

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2022/23 – 2024/25

Queen's University is committed to providing its students with an educational experience that is commensurate with the best universities in the world. It is also committed to ensuring that those who have the ability to benefit from such an education should have an opportunity to do so, irrespective of: socio-economic background, disability, ethnicity, political opinion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or age.

Widening Participation, Equality and Diversity are key components of Queen's Strategy 2030 (launched June 2021) and a key strand in the new Education Strategy. Priorities identified include:

- Fully integrating Widening Participation in the culture and working practices of the University.
- Offering an education portfolio which provides a range of routes to learning, and supports student progression and success.
- Ensuring that students have the opportunity to engage in delivering outreach activity.
- Delivering, in partnership with the Students' Union, initiatives to promote inclusivity and diversity.
- Making a real difference to the lives of those most disadvantaged in Northern Ireland (NI) through working in partnership with key stakeholders.

The University's Widening Participation Framework identifies two key thematic priorities, reflecting the student lifecycle (outlined in more detail in Section 1.4):

- Pre-Entry Outreach and Flexible Access to Higher Education.
- Supporting Transition, Retention, Attainment, and Employability.

Thematic Priority One: Pre-Entry Outreach and Flexible Access to Higher Education

- Review and increase the degree options and number of places on the Pathway Opportunity Programme, providing an alternative access route to Queen's.
- Continue to develop the Queen's Academy to deliver, in partnership with identified schools and FE colleges in Northern Ireland, a progressive programme of engagement and support with targeted pupils to achieve the necessary qualifications to access Higher Education.
- Further develop attainment raising interventions within the Junior Academy programmes.
- Pilot additional primary school interventions, building on the successful Professor Fluffy Programme.
- Enhance the information, advice and guidance available to pupils, schools and parents on widening participation opportunities to Higher Education.
- Continue the partnership with the Brilliant Club involving early career and doctoral researchers working with post-primary schools to enhance the pupil learning experience and aspiration, and promote awareness of research.
- Ongoing development of alternative routes to higher education in collaboration with Belfast Metropolitan College, as part of the Belfast City Deal.
- Contribute to the development of initiatives in partnership with FE to progress current apprenticeships to HE as relevant.
- Develop a range of scholarships for Widening Participation entrants.
- Recruit and train volunteer student and graduate ambassadors as role models to raise ambition of young people from under-represented groups.
- Embed a model of evidence based practice.

Thematic Priority Two: Supporting Transition, Retention, and Attainment

- Enhance the support package for students entering the University from Widening Participation cohorts, including the ongoing development of peer mentoring and individual learning support through the Learning Development Service.
- Enhance the provision of advice and guidance to Widening Participation entrants on the range of support and assistance available, including access to bursaries and scholarships, to enable a positive transition to University life.
- Provide support to address digital poverty where this may be a barrier to progression through the student journey.
- Provide a range of student wellbeing support to ensure students are supported throughout their student journey.
- Further promote the provision of dedicated services for the support for students with disabilities.
- Further promote the provision of support for care experienced young people including the £1,440 bursary (£1,000 plus low income bursary at 10% of fees) for those who meet the criteria.
- Provide support to ensure positive employability outcomes for Widening Participation cohorts.

Queen's continues to focus on the student experience, with a particular emphasis on improving student transition, retention and attainment. Considerable success has been achieved in terms of student retention, as demonstrated by the HESA Performance Indicators on "non-continuation", with a first-year dropout rate of 4.9% being below the benchmark of 5.3% and the NI average of 5.7%.

The University carefully monitors the recruitment of students from disadvantaged areas using the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure. In recent years, some 29% of our undergraduate intake is from areas in quintile 1 and 2.

The University is committed to ensuring that those most able but least likely to participate in Higher Education should have an equal opportunity to do so. Our Widening Participation Strategy, approved in June 2019, aims to widen participation; raise attainment; contribute to a strong regional skills base; and bridge gaps in retention, progression and success to ensure that students enjoy the best possible outcomes, at University and as graduates. Widening Participation is a key focus in the new Institutional Strategy (2030) and will embed the ambitions of the Widening Participation Strategy and over the coming months we will be defining our aims, objectives and targets as part of phase one of the Institutional Strategy.

1.3 (a) TARGETS

You will note that the tables numbered (i) to (vi) below have been pre populated with your institution's average enrolment for the last 3 years. You are now required to insert numerical targets for each of the groups identified across the **3 years 2022/23 – 2024/25**. These groups are regarded as being under represented in Access to Success.

(i) Group: **MDM Quintile 1**

Outcome: **To increase participation of those from NI MDM Q1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1,646		1650	1675	1675

(ii) Group: **Students with a Disability**

Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1,691		1900	1925	1950

(iii) Group: **Students with a Disability**

Outcome: **To increase the number of students in receipt of DSA**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
	4 Year Average	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
707	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	665	670	675

(iv) Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**

Outcome: **To increase participation of young males from NI MDM Quintile 1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
	4 Year Average	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
316	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	450	450	450

(v) Group: **Adult Learners**

Outcome: **To increase the number of adult learners participating in HE**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
	4 Year Average	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
4,114	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	4,000	4,000	4,000

As HESA data is largely incomplete for the following area, the figure that you provided in a previous WAPP for 2016/17 has been inserted as a base line.

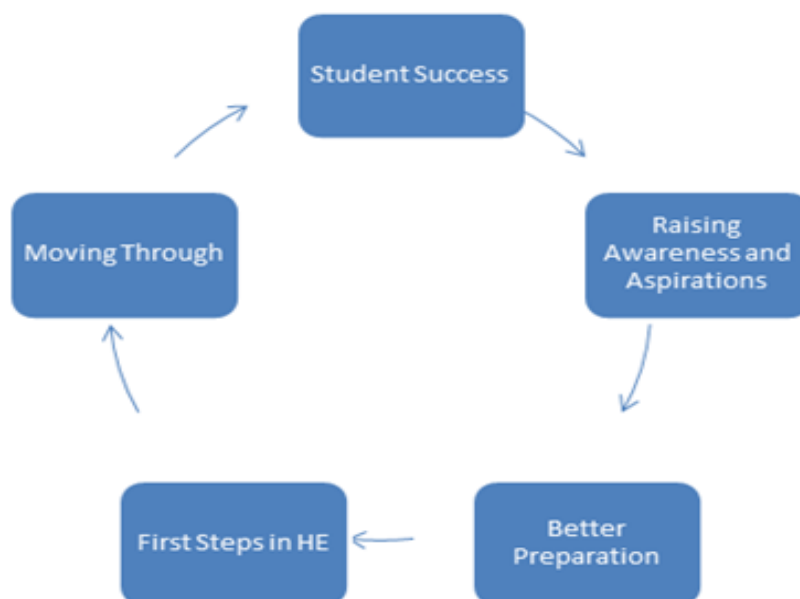
- (vi) Group: **Number of Care Experienced enrolments**
 Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

BASE YEAR	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
28	Number	60	65	70

Activity	Estimated Spend 2022/23 (£)	Estimated Spend 2023/24 (£)	Estimated Spend 2024/25 (£)
Bursaries	1,310,000	1,310,000	1,310,000
Scholarships	102,000	102,000	102,000
Other financial Support			
Outreach	860,400	860,400	860,400
Retention	1,498,218	1,498,218	1,498,218
Research Activity			
Staffing/ Administration			
TOTAL	3,770,618	3,770,618	3,770,618

Queen's Widening Participation programmes reflect the integrated learner-centred framework, our work recognising that widening access and participation must be addressed at different phases of the 'student lifecycle'.

STUDENT LIFECYCLE MODEL



- Raising awareness and aspirations (from primary school age upwards, including adults).

- Better preparation/pre-entry support (raising attainment to enable transition from school/FE College/Access courses to higher education).
- First steps in higher education (including induction programmes and transition support on course).
- Moving through the degree programme (supporting students in a holistic way, both their academically and personally).
- Student success (achievement and preparation for work and/or further study).

Ten programmes are presented below against this student lifecycle model and aligned with the priorities of the Queen's Widening Participation Framework.

Thematic Priority One: Pre-Entry Outreach and Flexible Access to Higher Education

RAISING AWARENESS AND ASPIRATION

1. Primary School Programmes

The successful **Professor Fluffy** Programme with its message of aspiration to Higher Education will be reviewed with a view to developing a partnership approach to engagement that will involve key stakeholders and the strong influencers in the pupils future decisions about Higher Education both during online, in-school visits and on-campus activity days (depending on what is available), e.g. parents, community leaders and head teachers. This is achieved through:

- A focus on schools located in areas of high deprivation in the Greater Belfast Area
- A combination of classroom delivered activities and on-campus activity days
- Developing a collaborative partnership approach to delivery if appropriate

The **Reading Together Programme** is a partnership project with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT). Looked After Children, and Care Leavers are Widening Participation target groups, as it is widely recognised that children in care have lower levels of educational achievement and are significantly less likely to enter Higher Education.

Reading Together aims to raise the literacy levels of children in care aged 9 -11 years by providing one-to-one paired reading and homework support for one hour per week from a student at Queen's University (Student Mentor).

- Support will take place on a weekday, immediately after and within each child's school/home depending on resources available.
- Each child will receive a minimum of 10 support sessions.
- Student Mentors are current undergraduate or postgraduate students at Queen's.

2. Queen's Junior Academy

The Queen's Junior Academy comprises the Junior Academy Sports Programme and Junior Academy. **Junior Academy Sports Programme** aims to introduce pupils to Higher Education through sport. The programme targets young males in Year 8 providing a progressive programme through to Year 10 and had been designed to develop communication, leadership and teamwork skills. In Year 10 participants have the opportunity to complete a Level 1 Qualification in Sports Leadership accredited by Sports Leaders UK. Forty places are offered each year to Year 8 pupils.

Sports Leaders qualifications provide a starting point for learners who wish to develop their leadership skills. The practical qualification allows learners to demonstrate their

ability to lead others in sport and helps set the foundation for future sports and career development. Pupils attend structured learning sessions including a one-hour practical session where they deliver a sports activity to younger pupils in their respective schools. To complete the qualification, participants demonstrate the ability to lead others, communicate effectively, and work as part of a team. Pupils are required to complete a portfolio of evidence and deliver a one-hour practical session.

The **Junior Academy Programme** is designed to introduce pupils to Higher Education and life at university. Each year participating schools have the opportunity to nominate up to five pupils to take part in the progressive programme from Year 9 -Year 12. Each year approximately 100 young people are nominated in Year 9 to take part in the programme which aims to raise awareness of Higher Education and the opportunities available by developing academic skills and supporting attainment. This is achieved through a progressive programme of engagement:

- In Year 9 - Participants take part in a Welcome and Orientation programme, where they are offered an insight into university life including campus and Queen's Elms accommodation tours. Pupils also gain insight into university life by having the opportunity to work with Student Ambassadors on a range of campus challenges.
- In Year 10 - Pupils gain knowledge of the variety of subjects offered by Queen's University by taking part in three faculty based taster days. Pupils attend lectures, workshops, and complete tasks set by academic staff supported by student ambassadors. Pupils gain information on the importance of GCSE selection and subject specific requirements needed for certain courses.
- Year 11 and 12 GCSE support in the form of study skills sessions. Pupils also attend Master Classes in English and Mathematics to support GCSE attainment.

GCSE Attainment Raising - as part of the Junior Academy the Widening Participation Unit are looking into means to Support GCSE Attainment in Year 11/12 addressing the core skills of Mathematics and English Language.

The focus will be to exploring ways to support GCSE attainment initially focusing on Mathematics with the potential to develop a pilot programme based on existing research based initiatives.

BETTER PREPARATION/PRE-ENTRY SUPPORT

3. Queen's Outreach to Schools and the Community

The Queen's Outreach to Schools and the Community Programme aims to raise awareness of the importance of higher education among students, enabling them to understand its relevancy to their own lives and future careers. By doing so, Queen's encourages and supports quality applications from pupils across Northern Ireland. This is achieved through:

- Delivery of physical and virtual talks to pupils across Years 10-14, teachers, parents and guardians. The series of talks include both general information about going to University and studying at Queen's, Applying through UCAS, Student Finance, Careers and Employability, Support Services as well as academic talks on the range of subject offerings available.
- Arrangement of bespoke University tours to student groups across years 10-12 to raise their awareness of what University can offer, providing useful insights into University life.

- Provision of bespoke campus tours, subject and/or support service talks to prospective students and their parents/guardians
- Delivery of live student panels and interactive chat sessions, enabling prospective students to hear from and chat to current students about their experiences, share advice and offer support to each other.
- Development and participation in Open Days, Higher Education Fairs, Exhibitions and Roadshows
- Participation in Career Conventions in collaboration with Area Learning Communities.
- Development of an online Undergraduate Course Finder tool and online Undergraduate (UG) prospectus
- Provision of a range of online resources and interactive tools tailored to meet the information needs of prospective pupils.
- Development of a career's teachers' website and newsletter as a resource for careers teachers to avail of up to date information and a range of teaching resources and links, to support the delivery of CEIAG across schools
- Provision of tailored information for young people with disabilities through booklets supported by dissemination workshops in Schools.
- Collaboration and engagement with a range of key external contacts in the community including teachers, parents, local politicians, employers and other professional organisations.

4. Queen's Senior Academy

The Queen's Senior Academy will deliver a comprehensive and progressive programme of support which aims to raise attainment and increase the number of entrants to Higher Education from targeted Widening Participation backgrounds. This is achieved through:

- Over 50 places available each year on the 18-month programme.
- A targeted approach in collaboration with NI-wide schools and FE colleges, to ensure those 'most able and least likely' are nominated to the Senior Academy.
- A targeted approach with NI Social Care Trusts to ensure nominations of young people in care.
- Further engagement and promotion with parents/carers around the benefits and facts of continuing further education and university prior to finding a job.
- An intensive programme combining on-campus/online activity and master classes hosted by Queen's University staff, including members of the Learning and Development and Wellbeing teams. Master classes focus on stress management, effective study skills and revision and technique.
- 30 Hours subject specific tuition in up to two A-level/BTEC subjects.
- Information and guidance sessions hosted by Queen's University on the UCAS application process, to ensure informed course selection and career development planning.
- An opportunity to get a taste of student life by spending a day with a current student at Queen's University, including attendance on campus, course specific discussion and going for lunch within the University area.
- Summer programme to increase knowledge and awareness of the student experience and the opportunity to gain an insight into life at the University. Pupils participate in a group subject specific project, show-casing findings through a presentation.
- Developing their communication, team work, research, analytical and presentation skills through project completion and presentation.
- Ongoing evaluation to inform the development of the Senior Academy.

- Past Senior Academy students at Queen's University are employed as Student Ambassadors, who assist in the hosting of events and provide information and guidance to participants on student life.

5. Pathway Opportunity Programme

The Pathway Opportunity Programme delivers a structured series of events, designed to aid progression to Queen's University Belfast, including admissions guidance and support. Participants take part in a series of workshops, masterclasses and seminars, delivered either on campus (where possible) or online via our Virtual Learning Environment. Participants complete an assignment based on work completed during a week-long summer school. The programme includes:

- A province wide targeting of year 13 students who are most capable but least likely to attend university based on multiple deprivation measures including those who are Care experienced, regardless of type of post-primary school attended (secondary, grammar, etc.).
- Subject specific coursework working with university lecturers and post-graduates to expose the students to university level academics while increasing their enthusiasm and motivation to study their particular subject at university.
- Academic Skills programmes to better prepare the students to attain the necessary A-Level grades to attend university as well as prepare them for university level academic study.
- Raising of knowledge about and awareness of university life and the entire application process through workshops and seminars.
- Where possible, a residential experience at Queen's to increase knowledge and awareness of the student experience and the opportunity to gain an insight into university life.
- Students who complete the programme received a guaranteed conditional offer or guaranteed interview for courses within their Pathway subject and, based on their assessed coursework, may receive a reduced offer of one or two A-Level grades (or equivalent).

6. Access and Open Learning

Queen's aims to increase the numbers of mature students progressing from Open Learning and Access courses to undergraduate study at Queen's. This is achieved through the promotion of Open learning courses as a taster of Queen's to adult learners and provision of support for those with special support needs and/or disabilities to ensure engagement with learning is a positive experience that will increase the possibility of those participating exploring options that will lead to further engagement with Higher Education.

- Delivery of a range of access programmes that provide entry level qualification to Queen's. These are designed for those who do not have A levels and have been generally out of full time education for more than two years, and are delivered at Further Education (FE) Colleges across Northern Ireland.
- Work with education providers at community level to explore awareness raising opportunities to promote Higher Education.
- Continue to embed and evaluate the revised Access quality assurance model in three partner colleges including the ongoing deployment of University Co-ordinators and External Examiners to ensure currency, shared moderation and parity of academic standards across programmes and providers

- Commence the new consortium model of delivery across two neighbouring FE colleges approved in 2021 with the process underpinned by internal and external expertise on programme design, content, delivery and assessment.
- Development of new Access pathway in Engineering aligned to the new Skills Strategy with a focus on interdisciplinary Science and Digital Skills areas.

Thematic Priority Two: Supporting Transition, Retention and Attainment and Employability

7. Transition Support Programme

The Transition Support Programme aims to ensure that a diverse student body settles successfully into university and becomes fully engaged in the Queen's student experience. The Transition Support Programme normally includes the following but is adapted every year based on evaluation of the previous year and emerging student needs:

- Disability Services "Offer Holder" information events inform prospective students who have disclosed a disability on the range of supports available both internally and through external funding, alongside how to register, etc.
- The VC meet the 'Parents/Guardian' event to increase awareness of support and help ease transition.
- Academic-based induction delivered at subject level and incorporating meetings with staff, current students, peers, personal tutor and finding out more about the course and relevant support.
- Pre-Semester Engagement Programme designed to support the transition of new and returning students to build campus connections, prepare to effectively engage with their studies and develop skills, knowledge and awareness to proactively manage and maintain their wellbeing during their time at Queen's.
- Student-led University-wide programme of welcome offering.
- Support to target groups including:
 - Mature student induction event and ongoing networking events;
 - Care-experienced students - academic induction event;
 - Direct entry to Level 2 and 3 Transition Support Programme;
 - Induction and transition support for students with Asperger's and ASC.
- Transition workshops for students entering from Senior Academy or Pathway Opportunity Programme.

Each of these activities will cover elements of learning in higher education, raising awareness of support available, and provide an opportunity to socialise with other students:

- School-based peer mentoring providing transition support to new students.
- Programme based peer assisted learning to help student as appropriate with academic content/skills.
- Promotion of student support through promotional materials such as: leaflets, flyers, information boards, and website resources such as: on-line self-management resources, videos, blogs, student interns, workshops, and group-work sessions.

ON COURSE SUPPORT

8. Academic Support Framework

The aim of the Academic Support Framework is to ensure students' progress through their course and attain a degree classification reflective of their academic potential. The framework combines generic support with a range of specialist academic and related

supports based on student needs. The framework is evaluated on an ongoing basis and innovative methods of support are developed and piloted to ensure support reflects the changing environment of learning and the needs of a diverse body of students.

The Framework includes:

- Personal Tutors, who provide an enhanced academic tutoring system to support the increased retention of our students. The personal tutor is key to guiding the student through their academic study by providing feedback on their academic performance and signposting students to additional relevant support if appropriate e.g. Learning Development Service (LDS) and to relevant development opportunities.
- Learning Development Service (LDS) which offers academic skills support through one-to-one meetings, workshops and online resources.
- Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) developed as an innovative approach to students supporting students in specific areas of academic content.
- Disability Services support students who disclose a disability or long-term condition to access a range of “in-course” and funded supports. The nature and type of support provided varies and is tailored to meet individual student requirements. Once registered with the service, their allocated Disability Officer will support the student to develop an Individual Student Support Agreement which outlines all supports and reasonable adjustments that a student is entitled to. The Disability Officer then liaises with all appropriate areas to put support in place. In addition, each academic School has a Disability Adviser (academic staff member) who assists in the arrangement of reasonable adjustments within their School to support the student’s learning and assessment.
- Disability Services also assists students with applications for funded support such as Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA).
- The Examinations Office makes arrangements for reasonable adjustments in examinations e.g. additional time, rest breaks, individual rooms, scribes/readers and use of a PC, and use of the ‘green room’ to accommodate students.
- Additional support to enhance accessibility to Library and information resources is provided and assistive technology is available on computers throughout the University.
- Student Disability & Wellbeing Drop-in runs daily from 11am – 3pm. Students can have a quick chat about their issue / circumstance and access short term focused support including tips on how to manage their wellbeing or information on the range of supports available across campus and beyond.

9. Student Wellbeing Support

Queen’s University believes that wellbeing is fundamental to a positive student learning experience. It is widely recognised that students who are happy, confident and able to establish meaningful relationships are better placed to achieve their full potential. Student Wellbeing Team, which provides co-ordination of support to students on a range of issues and complexities. These may include academic pressures, personal and family issues, financial difficulties and emerging mental health concerns. The service adopts a matched stepped care model of support ensuring students access the most appropriate level of support for their presenting needs. This ranges from protective wellbeing activities based upon the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing approach through to 1-1 coaching, group work, counselling and crisis intervention.

Support includes:

- A diverse range of workshops, interactive webinars, podcasts, and events are delivered throughout the year under the “Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing” framework

to encourage students to take personal responsibility for managing their mental health and wellbeing.

- 1-1 Consultations and Coaching for tailored personal, emotional, and academic support.
- Drop-in Clinic runs Monday-Friday (11am – 3pm) and can be accessed in-person, by telephone or video call. Designed to allow students to have a quick chat about their issue / circumstance and access short term focused support including tips on how to manage their wellbeing or information on the range of additional supports available across campus and beyond.
- A specialist service focusing on promoting “Safe and Healthy Relationships” across campus offers 1:1 support, advice and guidance to students impacted by sexual misconduct, hate crime, bullying or harassment. A team of advocates working across campus have been trained as an additional level of support to students reporting and responding to disclosures.
- Therapeutic support through short term focused low-level CBT.
- Peer Support groups, including Asperger’s Support Network, Epilepsy Support Group and Mature students. These groups offer ongoing support, connection with peers and skills development
- Student Psychological Support and Therapy Service which following a psychological wellness assessment matches students with a range of psychological interventions appropriate to their needs, including self-help materials, guided self-help courses, groupwork sessions and 1-1 talking therapy. In addition, students can access a 24/7 crisis helpline to access confidential support from trained psychological practitioners.

Additional Health, Wellbeing and Practical Supports available to Queen’s Students:

- Student Advice Centre which offers one-to-one guidance on budgeting and finance.
- Residential Life Team which is part of the University’s Accommodation provision and provides access to a range of social events.
- University Health Centre which provides health care that is accessible and responsive to the needs of students.
- #QUBeWell Healthy Campus Framework designed to support the health and wellbeing needs of students, staff and staff supporting students
- Hardship Fund which provides discretionary financial help for students who get into financial difficulty during their course.
- Creche facilities which are open to all full-time students.

STUDENT SUCCESS

10. Employability and Further Study

The University seeks to ensure that undergraduate students from under-represented groups have access to opportunities for Information Advice and Guidance, mentoring, work experience, placements, or internships, as part of the University’s commitment to improving the employment prospects of its undergraduates. This is achieved through a range of pre-entry and on-course activities, including:

- Developing and enhancing the information, advice and guidance to students and teachers.
- Supporting work experience and employability skills development via short internships, employability skills development projects or summer work. There is bursary support available to enable students to access these opportunities up to £250 allowance to cover travel and subsistence. This financial support can

be vital in ensuring these students gain valuable experiential learning that they would not otherwise be able to undertake.

- Expansion of Business Mentoring Scheme to include a strand specifically targeted at students from WP backgrounds. The scheme seeks to bridge the gap between education and industry and helps students to develop skills as well as build vital networks and connections with business professionals, who can support in their future careers. The business mentors are selected with differing skills sets from employer partner organisations across a range of sectors, thus providing a valuable opportunity for our students as well as strengthening links between graduate employers and the University. All students who join the University via the Queen's Senior Academy, Pathway Opportunities Programme, or who are identified as WP Schools/Colleges will have the opportunity to apply for the Business Mentoring Scheme to potentially aid their access to a variety of professions.
- Provision of one-to-one advice and guidance and a range of support events in the run up to, and post-graduation. Students are supported in exploring progression to further study and the University seeks to provide clearer, relevant, comparable information about the choices available, the costs involved and the funding available. This is achieved through enhanced and targeted information (paper and online).

1.1 Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

All activities mapped to Queen's Widening Participation Framework have been written to reflect the key actions of the Access to Success Strategy.

The activities seek to engage with key cohorts identified by the Access to Success Strategy for inclusion in future widening participation support initiatives:

- Low participation neighbourhoods (areas of high deprivation);
- Disability (physical, sensory or learning);
- Young males;
- Adult returners;
- Care experienced.

This is achieved by highlighting the above as required entry criteria for our pre-entry programmes in addition to 'first in family' and 'experience as a carer'.

1.2 How do you plan to communicate information on the availability of financial and other assistance to students?

Queen's will continue to ensure that prospective students and their parents have all the information they need to make an informed decision about the commitments they will be making, financial and other, if they come to study at Queen's. This information is made available on the University's Website and in its printed Prospectus and other publications. The Queen's Senior Academy and Pathway Opportunity programmes include a student finance awareness presentation from Advice SU, ensuring that participants are made aware of the financial support available to them at Queen's and how to access information relating to other institutions.

Additionally, students have access to professional advice and information services to help them to make the best use of the resources available to them during their time at Queen's.

Advice SU provides advice on a range of issues, including: loans, tuition fees, bursaries, the Support Fund, scholarships, Social Security Benefits, and budgeting skills. This advice is also available to prospective students at the pre-entry stage. Disability Services provides information on support available.

We work on an ongoing basis with students, prospective students and their parents/carers in the development and focus of our messages and our choice of information channels and to determine which information is of most importance to prospective students.

The provision of advice and information on financial support is a shared responsibility for all within the University who work directly with students, particularly Finance, Students' Union, Admissions and Recruitment and Outreach Officers. Advice SU provides expert advice in this area.

1.3 How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

The University Operating Board approve the Widening Access and Participation Plan and will monitor its progress throughout the year.

The Supporting Student Attainment Action Group (SSAAG) will monitor the retention and success measures. SSAAG has representation from senior management and the Students' Union.

As described in 1.3, the primary measures relating to Widening Participation will continue to be focused on:

- Disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Household income;
- Disability;
- Young males;
- Care experienced.

1.4 Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing or provide us with relevant documents in line with section 1.8 of the guidance document.

(Full details on how to complete this section are in the guidance notes)

In order to ensure consistency across institutions we would ask that you use the Kirkpatrick Model for this exercise. The concept is that individual institutions will learn from this self-evaluation and obtain evidence to influence future widening participation activity and plans. You may evaluate the institution's widening participation activity as a whole, or evaluate individual projects.

The following sub headings should help focus your response. The Department expects that most institutions will be able to evaluate widening participation activity to at least Level 3 (as below).

Level 1 Evaluation - Reactions

What participants thought and felt about the programme

In order to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of our widening participation outreach programmes, we ensure that participants are asked to provide an evaluation both at the end of individual activities and at the end of the overall year-long programme. We're

looking to see how it went for them, how relevant was it for them and how could we improve the programme in the future. These evaluations / feedback forms are designed to be age specific for the pupils/students. For primary school pupils it takes the form of anonymous questions on screen via our Personal Response clickers or paper questionnaires completed when they're back at school. With post primary school pupils/students the participants are asked to complete evaluation sheets or complete online surveys after the event and after the programme. In addition, feedback is sought from teachers via online surveys.

Examples of this kind of evaluation would include:

Professor Fluffy

Professor Fluffy evaluation quotes from school visits 2019

"I learnt that a professor could be a girl"

"Yes! It makes me want to go to university"

"Nothing, Queen's is perfect!"

"It has made me feel inspired"

"I never really wanted to go and I was very confused about university ... Yes. I can't wait until I'm old enough to enrol!"

"That college is not just learning"

"Yes because they explained it well and explaining all the classes and the clubs"

"The programme has definitely changed my opinion by showing us there's more than just English and Maths"

"University will help you in the future"

"That if you work hard you can go to university"

"I would have liked it to be longer"

"Yes and because I realised that university is not all work it can be fun too"

Teacher comments

"Increasing students' awareness and aspirations of university. Most have cited they would now like to attend after secondary school"

"Excellent programme, pupils were fully engaged and excited to participate"

Pathway Opportunity Programme

The most valuable aspects of the Pathway Opportunity Programme were: "Getting first-hand experience about the course and what the modules are like, talking to current students was also very useful. I was glad to have learnt things like referencing and what a lecture is like. Even though I was worried about meeting new people because I was the only one from my school in the week I went, I made loads of new friends which I still talk to which has made me more confident about making new friends next year which I thought was very daunting, in addition to that, the experience of living in elms village." *Pathway Student*

The most valuable aspects of the Pathway Opportunity Programme were: "Definitely getting to talk to students who attended or are attending Queens. It really helped to have an insight on the courses I was interested in and was vital in helping me decide what course I wanted to apply for this year. I also really enjoyed the residential as it gave me a real feel of the courses and university life and allowed me to make some really valuable friends." *Pathway Student*

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning

The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

In order to evaluate the participants' learning resulting from our outreach programmes, the participants complete a survey before the programme and then after the programme, focusing on the key objectives of the programme. Comparison of the quantitative "pre" and "post" results indicate the effectiveness of the programme. In addition, the "post" survey includes open-ended questions to provide qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme.

Examples of this kind of evaluation would include:

Pathway Opportunity Programme

87% of students who completed the Pathway Opportunity Programme in 2019/2020 indicated in a poll that after the programme they felt that their knowledge about university had increased.

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

This level of evaluation has been more difficult to measure as there are many aspects to the programme. Measuring behavioural change specifically related to the programmes is complex. To address this Queen's University WPU is involved in ongoing work with the Russell Group Widening Participation Group and the National Education Opportunities Network.

82% of students who completed the Pathway Opportunity Programme in 2019/2020 indicated in a poll that after the programme they felt more motivated to do well in their school/college work.

81% of students who completed the Pathway Opportunity Programme in 2019/2020 indicated in a poll that after the programme they felt more confident getting used to a new university campus / place of study.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance

The widening participation outreach programmes are reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme at meeting the key objectives and getting results. "Pre" and "Post" surveys are used to verify how the objectives have or have not been met and feedback surveys provided qualitative data on the results.

Of the 187 students who participated in the Pathway Opportunity Programme in 2019/2020, 166 (89%) completed the year-long programme and 103 (55% of the participants) started their studies at Queen's in 2020/2021.

Evidence based practice is key to all our outreach programmes and is a key ambition within our new Widening Participation Strategy. The first stage in 2019-20 of this has been to work closely with colleagues in the School of Education to develop an evaluation model that is based on agreeing outcomes, using logic models to work through the change we are aiming to measure through the programme. The development of logic models for each programme reflects best practice in working towards evidence practice.