**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

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**Widening Access and Participation Plan**

**WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019/20 – 2021/22**

**Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see the guidance notes for help in completing this return.**

* 1. Please provide a high level outline of your institution’s Widening Participation policy in Higher Education and how this fits in with the institution’s strategic direction.

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| 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 is a key component of Queen’s Corporate Plan (2016-21) and a key strand in Queen’s Education Strategy (2016‑21). 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. * Increasing the use of work-based learning, part-time, and distance or blended learning approaches. * 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 communities as evidenced through the work of the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation. For further information on Queen’s work in this area please visit[*Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation*](http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/cesi/zones/)*.*   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   * 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. * Pilot additional primary school interventions, building on the successful Professor Fluffy Programme. * Further expand the Pathway Opportunity Programme that provides an alternative access route to Queen’s. * Enhance the information, advice and guidance available to pupils, schools and parents on widening participation opportunities to Higher Education. * Develop the sustainability of widening participation opportunities that were delivered within the Research Councils UK (RCUK) Schools University Partnership Initiative (SUPI) project, involving early career and doctoral researchers working with post-primary schools to enhance the pupil learning experience and aspiration, and promote awareness of research. * Review and further develop the University’s Access Programme as a route to higher education for Adult Learners. * Contribute to the development of initiatives in partnership with FE to progress current apprenticeships to HE as relevant. * Assess the potential for the introduction of targeted 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. * Develop a model and practice of evidence based practice.   Thematic Priority Two: Supporting Transition, Retention and Attainment   * Enhance the personal support 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, to enable their transition to University life. * 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 £1,420 bursary (£1,000 plus low income bursary of £420) for those who meet the criteria, which was introduced in 2015-16. * Provide support to ensure positive employability outcomes for widening participation cohorts. |

* 1. What is your view of the success record of your institution in relation to recruitment, retention and progression for Widening Participation students?

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| The former Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), through its *Integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education, Access to Success*, acknowledges that Northern Ireland universities:  *“…have done much to promote widening participation in Northern Ireland and participation rates among young people in the region are much higher than in other parts of the United Kingdom.”*  It is also recognised in *Access to Success* that “*widening participation extends beyond recruitment and selection and covers the entire student journey to graduation and progression to the world of work*”. Through its integrated and coherent strategy, Queen’s has made an impressive contribution to the success of widening participation in Northern Ireland as evidenced by the following performance indicators.  Student Progression  Queen’s has enhanced 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 dropout rates being well below the NI average.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **HESA PI** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **NI average** | | 1st Year Dropout rate | 4.9% | 4.5% | 4.4% | 4.3% | 5.1% | | Overall Dropout rate | 8.0% | 7.4% | 8.1% | 8.7% | 10.8% |   Students from Low Income Backgrounds  The University monitors the recruitment of students from low income households.  In 2016-17, financial support in the form of bursaries, was provided to some 3,191 undergraduate students from the lowest household income category, representing 28% of the population.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Measure** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | | Low Income Students - income up to £19,203 | 3,521 | 3,376 | 3,361 | 3,191 |   Students with a Disability  The Disability Services Unit provides a pro-active service to potential applicants and registered students.  It ensures that their individual needs are assessed and that a support package is available to meet the requirements of their particular course.  In 2016-17 there were a total of 2,299 students registered with the service with 1,277 of these students in receipt of Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA). \*Please note these figures reflect the total population of students registered with a Queen’s University’s Disability Service from NI, Scotland, England and Wales.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Students with Disabilities** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | | **Students registered with Disability Services** | 1,785 | 2,260 | 2,567 | 2,299 | | **Students in receipt of DSA** | 851 | 1,032 | 1,469 | 1,277 |   Employability  Annual performance indicators are published by HESA on the employability of students six months after graduation.  Queen’s has established a comprehensive Employability Framework and performance on this measure remains strong. The Corporate Plan 2016-21 includes a target of 95% for student employability.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Measure** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | | Students Employed (inc. further study) | 93.8% | 94.6% | 93.5% | 94.4% | 96.0% | |

* 1. Please outline the Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets for the next 3 years for your institution.

*You will need to provide details on key target groups within Access to Success, anticipated expenditure and the measures of success – your response should include a description of your approach to targeting, as well as the areas targeted for improvement over the next 3 years. You may wish to add to the projection tables below to report on your own institution’s specified target groups if not already included in Access to Success.*

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| In developing Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets, it is important to note the following points relating to the Northern Ireland context:   * The 2015-16 budget resulted in unprecedented cuts to the funding of higher education in NI.  This has resulted in a phased reduction in the overall number of full-time, undergraduate places in NI institutions (the MaSN). * The most recent data from UCAS shows that 36% of NI domiciled students are exported to GB, a rise of 4% since 2014-15. This outflow of talent will undermine the Executive’s ability to deliver on a Programme for Government and a sustainable model of HE funding is required to allow NI universities to reduce the number of local students studying in other parts of the UK. |

**1.3 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 2019/20 - 2021/22. These groups are regarded as being under represented in Access to Success.

1. Group: **MDM Quintile 1**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE**  (based on 4 years 2013-2017) | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
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|
| **4 Year Average** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| **1685** |  |  |  |
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1. Group: **Students with a Disability**

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE**  (based on 4 years 2013-2017) | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
|
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|
| **4 Year Average** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| **1213** |  |  |  |

1. Group: **Students with a Disability**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE**  (based on 4 years 2013-2017) | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
| **4 Year Average** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| **768** |  |  |  |

1. Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE**  (based on 4 years 2013-2017) | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
|
|
|
| **4 Year Average** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| **330** |  |  |  |

1. Group: **Adult Learners**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE**  (based on 4 years 2013-2017) | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
|
|
|
| **4 Year Average** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| **4503** |  |  |  |

1. Group**: Number of** **Care Experienced enrolments**

Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

*As HESA data is largely incomplete for this area, please provide your 2015/16 figure as a base line.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BASE YEAR** | **Targets/Outcome** | | | |
|
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|
| **2015/16** | **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
|  |  |  |  |

* 1. List below the key programmes/projects financed from additional student fees that will contribute towards your institution’s performance.

(Please refer to the appropriate section of the guidance notes before completing.)

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| 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 WP Framework.  Thematic Priority One: Pre-Entry Outreach and Flexible Access to Higher Education  **RAISING AWARENESS AND ASPIRATION**   1. **Primary School Programme**   The successful **Professor Fluffy** Programme with its message of aspiration to Higher Education and the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects will be expanded to involve the pupils’ parents (strong influencers in the pupils future decisions about Higher Education) both during the in-school visits and the on-campus activity days. This is achieved through:   * The series of engagements will take place with P6 and P7 pupils and will have a strong STEM theme. * The programme will focus on schools located in areas of high deprivation in the Greater Belfast Area. * Pupils will benefit from a combination of classroom delivered activities and on-campus activity days. * The pupils’ parents/cares/guardians will be involved to reinforce the message of aspiration to Higher Education with the pupils.   Evaluation will be embedded in the programme to monitor the effectiveness of the programme and activities and as a tool to improve and further develop the Professor Fluffy Programme.  The **Reading Together Programme** is 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. * Each child will receive a minimum of 8 support sessions. * Student Mentors are current undergraduate or postgraduate students at Queen’s.   The programme has additional funding from the SEHSCT and a private donor though the collaborative working relationship with the Queen’s Development and Alumni department. It is anticipated that additional funding will continue to be sought to further develop the programme.   1. **The Queen’s Junior** **Academy**   The Queen’s Junior Academy comprises the Junior Academy Sports Programme and Junior Academy.  The **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 six learning sessions including a one-hour practical session where they deliver a sports activity 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 attend a Welcome and Orientation event at Queen’s University 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 offer GCSE support in the form of study skills sessions delivered by the Learning Development Service including; how to study, revision techniques and time managements. Pupils also attend Master Classes in English and Mathematics delivered by Academic members of staff who are supported by undergraduate students.   **BETTER PREPARATION/PRE-ENTRY SUPPORT**   1. **Queen’s Outreach to Schools and the Community**   The Queen’s Outreach to Schools and the Community Programme aims to raise awareness, ensure that the costs and benefits of higher education are readily understood and pupils can identify the relevance of higher education to their own lives and through this encourage and support quality applications from pupils across NI.  This is achieved through:   * Delivery of talks to Year 12-14 and parents/carers in NI Schools.  These include both general information about Higher Education and Queen’s, and academic talks from a range of Queen’s subject areas. * Participation in Career Conventions in collaboration with Area Learning Communities. * Development of an enhanced online Undergraduate (UG) prospectus and related resources to meet the information needs of prospective pupils. * Development of a careers teachers’ website as a resource for careers teachers to avail of up to date information. * Provide tailored information for young people with disabilities through booklets supported by dissemination workshops in Schools. * Engagement in a programme of outreach to key contacts in the community.  1. **The Queen’s Senior Academy**   The Queen’s Senior Academy will deliver a coherent and progressive programme of support which aims to raise attainment and increase the number of entrants to Higher Education from targeted WP groups. This is achieved through:   * Up to 50 places are 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 to ensure nominations of young people in care. * Provision of information and support for parents/carers to facilitate participation and ongoing engagement with the Senior Academy. * An intensive programme combining on-campus 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. * 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. * One-to-one subject specific tuition in up to two A-level 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 at classes and going for lunch within the University area. * Residential experience at Queen’s University Belfast to increase knowledge and awareness of the student experience and the opportunity to gain an insight into life at the University. * Ongoing evaluation to inform the development of the Senior Academy.  1. **Pathway Opportunity Programme**   The Pathway Opportunity Programme will deliver a holistic approach to preparing year 13/14 students for entry to Queen’s University focusing on university life, academic skills preparation, university studies within one of a number of subject Pathways (Law, Business, Computer Science, etc.) and the UCAS/application process. It is a credit bearing Educational Compact Scheme reflecting current practice in other Russell Group Universities which has been specifically designed around academic subject areas and degree pathways. 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 with disabilities and those who are Care experienced, regardless of type of post-primary school attended (secondary, grammar, etc.). * Online and on-campus 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. * Online 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 on-campus workshops and seminars. * Residential experience at Queen’s to increase knowledge and awareness of the student experience and the opportunity to gain an insight into life at the University, with an assessed coursework element. * Students who complete the programme received a guaranteed conditional offer onto 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).   Tracking, measurement and evaluation will be instrumental in monitoring the performance of the students on the programme and the effectiveness of the programme in bringing the Pathway students to Queen’s University.  **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:   * 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 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. * Delivery of information, advice and guidance for Access students to aid career planning and increase quality applications to Queen’s. * Visits to Queen’s for Access students to meet current students and gain further information on relevant courses. * A WP point of contact for ongoing queries from Access students to encourage quality applications to Queen’s. * Promotion of Open learning courses as a taster of Queen’s to adult learners. * 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.   Thematic Priority Two: Supporting Transition, Retention and Attainment and Employability  **FIRST STEPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**  **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:   * ‘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. * 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 ASD.   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. * 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, group-work sessions. * Annual evaluation of induction and transition support to enhance the overall programme.   **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. Each new undergraduate student is assigned a personal tutor who meets with the student up to two times a year. 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 help 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 guidance on essay writing, maths skills and study skills. * Disability Services supports students identifying themselves as having a disability or long term condition. When a student discloses a disability of long term condition, they are invited to meet with a Disability Officer to discuss their needs and the range of supports available. 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. Each academic School has a Disability Adviser who assists in the arrangement of reasonable adjustments within their School to support the student’s learning and assessment.  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 uses 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.   **9. Welfare Support Programme**  The aim of the Welfare Support Programme is to ensure students are supported appropriately when personal difficulties or complex situations arise and that this support enables students, if possible, to continue with their course of study. The support is both generic and specialist and is reviewed and enhanced as new needs become evident or as innovative approaches are implemented. Welfare support includes:     * Student Wellbeing Team, which provides co-ordination of support to students identified with complex difficulties, including personal and family issues, financial difficulties and emerging mental health concerns. * 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. * Asperger’s Support Network, which provides students with Asperger’s with ongoing support, connection with peers and skills development. * Counselling Service which provides counselling support to students within three working days of request, available at a range of locations across NI. Students have 24 hour access to a counselling helpline. * University Health Centre which provides health care that is accessible and responsive to the needs of students. * Are Ye Well? Campaign and promotional activities to ensure awareness of services. * Mind Your Mood student-led mental health campaign, delivering workshops to raise student awareness of their own health and wellbeing and ways to manage it. * 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.   Welfare initiatives are evaluated regularly and developed in collaboration with 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. * Running an Internship programme. There is bursary support available to enable students to undertake internships or work experience during their summer vacation. These students would not otherwise be able to undertake these opportunities without this financial support. Other awards of up to £750 are available to fund travel to International Placements/study abroad. * Expanding of Mentoring Scheme by developing a strand targeted at students from WP backgrounds. The scheme seeks to bridge the gap between education and industry. The scheme helps students to develop skills as well as build networks and connections with business professionals. The mentors are from a range of employers thus providing a valuable opportunity for our students and strengthening links between graduate employers and the University. All students who join the University via the Queen’s Academy, Pathway Opportunities Programme, Access Programmes or who are identified as WP Schools/Colleges have the opportunity to apply for the Mentoring Scheme to potentially aid their access to a variety of professions. * Provision of one-to-one support and workshops during the summer post-graduation. To support student progression to further study, 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. Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

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

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| 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 programme’s 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.  In addition, 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. How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

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| The Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Project Group (HEFSFPG) are responsible for monitoring the delivery of the programmes and progress towards key targets and milestones. 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.   The Supporting Student Attainment Action Group (SSAAG) will monitor the retention and success measures.  The HEFSFPG and SSAAG groups have representation from senior management and the Students’ Union. |

Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing.

*(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 evaluate the outreach programmes and ensure we are making continual improvements to ensure high impact delivery, the participants are asked to provide an evaluation at the end of every event/activity to get their thoughts about the programme - how it went and how relevant it was to them. These feedback forms are designed specifically for the age group of the pupils/students. For the Primary School pupils it takes the form of an on-screen questionnaire answered anonymously using our electronic Personal Response System (clickers) at the very end of the programme, in addition to a paper questionnaire completed back at their school in the days following the programme. For post-primary school programmes, the students are asked to complete a short evaluation sheet as well as seeking feedback from teachers either verbally or via an online survey after the programme. Small focus group discussions are also held with the older pupils/students which include discussion of what participants felt about the programme (Did they enjoy it? Was it relevant?) and how they would suggest improving it.

An example follows of a recent post-event questionnaire from a Queen’s Senior Academy “Tutoring for Success” which had the following results, among others:

**How would you rate the event overall**? (Percent of participants with each response)

**What part of the event did you find the most relevant and useful?** (Percent of students with each response)

“The Tutors filled us in on the technical aspects of how they work, what they expect and how to engage hours, so that we make as much as we can from the tutoring.” Student comment.

**Level 2 Evaluation - Learning**

*The resulting increase in knowledge or capability*

In order to assess the learning and change of attitudes/knowledge/skills as a result of each programme, we conduct survey (either paper based or using our electronic Personal Response System) at the beginning of a programme of events to assess the pupils’/students’ initial attitude/knowledge/skills - a pre-check- both to identify and formulate the content for the programme but also as a baseline assessment. At the end of the programme of a series of events, or on a yearly basis for multi-year programmes we repeat the survey to get a final assessment - post-check - and then compare to see the change in attitudes/knowledge/skills and the pupils’/students’ attitudes of what they have learned from the programme. The post-check includes a series of short open ended questions for a qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme.

An example follows of a pre and post-check for our Primary “Professor Fluffy” programme - a series of two events, one at the primary school and the second on-campus:

**Do you know what life is like at University**? (Percent of participants with each response)

**Are you thinking of attending University when you finish school**? (Percent of participants with each response)

**Did you enjoy today’s programme about Queen’s University?** (Percent of students with each response)

**Level 3 Evaluation - Transfer**

*Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application*

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. Some qualitative evaluation student comments do hint at the impact of the programmes on “transfer”:

“Senior Academy has improved my people skills and helped me to communicate with other students.”

“I really did have a very enjoyable time completing the Pathway Programme and I would encourage everyone eligible to apply. This programme gave me the opportunity to explore various courses and allowed me to find the course I wanted to study. I made some unforgettable memories at the residential summer school and met so many new people I look forward to seeing at Queens in September. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the running of the programme for such a valuable and worthwhile experience that has benefitted me greatly.”

Plus teacher’s comments also give weight to the transfer that occurred:

“Helped an already excellent student become more focused.”

“Enhanced their personal responsibility.”

“Increased confidence.”

“Developed key skills of use at University and beyond.”

“Motivation to pursue their chosen career path.”

**Level 4 Evaluation- Results**

*Results- the effects resulting from performance*

Each programme is reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme at meeting its aims and objectives - getting results. Some of these results are more subjective and come from pre/post checks and surveys, such as the following example from our Schools University Partnership Initiative (SUPI) which has an objective to increase aspiration in the pupils/students to progress to Higher Education:

**As a result of the event today I am more likely to think about going to university?** (Percent of students with each response)

Other results are more objective and are tied to receiving qualifications or actually applying onto higher education courses. For example:

* Out of 27 pupils on the Junior Academy Sports programme, 24 (or 89%) successfully completed their Level 1 qualification: Sports Leaders UK Certificate.
* Out of 43 students completing the Pathway Opportunity Programme, 35 (81%) applied to Queen’s University and the remainder are either resitting a year in school and will be applying the following year, or have applied to other establishments of higher education.