

# University of Kent

## Access Agreement 2016-17

### Introduction

The University of Kent has long been committed to the provision of higher education to all those who could benefit and has delivered major innovation and success in widening participation. Our on-going commitment to widen access has resulted in the development of a multimillion pound campus at Medway, significant investment in a range of nationally recognised outreach schemes, as well as providing a focus for academic excellence in the region through the delivery of our Partner Schools initiative. The University is proud of these achievements, particularly as our engagement with widening access pre-dates the wider sector and was driven by institutional commitment, rather than external factors, to the provision of higher education to all those who were intellectually able. Furthermore, we have balanced this commitment to widen participation with our confirmed position as a research-led University which delivers quality teaching.

The University of Kent has continued to develop, implement and build capacity within its widening participation strategy from the first HEFCE funded access project in 1996 to its established commitment to provide recurrent funding for all its outreach activity. From direct contact with those in target populations where we deliver support to raise attainment and aspirations, to major urban regeneration projects, Kent has played a key role in the investment and delivery of projects to widen access throughout its region. Our data illustrates the success of our outreach approach and the University has contributed nationally in the development of widening participation: Kent was one of a handful of universities which participated in the national HEFCE project on evaluation in widening participation, and our partnership team was nationally commended for our innovative development and excellent rated training within the Aimhigher Associate Ambassador Scheme that we now continue to fund.

The University has been a leading partner in the 'Universities at Medway' project. Kent was an early champion of the participation agenda with the development of a new campus in the Medway Towns; an area with significantly low participation. The University's direct contribution to the capital cost of this project to date exceeds £20m. In this challenging economic climate we must remain financially astute in order that we can sustain a programme of expansion and modernisation of space and facilities on all our campuses to ensure an appropriate 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment and experience for all our students while we also continue to deliver our innovative and insightful participation agenda.

Our success to date in widening participation is driven by the reality that we have never stopped our developmental approach in seeking best practice. We have sought a range of partners with a host of different aims to work towards a better local engagement with higher education. We have built capacity for widening participation within the University with people at all stages of their career, and this commitment will lead to a more systematic implementation over the next five years for both students and staff. The University has not only invested significantly in outreach provision, but has also invested substantially in partnerships and the maintenance of collaborative provision across sectors. This has helped sustain activity within the county post the withdrawal of national funding and has allowed the development of a range of primary and secondary school partnerships and Academy sponsorship while furthering relationships across further education, local government and communities of informal learners. This range of activity has resulted in the University's role in collaborative target setting on a local basis with nearly 50 partners. In addition, the creation of the Higher Education Access Tracking (HEAT) network has allowed for collaborative monitoring and evaluation approaches to outreach between 20 HEIs. In 2014 the University began the national roll out of HEAT to an increased number of HEIs in England, and by working collaboratively we will ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of WP practice develops and evolves.

We will further extend our work with schools, effectively doubling the number of Partner Schools to which we deliver in-depth aspiration and curriculum work and tripling the number of student ambassadors; provide our sponsored academy, Brompton Academy, with further specialist support and extend our community engagement in that locality. We will embed further a targeted retention and student success and employability programme that reinforces our aspiration efforts and ensures the successful transition of our students to employment. These efforts are coupled with generous financial support to those in most need. The following

pages outline the University's intentions for the future with regard to key aspects of the University's strategy and in full response to the OFFA guidance.

The Access Agreement fully articulates with the University's Widening Participation Strategy (2015-20) and Student Success (Equality and Diversity) project. There is full University policy engagement through the formal committee structures of the University and all academic schools and key professional services are engaged in the development, delivery and evaluation that are core to those policies,

## **Fees, student numbers and fee income**

The following section is based upon current Government policy and may be liable to change. The University of Kent will charge £9000 p.a. for all its full-time undergraduate programmes of study and a maximum of £6,750 for part time programmes. The University's Partner Colleges will charge fees as follows: Canterbury College, £6,000 p.a.<sup>1</sup>; and K College £5,640 p.a. (based on 2015/16 fees). The Medway School of Pharmacy will charge £9,000 p.a. for the undergraduate MPharm degree programme. We propose to charge £1,350 for years abroad and sandwich years. All fees for all programmes will be subject to annual inflationary increases where permitted.

For 2016-17 the University is forecasting that it will have 13,169 home students and a fee income of £36.1M.<sup>2</sup> The University has committed to a large increase in funding for the development and piloting of targeted student success measures over 2014-15 and 2015-16, the most successful of which will be mainstreamed, and has increased its ongoing commitment to outreach at £1.9M per annum. The University will also continue to provide funding for hardship in order to meet financial shortfalls not met by hardship from the student opportunity fund. For 2016-17 the University is forecasting to spend a total of £10.5m on access, student success and progression, and financial support measures.

## **Access and student success measures**

Based upon evidence collected and the analysis of that evidence, the University will continue to develop and offer a rich curriculum to partner schools, colleges and communities, and to provide targeted financial support to enable access and student success. The University's outreach provision regularly works with all ages across different settings. As stated in earlier Access Agreements, we have undertaken an extensive statistical review of widening participation and equality and diversity indicators to gauge where we are doing well and areas for further development. In response to initial findings the University has taken the decision to make a small reduction in the level of student financial support from £6,000 per student to £5,500 per student in order to invest more significantly in student success measures and outreach provision increasing spend by £500,000.

The University met both its national and local benchmarks for LPN 1 and 2 in 2012 and the percentage of students meeting one or more of four deprivation indicators rose to 48% (from 44% in 2011). NS-SEC 4-7 indicators have shown an improvement, from 25.9% in 2011 to 29.8% in 2013. This improvement means that the University is just below national and local benchmarks. The University will continue to address the collection of unknown NS-SEC data with a new information field within its student financial data. Monitoring from our 2014 intake demonstrates registrations of 32% BME and 9.2% students with a disability, compared to a Kent peers rate of 19% and 7.9% respectively (2013). We feel that our significant and targeted outreach provision, coupled with targeted financial support, has stabilized our widening participation student population and therefore we will continue with our implementation as outlined in earlier access agreements and our widening participation strategy.

In seeking evidence on the impact of financial support, the University undertook analysis on its 2009 cohort in regard to student success measures and analysed its NSP and Kent bursary scheme for 2012. Although more detail will be provided through the appropriate monitoring cycle this evidence informs the policy and procedures outlined in this Agreement. Firstly, analysis of the 2009 cohort demonstrates the positive impact of higher levels of financial support (this analysis focused on funds allocated through bursaries not scholarships). Young students who received our maximum bursary (£3000 at the time) had a 97% achievement of intended award rate. For mature students 94% of those in receipt of a bursary achieved the intended qualification outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to change in Government policy

<sup>2</sup> Full and part time home students and home fee income above the basic fee 2016 figures.

For both groups the success rate was significantly above those who did not receive a bursary although the gap was greater for mature students. On this basis we feel that student success is significantly enabled by well-targeted financial support.

Secondly, with regard to the 2012 intake under the new fee regime, the University's generous bursary and NSP scheme at three times the required level and targeted via the use of POLAR indicators resulted in the following profile of NSP recipients: 62% first generation to HE (compared to 40% average at Kent); 52% hit 4 deprivation indicators; 34% BME compared with 32% BME overall intake and 8% disability. On this basis we will continue to utilise POLAR as one indicator for allocation of financial support as evidence demonstrates that this approach is superior to using income levels alone.

The University undertakes a wide variety of monitoring processes; comparison of application data between 2012 and 2013 (to date) demonstrate shifts in behaviour, particularly in Q1 and Q2, depending on the use of POLAR v2 or POLAR v3. For longitudinal tracking purposes we will continue to monitor on both POLAR v2 and POLAR v3. We will seek meaning within these shifts through the analysis of data, particularly to assess if there are local wards in which we have offered outreach that have now been re-categorised under POLAR v3. Through the use of a range of measures we will assess whether the validity of the proxy measure has been compromised or whether we concur with its banding.

## Outreach

As documented in our last widening participation strategic assessment (WPSA), the University has performed well in regard to outreach volume measures, and generally well against the HEFCE benchmarks for access to the institution. However, our plans intend to address the following significant issues during the next five years:

- Retain the stability of the intake of young full time undergraduates from widening participation backgrounds post the introduction of higher fees in the sector (as defined by current HEFCE benchmarks and Kent's internal partnership targets).
- Improve our performance in the recruitment of young FT undergraduates from LPN Q1 and Q2.
- Improve our performance in the recruitment of students from NS-SEC 4-7.
- Increase the volume of applicants as well as full-time entrants to HE from Partner Schools and Colleges and Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) (Aimhigher legacy) schools.
- Undertake further analysis of our local state school intake to assess participation rates from selective and non-selective schools and the effect, if any, on subject choice and acceptance rates. This data will be used to inform the transitional targets for the embedding of Aimhigher activity and will effectively double, to 40, the number of Partner Schools of the University.
- Increase mature participation from LPN Q1 and Q2 through the development of new access provision in Medway.
- Work collaboratively with local authorities, schools and colleges to improve access to HE by care leavers.

As outlined above our data illustrates that our performance for participation of underrepresented groups from low participation neighbourhoods against national and regional benchmarks is good but with room for improvement, we are below the national benchmark but higher than the local adjusted benchmark. As outlined above our data illustrates that our performance for participation of underrepresented groups from low participation neighbourhoods against national and regional benchmarks is

The introduction of the new low participation indicator for 2006-07 data makes it difficult to assess, on this measure, the impact of the introduction of variable fees. However, the external NS-SEC measure, where we have underperformed against local and national benchmarks and our internal monitoring of students from our Partner Schools, both illustrate a significant dip for 06-07 intake. Our understanding of this data suggests that it will be a challenging target to aim to stabilise participation of our widening participation cohort post-2012 whilst working to improve our more challenging NS-SEC indicator by 2015<sup>3</sup>. Equally, our widening participation strategy has always actively addressed the selective school system that operates within Kent and our existing target schools are all non-selective institutions. However, we recognise that there is value in the further assessment of our success against the state school indicator, on a local basis, to ascertain post-Aimhigher

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to this measure the University will build upon the work undertaken by Aimhigher to establish robust proxies for social class as there is wide agreement that the NS-SEC measure on its own is highly unreliable.

which group of state non-selective schools we should continue, or begin to work with, in partnership. The funding through this Agreement is targeted to undertake outreach work with 20 Kent Medway Progression Federation schools.

As well as continuing our relationships with our Partner Schools, we will work with KMPF schools who wish to commit to a new partnership agreement, our local authorities (Kent and Medway) and partner HEIs (Canterbury Christchurch University, University of the Creative Arts) to ensure that collaborative work can continue productively in the region. Our commitment is to work with a minimum of 40 non-selective secondary schools and a smaller number of primary schools to offer ongoing and subject-based programmes of outreach. We remain committed to the active implementation of the Learner Progression Framework, to encourage a sustained and complementary programme of outreach activities to target learners and the elimination of duplication. We will continue to work with our partner colleges: Mid-Kent College, Canterbury College and West Kent and Ashford College, through delivery of our HE provision and outreach to their FE level students. The University will implement our existing care leaver plan. More detail on all aspects of this work is available as case studies and regularly updated evaluation reports from the Partnership Development Office at the University.

Additional outreach, which is essential to stabilise and enhance participation post 2012, will be focused in the following areas:

- To continue to support and to develop further the offer of paid and credit bearing student ambassador work within the University. This investment has the dual function of increasing capacity for aspiration and subject-based work in schools and colleges whilst significantly enhancing the student experience for our undergraduate and postgraduate students. These posts have shown to improve student engagement with the University community and hence retention via active and relevant work experience which also provides a stable income stream. We have worked over the years to recruit our Ambassador base from those who progressed from our current Partner Schools and will extend this successful scheme to our KMPF schools.
- We will increase the provision for academic investment in the development and delivery of outreach curriculum across all departments.
- Building upon our commitment to deliver outreach in all subjects and to make additional provision for subjects of strategic importance, as well as address access to professional programmes, the University will assess if new progression programmes need to be developed.
- Kent is the main sponsor of Brompton Academy in Gillingham, an area of high deprivation; a strategic priority for the University, we will fund a high concentration of outreach activity, including systematic curriculum design and delivery from year 5, in the Academy's feeder primary schools, to year 13.
- Finally, the University will continue to increase its provision of community-based outreach. In addition to building upon its very well regarded community learning forum, the University has designed and is delivering a modular level 3/0 programme in Medway, to help engage mature students in higher education. This work underpins and complements the work undertaken in the Brompton Academy by engaging with the adults/parents/carers in this community.

### **Student retention and success**

We are committed to ensuring that all our students, regardless of background, are given appropriate support to succeed; not just in the completion of their educational qualifications, but in becoming successful and productive citizens through engagement in graduate level employment or in the furtherance of their educational careers.

In response to the findings from the extensive statistical analysis undertaken on student success and performance measures in 2013, the University decided to create a two year developmental programme to provide further analysis of the qualitative issues in students' learning and achievement and provide a range of targeted action research projects to address variations in performance. Once the projects, which will be fully benchmarked and monitored, have been completed (by 2016) it will be possible to propose where ongoing support and systemic changes will be necessary to improve performance levels. The ongoing revised uplift in student success funding from 2017 anticipates that the requirement for WP internship provision and disability-employability support will not lessen in the medium term future.

Whilst the sector data for retention demonstrates that we perform well, our withdrawal rates for our WP

students is lower than that for non-WP students, these data sets are small and represent global performance across the cohorts.

Analysis of our 2009-10 intake illustrates similar performance, with regard to achievement of intended award amongst all BME and white ethnic groups. However, this picture is altered by further analysis that indicates a difference of 18% percentage points (compared to national average of 22%) between the percentage of white students compared to black students attaining a first or 2.1 (84% and 66% respectively).

A lower proportion of mature home students completed and achieved their intended awards compared to young home students (67% to 83% respectively). Equally, 81% of all young students achieved a first or 2.1 compared to 76% of mature students. Further analysis will be undertaken to assess possible impact on degree classification by programme of study and then appropriate strategies to reduce the gaps in performance will be tested and put in place.

Analysis of students with a disability who achieve their intended award indicates a good level of student success, particularly with students who have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia. Students in these groups report high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive during their studies. Although participant numbers are low so caution should be exercised on the significance of the data, we see slightly lower success rates for students with long standing health conditions, with mental health conditions or who are deaf, and these groups will continue to be monitored closely to assess trends.

As per our last Access Agreement, we established three posts with a remit devoted to retention and employability. These posts undertake targeted support as well as identify work-study placements and internship opportunities in addition to building capacity within the Faculties/Departments for strong personal tutoring across the University and within the Partner College HE provision and will support targeted students in the development of their employability skills. These posts will work to identify and establish work-study and internship opportunities, and to place students from targeted cohorts in these. These placements will engage students fully within the University community, and allow them to earn money while developing their employability skills. Some of these placements will be with our Student Ambassador Scheme, but many others will be established in other sections of the University and we will seek to match students in areas of professional interest.

To complement this we will continue to extend our ambassador scheme from exclusively outreach activities to include student mentoring. We will establish student mentor positions for 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates and postgraduates to work with first year undergraduates. Where first year students have studied at the same Partner School as their mentor, students will be paired prior to registration; where such matching is not possible, mentors will be allocated via subject-base.

Broad targets:

- Continue to monitor and address non-continuation of young full time degree entrants from LPN Q1 and Q2.
- Reduce the gap in achievement of intended award between POLARv3 Q2 and Q5 students (88% to 94% respectively).
- Reduce performance gap with regard to first and 2.1 attainment based on age and ethnicity.
- Improve retention and success of mature learners.
- Further development of targeted tracking, intervention and appropriate support as well as the identification of relevant work-study and internship opportunities, to be undertaken by the three faculty employability posts established last year under our Access Agreement
- Continuation of the ambassador and student mentoring programme across the University.
- Ambassador scheme to be assessed not only on success in outreach, but also monitored for impact on the retention and future employability of the student ambassadors.
- Employability advisors to work with students with disabilities and employers to address the lower employment rate of students with disabilities upon graduation.
- Closely monitor the impact of new fee levels on progression to postgraduate study.

### **Financial support for students**

The University anticipates that we will provide bursary support to a minimum of 700 students. Awards of

£5,500 will be allocated to eligible students across 3 years of study comprising £2,000 year 1, £1,500 year 2 and £2,000 year 3.<sup>4</sup>

This support will be targeted at students with a household income below £42,600 who also meet other widening participation criteria. In addition, the University will also grow its Partner School and College Scholarship Scheme to include more bursaries and we will introduce competitive work-linked financial programmes of support in partnership with these institutions too. Applications for Partner School and College scholarships are welcomed from UK and EU students from our partner institutions who are applying to Kent for full fee programmes and is worth £1,000 per year of study.

Eligibility for financial support will be determined by a number of indicators; in order to qualify, students whose household incomes fall within these bands will be required to meet low participation criteria (the student's household is located in an area that traditionally has had low levels of participation in higher education (quintiles 1 and 2) as defined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) or is classified as social housing). A full list of postcodes and their classification by participation (POLARv3) can be found on the HEFCE website and social housing data can be accessed on the University of Kent site<sup>5</sup>. Equally, all eligible candidates will have attended state funded education (including state funded secondary or Further Education aged 16 onwards). Students with disabilities in receipt of DSA<sup>6</sup> with an income up to £42,600 are also eligible. All care leavers will also be eligible for the same financial package. Socio-economic and first in family data will also be requested so that eligibility can be ranked should demand exceed supply. Medway School of Pharmacy students who also satisfy these criteria will be eligible for the same range of support packages.

## Targets and milestones

We provide additional information and context for the detail contained in tables 7a & b.

### Targets relating to young full time undergraduate entrants:

- Increase intake of young full time undergraduates from widening participation backgrounds post higher fees within the sector (as defined by current HEFCE benchmarks and Kent's internal partnership targets).
- Improve our performance in the recruitment of students from NS-SEC 4-7 (and develop robust proxy measures to aid assessment).
- Increase full time entrants from University Partner and KMPF Schools and Colleges.
- Further collaborative targets agreed by the Kent and Medway Progression Federation.

### Milestones:

- Assess impact on recruitment of young students to full time programmes using measures from state school, NS-SEC 4-7, low income and LPN Q1&2 for 2013 intake.
- Work towards meeting the national benchmark where we are below those measures and meet internal targets where we exceed benchmarks.
- Model data on local school and participation performance (including destinations to institutions other than Kent), to be made available through collaborative HEAT data analysis.
- New targets within a collaborative learner progression framework are now established and will be jointly monitored annually.

### Targets relating to mature student entrants:

- Community-based access provision established and two new pathways under development.
- Develop a programme for staff in secondary schools in the region in order to improve and increase the capacity of subject-based teaching (up to one-third of peripatetic staff do not hold a Bachelor's degree).

### Milestones:

- Assess impact on recruitment of mature students to full and part time programmes from low participation

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<sup>4</sup> Based on current Government policy.

<sup>5</sup> The University has decided to retain and refine its use of postcode data by the incorporation of social housing postcodes in higher quintiles. Analysis of our 2012 intake indicates that using postcode data as an additional indicator to the criteria has helped to ensure that funds are targeted to widening participation students.

<sup>6</sup> DSA is currently under review. Therefore eligibility criteria will be re-assessed once the new assessment framework for the DSA replacement is known.

- neighbourhoods and no previous experience of HE from 2012 intake.
- Assess impact of new progression-provision and family learning on 2013 and 2014 applications to HE (based on one and two year access intake).

**Targets relating to regeneration and community:**

- As the main sponsor of Brompton Academy in Gillingham which opened in 2010, we have the responsibility, through governance and support, to ensure the success of the school community.

**Milestones:**

Timescales and micro-monitoring are contained within the Academy's key performance indicators within its school improvement plan. In broad terms they focus upon the:

- Development of 5 University-led curriculum based projects within new specialism areas of Science and Arts.
- Leading community engagement of level 3 and above.
- Support development of 6th form.

**Targets and Milestones relating to non-continuation and student success:**

The University has built a more complete analysis of patterns of non-continuation of entrants with differing profiles including the collection of robust qualitative data. This informs our work with:

- Potential non-continuation of young full time degree entrants from LPN 1&2.
- Identifying non-completion and lower attainment in subject areas and assessing whether there are particular areas for intervention.
- The creation and targeting of internships and paid opportunities to include the further development of our Ambassador scheme; these opportunities to both support income generation during their study period as well as improve and employability skills.
- Improving student retention within HE in FE settings.
- Improving the retention of care leavers.

**Volume measures**

In addition to the targets and milestones given above (and in detail within tables 7a and b), the University will also use the following volume measures to ensure that appropriate levels of activities are in place to help secure our targets:

Existing volume measures will continue to be monitored and evaluated as outlined in our Widening Participation Strategy and we will incorporate our new OFFA targets into our institutional reporting cycle. In addition, care leaver targets are included in the new implementation plan that has been established to replace the Buttle UK monitoring.

We will increase provision for academic investment in the development and delivery of outreach curriculum across all departments; to include additional and new curriculum outreach programmes to ensure that access to the Humanities does not become the preserve of the elite and that access to subjects of strategic importance and the professions is equitable.

In addition to undertaking the governance of Brompton Academy, the University is committed to supporting the Academy in the development of its new specialisms of Science and the Arts. Curriculum across all year groups is being jointly developed in these areas and will be accessed by the Academy's 1200 students. Within the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the DfE, the University committed to undertake five cross-school projects and to lead on the engagement of the community at level 3 and higher education, building upon our areas of outreach and curriculum expertise.

**Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

As required under the OFFA guidance, data and activities will be monitored closely to ensure that both can be assessed and targets reaffirmed or altered on an annual basis. The granularity of our monitoring and evaluation is clearly demonstrated in tables 7a and b and more broadly in our case study submissions to OFFA and HEFCE. We will continue to build upon our RUFDATA and KMPF evaluation to ensure that we are on track to meet our longer term strategic aims within acceptable tolerance levels. Equally, we are committed to continue

to support wider trend analysis within the region and the sector. Since 2011 the University has led the Higher Education Access Tracking (HEAT) service, a collaboration of 20 other universities. Since 2014, the University has led the national roll out of HEAT to HEIs across England. The HEAT project allows the sharing of costs for student led monitoring and evaluation and for collaborative delivery of evidence based evaluation. Our national community of HEAT subscribers will work together in the research and development of effective, fit for purpose evaluation practice to inform outreach planning and assess impact.

HEAT provides monitoring and evaluation information on the impact of WP interventions through an evidence based WP evaluation framework. This evaluation framework aims to provide evidence that engagement in outreach activity has a positive impact on student outcomes and to assess whether our work is:

- Reaching and engaging disadvantaged students
- Delivering a progressive and complementary set of outreach activities to a range of year groups
- Increasing disadvantaged student's awareness and knowledge of HE
- Contributing to increased student attainment at KS4 and KS5
- Contributing to increased retention in education rates at age 16, 17, 18 years
- Increasing the applicant and accepted applicant UCAS rates of disadvantaged students
- Increasing the HE entrant and success rates of disadvantaged students

The University and the HEIs that subscribe to HEAT have developed a student data tracking system and a set of measures which allow annual monitoring of outcomes against baselines, e.g. trends in % UCAS application and % accepted applicant rates for outreach participants. Equally, additional interim measures are in place to evaluate the impact of outreach activities on other student outcomes which indicate the student's propensity to enter HE, e.g. KS4 attainment, KS5 attainment, and year 11 to year 12 retention data. Examples of the information provided through the collaborative service are:

- Planning data on Schools and Colleges (based on pupil level data) to help monitor effective targeting of schools/colleges and students
- Postcode data to assess student profiles
- A recording facility to facilitate student tracking and record student participation in activities
- Provision of a range of data sets/measures related to student outcomes (KS4, KS5, UCAS)
- Evidence exploring the relationship between student participation in outreach activities and HE participation (UCAS and HESA tracking studies)

The HEAT student tracking studies allow the monitoring of applicants and entrants to other HEIs and to HE in FE settings. Student led evaluation allows the exploration of the association between participation in outreach and set student outcomes throughout the student life cycle. For example, longitudinal tracking allows the exploration of patterns of HE entry over time (not just at age 18 or 19 years) and this is especially important for target group of students. Tracking studies through to HE entry and completion also allow research into the retention and success of students who progress.

Kent's evaluation framework also includes plans to assess the impact that our undergraduate Student Ambassador Scheme (in which current students assist in the delivery of outreach) has on their retention, success and future employability.

The University is also committed to qualitative evaluation of our outreach programme and we deploy Research Ambassadors to collect student feedback on individual outreach activity and our overall programme. We also gather evaluative evidence to assess the impact that our outreach programmes have on Partner School staff awareness and attitudes.

## **Equality and diversity**

As outlined in the relevant sections of the Access Agreement extensive analysis of the student life cycle has shown a varied picture. Outreach and access strategies have yielded very positive student participation levels for BME and disability (32% and 9.2% compared to Kent peers 19% and 7.9% respectively). Widening participation indicators are discussed above in more detail, including mature participation which has been

particularly hard hit. Our focus upon the delivery and further development of Access provision is helping to address mature participation in higher education. Analysis of data does not indicate any statistically significant issues with regard gender.

Student success measures will concentrate on improving mature success rates and attainment levels on degree programmes and will focus on reducing the attainment gaps referred to above between white undergraduates and other ethnic minorities.

Employability and further study trends under the new fee levels will be monitored to ascertain if progression into work or postgraduate study remains equitable for all groups. With regard to existing trend data (2008-09), it is of note that 7% of leavers without a disability were unemployed and looking for employment compared to 12% of leavers with a disability and therefore targeted work with students with disabilities will be undertaken in addition to the current widening participation focus of the employability team.

The other protected characteristics that are not included here are subject to new data collection and trend analysis in the future will be able to inform new targets in these areas if they are required.

### **Provision of information to prospective students**

The University will publish details of full costs for students and the means of support available, its financial support schemes and eligibility criteria in its annual prospectus. As this document is published well in advance of registration, supplementary information will be produced and published both online and in print. Documentation will provide detailed information of how to calculate eligibility for all bursaries and scholarships and a web-based 'ready-reckoner' to determine the financial aid package available.

The Information and Guidance Officers, Recruitment Officers, Outreach Coordinators and Development Officers have a role in the dissemination of information to the wider community and stakeholders. This information will be part of their portfolio of talks and presentations and they will deliver this information to schools, students, teachers, parents and community groups. The University is committed to supporting students through the application process.

Information will also be made available in a timely fashion to UCAS and SLC.

The University will provide full and accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs required to complete our degree programmes.

### **Consulting with students**

The Union has been consulted in the formulation of this agreement through attendance at all key planning meetings. The Union endorses our Access plan and the financial package on offer from 2016. The Union is particularly supportive of providing support to a larger proportion of students by offering a smaller financial support package, and importantly the University's commitment to financial support whilst studying rather than in the form of fee waivers. The Union also supports the guarantee that full and accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs are transparent. The current Agreement builds upon the clearly stated targets in the 2013 Access Agreement to develop joint working in outreach and student employability with Kent Union, as well as supporting the commitment for improving student success, especially BME students.

As part of our ongoing data collection and analysis pre-applicants, applicants and students are engaged in qualitative research to help inform our quantitative analysis and planning. We also undertake a programme of qualitative evaluation with students within our partner schools, colleges and community groups to inform our outreach and wider offer.