HE academic and professional colleagues guide to:

Access and Participation Plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

1   Context

Access and participation plans (APP) set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from HE. They include the provider's ambition for change, what it plans to do to achieve that change, the targets it has set and the investment it will make to deliver the plan. The Office for Students (OfS) monitors APPs to make sure that the providers honour the commitments they make to students in these plans, and take action if they do not. UCSD's plan will be audited at some point during the plan's lifespan. They replace Access Agreements.

The OfS recognise that nationally certain groups of students are underrepresented in HE and that there are gaps in performance between members of those groups and their peers. Underrepresented groups are primarily students from low participation neighbourhoods, household income or socioeconomic background; black, Asian and minority ethnic students; mature students; disabled students; and care leavers. The APP must demonstrate UCSD's current access, success and progression performance for these underrepresented groups, and how we intend to close any gaps. The data used include OfS data sets, internal attainment data, TEF data and DLHE results.

Access refers to the students who enrol in higher education; **Success (Continuation)** describes those who persist with their course to completion with no more than one year of interruption; **Success (Achievement)** refers to students who achieve a 'good degree' (2:1 or 1st, or over 60%). During 2016-2018, 48% of Foundation Degree students achieved a good degree, and 49% of BA/BSc student. Additionally, UCSD have described achievement grades as those students who pass their programmes, the average FD grade at UCSD is 59.99% and BA/BSc is 61.09%; and **Progression** is the measure of students who are in employment or further study (or highly skilled employment) six months after graduation (DLHE survey) and 15 months after graduation (the new Graduate Outcomes survey, starting 2019).

Building on our assessment of performance, the UCSD APP has both targets and commitments. Targets relate to the OfS key performance indicators for underrepresented groups, whereas the commitments refer to UCSD's areas for improvement that are not OfS key performance indicators. Six programmes of activity are identified to meet the APP targets by 2024-25. Evaluating the impact of APP programmes across the student lifecycle is a key aspect of the plan

2   UCSD gaps in performance

a) **Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status.** 51% of UCSD students come from the lower quintiles of socioeconomic status (compared to 27.2% or 33.2% nationally depending on the measure used). UCSD students from lower quintiles have 85% continuation compared to 83% for higher quintiles. There is no significant difference in attainment grades for students from lower or higher quintiles, with less than 1pp between the two groups at both FD and BA/BSc. However, 43.9% of students from the lowest areas attained

a 2:1 or above BA/BSc, compared to 70% from the highest. There is a 2.3pp difference between young (<21 yrs) low and high quintile students in terms of their progression, but just 0.5pp for mature students over 21 years.

b) **Black, Asian and minority ethic (BAME) students.** Torbay has a BAME population of 2.5% (using the 2011 census measure of non-white) and south Devon's BAME population is 1.6% (compared to 19.5% nationally). UCSD currently has 2.6% of students who are non-white, in 2018/19 this was 19 BAME students. It would be inappropriate to make success and progression judgements based on these numbers.

c) **Mature students:** 62% of UCSD students are mature (over 21 years at the start of their course). There is a 0.4pp difference in continuation rates between young (85.4%) and mature students (85.9%) at UCSD. There are statistically significant mean final grade differences at both FD (2.12pp) and (4.38pp), but in favour of mature students. 38.8% of young students attained 60% or above at FD compared to 54.3% of mature students, and 42.3% of young students got a 2:1 or above compared to 52.8% of mature students at BA/BSc. Mature students also have higher progression rates than younger students, with a 0.4pp difference.

d) **Disabled students:** Including apprentices, who are not eligible for Disabled Students Allowances (DSA), UCSD has 21% of students who are disabled. In 2016/7 and 2017/8, 125 students reported a disability: 62% cognition and learning, 18% social, emotional and mental health difficulties, 8% medical, 6% a communication and interaction disability and 5% a physical and/or sensory disability. UCSD has a 7.6pp continuation gap between disabled students and their peers (compared to the national gap of 0.9pp). There is also a statistically significant difference in achievement grades at both FD and BA/BSc level. At FD level, 37.8% of disabled students achieve 60% or above compared to 52.1% of non-disabled students. At BA/BSc Level 6, 27.3% of disabled students attained a 2:1 or above compared to 55.1% of non-disabled students. There is also statistically significant difference between types of disabilities but the numbers in different groups are too low to report. Disabled students were also less likely to progress with a 3.4pp difference between disabled and non-disabled students' progression in to employment or further study.

e) **Care leavers:** SDC does not currently collect this data, but will be collecting and analysing it from enrolment and reenrolment 2019/20.

f) **Other groups**: The OfS wants HE providers to close the gaps in access, success and progress of students who had free school meals when they were 15 years old; carers; people estranged from their families; people from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities; refugees; people with specific learning difficulties and mental health problems; or children from military families. We will commence the collection and analysis of this data in 2019/20.

3   Targets

From the gaps in performance across the student life cycle we have identified target groups and four ambitious objectives:

Target groups	Objectives
Access: BAME students; care leavers	• **PTA_1:** To increase SDC's BAME population to 3.5% by 2024/25 as measured by students' self-declarations at enrolment
Success (Continuation): students with disabilities	
Success (Attainment): students from low HE participation, household income or socio-economic backgrounds; students with disabilities; mature disabled students	• **PTS_1:** To eliminate the 5pp deprivation attainment gap for achieving a 2:1 or above at Level 6 between students from deprivation Q1 or 2 and Q3, 4, or 5 by 2024/25. • **PTS_2:** To reduce the disabled and non-disabled students attainment gap from 14.3pp to 5pp for achieving a grade of 60% or above at Foundation Degree by 2024/25. • **PTS_3:** To reduce the disabled and non-disabled students attainment gap from 27.8pp to 15pp for achieving a 2:1 or above at Level 6 by 2024/25.
Progression: students from low HE participation, household income or socio-economic backgrounds, mature students and disabled students	

In addition to our specific objectives for OfS target underrepresented groups, UCSD has commitments to continuing to support the access, success and progression of all students especially those from underrepresented groups or who are underrepresented at UCSD.

UCSD is distinctly aware that although the OfS recognise national gaps in access, success and progression for underrepresented groups that is not necessarily the case at UCSD. Similarly, just because an individual is from a target underrepresented group that does not imply they are not going to succeed and progress like their peers.

It should be noted that 89% of UCSD's student population are from at least one of these target underrepresented groups. Therefore, when we talk about supporting target students, we are talking about almost all students, thus we will be providing universal levels of support for all. We just need to monitor some groups more closely.

4   Programmes of support

UCSD student support programmes have been reviewed and adapted to take account of our APP targets and commitments and evidence-informed practice. Much of the activity within the six programmes of support is ongoing, but some will be gradually scaled up during 2019/20.

- **BAME development programme**
  To improve the access, success and progression of students from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background, UCSD will:
    i.   Continue to facilitate the work of Next Steps South West who support **students from POLAR quintile 1** to build aspirations, awareness and access to HE, helping target students to make informed decisions about their future.
    ii.   UCSD extend the work of Next Steps South West to **POLAR quintile 2 schools locally**. This will include myth busting sessions, master classes from UCSD academics, career opportunity sessions and one-to-one application support.
    iii. SDC **level 3 tutors** will continue to provide extended support to BAME students in their application for HE (at UCSD or elsewhere).
    iv.   Once on programme, BAME students will be a target group for success and progression programmes of activity.

- **Care leavers' development programme**
  To improve the access, success and progression of care leaver students, UCSD will:
    i.   Develop a robust **monitoring system** to identify and support care leavers.
    ii.   Continue to facilitate the work of Next Steps South West who support **students from** POLAR quintile 1 to build aspirations, awareness and access to HE, helping target students to make informed decisions about their future.
    iii. Extend the work of Next Steps South West to **POLAR quintile 2 schools locally**. This will include myth busting sessions, master classes from UCSD academics, career opportunity sessions and one-to-one application support.
    iv.   **Work directly with care leaver groups** in Torbay and Devon to build aspirations, awareness and access to HE, helping target students to make informed decisions about their future. This will include myth busting sessions, career opportunity sessions and one-to-one application support.
    v.   SDC **level 3 tutors** will continue to provide extended support to care leaver students in their applications for HE (at UCSD or elsewhere).
    vi.   All care leavers will automatically receive UCSD's highest level of **bursary**.
    vii. Once on programme, care leaver students will be target group for success and progression programmes of activity.

- **Widening access programme**
  To maintain UCSD's high levels of access for students from all underrepresented groups we will:
    i.   Extend the work of Next Step South West to **POLAR quintile 2 schools locally**. This will include myth busting sessions, master classes from UCSD academics, career opportunity sessions and one-to-one application support.
    ii.   Recognising the need for **vocational learners** to be better prepared for HE. UCSD will engage with FE lecturers and level 3 learners on vocational and Access to HE programmes for UCSD access and wider progression. Activities to include curriculum

alignment, master classes with UCSD academics, Q&As for myth busting, research activities and personal statement support.

iii. The **UCSD bursary** will be extended from 2020/2021 to be means-tested at Level 4. Level 4 students who progress from a local provider, are care leavers or have a family income below £25K will be eligible for the full bursary.

iv. UCSD will continue to work with local employers to explore **curriculum development** opportunities to meet local employment needs including a specific focus on developing Level 6 programmes to enable students to complete their degree close to home.

v. Considering applications on **contextual merit** rather than just entry qualification of 48 UCAS point to make offers to students who have low or non-tariff qualifications and/or work experience.

- **Persistence programme**
  The UCSD persistence programme is designed to provide support to students to enable them to complete their studies. As 89% of our students are from at least one underrepresented group our persistence programme is universal support to all students with some closer monitoring or enhanced support for individual groups of students:

  i. **Transition** is recognised as a key time for students therefore a package of pre-entry and induction activities will continue: Step up to HE workshops, online induction resources and an initial assessment tool (the Student Profile) that will enable students to reflect on their preparedness for HE and develop an action plan as part of their Professional Development Plan.

  ii. **Direct entry transition** for students arriving at UCSD in Level 5 or 6 will build on the usual transition activities and mirror the tutorial offer for Level 4 students (see below).

  iii. The **UCSD bursary** will be extended from 2020/2021 to be means-tested at Level 4. Level 4 students who progress from a local provider, are care leavers or have a family income below £25K will be eligible for the full bursary.

  iv. **Personal tutoring** will be a key element of the UCSD persistence programme with personal tutors taking on an enhanced responsibility for academic tutoring using Professional Development Plans (PDP), and providing additional support to students from underrepresented groups and those achieving less than 50% on assessments. Please see separate Personal Tutoring Guidance.

  v. Early referral to **Wellbeing support** and close monitoring by personal tutors

- **Grade improvement programme**
  At UCSD the average FD grade is 59.99% with a BA/BSc mean of 61.09%. We aim to raise the mean grades by closing the attainment gap between disabled students and their peers, and supporting all students to achieve.

  i. **Early intervention** through personal tutors monitoring those students who are attaining less than 50% (via their PDP) and making referrals to Support & Wellbeing for one-to-one support.

  ii. Building on the initial assessment tool, personal tutor referrals and APP targets, certain students will be offered **targeted study skills support**. Study skills support will remain accessible to all students on request.

  iii. **Research and scholarly activity** that develops our research-informed teaching will continue to be supported.

- **Progression improvement programme**
  UCSD is committed to maintain our high levels of progression as measured by the DLHE survey, therefore we will conduct our own DLHE even after the official survey has been replaced by Graduate Outcomes. Our objective is to have year on year improvements in the Graduate Outcomes survey for all underrepresented groups by:
    i. Embedding **course specific employability** skills within modules and assessments not just during tutorial. Current examples are poster presentations about the transferable skills gained during dissertation research, live brief assessments from local employers and guest speakers presenting a case study for assessment analysis.
    ii. **Social and emotional (soft) skills** need to be embedded within the learning environment through volunteering, extra-curricular activities and the hidden curriculum. A new UCSD employability award will promote and reward extra-curricular activities and reflection on the employability skills developed.
    iii. UCSD **Alumni** work is in its infancy. From 2019/20 we will be using the Future First alumni platform and will focus on developing social networks for our students who might have sparse social networks related to their career aspirations.

5   Evaluation

Evaluating the impact of APP is a key part of the process. We will need to evaluate the impact of our six programmes on access, success and progression of underrepresented groups. This evaluation will be monitored by the OfS alongside the access, success and progression data. Ultimately there could be OfS financial penalties if we are not able to demonstrate the impact our investment in the six programmes of activities is having on the access, success and progression of our target underrepresented groups.

The evaluation will be co-ordinated by the Social Mobility Development and Evaluation Lead, but all academic and professional staff will need to contribute to evaluations. Our evaluation strategy is set out in the APP and involves quantitative and qualitative data collection from prospective students, UCSD students and SDC/UCSD academic and professional staff.

If you already do some sort of short survey after, for example, a Master Class or a workshop for students, you may need to re-jig the focus of your survey. Your surveys need to evaluate the impact of the activity on the students' access, success and/or progression. During 2019/20, the Social Mobility Development and Evaluation Lead will develop resources and support tool to guide staff undertaking evaluation of activities.

6   Academic staff involvement

Academic staff need to know the OfS underrepresented groups, the UCSD target groups during different aspects of the student lifecycle and understand what this means for their own programmes. We also need to continue our good practice in access, success and progression:

Access

- Work with FE colleagues to support curriculum alignment
- Work with FE colleagues to support the progression of L3 students to HE
- Work with employers to develop curricula for local employment needs
- Support outreach activities, especially Master Classes for subjects that are not taught in schools
- Consider all applicants on contextual merit rather than just their UCAS points, therefore we need to be mindful of personal-experience, work-experience and other qualifications/study.

Success

- Encourage your in-coming students to attend Step up to HE workshops (new Level 4s and those transferring to UCSD in L5/6, including those APL from other courses such as DET).
- Review your students' initial assessment (Student Profile). Encourage students to reflect on their profile to develop a PDP action plan.
- Provide one-to-one support to L4 (and transfer L5/6) students who are not attaining over 50% in assessments (at-risk students) and target students from underrepresented groups as a priority.
- Use the PDP as a means of monitoring student progress.
- Refer any student who needs additional one-to-one study or wellbeing guidance to the HE Study or Disability & Wellbeing teams.
- Record all one-to-one support on LEAP.

Progression

- Ensure you are embedding employability skills (course related and social and emotional skills) within your tutorial timetable
- Ensure your programmes have explicit employability opportunities within assessments
- Stay in contact with your graduates (the Future First alumni network will facilitate this) and try to engage them in informally mentoring current students e.g. through a Facebook group or LinkedIn.

7 More information

The full UCSD Access and Participation Plan is available on the UCSD website.

If you have questions regarding the APP and your involvement, please speak to the relevant people:

- Overall responsibility for APP: Alastair Wilson
- Leading the APP monitoring and evaluation: Issy Hallam
- Access activities: Lauren Hardman
- Induction and personal tutoring: Lindsay Thomson
- Study skills: Sarah Kettle-Buchanan
- Wellbeing and disability: Sandy Akerman
- Progression and employability: Thea Jones