Impact Statement 2021/22
Liverpool Hope University Access and Participation Plan 2020-2024

1. Ambition and Strategy

Liverpool Hope is proud of its widening participation agenda which plays a fundamental role in the Mission and Values of this Institution. Liverpool Hope is dedicated to the vision of its 19th century founding colleges to open up opportunities to those traditionally excluded from higher education. We remain committed to enabling all students to benefit from a sound University education that is fully accessible and supports student's success through their time with us and beyond.

The Liverpool Hope Access and Participation Plan (APP) can be accessed here. The 2020-24 Plan details four strategic aims in relation to student access, success (continuation and attainment) and progression (into highly skilled employment or further study).

Strategic Aim 1: To make significant improvements in the success of students from areas of low participation (POLAR 4 Q1) and high deprivation (IMD Q1) in relation to continuation, attainment and progression into highly skilled employment or further study

Strategic Aim 2: To make significant and sustained improvements in the participation, success and progression into highly skilled employment or further study of Global Majority students

Strategic Aim 3: To increase access for mature students to reflect sector norms.

Strategic Aim 4: To close the attainment gap for Disabled students and ensure progression into highly skilled employment or further study for those with mental health conditions.

The University has continued to make significant progress in relation to the ambitions detailed in its APP. Monitoring data, evaluation of key initiatives and evaluating their impact is central to the work of each academic subject.

2. Self-Assessment of Targets

Metric Measurement	Description	Year OfS Data Relates To	Units of Measurement	2021-22 Milestone (Planned)	2022-23 Milestone (Planned)	Actual Performance in Year (OfS)	Target Self-assessment
Access	The proportion of Black students will increase and be equal to the proportion of the UK 18 year old Black population thus reducing the proportional gap to 0	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	1%	0%	2%	1pp behind
Access	The proportion of Asian students will increase and be equal to the proportion of the UK 18 year old Asian population, thus reducing the proportional gap to 0	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	3%	2%	4%	1pp behind
Access	The proportion of mature students will increase to within sector norms	2021-22	Percentage (%)	16%	20%	17%	Expected progress
Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates for IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point Difference (%)	6%	4%	7%	Expected progress

Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point Difference (%)	4%	2%	3%	Expected progress
Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates for Black and White students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point Difference (%)	7%	5%	0%	Expected progress
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates between IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	8%	6%	15%	7pp behind
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	10%	6%	5%	Expected progress
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates for Global Majority and White students will decrease	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	4%	2%	14%	10pp behind
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates for Disabled and non Disabled students will decrease	2021-22	Percentage Point Difference (%)	3%	2%	-6%	Expected progress
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 will decrease	2019-20	Percentage Point Difference (%)	3%	2%	8%	4pp behind
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for Global Majority students and White students will decrease	2019-20	Percentage Point Difference (%)	5%	2%	-3%	Expected progress
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for students with mental health conditions will decrease to be similar to students with no disabilities	2019-20	Percentage Point Difference (%)	10%	5%	1%	Expected progress
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for females from POLAR4 Q1/Q2 will decrease to closing the gap between males from POLAR Q3-Q5	2019-20	Percentage Point Difference (%)	7%	5%	0%	Expected progress

3. Investment Commitments

Access and Participation investment for the last audited year is shown in the Table below

Financial Year 2021/22	Predicted spend	Actual spend	Difference
Access Investment	£500,000	£438,240	-12%
Financial Support	£285,000	£309,246	8%
	£785,000	£747,487	

The University is mindful of the need to provide value for money for all of its students and uses the tuition fees it receives to support the student experience. As a small institution, the access and participation activities are embedded within the operations of the University and cannot be easily identified as stand-alone costs for the target student population. Many elements of expenditure are subjective in nature; therefore, the total costs are used and then a percentage of these costs are shown above as countable expenditure.

The financial 'hardship' support is managed through the Learning Support Fund, which is overseen by a Panel which includes representation from the Student Union. The Panel meets at least once each term and, in this way, can respond in a timely way to issues impacting the student body. The increased level of funding in 2021/22, reflects the University recognition of the impact the cost of living crisis is having on students and the numbers of students facing financial hardship. The Fund is allocated in a transparent way, ensuring targeted support for those in greatest need.

4. Action Plan

Liverpool Hope reflects continuously on its performance in relation to the ambitions for underrepresented students detailed in our overarching Access and Participation Plan.

Performance in relation to the ambitions detailed in Plan for 2021-22 and more broadly for underrepresented students

Considerable progress has been made across a number of the areas identified in the Plan. It is particularly significant to note gaps which have closed completely since the initiation of the Plan in 2020 namely: continuation for black students; attainment for disabled students; progression to graduate employment or further study for global majority students and for females from the areas of lowest participation.

There are, however, three areas where progress against the targets set out in the APP for 2021/22 were substantially less than expected. Indeed, two of these areas were similarly identified in the previous year's reflection. Despite our commitment to getting back on track these aspects have proven difficult to address.

i.   *To close the attainment gap between Global Majority and white students*

The published OfS data for 2020/21 reported a gap of 14 percentage points (pp) between global majority and white students. The milestone for this year was 4pp representing a widening gap of 10pp.

The University considers the gap in attainment to be the result of an 'awarding' gap. Our Plan has ambitious targets and we aim to neutralise the gap by 2024. However, we note that the small numbers of students in this group means that the data is subject to disproportionately large deflections.

However, regardless of the challenges it remains important to reflect on the awarding gap, identify underlying issues and tackle any barriers to success for Global Majority students. Liverpool Hope is striving to give all students a sense of belonging and in so doing create a safe space in which students' voices can be heard. Decolonising the curriculum to create an environment in which racism and anti-racism are understood is an important part of this journey.

Considerable insight into the ethnicity awarding gap can be found in a recent publication by Wong and Colleagues (in the 2021 Journal of Further and Higher Education (45(8):1147). The five recommendations from the paper form a key strategic approach to closing the gap and achieving our milestones in future years of the plan. The five recommendations that we intend to guide us are to:

- provide greater economic support for minority ethnic students
- challenge and eradicate all forms of racism on campus
- increase representation of minority ethnic staff and students
- to diversity the curriculum
- provide alternative provisions

Decolonisation has become an important theme for subject reviews and encompasses a broader discussion about library collections and activities within the curriculum to ensure our students feel empowered to discuss difficult topics.

The University is currently exploring the role that the influential RESPECT group can take in shaping our understanding of the richness of inclusive practices that can lead to sector change. The RESPECT group is locally based and is focussed on race equality issues that are particularly relevant to the guiding principles detailed above. Liverpool Hope has recently jointed a group of Universities Studying Slavery, a global initiative driving forward the historical and contemporary study of slavery.

ii. *To close the attainment rate gap between students from the most deprived areas (IMD quintile 1) and those from the least deprived areas (IMD quintile 5)*

Hope's attainment gap between students from areas of highest socioeconomic deprivation and students from areas of lowest deprivation, was 15 percentage points in 2021/22. The milestone set out in the plan was 8 percentage points. There remains a significant percentage point gap between our achievements and our milestone.

The University is committed to raising attainment in pre-16s and will work with schools, particularly those in areas of higher deprivation to achieve this. Students who come from the poorest socioeconomic backgrounds face many barriers to success in higher education. These barriers may be present during school years and persist in higher education and into employment. Arguably, this group of students has been amongst the most disrupted in their learning by the lasting impact of the COVID pandemic and the ensuing cost of living crisis. In supporting this group, the University has increased the amount of financial support available to support students experiencing difficulties. Nevertheless, we need to make further inroads into this gap; during 2021/22 49% of the students who received financial support had APP characteristics. Concerns that students in this group may be undertaking additional paid work as a consequence of financial insecurity remain difficult to address.

iii. *To close the gap in progression rates for students from the lowest participation areas (POLAR4) Q1 compared with those from areas of highest participation (Q5)*

Hope offers fair access to Higher Education for students from the areas of lowest participation and we are on target to close gaps in both attainment and continuation for this group. However, progression to graduate employment or further study for students from POLAR 4 Q1 has fallen below our milestone. It is unlikely that this issue has arisen because of one factor; it is much more likely that this data is multifactorial as students from the lowest participation areas are experiencing a range of challenges. For example, many of our students undertaken combined and education-related degrees which may contribute to the decreased progression to employment that meets the definition of 'graduate' level. This is something we are analysing further in order to better understand the underlying barriers whilst continuing with our current initiatives to address the matter.

Annexe A: Update on overarching achievements towards fulfilling the challenging commitments detailed in the Hope Access and Participation Plan

We are committed to engaging the Student Union in a working partnership that gives students a voice in the direction of the University. Going beyond the remit of communication between staff and students we see the Student Union as an asset in ensuring fairness and steering how we can improve our student experience.

APP Target Group	Progress in relation to milestones	Key Initiatives being employed/developed* to support the aim *some of these initiatives are pan University, some are subject specific
1. Access		
Black 18-Year-Old Population	**1pp behind**	a. Decolonisation of the curriculum in order to reduce the barriers to entry for Black and Asian Students.
Asian 18-Year-Old Population	**1pp behind**	b. Diversity in staff representation including at Open/Applicant Days and images of students and alumni in relevant advertising material.
		c. Student Ambassadors from these backgrounds will represent the University at Open/Applicant days.
		d. Use of focus groups of Hope students to gather information about barriers to University in this population.
		e. 'Bridging the Gap: a route into Social Work' was launched in 2021 to enable more Black and Global Majority students to be recruited into the Social Work England accredited program. The University is now considering how 'Bridging the Gap' might be expanded into other areas of the University
		f. Increasing our collaborative work with external partners including other higher education providers, employers and local schools. The established Hope Challenge and Shaping Futures collaborations fosters standard raising in primary and schools in areas in the Liverpool City Region.
Mature Student Population	**On target**	a. Subject specific promotional talks for access students at local colleges through a 'Progressing to University' program where the students are predominantly in the mature age group.
		b. Changing how we deliver our courses: we are developing an expanding range of courses available on line and in a flexible format. We are also committed to developing small, accessible chunks of learning that can be accumulated or used to progress professional careers lifelong.
		c. Flexible employment-related provision has been introduced and 'cold spot' provision has been extended. Hope is now offering full time employment-aligned provision, in the evening, at a partner College in St Helens.
		d. Increased representation of mature students as ambassadors at Open/Applicant day.
2. Success		
Continuation Rates between IMD Quintiles 1 to 5	**On target**	a. Early identification and assessment of skills/needs and signposting to appropriate support b. Financial support for students, through a series of scholarships and on course support from the Learning Support Fund. The University has a rapid access, highly visible, student finance team who assist and advise students with accessing funds.
Continuation Rates between POLAR 4 Quintiles 1 to 5	**On target**	
Continuation Rates between Black and White Students	**On target**	a. Inspirational speaker series focusing on this group

Attainment Rates between IMD Quintiles 1 to 5	**7pp behind**	b. Financial support for students, through a series of scholarships and through on course support from the Learning Support Fund. Management of the Learning Support Fund includes Student Union representation.
Attainment Rates between POLAR 4 Quintiles 1 to 5	**On target**	
Attainment Rates between Global Majority and white Students	**10pp behind**	a. The LHU Library has set up a group to improve diversity of collections and to make them more inclusive. The group is working with the Students Union to gather their input and students can suggest books for purchase. b. Making sure that what we deliver includes everyone: academic subjects are currently reviewing what they do to ensure course materials avoid stereotyping but celebrate diversity. The aim is to ensure that the classroom setting – and the range of assessment opportunities – reflects and respects a broad cultural mix and creates opportunities for students of all ethnic groups to engage with their own culture. c. Expand Academic Writing Skills Workshops for students whose first, or common language at home, is not English in order to offer additional support in key aspects of confidence building, essay planning and understanding assessment and feedback. d. Attainment raising through a programme of speakers and academic skills workshops. Workshops for students whose first language is not English removes barriers to success. Motivational speakers from the groups identified in our Plan is intended to be empowering, aspirational and inspirational. e. Adopting a five-step approach: provide greater economic support for minority ethnic students, challenge and eradicate all forms of racism on campus, increase representation of minority ethnic staff and students, diversity the curriculum, provide alternative provisions
Attainment Rates between Disabled and Non-disabled Students	**On target**	a. LHU carries out an Annual Disabled Student Survey which now includes questions about barriers to applying for DSA funding. b. The Disabled Students Survey, supported by focus group work is being used to provide information about barriers to success. c. Introduction of disability leads in academic areas, leading increased awareness of Learning Support Plans and their implementation. d. Providing a 'one stop' approach to student support. Liverpool Hope has a flexible and rapidly accessible range of support services. The work of the support services is embedded in the life of the University.
3. Progression		
Progression Rates between POLAR 4 Quintiles 1 to 5	**4pp behind**	a. Employer mentoring programme targeted at this group has been initiated b. The students will be offered one to one support via the student career team to offer the opportunities to develop their CV, personal statements, volunteering opportunities, work placements etc. c. Use of research projects for final year students to link to real world career opportunities d. High-profile Professional Development initiatives across all programmes, working closely with the Careers service. e. Accessible careers materials

Progression Rates between Global Majority and white Students	**On target**	a. Employer mentoring programme targeted at this group has been initiated b. Increased awareness in this group of volunteering and other opportunities; use of 'meet the professional's' events for third year students will emphasise positive role models in this group c. Engagement with regional mentoring programmes such as Step Forward, Step Up, aimed at Global Majority students, via work with the University's Honorary Fellow.
Progression Rates between Students with a Mental Health Condition and those with No Disabilities	**On target**	a. Employer mentoring programme targeted at students with disabilities group has been initiated b. Continue promotion of Change 100 c. Extend the Disability Internship Scheme to allow disabled students to carry out work placements in bespoke roles establishing confidence in the workplace.
Progression Rates between females from POLAR 4 Quintiles 1 to 5 compared to males from POLAR4 Q3-5	**On target**	a. Develop a 'Women in Leadership' training course aimed at smashing the glass ceiling.