

Impact Statement

Liverpool Hope University Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025

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 seeks bright and promising students irrespective of background. Dedicated to the vision of its 19th century founding colleges to open up opportunities to those traditionally excluded from higher education. Liverpool Hope remains committed to enabling all its students to benefit from a sound University education that is research-informed.'

The Liverpool Hope Access and Participation Plan (APP) can be accessed [here](#). The 2020-25 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.

Despite the difficulties created by the COVID pandemic 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 that Data Relates To	Units of Measurement	2020-21 Milestone (Planned)	2021-22 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	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	2 pp	1 pp	1 pp	Expected progress
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	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	4 pp	3 pp	4 pp	Expected progress
Access	The proportion of mature students will increase to within sector norms	2020-21	Percentage	14%	16%	20.5%	Expected progress
Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates for IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2019-20	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	8 pp	6 pp	6 pp	Expected progress
Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2019-20	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	6 pp	4 pp	2 pp	Expected progress
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates between IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	10 pp	8pp	11 pp	No progress
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	14 pp	10 pp	4 pp	Expected progress
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates for Global Majority and White students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	6 pp	4 pp	14 pp	No progress

Metric Measurement	Description	Year that Data Relates To	Units of Measurement	2020-21 Milestone (Planned)	2021-22 Milestone (Planned)	Actual Performance in Year (OfS)	Target Self-assessment
Attainment	Percentage difference in attainment rates for Disabled and non Disabled students will decrease	2020-21	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	4 pp	3 pp	1 pp	Expected progress
Continuation	Percentage difference in continuation rates for Black and White students will decrease	2019-20	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	9 pp	7 pp	4 pp	Expected progress
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 will decrease	2016-17	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	4 pp	3 pp		Comparable data yet to be published by OfS
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for Global Majority students and White students will decrease	2016-17	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	7 pp	5 pp		Comparable data yet to be published by OfS
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for students with mental health conditions will decrease to be similar to students with no disabilities	2016-17	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	15 pp	10 pp		Comparable data yet to be published by OfS
Progression	Percentage difference in progression rates for females from POLAR4 Q1/Q2 will decrease to closing the gap between males from POLAR Q3-Q5	2016-17	Percentage Point (pp) Difference	10 pp	7 pp		Comparable data yet to be published by OfS

3. Investment Commitments

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

Financial Year 2020/21	Predicted spend	Actual spend	Difference
Access Investment	£500,000	£423,200	-15%
Financial Support	£255,000	£557,192	118%
	£755,000	£980,392	

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.

NB £330,637 of the Financial Support figure, was financed by funding received from the OfS

The management of the financial support through the Learning Support Fund is overseen by a Panel which includes representation from the Student Union. The Panel meets each term and, in this way, can respond in a timely way to issues impacting the student body.

4. Action Plan

The Office for Students recently published data in relation to the targets detailed in Access and Participation Plans. Liverpool Hope has reflected on its performance in relation to the ambitions for underrepresented students with particular focus on the ambitions detailed in the APP for 2020-21.

Performance in relation to the ambitions detailed in Plan for 2020-21 and more broadly for underrepresented students

There are two areas where progress against the targets set out in the APP for 2020/21 were less than expected. We are committed to increase the rate of progress and get back on track in relation to these targets.

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 between global majority and white students. The milestone for this year was 6pp.

The University considers the gap in attainment to be the result of an 'awarding' gap. This approach avoids placing responsibility on the student rather than on the Institution. Our Plan has ambitious targets and we aim to neutralise the gap by 2024/25. There are small numbers of students in this group and the data may not be wholly reflective. However, it remains important to reflect on the awarding gap and identify and tackle any underlying barriers to success for Global Majority students.

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

When the curriculum is reviewed we now ensure that the processes include decolonisation, diversifying what we teach to 'open up' learning and remove bias. Library collections have been reviewed through this lens and the Students Union and local employers have contributed significantly to the increased awareness of cultural diversity.

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.

The adoption of the five key recommendations detailed above will guide us forward towards our proposed ambitions over the remainder of the plan.

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, has increased to 11 percentage points in 2020/21. The milestone set out in the plan was 10 percentage points. There is therefore a small 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 impact of the COVID pandemic. This may explain why the gap in the number of 1st and 2.1 degrees awarded to students from this group has increased. Barriers to success may include: limited access to campus resources including computers and Wi-Fi. Increased caring responsibilities and lack of a quiet learning space may all have contributed to students failing to reach their potential.

Liverpool Hope returned to in person teaching at the earliest opportunity and campus resources have been fully accessible since May 2021. In addition, in order to get back on track towards our milestones, we will ensure that financial support is available to students in this group and therefore help remove this barrier to success. During 2020/21 49% of the students who received financial support had APP characteristics.

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

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		
Global Majority 18-Year-Old Population	Exceeded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Decolonisation of the curriculum in order to reduce the barriers to entry for Black and Asian Students. 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.
Asian 18-Year-Old Population	On target	
Mature Student Population	Exceeded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
Attainment Rates between IMD Quintiles 1 to 5	1pp behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inspirational speaker series focusing on this group 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	Exceeding	
Attainment Rates between Global Majority and white Students	8pp behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Exceeded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Continuation Rates between Black and White Students	On target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	On target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	On target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Employer mentoring programme targeted at students with disabilities group has been initiated b. Continue promotion of Change 100

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
Condition and those with No Disabilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a 'Women in Leadership' training course aimed at smashing the glass ceiling.

