University of Suffolk
Access and P articipation Plan : 2020/21 to 2024/25

1.   ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Introduction

In its third year of independence, the University of Suffolk is proud to be a community impact institution; established in one of the few counties

rising entry profiles of our students and a revised classification algorithm that brings W K H   8 Q L Y H U V L W \ ¶ V   S U D F W L F H   L Q   O L Q H   Z L W K   V H F W R U

In previous Access and Participation Plans (APP) and Access Agreements, the University has focussed on increasing progression to highly skilled employment or further study for the whole population, as while our progression rates have remained static, the sector has seen an increase. We continue to undertake significant work to

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

The University's progression rate for xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx over the past four years POLAR the gap between Q1 and Q5 has fluctuated (Table 1), with a 9% gap in 2016/17 that is not flagged as statistically significant. We are pleased that our gap for IMD Q1 and Q5 has been no more than 2% over the past five years. However, our progression rates are generally lower than the sector and we are therefore committed to improving progression rates to reflect the sector norm, as well as reducing the gap in graduate outcomes between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students.

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (BAME students)

Access

Table 2 shows that over the past five years, a maximum of 11% of our 18-year-olds entrants are BAME students, which is below both the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds in the UK population and the proportion of BAME entrants in the sector. We have seen an increase in our entrants in 2017/18 with the introduction of our partner, the London School of Commerce (LSC), which has predominately Black and Asian entrants, although a significant majority of LSC entrants are mature. The gap between White and BAME entrants at

Success : Continuation
BAME students at the University have consistently had continuation rates similar to White students (Table 2). Continuation rates are also similar where we are able to disaggregate by ethnicity, with no statistically significant gaps identified for any BAME student group compared to White students. There is a small gap of 3.4 percentage points in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White in 2016/17 which we are committed to eliminating, but small cohort sizes (between 10 and 20 students over the five year period) means that percentages can fluctuate from year to year and therefore trends are indicative. Our continuation rate for all BAME students in 2016/17 was 86%, compared to 88.1% for the sector.

Success : Attainment
We recognise our gap in attainment rates between BAME and White students, and are prioritising a reduction (akin to the OfS KPM). Table 2 shows that the proportion of White students gaining a First or 2:1 classification is significantly higher at the University than for BAME students. Over the last five years, the gap between White students and BAME students has narrowed, but a gap of 17% still remained in 2017/18, which is higher than the national gap of 13.2%. This has been identified by the OfS

Success : Attainment
The University is pleased to report that attainment rates for students known to have a disability have improved over the past five years (Table 3) as a result of a significant amount of work in this area. However, we continue to have a gap between the attainment rate of students with a disability and those not known to have a disability, which has been highlighted by the OfS as part of our enhanced monitoring as an area for the University to make progress on. Disaggregating by disability type shows that students with cognitive or learning difficulties have slightly lower levels of attainment, but numbers are small (30 in 2017/18) and we cannot therefore draw any conclusions based on disability type. We will therefore be focussing on increasing attainment for all students known to have a disability.

Progression to graduate -level employment or further study
We are pleased that progression rates for students known to have a disability at the University are very similar to the rates of students not known to have a disability. However, Table 3 shows that progression rates for students known to have a disability are below the progression rates of students across the sector not known to have a disability.

sector). Data improves in 2017/18 with the introduction of LSC, but we will continue to prioritise access of BAME and IMD Q1 students to the University in Suffolk.

Success: Continuation
Our continuation data shows that we have had small gaps in single years relating to *gender and POLAR4 Q1/2*, and *ethnicity and POLAR4 or IMD Q1/2*, but the gaps have not been sustained.

Success: Attainment
Our attainment data shows a gap based on *ethnicity and IMD* with lower attainment rates for BAME Q1 students (55%) compared to White Q1 students (63.9%), when aggregating two years of data. Aggregated data also shows a gap between BAME male attainment (44.9%) and White male attainment (71.3%). Numbers are small but we are committed to reducing these gaps.

Progression to graduate -level employment or further study
Our analysis of progression data shows that previous gaps have closed or are no longer significant. We have had a slight increase in the gap between *male POLAR4 Q1-*

-

- Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 at the University by 2024/25 and eliminate the gap in our continuation rates compared to the sector by 2030/31. Our milestones are based on increased performance in later years, but with the gap closing by between 0.4% and 2% per year.

- Reduce the gap in attainment rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at the University from 15% in 2017-18 to 8% in 2024-25 (within the context of a current sector attainment gap of 9.5%).

- Reduce the gap in attainment rates between IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University from 10% in 2017-18 to 7.5% in 2024-25 (within the context of a current sector attainment gap of 18%).

We are also committed to working with employers to improve access for part-time students from IMD Q1 areas and reducing gaps in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5.

Black , Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students
Our AoP shows gaps in access of BAME students and their degree outcomes. As part of our enhanced monitoring the OfS has also asked us to focus on progression rates of BAME students. Our aims and measurable objectives are therefore to:

- Reduce the percentage gap in the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds at the University (excluding students based at LSC) compared to the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds in the UK population by 0.5% per year to 2024/25; and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31. We recognise that this is a particularly stretching target for the University as our a partiS1 0 5 1 145.82 705.46 Tm 0 g 0 G [(-)] TJ ET Q q 0.000008871 0 595.32 8

which has diverse membership from across the institution including partners from the community. Our work on access, success and progression is reported into the EDC, providing a holistic view of equality and diversity issues. Supporting our APP activity, work has been undertaken to analyse a broad range of protected characteristics of students to inform marketing and recruitment activities, curriculum development, and the tailoring of support to suit a range of needs. All staff involved with student recruitment, outreach and admissions receive training in equality and diversity, emphasising the need to ensure that discrimination, either direct or indirect, is not exercised at any stage. Much work has been done to support applicants and students known to have disabilities, and all marketing literature and digital media is fully compliant with accessibility guidelines. The University continues to invest in information and advice for applicants and students on reasonable adjustments and Disabled Students Allowances, and applicants are encouraged to disclose information about additional needs

to demonstrate values of inclusivity and to embed appropriate practices in their work, aligning with our access and participation strategy.

Employer Engagement and Employability: Our strategic approach to employer engagement and graduate employability actively engages academic schools and professional services departments in a range of initiatives to support progression in line with our APP targets. Our Employability Strategy includes a commitment to providing meaningful employer engagement opportunities for all students. Course teams are expected to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship education across the curricula, and the University has developed a set of Graduate Attributes which personal tutors can use to help students identify personal attributes and goals. The Strategy includes the wider roll-out of an online platform (FutureMe) and associated support to enable students to

and community support mechanisms. For those from IMD Q1 areas, recognised barriers to access that we need to address include poor school performance, low aspirations, concerns about the financial burden of HE, lack of visibility of graduate job opportunities and a fear of not fitting in. Recent research by the Bridge Group on geographical inequality is particularly relevant in our context, noting the barriers to access that arise for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds living in remote rural and coastal communities.[11]

Our approach to securing positive change in this regard is based on identification of activities that will increase the visibility of HE, remove barriers to access and increase interest in HE amongst young people from IMD

improve both access and outcomes. Improved data collection at enrolment from 2019/20 will enable us to evaluate the success of our activity for both student groups.

Success and progression

Our strategic measures to reduce or eliminate gaps in success and progression for specific under-represented groups sit within the context of our ambitious targets for improving outcomes for all of our students as part of our new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA Strategy). The Strategy has been designed to increase the success of our students through a managed process of increasing capability in independent learning. Both academic research[14] and our own experience shows that students who have experienced gaps in learning and those with low levels of academic confidence can find the transition to HE challenging, which can have an adverse impact on continuation and attainment. Rather than expecting students to quickly adapt to the different learning and teaching methods used in HE, our Strategy identifies three phases of learning aimed at supporting students towards autonomous learning through gradually tapering the level of guidance and contact time throughout their studies.

The Strategy is being implemented through a range of inclusive interventions across the student lifecycle designed to improve continuation, attainment and progression to graduate employment or further study for all students. These include a greater emphasis on inclusivity in terms of curriculum content and delivery; the establishment of a holistic peer and alumni mentorship programme; and provision of a comprehensive student support framework. This framework includes a refreshed approach to personal tutoring that utilises a coaching model of support; increased expectations of module tutors in facilitating engagement with learning activities; D Q G W K H L G H Q W L I L F D W L R Q R I G H G L F D W H G V W D I I Z L W K L Q H D tut R U ¶ U R O H V W R L G H Q W L I \ V W X G H Q W V D W U L V N R I Z L W K G U D Z D O D Q

To support progression, there is a focus within the Strategy on developing ʿGraduate Attributes ʾto enhance employability; enhancing V W X G H Q W understanding and engagement in career management; providing increased opportunities for employer engagement; and promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship. The University has a long history of successful collaboration with employers in the design of curricula to enhance progression into employment, and has been commended by the QAA on its approach to employability.[15] For example we have recently been successful in a collaborative bid with BT which will result in the development of curriculum focussed on technical skills E D V H G Z L W K L Q S uffolk; and current work R with Suffolk County Council to construct D E H V S R N H K R P H I R U 6 X I I R O N on the University campus R O O to provide our students across a range of degree programmes with opportunities for placements and practical work-based experience. Such collaborative activities help our students make connections in relevant

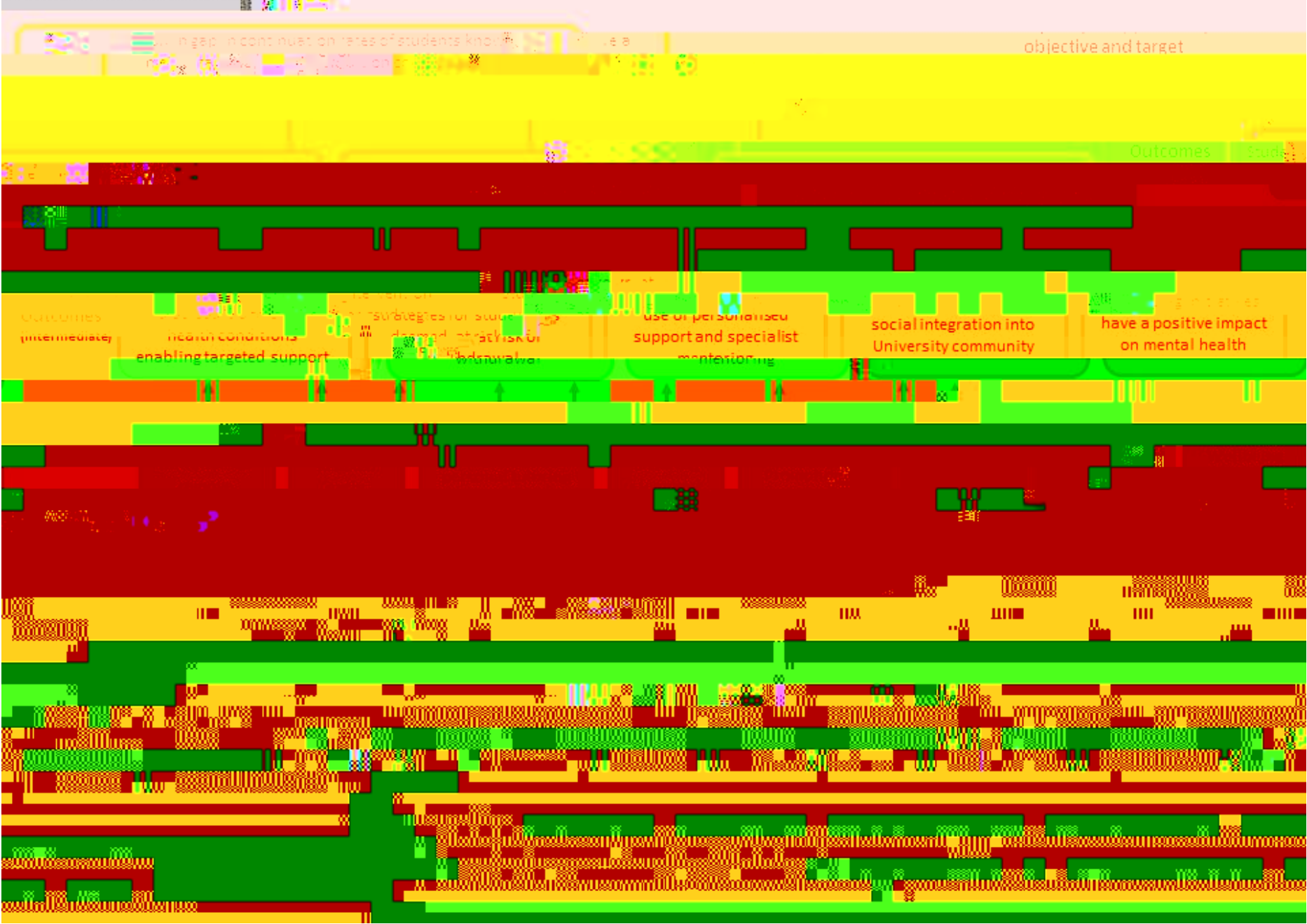*Strategic measures in relation to our continuation targets*

As highlighted in our aims and objectives, through our APP we have specific targets to improve continuation rates of POLAR4 Q1 students and students with a mental health condition. Research into student mental wellbeing in HE has highlighted how a range of interrelated social, academic, environmental and economic factors can affect mental health, necessitating a holistic approach to the provision of support.[16] Our initiatives to support continuation for students with a mental health condition are intended to provide clear and accessible points of contact for support (internal student focus groups highlight the value of having a single point of contact for advice and support); to destigmatise mental health difficulties to encourage disclosure; and to promote wellbeing and resilience within our target student community. For students from areas of low HE participation, to address barriers to continuation we aim to I D F L O L W D W H D Q G academicanbW V W social integration into the University community; raise awareness of

groups), POLAR4 Q1 students and IMD Q1 students. The recent UUK and NUS #closingthegap report highlights the BAME attainment gap as one of the starkest disparities in HE.[17] We have signed the UUK and NUS BAME Attainment pledge to commit to increasing attainment rates of BAME students, with our own intersectional analysis showing a need for particular focus on male BAME students. The recent report commissioned by the OfS on understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from

satisfaction with service provision and the impact of

Strategic measures in relation to our written commitments on success and progression

As part of our written commitments in relation to other groups who experience barriers to success (for example in terms of continuation, attainment and progression of care leavers and estranged students; progression of students from areas of low HE participation; and continuation of mixed ethnicity students and part-time disabled students), we are committed to offering support through specific group forums (e.g. for care leavers) and promoting activity and support for target groups as part of tailored initiatives stemming from the implementation of our new LTA Strategy. We will undertake continuous training and development to understand the specific challenges for under-represented groups, and will establish a Student Success

Annex 1: Theory of Change exemplar outcomes chain

objective and target

Outcomes

n gap in continuation rates of students kno...

Outcomes (intermediate)

health conditions enabling targeted support

strategies for stude... ...at risk of withdrawal

use of personalised support and specialist mentoring

social integration into University community

have a positive impact on mental health

Ref no	Written commitment	Examples of planned activities	Timescales	Success criteria
WC_1	Increasing the number of care leavers entering the University and supporting their success and progression See sections 1.5 (page 6) and 2.2 (page 8)	Working with Suffolk County Council to obtain better data on care leavers in the local area to inform our access activity; focused activity with care leavers to better understand barriers to access, success and progression; implementing bespoke support measures to support retention, attainment and progression (including financial support measures); improving collection and reporting of data on care leavers to underpin our activity.	Improved internal data collection and reporting from 2019-20; enhanced support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020	Over the period of the APP, the provision of reliable data that demonstrates an upward trajectory in terms of: x the number of care leavers entering the University each year x the proportion of care leavers being retained (with our non-continuation rate reducing by at least 10 percentage points by the end of the plan); successfully completing their programme of study with an upper second or first class degree classification (with our attainment rate increasing by at least 20 percentage points by the end of the plan); and progressing to graduate level employment (target to be determined when existing data quality improves sufficiently to allow assessment of current performance).

Ref no	Written commitment	Examples of planned activities	Timescales	Success criteria
WC_4	Working with employers to improve access for part-time students from IMD Q1 areas See sections 1.1 (page 2) and 2.2 (page 9)	Liaison with key regional employers (via partner colleges where relevant) to promote engagement of their staff from disadvantaged backgrounds in part-time study.	Work with employers to commence from 2020 with a view to improving HE participation rates from 2021 onwards	Over the period of the APP, reduction in gap between the proportion of part-time IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University (currently 16.3% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 10% by the end of the plan).
WC_5	Eliminating the small gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students See sections 1.2 (page 4) and 2.2 (page 9)	Bespoke initiatives to support the retention of Mixed Ethnicity students, as part of our wider University work to bring continuation rates into line with sector norms (as part of our new LTA Strategy).	Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020	Over the period of the APP, elimination of the gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students (currently 3.4% according to OfS dataset).
WC_6	Reducing gaps in continuation rates between part-time students known to have a disability compared to part-time students not known to have a disability See sections 1.4 (page 5) and 2.2 (page 9)	Work with our small group of part-time disabled students to better understand barriers to continuation, to inform subsequent support interventions.	Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020	Over the period of the APP, a reduction in the gap in continuation for part-time disabled students compared to those not declaring a disability (currently 16% based on internal data for 2015 entrants, with an aim to bring this into line with sector norms - currently 5.8% - by the end of the plan).
WC_7	Reducing gaps in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 See sections 1.1 (page 3) and 2.2 (page 9)	Initiatives to support graduate employability specifically targeted at POLAR4 Q1 students (e.g. targeted careers support via the Careers team and personal tutors; employer engagement initiatives; entrepreneurship initiatives; alumni mentoring).	Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020	Over the period of the APP, a reduction in the gap in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 (currently 9% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 5% by the end of the plan).

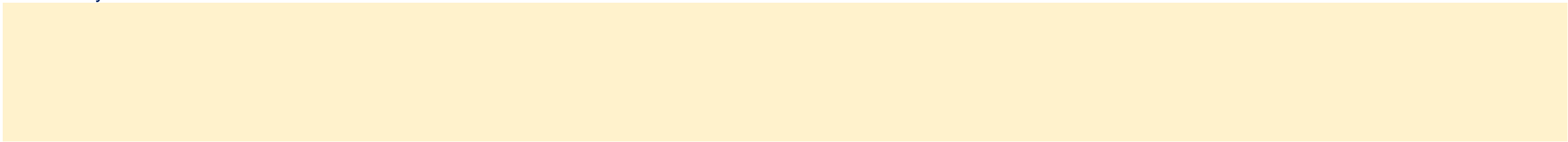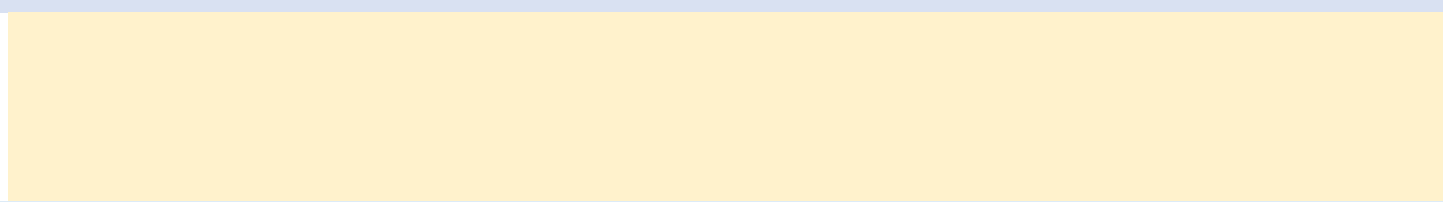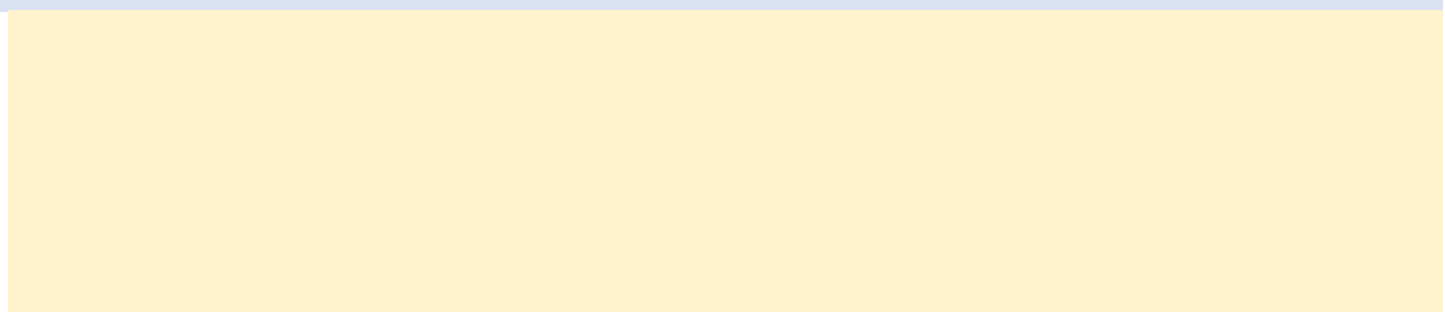*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£8,220
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND		£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£6,669
Accelerated degree		£11,100
Sandwich year	Non-UK Placement	£1,385
Sandwich year	UK Placement	£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		

Table 2a - Access

								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To eliminate the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Socio-economic	Eliminate the percentage gap between the proportion o IMD Q1 18 year olds at the University of Suffolk compa to the proportion of IMD Q1 18 year olds in the UK population	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	10%	8%	6%	4%	2%	0%	The proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-olds in the UK population for the