



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by University of Chester against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

University of Chester's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

The University continues to take whole student lifecycle approach to its access, student success and progression activities and ensured its strategy for 2019/20 is in line with the priorities of the Office for Students (OfS), targeting areas for improvement and closing recruitment and performance gaps of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluation to inform the development of its access, student success and progression activities and has developed an evaluation strategy allowing it to demonstrate the impact of its activities. The University will continue to examine ways of monitoring cohorts of individuals involved in our pre-application outreach activities throughout their student lifecycle to aid our understanding of the impact of interventions. We aim to reduce gaps in performance between students with differing characteristics and to deliver a more inclusive curriculum enabling equality of opportunity for every student to be successful regardless of background.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by University of Chester of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of University of Chester's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	To maintain the proportion of entrants against sector and locally adjusted benchmarks - %	2013-14	17.5	17.9	18	Percentage	2019-20	21.4	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	To maintain the proportion of entrants against sector and locally adjusted benchmarks - %	2013-14	17.6	18.2	18.4	Percentage	2019-20	21.4	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	To increase the proportion of entrants with no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhoods against sector and locally adjusted benchmarks - %	2013-14	23.2	23.8	24	Percentage	2019-20	20.2	No progress
T16a_04 (Access)	To increase the proportion of UK domiciled entrants from BME backgrounds - %	2013-14	8.5	8.9	9	Percentage	2019-20	10	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Access)	To increase the proportion of male entrants to UG Primary ITE programmes - %	2013-14	18.5	22	22	Percentage	2019-20	23.3	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Student success)	To increase the proportion of male level 4 UG Primary ITE students progressing to the next level of study - %	2013-14	82	86	88	Percentage	2019-20	96.3	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Access)	To increase the proportion of BME entrants to UG Primary ITE programmes - %	2013-14	3.7	6	6.5	Percentage	2019-20	2.6	No progress
T16a_08 (Student success)	To increase the % of students continuing or qualifying at the University	2013-14	88.3	90.5	91	Percentage	2019-20	88.8	Limited progress

T16a_09 (Student success)	To increase the % of students continuing or qualifying at the University	2013-14	84.2	89	90	Percentage	2019-20	88	Limited progress
T16a_10 (Student success)	To increase the % of students continuing or qualifying at the University	2013-14	87.5	87.9	88	Percentage	2019-20	84.7	No progress
T16a_11 (Student success)	To increase the % of students continuing or qualifying at the University	2013-14	86	87.2	87.5	Percentage	2019-20	84.2	No progress
T16a_12 (Progression)	To increase the % of students progressing to work and/or further study from low participation neighbourhoods	2013-14	91.2	91.5	91.6	Percentage	2019-20	88.7	No progress
T16a_13 (Progression)	To increase the % of students progressing to work and/or further study with a declared disability	2013-14	85.7	87.5	88	Percentage	2019-20	90.5	Expected progress
T16a_14 (Access)	To increase the proportion of young white male entrants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds	2015-16	35	35.4	35.6	Percentage	2019-20	41.6	Expected progress
T16a_15 (Student success)	To increase good degree outcomes (1st & 2i) of BME (non white) students	2015-16	54.7	58	59	Percentage	2019-20	68.1	Expected progress
T16a_16 (Student success)	To increase the success outcomes of students with a disability	2015-16	83.1	84	84.5	Percentage	2019-20	85.1	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	Number of mentees participating in outreach mentoring programmes	2013-14	224	240	250	Headcount	2019-20	203	No progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Number of events and participants benefitting from Primary outreach activity - events/participants	2013-14	22/1494*	25/1500	25/1500	Headcount	2019-20	4 291	No progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Number of events and participants benefitting from Secondary outreach activity - events/participants	2013-14	29/1182	32/1280	32/1280	Headcount	2019-20	42 1819	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Number of events and participants benefitting from FE College outreach activity - events/participants	2013-14	14/438	16/496	16/496	Headcount	2019-20	5 157	No progress
T16b_05 (Access)	Number of events run in collaboration with Outreach HEI networks	2013-14	4	10	10	Headcount	2019-20	0	No progress
T16b_06 (Progression)	Proportion of participants in Employability initiatives from a low participation background	2013-14	31	38	40	Percentage	2019-20	44	Expected progress
T16b_07 (Access)	Raise Attainment in schools	2018-19	n/a	To develop appropriate outcome measures	To improve on the outcome measures	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Limited progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£1,132,400.00	£710,000.00	-37%
Financial Support	£1,950,458.00	£1,978,000.00	1%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of Chester has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan as there was no large or significant decline in our mature student population. However, monitoring the proportions of our mature students and the impact of our Outreach activity on mature students (i.e. tracking progression into HE via HEAT) will continue.

The University confirmed that no on-campus or off-campus activity would be possible until national and local lockdowns are to be lifted by Government, therefore all Outreach activity aimed at mature students is now being delivered online. This includes:

- asynchronous resources for college students and teachers
- live events and web-chats with college students
- one-to-one guidance sessions with teachers

Also we are investing in and committed to:

- supporting mature offer-holders via a bespoke Brightside mentoring programme for 2021 offer-holders during the continued disruption caused by COVID
- increased provision of Foundation Year programmes, which are now attracting more mature students than in previous years (51.7% were mature in 2020/21 compared to 32.3% in 2019/20)*

*(UK domiciled full time undergraduate level 3 mature entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

T16a_03

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of OfS guidance on assessment of performance and developing targets, Programme level targets are no longer appropriate. Therefore this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan. However, monitoring the proportion of BAME entrants onto the primary ITE programme will continue.

The Outreach Team have developed a sustained project aimed at BAME students, to engage them with the University over a two-year period. The University confirmed that no on-campus or off-campus activity would be possible until national and local lockdowns are to be lifted by Government, therefore all Outreach activity aimed at BAME students is now being delivered online. This includes:

- asynchronous resources for college students and teachers
- live events and web-chats with college students
- one-to-one guidance sessions with teachers

Along with the Race Equality Challenge Group the University has also developed Student Race Advocates. These roles are designed to actively support and promote the needs of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) students through contributing to many aspects of the University's work. The University has employed 10 BAME students into these roles during 2020/21 and they work across all Faculties, including Faculty of Education and Children's services. The advocate roles will be reviewed in the summer of 2021 in order to enhance this development going forward. The advocates are currently also working with our Outreach Team on increasing BAME entrants.

T16a_07

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan as there was no large or significant gaps in the continuation rates of young students. However, monitoring of continuation gaps and the impact of our success and retention activities will continue.

Work in the area of raising staff awareness has continued further with Access and Participation now part of:

- Business Planning meetings
- Academic Faculty and Department meetings and action planning
- Development of training sessions for staff in the area of evaluation of impact in alignment with our strategic approach to evaluation
- New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team to strengthen transition between pre-entry and skills development agenda.

Going forward, we are also committed to strengthening our success and retention activities by:

- Continued enhancements to our data Dashboard 360, which allows for Academic Faculties and Departments to monitor and respond to poor engagement levels of students from underrepresented groups
- Continue with online teaching and learning methods, offering a 'Blended-Learning' approach to learning and adjustments made to the delivery of programme content
- Taking part in the national Transforming Access and Success Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO): Online Learning and Teaching in the time of COVID research project to explore the impact of online and blended learning approach on the outcomes of underrepresented groups
- Continuing to employ Learning Facilitators working between Lecturers and Students enhancing the communication, interactivity and cohesion of online teaching methods
- Investing in the external organisation, Grit, to enhance our existing PAT support system by delivering training to our PATs on coaching and mentoring techniques using a student-centred approach.
- Investing in Grit to also enhance our support for students by delivering workshops to help current students from underrepresented groups achieve their potential by increasing self-esteem, engagement and sense of belonging, and to learn how to take ownership of, and find solutions to problems
- Investing in the online financial support and learning platform Blackbullion to enhance our Financial Support offer and address financial barriers experienced by our students to help equip students with the skills to tackling money management issues

T16a_08

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan as there was no large or significant gaps in the continuation rates of young LPN students. However, monitoring of continuation gaps and the impact of our success and retention activities will continue.

Work in the area of raising staff awareness has continued further with Access and Participation now part of:

- Business Planning meetings
- Academic Faculty and Department meetings and action planning
- Development of training sessions for staff in the area of evaluation of impact in alignment with our strategic approach to evaluation
- New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team to strengthen transition between pre-entry and skills development agenda

Going forward, we are also committed to strengthening our success and retention activities by:

- Continued enhancements to our data Dashboard 360, which allows for Academic Faculties and Departments to monitor and respond to poor engagement levels of students from underrepresented groups
- continue with online teaching and learning methods, offering a 'Blended-Learning' approach to learning and adjustments to the delivery of programme content
- taking part in the national Transforming Access and Success Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO): Online Learning and Teaching in the time of COVID research project to explore the impact of online and blended learning approach on the outcomes of underrepresented groups
- continuing to employ Learning Facilitators working between Lecturers and Students enhancing the communication, interactivity and cohesion of online teaching methods
- investing in the external organisation, Grit, to enhance our existing PAT support system by delivering training to our PATs on coaching and mentoring techniques from a student-centred approach.
- Investing in Grit to also enhance our support for students by delivering workshops to help current students from underrepresented groups achieve their potential by increasing self-esteem, engagement and sense of belonging, and to learn how to take ownership of, and find solutions to problems
- Investing in the online financial support and learning platform Blackbullion to enhance our Financial Support offer and address financial barriers experienced by our students to help equip students with the skills to tackling money management issues

T16a_09

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan as there was no large or significant gaps in the continuation rates of mature students. However, monitoring of continuation gaps and the impact of our success and retention activities will continue.

Work in the area of raising staff awareness has continued further with Access and Participation now part of:

- Business Planning meetings
- Academic Faculty and Department meetings and action planning
- Development of training sessions for staff in the area of evaluation of impact in alignment with our strategic approach to evaluation
- New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team to strengthen transition between pre-entry and skills development agenda.

Going forward, we are also committed to strengthening our success and retention activities by:

- Continued enhancements to our data Dashboard 360, which allows for Academic Faculties and Departments to monitor and respond to poor engagement levels of students from underrepresented groups
- Continue with online teaching and learning methods, offering a 'Blended-Learning' approach to learning and adjustments to the delivery of programme content
- Taking part in the national Transforming Access and Success Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO): Online Learning and Teaching in the time of COVID research project to explore the impact of online and blended learning approach on the outcomes of underrepresented groups
- Continuing to employ Learning Facilitators working between Lecturers and Students enhancing the communication, interactivity and cohesion of online teaching methods
- Investing in the external organisation, Grit, to enhance our existing PAT support system by delivering training to our PATs on coaching and mentoring techniques from a student-centred approach.
- Investing in Grit to also enhance our support for students by delivering workshops to help current students from underrepresented groups achieve their potential by increasing self-esteem, engagement and sense of belonging, and to learn how to take ownership of, and find solutions to problems
- Investing in the online financial support and learning platform Blackbullion to enhance our Financial Support offer and address financial barriers experienced by our students to help equip students with the skills to tackling money management issues

T16a_10

Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.

Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan as there was no large or significant gaps in the continuation rates of mature students. However, monitoring of continuation gaps and the impact of our success and retention activities will continue.

Work in the area of raising staff awareness has continued further with Access and Participation now part of:

- Business Planning meetings
- Academic Faculty and Department meetings and action planning
- Development of training sessions for staff in the area of evaluation of impact in alignment with our strategic approach to evaluation
- New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team to strengthen transition between pre-entry and skills development agenda

Going forward, we are also committed to strengthening our success and retention activities by:

- Continued enhancements to our data Dashboard 360, which allows for Academic Faculties and Departments to monitor and respond to poor engagement levels of students from underrepresented groups
- Continue with online teaching and learning methods, offering a 'Blended-Learning' approach to learning and adjustments to the delivery of programme content
- Taking part in the national Transforming Access and Success Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO): Online Learning and Teaching in the time of COVID research project to explore the impact of online and blended learning approach on the outcomes of underrepresented groups
- Continuing to employ Learning Facilitators working between Lecturers and Students enhancing the communication, interactivity and cohesion of online teaching methods
- Investing in the external organisation, Grit, to enhance our existing PAT support system by delivering training to our PATs on coaching and mentoring techniques from a student-centred approach.
- Investing in Grit to also enhance our support for students by delivering workshops to help current students from underrepresented groups achieve their potential by increasing self-esteem, engagement and sense of belonging, and to learn how to take ownership of, and find solutions to problems
- Investing in the online financial support and learning platform Blackbullion to enhance our Financial Support offer and address financial barriers experienced by our students to help equip students with the skills to tackling money management issues

T16a_11

<p>T16a_12</p>	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>Following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets, our in-depth assessment of performance showed a performance gap between young (under 21) undergraduate students from POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1. Therefore this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan and a new one proposed.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor performance gaps in highly skilled employment rates of LPN students, and monitor up-take and impact of our Inspiring Futures employability initiatives.</p> <p>Work in the area of raising staff awareness has continued further with Access and Participation now part of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Planning meetings • Academic Faculty and Department meetings and action planning • Development of training sessions for staff in the area of evaluation of impact in alignment with our strategic approach to evaluation <p>This has led to the development and enhancement of employability initiatives, which are being embedded within our academic departments. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Faculty of Business and Management are working in collaboration with Careers & Employability department and the Inspiring Futures initiatives to have guaranteed places for their LPN students. • Our Law department, in collaboration with our Careers & Employability department, are holding mock interviews only accessible to LPN students in preparation for the Pro Bono opportunities they offer their students to gain work experience within the community.
<p>T16b_01</p>	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>This is an output target and following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets (only outcome/performance gap targets being acceptable), this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan.</p> <p>However, monitoring the number of mentees participating in the School Mentoring programme and the impact on mentees academic performance will continue when national/local restrictions are lifted and our mentors can attend school premises.</p> <p>School Mentoring will not continue in-person for 2020/21. However, virtual opportunities are being considered, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Student Scholars” project which will see student volunteers recording asynchronous content and videos for schools to use as a resource within the classroom • “Bonding through books” project which will see student volunteers develop content for a virtual book club aimed at Primary schools

<p>T16b_02</p>	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>This is an output target and following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets (only outcome/performance gap targets being acceptable), this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan.</p> <p>However, monitoring the number of Primary School events and participants, including the impact on participant’s perceptions of transitioning into higher education and career paths will continue.</p> <p>New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team which will strengthen and give focus to our Outreach offer and in particular the skills development agenda</p> <p>The University confirmed that no on-campus or off-campus activity would be possible until national and local lockdowns are to be lifted by Government, therefore all Outreach activity is now being delivered online. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asynchronous resources for primary school pupils and teachers • live events and web-chats with primary school pupils and teachers • one-to-one guidance sessions with teachers
<p>T16b_04</p>	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>This is an output target and following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets (only outcome/performance gap targets being acceptable), this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan.</p> <p>However, monitoring the number of FE College events and participants, including the impact on participant’s perceptions of transitioning into higher education and career paths, as well as tracking progression into HE via HEAT, will continue.</p> <p>New Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships (DASA) combining our Outreach Team, Apprenticeships Team, Study Skills Advisors and the Access and Participation Team which will strengthen and give focus to our Outreach offer and in particular the skills development agenda</p> <p>The University confirmed that no on-campus or off-campus activity would be possible until national and local lockdowns are to be lifted by Government, therefore all Outreach activity aimed at mature students is now being delivered online. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asynchronous resources for college students and teachers • live events and web-chats with college students • one-to-one guidance sessions with teachers

T16b_05	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>This is an output target and following the change of guidance from the OfS on conducting an assessment of performance and developing targets (only outcome/performance gap targets being acceptable), this target was discontinued for the new 5-year Plan.</p> <p>However, monitoring the number of collaborative events, including the impact of these collaborative events on participant’s perceptions of transitioning into higher education and career paths, as well as tracking progression into HE via HEAT, will continue.</p> <p>We will also continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the best ways of hosting on-campus activity through Shaping Futures when national and lockdowns are lifted. • HiHo+ staff will continue working across the network by collaborating across hubs and target school engagement/discussion • Continue exploring a collaborative research project with Reaseheath College to improve BAME recruitment.
T16b_07	<p>Target discontinued for 20/21 onwards.</p> <p>This is a target in development whereby baseline outcomes and improvement to the outcomes will be developed further during 2020/21 and outcomes data collected. The intention is then to include a raising attainment target in future APPs.</p> <p>Our Faculty of Education and Children’s Services raising GCSE attainment work will continue online in the area of English and Maths. Although the face-to-face element of this will not be at the same level in previous years, it is positive to note that the online sessions and courses have expanded to reach many more schools and teachers.</p> <p>Plus, as part of the regional Maths hub collaboration and our English raising attainment work, we are providing support to NQTs during 2020/21 in response to their limited school-based practice in 2019/20. Currently over 30 NQTs from all phases, with approx. 10 of them secondary/post-16 GCSE teachers.</p>

5. Confirmation

University of Chester confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
University of Chester has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Prof Eunice Simmons
Position	Vice-Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

University of Chester's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>Although we reported 'no progress' towards hitting our 2019/20 target/milestone, we outperform the sector benchmarks (of 14.2%) and locally adjusted benchmarks (of 17.2%) for the proportion of mature full time undergraduate entrants for 2019/20*. *Data Source: HESA UK Widening Participation Performance Indicator Table 2a</p> <p>Our internal data for 2019/20 also shows our commitment to strengthen the progression of mature students from access to HE programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27.3% had Access qualifications on entry • 23.4% had BTEC qualifications on entry • 35.1% had 'other' qualifications on entry • Only 14.1% had the 'traditional' routes to HE qualifications of A/AS Levels (UK domiciled full time and part time undergraduate mature entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners) <p>We committed to holding on-campus and off-campus events for FE Colleges across the region as noted in our 2019/20 plan to strengthen our strategic approach to support and encourage the progression of mature entrants from access to HE programmes.</p> <p>Despite holding less on-campus events than expected following the impact of COVID, we did hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 Post-16 off-campus events where 2377 students attended prior to national lockdown • Of which, 20 events were specifically aimed at mature students in FE colleges where 595 mature college students attended.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>At our interim review in February 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20 • 40-50 on-campus and off-campus events for FE Colleges would have taken place between March and Summer 2020 <p>The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national lockdown meant the scheduled events had to be cancelled.</p> <p>Despite not being able to hold events for potential mature applicants, our Outreach Team concentrated their efforts on and invested in providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online resources and materials for partner FE Colleges : https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/resources https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-teachers-and-advisors • Materials focusing on an introduction to HE, student life, decision making, how to write a personal statement, the UCAS application process, financial support and clearing: https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-post-16-students https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/post-16-

and-post-18-options

- Our Outreach Team also worked closely with Academic Departments to put on subject related sessions for post-16/FE college students aimed at giving students a taste of Chester's blended approach to learning and raise aspirations for the subjects we offer.
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/kitchen-sessions>

All resources were sent to our partner FE Colleges and targeted schools with high proportions of pupils from underrepresented groups (via the HEAT data source). Following this promotion, hits to our Outreach Team's webpage more than doubled from pre-lockdown hits, with hits to our resources pages for post-16 information, being the most popular following the release in May 2020.

In May 2020, we engaged Brightside mentoring and invested in their national online mentoring programme for Uni Connect partners in order to support our offer-holders from underrepresented groups, particularly mature applicants and those from low participation neighbourhoods, in light of the major disruption caused by COVID. The project aimed to:

- Increase mentees' understanding of what to expect from university study and student life
- Prepare mentees for the change in learning styles in HE
- Help mentees maintain motivation for their chosen subject and institution
- Build a sense of belonging, and help mentees feel confident that they would have a positive HE experience

Our Results showed:

- 74% of offer-holders participating in this Brightside initiative were mature students.
- 91% of mentees said their most likely route was to begin a HE course that year,
- mentoring increased mentees' knowledge about what to expect from student life and the key differences in learning and teaching at HE level (overall increase of 17 percentage points, with 54% of individual mentees recording positive change),
- 60% were more motivated and excited by the idea of studying their subject at HE level,
- and 98% of mentees enjoyed the programme, received useful feedback, and said conversations with their mentor helped them feel more optimistic about the future
- Overall, 92% of offer-holders participating in the programme enrolled in September 2020

Target reference number: T16a_07

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We committed to holding an on-campus event for the Faculty of Education and Children's Services in order to influence recruitment of BAME entrants onto primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Discussions and arrangements for an event in Summer 2020 were underway. However, the impact of COVID and national lockdown meant this scheduled on-campus event had to be cancelled.

In our 2019/20 plan, we also committed to using our Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Project findings to improve our overall BAME recruitment by addressing BAME recruitment challenges. The recommendations were:

- Reviewing and responding to BAME data: BAME offers and interview data, ethnicity data for withdrawals, and BAME Admissions data for every department is continually reviewed in collaboration with our Access and Participation team, Outreach Team, Registry and Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions department.

- Focus groups and BAME Networks
- Continue with diversity workshops for all students and staff for cohesion – an annual event each March
- Reciprocal mentoring – this involves students from BAME background being partnered with a member of our Senior Executive Team
- Specific outreach activity for BAME students
- Reporting system – a visible whistle-blowing policy for reporting racism publicised more widely to ensure zero tolerance across the institution.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

At our interim review in February 2020:

- There was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20
 - Discussions and arrangements for a BAME specific event in Summer 2020 to influence recruitment of BAME entrants onto primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes with the Faculty of Education and Children's Services were underway.
 - The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national lockdown meant the scheduled event had to be cancelled.
 - Our Outreach Team concentrated their efforts on and invested in providing online resources and materials for Secondary Schools and partner FE Colleges to use as part of our Widening Participation commitments
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/resources>
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-teachers-and-advisors>
 - Materials focus on an introduction to HE, student life, decision making, how to write a personal statement, the UCAS application process, financial support and clearing:
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-post-16-students>
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/post-16-and-post-18-options>
 - Our Outreach Team also worked closely with Academic Departments to put on subject related sessions for post-16/FE college students aimed at giving students a taste of Chester's blended approach to learning and raise aspirations on the subjects we offer.
<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/kitchen-sessions>
- All resources were sent to our partner Secondary Schools and FE Colleges and targeted schools with high proportions of BAME pupils (via the HEAT data source). Following this promotion, hits to our Outreach Team's webpage more than doubled from pre-lockdown hits, with hits to our resources pages for post-16 information, being the most popular following the release in May 2020.

The university formed a Race Equality Challenge Group in June 2020 who act as a BAME network being a proactive, action-oriented group, to promote and coordinate positive change in relation to race equality and diversity across the University. Details can be found here: <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/news/university-chester%E2%80%99s-race-equality-challenge-group>

The group is chaired by the vice-chancellor and has student and staff representation. The group are working on themes which include Access and Participation and the Student Journey from application to alumni. Focus groups with BAME students and staff were held to prioritise the voices of BAME members of the university community and formalise any concerns or initiatives required.

Our vice-chancellor also made visible the university's policy on zero tolerance to racism:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/open-letter-on-racism>. All staff and students are provided with our policy and details on reporting racism across the institution.

Target reference number: T16a_08

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Although we reported 'limited progress' towards hitting our 2019/20 target/milestone (we made progress, just not enough to achieve the 2019/20 target/milestone), we did match the 2018/19 sector benchmark of 88.8% for the proportion of young full time first degree entrants continuing or qualifying at Chester.

*Data Source: HESA UK Non-Continuation Performance Indicator Table 3a

We committed to, and invested in, the delivery of the activities in our 2019/20 plan to support areas of retention and success such as:

- Peer Mentoring,
- Residential support and 'flat chats',
- Support Services for mental health and wellbeing,
- Attendance and Engagement monitoring to support students with poor patterns of engagement via the new Student Dashboard, etc.

We continued embedding study skills into the curriculum and provided individual support to students on a one-to-one basis and via email 'feedforward' support. Seminars and online resources were also available and accessible.

Engagement with our study skills services were:

- Up by 59% from the previous year (13945 interactions in 2018/19 compared to 8285 in 2017/18)
- 48.2% of students engaging in the extra-curricular study skills activities were young
- Of which 93% of these young students successfully passed the year in 2018/19 (5.6% more than the UoC young student average of 84.4% for 2018/19)

(UK domiciled full time and part time undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Note that this target relates to 2018/19 entrants continuing into their next year of study of 2019/20 before the impacted of COVID.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Early view data at our November 2020 progress review shows that the successful outcomes (passed at level 3 and 4) of our young population are increasing from 81.7% in 2018/19 to 88.3% in 2019/20. We expect to see this reflected in our continuation data for 2019/20 young entrants continuing into their next level of study in 2020/21.

(UK domiciled full time undergraduate entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Work began in 2019/20 in the area of raising staff awareness of the APP and the issues and barriers experienced by students from underrepresented groups. The profile of Access and Participation is now high and is a key part of the University strategy including:

- Providing Departments data on incoming students backgrounds to assist with the allocation to specialist and informed Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)

- Formation of the Access and Participation Planning subcommittee which includes members from Professional Support Services and all Academic Faculties.

Academic changes were in the Blended Learning and also the practice of recording lectures, which immediately delivered the outcomes of our planned Lecture Capture development.

Academic departments made numerous adjustments to their delivery of programme content, including for example; using VR for fieldwork, remote access to PC labs for specialist work, early digital assessment in a module at level 4, assisting students with the technology when they were not confident, the use of different file formats to increase accessibility, varied online delivery in response to student feedback, reviewed assessment methods which seemed to be showing improved attainment.

When COVID hit, we also explored and implemented additional steps to support students continuing at Chester during this difficult and uncertain time. For example:

- increased our Financial Support via the Hardship Fund available in April 2020 (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021) to reduce the anxiety of money worries
- refunded our residential accommodation fees when national lockdown hit
- moved to online Support Services with immediate effect for mental health and welfare support, disability support, study skills support, peer mentoring, etc. including our support for Care leavers/Care Experienced, Estranged Students and young carers
- ensured students had access to IT hardware, software and internet connectivity to those most in need (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021)
- provided regular food and health/medication packages and online information and social activities to students (in collaboration with our Student Union) who have to stay in Residential accommodation due to health vulnerabilities or being Care Leavers/Care Experienced or Estranged students
- increased e-book and e-journal library catalogue and subscriptions following student-led requests
- increased support from PATs ensuring regular contact with students
- employed Student Engagement Assistants to engage with and develop projects to enhance our existing Study Skills Advisory team and to assist with changes and actions to mitigate the impact of COVID on this support service.

Target reference number: T16a_09

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Although we made 'limited progress' towards hitting our 2019/20 target/milestone (we made progress, just not enough to achieve the 2019/20 target/milestone), we outperformed the 2018/19 sector benchmark of 87.2% for the proportion of young full time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods continuing or qualifying at Chester*.

*Data Source: HESA UK Non-Continuation Performance Indicator Table 3b

We committed to, and invested in, the delivery of the activities in our 2019/20 plan to support areas of retention and success such as:

- Peer Mentoring,
- Residential support and 'flat chats',
- Support Services for mental health and wellbeing,

- Attendance and Engagement monitoring to support students with poor patterns of engagement via the new Student Dashboard, etc.

We continued embedding study skills into the curriculum and provided individual support to students on a one-to-one basis and via email 'feedforward' support. Seminars and online resources were also available and accessible.

Engagement with our study skills services were:

- Up by 59% from the previous year (13945 interactions in 2018/19 compared to 8285 in 2017/18)
- 43.9% of students engaging in the extra-curricular study skills activities were from POLAR4 Q1&2
- Of which 90.1% of these POLAR4 Q1&2 students successfully passed the year in 2018/19 (5.7% more than the UoC POLAR4 Q1&2 average of 84.4% for 2018/19). (UK domiciled full time and part time undergraduate and postgraduate students. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Note that this target relates to 2018/19 entrants continuing into their next year of study of 2019/20 before the impacted of COVID.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Early view data at our November 2020 progress review shows that the successful outcomes (passed at level 3 and 4) of our LPN population are increasing from 78.5% in 2018/19 to 87.7% in 2019/20. We expect to see this reflected in our continuation data for 2019/20 LPN entrants continuing into their next level of study in 2020/21. (UK domiciled full time undergraduate entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Work began in 2019/20 in the area of raising staff awareness of the APP and the issues and barriers experienced by students from underrepresented groups. The profile of Access and Participation is now high and is a key part of the University strategy following:

- Providing Departments data on incoming students backgrounds to assist with the allocation to specialist and informed Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
- Formation of the Access and Participation Planning subcommittee which includes members from across Professional Support Services and all academic Faculties

Academic changes were in the Blended Learning and the practice of recording lectures which immediately delivered the outcomes of our planned Lecture Capture development.

Academic departments made numerous adjustments to their delivery of programme content, including for example; using VR for fieldwork, remote access to PC labs for specialist work, early digital assessment in a module at level 4, assisting students with the technology when they were not confident, the use of different file formats to increase accessibility, varied online delivery in response to student feedback, reviewed assessment methods which seemed to be showing improved attainment.

When COVID hit, we also explored and implemented additional steps to support students continuing at Chester during this difficult and uncertain time. For example,

- increased our Financial Support via the Hardship Fund available in April 2020 (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021) to reduce the anxiety of money worries
- refunded our residential accommodation fees when national lockdown hit

- moved to online Support Services with immediate effect for mental health and welfare support, disability support, study skills support, peer mentoring, etc. including our support for Care leavers/Care Experienced, Estranged Students and young carers
- ensured students had access to IT hardware, software and internet connectivity to those most in need (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021)
- provided regular food and health/medication packages and online information and social activities to students (in collaboration with our Student Union) who have to stay in Residential accommodation due to health vulnerabilities or being Care Leavers/Care Experienced or Estranged students
- increased e-book and e-journal library catalogue and subscriptions following student-led requests
- increased support from PATs ensuring regular contact with students
- employed Student Engagement Assistants to engage with and develop projects to enhance our existing Study Skills Advisory team and to assist with changes and actions to mitigate the impact of COVID on this support service.

Target reference number: T16a_10

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We committed to, and invested in, the delivery of the activities in our 2019/20 plan to support areas of retention and success such as:

- Peer Mentoring,
- Residential support and 'flat chats',
- Support Services for mental health and wellbeing,
- Attendance and Engagement monitoring to support students with poor patterns of engagement via the new Student Dashboard, etc.

We committed to investing in academic Department level activity, particularly those with higher proportions of mature students. For example, the University committed additional resource to support pre-registration nurses during their studies and on placements by providing six appointments to the new role of Lecturer in Practice Learning (LPL) during the practice element of the programme.

- 63% of the September 2018 pre-registration nursing cohorts and 78.6% of the March 2019 pre-registration nursing cohorts were mature students,
- Of which 86.4% of mature pre-registration nursing students successfully passed the year in 2018/19 (2% more than the UoC average of 84.4% for 2018/19) (UK domiciled full time undergraduate mature entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Peer Mentoring was also trialled to support pre-registration nurses in their first year of study for 2018/19 where by

- all Level 4 students were automatically assigned a peer mentor either pre-arrival or on arrival to University
- average retention of Level 4 pre-registration nurses in 2018/19 was 91.1% (an increase on the figure from 2017/18 of 88.9%),
- Of which 91.4% of mature pre-registration nursing students were retained in 2018/19.

Note that this target relates to 2018/19 entrants continuing into their next year of study of 2019/20 before the impacted of COVID.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Early view data at our November 2020 progress review shows that the successful outcomes (passed at level 3 and 4) of our mature population are increasing from 83.1% in 2018/19 to 88.2% in 2019/20. We expect to see this reflected in our continuation data for 2019/20 mature entrants continuing into their next level of study in 2020/21. (UK domiciled full time undergraduate entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Work began in 2019/20 in the area of raising staff awareness of the APP and the issues and barriers experienced by students from underrepresented groups. The profile of Access and Participation is now high and is a key part of the University strategy including:

- Providing Departments with data on incoming students backgrounds to assist with the allocation to specialist and informed Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
- Formation of the Access and Participation Planning subcommittee which includes members across most Professional Support Services and all Academic Faculties

Academic changes were in the Blended Learning and the practice of recording lectures which immediately delivered the outcomes of our planned Lecture Capture development.

For our Foundation year courses, which have a high proportion of mature students, we delivered a Pre-Arrival Module (PAM), 7 to 11 September, to familiarise students with online learning and our online platforms. In other areas of the University special support was given to mature students who were less familiar with the technology.

When COVID hit, we also explored and implemented additional steps to support students to continue at Chester during this difficult and uncertain time. For example,

- increased our Financial Support via the Hardship Fund available in April 2020 (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021) to reduce the anxiety of money worries
- refunded our residential accommodation fees when national lockdown hit
- moved to online Support Services with immediate effect for mental health and welfare support, disability support, study skills support, peer mentoring, etc.
- ensured students had access to IT hardware, software and internet connectivity to those most in need (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021)
- provided regular food and health/medication packages and online information and social activities to students (in collaboration with our Student Union) who have to stay in Residential accommodation due to health vulnerabilities or being Care Leavers/Care Experienced or Estranged students
- increased e-book and e-journal library catalogue and subscriptions following student-led requests
- increased support from PATs ensuring regular contact with students
- employed Student Engagement Assistants to engage with and develop projects to enhance our existing Study Skills Advisory team and to assist with changes and actions to mitigate the impact of COVID on this support service.

Target reference number: T16a_11

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We committed to, and invested in, the delivery of the activities in our 2019/20 plan to support areas of retention and success such as:

- Peer Mentoring,
- Residential support and 'flat chats',
- Support Services for mental health and wellbeing,
- Attendance and Engagement monitoring to support students with poor patterns of engagement via the new Student Dashboard, etc.

We committed to investing in academic Department level activity, particularly those with higher proportions of mature students. For example, the University committed additional resource to support pre-registration nurses during studies and on placements by providing six appointments to the new role of Lecturer in Practice Learning (LPL) during the practice element of the programme.

- 63% of the September 2018 pre-registration nursing cohorts and 78.6% of the March 2019 pre-registration nursing cohorts were mature students,
- Of which 86.4% of mature pre-registration nursing students successfully passed the year in 2018/19 (2% more than the UoC average of 84.4% for 2018/19)
(UK domiciled full time undergraduate mature entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Peer Mentoring was also trialled to support pre-registration nurses in their first year of study for 2018/19 where by

- all Level 4 students were automatically assigned a peer mentor either pre-arrival or on arrival to University
- average retention of Level 4 pre-registration nurses in 2018/19 was 91.1% (an increase on the figure from 2017/18 of 88.9%),
- Of which 91.4% of mature pre-registration nursing students were retained in 2018/19.

Note that this target relates to 2018/19 entrants continuing into their next year of study of 2019/20 before the impacted of COVID.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Early view data at our November 2020 progress review shows that the successful outcomes (passed at level 3 and 4) of our mature population are increasing from 83.1% in 2018/19 to 88.2% in 2019/20. We expect to see this reflected in our continuation data for 2019/20 mature entrants continuing into their next level of study in 2020/21.
(UK domiciled full time undergraduate entrants. Includes readmitted students, but excludes Partners)

Work began in 2019/20 in the area of raising staff awareness of the APP and the issues and barriers experienced by students from underrepresented groups. The profile of Access and Participation is now high and is a key part of the University strategy including:

- Providing Departments data on incoming students backgrounds to assist with the allocation to specialist and informed Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
- Formation of the Access and Participation Planning subcommittee which includes members across most Professional Support Services and all academic Faculties

Academic changes were in the Blended Learning and the practice of recording lectures which immediately delivered the outcomes of our planned Lecture Capture

development.

For our Foundation year courses, which have a high proportion of mature students, we delivered a Pre-Arrival Module (PAM), 7 to 11 September, in an attempt to get students familiarised with online learning and our online platforms. In other areas of the University special support was given to mature students who were less familiar with the technology.

When COVID hit, we also explored and implemented additional steps to support students continuing at Chester during this difficult and uncertain time. For example,

- increased our Financial Support via the Hardship Fund available in April 2020 (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021) to reduce the anxiety of money worries
- refunded our residential accommodation fees when national lockdown hit
- moved to online Support Services with immediate effect for mental health and welfare support, disability support, study skills support, peer mentoring, etc.
- ensured students had access to IT hardware, software and internet connectivity to those most in need (before the Office for Students additional financial support was made available in December 2020 and February 2021)
- provided regular food and health/medication packages and online information and social activities to students (in collaboration with our Student Union) who have to stay in Residential accommodation due to health vulnerabilities or being Care Leavers/Care Experienced or Estranged students
- increased e-book and e-journal library catalogue and subscriptions following student-led requests
- increased support from PATs ensuring regular contact with students
- employed Student Engagement Assistants to engage with and develop projects to enhance our existing Study Skills Advisory team and to assist with changes and actions to mitigate the impact of COVID on this support service.

Target reference number: T16a_12

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Our commitment and investment to provide our new Inspiring Futures initiatives for 2019/20, such as Chester Difference Award, Venture, Internships, Mock Assessment Centres, etc., was offered and changed delivery to be online as soon as COVID hit. Only the 'Insight Industries/Employer Visits' initiative ceased due to not being able to go into places of work.

Our Inspiring Futures initiatives attracts an ever increasing proportion of LPN students, for example:

- 39% of our CDA students and 31% of our Internship students in 2019/20 were from LPN

Of the LPN graduates in 2017/18 who participate in our Inspiring Futures initiatives:

- 74.1% were in highly skilled employment following graduation (2.1% higher than the UoC average of 72% - data based on the Guardian League table criteria)

This shows that participating in our targeted extra-curricular employment activities can positively impact on students graduate outcomes.

Note that this target relates to 2017/18 graduates before the impact of COVID.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

At our interim review in February 2020, there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20 as the dataset from GOS had not been released until May 2020. Plus, up take of students from LPN onto our Inspiring Futures initiatives were also high.

It's important to note that work and/or further study data for the 2019/20 target refers to the 2017/18 graduates who responded to the new Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) surveying students 15 months following graduation. Previous data was collected through the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) surveying students 6 months following graduation. Respondent rates for the University, and the sector in general, was extremely low and therefore could be impacting the results data.

No additional steps were needed as we were able to change our delivery of these initiatives to be purely online. For example:

- Venture Programme moved to interactive online webinars
- Virtual Internships and Mock Assessment Centres were being offered which attracted a high number of applications
- All one-to-one interventions delivered remotely over the telephone or via Microsoft Teams
- Only the 'Insight Industries/Employer Visits' initiative ceased due to not being able to go into places of work

Work began in 2019/20 in the area of raising staff awareness of the APP and the issues and barriers experienced by students from underrepresented groups. The profile of Access and Participation is now high and is a key part of the University strategy following:

- Providing Departments data on incoming students backgrounds to assist with the allocation to specialist and informed Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
- Formation of the Access and Participation Planning subcommittee which includes members across most Professional Support Services and all academic Faculties

This also raised the profile of the new Inspiring Future initiatives, which includes our interventions known to impact positively of graduate outcomes of LPN students and sector initiatives from the AGCAS network that show positive impact findings which is key to our strategic approach to addressing performance gaps.

Target reference number: T16b_01

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

This is an 'output' target. Overall, 203 school mentees received our support through this programme which is 47 short of our 2019/20 target. However, this programme has positive 'outcomes' / impact results.

Secondary school mentees reported that having a mentor had:

- 77% positive impact on levels of persistence
- 100% positive impact on levels of confidence
- 85% positive impact on levels of motivation
- 100% positive impact on levels of self-esteem
- 77% positive impact on levels of study skills

- 92% positive impact on levels of awareness of Higher Education
- 100% positive impact on levels of academic performance

School Coordinator Evaluations showed that having a mentor had:

- 75% positive impact on mentees levels of persistence
- 80% positive impact on mentees levels of confidence
- 50% positive impact on mentees levels of motivation
- 100% positive impact on mentees levels of self-esteem
- 50% positive impact on mentees levels of study skills
- 80% positive impact on mentees levels of awareness of Higher Education
- 60% positive impact on mentees levels of academic performance

Primary school mentees reported:

- 100% enjoyed having a Mentor
- 100% found their mentor helpful, particularly in the areas of maths and reading support

We committed to offering Mentors within local schools in 2019/20 which involved:

- placing volunteer students in local primary and secondary schools on a weekly basis, for a minimum of half a school day for 8 weeks
- working on a one-to-one basis, in groups or in-class to support school pupils with a range of activities such as supporting academic work, guided reading and/or social-emotional problem solving skills
- Inspiring children and young people to reach their full potential as part of the University's commitment to Widening Participation

During 2019/20, four of our partner schools, two Secondary and two Primary, withdrew from the programme due to unexpected circumstances (staffing issues and other priorities), but all expressed an interest in participating in future years. Then COVID hit and we could no longer work with or assist more mentees in person from March 2020 onwards.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Despite losing three partner schools at the beginning of the academic year, we were able to develop agreements with two new partner schools.

In January, when one further partner withdrew, we linked with our Outreach department to secure another new partner agreement with a further school.

At our interim review in February 2020, we expected the number of mentees (129 mentees at this point in time) to increase by the end of the scheme as our feedback from the Mentors within schools indicated more mentees needed support. Plus gaining a new partner school when one withdrew in January would help to increase the opportunities to support more mentees.

However, when COVID hit in March national restrictions applied and a number of Mentors ended their support earlier than planned. Schools struggled then to factor in 'virtual' mentoring support into their change of delivery and timetables.

Target reference number: T16b_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>We committed to holding on-campus events for Primary Schools across the region as noted in our 2019/20 plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We held 4 events in total which 291 primary pupils attended <p>This was significantly less than previous years and significantly less than our target. However, our Primary School events primarily occur between Easter and the summer months when Primary school timetables allow this.</p> <p>The impact of COVID and national lockdown meant a significant number of scheduled on-campus events had to be cancelled with immediate effect.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>At our interim review in February 2020, there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15-20 on-campus events for Primary Schools would have taken place during Summer 2020• The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national lockdown meant the scheduled events had to be cancelled• Our Outreach Team concentrated their efforts on and invested in providing online resources and materials for partner Primary Schools to use: https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-primary-schools https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-teachers-and-advisors <p>Materials focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting Year 6 pupils transition to high school,• introduction to the concept of higher education• understanding links to career pathways and increase their knowledge of careers• transition to Secondary School• gaining an understanding of Higher Education <p>All resources were sent to our partner Primary Schools and targeted schools with high proportions of pupils from underrepresented groups (via the HEAT data source). Following this promotion, hits to our Outreach Team's webpage more than doubled from pre-lockdown hits, with hits to our resources pages for post-16 information, being the most popular following the release in May 2020.</p>

Target reference number: T16b_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>Although this target is based on the number of on-campus events for FE colleges, it is important to note that working with Post-16 pupils and FE Colleges primarily occurs off campus within schools and colleges themselves. In 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• we held 76 Post-16 off-campus events where 2377 students attended prior to national lockdown

We committed to holding on-campus events for FE Colleges across the region as noted in our 2019/20 plan:

- we held 5 events on-campus in total which 157 FE College students attended.

This was significantly less than previous years and significantly less than our on-campus event target. However, our FE Colleges events primarily occur in the summer months when college timetables allow this.

The impact of COVID and national lockdown meant a significant number of scheduled on-campus events had to be cancelled with immediate effect.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

At our interim review in February 2020, there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20:

- 40-50 on-campus and off-campus events for FE Colleges would have taken place in the Summer 2020

- The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national lockdown meant the scheduled events had to be cancelled

- Our Outreach Team concentrated their efforts on and invested in providing online resources and materials for partner FE Colleges to use as part of our Widening Participation commitments

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/resources>

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-teachers-and-advisors>

- Materials focus on an introduction to HE, student life, decision making, how to write a personal statement, the UCAS application process, financial support and clearing:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-post-16-students>

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/post-16-and-post-18-options>

- Our Outreach Team also worked closely with Academic Departments to put on subject related sessions for post-16/FE college students aimed at giving students a taste of Chester's blended approach to learning and raise aspirations on the subjects we offer.

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/kitchen-sessions>

All resources were sent to our partner FE Colleges and targeted schools with high proportions of pupils from underrepresented groups (via the HEAT data source).

Following this promotion, hits to our Outreach Team's webpage more than doubled from pre-lockdown hits, with hits to our resources pages for post-16 information, being the most popular following the release in May 2020.

Target reference number: T16b_05

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We committed to working collaboratively with Uni Connect (previously NCOP) partners in 2019/20. Whilst we have reported 'no progress' for this target, we would argue that there was progress with the work but holding collaborative events was limited by COVID.

There were at least 3-5 collaborative events planned with Shaping Futures and various

discussions relating to activity of the working groups (BAME, Mature, LAC, Students with Disability).
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>At our interim review in February 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20: • Discussions and meetings with collaborative Partners were being held • At least 3-5 collaborative events planned with Shaping Futures • The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national lockdown meant the scheduled events had to be cancelled. <p>Instead we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invested in joining NEON's Uni4Me (https://uni4me.co.uk/) which enabled us to work with partners to highlight and signpost access to online resources and activities. • Collaborative work continued through discussions and meetings in respect of the working groups focusing on the provision of online resources and materials. • We supported a variety of Shaping Futures and HiHo+ online collaborative events, namely a NW HELOA event delivering a presentation on UoC, and we staffed a panel discussion.

Target reference number: T16b_07
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>Whilst we have reported 'limited progress' for this target, we would argue that there was progress with the work but that the evaluation of this activity was limited by COVID. Limited outcome data was obtained in 2019/20 following a lack of response from schools which affected the ability to establish baseline data in order to develop and produce improvement outcome targets which we articulated in the 2019/20 plan.</p> <p>We committed to, and invested in, the delivery of raising GCSE attainment activities in two subject areas, English and Maths, across numerous schools in Cheshire West and Chester and North Wales.</p> <p>The raising attainment and supportive development programme we offered includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE revision sessions and masterclasses (direct class room based activity) • collaborative lesson/curriculum design and implementation and assessment and marking criteria design with teachers • coaching and professional development of teachers to increase knowledge, skill sets and confidence. <p>Up until March 2020, these activities took place in person. The Faculty of Education and Children's Service worked hard to change their activities to online. However, schools struggled to participate due to changes to their teaching format and practices effecting their timetables.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
At our interim review in February 2020, there was no indication of not hitting our committed target for 2019/20. The impact of COVID in March 2020 and national

lockdown meant the scheduled in-class or support for teachers had to be cancelled, until our Faculty of Education and Children's Services developed an online programme during Easter 2020.

- English and Maths both offered online resources and sessions for teachers designed in collaboration with teachers from regional schools.
- For example, Maths collaborated with the regional maths hub to provide provision to support 11-16 GCSE teachers and GCSE resit teachers
<https://www.ncetm.org.uk/maths-hubs>
- For English the Warrington Research Book Club also continued online
- English also continued with online CPD sessions to increase knowledge, skill sets and confidence
- Maths held online sessions with teachers in regional schools in the areas of 'learning to teach algebra, geometry and bar modelling projects online' and 'design and implementation of Trigonometry for Foundation Tier'.

Our Faculty of Education and Children's Services also held free online CPD sessions for schools to support teacher development in the areas of:

- o what schools should look like post COVID-19;
- o developing an inclusive classroom to develop the skills that allow all children and young people to thrive;
- o Diversity, Bias and Representation to explore the issues of race equality and bias within institutions, the impact on schools and education policy and discuss why representation matters in the curriculum;
- o exploring the importance of the early years teaching framework;
- o interactive sessions looking at positive behaviour strategies and creating positive learning environments by looking at the needs of individuals.

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/news/bringing-teaching-education-virtual-world?list=6800>

These sessions were designed and delivered in collaboration with our partnership schools and organisations and have had over 22,000 attendances regionally, nationally and internationally.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

University of Chester's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	
T16a_03	
T16a_04	
T16a_05	
T16a_06	
T16a_07	
T16a_08	
T16a_09	
T16a_10	
T16a_11	
T16a_12	
T16a_13	
T16a_14	
T16a_15	
T16a_16	
T16b_01	
T16b_02	
T16b_03	
T16b_04	
T16b_05	
T16b_06	
T16b_07	