Access, success and progression in the new HE environment

Chris Millward
Director for Fair Access and Participation, OfS
Social Mobility Action Plan

‘In our country today, where you start still all too often determines where you finish. And while talent is spread evenly across the country, opportunity is not. None of us should accept this. Everyone deserves a fair shot in life and a chance to go as far as their hard work and talent can take them.’
a) protect the institutional autonomy of English HE providers

b) promote quality, and greater choice and opportunities for students, in the provision of HE

c) encourage competition between English HE providers in connection with the provision of HE where that competition is in the interests of students and employers, while also having regard to the benefits for students and employers resulting from collaboration between such providers

d) promote value for money in the provision of HE

e) promote equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in HE

f) use the OfS’s resources in an efficient, effective and economic way

g) regulatory activities should be—
   (i) transparent, accountable, proportionate and consistent, and
   (ii) targeted only at cases in which action is needed.
Young participation: overall

Source: End of cycle report 2017, UCAS
Young participation: place
Young participation: MEM

Entry rates for English 18 year old by multiple equality measure groups

Ratio of 18 year old entry rate for MEM groups to 2 to 5 vs MEM group

(group 5 = most likely to enter to HE)

Source: End of cycle report 2017, UCAS
Young participation: tariff

Source: Internal OfS(DFA) analysis of HESA Performance Indicators 2016-17
Pre-HE attainment

How important is attainment at different ages in explaining SES gaps in HE participation?

Difference in participation at age 18/19 between 20% richest and 20% poorest state school students

- HE participation overall
- Participation at a high status institutions (amongst participants)

Source: Figure 5.1 of Crawford et al. (2017)

Choices and pathways

Skilled employment

- Higher education (undergraduate degree)
- Higher education (levels 4/5 technical education)
- Degree apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships

Bridging provision (where appropriate)

- A levels and/or applied general qualifications**
- College-based technical education including placement in industry
- Employment-based technical education, e.g. apprenticeship with at least 20% college-based education

Transition year (if appropriate)

- GCSEs and technical awards
- Academic option
- Technical option

* Where a student does both, the traineeship will follow the transition year. Students doing both the transition year and a traineeship may progress directly to employment.
Attainment and admissions

‘In England there is a closer link between prior attainment and university admission…it is clear that universities are more academically selective and students are admitted more on the basis of their prior achievement than on the basis of other factors, such as their social background…the socio-economic gap in prior achievement is very large in England…so social background matters more for university admission’.

(Crawford, Dearden, Micklewright and Vignoles 2017)

‘A-level grades are not a measure of ability, and not an entirely objective measure of attainment, but can serve as an indicator of potential when judged with reference to the socio-economic context in which they were achieved…many universities now ask for A-level grades which far exceed the minimum required to do well at degree level’.

(Boliver, Gorard and Siddiqui 2017)
Non-continuation rate by young participation

Source: HESA student record.
Mature students

Source: HESA

Number of entrants


Source: HESA
HE participation: level

Entrants by level and mode of study

- Full-time first degree
- Part-time first degree
- Full-time other UG
- Part-time other UG

Source: HESA student record.
UK-domiciled students at English institutions only.
All students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education:

• are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education;

• receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure;

• are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time;

• receive value for money
Access and participation priorities

Access

• To increase the entry rates of students from underrepresented groups to higher education, in particular reducing the participation gaps for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and at higher tariff providers, where they are widest.
• To reverse the decline in higher education participation by mature students from underrepresented groups.

Success

• To improve the non-continuation rates of students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, and to reduce the gaps between these groups and other students.
• To reduce the attainment gaps between students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, and those from other groups.

Progression

• To improve the rates of progression of students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, into graduate-level employment or further study, and to reduce the gaps between these groups and other students.
Pressure on individual providers.

• To demonstrate continuous, year-on-year improvement through access and participation plans to:
  • Reduce the gaps in access, success and progression for underrepresented groups among their own students
  • Improve practice, including through better evaluation and sustained engagement with schools from early years and with employers.

• A risk and outcomes based approach:
  • OfS can apply conditions where it identifies a higher level of risk to breach of this condition and it can refuse a plan
Sector-wide support

- Removing barriers to new providers and flexible provision
- Improving information, advice and guidance
- Availability and use of more common and rigorous data and evidence
- Collaborative working between higher education providers and with schools and employers
- Development and sharing of innovative and effective practice.
Mature students

What can OfS do?

- Removing regulatory barriers
- Rewarding innovation and ambition by aligning funding with targets
- Supporting collaborative outreach, building on NCOP
- Facilitating the growth of higher level and degree apprenticeships
- Working with local skills strategies
- Improving availability and use of data and indicators
Our challenge

‘Our regulatory framework enables the Director for Fair Access and Participation to develop a bold new approach to supporting social mobility, and equality and diversity, through higher education. …We will be radical and ambitious to make sure we deliver on the promise of higher education as an engine for social mobility, and a gateway to a better life for those who undertake it.’