

The Brunel WP Strategic Statement 2015-16

BACKGROUND

The Brunel WP Strategic Statement builds on the broad aims and objectives of the WP Strategic Assessment (WPSA) 2009-12. It underpins the work of the Brunel WP Office 2015-16 and the use of the HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation.

SECTION 1

1.1 The WP Strategic Statement 2015-16

WP activities in 2015-16 will be targeted at students from under-represented groups with particular emphasis on students with disabilities, care leavers, and mature students (over 21 on entry, full time first degree from low participation neighbourhoods). They will also focus on the retention and employability of all Brunel WP undergraduates. The aim is to consolidate the work carried out to date to ensure that Brunel continues to exceed its WP benchmarks in key areas and endeavours to meet its benchmarks in areas where it currently falls short by concentrating its activities on specific institutions and groups.

1.2 The WPSA 2009-12 had three main **aims**:

- To increase the number of students attending Brunel from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs).
- To encourage and support the application, transition, progression and retention of specific cohorts of WP students e.g. the disabled, care leavers, BTEC and mature, full time first degree students from LPNs.
- To improve the transition, progression and, in particular, the retention and employability of all WP students.

1.3 These aims will continue to be pursued, using the HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation for widening access 2015-16, through the following **objectives**:

- The University will concentrate its outreach activities on relevant areas in the six west London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Focused work will be carried out with targeted schools/colleges in these boroughs, in other relevant areas of greater London and also with voluntary organisations and regional/national WP projects. The WP Office will continue to support the delivery of the Brunel Urban Scholars Saturday School programme for WP students from institutions across London.
- The University will provide a range of outreach and transition activities for students with disabilities, care leavers, BTEC and mature students, such as tailored campus visits, pre-induction and induction programmes. Progression and retention activities will build on existing support offered by student support services such as the Disability and Dyslexia Service, Counselling Service and the Placement and Careers Centre.

- The University will continue to offer support for all WP learners, in particular through its Mentoring and WP Internship schemes, and will encourage the Colleges and student support services to develop further activities to improve retention and employability.

1.4 Targets and milestones 2015-16

Targets 2009-16	Milestones	
	2014/15	2015/16
Improve the HEFCE Polar 3 benchmark figure for students studying at Brunel from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs). Current benchmark 5.7% (2013/14).	0.2% annual increase	0.2% annual increase
Support the application, transition, progression and retention of specific cohorts of WP students. In 2013/14 the percentage of students in receipt of DSA was 8.7% (HEFCE KPI); the percentage of mature, full time first degree students from LPNs was 4.7% (HEFCE KPI) and there were c. 63 known care leavers. The percentage of entrants with BTEC qualifications in 2014/15 was c.20%.		Increase enrolments where required and maintain and improve provision for specific underrepresented groups through targeted activities
Improve retention*and employability in targeted academic areas, based on annual monitoring		Work with two academic/support areas to improve retention and employability (Other retention/employability work is funded through the Access Agreement)

* **Retention** is defined as 'course completed or progressed normally'

1.5 Staffing and management

The HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation 2015-16 will continue to be used to support the staffing (currently 2.0fte plus 0.5 administrator) and operational costs of the Brunel WP Office.

1.6 Added value of the HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation 2015-16

The WP Office will continue to offer assistance to the Brunel Urban Scholars scheme run by the Brunel Able Children's Centre (BACE) and funded in part through the Brunel Access Agreement. Over the years this has leveraged in substantial amounts of charitable funding for specific elements of the programme, most recently £57 K from Moody's Foundation and £8K from Niftylift Ltd in 2014-15.

www.brunel.ac.uk/sse/education/research/bace/urban

1.7 **Monitoring and evaluation**

- The WPSS is monitored in line with standard University practices by the Fees, Scholarships and SASS Committee.
- Membership of **AccessHE** (a division of London Higher) and participation in its collaborative events enable us to contribute to widening access across a broader geographic area. Evidence of the impact of Brunel's contribution is provided through the **AccessHE** evaluation processes.
- All activities will continue to be fully evaluated through written feedback, focus groups and action research within a developing formal evaluation framework covering both the OFFA Access Agreement and the WPSS. We have recently joined the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service in order to obtain better information about the progression routes of school and college students who participate in our WP activities. It will come into operation in September 2015.
- The Admissions Policy is reviewed annually by the Recruitment and Admissions Committee and referred to Senate for approval.

1.8 **Collaboration/Partnership initiatives**

- The HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation 2015-16 will be used to support summer schools, aspiration raising events and subject taster days in partnership with local schools, FE colleges and HEIs, local voluntary organisations and local authorities. It will also be used to support work with regional and national progression projects such as IntoUniversity and Generating Genius.
- Brunel's membership of **AccessHE** will continue to provide the framework for London-wide and collaborative initiatives in 2015-16 in the context of the new HEFCE guidance on National Networks for Collaborative Outreach.

1.9 **Support for Equality and Diversity objectives**

The WP Strategic Statement 2015-16 fully supports the University's Equality Objectives, in particular Equality Objectives 6 and 7.

See: www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives

1.10 **Fair Admissions**

See: www.brunel.ac.uk/courses/admissions/admissions-policy

SECTION 2

2.1 **Changes of approach 2015-16**

- There will be increased focus on retention, progression and employability initiatives in order to address some of the inequalities in outcome that exist among WP students.
- Provision has been made to fund certain new activities from the Access Agreement budget, if required, to further the aims of the WPSS.