

SENATE

Title of paper: Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 (APP)

Main purpose of the paper: For decision

Presenter(s): Prof Ruth Valentine, PVC Education and Rachel Dearlove, Head of Education Policy and Governance

Date of paper: 23 April 2024

Purpose of the paper:

To present for consideration and approval a near final draft of the Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 fulfilling OfS Condition of Registration A1. A new plan must be submitted to the OfS before the end of May 2024.

Recommendations:

- To endorse the near final draft of the APP for submission to the OfS
- To authorise the PVC Education to approve the final version for submission

Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):

Wider stakeholder engagement with the draft plan has been undertaken through FECs, Senior Tutor Forum, DoE forum and the Heads of Academic Unit Forum. A Student Consultative Group has contributed to the development of the plan. UEC endorsed the draft plan for onward transmission to Senate (UEC 18 April)

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 (APP)

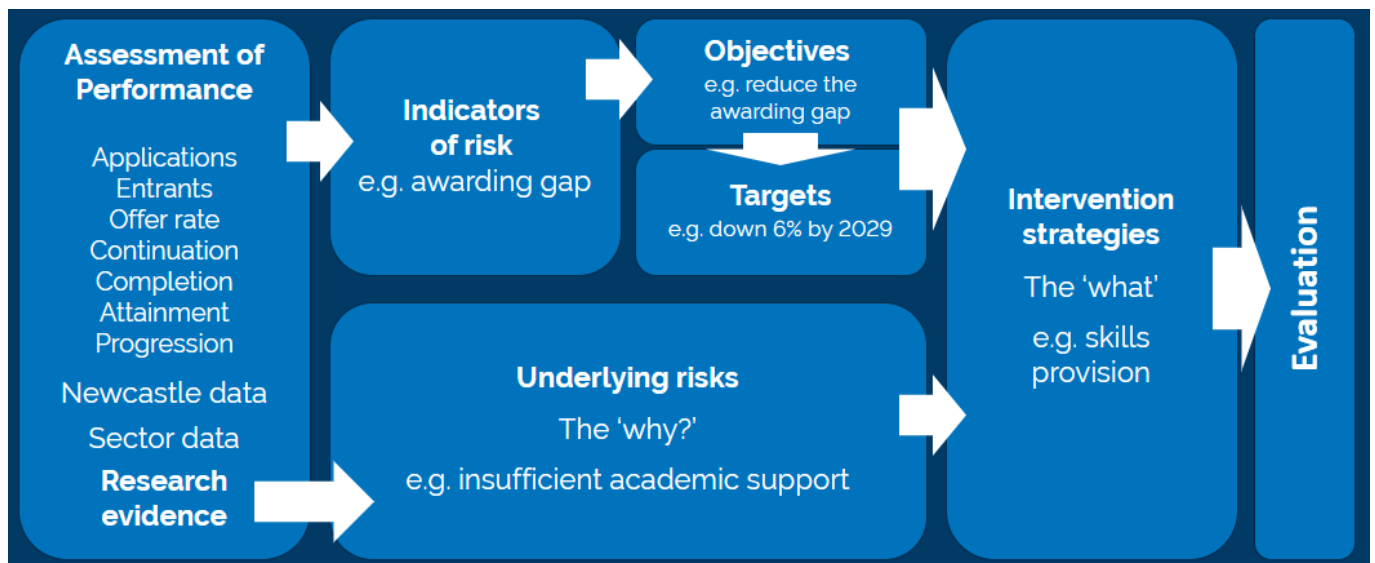
Background

1. The submission of an Access and Participation Plan (APP) is a regulatory requirement of the conditions of registration set by the Office for Students (OfS). The successful submission of an APP is required for institutions to charge Home fees above the fee cap of £6165 (representing £52 million income to the University). There is therefore substantial financial risk attached to the development of the plan if it did not meet OfS expectations.
2. The current APP covers the 2020-21 to 2024-25 period. The new APP is being written to cover 2025-26 to 2028-29 although the OfS may approve the plan for a shorter period – either based on its confidence in the plan or as part of its spreading of renewal dates across the sector.
3. A revised approach to APPs was published in Spring 2023 with a group of 35 institutions volunteering to produce plans in line with the revised approach as 'Wave 1'. All other institutions are in 'Wave 2' have a range of submission deadlines during 2024 however institutions with early application deadlines (for medicine, dentistry and veterinary courses) are required to submit by the end of May 2024.

APP development process

4. The OfS produced [detailed guidance](#) to support institutions in developing their APPs. Producing a plan requires institutions to work through a systematic set of steps drawing together quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand the underlying 'risks to equality of opportunity' that students face in their higher education journey.

APP process



5. The development of Newcastle's new APP has been undertaken through the APP Working Group. This has been chaired by the Academic Registrar with membership of the PVC Education, NUSU Sabbatical Officers, Recruitment & Admissions, Student Services, Inclusive Newcastle Knowledge Centre and Finance.
6. Student engagement in the development of the APP is a key requirement of the OfS and a Student Collaborative Group (SCG) was established to provide input and feedback on the draft APP as it was being developed. Newcastle University Student's Union intend to submit a Student Submission to the OfS as part of the APP process also drawing on the SCG.

Next steps

7. The APP is presented as a near final draft – there are some minor additions as well as copy-editing to be undertaken before submission. Senate is asked to approve this near final draft and authorise the PVC Education to approve the final version for submission.

Future governance and resourcing

8. UEC agreed that the existing APP Working Group change into an APP Monitoring Group reporting to UEC. This would meet three times a year to:
 - Monitor:
 - Data related to the assessment of performance
 - Performance against targets
 - Delivery of interventions
 - Evaluation of interventions including publication of evaluation outputs
 - Consider whether any variations to the plan should be proposed for submission to OfS
9. The Academic Registrar and PVC Education are looking at the future resourcing of activity related to the central support of the APP, with plans to be confirmed prior to the new academic year

Attachments:

Draft Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 (APP)