

Regent's University London (the 'University')

Access and Participation Statement 2020/21

Overview

The University offers students a supportive and personal environment to achieve our mission statement of developing tomorrow's global leaders. Our vision is to be a university of choice that transforms students' lives through inspirational and innovative teaching and research in an environment that provides a personalised student experience. The University's strategic plan commits to achieving six key objectives:

1. deliver outstanding and inspirational teaching, learning, scholarship and research while incrementally enhancing quality;
2. support and deliver student success, engagement and employability - developing successful, effective and engaged global citizens who achieve their maximum potential;
3. be financially sustainable, balancing income, primarily from tuition fees, with expenditure while generating sufficient surpluses to ensure renewal and investment;
4. embed the culture and supporting behaviours that our staff have said they wish Regent's to espouse;
5. maintain a strong international ethos; and
6. actively seek institutional partnerships and alliances where this enhances the academic reputation of the University, strengthens our finances and aligns with our institutional values.

Our practical, industry-led degrees enable our students to flourish as individuals, professionals and global citizens. The multitude of nationalities represented on campus benefit from small group teaching alongside a culture of internationalism, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Access and participation

The University's offer is a unique one and it is our ambition to increase access to a global education, meanwhile empowering our students to realise their potential at university and beyond. This statement, guided by OfS regulatory advice, details an assessment of current performance around access and participation, outlines current provision and sets out ambitions and strategy for the future.¹

In 2018/19, the University's student body comprised 2,303 full time equivalent students, including 1,633 undergraduates and 387 postgraduates, as well as students on study abroad, other postgraduate pathways and language courses. In 2017/18, 22% of the student body were UK domiciled and all access and attainment data relates to this cohort.

1. Assessment of current performance: access, attainment and progression

1.1 Access

- (a) The University receives no public or Government funding and generates most of its annual income through tuition fees. As one of the most internationally diverse campuses in the UK, the University puts internationalism at the heart of its mission statement and doesn't differentiate fees between home/EU and international students.
- (b) The University is classified as an Alternative Provider under the terms of Student Loans Company entitlements and students are therefore entitled to a tuition fee loan of no more than £6,165 per year. This is a significant barrier to entry as it doesn't cover the cost of tuition

¹ OfS Regulatory Advice on Preparing your 2019-20 access and participation Statement
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1110/ofs2018_07.pdf

fees at the University.² In 2019/20 the university supported eight UK domiciled undergraduate students from lower-income backgrounds with a full fee-waiver bursary and an additional stipend for international exchange.

- (c) The University's admissions records show gender parity from 2013/14 to 2017/18. In 2018/19, 26% of BAME applicants went on to register at the University, against 34% of applicants from white backgrounds. Transparency data for applications, offers, acceptances and registrations are published on the University's website.³

1.2 **Attainment**

The University recognises a BAME attainment gap consistent with the UK higher education sector. Male attainment is also lower, as is attainment amongst students in the lower IMD deciles. We will continue to benchmark and monitor disparities in access, attainment and progression at the University. The smaller student body allows the University to define interventions on a one-to-one basis through our Student Achievement Officers. There is no consistent difference in attainment for students with disabilities and provision is in place for continued success in this area.

1.3 **Progression**

Data on graduate outcomes is yet to be finalised and will be made available in our next access and participation statement.

2. **Current provision: outreach and financial support, student success and progression**

2.1 **Outreach and financial support**

(a) **The Regent's Achievement Scholarship**

The University currently supports eight students from low-income backgrounds with full fee-waiver bursaries and additional financial support for studying abroad. From 2020/21, these bursaries will be repositioned as 'The Regent's Achievement Scholarship' in order to highlight the academic achievement of recipients over the needs-based element of the award, formerly known as the Regent's Bursary. This is based on feedback from student consultation, in which recipients explained their wishes not be marked out as needs-based students, as well detailing their need for additional financial and pastoral support. From 2020, the award will therefore also comprise additional pre-entry support through the launch of our 'Insight to Regent's' programme, an annual stipend of £1,000, support with the costs of meals on campus and a dedicated point of contact at Regent's University London for pastoral support.

(b) **Insight to Regent's**

In 2020 we will launch 'Insight to Regent's' a pre-entry support programme for those applicants interested in the Regent's Achievement Scholarship. This new programme will offer all Regent's Achievement Scholarship enquirers the following:

- (i) 1-1 application support;
- (ii) information, advice and guidance around student finance;
- (iii) a tour of our campus, located in the heart of Regent's Park; and

² Student Loans Company *Student Support for Higher Education in England 2019: 2018/19 Full Year and 2019/20 Early In Year* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/847674/SLCSP052019.pdf

³ Regent's University London *Transparency return Applications, offers, acceptances and registrations: 2018-19 entrants* <https://regents.ac.uk/ofs-transparency>

- (iv) an opportunity to meet staff and students and ask questions about life at the University in an informal and welcoming setting, as well as talking through any challenges applicants might be facing in accessing higher education.

(c) **Scholarships and awards**

In addition to the Regent's Achievement Scholarship, the University offers a range of scholarships and other financial awards to support entry and reward excellence. Through our financial awards offer, the University supports international students in studying in the UK who would otherwise not have been able to fund their studies.

(d) **The Advocacy Academy**

Since 2015, the University has partnered with the Advocacy Academy, a youth development charity supporting underrepresented year 12 and 13 students in reaching their potential through engaging with contemporary social issues. The University invites students to campus throughout the year and hosts a week-long residential in August, during which the Advocacy Academy launches its flagship programme of support.

(e) **The Youth Model UN**

In keeping with the University's commitment to internationalism, the University delivers the Youth Model UN, a two-day conference in which we invite more than 100 students from schools across the UK, as well as several international schools, to find solutions to real world problems through a conference simulation. Attendees gain an understanding of international politics, conflict resolution and contemporary global issues.

Preparatory workshops are delivered in local schools and pre-programme training is offered to teachers. An integral part of the programme is bringing together students from local state, independent and international schools.

(f) **Schools and colleges**

The University welcomes requests from schools and colleges for information, advice and guidance workshops, as well as campus visits. The University is working to develop longstanding partnerships and takes a data driven approach in prioritising those schools and colleges with lower-participation rates. At present, we offer aspiration raising workshops covering an introduction to higher education, student finance and personal statements on an ad-hoc basis.

(g) **Hardship Fund**

The University makes available a discretionary Hardship Fund to provide some relief from financial hardship for students who experience unexpected emergencies or specific unexpected course or health costs. The Hardship Fund eases the financial burden faced by students who have no recourse to other sources of financial assistance.

(h) **Information, advice and guidance**

Our Student Advice team collaborate with our Finance Office to deliver 1-1 support to those students seeking support around funding their studies, living costs and applications to the Student Loans Company.

2.2 **Student success**

Our Student Support team offers a comprehensive range of information, support and specialist advice to help students reach their potential. The team oversee the provision of pastoral, practical and academic support tailored to the needs of our students.

(a) **Student achievement**

The University takes a whole university approach to student success, working across faculties, student and professional services to foster attainment. The Student Support team includes two Student Achievement Officers (2.0 FTE) dedicated to supporting all students at Regent's in reaching their potential. Student Achievement Officers offer tailored learning support plans, working 1-1 with students and teaching staff to foster academic potential.

(b) **Wellbeing and mental health**

The Student Support team appoints Student Support and Wellbeing Officers (2.5 FTE) who are a first port of call for students with questions or concerns around health, mental health, well-being and any other pastoral issues which arise throughout the student journey. We partner with the Marylebone Health Centre and refer students for specialist counselling where appropriate.

(c) **Disability support**

The University appoints a specialist Disability Support Coordinator (1.0 FTE) to support participation and success amongst students with disabilities. On behalf of students, our Disability Support Coordinator works to:

- (i) provide information, advice and guidance for disability related concerns;
- (ii) liaise closely with teaching staff to communicate needs and set up Student Support Agreements;
- (iii) organise exam concessions such as, extra time and specialist equipment;
- (iv) assist with applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA);
- (v) arrange screenings for specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) such as, dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- (vi) advise staff on reasonable adjustments so disabled students are not disadvantaged;
- (vii) arrange 1:1 sessions with the SpLD specialist;
- (viii) book counselling appointments; and
- (ix) arrange in class support (Non-Medical Helpers) such as note takers.

All teaching staff at the University are advised by the Student Services team in relation to declared disabilities and necessary adjustments.

(d) **Student consultation and the Student Union**

The University has an active student union, through which the student body are involved in decision making. The President of Regent's University London Student Union is an elected position and a paid sabbatical role held by a Regent's student. Their remit is to consult and lead the student body and enhance the student experience. The post-holder is employed by the University and sits on Academic Committee. The Student Union reaches all aspects of student life, from enhancing sports services and leading anti-bullying campaigns, to informing mental health provision on campus and supporting new student clubs and societies.

2.3 Progression

The results of the recent Graduate Outcomes survey is about to be published and will be made available in our in our next access and participation statement. This is a result of the disbandment of the DLHE.

(a) Alumni mentoring

The University offers current students the opportunity to be mentored by alumni and friends of the University to benefit from their academic, professional and personal experience and expertise. The connections made in the programme help prepare our students for a successful future and leave a lasting impact on the Regent's community. Students entering the university on means tested scholarships are prioritised for this opportunity.

(b) Careers and Business Relations team

Our Careers and Business Relations team provide to comprehensive careers and employability support throughout the student life cycle, including:

- (i) start-up advice;
- (ii) masterclasses;
- (iii) tailored careers advice;
- (iv) student consultancy services;
- (v) bookable hot desk environment for start-ups; and
- (vi) support with entrepreneurship visas if required.

The Careers and Business Relations team also work closely with the Student Union to provide dedicated support for student enterprise: 'The Hive' is the University's centre for entrepreneurship, offering students co-working space, extracurricular lessons and masterclasses, as well as advice sessions and enterprise competitions.

(c) Student ambassador programme

In 2020 the University launched its student ambassador programme, offering students the opportunity to gain valuable paid work experience around their studies. The programme includes training and ongoing professional development. Students in receipt of our needs-based scholarships are encouraged to apply and are guaranteed an invite to training and selection.

(d) Postgraduate progression scholarships

To support progression to postgraduate studies we offer all undergraduates at the University a discount to continue their studies with us.

3. Ambitions and strategy

3.1 Increase pre-entry outreach provision

The University appoints an Outreach Manager (1.0 FTE) and in 2020/21 this role has a renewed focus on access and participation. The post-holder will build new partnerships with schools with low participation rates, initially to offer the following pre-entry workshops:

- (a) an Introduction to Higher Education;
- (b) personal statement support; and

(c) fees and funding.

3.2 **Means tested entrants and student success**

To increase student success, the Outreach Manager will act as a single point of contact for students entering the university on a means tested basis. In addition to the recent introduction of a stipend and meal plan, we will also explore options to increase financial support for students entering the university on a means tested basis, as well as the introduction of a peer-to-peer mentoring scheme.

Our strategy around access and participation for students from low-income backgrounds will focus on providing a defined cohort of scholarship recipients with a comprehensive programme of support, with potential to scale the programme in the future.

3.3 **Reviewing financial awards at Regent's**

A significant barrier to entry for applicants to alternative providers is the cap on tuition fee loans at £6,165. The University continues to review its financial awards and the financial viability of partial fee-waivers for those applicants from underrepresented backgrounds who can access student loans through the Student Loans Company.

We will also review the expansion of the Regent's hardship fund to support those students who face challenges paying their tuition fees as a result of unexpected financial hardship.