



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by Leeds Conservatoire 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

Leeds Conservatoire's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

Our Access and Participation priorities are increasing the proportion of entrants from BAME* backgrounds and from the lowest participation areas, and closing the attainment gaps of those groups of students. We will seek to do this through a whole student lifecycle approach which begins at primary education age.

Pre-application: raising awareness, aspiration and attainment

As a conservatoire we recruit students through a selective audition process, and early development of young people is crucial for musicians to reach the appropriate standard to be competitive at audition. The national decline in music opportunities in primary and secondary education means that we need to increase our outreach work to raise attainment in schools, raise aspiration to HE music study and reduce barriers to entry.

Our own Junior department is a key element of our strategy; we have had success in providing bursaries for students aged 9-18 to attend our Saturday Music School (SMS). Student numbers have increased from 74 to 157 (112%) over the past seven years, and the number of students from low income backgrounds has increased at a higher rate, from 14 to 42 (180%). Students from low income backgrounds now make up 27% of SMS students, compared with 20% in 2011/12. We will continue to expand and promote this provision, and increase our outreach to young people, working in partnership with schools, Music Hubs and Conservatoires UK.

We will continue our partnership work with schools and increase this in a sustained way, targeting more of our activities towards schools and colleges in low participation areas, and those with high proportions of students from under-represented groups including lower-income backgrounds and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The city of Leeds and many of its surrounding areas are areas of low participation in HE; we currently recruit just 17% of our HE students from within West Yorkshire; we will seek to increase this through local partnerships with schools and colleges, Music Hubs and the National Collaborative Outreach Programme.

Evaluating the impact of our access activities is a long-term endeavour, particularly tracking young people from primary age into HE. We are investing in systems that will enable the evaluation of our long-term outreach measures and target setting for the future.

Application: reducing barriers to entry and offering advice and support

We continually review our entry requirements and procedures to reduce financial and structural barriers to conservatoire study, for example the removal of some audition fees and formal Music Theory qualifications, aiming to ensure that talented applicants with the potential to succeed are not deterred from applying.

Our open days and publicity materials aim to raise awareness of the financial and other student support available to applicants and students at the pre-application and application stages. Staff members are available at open day events to provide individual guidance to prospective applicants and their parents or carers.

On-programme: tailored student support and financial support

The small scale of the conservatoire means that we can provide bespoke support to students, including support for disabilities, mental health conditions and students on the autistic spectrum. We provide a personal tutor for all new students, whatever their point of entry, and we provide female personal tutors for female students as they are an underrepresented group within our student population, though this is improving year on year. Regular attendance monitoring and student progress meetings identify students at risk to enable early intervention.

Our financial support scheme provides automatic bursaries for students from lower-income backgrounds and we provide an additional hardship fund for students in particular need. Student financial support and advice are provided by a single team, ensuring a coordinated approach throughout the student lifecycle, and tailored advice for students at risk. A number of targeted actions are undertaken each year aimed at ensuring that all students are receiving the maximum financial support available to them, particularly where they have complex circumstances.

We need to take action to improve our support for BAME students and students from the lowest participation areas to help them to succeed, and we plan to do this by understanding the barriers to success faced by these students, which we will start to address through developing our data analysis. Creating diverse, inclusive, representative and supportive learning environments to close these attainment gaps is a national challenge. We have begun working in partnership with the Leeds City College Group and with Conservatoires UK on a variety of diversity initiatives and will sustain and invest in these activities throughout the life of this Plan.

We do not yet have sufficient insight into how much or how quickly we can reduce these gaps. During 2018/19 we will be working in partnership with our parent company the Leeds City College Group on social mobility as a strategic priority. As part of this we will be conducting further analysis of the student characteristics and reasons behind BAME retention and achievement gaps and the POLAR 1-2 achievement gap. This will enable us to put in place evidence based, targeted interventions for these groups and to commit to meaningful, stretching and outcomes-focused targets in our 2020/21 Access and Participation Plan.

Progression to employment and further study

Enterprise and employability are embedded throughout our HE curriculum, and we provide additional enterprise and career development activities outside the curriculum for both current students and alumni. All students have the opportunity to apply for career development bursaries or match funding to support projects that will enhance their employability.

Our postgraduate provision is small and relatively diverse: 17% of our postgraduate students are BAME and 21% have declared a disability. We have a good level of progression from our undergraduate provision to our postgraduate provision, but a very low number of those who progress are from low income backgrounds (7% or 1 student in 2017/18, and no students in the previous three years). We plan to further increase internal progression from undergraduate to postgraduate study and in particular to increase progression of those from low income backgrounds.

*Please note that Leeds Conservatoire will not be using the descriptor "BAME" in future documentation. We intend to break down our data to observe patterns by individual groups so that we have a more accurate understanding of our underrepresented groups and their specific needs.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by Leeds Conservatoire 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 Leeds Conservatoire'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)	Increase the proportion of Saturday Music School students from low-income backgrounds.	2014-15	20%	27%	28%	Percentage	2019-20	33	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Success)	Maintain the zero achievement gap between disabled students and students with no disability, as the proportion of disabled students increases.	2016-17	0%	0%	0%	Percentage	2019-20	6	No progress
T16a_03 (Success)	Reduce the retention gap between White British and Black and Minority Ethnic Students.	2016-17	4%	4%	4%	Percentage	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Success)	Reduce the achievement gap (failure rate) between White British and Black and Minority Ethnic Students.	2016-17	3%	3%	3%	Percentage	2019-20	2	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Success)	Reduce the Level 4 achievement gap (failure rate) between POLAR quintiles 1 and 5.	2016-17	10%	10%	10%	Percentage	2019-20	-1	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Success)	Reduce the Level 6 achievement gap (failure rate) between POLAR quintiles 1 and 5.	2016-17	8.6%	8.6%	8.6%	Percentage	2019-20	3	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Progression)	Increase the proportion of students progressing internally to postgraduate study who are from low-income backgrounds.	2017-18	7%	7%	14%	Percentage	2019-20	50	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

No data was returned for this section in Leeds Conservatoire's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

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	£170,000.00	£0.00	-100%
Financial Support	£435,536.00	£457,000.00	5%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Leeds Conservatoire 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

T16a_02	<p>30% of our students declared a disability in 2019-20, which is above the HESA average and an increase on the previous year. The data shows that the achievement gap mainly occurred with Level 5 students, where an 8% gap can be seen and at postgraduate level, where a 7% gap can be seen. At Level 3 and 4, the gap is reversed (students who have declared a disability have achieved at a higher rate than those who are not known to have a disability). At Level 6 the gap is 2%.</p> <p>Within the Level 5 cohort, we can see that students who declared a disability relating to mental health had an achievement rate of 75% and students who declared a learning difficulty had an achievement rate of 83%. This is compared to 89% for the whole cohort. Within our Postgraduate cohort, the gap was seen solely with students who had declared a learning difficulty (3 students failed/lost from a cohort of 64). Our Student Services team are working with academic staff to understand the pressures of Level 5, and are targeting this cohort with specific information about the support available to them. They are also working with the postgraduate team to assess support for students with learning difficulties.</p> <p>In addition to continuing to provide the additional services provided for students during 2019/20, we are again increasing our resource to support students' success with an additional health and wellbeing post. The remit of this role is to support students from underrepresented groups, and includes a focus on those students who are repeating a failed year.</p> <p>We are committed to supporting the success of students who have declared a disability and have set ambitious targets regarding continuation and achievement in our 2020-25 APP.</p>
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5. Confirmation

Leeds Conservatoire confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
No	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
Leeds Conservatoire 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	Professor Joe Wilson
Position	Principal

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

Leeds Conservatoire's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>With regards to meeting the commitments from our 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan: Support students with disabilities and learning difficulties through diagnostic testing – we met this commitment and were able to support an increased number of students.</p> <p>Mentoring for students who do not qualify for DSA or whose assessment has been delayed, particularly where there are mental health issues – we started mentoring students in advance of the formal DSA notification, where we were confident that it will be approved and therefore funded. For all other students, we have referred them in for work with our Wellbeing Advisers.</p> <p>Funding for transition work for disabled students at the start and end of their studies - we held an overnight orientation visit in August 2019 where a small number of students on the autistic spectrum stayed overnight in student accommodation and were introduced to the city and the conservatoire by support staff. In 2020, we offered a pre-arrival tour for students with additional needs.</p> <p>Funding for specialist educational diagnosis of autism – we are starting to develop this in 2020/21.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>We brought in the following measures to support students during 2019/20 and beyond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focusing our resource on providing as quick a response as possible to students referring themselves to our support service, and the creation of two short-notice appointments available every week day during term time. An improvement in the accessibility of the self-referral form, switching to a Microsoft Forms form.- Increased the range and availability of web-based resources for students with mental health and other health and wellbeing issues, signposting national websites, apps and downloadable resources.- Increased the mental health support available to students by increasing a wellbeing advisor post from 0.5FTE to 1.0FTE.- Delivered training to academic staff regarding students' wellbeing and ability to engage in online tuition. E.g. students with ADHD often preferred to engage with their cameras off as they found video calling too intense and intrusive.- Delivered training to all staff regarding how to encourage students to self-refer to the conservatoire's support services and how to have supportive conversations with students who are struggling. This training was contextualised for conservatoire students and led by the in-house Health & Wellbeing Manager.- Used the hardship fund to support students who didn't have the right learning technology to engage with online tuition, as well as ensuring a speedy turnaround of applications to the fund and widely promoting it to students.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

Leeds Conservatoire'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	