

## Point Blank Music School – APP 2020-25

### Introduction

Point Blank Music School provides programmes in music production and related subjects up to and including degree level. In harmony with widening participation, our mission is to prepare students from diverse backgrounds for a successful career in the music industry. Starting life as a recording studio, client interest in learning how to use the equipment led to the development of courses in response to a) those looking to learn and further their skills; b) positive student feedback; and c) knowledge exchange with industry partners. Further growth has since been fuelled by student recognition (NSS, WhatUni Award - 'Best Independent HE'), graduate progression and the School's own creative strategy. Excellent teaching (TEF Silver 2019) and industry standard facilities alongside practical, real-world experience has enabled Point Blank to evolve into the specialist HE School it is today.

The founding principles of Point Blank led the School to provide a wide range of accredited community outreach projects aimed at underrepresented groups. These roots should prove useful in our move towards widening access for which we can draw on our own experiences and best practice from other institutions. Currently, our students have the option to study on accelerated or standard modes across our programmes. From September 2019 students may enter all our courses via a new Foundation Year which has been strategically priced at £6,000, complementing our application to change category to Approved Fee Cap and supporting our widening participation goals and mission of enabling equal opportunities.

The School operates with a contextual admissions process for students who have attained two grades or less below standard entry requirements. The Foundation Year is being introduced in line with growing HE practice and to enable supportive access to student loan funding for students of all ages, increasing our equality of opportunity.

Overall, the student body at Point Blank reflects the average balance of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) representation in the HE sector. We have a high proportion of mature students and diverse cross-disciplinary mix of students across all courses. This encourages creative exposure to the variety of student cultures and interests in our small classes and between international and home students. As a global institution with an international reputation, we have welcomed students from over 43 nationalities during the past three years.

### 1. Assessment of Current Performance

When assessing our performance to identify gaps in access, success and progression, the data available from the OfS access and participation data dashboard is limited and is not considered to be statistically significant by OfS. To put this in context, we first established a relationship with our validating partner Middlesex University in 2012 but were limited to delivering CertHE and DipHE programmes (online distance learning only). In 2016 we were able to launch delivery of a face-to-face degree from our School in London. We started with a small cohort initially and due to resulting small sample sizes and this short time series, the identification of trends can prove challenging, as you will see below in this section. This also affects our progression data for now. In addition, many of our students have studied at our school with private funding and as such, their student equality data was not required to be returned to HESA and therefore is not included in the OfS dashboard. Consequently, the numbers shown from OfS in the tables in this section do not represent the full student body. However, we have used OfS data wherever possible in line with the guidance provided.

The popularity of the School and recruitment of a diverse student body continues to grow. Allied with the fact that all our HE provision will be designated from September 2019, the data available to OfS will increase going forward.

To overcome the challenges mentioned above, we have utilised and exhausted all other alternative data sources such as HESA's UK Performance Indicators, along with our own internal data where necessary. Where data has been supplemented, we have clearly stated the source. We have also applied the HESA rounding system where necessary for data protection, or used internal data showing percentage rate rather than number of students to avoid the potential identification of individuals as per HESA guidance.

In order to provide a richer data set, our focus encompasses students from all age groups and is not restricted to students aged 18-19 years old. In addition, as we have only recently had our first cohort of three year degree students complete the whole student life cycle, we decided to expand our focus to all undergraduate students and not restrict it to first degree students only, allowing a fuller picture of our student representation when assessing our performance. Due to the reasons mentioned above, our primary focus in this plan will be assessing access and success, and continuation of the collection and monitoring of data on progression, as well as disaggregation of all results. We will start analysing our progression data and disaggregating our data into detailed student characteristics when we have a more robust dataset in 19/20.

We are committed to monitoring and analysing the data as outlined in section 3 in our evaluation and monitoring strategies and will use this to inform our Access and Participation plans going forward.

## Enhancement of data capabilities and the use of data in future

We are committed to further developing our data collection and analysis capacity over the next five years. To date, we have conducted a comprehensive assessment based on the data available and our knowledge of our student base. We have been implementing various initiatives to enhance our data capabilities including streamlining and automating the data collection processes and promoting the culture of data-driven decision making throughout our governance structure. A key output of our efforts so far has been the recruitment of a data team and digital developers. This has allowed us to launch a digital application form for all applicants wishing to apply directly to Point Blank as well as a compulsory digital student details form which is completed by all applicants at point of enrolment. Along with dynamic data fields such as Care Leavers and socio-economic background, these developments will greatly enhance our data capture in preparation for both Access and Participation and future statutory data requirements and will allow us to report on data which is currently deemed statistically insignificant. We will also supplement our knowledge with qualitative data such as surveys of the impact of outreach activity and student recruitment interventions.

In response to the direction in which the sector is moving, we are also making more use of data and analytics to support our planning, decision-making and strategies in terms of widening participation. Our data team provides data and analytics at each stage of the student lifecycle, which will enable closer monitoring of our performance at these key stages and to identify any gaps in success and progression. This team assists with the continual review of information systems, the identification of outstanding data needs, and the analysis of statistics for management information and student characteristics. The data team will extend the scope of our data collection and analysis and develop and embed a longer-term institutional evaluation strategy to support planning and improvements in respect of our access, success and progression goals.

### 1.1 Higher Education Participation

#### Higher Education Participation – Access

Academic Year	No. with known participation data (rounded)	Entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR4)			
		Point Blank (rounded)	% from LPNs	Location adjusted benchmark (%)	Difference
16/17	30		3.4	9.2	-5.8
17/18	50		7.8	10.5	-2.7

Source: HESA UK Performance Indicators 17/18 (T1b)

Academic year	No. of students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 (rounded)	Point Blank (%)	UK average (%)	Difference
17/18	10	16	27.7	-11.7

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

Both data sources from OfS and HESA performance indicators suggest that we are below the national benchmark in terms of access for students from the low participation neighbourhoods (LPN) and/or from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2. We are fully aware that our current student funding is a barrier to students from the LPN/POLAR4 quintiles and have therefore identified this to be one of the areas to address in the following section.

#### Higher Education Participation – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Continuation rate of Point Blank students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	75	90.2	-15.2
17/18	92	90.2	1.8

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our non – continuation rates for students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see Point Blank continuation rates for students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 have improved substantially between 16/17 and 17/18, rising from 75% to 92%. As a result, we have not identified this as an area to address. We will continue to monitor the success (non – continuation) rate closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Higher Education Participation – Success (Attainment)

Academic year	Attainment rate of Point Blank students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	75	75	0
17/18	75	76	-1

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to assess our success (attainment) rate for students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 as OfS deem the data as insignificant due to reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 students are in line with the UK average for the past two years. As a result, we have not identified this as an area to target. We will continue to monitor the attainment rate closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Higher Education Participation – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

Point Blank aims to produce entrepreneurial graduates who can achieve professional careers in music and related creative industries, either through gaining employment or working independently, with many starting their own businesses. Our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with response rates of 100% and 86%, both demonstrate that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. We are unable to disaggregate the data further due to data protection and HESA guidance<sup>1</sup>.

The Department for Education analysis *Graduate outcomes (LEO): Employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates by subject studied and graduate characteristics in 2016/17*<sup>2</sup> shows that at one, three, five and ten years after graduation, POLAR4 quintile 1 consistently has the highest percentage of young graduates in further study, sustained employment or both, whereas POLAR4 quintile 5 has the lowest percentage. However, POLAR4 quintile 1 graduates have the lowest median earnings and POLAR4 quintile 5 graduates the highest earnings. POLAR4 quintile 5 graduates also have the highest difference in earnings one to ten years after graduation (£13,200 increase) and POLAR4 quintile 1 graduates the lowest (£10,600 increase).

We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to analyse our progression data in 19/20, when our first Graduate outcomes result is officially available, together with results collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention to the progression of students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2.

## 1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students

### Black Students – Access

Academic year	No. of Black students at Point Blank (rounded)	% of Black students at Point Blank	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	10	15	10.4	4.6
17/18	10	10	10.5	-0.5

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

Access for Black students was 15% in 16/17 and 10% in 17/18. Whilst the no. of Black entrants for both years is the same, the percentage decreased due to the overall growth of student numbers. We aim to proportionally grow our Black student numbers in line with our growing overall cohort and maintaining this performance over the remainder of the plan. We will continue to monitor the access rate for Black Students as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Black Students – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Point Blank Black student continuation rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	50	85.4	-35.4
17/18	58	85	-27

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

<sup>1</sup> HESA, *Data protection guidance for the HESA records* (Version 8.3, June 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education, *Graduate outcomes (LEO): Employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates by subject studied and graduate characteristics* (28 March 2019)

At a national level, as per OfS's *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students*<sup>3</sup>, retention rates are lower for Black students compared with their white peers. At Point Blank, in terms of continuation rates for our Black students, we have seen a slight improvement from 16/17 to 17/18. However, these rates are still significantly lower than for all other ethnic groups. We have therefore identified this to be one of the areas to address in the following section.

### Black Students – Success (Attainment)

Academic year	Point Blank Black student attainment rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	40	57.3	-17.3
17/18	100	58.9	41.1

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (attainment) rate for Black students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. However, national figures show a significant gap in Undergraduate degree results. In 17/18, white graduates were over twice as likely to get a first class degree as Black graduates, who were the least likely of all ethnic groups to achieve a first class degree (with 14.0% doing so) and 50.0% of white graduates achieved an upper second class degree (2:1), compared with 43.5% of Black graduates<sup>4</sup>. We have therefore identified this to be one of the areas to address in the following section alongside that of Black students' success (non – continuation).

### Black Students – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

As stated, our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrate that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. Despite this excellent performance, we recognise the national context as per OfS's *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students*<sup>5</sup>, that regardless of entry qualifications, subjects studied, degree outcomes and other sociodemographic characteristics, the differences in employment outcomes between white and BAME graduates persist even three years after graduation. We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to further analyse our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention to Black student progression.

### Asian Students – Access

Academic year	No. of Asian students at Point Blank (rounded)*	% of Asian students at Point Blank*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	35	18	13.3	4.7
17/18	20	7	13.7	-6.7

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our access rate for Asian students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that the number of Asian students has decreased from academic year 16/17 to 17/18. However, indicative numbers for 18/19 suggest that the number of Asian students has increased by approximately 35%. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor our Asian student numbers closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Asian Students – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Point Blank Asian student continuation rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	78	90.8	-12.8
17/18	94	90.3	3.7

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

<sup>3</sup> Office for Students, *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students* (January, 2018)

<sup>4</sup> HESA, *Undergraduate Degree Results* (6 June 2019)

<sup>5</sup> Office for Students, *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students* (January, 2018)

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for Asian students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that the continuation rate for Asian students has increased to 94% in 17/18 which is 3.7% above the national average. We have not currently identified this as an area to address. However we will continue to monitor our Asian student success rate (non – continuation) closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Asian Students – Success (Attainment)

Academic year	Point Blank Asian student attainment rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	61	70.7	-9.7
17/18	67	71.9	-4.9

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (attainment) rate for Asian students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that the attainment rate for Asian students has increased to 67% in 17/18 which is close to the national average. Although the attainment rate has increased, we have identified it to be one of the areas to address in the following section as our students have been below the national average for both years in which we have data available to us.

### Asian Students – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

As stated, our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. Despite this excellent performance, we recognise the national context as per OfS's Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students<sup>6</sup>, that regardless of entry qualifications, subjects studied, degree outcomes and other sociodemographic characteristics, the differences in employment outcomes between white and BAME graduates persist even three years after graduation. We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to further analyse our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will particularly monitor the progression of Asian students.

### Minority Ethnic Students – Access

Academic yr	No. ME students (rounded)*	% ME students at Point Blank*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	10	4.3	4.7	-0.4
17/18	25	9.8	4.8	5

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our access rate for Minority Ethnic students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series.

Using internal data, we have also seen a positive increase in Minority Ethnic students to 9.8% in 17/18. This is more than the national average for 17/18, which was 4.8%. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. We will therefore continue to monitor Minority Ethnic student numbers closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Minority Ethnic Students – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Point Blank ME continuation rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	89	89.1	-0.1
17/18	87	88.8	-1.8

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for Minority Ethnic students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that our Minority Ethnic student success (non – continuation) rate has remained in line with the national average for the last two years. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor the Minority Ethnic success rate (non – continuation) closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

<sup>6</sup> Office for Students, *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students* (January, 2018)

### Minority Ethnic Students – Success (Attainment)

Academic year	Point Blank ME attainment (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	71	75.3	-4.3
17/18	60	78	-18

Source: OfS Access and participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (attainment) rate for Minority Ethnic students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we note that our Minority Ethnic student success (attainment) rate has decreased in 17/18 to 60%, which is 18% below the national average. As such, we have identified this as a target to address in the following section as our Minority Ethnic students have been below the national average for both years.

### Minority Ethnic Students – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

As stated, our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. Despite this excellent performance, we recognise the national context as per OfS's *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students*<sup>7</sup>, that regardless of entry qualifications, subjects studied, degree outcomes and other sociodemographic characteristics, the differences in employment outcomes between white and BAME graduates persist even three years after graduation. We aim to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to further analyse our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention to the progression of Minority Ethnic students.

## 1.3 Mature Students

### Mature Students – Access

Academic yr	No. Mature students (rounded)	% Mature students (Point Blank)	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	30	49	27.4	21.6
17/18	80	59	27.8	31.2

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

Mature students (aged 21 and above), currently represent a strong area for the School in which we performed above sector average in terms of access. Whilst the OfS's *Topic Briefing on Mature and part-time students*<sup>8</sup> shows that numbers of mature students nationally have declined as there are fewer older part-time students, our figures buck this trend. The table above shows that Point Blank has consistently outperformed sector averages by an impressive margin, and when comparing against the same data from other small and specialist institutions within the same subject area, our performance also ranked at the top. We believe this is due to the vocational nature of our programmes, the support we provide and flexibility of entry points and delivery available. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. We will however continue to monitor Mature student numbers closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Mature Students – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	No. of Mature Students (rounded)*	Point Blank Mature student continuation rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	140	84	84.8	-0.8
17/18	160	86	84.7	1.3

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for Mature students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the reasons previously of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that our Mature student success (non – continuation) rate is in line with the national average over the last two years. Given the larger sample size shown, we have more confidence in the continuation of this trend. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. We will however continue to monitor Mature Student Success rates closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

<sup>7</sup> Office for Students, *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students* (January, 2018)

<sup>8</sup> Office for Students, *Topic Briefing: Mature and part-time students* (2019)

**Mature Students – Success (Attainment)**

Academic year	No. of Mature students graduating (rounded)*	Point Blank Mature student attainment rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	100	80	69.2	10.8
17/18	50	72	71.1	0.9

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (attainment) rate for Mature students as OfS deem the data as insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we can see that our Mature student success (attainment) rate has decreased in 17/18 but is still in line with the national average. Given the larger sample size shown, we have more confidence in the continuation of this trend. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. We will however continue to monitor Mature Student Success rates closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

**Mature Students – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)**

Our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to analyse our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention to the progression of Mature students.

**1.4 Disabled Students****All Point Blank Disabled Students – Access**

Academic year	No. of Disabled students (rounded)	% of Disabled students at Point Blank	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	10	13	13.7	-0.7
17/18	10	9	14.6	-5.6

Source: OfS Access and Participation dashboard

Currently OfS deem the data for our Disabled student access insignificant due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. We have seen a consistent number of students who declared disability year-on-year in terms of access; however, as a proportion of our growing student population this represents a percentage decrease. We recognise that due to this, our performance is slightly below our expectations and target performance and have identified this as one of our target groups to improve on.

**Disabled Students (without DSA) – Access**

Whilst we have collated the number of self-declared disabled students who have not claimed DSA internally, we cannot include this data in order to avoid the potential identification of individuals as per HESA guidance. We will continue to monitor this closely and as per the section above, we have identified access for Disabled students (both in receipt of and without DSA) as one of our target groups.

**Disabled Students (in receipt of DSA) – Access**

Academic Year	No. of disabled students in receipt of DSA (rounded)	% of DSA Disabled Students at Point Blank	HESA Benchmark %
16/17	0	0	12
17/18	5	2.9	10.1

Source: HESA Performance Indicators – T7

To further disaggregate access data for Disabled students, the data from HESA's UK Performance Indicators has also shown that we had five students (2.9%) in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in 17/18 compared to the sector performance of 10.1%. This is an area we will continue to work on to ensure students with declared disabilities are aware of the support and funding available to them.

As the proportion of disabled students grows, we aim to conduct more in-depth analysis on the access of our disabled students, by disaggregating our data into disability types as defined by HESA, by the end of 19/20. We will also start analysing year-on-year trends of different disability types by the end of 20/21 (once we have two years of data), which will inform our future strategic measures with regards to disabled students.

**All Point Blank Disabled Students – Success (Non – Continuation)**

Academic yr	Point Blank disabled student continuation rate (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	87	89.4	-2.4
17/18	86	89.4	-3.4

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for Disabled students as OfS deem the data to be insignificant. This is due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. Using internal data, we do not see any gap in terms of non-continuation between students with declared disabilities and other students, though we have been analysing student trends such as attendance and usage of our counselling service to inform our preventative measures and continue to improve our services. In 16/17, 87% of students with declared disabilities continued their studies at Point Blank, compared to 83% of students without, and in 17/18, 86% of students from both categories continued their studies. As a result, we have not identified this as an area to address. We will continue to monitor Disabled student continuation rates closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

**Disabled Students (in receipt of and without DSA) – Success (Non – Continuation)**

Academic year	No. of disabled students not in receipt of DSA (rounded)	Point Blank continuation (%)	No. disabled students in receipt of DSA (rounded)	Point Blank continuation (%)
16/17	15	86	0	100
17/18	10	78	5	100

Source: Internal data

To further disaggregate success rates for Disabled students, we can use internal data to monitor the success rates (non – continuation) of students in receipt of DSA and those not in receipt of funding. However, as there is no OfS benchmark for this disaggregation, we will monitor Disabled student success rate (non – continuation) as a whole where OfS data is available.

**All Point Blank Disabled Students – Success (Attainment)**

Academic Year	Point Blank attainment (%)*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	83	74.7	8.3

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

In attainment, we have little data (too few students to report on for 17/18), but what we do have suggests that students with declared disabilities have a high level of attainment on Point Blank courses. In 16/17, 83% of students with declared disabilities achieved a 2:1 or higher – above the UK performance rate of 75%, and significantly above the average for Point Blank students without declared disabilities that year (78%).

Whilst we have collated the number of self-declared disabled students who have not claimed DSA internally, we cannot include this data to avoid the potential identification of individuals as per HESA guidance. At present, dyslexia/ ADHD and mental health difficulties are the two dominant types of disability declared by our students however we cannot include this data to avoid the potential identification of individuals as per HESA guidance.

**Disabled Students – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)**

Our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to start undertaking further analysis of our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate Outcomes survey result is officially available, together with the result collected through internal surveys. We will pay close attention to the progression of Disabled students.

**1.5 Care Leavers****Care Leavers – Access, Success and Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)**

Previously Point Blank was not required to hold data relating to Care Leavers as this information was not part of the HESA AP student record annual return. However, we have pre-emptively started collecting such data for all target groups from April 2019, as part of the new statutory data requirements, at application and enrolment (as described in the introduction to section 1). We will monitor these areas closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above. We will also start analysing year-on-year trends of our Care Leavers by the end of 20/21 (once we have two years of data) across the student lifecycle, highlighting access, success and progression. This will inform our future strategic measures with regards to Care Leavers.



## 1.6 Intersections of Disadvantage

We conducted an analysis of potential intersections of disadvantage within student groups and have identified the following intersections of characteristics as our target groups.

### Deprivation Quintile and Ethnicity – Access

Academic year	No. of students IMD quintiles 1 or 2 & BAME (rounded)	Point Blank (%)	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	10	15	20.2	-5.2
17/18	10	12	20.7	-8.7

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

From OfS data, we can see that our access rate for BAME students from POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 is 10% which is above the national average of 7%. However, further research looking at the intersection of BAME students who are from IMD quintiles 1 or 2 has shown we are below the national average for the last two years. We have therefore identified it to be one of the areas to address in the following section.

### Deprivation Quintile and Ethnicity – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Ethnicity	Point Blank % of continuation POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2*	UK average (%)	Difference
17/18	BAME	75	91.6	-16.6

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for BAME students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 as OfS deem the data as insignificant. We can draw no conclusion from this due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and in particular because there is only one year of internal data. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor this area closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Deprivation Quintile and Ethnicity – Success (Attainment)

Currently we have no data available to analyse for this area due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and time series. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor this area closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Deprivation Quintile and Ethnicity - Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

Our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of graduates progressed into highly skilled employment or further study within six months of graduation.

We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to start undertaking further analysis of our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention to the progression of BAME students from deprivation quintiles 1 or 2.

### Deprivation Quintile and Sex – Access

Academic year	No. of female students from IMD quintile 1 or 2 (rounded)	% of Point Blank cohort (female and from IMD quintile 1 or 2)	UK average (%)	Difference
17/18	0	4	23.9	-19.9

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

Gender imbalance has been a prolonged challenge at Point Blank and within the wider music industry. For example, PRS for Music recently reported that only 17% of its writer membership identifies as female<sup>9</sup> and a recent study by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative found that women make up just 21.7% of artists, 12.3% of songwriters, and of particular relevance to Point Blank, just 2.1% of producers<sup>10</sup> in a study of 700 popular songs between 2012-2018. Furthermore, studies like Born and Devine (2017)<sup>11</sup> and DeBoise (2017)<sup>12</sup> emphasise a

<sup>9</sup> PRS Music, *New figures from PRS for Music reveal extent of gender disparity in songwriting* (8 March 2019)

<sup>10</sup> USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, *Inclusion in the Recording Studio?* (February 2019)

<sup>11</sup> Born, G. and Devine, K., 2015. Music Technology, Gender, and Class: Digitization, Educational and Social Change in Britain. *Twentieth-Century Music*, 12(2), pp. 135-172.

<sup>12</sup> De Boise, S., 2017. Gender Inequalities in Higher Music Education: Comparing the UK and Sweden. *British Journal of Music Education*, 35(1), pp. 23-41.

series of sociocultural and educational policy reasons as to why music technology degrees are on the whole overwhelmingly male and lower in terms of social class profile which is reflected at Point Blank – 38% of our student body are male students from IMD quintile 1 or 2 compared to the national average of 17.7%.

We have explored our internal data, focusing on the intersection of deprivation quintile and sex. Whilst a small sample, it shows a disproportionate ratio of genders in our student numbers. When intersected with deprivation quintile, our figures are well below the national average. Therefore, despite it not being one of the key performance measures in the national widening participation aims, improving access for female students from quintiles 1 or 2 has been identified as a high priority for us to focus on and address in the following section.

### Deprivation Quintile and Sex – Success (Non – Continuation)

Academic year	Point Blank % of continuation POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 and female*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	50	91.1	-41.1

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (non – continuation) rate for female students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 as OfS deem the data as insignificant. We can draw no conclusion from this due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and in particular because there is only one year of internal data. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor this area closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Deprivation Quintile and Sex – Success (Attainment)

Academic year	Point Blank % of attainment POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 and female*	UK average (%)	Difference
16/17	100	76.9	23.1

Source: OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, \*Internal data

Currently we are unable to use OfS data to show our success (attainment) rate for female students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 as OfS deem the data as insignificant. We can draw no conclusion from this due to the aforementioned reasons of sample size and in particular because there is only one year of internal data. As a result, we have not currently identified this as an area to address. However, we will continue to monitor this area closely as per the enhancement of data capabilities section above.

### Deprivation Quintile and Sex – Progression (Employment / Highly Skilled / Further Study)

Our inaugural 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data, with a respective response rate of 100% and 86%, both demonstrates that 100% of our graduates progressed into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation. We will continue to retain and monitor our good performance in this area and to monitor response rate and collect data relating to student progression through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and our own internal surveys. We aim to start undertaking further analysis of our progression data in 19/20, when the first Graduate outcomes survey result has become officially available, together with the result collected through our internal surveys. We will pay close attention in particular to the progression of female students from POLAR4/IMD quintiles 1 or 2.

## 2. Strategic Aims and Objectives

### 2.1 Overview

As a small and specialist provider we are proud of our achievements thus far in terms of access and participation. We are delighted with the success that those from underrepresented groups have already achieved, such as our high continuation and attainment rates for Mature students and white males from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2. We are also happy to report our excellent overall progression rates, with 100% of our graduates progressing into highly skilled employment and/or further study within six months of graduation in our 15/16 and 16/17 DLHE data.

Going forward, we have ambitious plans to further our commitment to equality of opportunity and outcomes for all students. Though we anticipate that changing category to Approved Fee Cap will accelerate our growth, we have already experienced significant increases in student demand and expect this to continue. We have therefore identified our key target groups below, based on the data available to us both of our own institution and of the national landscape, and are committed to improving access, success and progression across these areas, integrating them fully into our broader strategic aims.

## 2.2 Target groups

Based on the analysis in the preceding section, we have identified the following underrepresented target groups and the stages of the student lifecycle at which we will focus on our goals:

- **Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods – Access**  
Our current student body has a below average performance in terms of access to students who are from the Low Participation Neighbourhoods. As mentioned, we are aware that our current funding arrangement is a barrier to these students and the School is committed to focusing on improving access.
- **Black, Asian and minority ethnic students disaggregated by individual ethnic groups – Success**  
Whilst the ethnic diversity of our student body is approximately on-par with sector averages, Black, Asian and minority ethnicity students have lower than sector average continuation and attainment rates when compared to white students. We will target our efforts at improving continuation rate of our Black students, and improving the attainment rate of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students.
- **Intersection of Female students / POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 - Access**  
Despite not being defined as one of the Key Performance Measures by OfS, the School has identified female students intersected with POLAR4/IMD quintile 1 and 2. This is due to the significant disproportion in terms of our female/male student ratio, in particular when intersected with POLAR4/IMD quintile 1 and 2, and the broader research we have undertaken regarding the representation of women in the music industry and their access to music education.
- **Intersection of BAME students and POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 - Access**  
We note that BAME students who are also from a Low Participation Neighbourhood are the most underrepresented. Therefore, we have identified this as a target group we can improve on.
- **Disabled students – Access**  
Our access for disabled students has been steady in the last couple of years but has been slightly below sector average, thus we have identified this as a target group we can improve on.

## 2.3 Aims and objectives

**Access: We aim to increase access to Point Blank Music School for students from our targeted underrepresented groups, welcoming students from diverse backgrounds into our global community.**

- Increase the percentage of students at Point Blank from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2) from 16% to 28% over the five years of this plan.
- Increase the percentage of disabled students at Point Blank from 9% to 14% over the next five years.
- Increase the percentage of female students at Point Blank from Low Deprivation quintiles (1 or 2) from 4% to 15% over the five years of this plan.
- Increase the percentage of BAME students at Point Blank from Low Deprivation quintiles (1 or 2) from 12% to 20% over the five years of this plan.
- Although we have not identified access for Black students as a target, we aim to proportionally grow our number of Black students in line with our growing student numbers and maintaining that performance over the remainder of the plan.

**Success: We aim to create an inclusive learning and teaching environment and are committed to addressing the attainment gaps highlighted in our analysis in order that all students of Point Blank Music School can achieve their full potential.**

- Improve the continuation rate for Black students at Point Blank from 58% to 85% over the next five years.
- Improve the attainment rate for Black students at Point Blank from 40% to 55% over the next five years.
- Improve the attainment rate for Asian students at Point Blank from 67% to 72% over the next five years.
- Improve the attainment rate for Minority Ethnic students at Point Blank from 60% to 78% over the next five years.

**Progression: We aim to prepare students from diverse backgrounds for a successful career in the music industry and are committed to addressing future gaps that may be revealed in progression data analysis**

- Due to achieving 100% student progression into highly skilled employment and/or further study in the 16/17 DLHE, our aim in this area is to continue to achieve a high success rate of student progression. We will closely monitor this area over the next 5 years and, as more data becomes available, we will disaggregate it and set targets accordingly for underrepresented groups.

### 3. Ambition and Strategy

#### 3.1 Whole Provider Strategic Approach

##### Overview and alignment with other strategies

Point Blank's ethos strongly values equality and diversity. Our Strategic Plan, *'The Road Ahead: 2018-2021'*, leads with our mission to *"prepare students from diverse backgrounds for a successful career in the music industry."* Expanding on this, one of our five core strategic aims is to *"support widening participation objectives and global creativity by welcoming a diverse range of students and strengthening our open-minded, dynamic and pioneering academic community."*

As Point Blank continues our journey into HE, we have maintained high quality in our provision, receiving TEF Silver recognition in June 2019 and a commended QAA annual monitoring outcome. Furthermore, we have fully embraced the values of what we view as the forward-thinking approach of the Office for Students with specific reference to Widening Participation.

Our Access and Participation Plan reflects the broader strategic goals that we have set for ourselves, which are in line with the Equality Act 2010, providing us with the legal framework within which to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. Our Admissions Policy clearly outlines our belief that opportunities to participate in higher education should be provided to all who demonstrate potential to successfully complete their chosen course of study regardless of their background and outlines the steps we take to recruit a diverse population of students and to widen access to higher education. Furthermore, our Teaching Staff Recruitment & Selection Policy states our commitment to actively promoting equality and celebrating diversity. This creates a harmonious and productive environment in which diversity adds value to the work of Point Blank Music School, and it forms the basis for our recruitment practices.

We champion an inclusive curriculum, and as our Teaching and Learning Strategy states, we ensure that it is flexible in enabling and supporting the diverse needs of our students. We offer supportive learning resources and inclusive assessment and teaching methods. Our Student Wellbeing & Mental Health Policy shows how, by developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we will promote a safe and supportive environment for students affected directly or indirectly by mental health problems. Though we anticipate that changing category to Approved Fee Cap will accelerate our growth, we have already experienced significant increase in student demand and expect this to continue. As we develop into a larger institution, we wish to place WP at the heart of what we do and develop our data collation and analysis capabilities in order to ensure an evidence-informed theory of change.

#### 3.2 Strategic Measures

Using our data relating to higher education student recruitment and turnover, we are able to predict student numbers in receipt of student finance for the provision we offer and as a result, predict the HFI over the five year plan. As per OfS guidance, we used the advisory principles to determine guidelines for investment for access, progression, success, financial support and research and evaluation. Having understood our target groups and targets, our Access and Participation Working Group researched and budgeted activities which form our strategic measures and determine our financial investments. Our HFI and activity spend will be closely monitored along with our progress against the plan, and spend will be amended accordingly.

Using our assessment of performance, we have identified a series of areas for development that will enable us to contribute to equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, and in particular the target groups we identified earlier in our research. The key features of the strategy are:

- 31.4% of HFI to be spent on access, student success and progression measures in steady state;
- A means tested scholarship, bursaries and hardship fund package targeted at enhancing access and success of underrepresented students;
- The expansion of an enhanced and regularly evaluated outreach programme, with interventions at pre-16, post-16, adults and the community, and other underrepresented target groups;
- The introduction of new student recruitment practices and projects to improve access for underrepresented target groups;
- Development and enhancement of new and current initiatives respectively, to support success and progression, prioritising the attainment gaps identified in section 2;
- Maintenance and development of initiatives to support employability and skills development as our student number continues to grow;
- Investment in resource to support data analysis, monitoring and evaluation as outlined in section 3.3.

Furthermore, given that the majority of our analysis has identified access and success as priorities for our underrepresented target groups, we have geared our financial investment to these stages in the student lifecycle.

## **Curriculum, pedagogic and student support development to promote inclusivity and address attainment and progression gaps**

Access - Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods; Intersection of Female students / POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Intersection of BAME students and POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Disabled students; Black students

- Introduce our Foundation Year in September 2019 as an access route on to our degrees for those with limited relevant experience, or who do not meet our entry requirements; and continue with ongoing curriculum development in order to enhance access for underrepresented groups across the spectrum.

Success - Black, Asian and minority ethnic students disaggregated by individual ethnic groups

- Introduce an equality and diversity module in 19/20 and improve course content and provision. This will further integrate our values of promoting diversity and inclusivity in the creative industries to increase awareness and understanding and improve continuation rates for our underrepresented target groups.
- Enhance our student engagement activities through organised events and staff/student consultation. Our efforts in this area to date can be evidenced by the recruitment of our Student Engagement Executive and Careers Executive; the introduction of funded student societies; and increased student activities including Student Freshers events and Student Mixers. Through this, we will enhance inclusivity of BAME and underrepresented groups, in order to assist with progression and continuation rates.
- Foster our Student Voice and empower our student body to include those from underrepresented target groups to elect their own representation by introducing significant changes to our student representation system (see Student Consultation section for more information) that will come into effect from 19/20.
- Introduce a range of supportive resources, which are both academic and practical, for students entering via the Foundation Year to prepare them for Level 4, and for all students studying at Levels 4-6 to improve continuation. Academic support resources include extra-curricular workshops on common subject areas in which students may need the extra support, such as Music Theory, Sound Engineering, Academic Skills (e.g. academic writing, PDP, self-evaluation), and coding/software development. This will improve outcomes for students from underrepresented target groups, providing them with support to succeed in their programmes, therefore reducing any attainment gaps. Support of areas which may not be covered by workshops may be obtained on an individual basis via personal tutorials.
- Improve our student counselling provision with additional hours available in order to meet demand. We will also increase resource dedicated to our Wellbeing team to provide enhanced support to students. This will contribute to student continuation and attainment targets for underrepresented target groups.

## **Employability and skills development**

Progression – pre-emptive measures, to be targeted to appropriate underrepresented groups as data emerges

- Introduce a bi-annual Careers Fair, in order to educate our students into the range of opportunities available in the music industry, with tailored sessions for our targeted underrepresented groups.
- Develop a careers database, enhancing our network of industry professionals from various areas of the music industry, for example, record labels such as Universal and Decca. This will enable students to take advantage of exclusive internships or work experience opportunities during and after their programme which will enhance student career progression.
- Invite industry professionals to run classes, mentor students and provide feedback via listening sessions. This will enable students to learn more about the industry, reflect on their own career paths and develop vital contacts that will enhance their careers opportunities upon graduation.
- Contracting a prestigious Careers/Industry Consultant to provide guidance for our final year students and diverse mentorship programme. This will provide personal advice for our students as they approach graduation, empowering them to identify and pursue their preferred careers pathway with the tools they need to succeed. It will also improve their confidence and communication skills, which will be essential in interviewing for graduate roles.

## **Collaboration with other bodies across the student lifecycle**

Access - Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods; Intersection of Female students / POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Intersection of BAME students and POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Disabled students; Black students

*Collaborations*

- Increase our network of schools across and beyond London at which we will hold regular workshops and offer funded places on short courses. To date, we have found these outreach sessions to be very positively received. Nevertheless, we have already identified numerous areas of improvement to further engage with our targeted underrepresented groups via our outreach projects. We aim to continuously

develop and improve student engagement on our outreach projects, and further our reach beyond London with research and evaluation, support of our partners and the feedback we receive over the five years.

#### *Outreach Pre-16*

- We will offer free places on our short summer school courses starting with five places in 2020-21 and increasing to 16 from there on. 16 is the maximum number of students per classroom at Point Blank so we are therefore committing an entire classroom for this purpose. This will improve access for our targeted underrepresented groups.

#### *Outreach Post-16*

- We will host six in-house workshops per year designed specifically to target our identified underrepresented groups. We have not increased the amount of in-house delivery over the five years due to space concerns.
- We will deliver six outreach projects per year, increasing to eight in 2021-22 and ten from 2022-23 onwards. This will improve access for our targeted underrepresented groups.

#### *Outreach (Adults and the Community)*

- We commit to providing three adult-focused workshops per year throughout the five year plan. Since we are traditionally strong in this area, i.e. we have a lot of Mature students already, we are not looking to increase the number of workshops in this category.

#### *Outreach (other)*

- We will expand our efforts and introduce summer and short courses, which will be aimed towards WP and challenging traditional perceptions of the creative arts. Furthermore, we will be making free places available for our target groups. These courses will be tailored to provide taster and introductory sessions. We also aim to increase our general BAME diversity with a focus on attracting students identifying with Black ethnicity, noting the decrease in Black ethnicity access within POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2.
- We will hold two special WP recruitment events per year, either internally or externally targeting our underrepresented groups. These events will involve music industry professionals, Q&A panels of experts, A&R feedback sessions on music and so forth. For example, we are holding an event like this in 19/20 at The Roundhouse in Camden, London where we will be engaging with a diverse audience. The Roundhouse has access to 6,000 young people through their partner schools and colleges so will expose our provision to a broader audience.
- We will hold three outreach workshops with schools or charities each term targeting our underrepresented groups. In addition to this, we will provide heavily discounted weekend courses (90% reductions in some cases) and offered numerous taster sessions of our courses and open days in collaboration with charities.
- Point Blank has created an online music production tool called Music Machine which is specifically aimed at WP access. Using an expertly produced selection of copyright free music loops, users can build their own tracks and post them to the community site for feedback and ratings. It is free to all users and is aimed at both complete beginners as well as those who have more experience in creating or performing music. This has proved a very useful tool in the delivery of our workshops. In 2023-24 we will update the loop collection to reflect current tastes and re-skin the interface to keep the look and feel current and attractive. This initiative will encourage participation from our targeted underrepresented groups and promote access to our HE programmes.

#### Success - Black, Asian and minority ethnic students disaggregated by individual ethnic groups

- Further enhance and deepen the collaborations we have entered into with external organisations such as Music Managers Forum, MyBigCareer, the Musicians' Union and the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust. We aim to continue our good work with these organisations and develop new collaborations and industry partnerships over the next five years, in order to improve success for students from targeted underrepresented groups by offering enhanced support whilst on course to improve their outcomes.

#### **Alignment with other work and funding sources**

Access - Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods; Intersection of Female students / POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Intersection of BAME students and POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Disabled students; Black students

#### *Approved Fee Cap*

- We will apply to change category to Approved Fee Cap. Historically, access to our courses has been restricted by a student loan funding limit of £6,165 against our fees of £9,000. Due to students needing

to self-fund the circa £3,000 difference (unless they obtain a scholarship, bursary or other financial aid), this limit has restricted our enrolment and attraction of prospective students from Lower Participation Neighbourhoods and those from lower income households. This is likely a significant cause of our lower numbers of students in these categories, and our higher numbers of Mature students. Notwithstanding this, we have shown our commitment and efforts to date towards increasing diversity and access to our courses despite the fee limit barrier, as detailed below. As a result, changing category to Approved Fee Cap will be a significant aid towards widening participation and increasing access for our underrepresented target groups.

#### *Student recruitment*

- We will improve our marketing and recruitment efforts to better integrate inclusivity and diversity: we have begun this project with refreshed visual imagery in our marketing and online materials to attract our target groups for access whilst reflecting the diversity of the student body. Moreover, we aim to work more closely with our students, featuring diverse student progression stories.
- We will increase our attendance of a broad range of student recruitment events in relation to underrepresented target groups.
- We will increase our investment in advertising and marketing directed towards our underrepresented target groups from 2.5% of our total marketing budget in Year 1 to 15% in Year 5.
- As our student body grows, we will invest in our social media presence in a way that encourages participation by our underrepresented target groups and reflects a diverse audience. This is because our recruitment funnel is traditionally digital in its sources with YouTube playing a major role in referrals.
- We will increase our promotion via marketing at larger awareness-raising events hosted by Point Blank. We aim to invest more in awareness-raising activities in general, as such over £8,000 of our investment forecast has been set for targeted workshops and WP focused events each year of our five year plan.

#### **Financial support**

##### *Scholarships, Bursaries and Hardship Funds*

Point Blank is proud to have offered a range of means tested scholarships, bursaries and hardship funds since the School started delivering HE courses. For the majority of students who have benefited from this financial support, this has addressed the funding difference in the fees of our courses, enabling us to support many talented students who would not have otherwise been able to study at Point Blank. Since we are not yet in receipt of HFI, year 1 shows a higher percentage invested in these awards compared to the subsequent years. We will continue to support current students already in receipt of an award or who may require financial support in the future. We will further commit to this area by increasing the number of awards available as well as introduce new schemes to help us meet the targets outlined in this plan.

Access - Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods; Intersection of Female students / POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Intersection of BAME students and POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2; Disabled students; Black students

##### *Bursaries and Scholarships*

- We will introduce a new bursary award scheme and will award 21 of these bursaries over the five years to underrepresented students from low income households studying at our London School. These will assist people who may still not be able to relocate to London due to excessively high rents and living costs, even with the total tuition fees and maintenance being funded by student finance.
- We will introduce a new bursary award scheme and award 14 Female Producer Bursaries over the five years, to be means-tested for low income households. This reflects our target group of the intersection of females, POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2, as we have data and evidence that this area requires particular focus.

##### *Fee Waivers*

- We will increase the number of HE Bursary fee waiver awards already on offer to six places over the five years made to students from low income households.
- We will increase the number of HE Bursary Online fee waiver awards already on offer to eight places made to the same demographic. This is a fully funded award for our three year degree delivered through our distance learning provision which not only covers tuition, but provides students with the software required to study the course for free.
- We will introduce a new means-tested Female Producer Bursary fee waiver award and will have three places available.

### Success - Black, Asian and minority ethnic students disaggregated by individual ethnic groups

#### Hardship funds

- We will increase our Hardship fund from what is already on offer and make a total of £56,000 available in Hardship Funds to students who experience financial hardship during their course over the five years. This will enhance success rates, enabling students from our underrepresented target groups to remain on course who might otherwise be forced to discontinue study or suffer from stress as a result of their financial situation.

Please refer to the table in section 4 below which provides further detail, clarifying how financial support will be distributed across targeted underrepresented groups in each year of the access and participation plan.

### **Human Resource**

#### Data Monitoring & Evaluation

- Presently, our Head of Registry is coordinating and managing our Access and Participation projects, with the assistance of our Admissions Manager and other Heads of Departments. We will recruit a Widening Participation Manager in January 2020 and a Widening Participation Officer in 2022 to drive forward delivery of our Access and Participation Plan.

#### Access, success and progression – all underrepresented groups

- We will reportion the duties of a broad range of staff (including the Head of Education & Development, the Head of Marketing & Communications, the Head of Registry and the Head of Quality) to dedicate time to access and outreach, and to WP student success, in order to integrate it further into our work.
- We will give ownership of increasing outreach campaigns to our Degree Programme Leaders.
- We will hold regular in-house training days for relevant staff (at least two per year) in order to raise awareness of important issues that widening participation encompasses. This includes how to reach a wider pool of students at the recruitment stage and how to cater to their needs from access to success to progression.

### **3.3 Student Consultation**

Point Blank is deeply invested in student engagement and aims to ensure that it is a student-centric institution in which student views inform our decisions. We are committed to including students from a diverse range of backgrounds in all consultative processes and integrating best practice from the HE sector to ensure that we do.

At present, we consult with a group of seven Student Voice Leaders (SVLs) on a regular basis through monthly meetings with senior management and through their membership of the Board of Studies. We have invited the SVLs as members of the Access and Participation Working Group to contribute to and inform the development of our strategy going forward.

We recently consulted on a proposal with our SVLs about a significant change in the way that students are able to represent themselves within the institution. A proposal was approved in principle by our current SVLs at a recent meeting with senior management that will see the introduction of annual elections by the student body for four Student Representatives (President, Education Officer, Societies & Events Officer, and Community & Welfare Officer), who will each serve a one-year term. These Student Representatives will be elected to act on behalf of Point Blank students and their needs, and will ensure that the student voice is heard in a range of areas. This has been approved by Academic Board, and we will hold our first elections in 19/20 for these new posts. We intend for this to be the first step in our process towards establishing a Students' Union.

We are committed to ensuring that our student body is engaged with our Access and Participation Plan. Going forward, we will ensure that we seek their feedback through our Student Representatives (via our monthly meetings and through their membership of the Board of Studies) and, at course level, our Student Voice Leaders, as well as via our Student Societies (for example, our Female Focus Society and LGBTQ Society). We will invite the Student Representatives to replace the SVLs on the Access and Participation Working Group once they have been elected. We will particularly ensure engagement with students from our target groups and work with our student body to empower them to act as partners in the monitoring, evaluation and future development of plans.

In order to ensure student engagement as part of the development of our Access and Participation Plan, the General Manager and Head of Registry discussed the strategy with our SVLs in one of their regular monthly meetings on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and sourced ideas regarding key strategic measures noting particular enthusiasm for entering the fee cap category and therefore attracting a more diverse student body. The General Manager subsequently shared a draft with the group for feedback. The following statement was provided by the group:



“The Student Voice Leaders are supportive of Point Blank’s Access and Participation Plan. We think the target groups and the strategic measures are appropriate. We support the movement toward establishing elected Student Representatives and, as a student body, look forward to engaging effectively with the APP through the channels discussed.”

### **3.4 Evaluation Strategy**

In 2018 we appointed a Data Manager, followed by a Data Officer in 2019. Their roles include the analysis of our performance across the student lifecycle, for both widening participation and students with protected characteristics. Presently, our Head of Registry is coordinating and managing our Access and Participation projects, with the assistance of our Admissions Manager and other Heads of Departments and reports into the Access and Participation Working Group. Furthermore, a Widening Participation Manager will be appointed in January 2020 followed by a Widening Participation Officer in 2022. They will manage the implementation of the Access and Participation Plan, as well as develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy across the student lifecycle in consultation with our data team.

An Access and Participation Working Group has been created, chaired by our Head of Quality, which will make active use of the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool over the next five years across the full student lifecycle, pertaining to access, success and progression, as well as for enhancement of our programme review. This Working Group has authority to make decisions and is responsible for researching and advising on effective tools and measures, and evaluating the effectiveness of current actions and projects. The Working Group reports to the Quality and Standards Committee on their evaluation of the effectiveness of the School’s strategy, monitors data and progress against the plan, and coordinates research into continuously improving and ensuring our actions are making the most efficient use of higher fee income. The Working Group reports to the Quality and Standards Committee if the School appears to divert from the Access and Participation Plan or looks at risk of not meeting targets, and advises on any actions that may be necessary to achieve said targets.

At present, we have a robust feedback and data analysis system that is primarily focused on success and progression, including evaluation of student progress, multi-source student feedback and ongoing surveys of our alumni. However, with the appointment of our data team officers, we have expanded this to include a revised system of data collection for applicants, in order to offer us richer information regarding access. We have introduced enhanced evaluation of our outreach work with pre-entry and other underrepresented groups, using qualitative research methods such as surveys (to understand the expectations, aspirations and attainment of students before, during and after intervention) and quantitative methods such as conversion rates and later attainment levels to assess the impact of our activity. Our findings inform our future work, enabling us to enhance our WP provision as we move forward and grow.

We also aim to track the effectiveness of our new academic support resources and their relation to attainment. Specifically, we will focus on the attainment and continuation data of our students entering via the Foundation Year, as well as BAME and POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 attainment, continuation and progression in general across Levels 4-6. The results of these strategic measures will inform our measures of success for our Access and Participation Plan on an annual and ongoing basis.

Furthermore, we are committed to the use of evaluation, research and student feedback to inform our access and participation programme design to targeted underrepresented groups.

To date, we have made use of the OfS self-evaluation tool to evaluate our existing outreach programmes to benchmark effectiveness and our current practices against current expectations and commended practice. This has formed the basis of our evaluation strategy which we will use to implement our access and participation projects. These mechanisms and the evaluation strategy will also inform our planning of future access and participation outreach programmes and supportive academic resources or community projects. The Access and Participation Working Group has assured that there is a clear rationale for current outreach programmes and improvements have been made using the tool to evidence theory of change, and defined tailored objectives drawn from our targets, aims and objectives in this plan. Interventions have also been agreed mapped to strategic measures and informed by our data monitoring strategy, to be actioned if progress against the plan worsens.

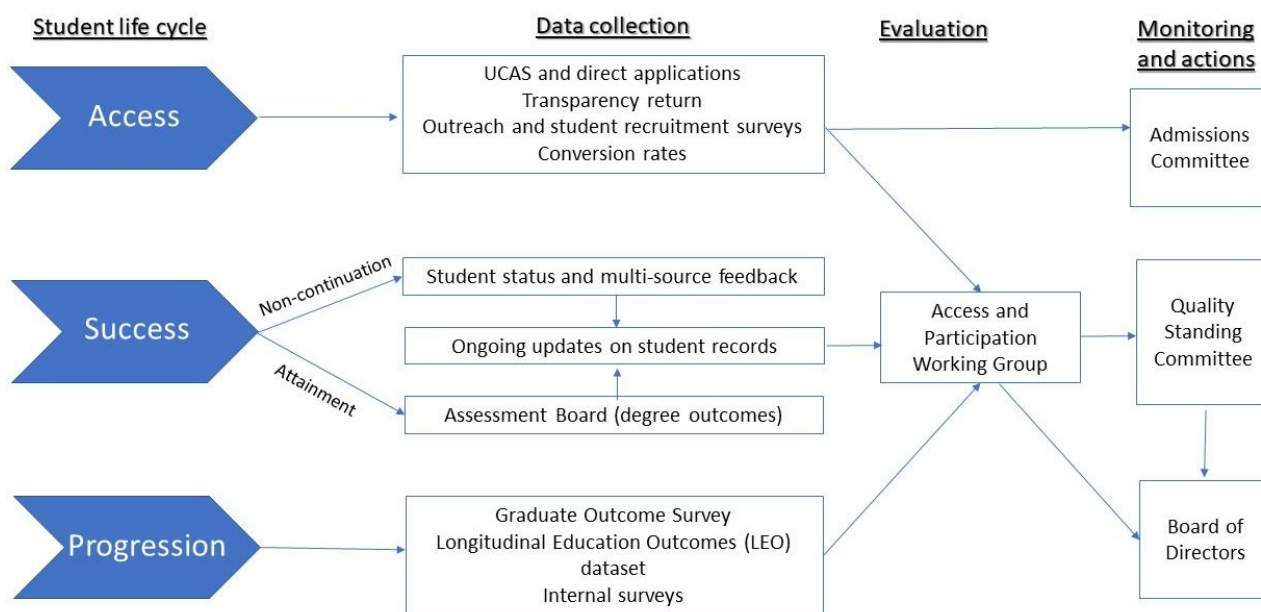
Going forward, evaluation against the self-evaluation tool will take place throughout the development and implementation of future programmes, to ensure that there is a concrete rationale for all new programmes and that the programme design integrates strategic measures for evaluation, and design is informed by evidence and able to be continually informed by data. We endeavour to offer an inclusive educational experience, in which all Point Blank students are empowered to learn, participate and be engaged with as valued members of our School.

We use multi source feedback from across our student body and via our social media channels, as well as focus groups where required, to inform our continuous programme development methodologies. This information is also fed into our Programme Development Committee and Board of Studies to develop action plans that are overseen by our Head of Education and Development. We apply best practice to offer flexible teaching, a broad range of assessment methodologies and personalised interventions for those who need specialised learning support. We also regularly survey the musical landscape, ensuring our material is current, cutting edge and multi genre, in order to cater to a diverse audience, which we sense check with our students through feedback surveys.

With regards to financial support, our custom-built student record system has been designed to monitor the effectiveness of all the awards we offer. We can disaggregate the data by award type and monitor progress of students in receipt of financial support in terms of non-continuation, attainment and progression. Through the committee structure mentioned above, we can adjust the financial support budget as required.

We intend to review our current targets after one year using data and student consultation with our soon to be appointed selected student representatives to ensure they continue to reflect a high level of ambition. We have compiled evaluation measures and data monitoring systems which will plot results across all our WP projects.

This evaluation and monitoring strategy and our process going forward will be informed by OfS guidance on standards of evidence, as laid out in the publications ‘Using standards of evidence to evaluate impact of outreach’ and ‘Access and participation standards of evidence.’ The School will also be making active use of the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool over the next five years to ensure our strategy, outreach efforts and Access and Participation Plan remain effective. It is anticipated that with a longer timeframe (one to two additional years of available data) and a larger dataset (as the School expands significantly), we will be able to use data more effectively to identify trends, and evaluate our success in enabling equality of opportunity and outcomes for all.



### 3.5 Monitoring Progress Against Delivery of the Plan

As part of our Access and Participation Plan, Point Blank will ensure robust monitoring against delivery of the plan. As a condition of our registration with OfS, Point Blank was required to undertake a review of our management and governance arrangements with emphasis on having external checks and balances in place. Following the enhancements made in Summer 2018, including the implementation of an External Advisory Committee consisting of experienced higher education and music industry specialists, we have taken further steps to embrace this process. Having put the project out to tender, we have now contracted Shakespeare Martineau, acknowledged specialists in the field of Higher Education governance, to conduct an independent review. Alongside a desk-based research exercise, in which they are reviewing our committee structure, terms of reference, membership and governance practices, they are also conducting interviews with key members of staff, as well as with faculty and student body representatives. We anticipate recommendations emerging from this review that will require further development for the School and are committed to implementing them through a robust action plan. We look forward to the positive influence that external input will have on our governance structure and will take the appropriate steps to ensure transparent decision-making and accountability.

This reflects our ongoing commitment to best practice in good governance. The Board of Directors has taken a leadership role in the development of the Access and Participation Plan and will closely monitor progress against it with the External Advisory Committee. They will receive a report from the Access and Participation Working Group via the Quality and Standards Committee at each meeting, alongside relevant data on access, success and progression. Furthermore, they will be engaged with any amendments to the plan and take a leadership role in championing WP across the organisation.

We will consult with our Student Representatives via their monthly meetings with the General Manager and Head of Registry and highlight any areas of concern. Our Data Manager will continuously collect, collate and analyse data throughout the student life cycle to evaluate our performance as our student numbers grow. Our Head of Quality will escalate any concerns from our Access and Participation Working Group (further details above in section 3.3 regarding the process for monitoring and exceptions-based escalation).

As outlined above, the Access and Participation Working Group has been established, with terms of reference that provide responsibility for the oversight of monitoring progress against delivery of the plan. Our Head of Quality will chair this group and escalate any deviation from the plan to the Quality and Standards Committee. Both the Working Group and the Committee have decision making powers and will be able to escalate issues to the Board of Directors via the regular reporting structure.

We will monitor the effectiveness and success of our Foundation Year and increased resources for academic support closely as part of our strategic measures' matrix and action plan. We will also monitor the impact of our outreach activity, access for our targeted underrepresented groups, the attainment and continuation rates of our target students, and the progression data for all groups as we are able to disaggregate it. Interventions and adjustments to maintain or improve the effectiveness of our provision and support measures will be made as necessary to benefit all students, particularly our underrepresented target groups.

Point Blank offers four intakes a year which means we can regularly review our progress against targets on a termly basis, as opposed to annually under a more traditional delivery method. Due to this model, our committees, working groups and boards meet every three months. As a result, we can continually review our performance against the plan and make necessary adjustments where our progress is not meeting expectation or is worsening. As mentioned, the Head of Registry is coordinating and managing our Access and Participation projects until January 2020 when a Widening Participation Manager will be appointed. These staff report into the Access and Participation Working Group Chaired by our Head of Quality. Any deviations from the plan will be escalated to our Quality and Standards Committee which has decision making powers, with any major deviations reported to the Board of Directors. Point Blank is fully committed to achieving this plan and can increase financial commitment or relocate / increase resources where necessary when targets are not being met.

We will continue to report as required to the OfS on all elements of our Access and Participation Plan and associated Widening Participation work.

#### **4 Provision of Information to Students**

Information on fees and financial support is currently provided to students on our website and during the application process. Comprehensive information is conveyed during our outreach activities and workshops and submitted to the schools following the workshops.

For students expressing interest in the courses, information is provided or signposted during open days, at application (direct applications), on the website, by Course Advisors and Student Services Administrators, and at the offer stage. We take great care to provide timely, accurate, uncomplicated and easily accessible information to existing students and prospective applicants about all aspects of the School.

All our processes are in accordance with guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority, the QAA, OIA and OfS for prospective applicants during the admissions and enrolment process. This is made clear to students in our policies on our website, commended outcomes with the QAA and as part of our registration with the OfS. We make every effort to ensure that student attention is drawn to any important aspect of their studies or fees in person, at application and on our website or our bespoke Virtual Learning Environment.

**Provision of information in relation to financial support**

Clarity and transparency will also be provided for students regarding the financial support available to them as well as support services. The table below outlines the number of awards initially on offer throughout our five year plan, and the value of those awards per year. The information in this table will be made available to students in guidance on the financial support and support services, including academic and wellbeing support, which will be provided by Student Services. Financial support will be reviewed every year to monitor effectiveness and popularity amongst applicants through the Access and Participation Working Group and termly Admissions Committee, with adjustments made as and when required.

Type	Award	Target Group		20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
Bursary	HE Bursary London (£3,000 p.a. of study)	POLAR4 1 or 2, IMD 1 or 2 + BAME, Disabled	No. of new students in receipt	3	3	4	5	6
			Total value	£9,000	£18,000	£30,000	£36,000	£45,000
Bursary	Female Producer Bursary London (£3,000 p.a. of study)	POLAR4 1 or 2 + Female, Disabled	No. of new students in receipt	2	2	3	3	4
			Total value	£6,000	£12,000	£21,000	£24,000	£30,000
Fee waiver	HE Fee Waiver London (£3,000 p.a. of study)	POLAR4 1 or 2, IMD 1 or 2 + BAME, Disabled	No. of new students in receipt	1	1	1	1	2
			Total value	£3,000	£6,000	£9,000	£9,000	£12,000
Fee waiver	HE Fee Waiver Online (£6,000 p.a. of study)	POLAR4 1 or 2, IMD 1 or 2 + BAME, Disabled	No. of new students in receipt	1	1	2	2	2
			Total value	£6,000	£12,000	£24,000	£30,000	£36,000
Fee waiver	Female Producer Award (£3,000 p.a. of study)	POLAR4 1 or 2 + Female, Disabled	No. of new students in receipt	0	0	1	1	1
			Total value	£0	£0	£3,000	£6,000	£9,000
Hardship fund	Hardship funds (up to £1,000 per student)	All target groups	Total value	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£12,000	£14,000

All bursaries and fee waivers described in Section 3, under *Financial Support* are means tested awards which will be available to either students from underrepresented groups or households with an income of £25,000 or less.

**Investment and provision of information for students**

In line with our current student number projections, we are committing to an overall average of 31.4% investment of HFI over the next five years. We have recorded the individual years' percentage of HFI investment in the table above. If we recruit higher student numbers than the projections in the plan, we will increase our investment.

Area	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Access	14.3%	9%	9.6%	10.5%	9.2%
Financial Support	6%	4.8%	5.4%	5.8%	6.4%
Progression	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Student Success	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Research & Evaluation	6.5%	3.2%	2.2%	2.3%	2.1%
Investment in Access, Financial Support, Research & Evaluation	£152,482	£203,757	£306,864	£375,344	£402,942
<b>Total investment % HFI</b>	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>

The main reason we are applying to change category is to offer a wider range of students the chance to study at our School. By allowing students to access 100% of the tuition fees, we will be able to accommodate students who cannot currently afford the £3,000 annual top up and increase our access, WP and diversity. We are committed to investing in a wide-ranging campaign designed to recruit, enable, nurture and foster successful progression routes for targeted underrepresented groups on our courses. This process has already begun.

Our overall projections detail that the total student cohort/new entrants will initially be small as we enter Approved Fee Cap, however, the investment amount will reduce as a percentage to a stable overall percentage of 29-30% of HFI. This is due to increasing student numbers and the increase in HFI that will result. The remaining years of the plan show a yearly investment in access of approximately 9 or 10%.

Currently, the highest proportion of our investment is in access, in line with OfS and DfE guidance. Year 1 sees a higher percentage investment of HFI in access at 14.3% due to our strong commitment in proportion to new 2020 entrants.

Please see our Targets and Investment Plan, which has additional detail on how the investment will be distributed.