



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by The Royal Veterinary College 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

The Royal Veterinary College's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

Our 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan stated the following key points:

The RVC has a pivotal role to play in the forward march of social mobility within the veterinary profession and bioscience sectors, while maintaining the standards set by professional and scientific bodies. Having set very challenging benchmarks, milestones and targets of enrolments of target groups, we continue to provide a full programme of widening participation activity and develop new initiatives. Priority groups in terms of widening participation are state school students (and under that overarching cohort students from BAME backgrounds, and white males from disadvantaged backgrounds), mature students and in care students. We make reasonable adjustments to support all students with physical and non-physical disabilities. Our aim and long-term ambition was to increase the percentage of students from these cohorts by 25% over a five year period.

We shall focus widening participation activity across strategic themes:

- Contextual entry: We aim to achieve a percentage of > 88% state school applicants within a five year period, and to increase the numbers of successful applicants with Diploma/BTEC qualifications e.g. through establishing progression agreements with FE Colleges. In assessing eligible students for our Gateway Programme we scrutinise school performance and make allowances for candidates who fulfil non-academic criteria e.g. in care applicants and those with disabilities.
- Collaboration: We shall continue to work with regional and national networks, schools, individual HEIs and other third sector organisations e.g. AccessHE, NCOP regions, NEON and the Sutton Trust. This allows us to reach areas that are geographically beyond our own resource, participate in multidisciplinary projects, and to adapt good practice. Work with these networks includes projects targeting students from BAME backgrounds, carers, disabled and mature students.
- Attainment: We will continue to co-operate with local and national state schools to contribute to the raising of their attainment at GCSE, A Level or BTEC. We reduced our programmes for primary schools to concentrate more on Secondary pupils, and initiated our Junior and Teen Vet Clubs to engage pupils at whichever age they become interested in careers. We support teachers' work through programmes such as our Bengali Workers Association Homework Club, and build on existing partnerships with schools/FECs to contribute to an increase in cohort attainment. Contingent on this relationship would be a commitment from the schools to provide RVC with performance data and tracking/destination data.
- Success: We provide support at both academic and pastoral level, including for students who need to either re-sit examinations or take a year out of study, and a tutorial system enabling students to build up an important academic relationship with staff. Retention on all courses is good, though for Veterinary Nursing we will be monitoring retention further. We will concentrate our existing funding, apart from bursary support, on learning support and career guidance. This includes ensuring teaching is transmitted in an inclusive manner, 1-2-1 support, 24 hour access to independent study environments, and availability of e-learning modes. More than 10% of RVC students have a form of learning difference, and we address these challenges with both pastoral and academic support. We work with former BTEC students on examination technique and support all students in developing research and statistical skills. The overall level of failure rate is low.
- Progression: Most of the veterinary cohort and a substantial part of the Biological Sciences cohort obtain employment within six months of graduation. We will increase support and advice, including developing a structured programme of STEM careers IAG (including postgraduate careers), creating an alumni network for advice and mentoring, and collaborating with professional bodies to target support for transition into HE for those on non-A Level entry routes.
- Evaluation: Evaluation is embedded across our programmes in three stages. 1. Front end evaluation: consulting with stakeholders 2. Formative evaluation: acting on feedback to shape our programmes, including developing student ambassador-led content and a regular Sutton alumni student voice panel. 3. Summative evaluation to measure programme impact in terms of 5 learning domains: Skills, Place, Emotion, Attitudes and Knowledge. We will assess development longitudinally e.g. our attainment-focussed Homework Club, in partnership with

parents, community support workers and teachers. We evaluate our bursary provision through focus groups and large scale surveys, researching the challenges facing target groups and how best to support them financially.

Monitoring and delivery of the plan: We report regularly to the Director of Access (a senior manager and a member of the College Executive Committee), and the Academic Board. Our Monitoring Group receives data updates on retention and success, and reports to the Student Development Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee. The Access Plan will become a standing item on the Equality and Diversity Committee agenda.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by The Royal Veterinary College 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 The Royal Veterinary College'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)	We aim to increase our state school student percentage, focussing on RVC Contextual schools https://www.rvc.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/veterinary-gateway/contextual-schools as our targets for a range of long term activities to increase attainment and engage teachers and parents in pupil progress.	2017-18	80.43%	81%	81.5%	Percentage	2019-20	81.8	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	We aim to increase our NS-SEC 4-7 cohort. Within this cohort we will focus on males from a range of under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds, as stated in our Gateway programme eligibility criteria https://www.rvc.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/veterinary-gateway#tab-entry-requirements .	2017-18	26.52%	27%	27.5%	Percentage	2019-20	25.25	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Using the published data we shall specifically target schools and FECs serving LPNs.	2017-18	22.83%	23%	23.5%	Percentage	2019-20	25.88	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	We aim to increase the numbers of students applying from a range of under-represented ethnicities.	2017-18	10.63%	11.5%	12.5%	Percentage	2019-20	15.76	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Access)	We aim to increase the visibility of our male role models at a range of student lifecycle stages in order to encourage parity. Our goal is to have more than 5% males from Quintiles 1 and 2 apply to our courses.	2014-15	<5%	5%	5.5%	Percentage	2019-20	5.15	Limited progress

T16a_06 (Access)	Working with designated groups of pupils at partner institutions we shall contribute to the raising of GCSE and A Level performance for groups of students whose attainment performance is borderline on meeting RVC entry criteria	Other (please give details in Description column)	None	10	15	Headcount	2019-20	0	Limited progress
T16a_07 (Access)	We aim to work with Teachers from RVC contextual schools, to join our Teacher Panel. Through being part of our consultation network we will be informed about their attainment priorities to shape our curriculum offer, and they will be more aware of our long term opportunities for their students for academic and social mobility.	2014-15	26	40	40	Headcount	2019-20	59	Expected progress
T16a_08 (Success)	Develop learning support and methods of learning to improve retention rates in VN/FD First Year	2014-15	61%	80%	82%	Percentage	2019-20	91.04	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

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
T16b_01 (Access)	Year 10-12 students recruited nationally for annual easter Y10 non residential school, Y11 summer non-residential school, and Y12 Sutton Trust summer residential school	2010	48	50	55	Headcount	2019-20	75	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	We aim to continue to run a menu of activities including: Afternoon Anatomy; HE Experience Days; Student Shadowing; Science Clubs; Careers events	2010	50 schools	54	60	Headcount	2019-20	78	Expected progress
T16b_03 (Access)	The RVC will work in collaboration with a range of HEI partners in London particularly concentrating on Science and Medicine and IAG	2014-15	300	500	525	Headcount	2019-20	601	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	We will aim to work long term with increasing numbers of prospective students from a variety of under-represented ethnicities, through our Teen Vet Club, Junior Vet Club, Y 10 Easter school, Y11 Summer school and Y12 Sutton Trust summer school.	2015-16	12	35	35	Headcount	2019-20	65	Expected progress
T16b_05 (Multiple)	We aim to increase the number of Mature Students at each stage of the student lifecycle who have followed Access to Science routes into Higher Education, through working with our Mature student association and creating a Career Explorers network for mature first degree prospective students	2015-16	5	10	15	Headcount	2019-20	4	Limited progress
T16b_06 (Access)	We aim to increase our long term outreach work beginning with primary school students and leading through the Key Stages.	2014-15	15 schools	20 schools	21 schools	Headcount	2019-20	200	Expected progress
T16b_07 (Access)	We aim to offer local Homework clubs for WP pupils, close to our campuses	2017-18	11	13	15	Headcount	2019-20	15	Expected progress

T16b_08 (Success)	We are establishing a Sutton Trust student voice panel	2018-19	18	18	20	Headcount	2019-20	25	Expected progress
T16b_09 (Multiple)	We are launching a new Work experience project	2018-19	3	3	5	Headcount	2019-20	12	Expected progress

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	£425,000.00	£466,000.00	10%
Financial Support	£617,049.00	£561,000.00	-9%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected The Royal Veterinary College 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	In 2020-21 we carried out a large-scale survey and in-depth focus group with students receiving financial assistance from the RVC (identified by SFE loan status). The key finding from this evaluation was a lack of awareness of the financial support on offer pre-enrolment, and that such an awareness would have made some impact on the students' decisions and stress about going to university. We have already taken several actions in direct response to these findings and the students' suggestions, e.g. updated our financial support webpages and offer holder materials to make information more accessible and signpost support. We promote the financial support available through Widening Participation programmes (e.g. summer schools), and will use these findings to improve the information given in Welcome Week and prospectuses. We will repeat this year's evaluation in 2021-22, and hope to see improved awareness of financial support, and increased applications from lower income groups, as a result.
T16a_05	In light of the current context around gender, we were advised by OfS not to focus on males as a target group for our APP 2020-24.

T16a_06	<p>Biology and Chemistry Masterclasses will resume when on-campus visits are possible. We continue to build relationships with schools through in-person and virtual programmes, to meet their needs, and to give bespoke support for targeted young people to reach their goals.</p> <p>In 2020-21 we identified a need for attainment-raising in Chemistry, for young people to reach their STEM HE goals. We created a new virtual programme funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry, Chemistry Champions, running as a six-session course in Spring Term 2020, with over 700 young people signed up from over 200 schools. Our research including a focus group with teachers suggests that this approach, rather than working with school groups, will be a more effective way to target our impact on attainment towards achieving our APP goals for 2020 onwards.</p>
T16b_05	<p>Our Biosciences courses are currently being redeveloped to be more flexible and therefore increase accessibility for underrepresented groups including mature students. This includes using blended digital/in-person platforms for learning, and modularising the curriculum.</p> <p>As well as the continuation of the projects specified here, we will collaborate with other HEIs via the WP Vet Schools Network (created by RVC in 2020-21) and UniConnect, to improve our recruitment of mature students.</p>

5. Confirmation

The Royal Veterinary College confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
The Royal Veterinary College 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	Stuart WJ Reid
Position	Principal

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

The Royal Veterinary College'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>The RVC bursary of £1000/year was distributed to 501 students in 2019-20, and promoted through the prospectus, website and materials sent to offer holders. Alongside the RVC Hardship fund, and bursaries specifically for extra-mural studies placements, these aim to mitigate the barrier of cost of study. The Veterinary Gateway programme continues to attract a high proportion of young people from lower socio-economic groups, providing an accessible path to qualification in Veterinary Medicine. We use NS-SEC group as a criteria for selecting to our intensive Summer School programmes.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>We carried out data analysis and consultation (e.g. focus group), which identified the key barriers for these groups as direct & perceived cost of study, and a lack of parent or teacher support (intersection with being first in family/first in school). We addressed these barriers with targeted Widening Participation programmes including IAG & support for teachers (resources and CPD sessions), parent/carer support events, sharing student role model stories addressing these barriers (online and in-person), and promoting the financial support available. The impact of these programmes on the concerns of potential students has been significant: for example in the evaluation of our Year 12 Summer School, young people showed increases in measures including feeling able to manage finances, feeling well-informed about support services (an increase from 20% at baseline to 72% at endpoint) and confidence living away from home.</p> <p>The NS-SEC measure is no longer a priority focus for our APP 2020-24, so the work described here now targets groups based on POLAR4 & IMD measures.</p>

Target reference number: T16a_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>We actively ensure male role models are represented in our recruitment programmes and materials. We have targeted our WP programmes to young people in POLAR4 Q1&Q2.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>Our new RVCforAll webpages aim to represent students and stories from a range of different backgrounds, as the perception of not seeing "people like me" was identified as a key barrier for applications to RVC in evaluation. The webpages, as well as Ambassadors working on our WP programmes, include male role models and their stories.</p> <p>Several new WP programmes targeted to prospective students from POLAR Q1 areas were initiated, e.g. a pre-interview support session, in response to data evidencing that this group performs less well at specific interview stages. These programmes attracted several males from Q1 & Q2 areas.</p>

Target reference number: T16a_06
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>In 2018-19 we ran five Biology and Chemistry Masterclass sessions for school groups, learning from our world-class researchers. These sessions worked to support the attainment of pupils in topics that teachers identified as struggling to deliver in an engaging way, and directly linked study of these topics to future careers. We had a further five sessions booked in for 2019-20, all of which were cancelled either by the school or due to COVID-19. We continued to collaborate on attainment in our local community as planned in 2019-20 with the Bangladeshi Worker's Association (see Homework Clubs, below).</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>Limited impact on attainment can be made without investing into long-term, in-depth collaborative programmes with schools, which did not represent best use of our limited resources in 2019-20. This target was deprioritised as it has not been identified as a priority in our APP for 2020-21 onwards.</p>

Target reference number: T16b_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>We analysed the data of Access to Science route mature students and found evidence of poor success rates within the course, so did not further explore this route for recruitment. The new Mature Students Society was successfully established as an official SU society, including creating a committee and gaining its first members. Its planned launch event in March 2020 was disrupted by COVID-19, and rescheduled for December 2020, which attracted 16 attendees. The Society now runs regular events and has more than 260 followers in their active Facebook group.</p> <p>Our Night at the Vet College event in November 2019 (engaging the public in RVC's scientific research) was advertised in channels to attract mature students e.g. science interest networks and FE colleges, and attracted over 400 attendees.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>We attend the NEON mature students working group to stay informed and collaborate on issues facing this demographic.</p>

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

The Royal Veterinary College's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	
T16a_03	NB performance has been calculated using current POLAR4 data, rather than the previous POLAR3 version specified in the target description. This data is the overall POLAR4 Q1+2 % of UK Domiciled FT Students, across all ages and years.
T16a_04	
T16a_05	NB performance has been calculated using current POLAR4 data, rather than the previous POLAR3 version specified in the target description.
T16a_06	
T16a_07	
T16a_08	Significant impact of the COVID-19 no detriment policy in 2019-20.
T16b_01	Virtual summer schools delivered (see Impacts of Coronavirus in monitoring return).
T16b_02	All activity counted here was delivered face to face, before the March 2020 lockdown. In response to schools' needs, we also created & distributed a support pack for Teachers & Career Advisors during the initial lockdown in April 2020, to help them support young people remotely with progression to RVC.
T16b_03	All activity counted here was delivered face to face, before the March 2020 lockdown. Further activities were undertaken virtually post-lockdown but accurate statistics on reach are not available to represent here (e.g. resources made freely available via a website). Collaborative partners included UniConnect, AimHigher, Sutton Trust, and the Knowledge Quarter.
T16b_04	All activity counted here was delivered face to face, before the March 2020 lockdown, by the Animal Aspirations student-led programme (developed from the Prepare to Succeed project). Further activities were undertaken post-lockdown including a new Animal Aspirations website and social media strategy, and 24 young people from BAME backgrounds attending our virtual Summer Schools.
T16b_05	
T16b_06	Our Junior Vet Club for Primary aged children numbered over 1200 members as of June 2020, from over 200 different schools. An October half-term event for members and their families drew 100 attendees, and a further Careers with Animals event in collaboration with Bayer PLC's Baylab was planned for 70 children in April 2020 (cancelled due to COVID).

	We hosted four visits to our Hawkshead campus by local Primary schools, including activities on our nature trail, farm, and planting trees.
T16b_07	Our Student Ambassadors worked with the Bangladeshi Workers' Association Homework Club on a weekly basis. 19 sessions were attended before lockdown in March 2020.
T16b_08	Fourteen students attended our Sutton Trust alumni focus group in October 2019, to discuss their lived experience of barriers to making an application. We engaged a further eleven WP students and alumni in contributing to and consulting on the development of our online resources: RVCforAll (website of student stories and tips) and Animal Academy (resources & events for WP young people).
T16b_09	Many more work experience placements were planned for Summer 2020 but cancelled due to the pandemic.