

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE RESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 9.30-11.30am, 4 February 2020 Senate House Council Chamber			
Present	Professor Christopher Hughes	CH	Pro Vice Chancellor (Education), (Chair)
	Dr Anil Awesti	AA	Centre for Lifelong Learning; Student Success and Progression Working Group Co-Chair
	Chloe Batten	CB	Education Officer, Warwick Students' Union
	Paul Blagburn	PB	Head of Widening Participation (Secretary)
	Delyth Chambers	DC	Director of Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions Services
	Alice Churm	AC	Postgraduate Officer, Warwick Students' Union
	Kate Ireland	KI	Director of Centre for Teacher Education
	Professor Lorenzo Frigerio	LF	Head of Department, Life Sciences
	Dr Jonathon Heron	JHe	Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning Representative
	James Hutchinson	JHu	Head of Student Funding and Finance
	Dr Ines Molinaro	IM	Academic Director, Warwick Foundation Studies
	Dr Rachel Moseley	RM	Head of Department, TV and Film
	Professor Robin Naylor	RN	Director of Studies, Economics; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair
	Kulbir Shergill	KS	Director of Social Inclusion
	Professor Jeremy Smith	JS	Head of Department, Economics
Professor Pat Tissington	PT	Academic Director of Employability and Skills (until 10.00)	
Professor Richard Tunstall	RT	Head of Clinical Anatomy and Imaging, WMS	
Attending	Claire Edden	CE	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Social Sciences
	Kathryn Fisher	KF	Head of Disability Services
	Baljit Gill	BG	WP Manager (Assistant Secretary)
	Professor Paramjit Gill	PG	Warwick Medical School
	Dr Damien Homer	DH	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Arts
	Paul Johnstone	PJ	Head of Analytics, Strategy Group
	Cherryl Jones	CJ	WP Access and Lifecycle Manager, Student Success and Progression Working Group Co-Chair
	Catherine McNicholl	CM	WP Manager
Dr Tammy Thiele	TT	WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair	
Ref	Item		
037	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Amanda Bishop (WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Science, Engineering and Medicine); Matt Ferguson (Director of Development); Dr Rebecca Freeman (Dean of Students); Dr Hannah Friend (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding); Dr Anne Hollinshead (Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning); Sam McClenaghan (Deputy Finance Director Departmental Services); Faye Murray (Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics); Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director, Graduate Studies); Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar); Roberta Wooldridge Smith (Director of Student Opportunity)</p>		
038	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>		

039	<p>Minutes of last meeting on 4 February 2020</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 were received and approved.</p>
040	<p>Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting on 4 February 2020</p> <p>(a) Bursary Award for MBChB students (032-WPC040220)</p> <p>PB provided an update on the Bursary Award for MBChB students. The paper has been presented to and approved by ARC. From 2021 entry MBChB students will receive financial support in line with the Warwick Bursary. RT welcomed this decision and thanked the group for their support.</p>
Chair's Business and Actions	
041	<p>(a) Chair's welcome</p> <p>CH welcomed members to the meeting and introduced PG, Professor in General Practice in Warwick Medical School and a GP in Coventry. The Chair expressed the necessity of holding this meeting, albeit truncated during this unprecedented situation, to focus on Widening Participation developments over the last few months and looking forward in response to the situation.</p> <p>(b) WP Post-TEG event</p> <p>Following previous discussions, this event had been planned to take place in March, with around 140 attendees from across the University. Due to the current situation, this will now be postponed to a later date, and potentially held in a different format, centring on a group plenary and themed sessions. KS agreed the importance of not losing the momentum gained by the TEG exercise, and suggested a number of smaller group sessions would facilitate discussion around the impact on students from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>(c) Race Equality Taskforce</p> <p>Held on 6 May 2020, this meeting was attended by a number of Committee members and discussion focussed around concerns over the attainment gap identifying disproportionate effect on some groups. The meeting went well, and provided transparency and clear communication between the Taskforce and Widening Participation, facilitating a partnership approach. It is anticipated that discussion will continue in smaller groups online. RN as the Co-chair of the Research and Evaluation working group outlined future research in the Autumn term, looking at UK applications through Admissions, identifying acceptors, enrollers, and those who have been deterred at different stages of the application process. Through this exercise, it is hoped to identify any gaps in students with protected characteristics at each stage. While hard data on A levels may be missing, it is anticipated that findings will inform direction over the next year.</p> <p>(d) IntoUniversity and Upreach</p> <p>PB provided an update on recent meetings held with these organisations with the Chair of the Committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <u>IntoUniversity</u> Due to the current challenges, all IntoUniversity centres are closed. Nevertheless the organisation aims to offer support to students during the last elements of their decision-making by launching a national campaign next week to telephone all year 13s, as they have found this contact has the potential to have significant impact. The University will receive data on applicants to Warwick, which will inform tailored support for them. ii. <u>Upreach</u> The end of year report from Upreach will be circulated for the next meeting. The organisation works solely with students from a WP background and the report provides insightful analysis on how these students are feeling with the current online teaching, learning and assessment methods, as they move into further study or employment. Around 130 Warwick students are involved in this programme, and the next meeting will focus on raising the visibility of the programme with academic colleagues and further collaboration. iii. CH welcomed the updates and encouraged continued close contact with University partners.

042	<p>Access Agreement Monitoring Return 2018-19</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Access Agreement Monitoring Return 2018-19 from the Head of Widening Participation (042-WPC190520)</p> <p>(a) Following previous discussion at the Committee, the Access Agreement Monitoring Return was approved by ARC and submitted to the Office for Students on 28 February 2020. The OfS access agreement monitoring expectations have changed significantly to reduce the burden on institutions but also reflecting the changing nature that priority has shifted since the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) operated access agreements and when these agreements were produced in 2017.</p> <p>(b) This return focusses predominantly on financial expenditure of a year ago. Previous monitoring returns also included data on progress towards institutional targets and annual milestones, an overview of student fee income, and evaluation work. Overall, the reported access agreement expenditure was down in cash terms and as a proportion of higher fee income compared to predictions made in our 2018 access agreement. However expenditure across all reportable categories has increased compared to the previous year and appears consistent with the new access and participation approach approved in 2019.</p> <p>(c) Financial support through the Hardship Fund has increased slightly, albeit to a fewer number of students. This may be the consequence of the different levels of funds available to students. JHu concurred that these are marginal changes, with no reduction in consistency.</p> <p>(d) Reporting on future access and participation plan investment commitments will be provided through the University's annual published accounts and therefore will be subjected to scrutiny by Warwick's approved external auditors, KPMG. The OfS have stated only expenditure related to access and student financial support be included in the accounts. Work is currently underway to ensure a robust and timely account of access and participation investment for the 2019-20 financial year.</p> <p>(e) To date the OfS have not responded with any queries.</p> <p>DECISION: The Committee noted the update on the Access Agreement Monitoring Return 2018-19 submitted to the Office for Students.</p>
043	<p>Supporting Widening Participation students in the Covid-19 Environment</p> <p>The Committee received a paper exploring the impact on, and support for, WP students in the Covid-19 environment from the Head of Widening Participation (043-WPC190520)</p> <p>(a) This briefing paper summarises how students from widening participation backgrounds may be impacted across the student lifecycle by the current Covid-19 situation. The situation has resulted in significant issues for students pertaining to health and wellbeing, economic and financial, and educational and opportunity based challenges. While all students will be effected, the consequences of the pandemic and lockdown measures are likely to impact WP groups the hardest and could present undue challenges related to our access and participation ambitions and priorities.</p> <p>(b) The initial findings have been collected in a short time with a limited audience sample but clearly depict broader challenges and impact, and will influence the University's immediate and longer term response. Barriers and challenges can be evidenced across the whole student lifecycle, from school children to current students, all of whom will have missed out on six months of education. This is highly pertinent to young people working towards A levels (years 13) and GCSEs (year 11).</p> <p>(c) Students from a disadvantaged background are impacted disproportionately compared to their more advantaged peers, and while OfQual is directing a semi-robust process, many of our incoming student may</p>

be negatively impacted. This may require adaptation of the first year curriculum to address the challenges they may face.

- (d) Current students from a WP background may also face significant challenges in the new online environment, from access to IT, equipment, learning spaces, and in the case of some of our most vulnerable students – care leavers and estranged students – a lack of family support. Many current students rely on the now non-existent part time work in the hospitality sector, or other opportunities to undertake work experience, so this may have significant financial impact. Furthermore the financial situation of their parents may have changed considerably during lockdown, thus impacting on their access to student finance.
- (e) The University focus is that no student should be disadvantaged in their application or progression at this time and the paper highlights responses in light of some of the challenges which will support different groups across the various stages of the student lifecycle. Furthermore, the University is providing additional financial support to finalists who are considering further study at Warwick. In addition to the current WTMS funding of £10k, postgraduate students will be offered a 10% PG Alumni discount and a Graduate Scholarship Award of 30-50% on a range of courses.
- (f) Recommendations to inform future direction were presented. Discussion was welcomed on further support and areas of focus that the University may consider to ensure that prospective and current Warwick WP students are not adversely impacted by the current situation and are able to engage in their student experience effectively. Information should be positive and reassuring but not misleading. If a blended approach to teaching, learning and assessment is to be implemented, all students should be clear on what this means for them.
- (g) RN suggested that for some students, online learning can be advantageous. Without creating a two-tiered population, many students would welcome a different university experience that would be equal to the standard one.
- (h) AA informed the group that discussions three weeks ago in the Student Success working group centred on a number of concerns.
 - i. Whether funds which would have been spent on the now cancelled summer school residentials could be moved to provide IT equipment. PB informed the group that there have been significant difficulties in procuring equipment for staff. It was further suggested that this was a wider issue, as the University has a responsibility to support all students, but the potential of providing equipment would be explored. DH informed the group that the library currently have thirty laptops to loan to students who are in need and a number of Arts students have used this service. Colleagues to contact DH for further information.
 - ii. As students' financial situations are changing at a rapid rate, whether this would be taken into account for evidencing applications to the Hardship Fund. AA and JHu to discuss this further with Student Funding to clarify this.
 - iii. Predicted grades for black offer holders and those from a poor background are generally poorly predicted, and whether this would be taken into account. DC agreed that flexibility will be required in August; to be discussed in item 044.
- (i) AC raised the concerns of PGR students who are not represented in discussions. With reduced teaching opportunities and disappearance of part time paid work, this group is also facing challenges at the current time. CH agreed that plans going forward should include provision for postgraduate students.
- (j) PG shared that, from a clinical perspective, his surgery has seen an increased number of postgraduate students seeking help with mental health issues, particularly anxiety. Unfortunately with existing long waiting lists for NHS services, these issues will only increase. KF outlined the wellbeing support available to all students, with the service continuing to offer support, albeit in different ways. The Counselling Service

	<p>offers video and email appointments on a daily basis, and has seen an increased use by students living at home, with therapeutic input utilising CBT and talking therapy on offer. The service also holds daily masterclasses, working closely with local services, to provide a 'toolkit' of support strategies for students and staff. There is mental health nurse provision for students in high risk categories, who liaise with crisis teams. As many students are at home, efforts are made to contact teams within their locality.</p> <p>(k) JHe cited current government advice, on the campus as a physical space. As some groups will need to return quickly, it is vital that the University commit to providing safe study space when allowed. KI informed the Committee that a group is convening this week looking at that issue, while CH added that Estates are also exploring this. CJ raised concerns over care leavers and estranged students, who will need accommodation at the start of their course of study, and will need reassurance on the physical space on campus. CH will discuss with the Business Continuity work stream.</p> <p>(l) PB queried how the University can realistically provide support for those students currently on campus, such as care leavers and estranged students and KF added that Wellbeing Services offer support to these students. Regarding connectivity with the most vulnerable groups, PB cited Sanctuary Scholars, who are currently not a 'WP' group; a group meeting is scheduled shortly to discuss this. KS suggested telephone support for current students could be highly effective, unfortunately GDPR regulations do not allow this. DH informed the group of the WP Student Network, made up of around 160 students from a WP background, normally held physically. An online meeting was held recently, although with low numbers, those students who engaged were appreciated the contact. CE raised the additional issue of pre 16 learners' access to IT proving problematic.</p> <p>(m) KF described the support from Wellbeing in Offer Holders' Open Days and campus visits, with extra support for autistic applicants and private telephone discussions. DC shared that there has been a great level of online engagement from the Recruitment team, replicating physical provision where possible and the development of online Open Days.</p> <p>DECISION: The Committee noted the briefing paper and the subsequent discussion on the issues raised in the report.</p>
<p>044</p>	<p>Update on Undergraduate Applications by POLAR 4</p> <p>The Committee received an update from the Head of Widening Participation and the WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager on undergraduate applications by POLAR 4 (044-WPC190520) [PB offline for 10 minutes]</p> <p>a) The report provides an overview of the latest (as of 28th April 2020) applicant and conversion position for POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 5, a key KPI in the University's Access and Participation Plan, at an institutional, faculty and departmental level. At an institutional level, there have been a total of 25,672 home applications, including 1,590 (6.2%) from POLAR4 quintile 1 backgrounds, and 9,774 (38.1%) from POLAR 4 quintile 5 (including Conditional and Unconditional offers). There is no basis for comparison to last year.</p> <p>b) DC informed the group that since this dataset was collected there have been an additional 1200 applications. Conversion is improving, with a 27% firm accept rate overall and there have been currently few deferrals. There is no data on the characteristics of these applicants, although figures prove similar to last year's cycle. There has been a significant level of applicant engagement through both the Recruitment and WP teams, to support applicants in their decision-making. Communications will be sent out today (19 May 2020) to all offer holders to reassure them regarding the planned blended learning approach for the new academic year.</p> <p>c) DC added that the University aims to offer increased flexibility in August regarding students from a WP background; however the current cap on student numbers offers only a 5% margin. With some</p>

	<p>departments showing high numbers of applicants, the level of flexibility may prove limited. There will be additional transition support for all new students to ensure they are well prepared.</p> <p>d) Further updates and a more precise position will be available after the UCAS offer holders' response deadline on 18th June. This will influence the approach taken at Confirmation and Clearing, including prioritising and giving additional consideration to WP applicants during the Confirmation stage. Moreover, a decision will be taken at the Student Recruitment Steering Group on any tactical use of Clearing Plus, recently launched by UCAS, to further target Q1 students.</p> <p>ACTION: The Committee noted this report, and welcomed further updates at the next meeting.</p>
Other	
045	<p>Any other business</p> <p>PB assured the committee that widening participation and inclusivity issues are embedded in all ongoing educational provision, in business continuity discussions looking ahead at the next cycle.</p> <p>CH thanked the members of the Committee, reiterating the importance of widening participation in the current environment.</p>
<p>Close: 11.00am</p> <p>Next meeting: 09.30am-11.30am, Tuesday 23 June 2020, University House, CMR 1.0</p>	

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DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
044 Update on Undergraduate Applications by POLAR 4	Further applications updates to be presented after the UCAS offer holders' response deadline on 18th June.	PB/TT 23 June 2020	