

Arden University (10005451): Access and Participation Plan variance request

In line with OfS requirements we are varying our plan to ensure that we are meeting the requirement to support pre-16 student attainment in school, enabling underrepresented students to succeed in school no matter which study pathway they decide to choose after their secondary education.

This will not require any further investment but will move a portion of investment from our Hardship initiative to cover the additional investment into pre-16 and post-16 outreach.

Two programmes of activity have been devised to provide support within both primary and secondary schools/FE. These are detailed below:

PG Certificate in Neurodiversity:

This qualification is being developed by our School of Psychology, with the first iteration to be complete and ready for us by April 2023. The course content includes:

- Introduction to Neurodiversity
- Neurodiversity in Education
- Applying Neurodiversity to the workplace
- Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System

We propose to offer the qualification fully funded to teachers from primary and secondary education. The course will be delivered in full, having analysed the content of the 'Applying Neurodiversity to the Workplace' and 'Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System' we are satisfied that these directly relate to the teaching profession with alignment around employability and youth offending and its link to SEND.

Evaluation:

First delivery of the course will commence in April 2023. The impact of the course provision will be evaluated through narrative and the theory of change. We will conduct both focussed feedback sessions with participants and a survey to ensure that we receive detailed responses further to initial delivery and a year after this, to gauge the impact of the programme on students at the participating schools.

Investment requirement:

For the development of the programme, delivery and marking for the next academic year £69,277.00 will be invested. This sum will increase over the subsequent academic years within the 2020 plan, as we expand delivery of the programme.

Mental health and wellbeing across the schooling journey:

The second programme in development involves a series of workshops that will run through primary, secondary and FE education. The intention is that underrepresented groups will be supported through their journey by a series of workshops to help them cope and understand any impact on their mental health. Students will also have access to learning mentors who will guide them as they progress. This additional input and continual support will impact positively on attainment.

The primary programme will involve 3 key workshops:

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|---|-------------------|
| – Naming and Talking about emotions | Key stage 1 and 2 |
| – Making great friendships | Key stage 2 |
| – Developing my strength and resilience | Key stage 1 and 2 |

In addition to this, the School of Psychology will support the coaches develop their own skills. This will be twofold:

1. Provision of 1 to 1 coaching for the learning mentors
2. Creation and delivery of a training package to teach coaching skills to the learning mentors, to put in place best practice at each school

The secondary/FE programme will include 4 workshops over different key stages.

<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Parent</u>
– Identifying and managing emotion (focus on anxiety and avoidance)	Y8, 9, 10, 11 – selected students or student who are interested in this.	All year groups
– Developing Quality Friendships	Y9 (Y8) Selected students	KS3
– Embracing Individuality	Y9, 10, 11 (dependent on students so smaller groups)	KS4
– Managing your environment	Y10 and 11 groups	All

Evaluation:

In the short term each programme of activity will be analysed separately after year one, the outcomes of this evaluation will be used to inform any changes, where needed, in the following year.

While we plan that all students can access this programme of support, our key target group will be those from underrepresented groups.

We envisage that the evaluation method for this programme will be either through Imperial enquiry, having data sets to compare, or; with causal evidence, using a control group. Which will be dependent on how we can work with schools to define each workshop group. We will be able to confirm exact evaluation from 2023-2024.

The long-term plan for this programme is that we can track the instigation of the workshops in a control group from primary school and follow through to secondary school, to fully evaluate the impact on the students through their student journey.

Investment requirement:

In academic year 2022-2023 an initial investment of £10,000 will be invested to cover the costs of the initial development of this programme. The research that we carry out will lead to initial delivery of workshops from 2023, as such investment will increase incrementally to cover the delivery and evaluation of the programme.

Removal of initiatives:

In addition to the development of the programmes above, Arden University has grown and progressed over the last two years in such a way that some initiatives initially planned have now been superseded by other initiatives that provide the outcomes required for the relevant priority groups. This has resulted in the decision to remove the following initiatives from the plan:

- Initiative 2: Extend and build upon Arden’s personalised admissions process to increase the number of part-time students entering higher education. (Priority group: Part-time students)

Our admissions process is contextualised in all cases, as such no AP investment has been made for this initiative as it remains a broad policy at Arden and as such the priority group remains a focus.

- Initiative 4: Implementation of two week diagnostic and intensive skills training at commencement of studies on full-time blended learning programmes to ensure the provision of targeted study skills support and improve success rates. (Priority groups: BAME students, students from most deprived areas)

From May 2022 Arden University moved to a new study calendar, with 4 blocks of 10 week study periods over the course of a year. Due to the intensity of this new calendar, it has been recognised that this 2-week intense provision could not be provided without interrupting the flow of the study year. In addition, with the introduction of a fully resourced Academic Skills team, offering one to one support to students, ‘Togetherall’ our online wellness portal, a fully resourced counselling service and an online induction programme available prior to enrolment, the additional support envisaged through this initiative is no longer required.

- Initiative 5: Conduct of an exploratory research project within our Learning and Innovation Fund to help the University to identify successful academic support strategies that improve grade attainment, and assess the impact of these strategies (priority group: BAME students)

This initiative was completed and resulted in the instigation of an EDI Sub-committee as advised by the research carried out. This sub-committee reports directly to the Access and Participation Committee. The aims of this group includes improved grade attainment for the ethnic minority students. The investment toward the research will now support the EDI sub-committee.

Amendments to investment:

In summary, while no new investment is being made, the table below confirms investment in each area in line with the variance detailed within this paper.

Total Investment		Academic year				
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	Initiatives	£316,621.39	£2,221,016.19	£2,782,207.83	£3,142,807.98	£3,497,824.90
	1 – Schools liaison programme	£27,854.93	£68,008.30	£179,971.39	£233,803.66	£299,588.49
	3 – individual coaching programme	£110,829.03	£155,887.59	£190,907.06	£264,349.38	£331,296.29

	5 – Targeted interventions (EDI sub-committee)	£21,000.00	£73,647.68	£75,857.11	£78,132.82	£80,476.81
	6 – Dedicated student counsellor	£62,564.78	£110,471.52	£265,499.88	£273,454.88	£281,668.82
	7 – Wellness portal	£15,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£60,000.00
	8 – Arden learning experience strands	£0.00	£168,616.50	£181,471.42	£182,574.85	£188,052.09
	9 – Pilot alternate delivery modes	£0.00	£11,887.96	£12,244.60	£12,611.94	£12,990.30
	10 – Develop and expand the careers portal	£73,296.66	£132,570.33	£151,532.80	£155,463.58	£159,409.29
	11- Annual career enhancement survey	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	12- scholarships	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	13- Hardship	£6,076.00	£643,081.00	£710,296.50	£820,980.00	£908,111.75
	14 – Digital poverty	£0.00	£507,818.75	£629,337.50	£729,337.50	£806,900.00
	15 – APP staffing	£0.00	£319,026.58	£354,989.58	£362,089.37	£369,331.16
	Of which is funded by higher fee income (£)	£316,621.39	£2,221,016.19	£2,782,207.83	£3,142,807.98	£3,497,824.90
	Of which is funded by the higher fee income (%HFI)	8.4%	17.7%	12.4%	10.5%	9.7%
	Of which is funded by other sources (£)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

These changes are also detailed within our variations template as requested.

We will evaluate these measures annually in addition to our other initiatives and dependent on outcomes will revise our plan for 2025 onwards accordingly.

Submitted for an on behalf of the Accountable Officer and Board of Directors.

Kavita Cassidy, Head of Quality, Access and Participation, July 2022.