

Office for
Students

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Next steps in access and participation

8 February 2022

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Agenda

1330 **Welcome**

Sarah Howls, Head of Access and Participation

What next for access and participation?

John Blake, Director for Fair Access and Participation

Access and participation reforms: What happens next?

Charlie Leyland, Access and Participation Plan Manager

Questions and answers

1445 **Close**

Event notices

- Closed captions are available – please click the CC icon
- A recording of this event will be available on the OfS website
- Please use the Q&A box rather than the Chat box to ask a question
- Use the Chat box if you would like to speak to the events team.

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Equality, quality and evaluation

What next for access and participation?

John Blake

Director for Fair Access and Participation

Next steps in access and participation

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[@johndavidblake](https://twitter.com/johndavidblake)



Where are we now?

- Over 250 access and participation plans (APPs) approved
- Over £2.5 billion committed over five years to access and participation work
- ‘The OfS’s work on access and participation has led to stretching and broad-ranging targets, with more ambitious and strategic approaches to achieve them.’

Reviewing our work – how could we improve?

Connecting access and participation within access and participation plans

Complexity of access and participation plans

Non-traditional pathways and modes of study

Effect on smaller providers

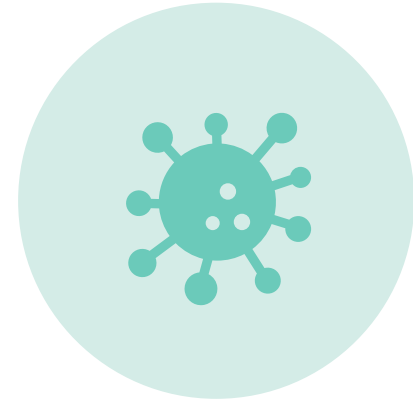
What else is happening?



Attainment gap -
early and persistent



The OfS's new
quality regime



COVID-19



Evaluation

**We can't share what works,
if we don't actually know what works**



Access and quality

Access is about successful higher education, not just any higher education

School-university engagement

The attainment gap opens early in life, so attempts to close it have to start then too

What kind of activity might we expect to see?

- Provider support for evidence-led, provenly-successful interventions to help them expand.
- Innovative action on measuring and enhancing the knowledge and skills of disadvantaged pupils in non-statutory assessed years.
- Place-based policy initiatives tied closely to localities **and** more wide-reaching regional and national initiatives.

Innovation and experimentation – with evaluation!

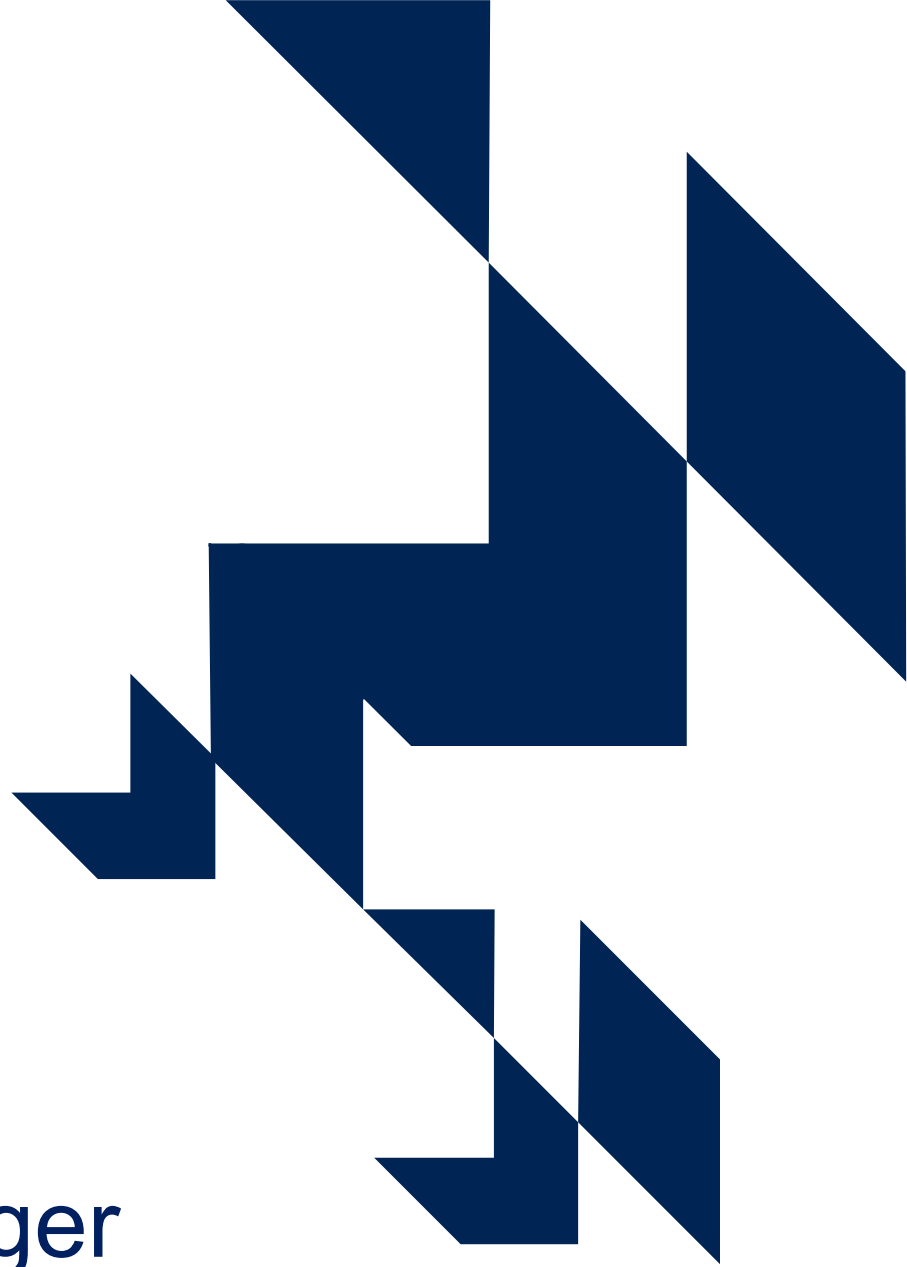
How will we do this?



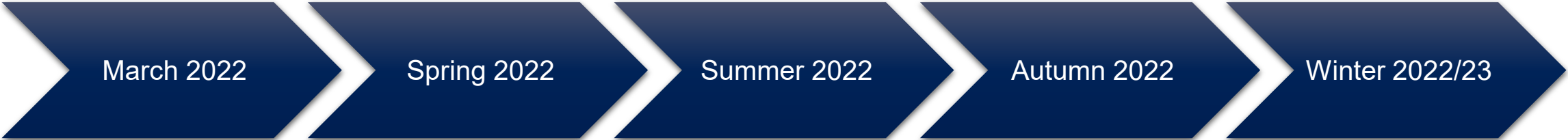


Access and participation reforms: Next steps for access and participation plans

Charlie Leyland
Access and Participation Plan Manager



Timeline



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Access and participation data dashboard update

OfS monitoring of progress against 2020-21 plans

Variations advice published

OfS variation assessments and outcomes

Stakeholder engagement on future access and participation plan cycle

2023-24 plan approval roll over decision

Continue to assess new access and participation plans for 2022-23 and 2023-24

Universities and colleges

Consider performance and progress against access and participation plans

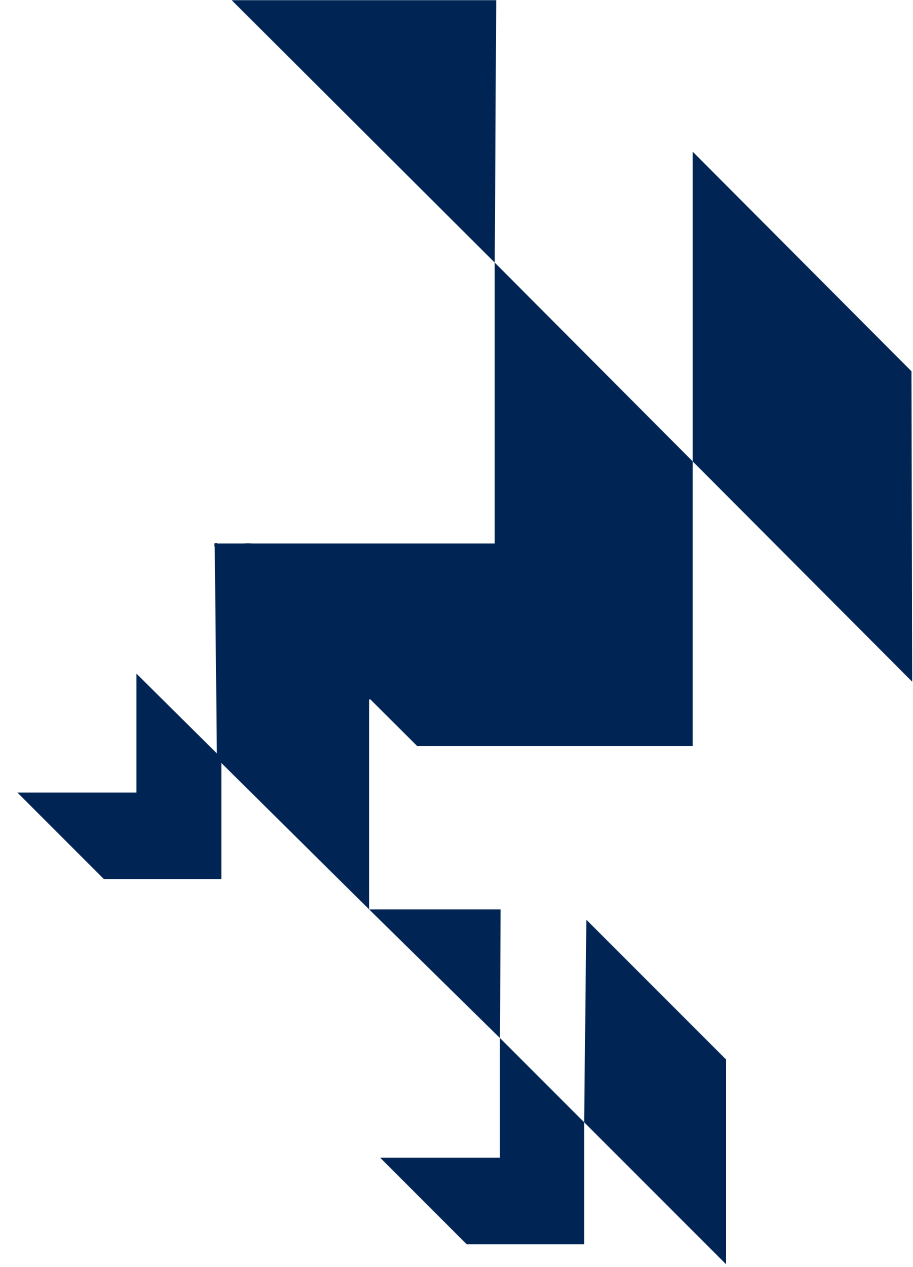
Respond to OfS requests for further information if you have not made sufficient progress against your access and participation plan

Submit variations

Publish 2020-21 impact reports

Continue to deliver commitments in approved access and participation plans

2020-21 access and participation plan monitoring



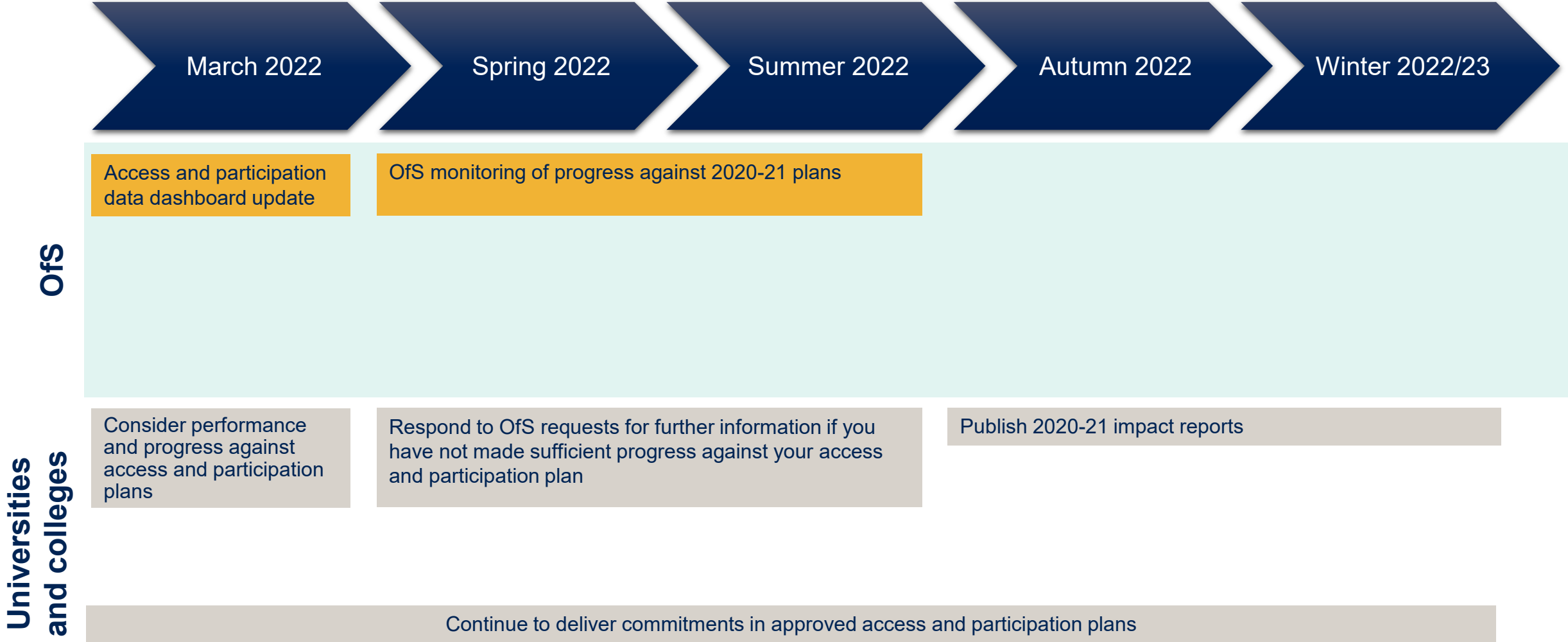
Monitoring approach for 2020-21 plans

The OfS will **monitor all providers' access and participation plans**. It will do so by **using the indicators** in the **access and participation dataset**, **reportable events**, and **other intelligence** such as complaints. These will be used to identify early warning signs that there is an increased risk that a provider may not satisfy its ongoing conditions of registration. Regulatory decisions will not normally be taken solely on the basis of these indicators, but will identify areas for the OfS to assess further.

OfS regulatory notice 1: Guidance on access and participation plans (paragraph 60, emphasis added)

We will only follow up where we have concerns or require further information to determine whether a university or college has taken all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of its plan.

2020-21 monitoring timeline



2020-21 monitoring: What do universities and colleges need to do?

If you had an access and participation plan in force for 2020-21:

1. Consider your performance against your 2020-21 access and participation plan and more broadly for underrepresented students at your university or college
2. Work with your students to refine and evaluate the delivery of access and participation plans, and to ensure the effective delivery of financial support for eligible students
3. If you can see that you have not made expected progress in relation to targets, reflect on the reasons for this and the steps you intend to take to get back on track
4. Publish a short impact report

Reminder of obligations under Condition A1

Condition A1: An Approved (fee cap) provider intending to charge fees above the basic amount to qualifying persons on qualifying courses must:

- i. Have in force an access and participation plan approved by the OfS in accordance with HERA.
- ii. Take all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of the plan.

If you become aware of anything that could negatively affect your ability to comply with condition A1 then you should consider whether you need to report this to us in line with our guidance on reportable events.



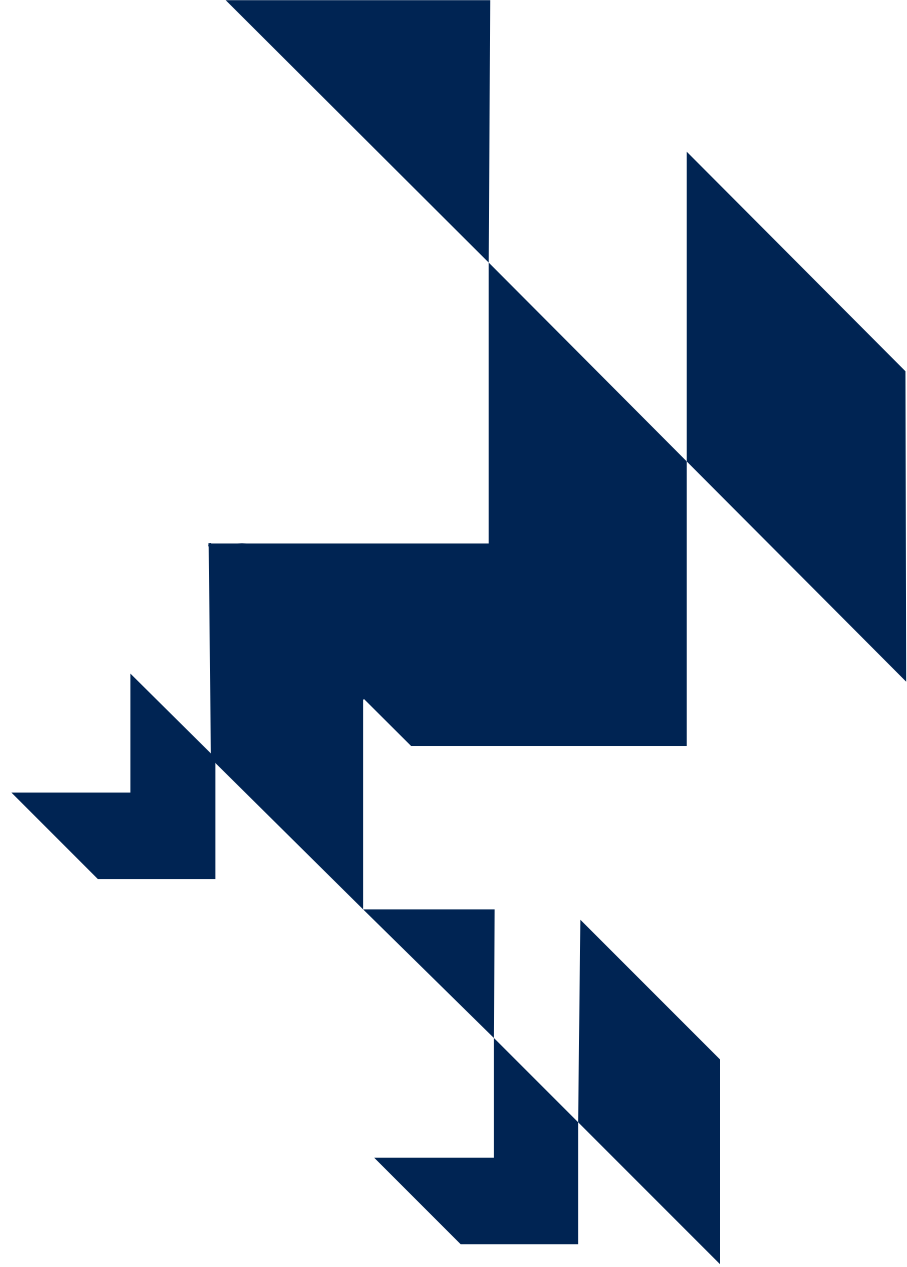
What can students do?

Work with your university or college to understand their performance and any areas for improvement:

- read the access and participation plan
- note commitments made about how your university or college will achieve its targets and engage with students
- ask for an update on progress, or use our access and participation data dashboard
- raise any concerns with your university or college and work in partnership to better understand and remedy any issues or to realise potential opportunities.

Tell us if you have concerns about your university or college's delivery of their access and participation plan through our notifications process.

Variations to existing access and participation plans





Variations

- We strongly encourage you to vary your plan to take account of the priorities outlined by the Director for Fair Access and Participation.
- We will publish advice on how to do this in spring 2022.
- The advice will include information on the areas that should be covered in variations. This is likely to cover:
 - strategic partnerships with schools to raise attainment
 - improving the quality of provision for underrepresented students
 - developing non-traditional pathways and modes of study
 - the production of two-page access and participation plan executive summaries using an optional template.

Variations timeline

March 2022

Spring 2022

Summer 2022

Autumn 2022

Winter 2022/23

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Variations advice published

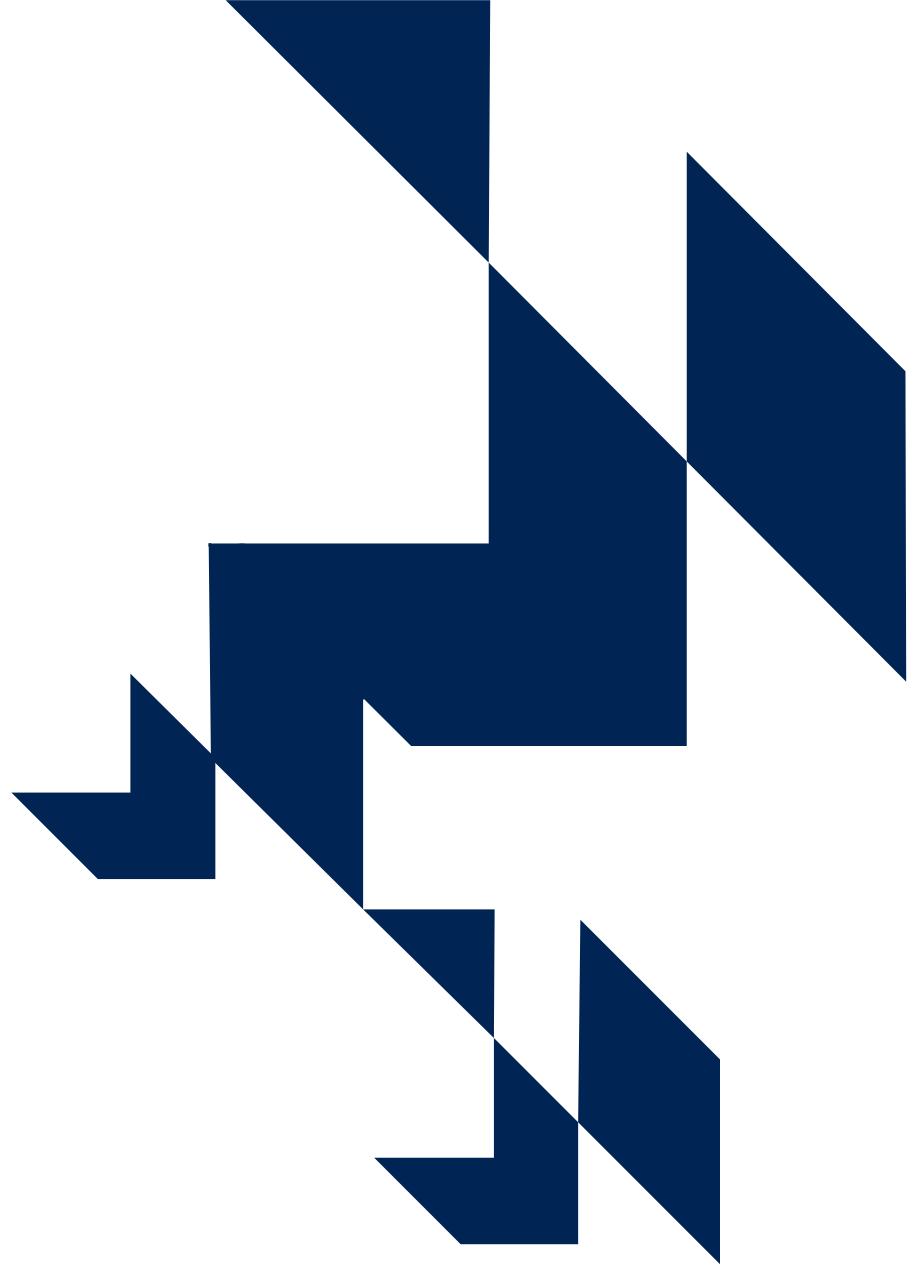
OfS variation assessments and outcomes

Universities and colleges

Submit variations

Continue to deliver commitments in approved access and participation plans

Development of future access and participation plan cycle



Stakeholder engagement timeline



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Stakeholder engagement on development of future access and participation plan cycle

Universities
and colleges

Continue to deliver commitments in approved access and participation plans

Other upcoming access and participation milestones



Submit financial information about access and participation expenditure via the Annual Financial Return (or the ESFA for further education colleges) in summer.



Provide information about the fees that you will charge to new entrants for 2023-24 through the Annual Fee Information (AFI) process in autumn.



The process for submitting a new access and participation plan for 2022-23 has not changed. Please submit your plan by the deadline of 28 February 2022.



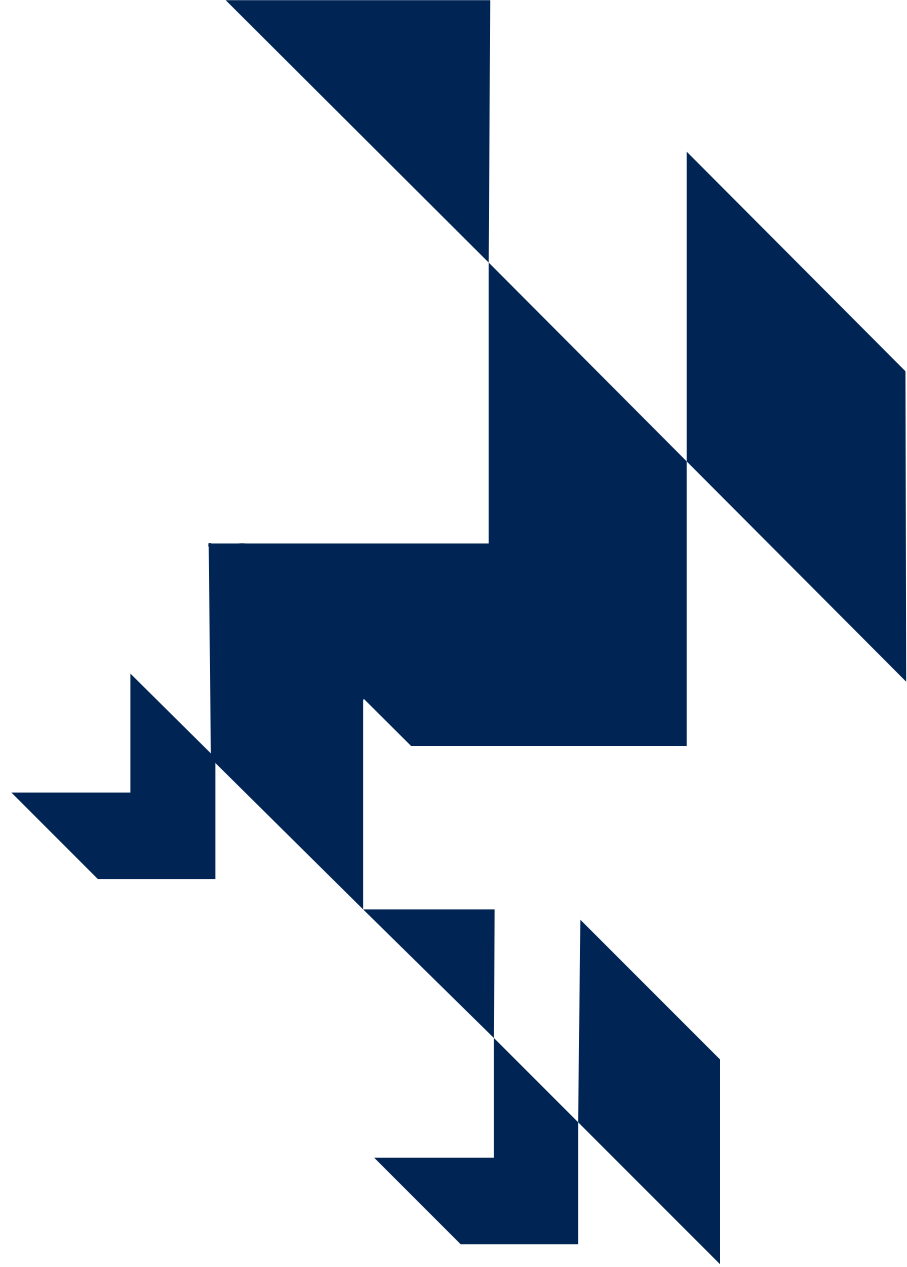
If you do not have an access and participation plan but would like one for 2022-23 and 2023-24, we will still assess your plan but it may be approved for a shorter duration to align with the broader reforms.

Links

- [Regulatory framework for higher education in England](#)
- [Regulatory notice 1: Access and participation plan guidance](#)
- [Regulatory advice 15: Monitoring and intervention](#)
- [Regulatory advice 16: Reportable events](#)
- [Student guide: Office for Students notifications](#)
- [2019-20 monitoring outcomes report](#)
- [Insight event – Raising attainment, improving access, securing success](#)

For further information please contact: app@officeforstudents.org.uk

Questions and answers



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Thank you for listening

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