

A guide to canvassing student opinions

Below are some suggestions on how to canvas student opinions to inform your student submission.

Where should I start?

The questions you ask your student body should relate to the commitments made in your university or college's approved 2019-20 access and participation plan (APP).

We would recommend that you first read your university or college's [2019-20 access and participation plan](#). Focus particularly on the areas listed below, noting the groups of students your university or college has committed to supporting and the activities it has outlined to do this:

- Ambition and strategy
- Targets
- Access, success and progression measures.

Some examples of activities you might see in the access, success and progression measures section of the plan are study support, mentoring or lecture capture. You may also see commitments to consult and work with students on delivering the plan, which might include creating a student advisory panel, involving students in curriculum design or running focus groups with underrepresented student groups.

Next you should consider the [questions that you will be asked](#) as part of the student submission. These focus on the activities your university or college committed to and the steps it planned to take to work with students on their plan. You may want to use this structure in deciding what to ask your student body.

Feedback from students can then be used to inform the [conversation with your university or college](#), where you may want to identify successes and challenges and assist in resolving them.

Which topics should I ask about?

Although the questions you ask will be specific to your university or college's 2019-20 access and participation plan, you may find it useful to focus on the following topic areas:

- 1. Student awareness of the APP in general and the groups the APP supports.**
You may want to ask questions on whether students are aware that their university or college has an APP, and whether they know which groups the APP supports. These may be good introductory questions and could be kept brief.
- 2. Student awareness and experiences of activities described in the APP.**
You may want to ask questions about student awareness of the activities your university or college has committed to in their APP. If students have been involved in activities, you could then ask them about what they thought of these and how they could be improved.
- 3. Student experiences of how their university or college works with students on their APP.**
You may want to ask questions about how your university or college consults and works with students on their APP. For example, are students aware of the ways they can get involved in the APP, and how could this be improved in the future.

4. Student experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic

For this year's student submission, we are interested in the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences of underrepresented students. You may want to ask questions about how underrepresented student groups have been affected by the pandemic, and whether your university or college has adequately supported students during this period.

Which students should I approach?

The purpose of [canvassing opinions](#) from a diverse range of students is to gain an understanding of the experiences of underrepresented students 'on the ground'.

As access and participation plans focus on underrepresented students, we would encourage you to canvas the opinions of these students. However, the method you choose may impact who you approach.

For example, if you choose an online survey, it is fine to send this to all students, as many of the activities in the APP will impact on the whole student body. However, if you choose to run a focus group, it might be easier to focus on asking underrepresented student groups to participate.