

Annex B: Provider checklist

OfS access and participation plan submission checklist

This checklist document is intended as a supportive tool and guidance for providers when preparing and submitting their access and participation plans (APPs).

Having completed and complied with this checklist does not guarantee that a plan will be approved.

Where you have not included any of the information on this checklist, please state the rationale for doing so in the plan and present alternatives, where appropriate.

Related guidance

This document should only be used in conjunction with the following, online guidance when preparing your APP:

- [Regulatory notice 1: Access and participation plan guidance - Office for Students](#)
- [Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan - effective practice advice - Office for Students](#) in particular Annex C (access and participation plan template) and Annex D (guidance on completing the fees, investments and targets document)

Plan content checks

Providers are expected to use the template available on the OfS website to structure its access and participation plan.

The following guidance is set out in [Regulatory notice 1: Access and participation plan guidance - Office for Students](#)

An access and participation plan should, as a minimum, contain:	
a.	<p>Introduction and strategic aim:</p> <p>A provider is expected to use the introduction to set out its context, mission, and overarching strategic aim, as they relate to the delivery of equality of opportunity for students.</p>

An access and participation plan should, as a minimum, contain:	
b.	<p>Risks to equality of opportunity:</p> <p>A provider is expected to summarise the key risks to equality of opportunity that it has identified through the assessment of its own performance and consideration of the equality of opportunity and risk register, and which will be addressed in the plan.</p>
c.	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>A provider is expected to set objectives to address the indications of risk identified through the assessment of performance, and in doing so address risks to equality of opportunity. The objectives set should be timebound and measurable. One objective may address multiple risks to equality of opportunity.</p> <p>For example, 'To ensure that white, free school meal-eligible students have equal opportunity to make a successful application to the provider by 2029-30.'</p>
d.	<p>Intervention strategies and expected outcomes:</p> <p>An outline of the evidence-informed intervention strategies a provider will deliver to meet each of its objectives. Each intervention strategy may address multiple risks to equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The intervention strategies should relate to a specific objective(s) and include details of the individual activities that underpin it, the theory of change, including expected outcomes, how it will be evaluated, the resources required to deliver the intervention strategy and details of how each outcome will be monitored and evaluated. This should also include a timetable for when associated evaluation outcomes will be shared and the expected format this will take.</p>
e.	<p>Targets:</p> <p>Where appropriate, objectives should be translated into numerical targets with measurable outcomes-based milestones as part of the fees, investments and targets document.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Aim: To eliminate the application success rate difference between applications from white, free school meal-eligible students and all other students by 2029-30.</p>
f.	<p>Whole provider approach:</p> <p>A description of how staff from departments and services across the provider are led and engaged to ensure that its students are supported to access, succeed in and progress from their time at the provider.</p>
g.	<p>Student consultation:</p>

An access and participation plan should, as a minimum, contain:

	<p>A plan should demonstrate how students have had the opportunity to express their views about the content of the plan before it was submitted for approval, what steps were taken as a result, and evidence of how students from a range of backgrounds have been, or will be, involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the plan.</p>
h.	<p>Evaluation of the plan:</p> <p>An outline of how a provider will strengthen and undertake evaluation of the activities delivered through its plan, including plans for publication of that evaluation.</p>
i.	<p>Investment:</p> <p>Investment information alongside each intervention. Information about a provider's investment in financial support for students and research and evaluation in the fees, investments and targets document.</p>
j.	<p>Provision of information to students:</p> <p>How prospective students will be provided with clear and accessible information about the fees they will be charged for the duration of their course. It must also set out how a provider will inform students about any financial support to which they are entitled, the eligibility criteria and the level of financial support students will be offered in each year of study.</p> <p>In summary, please include the following criteria in your plan as links to current webpages will not be considered sufficient for these purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the eligibility criteria • the amount that students will be offered (as a figure) • and how often they will be offered this in each year of their studies (one-off, quarterly, annually etc). <p>You only need to include details of the financial support for those student groups who you have identified as being at risk of not experiencing equality of opportunity, to address the specific barriers known to exist for these student groups.</p>

Plan format and final review checks

An access and participation plan should:	
1.	<p>Be in an accessible Word document format and not a pdf.</p> <p>Please see Annex C (access and participation plan template) of Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan – effective practice advice – Office for Students.</p>
2.	<p>Not usually exceed 30 pages of A4, excluding annexes.</p> <p>Plans that exceed the recommended limit will take longer to assess and could result in a delay in communicating the outcome.</p>
3.	<p>Comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to using and publishing information that may identify individuals.</p> <p>You may wish to refer to HESA’s guidance on anonymising statistical data.</p>
4.	<p>Have an accompanying fees, investments and targets (FIT) document that has passed all validation checks.</p> <p>In particular, the inflation statement must be sufficiently detailed to allow prospective students to foresee the exact level of tuition fees for the duration of their course.</p> <p>For example, if a provider increases new entrants’ fees annually in line with inflation, the statement must link the increases to an objective verifiable index, such as the Retail Prices Index (RPI-X) or Consumer Price Index (CPI). If a provider chooses ‘Other inflation statement’ they must complete the commentary box underneath.</p> <p>Please refer to Annex D of Regulatory advice 6: Guidance on completing the FIT document for further information.</p>
5.	<p>Present a clear and consistent use of terminology, particularly with regards to student groups, which aligns with the data sources used so it is clear which student groups are being referred to.</p>
6.	<p>Specify the period during which it is to be in force.</p>
7.	<p>Have been proofread and be deemed suitable for publication (free of comments and tracked changes). We will not normally be able to accommodate minor corrections to the plan once submitted given the administrative burden that this entails.</p>
8.	<p>Have been signed off by the provider’s accountable officer.</p>

Final submission checks

All APPs and related documents should be submitted via the OfS provider portal. Submissions via email will not be accepted.

The following documents should be uploaded to the OfS provider portal:	
1.	An access and participation plan in word document format and use the recommended template
2.	Optional annexes (if these are in separate documents to the plan): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex A: Assessment of performance• Annex B: Intervention strategy rationale
3.	Fees, investments and targets (FIT) document

Declaration

By submitting your application via the OfS portal, you are confirming that:

- you have read this document
- you have followed the necessary steps to make a valid submission, as set out above
- you have uploaded all your documents, as set out above
- you have consulted with and informed students of their ability to submit a separate student submission.