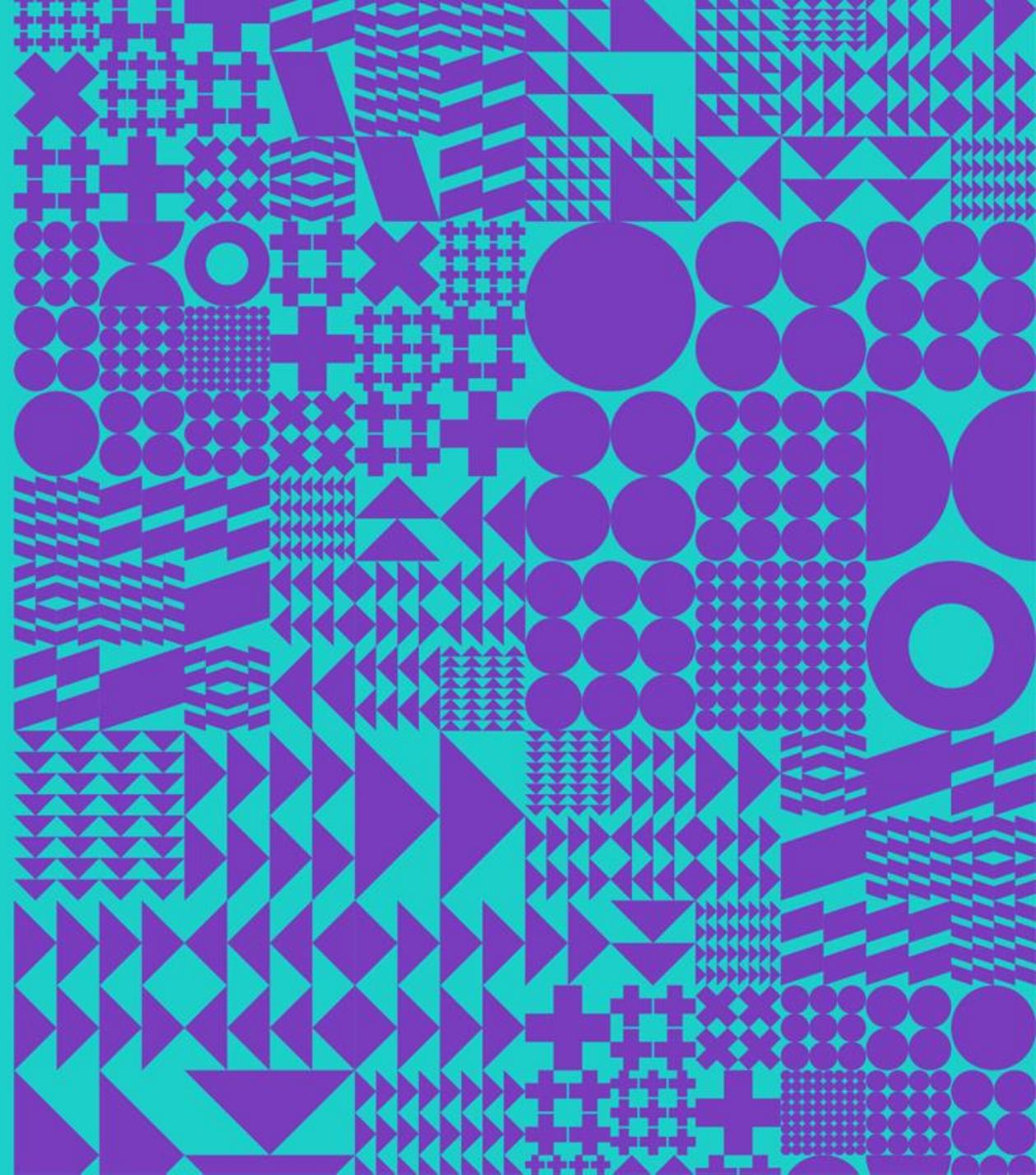


Do foundation year programmes increase participation rates for under-represented groups?

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Under-represented groups at UoC

- Mature students
- Care leavers
- Adult carers
- Estranged students
- Disabled students (inc Mental Health)
- BME
- First generation
- LPN/PQ1&2



Who am I?

- Student Transition Adviser supporting Foundation Year students
- Two years in student recruitment
- FE college tutor at level three and level four
- Undertaking a PhD in Higher Education Research, Evaluation and Enhancement
- Focus on widening participation

My research

A systematic literature review of Foundation Year programmes pertaining to the participation of under-represented groups within the UK higher education sector

Problems with discourse:

- Under-represented, non-traditional and WP
- General/vocational foundation year, international foundation year, dentistry/medicine and veterinary foundation year and foundation year primary education
- Little has been written (with the majority between 2010 – 2016)
- Research is predominately by higher ranking (research intensive) universities

Background

“Despite the expansion of higher education, certain groups remain **radically underrepresented**: participation in higher education continues to be **segregated** along lines of **class, geography** and **ethnicity**.

There are particularly acute differences between different types of institutions, with disadvantaged groups **disproportionately represented** at non-elite, regional and post-92 universities” (McLellan, et al, 2016, p. 55).

Background

- Market place
- Government policy is interpreted at an institutional level – competition encourages universities to focus on the easiest targets (Rainford, 2017)
- Difference between increase in participation and widening participation
- “UK-domiciled students entering integrated foundation years in England almost tripled between 2012/13 and 2017/18, from 10,430 to 30,030”
Augar review (gov.uk, 2019, p. 103)

The market place – the top ten

University	Foundation year option and WP requirements
Cambridge	No
Oxford (2016)	Yes – standalone year (BBB rather than AAA) – only available to those with low socio-economic background (WP) – fully funded (including accommodation and stipend) Typically need to achieve a distinction to progress into the undergraduate course
St Andrew's	No
Loughborough	21 subjects + Elite athletes programme Typical offer BBB-CCC Sporting commitments, mitigating circumstances, mature students, students without appropriate background, students with alternative backgrounds and qualifications
Durham	WP and conversion students (those who have strong A-levels in the wrong subjects)
Bath	No
Imperial College London	No
Warwick University – just the business school (Management & Accounting and Finance)	2 socio-economic criteria (WP) Scholarship for tuition fees for all selected
Lancaster university	1 in medicine (AAB) Low socio-economic background, WP criteria, mitigating circumstances
Leeds University	6 curriculum areas LPN, Care leaver or attended a school which achieved less than the national average of 5 A*/9- C/4 passes at GCSE or attainment 8 score at GCSE Except science which is a conversion course

Recruitment vs widening participation?

The lowest ten ranking universities offer double the number of foundation year programmes in comparison to the rest of the sector (based on the mean average data from UCAS, 2019)

Although UCAS tariffs are lower, there are no specific WP criteria in the entrance criteria

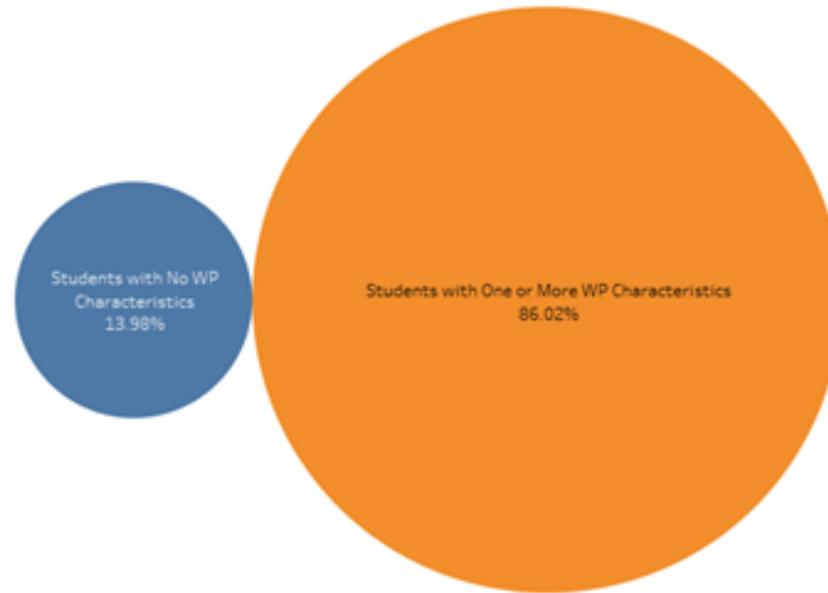
“It is hard not to conclude that universities are using foundation years to create four-year degrees in order to entice students who do not otherwise meet their standard entry criteria” Augar review (gov.uk, 2019, p. 103)



WP statistics for full time UG

3,746 students
(86.02%) have one or
more WP
Characteristics

What Percentage of the FT, UG Population are WP?

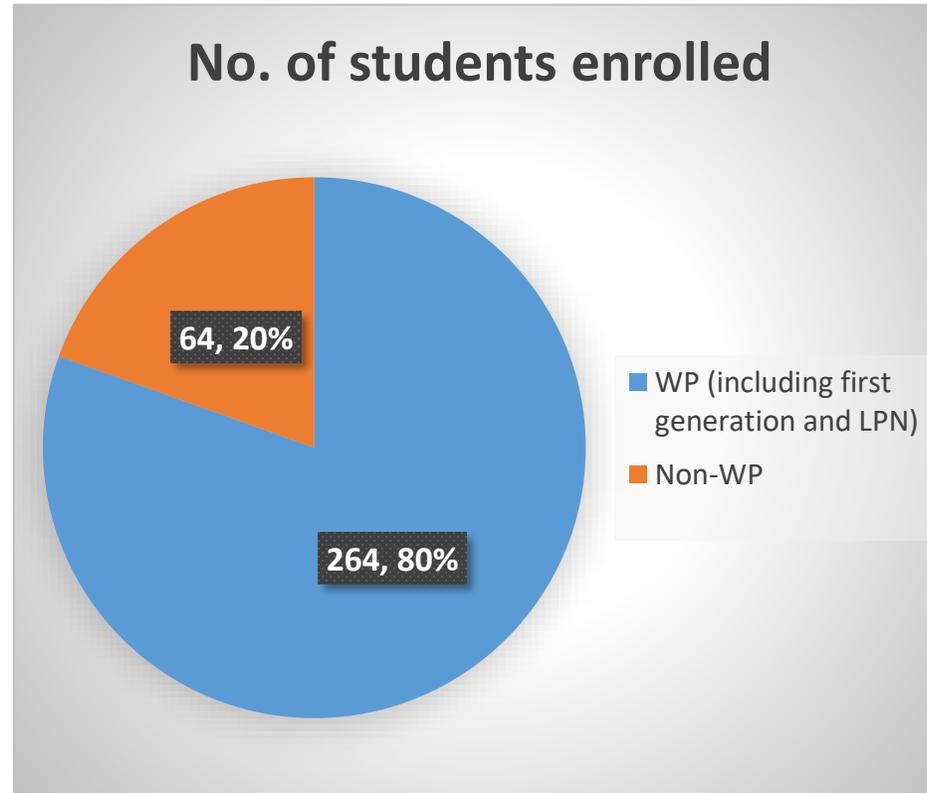


How Many of the FT, UG Population are WP?



WP statistics for foundation year

328 students enrolled on the IFY from 2015/16 – 2018/19



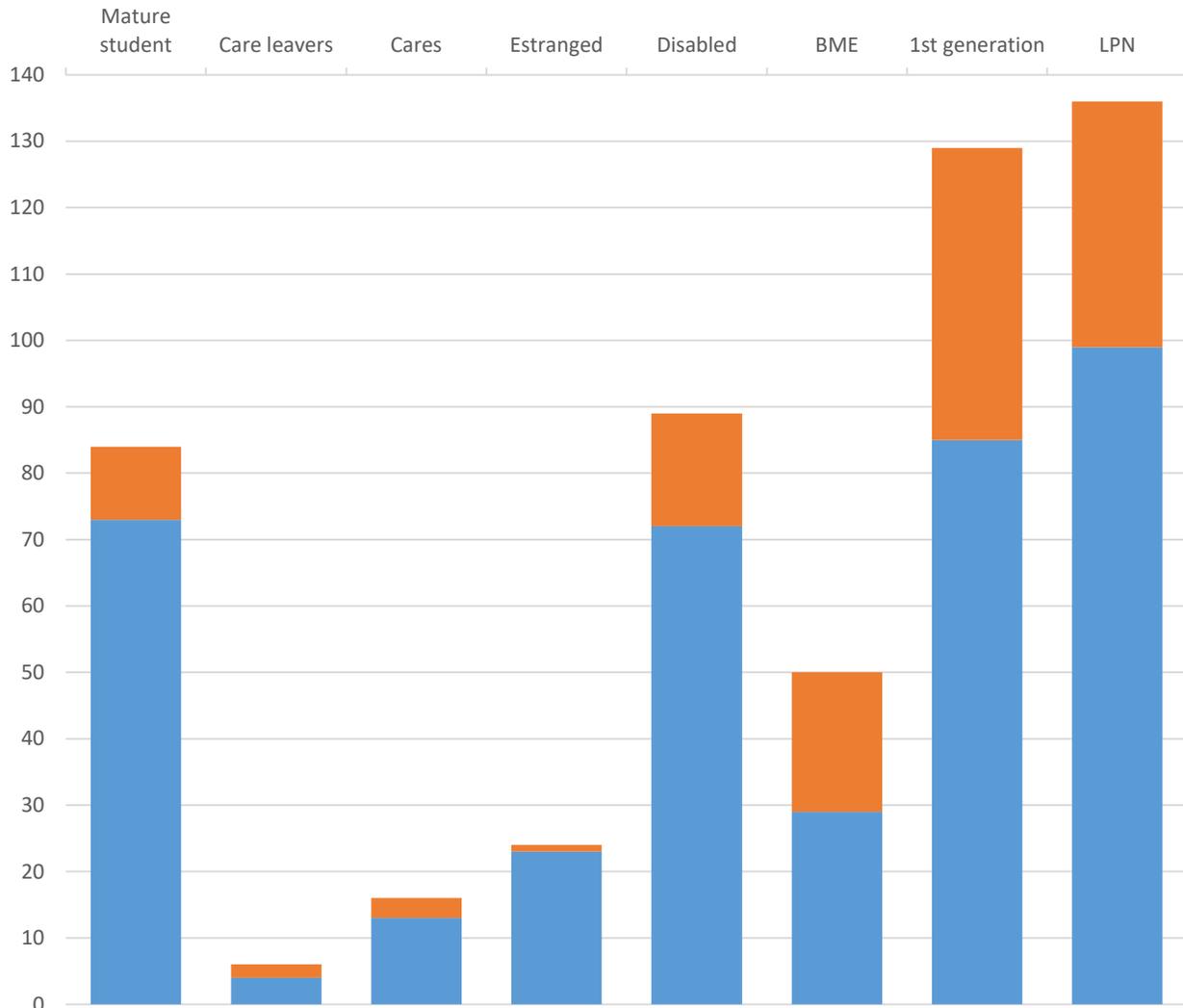
Stepping stone

Whole cohort	15/16	16/17	17/18
Retention at the end of the IFY	33.9%	37%	57.65%
Current retention (April 2019)	57.62%	66.67%	80%

WP, LPN, 1 st generation	15/16	16/17	17/18
Retention at the end of the IFY	85%	76.92%	73.7%
Current retention (April 2019)	91.18%	78.57%	76.47%



Retention rates for WP characteristics



WP characteristic	Retention rate
Mature student	86.9%
Care leavers	66.67%
Carers	81.25%
Estranged	95.84%
Disabled	80.9%
BME	58%
1 st generation	65.89%
LPN	72.79%



Benefits of a foundation year

- Diversity in teaching and learning
- Opportunity for collaboration
- Larger pool of potential applicants
- Diversity in student population



Challenges of a foundation year

- High level of differentiation needed
- May be seen as diminishing quality
- High level of additional resources needed to support students
- In more elite universities these students may be seen as taking the place of 'more able' students



Other routes into higher education

- Access Diplomas
- Contextualised admissions
- Adult education routes



The future?

Recommendation 3.8

- We recommend withdrawing financial support for foundation years attached to degree courses after an appropriate notice period. Exemptions for specific courses such as Medicine may be granted by the OfS. Augar review
(gov.uk, 2019, p. 104)
- Working in collaboration with Further Education
- More universities delivering their own access programmes



Further research

- Specific focus on individual characteristics within foundation year programmes
- Longitudinal studies to track students beyond their foundation year
- Larger sample sizes
- More research from non-elite and post-92 universities
- Focus on geographical area (LPN)
- More comparative studies



Questions

- Do foundation years work as an access route for underrepresented groups?
- Is it okay to use the WP agenda as a recruitment tool?
- What is the purpose of a foundation year?
 - Is it about recruitment or WP or both?



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