

University of Southampton

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

1. The University of Southampton has a clear strategic vision for the future. Our mission is to inspire excellence to achieve the remarkable and build an inclusive world. Underpinning this is our determination to help make the world a better and fairer place.
2. We proudly promote egalitarianism as a core value for the institution. We recognise that diversity is a strength, helping us to be more creative and innovative. We prioritise inclusion as a strategic objective, enabling us to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow with greater resilience and breadth of thought. Our strategy contains commitments which make clear the importance we place on equality of educational opportunity based on merit, irrespective of background and socio-economic context.
3. We strive to demonstrate our values in everything we do – from teaching and research through to how we interact with our communities. Our approach to equality of opportunity means that we deliver collaborative, agile, and sustainable activities to nurture transformational leaders.
4. We aim to be an exemplar of egalitarianism in our region and mission group. Through our ongoing evaluation and assessment, we have carefully identified objectives and targets. These mean we will have a leading role in ensuring equality of opportunity for access in Hampshire and surrounding counties, as well as providing a beacon of excellence for success and progression within the Russell Group.
5. To realise our strategic goals we have developed eleven strategic plans. Fair access and participation is threaded through all of them, but is particularly prominent within our plans for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Civic; and Student Experience and Education with measurable key performance indicators identified.
6. We have developed a specific plan for widening participation. *For a Fairer Future*, sets out how our work in this area will develop across five years. Under this plan, the University has developed three initiatives: 'Ignite Southampton', our flagship lifecycle-orientated programme; the 'Awarding Gap Project' devoted to understanding and reducing achievement differences; and the 'Social Mobility Network', developed to raise awareness of issues relating to social class in higher education. *For a Fairer Future* is based on a set of principles which define the approach to widening participation at Southampton:



7. We believe in institutional accountability and engagement with widening participation. We have configured our ambitions across targeted access and success into a single department – Widening Participation and Social Mobility. This department coordinates our efforts to support students from underrepresented groups both to get into and thrive at Southampton.
8. This structure facilitates a fluid, lifecycle approach which embeds co-design, delivery and evaluation throughout, ensuring that students are at the heart of what we do. We value a listening, collaborative and joined-up approach that is continuously informed by colleagues across the institution, the community and the sector. We aim for an evidence-based practice developed through knowledge, research and evaluation. Our goal is to be a well-supported, resourced, connected and confident University which values wellbeing. In line with the institutional strategy we aspire to dynamism, flexibility and responsiveness, as well as critically engaging with changes in policy and political trends. We look to cultivate fresh ideas, creative approaches, interventions and best practice, which can be applied in different contexts, embedded across the University, and shared across the sector. We want to support students to overcome barriers throughout their education, bridging the gaps to ensure an inclusive and fair experience of higher education. Critically, we prioritise working alongside our students with their challenges, supporting them to access the tools they need to overcome them, and building resilience to navigate the barriers they face to achieve their goals.
9. Under the previous Access and Participation Plan, we have seen several successes and persistent challenges which are further explored in paragraphs 23 - 27. We recognise that there is still much work to do and have volunteered to participate in the first phase of access and participation reforms to help expediate our progress. This Plan will be a tool that integrates into our wider strategic plans to ensure we meet our equality of opportunity ambitions.
10. Our international reputation as a QS World ranked top 100 university and founding member of the Russell Group means we are well placed to make a leading contribution to the sector response to continued and evolving challenges in access and participation. We have a global reputation for our passion and ability to work collaboratively in delivering world-class education, research and innovation. As students become graduates of the University they join our wider, global community of over 230,000 alumni, able to access a network that can provide further opportunities across the world. Our UK campuses are based in Southampton and Winchester, and we draw most of our UK domiciled students from the South East, South West and London.
11. We are a multi-disciplinary institution, providing a wide range of subjects across our five faculties (Arts and Humanities, Medicine, Social Sciences, Environment and Life Sciences, Engineering and Physical Sciences). Our expertise tends to traditional modes of delivery, with on-campus, full-time programmes being our dominant method of provision.

Risks to equality of opportunity

12. Our analysis shows several indications of risk to equality of opportunity with all underlying and contributory risks identified in each intervention strategies. A full analysis can be found in Annex A.
13. The most prevalent of these are addressed by this Plan:
 - Risk one: There is a lower proportion of students at the University of Southampton either from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes (versus other quintiles) or from those who have been eligible for free school meals (versus those who have been ineligible). Our own and sector analysis suggests that this is because of gaps in prior attainment,

awareness, application and conversion.

- Risk two: There are gaps in continuation for students from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes (versus those from Quintile 5) and for those who have been eligible for free school meals (versus those who have been ineligible). Sector evidence is inconclusive on the causes for this, although findings from our use of the OfS bursary evaluation tool suggest financial hardship is a greater pressure for these students. Considering analysis cited in risk one, gaps in prior attainment may also be an issue. Research around fit and belonging amongst students from low socio-economic groups also suggests institutional cultures may be a factor.
- Risk three: There are gaps in awarding for students from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes (versus those from Quintile 5) and for those who have been eligible for free school meals (versus those who have been ineligible). Underlying causes are complex, and it is possible that the same combination noted against risk two - financial and academic support, as well as sense of belonging - are factors.
- Risk four: There is a gap in continuation between students with a mental health disability versus students with no disability. Our own and sector analysis indicates that the reasons for this are multifaceted and complex and can range from increased stress or isolation during times of transition and change through to limited access to formal mental health treatment.
- Risk five: There is a gap in continuation between students with a social and communication impairment versus those with no disability. Our own and sector analysis indicates that students with a social and communication impairment continue to face key challenges, including access to inclusive and accessible learning and teaching, and navigating day to day university life.
- Risk six: There is a gap in continuation between Black students and White students. Evidence is inconclusive on the causes for this. Several studies suggest that students have a lack of trust in institutions which may be a factor. There are likely to be structural issues which underpin success gaps for Black students which need to be addressed, and the factors which affect success gaps for other student groups covered in this Plan may also be relevant due to intersections and compounded outcomes.
- Risk seven: There is a gap between Black students and White students being awarded a first or upper second-class degree. It is likely that the factors noted against risk six play a similar role in exacerbating this awarding gap.
- Risk eight: There is a gap in progression to graduate level employment or further study between students from IMD Quintile 1 (versus those from Quintile 5) or those eligible for free school meals (versus those who were ineligible). It is likely that the factors noted against risks two and three play significant parts in this risk as well. There are several studies which suggest a lack of network, connections and background knowledge can disadvantage students from lower socio-economic groups in the graduate job market and when progressing to onward study. The latter is also underpinned by financial challenges.

14. It is important to note that indications of risks not included in this Plan will also be monitored closely and addressed where appropriate.

15. We acknowledge that access rates for mature students are lower than the sector average. As further explained in paragraph 26, our percentage of mature students is the third highest in the Russell Group, suggesting that we are performing well amongst our mission group. Additionally, our strength as an institution lies in the delivery of full-time programmes, which evidence suggests can be less appealing to some mature students than those under 21.

For this reason we have elected not to include a target for this group. We will continue to welcome and invest in supporting the student experience for those mature students that choose to study with us, ensuring that targeted measures are in place to address continuation, completion and awarding issues should they evolve into trends.

16. We have identified several intersections within socio-economic, ethnicity and disability groups which will be monitored within our intervention strategies. Tailored support will be implemented as required.
17. Where we have seen short-term indications of risk (i.e., in one year's data only) we will closely monitor trajectories and similarly implement targeted interventions as necessary.

Objectives

18. Given our strategic aim to be an exemplar of egalitarianism, our overarching objective is to play a leading role in equality of opportunity for access in our region, and success and progression in our mission group.
19. The indications of risk highlighted in this Plan span the student lifecycle. To mitigate these we have articulated six objectives. Objectives one, two and six collectively seek to tackle gaps in access, continuation, awarding and progression of students who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Objectives three and four respond to gaps in continuation which are evident for students with a mental health disability or a social and communication impairment. Objective five relates to gaps in continuation and awarding between Black and White students.
 - Objective one: To increase the proportion of students studying at the University of Southampton from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We will increase the percentage of students from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes and those eligible for free school meals to 10.4% and 14.6% respectively by 2027/28. We will do this by focusing on improving conversion and increasing our targeted attainment raising activity in Southampton, the wider region and on a national scale.
 - Objective two: To improve the outcomes of students from IMD Quintile 1 areas and those eligible for free school meals. We monitor growth of continuation rates and reduce the awarding gaps to 6.6 percentage points and 3 percentage points respectively by 2027/28, with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by expanding Ignite Your Success, improving transition, embedding academic skills and targeted financial, pastoral and peer support.
 - Objective three: To reduce the continuation gap between students with a social and/or communication impairment and those with no disability. This currently stands at 9.6 percentage points, and we wish to reduce it to 4ppts by 2027/28, with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by improving transition to the University, focused activities to improve confidence and belonging and increasing staff awareness and skills to develop and improve academic and pastoral practice.
 - Objective four: To reduce the continuation gap between students with a mental health condition and those with no disability. This currently stands at 7.1ppts and we wish to reduce it to 2ppts by 2027/28 with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by developing stronger links with local NHS services, enhancing provision for support and developing staff confidence to identify and respond to the needs of those with mental health disabilities.
 - Objective five: To improve the experience and differential outcomes of Black students by monitoring the short-term growth of the non-continuation and completion rate gaps and reducing the awarding gap to 10.9 percentage points by 2027/28, with a

view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by working in partnership with students on the Awarding Gap Project, a Strategic Major Project focused on community, culture, and curriculum development.

- Objective six: To improve progression outcomes for students from low socio-economic groups. We will reduce outcome gaps for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas and those eligible for free school meals to 3.7 percentage points and 1.4 percentage points respectively by 2027/28, with a view to reducing them further by 2030. We will do this by introducing interventions to increase the number of students progressing to postgraduate study and graduate level employment.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

20. The objectives articulated in the previous section have been translated into the following intervention strategies. These strategies are underpinned by theories of change and contain well evidenced activities that will help us in achieving our goals.

21. Our targeted intervention strategies are:

- IS one: Increase applications, offers and enrolments of students from low socio-economic groups to the University of Southampton.
- IS two: Ensure that students from low socio-economic groups have equality of opportunity to stay and thrive at Southampton.
- IS three: Improve the retention of students with a social and/ or communication impairment.
- IS four: Improve the retention of students with a diagnosed mental health condition.
- IS five: Improve the student experience for Black students, ensuring they can feel comfortable to stay and thrive at Southampton.
- IS six: Reduce gaps in progression to graduate level employment or post graduate study for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas and those eligible for free school meals.

22. We will continue to provide a range of outreach and success activity to support our entire student body. Within this broader portfolio, we will target projects at students from underrepresented groups to facilitate a cumulative positive effect on outcomes. This is not covered by the following intervention strategies but aligns to our wider commitments to all of our students.

Intervention strategy 1: Objectives and targets

Objective one: To increase the proportion of students studying at the University of Southampton from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We will increase the percentage of students from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes and those eligible for free school meals to 10.4% and 14.6% respectively by 2027/28. We will do this by focusing on improving conversion and increasing our targeted attainment raising activity in Southampton, the wider region and on a national scale.

Access target one: (PTA_1) Raise enrolments of entrants from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes from 7% to 10.4% by 2027/28

Access target two: (PTA_2) To increase enrolments of entrants eligible for Free School Meals from 9% to 14.6% of the UG student population by 2027/28

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy one aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for students from low socio-economic groups to access the University of Southampton and aims to mitigate risks 1 – 4

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
(Expanded activity) Work with 150 schools and 20,000 students nationally to increase the number of schools with students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for FSM who complete a L3 Extended Project Qualification through a combination of teacher CPD events both in-schools and on-site with pupils. This activity aims to increase attainment at L3, increasing access to Southampton through our contextual EPQ offer and impacting degree level attainment by increasing students' readiness for higher education.	3.0FTE Pre-entry Academic Skills Officers to deliver workshops in schools and colleges 0.5FTE management resource £935,000	Increased participation in EPQ programme, increased confidence and academic self-efficacy, improved perception of HE as accessible for students completing the EPQ programme and improved attainment at KS5. Increased confidence for teachers delivering EPQs. Long term outcomes indicators also include increased participation in HE and improved degree level attainment.	IS2, IS6
(New activity) Deliver Reading Buddies in 5 high priority secondary schools to raise attainment by improving comprehension, literacy skills and reading	2.5FTE Access Practitioners to deliver programme	Increased comprehension and reading ages for pupils participating in the programme; increased confidence, self-esteem, and improved	IS2

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>ages with Y7-10 pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals or from disadvantaged areas in the Southampton City Region. Participating students will be provided with books as part of the intervention.</p>	<p>100 Student Ambassadors</p> <p>£726,000</p>	<p>attitudes to reading; an increase in participants' self-reported reading for pleasure. Ongoing improved access to wider education through improved reading skills.</p>	
<p>(Expanded activity) Deliver Books and Stories (to improve reading skills)/ Shapes and Numbers (to improve numeracy skills) in 10 high priority primary schools in the Southampton City region to raise attainment for young people eligible for FSM with reading/numeracy skills which are below baseline for the school and/ or the national average.</p>	<p>1.7FTE Access Practitioners to deliver the programme</p> <p>40 Student Ambassadors per year</p> <p>£399,000</p>	<p>Improved reading age and comprehension for participants (compared to a matched control group) and/ or improved maths attainment for participants; an increase in observed confidence and self-esteem in relation to reading and/ or maths; a positive shift in attitudes in relation to reading and/ or maths. Schools will report a greater engagement in school from pupils engaged in the programme and that pupils understand the relevance of literacy and numeracy skills in their future studies.</p>	IS2
<p>(Existing activity) Ignite Your Journey (part of our flagship Ignite Programme) will support 100 Y13 students from low socio-economic backgrounds annually from across the UK to apply, receive an offer and transition to high tariff Universities such as the University of Southampton. Ignite Your Journey will offer an online programme of activities, bespoke mentoring, transition events and financial support.</p>	<p>1.5FTE Access Practitioners to deliver the programme</p> <p>£584,000</p>	<p>Improved knowledge of higher education; increased sense of belonging at the University of Southampton and in HE more generally; increased knowledge and confidence in applying for university. A high number of participants will apply to Southampton, receive an offer, and enrol following participation in the programme.</p> <p>In the longer term, students on the programme will achieve equitable success outcomes (non-continuation and awarding) as the university average.</p>	IS2, IS6

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?

Evidence base and rationale: Interventions were developed in consultation with teachers from local schools and colleges, and with reference to our local and institutional data and our previous evaluation findings for existing activities. Each of the four activities is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which was informed by a comprehensive literature review. A synthesised research summary for the overarching strategy is provided in Annex B.

Evaluation

The impact of Books & Stories on participants' reading age and comprehension will be evaluated using a Randomised Control Trial design (OfS type 3); for all other activities, the relationships between taking part in the activity and the intended outcomes will be evaluated using Empirical Enquiry (OfS standards type 2).

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.	Summary of publication plan When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
All attainment raising activities	Increased attainment	Pre/post comparison of participants' attainment scores, additionally using a non-random comparison group when appropriate (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	Findings will be available on our website from Summer 2026
Books & Stories	Increased attainment	Randomised Control Trial: Pre/post comparison of participants' attainment scores for two treatment groups (<i>Causal – type 3</i>)	
All activities	Increased psychosocial outcomes e.g., Subject related confidence and self-efficacy; sense of belonging	Pre/post comparison of survey data for participants (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>) Qualitative research with teachers and academic staff (<i>Empirical – type 2 and Narrative – type 1</i>)	Interim findings will be shared with the sector annually from Summer 2025 and incorporated into later publications

		Qualitative research with participants immediately after and/ or 6-12 months after completing the programme (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	
Learn with US Transition	Improved attainment	Post-intervention participants' KS5 attainment scores compared with their expected attainment (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	
	Greater teacher confidence in delivering the EPQ	Pre/post comparison qualitative research with teachers (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	
Ignite Your Journey	60% of participants apply to study at the University of Southampton	Tracking participants' applications (<i>Narrative – type 1</i>)	Findings will be shared on our website from Summer 2026
	Increased conversion between offer and enrolment to University of Southampton	Non-random comparison of conversion rates between participant and non-participant groups (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	

Intervention strategy 2: Objectives and targets

Objective two: To improve the outcomes of students from IMD Quintile 1 areas and those eligible for free school meals. We monitor growth of continuation rates and reduce the awarding gaps to 6.6 percentage points and 3 percentage points respectively by 2027/28, with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by expanding Ignite Your Success, improving transition, embedding academic skills and targeted financial, pastoral and peer support.

Success target one (PTS_1): Reduce the awarding gap between students from IMD Quintile 1 and IMD Quintile 5 areas from 11.4ppts to 8.1pps by 2027/28 and to 6.6ppts by 2030/31

Success target two (PTS_2): Reduce the awarding gap between students who have been eligible for free school meals and those who have not from 8.7p.p to 5.0ppts by 2027/28 and to 3ppts by 2030/31

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy two aims to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds to stay and thrive at the University of Southampton and mitigate risks 6-10

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>(Expanded activity) Peer Assisted Learning (PALS) embedded at L4 programme level to support students' academic transition to undergraduate level study. This activity will be delivered as a pilot in schools with non-continuation gaps for students from IMD Q1 areas or students eligible for FSM greater than the university average.</p>	<p>1.25FTE staff to coordinate and manage the programme</p> <p>£383,000</p>	<p>Students report increased sense of community in the academic environment and increased academic self-efficacy and confidence. Programmes with embedded PALS programme have improved module outcomes and reduced continuation rates for target students compared to previous years. Academic leaders report greater integration of first year cohorts into the University and a greater sense of community within and across the year groups involved. Increases in Peer Leaders' metacognitive skills will also be explored qualitatively.</p>	<p>IS5, IS6</p>
<p>(New activity) Embedded curriculum development programme to improve teaching of academic skills within academic disciplines at L4.</p>	<p>1.25FTE with additional academic staff resource (not included in activity cost)</p> <p>£312,000</p>	<p>Students in target programmes report increased academic confidence and higher skill level. Continuation rates for target students reduce to university average and awarding gaps at module level reduce. Staff report greater evidence of academic skill in assessments and greater confidence in teaching academic skills.</p>	
<p>(Expanded activity) Ignite Your Success, part of our flagship Ignite Programme, will support 60 students per entrant cohort from IMD Q1 areas, those eligible for FSM and/ or those who are Care Experienced from enrolment to graduation. The programme will include workshops with University staff and alumni, 1:1 and group pastoral support, mentoring and financial support. Students</p>	<p>3.20FTE staff to coordinate the programme and offer pastoral and management support for the programme</p> <p>£1,416,000</p>	<p>Improved sense of belonging and confidence in their skills and academic studies and improved Career Readiness scores. Continuation rates and ongoing awarding are reviewed regularly and considered in relation to participants' level of engagement with support offered.</p>	<p>IS6</p>

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
will be selected through an application process to determine need.			
<p>(Ongoing activity) University of Southampton Bursary Programme</p> <p>Students with a household income of less than £30,000 are eligible for the Bursary Programme if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fully enrolled undergraduate - paying the full £9,250 tuition fees - have a household income of £30,000 or less, as assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Awards Agency Scotland <p>Students with a household income of up to £16,000 are entitled to £2,000 per year, and those with a household income of £16,001 to £30,000 will receive £1,000 per year.</p> <p>Exclusions apply and can be found on our website: Undergraduate bursaries University of Southampton</p>	<p>2.0FTE members of staff to administer the fund</p> <p>£23,136,000 (including financial support)</p>	<p>Students in receipt of a bursary are as likely as their peers to progress through their programme and are as likely to complete their programme.</p>	

Evidence base and rationale: Each individual activity is informed by a comprehensive Theory of Change, including a literature review. Support is delivered within specific degree programmes or provided for particular students based on institutional data. The Peer Assisted Learning scheme and Financial Support provision were informed through consultation with the University of Southampton's Student Advisory Board, consisting of students from groups which are

underrepresented at the University. A summary of the underpinning evidence is provided in annex B.

Evaluation

We will evaluate activities using different forms of Empirical Enquiry and Narrative approaches, to identify associations between participation and outcomes (OfS standards type 2 and 1).

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.	Summary of publication plan When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
Peer Assisted Learning Embedded support	Increased continuation and completion Improved module outcomes	Matched comparison of outcomes for participants with the outcomes of demographically similar non-participants: -Who are enrolled on similar degree programmes in the same academic year -Who were enrolled onto the same degree programme in the previous 1-2 academic years (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	Findings will be available on our website from Summer 2026
Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)	Increased continuation and completion Improved attainment and awarding	Dosage-response: Examining the relationship between number of PAL sessions attended and continuation, attainment and awarding outcomes (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	
Ignite Your Success	Increased continuation and completion Improved attainment and awarding	Dosage-response: Examining the relationships between the number, types and timing of intervention activities attended and participants' continuation, attainment and awarding outcomes (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>) Contribution Analysis	
Bursary scheme	Increased continuation and completion	OfS financial support toolkit (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	Findings will be available on our website from Summer 2024
All activities	Improved skills, teaching and learning	Pre/post comparison of participant survey and/ or interview data (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)	Interim findings will be shared with the

	experiences and/or psychosocial outcomes for participants	Qualitative pre/post comparison research with staff (where appropriate) <i>(Empirical – type 2)</i>	sector annually from Summer 2025 and incorporated into full publications
Peer Assisted Learning	Increase in metacognition for peer leaders	Qualitative research with peer leaders <i>(Narrative – type 1)</i>	
Learn with US Transition	Increased continuation and completion for students who completed an EPQ at KS5	Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes between those who enrolled with an EPQ and those who enrolled without an EPQ <i>(Empirical – type 2)</i>	Full reports will be available on our website from Summer 2027

Intervention strategy 3: Objectives and targets

Objective three: To reduce the continuation gap between students with a social and/ or communication impairment and those with no disability. This currently stands at 9.6 percentage points, and we wish to reduce it to 4ppts by 2027/28, with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by improving transition to the University, focused activities to improve confidence and belonging and increasing staff awareness and skills to develop and improve academic and pastoral practice.

Success target three (PTS_3): Reduce the continuation gap between students with a social and/ or communication impairment and those with no disability from 9.6ppts to 4ppts by 2027/28.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy three aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity 6 – 10 for those with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) defined by HESA as a Social or Communication Impairment

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
To develop and deliver specialist and bespoke onsite pre-arrival Transition to University days for students with a social and communication impairment. To launch in the 24/25 academic year.	1.25FTE to deliver, support and manage £249,000	Students will report reduced social discomfort and worry about attending university. Students feel supported to develop routines to create stability during studies. Students will be more likely to engage with Disability Team during studies and report increased feelings of belonging. Non-continuation rates for students with Asperger's or ASC will improve.	IS4

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>To develop and deliver bespoke peer-led 1:1 orientation and mentorship for students with ASC across semester one to support them to navigate day to day living in residences and on campus. This project will be piloted and evaluated with options for expansion across the APP period as needed.</p>	<p>1.25FTE to develop and deliver</p> <p>10 Student Ambassadors with ASC</p> <p>£248,000</p>	<p>Participants will report increased belonging and independence and feel supported to develop routines to create stability during their experience at university. Participants report increased self-esteem and feeling comfortable and confident in developing good personal connections with peers. Non-continuation rates will improve.</p>	
<p>To develop and deliver a programme of bespoke community building and engagement events for students with ASC, piloted in 24/25 academic year for full roll out in 25/26.</p>	<p>1.75FTE to develop and deliver</p> <p>£340,000</p>	<p>Students will have opportunities to engage with the programme of events. Participants will report increased belonging and independence and feel supported to develop routines to create stability during their experience at university. Participants report reduced sensory overload, increased self-esteem and feeling comfortable and confident in developing good personal connections with peers. Non-continuation rates will improve.</p>	
<p>Review and expand our Autism Matters workshops programme to deliver an enhanced programme of activities from 2024/25.</p>	<p>2.3FTE to develop and deliver</p> <p>£491,000</p>	<p>Participants develop good connections with staff and feel that there is an inclusive and supportive culture within the institution. Participants feel confident to develop and use strategies explored in themed workshops, such as strategies to improve social and academic functioning, improve belonging, or make informed choices. Non-continuation rates will improve.</p>	
<p>To review the impact of staff training in autism awareness, as trialled in 2023-24, to develop and implement a programme of autism-focussed training for academic and</p>	<p>1.0FTE to coordinate</p> <p>£206,000</p>	<p>Increased knowledge about autism; increased understanding of and ability to consider implications for work; increased confidence and ability to apply learning to job role.</p>	IS4

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
administrative staff and peer support ambassadors.			

Evidence base and rationale: This intervention strategy is informed by a literature review, our practitioner experience and informal feedback from students with ASC from existing activities. More information is provided in annex B. We will continue to embed student participation at all stages of our work to allow for co-design of interventions and their evaluation.

Evaluation

We will commission independent, external researchers to design and implement robust evaluations, including consultation with our current students with ASC. As a minimum, we expect evaluation to be completed and published according to the plan set out in the table below:

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
All activities	Increased continuation from Year 1 to Year 2 of study	<p>Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.</p> <p>Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Targeted students who participate in interventions -Targeted students who did not participate in interventions -Whole year group <p>We will be combining data due to small numbers of targeted student participation (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
	Increased rates of degree programme completion		Findings on our website from December 2026
	Increased knowledge and improved psychosocial outcomes for intervention participants	<p>Pre/post comparison of survey data from participants engaged in targeted activities (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p> <p>Qualitative research with participants (<i>Narrative – type 1</i>)</p>	Findings on our website from December 2027
			Interim research summaries will be available on our website from December 2027

Intervention strategy 4: Objectives and targets

Objective four: To reduce the continuation gap between students with a mental health condition and those with no disability. This currently stands at 7.1ppts and we wish to reduce it to 2ppts by 2027/28 with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by developing stronger links with local NHS services, enhancing provision for support and developing staff confidence to identify and respond to the needs of those with mental health disabilities.

Success target four (PTS_4): Reduce the non-continuation gap between students with a diagnosed mental health condition and those with no disability from 7.1ppts to 2ppts by 2027/28.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy four aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for those with a diagnosed mental health condition focused on risks 6-10

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Develop and deliver in partnership with the NHS a programme of interventions with clear clinical outcomes for students with diagnosed mental health conditions launching in the 2025/26 academic year.	1.5FTE Management and delivery from both university and NHS clinical staff £335,000	Reduction in suspension or withdrawal and increased continuation.	IS4
Use data analysis* to inform the development and implementation of targeted staff development and training for mental health in collaboration with our Centre for Higher Education Practice. *two sources of data will be interrogated: i. data relating to our cohort of students with diagnosed mental health conditions; ii. The data from the Nurture-U study	3.5FTE to develop and deliver activity and analyse data £753,000	Increased knowledge amongst targeted staff (including Senior Academic Tutors, personal tutors and pastoral leads in professional services) about key mental health conditions; able to consider implications for work; able to apply learning to job role.	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
on student mental health led by a cohort of universities.			

Evidence base and rationale: The activities in this intervention strategy are informed by case studies from the OfS Student Mental Health Partnerships Project, through sector-wide peer learning and shared experience, as well as academic literature on what works. A summary is provided in Annex B. We benefit already from a partnership with our onsite GP service, the PCN and Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Evaluation

Evaluations will be built into specific intervention programme designs drawing on the expertise of our partners and will include clinically-based pre-intervention assessments and post-intervention reviews. We will evaluate continuation outcomes and staff development according to the plan set out in the table below:

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
All activities	Increased continuation from Year 1 to Year 2 of study	<p>Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.</p> <p>Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Targeted students who participate in interventions -Targeted students who did not participate in interventions -Whole year group <p>We will be combining data due to small numbers of targeted student participation (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
	Increased continuation from Year 2 to Year 3 of study		Findings on our website from December 2026
	Increased rates of degree programme completion		Findings on our website from December 2027
			Findings on our website from December 2028

	Staff increased knowledge Increased confidence and ability to apply knowledge to role	Pre/post comparison of survey data from participants engaged in targeted activities <i>(Empirical – type 2)</i> Qualitative research with participants <i>(Narrative – type 1)</i>	Interim research summaries will be available on our website from December 2027
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Intervention strategy 5: Objectives and targets

Objective five: To improve the experience and differential outcomes of Black students by monitoring the short-term growth of the non-continuation and completion rate gaps and reducing the awarding gap to 10.9 percentage points by 2027/28, with a view to reduce further by 2030. We will do this by working in partnership with students on the Awarding Gap Project, a Strategic Major Project focused on community, culture, and curriculum development.

Success target five (PTS_5): To reduce the awarding gap between Black students and White students from 18.1ppts to 10.9ppts by 2027/28 and to 9ppts by 2030/31.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy five aims to improve the student experience for Black students, ensuring they can feel comfortable to stay and thrive at Southampton.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
(Enhanced activity) Strategic Major Project strand one: To grow the Awarding Gap Project, community development initiative led by a panel of 15 – 20 UG Black students to design and deliver events to both improve transition and welcome as well as initiatives focused on building students' trust in the processes and policies within the University.	1.5FTE to support the students and manage projects 15-20 Student Panel members £413,000	Panel members report high satisfaction and engagement with the project, attending all sessions and organisation events with high attendance from the wider student body. Increased trust from Black students in the institution and panel members report increased belonging, autonomy, and agency. NSS scores on belonging for Black students will increase.	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
(New Activity) Strategic Major Project strand two: Develop and improve Black and minoritised ethnic staff and students' experience of the institutional culture of equality in education. This will include a review of policies, improved training for staff and students and a no tolerance approach to racism and harassment.	2.0FTE from within WPSM £501,000	Staff will be confident to self-assess personal practice (both pastoral and academic) recognising areas for development as well as understanding the reasons for the awarding gap. Students will report a higher trust in the organisation to investigate and manage incidents of racism and harassment and report a greater sense of belonging within the University. Non-continuation rates for Black UG students will improve.	
(New activity) Strategic Major Project strand three: To launch a curriculum and process review piloted in areas with large awarding gaps between Black students and White students. Project will be co-designed with students and academic staff and launch in the 2024/25 academic year.	5.0FTE from across the institution £1,061,000	Student Consultants will report increased belonging and levels of agency in their disciplines. They will report increase levels of academic self-efficacy and improved levels of trust in the institution. Pilot schools will see reduced awarding gaps at module and programme level. Staff will report greater understanding of race equality in their academic practice.	

Evidence base and rationale: This intervention strategy was informed by consultation with Awarding Gap Project panel members and best practice recommendations from the sector. Each activity is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which includes a literature review. A summary of the evidence is included in annex B.

Evaluation

All evaluations for this intervention strategy will be aligned to OfS standards of evidence type 2 (Empirical Enquiry), allowing us to explore associations between activities and their intended outcomes. For the Community strand, we will support and encourage Awarding Gap Panel members to design and implement evaluations for the activities they (co)develop through this role, and to disseminate their findings within and beyond the institution.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
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		Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.	When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
SMP Awarding Gap Project: Community & Curriculum	Improved continuation and module outcomes	<p>Pre/post comparison of module outcome data (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p> <p>Pre/post qualitative research with academic staff</p> <p>-Immediately after CPD -6-9 months later</p> <p>(<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	Interim findings will be shared with the sector annually from Summer 2026; full reports will be published on our website from Summer 2027
	Increased psychosocial outcomes, e.g., sense of belonging	<p>Pre/post comparison surveys using validated scales (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p> <p>Qualitative research with panel members (<i>Narrative – type 1</i>)</p>	
SMP Awarding Gap Project: Culture & Curriculum	Increased knowledge about root causes of awarding gaps	<p>Pre/post qualitative research</p> <p>-Immediately after CPD -6-9 months later</p> <p>(<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	Interim findings will be shared with the sector annually from Summer 2026
	Increased confidence to reflect on and make changes to academic practice	<p>Document analysis of relevant programme documents (e.g., reading lists, module outcomes)</p> <p>(<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	
	Improved teaching and learning experiences	<p>Student module feedback forms for modules where staff have undertaken CPD compared to previous semesters/ years</p> <p>NSS scores related to teaching and learning compared to previous years</p>	

Intervention strategy 6: Objectives and targets

Objective six: To improve progression outcomes for students from low socio-economic groups. We will reduce outcome gaps for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas and those eligible for free school meals to 3.7 percentage points and 1.4 percentage points respectively by 2027/28, with a view to reducing them further by 2030. We will do this by introducing interventions to increase the number of students progressing to postgraduate study and graduate level employment.

Progression target one (PTP_1): To reduce the progression gap for students from IMD Quintile 1 compared to those from IMD Quintile 5 areas to 3.7ppts.

Progression target two (PTP_2): To reduce the progression gap between students eligible for free school meals and those ineligible to 1.4ppts.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention strategy six aims to improve the experience and progression for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and mitigate risks 6 – 12

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
(New activity) The Vice Chancellor's Progression Scheme aims to increase access to PGT study for students from IMD Q1 areas, those eligible for FSM and other underrepresented students. The programme will offer application support, career planning tools, mentoring and bursaries to support living costs.	1.0FTE Career Practitioner, WP Coordinator and Academic Skills support £1,150,000 in bursaries/fee waivers over 4 years £1,370,000	Increase in application and enrolment to PGT programmes (up 100 from 2022/23.) Students receiving support will report an increase in career readiness following completion of their PGT programme. Graduate outcomes will improve for students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for FSM.	
(New activity) Career Vision Plus will work with students from IMD Q1 areas, those eligible for FSM and other students at risk of lower progression outcomes in their final year to identify and apply for graduate level roles. Students will be eligible for priority access to internship programmes, intensive career coaching and mentoring, funding for employer visits or interviews and workshops including networking and extended careers guidance.	2.0FTE £530,000	Increased engagement with Careers, Employability and Enterprise from students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for FSM at L6 (and L7 for integrated programmes). Students engaged in programme report higher Career Readiness Skills and increased confidence in engaging with employers. The progression gap will reduce for students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for FSM.	
(Enhanced activity) My Generation Career Coaching Programme will work with students who are the first in their family	1FTE £235,000	Students will report increased career readiness, increased participation in employment enhancing	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>to attend university (significant crossover with IMD Q1 and FSM groups) to support them to transition to graduate labour market, identifying career goals and address their unique challenges. Over 12 months, the programme will work with students to write individual career plans and then offer confidential career coaching sessions and access work experience.</p>		<p>activities (e.g., societies, internships, part time employment and attendance at career fairs) and increase in self-confidence. Reduced progression gaps for students who are first in their families to attend university.</p>	

Evidence base and rationale: The Vice Chancellor’s Progression scheme was developed in collaboration with the University of Southampton’s Student Advisory Board, a consultation panel consisting of students from groups which are underrepresented at the University. The expansion of other activities has been informed by informal participant feedback and formal evaluation findings. All activities within this intervention strategy were guided by research and academic literature reviews; a summary is provided in annex B.

Evaluation

The outcomes of all activities will be evaluated to OfS Type 2 standards, comparing outcomes for participants with outcomes for non-random comparison groups of students who do not participate (Empirical Enquiry).

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.	Summary of publication plan When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take
All activities	Increased engagement with careers and employability activities	<p>Non-random comparison: Comparing engagement rates of students meeting eligibility criteria against the wider cohort in the same academic year</p> <p>These figures will be compared against previous years</p>	Reports available on our website from Winter 2025
	Increased number of students from underrepresented groups progressing to graduate-level work	<p>Non-random comparison: Comparing graduate outcomes (18 months after graduating) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Targeted students who participated in the activities -Students meeting eligibility criteria but who did not engage with the activities -All postgraduate students in the year group <p>We may need to combine data due to low response rate (<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	Full reports available on our website from Winter 2028
	Increased Career Readiness	<p>Pre/post comparison: comparing Career Readiness scores of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Targeted students who participated in the activities -Students meeting eligibility criteria but who did not engage with the activities -All students in the year group <p>(<i>Empirical – type 2</i>)</p>	Reports available on our website from October 2025

More detailed information on evaluation can also be provided in the Evaluation section or at Annex B.

Whole provider approach

23. We are proud of the progress we have made under the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25. We have seen an increase in the number of students from the most disadvantaged areas of the UK, with an increase of 26% (55 students) entering from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes in 2022/23 compared to 2018/19. Whilst this increase is not shown at a population level due to growing student numbers, it is an indication that outreach activity is impacting on recruitment. During the same period we have also seen an increase in the number of students from care experienced or estranged backgrounds from 28 to 60 students enrolled in 2022/23.
24. The proportion of disabled students studying at the University of Southampton has also increased by 8.5ppts to 22% of the undergraduate student population in the 2021/22 academic year. This is 4.6ppts higher than the sector average and the highest proportion of disabled students studying at any Russell Group University.
25. Although the percentage of mature students in the population has reduced slightly following the Covid pandemic, it remains higher than sector average at 9% of the population and the third highest in the Russell Group.
26. Our continuation rate for all students is above sector average and has been consistently high across the previous five years. There have been some short-term changes following the Covid pandemic, the most significant of these seen amongst students starting in 2020/21.
27. We have also seen significant improvement in the progression rates for the two groups of students identified as having gaps in our 2020-2024 Access and Participation Plan. Progression of students with a mental health condition has increased, with the gap between them and those with no disability falling from 8.3ppts to 4.4ppts in 2019/20, and progression for those with mixed ethnicity versus White students improving by 3.8ppts. These students now have higher progression rates than students of all other ethnicities except Black students, who have the highest progression rates of all students.
28. We recognise, however, there is much work still to do if we are to meet our aspiration of being a leading institution for access and participation in our region and mission group. We have set access targets which would place us in the top third of universities in Hampshire and surrounding counties and success and progression targets which would see us in the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
29. Our targets over the life of this Plan are to:
 - Raise enrolments of entrants from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes from 7% to 10.4% by 2027/28. Achieving this would take us from the bottom third to the top third of universities in our region.
 - Raise enrolments of entrants who have been eligible for free school meals from 9% to 14.6% by 2027/28. Achieving this would take us from the bottom third to the top third of

universities in our region.

- Reduce the continuation gap between students with a social and/ or communication impairment and those with no disability from 9.4ppts to 4ppts by 2027/28.
 - Reduce the continuation gap between students with a mental health condition and those with no disability from 7.1ppts to 2ppts by 2027/28.
 - Reduce the awarding gap between students from IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 postcodes from 11.4ppts to 8.1ppts by 2028/29. Achieving this would take us from the bottom half to the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
 - Reduce the awarding gap between students who have been eligible for free school meals and those who have not from 8.7ppts to 8.2ppts by 2028/29. Achieving this would take us from the middle third to the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
 - Reduce the awarding gap between Black students and White students from 18.1ppts to 10.9ppts by 2028/29. Achieving this would take us from the bottom third to the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
 - Reduce the gaps in progression between students from IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 from 7.9ppts to 3.7ppts by 2028/29. Achieving this would take us from the bottom third to the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
 - Reduce the gaps in progression between students who have been eligible for free school meals and those who have not from 10.5ppts to 1.4ppts by 2028/29. Achieving this would take us from the bottom third to the top third of English universities in the Russell Group.
30. This plan showcases the reach and commitment at the University of Southampton to ensure access and participation is embedded into our culture and structure. The suite of interlocking plans upon which our strategic mission is based have equality of opportunity woven through them, and our governance structure ensures that work in this area is given the highest priority. Academics across all Faculties are engaged with the policy and practice of widening participation, and colleagues in Professional Services actively consider the needs of students from underrepresented groups when developing and reviewing processes.
31. The significance we place on access and participation is symbolised by our value of egalitarianism, which tangibly supports our Civic, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Education and Student Experience strategic plans.
- The University of Southampton signed the Civic University Charter in December 2020, committing to develop a civic university agreement to define how we will work within our geography, and agreeing principles with key partners, including local government and other universities. We will work with our civic partners to achieve socio-economic benefit and to improve the lives and environment of people across diverse communities. In our Civic plan we emphasise the symbiotic relationship between the University and our community. We demonstrate this by promoting social mobility in our region, working to deliver a responsive and developing outreach programme with schools and colleges in the local areas.
 - Our EDI plan shares KPIs with this Access and Participation Plan and prioritises 'belonging' to encourage an inclusive and supportive culture in which our students can thrive. The EDI

architecture addresses socio-economic class as well as protected characteristics and encompasses our Social Mobility Network which celebrates working class experiences in higher education. This is actively contributing to a greater awareness of issues around social class whilst cultivating a sense of fit and community for students and staff from underrepresented groups.

- The Student Experience and Education plans have concrete goals to ensure that we offer an inclusive environment for our students. Under these plans we are developing communities for our students to belong to; graduate outcomes improve and processes are streamlined, ensuring our curriculum design, content and education practices reflect our priorities on equality and inclusivity. Achieving these goals will facilitate a transformative experience for all of our students, but we will be particularly careful to identify and respond to the needs of students from groups targeted by this Access and Participation Plan.
32. Aligned to the above core plans are our Employability Action Plan, Student Disability & Inclusion Plan and our Fair Admissions Policy. These are all reviewed regularly, and in the review cycle we will ensure that the content of this Plan is reflected fully in these publications.
33. The governance structure around access and participation has been designed to ensure embedded thinking which is clearly articulated from the University Executive, through Faculty and School committee structures to our key framework for student representation. The governance structure is informed by:
- The Student Advisory Board (referenced in the Student Consultation section) which provides insight and opinion in policy development
 - The Widening Participation Operations Group (WPOG) responsible for the implementation of this Plan and which has spin offs in each Faculty working on tailored action plans
 - The Widening Participation Subcommittee (WPSC), which sets strategic direction for this Plan and reports directly to our Education and Student Experience Committee and thence to Senate and to the University Executive Board.
34. This governance structure ensures that we can drive forward institutional strategies related to access and participation, and that we achieve our aim to take a whole-provider approach, embedding this work in the day-to-day life of the University. As well as the Education and Student Experience Committee our commitment is also reflected in the responsibilities of other instrumental committees, including Council and its Executive Board, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, the Student Recruitment Management Group and Admissions Policy Subcommittee. University Council, our governing body, take an active interest in supporting the Plan.
35. Staff are highly engaged, both through the committee structure described previously, but also through monitoring performance locally and through the design and delivery of activity. A Faculty Research and Action Fund is available to academic colleagues in order to facilitate enquiry or implementation of activities in line with our Plan, and this fosters a sense of ownership, initiative and pride through every layer of our university.
36. The activity described in this Plan, along with our wider work to support social progress, is led by the Widening Participation and Social Mobility (WPSM) department. WPSM is made up of three vertical sections – Access, Enhancement and Success – and one lateral section – Lifecycle – to ensure that students from underrepresented groups are supported to access, succeed at, and progress from higher education.

37. This governance structure allows us to be confident in our effective alignment between the activities of different groups across the institution, and in the monitoring of progress within our standard quality assurance processes.
38. To complement the new and emerging activities cited in our intervention strategies, the University will continue to run an information, advice and guidance programme of outreach in our local schools, colleges and community. This embedded activity is important for maintaining trust and will continue to both reinforce our visibility to pupils and support our long-established relationships with partners in the region.
39. Reflecting our institutional value of collaboration, we believe in the cumulative and strategic benefit to working with other universities and third sector organisations to achieve the best outcomes for students. We proactively seek out partners to provide additional expertise and capacity to support our students, and to help us collectively to meet our strategic aims. Additionally, we have cultivated deep and long-lasting relationships with key organisations to both strengthen our commitment to our community and support attainment raising in schools.
40. We are part of the **Into**University partnership network – a collaboration between 27 funding partner Universities, and 39 **Into**University learning centres – which serves 49,000 young people and their families each year across England and Scotland. We sponsor a learning centre in Redbridge, an estate in the heart of our Southampton community, which provides sustained academic support, mentoring and schools’ programmes. The partnership provides multiple benefits: direct experience of university for children and families; volunteering opportunities for university students; opportunities for academics to support programme delivery and curriculum development; and direct opportunities to provide support for students with the transition to university and throughout the student lifecycle.
41. We are a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) Service, which provides higher education providers with data and intelligence to effectively target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activities. Through the HEAT national community, we collaborate on the development of knowledge, skills, tools, resources and methodologies required for robust evaluation. The HEAT membership therefore supports our delivery of robust evaluation which will produce high quality evidence of what works and what does not work within our particular context. Being part of the HEAT evaluation collective is more efficient than working in isolation, minimalises duplication of effort and supports the sharing of evaluation resources across the sector. Through its links with national organisations such as HESA and the DfE, HEAT provides us with data outcomes which are essential for our impact research. Accessing data centrally through HEAT enables us to avoid burdening schools and colleges with requests for data. The HEAT collaboration also provides opportunities for us to share our evaluation plans with other higher education providers for feedback. This peer evaluation facilitates knowledge transfer between providers, increases transparency and rigour and helps us to improve our evaluation going forward. The HEAT collaboration therefore drives up evaluation literacy across the sector through providing access to the data, tools and systems required to build robust evidence of impact.
42. We believe in advancing the widening participation project across the sector, and we work closely with colleagues in other higher education providers. We are a co-founder and convenor of the Access and Participation Plan Special Interest Group within the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) network. The Group provides a space for institutional leads responsible for widening participation to share findings, best practices and approaches to supporting students from underrepresented groups. Over the course of this Plan, the Group will be working collaboratively to provide peer support and professionalisation opportunities whilst advocating for widening participation nationally.
43. We are the host university for the collaborative award-winning Southern Universities Network (SUN), which comprises five other universities in the region (Dorset, Hampshire,

and the Isle of Wight). SUN staff members are integrated into our Access team to ensure delivery of the Uni Connect and University programmes are complementary and strategically supportive. With oversight from representatives of Southampton, the SUN delivers pre-16 and post-16 outreach activity where economies of scale and added value are leveraged through a collaborative approach. Strategic outreach collaboration is a key priority of the SUN's work, ensuring that students from underrepresented backgrounds have access to the information, advice and guidance they need to make informed choices about their futures. Specific goals and success criteria include the increase of progression levels and applications from students domiciled in target areas; the attainment of learners; the successful progression of Young Carers, Estranged Students, Care-Experienced Students, and Students from Military Families; and the number of young males participating in higher education from targeted wards. Throughout 2023-25, we will work with the SUN to deliver a range of attainment raising interventions focusing on cross-partnership work with local authorities, third-party providers, and the Careers Enterprise Company to improve attainment for underrepresented learners in HE.

44. In addition to a formal strategy and action plan, we have well established governance structures for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Our different EDI work streams, including Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter, Stonewall, and Disability Confident, are aligned and allow for a thorough and effective consideration of and action to address multiple disadvantages. We are mindful in planning our access, success and progression activities, of the needs and requirements of people with protected characteristics, and of the need to ensure that equality impact assessments are an integral part of planning and review processes. In planning the activities referred to in this Plan we have taken steps to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not discriminated against. We are confident that the breadth of our activity affords all individuals the opportunity to benefit, although some of our targeted activity is by its nature not wholly inclusive. As a major employer and education provider the University is conscious of the importance of role models and of its responsibility to represent people with different protected characteristics in its public activities and student and staff bodies.
45. We have prepared this Plan aware of our responsibility, under the Equality Act 2010, to eliminate discrimination; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between groups who share different protected characteristics. The measures set out in the Plan will increase opportunities for students from under-represented groups and contribute to the diversity of the student population.

Student consultation

46. Students have valuable insight, lived experience and rich perspectives which are critical to getting our support provision right. Our student representation at the University is led by Southampton University Students' Union (SUSU). SUSU have representation through their elected officers in all major committees of the University, including the Widening Participation Subcommittee, Education and Student Experience Committee, Senate, and University Council.
47. We have set up a Student Advisory Board (SAB) which is currently made up of twenty-five students from underrepresented backgrounds. The SAB is part of our governance structure and is linked to the Widening Participation Operation Group. This allows us to co-govern our work with students. Students are involved in every stage of co-creation – from design and delivery through to research and evaluation. This ensures we do our work with students and not to them, and we learn from their insights and lived experience.
48. Our Awarding Gap Project is fully student-led and launched in 2022. It is focused on closing the awarding gap between Black students and White students. Our Awarding Gap Panel includes fifteen Black undergraduate students from a range of disciplines and is supported by members of staff and a budget enabling them to create and implement interventions

promoting belonging and ownership of activity.

49. We ran a series of moderated focus-groups exploring the Plan and invited feedback from students who participate in our programmes. In these sessions the plan was introduced, and comments gathered on the substance and the wider action plans associated with delivering our aims.
50. This student consultation led directly to the development of a number of the actions identified in intervention strategy four including: a goal of matching of personal and academic tutors to students with the same characteristics; development of numeracy support; better promotion of financial support packages; enhanced provision of training relating to mental health; and, enhanced plans for communication with students about opportunities that are afforded to them. Students will be involved as co-creators of these initiatives.
51. As part of our consultation students raised concerns about the impact of the rising cost of living on their engagement and outcomes whilst studying. This resulted in several suggested changes to the University of Southampton bursary programme. Due to the timescales for the submission of the Access and Participation Plan, however, the level of consultation required to ensure an equitable approach was not feasible. We are therefore committing to a review of the bursary in 2023/24 and will submit a variation with any changes for 2024/25.
52. Students additionally raised concerns about the cost of access to sports facilities for those in societies, and this feedback is reflected in our student submission. Due to the rising costs of providing access to sport facilities and the limited evidence regarding impact on student outcomes investment was allocated elsewhere in the Plan.
53. Our 'Ignite Your Success' programme offers 60 fully funded internships each year with 50% of these offered internally. This ensures that students from underrepresented backgrounds can take ownership of projects which make an impact on the institution. Roles in research units, Communications and Marketing, our Centre of Higher Education Practice and Public Policy Southampton have all benefited from the experience, knowledge and insight of Ignite students.
54. Across the lifecycle of this Plan, we will continue to engage with SUSU's elected officers and the wider student community on our activity, this will include students being involved in the annual review of impact.

Evaluation of the plan

55. We believe that the practice, policy and research strands of fair access and participation should work together to inform strong evidence-based interventions to support students. This is a central feature of our plan for widening participation and has been a key principle in our approach for several years.
56. We have worked with Villiers Park Educational Trust to train our practitioners in the design and implementation of theories of change and provide continuous support from our evaluation team to help gather and interpret findings. As these data mature, they will inform the development of our programme and be presented as evaluative findings for greater understanding across the sector.
57. To enhance our evaluative capacity, support our aim to co-evaluate with students and encourage future careers in widening participation, we have initiated the Research Associates programme. Research Associates is a team of PhD students who are employed to investigate specific questions related to widening participation. The evidence from these projects is then used to inform process and activity design.

58. We have developed a full Theory of Change for each of the activities described in this Plan. In each Theory of Change we have identified the problem to be addressed, tested our assumptions, articulated what we are trying to change and set short, medium and long term success measures.
59. Our evaluation methodologies are a combination of narrative, empirical and where appropriate causal. How these evaluative types are distributed across our evaluation portfolio is outlined in Annex B.
60. As a research-intensive institution, we will always seek to disseminate our findings through the most appropriate channels for the benefit of the wider sector. In the first instance we will publish evaluation findings on our website at pertinent points across the lifetime of this Plan. The specific timings of these are outlined in Annex B.
61. We are proactive in sector networks. Our staff are encouraged to attend and present at conferences and seminars to both bring back insight for our programme development and contribute to the development of programmes in other institutions

Provision of information to students

62. We will publish information on tuition fees and financial support in a timely fashion and in a manner accessible to both existing and potential students. Prospective students are provided information on the tuition fee rates for the duration of their programme online, alongside information on loans, scholarships and financial support. Fee rates are also published on individual course pages. When receiving an offer to study with us, applicants have their fees confirmed in their offer letters, ensuring they are aware of the fee for their programme. Students receive notification letters in advance of any fee increase in later years of study.
63. Prospective students will continue to be able to access the most current information in a range of formats including:
 - A virtual open day that provides students with access to all our campuses, in the form of text imagery and videos.
 - Open days at which trained staff and Student Ambassadors promote the Southampton offering, including reference to our financial support packages.
 - An 'interactive prospectus' system that provides users with videos of student experiences and information on key topics, plus virtual tours and engagement through social channels: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/courses/prospectuses.page>
 - A comprehensive information and advice service, provided through the Student Union's Advice Centre and the University's Financial Information and Assistance team. This provides details of financial support, including emergency financial support, and can be accessed online as well as face-to-face.
 - Online communications through chat functions which are supported by trained financial advisors at pre-arrival to ensure that students access all funding available to them.
 - An online student portal which provides advice about part-time work for students. Here, students can also find much of our information about career opportunities, including progression into professions. In addition details of events to support and prepare all students for their professional aspirations are included in information made available to

prospective students: <https://mycareer.soton.ac.uk/home.html>

- We provide timely and accurate information to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and Student Finance England (SFE), to allow them to populate their databases with the most up-to-date information for potential applicants. Information on specific financial support is also available through Propel and the Complete University Guide.
- Our dedicated Student Communications Team manage our student-focused social media channels (including email, Facebook, Snapchat and WhatsApp). These channels provide regular engaging, valuable and diverse communications to all student audiences, including students from under-represented groups. The team utilises these platforms to host timely student messages, celebrate successes, and to regularly highlight the support available to students from their time as a Fresher right through to when they graduate.
- Our approved Access & Participation Plan will be published on the University website: www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/

Annex A: Assessment of performance

Introduction

1. In producing this report, we have made use of: 1) Office for Students (OfS) access and participation (APP) aggregated and individualised data; 2) HESA data supply files; 3) UCAS End of Cycle data; 4) internal Banner student record data; 5) data used in the Financial Evaluation Toolkit, 6) purchased HESA student data and 7) corresponding OfS guidance for reference (RN1 and RA6). For access-related analyses we have considered individual student characteristics, with comparisons in rates and gaps over time and in relation to the sector. Data relating to access is supported with internal admissions data. For all other lifecycle stages, individual student characteristics were first considered (over time and in relation to the sector) with row-wise regression modelling of combinations of student characteristics providing a framework for understanding trajectory and statistical significance. Unless expressed otherwise this report refers explicitly to full-time undergraduates (and includes undergraduate students with postgraduate components).
2. Throughout this document, reference is made to six-year, four-year and two-year aggregated rates. This is to support investigations of change over time but to also aid insight on populations where threshold ($n = 23$) could not be met for particular years or for a series of years. All percentages in this document, unless noted, refer explicitly to populations above the OfS threshold.

Access

3. The proportion of Mature students at the University of Southampton (UoS) is currently 7.4%, down 1.6 percentage points (ppts) from the 2020-21 cohort (9.0%) and down 2.9 ppts from the 2016-17 entry cohort (10.3%). Apart from students in the 2020-21 entry cohort the proportion of Mature students at the UoS has been consistently falling, with an aggregated four-year share of 8.4% and an aggregated two-year share of 8.2%. Whilst this contrasts with the sector where the proportion of Mature students has increased 5.1 ppts in the last six years and is currently 29.0% (21.6 ppts higher than the UoS) the University of Southampton are the fourth highest recruiter of mature students in the Russell Group. We recognise that whilst we offer a diverse provision of subjects, the University offers only very limited niche part-time or modular programmes at undergraduate level and that will limit the number of mature students who choose to study with us. There is no risk of equality of opportunity regarding local provision with three other HEIs offering a range of programmes within Hampshire. Therefore, we will not be committing to an access target for the recruitment of mature students and instead will focus on the experience of students who choose to study at the University of Southampton.
4. The proportion of students from IMD2019 Quintile 1 (Q1) areas at the UoS has increased 0.1 ppt on the previous year and is currently 7.0% (see Table 2). This is 0.6 ppts greater than in 2016-17, and with an aggregated four-year proportion of 6.7% and an aggregated two-year proportion of 7.0% the actions currently undertaken by the UoS are promising. Despite this, the gap in the proportion of IMD2019 Q1 students at the UoS vs the rest of the sector continues to widen, with the UoS failing to keep up with the pace of the sector. This gap currently stands at 15.8 ppts (sector current: 22.8%) and is up 1.8 ppts from the previous year (2020-21 IMD2019 Q1 gap: 14 ppts) and is up 2.5 ppts from 2016-17 (2016-17 IMD2019 Q1 gap: 13.3 ppts). The IMD2019 Q1 vs Q5 gap for the UoS currently stands at 31.7 ppts (Q1 proportion: 7.0%; Q5 proportion: 38.7%) and significantly contrasts the sector (Q1 proportion: 22.8%; Q5 proportion: 19.6%). An analysis of intersectionality and

the process of recruitment (using internal admissions data) has highlighted that particular populations (markedly so for IMD Q1 students, FSM IMD Q1 students and Mature IMD Q1 students) have lower application-to-firm and application-to-enrolment rates than the UoS average. This will be a priority for the University of Southampton across the four-year period of the plan with a stretch target of increasing the proportion of students from these areas to 10.4% of the UG student population by 2027/28. Please see PTA_1.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	IMD2019 Q1	6.4%	6.6%	6.1%	6.7%	6.9%	7.0%	6.7%	7.0%
UoS	IMD2019 Q2	13.4%	13.6%	12.1%	13.5%	14.0%	12.4%	13.0%	13.1%
UoS	IMD2019 Q3	18.2%	19.0%	17.8%	18.1%	17.6%	19.4%	18.3%	18.6%
UoS	IMD2019 Q4	24.6%	23.3%	25.5%	24.4%	22.6%	22.6%	23.7%	22.6%
UoS	IMD2019 Q5	37.4%	37.6%	38.5%	37.3%	38.9%	38.7%	38.4%	38.8%
Sector	IMD2019 Q1	19.7%	20.1%	20.7%	21.6%	21.9%	22.8%	21.8%	22.4%
Sector	IMD2019 Q2	20.0%	20.3%	20.5%	20.9%	21.4%	21.3%	21.0%	21.3%
Sector	IMD2019 Q3	19.0%	18.8%	18.8%	18.6%	18.7%	18.5%	18.7%	18.6%
Sector	IMD2019 Q4	19.4%	19.3%	19.0%	18.6%	18.1%	17.7%	18.3%	17.9%
Sector	IMD2019 Q5	21.9%	21.5%	21.2%	20.3%	19.9%	19.6%	20.2%	19.8%
vs. Sector	IMD2019 Q1	-13.3	-13.5	-14.6	-14.9	-15.0	-15.8	-15.1	-15.4

Table 1. The proportion of students by IMD2019 quintile for UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 entry cohort).

- While the number of students eligible for free school meals (FSM) has increased (2020-21 rounded numerator: 230; 2021-22 rounded numerator: 270), the proportion of students eligible for FSM has dropped to 9.0% (0.5 ppts lower than the previous year). This value is 1.2 ppts lower than in 2016-17, lower than both the four-year and two-year aggregate values (9.3% and 9.2% respectively) and is 9.4 ppts lower than the proportion of FSM eligible students in the sector (2021-22: 18.4%). There is now a 82.0 ppts gap between students who are eligible for FSM and students who are not eligible, a value 18.8 ppts higher than the current sector equivalent. The University of Southampton recognise the value to the FSM metric and will be prioritising this as our dominant socioeconomic measure. We have set ourselves a stretch target to increase the proportion of students eligible for FSM to 14.6% of our UG population by 2027/28. Please see PTA_2.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Eligible	10.2%	11.2%	9.7%	9.4%	9.5%	9.0%	9.3%	9.2%
UoS	Not eligible	89.8%	88.8%	90.3%	90.6%	90.5%	91.0%	90.7%	90.8%
Sector	Eligible	18.6%	19.2%	19.4%	19.8%	19.3%	18.4%	19.2%	18.9%
Sector	Not eligible	81.4%	80.8%	80.6%	80.2%	80.7%	81.6%	80.8%	81.1%
vs. Sector	Eligible	-8.4	-8.0	-9.7	-10.4	-9.8	-9.4	-9.9	-9.7
vs. Sector	Not eligible	8.4	8.0	9.7	10.4	9.8	9.4	9.9	9.7

Table 2. The proportion of students split by FSM Eligibility for UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 entry cohorts).

6. We acknowledge there is a gap between students enrolling from TUNDRA quintile 1 areas compared to those from quintile 5 areas. In 2021/22 the gap was 23.4ppts compared a national gap of 18.2ppts, indicating a 5.2ppts difference between Southampton and the wider sector. We assess a greater risk to equality of opportunity for students from IMD Q5 areas (the gap being 31ppts and considerably higher than sector and not following the national trend) and those eligible for free school meals. We will therefore commit to monitor the TUNDRA gap for signs of growth and target activity at students from these areas to increase enrolments within our wider outreach offer, but will not include TUNDRA in the intervention strategies or targets of this Plan. This will enable us to concentrate our strategic efforts on those gaps we know to be most significant whilst contributing the evidence base for tackling the national risks to equality of opportunity which are present in our institution.

7. The proportion of ABCS Q1 students has decreased 0.1 ppt to 3.8% in the latest entry cohort (Table 10). This mirrors the four-year and two-year aggregates for the UoS, where little change is demonstrated, and is 3.3 ppts lower than the sector (currently at 7.1%). At present, the ABCS Q1 vs Q5 gap at the UoS is 34.1%, up 2.8 ppts from the previous year with no clear trend direction over the last six years of entry cohorts. The sector ABCS Q1 vs Q5 gap is 27.8%, up 1.2 ppts from the previous year; this gap is currently 6.3 ppts lower than the UoS. As ABCS at access includes socioeconomic measures, we anticipate interventions which are targeted to reduce the two large access gaps identified for students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for free school meals mentioned above having a significant impact on the access rate for students in the ABCS quintile 1 data. Our work through Intervention Strategy 1 (IS-1) will prioritise these students and is measured through targets PTA_1 and PTA_2.

8. Finally, internal, and published OfS data demonstrates increased rates for students defined as Care Leavers both under the UCAS definition and the UoS definition (including estranged students). Under UCAS' definition the number of Care Leaver entrants doubled

from the previous year, while under the UoS definition the number of Care Leaver entrants tripled, aligning with our APP 2019-2024 target of 60 care leavers by 2024/25.

Continuation

9. The continuation rate for the UoS, using the latest APP data (2020-21 entrants), is 96.3%, down 1.2 ppts on the previous year, and 7.3 ppts higher than the current continuation rate for the sector (89.0%). Whilst the continuation gap at the University of Southampton has been consistently higher than sector average for all students, in the latest data there are some short-term gaps emerging.

10. There is currently a 5.9 ppt gap in the continuation rate for UoS young and mature students, with a 90.9% continuation rate for mature students (-3.3 ppts on the previous year) and a 96.8% continuation rate for young students (-1.0 ppts on the previous year). This gap has widened 2.3 ppts on the previous year (previously 3.6 ppts) but remains above sector. From 2016-17 the continuation rates for both populations increased year-on-year, with the 2020-21 entry cohort representing the first year in five years a drop was recorded. Recent falls in the continuation rate for both categories in the UoS mirrors wider sector trends. Therefore, whilst we will monitor this fall, we have prioritised other, sustained continuation gaps in our Intervention Strategies. In considering our financial assistance strategy at the UoS, data from the OfS Financial Evaluation Toolkit framework suggests that increasing amounts of financial support for Mature students increases their continuation rate. Financial support strategies which aim to mitigate impacts of the Cost-of-Living Crisis will therefore prioritise Mature students (amongst other at-risk groups) for support.

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Mature	95.2%	90.1%	92.2%	92.3%	94.2%	90.9%	92.3%	92.5%
UoS	Young	96.9%	96.0%	96.4%	97.4%	97.8%	96.8%	97.1%	97.3%
Sector	Mature	85.1%	84.8%	83.9%	84.1%	85.2%	82.0%	83.7%	83.5%
Sector	Young	92.1%	92.1%	92.0%	92.1%	93.4%	91.9%	92.4%	92.6%
vs. Sector	Mature	10.1	5.3	8.3	8.2	9.0	8.9	8.6	9.0
vs. Sector	Young	4.8	3.9	4.4	5.3	4.4	4.9	4.7	4.7

Table 3. Continuation rate split by Age for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts).

11. Continuation rates for all UoS IMD2019 quintiles outperform the wider sector (Table 12). However, in the latest data IMD2019 Q1 students at the UoS saw a substantial fall in their continuation rate, with a 6.9 ppt drop from 98.6% to 91.7% (the lowest continuation rate for any IMD quintile). This contrasts with drops of 0.3 ppts, 0.1 ppts, 1.4 ppts and 1.1 ppts for IMD2019 Q2-Q5 entry cohorts at the UoS respectively. From 2016-17, the continuation rate for IMD2019 Q1 students increased year-on-year, with an aggregate four-year continuation rate of 94.5% and an aggregate two-year continuation rate of 94.9% also supporting this trend. This drop is not seen at a scale within the sector with a 3.3 ppt drop to 84.4% recorded for IMD2019 Q1 students in the sector. The previous year saw no difference in the

continuation rate between IMD2019 Q1 and Q5 students, with both groups having a continuation rate of 98.6%, whereas the recent results now see the gap widening to 5.8 ppts. In considering strategies for tackling the lower continuation rate for IMD2019 Q1 students at the UoS, data from the OfS Financial Evaluation Toolkit framework does highlight that increasing financial support for IMD2019 Q1 students increases the continuation rate. This is evidenced in Intervention Strategy (IS) 2.

12. Whilst this decrease to the continuation rate for students from IMD2019 Q1 areas is cause for attention, due to the short-term nature of this we will commit to monitor this over the next cycle through IS-2 setting a numerical target if no improvement is seen.

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Q1	93.6%	92.2%	92.7%	95.9%	98.6%	91.7%	94.5%	94.9%
UoS	Q2	96.6%	93.4%	95.3%	96.7%	95.2%	94.9%	95.5%	95.0%
UoS	Q3	96.5%	94.9%	95.0%	96.4%	96.6%	96.5%	96.1%	96.6%
UoS	Q4	96.8%	94.8%	96.9%	97.8%	97.6%	96.2%	97.1%	96.9%
UoS	Q5	97.3%	96.9%	96.9%	97.1%	98.6%	97.5%	97.5%	98.0%
Sector	Q1	86.2%	86.2%	86.1%	85.7%	87.7%	84.4%	85.9%	85.9%
Sector	Q2	88.2%	88.0%	87.6%	87.9%	89.5%	86.3%	87.8%	87.9%
Sector	Q3	90.7%	90.5%	90.2%	90.6%	91.3%	89.4%	90.4%	90.3%
Sector	Q4	92.0%	92.2%	91.9%	92.2%	93.1%	91.5%	92.1%	92.2%
Sector	Q5	93.8%	93.7%	93.6%	93.8%	94.6%	93.5%	93.9%	94.0%
vs. Sector	Q1	7.4	6.0	6.6	10.2	10.9	7.3	8.6	9.0

Table 4. Continuation rate split by IMD2019 quintile for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts).

13. The continuation rate for UoS students eligible for FSM dropped 5.2 ppts to 93.0%, the lowest rate for five years (Table 5). This is a drop greater than FSM-eligible students in the sector (down 2.7 ppts to 87.3%) and now opens up a 4.2 ppt gap with those not eligible for FSM (FSM-ineligible students saw a slight drop of 0.6 ppts to 97.2%). While the rates for both groups are outperforming the sector the sharp drop for FSM-eligible students at the UoS is concerning and will be closely monitored. With the addition of FSM fields being relatively new within OfS procedures, and the field not present in the recent iteration of OfS data which supports the Financial Evaluation Toolkit, it is currently unknown the degree to which awarding students eligible for FSM impacts their continuation rate. This work will be carried out in Autumn 2023.

14. As with the emerging gap for students from IMD2019 Q1 areas we will monitor this progress in IS-2 and implement a numerical target no improvement is seen.

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Eligible	95.9%	90.4%	94.6%	98.7%	98.2%	93.0%	96.0%	95.5%
UoS	Not eligible	97.0%	96.1%	96.8%	97.5%	97.8%	97.2%	97.3%	97.5%
Sector	Eligible	87.3%	87.3%	87.1%	87.4%	90.0%	87.3%	88.0%	88.7%
Sector	Not eligible	92.6%	92.7%	92.7%	92.9%	94.0%	92.6%	93.0%	93.2%
vs. Sector	Eligible	8.6	3.1	7.5	11.3	8.2	5.7	8.0	6.8
vs. Sector	Not eligible	4.4	3.4	4.1	4.6	3.8	4.6	4.3	4.3

Table 5. Continuation rate split by FSM Eligibility for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts).

15. The continuation rate for TUNDRA Q1 students at the UoS for 2020-21 entrants fell 2.8 pts to 93.4%, this follows a fall of 0.9 pts in the previous year (Table 18). This recent fall broadly aligns with the sector where the continuation rate for TUNDRA Q1 students fell 2.4 pts to 89.3% over the same period. Falls in the continuation rate of 1.7 pts (to 95.6%) and 1.8 ppt (to 97.1%) are observed for TUNDRA Q2 and Q4 2020-21 entrants, while a smaller drop of 0.2 pts is observed for students from Q5 backgrounds. The drop in continuation rate observed in Q2 and Q4 students are also comparable to the sector equivalents, where drops of 1.6 pts and 1.7 pts are observed respectively. These figures now result in a TUNDRA Q1 vs Q5 gap of 4.3 pts, up 2.6 pts from the previous year, and the widest gap for four years. However, due to the whilst still short-term but larger gaps for students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for free school meals we will prioritising these areas for monitoring through Intervention Strategy 2 (IS-2). We anticipate work focused with students from these other low-socioeconomic groups will impact continuation for students more widely, and we will continue to monitor the gap for students from TUNDRA Q1 areas throughout the lifecycle plan.

16. For black students, four-year and two-year aggregated continuation rates highlight a positive trajectory in continuation (96.9% and 97.1% respectively), however the latest 2020-21 data shows the continuation rate falling to 95.1%, a four-year low. While all rates are outperforming the sector these rates will continue to be closely monitored. An investigation of financial assistance provided to students demonstrates that students from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds saw increasing continuation rates as the amount of financial support increased. Other categories demonstrated no significant change in continuation rate or were too small to infer substantial insight from. This emerging continuation gap will be monitored through IS-5.

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Asian	98.3%	96.2%	94.7%	99.0%	[DPH]	98.0%	97.9%	98.9%
UoS	Black	96.0%	96.0%	95.8%	97.7%	[DPH]	95.1%	96.9%	97.1%
UoS	Mixed	98.8%	94.0%	98.3%	98.4%	98.0%	97.0%	97.9%	97.5%
UoS	Other	[DPH]	[DPH]	[DPH]	[DPH]	[DPH]	95.3%	96.9%	95.6%
UoS	White	96.4%	95.4%	96.0%	96.5%	97.0%	96.2%	96.4%	96.6%
Sector	Asian	90.8%	90.4%	90.2%	90.1%	92.1%	88.7%	90.3%	90.3%
Sector	Black	86.0%	86.0%	85.3%	85.5%	86.9%	84.3%	85.5%	85.6%
Sector	Mixed	89.2%	89.0%	89.1%	89.4%	90.4%	87.9%	89.2%	89.1%
Sector	Other	88.1%	88.4%	87.6%	87.2%	88.8%	86.5%	87.5%	87.6%
Sector	White	91.1%	91.1%	90.9%	91.0%	91.9%	90.1%	90.9%	91.0%
vs. Sector	Asian	7.5	5.8	4.5	8.9	-	9.3	7.6	8.6%
vs. Sector	Black	10.0	10.0	10.5	12.2	-	10.8	11.4	11.5%
vs. Sector	Mixed	9.6	5.0	9.2	9.0	7.6	9.1	8.7	8.4%
vs. Sector	Other	-	-	-	-	-	8.8	9.4	8.0%
vs. Sector	White	5.3	4.3	5.1	5.5	5.1	6.1	5.5	5.6%

**Table 6. Continuation rate split by Ethnicity for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts).
DPH: The numerator is greater than two but is two within the denominator**

17. The continuation rate for students with a reported disability, in the latest year, dropped 3.6 ppts from 96.9% to 93.3%. For students with no disability reported the continuation rate dropped at a rate lower than those with a reported disability, only 0.5 ppts from 97.6% to 97.1%. This results in a gap now widening to 3.8 ppts (up 3.1 ppts from 0.7 ppts among 2019-20 entry cohorts). Both categories of students have higher continuation rates than the sector with students with a reported disability from the UoS outperforming the sector by 4.5 ppts (UoS: 93.3% vs Sector: 88.8%) and students with no reported disability outperforming the sector by 8.1 ppts (UoS: 97.1% vs Sector: 89.0%). Please refer to Table 6 for more information. In greater depth, the largest falls in continuation rates can be seen for students with a mental health condition (down 5.0 ppts to 90.0% for 2020-21 entrants) and for those with multiple or other impairments (down 3.5 ppts to 93.4%). While all rates for each disability category in the UoS outperform the sector rate (see Table 6), one concern is the low continuation rate for students with a social or communication impairment, now 87.5% (9.6 ppts behind students with no disability and 8.8 ppts behind the UoS overall continuation rate). Through IS-3 and IS-4 we will be implementing interventions with an aim to improve the continuation rate for students with a diagnosed mental health condition as

well as those with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), defined by HESA as having a social and communication impairment. Please see PTS_3 and PTS_4.

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Disability	95.4%	93.0%	94.9%	95.9%	96.9%	93.3%	95.2%	95.0%
UoS	No disability	96.9%	95.8%	96.2%	97.2%	97.6%	97.1%	97.0%	97.3%
Sector	Disability	89.3%	89.4%	89.3%	89.3%	90.2%	88.8%	89.4%	89.5%
Sector	No disability	90.5%	90.4%	90.1%	90.2%	91.4%	89.0%	90.2%	90.2%
vs. Sector	Disability	6.1	3.6	5.6	6.6	6.7	4.5	5.8	5.5
vs. Sector	No Disability	6.4	5.4	6.1	7.0	6.2	8.1	6.8	7.1

Table 7. Continuation rate split by Disability for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts).

Population	Split	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	COGN	96.3%	94.9%	95.7%	97.9%	97.4%	96.2%	96.8%	96.8%
UoS	MH	95.5%	87.8%	93.2%	94.1%	95.0%	90.0%	92.9%	92.4%
UoS	MULTI	94.3%	94.6%	94.5%	94.0%	96.9%	93.4%	94.8%	95.1%
UoS	NODIS	96.9%	95.8%	96.2%	97.2%	97.6%	97.1%	97.0%	97.3%
UoS	SENS	93.7%	94.9%	[DPH]	[DPH]	[DPH]	97.1%	98.1%	98.5%
UoS	SOC	[DPH]	[low]	93.0%	91.7%	[DPH]	87.5%	92.2%	92.0%
Sector	COGN	91.2%	91.5%	91.5%	91.5%	92.1%	91.2%	91.6%	91.6%
Sector	MH	86.5%	86.7%	86.9%	86.7%	88.4%	87.0%	87.3%	87.7%
Sector	MULTI	88.2%	89.3%	89.2%	89.3%	90.3%	88.5%	89.3%	89.4%
Sector	NODIS	90.5%	90.4%	90.1%	90.2%	91.4%	89.0%	90.2%	90.2%
Sector	SENS	88.8%	88.9%	88.5%	89.0%	89.9%	88.2%	88.9%	89.0%
Sector	SOC	88.9%	87.8%	89.1%	88.4%	88.9%	86.9%	88.2%	87.8%

vs. Sector	COGN	5.1	3.4	4.2	6.4	5.3	5.0	5.2	5.2
vs. Sector	MH	9.0	1.1	6.3	7.4	6.6	3.0	5.6	4.7
vs. Sector	MULTI	6.1	5.3	5.3	4.7	6.6	4.9	5.5	5.7
vs. Sector	NODIS	6.4	5.4	6.1	7.0	6.2	8.1	6.8	7.1
vs. Sector	SENS	4.9	6.0	-	-	-	8.9	9.2	9.5
vs. Sector	SOC	-	-	3.9	3.3	-	0.6	4.0	4.2

Table 8. Continuation rate split by Disability Type for the UoS and the Sector (15/16 - 20/21 entry cohorts). DPH: The numerator is greater than two but is two within the denominator. Low: Denominator less than 23. COGN: Cognitive or learning difficulties; MH: Mental health condition; MULTI: Multiple or other impairments; NODIS: No disability reported; SENS: Sensory, medical or physical impairment; SOC: Social or communication impairment.

18. For UoS students who comprise ABCS Q1 the continuation rate fell 3.0 ppts to 89.1% for 2020-21 entrants (Table 18). This rate is 8.9 ppt higher than the sector equivalent which also dropped at a comparable rate (3.2 ppts to 80.2%). The largest drop in the UoS can be seen in ABCS Q2 students within the 2020-21 entry cohort which fell 4.7 ppts to 91.6%. While the ABCS Q1-Q5 gap is now 8.8 ppts, the highest for four years, this is 6.0 ppts lower than the equivalent gap in the sector which is now 14.8 ppts (up 2.1 ppts from the previous year). We anticipate a strong impact on this widening gap due to falling continuation for students from IMD Q1 areas, those eligible for free school meals and disabled students and therefore expect work committed through IS-2, IS-3, and IS-4 to support the reduction of the gap in this area. This will be monitored throughout the lifecycle of the plan.
19. To explore intersectionality, and to detect low continuation rates for specific groups of individuals and thus populations at risk, six-year aggregates for every combination of the following 11 student characteristics were explored: 1) age, 2) IMD2019, 3) care leaver status (UCAS definition), 4) care leaver status (UoS definition), 5) disability, 6) ethnicity, 7) FSM, 8) sex, 9) ABCS (Continuation), 10) TUNDRA and 11) EPQ status. With a large number of combinations (n = 661), the focus here is on populations with a continuation rate less than 90% (Figure 1), while confidence intervals (using Wilson Score 95% intervals) have been created to reflect the degree of confidence attributed to smaller populations.

Continuation Rate by Intersectionality

Six-year Aggregated Rate (< 90% Continuation Rate)

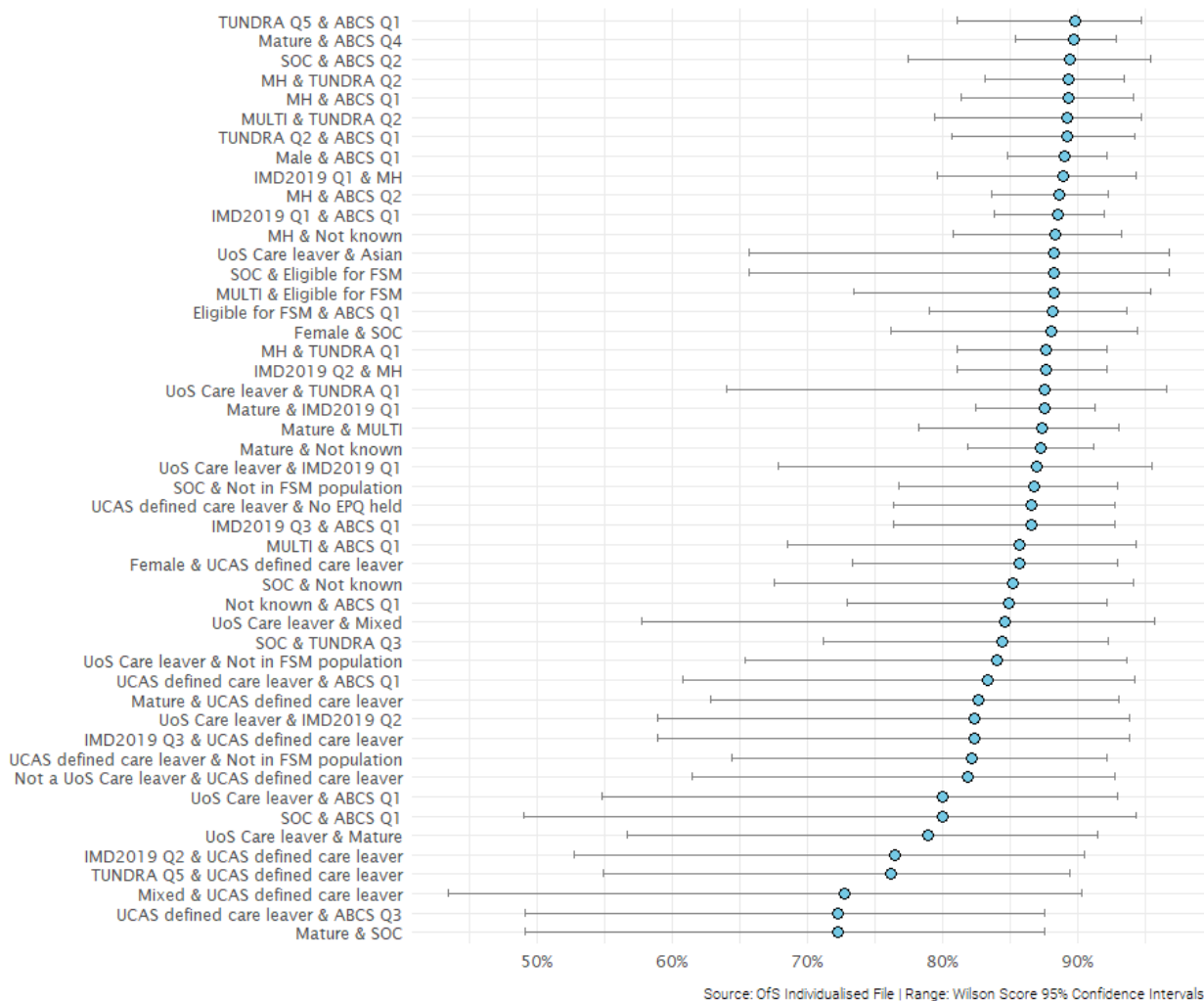


Figure 1. Six-year aggregated UoS continuation rates by combined characteristic and for populations with a continuation rate less than 90% (for visualisation reasons).

20. Four groups of individuals feature the lowest six-year aggregated continuation rate: 1) students with a social or communication impairment, 2) students defined as care leavers under both the UCAS and UoS definition, 3) ABCS (Continuation) Q1 students and 4) mature students. Mature students with a social or communication impairment, and UCAS-defined care leavers from ABCS Q3 backgrounds have the lowest continuation rate with aggregated values of 72.2%. A number of care leaver populations then comprise the next lowest scores. While these are smaller populations, with large confidence intervals, the continuing presence of particular characteristics e.g. care leavers is concerning. Larger populations with a continuation rate less than 90% include Mature IMD2019 Q1 students (aggregated six year continuation rate: 87.5%; denominator: 220), IMD2019 Q1 students with a mental health condition (aggregated six year continuation rate: 88.9%; denominator: 70) and TUNDRA Q1 students with a mental health condition (aggregated six year continuation rate: 87.6%; denominator: 140).

Completion

21. The completion rate, for 2017-18 entrants at the UoS, is 94.8%, down 0.2 ppts on the previous year, but 7.5 ppts higher than the current completion rate for the sector (down 0.4 ppts to 87.3%).
22. For mature 2017-18 entrants, the completion rate is now 91.1%, up 2.2 ppts from the previous year and now 11.6 ppts above the sector equivalent. The completion rate for young students however fell 0.6 ppts to 95.1%, a magnitude comparable to the sector (mature students: -0.4 ppts to 89.7%). This change means that the young/mature gap at the UoS has now reduced to 4 ppts (down 2.8 ppts from 6.8 ppts in the previous year) and is 6.2 ppts below the sector young vs mature gap (which has widened to 10.2 ppts). Both splits continue to out-perform sector equivalents (see Table 20 for further information) and therefore have not been prioritised for intervention in the Access and Participation Plan however significant resources and staff time will continue to be allocated to working with mature students, as committed in our 2020-2024 Access and Participation Plan and completion will be monitored as an outcome of this activity internally.

Population	Split	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Mature	87.3%	86.6%	84.5%	90.7%	88.9%	91.1%	88.7%	89.9%
UoS	Young	95.5%	94.8%	96.0%	94.6%	95.7%	95.1%	95.3%	95.5%
Sector	Mature	81.2%	81.4%	80.7%	80.6%	80.4%	79.5%	80.3%	80.0%
Sector	Young	90.9%	90.8%	90.3%	90.0%	90.1%	89.7%	90.0%	89.9%
vs. Sector	Mature	6.1	5.2	3.8	10.1	8.5	11.6	8.4	9.9
vs. Sector	Young	4.6	4.0	5.7	4.6	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.6

Table 9. Completion rate split by mature students and young students at UoS and the Sector (12/13 - 17/18 entrant cohorts)

23. Completion rates for UoS IMD2019 quintiles continue to outperform the sector (Table 21). For IMD2019 Q1 students the completion rate fell by 1.6 ppts to 90.7%, a fall higher than IMD2019 Q1 students in the sector (-0.3 ppts to 81.6%). This completion rate continues to under-perform against other IMD2019 quintiles in the UoS and contrasts its position among 2014-15 entrants when their completion rate mirrored students from IMD2019 Q5 backgrounds. Other IMD2019 quintiles in the UoS saw falls in their completion rate, with declines of 0.9 ppts (to 92.9%), 0.1 ppts (to 94.7%) and 1.0 ppts (to 95.4%) for IMD2019 Q2, Q3 and Q5 respectively. Students from IMD2019 Q4 backgrounds contrast changes both in the UoS and the sector with an improved completion rate of 96.4% (up 2.1 ppts on the previous year). This data now results in a IMD2019 Q1 vs Q5 completion gap of 4.7 ppts, up 0.6 ppts from the previous year. Despite this, the UoS IMD2019 Q1 vs Q5 completion gap continues to be narrower than the sector equivalent, where the gap rose by 0.2 ppts to 10.6%. Using internal data supporting the Financial Evaluation Toolkit framework it was possible to observe that increasing amounts of financial assistance resulted in a significantly higher rate of completion for IMD2019 Q1 students.

Population	Split	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	IMD2019 Q1	94.3%	90.8%	95.8%	90.0%	92.3%	90.7%	91.9%	91.6%
UoS	IMD2019 Q2	92.3%	93.1%	90.6%	93.4%	93.8%	92.9%	92.7%	93.3%
UoS	IMD2019 Q3	93.3%	92.3%	93.5%	94.1%	94.8%	94.7%	94.2%	94.8%
UoS	IMD2019 Q4	94.6%	94.9%	95.6%	94.3%	94.3%	96.4%	95.1%	95.2%
UoS	IMD2019 Q5	95.2%	94.6%	95.8%	95.2%	96.4%	95.4%	95.7%	95.9%
Sector	IMD2019 Q1	83.5%	83.4%	82.3%	81.8%	81.9%	81.6%	81.9%	81.7%
Sector	IMD2019 Q2	86.1%	86.0%	85.1%	84.8%	84.6%	84.1%	84.7%	84.4%
Sector	IMD2019 Q3	88.7%	88.9%	88.3%	88.0%	88.0%	87.4%	87.9%	87.7%
Sector	IMD2019 Q4	90.7%	90.5%	90.2%	90.2%	90.3%	90.0%	90.2%	90.2%
Sector	IMD2019 Q5	92.4%	92.6%	92.3%	92.5%	92.3%	92.2%	92.3%	92.3%
vs. Sector	IMD2019 Q1	10.8	7.4	13.5	8.2	10.4	9.1	10.0	9.9

Table 10. Completion rate split by IMD2019 quintiles for the UoS and the Sector (12/13 - 17/18 entrant cohorts)

24. For FSM-eligible students at the UoS the completion rate fell marginally by 0.1 ppt to 92.3% (Table 24), in line with four-year and two-year aggregated completion rates (four-year aggregated: 92.4%; two-year aggregated: 92.3%). In comparison the sector saw a 0.8 ppt fall to 82.5%. There is now a positive 9.8 ppt gap in the completion rate for students eligible for FSM in the UoS and in the sector, the highest for the last six years. For students ineligible for FSM a 0.6 ppt, down to 95.4%, is observed for 2017-18 entrants, a magnitude larger than the fall seen in the sector (down 0.1 ppt to 90.8%). Despite this the UoS continues to out-perform the sector in both splits. The gap between FSM-eligible and FSM-ineligible students continues to deviate around three-to-four percentage points with no clear

direction of travel. This again contrasts the sector, where the gap in both splits continues to widen (2017-18: gap of 8.3 ppts).

Population	Split	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Eligible	96.7%	90.9%	92.6%	92.4%	92.4%	92.3%	92.4%	92.3%
UoS	Not eligible	96.3%	95.3%	96.7%	95.0%	96.0%	95.4%	95.7%	95.8%
Sector	Eligible	89.0%	86.0%	83.7%	83.2%	83.3%	82.5%	83.2%	82.9%
Sector	Not eligible	93.5%	92.0%	91.0%	90.9%	90.9%	90.8%	90.9%	90.8%
vs. Sector	Eligible	7.7	4.9	8.9	9.2	9.1	9.8	9.2	9.4
vs. Sector	Not eligible	2.8	3.3	5.7	4.1	5.1	4.6	4.8	5.0

Table 11. Completion rate split by FSM eligibility for the UoS and the Sector (12/13 - 17/18 entry cohorts).

25. The lowest three TUNDRA quintiles for the UoS all saw improvements in their completion rates. For TUNDRA Q1 2017-18 entrants the completion rate was 94.0%, up 0.6 ppt on the previous year. For TUNDRA Q2 students the completion rate increased 1.3 ppt to 96.0%, while for TUNDRA Q3 students the completion rate increased 0.9 ppts to 95.5%. These three quintiles contrast changes in the sector which witnessed falls in their respective completion rates. In contrast to other UoS quintiles, TUNDRA Q4 and Q5 students saw completion rates fall 1.0 ppts (to 95.2%) and 1.8 ppts (to 95.2%) respectively. As completion rates for students from TUNDRA quintiles 1 – 3 improve, prioritisation will be given to on students from IMD Q1 areas or those eligible for free school meals and monitored through Intervention Strategy 2 (IS-2).
26. The completion rate for Asian and mixed entrants in 2017-18 fell 0.9 ppts (to 95.5%) and 0.5 ppts (to 93.3%) respectively, rates comparable to the sector (-0.5 ppts and -0.1 ppts respectively). Despite increased completion rates (as exemplified by four-year and two-year aggregates), the fall in completion rate for black students (-4.2 ppts to 91.1%) is noteworthy. Despite the completion rate for black students (and all other categories) outperforming the sector (Table 12), this now creates a gap of 3.9 ppts in the completion rate of black and white students at the UoS (the largest gap between both groups in the last six years). Internal data highlighted that increasing amounts of financial assistance led to an increased rate of completion for Black African and Black Caribbean students. As this fall in completion rate for Black students is both short-term and currently outperforming sector no numerical target will be set however this will be monitored through Intervention Strategy 5 (IS-5.)

Population	Split	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Asian	95.4%	94.7%	92.5%	95.2%	96.4%	95.5%	94.9%	95.9%
UoS	Black	95.5%	91.4%	92.6%	91.5%	95.3%	91.1%	92.6%	93.3%
UoS	Mixed	96.6%	95.5%	97.3%	96.2%	93.8%	93.3%	95.1%	93.5%
UoS	Other	83.3%	[DPH]	90.3%	[DPH]	[DPH]	[DPH]	95.8%	96.7%
UoS	White	94.3%	93.7%	95.0%	94.1%	95.0%	95.0%	94.7%	95.0%
Sector	Asian	89.3%	89.2%	87.8%	87.5%	87.5%	87.0%	87.4%	87.2%
Sector	Black	83.3%	83.2%	81.8%	81.4%	81.5%	80.7%	81.3%	81.1%
Sector	Mixed	86.6%	86.2%	85.8%	85.8%	85.7%	85.6%	85.7%	85.7%
Sector	Other	85.6%	86.6%	85.0%	84.1%	84.4%	84.0%	84.4%	84.2%
Sector	White	89.4%	89.5%	89.0%	88.9%	88.8%	88.5%	88.8%	88.7%
vs. Sector	Asian	6.1	5.5	4.7	7.7	8.9	8.5	7.5	8.7
vs. Sector	Black	12.2	8.2	10.8	10.1	13.8	10.4	11.3	12.2
vs. Sector	Mixed	10.0	9.3	11.5	10.4	8.1	7.7	9.4	7.8
vs. Sector	Other	-2.3	-	5.3	-	-	-	11.4	12.5
vs. Sector	White	4.9	4.2	6.0	5.2	6.2	6.5	5.9	6.3

Table 12. Completion rate split by ethnicity for the UoS and the Sector (12/13 - 17/18 entry cohorts).

27. For students with a reported disability at the UoS the completion continued to rise for the fourth consecutive year, rising 0.7 ppts to 93.5% for 2017/18 entrants. This is now 8.0 ppts above the sector equivalent (down -0.5 ppts to 85.5%). For students without a disability the completion rate fell 0.4 ppts to 95.0%. These students however continues to outperform the sector equivalent, with a 7.4 ppt gap between the UoS and the sector. This means that the gap between students without a reported disability and students with a reported disability is now 1.5 ppts, down 1.1 ppts on the previous year, and slightly lower than the sector equivalent (sector gap: 2.1 ppts) - see Table 22 for further information. It was also noted through the Financial Evaluation Toolkit that a higher rate of completion was obtained for students with financial assistance, than for students with a reported disability and no financial assistance. In greater detail the UoS observed increased completion rates for students with cognitive or learning difficulties and multiple (or other) impairments and mental health conditions, contrasting changes in the sector. For students with cognitive or learning difficulties the completion rate for 2017/18 entrants increased 0.6 ppts to 94.6%, the highest rate in the last six years, and is 6.2 ppts above the sector equivalent (88.4%). Students with a mental health condition, and multiple (or other) impairments, saw the greatest increase in completion rate with 2.6 ppt (to 92.2%) and 2.8 ppt (94.5%) improvements respectively.

Improved completion rates can also be seen for students with a social or communication impairment. Aggregated four-year and two-year scores of 92.6% and 95.0% for students with a social or communication impairment is encouraging and shows improvement at a rate higher than the sector. Students with a sensory, medical or physical impairment saw a fall in completion rate of 2.4 ppts, down to 92.3%. While this is disappointing and is at a drop larger than the sector equivalent (-0.9 ppts) there is marked improvement over time as evidenced by aggregated four-year and two-year completion rates (four-year aggregate: 92.6%; two-year aggregate: 93.5%). Each group of individuals with an OfS disability category continue to out-perform the sector with considerable gaps for each disability type and for the last six years. Therefore, whilst a target will be set focusing on continuation (PTS_1 and PTS_2) no objectives or targets for have been set in this area.

28. ABCS Q1 students saw a marked rise in completion rate, increasing 6.1 ppts to 90.9% and ABCS Q1 students saw a marked rise in completion rate, increasing 6.1 ppts to 90.9% and is 11.8 ppts above the low of 79.1% recorded for 2014-15 entrants. The aggregated four-year completion rate of 85.6% and aggregated two-year completion rate of 87.9% for ABCS Q1 students is also encouraging. Modest increases of 0.9 ppts (to 89.5%) and 0.6 ppts (to 93.6%) were also observed for ABCS Q2 and Q3 students. ABCS Q4 and Q5 students, mirroring the trend with TUNDRA, saw modest drops in their completion rates, with ABCS Q4 students seeing a fall of 1.4 ppts (to 95.0%) and ABCS Q5 students falling 0.8 ppts to 97.1%.

29. Care leavers, as defined by the UoS and as defined under UCAS, both saw notable improvements in their completion rates, with the gaps between care leavers and non-care leavers narrowing. While these populations are comprised of small populations, these observations are encouraging.

Awarding (Attainment)

30. The awarding rate, defined as the rate of students achieving first or upper-second class degrees, for the UoS 2021-22 graduating cohort is 88.5%, down 4.0 ppts from 92.5% on the previous year. This is 9.5 ppts above the rate for the sector which for the 2021-22 graduating cohort is 79.0%.

31. The awarding rate for mature 2021-22 UoS graduating cohort fell sharply from 90.1% to 76.0, falling 14.1 ppts (Table 11). This is 12.7 ppts below the four-year aggregate score of 83.3 and 8.3 ppts below the two-year aggregate score of 84.3%. While this is 4.5 ppts above the awarding rate for mature students in the sector (2021-22: 71.5%), the magnitude of the drop is concerning. With a much lower 3.3 ppt drop-in awarding rate for young students (a fall seen comparably in the sector), the current gap between young and mature students now stands at 13.4 ppts, up 10.8 ppts from the previous year, and 4.0 ppts larger than the sector gap. Whilst we have not developed an intervention strategy regarding this risk, we do have significant investment (1.5FTE, operational budget of £120,000) committed to working with Mature students and will be continuing our research with students both pre-enrolment and during their studies to develop further interventions with the aim to increase awarding. If this gap between young and mature students continues to rise, this will be reviewed.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Mature	76.6%	84.6%	82.8%	82.5%	90.1%	76.0%	83.3%	84.3%
UoS	Young	86.9%	87.9%	88.8%	91.3%	92.7%	89.4%	90.5%	91.1%
Sector	Mature	68.0%	69.4%	69.3%	74.0%	74.6%	71.5%	72.3%	73.0%
Sector	Young	78.7%	79.6%	79.4%	84.4%	85.2%	80.9%	82.5%	83.1%
vs. Sector	Mature	8.6	15.2	13.5	8.5	15.5	4.5	11.0	11.3
vs. Sector	Young	8.2	8.3	9.4	6.9	7.5	8.5	8.0	8.0

Table 13. Awarding rate split by Sex for the UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 graduating cohort).

32. Falls among all IMD2019 quintiles, for both the UoS and the Sector, are recorded for the 2021-22 graduating cohort. IMD2019 Q1 students at the UoS saw their awarding rate fall 4.2 ppts to 79.3%, 1.7 ppts below the aggregated four-year awarding rate of 81.0% and 2.3 ppts below the aggregated two-year awarding rate of 81.6%. This was the second biggest drop among IMD2019 quintiles at the UoS with IMD2019 Q2 students experiencing the greatest fall in awarding rate, with a fall of 5.5 ppts to 82.5%. Drops of 3.3 ppts (to 89.2%), 2.9 ppts (to 89.5%) and 4.0 ppts (to 90.7%) are observed for IMD2019 Q3, Q4 and Q5 populations within the 2021-22 graduating cohort. While these awarding rates are higher than rates in the sector (see Table 28) the magnitude of falls among IMD2019 Q2 and Q5 students are greater than experienced in the sector. These changes have resulted in the gap between IMD2019 Q1 and Q5 students widen slightly to 11.4 ppts, 6.4 ppts lower than the gap observed in the sector (17.8%). For IMD2019 Q1 and Q2 students, internal data using the Financial Evaluation Toolkit, demonstrated that the awarding rate increased with increasing amounts of financial assistance. Other quintiles did not see an increase in awarding rate between assistance categories. These groups, and Black African and Black Caribbean students (see below) were the only observed groups to see increasing rates with increasing financial assistance. IS-2 focusses on this risk and target PTS_1 will track performance.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	IMD2019 Q1	77.7%	81.9%	80.1%	81.1%	83.5%	79.3%	81.0%	81.6%
UoS	IMD2019 Q2	80.8%	83.4%	87.7%	85.1%	88.0%	82.5%	86.0%	85.4%
UoS	IMD2019 Q3	84.5%	87.1%	84.9%	92.1%	92.5%	89.2%	89.4%	91.0%
UoS	IMD2019 Q4	86.7%	88.6%	89.4%	90.6%	92.4%	89.5%	90.5%	91.1%
UoS	IMD2019 Q5	88.7%	89.8%	90.9%	93.3%	94.7%	90.7%	92.4%	92.8%
Sector	IMD2019 Q1	65.5%	66.6%	66.4%	72.8%	73.9%	68.5%	70.4%	71.2%

Sector	IMD2019 Q2	70.9%	72.5%	72.4%	77.9%	78.9%	74.3%	75.9%	76.6%
Sector	IMD2019 Q3	77.2%	78.0%	78.2%	82.9%	83.8%	79.8%	81.2%	81.8%
Sector	IMD2019 Q4	80.5%	81.7%	81.6%	86.1%	86.7%	83.5%	84.5%	85.1%
Sector	IMD2019 Q5	83.8%	84.8%	84.7%	88.9%	89.2%	86.3%	87.3%	87.8%
vs. Sector	IMD2019 Q1	12.2	15.3	13.7	8.3	9.6	10.8	10.6	10.4

Table 12. Awarding rate split by IMD2019 quintile for the UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 graduating cohort).

33. For students eligible for FSM the awarding rate fell 1.9 pts to 81.2% (see Table 28). This is 11.5 pts above the same group for the sector which fell 6.2 pts to 69.7, but 7.7 pts lower than the previous high of 88.9% among the 2019-20 graduating cohort, 3.1 pts lower than the aggregated four-year awarding rate of 84.3% and 1.0 ppt lower than the aggregated two-year awarding rate of 82.2%. For students ineligible for FSM the awarding rate fell 3.5 pts to 90.0%. While the drop is less than the sector (which fell by 4.1%) and is higher than the sector equivalent (at 82.1%) this awarding rate is lower than both the four-year and two-year aggregate rates (91.2% and 91.8% respectively). This now means that the gap between FSM-eligible and FSM-ineligible students is down 1.6 pts and is now 8.8%. This is lower than the sector equivalent which has increased 2.1 pts to 12.4%. As above, IS-2 focusses on improvements to awarding for students eligible for FSM and a numerical target, PTS_2 has been set to track performance.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Eligible	84.4%	80.0%	82.5%	88.9%	83.1%	81.2%	84.3%	82.2%
UoS	Not eligible	87.7%	88.9%	89.4%	92.1%	93.5%	90.0%	91.2%	91.8%
Sector	Eligible	67.8%	68.0%	67.2%	75.2%	75.9%	69.7%	72.1%	72.8%
Sector	Not eligible	80.4%	81.0%	80.8%	85.4%	86.2%	82.1%	83.6%	84.2%
vs. Sector	Eligible	16.6	12.0	15.3	13.7	7.2	11.5	12.2	9.4
vs. Sector	Not eligible	7.3	7.9	8.6	6.7	7.3	7.9	7.6	7.6

Table 13. Awarding rate split by FSM eligibility for the UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 graduating cohort).

34. Falls in awarding rates were recorded for all TUNDRA quintiles at the UoS and in the Sector. TUNDRA Q1 students saw the smallest drop in awarding rate, down 0.3 pts to 88.7%. This contrasts the 4.8 ppt fall in awarding rate for TUNDRA Q1 students in the sector and the magnitude of falls throughout other quintiles at UoS and the sector. TUNDRA Q2 students,

in contrast, saw the largest fall in awarding rate, down 4.9 pts to 89.9%. This is roughly comparable to the fall in the sector where a fall of 4.0 pts (to 79.5%) was recorded. More broadly, TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students at the UoS see improved awarding rates over time with four-year aggregate scores of 88.4% and 91.9% respectively, and two-year aggregate scores of 88.9% and 92.5% respectively. The gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students is now 1.3 pts, down 1.9 pts on the previous year and at a three-year low. This greatly contrasts the sector where the gap is 5.1 pts higher at 6.4 pts and has been increasing steadily over the last five years. Please see Table 31 for further information. As the gaps for students from TUNDRA Q1 areas remain small, no numerical target will be set in this area.

35. Among all ethnicity groups the awarding rate fell for the 2021-22 graduating cohort at the UoS, mirroring trends in the sector. For Asian students the awarding rate fell 1.8 pts to 85.8%, a rate still higher than their four-year aggregate rate of 84.4% and 11.0 pts above the sector equivalent (74.8%). For white students the awarding rate fell 3.4 pts to 91.4%, the lowest rate for three years. This fall is slightly larger than the fall in awarding for white students in the sector (-3.1 pts) and is a rate lower than their four-year and two-year aggregate rates (92.4% and 93.2% respectively). However, this continues to be the highest awarding rate within the UoS, and 8.2 pts above the sector comparison. For black students a fall in awarding rate of 4.0 pts was observed for the 2021-22 graduating cohort. While this fall is smaller than the drop in awarding rate for black students in the sector (-4.9 pts), the gap between black and white students has widened to a three-year high of 18.1 pts and is of stark contrast to the 5.1 ppt gap among the graduating 2016-17 cohort. For mixed students the awarding rate fell at a magnitude larger than the sector, dropping 5.7 pts to 85.0%. This now results in a white vs mixed awarding rate gap of 6.4%, up 2.3 pts from the previous year, and 2.9 pts above the sector's white vs mixed awarding gap. For students defined as having an 'Other' ethnicity the awarding rate fell a staggering 21.2 pts to 69.7, the lowest awarding rate of any UoS category. While this is relatively small population (rounded denominator: 30), with 97.5% confidence interval limits of 50.4% and 84.9% in awarding rate, this fall is unprecedented and contrasts the smaller drop among other students in the sector (-4.7 pts to 72.6%). As mentioned earlier, Black African and Black Caribbean students were the only other group of individuals which saw awarding rates rise with increasing financial assistance. This will need to be considered when developing awarding-increasing intervention strategies aimed at Black African and Black Caribbean students. With the gap between Black students and white students remaining large, this is our priority areas for intervention. IS-5 is focused on reducing this gap and we have set a stretch target (PTS_5.)

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Asian	80.9%	83.0%	81.6%	82.4%	87.6%	85.8%	84.4%	86.7%
UoS	Black	82.8%	79.2%	70.1%	76.8%	77.3%	73.3%	74.2%	75.4%
UoS	Mixed	79.9%	83.0%	83.6%	87.5%	90.7%	85.0%	86.5%	87.9%
UoS	Other	[low]	78.0%	71.7%	81.6%	90.9%	69.7%	78.0%	80.3%
UoS	White	87.9%	89.6%	90.9%	92.6%	94.8%	91.4%	92.4%	93.2%

Sector	Asian	69.3%	70.6%	70.2%	77.4%	80.2%	74.8%	75.7%	77.5%
Sector	Black	56.3%	58.0%	58.8%	66.2%	68.0%	63.1%	64.1%	65.6%
Sector	Mixed	74.6%	77.1%	76.5%	81.9%	83.6%	79.7%	80.5%	81.7%
Sector	Other	67.1%	67.6%	67.0%	75.1%	77.3%	72.6%	73.2%	74.9%
Sector	White	80.6%	81.6%	81.7%	86.0%	86.3%	83.2%	84.3%	84.8%
vs. Sector	Asian	11.6	12.4	11.4	5.0	7.4	11.0	8.7	9.2
vs. Sector	Black	26.5	21.2	11.3	10.6	9.3	10.2	10.1	9.8
vs. Sector	Mixed	5.3	5.9	7.1	5.6	7.1	5.3	6.0	6.2
vs. Sector	Other	16.2	10.4	4.7	6.5	13.6	-2.9	4.8	5.4
vs. Sector	White	7.3	8.0	9.2	6.6	8.5	8.2	8.1	8.4

Table 14. Awarding rate split by Ethnicity for the UoS and the Sector (16/17 - 21/22 graduating cohort).

36. Falls in awarding rate are also observed for both primary disability categories, in the UoS and in the sector. In the UoS the awarding rate for those with a reported disability fell 4.4 pts from 90.4% to 86.0%, while for those without a reported disability the awarding rate fell 3.9 pts from 93.0% to 89.1%. These trends broadly align with events in the sector, albeit a higher rate of decline for those with a reported disability was observed at the UoS. While both awarding rates, for those with and without a reported disability, out-perform the sector (with awarding rates of 79.4% and 78.9% among the 2021-22 graduating cohort respectively), the gap between both categories has widened by 0.5 pts to 3.1 pts. This will be monitored through our Student Support (Student Disability and Wellbeing Teams) to review the impact of ongoing work from our 2020-2024 Access and Participation Plan. If this continues to grow, we will review options to expand Intervention Strategies 3 and 4 to include an awarding target in addition to the two focused on continuation.

Population	Split	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	AGGLAST 4YRS	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Disability	82.7%	86.3%	85.9%	89.4%	90.4%	86.0%	88.0%	88.3%
UoS	No disability	86.4%	87.8%	88.8%	90.8%	93.0%	89.1%	90.4%	91.2%
Sector	Disability	74.0%	75.2%	75.4%	81.4%	82.3%	79.4%	79.7%	80.9%
Sector	No disability	77.1%	78.1%	77.9%	82.7%	83.3%	78.9%	80.7%	81.2%
vs. Sector	Disability	8.7%	11.1%	10.5%	8.0%	8.1	6.6	8.3	7.4

vs. Sector	No Disability	9.3%	9.7%	10.9%	8.1%	9.7	10.2	9.7	10.0
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Table 15. Awarding rate split by Disability for the UoS and the Sector (16/17-21/22 graduating cohort).

Attainment Rate by Intersectionality

Six-year Aggregated Rate (< 80% Attainment Rate)

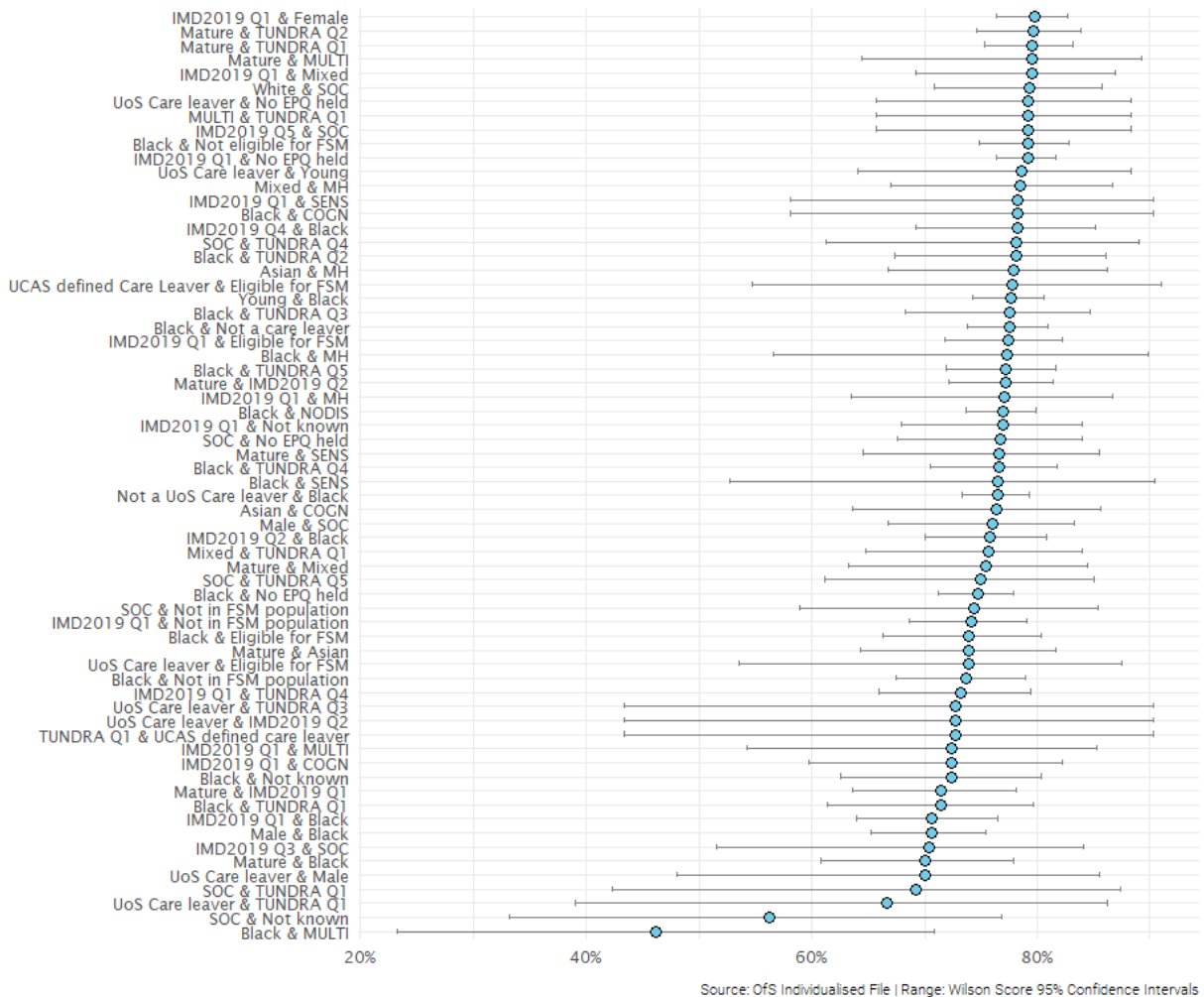
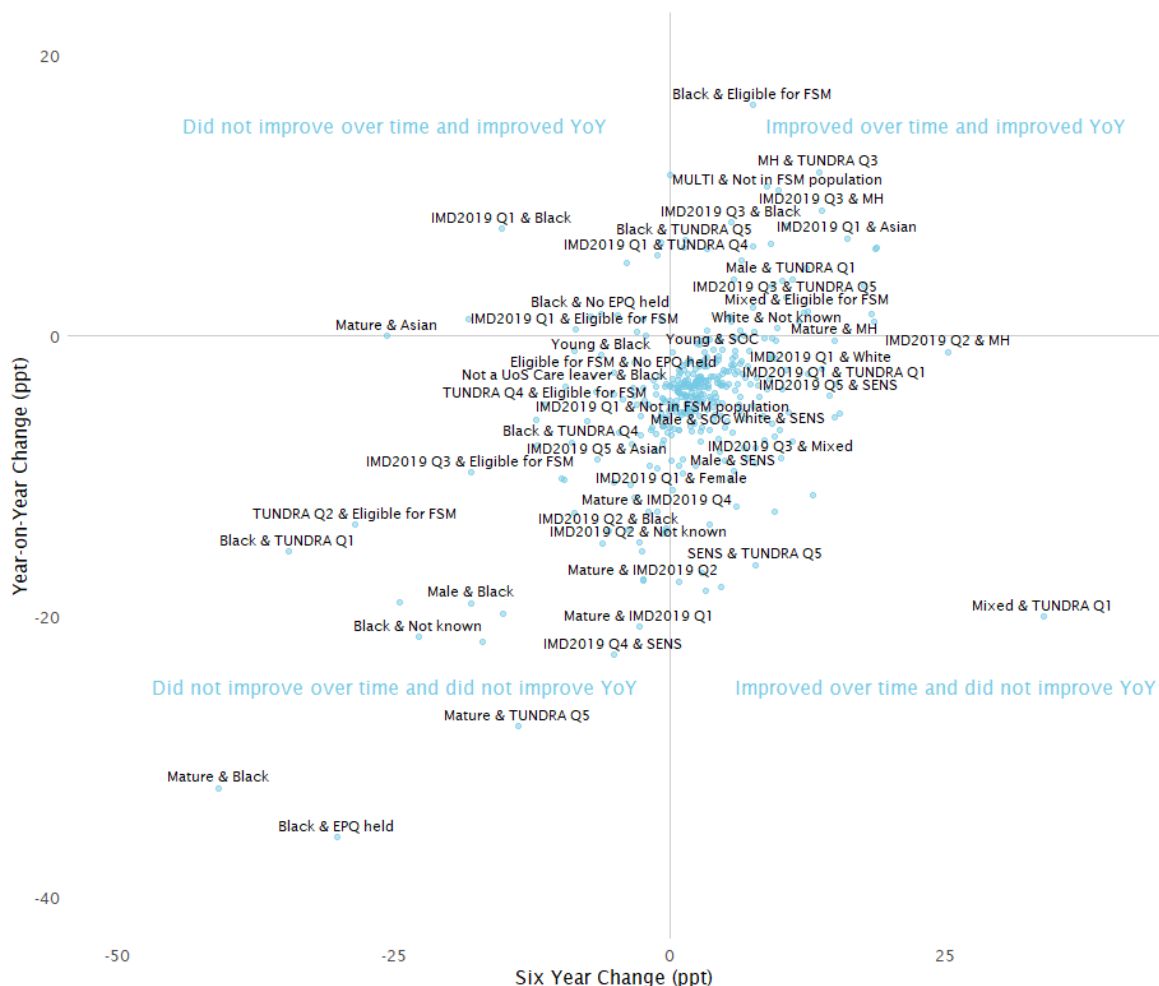


Figure 2. Six-year aggregated UoS awarding rates by intersectionality and for populations with a completion rate less than 85% (for visualisation reasons).

37. For care leaver populations, trends are difficult to discern due to the size of populations in question. Nevertheless, we can use aggregated rates (where denominators meet OfS thresholds) to better understand and publish on these groups of individuals. Six-year aggregate scores of 83.7% and 89.9% for care leaver and non-care leaver populations, and four-year aggregate scores of 85.3% and 90.6%, under the UCAS classification, highlights improved awarding rates for both populations over time. However, under the UoS definition, six-year aggregate scores of 88.9% and 80.4% for care leaver and non-care leaver populations, and four-year aggregate scores of 79.5% and 90.0% both demonstrate a fall in awarding rate for UoS-defined care leavers over time. Care experienced student at Southampton are eligible for the Ignite Your Success programme (see IS-2) and whilst no target has been set we expect this intensive programme to increased awarding rates here.

38. To explore intersectionality, and to detect low awarding rates for specific groups of individuals and thus those at risk, six-year aggregates for the 11 student characteristics as examined previously were cross-examined. See Figure 2 for intersectionalities with an awarding rate below 80%.

Attainment Rate by Intersectionality



Source: OFS Individualised File

Figure 3. A bivariate visualisation of year-on-year and six-year percentage point change in awarding rate for different combinations of characteristics.

39. Three particular combinations of characteristics feature awarding rates lower than all other combinations of student characteristics: 1) black students with multiple (or other) reported disabilities, 2) students with an unknown (UCAS) Care Leaver status and a social or communication impairment, and 3) TUNDRA Q1 students defined as a care leaver under the UoS' criteria. For black students with multiple (or other) disabilities a six-year aggregated awarding rate of 46.2% was recorded. While the denominator is low, below publishable guidelines, this rate is worrying and contrasts all other intersectionalities (of varying population sizes). Similarly, for students with an unknown care leaver status and a social or communication impairment, and TUNDRA Q1 care leavers under the UoS definition, their population sizes are below threshold and still concerning. Care leavers (of UoS or UCAS definition), students with a reported disability, black students, and students from TUNDRA Q1 backgrounds worryingly dominate the lower part of Figure 3. A consideration of larger groups of individuals, with low awarding rates, in comparison to all

other combinations of characteristics, highlights issues in awarding rate for black students. Black male students are recorded as having a six-year aggregated awarding rate of 70.6% (and a rate of 60.5% among the 2021-22 graduating cohort), while black students without an EPQ have a six-year aggregated rate of 74.7% and a four-year aggregated rate of 71.9%. Low awarding rates also occur for black students eligible and ineligible for FSM, with six and two-year aggregated rates of 74.0% and 74.5% for black students eligible for FSM, and six and two-year aggregated rates of 79.1% and 77.5% for black students not eligible for FSM. This aligns with the data for black students as noted in the above analysis, where a rate of 73.3% was recorded for black students in the 2021-22 graduating cohort. This will be considered through IS-2 and IS-5.

40. Figure 3 considers the change in year-on-year and six-year awarding rates for each combination of student characteristics. The graphic, with the concentration of data points in the bottom right quadrant, highlights that the awarding rate for students of different intersectionality has generally increased, with the most recent data affecting most populations. However, and as above, the graphic highlights the long and short-term changes in awarding rates for black students with intersections such as mature black students, black students with EPQs, black students from TUNDRA Q1 backgrounds and black male students suffering from sudden drops over a period of decline. The one exception to this rule is black students eligible for FSM, who while having low awarding rates have seen significant improvement over time and in the latest year of APP data.

Progression

41. The progression rate, that is to say the rate with which students progress into managerial or professional employment, further study or other positive outcomes, for the 2019-20 graduating cohort at the UoS is 80.1%. This progression rate is 5.1 ppts higher than the previous year and is now 7.8 ppts higher than the progression rate for the sector (rising 1.6 ppts to 72.3%).
42. IMD2019 Q1 students see a fall in their progression rate when compared to the 2018-19 graduating cohort. The progression rate for IMD2019 Q1 students fell a considerable 8.6 ppts from 82.5% (the highest rate for any UoS IMD2019 quintile) to 73.9% (the lowest rate for any UoS IMD2019 quintile). While higher than the progression rate for IMD2019 Q1 students in the sector, which for the 2019-20 graduating cohort was 66.2%, the direction of change differs with the sector and all other quintiles at the UoS which witnessed increased progression rates (Table 33). Jumps of 3.2 ppts (to 77.4%), 3.7 ppts (to 79.6%) and 4.6 ppts (to 81.7%) were observed for UoS students from IMD2019 Q2, Q4 and Q5 backgrounds. IMD2019 Q3 students at the UoS saw the highest jump in progression rate, up 7.0 ppts to 81.3%, this contrasts with the sector which saw a 0.9 ppt rise to 72.0%. All IMD2019 quintiles, except for, Q1 saw rises greater than in the sector. This all results in an IMD2019 Q1 vs Q5 gap of 7.8 ppts, reversing a previous 5.4% gap in favour of IMD2019 Q1 students and a total 13.2 ppt swing. While this is lower than the sector equivalent, which saw an IMD2019 Q1 vs Q5 gap of 10.6% (in favour of Q5), these new rates do reverse the trend in IMD2019 Q1 students having a progression rate higher than their Q5 counterparts. Internal data, through the Financial Evaluation Toolkit framework, suggests that, for IMD Q1-Q4 students, increasing amounts of financial assistance support have resulted in an increased rate of positive destinations (this is particularly so for IMD Q1 students). With only one year's worth of Graduate Outcomes data in the current Financial Evaluation

Toolkit future work will help to support or clarify these findings. IS-6 provides information on our commitments to reducing this gap with a target set in PTP_1.

Population	Split	17/18	18/19	19/20	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	IMD2019 Q1	83.4%	82.5%	73.9%	78.4%
UoS	IMD2019 Q2	76.0%	74.2%	77.4%	75.8%
UoS	IMD2019 Q3	82.0%	74.3%	81.3%	77.5%
UoS	IMD2019 Q4	80.8%	75.9%	79.6%	77.7%
UoS	IMD2019 Q5	81.5%	77.1%	81.7%	79.3%
Sector	IMD2019 Q1	67.1%	64.7%	66.2%	65.4%
Sector	IMD2019 Q2	70.2%	67.9%	69.0%	68.4%
Sector	IMD2019 Q3	73.2%	71.1%	72.0%	71.5%
Sector	IMD2019 Q4	75.8%	72.8%	74.4%	73.6%
Sector	IMD2019 Q5	77.4%	74.3%	76.8%	75.5%
vs. Sector	IMD2019 Q1	16.3	17.8	7.7	13.0

Table 16. Progression rate split by IMD2019 quintile for the UoS and the sector (17/18 - 19/20 graduating cohort).

43. The progression rate improved for both students eligible and ineligible for FSM (Table 17). For students eligible for FSM the progression rate improved 2.3 ppts to 69.5%, and aligns with a similar improved rate among FSM-eligible students in the sector, which rose 1.7 ppts to 65.2%. For 2019-20 graduates who were not eligible for FSM a progression rate of 80.0% (up 5.2% from the previous year) was observed. This exceeds the 2.1 ppt rise recorded for corresponding students in the sector, and now results in UoS FSM-ineligible students out-performing the sector equivalent group by 8.1 ppts. In both the UoS and the rest of the sector the gap between FSM-eligible and FSM-ineligible students increased: for the UoS this increased by 2.9 ppts to 10.5% while the sector saw a 0.4 ppt rise to 6.7%. With the gap at the UoS now 3.8 ppts wider than the sector this is in urgent need of correcting. Please refer to Table 17 for further information. IS-6 contains details regarding our planned interventions, and we have set a target in PTP_2 to significantly reduce this gap.

Population	Split	17/18	18/19	19/20	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Eligible	69.5%	67.2%	69.5%	68.4%

UoS	Not eligible	79.9%	74.8%	80.0%	77.2%
Sector	Eligible	65.1%	63.5%	65.2%	64.3%
Sector	Not eligible	72.9%	69.8%	71.9%	70.8%
vs. Sector	Eligible	4.4	3.7	4.3	4.1
vs. Sector	Not eligible	7.0	5.0	8.1	6.4

Table 17. Progression rate split by FSM eligibility for the UoS and the Sector (17/18 - 19/20 graduating cohort).

44. The progression rate for students with a reported disability rose 4.8 ppts to a high of 78.4% (Table 14). This rose at a rate faster than for students with a reported disability in the sector, which rose 1.9 ppts, and now out-performs the sector by 7.5 ppts (with a rate at 70.9%). For students without a reported disability the progression rate rose (at an equivalent amount) by 4.0 ppts to 80.4%. This rate of change is 2.9 ppts above the sector equivalent, which saw their progression rate for students without a reported disability rise by 1.5 ppts, and currently out-performs the sector by 7.8 ppts. This results in a UoS gap, between students with a reported disability and those without a reported disability, of 2.0 ppts, down 0.8 ppts on the previous year. This gap, while decreasing, remains larger than the sector equivalent which narrowed by 0.4 ppts to 1.7 ppts.

Population	Split	17/18	18/19	19/20	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	Disability	76.6%	73.6%	78.4%	76.1%
UoS	No disability	81.4%	76.4%	80.4%	78.3%
Sector	Disability	71.0%	69.0%	70.9%	69.9%
Sector	No disability	73.8%	71.1%	72.6%	71.8%
vs. Sector	Disability	5.6	4.6	7.5	6.2
vs. Sector	No Disability	7.6	5.3	7.8	6.5

Table 18. Progression rate split by Disability for the UoS and the sector (17/18 - 19/20).

45. When considering specific disability groups, and for those with denominators above threshold, we see increased progression rates for all categories. For students with cognitive or learning difficulties the latest data from the 2019-20 graduating cohort highlighted a 6.0 ppt rise in progression rate to 81.5%. This is the highest progression rate for any category, including students with no reported disability and results in that category outperform the sector by 7.1 ppt (which rose 2.9 ppts to 74.4%). Students with a mental health condition saw the most improved progression rate, up 7.7 ppts to 76.0%. Again, the rise in progression rate far exceeds the 2.1% rise noted among students with a mental health condition in the sector, and results in a positive 7.6 ppt gap against the sector. Students with multiple (or other) impairments saw a modest 2.4 ppt rise to 78.0% while students with a sensory, medical or physical impairment saw a rise of 0.2 ppts to 76.8%. In both

instances, these progression rates outperform the sector (see Table 15 for further information). While limited data can be published on students with a social or communication impairment, due to the number of students not meeting threshold, the aggregated two-year progression rate of 79.3% is promising and is higher than all other aggregated rates, both at the UoS and in the sector; for comparison, the aggregated two-year progression rate for students with a social or communication impairment is 59.6%, 19.3 pts below the UoS equivalent rate. Rising rates of progression for all disabled students is promising and therefore no intervention strategy or numerical targets are required here. However, the University of Southampton will continue to take a whole institutional approach to equality of opportunity to positive graduate employment and further study offering priority access to Careers and Employability support and the Vice-Chancellors Progression Scheme in addition to those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds.

Population	Split	17/18	18/19	19/20	AGGLAST 2YRS
UoS	COGN	78.2%	75.5%	81.5%	78.4%
UoS	MH	73.1%	68.3%	76.0%	72.4%
UoS	MULTI	69.4%	75.6%	78.0%	77.0%
UoS	NODIS	81.4%	76.4%	80.4%	78.3%
UoS	SENS	85.0%	76.6%	76.8%	76.7%
UoS	SOC	[low]	[low]	[low]	79.3%
Sector	COGN	74.0%	71.5%	74.4%	72.9%
Sector	MH	67.2%	66.3%	68.4%	67.4%
Sector	MULTI	70.7%	69.2%	70.2%	69.8%
Sector	NODIS	73.8%	71.1%	72.6%	71.8%
Sector	SENS	72.0%	69.4%	71.3%	70.3%
Sector	SOC	58.6%	59.4%	59.8%	59.6%
vs. Sector	COGN	4.2	4.0	7.1	5.5
vs. Sector	MH	5.9	2.0	7.6	5.0
vs. Sector	MULTI	-1.3	6.4	7.8	7.2
vs. Sector	NODIS	7.6	5.3	7.8	6.5
vs. Sector	SENS	13.0	7.2	5.5	6.4

vs. Sector	SOC	-	-	-	19.7
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Table 19. Progression rate split by Disability Type for the UoS and the Sector (17/18 - 19/20 graduating cohort). DPH: The numerator is greater than two but is two within the denominator. Low: Denominator less than 23. COGN: Cognitive or learning difficulties; MH: Mental health condition; MULTI: Multiple impairments; NODIS: No disability reported; SENS: Sensory, medical or physical impairment; SOC: Social or communication impairment.

46. Quintile 1 ABCS students at the UoS saw their progression rate rise 4.1 ppts to 70.9%, a rise comparable to their Q5 counterparts, rising 4.6 ppts to 87.9%. Other improvements include a 5.4 ppt rise to 79.5% for ABCS Q3 students at the UoS and a 4.5 ppt rise to 81.0% for ABCS Q4 students, while ABCS Q2 students saw a modest 1.4 ppt rise to 75.4%. While all quintiles out-perform the sector (see Table 39), the progression rate for ABCS Q1 students at the UoS has a two-year aggregated progression rate of 69.0%, 16.5 ppts below ABCS Q5 students. The gap between these quintiles continues to increase for the UoS at a time where the sector saw a recent fall in their (albeit larger) gap. No Intervention Strategy or target is required in this area.
47. To explore intersectionality, and to detect low progression rates for specific groups of individuals and students with particular combinations of characteristics, three-year aggregates for the 11 aforementioned student characteristics were cross-examined. See Figure 4 for those combined sets of characteristics with a progression rate below 85%. A number of intersectionalities have distinctly lower progression rates. These involve ABCS Q1 students, IMD2019 Q2 students and various disability types. The lowest progression rate is for students with a multiple (or other) disabilities with ABCS Q1 characteristics, with a rate of 46.2% (denominator: below threshold). For students with ABCS Q1 characteristics and cognitive or learning difficulties a three-year aggregate rate of 47.1% is observed (denominator: below threshold) While these and other two-way combinations at the bottom of this graphic may feature small populations the data and analysis highlight the need to address these gaps for students with particular disabilities and the need to consider further these students with these combinations of characteristics. Larger populations, with progression rates below 85%, include a number of combinations including FSM eligible students. For example, white students eligible for FSM have a three-year aggregated rate of 67.7%, while white students who are ineligible for FSM have an aggregated progression rate of 78.0%.

Progression Rate by Intersectionality

Three-year Aggregated Rate (< 85% Progression Rate)

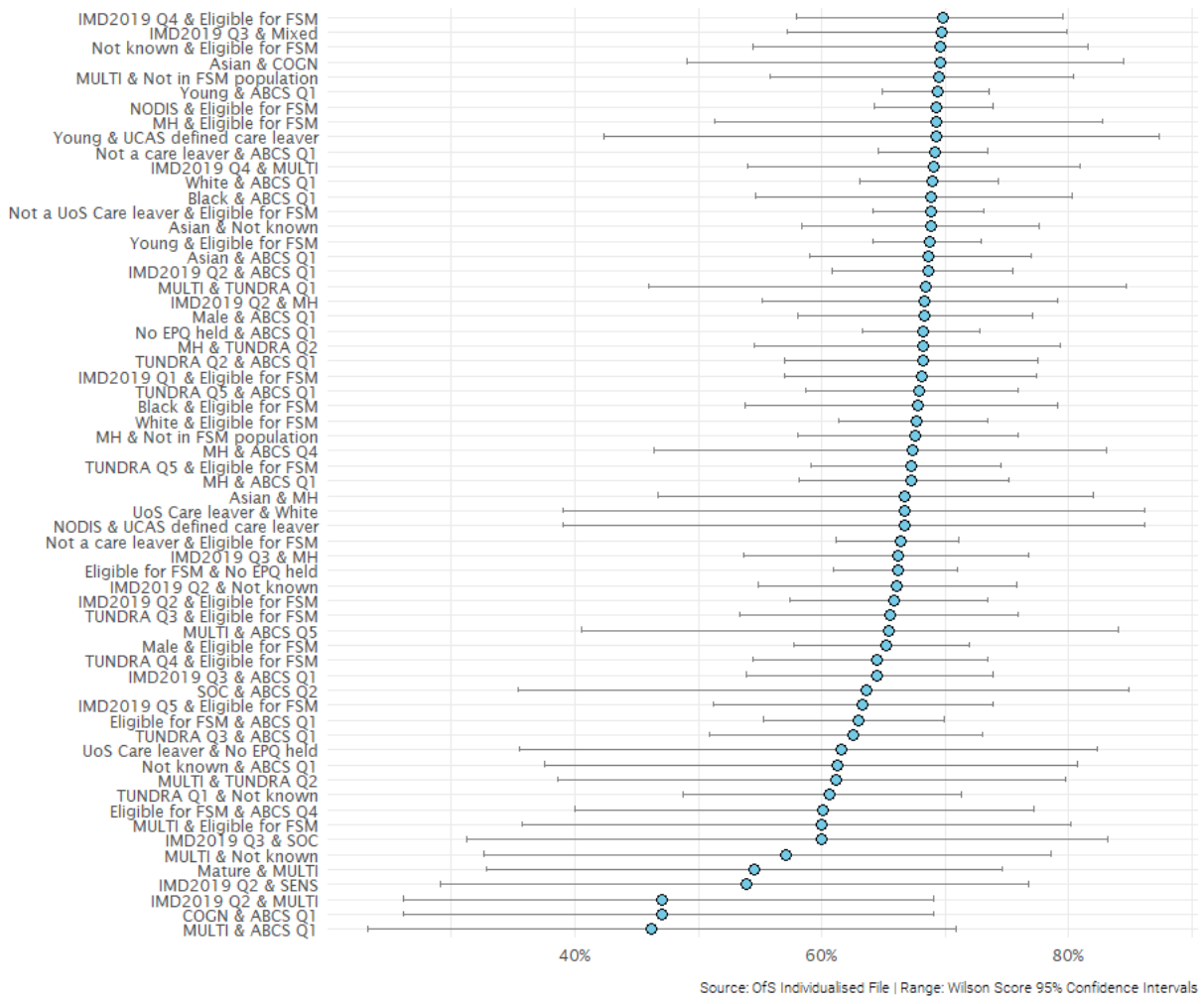


Figure 4. Three-year aggregated UoS progression rates by intersectionality and for populations with a completion rate less than 85% (for visualisation reasons).

Annex B: Evidence base and rationale for intervention strategies (further detail)

Intervention Strategy 1 – Increasing enrolments for students from IMD Q1 areas and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

Gaps in prior attainment are one of the most significant and persistent barriers to university access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Turhan & Stevens, 2020). Supporting local schools to raise attainment across the student lifecycle is therefore a significant focus of our widening participation activity.

At primary and secondary-school age, a high proportion of school students eligible for Free School Meals and/or Pupil Premium have lower Maths grades than their peers, and / or a reading age which is lower than the average for their chronological age. The consequent decrease in opportunities to access learning materials across the curriculum (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000) means there is a correlation between student reading ability and eventual performance across all subjects at GCSE, including Maths and Science (GL Assessment, 2020).

There is strong evidence that informal but structured tutoring programmes can increase attainment. The Education Endowment Foundation has reviewed 123 studies on tutoring delivered one-to-one (EEF, 2021a) and 62 studies on tutoring delivered in small groups (EEF, 2021b). They found that both approaches are effective for attainment-raising, delivering four to five additional months progress on average. At Bournemouth University, a 10-week reading-focused activity delivered with disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was reported to significantly accelerate reading development; on average, pupils' reading age increased by 12 months, and 38% of pupils improved their reading age by 2 years or more (OfS., 2022).

Outside of the UK, several randomised controlled trials and meta-analyses have demonstrated a positive relationship between structured reading tutoring delivered specifically by university students (non-professional tutors) and the attainment of primary school pupils (Bloom, 1984; Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000; Lindo, Weiser, Cheatham, & Allor, 2018; Nickow, Oreopoulos, & Quan, 2020). These positive effects on attainment remain when the tutees are students from disadvantaged backgrounds who lack family support for reading (Resnjanskij, Ruhose, Wiederhold, & Woessmann, 2021). School pupils have reported trusting and identifying with Student Ambassadors when tutoring occurs in informal contexts (Gartland, 2015). Evidence shows that when positive adult role models like Ambassadors demonstrate enthusiasm for reading, it can have a strong and lasting effect on students' reading attitudes and practices (Hughes-Hassell & Lutz, 2006).

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a research-based Level 3 qualification. Undertaking an EPQ alongside other qualifications significantly enhances the odds of achieving a higher grade (A*-B) in Level 3 qualifications (Gill, 2017; Jones, 2015). The skills students learn (e.g., planning, researching, critical thinking, etc.) are valuable for academic success in both Level 3 studies and at undergraduate level. Increasing the number of schools with high proportions of students from underrepresented backgrounds which offer an EPQ and provide both EPQ students and their teachers with high-quality academic provision, could help to mitigate differences in Level 3 attainment. Completing an EPQ also prepares students effectively for academic transition to university (Cripps & Wheeler, 2018; Stephenson & Isaacs, 2019), a fact borne out in our own student outcomes: data from the last five years shows that, on average, 93.6% of students who

have completed an EPQ were awarded a good degree (a 2:1 or 1st), compared to an average of 86.3% for their non-EPQ counterparts.

Ignite Your Journey (IYJ) is a multi-activity outreach programme. Multi-activity outreach programmes which include a mentoring component are positively associated with participants' attitudes toward and aspirations for Higher Education (Robinson, 2020). Several important factors are likely to influence HE attitudes, such as having regular access to a current student Ambassador (E-Mentor). This relationship offers the opportunity for interaction with a relatable 'role model' in a near-peer relationship that allows them to explore their learner identity in an HE context (Gartland, 2015) and gain insight into the realities of studying at a research-intensive university (Sanders et al., 2018).

There is limited causal evidence demonstrating the impact of multi-intervention outreach on application behaviours; two quasi-experimental evaluations of multi-intervention outreach programmes (UniConnect and The Access Project) revealed that participation was associated with a greater likelihood of students progressing to HE compared to demographically matched groups (Burgess, Horton, & Moores, 2021; The Access Project, 2021). However, TASO's interim findings from impact evaluations of 5 multi-intervention outreach programmes suggests that these activities attract students who are already likely to apply to university and may therefore have limited impact on application or progression to HE (TASO, 2023). Given the challenges associated with evaluating complex, 'Black Box' programmes (Robinson, 2020), as well as the successes and positive feedback received from our programme participants, we will explore the impact of participating in IYJ on applications and awarding in our own context through on-going evaluation.

One of the aims of IYJ is to prepare students for successful transition into and through university. In the last 5 years, IYJ graduates have been more likely to graduate from the University of Southampton with a 1st or 2:1 than their peers in the wider cohort (89.1% and 87.5%, respectively). IYJ graduates' awarding outcomes are higher than the rates observed for students from IMD Q1 and POLAR Q1 postcodes (81.2% and 85.7%) and those eligible for Free School Meals (83.5%). This demonstrates a positive association between IYJ and awarding outcomes but is not causal evidence, meaning that other factors such as students' motivation or prior attainment may be playing a role.

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Intervention Strategy 2 – Improving experience and outcomes for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds measured through from IMD2019 Q1 and eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)

Insufficient academic and social support can contribute to non-continuation and awarding gaps. Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) facilitates cross-year academic and social support between university students on the same degree programme. Engagement with PAL is positively associated with improved assessment scores for first-year undergraduate students (Capstick, Harrell-Williams, Cockrum, & West, 2019; Fox, Stevenson, Connelly, Duff, & Dunlop, 2010; Kerrigan & Manktelow, 2021; Sandner, 2015). Causal studies undertaken in the US have shown that delivering PAL in students' first year improves continuation rates to second year (Bettinger & Baker, 2011; Capstick et al., 2019). Being connected to cross-year peers on a degree programme can create an academic and social Community of Practice which aids students' sense of belonging and resilience, promoting persistence (Adam, Skalicky, & Brown, 2011; Tinto, 2017).

Peer Leaders can also benefit from delivering PAL by gaining academic knowledge, increasing their attainment, and improving their career readiness (Riser, da Silva, & Clarke, 2021). Qualitative research demonstrates that Peer Leaders experience improved psychosocial outcomes which are positively associated with attainment and retention in HE, including increased academic self-efficacy, increased metacognitive and communication skills and increased sense of belonging (Bailey, 2021; Young, Hoffman, & Reinhardt, 2019).

Some research indicates that an effective way of delivering academic skills support to students is by embedding those skills directly into module-level teaching (e.g. Gunn et al, 2011; Hill et al, 2010). When support is supplied by a generic, ancillary service, many students do not benefit adequately from it (Wingate, 2006). They may worry they will be seen as failures, or they may be unable to self-diagnose and self-refer, or they may simply be unaware of the help available. These issues are particularly acute for students who sit within the Widening Participation remit, and this may well contribute to the attainment gap (Goldingay, Sophie et al, 2014).

Our Embedded Skills model is informed by 'best practice' recommendations (e.g. Bohemia et al; 2007; McWilliams et al, 2014). Foregrounding the constructive alignment of teaching, learning and assessment outcomes (Biggs and Tang, 2011) the Enhancement Team work collaboratively with academic colleagues to ensure that the interventions use appropriate discipline conventions and discourses (Lea and Street, 1998; Wingate and Tribble, 2012).

Ignite Your Success (IYS) is a sustained programme of multi-intervention support. We recognise the complexity of addressing inequalities and, accordingly, provide bespoke and flexible support with the capacity to address multiple risks to equality of opportunity, including financial, social, academic and pastoral elements. A randomized control trial undertaken in the US demonstrated that combining financial support with academic and pastoral support can have a positive impact on student attainment (Angrist, Lang, & Oreopoulos, 2009). Workshops for IYS are designed to facilitate the development of several psychosocial outcomes which are positively associated with or known to have a causal relationship with attainment and retention, such as analytical thinking, cognitive skills, metacognitive skills, and motivation (Taylor, van Eyk, & Syme, 2018; Thompson, Bellaera, Ilie, & Konstantina, 2022).

Feeling a sense of belonging in university is important for student continuation and attainment (Thomas, 2013, 2016), so facilitating student communities and offering enhanced pastoral support through IYS could mitigate some of the risks associated with withdrawal from study. Through

integrating a 5-stage model of belonging into all programme activities and outcomes and by providing spaces and opportunities for social networking and peer mentoring, we assume that we can reduce continuation and awarding gaps through fostering a sense of belonging for all students on the programme (Angrist et al., 2009; Geenan et al., 2015; Tinto, 2017).

The cost of attending university also constitutes a risk for non-continuation and awarding for students from low-income households. There is a robust causal evidence base, particularly from the US, demonstrating that the provision of needs-based financial support improves retention and completion for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bettinger, 2015; Castleman & Long, 2016; Denning, 2017; Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen, Harris, & Benson, 2016). A quasi-experimental study in the UK found that increasing financial aid by £1,000 increased the likelihood of obtaining at least an upper second-class degree by 3.7 percentage points (Murphy & Wyness, 2016). Providing financial aid allows students to work fewer hours in off-campus employment (Broton, Goldrick-Rab, & Benson, 2016) a practice which is negatively associated with academic performance (Zhang & Yang, 2020).

These findings are echoed by our financial support evaluation at the University of Southampton. Aggregated data for cohorts of students who entered from 2016/17 to 2019/20 demonstrates that students from IMD Q1 postcodes in receipt of financial support were, on average, continuing at a rate 3.4 percentage points above those with no financial support.

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Intervention Strategy 3 – Retaining students with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) as defined by HESA as a social and communication impairment

There is very little causal evidence on what works to address disability inequalities in Higher Education (TASO, 2023). Most of the activities within this intervention strategy were designed with reference to our extensive practitioner experience and consultation with our own students with ASC. We have also drawn widely on research studies which explore the experiences and unfulfilled needs of university students with ASC, and provide actionable recommendations (e.g., Irvine & MacLeod, 2022; Sarrett, 2018; Vincent et al., 2017). As there is clearly a need for more robust evaluation evidence, we will be commissioning researchers to facilitate our contribution in this field.

Research has highlighted challenges that some students with ASC can face in transitioning to the novel university environment, which encompasses a wide range of new social and academic experiences (Gurbuz, Hanley, & Riby, 2019; Irvine & MacLeod, 2022; Vincent et al., 2017). UK-based studies of people with ASC who have attended university indicate that the experience of transitioning to university is particularly important in predicting university completion (Cage, De Andres, & Mahoney, 2020). Many institutions therefore provide transition events which help students with ASC to navigate these diverse new experiences and to signpost ongoing support.

Findings from a pre/post empirical evaluation of a pre-entry transition event for students with ASC at one UK university indicate that transition events can help to reduce participants' concerns about progressing to HE, including concerns about social, academic, and psychosocial challenges and living independently (Lei, 2020). A small, randomized control trial provided promising evidence that transition support including goal setting, parent-teacher consultation and coaching could support students with ASC to achieve their transition goals (Ruble et al., 2018). However, both studies report on data from small sample sizes and, while the findings suggest that transition support may yield positive short-term benefits, neither reported on medium- or long-term outcomes for participants (or non-participants).

Ensuring students are aware of and feel comfortable accessing support services may aid the continuation and awarding outcomes for students with ASC. A data analysis using 10 years of data at a large university revealed that students with a reported disability were more likely to persevere at university and receive higher academic awards when they engaged with disability services, especially during their first semester (Safer, Farmer, & Song, 2020).

A common concern in the literature on the experiences of students with ASC at university is a lack of awareness of and understanding about ASC among staff and other students, which can increase social isolation and exacerbate anxieties and social concerns of students with ASC (Gurbuz et al., 2019; Vincent et al., 2017). Disability awareness training has been implemented in universities, but there is no causal evidence of its effectiveness (TASO, 2023), and very limited empirical evidence on its effectiveness from the UK (DSDUK, 2022; Hector, 2020).

An empirical, pre/post design evaluation of an Autism awareness training programme for college students undertaken in the US and in Lebanon demonstrated that training co-developed and delivered by autistic students had a stronger impact on university students' knowledge and acceptance of autism compared to the impact of a similar training programme developed and delivered by professional staff alone (Gillespie-Lynch et al., 2022). An empirical evaluation on the impact of a co-designed Autism awareness training delivered in another US college yielded similar

results in term of improving University Educators' knowledge about autism and reducing stigma towards autism; these changes were retained one month after the intervention (Waisman et al., 2023). Both studies focused on changes to participants' knowledge and attitudes relating to ASC but did not include behavioural measures or examine impact on the experiences or outcomes of students with ASC. Nonetheless, both studies illustrate the value of co-designing training about supporting students with ASC.

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Intervention Strategy 4 – Retaining students with a diagnosed mental health condition

The number of UK university students reporting a mental health condition has increased by more than 180% since 2014-15 (Hubble & Bolton, 2021), and the actual number of students with a mental health condition is likely to be higher due to concerns around disclosure (Thorley, 2017; UUK, 2022). Students with a declared mental health condition are less likely to progress to their second year of university study than their peers with no known disability (TASO, 2022). There is little robust research to show which specific interventions have a demonstrable, causal impact on university students' mental health and well-being outcomes, or what support may protect against non-continuation risks (TASO, 2022).

In the UK, there is a significant risk that students will not be able to access adequate mental health and wellbeing support; the challenges of extensive waiting lists and high demand for services are complicated further by students' changes to address during home- and term-time (UUK, 2018). This puts significant pressure on university mental health support (Thorley, 2017). A series of case studies have demonstrated positive impacts of NHS-university partnerships on students' access to appropriate mental health provision, including high numbers of students accessing support, greater access to condition-specific support and more timely access to support (NHS Confederation & Network, 2021; OfS, 2022; UUK, 2022). Closely aligned to both the NHS Long-Term Plan and the OfS Student Mental Health Partnerships Project, the core focus of our intervention strategy is to build capacity to provide or facilitate increased mental health support through strengthening our NHS partnership and developing high quality, collaborative interventions (NHS, 2019; UUK, 2022).

University staff are well placed to support students with mental health conditions but have consistently reported lacking knowledge and skill to provide it (Gulliver, Farrer, Bennett, & Griffiths, 2019; Spear, Morey, & van Steen, 2021). Increased levels of mental health literacy are positively associated with staff feeling able to assist students with mental health conditions; empowering staff with knowledge could facilitate greater access to informal support for university students and increase connections to appropriate care (Gulliver et al., 2019). Fears around stigma and unfair treatment have inhibited university students' willingness to disclose mental health conditions to their institution (Thorley, 2017), so widely and openly promoting whole-staff training may signal to students that it is safe and appropriate to discuss their concerns with staff.

Although staff training in mental health support is increasingly common (see Thorley, 2017, for several case studies), there is little evidence on its effectiveness. A staff training programme delivered as part of a "Start to Success" Partnership programme at the University of Keele was evaluated using an empirical pre-post design. Findings showed a statistically significant increase in confidence for recognising symptoms of common mental health conditions and supporting students. An evaluation of the Staff Training strand of the Mentally Healthy Universities Programme demonstrated increased confidence in discussing mental health at work, and tackling mental health stigma in the university (Mind, 2021). However, the Mind evaluation data was collected post-intervention only, asking participants to retrospectively rate their pre-training attitudes after the training. In both cases described above, evaluators did not collect data on medium- or long-term behaviour or knowledge outcomes for staff, or any changes in students' experiences associated with the training.

We will develop training and upskill university staff to promote wellbeing and provide mental health support as part of our whole-institution approach (Cage, Jones, Ryan, Hughes, & Spanner, 2021;

TASO, 2022; Thorley, 2017; UUK, 2020). Given the paucity of evidence around the effectiveness of staff training, we will commission independent researchers to explore the impacts and outcomes of this initiative.

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Intervention Strategy 5 – Improving experience and outcomes for students for Black students

There is persistent and unequal awarding between undergraduate Black and white students (OfS, 2021). Exploratory research has identified multiple social, structural and systemic inequalities in student experiences which may all contribute to ethnic degree awarding gaps, indicating the need for a multi-intervention approach (Bunce, King, Saran, & Talib, 2021; University of Southampton, 2022; UUK & NUS, 2019). However, there is limited evidence on ‘what works’ to reduce awarding gaps (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015).

Institutions are recommended to create more opportunities for staff and students to engage in meaningful conversations about race, and to co-design solutions which will change the institutional culture (UUK & NUS, 2019). Lack of knowledge and open dialogue can cause staff to circumvent their responsibility for tackling the systematic issues which underpin differential experiences (Bouattia, 2015; Curtis et al., 2021; UUK & NUS, 2019).

At the University of Southampton, a small Reverse Mentoring project was piloted, in which staff and students from underrepresented groups engaged with diversity training and up to five facilitated one-to-one conversations about the students’ Higher Education experiences. Findings from an empirical enquiry suggested that the reverse mentoring helped staff develop a more realistic and nuanced understanding of these students and their experiences, and some staff felt inspired to take action (Curtis et al., 2021). Further research is being undertaken to explore the longer-term impact of this activity. We will continue to expand and evaluate staff development through our Culture strand.

Black undergraduate students have reported a lack of trust in their institution and a lower sense of belonging than their white peers (University of Southampton, 2022; UUK & NUS, 2019). The perceived lack of trust may account for some of the challenges associated with the co-creation and implementation of informed institutional changes (University of Southampton, 2022). A student panel was created as part of the Awarding Gap Project Community strand; Black students are employed as consultants and encouraged to draw on their own insights and experiences to identify issues and opportunities for change within the institution. They are provided with financial resources and support to co-develop activities and solutions to improve the student experience. Our first student panel delivered a successful cross-university event in Southampton city and developed a ‘Black Fresher’s Guide’ to support transition.

Empirical studies suggest that students involved in co-creation can have increased feelings of belonging to the institution through having autonomy over their experience in university (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014) and that there is a link between institutional engagement, belonging and attainment (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bovill, 2021). Bringing a community of students together to discuss sensitive topics for the purpose of co-production can also reduce feelings of isolation and facilitate or strengthen valued peer networks (Healey et al., 2014; Slay & Stephens, 2013). These outcomes are reflected in our pre/post evaluation of the pilot Awarding Gap student panel: 80% of survey respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed that panel membership had improved their university experience (Chipato, 2022). In qualitative feedback, participants expressed pride in their achievements and contributions to the university as part of the panel, especially to the Black student community. Many commented on the opportunity to meet and share important conversations with other panel members, including “inspiring women” (Chipato, 2022).

Reviews of academic curricula in UK Higher Education have consistently shown that issues of diversity, equality and discrimination are not adequately embedded into university pedagogy (Bird & Pitman, 2020; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; Richardson, 2018; UUK & NUS, 2019). TASO commissioned causal evaluation on the impact of curriculum reforms which were designed to tackle awarding gaps at two UK universities. Reforms included increasing the diversity of authorship in reading lists and providing toolkits to support staff in increasing the cultural sensitivity of their teaching, learning and assessment resources. Students reported that the curriculum changes improved their course satisfaction and belonging in HE. However, limited evidence was found on the impact of the reforms on the awarding outcomes of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity students. This was partially attributed to the variability of staff engagement with the curriculum reform resources, and limited student engagement with reformed resources such as reading lists (TASO, 2022).

The findings from TASO's evaluation emphasise the need for curriculum development and audits of institutional processes to be embedded within broader diversity and reflexivity training. Staff must be given time and ongoing support to meaningfully reflect on and engage with issues of institutional racism, and to develop confidence in making and evaluating sustainable changes to their practices. Moreover, the guidance and resources provided by the institution to support staff must be contextually relevant, informed by the insights and experiences of our own students (TASO, 2022; UUK & NUS, 2019).

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Intervention Strategy 6 – Improving progression to graduate employment and further study for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds measured through from IMD2019 Q1 and eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)

Inequalities in progression to post-graduate (PG) study have been attributed to the high fee levels, and the associated lack of affordability for students from low-income families (Mateos-Gonzalez & Wakeling, 2020; Milburn, 2012; Willetts, 2017). At a national level, the recently introduced Masters loans considerably narrowed gaps in participation between graduates from different socio-economic classes (Mateos-Gonzalez & Wakeling, 2020). However, while loans may improve access to PG study, they defer rather than remove the financial inequalities that students from low-income families face in choosing PG study, indicating a need for additional financial support such as non-repayable bursaries. Moreover, completing PG study does not guarantee access to desirable, graduate-level careers; additional support to aid progression to a desired career could add value to this pathway (Mateos-Gonzalez & Wakeling, 2020).

'What works' in reducing progression gaps for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is an under-researched topic compared to other areas of widening participation, and there are few studies providing causal evidence of impact (Ramaiah & Robinson, 2022). However, engagement with careers services has been found to increase graduates' earnings, including when controlling for academic achievement and socioeconomic backgrounds (Percy & Emms, 2020). Career planning is strongly associated with positive graduate outcomes (including employment and further study); research shows that having a good career plan was the most important factor in determining whether graduates' future employment was in professional or managerial role or in non-professional roles (Shury, Vivian, Turner, & Downing, 2017).

A meta-analysis of 57 studies suggests there is a positive association between providing careers-focused information and recipients' ability to make effective career choices (Whiston, Li, Mitts, & Wright, 2017). One-to-one career counselling has a strong link between graduates' ability to make effective career decisions and career decision-making self-efficacy, while group-based career counselling has a moderate association with effective career choices.

The University of Southampton's My Generation Career Coaching Programme' provides first-generation students with support to identify career goals and develop the skills needed successfully enter the graduate labour market (Pasero, 2023). The programme is underpinned by the theoretical framework of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994), with particular reference to the importance of vicarious learning from trusted role models. Supporting and measuring participants' development of employability 'capital', including engagement with extracurricular activities, part-time work, careers related confidence and self-awareness is central to this programme, in recognition of the significance of these factors in shaping graduate outcomes (Artess, Hooley, & Mellors-Bourne, 2017). Changes to participants' employability capital is measured through the Careers Readiness Test, an empirically validated psychometric tool which was developed at the University of Southampton to analyse and support the career readiness of university students (Tomlinson, 2022).

Evaluation undertaken with My Generation participants from 2019-2022 showed a 39% increase in participants' careers-related confidence, and an increase in participants' career readiness by up to 20%. We also observed increased engagement with employment enhancing activities, from 34% to 65%.

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Fees, investments and targets 2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Southampton

Provider UKPRN: 10007158

Summary of 2024-25 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Our intention is to charge the maximum fee, subject to the fee limits set out in Regulations.

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Entrants starting courses after 31 July 2017	N/A	9250
First degree	Entrants starting courses before 1 August 2017	N/A	9000
Foundation degree		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Southampton

Provider UKPRN: 10007158

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OFS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£1,774,000	£1,823,000	£1,872,000	£1,919,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£6,306,000	£6,277,000	£7,122,000	£7,525,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£134,000	£137,000	£139,000	£141,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£332,000	£343,000	£353,000	£363,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£965,000	£991,000	£1,016,000	£1,039,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£477,000	£489,000	£503,000	£517,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£1,774,000	£1,823,000	£1,872,000	£1,919,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	4.7%	4.6%	4.5%	4.4%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£1,774,000	£1,823,000	£1,872,000	£1,919,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£5,756,000	£5,727,000	£6,572,000	£6,975,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£550,000	£550,000	£550,000	£550,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£6,306,000	£6,277,000	£7,122,000	£7,525,000
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	16.8%	15.9%	17.1%	17.2%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£134,000	£137,000	£139,000	£141,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

Fees, investments and targets 2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Southampton

Provider UKPRN: 10007158

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative ?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
To increase the proportion of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds	PTA_1	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	All other quintiles	Raise enrolments of entrants from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes from 7% to 10.4% by 2027/28	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	7%	7.4%	8.4%	9.4%	10.4%
To increase the proportion of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds	PTA_2	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		To increase enrolments of entrants eligible for Free School Meals from 9% to 14.6% of the UG student population by 2027/28	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	9%	10%	11.3%	12.8%	14.6%
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative ?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
To improve the outcomes of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds	PTS_1	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	Reduce the awarding gap between students from IMD Quintile 1 and IMD Quintile 5 areas from 11.4ppts to 8.1ppts by 2027/28 and to 6.6ppts by 2030/31	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	11.4	10.4	9	7.5	6.6
To improve the outcomes of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds	PTS_2	Attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	Reduce the awarding gap between students who have been eligible for free school meals and those who have not from 8.7p.p to 5.0ppts by 2027/28 and to 3ppts by 2030/31	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	8.7	7	5.5	4	3
To improve the outcomes of students with a social and / or communication impairment	PTS_3	Continuation	Reported disability	Social of communication impairment	No disability reported	Reduce the non-continuation gap between students with a social and / or communication impairment and those with no disability by from 9.4ppts to 4ppts by 2027/28	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	9.6	8.4	6.8	5.2	4
To improve the outcomes of students with a diagnosed mental health condition	PTS_4	Continuation	Reported disability	Mental health condition	No disability reported	Reduce the non-continuation gap between students with a diagnosed mental health condition and those with no disability from 7.1ppts to 2ppts by 2027/28	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	7.1	6	4.5	3	2
To improve the outcomes of Black students	PTS_5	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	White	Reduce the awarding gap between Black students and white students from 18.1ppts to 10.9ppts by 2027/28 and to 9ppts by 2030/31	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	18.1	16	14	12	10.9
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

