

# University of Southampton Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

## 1.0 Assessment of Performance

In producing this Plan, we have made use of: the Office for Students (OfS) access and participation; HESA data supply files; UCAS PERS datasets; Banner student record data; HESA PI underlying data files; purchased HESA student data; HeidiPlus data; the OFFA toolkit; UCAS End of Cycle data; and, ONS data.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Higher Education Participation, household income, or socio-economic status

Our analysis shows that our performance in relation to students from low participation neighbourhoods is mixed. In line with other high tariff institutions, we have a gap in access (KPM2) where we perform behind the sector. Traditionally continuation rates have been good, but we experienced a reversal of trend in the latest year, which means that we now perform behind the sector (KPM3). Our record of attainment and progression to employment are good.

#### Access

	Indicator POLAR4Q1						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	7.4	7.7	8.3	7.9	7.8		0	-30
Sector	11.1	11.6	11.7	11.8	12.0		5610	730

	Indicator POLAR4Q5						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	40.6	41.3	40.2	40.4	40.6		-100	-100
Sector	31.0	30.5	30.4	30.4	30.3		6020	-130

The proportion of intake from POLAR4 Q1 at the University of Southampton (UoS) has been inconsistent over this period and is below that of the sector. We have increased applications from POLAR4 Q1 students (8.8% in 18/19). This is a lower percentage than for 18-year old UK applicants in the sector (11.1% in 18/19). Analysis also indicates that attracting additional applications is not enough – data shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds (both POLAR4 and IMD) have relatively lower conversion rates from applications to offers and enrolments. Additional analysis has shown us that that we need to pay close attention to ‘intersectionality’ in this and related contexts: for example, the conversion rate for applicants with a BAME background in POLAR4 Q1 is lower than that of BAME students in other quintiles.

	Gap IMDQ1_Population18/IMDQ1_Age18						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	17.2*	16.7*	15.8*	15.8*	15.9*		No	No
Sector	7.5*	6.7*	6.4*	6.1*	5.7*		Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Indicator IMDQ1						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	6.0	5.9	7.2	6.9	7.3		30	-10
Sector	19.0	20.4	20.9	21.2	21.6		21320	2380

<sup>1</sup> Source: UCAS End of Cycle data (EOC\_data\_resource\_2018-DR2\_059\_04.csv)

Our proportion of IMD Q1 18 year olds (7.3% in year 5) is much lower than that of the sector (21.6% in year 5), although it has been improving somewhat over time. The gap in Q1 18 years olds at UoS vs in the population is also large (15.9ppts in year 5), and statistically significant in all 5 years being reviewed here, and although the gap has been growing smaller, this change is not significant.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

	Gap POLAR4Q5/POLAR4Q1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	6.0	-- -- -- ■	No	No
Sector	4.2*	4.6*	4.9*	4.8*	5.0*	-- ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap IMDQ5/IMDQ1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	-- -- -- ■	No	No
Sector	6.3*	6.5*	7.5*	7.7*	7.9*	-- ■ ■ ■ ■	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

The OfS data shows that Continuation rates at UoS are strong, and rates are higher than the sector average for every POLAR4 and IMD quintile. For example, POLAR4 Q1 continuation is 92%, compared to 89.2% for the sector in Y5. This has been a consistently positive area for UoS. In the most recent year, we have seen a lower continuation rate which has affected both POLAR4 and IMD, with the gap between Q5 and Q1 in both measures widening. In the case of POLAR4, the gap between Q5 and Q1 at UoS is wider than that of the sector for the first time; for IMD the gap has also widened but is still only about half the size of the sector gap. However, none of the gaps are statistically significant in any of the five years, and neither is the change over one or five years. Additional analysis has shown that 'intersectionality' is relevant here; Transfer/Non-continuation rates are worse for Q1 students who also fall into another underrepresented category (black, disabled, mature, or living at home). There is also an apparent link between Q1 non-continuation and subject of study, which will help us to focus our interventions in this context.

We have considered the gap in non-continuation for POLAR4 Q1 students within the institution. Whilst this gap showed a large increase in Y5 of the data (from 2ppts to 6ppts) neither this change nor the gap was flagged as significant. The continuation gaps between Q1 and Q5 students have been analysed and up to and including the HESA PI data published in 2018 (Y4) we consistently performed better than the sector in this area. We can see in our Y5 data that non-continuation has worsened for the whole institution and almost every group within it. It is our intention to investigate our performance in terms of non-continuation overall to see whether positive interventions can return performance to historic rates at an institutional level, rather than immediately narrowing the focus to specific subgroups based on the large gap in a single year. Performance in this regard will be closely monitored to establish if this is a continuing trend; if so we will introduce a target to future iterations of our plan.

#### Attainment

	Gap POLAR4Q5/POLAR4Q1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	8.0	8.0	3.0	6.0	4.0	■ ■ _ _ _	No	No
Sector	10.0*	10.5*	9.6*	10.4*	9.5*	■ ■ _ _ _	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap IMDQ5/IMDQ1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	6.0	8.0	13.0	10.0	10.0	— ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	18.1*	19.1*	19.1*	18.3*	18.0*	— ■ ■ ■ ■ —	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

Our attainment record is good. Our POLAR4 Q5/Q1 gap is consistently below that of the sector and has shown improvement over the period. Our current gap in 'good' degree outcomes is less than half that of the sector and half of what it was in Y1. In contrast, the sector has stayed relatively level over the period. With regard to IMD, the Q5/Q1 gap has widened over the last five years. However, the gap is not statistically significant in any of those years.

### Progression to employment or further study

	Gap POLAR4Q5/POLAR4Q1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	-1.0	2.0	-3.0	4.0	3.0	— ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	7.1*	8.0*	8.0*	6.1*	6.0*	— ■ ■ ■ ■ —	No	No

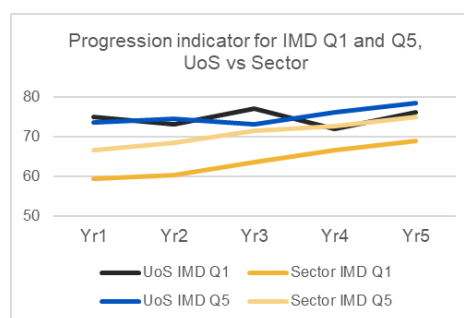
\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap IMDQ5/IMDQ1						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	4.0	2.0	-7.0	-5.0	6.0	— ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	9.7*	9.6*	8.9*	8.7*	7.1*	— ■ ■ ■ ■ —	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

Progression rates at UoS are strong and higher than the sector for every POLAR quintile. POLAR4 Q1 progression is 76% for UoS, compared to 69% for the sector in year 5. The gap between POLAR4 Q5/Q1 is low across the period and currently stands at 3.0ppt against a sector average of 6.0ppt. In some years, POLAR4 Q1 experienced better progression than Q5. IMD shows a similar pattern to POLAR4.

The extent to which UoS has been outperforming the sector on this metric has been reducing over time. However, in general IMD Q1 students at progression at UoS is better than the sector average.



### **1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students**

Our analysis indicates that our performance in relation to students from a BAME background has been improving. We have made positive improvements to the proportion of entrants from a BAME background. Once BAME students have joined UoS, continuation rates are good and ahead of the sector. This success continues to Attainment and Progression where rates are also positive compared to the sector at both a BAME and Black (KPM4) level. We note that Attainment (KPM4), while positive, shows a trend that is flat. Mixed ethnicity students appear to be the exception and perform less well than other ethnic groups for continuation, attainment and progression. Our OFFA toolkit analysis (2018) found a significant correlation for ethnicity with continuation and degree result (but not for positive employment destination).

Access

	Indicator ABMO						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	16.7	18.7	21.1	20.2	21.6	▬▬▬▬▬	120	-20
Sector	26.2	28.4	29.5	30.4	31.1	▬▬▬▬▬	35300	4180

	Gap White_Population18/White_Age18						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	0.9	2.4*	4.2*	3.6*	5.0*	▬▬▬▬▬	No	No
Sector	6.8*	7.9*	9.0*	10.0*	11.2*	▬▬▬▬▬	Yes	Yes

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap Black_Population18/Black_Age18						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	0.0	-0.7	-0.4	-0.6	-0.7	▬▬▬▬▬	No	No
Sector	-1.9*	-2.2*	-2.5*	-2.6*	-2.7*	▬▬▬▬▬	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

The proportion of entrants from BAME groups increased over the last five years. Our internal data shows that BAME applications have increased over the same period, but that conversion rates tend to be lower for BAME than they are for other applicant groups. These differences tend to be at stage of acceptance rather than offer.

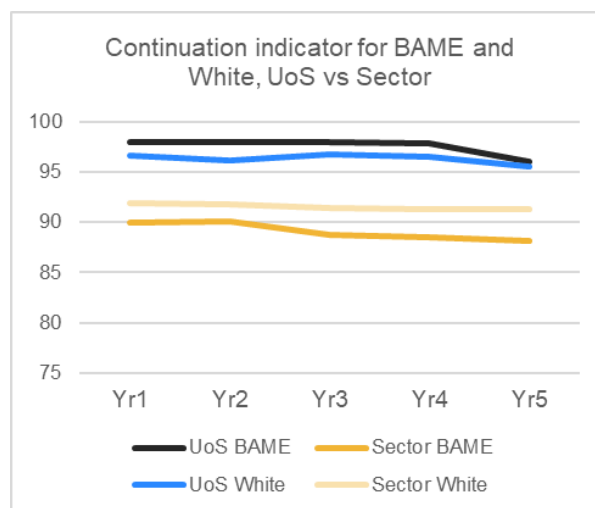
Success

*Non-continuation*

	Gap White/ABMO						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.5	0.0	▬▬▬▬▬	No	No
Sector	1.9*	1.7*	2.7*	2.7*	3.2*	▬▬▬▬▬	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

We have good student success rates and we outperform the sector across all ethnicity splits. OfS data shows that overall at UoS BAME students have better continuation rates than those of white students. Although the drop in continuation rates in Y5 were more evident for BAME students, the change was not statistically significant. The gap at a sector level has increased significantly across the period; throughout this time our performance has remained ahead of sector, and we showed no gap in the most recent year.



## Attainment

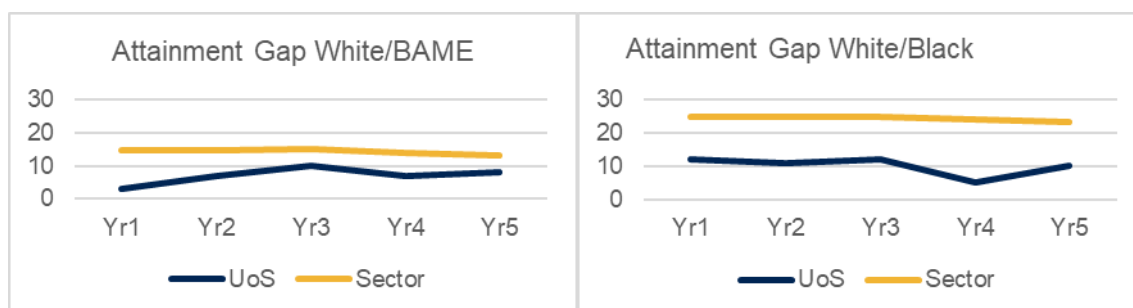
	Gap White/Black						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	12.0	11.0	12.0	5.0	10.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	24.6*	24.6*	24.7*	23.8*	23.1*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap White/ABMO						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	3.0	7.0	10.0*	7.0	8.0*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	14.8*	14.6*	15.0*	13.8*	13.2*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

We have good attainment rates and the gap between White and BAME students is smaller than the sector. We note that there has been a non-significant widening of the gap, in contrast with a narrowing gap across the sector. Our gaps between White and BAME students were significant in year 3 and year 5.



Attainment rates at UoS are ahead of the sector for all BAME splits bar mixed ethnicity. The gap for this group widened in Y4 and Y5, and although neither the gap nor the change over time is flagged as statistically significant, this is something we will monitor. Attainment rates for Black students compare well to the sector with a gap of 10.0ppts vs 23.1ppts for the sector. We note that this is the largest gap in relation to degree attainment and that the trajectory of improvement is neither significant nor sufficiently steep.

Although we perform well compared to the sector gap, we are aware that attainment levels for Black students both in the sector and at UoS are behind those of other students. Further investigation has shown a possible link with the choice of subject. This finding will allow us to better target interventions to drive improvement.

## Progression to employment or further study

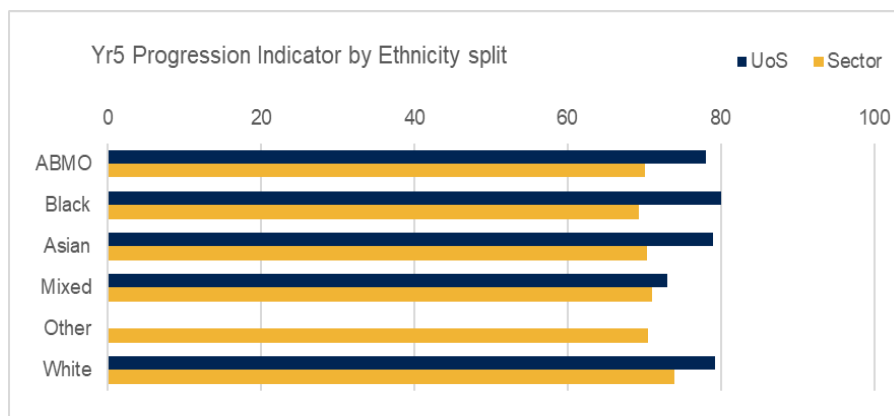
	Gap White/ABMO						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	7.0	1.0	-1.0	3.0	1.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	6.5*	5.1*	3.3*	4.5*	3.9*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap White/Black						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	8.0	5.0	-4.0	3.0	-1.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	7.9*	7.0*	4.7*	5.7*	4.8*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

Progression rates are good and the gap between White and BAME students is at 1.0ppt which is ahead of the sector. At a split-level performance does fluctuate over time but not to a significant degree. The gap for Black and Asian students is ahead of the sector and remains narrow, with these students in some years out performing White students. The indicator data for Progression shows that rates fluctuate between years, but in Y5 Black, White and Asian leavers all achieved very similar progression rates, with black leavers having the highest rate at 80%. Mixed ethnicity has seen greater fluctuations and variance in performance over time.



### 1.3 Mature Students

Our analysis indicates that our performance in relation to mature students has been declined. Our proportion of mature students has decreased over the period and the gap between UoS and the sector has widened.

#### Access

	Indicator Mature_Age21andOver						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	12.1	11.2	8.9	10.5	9.1	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	-170	-100
Sector	24.7	26.4	26.9	27.4	27.8	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	26210	2730

The proportion of mature entrants (Full-time All UG) has decreased by 3ppts points to 9.1% since 2013/14. UoS is moving against the sector trend for all mature age groups. Our data shows that this decrease is largely a result of the changing trend for Nursing & Midwifery programmes with this subject accounting for 1/4 of the mature student population in 2014/15 and now just 1 in 6. Other subject areas have also seen declining numbers of full-time mature entrants, Medicine being our only exception. Our data suggests that Mature applicants are less likely than Young applicants to receive offers, but more likely to accept them. 'Intersectionality' also has an impact in this space, with conversion from applications to offers being particularly poor for Asian Mature students and Black Mature students.

Our work in this area will focus on ensuring that our mature applicants are strongly supported through the application process and that they are not disadvantaged at the offer stage. We note that around a third of all UK UG mature sector entrants in 2017/18 were enrolled on other UG programmes (as opposed to first degrees), whilst our education portfolio focuses on first degree programmes. Therefore, it is not our aspiration to drive a significant increase in our mature student population.

## Success

### Non-continuation

	Gap Young_Under21/Mature_Age21andOver						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	4.0	6.0*	6.0*	2.0	6.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	6.7*	6.8*	7.1*	6.8*	7.4*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

Continuation rates for mature students are strong and ahead of the sector. The gap between young and mature students has been lower than the sector in all years. These gaps were statistically significant in Y2 and 3. Our gap is smaller than the sector for all mature age groups apart from 31-40-year olds.

### Attainment

	Gap Young_Under21/Mature_Age21andOver						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	7.0	12.0*	7.0	10.0	3.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	9.0*	10.3*	10.2*	10.8*	10.3*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

There is currently a gap of 3.0ppts between degree outcomes for young and mature students. The gap has fluctuated over time, but was only flagged as statistically significant in year 2, which was also the only year in which the gap was larger than the sector. The change over time is not statistically significant.

All age groups perform ahead of sector in Y5 and have performed consistently ahead of sector for the past 3 years (where data is at a level to be considered). The largest gap in Y5 was for the 31-40 age group, at 5ppts. Our data indicates that 80% of these students were in nursing which provides focus for future interventions.

### Progression to employment or further study

	Gap Young_Under21/Mature_Age21andOver						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	-12.0*	-15.0*	-18.0*	-14.0*	-15.0*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	-7.3*	-7.4*	-5.3*	-3.3*	-3.4*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Yes	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

Mature students both at UoS and across the sector have better progression rates than Young students. At UoS we see a more positive gap between mature and Young students than the sector in all years. Our destination rates for mature leavers are better than the sector in all five years. Only three other providers in the APP sector dataset had higher rates for this indicator for mature students (three other providers had the same rate as us) in 2016/17. Although the sector has gained on average 1.5ppts on us every year (from 11.3ppt to 5.2ppt).

### **1.4 Disabled Students**

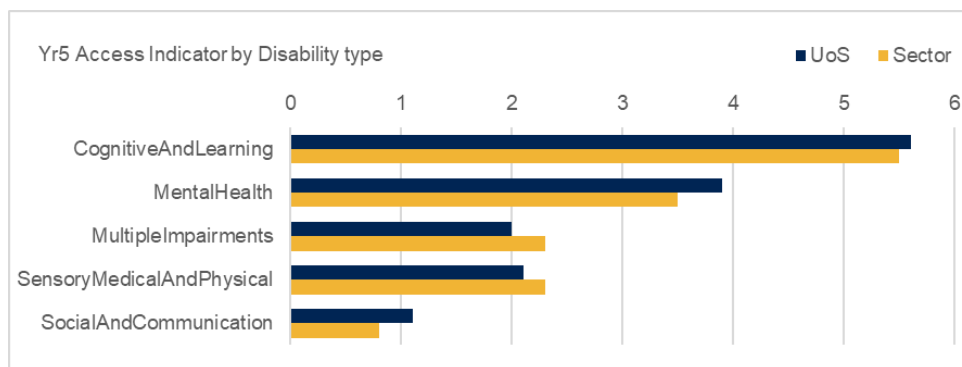
Our disabled student population has seen significant profile changes over the period, mirroring those seen across the sector. Increasing incidence and/or declaration of mental health issues means that students with mental health issues now make up the second largest disabled group at UoS, after those with learning disabilities. Those with a learning disability have seen improving success trends and good progression. Students with mental health disabilities are more likely to under-perform compared to others in terms of success and progression both at UoS and across the sector.

## Access



	Indicator Disabled						Numerator change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	11.1	11.3	12.0	13.5	14.6	---■	90	-10
Sector	11.8	12.3	12.9	13.7	14.6	---■	17910	4050

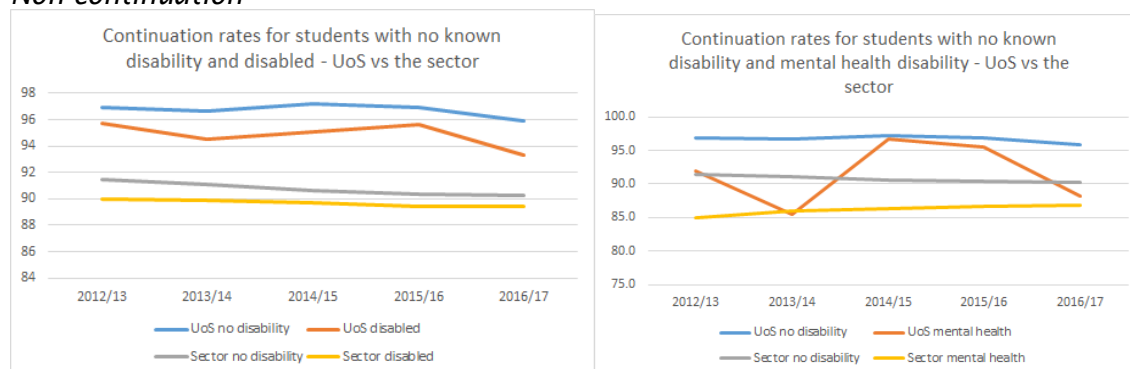
The number of entrants declaring a disability has grown from 480 (11.1%) in Y1 to 560 (14.6%) in Y5



The number of students reporting mental health issues more than doubled over the last five years, from 60 in Y1 to 150 in Y5, while the number in the largest disability group (Cognitive and Learning) decreased from 250 to 220.

Success

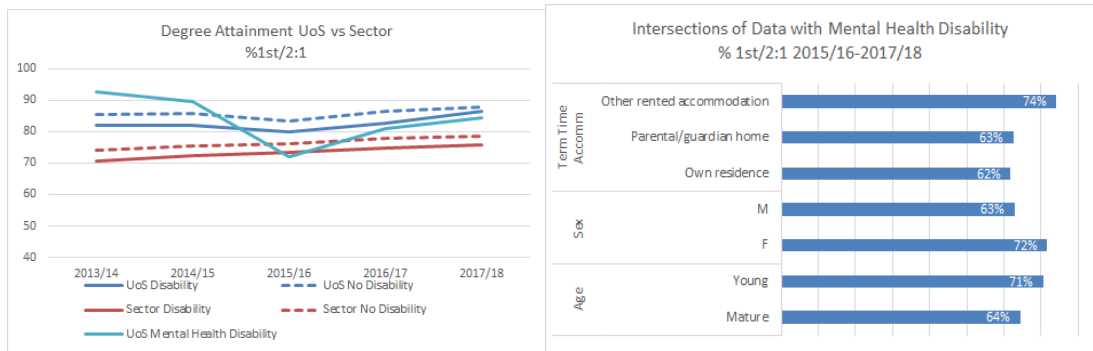
Non-continuation



Our data shows that students who study at UoS with a disclosed disability are less likely to continue their programme of study compared to students with no known disability. Despite performing above the sector, our continuation gap is growing and has doubled in size. This significantly contradicts the sector trend where the gap is being closed. Our data shows that students with a disclosed mental health condition are most affected with our continuation gap over double that of the sector (UoS 8.0ppts vs sector 3.5ppts). This will therefore be a priority area for us.

Attainment





Students with a disclosed disability are less likely to graduate with a higher degree outcome than students who have no known disability. However, we see a variation in trend for our largest disability groups. Attainment by students with cognitive and learning disabilities has improved and there is no gap. Students with a mental health condition are most disadvantaged. We can see from our intersectional analysis that when combined with other characteristics (such as Mature) there is a further gap in attainment.

### *Progression to employment or further study*

	Gap NoKnownDisability/Disabled						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	-3.0	-1.0	3.0	2.0	-1.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	1.1	1.8*	1.6*	1.9*	1.8*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

	Gap NoKnownDisabilityType/MentalHealth						Significant Change	
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Trend	Y1/Y5	Y4/Y5
UoS	5.0	-5.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No
Sector	5.6*	6.1*	5.8*	5.8*	4.1*	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	No	No

\* indicates gap is statistically significant

In contrast to sector performance, UoS leavers with a disclosed disability outperformed graduates with no disclosed disability in three of the last five years. However, students with a disclosed mental health condition are less likely to secure a graduate role, which is also in line with the sector.

### **1.5 Care Leavers**

The small numbers of identified estranged students and care leavers in our data limits the extent to which we can carry out meaningful. In some cases, it has been possible to combine data across years to get a reasonable cohort size.

In terms of access, numbers are small (5-15 entrants per year), but our data suggests an increase in the number of estranged students and care leavers entering the University year on year.

In terms of non-continuation our analysis indicates that care leavers have a higher rate of transfer/non-continuation overall. However, the number of students not continuing is fewer than 10 across the 5 years.

In terms of attainment our data indicates that the care leavers who completed their studies performed in line with the wider student population.

In terms of progression to employment or further study, since the HESA care leaver flag was introduced in 2013/14 we do not have sufficient data to draw any meaningful conclusions. This will be an area of focus as we implement this Plan.

### **1.6 Intersections of disadvantage**

In undertaking the analysis of our performance, we have observed a number of gaps which we will seek to address in our plan:

#### *Access*

- Our data indicates that being from a BAME background exacerbates differences in the application to offer conversion rate for students from lower POLAR and IMD Quintiles.
- A higher proportion of Mature than Young entrants (2017/18) belong to IMD Q1. Being Mature and IMD Q1 or 2 reduces the conversion rate between application and offer compared to Young IMD Q1 and 2 students.

#### *Non-continuation*

- Transfer/Non-continuation rates are worse for POLAR4 Q1 students that also are of Black ethnicity, are known to have a disability, are Mature, or live at home, or are also from a low IMD quintile.
- Mature students entering with a BTEC were approximately twice as likely to transfer or not continue compared to those with A-levels or Access diploma.
- Intersections between disability and other characteristics often result in a worse transfer/non-continuation rate.
- We will continue to monitor non-continuation for POLAR Q1, mature students.

#### *Attainment*

- Lower attainment for students with a disclosed mental health disability may be compounded by their accommodation type, sex and age.

#### *Progression to employment or further study*

- IMD Q1/2 Males generally have lower progression rates than Q1/2 females.
- The gap between POLAR4 Q 1/2 BAME and Q3/5 BAME has changed direction over the last 5 years, with Q1/2 outperforming Q3/5 in Y1 and underperforming by Y5. The gap also exceeded that of the sector in Y5.

### ***1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education***

In 2018 UoS used the statistical element of the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit against an aggregated three-year student cohort to identify which student/demographic characteristics had a statistically significant impact on success across the lifecycle. The analysis found the following significant impacts amongst the main APP groups:

- Continuation: Income, Ethnicity
- Degree result (attainment): Income, Ethnicity, Disability
- Positive destination (progression): None

Other variables that were found to have a significant impact included:

- Continuation: Entry qualification, accommodation type, distance travelled, degree size, faculty
- Degree result (attainment): Sex, nationality, entry qualification, tariff, accommodation type, degree size, faculty
- Positive destination (progression): Entry qualification, tariff, accommodation type, distance travelled, faculty, school type

This shows that the variables that were significant across all three lifecycle stages were accommodation type, entry qualification and faculty (i.e. subject studied). Other variables that were significant at two lifecycle stages were tariff, distance travelled and degree size. These findings align with the findings from other analysis carried out in preparing this document.

Students with BTEC qualifications are less likely to continue than those with other entry qualifications.

For progression, not knowing whether your parents had higher education seems to be a factor for lower employment, but more investigation is necessary to understand who these students are.

## **2.0 Strategic Aims and Objectives**

### ***2.1 Target Groups***

#### **1. Students from low participant neighbourhoods, POLAR4 Q1/Q5 and IMD Q1/Q5**

Our analysis has indicated that, in line with other high-tariff providers, our largest gaps in access and student success relate to students from POLAR4 and IMD Q1. We will be focussing on reducing gaps in participation and success in the following areas:

- i. Access: We will aim to increase the volume of students from POLAR4 Q1 and thus reduce the gap in participation. This will directly support OfS KPM2.
- ii. Access: We will aim to reduce the gap in participation of IMD Q1 18 year olds.
- iii. Attainment: We will aim to reduce the gaps in attainment between students in IMD Q1 and Q5. This will directly support OfS KPM3.

#### **2. Black, Asian and minority ethnic students**

Analysis has indicated that performance for this category of students is strong in comparison with the sector. We will continue to target this group of students in whole-lifecycle interventions. However, we acknowledge that we still have a gap in attainment and so will be focussing on reducing the gap in **attainment** between white and black students. This will directly support OfS KPM4.

#### **3. Mature students**

Analysis has highlighted that we have a large and growing gap in participation rates of mature students. As such we will focus on decreasing the gaps in **access** for this category of student.

#### **4. Disabled students**

Our analysis has shown that numbers of students with a disability has grown but that we have gaps to be addressed relating to continuation and attainment. We will be focussing on reducing gaps in participation and success in the following areas:

- i. Non-continuation: We will reduce the gap relating to students with a mental health disability.
- ii. Attainment: We will seek to close the gap in attainment between those students who are disabled and those who are not. This will directly support OfS KPM5.
- iii. Progression: We will close the gap in progression for students who disclose a disability

#### **5. Care Leavers**

The number of care leavers at the university is small. As such we will seek to increase the number of care leavers and take a whole-lifecycle approach to ensuring there are no gaps in non-continuation, attainment and progression to employment.

We will also work collaboratively with members of the Southern Universities Network (SUN) to narrow the attainment gap between looked after children and their peers at KS3 and to increase the numbers of looked after children who are confident they can achieve ambitions of progressing to HE.

## 2.2 Aims and Objectives

We have set an ambitious plan. We aim to maintain those elements of our performance that are strong, and of which we are proud. This means that we will continue our work to attract students from underrepresented backgrounds and to support strong performance in our student body in terms of non-continuation, attainment and progression. The plan below outlines our ambition to eliminate gaps in areas that we have identified in the analysis of our performance. The University will prioritise the targets set in the submitted APP, however data on non-continuation for POLAR Q1, mature students will be revisited in the 2022 Impact Report and if required additional targets maybe put in place.

Many of our ambitions will be realised over a longer period, up to 2038 in line with the OfS KPMs, but the objectives in our plan focus demonstrate that we aim to realise progress towards our aims by 2024-5.

Target Group	Aims	Measurable objective	OfS KPM
Students from low participant neighbourhoods	Increase the volume of learners from POLAR 4 Q1	Reduce the gap in participation between Q1 and Q5 from 5.2:1 to 3:1 by 2024/5	KPM2
	Increase the volume of IMD Q1 18 year old students at UoS	Reduce the gaps in Q1 18 years olds at UoS vs in the population from 15.9% to 10% by 2024/25	-
	Eliminate the unexplained gap in non-continuation between most and least represented groups	Reduce non-continuation rates for Q1 students who are also either of black ethnicity, or are mature, or live at home or are known to have a disability to the University average (92%) by 2024/5	-
	Reduce the gaps in attainment that are visible between IMD Q1 and Q5	Reduce the gaps in attainment between IMD Q1 and Q5 from 10.0 to 5.0 by 2024/5	KPM3
BAME students	Eliminate gap between black and white attainment	Halve the gap between white and black degree outcomes by 5% by 2024/5 and remove by 2038.	KPM4
	Close the gap in progression for students from a BAME background	Reduce the gap between white/mixed ethnicity progression to sector average of 3% by 2024/5	-
Mature students	Increase the volume of mature learners	Increase the population of mature learners back to 2013/14 levels (+3ppts) to 12% by 2024/5	-
Disabled students	Reduce non-continuation rates of students with disability	Reduce the gap visible for students with a mental health disability	-
	Close gap in attainment for students who disclose disability	Remove the absolute gap in attainment by 2024/25	KPM5
	Close gap in progression for students who disclose a disability	To remove the absolute gap in progression for students with a mental health disability	-
-Care leavers	Increase volume of learners with a background of care	Increase the population of learners with a background of care to 60 by 2024/5	-

The University provides a Widening Access in Medicine course with integrated Year 0: BM6. This course is open to students from underrepresented groups and includes a generous contextual consideration. Students study at one of the UK's leading teaching

hospitals, Southampton General Hospital, and at our purpose-built life sciences facilities on campus. They gain clinical experience from the start of your course, meeting patients in hospital and primary care settings. They also benefit from our world-leading medical research groups, carrying out your own in-depth project.

Our expertise tends toward traditional academic pathways. As we seek to further enhance our excellence in this space, we do not plan to introduce apprenticeships or other alternative pathways.

### **3.0 Strategic Measures**

#### ***3.1 Whole Provider Strategic Approach***

The University of Southampton is committed to ensuring that all our students have equal opportunity to succeed. The new University strategy proudly promotes egalitarianism as a core value for the institution, which runs through everything we do. We recognise that diversity is a strength, and that it makes us more creative and innovative. We prioritise inclusion as a strategic objective to enable the University to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow with greater resilience and diversity 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.

Our governance structure has been designed to deliver on these commitments, and includes a Widening Participation Subcommittee (WPSC), which reports directly to our Education Committee and thence to Senate and to the University Executive Board. This Subcommittee has responsibility for driving forward institutional strategies related to this work and ensures that we achieve our aim to take a whole-provider approach that sees all Widening Participation activity embedded in the day-to-day life of the University. Our commitment is also reflected in the responsibilities of other important 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.

We have created a new department to lead the University's Access and Participation Plan and wider work to support social progress: Widening Participation and Social Mobility (WPSM). WPSM is made up of three vertical sections – Access, Enhancement and Success – and one lateral section – Lifecycle – to ensure students from underrepresented groups are supported to access, succeed at and progress from higher education. We will ensure effective alignment between groups and roles that have responsibility for access, success, progression and evaluation. We will also ensure that effective monitoring of progress is embedded in our quality assurance processes.

To achieve our ambitions, we have created **Ignite Southampton**: a lifecycle-oriented programme to support students from pre-entry to post-graduation. This will be our flagship vehicle for widening participation and will bring together new and existing projects underneath into one holistic, outcomes-focused scheme. This programme will support us in our development of attainment raising activity in schools.

#### ***3.2 Alignment with other strategies***

Our Plan is an integral part of a suite of key publications, which together articulate our commitment to widening access, student success and progression. As well as the institutional Strategy, our Strategic Plans for Education, Student Experience, Civic, People and EDI all drive action in our work and ensure a clear and comprehensive focus on inclusion and success. Our Employability Action Plan, Student Disability & Inclusion

Plan and our Fair Admissions Policy are also aligned to these plans. 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.

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.

In addition to a formal strategy and action plan, we have well established governance structures for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The University's Equality and Diversity Champion is a member of the University Executive Board. The University is actively identifying and addressing intersectional issues. Different EDI work streams, including Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter, Stonewall, Disability, are aligned and allow for more effective consideration of and action to address multiple disadvantage. 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 a 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. The University is conscious of the importance of role models and of its responsibility as a major employer and education provider to represent people with different protected characteristics in its public activities and student and staff bodies.

The continued development and enhancement of our monitoring and evaluation activity will allow us to improve the breadth and depth of analysis relevant to equality and diversity monitoring across the student lifecycle. Our findings and additional research will support the production of an action plan to address any issues, overseen by the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

## **Access**

Our access activity is routed in both research and practitioner experience. We believe that our work offers a cumulative value to outreach between partners, which benefits both students and organisations. Our work is embedded across partner schools and organisations which offer us the skills and experience, ensuring our offer is impacting attainment at every stage.

We are the host institution for the award-winning Southern University Network (SUN) Uni Connect partnership. Through SUN, we work collaboratively with our colleagues at other universities in the region to ensure that students from target wards have access to a range of collaborative outreach opportunities and targeted activity led directly by the SUN team. As a partnership we are currently devising ways we can use our combined resources to support attainment raising.

With Solent University and sixth form colleges in Southampton, we are founder members of a Premium initiative which will support sixth form and college students in the city. The Premium is in development and aims to be live in 2023. It will be comprised of a series of activities designed to enrich participants' attainment, awareness and experience as they make crucial decisions about their future pathways.

In 2022 the University has joined the Purpose Coalition, a partnership of universities, businesses and third sector organisations combining to progress social mobility. The Purpose Coalition assessed the University's impact against its Levelling Up Goals and found our commitment to be exceptional, with significant strengths in four key areas:

successful school years; right advice and experiences; closing the digital divide; and achieving equality through diversity and inclusion.

We further leverage our outreach provision to provide attainment raising opportunities through key partners. These include IntoUniversity, whose Redbridge centre we sponsor and run a local homework club and Brilliant Club (who work with our PhD students to provide tutoring in schools). We have additionally run an innovative collaboration with Villiers Park to support the evaluative culture of the widening participation team (see evaluation section).

Under the banner of Ignite Southampton, we are creating new and revising existing projects to support pupils and students in the most need. At the pre-entry stage, this includes:

- **Ignite Your Potential** – A programme working with care experienced and looked after children from across the southern region from year 10 through to year 13. Ignite Your Potential is an attainment raising programme supporting young people to access the GCSE grades required to progress to further studies. Using our estate as a hub for the local community we offer campus visits, guest lectures, a programme to develop research skills and support for parents and carers under the programme's banner. This programme feeds directly to our Ignite Your Journey transition programme.
- **Ignite Your Journey** – Working with students from year 13 to raise attainment at Level 3 and support students transition into higher education.

Alongside this sits our existing access activity: Learn with US, which takes a targeted, attainment raising approach with students from Year 6 to 13. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we digitised our Learn with US workshops for Year 7-10 pupils and made them available online for all state schools in the UK. We engage with students early in their educational journey, and work with them on a long-term plan throughout their primary, secondary and further education, providing information and advice at key decision and transition points, and providing support for entry to the University through Ignite Southampton.

The key features of these programmes are:

- University visits and residential events
- School/college-based workshops, attainment raising activities and mentoring
- Work shadowing and placement opportunities
- Support for teachers/advisors, parents and carers
- Information, advice and guidance

Our support for attainment raising works with students across the lifecycle to develop the kinds of skills that support their performance at primary school, Key-Stage 5, throughout their degree and beyond.

### **Early-years**

We are piloting a project with approximately 120 children in an early-years setting in the east of the city; an area where there are high levels of deprivation and low levels of progression to higher education. Working with academics and students we will be supporting sessions around growth and change, providing hands on opportunities to explore science at regular points through the academic year. We are also hoping to link this to other activity and in so doing, provide opportunities for young people who are supported with their reading to be able to read with the pre-school children at the



setting, in so doing sharing their learning and building their confidence. We envisage that this early intervention will encourage the children to engage with science, but also provide opportunities to share this with their families.

### **LifeLab – Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1**

In partnership with Southampton City Council, we will roll out the Early LifeLab programme to primary schools across the city.

Early LifeLab provides professional development for teachers to refresh their science knowledge and increase confidence in teaching scientific enquiry. It also supports the development of skills to help behaviour change in children, with the world-leading ‘Healthy Conversation Skills’ training. This professional development is accompanied by a series of fully resourced ‘teaching toolkits’ which consist of short, cross-curricular work packages for delivery at different stages of the primary years, housed within transportable flight cases. These modules make the science behind the need for healthy diet, physical activity and sleep accessible to children, helping them to discover why it is important, supporting children and their families in making healthy choices.

The programme of work will include:

- A one-day professional development course in teaching the modules to be delivered to 60 teachers
- Schools to be provided with the fully-resourced ‘Flight Case’ containing all the resources and curriculum-linked materials required to deliver the lessons
- Schools to have the flight cases for 3 weeks, during which they will deliver the six-eight cross-curricular activities in the module.

### **Books & Stories and Shapes & Numbers – support for literacy and numeracy**

Aimed at pupils in Year 5, Books & Stories explores different literacy skills while working through a reading book together, while Shapes & Numbers links University of Southampton subject areas to different topics from the KS2 numeracy curriculum to build understanding of the transferability of maths.

We work with pupils who are currently working slightly below average in their numeracy or literacy, with the aim to boost both confidence and attainment in those areas.

### **Learn with US Transition**

Our innovative pre-entry offering – the Learn with US Transition Programme – supports this endeavour by promoting the value and assisting in the delivery of research-based learning opportunities like the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Research and academic guidance is delivered to Y12 and Y13 students in 80 target schools to 1500+ students across the course of approximately 300 sustained interventions each academic year. The EPQ is positively correlated with raising student attainment, with students who take it at Level 3 outperforming their counterparts at KS51 and in HE2, findings corroborated in our own data with higher proportions of EPQ students progressing through HE and achieving first or upper second-class honours than their non-EPQ peers.

We also deliver targeted activity to support access for the following groups:

- *Care leavers*: in addition to Ignite Your Potential we provide supported individual pre-application visits to the University, providing the opportunity to speak to current students and support staff from outreach, admissions and student services; taster days; mentoring support and potential entrance through the University’s Access to Southampton scheme. We also delivering training for pathways advisors and social workers and information sessions for foster parents.

- *Young Carers*: we work with local young carers groups to provide aspiration-raising activities and pre-application support. Young carers are also eligible for additional support through Ignite Your Journey.
- *Mature students*: we offer tailored application workshops and finance presentations. This area of work has been strengthened through partnership work with local access course providers and community groups.
- *Disabled students*: we provide updates, training opportunities and bespoke activities for staff from local schools and colleges. We also provide transition days between July and September for Year 13 students. These transition days give students the opportunity to meet with our Enabling Services team, prior to starting their chosen study programme meaning that we have appropriate support in place at the earliest opportunity.

The university's ambassador scheme is being redeveloped to maximise strategic benefits for the University, schools and pupils. The programme will see current students placed in partner schools to deliver a sustained tutoring programme to support attainment raising at Key-Stages 3, 4 and 5, simultaneously assisting the metacognition of our students as well as pupils.

### Student success

Our commitment to egalitarian values is clear through our dedicated Student Success function based within our Widening Participation and Social Mobility department. This function allows us to effectively transition students underrepresented in higher education and remove the barriers which result in differential outcomes. As in Access, our main vehicle for targeted support for students from underrepresented groups will be Ignite Southampton. Post-entry this will include:

- **Ignite Your Success**: A programme working with students from IMD Q1 areas and those from care experienced backgrounds Ignite Your Success offers support throughout student's undergraduate programmes. With a workshop series supported by alumni, guaranteed internships, mentoring and an international experience, Ignite Your Success provides students with a space to reflect on their journey to university and the experience they bring to the institution and their chosen career paths. All students receive financial support whilst engaged on the programme ranging from £1,000 per year to fully funded scholarships which cover fees and living costs.
- **Ignite your future**: Launching in 2022/23 Ignite Your Future is our postgraduate arm offering bursaries to support students from IMD Q1 areas and those from care experienced backgrounds to access master's level study. Student are offered mentoring from PhD students and established academics to support students to access careers in academia.

All students from IMD Q1 areas will be invited to join the wider Ignite community which will offer additional careers and employability support, priority access to funding opportunities and additional training. They will have lifelong membership of the Ignite community and will be able to support future participants by providing internships, mentoring, placements, and other networking support.

Our Academic Skills Service builds on our efforts at KS5, providing a service at point of need for all students whilst simultaneously targeting and prioritising cohorts of current students where non-continuation is higher, and success lower, amongst students from underrepresented backgrounds. We support students in developing general academic study skills, writing and statistics and mathematics.

The Academic Skills Service not only supports students in its own right, it also used extensively to complement other areas of our entire programme including the Learn with US pre-16 programme, Ignite Your Journey and Ignite Your Success.

We operate a 24/7, 365 day a year student support model, which is delivered collaboratively by academic and Professional Services colleagues. This includes:

- Our 'Early Warning System', which monitors student engagement to ensure we have early sight of students who are not engaging compared to their peers.
- Our Academic Skills hub, which provides students with study skills advice and guidance through online, one to one and group delivery. Advice focuses on the development of literacy skills including academic writing, referencing and proof reading.
- 24/7, 365 access to trained staff who can triage student support needs and effectively signpost to specialist support, e.g. counselling. This is supported by NHS developed self-help tools and guidance.
- Our Inclusive Learning Volunteer Programme for disabled students, through which new students in their first year are matched with volunteer Transitions Facilitators from our current students to help their transition into University life; and our Peer Mentoring Scheme through which current students meet with disabled students to offer dedicated advice and support.
- Our Summer Opportunities Fund which awards grants for students to access additional enriching opportunities outside of their studies.
- Our Commuter Fund which supports mature, commuting students' regular access to campus to support engagement with extra curricula activities and opportunities.
- Care Leavers: The University offers a package of pastoral and financial support for Care Leavers post entry, provided in partnership with the Student Union. Students receive a bursary of £2,000 in each year of study, have a named contact to provide ongoing support throughout their studies and access to 365 days accommodation. Students have a meeting with our Student Inclusion team on arrival and are given welcome pack containing supermarket vouchers, a city wide bus pass and vouchers for Student Union events or societies. The University also covers graduation costs for all final year students.

## **Progression**

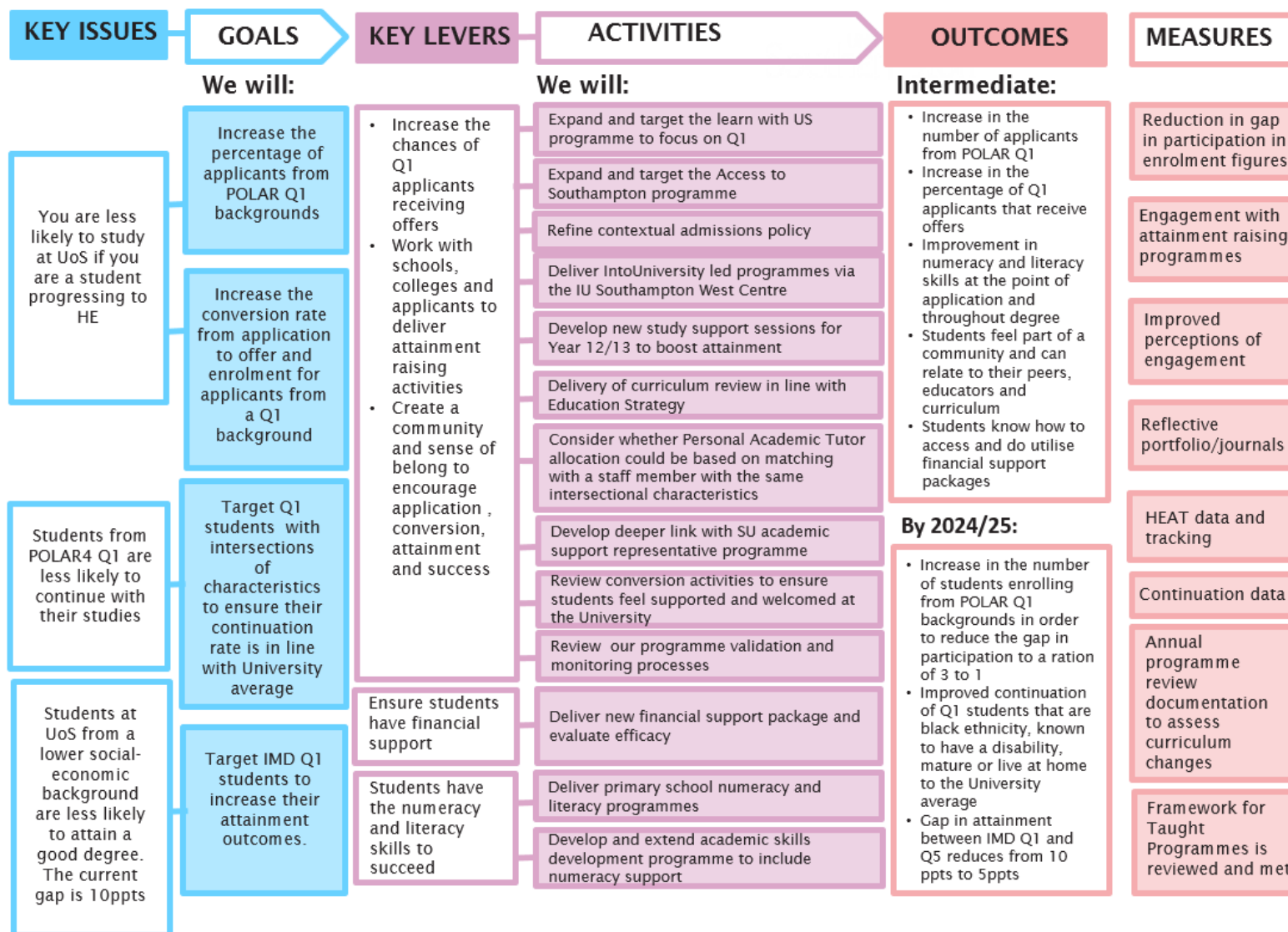
Our aim is to embed employability within the University curriculum and we have developed mechanisms to support this approach such as employability now being part of our programme validation process. In addition to programme-based employability development, our Careers and Employability team offer a range of centrally delivered support including:

- A range of targeted Professional Development opportunities, including internships, volunteering and business consultancy.
- Diversity mentoring (BAME, Care leaver, Disability, 1<sup>st</sup> gen HE, LGBT+): Students are matched with a mentor from a similar background to ensure the mentoring can be tailored to consider individual student need.
- Disability, Disclosure and Employability Workshops: A series of workshops for disabled students to provide advice and guidance on how students may want to disclose their disability at application and interview stages and in the workplace.
- Mock Assessment Centres for BAME and low-income backgrounds students.

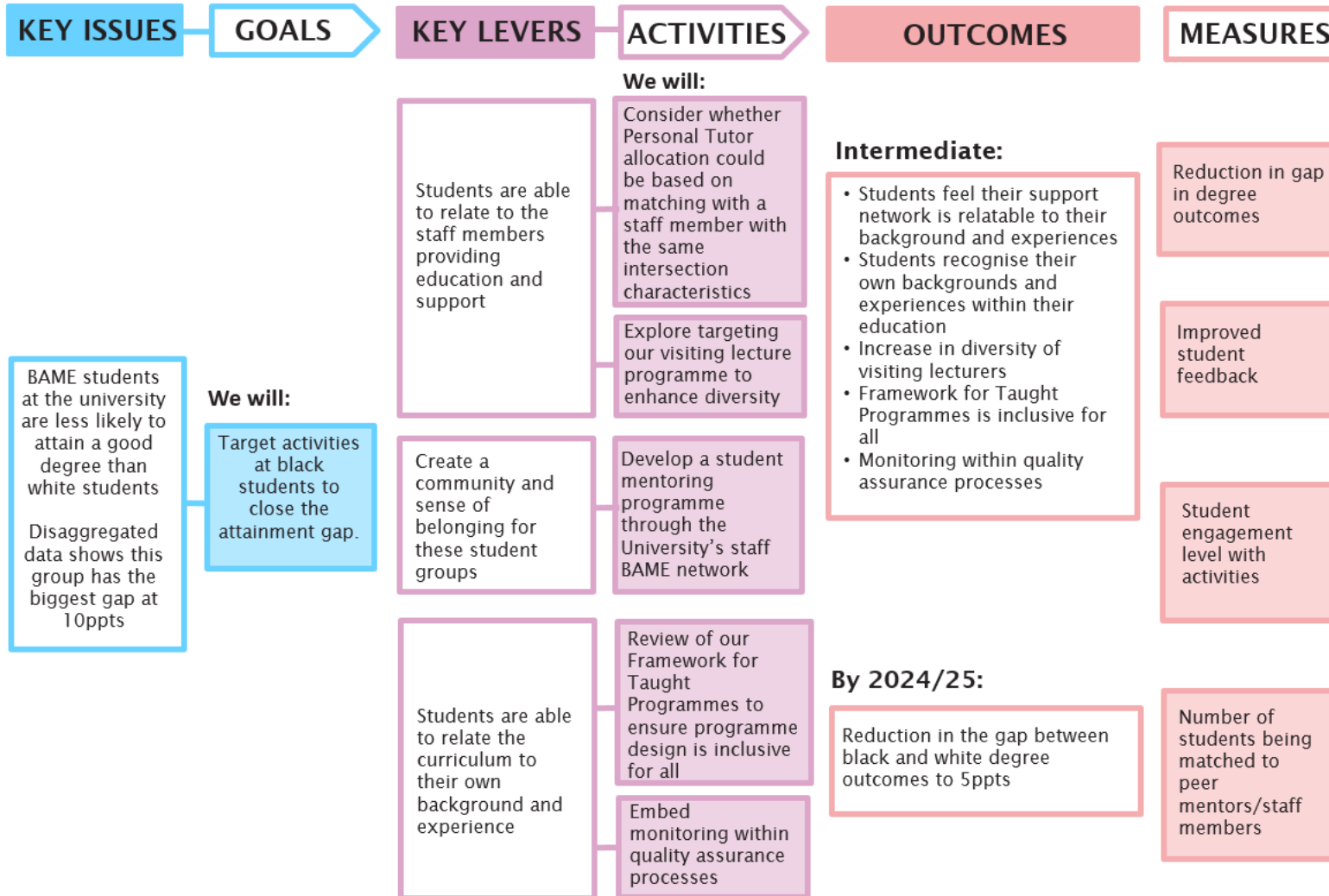
During the 2019/20 academic year the university will engage in reviews of current practice, consolidating work ready to put in place new or adapted practice for the 2020/21 academic year.



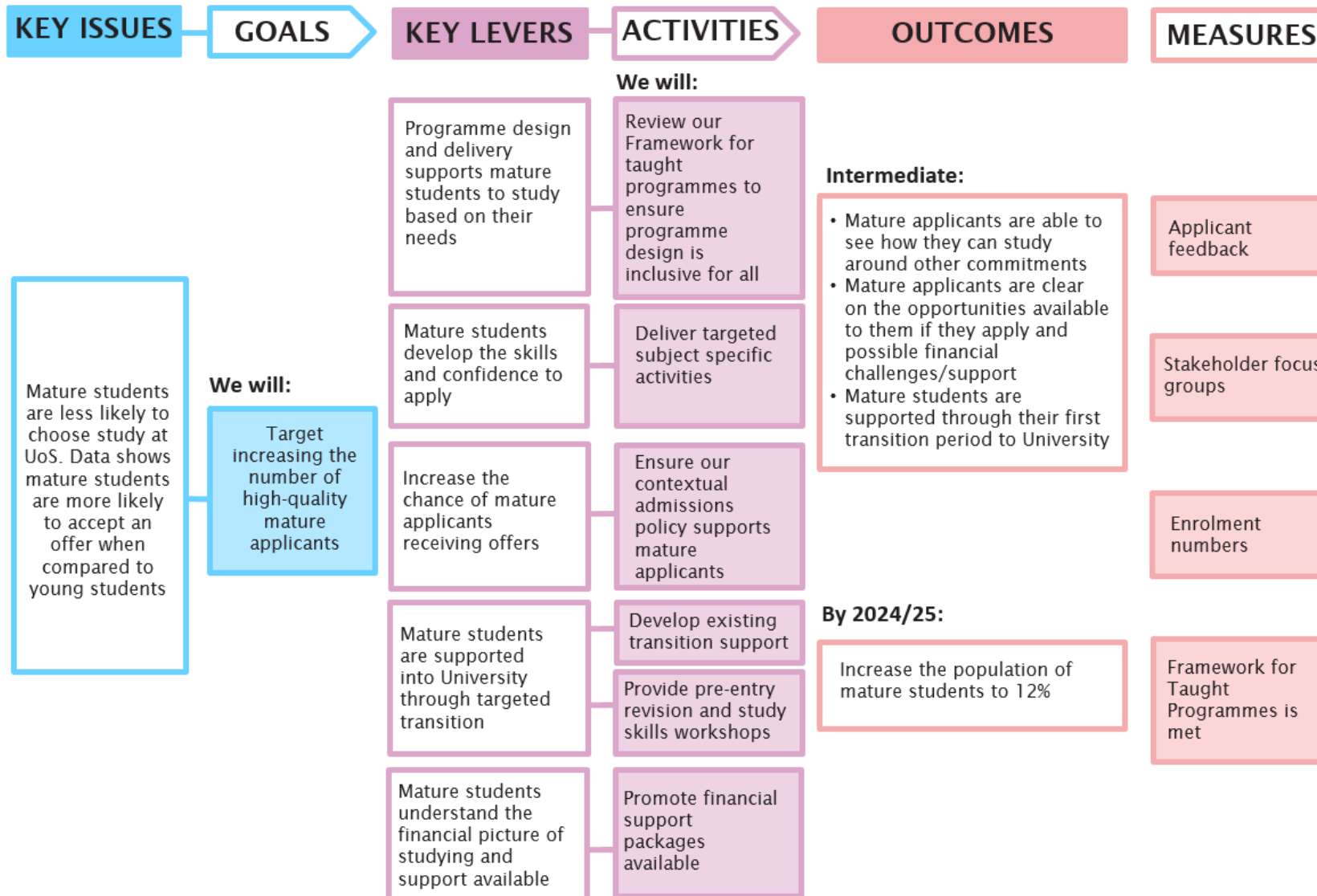
### 3.1.2 Specific Interventions for Higher education participation, household income, or socio-economic status



3.1.3 Specific Interventions for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

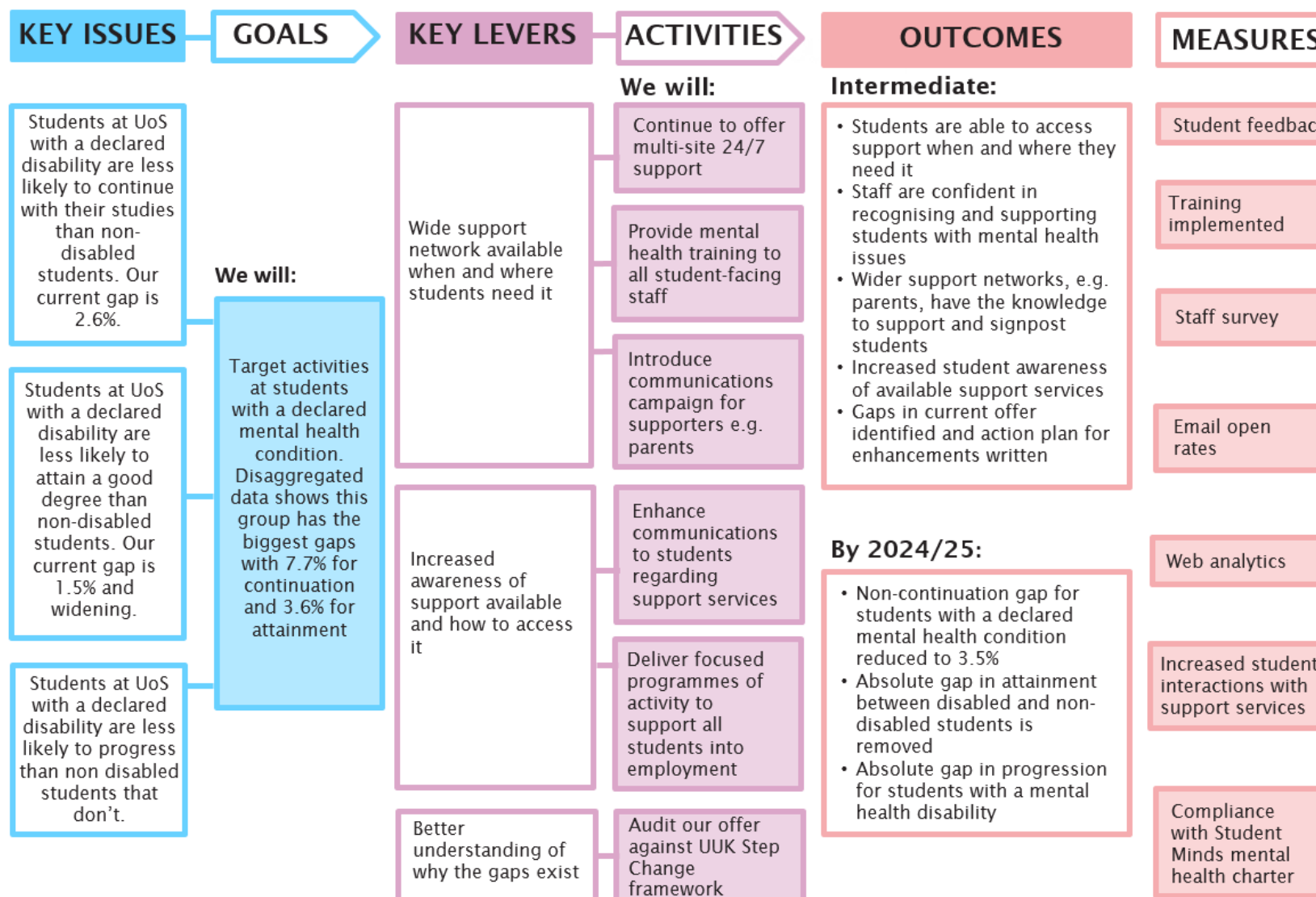


### 3.1.4 Specific Interventions for Mature Students

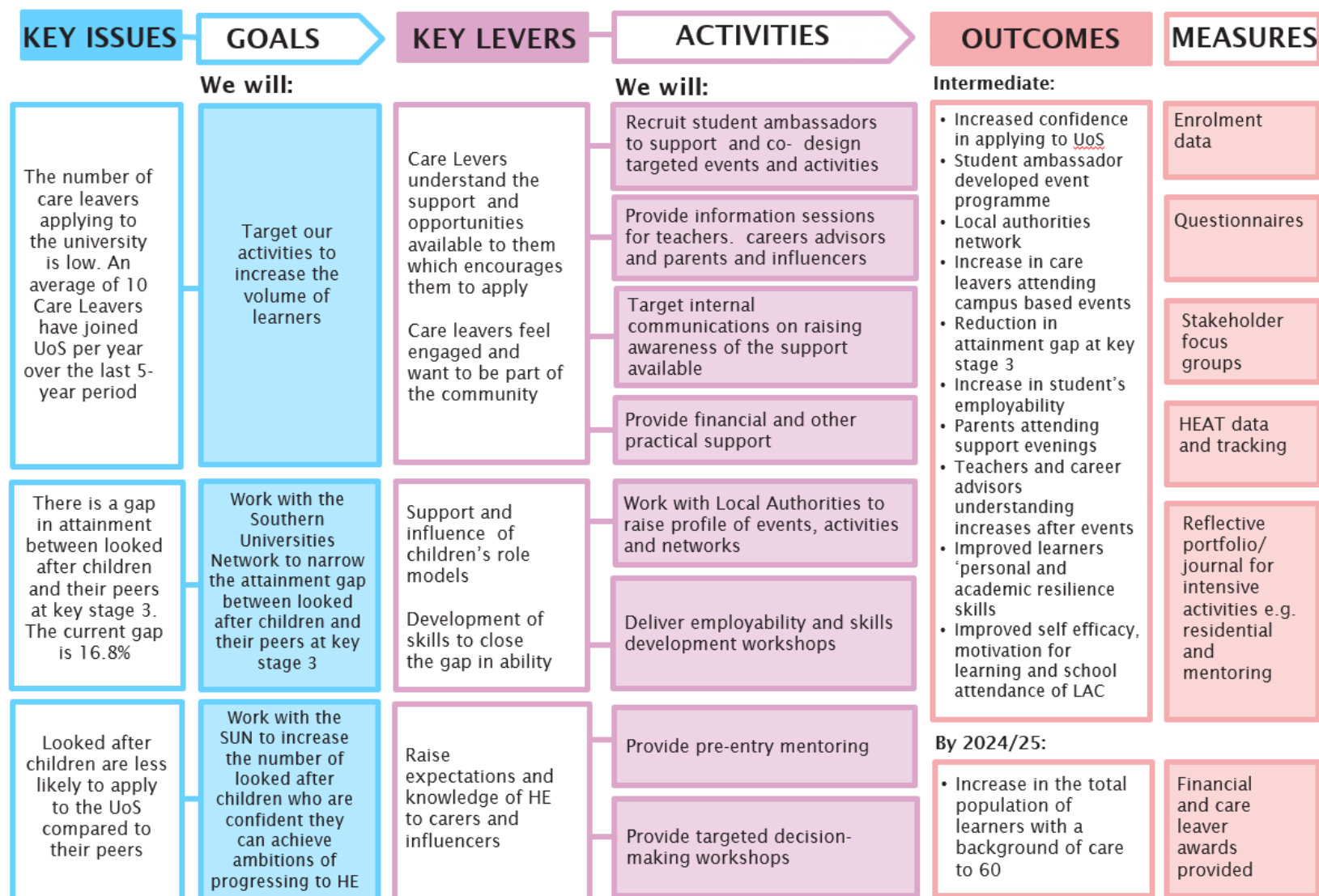




### 3.1.5. Specific Interventions for Disabled Students



### 3.1.6 Specific Interventions for Care Leavers



### **3.2 Student Consultation**

We are committed to engaging students in the life of the university and have ensured student consultation in the development of this plan. 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 Sub Committee, Education Committee, Senate and University Council.

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 research and evaluation. This is evidence of one of our most important principles of two-way dialogue and ensuring we do our work with students and not to them, and we openly learn from their insights and lived experience.

Our Awarding Gap Project launched in 2022 which focused on closing the awarding gap between Black students and white students is fully student led. Our Awarding Gap Panel comprised of eight Black undergraduate students from a range of disciplines and supported by members of staff own a budget to create and implement interventions promoting belonging and ownership of activity with for and with other Black, Asian and minority ethnic students.

In addition, two elected officers formed part of the editorial group which developed the initial Plan in detail, making full and active contributions. In the initial writing process, we undertook wider and in-depth consultation with students, including non-traditional students, on the development of the Plan. We ran a series of moderated focus-groups exploring the Plan and inviting feedback. In these sessions the plan was introduced and comments gathered on the substance and the wider action plans associated with delivering our aims.

This student consultation led to the development of a number of the actions identified in section 3.1 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 that are designed to widen access and improve support and success.

Our Ignite Your Success programme offers 30 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 which offers training for our academics and Public Policy Southampton have all benefited from the experience, knowledge and insight of Ignite students. Our policy to ensure all projects which target students from underrepresented backgrounds are authentic and impactful means we employ students with lived experience on all our project strands.

Across the lifecycle of this Plan, we will continue to engage with SUSU's elected officers, student roles including the BAME student officer and the wider student community on our activity, this will include students being involved in the annual review of impact.

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including the Widening Participation Sub Committee, Education Committee, Senate and University Council. In addition, two elected officers have formed part on the editorial group which has developed this plan in detail, these students have fully contributed. To support this process, we have undertaken wider and in-depth consultation with students, including non-traditional students, on the development of this plan. We have run a series of moderated focus-groups exploring the plan and inviting feedback. In these sessions the plan was introduced and comments gathered on the substance and the wider action plans associated with delivering our aims.

Across the lifecycle of this Plan we will continue to engage with SUSU's elected officers, student roles including the BAME student officer and the wider student community on our activity, this will include students being involved in the annual review of impact.

### ***3.3 Evaluation strategy***

We have made significant strides in our evaluation work – an area in which we take particular pride. We have taken significant steps toward embedding a culture of reflexive practice into our widening participation team and have introduced several initiatives to support evaluative thinking in developing outreach activity

Areas that we have previously focused on through our Evaluation Strategy have been:

- Profiling of the student population by social and demographic characteristics
- Evaluating the ongoing impact of the University's contextual admissions policy, particularly taking into consideration the findings from the University's participation in UCAS's pilot of multiple equality measures for contextual admissions.
- Refining the methods and data used to target the University's outreach activity to relevant groups
- Using HEAT participant data to continue to monitor the impact of the University's outreach activity and the success of participants through the student lifecycle.
- Building on findings from the OFFA financial support evaluation toolkit to provide more robust, and more in-depth analysis related to continuation, completion, outcomes and progression for different groups.

### **Strategic Context**

The Widening Participation Subcommittee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the access, success and progression activities outlined in the Plan and receives management information data reports, and evaluation reports, pertaining to target groups and activities, making recommendations based on the data analysis provided. Under this we have initiated the Widening Participation Operations Group (WPOG) which is responsible for implementing Faculty Action Plans. A further WP Research and Evaluation Board feeds into WPOG. The Board commissions research projects to better understand how University functions affect underrepresented students.

Members of all relevant boards and committees have access to regularly updated dashboards providing faculty and school level admissions, non-continuation, awarding and graduate outcome data allowing us to take an institution wide approach in embedding our Plan objectives into activity and planning.

Co-production is a key principle, and we ensure that we evaluate with our students. Working with our Student Advisory Board on the co-design and development of activities we ensure that our activities are meeting the needs of target groups and are informed by their insights. We have evidence of success in this regard; in our Medicine Faculty, evaluating the progression and retention of Widening Access to Medicine students is crucial to maximise the student experience and ensure effective delivery of the programme and appropriate support to maximise the opportunity for success.

Evaluation is embedded within the delivery of the curriculum and is the focus of a bespoke medical education research group, including PhD studies, Masters Projects and BMedSci projects. A team of Research Associates – current PhD students – are deployed on research projects. The findings of these projects are then fed back through WPOG and the further governance structure for contextual action.

Our Faculties use granular information from data dashboards to develop bespoke activities which are designed to meet specific requirements. Evaluation is built into the development of this activity, with the outputs feeding into our wider evaluation map. Representatives from the Faculties share findings for cross-institution benefit through WPOG and WPSC.

We have committed additional resource to support the development of in-programme interventions and evaluation to ensure a consistent approach across all programmes. We are developing a PG Cert in Widening Participation and Evaluation which is part of our commitment to professionalise the sector. The PG Cert will fuse policy, theory and practice of widening participation and will support individuals and their home universities in the development of robust, evidence-based activities.

We will continue to take a cross institutional approach, drawing on the expertise of practitioners, Institutional Research, the Education School and the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) to understand and disseminate the findings from our evaluation.

### **Evaluation Design**

Evaluation is multi-faceted and evaluates the students' experience, perceptions of the programme and support requirements, identifying differences in access, success and progression through analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, developing support interventions, and evaluating the impact. It is vital that through quality research we provide the appropriate support to optimise the chances of success for this vulnerable group of students.

The evaluation of our access and participation activity is informed by theories of change which identify the problem, our assumptions, evidence base, success measurements and methods of evaluation for each of our substantial activities. Outputs will be collated into an evaluation map, which will allow us to understand our impact by themes across our work.

Currently the majority of the evaluation we undertake is narrative, although empirical enquiry is used for our more intensive and/or sustained programmes, including mentoring and residential activities. We will be drawing on expertise from across the institution to develop more innovative and experimental evaluation designs. We are exploring ways to participate in studies to understand causal impact of our work.

### **Evaluation Implementation**

Evaluation is used at activity and programme level to inform programme design. We work closely with third sector partners on evaluation to ensure that impact is evidenced. We also work closely with colleagues in the Southern Universities Network (SUN) and have established an evaluation working group for widening participation practitioners, enabling colleagues to share good practice in evaluation, both in terms of each partner's activity and in terms of evaluating collaborative projects, and explore the use of HEAT and/or other tracking services to evaluate the impact of collaborative activity. There are also plans to develop an Outreach Hub in collaboration with the Southern Universities Network NCOP to expand on current activity.

### **Learning to shape improvements**

To support continuous improvement, we have set up a Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Group which will report to the Widening Participation Subcommittee,

providing practitioners and researchers from across the institution with a forum for sharing good practice.

To ensure that we have the necessary process and rigour in place, we have identified that additional resource is required, this will include additional staffing and budget within our Institutional Research team and drawing on the expertise of our academic community.

### **Evaluation of Financial Support**

We use the OFFA Toolkit to assess the impact of our financial support package on closing non-continuation, attainment and progression gaps. We are currently undertaking a further review of our financial support to understand how effective our provision is in supporting students to succeed.

### **Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

We will monitor the delivery of this plan through both our management and governance structures. Our University Council, who approve this plan, will receive annual monitoring reports in line with the annual reporting cycle. The University Finance Committee receive an annual update relating to the impact of the expenditure and monitor progress accordingly. The University Audit Committee will monitor our progress against targets and ensure to this end we will also ensure that this facet of the institution's work is captured within our risk register to allow for regular monitoring. A more regularised reporting and monitoring process will be undertaken through the Widening Participation Subcommittee of the university. University Executive Board will monitor progress against the metrics in the monthly management information pack, ensuring a constant overview from the university's leadership team. This will also form a part of the annual planning cycle for those areas who have a contribution to make.

All activity will be carefully monitored using our action plan and adjustments made as required. Should we find that our progress towards a target is worsening, or rather not progressing as we had hoped, we will ensure that we either divert resource or adjust targets within agreed parameters. We have a productive relationship with TASO and, having recently hosted an event for universities in the South-East on their behalf, are a key regional partner.

Students are active partners in our evaluative work. Firstly, SUSU will remain engaged in this work through our governance structures and representation on all university committees that receive monitoring updates. Secondly, our evaluation processes ensure that these capture feedback from those students our programme is seeking to support and to this end we will ensure engagement. Finally, we actively encourage the Student Advisory Board to hold us to account and challenge our assumptions to make our programme more robust and tailored to the needs of students.

### **4.0 Provision of Information to Students**

UoS publishes information on tuition fees financial support in a timely fashion 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<sup>2</sup> alongside information on loans, scholarships and financial support. Fee rates are also published on individual course pages. At the stage of offer, applicants have their fees confirmed in student 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.

Prospective students will continue to be able to access the most current information in a range of formats including:

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<sup>2</sup> [www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/fees-funding.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/fees-funding.page)

- A virtual open day that provides students with access to all our campuses through 360° panoramas. Complete with contextual information on the area they are viewing, in the form of text imagery and videos  
<http://virtualopenday.southampton.ac.uk/>
- Open days: trained staff and student ambassadors will promote Southampton, including our financial support packages, as well as all of the above channels.
- An interactive prospectus' system that provides the user with videos of student experiences and information on key topics, 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 Unions' Advice Centre and the University's Financial Information and Assistance team. This includes financial support, including emergency financial support, which is available online as well as face to face. The University will promote the available support at all campuses through a range of interactive events and drop-ins.
- Online communications through online chat functions supported by trained financial advisors at pre-arrival to ensure students access all funding available to them
- An online student portal for advice about and advertisement of part-time work for students once they have joined, and much of our information about career opportunities, including progression into professions, and events to support and prepare all students for their professional aspirations is included in information made available to students considering applying to Southampton.  
<https://mycareer.soton.ac.uk/home.html>
- We provide timely and accurate information to UCAS and 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 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 their successes, and they regularly highlight what support is available to students from their time as a Fresher right through to when they graduate.

The approved Access & Participation Plan will be published on the University website:  
[www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/)



## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

## Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,000
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	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	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	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	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan

## 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Southampton

Provider UKPRN: 10007158

### Investment summary

The OFS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

#### Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£1,782,244.00	£1,819,796.00	£1,819,796.00	£1,819,796.00	£1,819,796.00
Access (pre-16)	£565,701.00	£578,093.00	£578,093.00	£578,093.00	£578,093.00
Access (post-16)	£977,119.00	£998,523.00	£998,523.00	£998,523.00	£998,523.00
Access (adults and the community)	£222,282.00	£225,662.00	£225,662.00	£225,662.00	£225,662.00
Access (other)	£17,142.00	£17,518.00	£17,518.00	£17,518.00	£17,518.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£7,620,000.00	£7,101,000.00	£7,077,000.00	£7,229,000.00	£7,663,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£148,946.00	£154,894.00	£161,120.00	£164,343.00	£167,629.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£38,977,080.00	£39,781,830.00	£42,760,095.00	£45,556,270.00	£47,946,810.00
<b>Access investment</b>	4.5%	4.5%	4.2%	3.9%	3.7%
<b>Financial support</b>	19.5%	17.8%	16.6%	15.9%	16.0%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	24.4%	22.7%	21.1%	20.2%	20.1%

