

# University of Greenwich Access and Participation Plan 2025/6 – 2028/9

## Introduction and Strategic Aim

The University of Greenwich (UoG) prides itself on being a widening-participation university with a highly diverse student population. Our key mission is for our students to have an outstanding, relevant, and authentic educational experience that gives them the best possible start to their future journey. **Education without Boundaries** is the practical application of the UoG values of inclusivity, collaboration, and impact, as set out in our university strategy 'This is Our Time 2030'. We aim to build upon our students' lived experience and prior education, remove barriers to their ongoing university journey, and to support them to fulfil their potential.

Many of our students face a range of material challenges and risks to equality of opportunity (Section 2), with many coming from deprived backgrounds – 58% from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles (Qs) 1 and 2 – and facing financial hardship that requires them to work to support their studies.<sup>1</sup> Recent Greenwich Students' Union (GSU) research shows that 39% of our students work over 20 hours a week and 19% work more than 40 hours. A substantial number of our students are local or commuting, with 70% of our applications coming from within a 30-minute drive of the university and 77% of students being UK-domiciled.<sup>2</sup> We have a large Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) cohort (21% Black, 25% Asian, 8% Mixed and 5% Other, compared to 42% White students). Many of our students enter via non-traditional routes, with 23% having taken BTECs and 30% have an Access or Foundation course on arrival. On entry, 70% of our undergraduates are under 21, 18% are 21–30 and 12% are older than this.<sup>3</sup>

We pride ourselves on providing effective education and support that helps students to mitigate against risks to equality of opportunity and to succeed. We have the fourth highest social mobility rate of students in England, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies,<sup>4</sup> with many students coming from poorer backgrounds going on to higher income occupations. Our students are at the centre of our decision-making, enabling us to provide a truly exceptional – Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold – educational journey that challenges, supports, and prepares them for future life and work with a strong ethical and sustainable foundation. Our strong relationship with GSU ensures an amplification of the student voice at our university. The TEF panel commented that there was 'compelling evidence' that through co-creation, our students draw on their lived experience and knowledge to actively inform an inclusive educational offer and practice. This creates a strong student community that feels connected to the university, leading to connected alumni who come back to teach and mentor others.

We are proud to have been early adopters of a whole-university approach to mental health, with wellbeing now fully integrated into our curriculum, extracurricular activities and embedded within all our support services (Section 5.1). We have made significant investment in our dedicated student wellbeing services. This includes proactive, early intervention support by our psychological wellbeing team, and we are delighted to have achieved our ambition to reduce the continuation gap for students disclosing a mental health condition over the course of our previous Access and Participation Plan (APP). Our commitment to mental health and wellbeing will continue to be central to our mission. We understand that most people will experience challenges with their mental health and wellbeing at some point in their lives. Moreover, some groups of students, including males and those from ethnically minoritised communities, can experience more barriers to receiving a diagnosis and accessing support both within the university and the community. Our work towards achieving the University

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<sup>1</sup> Office for Students, 'Access and participation data dashboard' – University of Greenwich, 2021/22 full-time undergraduate intake (Office for Students, 2023a). Source: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>2</sup> Office for Students, 'Teaching Excellence Framework: Provider Submission, University of Greenwich' (Office for Students, 2023b) <<https://tef2023.officeforstudents.org.uk/open-ancillary/open-ancillary-provider-submission/?id=f511245a-dcc4-ee11-9079-0022481b5c9c&summarystatement=25cb415b-dcc4-ee11-9079-0022481b55ca>> [accessed 4 June 2024].

<sup>3</sup> Office for Students, 2023a; 2023b

<sup>4</sup> Jack Britton, Elaine Drayton and Laura van der Erve, 'Which university degrees are best for intergenerational mobility?', (Institute for Fiscal Studies, November 2021). Source: [https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/output\\_url\\_files/Which-university-degrees-are-best-for-intergenerational-mobility.pdf](https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/output_url_files/Which-university-degrees-are-best-for-intergenerational-mobility.pdf) [accessed 24 May 2024].

Mental Health Charter Award will include interventions to address these barriers and encourage more students to disclose a mental health condition and access support. We will take an intersectional and trauma-informed approach.

We have always excelled in ensuring access for a highly diverse body of students through extensive partnerships with other education providers and third-sector organisations across London and Kent. This includes delivering outreach to prospective students from over 200 local schools and colleges, several of which we have established strategic relationships including the Royal Greenwich Trust School (RGTS) and Shooters Hill Sixth Form College. We have a longstanding partnership with other higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs) in Kent and Medway through the Kent and Medway Progression Federation. As part of this partnership, we deliver targeted and strategic outreach through the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme (KaMCOP) and other collaborative outreach projects across Kent. Furthermore, in addition to the university-wide strategic partnership with Charlton Athletic Football Club (CAFC), we have partnered with Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) over several years to deliver inspirational careers and skills development programmes to some of the most disadvantaged and underrepresented young people in our regions.

To reflect the different needs and demands of our unique student body, we have a diverse range of pathways into and through our higher education (HE) provision. We have an established and diverse network of partner colleges where we validate HE provision and, where possible, offer integrated pathways to on-campus provision at the university. Over the past four years, we have developed new demand-sensitive courses, including 23 approved apprenticeship pathways, higher technical qualifications, micro-credentials, continuing professional development (CPD), and our flexible Elevate courses.

Despite our successes, we recognise there is still more to be done to meet our key strategic aims and deliver our key objectives to improve access further and reduce gaps in attainment and progression across different ethnicities and levels of deprivation. Our plan outlines how we will address our key risks to equality of opportunity (Section 2) in the years ahead and ensure the best outcome possible for all our students. The plan focuses on our key objectives (Section 3) and interventions (Section 4) to improve access (Section 4.1), improve attainment (Sections 4.2 and 4.3) and improve progression (section 4.4). The plan outlines how we adopt a whole provider approach (section 5) and how we will ensure we evaluate our interventions effectively and disseminate and share good practice (sections 4 and 7). The plan has been created in collaboration with our students and has been signed off via appropriate governance (Section 6).

## **Risks to Equality of Opportunity**

In determining where we target interventions, we have undertaken a detailed assessment of performance (Annex A) using the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Data Dashboard, internal UoG data and the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). There are indications of risk present in our data that can be linked, and to varying degrees accounted for, by all 12 risks outlined in the OfS EORR, and many of these risks are present at various stages of the student lifecycle. We are taking a whole student lifecycle approach to identifying and addressing our risks to equality of opportunity and our plan outlines targeted interventions at the stage we consider optimal in the lifecycle to address each risk. We are particularly concerned with supporting students as they negotiate critical transitions into and through their student journey. We take a whole provider approach to addressing capacity issues (Risk 11) ensuring we target our resources where they are most required by at-risk populations and across the student journey (Sections 5 and 8).

While our assessment of performance identified all our notable indications of risk, our intervention strategies (Section 4) prioritise those that pose the greatest risk to equality of opportunity at our university. For areas with smaller levels of risk, and areas where we have already reduced risks to below sector levels, we have not created specific targets or intervention strategies. However, we are still fully committed to understanding and addressing challenges that emerge and creating further interventions if required. In recent years, we have made some significant advances in mitigating risks. For example, for continuation we have significantly reduced gaps across ethnicities and levels of deprivation to well below sector normative levels and to almost zero in some areas (Q1 vs Q5 IMD). We have also made significant progress against our previous targets and mitigated risks in relation to students declaring a disability or mental health condition (Section 5.1), as is demonstrated in Annex A. The continuation gap between those declaring and not declaring a disability has reduced to 2% points for full-time students and the continuation gap for students declaring a mental health condition has reduced to 2.6% points. As these now represent relatively small gaps we do not have specific targets relating to these in this plan. However, as

outlined in our whole provider approach (Section 5), an institutional approach to improving continuation and student mental health continues to be a key strategic priority.

Below we outline the core areas of risk that we have identified in our assessment of performance which our plan aims to address.

## Risks to Access

Evidence from the sector, literature, and internal data, including the outcomes of student focus groups, suggests that for access our key indications of risk taken from the OfS EORR relate to:

Risk 1	Gaps in Prior Knowledge and Skills
Risk 2	Lack of Information and Guidance
Risk 3	Differential Perceptions of Higher Education
Risk 4	Application Success Rates
Risk 5	Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode
Risk 9	Ongoing Impacts of Coronavirus
Risk 10	Cost Pressures.

## Mitigated Risks to Access

Through our ongoing pre- and post-16 work with schools and colleges, the university has considerable success in mitigating many of the risks above (Risks 1,2,3,4). We are highly successful in attracting students from areas classified as IMD (2019) Q1/Q2, students eligible for Free School Meal (FSM) and from BAME backgrounds, with 25% points more BAME students and 14% points more students from IMD Q1/2 compared to the sector average (Risk 5). We have also met our target for the number of care leavers studying at the university, and we now have the seventh largest care-leaver population of all HE providers in England. Our Outreach and Educational Partnerships team will continue to prioritise reaching these groups of students to contribute to the achievement of our student success and progression objectives, providing targeted and personalised access activities in line with the needs of students as they progress to, through and beyond university.

## Areas of Risk to Access

It is recognised that compared to sector norms we see a sizeable difference in the proportion of students we enrol from areas of low participation in HE – designated by participation of local areas POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 compared to students from POLAR4 Q5. However, it is also well recognised that POLAR4 is a less useful index when applied to London, where the majority of areas show high participation rates. It is indeed common for London-based institutions, particularly for those that attract their student body largely from areas near their London campuses, to register large gaps in access using this measure, even if they are recruiting large and diverse proportions of students from areas of IMD Q1/Q2. For this reason, we have not set a target for reducing our POLAR4 gap, but we are committed to increasing the headcount of students from low participation areas and will continue to target POLAR4 Q1/Q2 areas in London. Furthermore, unlike other London institutions, our university has a campus base in Kent, where POLAR4 gives a more useful indication of areas to target, and our Medway Campus is close to a number of these Q1/Q2 areas.<sup>5</sup> The size of the student population and course portfolio at our Medway Campus is small compared to our London campuses, and focuses on science, engineering and some health courses. However, this does provide us with a platform to operate in the Kent and Medway area to encourage and facilitate progression to HE for those who may not have previously considered HE but have the potential to benefit from it.

While area-based participation metrics such as POLAR4 can be helpful for targeting areas for outreach activity outside London, our in-depth knowledge of schools, colleges and individual circumstances also informs our outreach activities within the Greater London area and Kent and Medway. We know that students from areas of low participation are more likely to be

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<sup>5</sup> Department for Education, '[Progression to higher education or training, Academic year 2021/22](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/progression-to-higher-education-or-training)' (*Explore education statistics, 19 October 2023*). Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/progression-to-higher-education-or-training> [accessed 24 May 2024].

the first in their families to access HE and face associated challenges with navigating HE information and opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, there is evidence of a correlation between areas of low representation and other indices of socio-economic disadvantage,<sup>7</sup> suggesting that while POLAR4 itself is not a measure of socio-economic disadvantage, financial risks to equality of opportunity are also important to consider when attempting to address this gap (Risk 10).

For these reasons, we are also using FSM and IMD data to inform our assessments of risk. We also recognise the ongoing risks of coronavirus (Risk 9) on school attainment outcomes in low-participation and low-income populations, as all children in the period of this APP will have been impacted by the pandemic at some point in their school studies in Key Stages 1 to 5. Furthermore, while we have led the way in diversifying pathways into HE in some subject areas (ie apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications), we recognise that these pathways are not yet available across all areas of the university, and we will continue to diversify these as part of our intervention strategy in this area (Risk 5).

Therefore, for POLAR4 students and those from IMD Q1/2 areas we have identified a need to target access interventions to address Risks 1,2,3, 4, 5, 9 and 10.

### **Risks to Student Success (Participation)**

Evidence from the sector, literature, and internal data, including the outcomes of student focus groups, suggests that across all the stages of the student journey a key indication of risk taken from the OfS EORR is mental health (Risk 8). This risk is primarily being addressed within our whole provider approach to mental health (Section 5) and we see this as very important to the success of all our students.

### **Risks to Continuation**

Our assessment of performance in Annex A suggests that there are far smaller indications of risk to equality of opportunity present in our continuation and completion data. However, our assessment of performance indicates that there are ongoing risks to continuation, completion, (as well as attainment) for part-time students with intersectional characteristics including those who are Black, female, disabled and over 40 years old. We have not included specific targets for part-time students in our intervention plans due to the small size of the populations. However, we strive for an environment in which all our students can achieve their ambitions, and we are committed to working with our part-time cohort and GSU to fully understand their student journeys and specific barriers, ensuring that part-time students are considered within all our key priorities, and that these are adapted to close these gaps.

### **Risks to Attainment**

Evidence from the sector, literature and internal data, including the outcomes of student focus groups, suggests that, for attainment, our key indications of risk taken from the OfS EORR relate to:

Risk 6	Insufficient Academic Support
Risk 7	Insufficient Personal Support
Risk 8	Mental Health
Risk 9	Ongoing Impacts of Coronavirus
Risk 10	Cost Pressures.

Through our assessment of performance, we have identified attainment gaps as the most significant indications of risk to student success within our context, representing some of our largest and most persistent gaps across the student lifecycle, with large gaps in attainment relating to ethnicity and level of deprivation. Addressing risks of potential insufficient academic

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<sup>6</sup> Office for Students, 'Frequently asked questions about area-based measures (POLAR and TUNDRA)' (September 2020). Source: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd78246d-0072-4e2f-a25a-42ba54deea11/polar-and-tundra-faqs-september2020.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>7</sup> Jenny Bermingham, Siobhan Donnell and Tej Nathwani, *Using Census data to generate a UK-wide measure of disadvantage* (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2022), pp. 28-31. Available at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/UK-wide-measure-disadvantage-20211005-updated-20220525.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2024].

and personal support (Risks 6 and 7), specific wellbeing needs for students (Risk 8), the ongoing impacts of coronavirus (Risk 9) and cost pressures (Risk 10) are key foci of our intervention strategies outlined in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

### **BAME Attainment Gap**

Specifically, there is a significant difference in the proportion of students from Black and Asian backgrounds being awarded a 2.1 classification or above compared to their White counterparts. The data shows that this impacts on both full-time and part-time students, though the gap for Black part-time students is particularly large.

While ethnicity awarding gaps exceeded our improvement targets during the initial term of our previous APP (2020/21), performance was subsequently negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic (Risk 9) and by large increases in the cost-of-living in London, in particular (Risk 10). This impact was partly ameliorated for final-year students during the coronavirus pandemic and for the following year by a temporary introduction of a no-detriment policy along with other support, which helped meet our target gap in the following year (2021/22). However, the ongoing impact of coronavirus has continued for those who started their courses during the pandemic and completed in 2022/3. They have also been impacted the most by the cost-of-living crisis.

We have a considerable proportion of students entering the university with non-traditional qualifications. In-depth analysis of outcomes by entry type has informed us that there are differences in attainment by entry qualification, with those who have A-levels more likely to achieve a First or 2.1 classification compared to those with alternative qualifications. We know that across the sector there are higher proportions of students from BAME backgrounds entering with alternative qualifications. Understanding and providing better academic support to address prior knowledge and skills gaps for students from this group and providing better targeted personal support (Risks 6 and 7) will also be crucial to closing our awarding gap (Section 4.2).

### **Deprivation (IMD) Attainment Gap**

Our data also shows that students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMD 2019 Q1) and those eligible for FSM are less likely to be awarded a good honours degree (2.1 or above) than students from the least deprived backgrounds (IMD 2019 Q5 and ineligible for FSM). As outlined above, cost pressures (Risk 10) are likely to be having an ongoing impact on these students and we have put in place interventions to address these challenges (Section 4.3)

### **Intersectional and Additive Effects**

It should be noted that while our data shows considerable intersectionality between ethnicity and deprivation, there are also significant gaps in the awarding of the 2.1 classification or above for White students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMD 2019 Q1 and FSM eligible). While evidence from the sector, literature and internal data, including the outcomes of student focus groups, suggests that the same risks to equality of opportunity can be applied to both ethnicity and deprivation, our plan outlines separate intervention strategies for reducing awarding gaps for students in each of these subgroups. However, we will be considering the intersectionality between these risks and the additive effects of multiple risks, and there will be cross-group coordination of interventions where appropriate. The interventions outlined in this plan are all student focused, recognising that each student has a unique history and set of characteristics and will apply to both full- and part-time students. Although numbers of part-time students are relatively small and we have not set a separate target, we are committed to better understanding the experience of all our students and addressing specific barriers to equality of opportunity.

### **Risks to Progression**

Evidence from the sector, literature, and internal data, including the outcomes of student focus groups, suggests that, for progression, our key indications of risk from the OfS EORR relate to:

- |        |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Risk 6 | Insufficient Academic Support |
| Risk 7 | Insufficient Personal Support |

Risk 9	Ongoing Impacts of Coronavirus
Risk10	Cost Pressures
Risk12	Progression from HE.

## **BAME Progression Gap**

While progression opportunities were impacted nationally by coronavirus (Risk 9), we have seen an improvement in progression for our Black students, with the last year of data showing that the gap has closed (2020/21). However, until now this has been a longstanding gap, and we want to ensure that graduate outcomes for this group of students continues to follow a positive trajectory. There continues to be a notable and persistent difference in the proportion of students from Asian backgrounds progressing to graduate employment or further study compared to their White counterparts. Consequently, our progression interventions are designed for all BAME students, rather than just Asian students.

## **Deprivation (IMD) Progression Gaps**

Our largest gap in progression to graduate employment or further study is between the most and least deprived students based on the IMD (2019) and FSM measures. As outlined in our analysis in Annex A, the gap is higher at our university due to the higher rates of positive progression outcomes for students from the least deprived areas compared to the sector, with an increase of 7.6% points for this group in the most recent year, creating a larger gap at our university than other HEIs.

Therefore, while we are similar to the sector in terms of the absolute level of outcomes for our students from the most deprived areas, it remains one of our largest and most significant relative outcome gaps. Consequently, it has a dedicated intervention strategy and also continues to be central to our whole provider approach (Section 5). We are targeting our specific interventions to improve academic and personal support (Risks 6 and 7) through more targeted career mentoring and pre-job application support and by providing financial support for interviews (Risk 10).

Cost pressures (Risk 10) from the cost-of-living crisis presents a particular challenge for students from the most socio-economically deprived backgrounds being able to pursue opportunities to enhance their graduate prospects while studying, often because of significant commitments to other less-skilled paid work. This comes through very strongly in the consultation undertaken with our students and in our contextual risks outlined in Section 2.3 below.

## **Additional University of Greenwich Contextual Risks**

Our student consultation and cross-university workshops with staff and GSU revealed that the experience and outcomes of students are also impacted by some additional risks not explicitly covered by the OfS EORR.

### **University of Greenwich (UoG) Risk 1: Ensuring Consistency in Transition Between Key Stages and Building a Sense of Belonging**

A positive transition into university study that helps to build a sense of belonging to the university community is particularly important for the retention and success of students from non-traditional backgrounds. Achieving a feeling of belonging during the initial weeks at university helps to create relationships with staff and networks as well as other students. This supports engagement and successful outcomes throughout the programme of study.<sup>8</sup> This may be more pronounced for part-time students. It is vital that our university festival of learning (GREFest), school and course welcome, and induction activities are comprehensive and consistent, regardless of school or faculty, and tailored to the needs of our diverse student intake. We are committed to reviewing this annually as part of our whole provider approach (Section 5.2). Moreover, it is especially important for students from non-traditional backgrounds to have the opportunity to develop a positive relationship with their personal tutor at an early stage.<sup>9</sup> Our data transformation projects, outlined in our whole provider approach and BAME attainment intervention strategy (Section 4.2) will enable us to contact students who are particularly 'at risk', including students from IMD Q1 and BAME backgrounds, during key transition stages, as a priority. This is something we

<sup>8</sup> Harriet Jones and others, *Transition into Higher Education* (Critical Publishing, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



already have in place for care leavers and care experienced students and students who have declared a disability who we currently prioritise for welcome calls.

## **UoG Risk 2: Reducing Challenges for Students Undertaking Paid Work and/or Commuting**

The scheduling of on-campus daytime delivery, and the inevitable timetabling constraints that determine when sessions are delivered, are a challenge for students at risk of socio-economic disadvantage, who are often balancing their studies with paid work and/or caring responsibilities. We know that many students from IMD Q1 backgrounds will commute to university for a variety of reasons, including parental or caring responsibilities and/or needing to work part-time, and that many commuter students are mature and are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Having classes spread out over several days of the week, and sometimes not knowing a timetable far enough in advance of starting the term, can make it difficult for students to organise work shifts and/or childcare. This may mean that students choose to miss class to attend work or for childcare reasons. Commuter students may also weigh up the value of attending one class a day versus saving money on travel or childcare costs. Research already tells us that, 'commuter students obtain poorer outcomes... and will be less engaged and satisfied with their academic experiences'.<sup>10</sup> Having limited spaces on campus designated specifically for studying and/or socialising may also result in a lack of a sense of belonging and community (UoG Risk 1). This, in turn, may make it less appealing to stay on campus during the gaps between timetabled activities, meaning students are more likely to miss out on learning and other developmental experiences. Social contact with peers, particularly those already experienced in the environment, is crucial as it helps new students to successfully navigate their new community.<sup>11</sup>

We continue to develop our campuses to provide more informal and formal study spaces to students; and we will continue to develop flexible pathways and modes of delivery including new Elevate courses that are delivered in one-day block teaching (see 4.1). We also have an intervention to increase online delivery of teaching. We will continue to provide practical support via our commuter bursary, and we will review our support for commuter students who are experiencing financial hardship (see 4.2 and 4.3). To encourage the development of peer relationships and sense of belonging, we will continue to develop our peer mentoring scheme and ensure that our campuses have a range of facilities that support students who are commuting. As outlined in our intervention strategy (see 4.4) to improve progression for students from IMD Q1 backgrounds, we will also offer additional support to help these students to secure paid work at the university as student ambassadors, which will allow them to work around their studies, often more easily than other paid work.

## **UoG Risk 3: Ensuring a Deeper Understanding of the Reasons for the BAME Awarding Gaps**

We have undertaken a lot of work during the last APP period (2020–2025) to understand and address the challenges faced by our BAME students and have developed targeted interventions to support them, many drawn from good practice across the sector. However, in the face of the ongoing impacts of coronavirus and cost pressures, there is more work we need to do. As outlined in the whole provider approach (Section 5.2), we have set up a BAME Awarding Gap Stakeholder Group to address the risks arising from not having a deep enough understanding of the reasons for the awarding gap. We recognise that many of our students share a story of common barriers to HE study, including multiple deprivation, structural racism, a lack of belonging in a university environment, and sometimes having been out of formal education for a long period. We also recognise that BAME students may be experiencing barriers to accessing support that is available.

### **Objectives**

#### **Key Objectives for Access**

As demonstrated by our assessment of performance (Annex A) and outlined in our analysis of risks (Section 2.1), our record on access overall is very strong, but our focus needs to be on increasing the head count of students studying at our university

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<sup>10</sup> David Maguire and David Morris, *Homeward Bound: Defining, understanding, and aiding 'commuter students'* (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2018), p6. [Available at https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-commuter-students-Report-11429\\_11\\_18Web.pdf](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-commuter-students-Report-11429_11_18Web.pdf) [accessed 24.05.2024].

<sup>11</sup> Jones and others, *Transition into Higher Education*, p13.

who come from low participation areas, as measured by POLAR4. While it is usual across the sector to set targets to reduce gaps between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5, as we have outlined in Section 2.1, institutions that largely recruit in London, where area participation rates are far higher than average, are not able to close this percentage gap. However, we are committed to continuing to work to recruit from POLAR4 Q1/Q2 in London and from lower participation areas closer to our Medway Campus in Kent. Our objective is to increase the absolute head count of entrants from Q1 backgrounds, and we believe that this is a suitable target for our context. We aim to achieve this through the delivery of sustained attainment-raising programmes and information, advice, and guidance opportunities to young people in partnership with schools, other HEIs, FECs and third-sector partners. We have also initiated regional outreach activity in areas of low participation outside of London and the South East.

## **Key objectives for Student Success (Participation)**

### **Attainment Objectives**

In line with the University Strategy 2030, we aim to considerably reduce the awarding gaps between Black and White students and Asian and White students during this plan. This will be achieved through the adoption of a holistic approach to the experiences of our BAME students, commencing pre-entry and continuing throughout all transitions in their time at the university. We recognise the importance of making multiple interventions throughout the lifecycle and across the student experience, as discussed in the TASO 2024 Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap report,<sup>12</sup> and have designed a range of interventions to address barriers to success across the student lifecycle. This includes pre-entry outreach activities, the further development of an inclusive curriculum and learning experiences that celebrate differences, incorporate lived experience and address barriers, and better use of data to enable more targeted support. We will continue to work in partnership with students to develop a clearer understanding of how experiences in and outside of the classroom impact attainment. This will enable us to reduce our ethnicity awarding gaps.

For our students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMD 2019 Q1), we aim to reduce awarding gaps over the same period, through pre-entry outreach activities, targeted financial support and enhancements to academic and pastoral support. As outlined in Section 2.2, where data are available, we also see gaps in attainment for students who received FSM compared to those who were not eligible for FSM. We do not currently have ready access to accurate FSM data, or other comparable data on an individual basis, and while we recognise that there are limitations to using area-based measures to target support, this is currently a more reliable index of deprivation. Consequently, we have set a target relating to IMD Q1 attainment. Given the known intersectionality between IMD Q1 and FSM eligibility, we are confident that interventions based on Q1 status will also reach those who received FSM.

### **Progression Objectives**

Differential outcomes for Asian students compared to White students persist at the progression stage, as does the progression gap between our most and least deprived students (IMD Q1 vs Q5). We aim to reduce these gaps over the course of this plan through mentoring and targeted personalised employability education activities delivered in partnership with our alumni and an extensive range of corporate and third-sector partners. The provision of targeted financial packages, information, advice, and guidance will support progression to postgraduate study. As explained above, we will be using IMD Q1 rather than FSM eligibility for targeting.

## **Intervention strategies and expected outcomes**

### **Access intervention strategy – increasing number of students from low participation areas**

#### **Objectives and Targets for Access**

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<sup>12</sup> Andrews and others, *Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap: Contextualising the landscape and developing a typology* (TASO, 2023). <https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Approaches-to-addressing-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2024].



PTA\_1: To increase the head count of new entrants from POLAR4 Q1 areas (2021/22 baseline) studying at our university by 56% by 2028/9.

## Targeted Risks to Equality of Opportunity for Access

For POLAR4 students and those from IMD Q1/2 areas, we have identified a need to target interventions to address Risks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10.

## Specific Activities, Inputs and Outcomes for Access

In addition to our whole provider approach to addressing inequalities in access (Section 5.2), below we outline specific activities aimed at improving Access.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Pre-16 outreach</b>			
<b>Addressing Risks 1,2 and 3</b> – Gaps in Prior Knowledge and Skills, Lack of Information and Guidance, and Differential Perceptions of HE			
<b>Make it Make Sense (MiMS)</b> This is a sustained pre-16 outreach programme delivered in partnership with CACT in schools with high proportions of students from low participation areas. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff costs</b> 0.1 full-time equivalent (FTE) Deputy Head of Outreach, 0.1 FTE Partnerships Relationships Manager. <b>Non-staff costs</b> £72,000 per annum.	Positive impact on school attendance. Positive impact on attainment. Increased awareness and confidence in life/soft skills. Improved knowledge of pathways into HE and employment. Higher number of students from low participation areas applying.	N
<b>STEM Attainment Project</b> This is a sustained pre-16 attainment-raising project for STEM subjects, in partnership with schools that have high proportions of students from low participation areas. <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 0.2 FTE Outreach Manager, 0.25 FTE Outreach Project Lead, 0.1 FTE Outreach Officer, 50 ambassador hours per annum. <b>Non-staff costs</b> £3,850 per annum.	Higher numbers of students opting to take science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3. Improved attainment in STEM subjects. Improved progression rates to STEM subjects for students from low participation areas. Higher number of students from low participation areas applying to HE, and to our university.	N
<b>Literacy Attainment Project</b> This is a pre-16 programme focused on raising reading age in partnership with schools that have high proportions of students from low participation areas. <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 0.2 FTE Outreach Project Lead, 0.1 FTE Outreach Manager, 20 ambassador hours per annum. <b>Non-staff costs</b> £900 per annum.	Increased enjoyment of and confidence in reading. Enhanced reading ability. Higher number of students from low participation areas applying to HE, and to our university.	N
<b>Post-16 outreach</b>			
<b>Addressing Risks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9</b> – Gaps in Prior Knowledge and Skills, Lack of Information and Guidance, Differential Perceptions of HE, Application Success Rates, and Ongoing Impact of Coronavirus			

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p><b>GREat Skills</b></p> <p>This is a post-16 transferable skills programme targeting mathematical, academic, and personal skills, developed in partnership with the RGTS. It is delivered in schools with high proportions of students from BAME and/or IMD Q1 and/or FSM eligible backgrounds, particularly those undertaking non-traditional Level 3 qualifications.</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.1 FTE Outreach Manager, 0.25 FTE Outreach Project Lead, 0.25 FTE Outreach Officer, 170 student ambassador hours per annum.</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£5,400 per annum.</p>	<p>More realistic expectation of HE and readiness for success.</p> <p>Improved attainment and completion levels at Level 3.</p> <p>Increased likelihood of progression to HE.</p> <p>Improved on-course attainment.</p>	<p>Y – contributing to success and progression for BAME and IMD Q1 students by aiding informed course choices, supporting the acquisition of academic skills for university attainment and career planning, pre-entry.</p>
<p><b>Targeted information for schools</b></p> <p><b>Addressing Risks 2 and 3 – Lack of Information and Guidance, Differential Perceptions of HE</b></p>			
<p><b>Schools' Access Toolkit</b></p> <p>This is the delivery of information, advice, and guidance, standalone or as part of a series. It is delivered in schools and colleges with high proportions of students from low participation areas, BAME and/or IMD Q1 and/or FSM eligible backgrounds (predominantly post-16).</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.1 FTE Deputy Head of Outreach, 0.1 FTE Outreach Manager, 2.8 FTE Outreach Project Lead, 1 FTE Outreach Officer, 320 ambassador hours per year.</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£10,440 per annum.</p>	<p>Increased understanding and awareness of HE opportunities leading to improved decision-making.</p> <p>Reduced perceived barriers to HE.</p> <p>Increased sense of belonging in HE.</p> <p>More realistic expectation of HE and readiness for success.</p>	<p>Y – contributing to success and progression for BAME and IMD Q1 students by aiding informed course choices and career planning, pre-entry.</p>
<p><b>Targeted contextual admissions:</b></p> <p><b>Addressing Risks 2 and 4 – Lack of Information and Guidance, Application Success Rates</b></p>			
<p><b>Contextual Admissions</b></p> <p>Contextualised consideration of applicants from POLAR4 Q1 areas, supported by a cash travel bursary of up to £50 per applicant for those in receipt of contextual offers during the application cycle to visit the university for an open day or offer-holder event pre-entry.</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p> <p>Contextual consideration for applicants from partner schools with high proportions of students from low participation postcodes/linked to outreach participation, to sit alongside broader partnership agreements to promote HE and support attainment-raising.</p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.15 FTE Deputy Head of Admissions, 0.1 FTE Admissions Officer, 0.1 Events Manager, 0.1 Events Lead, 0.1 Events Assistant and 140 ambassador hours per annum.</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£10,000 per annum.</p>	<p>Increased number of applicants (and ultimately enrolments) from POLAR4 Q1 areas.</p> <p>Improved relationships with schools in areas with high proportions students from low participation areas.</p> <p>Improved access to information to support effective HE decision-making for students from low participation areas.</p>	<p>N</p>

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>New activity</b>			
<b>Diversifying pathways:</b> <b>Addressing Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode</b>			
<b>Further development of new pathways</b> In partnership with employers, we will add to the existing portfolio of apprenticeships, technical qualifications micro credentials, and Elevate courses and raise awareness, understanding and uptake of alternative routes through outreach activities (predominantly post-16). <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 1 FTE Deputy Head of Pathways and Partnerships, 1 FTE Outreach and Pathways Officer, 140 student ambassador hours per annum. <b>Non-staff costs</b> £1,000 per annum.	Greater choice and awareness and understanding of choice for students, leading to closer alignment between student interests, career aspirations and lifestyles and course commitments and outcomes. Increase appeal of HE by offering non-traditional and flexible alternatives.	Y – greater diversity in course type contributes to student success and progression if students are able to access course types that are the best fit for them from the outset.
<b>Financial support:</b> <b>Addressing Risk 10 – Cost Pressures</b>			
<b>Review of outreach student scholarships</b> (currently GREAt Skills and Visionary). The GREAt Skills Scholarship is a £2000 cash scholarship paid to eligible students in their first year of study. The Visionary Scholarship is a £5000 cash scholarship paid to eligible students in their first year of study. In each case participation in Greenwich outreach activities is the main eligibility criteria, with applicants from underrepresented backgrounds prioritised for award. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Non-staff costs</b> £70,000 per annum (£10,000 per annum from philanthropic funding).	Increased take-up of financial support available to widening-access students who have participated in our outreach programmes. Increased number of students who have benefited from our widening-access programmes progressing to our university.	Y – contribute to reduction of on-course financial pressures for eligible IMD Q1 students.
<b>Review and expansion of teacher/school staff partnership stipends.</b> A cash payment of £3000 a year (reviewed on an annual basis) to partner schools to contribute to the cost of administering the partnership with the university. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 0.1 FTE Deputy Head of Outreach, 0.2 FTE Outreach Manager. <b>Non-staff costs:</b> £30,000 per annum.	Enhanced communication and partnership working between the university and key partner schools, contributing to improved outcomes for students.	N

Please see Annex B (Section B.1) for further evidence that supports our access intervention strategy.

There is established and/or emerging evidence for the range of approaches we have chosen to improve access to university for students from areas of low participation in HE. There is evidence supporting the removal of barriers to entry linked to prior attainment, by utilising contextual admissions,<sup>13</sup> and pre- and post-16 outreach activities to support attainment-raising in schools and/or colleges such as academic/soft skills workshops.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, evidence also indicates that varied and sustained interactions, particularly starting with young children, are the most impactful,<sup>15</sup> and we have made provision to build on our existing post-16 sustained programme to offer three new pre-16 sustained programmes of activity.

In addition, evidence suggests that the work we do pre-entry has the potential to positively impact our students' success on-course as well as progression after graduation.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we have also taken the decision to target BAME and the most socio-economically deprived students (IMD Q1 and/or FSM eligible), especially those undertaking non-traditional Level 3 qualifications, through our outreach work to contribute to the provision of information, advice and guidance and university preparedness for students from these backgrounds.

We are also looking to diversify our pathways into and through university to be able to meet the needs of diverse student cohorts, ensuring that there are study options to suit everyone. For example, we know that the cost of undertaking a degree can be a particular barrier to prospective students who are at risk of economic disadvantage,<sup>17</sup> something which employer-funded degree apprenticeships help to alleviate.

## Evaluation of Access Interventions

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Evaluation of impact of pre-16 outreach</b>			
<b>Make it Make Sense (MiMS) Project</b>	Positive impact on school attendance. Positive impact on attainment. Increased awareness and confidence in life/soft skills. Improved knowledge of pathways into HE and employment. Higher number of students from low participation areas applying to HE, and to our university.	Higher Education Tracker (HEAT) data analysis. (Type 1). Pre- and post-workshop/programme surveys using TASO validated scales. (Type 2). Quantitative and qualitative data from teachers relating to attendance, confidence, skills and attainment for students who have participated. (Type 2).	Annual internal report and CACT impact report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>STEM Attainment Project and</b>	Improved subject knowledge skills and attainment.	HEAT data analysis. (Type 1). Pre- and post-workshop/programme surveys using	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/ papers

<sup>13</sup> Vikki Boliver, Stephen Gorard, and Nadia Siddiqui, 'Using Contextual Data to Widen Access to Higher Education', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 25.1 (2021), pp 7–13, doi:10.1080/13603108.2019.1678076; Sophie Spong, Rachel Moreton, and Lindsey Bowes, *Contextual Admissions in London's Higher Education Institutions: A Report for the Greater London Authority by CFE Research*, 2021. [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/contextual\\_admissions\\_in\\_londons\\_higher\\_education\\_institutions\\_se\\_11nov2021.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/contextual_admissions_in_londons_higher_education_institutions_se_11nov2021.pdf) [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>14</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, *Typology of Attainment-Raising Activities Conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review*, 2022. <https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO-attainment-raising-typology-and-rapid-evidence-review.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>15</sup> Adrian P. Burgess, Matthew S. Horton, and Elisabeth Moores, 'Optimising the Impact of a Multi-Intervention Outreach Programme on Progression to Higher Education: Recommendations for Future Practice and Research', *Heliyon*, 7.7 (2021), p. e07518, doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07518.

<sup>16</sup> Dandridge, N. (2017) Working in Partnership: Enabling social Mobility in Higher Education. rep. Universities UK. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/27586/1/working-in-partnership-final.pdf> [accessed 03 May 2024]

<sup>17</sup> Joe Lewis and Paul Bolton, *Equality of Access and Outcomes in Higher Education in England* (House of Commons Library, 31 January 2023). <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9195> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<b>Literacy Attainment Project</b>	Improved enjoyment of and motivation for learning. Higher numbers of students opting to take STEM subjects at Level 3. Higher number of students from low participation areas applying to HE, and to our university.	TASO validated scales. (Type 2). Quantitative and qualitative data from teachers relating to confidence, skills and attainment for students who have participated. (Type 2).	published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>Evaluation of impact of post-16 outreach</b>			
<b>GREAt Skills</b>	More realistic expectation of HE and readiness for success. Improved attainment and completion levels at Level 3. Increased likelihood of progression to HE. Improved on-course attainment.	HEAT and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) Outreach Evaluator data analysis. (Type 1). Pre- and post-workshop/ programme surveys using TASO validated scales. (Type 2). Quantitative and qualitative data from teachers relating to confidence, skills and attainment for students who have participated. (Type 2). Tracking of GREAt Skills participants' attainment as they progress through the university. (Type 2).	As above.
<b>Evaluation of impact of diversifying pathways</b>			
Further development of new pathways	Greater choice and awareness and understanding of choice for students, leading to closer alignment between student interests, career aspirations and lifestyles and course commitments and outcomes.	HEAT and UCAS Outreach Evaluator data analysis. (Type 1). Qualitative feedback from workshop participants and their teachers. (Type 2). Quantitative and qualitative data from teachers relating to confidence, skills and attainment for students who have participated. (Type 2).	As above.

## Student Success Intervention Strategy 1 – improving BAME attainment and reducing gaps

### Objectives and Targets for BAME Attainment

PTS\_1: To reduce our attainment gap between Black and White students from 15% points (2021/22 baseline year) to 7.5% points by 2028/29 (full-time, UK-domiciled, all undergraduate students).

PTS\_2: To reduce our attainment gap between Asian and White students from 12.1% points (2021/22 baseline year) to 5% points by 2028/29 (full-time, UK-domiciled, all undergraduate students).

### Risks to Equality of Opportunity for BAME Attainment

The main risks to opportunity that apply to BAME attainment relate to EORR Risks 6, 7, 8 and 10 and our UoG Risks 1, 2 and 3.

### Specific Activities, Inputs and Outcomes for BAME Attainment

In addition to our whole provider approach to understanding mental health and the BAME awarding gap and the promotion of inclusivity, race awareness and equality (Sections 5.1 and 5.3), below we outline specific targeted activities aimed at tackling the BAME attainment gap.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Changes to assessment, curriculum and support</b>			
<b>Addressing Risks 6 and 7 and UoG Risk 3 – Insufficient academic support and insufficient personal support; ensuring a deeper understanding of the reasons for the BAME awarding gaps</b>			
<b>Further developing the curricula</b> to better reflect and support the lived experience of BAME students.  Incorporating autobiographical reflections and life experiences into the curriculum.  Decolonisation of the content of the curriculum.  Teaching about inclusive professional practice.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  Associate Professor in HE: 0.1 FTE (VC office) with support from Module Leaders equivalent to 5 FTE.	Inclusive and supportive culture embedded in the curriculum.  Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.  BAME awarding gap reduced.	Y – BAME progression.
Promote the use of <b>revised Inclusive Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b> to reflect on effectiveness of modules in delivering an inclusive education.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  1 FTE per annum of module leader time.	Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.  BAME awarding gap reduced.	Y – BAME progression.
Better embed key <b>academic skills</b> into the curriculum to support BAME students who have alternative qualifications.  <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  3 FTE of academic staff time plus 5 FTE of module leader time.	Increased academic skills, networks and ability to set goals among BAME students.  Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.  BAME awarding gap reduced.	Y – BAME progression and IMD attainment.
<b>Revise assessments</b> to suit students entering with different qualifications and experience of assessments.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  Associate Professor in HE: 0.1 FTE (VC office) with support from Module Leaders equivalent to 5 FTE.  <b>Non-staff cost</b>  Exemplars of good practice for assessments.	Reduction of differences in assessment outcomes.  BAME awarding gap reduced.	Y – BAME progression and IMD attainment.
<b>Wellbeing support targeted at BAME students</b>			
<b>Addressing Risk 8 – Mental health (see also whole provider approach for wider support)</b>			
<b>‘Safe Space’ drop-ins and workshops</b>	<b>Staff costs</b>	Students are empowered to report incidents of racism and	Y – BAME progression.



Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Tackling racism, discrimination, and harassment via the creation of drop-ins and workshops delivered by our Report and Support Team. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>0.1 FTE Student Support Adviser, 0.1 FTE Student Support Manager.</b>  <b>Non-staff costs:</b> £28,000 per year (platform cost)	discrimination that happen on and off campus.  Students receive support for the associated impacts on their studies, wellbeing and sense of belonging.	
<b>Supporting a sense of belonging</b>			
<b>Addressing UoG Risk 1 – Ensuring consistency in transition between stages and building a sense of belonging</b>			
<b>‘Living Black at University’</b> Project to support BAME students develop a sense of belonging and community outside of the classroom. <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  0.1 FTE Head of Accommodation Services, 0.1 FTE Accommodation Officer, 0.1 FTE Residential Assistant.	Provision of culturally competent services.  Ensures that students feel a sense of belonging and community within university accommodation.	Y – BAME progression.
Development of <b>targeted support group workshops</b> for BAME students to develop wider connections and support sense of community and of belonging. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  0.1 FTE Senior Student Engagement Officer (projects).	BAME students feel valued.  Students and are more equipped to make connections.  More able to set goals for the future.  More able to identify new and existing support systems available to them to help them to succeed during and after university.	Y – BAME progression.
Targeting of <b>Peer Mentoring Scheme</b> to Asian students. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  1 FTE Senior Student Engagement Officer (projects).	Improved sense of belonging, confidence and self-efficacy, leading to improved engagement and success.  Reduced feelings of imposter syndrome.  Improved networking skills.  Raising career aspirations.	Y – BAME progression (Asian student progression gap)
<b>Ensuring resources and support are better accessed and utilised</b>			
<b>Addressing Risk 10 and UoG Risk 2 – Cost pressures and challenges for students in part-time paid work</b>			
<b>Increase the use of online lectures/resources</b> to support BAME students who have part-time work and caring responsibilities and need opportunities for more flexible working. <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  2 FTE of module leader time.	Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.  BAME awarding gap reduced.	Y – BAME progression and IMD attainment.
<b>Review usage and access and improve targeted promotion of the Studiosity platform</b> to better support BAME students. <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  0.05 FTE of Head of Academic and Digital Skills  <b>Non-staff costs</b>	Participants will have equal or higher outcomes when compared to their White counterparts.  Improve the uptake of Studiosity by BAME students.	Y – BAME progression.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
	£124,184 (platform cost)	Enhance our evidence base for further bespoke interventions.	
<b>Student data project</b> utilising our new Student Lifecycle Management system and Digital Student Centre to identify how many BAME (and IMD Q1/2, FSM) students are engaging with each service, and where multiple services are used and needed, allowing us to better target services and intervene earlier.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b>  0.1 FTE of heads of student support service time.	Access to key data on service usage for staff at the appropriate level within each student support service.  Data is broken down by ethnicity and IMD etc, to better identify gaps (eg in uptake of mental health services).  BAME/IMD awarding gaps reduced.	Y – IMD attainment and IMD and BAME progression, and Access and Continuation for all at-risk groups.

## Evidence Base and Rationale for BAME Attainment Interventions

Please see Annex B (Section B.2) for additional evidence that supports our BAME attainment interventions.

There is established and/or emerging evidence for the range of approaches we have chosen to reduce awarding differences between our BAME and White students. We are taking a holistic view of the BAME awarding gap at the university (Section 5.3), ensuring that our activities target student experiences inside the classroom, such as adapting our assessment approaches and developing the curricula to better reflect the lived experience of BAME students, and outside of the classroom, for example our ‘Living Black’ Project within student accommodation. There is extensive evidence showing that experiences within both of these environments impact student attainment.<sup>18</sup> For more information, see Annex B.2.

It is essential that there is cross intervention between our strategies, to target the risks to equality of opportunity for BAME students across the whole student lifecycle, as ‘the attainment gap does not exist in isolation from other inequities that BAME students face’.<sup>19</sup> In their report, Universities UK and the National Union of Students found that inequalities in graduate outcomes, ‘persist three years after BAME students graduate in comparison with the experiences of White students’.<sup>20</sup>

Our data transformation project includes the development and implementation of our new Student Lifecycle Management (SLM) system and Digital Student Centre. This is a strategic whole provider project (Section 5.6), specifically delivering our ambitions as defined in the Student Success Sub-Strategy. It aims to standardise and modernise our approach to personalised support and student case management. It enables us to introduce real-time information, delivering a 360-degree view of the student over time and empower students to be in control of the support they receive and have easier access to information and arranging support at the point of need. These systems and the data they make available will enable us to better understand which students access student support services. Importantly, this will enable us to see which groups of students do not access support or only access it when it is already too late to identify their support needs and deliver proactive early

<sup>18</sup> Megan Louise Pedler, Royce Willis, and Johanna Elizabeth Nieuwoudt, ‘A Sense of Belonging at University: Student Retention, Motivation and Enjoyment’, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46.3 (2022), pp 397–408, doi:10.1080/0309877X.2021.1955844.

<sup>19</sup> Universities UK and National Union of Students, *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #Closingthegap*, May 2019. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf><https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2024]., p58.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

interventions. We will use this data to design effective interventions aimed at encouraging take-up of services by groups who are facing barriers to seeking support at an early enough point to facilitate success. We will also be implementing findings from reviews that we have already undertaken that have identified inequitable use of our extenuating circumstance procedures and of potential inequities in our assessment and curriculum design.

## Evaluation of BAME Attainment Interventions

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Evaluating changes to curriculum, skills and assessment</b>			
Developing the curricula to better reflect the lived experience of BAME students.	Inclusive culture. Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.	Type 2: compare module gaps before and after for those who have changed curriculum.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in Greenwich GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Promotion of use of Inclusive Curriculum Evaluation Tool.	Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.	Based on strong existing evidence so will not be evaluated.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Embedding of academic skills into curriculum.	Increased academic skills, networks and ability to set goals among BAME students. Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.	Type 2: compare module gaps before and after for those who have changed curriculum.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Revised assessments to suit students entering with different qualifications.	Reduction of gaps in assessment outcomes.	Type 2: compare module gaps before and after for those who have changed assessment.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>Evaluating wellbeing support targeted at BAME students</b>			
Tackling racism, discrimination, and harassment via the creation of 'Safe Space' drop-ins and workshops delivered by our Report and Support Team.	Students are empowered to report incidents of racism and discrimination that happen on and off campus and receive support for the associated impacts on their studies, wellbeing and sense of belonging.	Type 1 and 2 – surveys/focus groups of students who used the service.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>Evaluation of support for transitions and sense of belonging</b>			
'Living Black at University' Project.	Increased understanding of how student experience outside the classroom impacts degree outcomes. Improved sense of belonging and mattering among BAME students.	Type 1 and 2 – surveys/focus groups of students who participated.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.

Development workshops for BAME students.	Students see new possibilities for themselves and their futures.  Students are able to identify existing and new support systems available to them.	Type 1 – participant focus groups.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Targeting of Peer Mentoring Scheme to Asian students.	Improved sense of belonging, confidence and self-efficacy, leading to improved engagement and success. Reduced feelings of imposter syndrome.	Type 1 and 2 – surveys/focus groups of students who participated.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>Evaluation of better utilisation of resources and support</b>			
Increase the use of online lectures/resources.	Increased BAME student engagement with their learning.	Type 2: compare module gaps before and after implementation for those who have added online delivery to their curriculum.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Improve utilisation of Studiosity platform by BAME students.	Improved student outcomes. Reduction in awarding gap. Evidence base for further bespoke interventions. Improve the take-up of Studiosity by BAME and IMD Q1 students.	Type 1 – uptake of BAME students.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Student data project (SLM) and Digital Student Centre data and 'Student at risk dashboard')	Appropriate staff have easier access to data on inclusivity of their service.	Type 1: focus groups with heads of service to evaluate improved insight to service delivery.	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.

## Student Success Intervention Strategy 2 – improving IMD Q1 attainment and reducing gaps

### Objectives and Targets for IMD Q1 Attainment

PTS\_3: To reduce our attainment gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 students from 14% points (2021/22 baseline year) to 6% points by 2028/29 (full-time, UK-domiciled, all undergraduate students).

### Risks to Equality of Opportunity for IMD Q1 Attainment

In addition to the cross-intervention risks mitigated by whole provider initiatives (Section 5) and the interventions outlined in Section 4.2, the main EORR risks for attainment for students from IMD Q1 areas are Risk 10 and UoG Risk 2.

### Specific activities, inputs and outcomes for IMD Q1 attainment

In addition to our whole provider approach to addressing economic hardships (Section 5.4) and cross-intervention projects already outlined in Section 4.2, below we outline additional specific activities aimed at tackling the IMD attainment gap.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Targeted financial support and advice for low-income students</b>			
<b>Addressing Risk 10 and UoG Risk 2 – Cost pressures; and challenges for students undertaking paid work and/or commuting</b>			
<p><b>Bursaries for undergraduate students with low household incomes (&lt;£25,000)</b> including:</p> <p>Accommodation Bursary of £700 reduction in rent for first year of study for new students.</p> <p>Commuter Bursary of up to 50% of monthly commuting costs between home and university up to a maximum of £1,000 per academic year.</p> <p>Digital Access Bursary of up to £300 towards IT equipment and internet connection for new students in their first year of study.</p> <p>The Global Greenwich Bursary of up to £2,000 cash (depending on location) for students undertaking their first approved study abroad year.</p> <p>The Greenwich Bursary of £700 paid as credit on student's Aspire Card to use on resources to enhance their learning experience in their first year of study.</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>Student Finance Manager 0.1 FTE; Funds and Bursaries Manager 1 FTE; Student Finance Officer 1 FTE; Student Finance Administrator 1 FTE.</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>See Fees, Investments and Targets (FIT) document.</p>	<p>Reduction in gaps in student outcomes for students from low-income households compared to middle-income households.</p> <p>Students more likely to achieve a 'good' degree outcome.</p>	Y – BAME attainment.
<p><b>Proactive workshops and resources around managing money</b> and financial wellbeing targeted to bursary and scholarship recipients.</p> <p><b>New activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>Student Finance Advice Manager 0.1 FTE.</p>	<p>Students have the skills and confidence to manage their money effectively.</p> <p>Students less likely to experience the stresses that come with repeated financial hardship.</p> <p>Students feel more able to come forward to ask for help when experiencing financial worries to allow early intervention.</p> <p>Reduced impact on their studies.</p>	Y – BAME attainment.
<p><b>Provision of free 'community meals'</b></p> <p>Targeting of vouchers for free breakfasts or dinners at students who are eligible for FSM.</p> <p>Vouchers are to value of £20 and applications can be made once a term for each academic year of study.</p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.1 FTE Senior Student Engagement Officer (projects).</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£40,000 (cost of meals).</p>	<p>Students less impacted by low income.</p> <p>Less likely to suffer from hunger and poor attention.</p> <p>More able to study and learn effectively.</p> <p>Reduced awarding gap.</p>	Y – BAME attainment.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Evolving activity</b>			
<b>Commuting student project</b> Project to develop a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of our commuter students in order to help them to develop a sense of belonging and ensure they are aware of the support available to them. <b>New activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> Head of Information, Advice and Participation 0.05 FTE.	Commuter students feel a sense of belonging. They are more aware of the support available to them.	Y – BAME attainment.

## Evidence Base and Rationale for IMD Q1 Attainment Interventions

Please see Annex B (Section B.3) for additional evidence that supports these interventions.

We have decided to focus our IMD Q1 interventions predominantly around financial support, given that sector research shows the links between financial hardship and poor mental health which can lead to lower degree outcomes.<sup>21</sup> Students from IMD Q1 backgrounds are more likely to come from low-income households, where parents or caregivers are unable to make the parental contribution recommended by the government to help cover their child's higher education costs and living expenses.<sup>22</sup> As a result, students from IMD Q1 backgrounds are likely to have to work considerable hours each week to cover the essential living costs of being a student. This is likely to impact their attendance and the time available to dedicate to their studies. Students from low-income households have been found to experience considerable and increasing financial stress related to their studies,<sup>23</sup> and we know from research conducted by GSU that the cost-of-living crisis has further exacerbated this issue (see Annex B3 for additional evidence).

It is important to consider the intersectionality between BAME students and students from IMD Q1, as a high proportion of our BAME students come from areas of high deprivation. A report conducted by GSU highlighted that a high number of our BAME students have part-time jobs to afford the cost of going to university.<sup>24</sup>

## Evaluation of IMD Q1 Attainment Interventions

We are currently reviewing the way we evaluate the financial support we offer to students. We intend to evaluate our financial support offer using the OfS Financial Support Toolkit every three years.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Evaluation of targeted financial support and advice for low-income students</b>			

<sup>21</sup> Office for Students, 'Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit - Office for Students' (Office for Students, 2019), Worldwide <<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/>> [accessed 4 June 2024]; Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, 'Financial Support (Post-Entry)' <<https://taso.org.uk/intervention/financial--post-entry/>> [accessed 4 June 2024].

<sup>22</sup> Blackbullion, Lee Elliot Major, and Lynne Condell, *Student Money & Wellbeing 2023: What Is the Cost of Living Crisis Really Costing Students?*, February 2023 <<https://business.blackbullion.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Student-Money-Wellbeing-Report-2023--Blackbullion-1.pdf>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>23</sup> Sian Halliday-Wynes and Nhi Nguyen, *Does Financial Stress Impact on Young People in Tertiary Study? | VOCEDplus, the International Tertiary Education and Research Database*, Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2014). <https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv:64288> (accessed 24.05.2024).

<sup>24</sup> Office for Students, 2023b



Bursaries for students from household incomes of <£25,000.	Measurable improvements in outcomes for target populations between students with household incomes of <£25,000 and students with household incomes of above £25,000.	Monitoring of attainment of students who are in receipt of bursaries. (Type 1). Termly focus groups with bursary recipients. (Type 2). Evaluation using the OfS Financial Support Toolkit. (Type 3).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Proactive workshops and resources around managing money and financial wellbeing targeted at bursary and scholarship recipients.	Bursary and scholarship recipients who engage in the workshops rate their confidence levels at managing their money more highly than recipients who do not. Reduction in repeated hardship applications from workshop attendees.	Impact evaluation to understand whether the money management workshops increase attainment of IMD 1 and 2 students. (Type 2). Monitoring of repeated hardship fund applications. (Type 1). Monitoring participation in workshops. (Type 1).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Community meals.	Increased attendance and engagement, resulting in better attainment.	Monitoring of attainment of students who are in receipt of community meals. (Type 1).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
Commuting student project.	Commuter students will have equal or higher outcomes when compared to non-commuter students.	Monitoring outcomes of commuter students. (Type 1).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.

## Student Success Intervention Strategy 3 – increasing BAME and IMD Q1 student progression into employment and reducing gaps

### Objectives and Targets for BAME and IMD Q1 Student Progression

- PTP\_1: To reduce the gap in progression to graduate employment or further study between Asian and White students from 9% points (2020/21 baseline year) to 3% points by 2028/29 (full-time, UK-domiciled, all undergraduate students).
- PTP\_2: To reduce the gap in progression to graduate employment or further study between IMD Q1 and Q5 students from 16.4% points (2020/21 baseline year) to 6% points by 2028/29 (full-time, UK-domiciled, all undergraduate students).

### Risks to Equality of Opportunity for BAME and IMD Q1 Student Progression

In addition to the cross-intervention risks mitigated by whole provider initiatives (Section 5) and by the interventions already outlined in Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, the main risks for progression for BAME students and those from IMD Q1 areas that are addressed below are Risks 10 and 12.

### Specific Activities, Inputs and Outcomes for BAME and IMD Q1 Progression

In addition to our whole provider approach to supporting Progression (Section 5.5), below we outline specific activities aimed at improving Progression for our main at-risk groups of students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Targeted career mentoring</b>			
<b>Addressing Risk 12 – Progression from HE</b>			
<b>Career mentoring:</b> expanding our mentoring programme and ensuring it is better promoted to students from BAME and IMD Q1 backgrounds in subject areas where we know we have the biggest gaps in Progression outcomes, prioritising and providing additional and tailored engagement opportunities for students with mentors drawn from employer partners and alumni.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 0.3 FTE Career Mentoring Manager, 0.6 FTE Career Mentoring Officers and one full week of support from Alumni and Fundraising team to recruit mentors per annum.  <b>Non-staff costs</b> £18,660 per annum (includes platform).	Increased confidence in navigating the job market. Elevated career ambitions. Clear career plan to obtain graduate-level employment. Improved employability skills and confidence. Enhanced access to professional networks. Greater social and cultural capital.	Y – BAME and IMD continuation and attainment
<b>BAME alumni community:</b> facilitating professional and personal networks, sourced from BAME alumni who reflect graduating student experience, that provide informal mentoring, advice and opportunities for graduating students from BAME backgrounds.  <b>Evolving activity</b>	<b>Staff time</b> 1 x 0.1 FTE Alumni and Fundraising Coordinator.  <b>Non-staff costs</b> £1,000.	Enhanced access to professional networks. Greater social capital. Increased confidence in navigating the job market.	N
<b>Providing targeted support and opportunities for work and study</b>			
<b>Addressing Risk 10 and 12 – Cost pressures and Progression from HE</b>			
<b>New activity</b>  <b>Holistic interview support package:</b> sponsored by university employer partners and alumni, for final-year students from IMD (2019) Q1/low household incomes to overcome financial barriers to pursuing graduate-level interview opportunities.	<b>Staff time</b> 0.1 FTE Head of Employability Education, supported by Employability Advisers and the Alumni and Fundraising team.  <b>Non-staff costs</b> Sponsorship from university employer partners and review of hardship fund eligibility criteria.	Contribution to removal of financial barriers to pursuing graduate-level opportunities. Greater numbers of students from the most deprived backgrounds pursuing graduate-level opportunities.	N
<b>Annual part-time jobs fair:</b> in partnership with local employers to connect students with part-time work opportunities that could provide graduate-level experience and/or lead to graduate employment, including specific pre-application support for BAME students and those from IMD Q1 areas.	Covered by inputs outlined under positive action recruitment intervention.	Increased number of students in part-time work that supports graduate outcomes. Better CVs and evidence for future applications and interview.	N

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<b>Evolving activity</b>			
<p><b>Positive action recruitment and selection</b> for student jobs (internal placements and student ambassador roles and working with our employers to encourage adoption of the same), including targeted promotion, pre-application support and guaranteed interviews for BAME students and those from IMD Q1 areas in subject areas where we know we have the biggest gaps in progression outcomes.</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.2 FTE Jobshop Manager, 0.4 FTE Jobshop Officer, 0.2 FTE Placements and Internships Manager, 0.6 FTE Placements and Internships Officer, 0.4 FTE Employer Engagement Advisers.</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£6,000 per annum.</p>	<p>Greater representation of identified cohorts in the student ambassador scheme and internal placements.</p> <p>More 'study friendly' work opportunities for students in financial need.</p> <p>Reduced financial barriers to study and pursuing opportunities to enhance employability and gain graduate employment.</p> <p>Greater numbers of target cohort achieving graduate-level positions.</p>	Y – BAME and IMD attainment
<p><b>Postgraduate Task Force:</b> Involving representatives from academic and professional services, tasked with raising the profile of postgraduate study opportunities, with specific consideration given to the needs of Asian students and those from IMD Q1 areas. Group to be established and action plan agreed 2024/25 with the plan to become fully operational from 2025/26.</p> <p><b>Evolving activity</b></p>	<p><b>Staff time</b></p> <p>0.1 FTE Deputy Head of Recruitment, 0.1 FTE Recruitment Manager, 0.3 FTE Recruitment/Comms Lead, 0.5 FTE Recruitment Officer, 0.2 Recruitment Assistant</p> <p><b>Non-staff costs</b></p> <p>£250 per annum.</p> <p>Additional staff time and non-staff costs expected to arise as action plan is operationalised.</p>	<p>Greater awareness of and confidence to pursue varied postgraduate study opportunities.</p> <p>Increased progression to postgraduate study.</p>	N

## Evidence Base and Rationale for BAME and IMD Q1 Student Progression

Please see Annex B (Section B.4) for additional evidence that supports these interventions.

Interventions to address our progression gaps have been designed on the basis that career planning, relevant work experience and social and cultural capital are all key to achieving graduate level outcomes. Research on social and cultural capital has shown that, while inequality persists, this can be mitigated by institutional measures. For example, Mishra's systematic review found that successful individuals from marginalised backgrounds utilised peer and staff networks within their institution to enhance their information-related social capital.<sup>25</sup> Bunce et al identify relatedness, competence and autonomy as three key unmet needs of BAME students.<sup>26</sup> BAME career mentoring helps students form the networks

<sup>25</sup> Shweta Mishra, 'Social Networks, Social Capital, Social Support and Academic Success in Higher Education: A Systematic Review with a Special Focus on "Underrepresented" Students', *Educational Research Review*, 29 (2020), p. 100307, doi:10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100307.

<sup>26</sup> Louise Bunce and others, 'Experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Students in Higher Education: Applying Self-Determination Theory to Understand the BME Attainment Gap', *Studies in Higher Education*, 46.3 (2021), pp. 534–47, doi:10.1080/03075079.2019.1643305.

identified in Mishra<sup>27</sup> as well as providing community (which assists with relatedness) and help through their degree (improving competence). It also helps students forge their own path in professional and personal development, contributing to autonomy.

In-depth knowledge of our own student body, gained from research led by academic colleagues and GSU, reinforces how significant financial pressures are in creating barriers for students at risk of economic disadvantages, affecting their ability to pursue opportunities to enhance their graduate employability prospects. This has been greatly exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. Financial pressures, which lead students to overburden themselves with paid employment while studying,<sup>28</sup> can also act as a barrier to this group of students, preventing them from being able to fully engage in the available employability, education, or placement opportunities. For students who rely on a regular income from part-time work, taking on a fixed-term internship or placement that does not pay or pay sufficiently, may be perceived as a threat to their ability to maintain their ongoing part-time employment.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, student focus groups confirm that attending interviews for graduate opportunities towards the end of their degree courses can present challenges for students who are economically disadvantaged: meeting the cost of travel to and from the interview, purchasing suitable interview wear or even being able to find a private space with reliable internet connection for online interviews, can all act as barriers to equality of opportunity in progression outcomes.

Alongside graduate employment outcomes, we have identified differences in the rate of progression to postgraduate study between our Asian students and IMD Q1 students, compared to students from other ethnic backgrounds and IMD Q5 respectively. Our student consultation also revealed that our students perceive a lack of encouragement and information in relation to postgraduate study options. Consequently, we also seek to address postgraduate progression for students from these groups in our intervention strategy.

### Evaluation of Interventions for BAME and IMD Q1 Student Progression

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Evaluation of targeted career mentoring</b>			
<b>Career mentoring by employers and alumni</b>	Increased confidence in navigating the job market. Elevated career ambitions. Clear career plan to obtain graduate-level employment. Improved employability skills and confidence. Enhanced access to professional networks. Greater social and cultural capital.	Graduate outcome results cross-referenced against participation in career mentoring programme. (Type 2). Annual career registration questionnaire cross-referenced against participation in career mentoring programme. (Type 2). Pre- and post-mentoring surveys to assess social and cultural capital gains. (Type 2).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.
<b>Evaluation of targeted support and opportunities for work and study</b>			
<b>Positive action in recruitment and interviews, and postgraduate study support packages</b>	Greater representation of identified cohorts in the student ambassador scheme and internal placements. More 'study friendly' work opportunities for students in financial need.	Graduate outcomes cross-referenced against participation in the student ambassador scheme of work experience opportunities brokered by the employability team. (Type 2).	Annual internal report as well as relevant university web pages/publications/papers published in GALA and/or shared at sector conferences.

<sup>27</sup> Mishra.

<sup>28</sup> Office for Students, 2023b

<sup>29</sup> Lizzie Rodulson, Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Sophie Harrison, Lizzie, Hilary Orpin and others, *The Student Stories Project: Final Report* (Greenwich Students' Union & University of Greenwich, 2023).

	Reduced financial barriers to study and pursuing opportunities to enhance employability and gain graduate employment. Greater numbers of target cohort achieving graduate-level positions.	Quantitative data analysis of demographic profile of students successfully appointed as student ambassadors or roles brokered by the employability team. (Type 2). Annual career registration questionnaire cross-referenced against participation in work experience opportunities brokered by the employability team. (Type 2). Student surveys and focus groups. (Type 2).	
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## Whole Provider Approach to Access and Participation

Widening participation is core to our values and mission, and many of our risks to equality of opportunity are addressed through our whole provider interventions, outlined below, that complement the specific interventions outlined in Section 4 above.

## Whole Provider Approach to Mental Health and Disability

We have been early adopters of a whole-university approach to mental health, co-creating our first university-wide Health and Wellbeing strategy with students in 2019. We are part of the University Mental Health Charter Programme and are actively working towards achieving the University Mental Health Charter Award within the next APP period. We work with a number of external mental health organisations as partners, for example with 'Time to talk' we provide workshops to support students to cope with exam stress. Our mental health work has spanned the development of personal toolkits to manage wellbeing alongside multidisciplinary mental health and wellbeing services to directly support students in need. To ensure that all students benefit from consideration of wellbeing, we have embedded wellbeing into the curriculum. In 2019, we took part in an Advance HE project on this topic and went on to embed the expectation in our curriculum framework in 2021. When designing the curriculum, we ensure that it includes teaching students about wellbeing and that the course and assessment design takes into account wellbeing issues. This expectation is embedded in all our approvals processes for new courses. We have supported over 800 members (almost 40%) of staff to undergo mental health first aid training and this has enabled support to be delivered as part of personal tutoring. Personal tutors also take part in CPD on how to support students who are in distress and how to use coaching techniques to support self-efficacy. Our postgraduate certificate (PGCert) for new lecturers includes embedding wellbeing in the curriculum as a core topic.

We are pleased to have made progress in relation to the continuation targets for disabled students and disabled students disclosing a mental health condition from our previous APP, and it is because of this progress that we have not taken these targets forward into this plan. However, we continue to recognise the risks to equality of opportunity our disabled students face, and our commitment to this group of students has not been dampened. We are developing our Disabled Student Commitment, to make the step change necessary to create a more inclusive higher education environment for everyone. Our disabled students are supported by a unique, first in sector scheme, Support Through AccessAbility, Retention and Transition (STAART), which spans the whole student lifecycle. The significant positive impact this has on our students was recognised in 2021 by a Levelling Up Universities Award.

## Whole Provider Approach to Access

We will continue to grow our diverse student body through targeted activities to widen access from POLAR4 regions (see 4.1) and through the ongoing expansion of diverse and flexible new pathways. In addition to the targeted measures outlined above, we were successful in securing £1.2 million of funding from the OfS to grow our Level 6 apprenticeship provision, and

to specifically diversify the profile of students undertaking degree apprenticeships to include more students who are BAME, disabled and from IMD Q1 and 2 areas. This supports our already established whole-provider strategic commitment outlined in the University Strategy 2030 to grow the number of apprenticeships offered at the university. To support this expansion, we are also creating a new apprenticeships support and management team consisting of 17 FTE members of staff.

We understand the importance of ensuring that, from pre-16 and all through their student journey, students are provided with the support and skills they need to progress and have a genuine feeling of belonging to the university. Our welcome (GREFest) and onboarding processes reflect these aims, and we continue to develop interventions to enhance digital, academic and mathematical skills for students at risk (eg FSM, BAME, IMD, alternative qualifications) as part of our welcome and personal tutoring framework. We are committed to reviewing and changing our welcome activities (GREFest) annually, to ensure that the experiences of different groups of students are positive and are suitably adapted to the different needs of these groups. We recognise that all students need support each year as they transition into the next stage of their student journey.

## **Whole Provider Approach to BAME Gaps and Inclusivity**

We have adopted a whole provider approach to reducing our BAME awarding gap, which is a key element of our University Strategy 2030 and our Student Success Sub-Strategy, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Provost and our Pro Vice-Chancellor Education. Our whole provider strategic commitment to being an inclusive university drives our ambition to fully close all awarding gaps. Eliminating the BAME awarding gap, which stood at 13.1% in 2021/22, is a central focus of all our activity. It is one of the university's nine key performance indicators (KPIs) and is seen as a collective responsibility by the university's leadership. Our BAME Awarding Stakeholder Group has undertaken a range of activities to develop a more in-depth understanding of the reasons for differences, and concluded its work prior to the start of our new APP. All faculties have local action plans in line with the priorities outlined in our institutional Student Success Sub-Strategy, and each school is required to deliver a 'plan on a page' to outline their key priorities and how they are addressing the awarding gaps within their area. Our whole provider strategic commitment to being an inclusive university drives our ambition to fully close all awarding gaps.

Aligned to this, our Race Action Plan 2021–2026 sets out what we will do to achieve long-lasting change for our students and staff by eliminating structural, institutional, and systemic racism in our university. We confirmed our intention to submit for the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (bronze award) in November 2022 with a planned November 2025 submission. We are currently building an evidence-based framework to ensure thorough knowledge of our staff and students to develop our action plan through gathering and analysing quantitative and qualitative data. To support our insight, we will be undertaking a staff and student survey in April/May 2024.

We are committed to being an inclusive employer and have a strategic aim to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion by 2030. This includes the recruitment of a more inclusive leadership team who more closely reflect our student body: 26% of our leadership team come from a BAME background, compared to a sector-average of 7.7%.<sup>30</sup> Our staff body is already proudly diverse, with 5% of staff declared as disabled, 30% BAME, 6% LGBT+ and 57% female, compared to sector-averages of 6% disabled, 16% BAME and 54% female. Many of our staff come from non-traditional academic backgrounds, having been first-in-family to go to university themselves and/or having entered the academic community from a practice background.<sup>31</sup>

The CPD available to staff at the university reflects this commitment. For example, our BAME leadership programme (LEAP into Leadership) has been launched to support aspiring leaders from BAME backgrounds, equipping them with essential skills that will facilitate career advancement and progression into higher-ranking roles. We are also committed to delivering race-related training for all staff and students across the university so our whole community have a better understanding on race-related issues and are able to reflect on their own personal impact in relation to achieving race equality at the university. We are committed to ensuring staff receive training on the best use of inclusive practice and language in their teaching materials

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<sup>30</sup> Advance HE, *Equality + Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2022*, 2022. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-reports-2022> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>31</sup> Rodulson and others.



and delivery, and we are committed to ensuring students are exposed to as many positive BAME role models as possible via invited talks and the use of more diverse and better representative examples in course materials. This builds on prior work to decolonise the curriculum as well as our research and knowledge exchange activities.

## **Whole Provider Approach to Supporting Students at Risk of Economic Disadvantage**

We tailor our hardship funds, bursary and scholarship provision, and the application process, where applicable, to ensure that financial support reaches students who are most in need. Our Cost-of-Living Working Group was set up to monitor the impacts of financial pressures on our students and to design specific interventions to assist those students who are most impacted.

We offer a range of bursaries, many of which are automatically paid to the student if they meet the eligibility criteria, which includes low household income. This ensures that students get what they are entitled to and reduces the burden of having to make an application. The university has partnered with John Smiths Group to deliver our £700 Greenwich Bursary via an Aspire@Greenwich Card to new full-time undergraduate students entering Year 0 or 1 who have a household income of below £25,000 and meet our eligibility criteria outlined on our web page. The funds can be spent on a range of essential learning resources and eligible students also have access to a range of resources via the Aspire Platform which provide a range of information on managing their finances while at university.

Our Alumni and Fundraising team concentrate on securing philanthropic support for students at risk of economic disadvantage and recently set up the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship (architecture), which provides a cash or fee waiver (worth £18,500) for the two-year Architecture Part II qualification with mentoring and placement opportunities provided by alumni, supporters, and partners. It is available to Black students from the most deprived areas. Through further gift campaigns, we aim to grow the number of Stephen Lawrence Scholars over the course of this plan. We are also part of the Preferred Partnership Scheme with the Aziz Foundation, which enables British Muslim students at UoG undertaking eligible courses of study at postgraduate level to apply to the Aziz Foundation for financial support.

Students who need additional financial assistance while studying with us can receive support in a number of ways, for example by applying for our hardship fund or food voucher scheme. To ensure an easy process for students who are in financial need, we have moved our hardship fund and food voucher application forms online and work is underway to incorporate them into our Digital Student Centre to make this process easier for students. We have dedicated cost-of-living web pages for students that outline the support available to them during their studies if they are struggling with financial hardship. Following feedback from GSU, we will be working with module leaders to ensure that the unanticipated costs of studying eg field trips and project materials for creative courses are more visible to prospective students. We have also updated our extenuating circumstances policy for assessment to include the potential impact of cost-of-living factors.

We advertise our proactive workshops and webinars on a range of student finance topics, from understanding their student loan to budgeting and financial wellbeing, via our website throughout the year and work closely with GSU to ensure we are targeting the money concerns that are impacting our students the most.

## **Whole Provider Approach to Partnerships that Support Progression into Employment**

Partnerships are at the core of our approach to achieving equality of opportunity in access, success, and progression. Consequently, we established a partnership hub in 2022, which coordinates partnership working across the university, particularly ensuring that all partnerships are developed to have maximum benefit for our student body. This has already resulted in enhancements to our curriculum, financial support packages for students and graduate opportunities. For example, RSK Group are offering five £5,000 scholarships to undergraduate students on identified science, engineering and built environment courses at our university for students throughout the duration of our current memorandum of agreement running until 2026.

Partnerships also benefit from the work undertaken by the employability team, and others, to mitigate disparities in progression opportunities between the most and least disadvantaged. A recent project examining this issue involved one of our law academics. It revealed that of the 151 staff surveyed in one city law firm, over 79% of lawyers were white, and of the

72% of lawyers educated in the UK, only 52% had attended state schools. Only 46% of vacation schemes places were taken by state school educated university students.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service, the Metropolitan Police and law firms such as Womble Bond Dickinson, our School of Law and Criminology offer an established and growing employment mentoring programme. It involves sustained mentoring for students from backgrounds underrepresented in the legal profession.

## **Whole Provider Approach to Digital Enhancement**

Our Student Success Sub-Strategy and Digital Enabling Strategy set out our approach to enhancing our student experience for all our students, an important part of which is the Student Lifecycle Management system, a sector-leading self-access platform, launched in 2023. The Digital Student Centre also improves the speed and quality of information students receive as well as facilitating more proactive and personalised student support. Our students now have a single space to access information and find answers to their queries. It is accessible at any time of the night or day on any digital device and colleagues from across the university collate, track, and respond to each query. Colleagues accessing the system use improved insights, including real-time student feedback to improve our services. By the end of the project, the Digital Student Centre will be able to provide more complex and detailed support solutions in the areas of finance, disability, mental health, and wellbeing.

## **Whole Provider Collaboration in the Development of this Access and Participation Plan**

Our APP not only reflects our institution-wide strategic commitments and associated action plans, but our approach to the production of this plan has been collaborative and inclusive and contributes to the furtherance of a whole provider approach to its execution, building on established practices and processes. We created an Access and Participation Plan Task and Finish Group made up of academic and professional service colleagues from across the institution, including those responsible for student-facing teams, and colleagues from finance, as well representatives from GSU. In addition to the student consultation outlined below, alumni and staff networks, including our BAME and disabled staff networks, have been consulted as well as the EDI race advisers leading on the Race Action Plan. Our University Widening Participation Committee, Student Success Board, who formally oversee our APP and Student Success Sub-Strategy, as well as our Vice-Chancellor's Executive have all endorsed our plan, which has been approved by our Academic Council and Governing Body. Together, we have created and agreed this plan and as a result we are all committed to delivering the objectives we have set out to achieve to address risks to equality of opportunity within our institution, and we are confident we can do so through our collective efforts.

## **Student Consultation During the Development of the Plan**

We are proud of the university's relationship with GSU and working in partnership with them is an integral part of the development of any new initiatives for students. The head of advocacy and policy at GSU and the GSU president are both members of our University Widening Participation Committee (UWPC), the APP Monitoring Sub-group and the APP Task and Finish Group. Regular meetings between the staff members responsible for drafting the plan and GSU were held. Consideration was given to the best times within the academic year to consult with students to ensure the best possible engagement and representation from our target groups.

At the beginning of our planning for our new APP, we worked in collaboration with the GSU head of advocacy and policy to design a three-phase APP consultation plan which outlined how the university would work in partnership with them to deliver the student consultation. This consultation plan was agreed by the UWPC.

Phase 1 took place in October 2023 and involved running five co-delivered workshops throughout the month with students from our APP target groups. The purpose of the workshops was to gain student insight and give them the opportunity to input into the interventions that they believe to be most impactful based on the initial assessment of performance data. These workshops were co-delivered with a student representative and students participating in the workshops were

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<sup>32</sup> Carol Withey, 'Online Mentoring Programmes: Addressing the Graduate Skills Gap and Lack of Diversity in Legal Recruitment' (presented at the Association of Law Teachers Annual Conference, 2023). <http://lawteacher.ac.uk/event-resources/annual-conference/> [accessed 24 May 2024].

provided with a briefing beforehand to understand the context of the APP to ensure they had the information they needed to enable them to make meaningful contributions. Workshop participants were paid for their time to ensure accessibility of this opportunity for students in our APP target groups.

A report of outcomes from phase one of the student consultation was provided to the UWPC and to the APP Task and Finish Group. The formal mechanisms for feeding the findings into the plan and building the feedback into the design of our university-specific risks, objectives and APP intervention strategies were agreed. The three university risks were largely informed by this consultation.

The second phase of the student consultation involved employing student staff on a part-time basis to support the drafting of the plan. These student staff were managed by GSU and provided with a clear job description. They received a detailed induction outlining the scope of APP, the EORR, an overview of the data, including the risks that have been identified as relevant to our context, and their responsibilities around supporting the development of the plan. Their responsibilities included collating further student feedback, discussing proposed APP interventions with students to gain their views and actively participating in APP workshops to ensure the student voice was included throughout the final version of the plan. We aimed to treat student staff as equal partners throughout the process and their input and feedback was incorporated into the plan.

Phase 3 of the student consultation will take place following the approval of the plan. It is essential that students continue to be involved in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of agreed interventions and continue to be appropriately remunerated for this. Responsibility for ensuring this requirement is met will sit with each intervention project lead. To ensure a consistent approach and implementation of this requirement, we have established a red, amber and green (RAG) rating of all agreed interventions to indicate where students are co-creating and delivering and any areas of risks, based on Cathy Bovill's Ladder of Student Participation.<sup>33</sup>

## **Student Involvement in Monitoring and Governance of the Plan**

The monitoring and governance of the plan, and discussions about capacity (Risk 11) is overseen by the Student Success Board (SSB), and Academic Council, and then through to the University Governing Body. The plan has been developed by our UWPC and been formally approved by the SSB, Council and the Governing Body. Each of these committees and the Governing Body has student representation on them along with representatives from academic and professional services, ensuring we adopt a whole university approach. During the period of the plan, SSB will have oversight of the delivery, reporting progress and any delivery risks into the wider governance structure.

## **Evaluation of Interventions and Effectiveness of the Plan**

The University of Greenwich is establishing the Student Success Evaluation Centre (SSEC), which will be fully in place in time for the beginning of this plan in 2025/26, with initial funding for a dedicated workforce of two FTE core staff. In broad terms, SSEC aims to: 1. Deliver and support student success evaluations in collaboration with internal and external partners, 2. Facilitate an inclusive, collaborative, and participatory evaluative culture, and 3. Enhance the evidence and impact of student success interventions through the internal and external dissemination and application of evaluation findings. This will be an exciting evolution of our approach to evaluation, building upon and further formalising the excellent work happening across the university.

The new centre is a direct response to the OfS call for more evaluation but is also rooted in the results of our evaluation self-assessment and our institutional ambitions to embed evidence-informed decision-making across both our APP and delivery of our wider university strategy. While we have successfully undertaken evaluations in the past, which have informed the design and review of our APP interventions, our evaluation self-assessment (using the OfS toolkit) identified the need to

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<sup>33</sup> C. Bovill and C. J. Bulley, 'A Model of Active Student Participation in Curriculum Design: Exploring Desirability and Possibility', in *Improving Student Learning (ISL) 18: Global Theories and Local Practices: Institutional, Disciplinary and Cultural Variations.*, ed. by C. Rust (Oxford Brookes University: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, 2011), pp. 176–88.

accelerate the development of a broader evaluative culture, improve the dissemination of research/evaluation outputs, and better coordinate pedagogical research across the institution to benefit from alignment to our APP priorities.

In addition to our new centre, we have already taken significant steps in strengthening our approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. To empower evaluation of initiatives across the university, we have established the Pedagogic Research Special Interest Group, which brings together mainly academic colleagues from across the institution (with a membership of over 100 colleagues) as a learning community around pedagogic research and evaluation. Aligned to this we established the Pedagogic Pilot Fund, which has awarded £40,000 across nine projects that sought to implement, trial or evaluate evidence-based approaches to enhance aspects of student outcomes and their success. We also recently participated in the TASO-commissioned and Ipsos-supported programme to develop theories of change for pre-16 attainment-raising initiatives, and all our APP project leads have been taken through a bespoke training programme on developing enhanced theories of change. While we will look to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods in future evaluations, we see theory-driven evaluations as a useful methodological framework for facilitating organisational learning and continuous improvement.

We have been using the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit for a number of years and it has evolved internally to be a respected assessment of the impact of student bursaries with associated review processes deliberately timed to align with the availability of data analysis. We are represented on TASO's Evaluation Advisory Group and are currently exploring the use of TASO's validated survey scales as a means of strengthening our Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence. Looking forward, we are seeking to ensure that evaluation recommendations and findings are embedded into our annual planning and budgeting processes as well as our already established APP governance processes. We are also amending our internal research repository to make it easier to disseminate research findings.

Evaluation has been assessed and built into each of our intervention strategies. This is all part of our institutional drive to design in evaluation as part of the planning phase for key interventions, whether it be APP-related and/or linked to our wider university strategy. We will use a combination of OfS Type 1 (narrative), Type 2 (empirical enquiry) and Type 3 (causality) evidence in evaluating our intervention strategies, with an emphasis on strengthening our Type 2 evidence and adding more Type 3 evaluation where appropriate. To this end, our new SSEC will have capacity and capability to undertake statistical analysis, and this will be complemented by further investment in our business intelligence function.

To enhance our foundations for improved data analysis and quantitative research, our Data Transformation Project, which is currently underway, will be reviewing our data landscape, exploring data siloes and putting in place a data strategy that will help us integrate and share data across functional areas. This will make data available for use in evaluations in a way that has not been possible in the past.

With regard to student participation, although we actively consult with students on APP-related matters and seek their views as 'beneficiary' stakeholders when undertaking evaluations, we see our new APP and supporting SSEC as a landmark opportunity to more fully embrace participatory research approaches. Inspired by citizen-led monitoring initiatives, something commonly seen as part of the monitoring of the sustainable development goals in the international development sector, we will develop a model of student-led participatory monitoring and evaluation that treats students as active participants and incorporates action research into our regular cycles of review, reflection, and learning.

## **Provision of Financial Information to Students**

We use a range of approaches to communicate information about the financial implications of undertaking a degree at UoG to prospective students or applicants and their families, caregivers, or supporters where applicable. Each course has its own webpage, and this includes the tuition fee for each full-time year of study, any specific on-course costs, accommodation costs and financial support available, this is updated regularly as required. Furthermore, more detailed on-course financial support for which students may be eligible, such as bursaries, scholarships, or the hardship fund, is available on open access pages on our website (Section 5.4).

However, we understand that navigating the world of student finance is not easy, particularly for students without familial HE experiences. Consequently, pre-entry (and often pre-application) our Outreach team offer university finance talks and workshops which cover the costs and options for financing a degree, in addition to financial planning guidance and student loan repayment information. Similar talks also feature in all our Open Days as well as the provision of fees and finance information at applicant days and other opportunities to engage with the university pre-entry, including our Instagram Live and webinar series, for example. We have a dedicated prospective student and applicant enquiry phone line and LiveChat service, operational during working hours Monday to Friday. It is staffed by a team of student staff trained to answer fees and finance queries and/or to direct more complicated queries to expert members of staff, as necessary. Finally, we have an established prospective student and applicant digital communications plan, whereby information is conveyed via email and text message through our customer relationship management system. It covers university costs and financial support opportunities, including personalised communication campaigns for students from widening participation backgrounds who are eligible for bespoke financial support packages.

Our tuition fee policies are published on our website and our dedicated fees and finance web pages outline the support that is available to students while they are studying with us. These web pages are reviewed each year to ensure they are clear and accessible to students.

The Digital Student Centre platform ensures that information on fees and financial support is available to students in a variety of different ways once they have registered at the university. Firstly, students have access to hundreds of articles on the topic of fees and financial support that have been created by subject matter experts within the Fees and Funding Team. The Digital Student Centre is available to students 24/7, 365 days a year and students can get an immediate answer to their question by typing it into the search engine to bring up articles that match their need. They can also look at FAQs which ranges from information on payment plans to liability dates and maintaining financial wellbeing. Secondly, students can book appointments with a student fees and funding adviser and book onto money workshops via the Digital Student Centre.

## Annex A: Assessment of Performance

### Executive Summary

Our analysis has interrogated both OfS and internal data and utilised a range of statistical techniques to assess student outcomes across the whole student lifecycle. Exploration of differences across student characteristics and of intersectionality has revealed gaps in outcomes of varying significance. The most significant – in terms of size of disparity and size of population – and persistent have been prioritised for action through our intervention strategies. These include:

- i. **The number of students from low participation areas** – our high student intake from the London catchment area, where participation in HE rates are traditionally higher, means our proportion of students from low participation areas (as defined by POLAR4 and TUNDRA Q1 and Q2) is relatively low. Our Medway Campus, however, does offer an access route for students from low participation areas in Kent and our two London campuses do attract students from the limited number of low participation areas in London. We have therefore targeted our access intervention strategy on increasing the number of students from low participation areas.
- ii. **BAME attainment** – analysis shows that there is a sizeable, statistically significant, and persistent gap between the attainment of our BAME students in comparison to White students. This represents one of our most significant gaps in student outcomes, with analysis showing that level of deprivation and prior entry qualifications also contribute to further widen disparity gaps. This has therefore been prioritised as an intervention strategy with specific targets aimed at reducing the gaps between Black and White students and Asian and White students, given the larger cohort sizes required for monitoring purposes.
- iii. **Attainment of those from deprived areas (IMD Q1)** – alongside BAME attainment, analysis shows a large and persistent gap in attainment outcomes between those from the most and least deprived areas (IMD Q1 vs 5). We have therefore selected this as the focus of a specific intervention strategy.
- iv. **Progression (to employment or further study) of Asian students** – breaking down progression outcomes by ethnic groups reveals that, while outcomes for some groups such as Black students have improved, there remains a substantial gap between our Asian and White students which also greatly exceeds sector average. Our assessment has revealed important subject-by-subject dynamics at play in the varying progression outcomes by ethnic group.
- v. **Progression (to employment or further study) of students from deprived areas (IMD Q1)** – our assessment shows a significant and persistent gap in progression outcomes between students from the most and least deprived areas. This mirrors a similar gap at sector level, but our gap is larger given our students from the least deprived areas (IMD Q5)

outperform the sector average – our students from the most deprived areas have outcomes similar to those at sector level.

- vi. **Part-time students** – this cohort makes up only 4% of our student population and, due to the small numbers involved, many data points on student outcomes are either suppressed and/or show substantial year-on-year variation. Analysis across multiple years of data does indicate the presence of significant gaps in some student lifecycle stages. To address this, we are therefore integrating consideration of part-time student outcomes across all our priorities and intervention strategies.

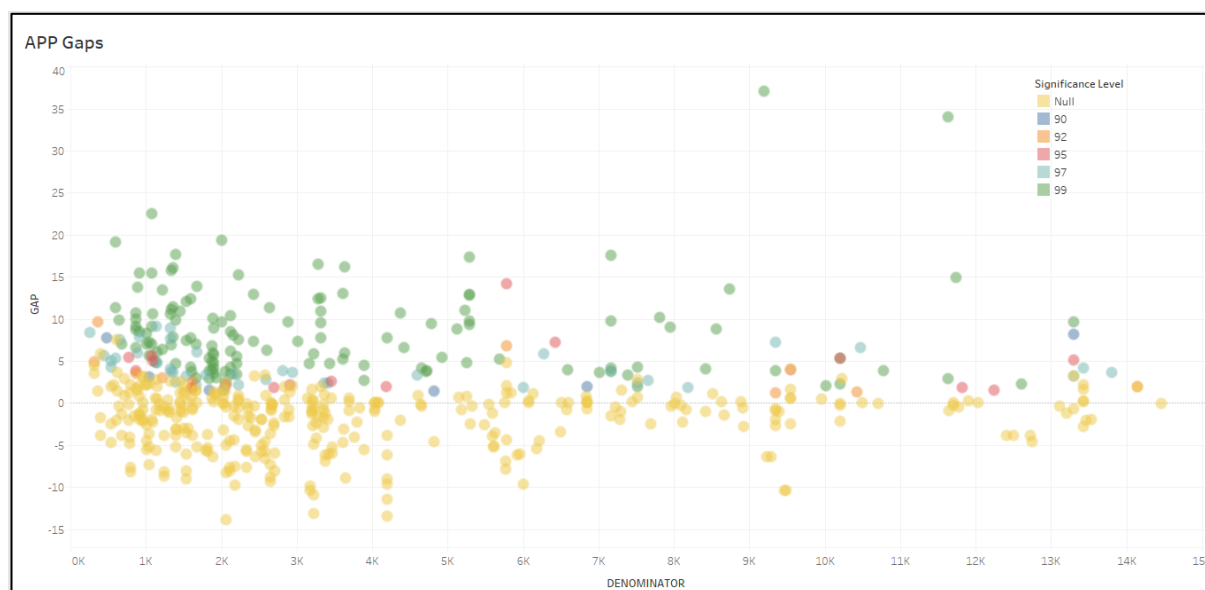
Our analysis of the continuation and completion lifecycle stages shows that, where gaps exist, they are not as sizeable or persistent as in our attainment and progression outcomes. For example, variation in continuation outcomes across all ethnic groups is just 3% points compared to over 15% points in attainment and progression. In general, our gaps in continuation and completion tend to be smaller or comparable to sector trends. In some cases, such as the completion gaps between ‘young’ and ‘mature’ and those declaring and not declaring a disability, they have reduced significantly. While we will continue our efforts to reduce any gaps in these areas, based on our assessment of our most significant and persistent gaps, they have not been prioritised as the focus of our intervention strategies.

## A.1 Overall Approach to Assessment

The assessment of performance was led by the university’s Planning and Statistics Directorate and involved in-depth analysis of the latest external OfS and internal data as well as consideration of a range of historical analyses. The process was an iterative one beginning with an evaluation of our previous gaps and targets and interrogation of the OfS dataset – using differing statistical confidence levels and examination of each student lifecycle stage – to identify our most significant and persistent disparities in student outcomes. Findings were shared with the core Access and Participation team as well as key stakeholders and collaboratively interpreted in order to generate insights and steer further investigation. This iterative process enabled focused deep dives into our highest priority areas and informed the development of our intervention strategies.

Given small student cohort sizes and high year-on-year variability for some of these cohorts, particularly during the course of the Covid pandemic, initial filtering of the OfS dataset began by looking at aggregate data over the last four years. All recorded gaps were plotted according to size of the population and gap in outcomes and further analysed by the level of statistical significance of the gap. This is shown below in Figure A1. The one exception to this was analysis of the access lifecycle stage, which was assessed separately in terms of the gaps in proportion of entrants compared to sector average.

**Figure A1: Initial filtering of gaps in student outcomes categorised by size of population, gap in % points and level of statistical significance**



Aggregate data over the last four years was taken as an initial proxy for there being a persistent and significant gap over the time period. Analysis then focused on those gaps with the highest levels of statistical confidence which helped to identify



persistent gaps affecting large student cohorts and larger gaps affecting smaller student cohorts. Before final prioritisation, each significant gap at the four-year average level was broken down into its constituent years in order to analyse its historical trend. This acted as both a data sense check (eg identification of any outlier years that may be unduly affecting the four-year average) and enabled us to see whether it was an improving or worsening trajectory. This was then assessed against the effectiveness of any interventions we had focused on those areas within the time period. This led to a number of areas that were prioritised for data deep dives with interrogation shaped by internal stakeholders and consideration of factors in the EORR, particularly where we could match these to internal data points (eg commuter students and prior qualifications).

Data deep dives entailed bespoke statistical analysis<sup>34</sup> – particularly to explore intersectionality – and interrogation of both raw individualised OfS and internal data in order to enrich the data analysis through the inclusion of additional data points. We also incorporated subject-level breakdowns as we are aware that some of our gaps result from the differing make-up of our student body across subject areas (eg we have higher proportions of ‘mature’ students in healthcare and teaching courses with more direct routes to graduate destinations, meaning they outperform ‘young’ students on progression outcomes). We paid particular attention to intersectionality in our analysis with various statistical models developed to test whether specific gaps resulted from the additive effect of students experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage (ie the gaps were a sum of various parts) or if interaction effects resulted from those intersections to produce gaps that were greater than the sum of their parts (ie different forms of disadvantage interact to create larger gaps than would be expected on their own).

It should be noted that initial filtering focused on our undergraduate full-time student population as this makes up 94% of our level and mode of study within the OfS dataset (the remainder being 4% part-time undergraduate and 2% apprenticeships). However, we were historically aware of disparities in outcomes for our smaller part-time student body – including in our previous APP – and so this was subject to separate analysis (Section A3). Due to small cohort numbers, extremely low levels of statistical significance and the suppression of results in the OfS dataset, a different filtering process was used for part-time students and then followed up with analysis of internal data.

## **A2. Analysis of Performance of Full-Time Cohorts**

### **A2.1 Access Performance**

#### **A2.1.1 Above Benchmark Performance in Access**

The University of Greenwich has a diverse student intake regularly ranking in the top 25 of providers for social inclusion.<sup>35</sup> OfS data for the 2021/22 intake shows that 58% of our intake were of Asian, Black, Mixed, or Other ethnicity (internally we refer to this as our BAME population) which is 23% points more than the sector average.<sup>36</sup> Nearly 60% of our intake also comes from the most deprived areas, 14% points more than the sector average<sup>37</sup> and a third of our intake has been eligible for FSM which is again 14% points more than the sector.<sup>38</sup> We have been steadily increasing our numbers of care leavers and have the seventh highest intake across English HEIs according to the latest official statistics.<sup>39</sup>

Across most demographic characteristics, the university has higher proportions of entrants from underrepresented groups compared to the sector. However, two areas were identified and prioritised for further analysis as part of our assessment of performance.

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<sup>34</sup> Statistical techniques employed included logistic regression, linear regression, LASSO and stepwise variable selection, ANOVA analysis on Bayes Factors, Bayesian linear regression and groupwise goodness of fit tests.

<sup>35</sup> The Times, ‘UK University Rankings 2024 (Social Inclusion Ranking)’, 2024. Source: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/uk-university-rankings> [accessed 24 May2024].

<sup>36</sup> Data relates to proportion of all entrants (‘young’ and ‘mature’) to full-time all undergraduate study. The University of Greenwich’s 58% BAME students is made up of 24.8% Asian, 20.7% Black, 7.5% Mixed and 5.3% Other ethnicity. Sector numbers for the same 2021/22 intake are 65.2% White, 15.7% Asian, 10.5% Black, 5.6% Mixed and 3% Other.

<sup>37</sup> OfS data for 18-year-old entrants to full-time undergraduate study in 2021-22, most deprived areas defined as IMD Q1 and 2. The University of Greenwich has 23.5% from IMD Q1 and 34.7% from IMD Q2 compared to 22.8% and 21.3% respectively for the sector.

<sup>38</sup> OfS data for 18-year-old entrants to full-time undergraduate study in 2021-22, the University of Greenwich has 32.3% eligible for FSM compared to 18.4% for the sector.

<sup>39</sup> Student Loans Company, ‘Estranged Students and Care Leavers by HEP: AYs 2017/18 – 2023/24’, 2024. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/estranged-students-care-leavers-by-hep-ays-201718-202324> [accessed 24 May2024].

### A2.1.2 Gaps in Recruitment of Students from POLAR4 Q1 Areas

Firstly, we have lower proportions of students from POLAR4 and TUNDRA Q1 and 2 (low participation areas) compared to the sector (8.2% below sector for POLAR4 and 9.5% for TUNDRA). We have introduced operational processes to better target activity towards POLAR4 Q1 applicants and, as 98% of our undergraduate UK-domiciled intake is from state schools,<sup>40</sup> TUNDRA's tracking of entry to higher education from state-funded mainstream school pupils offers little added benefit to what we already implement using POLAR4. Further analysis of postcode data shows that this largely results from having a high London-based intake (70% of undergraduate UK applications come from students living within a 30-minute drive of the university) where the traditionally higher education participation rate means there are relatively few low participation areas. Our campus in Medway, which is based outside of London in Kent and is home to our Faculty of Engineering and Science, does offer a local access route for students from lower participation areas, particularly those in north Kent.

Our institutional strategy to offer Education without Boundaries means we will be looking to both sustain and increase the diversity of our student body, especially those from underrepresented groups. However, our predominantly London campus footprint and catchment area means we will tailor this according to our specific context. Our Access Intervention Strategy therefore sets out our plans to increase the number of students from low participation POLAR4 Q1 areas (Section 4.1).

### A 2.1.3 Gaps in Proportion of Students Declaring a Disability

Secondly, our data shows we have a small although persistent gap in relation to the proportion of our entrants declaring a disability. Aggregate data for the last four years shows that our proportion is 3.9% points lower than the sector and the historical time series is shown below.

**Table A1: Proportion of new entrants declaring a disability at the University of Greenwich and across the sector**

	Proportion of entrants declaring a disability (%)							
	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	6-year change (% points)	Last 2-year change (% points)
University of Greenwich	10.8	10.8	12.4	12	12.6	13.9	+3.1	+1.9
Sector	13.7	14.6	15.8	16.7	17	17.4	+3.7	+0.7

The time series shows that UoG has been gradually increasing its proportion of entrants declaring a disability but that this trend has been mirrored across the sector. However, over the last two years, UoG has accelerated its improvement with a 1.9%-point positive change compared to 0.7% points at sector level. This is in response to our increased and focused access activity in this area and we expect the trend to continue. We have also greatly improved continuation rates for students declaring a disability and, for these reasons, we have decided to prioritise other more significant and persistent gaps in other parts of the student lifecycle for intervention strategies.

## A 2.2 Continuation Performance

<sup>40</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency, 'Widening Participation: UK Performance Indicators 2020/21 | HESA', 2022. Source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/widening-participation> [accessed 27 May.2024].

Analysis across demographic groups and in comparison to the sector shows that our continuation outcome gaps are smaller than in other student lifecycle stages. In terms of ethnicity, just 3.1% points separate the main ethnic groups in the latest 2020/21 data, with our Black and Other ethnicity students having higher continuation rates than White students.<sup>41</sup>

### A 2.2.1 Continuation by Ethnicity

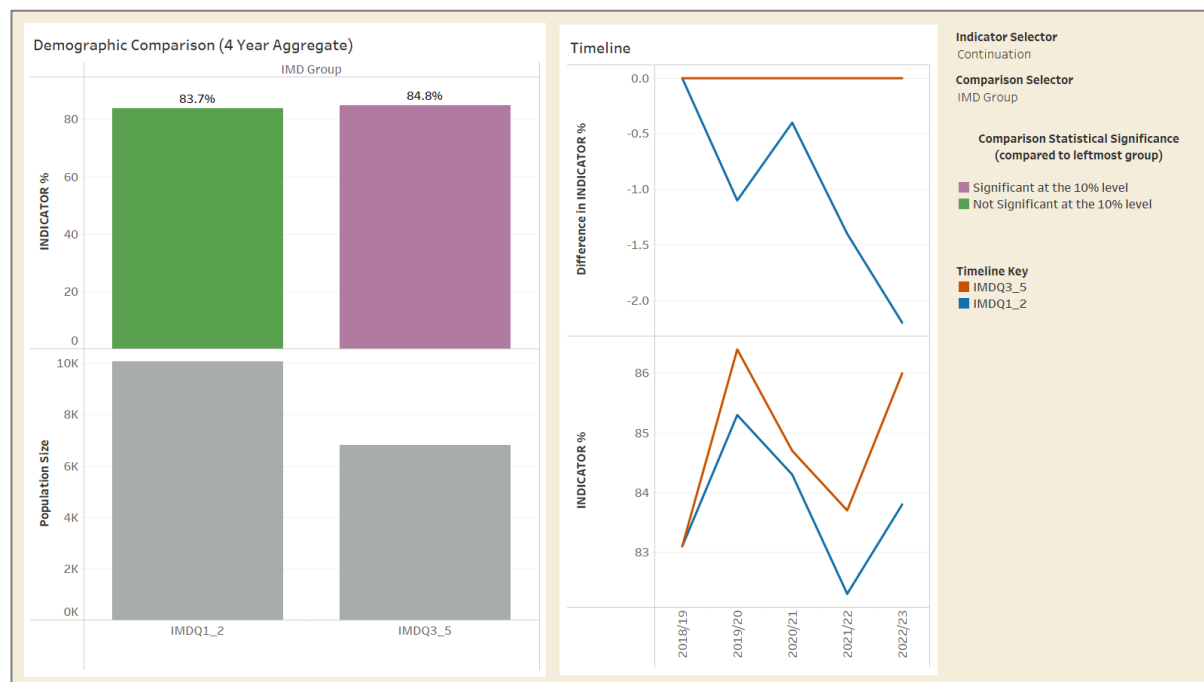
Despite the latest external data, we are internally monitoring our gaps closely as internal analysis from 2018–22 entry shows that we do have a significant (1% significance level) 3.4%-point White compared to Black gap in continuation outcomes over the reporting period. The only other significant ethnicity gap (compared to White) was for Mixed students, but this covers a much smaller population. Despite the statistical significance, the size of ethnicity gaps at continuation are smaller than in other stages of the student lifecycle, and ethnicity was not found to be an important factor in our statistical models.

### A 2.2.2 Continuation by IMD

Over the last six years we have seen a steadily reducing gap between students from the most and least deprived areas (IMD Q1 vs 5) which has predominantly been driven by an improvement in the continuation rate for those from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1).<sup>42</sup> Initial filtering, which looked at four-year aggregate data did reveal a gap, but interrogation of the time series shows that this gap is now all but eliminated, standing at just 0.6% points. It also compares positively to a 9.1%-point gap at sector level.<sup>43</sup> Our students from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) achieve a continuation rate that is over 4% points higher than the average for the same group across the sector.<sup>44</sup>

More recent internal data over the last five years also shows there is not enough evidence (at 5% significance level) to suggest there is a deprivation gap (IMD Q3–5 vs Q1–2) and, while the gap has widened slightly to just 2.2% points in 2022/23, the change is minimal and still not significant. We are however aware of the legacy impacts of the Covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis and will continue to monitor these impacts on students from more deprived areas closely.

**Figure A2: Continuation gaps by (IMD)**



<sup>41</sup> Latest OfS data for 2020/21 starting cohort for full-time undergraduate students. Students of Mixed ethnicity had a continuation rate of 85.8% and those of Other ethnicity 88.9%. White students had a continuation rate of 88%.

<sup>42</sup> Latest 20/21 data for the University of Greenwich shows a continuation rate of 88.9% for the most deprived IMD Q1 and 89.5% for the least deprived IMD Q5 (a gap of only 0.6% points)

<sup>43</sup> OfS sector-level data shows that, on average, the most deprived IMD Q1 students achieve a continuation rate of 84.4% and the least deprived IMD Q5 achieve 93.1% (a gap of 9.1% points).

<sup>44</sup> At the University of Greenwich, students from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) continue their studies at a rate of 88.9% and IMD Q1 students across the sector average 84.4% (data from OfS dataset for 2020/21 cohort, full-time, all undergraduates).

We have assessed other measures of deprivation and we do continue to see small gaps on FSM eligibility and associations between characteristics of students (ABCS) where we see gaps of 2.6% points and 4.9% points respectively in the most recent 2020/21 OfS data. However, these compare positively to much more significant gaps at the sector level where the FSM eligibility gap is 5.2% points (twice that of UoG)<sup>45</sup> and the ABCS gap is 14.8% points (three times that of UoG).<sup>46</sup> The ABCS gap suggests a complex interaction of factors that may lead to small cohorts not achieving desired outcomes and we will continue our investigations and target accordingly as a result.

### **A 2.2.3 Continuation by Gender and Age**

Internal data shows a persistent statistically significant 4.9%-point gap exists between our female and male students, an area where a gap is also seen at sector level. Gender, alongside entry qualifications, where there is also a significant gap of 3.6% points in A-levels vs combinations of other Level 3 entry qualifications, are the two most influential factors in statistical modelling. The entry qualifications gap increases to 6.3% points when comparing A-levels to BTECs specifically.

A small gap does exist between our 'young' and 'mature' students. This has remained at between 1.6 and 3% points over the last six years. However, the latest 2022/23 internal data shows no gap (0.1% points). This follows a consistent gap reduction over a five-year period from 9.2% points in 2018/19 and compares to a sector gap of 9.8% points. For the 2020/21 cohort our 'mature' students also achieved a continuation rate of 86.7%, significantly more than the sector average of 82%.

Continuation has not been selected as a focus area for our intervention strategies because although there are some statistically significant gaps on continuation, they are much smaller in comparison to other areas of the student lifecycle. Moreover, in general, our performance is positive compared to

## **A 2.3 Completion Performance**

Analysis shows that some gaps have reduced significantly over the last six cohorts while some have persisted. A significant 5.9%-point gap between 'young' and 'mature' has completely disappeared and the gap between those declaring and not declaring a disability has reduced to just 2% points. Gaps between ethnic groups are similar to continuation with no significant persistent gaps (although there is some year-on-year variability across smaller Mixed and Other ethnic groups).

### **A 2.3.1 Completion by IMD, FSM and ABCS**

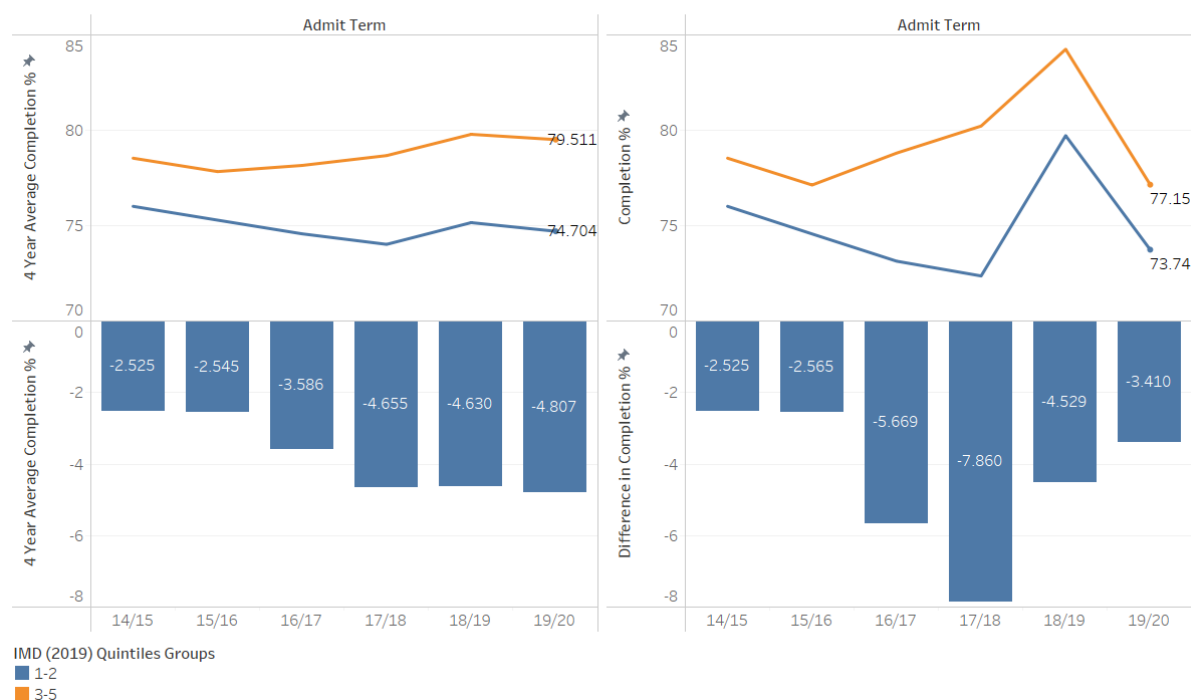
Deprivation as measured through IMD does appear as a persistent though small gap, despite improvements to the outcomes for those from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) over the more recent cohorts. The gap between IMD Q1 and 5 for the latest 2017/18 starting cohort stands at 3.5% points and the link to deprivation is supported through a similar gap for those who were eligible for FSM where the gap stands at 6.8% points. The IMD gap of 3.5% points at UoG compares to a sector gap of 10.7% points and its FSM gap of 6.8% points compares to a sector gap of 8.2% points.

Analysis of ABCS suggests a complex interaction of factors leading to poorer outcomes for some students, few of whom fall neatly into individual demographic groups or OfS-combined intersections. For UoG, the latest ABCS gap of 20.5% points is significant but this is comparable to the latest sector average of 23.7% points. To investigate this, we analysed internal trend data to look at data yet to flow through into externally published OfS data.

**Figure A3: Four-year average and individual year actual completion rates by IMD Q1/2 vs Q3–5**

<sup>45</sup> The University of Greenwich's (UoG) FSM eligibility gap stands at 2.6% points compared to 5.2% points at sector level. Here UoG's FSM eligible cohort perform similarly to the sector in absolute terms – UoG students achieve 87.2% compared to 87.3% across the sector. The wider sector gap therefore results from higher sector continuation rates for those students not eligible for FSM (based on latest OfS sector data for 2020/21 full-time, all undergraduate cohort).

<sup>46</sup> UoG ABCS Q1 students achieve a continuation rate 85.9%, which is over 5% points higher than the sector average for this group of 80.2%. This is part of the reason why UoG's ABCS gap is only 4.9% points compared to the sector average of 14.8% points (latest OfS data for 2020/21, full-time, all undergraduate).



When quintiles are split into groups of 1–2 (most deprived) and 3–5 (less deprived), analysis of latest internal data for cohorts 2018/19 and 2019/20 indicate that IMD gaps in completion have not narrowed when using a four-year moving average, with the latest average reaching a peak gap of 4.8% points. This is mainly driven by the fact that the 2017/18 cohort had the largest individual gap of 7.8% points which will continue to be absorbed by moving averages up until 2020/21. However, internal data for the two most recent cohorts shows an improving trend in terms of gap reduction. We will continue to monitor this closely as we track cohorts affected by the Covid pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.

### A 2.3.2 Completion by Reported Disability

Analysis of completion gaps in relation to reported disabilities shows a steady reduction in recent years. Internal data shows the most recent four-year average gap between students with no known disability and students with at least one reported disability has narrowed to 3.5% points. Breaking down disability type shows some variations in outcomes and we are building this into our already successful interventions, which have eliminated continuation gaps for students declaring a disability.

## A 2.4 Attainment Performance

### A 2.4.1 Attainment by Ethnicity and Level of Deprivation

Attainment gaps represent some of our most significant and persistent gaps across the student lifecycle. A deep dive into the data revealed that level of deprivation, ethnicity and entry qualifications are all individually significant factors. Using the latest OfS dataset, tables A2 and A3 show the four-year aggregate results for ethnicity and deprivation (IMD).

**Tables A2 and A3: Rate of good awards by ethnicity and IMD quintile (4-year average)**

Ethnic Group	% 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2:1
White	83.5%
Mixed	74.2%

		IMD Quintile	% 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2:1	students, data, when period, the least
Asian	73.8%	5 (least deprived)	85.9%	
Other	70.6%	4	82.3%	
Black	66.1%	3	78%	
There is a 12.8%-point gap between our White and BAME data labelled Asian, Black, Mixed and Other (ABMO) in OfS averaged over the last four years. Over the same time gap stands at 16.1% between students from the most and deprived areas (IMD Q1 vs 5). <sup>47</sup>		2	74.6%	
		1 (most deprived)	69.9%	

The latest gaps for the 2021/22 finalists show gaps in relation to White student outcomes of: 18.9% points for students classified as Other; 15% points for Black students; 12.1% points for Asian students; and 5.9% points for students classified as Mixed. The latest gaps for IMD Q1 vs Q5 is 14% points and 12% points between those eligible and not eligible for FSM.

Analysis of intersectionality has shown ethnicity and level of deprivation to both be contributory additive factors (ie they both have individual impacts but not beyond the sum of their individual contributions). Isolating the White cohort shows that those from less deprived areas (IMD Q3,4 and 5) have attainment outcomes that are 6.4% points better than those from more deprived areas (IMD Q1 and 2).<sup>48</sup> A similar trend is observed for BAME students, with those from less deprived areas (IMD Q3,4 and 5) achieving outcomes that are 4.1% points better than those from more deprived areas (IMD Q1 and 2).

**Table A4: The additive effects of deprivation and ethnicity on attainment outcomes**

	Less deprived area (IMD Q3,4 and 5)	More deprived area (IMD Q1 and 2)	%-point gap across IMD
White	85.9	79.5%	6.4%
BAME (ABMO in OfS dataset)	73.4	69.3	4.1%
%-point gap across ethnicity groupings	12.5%	10.2%	

When compared across deprivation and ethnicity, the data shows that White students from more deprived areas still do 6% points better on attainment outcomes than BAME students from less deprived areas.

### A 2.4.2 Attainment by Prior Qualifications

Further data analysis including statistical modelling and internal data points has explored the interrelationships between these factors and others such as students' prior qualifications (particularly the difference between A-levels and BTECs) which fall outside of the OfS Access and Participation target groups. Modelling has shown these factors have an additive effect in terms of worsening outcomes rather than any interaction effects which lead to gaps larger than the sum of its parts. Internally our work on attainment gap variations by prior qualification type is also informing our wider work to improve student attainment.

<sup>47</sup> This reduces to 8.8% points between the most deprived Q1 and 2, and Q3, Q4 and 5.

<sup>48</sup> Data is for last four years aggregate data for full-time all undergraduate students.

Extensive analysis of the intersectionality between level of deprivation, ethnicity and prior entry qualifications has been performed to understand the interactions between them. This includes using the following techniques:

- Logistic regression with attainment as the target variable
- Linear regression with Grade Point Average (GPA) as the target variable
- Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (LASSO) and stepwise variable selection
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis on Bayes Factors
- Bayesian Linear Regression with GPA as the target variable
- Groupwise goodness of fit tests
- Performing the above techniques on the original dataset, oversampling of those with a non-attainment outcome, and separately under-sampling of those with an attainment outcome. Additionally, working with the predictor variables at varying levels of aggregation (eg IMD Q1–2 and Q3–5 vs at a quintile level or ethnicity group – White, Black, Asian, Mixed, Other vs White/BAME).

While ethnicity, IMD and entry qualifications were consistently significant factors in the statistical models produced, in no model were any of their interaction terms found to be significant. This was further supported by the groupwise goodness of fit tests which tested against the null hypothesis that a particular gap was consistent within a particular group (eg if the White compared to BAME gap remained similar to the overall population within just IMD Q1–2). There was only evidence to reject the null hypothesis in one instance, suggesting that the IMD gap may be reduced for BAME students. In conclusion, while BAME students from more deprived areas entering with qualifications other than A-levels have the lowest attainment outcomes of any combination of groups, it is attributed to the sum of its parts, rather than any additional impact from identifying to multiple at-risk groups. This implies that there is not an immediate need for targeted intervention strategies surrounding intersectionality, but rather that the attainment gaps for these group combinations will reduce as the IMD, ethnicity and entry qualification gaps are addressed. Our intervention strategies have therefore been designed on this basis.

## **A2.5 Progression to Employment or Further Study Performance**

Our assessment of performance combined with our ongoing monitoring of our previous APP shows that, despite positive progress in some areas,<sup>49</sup> we continue to have persistent and significant progression gaps, particularly in relation to students from deprived areas and those from certain ethnic groups.

### **A 2.5.1 Progression by IMD**

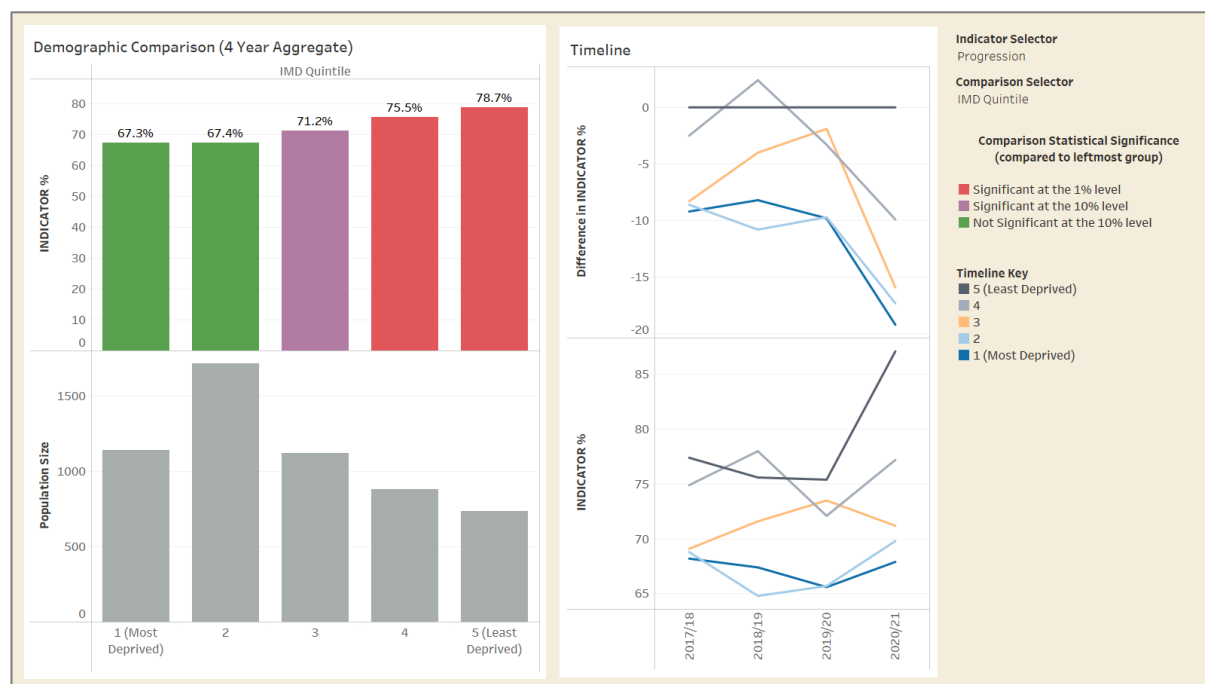
Our most significant gap relates to the socio-economic status of our students and is reflected in the metrics on deprivation (IMD), FSM eligibility and ABCS. In terms of students from more deprived areas, we have a persistent gap that has grown over recent years to now stand at 16.4% points (difference between IMD Q1 and Q5 for the 2020/21 cohort). Furthermore, although this is a persistent gap across all four years of Graduate Outcomes data, it is notable that the gap has more than doubled from 7.5% points two years ago in 2018/19. Figure A4 below shows the progression outcomes by IMD quintile and historical time series.

**Figure A4: Progression outcomes by IMD quintile**

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<sup>49</sup> For example, we have improved the progression outcomes for Black students by 9.9% points over the last two years and they now, in the latest 20-21 reported year, achieve 2.9% points better outcomes than our White students (in 2018/19 Black students achieved positive progression outcomes at a rate of 69.2% and this has improved to 79.1% in 2020/21). OfS data shows that the sector Black student progression rate of 71.3% is lowest of the main reported ethnic groups – the University of Greenwich therefore performs 7.8% points better than the sector average for this cohort.





This is a gap seen at sector level where the current gap stands at 10.8% points for full-time, all undergraduate (FT, All UG) students. Students at both UoG and across the sector from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) have similar absolute outcomes (67.3% at UoG and 67.7% at sector level for IMD Q1 FT, All UG in 2020/21).

The gap is higher at UoG due to the higher rates of positive progression outcomes for students from the least deprived areas compared to the sector, with an increase of 7.6% points for this group in the most recent year driving the gap enlargement at UoG. The University of Greenwich is therefore not dissimilar from the sector in terms of the outcomes of our students from the most deprived areas. Nevertheless, it remains one of our largest and most significant outcome gaps and has been prioritised for an intervention strategy.

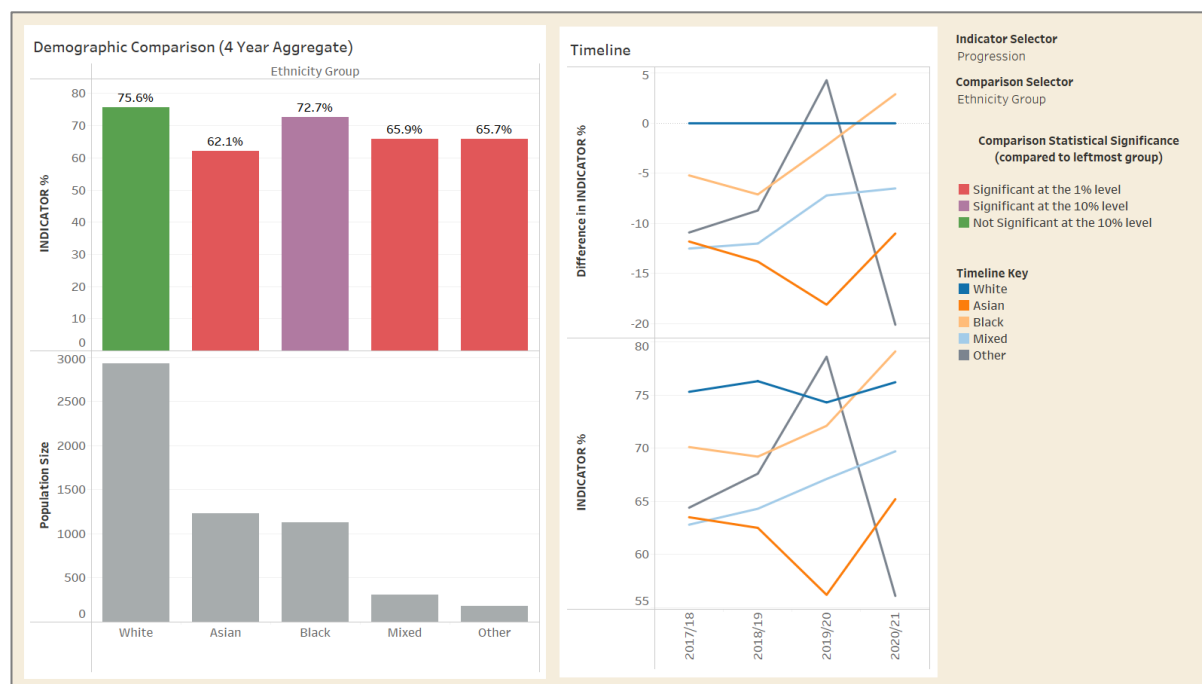
The socio-economic gap seen in level of deprivation is also present in relation to our students who were eligible for FSM. Our latest gap stands at 12.1% and this is 6.8% at sector level (FT, All UG 2020/21 cohort). Here we note that the difference in gap compared to the sector is driven by the poorer outcomes for our FSM-eligible students – the absolute rate of positive progression for our FSM-eligible students is currently 60.8% which is 7% points lower than the sector average for this cohort (sector average being 67.8% in 2020/21). Like the sector, we have a significant and similar gap in relation to ABCS.<sup>50</sup>

### A 2.5.1 Progression by Ethnicity

Our analysis revealed significant and persistent gaps between White students and students of other ethnicities, which prompted a deep dive into this area. Figure A5 below shows progression outcomes by ethnicity.

**Figure A5: Progression outcomes by ethnicity**

<sup>50</sup> Our current gap stands at 18.6% points and this compares to 17.3% points at sector level. Absolute performance for the ABCS Q1 is also similar with a rate of 63.8% at the University of Greenwich and 64.6% at sector level.



Our in-depth analysis revealed the following key themes. Firstly, the progression outcomes for our students of Asian ethnicity are a priority both in terms of absolute performance and relative gaps. At UoG, we currently have a gap of 9% points between Asian and White students and, while this is the lowest it has been in the four years of Graduate Outcomes data,<sup>51</sup> it remains a persistent and statistically significant gap. It also greatly exceeds the sector gap of 2.9% points and analysis of absolute performance shows that this is driven by our Asian students having outcomes that are worse than sector average.

Students of Asian ethnicity at UoG achieve positive progression outcomes at a four-year average rate of 63.6% compared to a sector average of 70% – a gap of 6.4% points. The most common subject area studied for our Asian students in the progression dataset is business and management, accounting for 28.9% of all Asian students in the dataset. This is proportionally double what it is for White students. The progression rate for this subject area is 55.9%. This is the second lowest Primary Common Aggregation Hierarchy level 1 (CAH1) subject area institutionally. Additionally, subjects allied to medicine is the most popular subject area for White students, with the highest progression rate in the institution of 93.6%. We also interrogated data relating to the progression of our undergraduate students to further study and found that Asian students and IMD Q1 students were less likely to go into further study. Our understanding of this and the subject context is informing our intervention strategy.

Secondly, in the latest 2020/21 data our Black students have improved outcomes to the point where they have progression rates that are 3.6% points higher than our White students. They also outperform the sector average (74.2% vs 69.1% over the four-year average). However, we note that Black students have not had higher rates of Progression than White students over the whole Graduate Outcomes time series. We will therefore monitor future results closely.

Our analysis here has confirmed our understanding of our subject-mix context, with subjects allied to medicine the most popular area for Black students and the proportion of Black students studying that subject area increasing from 32% in 2017/18 and 2018/19 to 42% in 2019/20 and 2020/21. This increase has aligned with the increase in progression rates for Black students. Furthermore, this was coupled with a 4%-point drop in the proportion of Black students studying business and management related courses between the same two time periods.

Thirdly, we do have gaps across other ethnic groups (the Mixed and Other groupings in the OfS dataset) but at UoG these represent small cohorts (<600 total over the four-year period) and/or show significant year-on-year variability. For example, our largest current progression ethnicity gap is for those of Other ethnicities – a gap of 18.3% points – but analysis shows that this relates to a population of only 60 students.

<sup>51</sup> The gap was 11.8% points in 2017/18, 13.8% points in 2018/19, 18.1% points in 2019/20 and 11.0% points in 2020/21 (full-time, all undergraduates).

Furthermore, trend data shows that the latest 2020/21 year is an outlier. While absolute performance for the cohort was just 56.9%, this dramatically declined from the previous year's performance of 75.4% where students of Other ethnicities achieved the same outcomes as those for White students (White students in 2019/20 had a progression rate of 75.5%). In another small cohort area, we have a gap of 4.7% points in the latest 2020/21 year between our Mixed ethnicity and White students, but this relates to a cohort size of only 90 students. We therefore have not prioritised them as standalone target areas. Given the intersectionality with level of deprivation, our assessment shows that a target in that area will better address the overarching disparity in outcomes.

Across other demographic characteristics, we do not see the same level of progression gaps and/or we outperform the sector. For example, we have no significant gap in relation to disability and,<sup>52</sup> in relation to age, we differ from the sector trend of 'mature' students doing worse than 'young' students. Here our higher proportions of 'mature' students studying healthcare and teaching-related courses with more direct links to graduate employment means that they achieve a progression outcome of 79.1%. This is 7.1% points higher than 'mature' students across the sector and 9.6% points more than our 'young' students at UoG. While we wish to improve progression outcomes for our 'young' students, which is to be addressed through our intervention strategies focusing on deprivation and Asian students, our assessment shows that the gap between 'young' and 'mature' is driven by the higher performance of the 'mature' cohort resulting from the subjects they study.

Statistical analysis found not enough evidence to suggest that any gaps are different within particular demographic groups and did not identify any interaction terms as significant (ie any effects are additive and amount to the sum of the parts rather than outcomes being the result of interaction effects that are more than the sum of the parts).

### **A3 Analysis of Performance of Part-Time Students**

Our part-time students make up only 4% of our population in the OfS dataset and unfortunately low numbers means analysis is hampered by the suppression of many data points. However, where data does meet reporting thresholds, there is sufficient evidence of gaps to warrant investigation.

Analysis of four-year aggregate data shows that sizeable (statistical significance being more challenging to establish) gaps do exist across the continuation, completion and attainment lifecycle stages for Black, female, those declaring a disability, those from more deprived areas and those over 40 years of age. We are therefore considering part-time students across all our key priorities and intervention strategies.

#### **A3.1 Part-Time Student Continuation by Other Characteristics**

On continuation, for part-time students there is a gap in relation to deprivation of 12.7% points between IMD Q1 and Q5, a 12.8%-point gap between male and female. Black student outcomes are 9.1% points worse than the average of other ethnic groups (Asian, White, Other, Mixed). Those over 40 years of age have continuation rates of less than 75% compared to a 92% rate for White students (over a 17%-point gap).

#### **A3.2 Part-Time Student Completion by Other Characteristics**

Regarding completion, those part-time students declaring a disability do 11% worse than those not declaring a disability and while the gaps across ethnicity and sex seen in continuation are less prominent (both less than 5% points), the gap in relation to deprivation remains (8.1% points between IMD Q1 and Q5) and those over 30 years of age do noticeably worse with the 41–50 year-old group having a completion rate that is 12% points worse than the 'young' cohort.

#### **A3.3 Part-Time Student Attainment by Other Characteristics**

On attainment, Black part-time students do considerably worse than White part-time students, with a disparity in outcome of 32% (91.4% compared to 59.4%). A sizeable 17.1%-point gap exists in relation to sex, with male students achieving an

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<sup>52</sup> The latest 2020/21 data shows just a gap of 0.3% points between those declaring and not declaring a disability and the gap has not exceeded 3% points in any of the last four years of Graduate Outcomes data.

attainment rate of 92.4% compared to 75.3% for female students. A double-digit gap also exists for those declaring a disability, with data showing only 75.3% achieving a good award (11.4% points less than those not declaring a disability).

The gap in relation to deprivation is only 4.8% points, which is lower than it is for continuation and completion. The gap between 'young' and 'mature' students presents as only 3.1% points, but this masks the fact that those over 40 years of age do significantly worse (a good degree attainment rate of under 70% compared to the average rate of 88.5% for 'young' students).

### **A3.3 Part-Time Student Progression by Other Characteristics**

The suppression of data for 'young' students on progression to employment or further study means that some comparisons are not possible. However, analysis of other characteristics shows that the gaps that exist in the part-time cohort across other lifecycle stages largely disappear when it comes to progression.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, most part-time students appear to achieve very positive progression outcomes with rates in excess of 90%.

## **Annex B: Additional Evidence Base and Rationale in Support of Intervention Strategies**

Below is supplementary evidence base and rationale in support of interventions in addition to the key evidence provided in this plan.

### **B.1: Additional Evidence Base and Rationale in Support of Intervention Strategy 1 – increasing number of students from low participation areas**

The interventions within our access intervention strategy are designed to achieve two main things. The first is to achieve our target of increasing the number of students from POLAR4 Q1 backgrounds progressing to degree-level study at the university. The second is to contribute to the achievement of our targets to reduce the ethnicity and deprivation awarding gaps. We will do this by supporting the development of a sense of belonging in the university environment, helping students to choose the right course for them and to develop academic and personal skills to support their successful transition into higher education.

While POLAR4 is not in itself a measure of disadvantage, we know that there is a correlation between areas of low representation in HE (POLAR4 Q1) and socio-economic disadvantage.<sup>54</sup> The latest report into attainment of different socio-economic groups by the Education Policy Institute concluded that while some progress has been made in narrowing attainment gaps between the most and least disadvantaged at primary school, the gaps worsen in secondary school. They are equivalent to the most disadvantaged students being a year and a half behind by the end of Key Stage 4.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, the activities that target this group are a mixture of attainment-raising in the case of the literacy and STEM projects and MiMS (aimed at students across the secondary phase), action to mitigate existing inequalities in attainment through contextual admissions, and financial support with the travel bursary to attend open days or applicant days. From the EORR, sector research and our student consultation, we know that students from IMD Q1 backgrounds are more likely to be first in family to go to university. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that the transition support available upon entry to university addresses any gaps in information available to students and sets out the academic context and expectations of the university experience.

#### **Pre-16 Outreach**

We are offering both subject-focused and skills-focused sustained outreach activities designed to support attainment for students in Key Stages 3 and 4. Our literacy and STEM projects are aimed at Key Stage 3 and the MiMS programme delivered in conjunction with CACT is designed to support successful transition into Year 7, incorporating multiple touch points with the same students until Year 13.

MiMS is designed to address the risk factors that have the biggest impact on the outcomes of participating students. We know that transitions between different phases of education (eg between primary and secondary) are risk points for

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<sup>53</sup> Analysis shows only a 3.5%-point gap in relation to Disability, a 2.9% gap on Sex and a 5.6% gap on deprivation (IMD Q1 vs 5).

<sup>54</sup> Office for Students, 'Frequently Asked Questions about Area-Based Measures (POLAR and TUNDRA)', 2020 <<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd78246d-0072-4e2f-a25a-42ba54deea11/polar-and-tundra-faqs-september2020.pdf>> [accessed 24 May 2024]; 'Using Census Data to Generate a UK-Wide Measure of Disadvantage - Results | HESA' <<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/insight/05-10-2021/new-measure-disadvantage-05-results>> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>55</sup> Jo Hutchinson and others, *Education in England: Annual Report 2019* (Education Policy Institute, 2019) <<https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/EPI-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>> [accessed 24 May 2024].

vulnerable students and interventions at this stage are important to avoid this group falling behind.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, since the coronavirus pandemic, school attendance has not fully recovered, which is concerning not only for reasons of wellbeing and personal development, but also because school attendance is a strong indicator of attainment. Students who have the highest attendance rates throughout their time at school also achieve the best GCSE outcomes.<sup>57</sup>

Consequently, the MiMS programme has elements that aim to support vulnerable students to continue to engage in school, including the use of sport, literacy and numeracy support, a range of personal skills workshops and, at a later stage, information, advice and guidance. There is evidence from recent interventions that using sport as a hook for engagement has been successful in reducing persistent absence.<sup>58</sup> A pilot programme run by CACT at a school in the Isle of Sheppey (Kent), where students from POLAR4 Q1 areas stands at 94%,<sup>59</sup> saw an increase in school attendance. Initially, this was seen on the day the programme was delivered, however, over time this led to increased overall attendance and a re-engagement with learning. Following the programme, 40% had a more positive attitude in school and the average increase of the young people's English assessment score was 88%.<sup>60</sup>

There is also emerging evidence that activities to develop soft study skills can support attainment-raising.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, evidence for this type of intervention is further supported by research conducted by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) suggesting that 'non-cognitive skills' are strongly associated with positive outcomes for young people, particularly for low-attaining students. Several non-cognitive skills studies suggest modest causal effect on other outcomes. These include self-efficacy, metacognitive strategies, and social skills, all of which feature in the MiMs programme.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of the other pre-16 outreach interventions designed to support attainment, we have elected to run a STEM project because research has highlighted the need to raise academic attainment in Key Stage 4 to tackle STEM skills shortages.<sup>63</sup> Research from the EEF highlights that barriers to STEM attainment include student perceptions of STEM subjects, lack of awareness of STEM pathways and a shortage of STEM teachers. STEM subjects are also often those where it is necessary to have made the right subject choices as early as GCSE to be able to pursue STEM to a high level of study. Consequently, we also felt it important to contribute to participants' ability to make informed choices from an early age. Furthermore, many of our STEM courses are based in Medway, delivered by the Faculty of Engineering and Science. This provides an opportunity for us to harness the location of the campus and faculty resources to engage prospective students from low representation postcodes. We are currently collaborating with local schools in Kent with high proportions of students from low representation (POLAR4) areas and disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD Q1/2) to design the programme of interventions, which we believe will give it the best chance of success.

Alongside the STEM project, we will also run a literacy outreach project because research shows that strong reading skills improve academic attainment across a variety of subjects including English, maths, and science.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, we know that consistent reading behaviour and positive reading attitudes are linked to increasing attainment.<sup>65</sup>

## Post-16 Attainment-raising

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<sup>56</sup> Education Endowment Foundation, *The Attainment Gap 2017, 2018* <[https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/support-for-schools/bitesize-support/EEF\\_Attainment\\_Gap\\_Report\\_2018.pdf?v=1714301618](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/support-for-schools/bitesize-support/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018.pdf?v=1714301618)> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>57</sup> Department for Education, 'Why Is School Attendance so Important and What Are the Risks of Missing a Day? – The Education Hub', *The Education Hub (Gov.Uk)*, 2023 <<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/school-attendance-important-risks-missing-day/>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>58</sup> House of Commons Education Committee, *Persistent Absence and Support for Disadvantaged Pupils* (Parliament, 12 September 2023) <<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/>> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>59</sup> Higher Education Access Tracker, 2022-23 dataset (internal).

<sup>60</sup> Charlton Athletic Community Trust internal evaluation report.

<sup>61</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, *Typology of Attainment-Raising Activities Conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review*, 2022 <<https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO-attainment-raising-typology-and-rapid-evidence-review.pdf>> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>62</sup> L. M. Gutman and I. Schoon, *The Impact of Non-Cognitive Skills on Outcomes for Young People. A Literature Review*, Education Endowment Foundation: London, UK. (Education Endowment Foundation, 1 March 2013) <<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/essential-life-skills/>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>63</sup> Genna Kik and others, *The UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey 2013: UK Results* (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, January 2014) <<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74b93440f0b619c8659e84/evidence-report-81-ukces-employer-skills-survey-13-full-report-final.pdf>> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>64</sup> Ariane Baye and others, *Reading Programmes for Secondary Students: Evidence Review* (Education Endowment Foundation, July 2019) <[https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance/Reading\\_Programmes\\_for\\_Secondary\\_Students\\_Evidence\\_Review.pdf?v=1711369797](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance/Reading_Programmes_for_Secondary_Students_Evidence_Review.pdf?v=1711369797)> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>65</sup> Christina Clark and Sarah De Zoysa, 'Mapping the Interrelationships of Reading Enjoyment, Attitudes, Behaviour and Attainment: An Exploratory Investigation', *National Literacy Trust*, 2011 <<https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/mapping-interrelationships-reading-enjoyment-attitudes-behaviour-and-attainment-2011/>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

In addition to pre-16 attainment-raising activity, it is important to continue with our 16+ attainment-supporting intervention. Called GREat Skills, it is a sustained programme of skills workshops including both academic, transferable and personal skills. We have been running a version of GREat Skills for several years and it is received positively by teachers and is successful at engaging students and supporting their Level 3 outcomes.<sup>66</sup> There is a close correlation between attainment at Level 3 and university success,<sup>67</sup> and this intervention draws on existing evidence that learning strategies focused on developing study skills and soft skills can contribute to attainment-raising.<sup>68</sup>

However, for this plan, we will be updating GREat Skills to make sure we provide tailored support for students who are undertaking alternative Level 3 qualifications. We are working in partnership with the RGTS, which currently only offers BTEC qualifications at Level 3, to design the programme. This recognition of the needs of particular students is a result of our assessment of performance (Annex A) that has demonstrated that there is an additional gap in attainment related to pre-entry qualifications, with those entering with A-levels outperforming those entering with alternative qualifications, large numbers of whom are from BAME backgrounds. By working with the RGTS to tailor the programme, we will be able to support students from our local schools and colleges to develop skills that will equip them for success at Level 3 and at university. This, alongside the innovations in teaching and learning happening within the university, we think will contribute towards closing our awarding gaps.

We will also be delivering post-16 outreach through our Schools' Access Toolkit, which is a set of workshops that provide information, advice, and guidance to students in sixth form or college about all aspects of progressing to higher education. This is specifically designed to help students access higher education and make informed choices. If successful, it can help to alleviate issues that can arise on-course with regards to retention and attainment for students who have not chosen the most suitable course for them. Unsurprisingly, clear and timely information, advice and guidance has been found to increase learner confidence to make well-informed choices.<sup>69</sup> The Toolkit is often delivered by student ambassadors or a combination of staff from the Outreach team and student ambassadors. We know from student feedback how important peer contact is for our students at every stage of their higher education journey so the use of student ambassadors is a key element of delivery. Furthermore, as with all our outreach activities, there is the option for workshops to be delivered in school/college or on campus. This is because there is clear evidence from our own students and evaluation carried out by TASO that experiencing the university campus pre-entry can be significant for starting to foster a sense of belonging, which is accepted is a key part of making a successful transition to university study.<sup>70</sup>

## Contextual Admissions

Contextual admissions is now a common strategy within the sector used to attract students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and a crucial tool in ensuring we widen access to higher education.<sup>71</sup> At UoG, we introduced contextual admissions for care leavers and care experienced students in 2021, which we believe has contributed to our success in growing the number of students from this group enrolling at the university. Furthermore, we know how important it is for students without familial experience of higher education to be able to have encounters with universities and, particularly, to visit the university environment to be able to make informed decisions. Student focus groups conducted while preparing this plan informed us that for those students who were able to come on to campus pre-entry, this broke down barriers to applying and made university feel more attainable. For this reason, we will be providing travel bursaries for applicants in receipt of contextual offers so they are able to visit the university for offer holder events.

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<sup>66</sup> University of Greenwich, 'GREat Skills: For Schools and Colleges' <<https://www.gre.ac.uk/for-schools/activities/epqs>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>67</sup> Universities UK, *Working in Partnership: Enabling Social Mobility in Higher Education. The Final Report of the Social Mobility Advisory Group*, 2017 <<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/working-in-partnership-final.pdf>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>68</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, *Typology of Attainment-Raising Activities Conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review*.

<sup>69</sup> Sarah Harding and Lindsey Bowes, *Fourth Independent Review of Impact Evaluation Evidence Submitted by Uni Connect Partnerships: A Summary of the Local Impact Evidence to Date for the Office for Students* (Office for Students, 2022) <<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/c304f005-89a1-4a5b-9468-b98eb7475ad4/cfe-review-of-impact-evidence-from-uni-connect-partnerships.pdf>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>70</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, *School's in for the Summer: Interim Findings on the Impact of Summer Schools*, November 2023 <[https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO\\_Report\\_Schools-in-for-the-summer-interim-findings-on-impact-of-summer-schools.pdf?new2](https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO_Report_Schools-in-for-the-summer-interim-findings-on-impact-of-summer-schools.pdf?new2)> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>71</sup> Vikki Boliver and others, *Admissions in Context: The Use of Contextual Information by Leading Universities* (The Sutton Trust, October 2017) <[https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Admissions-in-Context-Final\\_V2.pdf](https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Admissions-in-Context-Final_V2.pdf)> [accessed 27 May 2024].



## B.2: Additional Evidence Base and Rationale to Support Student Success Intervention Strategy 1 – Ethnicity Awarding Gap

We recognise the importance of making multiple interventions throughout the lifecycle and across the student experience, as discussed in the TASO 2024 Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap report,<sup>72</sup> and have designed a range of interventions to address barriers to success across the student lifecycle.

### Changes to Assessment, Curriculum, and Support

#### Further developing an inclusive curriculum

There has been a wealth of literature to suggest that an inclusive curriculum results in better outcomes for BAME students. Nunan et al. state that, where curricula reflect ‘a dominant Eurocentric world view, those who are not members of this culture or who resist Eurocentrism are effectively excluded from the educational process and social advantages that come with success.’<sup>73</sup> Our review of our curriculum found that it is currently less representative of BAME students’ lives and thus less engaging. Work has taken place already at the university in this area, for example, the implementation of our **Inclusive Curriculum Enhancement Tool**. This was based on research around improving equality of opportunity in higher education through the adoption of an inclusive curriculum framework and the deployment of our student inclusivity consultants. Nevertheless, we continue to review and update our approach to ensure consistent delivery of inclusive approaches to teaching and learning.

#### Academic skills support

Academic skills support is extremely important in addressing our awarding gap. A UoG report on students using our online academic writing support tool (Studiosity), from 2020 to 2022, indicated that Studiosity users studying at Levels 4 and 5 were more likely to complete their course, progress to the next year and achieve better degree outcomes than non-users.<sup>74</sup> BAME students who used the academic writing feedback service got better outcomes than those who did not. However, our data from the platform shows that there is lower usage of this platform by BAME students. Therefore, we will be actively targeting this platform at our BAME students via a range of methods. As outlined in our assessment of performance and in our approach to post-16 attainment, we recognise that students with alternative Level 3 qualifications also need targeted support, and our service is also aimed at supporting these students.

#### Adapting assessments

We believe that adapting our forms of assessment is one of the major levers for closing the BAME awarding gap at UoG, as we know from analysis of our internal data that BAME students are more likely to enter the university with alternative qualifications to A-levels. Our assessment of performance and colleagues’ scholarly research shows that students who entered the university with non-traditional qualifications have a lower degree outcome than those who entered with A-levels.<sup>75</sup> As a result, we are undertaking a revision of our assessments to ensure that they are accessible for students entering with different qualifications and we are focusing on academic skills during the transition to university phase of the student lifecycle.

#### Wellbeing Support Targeted at BAME Students (Safe Space)

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<sup>72</sup> Dr Sally Andrews and others, *Approaches to Addressing the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap: Contextualising the Landscape and Developing a Typology* (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, June 2023) <<https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Approaches-to-addressing-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>73</sup> Nunan, Ted & George, Rigmor & McCausland, Holly. (2000). Inclusive Education in Universities: Why it is important and how it might be achieved. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 4. 63-88. 10.1080/136031100284920, p. 66

<sup>74</sup> Internal Studiosity Usage Report, 2021

<sup>75</sup> Harriet Jones and others, *Transition into Higher Education* (Critical Publishing, 2023).



Research shows that active involvement from students is key to closing the gaps.<sup>76</sup> Our proactive workshops and **Safe Space** drop-ins delivered by our Report and Support Team are designed around the themes that are present in the data from the reporting platform and, therefore, we can ensure that they are timely and relevant to our context. These workshops are targeted at BAME students and aim to provide them with the space ‘to talk directly about race, racism and the attainment gap’ in a safe environment. Ensuring that our Report and Support platform is actively promoted on courses with the highest numbers of BAME students and in our student accommodation ensures that BAME students know that they have a place to disclose incidents of racism, discrimination and micro-aggressions that happen on campus, in halls or external to the university. If they wish, students can receive dedicated support and advice on their reporting options. We use the data we receive via the Report and Support platform to inform preventative interventions to ensure that we achieve our aim of being an anti-racist university, such as training for students and staff and work with GSU and student societies on university-wide campaigns to raise awareness of particular race-related issues that are present on our campuses.

## Supporting a sense of belonging

Our **Living Black at University** project is based on research carried out by Unite Students which found that, ‘only 43% of the Black students surveyed felt a sense of belonging in their accommodation compared with 61% of White students’. The report highlighted that many Black students ‘felt isolated or unsupported from the moment they arrived at University’.<sup>77</sup> Research shows that a sense of belonging is vital to the success of students from ethnic minority and lower socio-economic backgrounds.<sup>78</sup> Having a positive transition experience within student accommodation and feeling safe and part of a community is vital to student success.

In line with recommendations from sector research,<sup>79</sup> we have designed a range of interventions which actively involve students to ensure that we develop a better understanding of the different experiences of our students outside of the classroom. This will enable us to co-create interventions to develop racially diverse and inclusive environments for our students. We believe that our interventions in this space will enable us to address a risk specific to our context (UoG Risk 3) around not currently having a full understanding of the reasons for our attainment gap. We are also increasing the use of online lectures and resources, given we know from sector research as well as research conducted by GSU that BAME students are more likely to have caring responsibilities and need to work part-time to fund their studies.

Celebrating the lived experience of our diverse student and staff population is important to us at UoG. We have a regular programme of events and training for staff to celebrate culture and we educate staff on how to incorporate race-sensitive practices into their day-to-day work. Our Student Stories Project in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences has helped to highlight the successes and challenges of our BAME students and ensures that we are avoiding taking a deficit model approach to the awarding gap and instead are focusing on the inequities that result in awarding disparities.

## Ensuring Resources and Support are Better Accessed and Utilised

Our new data transformation project aims to enhance the provision of data to staff at all levels in faculties and Student Services to ensure they have the information they need to ensure a tailored provision of support. This is made up of various sub-projects including the SLM project which is detailed further in the Whole Provider Approach (Section 5). SLM will improve the information available to staff in Student Services with regards to breaking down student engagement with mental health, counselling, and advice services at the university by student characteristics including ethnicity. We are aware that while we have made progress in closing gaps in outcomes between students disclosing a disability and those who do not disclose a disability, there are barriers to BAME students in receiving a diagnosis for their mental health and in seeking support. Research shows us that, ‘rates of mental illness for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are

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<sup>76</sup> Barbara Adewumi and others, ‘The Diversity Mark Programme with Dr Barbara Adewumi and Rachel Gefferie.M4a’, The Pluriversity Podcast <<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/uofgdtccop/episodes/6--The-Diversity-Mark-Programme-with-Dr-Barbara-Adewumi-and-Rachel-Gefferie-e29c3qn>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>77</sup> Unite Students, *Living Black At University*, 2022 <<https://www.unitegroup.com/living-black-commission-report>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>78</sup> Bronwyn E. Becker and Suniya S. Luthar, ‘Social-Emotional Factors Affecting Achievement Outcomes Among Disadvantaged Students: Closing the Achievement Gap’, *Educational Psychologist*, 37.4 (2002), pp. 197–214, doi:10.1207/S15326985EP3704\_1.

<sup>79</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, 2023

sometimes greater than for white people', however 'more white people receive treatment for mental health issues than people from BAME backgrounds and they have better outcomes'.<sup>80</sup> The SLM project will enable us to better understand how mental health intersects with the other challenges for the groups of students who are the focus of our APP. For example, if BAME students are less likely to receive a diagnosis of a mental health condition than White students or are less likely to disclose, they will not be receiving the reasonable adjustments they need, which is likely to be contributing towards the attainment gap. The outcomes of this project will lead to specific interventions being created to address gaps in access to services.

### **B.3: Additional Evidence Base and Rationale to Support Student Success Intervention Strategy 2 – IMD Q1 vs Q5 Awarding Gap**

#### **Targeted financial support and advice**

Research undertaken by GSU shows that 30% of students have an income which does not cover their essential living costs and 44% have less than £50 disposable income per month.<sup>81</sup> The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated these issues and students are having to make difficult decisions on a daily basis, for example, deciding between travelling to attend their lectures or buying food, and for student parents, feeding their families. Students surveyed by Blackbullion reported feeling too cold or too hungry to concentrate on their studies due to having to choose between food and heating or the other costs of attending university.<sup>82</sup> A 2020 survey commissioned by NatWest found that almost half of their 3,604 respondents (43%) had run out of money by the end of the term, and one in three (32%) had used their overdraft to cover essentials like rent and household bills.<sup>83</sup>

As a result of financial pressures, students from low-income households are often required to work to fund the costs of university. A report by GSU shows that 39% of our students work over 20 hours a week and 19% work more than 40 hours to supplement their income.<sup>84</sup> More than half of the 10,000 students surveyed by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) said they did paid work during term time, with most saying they were using their wages to support their studies.<sup>85</sup> The increase of zero-hours contracts in the post-covid landscape, means that students have to take work whenever it is available rather than working shifts that fit around their university timetable. For many students this involves working unsociable hours in both the day and nighttime economy. This creates a barrier to attending scheduled learning activities which makes these students more susceptible to falling behind on learning outcomes. 60% of students surveyed by Blackbullion reported, 'not having enough time to study, revise for an exam or complete an assignment due to hours spent working'.<sup>86</sup> Removing some of the financial pressures on this group of students provides them with stability in one aspect of their student experience making them less likely to have to work over the recommended 15 hours per week and, as a result, more able to attend and engage with all aspects of the learning experience and, ultimately, obtain the degree outcome of which they are capable.

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<sup>80</sup> Cabinet Office, *Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website*, October 2017 <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/686071/Revised\\_RDA\\_report\\_Marc\\_h\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_Marc_h_2018.pdf)> [accessed 24 May 2024].

<sup>81</sup> Office for Students, 2023b

<sup>82</sup> Blackbullion, Lee Elliot Major, and Lynne Condell, *Student Money & Wellbeing 2023: What Is the Cost of Living Crisis Really Costing Students?*, February 2023 <<https://business.blackbullion.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Student-Money-Wellbeing-Report-2023--Blackbullion-1.pdf>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>83</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education, 'Financial Wellbeing Study', *TASO*, 2021 <<https://taso.org.uk/financial-wellbeing-study/>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>84</sup> Office for Students, 2023b

<sup>85</sup> Rose Stephenson, 'Students' Improving Academic Experience Overshadowed by Cost-of-Living Crisis: HEPI / Advance HE 2023 Student Academic Experience Survey', *HEPI*, 2023 <<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/06/22/student-experience-academic-survey-2023/>> [accessed 27 May 2024].

<sup>86</sup> Blackbullion, Major, and Condell.

## **B.4: Additional Evidence Base and Rationale to Support Student Success Intervention Strategy 3 – Progression of BAME and IMD Q1 Students**

### **Targeted career mentoring**

Career mentoring will be adopted as a key approach to reducing the progression gap for Asian students and those from IMD Q1 compared to Q5 backgrounds. As mentioned in the intervention strategy, while this programme is university-wide and open to all students, there are specific elements that are additional and tailored for students from the target cohorts. It is also important to us that the experience of different student groups within these cohorts is understood and that mentoring and other employability opportunities are personalised accordingly.

While our assessment of performance identifies a gap in Progression to graduate employment or further study for Asian students compared to their White counterparts, from the quantitative data there do not appear to be any differences in Progression rates between Asian males and females. However, qualitative research was carried out within the university to understand the concerns and challenges faced by Asian female students with regards to their Progression.

Data was gathered through focus groups and in-depth interviews with Asian female alumni and university staff involved in providing wellbeing and employability. The main themes emerging from the research indicated that these students face significant issues with self-efficacy. They feel they are not suited to certain graduate-level job roles, which means they rule themselves out. They also felt that the support offered through the employability services needed to be targeted to address their concerns.

The need to co-create with these students to tailor services and interventions to best support them came through clearly in this research. This is an extremely valuable insight and a specific example as to why it is so important to understand and cater for the nuanced experiences of our students for our interventions to have the best chance of success in achieving our objectives.

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Greenwich

Provider UKPRN: 10007146

### Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

#### Inflation statement:

All fees in this Access and Participation Plan are subject to an annual fee setting exercise and will rise annually in line with the regulated fee rate set by the UK Government currently based on the RPI-X (Retail Price Index excluding mortgage interests payments). Fees for entrants for earlier years are governed by the Access Agreement governing the relevant year of entry.

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree		N/A	6165
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND		N/A	6165
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9250
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree		N/A	9250
Sandwich year		N/A	1385
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Doreen Bird College of Performing Arts Ltd.	10002011	9250
First degree	Hadlow College	10002843	9250
First degree	London South East Colleges	10000948	8630
First degree	North Kent College	10004721	8630
Foundation degree	Hadlow College	10002843	6165
Foundation degree	London South East Colleges	10000948	6165
Foundation degree	North Kent College	10004721	6165
Foundation degree	Whitefield Academy Trust	10060725	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	Barking and Dagenham College	10000528	6165
HNC/HND	Hadlow College	10002843	6165
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	London South East Colleges	10000948	8630
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree		N/A	4625
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	6935
HNC/HND		N/A	4625
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	6935
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Doreen Bird College of Performing Arts Ltd.	10002011	6935
First degree	Hadlow College	10002843	6935
First degree	London South East Colleges	10000948	6935
First degree	North Kent College	10004721	6935
First degree	North Kent College	10004721	6935
Foundation degree	Hadlow College	10002843	4625
Foundation degree	London South East Colleges	10000948	4625
Foundation degree	London South East Colleges	10000948	4625
Foundation degree	North Kent College	10004721	4625
Foundation year/Year 0	London South East Colleges	10000948	4625
HNC/HND	Barking and Dagenham College	10000528	4625
HNC/HND	Hadlow College	10002843	4625
HNC/HND	London South East Colleges	10000948	4625
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Greenwich

Provider UKPRN: 10007146

### 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	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£3,914,000	£3,992,000	£4,072,000	£4,154,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£1,839,000	£1,821,000	£1,823,000	£1,820,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£820,000	£836,000	£853,000	£870,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£324,000	£330,000	£337,000	£344,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£3,590,000	£3,662,000	£3,735,000	£3,810,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£3,914,000</b>	<b>£3,992,000</b>	<b>£4,072,000</b>	<b>£4,154,000</b>
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£3,914,000</b>	<b>£3,992,000</b>	<b>£4,072,000</b>	<b>£4,154,000</b>
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£1,608,000	£1,590,000	£1,592,000	£1,589,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£231,000	£231,000	£231,000	£231,000
Financial support investment	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£1,839,000</b>	<b>£1,821,000</b>	<b>£1,823,000</b>	<b>£1,820,000</b>
Financial support investment	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£820,000	£836,000	£853,000	£870,000
Research and evaluation investment	<b>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

## Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

[illegible]

Table 5d: Success targets

[illegible]

### Table 5e: Progression targets

[illegible]



[illegible]