

University of Plymouth

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

The University of Plymouth (UoP) is committed through our institutional strategy, University 2030: A Future of Excellence, to deliver outstanding education that makes a difference, improving local, national and global communities. Central to our mission is institution-wide support to our diverse student population, ensuring that every student can achieve their potential. Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) is critical to this mission, ensuring that we identify those students who are at risk of inequality of opportunity and deliver a wide range of interventions designed to reduce these risks.

The student population of UoP is approximately 18,000, predominantly full-time undergraduate (UG). We draw most of our UG students from the South West (59% of UK domiciled), a region with the lowest progression to Higher Education, or training to Level 4 or higher, in England. We have a significant population of commuter students whose travel is often challenging due to the transport infrastructure in the region. The characteristics of these student populations intersect with geographical areas of deprivation, free school meals, and lower entry tariff. Within our student population 20.5% declare mental health disabilities on entry vs a sector average of 14.9%. Regional demographics also greatly affect the ethnicity of our students, with ethnically diverse (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic [BAME]) students representing only 10.8% of our student population compared to 26.5% for the sector. However, this compares well to the ethnically diverse proportion of the population in the South West, which is 6% compared to 26% nationally.

To further support our ambitions for widening access to HE, we have increasing numbers of students studying for integrated Foundation degrees and an expanding portfolio of on-site and blended learning degree apprenticeships. The characteristics of our student population are always at the forefront of the design and delivery of our programmes and curricula, and embedded into our processes and policies, to ensure that we support excellent student experience and outcomes.

We have 14 longstanding collaborative academic partners located across the South West who deliver UoP-approved, successful, HE programmes within a further education (FE) context to over 3,000 students each year. The University works collaboratively to support our partners, sharing events, activities and staff development. Our Partnership Forum is used to promote our teaching and learning culture, and to pass on best practice. Our partnership network significantly contributes towards equal opportunity across the South West region by providing FE students direct access to the first year of our programmes (over 1000 applications in the current cycle) and direct entry into Level 6 (approximately 250 students each year). We also collaborate across the Uni Connect network through Next Steps South West, for which we are the lead institution, and current chair of the steering group.

Over the past 5 years our current APP has delivered improvements against many of our objectives whilst progress in some areas remains a challenge. For access we have increased the proportion of ethnically diverse students, although black students remain below our milestone, and recruiting from the lower quintiles of the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) remains challenging. The awarding gaps (attainment) are some of the most persistent challenges, and whilst we have closed the gap for disabled students it remains a significant challenge for our black students.

Risks to equality of opportunity

In reviewing our assessment of performance, we referred to the following sources of data:

- Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Data Dashboard
- the University's internal APP Data Dashboard, which includes an analysis of intersectionality between underrepresented groups
- the University's APP Enrolment Dashboard
- applications and acceptances for underrepresented groups using UCAS end of cycle data
- an analysis of disaggregation for ethnicity and disability

These data were then cross referenced to the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) to identify the inequalities and indicators of risk of equality of opportunity for different underrepresented groups at each stage of the student lifecycle. In consultation with staff and students, these were used to consider the underlying risks and how these were impacting on different groups of students.

In addition, from analysis of our own UoP data, and ongoing research from our Educational Development team, there is evidence that within the local UoP context, students' residential status (i.e. whether they opt to relocate for their university studies or remain living at home), is a potentially insightful socio-demographic variable through which to consider the student experience. Students' residential status can have a considerable impact on their access to higher education and their subsequent journey through the student lifecycle.

To inform how we, at the University, are supporting live at home and commuter students, Educational Development, in collaboration with the University of Plymouth Students Union (UPSU) and the Impact Evaluation Team (IET), are undertaking research to examine the experiences of this cohort. When analysis of this work is complete, our intention is to develop activities aimed at mitigating the risks to equality of opportunity for these students.

We believe that all risks listed on the sector wide EORR impact on our students and we have identified the following inequalities of opportunity at UoP.

Access

Identified inequality 1: The proportion of students from an ethnically diverse background enrolling at UoP is lower compared to their white counterparts. Evidence from the sector and literature suggests this is related to EORR Risk 1: Knowledge and skills, Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education and Risk 4: Application success rates. In addition, as UoP recruits more than 60% of UG students from the South West, our applicant population is less ethnically diverse than the sector average.

Identified inequality 2: The proportion of students eligible for Free School Meal (FSM) enrolling at UoP is lower compared to those who are not eligible. Evidence from the sector and literature suggests this is related to EORR Risk 1: Knowledge and skills, Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education and Risk 4: Application success rates.

Identified inequality 3: The proportion of students from IMD Q1 enrolling at UoP is lower compared to those from IMD Q5. Evidence from the sector and literature suggests this is related to EORR Risk 1: Knowledge and skills, Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education and Risk 4: Application success rates.

Analysis of our intersectional data for Access (2017-18 to 2021-22) shows we enrol fewer mature, male, ethnically diverse students and fewer young, male, white, IMD Q1 students. Disaggregated

data for disability (cognitive or learning difficulties, mental health conditions, multiple impairments, sensory, medical or physical impairment and social or communication impairment) revealed no obvious trends. For ethnically diverse students there is a small increase for all ethnicities with a larger increase for Asian students.

Continuation

Identified inequality 4: There is a gap in Continuation between mature and younger students. Evidence from the sector and literature suggests this is related to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support and Risk 8: Mental health. Mature students are likely to be disproportionately affected by Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues due to the higher numbers of those commuting and those studying on health programmes.

Identified inequality 5: There is a gap in Continuation between students from TUNDRA (tracking underrepresentation by area) Q1 and those from TUNDRA Q5. Evidence from the sector and literature suggests this is related to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity.

There are no clear trends from our analysis of the intersectional data for Continuation between 2016-17 and 2020-21. From our analyses of the disaggregated data there are no clear trends for disability, while for ethnicity there was an increase in the gap for all ethnicities.

Completion

Identified inequality 6: There is a gap in Completion between black students and white students. Evidence from the sector and the literature suggests this is related to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues.

From our intersectional analysis of the Completion data between 2012-13 and 2017-18, there are larger gaps for mature black and ethnically diverse students and black male students. Analysis of disaggregated data shows no clear trends for disability, while for ethnicity there were drops in completion for black students and for 'other' students.

Attainment

Identified inequality 7: There is a gap in Attainment between black students and white students. Evidence from the sector and the literature suggests this is related to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues.

Identified inequality 8: There is a gap in Attainment between students from IMD Q1 and students from IMD Q5. Evidence from the sector and the literature suggests this is related to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues.

From our intersectional analysis of the data between 2017-18 to 2021-22, there is a larger Attainment gap for black, disabled students. All disaggregated disabled groups improved their attainment (awards) between 2018-19 and 2019-20, but then between 2019-20 and 2020-21, all groups performed worse, apart from students with cognitive or learning difficulties. Between 2021-22, all groups performed worse, apart from students with social or communication impairment. Overall, there was an increase for all disaggregated ethnicities over the five years between 2017-18 and 2021-22.

Progression

Identified inequality 9: There is a gap in Progression between black students and white students. Evidence from the sector and the literature suggests this is related to Risk 7: Insufficient personal

support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Identified inequality 10: There is a gap in Progression between students from TUNDRA Q1 and students from TUNDRA Q5. Evidence from the sector and the literature suggests this is related to Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

From our intersectional analysis of the Progression data between 2017-18 and 2020-21, there is a larger gap for ethnically diverse students who are mature and from TUNDRA Q1. For students with mental health conditions, multiple impairments and social or communication impairments Progression improved, while for students with a sensory, medical or physical impairment, and cognitive or learning difficulties, it got worse. Progression for all ethnicities got worse, apart from Asian students, who improved.

Where we have identified intersections, these will be monitored and addressed through our intervention strategies. Additional, or tailored support, will be included as required.

Objectives

Objective 1: To increase the proportion of ethnically diverse students accessing the University from the 2021-22 baseline value of 13.5% to 15.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 2: To increase the proportion of FSM students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 12.6% to 16% by 2028-29.

Objective 3: To reduce the gap in Access between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 8.3% to 4.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 4: Pre-16 Attainment Raising. We will deliver outreach that improves the skills and learning that support attainment, based on the University's Theory of Change for Pre-16 Attainment Raising.

Objective 5: To reduce the gap in Continuation between mature students and young students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 6.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 6: To reduce the gap in Continuation between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 5.8% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 7: To reduce the gap in Completion between Black and White students from our 2017-18 baseline value of 9.9% to 4.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 8: To reduce the gap in Attainment between Black and White students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 19.7% to 14.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 9: To reduce the gap in Attainment between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 14.8% to 9.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 10: To reduce the gap in Progression between black and white students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 2.1% to 0% by 2028-29.

Objective 11: To reduce the gap in Progression between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 7.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

The objectives outlined in the previous section have been translated into the following Intervention Strategies (IS). These are underpinned by theories of change and include activities that have been developed based on relevant research and sector evidence.

Intervention strategy 1: Widening Access. Activities to increase applications, offers and enrolments of students from low socio-economic groups and from students who are ethnically diverse.

Objectives and targets

Objective 1 (PTA_1): To increase the proportion of ethnically diverse students accessing the University from the 2021-22 baseline value of 13.5% to 15.0% by 2028-29; Objective 2 (PTA_2): To increase the proportion of FSM students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 12.6% to 16% by 2028-29; Objective 3 (PTA_3): To reduce the gap in Access between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 8.3% to 4.0% by 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 1: Knowledge and skills; Risk 2: Information and guidance; Risk 3: Perception of higher education; Risk 4: Application success rates.

Related objectives and targets.

Objective 4 (PTA_4): Pre-16 Attainment Raising; Objective 10 (PTP_1): Progression between black and white students; Objective 11 (PTP_2): Progression between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students

Related risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Beyond Face Theatre Company UoP Music	Existing, collaborative. Weekly, small group sessions, in collaboration with a South West theatre-based company specifically for ethnically diverse students. Existing. Small group music instrument tuition delivered to Y8 – 11 students by Student Ambassadors (SAs).	Outreach Officer Beyond Face SAs	Increased expectations to succeed, knowledge and awareness of student life, what to expect, how to prepare and options at HE.	IS 6
Peninsula Pathways	Existing, collaborative. Longitudinal programme, Y10-Y13. Part of UKWPMED for students from POLAR 4/TUNDRA Q1, IMD Q1, in receipt of Free School Meals or a Looked After Child.	Widening Participation Officer G3 Administrator SAs	Increased expectations to succeed, knowledge and awareness of student life, what to expect, and how to prepare for medicine/dentistry in HE. Contextual offer increases access to HE.	IS 6
Opportunity Plymouth and Are We Included?	Existing, expanded, collaborative. Opportunity Plymouth is a mentoring programme to Y10s, and Are We Included, in partnership with Plymouth Marjon University, to Y8s. Both programmes will be expanded to schools with high FSM and IMD Q1.	Outreach Officer Academic staff SAs	Increased expectations to succeed, knowledge and awareness of Student Life, what to expect, how to prepare and options at HE.	IS 6

Girls into Geoscience	Existing. A two-day residential event including a field trip, talks and workshops to introduce female A-level students to earth sciences, including issues of sustainability. Bursaries for travel and accommodation.	Academic staff, SAs, workshops and bursaries	Increased understanding and learning of earth sciences, expectations to succeed, how to prepare and knowledge of HE. Female students more likely to apply.	No
Student Shadowing	Existing, expanded. Y12 and 13 students come onto the campus and shadow an undergraduate for a day. Targeted at schools with high numbers of IMD Q1 students and students eligible for FSM.	Outreach Officer SAs £8,000.	Increased understanding and learning of their chosen subject, knowledge of student life, what to expect, how to prepare and options at HE. Increased expectations to succeed.	No
Work Experience	Existing, expanded. Four-day experience for Y10 students to learn more about individual subject areas and careers in Schools across the University.	Academic staff Outreach Officer SAs	Increased expectations to succeed. Increased understanding of future careers and pathways available.	IS 6
Virtual CSI Programme	Existing. Introducing students to investigative processes. Online activity over 5 weeks.	Academic staff Outreach Officer	Increased awareness of HE and access, metacognition and skills that support learning and expectations to succeed.	No
SW Looked After Children Event	Existing, collaborative. Held with University of Exeter and Falmouth University. Each delivers a one-day event for Looked After Children in Cornwall and Devon.	Outreach Officer Academic staff SAs	Increased awareness of HE and access, and expectations to succeed.	IS 6
Engaging students with information	Existing. Science and Technology Showcase (including sustainability), Conference, Maths Taster Days, Mental and Physical Wellbeing Programme, podcasts for ethnically diverse students, Outreach Officers delivering into schools with high numbers of ethnically diverse students including London and the South-East.	Outreach Officers Academic staff SAs	Increased awareness of HE options and access, expectations to succeed, and future careers. How to support themselves with their mental health.	IS 6
IMD Q1 Contextual Offer	New. A reduced tariff offer for students from IMD Q1 with intersections of underrepresentation.	Admissions staff	More underrepresented students from IMD Q1 with intersections of underrepresentation will be offered a place at the University.	No
Careerpilot and Lifepilot	Existing, collaborative, expanded. Careerpilot – a careers website. Lifepilot – an impartial site supporting post 19 adults and part time learners back into education and to HE. Outreach sessions using Careerpilot.	Outreach Officer; Licence fee for Career pilot and Lifepilot; SAs	Increased expectations to succeed. Underrepresented students can access online content to study and learn. Increased understanding of future careers and pathways to them.	IS 6

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy 1 = £1,579,983

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The General Access activities have been developed in collaboration with local schools and third sector organisations, with reference to local school planning data and our institutional data. Each has a rationale based on relevant research and, in many cases, empirical evidence from our own evaluation. Each of the activities is underpinned by our Access Theory of Change and a detailed summary of the research and evidence base is available in Annex B.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. Access and Participation Subcommittee [APS]), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Beyond Face, Plymouth Music Programme	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison or post-measure: participants' survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Peninsula Pathways	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data from TASOs validated scale. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Opportunity Plymouth, Are We Included	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate knowledge and skills development. Qualitative research: participants and staff members. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate progression to HE.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Girls into Geoscience, Student Shadowing, CSI Crime Investigation	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison or post-measure: participants' survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
South West LAC and various events	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison or post-measure: participants' survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Work Experience	Increased knowledge of HE, university expectations, sense of belonging, social and cultural capital, understanding of future careers	Pre/post comparison or post-measure: participants' survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
IMD Q1 Contextual Offer	Increased number of IMD Q1 students applying and enrolling to UoP	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate attitudes and behaviour; progress against previous years' access data.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Careerpilot and Lifepilot	Increased knowledge of HE, access to online content, understanding of future careers	Post-measure: participants' survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Dosage-response: Careerpilot longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	Careerpilot and HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Intervention strategy 2: Pre-16 Attainment Raising. Programmes of activities, in collaboration with Next Steps South West (Uni Connect), to raise attainment and improve GCSE results.

Objectives and targets

Objective 4 (PTA_4): Pre-16 Attainment Raising. We will deliver outreach that improves the skills and learning that support attainment, based on the University's Theory of Change for Pre-16 Attainment Raising. This will deliver the following outcomes:

1. Students improve their study skills and strategies for learning.
2. Students have an increased understanding and learning in particular subject areas
3. Students develop personally relevant and transferable strategies for revision and exam techniques.
4. Students are equipped with increased social and cultural capital. They have greater belief, ambition, and expectations to succeed.

Risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 1: Knowledge and skills; Risk 2: Information and guidance; Risk 3: Perception of higher education; Risk 4: Application success rates.

Related objectives and targets

Objective 1 (PTA_1) : Increase the proportion of ethnically diverse students; Objective 2 (PTA_2) : Increase the proportion of FSM students; Objective 3 (PTA_3) : Reduce the gap in Access between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5; Objective 10 (PTP_1): Reduce the gap in Progression between black and white students; Objective 11 (PTP_2): reduce the gap in Progression between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5

Related risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Children's University	Existing, collaborative, expanded. UoP manages the Devon and Cornwall Children's University programme, for primary school children and Y7.	Outreach Officer, SAs Children's University Licence fee	Increased attainment in reading and maths, expectations, confidence, resilience, and understanding of HE.	IS 6
Pre-16 English Attainment Raising Programme	Existing, collaborative. Literacy programme 'Crafting Accurate Sentences' for up to 15 Y8s in selected schools. Collaborative activities with Uni Connect – Next Steps Southwest, Articulacy and MADE Training.	Outreach Officers Articulacy Made Training SAs	Write more accurate sentences (Y8), identify and articulate knowledge and skills (Y9), improve study skills and strategies for learning (Y10), develop strategies for exam success (Y11).	IS 6
Junior Academy	Existing. Individual instrument tuition delivered by university staff and individual musical theory tuition delivered by SAs. Y9 – Y13 students.	Academic staff SAs	Increased instrumental and musical theory ability, expectations to succeed, awareness of Student Life, what to expect, how to prepare and HE options.	IS 6
Pre-16 Maths Attainment Raising Programme	In development, collaborative. Maths attainment raising programme developed by UoP mathematics academics in collaboration with local schools and external practitioners.	Academic staff SAs	Increased understanding and learning about maths, expectations to succeed, awareness of Student Life, what to expect, how to prepare and course options at HE.	IS 6
Y9 Maths Residential	Existing. Maths residential for Y10 students. Targeted at schools with high numbers of IMD Q1 students and students eligible for FSM. Students from underrepresented groups receive their accommodation costs.	Maths Academic SAs	Increased understanding and learning about maths, expectations to succeed, awareness of Student Life, what to expect, how to prepare and course options at HE.	IS 6

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy 2 = £233,191

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The Pre-16 Attainment Raising activities have been developed in collaboration with local schools and third sector organisations, with reference to local school planning data and our institutional data. Each has a rationale based on relevant research and, in some cases, empirical evidence from our own evaluation. Each of the activities is underpinned by our Pre-16 Attainment Raising Theory of Change and a detailed summary of the research and evidence base is available in Annex B.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Children's University	Increase in expectations, hope and ambition, confidence and resilience, understanding of HE, and attainment in reading/maths.	Post-measure: evaluation from participants' survey data. Qualitative research: participants and staff members. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Pre-16 English and Maths Attainment Raising Programme	Increased knowledge of specific subject-areas (English or Maths). Improved literacy and study skills, social and cultural capital, and attainment.	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate knowledge and skills development. Qualitative research: participants and staff members. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking; KS4 (GCSE) and KS5 (A-level) attainment scores.	HEAT analysis and dashboard analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Junior Academy	Increased knowledge of HE, expectations, sense of belonging, understanding of future careers and pathways	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate knowledge and skills development. Qualitative research: participants and staff members Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate progression to HE.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Y9 Maths Residential	Increased knowledge of specific subject-areas (Maths). Improved numeracy and study skills, social and cultural capital, and attainment as measured by in-school exam scores.	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate knowledge and skills development. Qualitative research: participants and staff members Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking using bespoke dashboards to evaluate KS4 (GCSE) and KS5 (A-level) attainment scores.	HEAT analysis and dashboard analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Intervention strategy 3: Continuation. Activities to improve Continuation for students from TUNDRA Q1, and for mature students.

Objectives and targets

Objective 5 (PTS_1): To reduce the gap in Continuation between mature students and young students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 6.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29;

Objective 6 (PTS_2): To reduce the gap in Continuation between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 5.8% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues

Related objectives and targets. None. **Related risks to equality of opportunity.** IS 7: Mental Health

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Pre-induction Support	Existing. Pre-admissions work – students that disclose a disability are contacted prior to arrival to put in place relevant support.	Student Support Officer	New students feel well supported and develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 7
Transitional support	Existing. Transition skills development, pre-sessional SAs and enhanced induction.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff, SAs	New students feel well supported and build a sense of identity and belonging. Students have better metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 7
CoachBright	Existing, expanded. Coaching scheme for ethnically diverse and IMD Q1 students to support confidence and build skills.	CoachBright	Develop metacognitive abilities, skills that support learning, feel well supported and Increased expectations.	IS 5 & 7
Disability Support	Existing. Disability Drop-ins: support sessions. Disability Advisor 1-2-1 appointments. In development. Student Support Document.	Student support staff	Students feel well supported, have a sense of identity and belonging, and have the means to support themselves.	IS 7
Student Digital Champions	Existing. Student led disciplinary academic support sessions and buddy projects.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff, SAs	Increased social and cultural capital, confidence, belief and expectations. Metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 5
Care Leavers Support	Existing. Contact with Care Leavers in November to invite them to the Student Hub and help them to access relevant support. Follow up in Semester 2.	Student support staff	Care Leavers feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 7
Student Networks	Existing, developing. Social Networks for underrepresented groups.	Student support staff Student Union staff	Students feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging. Increased and expectations.	IS 7
Students' Union clubs and societies	Existing, expanded. Improve and support access to student clubs and societies for underrepresented students with support to overcome financial barriers.	Student Union staff	Students feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 7
Contextual offer programme	In development. Programme with activities to support contextual offer students including induction, a buddy scheme, additional Personal Tutor support and group support.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff SAs	New students feel well supported and build a sense of identity and belonging. Increased social and cultural capital, confidence, belief and expectations	IS 5, IS 7

Learner Analytics	New. Implement systems that identify students from under-represented groups who may be at risk of not continuing or completing.	Academic staff Digital development staff; Staff training	Students feel well supported and able to develop skills they need to achieve well. Staff are better able to support underrepresented groups.	IS 5
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy = £912,382

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The Continuation activities have been informed by relevant research, our own empirical evaluation and institutional data, and in collaboration with third sector organisations. Each of the activities is underpinned by our Continuation Theory of Change and a detailed summary of the research and evidence base is available in Annex B.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Pre-induction Support	Increased sense of belonging and awareness of support available to specific groups	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging. Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Transitional support	Increased sense of belonging and awareness of support available to specific groups	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging. Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
CoachBright	Increased sense of belonging and self-efficacy	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with validated questionnaires to evaluate sense of belonging and self-efficacy. Qualitative research: participants' feedback to evaluate impact and skills gained from the programme. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin combined data to evaluate retention/attainment.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Disability Support	Staff are confident supporting students with reported disabilities. Increased sense of belonging	Pre/post comparison or post measure: participants and/or staff survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes. Comparative analysis: progress against previous years' data.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Student Digital Champions	Increased sense of belonging Improved metacognitive strategies	Qualitative research: participants, leaders and staff members Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Care Leavers Support	Increased sense of belonging	Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Student Networks	Increased social and cultural capital, and sense of belonging	Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Students' Union clubs and societies	Increased social and cultural capital, self-belief and expectations to succeed in HE. Increased sense of belonging.	Pre/post comparison or post measure: participants and/or staff survey data to evaluate short and intermediate outcomes.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Contextualised offer programme	Increased social and cultural capital, self-belief and expectations to succeed at HE	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate attitudes and behaviour. Evaluate continuation and awarding gaps between IMD Q1 students with contextual offers and IMD Q5 students. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/ in-house admin data to evaluate retention/attainment.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Learner Analytics	Higher retention/completion rates and better awarding grades for underrepresented students	Theory of change is well developed and supported by literature review. Qualitative research: with relevant stakeholders to establish a consistent definition for student intermediate outcomes. Comparative analysis: evaluate student module feedback forms where staff have undertaken a learner analytics initiative and compare to previous semesters/years.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Intervention strategy 4: Financial Support. Bursaries and scholarships to support students from households with low annual income and students from low socio-economic groups.

Objectives and targets

Objective 3 (PTA_3): To reduce the gap in Access between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 8.3% to 4.0% by 2028-29; Objective 5 (PTS_1): To reduce the gap in Continuation between mature students and young students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 6.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29; Objective 6 (PTS_2): To reduce the gap in Continuation between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 5.8% to 1.0% by 2028-29; Objective 9 (PTS_5): To reduce the gap in Attainment between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 14.8% to 9.0% by 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues; Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Related objectives and targets. None. **Related risks to equality of opportunity.** None

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Mayflower Award	Existing. A two tier bursary of £1000 or £400 depending on household income. £1,000 each year for Care Experienced or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students	Finance staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Decreased anxiety associated with financial barriers and improved wellbeing amongst beneficiaries. Increased continuation and completion rates.	IS 3 & 7
Sanctuary Scholarship	Existing. For asylum seekers and refugees, students with limited leave to remain and the dependants of the above groups Full fee-waiver. £1000 per year toward study costs, fully funded pre-session English course.	Finance staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3 & 7
Make It Count Award	New. Selected students who enrol via the IMD Q1 contextual offer will receive a bursary in the first year.	Finance staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Decreased anxiety associated with financial barriers and improved wellbeing amongst beneficiaries.	IS 3 & 7
Plymouth Astor Bursary	Existing. For students from underrepresented groups studying early year's programmes to enable access to activities that support their future careers.	Finance staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 3 & 7

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy = £1,651,305

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The current financial support has been informed by relevant evaluation and student need. The Mayflower Award has been evaluated using the OfS Financial Toolkit to produce statistical, quantitative analysis as well as qualitative analysis through a survey and focus groups.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Mayflower Award, Sanctuary Scholarship and Plymouth Astor Bursary	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Decreased anxiety associated with financial barriers and improved wellbeing amongst beneficiaries. Increased continuation and completion rates.	OfS Evaluation Financial Toolkit. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate continuation/completion rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants, with statistical analysis from OfS toolkit. Mixed methods: survey and interview data from beneficiaries to evaluate impact on outcomes. Admin data to cross-reference students who benefited from more than one financial support.	Publish HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Make It Count	Students feel well supported and have the means to support themselves. Decreased anxiety associated with financial barriers and improved wellbeing amongst beneficiaries. Increased continuation and completion rates.	Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate continuation/completion rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants, with statistical analysis from OfS toolkit. Mixed methods: survey and interview data from beneficiaries to evaluate impact on outcomes. Admin data to cross-reference students who benefited from more than one financial support.	Publish HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Intervention strategy 5: Awarding Gap and Completion. Activities to improve Completion and Attainment for students from areas of low socio-economic groups, and for black students.

Objectives and targets

Objective 7 (PTS_3): To reduce the gap in Completion between Black and White students from our 2017-18 baseline value of 9.9% to 4.0% by 2028-29; Objective 8 (PTS_4): To reduce the gap in Attainment between Black and White students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 19.7% to 14.0% by 2028-29; Objective 9 (PTS_5):

To reduce the gap in Attainment between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 14.8% to 9.0% by 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity. Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues

Related objectives and targets. Objective 5 and Objective 6. **Related risks to equality of opportunity.** EORR Risk 8: Mental Health

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS)	Existing, expanded. Academic and pastoral peer support for students from entry, targeted at courses with high numbers of students from IMD Q1.	Academic Coordinator PALS Leaders (SAs)	Students are more confident about their studies and university life, have better metacognition and skills that support learning. Increased engagement.	IS 3 & 7
Various Academic Support Activities	Existing. Academic writing support from staff and/or peers, either in groups or one to one. Student access to exemplars of academic writing within the disciplines with academic input into structure, content, argument etc. Support for students with their quantitative skills and mathematical knowledge.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff Student Peers	Students are more confident about, and engage better with, their academic writing. They are better able to articulate deeper and more critical ideas within their writing and have better metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 3
Embedded academic skills programmes	Existing, expanded. Learning Development sessions embedded within the curriculum, targeted at courses with high numbers of underrepresented students.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff	Students have better metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 3
Assessment Checklist	New. An active checklist, delivered in class time, to prepare students for their first assessment submission.	Academic Coordinator Academic staff	Students exhibit increased confidence regarding their assessments and their ability to meet the required criteria. Students have better metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 3

Learner Analytics	New. Better monitoring by Personal Tutors and staff of student engagement/attendance/academic performance. System to facilitate and enable communication and engagement with students at risk to provide appropriate support and signposting.	Digital Development staff Digital system costs	Students attain better in modular assessments and end of year exams Students feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging	IS 3
Contextual Offer Programme	New. Building on the programme delivered in Y1, covering relevant academic skills and the 3 key areas of community and belonging, building confidence and building competence.	Academic Coordinator SAs	Students feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging. Students have better metacognition and skills that support learning.	IS 7
Programme for black students	New. A programme aimed at providing additional support to black students, covering relevant academic skills and the 3 key areas of community and belonging, building confidence and building competence.	Academic Coordinator SAs	Students feel well supported and have a sense of identity and belonging. Students have better metacognition and skills that support learning. Students are more likely to complete their degree and attain well.	IS 3 & IS 7

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy = £682,940

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The Completion and Awarding gap activities have been informed by relevant research and our own empirical evaluation and institutional data. Each of the activities is underpinned by our Awarding Gap Theory of Change and a detailed summary of the research and evidence base is available in Annex B.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Various Academic Support Activities	Increased sense of belonging Improved metacognitive strategies	Qualitative research: participants, leaders and staff members. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALs)	Increased sense of belonging Improved metacognitive strategies	Quantitative and qualitative research: participants' survey data to measure variations in short and medium-term indicators from three data points. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention/attainment from participants and demographically similar non-participants. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Embedded academic skills programmes	Increased academic confidence and higher skill level Improved module outcomes	Comparative analysis: evaluate student module feedback forms, NSS scores related to teaching and learning and retention/attainment rates from students enrolled onto the same degree compared to previous semesters/years. Qualitative research: participants' feedback on experience. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates/attainment from participants and demographically similar non-participants. For comparison group consider students with similar scores who did not receive this embedded support, e.g. direct access to their first year.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Assessment Checklist	Increased students' engagement with their assessments	Case studies: staff members to reflect on clarity of assessments, students' behaviours e.g. request for extensions, referencing. Participants to reflect impact on organising to complete their coursework, skillset required, engagement with assessments. Comparative analysis: evaluate student module feedback forms where this intervention took place and NSS scores related to teaching and learning compared to previous semesters/years. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/ in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates/attainment from participants and demographically similar non-participants. Compare with similar programmes where the initiative did not take place.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Learner Analytics	Higher retention/completion rates and higher attainment (award) for underrepresented students	Theory of change is well developed and supported by literature review. Qualitative research: with relevant stakeholders to establish a consistent definition for student intermediate outcomes . Comparative analysis: evaluate student module feedback forms where staff have undertaken a learner analytics initiative and compare to previous semesters/years. Progress against previous years' continuation/completion data.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Contextual Offer Programme and Programme for black students	Increased social and cultural capital, self-belief and expectations to succeed at HE	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate attitudes and behaviour. Tracking and monitoring: admin data to evaluate continuation and awarding gaps between IMD Q1 students with contextual offers and IMD Q5 students. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention/attainment from participants and demographically similar non-participants.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
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Intervention strategy 6: Progression. Reduce gaps in progression to graduate level employment or post graduate study for students who are black, or who are from TUNDRA Q1.

Objectives and targets

Objective 10 (PTP_1): To reduce the gap in Progression between black and white students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 2.1% to 0% by 2028-29; Objective 11 (PTP_2): To reduce the gap in Progression between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students from our 2020-21 baseline value of 7.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Related objectives and targets. None. **Related risks to equality of opportunity.** None

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Learner Analytics and Alumni support	New. Current students: identify underrepresented students not engaging with employability activities through S4 or My Career data, provide support. Alumni: track alumni data from underrepresented groups for staff awareness of graduate destinations. Facilitate success story sharing and offer support to unemployed graduates.	Careers Support staff Digital Development staff Digital system costs	Students feel well supported, with a sense of identity and belonging. Students from underrepresented groups are motivated by role models from similar backgrounds, and there is support for those unsuccessful in finding employment.	

Work experience	Existing. Micro Internships: short, two-week internships available to undergraduate students, with three cycles taking place across an academic year, including in sustainability. Student Jobs work experience: part-time jobs, taken in parallel to the degree studied, such as UPSU roles, writing mentors. Student Ambassador scheme: two-tiered job opportunity provides students with flexibility.	Careers Support staff SAs	Obtain relevant work experience and an increased understanding of how to navigate and succeed in the graduate employment market. Prepared, trained and equipped with the professional skills and behaviours required for work.	
Targeted Financial support for work experience	Existing. Career Development Bursary: bursaries of up to £250 are available to support underrepresented students access career development opportunities. Expanded. Career Insight Programme, increased number of internships with a bursary payable on successful completion. Part of a wider, longitudinal employability package.	Careers Support staff Bursary fees	Students have the means to obtain relevant work experience and an increased understanding of how to navigate and succeed in the graduate employment market. More students from underrepresented groups engage with the employability activities.	IS 5
Support for Postgraduate Study	New. Scholarships/bursaries for postgraduate studies: provided to students from underrepresented groups to support their continuation into postgraduate study. Get Into Masters: workshops to demystify postgrad study for 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates. In development. PALS for Postgrad: undergraduate participants receive 1-1 mentoring from current postgraduate students on their PG programme of interest.	Careers Support staff Bursary fees	Students develop their knowledge and understanding of postgraduate study. Increased progression rates into postgraduate studies. Reduced financial barriers to postgraduate study.	
Coaching /Mentoring	Existing. Careers Mentoring Programme: students are matched with a mentor who they meet a minimum of 4 times. Priority matching for underrepresented students, TUNDRA Q1 and Black. Babcock Mentoring Scheme: students gain skills, knowledge, and practical experience through four flexible sessions led by industry professionals.	Careers Support staff	Increased social and cultural capital - greater belief, ambition and expectations to maximise the careers service offer, including networks and work experience.	

Various Employability Activities providing Information, Advice and Guidance	Existing. Head Start Welcome Day: a one-day event, promoted to target students by faculties. Soar!: a complementary programme from the Careers Service. Quiet hours at Careers Fairs: for neurodiverse students. Finalist & Graduate call centre: follow up and careers support for past and current students prioritising underrepresented groups. Technology-based employability solutions: a range of innovative practices including work simulations, E-portfolios and CV analysers.	Careers Support staff	Increased social and cultural capital, greater belief, ambition and expectations to maximise the careers service offer. Better prepared, connected and supported to obtain relevant work experience and improve their employability skills. Increase in skills relevant to employers.	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy = £825,913

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The Progression activities have been informed by relevant research, our own empirical evaluation and institutional data, and in collaboration with businesses and third sector organisations. Each of the activities is underpinned by our Progression Theory of Change and a detailed summary of the research and evidence base is available in Annex B.

Evaluation

Activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Targeted Financial support for work experience	Increased work experience and progression to skilled employment	Qualitative research: case studies from participants. Feedback from staff members to reflect on students' employability skills. Matched non-random comparison groups: evaluate positive destinations, i.e. in Graduate Outcomes Survey, from participants and demographically similar non-participants enrolled in the same or similar programmes, who were eligible but did not take part/were not selected.	HEAT analysis My Career analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Work Experience interventions	Increased work experience and progression to skilled employment	Qualitative research: case studies from participants. Feedback from staff members to reflect on students' employability skills. Matched non-random comparison groups: evaluate positive destinations, i.e. in Graduate Outcomes Survey, from participants and demographically similar non-participants enrolled in the same or similar programmes, who were eligible but did not take part.	HEAT analysis My Career analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year.
Support for Postgraduate Study	Increased knowledge of, and applications to, postgraduate opportunities	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate changes in knowledge of postgraduate level study. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking against admin data and postgraduate applications/enrolments data to measure change in outcomes based on levels of engagement.	HEAT analysis My Career analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year.
Coaching/Mentoring programmes	Improved employability skills Raised knowledge of jobs/graduate level study Increased applications to internships and placements	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate changes in employability skills and knowledge of jobs/graduate level study. Matched non-random comparison groups: evaluate positive destinations, from participants and demographically similar non-participants enrolled in the same or similar programmes, who were eligible but did not take part.	HEAT analysis My Career analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year.
IAG for progression (talks, workshops or technology based)	Improved employability skills Raised knowledge of jobs/graduate level study Increased applications to internships and placements	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data to evaluate changes in employability skills and knowledge of jobs/graduate level study. Comparative analysis of engagement: eligible underrepresented students engaging with progression interventions, internships and placements. Dosage-response: HEAT longitudinal tracking against admin data and Graduate Outcomes Survey data.	HEAT analysis My Career analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year.

Intervention strategy 7: Mental Health. Activities to support student mental health, developed for, or targeted at, those students from underrepresented groups disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

Objectives and targets

The University has convened a Mental Health and Wellbeing Task Force with stakeholders from across Service Areas, Faculties, Schools and the Students' Union, as well as a new Student Wellbeing subcommittee of the University Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee. The taskforce is currently analysing the data around mental health, looking at relevant research and publications and developing a theory of change. This is due to be completed in July 2024. We will then be in a position to develop a better targeted and effective Intervention Strategy, which we will submit as a variation Request. For this current submission we have detailed the existing provision to support students' mental health, working on the assumption that mental health impacts across many of our other objectives.

Risks to equality of opportunity.

Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 10: Cost pressures

Related objectives and targets. We will examine evidence for the impact of mental health on related objectives. **Related risks to equality of opportunity.** We will examine evidence that mental health contributes to related risks to equality of opportunity for our students.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Pre-induction Support	Existing. Campus Days: support for students with anxiety, mental health issues and autism through a day on campus to familiarise themselves with the layout and meet staff and students. Pre-admissions work: students that disclose a disability are contacted prior to arrival to put in place relevant support.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 3
Staff led support groups	Existing. ADHD Group, Autism Group, Walking Group, LGBTQ+ Wellbeing group Various group activities: board games, cake and conversation, study yoga	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3
Students' Union Networks	Existing. Students' Union networks: provide the opportunity for students from different groups to meet and feedback on student life. The groups include the Students with Disabilities Network.	Student Union staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3
Targeted campaigns and events	Existing. University mental health day, suicide prevention, exam pressures etc. Variable campaigns and events throughout the academic cycle in collaboration with the student union and external agencies.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 3
Mental Health assessment and liaison	Existing. Appointments by referral only, for students with complex mental health diagnosis whereby co-ordinated support may be required, including liaison with statutory services and/or other UoP departments.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3

Wellbeing service	Existing. Appointments by referral only, for students with low level needs that require information, advice and guidance about their wellbeing.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 3
Daily and Weekly Mental Health Drop-ins	Existing. A discussion with a Mental Health Advisor, without having to book an appointment in advance, in which students can explore strategies to enhance wellbeing and formulate an ongoing plan.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging.	IS 3
Counselling Service	Existing. Self-bookable appointments for brief therapy, triaged according to presenting needs. Averaging 3-4 sessions per student over the academic year.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3
Personal development workshops	Existing. To help students get the most from their studies and personal life, includes Sustainable Happiness, Managing Anxiety, Look After Your Mate and Wellbeing Walks.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3
Togetherall	Existing. Wellbeing platform available 24/7 for peer support and listening support. Platform also includes psychoeducational materials on common issues faced by students - open to all students.	Student Support staff	Students feel well supported and have the means to support their own mental health.	IS 3
Students' Union clubs and societies	Existing, expanded. Student clubs and societies provide important opportunities for students to enhance their university experience through peer-to-peer support, supporting students with their mental health and in turn academic achievement. This activity aims to improve and support access to student clubs and societies for underrepresented students, through better use of data and support to overcome financial barriers.	Student Union staff	Students feel well supported and a part of the student community. They have the means to support their own mental health. Students develop a sense of identity and belonging. Increased expectations.	IS 3

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy = £330,644

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The current mental health activities have been informed by relevant research and student need. As part of the Mental Health Task Force we are analysing our institutional data, surveying students and exploring the latest research and sector evidence. From all of this we will develop a Theory of Change for student mental health that will lead to a targeted and effective Intervention Strategy.

Evaluation

Once we have developed our Theory of Change and subsequent Intervention Strategy for Mental Health, activities will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 Standards of Evidence, to establish whether each activity leads to the intended outcomes, and modify activities where evaluation shows that outcomes are not as expected. We will disseminate interim findings every year, internally through relevant channels (e.g. APS), and externally on our website and sharing via networks such as TASO. In the table below we have given examples of how we intend to evaluate activities to support mental health, some of which we are already evaluating.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Pre-induction Support	Increased sense of belonging, increased awareness of support, higher continuation rates for disabled students	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging . Qualitative research: participants' feedback .	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Staff led support Groups	Increased sense of belonging, awareness of support and higher continuation rates	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging . Qualitative research: Participants' feedback . Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Student Union Networks and Student Union clubs and societies	Increased sense of belonging, awareness of support and higher continuation rates	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging. Qualitative research: participants' feedback. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/ in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports Findings will be published on the UoP website at the beginning of each academic year
Daily/Weekly Mental Health Drop In	Increased awareness of support available to specific groups and higher continuation rates	Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Targeted campaigns and events and Togetherall	Increased sense of belonging, awareness of support and higher continuation rates	Qualitative research: participants' feedback.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Mental Health assessment and Wellbeing Service	Increased sense of belonging, awareness of support and higher continuation rates	Pre/post comparison: participants' survey data with TASOs validated questionnaire to evaluate sense of belonging . Qualitative research: participants' feedback. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year
Personal development workshops	Increased sense of belonging, awareness of support and higher continuation rates	Qualitative research: participants' feedback. Matched non-random comparison groups: HEAT longitudinal tracking/in-house admin data to evaluate retention rates from participants and demographically similar non-participants.	HEAT analysis Yearly internal reports UoP website each year

Whole provider approach

The strategies and policies for teaching and learning, as well as those more broadly covering the student experience (e.g. wellbeing services), are coordinated across the University to ensure they align with the needs of our diverse student population. This includes ensuring that we focus on any groups that have been identified as at risk of not having equal opportunity, as well as those protected under the Equality Act 2010.

The strategic direction of the APP is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience (DVC ESE) who reports to the Vice-Chancellor and works with the University Executive Group (UEG) to ensure there is appropriate coordination across the organisation to deliver the APP effectively. The University's comprehensive and integrated annual Planning and Accountability cycle ensures that the actions contained within the APP are resourced through, and embedded and delivered within, fully budgeted cross-institutional business plans. The University Teaching Learning and Quality Committee (UTLQC) oversees all aspects of the teaching and learning for students as well as the broader student experience and supports the success of all students including those at risk of equality of opportunity. The committee is chaired by the DVC ESE and has broad academic, professional services and Student's Union representation. The Board of Governors are provided with an annual update of actions taken, in compliance with the approved plan and progress against the plan's objectives.

Wherever possible the work to support the success of our students, whether identified through the APP as an area of risk to equal opportunity or not, occurs within the appropriate dedicated forum. As an example, progression is considered in detail by the Graduate Outcomes Steering Group. However, it is also important that the delivery and progress of our APP is considered in its entirety, and this is the responsibility of the University Student Success Committee (SSC). The committee ensures that all University of Plymouth students have the opportunities to succeed through strategic oversight of access, success, and progression and to ensure that our approach is aligned with national APP agendas and emerging initiatives. This committee, chaired by the DVC ESE, monitors our progress against our APP targets, reviews evaluation of our interventions and makes recommendations to UTLQC for any changes that might be required to improve our progress against milestones and targets.

Membership of the SSC includes the chair of the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (UEDIC), ensuring coordination with EDI strategy, as well as the Access and Participation Manager. UEDIC aims to realise the University's vision through an EDI plan (2022-2026) which includes objectives in alignment with the University's core strategic principles, as well as actions following our recent institutional Athena Swan Silver award. Representatives are embedded across the major committees of the University to contribute to the shaping and delivery of key policies and strategic initiatives. The SSC is supported by the APP Operations Group, chaired by the Access and Participation Manager, which is responsible for the implementation and delivery of the plan. The membership of APP committees includes academics from each Faculty, the Student's Union, and professional services staff from relevant directorates including Admissions, Marketing, Registry, Careers and Student Services. From September 2024 the SSC will become the APP Sub-committee of UTLQC to make clear to staff and students where the focus of our efforts on APP is governed and ensure clear lines of accountability.

Student representation at both regular committees and during the design of new strategies and policies is key to ensuring that our ambitions and interventions meet the needs of the diverse

student population at the University. Students are represented through sabbatical officers from the student's union, as well as course and School level student representatives as appropriate, resulting in every committee where education or the student experience is considered having a student voice.

Currently 20% of our UK-domiciled students declare a disability with 4.9% disclosing a diagnosed mental health condition. The University is currently developing a whole institution approach to student mental health and wellbeing, with a Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce. The University Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, covering both the staff and student experience, will lay the groundwork for the University to sign up to the University Mental Health Charter programme during 2024. The 'learn' strand of this group will be coordinated by a new Student Wellbeing sub-committee of UTLQC. Their work will include examining progress against our new APP targets for the equality of opportunity risk to mental health.

The governance of our access, continuation, completion, awarding gap and progression outlined above is also responsible for robust quality assurance of our provision. The annual review process ensures that there is regular review of progress for all areas of our APP, as part of a broader review of teaching and learning and the student experience, which includes data from student surveys including NSS, and all data on the success of all our students.

Student consultation

Our University of Plymouth Students' Union (UPSU) has representation on all major committees through its elected officers and permanent members of staff. This includes the SSC and the APP Operations Group. Students were involved throughout all stages of the APP submission process, both through the Students' Union and also through focus groups and workshops.

Initially, so that we had input and feedback from the student perspective, we held an information gathering workshop as part of the APP Operations Group where we invited students from our underrepresented groups to discuss existing and potential activities that could be included in the Intervention Strategies. To gather feedback from the wider student body for the APP, we worked closely with UPSU to design a survey to gauge student opinion on the range of activities in place to support the different underrepresented groups at the University. We asked which activities students were aware of, which ones they had taken part in, and whether they were beneficial and effective in their outcomes. We also included a section to gauge mental health using the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.

We worked with UPSU to better target underrepresented students by providing a list of courses with high numbers of these students, and then UPSU promoted the survey through the Student Reps for these courses. As a result of this work, and discussions of how to engage better with underrepresented students, we have agreed to improve the data sharing agreement with UPSU so that they can identify and support students from underrepresented groups through their clubs and societies to better address EORR Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, and Risk 8: Mental health. Following the survey, we delivered workshops, where we laid out the range of proposed activities for each stage of the student lifecycle that would feed into the Intervention Strategies. We then discussed these, along with the related objectives, to gather students' views on which activities we should take forward, how they could be improved, and any areas where there were perceived gaps in provision.

The students who attended the workshops provided insightful and considered feedback and there was general agreement that the University was providing a good range of support for different groups. However, there was a lack of awareness of the available activities and how to access some of them, with a clear need to improve communication. Students also commented that there should be more tailored support for specific groups and that there wasn't enough guidance on the different types of resources and how to use them. This feedback was then presented to the APP Working Group and incorporated into the final Intervention Strategies. Once the plan was ready in draft format, UPSU and its officers were asked to review the draft APP and provide comment before submission. The University also supported the UPSU VP for Education with the Student Submission for the APP, discussing the approach, the work towards the different sections and the involvement of our students. Moving forward, we will work with UPSU to complement their Student Networks by building on these to hold student led forums of underrepresented groups to feedback on the work and impact of the APP, including the various activities delivered through the Intervention Strategies.

Evaluation of the plan

Within the University's Planning and Analytics Office (PAO), we have two teams that support evaluation of the APP. Firstly, we have a Data Analytics Team that provide bespoke analysis of our applicants and students. Part of their role is to produce an annual APP Data Dashboard that includes analysis of intersectionality and the disaggregated groups for ethnicity and disability. Secondly, there is a dedicated Impact Evaluation Team (IET) that includes an Evaluation Analyst and an Evaluation Assistant Analyst to work under the guidance of the Access and Participation Manager. This team provide the relevant level of expertise to oversee and support a coherent programme of evaluation across the different strands of the student lifecycle. To provide narrative evidence and a basic rationale for activities, the IET has collated a bank of relevant, up to date research papers and publications which include theoretical, empirical and policy literature so that APP activities are, as a minimum, based on Type 1 evidence.

For each strand in the student lifecycle, we have developed a theory of change that links our activities to outcomes and clearly articulates the assumptions and processes underpinning the interventions. We have developed our quantitative and qualitative evidence, particularly around pre- and post-evaluations, to demonstrate where the outcome shows a difference for participants before and after the activities. In addition, wherever possible, we include the views of parents, teachers, academics and other relevant stakeholders so that we are triangulating the data from multiple sources. However, we understand the limitations of self-reported data, especially from questionnaires, and, where possible, we use sector-standard tools and techniques to help overcome these limitations e.g. TASO validated questionnaires, OfS Financial Support Toolkit.

As part of the process for the new APP, we completed the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Toolkit. While we have made significant progress since this was completed for the last APP there are still challenges to address. We recognise the need to improve the quality of our evaluation, moving to strong Type 2 evaluation by incorporating mixed methods and robust statistical analysis, and will explore the opportunities to deliver Type 3 evaluation for some activities. To improve our evaluation practice, IET staff are members of the South West Evaluation Forum and part of the TASO Consultancy network. The IET has an approved Data Management Plan that explains what data will be collected or created and how this will be done. It also covers; what documentation and metadata will accompany the data, the ethics and legal compliance, the storage and backup of

data, the selection and preservation of data, responsibilities around data sharing, and the data resources.

Where we are working closely and on a regular basis with schools, we have a data sharing agreement to maximise data protection, evaluation data and results. To support staff across the University to understand impact evaluation we have developed an Evaluation Toolkit. This includes all the relevant documents that explain and support the processes involved and enables the IET to support the staff they work with to develop their understanding. For some of the activities delivered to our own students, the IET has worked closely with academics to contribute to research and the aim is to develop this more through the life of the APP.

The system that we use to store and analyse data at an individual participant level is the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). This enables us to track students into and through higher education, capturing changes in the outcomes of individuals over time. It also enables us to look at cohorts and subgroups to analyse relevant changes or trends in the data and, where practicable, to follow up with participants. For the new APP we will be using the HEAT Evaluation Planning Tool, in combination with the TASO Mapping Outcomes and Activities Tool (MOAT), to improve the rigour and consistency of our evaluation, and support comparisons across the sector. The IET regularly reviews the outcomes of activities and feeds back at a local and operational level. It provides analysis for each activity, the depth and detail of which will depend on the numbers of participants and the intensity of the activity. This enables a review of key activities both in terms of process and in terms of outcomes, providing feedback to the relevant stakeholders. This is then inputted into how to implement the activity in future cycles, taking into account whether the empirical evidence, the underpinning rationale, the theory of change and related practices need updating so that improvements and changes are based on what works in the given context.

As part of the work to support the APP, the relevant webpages will be updated and will include a section for evaluation where we will upload and publish our findings, both those that have positive, expected outcomes and those that show where activities are not working. This links to our ambition to be transparent in sharing our evaluation information and to contribute to the wider sector bank of evidence.

Provision of information to students

The University makes its latest, approved APP, available on its website, along with relevant Tuition Fee information for prospective students. The University is committed to publishing clear and accessible information about its fees and financial support for prospective and existing students. We provide this information in a range of formats, through recruitment publications and on the website. Each course has its own webpage which details the key features, the entry requirements and the fees, costs and funding. Students are sent specific course information when offered a place. We will work with UPSU and students to ensure that communication of our new APP is made more accessible for all stakeholders.

We publicise information on the available financial support on our [‘Funding, scholarships and bursaries’ webpage](#). This lists the various funds and bursaries available, including the Mayflower Award, our access bursary for underrepresented groups, the Financial Support Fund (hardship fund) as well as other funds, both internal and external, that students can apply for. There is clear information on eligibility criteria and relevant terms and conditions, assessment, available amounts and payment dates. In most cases, where a student is eligible for an award, this is automatically

assessed via the Student Loans Company and the money is paid directly into the student's bank account. Further information is provided at Open Days, where members of the Student Funding Team are available to answer queries from prospective students, parents and carers and provide advice on the different funding available. The Outreach Team also provide information about student fees, funding and finance through presentations and activities in schools and colleges.

Details of our current financial support offer for students is shown below.

Scheme	Eligibility	Amount
Sanctuary Scholarships	UK domiciled. For asylum seekers and refugees, students with limited leave to remain and the dependants of the above groups.	Full fee-waiver. £1000 per year of study. Fully funded pre-sessional English course.
Mayflower Award – household income	UK domiciled. A two-tier bursary for students who come from households with a low annual income.	£1000 for the first year of study for students from households with an annual income <£25K. £400 for the first year of study for students from households with an annual income <£35K.
Mayflower Award – Care Leavers	UK domiciled. Students who are Care Leavers.	£1,500 per year of study.
Mayflower Award – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller	UK domiciled. Students who are from Gypsy, Roma or traveller families.	£1,500 per year of study.
Young Adult Carer Awards	UK domiciled. For students who are the main carers for another person.	High award £1,500: the student lives with the cared for person and is the main carer. Mid award £750: the student does not live with the cared for person but is the main or joint carer. Basic award £300: the student does not live with the cared for person but has caring responsibilities in holiday periods
The Tamar Engineering Project. For students studying an engineering degree.	UK domiciled. From a family with an income <£25,000. TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1. A Care Leaver student. Caring unpaid for a family member or friend. Irreconcilably estranged from parents.	£3,000 per year of study towards living costs. £1,500 fee waiver per year of study.
Make It Count Award	UK domiciled IMD Q1.	£3,000 for the first year of study.
Career Development bursary.	UK domiciled. TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1.	A one-off payment of '£50-£250' per student.

For extra-curricular career development activities.	Ethnically diverse. A Care Leaver. Caring unpaid for a family member or friend. Irreconcilably estranged from parents. Disabled. Mature.	
Careers Insight Programme. For internships and work experience.	UK domiciled. TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1. Ethnically diverse. A Care Leaver. Caring unpaid for a family member or friend. Irreconcilably estranged from parents. Disabled. Mature.	A one-off payment of £1,000 per student upon successful completion of the programme.

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

Introduction

Analysis of our performance was led by the Planning and Analytics Office, with initial analysis of the OfS and HESA data from the Data Analytics Team (DAT) and further analysis, focused on the APP and EORR, from the Impact Evaluation Team (IET). In analysing the data we have made use of: 1) OfS access and participation aggregated and individualised data, 2) HESA data supply files, 3) UoP internal student record data, 4) UCAS End of Cycle data, 5) the OfS Financial Evaluation Toolkit and 6) NSS data.

We have looked at the data across each stage of the student lifecycle, and for each stage we have analysed the intersections between the different underrepresented groups, including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, IMD, FSM and TUNDRA. In addition, for ethnically diverse students we disaggregated the data into the following ethnicities: Asian, Mixed, Black, Other and White. For disabled students we disaggregated the data into the following disabilities: Cognitive or learning difficulties, Mental health conditions, Multiple impairments, Sensory, medical or physical impairments and Social or communication impairments. We then analysed these data to see if there were any significant performance measures for any of the disaggregated groups.

For access we have considered individual student characteristics, as well as area-based measures, with comparisons in proportions and gaps where relevant. For each stage of the student lifecycle we have analysed the data over the previous five-years to produce averages that give a clearer picture of whether proportions and/or gaps are increasing or decreasing over time. We have also looked at the sector data and compared UoP performance, again across the student lifecycle and over the previous five years.

Given that the majority of our UK domiciled undergraduate population is full time (88%) we have focussed our analysis on these students.

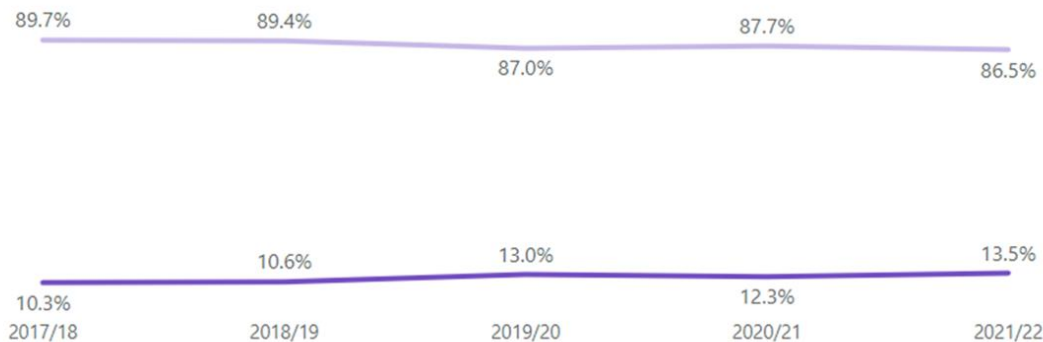
Access

The University continues to do well in terms of access for mature students, disabled students, and TUNDRA Q1 students. Although it is also doing well for the overall ABCS measure, this is not matched in some of the individual groups, namely ethnically diverse students including black students, those students from IMD Q1 and those students eligible for FSM.

Access	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Average	Sector 2021-22	Gap or Proportion
ABCS	7.2	4.6	6.4	7.6	8.9	6.9	27.8	G
Age	26.6	31.2	31.4	34	28.9	30.4	29	P
Disability	17.9	21.5	20.9	22.3	17.7	20.1	17.4	P
ED	10.3	10.6	13	12.1	13.5	11.9	34.8	P
Black	2	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.4	10.5	P
FSM	12.9	14.7	13.8	14.6	12.5	13.7	19.2	P
IMD	8	6	4.8	4.7	8.3	6.4	8.8	G
TUNDRA	-3.7	-5.5	-7.6	-5.6	-2.4	-5.0	18	G

Due to our geographical location we continue to perform poorly in relation to the sector for access for ethnically diverse students, including black students – the proportion of ethnically diverse students is 11.9% compared to the sector's 34.8%, while for black students the proportion is 2.4% compared to 10.5% for the sector. However, the 5-year average for both is positive.

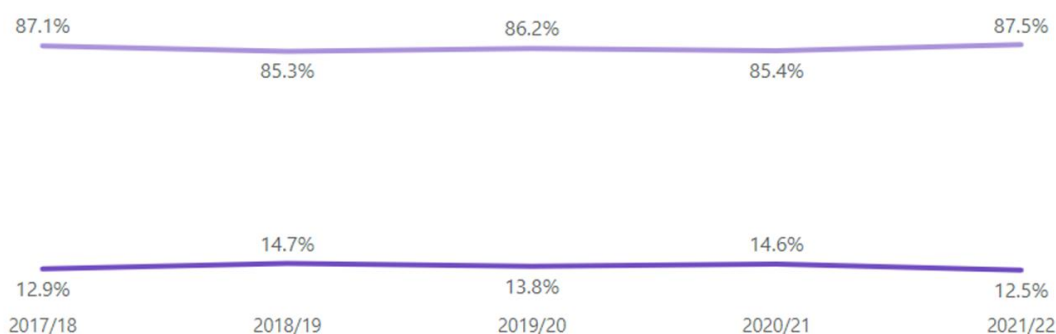
Access proportion Ethnically diverse and White



There is a small improvement for all of the disaggregated ethnicities for the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, with a larger improvement for Asian students and in terms of our UCAS applications we have seen a steady increase in applications and acceptances for ethnically diverse and black students. We will monitor this and continue with our access target for ethnically diverse students as a whole.

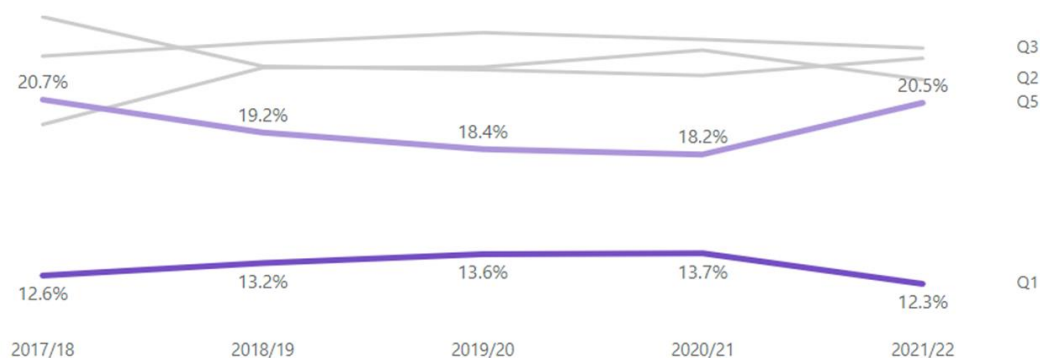
In 2021-22 the University recruited over 59% of its students from the South West which has a population that is 93.1% White, 2.8% Asian, 1.2% Black, 2.0% Mixed/Multiple ethnic and 0.9% Other Ethnic group (Gov.UK, 2022). In addition, the majority of our outreach work is focused on those schools geographically closest to Plymouth, either in the city itself or Devon and Cornwall, and the average proportion of black students across these three areas is 0.42%. (Gov.UK, 2023). We have therefore taken the decision not to include a target for access for black students in this APP and to replace it with a target for students eligible for FSM.

Access proportion FSM Eligible and Not Eligible



While the five-year average for both the proportion of FSM and the gap for IMD Q1 is positive, these are areas where the University is behind the sector - the proportion of FSM students for the sector is 18.4% compared to the UoP proportion of 12.5% and the sector gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 is currently -3.2% compared to the UoP gap of 8.3%.

Access proportion for IMD Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5



With larger cohorts of students from these underrepresented groups in a number of local schools the University intends to predominantly target its Pre-16 Attainment Raising and General Access activities at these two cohorts. These are gaps in access where a schools based and geographical targeting approach will, through collaboration and the use of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) system, enable us to evaluate and track the progress of our Intervention Strategies. This also ties in with our intersectional analysis which shows a relatively large gap for IMD Q1, young, male (and white) students.

For the disaggregated disability data there are no obvious trends over the period 2017-18 to 2021-22. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22 there was a fall in the percentage of students with cognitive or learning difficulties from 8.2% to 4.8%, and a fall in the percentage of students with a mental health condition from 6.3% to 4.0%. We will therefore monitor the access figures for these specific disabilities.

From our existing outreach work to widen access, both through our own interventions and those of our Uni Connect, Next Steps South West (NSSW), combined with evidence available at a national level, we believe the students we are aiming to support to access higher education are subject to the following risks from the EORR: Risk 1: Knowledge and skills, Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education and Risk 4: Application success rates.

As part of our collaborative work through NSSW, we will work with the other Plymouth higher education providers (HEPs) to avoid duplicating work in schools, and to ensure there is outreach and pre-16 attainment raising coverage for the schools with the highest numbers of underrepresented students. Where we have similar objectives, and identified inequalities of opportunity that are common to the Plymouth context, we will explore the possibility of delivering and evaluating the same activities to provide more robust outcomes.

As part of the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance we have supported the production of the Creative Forces 2022/23 impact evaluation report. From 2024-25, as UCAS make the data for applications from Service Children available, we will monitor their access to UoP and review our approach as we move forward.

We have assessed our performance with respect to Care Leavers, however, based on our internal data, we have very few care leavers in our student population. As a result, the numbers are below statistical thresholds and due care is needed with regard to GDPR.

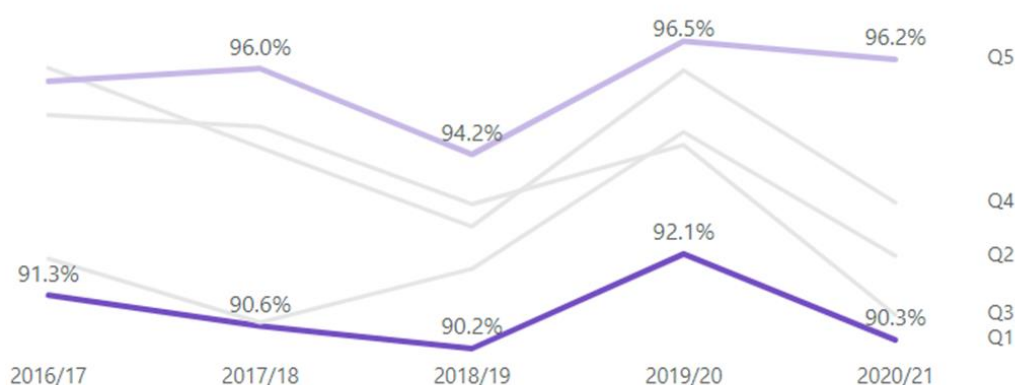
Our Access data show that in 2021-22, out of a population of 4,407, we had 49 Care Leavers which equates to 1.1%. The proportion has varied year on year however the average between 2017-18 and 2021-22 has reduced slightly. While we do not intend to set any specific targets for this group, we will monitor and track performance over the life of this APP to ensure there are no significant trends that require further action.

Continuation

For Continuation the University outperforms the sector for the majority of underrepresented groups. For ABCS, mature, FSM, Care Leavers and IMD the five-year average is positive however, for disabled, ethnically diverse and black students it is negative. We will monitor these underrepresented groups to see if this persists.

Although Continuation for mature students is a target area, we have only made limited progress in this. Continuation for TUNDRA Q1 students has deteriorated, with a negative five-year average, and is also lower than the sector. We will therefore continue with these two objectives for this strand.

Continuation rates TUNDRA Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5



There are no clear trends for the various intersections analysed for the Continuation strand.

In terms of the disaggregated data for ethnicity, there is a drop in continuation for all ethnicities between 2016-17 to 2020-21, with some inconsistencies across Faculties and Schools and so we will monitor these in future years.

There are no obvious trends over the period 2016-17 to 2020-21 for disaggregated disabilities, although we will monitor students with social or communication impairment as between 2019-20 and 2020-21 there was a fall in Continuation for these students from 90% to 78.8%. We will look at measures to support the wider mental health of our students as part of the outcomes from the University's Mental Health Task Force, which are due in the summer of 2024.

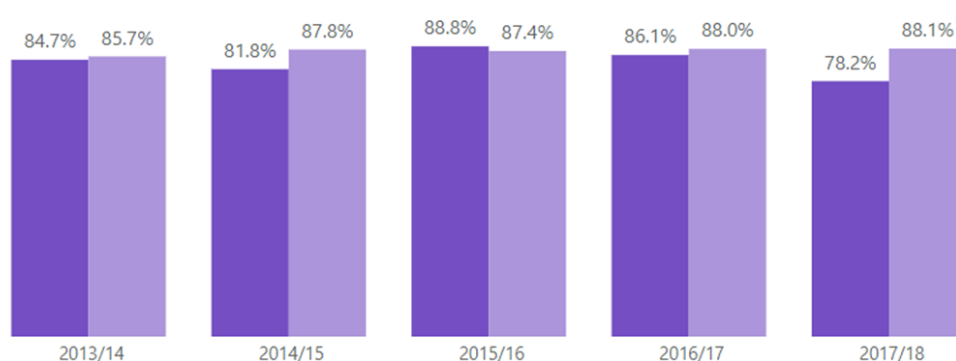
From the evaluation of our own existing activities to support Continuation, and the national research in this area, the risks to equality of opportunity for this strand from the EORR are: Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues.

Awarding Gap and Completion

The majority of students from underrepresented groups complete their degrees at University of Plymouth and we outperform the sector for ABCS, age, disability, ethnically diverse, FSM and IMD. While the gap for TUNDRA is slightly higher for 2021-22 the five-year average is positive. However, our black students are not completing their degrees as well as in the wider sector, 9.9% compared to 7.8%, and the five-year average is negative. Completion data for Care Leavers also shows a negative five-year average.

Completion	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Average	Sector 2017-18
ABCS	17.6	20.5	15.8	17.8	17.6	17.9	23.7
Age	5.2	5.4	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	10.3
Disability	3.5	5.3	3.8	4.3	1.6	3.7	2
ED	-0.6	1	2	2.1	4.1	1.7	4
Black	-0.4	9	1.3	0.4	11.1	4.3	7.8
FSM	2.4	6.9	1.4	7.4	5.5	4.7	8.2
IMD	9.1	7	6	9.9	7.0	7.8	10.7
TUNDRA	6.2	4.4	5.4	6.7	4.8	5.5	4.9

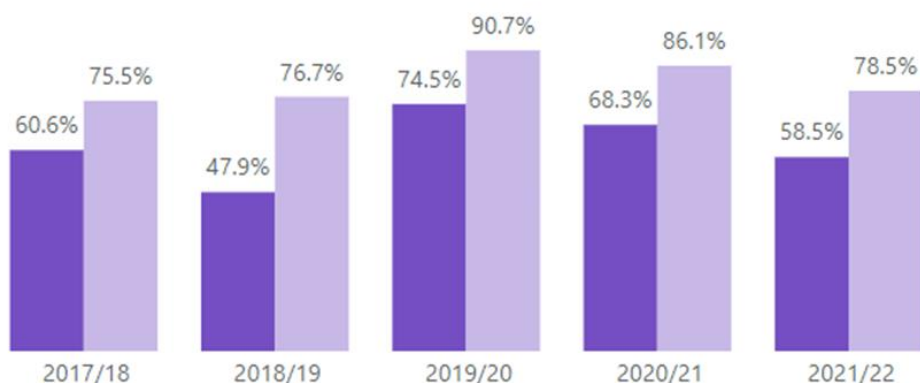
Completion rates **Black Students** and **White Students**



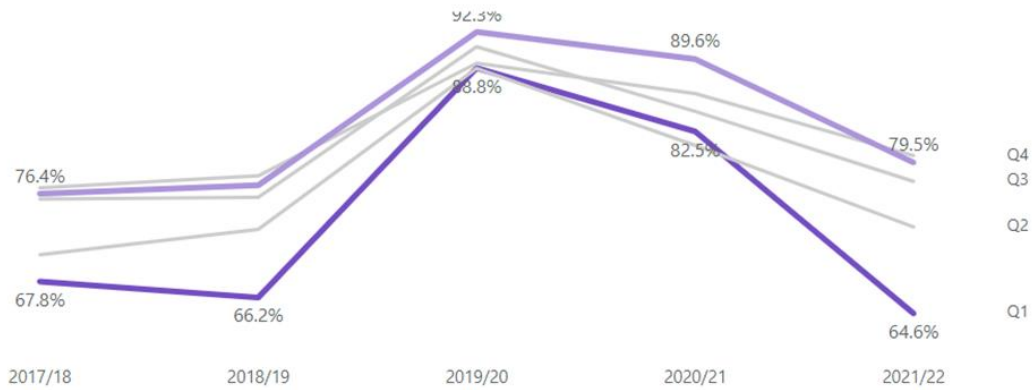
From our intersectional analysis we know that fewer mature students across all underrepresented groups complete their course, and it is expected that our Intervention Strategy to improve Continuation will feed into an improvement for these students' Completion as well. In addition, there is a larger Completion gap for black, male students and so we will ensure that we include activities in the Intervention Strategy for Completion and the Awarding Gap (IS 5) that specifically engage these students.

While the University has eliminated the Awarding Gap for disabled students, and the five-year average for Care Leavers is positive, there are still stubborn gaps for black students and IMD students. Although the University is performing better than the sector, both these underrepresented groups have negative five-year averages.

Attainment Rates **Black Students** and **White Students**



Attainment rates IMD Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5



Our intersectional analysis shows a larger gap for black, disabled students and this has been consistent over the 5 years from 2017-18 to 2021-22, apart from during Covid in 2020.

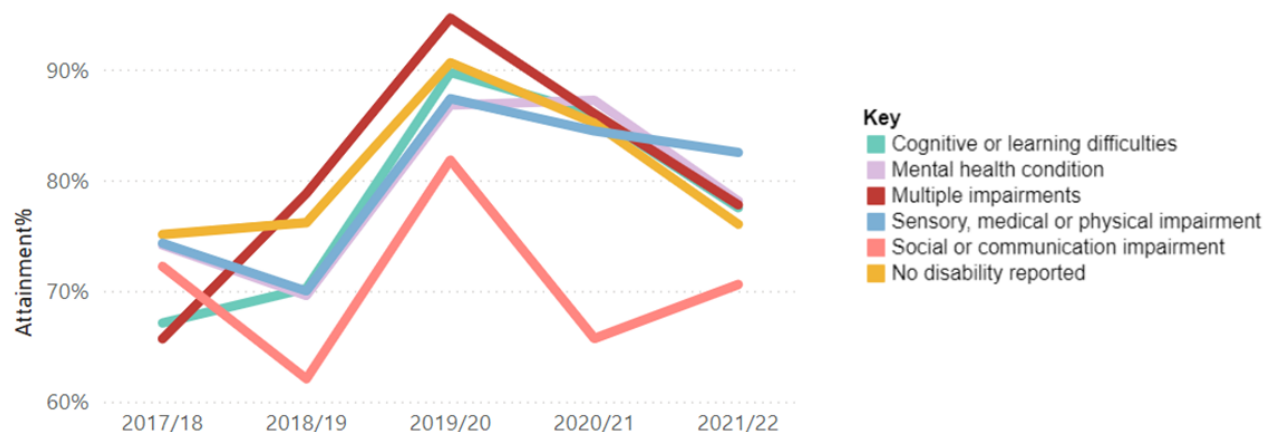
Intersectional Attainment Rates (low and high) by Ethnicity and Known Disability

Ethnicity breakdown	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Black					
Known Disability	66.7%	27.3%	40.0%	70.6%	37.5%
No Disability	59.8%	51.6%	82.2%	67.4%	63.6%
White					
Known Disability	70.3%	72.2%	89.9%	85.8%	79.3%
No Disability	76.7%	77.8%	91.0%	86.2%	78.3%

The disaggregated data for ethnicity shows that between 2020-21 and 2021-22, Asian and Other students improved. Overall, despite the peak and fall off around Covid, there was an increase in attainment for all ethnicities over the five years between 2017-18 and 2021-22.

All the disaggregated disabled groups improved their attainment between 2018-19 and 2019-20 but then between 2019-20 and 2020-21, apart from students with cognitive or learning difficulties, all groups performed worse. Between 2021-22, all groups apart from students with social or communication impairment, who improved from 65.7% to 72.7%, attained less well. We will continue to monitor the different disabled groups to see if any trends develop that require mitigation and this will feed into our wider Intervention Strategy for Mental Health that we will develop during the summer of 2024.

Attainment rates by disability type



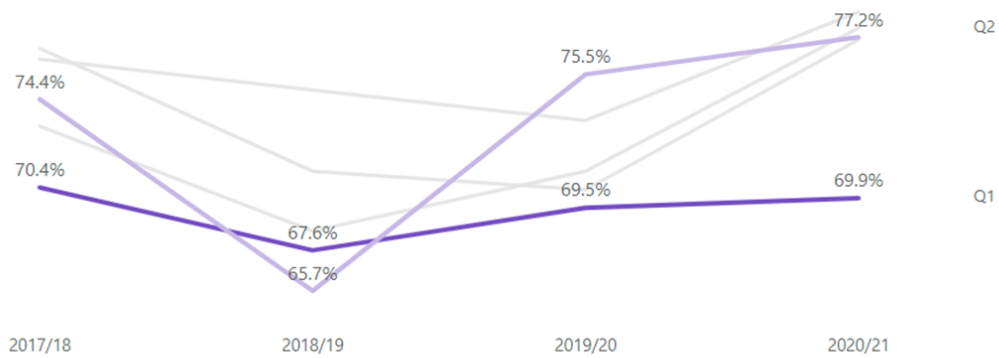
In reviewing evidence relating to Completion and Awarding Gaps the following risks from the EORR are most relevant to students at the UoP: Risk 6: Insufficient academic support, Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 11: Capacity issues, where this relates to the ability to take part in field trips and other specific course related activities.

Progression

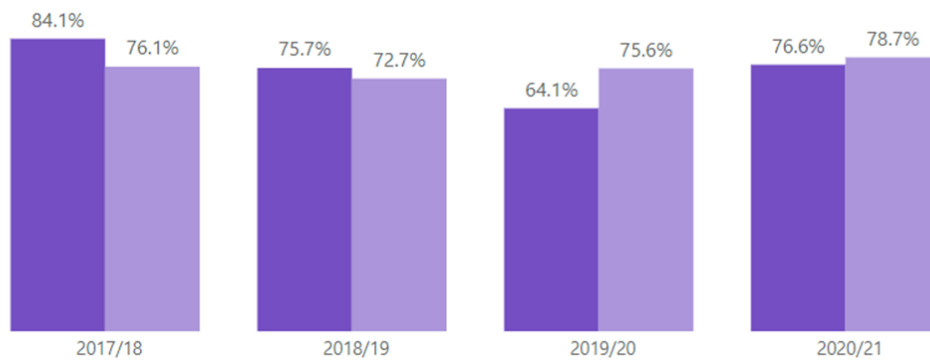
The majority of underrepresented groups progress well at the UoP and ABCS, age and IMD all have a positive trend since 2017-18. The gap between Care Leavers and non-Care Leavers was 5.7% in 2021 and the average since 2017-18 is slightly negative. In the previous APP we had objectives for black students and students from POLAR 4 Q1. For both of these groups the five-year average is negative and so we will continue to focus on them in this APP, although we will follow the OfS move from POLAR to TUNDRA for the measure of representation in higher education. The Progression gap between black and white students at UoP is currently 2.1%, which compares favourably to the sector gap of 3.6%, while the sector gap between TUNDRA Q5 and Q1 is currently 6.7%, compared to the UoP gap of 7.3%. For FSM the sector and UoP gap are the same, 6.9%, and as the gap at UoP has increased over the four years since 2017-18 we will monitor this in future years to see if this requires a specific focus within our Intervention Strategy for Progression.

Progression	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Average	Sector 2020-21
ABCS	20.8	22.7	23.8	13.6	22.4	17.3
Age	-7.3	-11.5	-14.7	-9.4	-11.2	2.8
Disability	-2.2	1.5	2.1	1.5	0.5	2.1
ED	-3.1	-3.7	0.3	1	-2.2	2.6
Black	-7.9	-3	11.3	2.1	0.1	3.6
FSM	-4.3	1.4	7.8	6.9	1.6	6.8
IMD	4.5	-3.2	8.4	6	3.2	10.8
TUNDRA	4	-1.8	6	7.3	2.7	6.7

Progression rates TUNDRA Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5

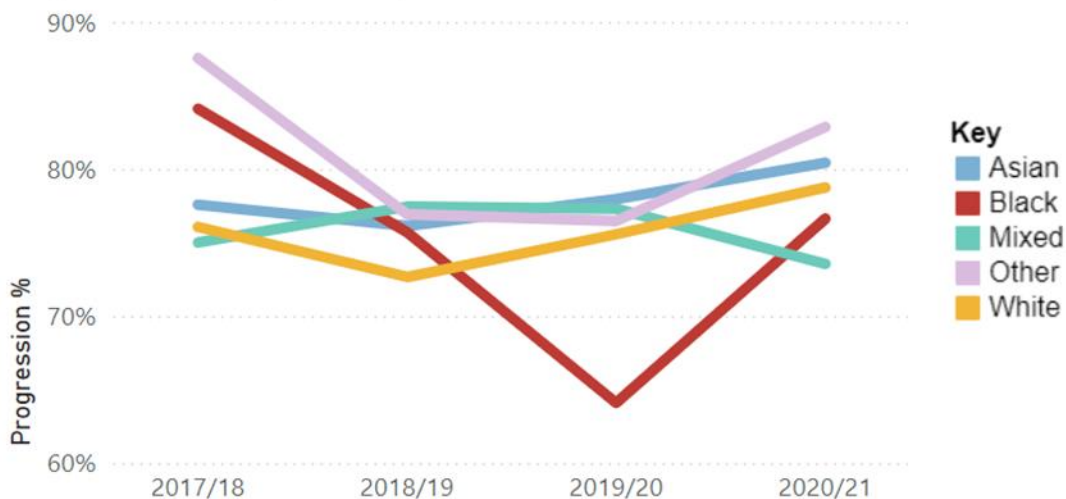


Progression rates Black Students and White Students



From our intersectional data we can see that there is poorer progression for ethnically diverse students who are also in TUNDRA Q1 while the disaggregated ethnicity data shows that between 2017-18 and 2020-21 progression for all ethnicities got worse, apart from Asian students, who improved.

Progression rates by ethnicity



For the disaggregated disability data between 2017-18 and 2020-21 mental health conditions, multiple impairments and social or communication impairments all improved while sensory, medical or physical impairment and cognitive or learning difficulties got worse. In line with the other strands in the student lifecycle, the work from our Mental Health Task Force will determine if there are specific activities required to support progression for students who are diagnosed with mental health conditions.

From the evaluation of our own existing activities to support Progression, combined with wider evaluation and research in this area, the risks to equality of opportunity from the EORR for this strand are: Risk 7: Insufficient personal support, Risk 8: Mental health, Risk 10: Cost pressures and Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

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Gov.UK (2023) Ethnicity Facts and Figures, GCSE Results (Attainment 8). Available at:

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/gcse-results-attainment-8-for-children-aged-14-to-16-key-stage-4/latest/> [Accessed 15 January 2024]

Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.

IS 1: Widening Access and IS 2: Pre-16 Attainment Raising

Evidence from the Office for Students (OfS) (OfS, 2021) shows that compared to the rest of the country, South West England has the lowest proportion of young people entering higher education; 37.4% compared to 42.2% nationally. In addition, Cornwall, Plymouth and Devon are among the regions with the biggest gaps in GCSE attainment between the most and least advantaged pupils (Education Policy Institute, 2023).

Given that UoP recruits the majority of its students from this region it is clear we should engage with our local schools and the wider communities in which they are situated. We are also aware, as demonstrated through our licence for Devon and Cornwall Children's University, of the importance of engaging with the educational journey of our young people from an early age (EEF, 2017) and engaging with the drive to improve attainment through primary and into GCSE.

While multi-intervention outreach shows promise, establishing causal links remains difficult due to research constraints. A quasi-experimental evaluation of a Uni Connect outreach program demonstrated increased acceptance into HEPs among participants (Burgess et al., 2021). Our general access work features a number of different interventions that together can raise awareness of higher education and start to increase aspiration and expectation.

Evidence suggests that long-term, sustained programmes of outreach can have a positive impact on disadvantaged school students (Bainham, K. 2019). Numerous studies conducted in the UK suggest that such initiatives correlate with improved attitudes, aspirations, and in certain instances, academic achievement and progression to higher education. However, it's important to note that the existing evidence is not 'causal' (TASO, 2023).

Research shows that academic achievement is the most important predictor of university progression (Crawford, 2014) while the Education Policy Institute's annual report from 2020 (Education Policy Institute, 2020) highlights attainment gaps due to the following factors: ethnicity, looked after children and regional disparity, while the subjects with the largest gaps are Music and PE, then Maths and English.

As part of our Widening Access and Pre-16 Attainment Raising Intervention Strategies, we will be using mentoring and tutoring, the former to provide emotional support and study support through positive role models, and the latter to raise attainment in specific subjects. Multi-activity outreach programmes that include a mentoring component are positively associated with participants' attitudes toward, and aspirations for, Higher Education (Robinson, 2020). Mentoring and role model interventions positively impact students' higher education attitudes and aspirations and utilizing current students as mentors encourages university applications (O'Sullivan et al., 2017), with online mentoring correlating with HE entry and attainment outcomes (Brightside, 2021).

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has reviewed 123 studies on one-to-one tutoring (EEF, 2021a) and 62 studies on tutoring delivered in small groups (EEF, 2021b). They found that both approaches are effective for attainment-raising, delivering four to five additional months progress on average. Moreover, they provide evidence that informal but structured tutoring programmes can increase attainment. One of the key findings was that one-to-one tuition might be an effective strategy for providing targeted support for pupils that are identified as having low prior attainment or are struggling in particular areas.

It is established practice for universities to use Student Ambassadors (SAs) to support widening access work in the UK (Ylonen, 2010) and they are seen to be an effective means to raise aspiration and, in the right setting and with the right training, to support attainment-raising work

(Gartland, 2014). They are often seen as role models for pupils while many of the SAs themselves gain valuable skills and experience. We believe that with the right support and training our SAs can make an important contribution to our access work.

Using contextual offers to support access for students from underrepresented groups has been used by various HEPs over a number of years (OfS, 2019; Mountford-Zimdars and Moore, 2020) and the research shows that this is a process that needs careful consideration in the criteria used to identify potential contextual offer holders (Gorard et al., 2017). Many HEPs, including ourselves with the Peninsula Pathways programme, include contextual offers as a part of a sustained outreach programme that students attend in order to access the contextual offer.

Our contextual offer for IMD Q1 students is a new initiative for 2024-25 entry, and we are aware of the need to present contextual offer information clearly and accessibly so that applicants can evaluate their eligibility and make an informed choice where to apply (Eguiguren Wray et al., 2020). As part of our contextual offer programme we will not only focus on the access for those students who are eligible but put in place a programme of activities that support them to continue and achieve well once they are at UoP. This is detailed in IS 3.

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IS 3: Continuation

To facilitate the academic achievements of students with disclosed disabilities, it is essential for staff to assist these students in navigating available support services and accommodation when entering university (Dong and Lucas, 2016). Additionally, access to information and comprehension of disability support services hold particular significance for students with non-visible disabilities (Murray and Sotardi, 2022). The experience of transitioning to university is particularly important in predicting university continuation and completion (Cage et al., 2020).

In a study from Hughes et al., (2016), students with disabilities or chronic illnesses expressed a preference for support that provided flexibility in terms of time, organizational assistance, and strategies to manage academic stress. In another small-scale qualitative survey, the benefits of having a Disability Access Plan, also known as a support plan, were highlighted. Participants

reported positive outcomes, such as the ability to negotiate extensions on coursework submissions and additional time for exams, which alleviated pressure (Kendall, 2016).

Students with a reported disability were more likely to continue at university and achieve higher academic awards when they engaged with disability services, especially if this was early in their student lives (Safer et al., 2020).

For care leavers, having access to a safety net and support from a trusted adult figure is paramount, often fulfilled by a university's care leavers' service. Essential elements contributing to this group's success in higher education encompass motivation for engagement, adequate university readiness, and the provision of academic, personal, and financial assistance (Cotton et al., 2014).

A sense of belonging in higher education is positively associated with academic success (Robertson et al., 2019), though this seems to impact more on students from underrepresented groups (WONKHE; 2022b). A recent WonkHE/Pearson report (Blake et al., 2022) found that connection, inclusion, support, and autonomy were the four key foundations for a student sense of belonging while an earlier student survey on belonging and inclusion found that mental health was key (McVitty et al., 2022; WONKHE, 2022a).

The establishment of positive social communities plays a pivotal role in bolstering students' institutional commitment and diminishing the likelihood of dropout (Burke, 2019). Moreover, studies indicate that students who experience a strong sense of belonging in higher education tend to demonstrate heightened motivation, increased academic self-assurance, greater engagement with their studies, and ultimately, superior academic performance (Pedler et al., 2022).

Additionally, cohort models, where students sharing a similar identity or focus progress through their academic journey together, have proven effective in enhancing overall retention rates among students, particularly among minority cohorts (Mauldin et al., 2022).

We intend to provide a comprehensive programme through the student lifecycle for our contextual offer students. Once within HE, these students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds face increased challenges when navigating unfamiliar educational processes and spaces due to a lack of existing familiarity and experience with similar education systems and approaches (Baer & Kearney, 2023; Arday, 2021). This barrier is reflected within OfS completion data, which highlights that 'students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to complete their course' (OfS, 2023).

Providing Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS) opportunities helps to support students during key transition points, such as their initial transition into university, by allowing them to learn from the experiences (both successes and failures) of students who have previously completed their current year of study (DeMarinis et al.)

Studies have shown that students who participate in coaching programmes often have better outcomes with a positive impact on attainment, continuation, and completion (Rodriguez et al., 2019; Howlett et al., 2021). From the evaluation of our pilot Lifecycle coaching programme, designed and delivered in collaboration with the social mobility charity CoachBright, we found that students increased their confidence and their belief in their ability to succeed, adjusted to university life better, had a stronger sense of connectedness to the University and that it supported their transition to higher education. This was a small pilot and so we cannot draw any definitive conclusions at this stage, however, we will increase the number of participating students and refine our evaluation to provide a stronger evidence base and identify the most effective features as we move forward.

The use of Learner Analytics to improve understanding of students learning is becoming more commonplace although there is limited research and evidence, and what there is often lacks

empirical rigour or peer review. Where interventions have been well designed there is evidence to suggest they improve student outcomes.

Cambruzzi et al. (2015) tested a learning analytics system that provided dropout predictions and allowed teachers to undertake personalised, pedagogic action. The system predicted student dropout rates with an average of 87% accuracy and led to an 11% reduction in them. 'Student Explorer', a system alerting students and teachers of student progress and performance using a traffic light system, recorded significant increases in test scores for all the participating students.

At Teeside University, a recent piece of action research used engagement and attendance data to track student engagement across the academic year 2021/22. The research aimed to identify and invite relevant students to attend tailored academic reengagement sessions known as the Student Success Programme (SSP). Primarily targeting students with low engagement levels according to learning analytics, the SSP resulted in a 14% overall attendance increase, particularly benefiting students at levels 3, 4, and 7, typical transition stages into higher education, undergraduate, and postgraduate studies respectively. Most SSP participants were at levels 3, 4, and 6, indicating transitional periods and a need for support in completion. Among students with low or no engagement who attended two or more SSP sessions, 73% showed improved engagement.

UoP is currently exploring options and ways to use and improve learner analytics to increase support for students from underrepresented groups.

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IS 4: Financial Support

Financial support can include grants, bursaries, scholarships and fee-waivers. It is designed to help students succeed on-course by alleviating the financial costs of studying. There is strong evidence to show that financial support can have a positive impact on continuation and completion with less strong evidence to show that it improves attainment (Byrne and Cushing, 2015; Hoare and Lightfoot, 2015; Ilie et al., 2019). Importantly, a study from Moores and Burgess (2023) found that after controlling for multiple demographic and attainment factors (age, gender, ethnic grouping, disability, nationality, household income, prior educational attainment, and local Higher Education participation rates), scholarships improved student retention for those students from households with low and intermediate incomes.

The evaluation of our main bursary, the Mayflower Award, using the OfS Financial support evaluation toolkit, indicates that the bursary is effective in enabling students to progress from their first year of study to their second. Students receiving the bursary are 16% more likely to be retained into their second year.

Financial support in the form of bursaries can empower students to participate more fully in their studies because they reduce worry and stress about money. It can also be the difference between students participating in Student Union societies and social activities with their peers that build a sense of belonging and support continuation (Kaye, 2021). A report from the Sutton Trust (2021) found that about a third of students who did not take part in student societies were not able due to paid work commitments.

For other students, there is a reliance on bursaries to engage in unpaid work experience, especially in fields where such opportunities are vital for future career prospects. This option becomes challenging without financial support, as students often need to work for pay during summer breaks (Harrison et al., 2018).

With the rise in the cost of living, financial support has taken on an increasingly important role for students. The Savanta cost of living research commissioned by the OfS (OfS, 2023), found that many students had to cut back on food shopping, an increasing number were having to work, and for longer, and many had noticed a negative impact on their wellbeing.

Financial strain, along with work commitments that can impact on time management and ability to study, are all important factors in students considering leaving university (Nieuwoudt & Pedler 2021). These can all be mitigated by needs-based, targeted financial support. Bursaries can allow students to work fewer hours in off-campus employment (Broton et al., 2016) which it is shown can negatively impact academic performance (Zhang and Yang, 2020).

Care Experienced students, many of whom do not have the support and backing of a typical family unit, can be particularly reliant on bursaries and grants that help to cover the costs of year-round accommodation, and other additional expenses that can provide stability in their student experience (OfS, 2021).

One area where additional financial support can play a key role is in supporting work experience and internships that build employability skills to support graduate employment. Access to these opportunities is often more difficult for students from low-income households, due to financial barriers (Roberts and Ouwehand, 2017).

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IS5 – Awarding Gap and Completion.

Participation in mentoring programs, especially peer mentoring, correlates with improved outcomes, such as workplace competence, career development, and academic success. For instance, Kerrigan and Manktelow (2021) observed higher assessment scores and lower module failure rates among participants in a peer mentoring program. Bolton-King (2022) found that undergraduate mentors enhanced their employability skills through mentoring, boosting self-confidence and communication abilities.

Provision of a consistent PALS offer throughout a student's first year at university improves their confidence to engage with course-specific content and improves the satisfaction and achievement of those students who actively make use of the support offer (Gamlath, 2020). Whilst PALS is not typically targeted at particular student groups, offering peer-led spaces where students can develop academic skills, capabilities and required cultural competencies, can particularly benefit students from non-traditional academic backgrounds who may be less likely to possess the expected academic cultural capital prior to starting.

According to the TASO Evidence Toolkit (TASO, 2023), most of the existing evidence for student support programmes compares outcomes for students who have participated in such programmes with comparator groups of students who have not. Evidence suggests that multi-intervention programs are likely to have a greater impact than other singular approaches. The 'EXCEL Programme', presented by Dagley et al. (2016), was a two-year program primarily based on the learning community concept, encompassing both residential and curricular components. It was successful at increasing both the retention and graduation rates of its students, with underrepresented groups also experiencing similar, if not higher, increases in retention.

Although these studies all suggest a positive correlation between participation and retention and success, at this stage more evaluation is needed to verify that such programmes are having the desired impact, and to quantify the size of this effect (Grier-Reed et al., 2016).

As a way of improving academic literacy skills for large cohorts, integrating, and embedding the development of these skills throughout students' educational journey and within the university setting appears to be the most successful approach (Gunn et al., 2011).

Academic skills advisors also have an important role to play in increasing academic confidence and self-efficacy among undergraduate students and, if delivered effectively, resources and programmes to support students to become self-directed and independent learners can have a positive effect on learner's progress, (Higgins et al., 2015).

SUM:UP is the University's mathematics and statistics drop-in service, available to all students at the University of Plymouth. Delivered by PhD students it builds on the premise that where students can engage with maths support it improves their confidence in the subject, helps attainment and reduces students leaving their course due to maths difficulties (Matthews et al., 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2014).

Magennis et al. (2014) emphasised peer support's significance in fostering digital skills among individuals with disabilities, crucial for transitioning to Higher Education and employment. They proposed DigiPlace4All, an online peer support community, to facilitate one-to-one peer support and information sharing on digital technologies and inclusion among people with disabilities, educators, and employers. The study validates the necessity of such online spaces.

In the Gravity Assist report (OfS, 2021), part of the wider Digital Teaching and Learning Review, a case study of the University of Plymouth's Writing Café was included as an example of a digital space that offers students the opportunity to meet virtually with student mentors who offer support with academic skills such as writing and pastoral support. While it was instigated due to Covid, it has continued and now complements the face-to-face option. This allows greater flexibility to

disabled students, commuter students, those studying at satellite campuses and other student groups, to access the Writing Café regardless of how they are studying.

The degree attainment awarding gap between ethnically diverse and white undergraduate students is a persistent and ongoing problem. Some of the factors contributing to degree awarding gaps are structural such as entry qualification, subject of study or age of students. However, once such factors are taken into account, data shows that there remain significant unexplained differences (OfS, 2021).

From the TASO report, 'Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap' many HEPs are delivering activities to try and close the ethnicity degree awarding gap and the examples of good practice include a number of multi-intervention approaches, curriculum reform, students as co-creators and a robust theory of change (TASO 2023). The recommendations from the report focused on providing clarity through a detailed theory of change, taking a long-term approach, building bottom-up and top-down activities, ensuring clear accountability and responsibility, developing multi-stage approaches, considering the mechanisms of change, recognising the need for sensitivity in how activities are approached and incorporating continuous evaluation. In addition, the guidance and resources provided to support staff in this area must be contextually relevant and informed by the insights and experiences of the institution's own students (TASO, 2023; UUK & NUS, 2019).

We will continue to evaluate our current PALS, CoachBright and Contextual Offer programmes and combine the evaluation from these with developments in learner analytics to develop a programme of support for our black students. One area that research shows can have a positive impact is in assessment, as demonstrated through the Student Attainment Project, (OfS, 2019). This demonstrated how an active checklist, delivered in class time via the academic, could lead to immediate improvements on student performance, helping them to avoid simple mistakes in their work and allowing them a framework against which they could check their work.

In their research, Davis et al. (2016) conducted a randomised controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of 'Learning Tracker', a tool designed to visualize a range of engagement metrics. This innovative tool not only enabled students to track their own engagement but also provided valuable comparative insights by juxtaposing their performance against that of previous successful cohorts, offering contextual feedback on their level of engagement. Their findings revealed a significant improvement in academic performance, with an impressive 8.5% increase observed. Moreover, the study noted enhancements in two out of six engagement proxies, indicating a positive impact on student involvement and commitment to learning. This pioneering approach highlights the potential of technology-driven interventions in enhancing educational and employment outcomes and fostering student progression.

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IS 6 – Progression.

According to the 'What Works to Reduce Equality Gaps in Employment and Employability' report (TASO 2022), there are significant disparities in employment equality. Gaps in graduate earnings emerge immediately after graduation and increase further over time. One year after graduation, the earnings gap between the lower and upper quartile of graduates stands at £11,300, increasing to £24,100 after ten years.

Additionally, significant earnings disparities exist among graduates of different ethnicities three years post-graduation (The Sutton Trust, 2021). Outside of academic studies, university students commonly engage in various activities. Among recent graduates, 79% worked, 61% participated in student societies, and 43% gained work experience. However, participation rates vary significantly based on socio-economic background. Only 52% of working-class graduates engaged in student societies, compared to 64% of their wealthier peers, while participation in work experience was 46% and 36%, respectively.

Many students depend heavily on bursaries as a lifeline to participate in invaluable unpaid work experiences, particularly within industries where such opportunities are important for shaping their future career trajectories. The need for financial assistance becomes obvious, especially as students frequently find themselves grappling with the need to secure paid employment during summer breaks, which makes it even more difficult to pursue unpaid internships or other career-enhancing activities (Harrison et al., 2018).

The TASO employability report (TASO 2022) suggests that work experience, information, advice, and guidance (IAG), technology-based interventions, and teaching employability skills can benefit students in securing graduate employment. It advises Higher Education Providers (HEPs) to identify which employability skills are pertinent to different student demographics, especially disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Additionally, HEPs should evaluate the impact of relevant employability skills on employment outcomes and develop effective methods for teaching these skills.

At UoP there are many programmes with embedded employability modules. From Scott and Willison (2021), the most important finding was that employability modules should be tailored to a specific cohort to ensure they are aligned with their needs. This suggests that central university employability module providers should work closely with individual departments to maximise the impact of these for students.

A study from Whiston et al., (2017) provided evidence to suggest that Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) programs focused on employment and employability can have a positive impact on students' career prospects and graduate employment outcomes. A meta-analysis conducted on 57 research papers examining IAG interventions indicates a reliable association between these interventions and recipients' ability to make effective career choices.

The Careers Service at UoP has been evaluating its core programmes over the life of the current APP and there is empirical, Type 2 evidence to demonstrate that many of the programmes are

having a positive impact. Moving forward, we will use this, combined with student consultation, to refine the various employability activities and develop our understanding of how to use our IAG to better support those students who are not progressing as well. Through updating the online platform, My Career, we are now able to identify students from underrepresented groups and raise awareness of careers and employability sessions, internships, and work experience opportunities for students from these cohorts.

Reports commissioned by the UK government, including those by Dearing (1997) and more recently Wilson (2012), emphasize the importance of work experience in university education. Work experience aims to equip undergraduates with skills and knowledge that enhance their employability post-graduation.

Various forms of work experience exist, such as part-time jobs, internships, or collaborations with industry partners integrated into the curriculum. Many UoP students support our work with schools and community groups and there is evidence to show that this kind of work experience can help university students to become successful professionals and citizens once they graduate from university. Evidence from student ambassador alumni suggests that the positive impacts are broad and long-lasting, contributing to students' professional successes and personal lives (Gannon et al., 2018).

'Sandwich placements' stand out as particularly effective, offering sustained exposure to the workplace alongside academic studies. A literature review by Brooks and Youngson (2016) revealed that students who participated in placements demonstrated enhanced academic performance, with a significant increase in grades starting from year 2 compared to non-placement students. This improvement led to 40% of placement students achieving a higher final classification and better employment outcomes, including securing full-time positions matching their graduate education level and higher starting salaries.

Students who participate in placements report positive outcomes e.g. enhanced confidence, maturity, interpersonal skills, and learning capabilities (Lock et al., 2009) while there is evidence that participation in longer term or extended placements increases the likelihood of attaining a good degree and securing employment in the students chosen area of interest (Bullock et al., 2009).

Mazerolle et al. (2018) highlighted the mutual benefits of formal Higher Education Mentor Programs, where mentors learned from mentees, fulfilling professional duties, while mentees gained external perspectives, valuable feedback, and networking opportunities. Despite the benefits, challenges in implementing effective mentoring programs persist, with the need for diverse mentor networks emphasized to accommodate the evolving work environment (De Janasz et al., 2003).

As part of the wider Learner Analytics project at UoP we will put in place systems and training to identify underrepresented students that aren't engaging with employability and careers activities and follow up through targeted communications to encourage them to participate.

Building on previous research in the field, the OfS ABSS project, 'Improving progression rates to taught postgraduate study' was delivered in partnership between the Universities of Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Warwick and York (OfS, 2019). It targeted students previously identified as having lower levels of progression to Postgraduate Taught study, specifically those from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR quintile 1 and 2) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. The project involved the design and evaluation of non-financial interventions that aimed to support student progression onto Postgraduate Taught study and remove barriers and inequalities. It highlighted the need for pre-arrival support, demystification of postgraduate study and IAG on postgraduate finance. In addition, representation remains highly relevant when considering widening participation at Postgraduate Taught level. A perceived lack of diversity in the

Taught Postgraduate student cohort and within academia can be a barrier to further study for students from non-traditional backgrounds.

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IS 7 – Mental Health.

This Intervention Strategy is in development but will include a range of activities to support student mental health, with specific activities developed for, or targeted at, those students from underrepresented groups that our analysis shows are disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Plymouth

Provider UKPRN: 10007801

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for new entrants

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	9250
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	Classroom based - lower fee cap	N/A	5760
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree		N/A	11100
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
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	BCNO Limited - BCOM Integrated Masters	10000911	9250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
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	6935
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	6935
Foundation year/Year 0	Classroom based - lower fee cap	N/A	5760
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
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	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
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 Plymouth

Provider UKPRN: 10007801

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	£1,813,000	£1,905,000	£2,052,000	£2,229,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£1,651,000	£1,735,000	£1,869,000	£2,030,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£405,000	£426,000	£459,000	£498,000

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 (£)	£233,000	£245,000	£264,000	£287,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£758,000	£797,000	£858,000	£932,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£822,000	£863,000	£930,000	£1,010,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£1,813,000	£1,905,000	£2,052,000	£2,229,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£1,813,000	£1,905,000	£2,052,000	£2,229,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£1,190,000	£1,270,000	£1,398,000	£1,552,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£66,000	£70,000	£76,000	£83,000
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£395,000	£395,000	£395,000	£395,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£1,651,000	£1,735,000	£1,869,000	£2,030,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£405,000	£426,000	£459,000	£498,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Plymouth

Provider UKPRN: 10007801

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To increase the proportion of ethnically diverse students accessing the University from the 2021-22 baseline value of 13.5% to 15.0% by 2029-30.	PTA_1	Access	Ethnicity	Mixed		This target will measure the increase in the proportion of ethnically diverse students (BAME) accessing the University. It was calculated based on the previous 5 year average and the expected impact of the intervention strategy.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	13.5%	13.8%	14.2%	14.6%	15%
To increase the proportion of FSM students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 12.6% to 16% by 2029-30.	PTA_2	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		This target will measure the increase in the proportion of students eligible for FSM accessing the University. It was calculated based on the previous 5 year average and the expected impact of the intervention strategy.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	12.6%	13.4%	14.3%	15.2%	16%
To reduce the gap in Access between Indices of Multiple Deprivation IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 8.3% to 4.0% by 2029-30.	PTA_3	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	This target will measure the decrease in the gap between the number of students from IMD Q1 accessing the University compared to the number of students from IMD Q5. It was calculated based on the previous 5 year average and the expected impact of the intervention strategy.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	8.3%	7.2%	6.0%	5.0%	4%
Pre-16 Attainment Raising. We will deliver outreach that improves the skills and learning that support attainment, based on the University's Theory of Change for Pre-16 Attainment Raising.	PTA_4	Raising attainment	Other	Other (please specify in description)		Given the demographic of students in the immediate area the main focus will be on working with schools that have high, relative percentages of students from IMD Q1, FSM and TUNDRA Q1. Our targets will be to increase attainment for these groups based on an intervention strategy that improves the skills and learning that support attainment, based on our Theory of Change for Pre-16 attainment raising.	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2021-22	Other (please include details in commentary)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To reduce the gap in Continuation between mature students and young students from our 2021-22 baseline value of 6.3% to 2.0% by 2029-30.	PTS_1	Continuation	Age	Mature (over 21)	Young (under 21)	This target will measure the decrease in the gap between the number of mature students continuing into Y2 compared to the number of young students. It was calculated based on the previous 5 year average and the expected impact of the intervention strategy.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	6.3%	5.3%	4.2%	3.1%	2.0%

[illegible]