

Ravensbourne University London

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

1. Introduction and strategic aim

This Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out how Ravensbourne University London (RUL) will ensure students from underrepresented backgrounds are supported to **access, succeed, and progress** to good graduate outcomes at the University. The plan is focused on Home Undergraduate students on full-time courses and identifies risks to equality of opportunity for these students, alongside a comprehensive overview of our planned intervention strategies designed to address those risks. At RUL our central mission is to develop people, ideas and innovation, in collaboration with industry. We have four core strategic aims: to provide a transformative student experience for our students, which enables success in their lives and careers; a university built around access, inclusion and diversity; an integral contributor to communities and society; and an essential partner to industry.

At RUL we believe that students from all backgrounds should be able to benefit from the transformative opportunities higher education offers, and that once at RUL they are supported to complete their degree and succeed. Ensuring that all our students achieve successful degree outcomes which are valued by employers and industry is imperative for us. We acknowledge the role we play in improving the social mobility of our students, and in changing and diversifying the creative and digital industries for the future. It's therefore vital for us that we can support our students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds to achieve good degree outcomes and progress to a career within their industry.

Our strategic aim for access and participation over the coming years is to further understand and improve, and eliminate where possible, our gaps in access, success and progression for learners from underrepresented groups. Our latest enrolment data from 2023/24 shows that of our total Home, Undergraduate, Ravensbourne-taught population, 83.6% are from 1 or more underrepresented group, and:

- 22.4% are mature learners
- 32.9% have a declared disability
- 56.6% are from the global majority
- 60.1% are from a low IMD postcode (Q1&2)
- 12.8% are from a low POLAR4 postcode (Q1&2)
- 3.1% are care leavers

Success will be delivered by adopting a whole institution approach to policy and procedural changes, including for our collaborative provision; collaboration, stretch-and-challenge targets, professional development, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Our strategy is, and will continue to be, informed by sector best practice, case studies and reports from the OfS, TASO, Advance HE, Universities UK and other collaborative networks we are part of.

2. Risks to equality of opportunity

We identified our key risks to equality of opportunity using the following methodology:

1. We conducted an analysis of our current performance, using the Access and Participation data dashboard. From this we identified the largest gaps in performance across student groups and lifecycle stages. We also worked with our partners who deliver collaborative provision to do the same. For a full analysis of our *assessment of performance* please see Annex A.
2. We used the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and considered how these risks related to our context.
3. We used insights from collaborative networks we are part of, for example, London Higher, GuildHE, NERUPI and UKADIA.
4. We undertook consultation with staff and students, including at academic staff development days and an all-staff conference, surveys and focus groups with relevant staff and students, as well as more formal settings such as Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, EDI Committee, and the APP Steering Group.

This process identified six key risks across the student lifecycle. These risks are outlined below and have been mapped to the EORR.

Access:

Risk 1: There are lower proportions of students from geographical areas of the highest deprivation applying and studying at RUL, using IMD Q1 as a measure.

Risk 2: There are lower proportions of students from multiple characteristics of disadvantage and underrepresentation applying and studying at RUL, using ABCS Q1 as a measure.

Mapped to EORR: Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills; Risk 2: Information and Guidance; Risk 3: Perception of Higher Education; Risk 4: Application Success Rates

Success – Continuation and Completion:

Risk 3: There is a gap in non-continuation between learners from Asian Black Minority Other ethnicities and White students.

Risk 4: There is a gap in completion between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability.

Mapped to EORR: Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills; Risk 2: Information and Guidance; Risk 3: Perception of Higher Education; Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental Health; Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues

Success – Degree Awarding:

Risk 5: There is a gap in ‘good degree’ outcomes between Asian Black Minority Other (ABMO) students and White students.

Mapped to EORR: Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills; Risk 2: Information and Guidance; Risk 3: Perception of Higher Education; Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental Health; Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues

Progression:

Risk 6: Lower progression to further study or employment for Asian Black Minority Other (ABMO) compared to White students.

Mapped to EORR: Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental Health; Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus; Risk 10: Cost pressures; Risk 11: Capacity issues; Risk 12: Progression from Higher Education

3. Objectives

Following the identification of six key risks to equality of opportunity across the student lifecycle, the University has committed to six strategic objectives set to mitigate their impact on students. The objectives form the rationale for the four intervention strategies, which are listed in the next section. We have restricted our objectives (and targets) to the areas where we have the largest gaps (and for which data is publicly available) to enable us to prioritise our work. For the gaps which aren’t covered by our objectives and targets, we are committed to monitoring these trends and will respond accordingly should the gaps increase and therefore priorities change.

Group at risk	Objective	Year	Target
Access		Current - 21/22	1.6
Socio-economic disadvantage	The University will increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and RUL in particular, for students from IMDQ1 areas. The University is committed to close the gap in access by 2028/29.	25/26	0.7
		26/27	0.5
		27/28	0.2
		28/29	0
Access		Current - 21/22	29.5
Multiple indications of disadvantage	The University will increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and RUL in particular, for students from ABCSQ1 areas. The University is committed to reducing the gap to 15pp in access by 2028/29.	25/26	21.2
		26/27	19.1
		27/28	17.1
		28/29	15.0
Success – Continuation and Completion		Current – 20/21	3.3
		25/26	2.3

Ethnicity – Asian Black Mixed Other (ABMO) / White	The University will increase the percentage of ABMO students who successfully continue their studies. The University is committed to reducing the continuation gap to 1.5pp for entrants in the 2028/29 year	26/27	2.0
		27/28	1.8
		28/29	1.5
Success – Continuation and Completion		Current – 17/18	7.9
Declared disability	4. The University will increase the completion rate for students who declare a disability, including neurodivergent students and those with declared mental health conditions. The University is committed to reducing the completion gap to 3.5pp for 2028/29 entrants.	25/26	5.4
		26/27	4.8
		27/28	4.1
		28/29	3.5
Success – Degree Awarding		Current - 21/22	12.8
Ethnicity – Asian Black Minority Other (ABMO) / White	5. The University will close the awarding gap for ABMO groups getting a 1 st or 2.1 compared to White students. The University is committed to reducing the awarding gap to 4.5pp by 2028/29.	25/26	8.1
		26/27	6.9
		27/28	5.7
		28/29	4.5
Progression – Graduate Outcomes		Current – 20/21	6.1
Ethnicity – Asian Black Minority Other (ABMO) / White	6. The University will increase the percentage of ABMO students who progress into further study or 'good' graduate employment The University is committed to reducing the gap to 2.0pp by 2028/29.	25/26	3.8
		26/27	3.2
		27/28	2.6
		28/29	2.0

Notes on our objectives and targets:

- We have not included an Access objective and target for attainment raising. We are an institution focused on harnessing creativity and therefore our focus is on skills development and providing good quality careers information, advice and guidance for careers in creative, technology and business sectors. Feedback from our school, college and collaborative networks has identified a need for employer informed IAG for careers in our sector.
- We have chosen to include an objective and target on Access for ABCS to cover multiple characteristics of underrepresentation, and key measures such as free school meals, IMD and IDACI.
- We have not included a purely geographical Access objective and target for TUNDRA Q1 because by addressing our ABCS Q1 gap we also hope to increase our TUNDRA Q1 enrolment rates. Increasing the number of entrants from POLAR4 Q1 has been a priority objective for us, and we have been doing targeted access work to this group for the past five years without seeing an increase in our indicator performance. We are a London-based institution with a high 'commuter student' population and very few POLAR4 and TUNDRA Q1 postcodes fit into this reach.
- We have taken the decision to focus our objectives and targets on access work to reduce our IMD and ABCS gaps, considering the current cost of living crisis facing many families, especially those on low incomes who may not be able to move away from home for university.
- We also aim to increase the access of other key groups to enter higher education, such as care experienced and estranged learners, but we are not including an objective for these groups due to the small cohort size.
- We have not included a specific Success objective and target for Mature learners even though we acknowledge the risks this group face to equality of opportunity. The performance of Mature learners has fluctuated over recent years. We intend for all four of our intervention strategies to also support this cohort, and as there has been consistent growth in the population size of mature learners we will be monitoring the gaps closely.
- We have set targets to close gaps for all Asian Black Minority Other students compared to White students for Success objectives, even though some gaps are larger than others for specific ethnicities - for example, our attainment gap is biggest between Black students and White students. Our performance for continuation, completion and attainment for all ABMO groups has fluctuated over the past 5 years so we have decided to be broad in our target, but we will monitor the performance of all ethnicity groups closely.
- We have not included an objective and target for TUNDRA Q1 or POLAR4 Q1 Success outcomes because of small numbers in the target cohorts. We will continue to monitor these gaps closely.

4. Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes with Evaluation Plan

Intervention Strategy 1 - Accessing STEAM and FUTURE careers in creative, technology and business.

Objectives and targets: This intervention strategy will contribute towards objectives 1 and 2.
Risks to equality of opportunity (EORR): 1. Knowledge and Skills, 2. Information and Guidance, 3. Perception of Higher Education, 4. Application Success Rates, 10. Cost Pressures.
Student consultation: Biggest barriers to our students when they were deciding whether to go to university – 1. Graduate outcomes (worried about employability or further study options after completing degree) - 31.3%, 2. Perception (worried they might not fit in) - 16.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (might not have the grades / skills to be accepted onto the course) - 13.4%

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
An employer informed Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) programme focusing on STEAM and FUTURE careers	<p>Supporting learners, schools, and other key influencers to better navigate pathways to STEAM and FUTURE careers; we will deliver a programme of activity to increase knowledge and understanding of pathways and careers within our fast moving and specialist industry. Practice will align with Gatsby benchmarks, and we will provide evidence and information that can inform school and college reporting e.g. governing bodies and Ofsted.</p> <p>Our outreach work in this area and consultation with our school partners has identified that there is currently not a good level of understanding of career pathways for the creative industries, especially digital and technical areas. We will develop our in person and online resources to help bridge this gap, as well develop our programme of Teachers CPD to inform curriculum design and develop teachers' pedagogy and practice</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Materials and resources (print and online)</p> <p>Student Ambassadors and Graduate workshop tutors</p>	<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are able to make well informed decisions and confident choices about HE options, and choose the right course for them • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. • Develop an understanding of STEAM and FUTURE careers • See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in • Apply to and enrol on RUL courses <p>Teachers and careers advisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the different career options available and are able to signpost their learners to advice and support • Understand different pathways and routes to STEAM and FUTURE careers 	IS2 IS3
Develop our School and FE College partnerships in IMD, IDACI & TUNDRA Q1 areas	<p>We will develop an outreach progression framework for schools along with a data sharing agreement. Projects will be delivered by our academic community and graduate workshop tutors. We will also encourage our university community to be school governors.</p> <p><u>Post 16 and adult learners:</u> Our partnership work will focus on supporting learners' knowledge and development through creative and skills-based workshops, as well as</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>Digital equipment for workshops</p>	<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are able to make well informed decisions and confident choices about HE options, and choose the right course for them • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. 	IS2 IS3

	<p>support with university research, applications, portfolios and interviews.</p> <p><u>Pre-16</u> - Our pre 16 partnership work will focus on supporting learners in years 7-11 to explore experiences at university and develop creative and technical skills; as well as understand career options and progression pathways to Level 2, 3 and beyond.</p>	<p>Staff development and time for governor roles</p> <p>Collaborative network subscriptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how to develop them See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in Feel confident applying and gaining a place at RUL. Apply to and enrol on RUL courses 	
'Make it' Ravensbourne extracurricular programme	<p>The delivery of a programme of interventions to support young and mature learners to develop the knowledge and skills to progress to Higher Education through our extracurricular workshops e.g. holiday schools, Saturday programmes and portfolio projects.</p> <p>Projects will be delivered by academic community and graduate workshop tutors so we will be better placed to understand students' broader educational achievements and make a contextual offer of entry.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>Digital equipment for workshops</p> <p>Transport</p>	<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how to develop them. Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in Feel confident applying and gaining a place at RUL or another HEI. Apply to and enrol on RUL courses 	IS2 IS3
Primary School Projects	<p>The Outreach Team will work with primary schools in local IMD Q1 areas to nurture both creativity and technology, influencing knowledge, skills and aspiration at an early stage in a disadvantaged learners' education.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>Transport</p>	<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how they can lead to a future job. Understand what a university is Understand what careers there are in the related subject. 	
Contextual admissions policy	<p>We will introduce contextual offers for applicants from APP groups. By providing a long-term programme of interventions we will be better placed to understand students' broader educational achievements and make a contextual offer of entry.</p> <p>For care leavers and estranged applicants, we will introduce guaranteed offers for non-portfolio programmes and guarantee a portfolio review and programme of support.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Staff development and time for implementation of policy</p>	<p>Applicants from APP groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive offers which take into account their individual circumstances. Feel confident they can get the grades they need to get into RUL and believe they will be successful if they apply. Increased proportion of offers to APP applicants to RUL Increased conversion and enrolment from APP applicants to RUL 	IS2 IS3
Provide diverse and accessible pathways into Higher Education	<p>This includes our FE provision (Foundation Diplomas and Access to HE courses) and supporting internal progression to Undergraduate courses for these students, as well as developing new Foundation Year of Study programmes (Year 0) for a range of our Undergraduate courses.</p> <p>Research suggests that learners from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to benefit from this option as they may require further exposure to a</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Materials and resources (print and online)</p>	<p>Applicants from APP groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to FE and Year 0 courses Continue to level 4 from FE and Year 0 programmes Increased progression from FE to UG courses at RUL On course continuation and attainment rates on FE and UG programme at RUL 	IS2 IS3

	range of discipline areas and HE learning experiences to make informed choices and build confidence and effective study skills.			
Developing pre-enrolment transition support for learners from APP groups	Dedicated support for offer holders from APP groups, with a transition summer school and online support sessions in Spring and Summer terms; giving offer holders the opportunity to meet current students and attend a summer school with a creative project brief as well as workshops on study skills, student support and financial support, and student life. Specifically taking into consideration the challenges more likely to be faced by WP groups, this approach will support continuation and attainment outcomes, as well as widening access. It is recognised that transition from FE to HE can be difficult for a number of learners, with a more pronounced impact since the pandemic.	Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation Workshop materials Transport Collaborative network subscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants engage with transition support by reading email comms and attending event(s). • Applicants have an increased awareness of how to access study support and extracurricular opportunities. • Increased continuation and completion rates for targeted learners who engage with transition programme. 	IS2 IS3
Marketing and broader student recruitment work	Open Days UCAS exhibitions and HE Fairs Application support including portfolio and showreel support. Discovery Days Print and online resources (website, blogs, creative careers advice) Social media Conversion support for offer holders.	Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation Materials and resources (print and online) Student Ambassadors	Participants in our programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how to develop them. • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. • See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in • Feel confident applying and gaining a place at RUL. • Apply to and enrol on RUL courses 	IS2 IS3
Total cost for delivering this intervention strategy £932,000 over 4 years of the plan				
Evidence base and rationale: The rationale for this intervention strategy is the current lower proportion of students from specific underrepresented groups (IMD Q1 and ABCS Q1) as evidenced by the OfS Data Dashboard; as well as feedback from our Outreach partner schools and collaborative outreach partners of the requirement of information, advice, and guidance (IAG) for STEAM and relevant future careers. Our industry is specialist and fast moving and our partner schools have reported a need for support in providing relevant IAG to their learners. Our student consultation placed 'Graduate Outcomes – you were worried about employability or further study options after your degree' as the biggest barrier when deciding whether to go to university, with 31.3% students reporting this is as their biggest concern, which reiterates the requirement for careers IAG as a key project strand of our widening access work. To design this strategy, we carried out a literature review and gathered evidence which underpins these programmes and activities (this is referenced in Annex B). We developed this intervention strategy following a consultation with students, including student focus groups and outreach student ambassadors; and it has been designed using TASSO theory of change measures, evaluation tools and methodologies.				
Evaluation: As a baseline all interventions will be evaluated to Type 1 and Type 2 using pre and post comparison surveys, focus groups and tracking. The results from these evaluations will be published in an annual impact report which will highlight key findings and insights from the intervention strategies. After 5 years, we will publish a summary report of our overall findings from this intervention strategy, and these findings will be used to inform the design of future intervention strategies. See evaluation plan below for more details.				
Cross intervention: We recognise that the activity of this intervention strategy will be linked to IS2 & IS3. The work of this IS aims to support student metacognition and increased academic self-efficacy, knowledge and understanding of higher education and the creative industries; and will therefore have an impact on: Continuation rates (IS 2&3), Completion rates (IS 2&3), Degree Outcomes (IS2&3)				

Evaluation Plan

Outcomes	Outcome measures	Methods of evaluation
Delivery an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) programme		
<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are able to make well informed decisions and confident choices about their HE options, and choose the right course for them • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. • Develop an understanding of STEAM and FUTURE careers in creative and digital • See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in <p>Teachers and careers advisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are able to signpost their learners to advice and support • Understand different pathways and routes to STEAM and FUTURE careers in creative and digital and can signpost their learners to advice and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and understanding of HE and careers within the creative industries – measured through surveys • Increased application numbers to RUL from partner schools • Increased enrolment numbers to RUL from partner schools • On course continuation and attainment rates on UG programme at RUL from this group of learners. 	<p><i>Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review – evidence of what works • Information gathering from schools re: gaps in knowledge and objectives of programme - aligned to Gatsby benchmarks and school governance requirements <p><i>Process and Implementation evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils with target characteristics attending sessions (T1). • Output analysis: the number of activities delivered. (T1) • Teacher feedback survey (T2) • Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder experience and perceptions (students, staff). (T2) <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post activity evaluations (analysed within HEAT) • Teacher feedback survey • Quantitative analysis of data on RUL applications and enrolments • Focus groups with RUL students who have participated in our careers IAG programme
Develop our School and FE College partnerships in IMD, IDACI & TUNDRA Q1 areas.		
<p>Short term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants feel informed and empowered to make decisions about HE options • Participants have an increased knowledge of making successful applications to creative degree courses • Participants have developed skills in creative practice <p>Medium term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased applications to RUL from underrepresented groups, especially IMD Q1, TUNDRA Q1. • High offer rates to applicants from underrepresented groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted and effective relationships and partnerships with schools and colleges with mutual objectives • Increased academic self-efficacy, knowledge and understanding of HE and pathways within the creative industries – measured through surveys. • Increased application numbers to RUL from partner schools • Increased enrolment numbers to RUL from partner schools • On course continuation and attainment rates on UG programme at RUL. 	<p><i>Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis of percentage of pupils at partner schools with target characteristics. • Partnership agreements reviewed annually with school SMT and careers lead – through surveys and/or meetings <p><i>Process and Implementation Evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils at partner schools/ colleges with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: the number of schools /colleges in a relationship. (T1) <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post activity evaluations (analysed within HEAT)

<p>Long term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased conversions to RUL courses • Students feel part of the community • Students feel they have the skills and knowledge to continue their studies and attain a good degree outcome. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis of work completed during skills development workshops • End of project Teacher survey exploring content and impact on participants' knowledge and skills development • Quantitative analysis of data on RUL applications and enrolments • Focus groups with RUL students who have participated in our School and College partnership programme
<p>'Make it' Ravensbourne programme of extracurricular workshops</p>		
<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how to develop them. • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. • See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in • Feel confident applying and gaining a place at RUL or another HEI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased academic self-efficacy, knowledge and understanding of HE and pathways within the creative industries – measured through surveys. • Increased application numbers to RUL from partner schools • Increased enrolment numbers to RUL from partner schools • On course continuation and attainment rates on UG programme at RUL. 	<p><i>Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering from academics on skills development required in applicants (evidence from portfolios, interviews, on-course) <p><i>Process and Implementation evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils with target characteristics attending sessions (T1). • Output analysis: the number of activities delivered. (T1) <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post activity evaluations (analysed within HEAT) • Qualitative analysis of work completed during skills development workshops. • Semi structured interviews and feedback from participants • Quantitative analysis of data on RUL applications and enrolments • Focus groups with RUL students who have participated in our School and College partnership programme
<p>Primary School Projects</p>		
<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how they can lead to a future job. • Understand what a university is • Understand what jobs there are in the related subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of what a university is • Increased understanding of relevant jobs in the related subject 	<p><i>Process and Implementation evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils with target characteristics attending sessions (T1). • Output analysis: the number of activities delivered. (T1) <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post event quiz (interactive and age appropriate) – record results • End of project Teacher survey exploring content and impact on participants' knowledge and skills development
<p>Contextual admissions policy</p>		
<p>Applicants from APP groups:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proportion of offers to APP applicants to RUL 	<p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive offers which take into account their individual circumstances. • Feel confident they can get the grades they need to get into RUL and believe they will be successful if they apply. • Are able to meet the academic and portfolio requirements which they need for progression to RUL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased conversion and enrolment from APP applicants to RUL • On course continuation and attainment rates on UG programme at RUL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis of data on RUL applications to offers to enrolments for target groups • Quantitative analysis of enrolment rates by target groups • Quantitative analysis of performance for continuation, completion, and attainment data for target groups
<p>Provide diverse and accessible pathways into Higher Education</p>		
<p>Short term outcomes: Applicants from APP groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to FE and Year 0 courses • Progress to level 4 from FE and Year 0 programmes <p>Long term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased conversions to RUL courses • Students feel part of the community • Students feel they have the skills and knowledge to continue their studies and achieve a good degree outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application numbers to FE and UG courses from target groups • On course continuation and attainment rates on UG programme at RUL. 	<p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis of number / percentage of target students enrolling onto UG programmes from FE and Year 0 Foundation programmes. • Quantitative analysis of performance for continuation, completion, and attainment data for target groups • Focus groups with RUL students from target groups on relevant courses.
<p>Developing pre-enrolment transition support for learners from APP groups</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants engage with transition support by reading email comms and attending event. • Applicants have an increased awareness of how to access study support and extracurricular opportunities. • Increased continuation and completion rates for targeted learners who engage with transition programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge, confidence and understanding of being prepared for HE – measured through pre-post questionnaire survey. • Conversion of participants to enrolments at RUL. • Increased knowledge and confidence of access support at RUL – pre-post questionnaire survey. • Increased continuation and completion rates for targeted learners who engage with transition programme. 	<p><i>Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review – evidence of what works • Information gathering from RUL students and relevant student facing staff re: gaps in knowledge and objectives of programme <p><i>Process and Implementation evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils with target characteristics attending programme(T1). • Output analysis: the number of activities delivered. (T1) <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post activity evaluations & RU Ready Transition programme survey • Quantitative analysis of data on conversion from offer to enrolment for target groups • Quantitative analysis of performance for continuation, completion, and attainment data for target groups • Focus groups with RUL students who have participated in our pre-enrolment transition programme.
<p>Marketing and broader student recruitment work</p>		

<p>Participants in our programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their skills, abilities and interests and how to develop them. • Feel confident about their future progression options and know how to access further advice and support. • See RUL as a place for them and believe they will fit in • Feel confident applying and gaining a place at RUL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased academic self-efficacy, knowledge and understanding of HE and careers within the creative industries – measured through pre-post questionnaire survey. • Increased application numbers from attendees to RUL • Increased conversion to enrolment from event attendees to RUL 	<p><i>Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreements reviewed annually with school SMT and careers lead – through surveys and/or meetings <p><i>Impact assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post activity evaluations (analysed within HEAT) • End of project Teacher survey exploring content and impact on participants' knowledge and skills development • Quantitative analysis of data on RUL applications and enrolments
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Intervention Strategy 2 – Creating a sense of belonging and mattering.

<p>Objectives and targets: This intervention strategy will contribute towards objectives 3, 4 and 5.</p>
<p>Risks to equality of opportunity (EORR): 6. Insufficient academic support, 7. Insufficient personal support, 8. Mental Health, 9. Ongoing impacts of coronavirus, 10. Cost Pressures, 11. Capacity Issues.</p>
<p>Student consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to stay on course and complete their degree – 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 31.3%, 2. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 17.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (don't have the knowledge and skills to complete work) - 16.4%. • Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to achieve a good degree outcome – 1. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 23.4%, 2. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 20.9%, 3. Long term impact of COVID (the pandemic continues to impact your ability to get a good degree outcome) - 19.4%.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
<p>Developing and maintaining a safe campus</p>	<p>Through the implementation of mechanisms that enable students and staff to report harassment. We will also seek to proactively address and prevent discrimination, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour on campus. - To achieve this, we will adopt a report and support programme to encourage reporting of harassment, provide tailored support, standardise practice, provide bystander initiatives and embed equality monitoring.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Online software</p> <p>Development of programme including staff development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase students' sense of safety on campus due to 'report and support' programme • Increase in students' understanding of harassment and violence • Increase in staff sense of safety on campus due to 'report and support' programme • Increase in staff understanding of harassment and violence • Increase in continuation and completion rates for target students • Improvement in closing awarding gap for target students. 	<p>IS3 IS4</p>

<p>Inclusive curriculum development</p>	<p>We will take a strategic approach to developing and introducing an inclusive curriculum framework.</p> <p>Undertake a needs analysis of the curriculum.</p> <p>Provide staff development workshops to better understand barriers and challenges different groups of students face in learning and engagement and equip staff with knowledge, skills and confidence to design, deliver and support diverse student needs through inclusive curriculum design, content and learning experiences.</p> <p>Revise and update our Inclusive Curriculum Checklist which will then to be used to audit all courses on an annual basis with representatives from our Student Diversity Forum.</p> <p>Provide professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of inclusivity in education – workshops will be informed by needs analysis</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Collaborative network subscriptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis assessment of staff knowledge, skills and development requirements • Staff attendance and completion of mandatory training • Increased confidence in designing and delivering inclusive content and supporting students – self reported through surveys and focus groups • Increase in continuation rates for ABMO students • Increase in completion rates for students who declare a disability • Improvement in closing awarding gap for ABMO students. • Lower rates of retrievals for target groups • Increased student satisfaction – measured by NSS and module / annual evaluations for targets groups 	<p>IS3 IS4</p>
<p>Embedding mental health and wellbeing in the learning journey</p>	<p>Develop a mental health strategy to provide a whole institution approach to support student wellbeing and address mental health needs by i) maintaining wellbeing and destigmatising mental health issues ii) prevention; and iii) early intervention</p> <p>Undertake wellness campaigns at the start of each semester to raise awareness of support and destigmatise mental health conditions to promote self-disclosure</p> <p>Provide mental health first aid training for all student facing staff to understand mental health conditions and how to support students' different needs and suicide prevention</p> <p>Provide training and workshops to equip staff in supporting students' wellbeing and mental health needs – as identified by needs analysis assessment and actions from the Student Diversity Forum.</p> <p>Design and host 3 x micro-courses for new and returning students (e.g. 'what to expect', 'understanding and managing your wellbeing', 'developing resilience') as part of the transition to HE 'RU Ready' programme.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Delivery of counselling services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Strategy for students which sets out a university-wide approach to supporting students' wellbeing and addressing mental health needs. • Improved outcomes for continuation, completion, attainment and progression for target groups compared with previous cohorts of target groups and relevant comparable groups where possible • Increased staff and student awareness of mental health conditions and how to support and manage wellbeing in self and others • Representative staff in each department and service trained as mental health first aiders • Increased self-awareness and confidence of new and returning target students related to completing the micro-courses as part of the Transition to HE programme 	<p>IS3 IS4</p>

	<p>Support target students with mentors trained in wellbeing to support students' integration to university and ease the transition.</p> <p>Embed wellbeing awareness development and management through an active learning project in year 1 focusing on the theme of wellbeing.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved attainment outcomes for ABMO students at module level • Continued wellbeing, sense of integration and positive transition to university for target students supported by mentors • Increased self-awareness and wellbeing management from professional life practice (PLP) module at level 4 (which includes an active learning project on wellbeing awareness and management) 	
<p>Establish a co-ordinated approach to implementing disability and learning plans</p>	<p>We will provide a coordinated approach to developing and implementing disability and learning support plans with relevant academic and student services teams for students with disability needs.</p> <p>Conduct a university wide student survey to ascertain baseline student awareness of and registration with the disability support service and use of transition support, disability/ learning support plans, reasonable adjustments (RA's). Use the survey to evaluate transition support with specific questions for students with a disability.</p> <p>Follow up with focus groups for students with disabilities, to investigate their perceptions and experience of transition support, RA's and current use of disability support service and support from academics</p> <p>Survey staff who have responsibility for designing and implementing transition support to understand development and current processes. This will inform enhancements for future practice.</p> <p>Follow up with focus groups and interviews with staff exploring ideas for new approaches.</p> <p>Establish a working group (disability support service staff, academics and student representatives) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the work of the project, the terms of reference, schedule of activity, reporting structure, and outcomes required • Implement a standardised format for plans, the process and evaluation 	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Delivery of disability services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase student and staff awareness of disability/learning support available. <p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase student disclosure of student support needs. • Increased student sense of belonging. • Increased continuation. • Increased completion rates. • Increased on-course attainment. 	<p>IS3 IS4</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a communication plan for students and staff (working with Head of Communications) to raise awareness and understanding in order to support student disclosures. • Create clear and consistent guidelines for developing and implementing transition support, RA's and disability / learning support plans. The guidelines will be approved at the appropriate committee as part of formal reporting structure. • Establish and continually develop a comprehensive list of transition support, RA's and disability / learning support actions to define them and review effectiveness. • Evaluate effectiveness of transition support, RA's and disability / learning support plans for each student as well as evaluate effectiveness of each intervention activity. 			
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Total cost for delivering this intervention strategy £335,000 over 4 years of the plan

Evidence base and rationale: The rationale for this intervention strategy is the current gaps in continuation, completion and attainment for specific underrepresented groups as evidenced by the OfS Data Dashboard; as well as sector evidence and consultation with academic and student facing staff. Our student consultation identified the biggest challenges to student success as being 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable), 2. Insufficient non-academic personal support, 3. Knowledge and Skills, and 4. Long term impact of COVID, which informed a rationale for the activities in this strategy. To design this strategy, we carried out a literature review and gathered evidence which underpins these programmes and activities (this is referenced in Annex B). We developed this intervention strategy following a consultation with students, including student focus groups and outreach student ambassadors; and it has been designed using TASO theory of change measures, evaluation tools and methodologies.

Evaluation: As a baseline all interventions will be evaluated to Type 1 and Type 2. The results from these evaluations will be published in an annual impact report which will highlight key findings and insights from the intervention strategies. After 5 years, we will publish a summary report of our overall findings from this intervention strategy, and these findings will be used to inform the design of future intervention strategies. See evaluation plan below for more details.

Cross intervention:

We recognise that the activity of this intervention strategy will be linked to IS3 and IS4. The work of this IS aims to support student metacognition and increased academic self-efficacy and confidence, sense of belonging and mattering; and will therefore have an impact on:
Continuation rates (IS 2&3), Completion rates (IS 2&3), Degree Outcomes (IS2&3)
Progression rates (IS4)

Evaluation Plan

Outcomes	Outcome measures	Methods of evaluation
Developing and maintaining a safe campus		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase students' sense of safety on campus due to 'report and support' programme • Increase in students' understanding of harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of safety (see McCarry, M., Jones, C., & Kossurok, A. (2021). Equally Safe on Campus. (questions in Appendix) • Understanding of consent, bystander behaviour, and harassment tested in online training (follow approaches by 	<p>A multi-method approach to data collection will be adopted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desk-based literature review to be completed to cover requirements and evidence-based best practice • A survey of staff who have responsibility for designing and implementing the report and support tool

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in staff sense of safety on campus due to 'report and support' programme • Increase in staff understanding of harassment • Increase in continuation rates for ABMO students • Increase in completion rates for students who declare a disability • Improvement in closing awarding gap for ABMO students. 	<p>York St John https://www.yorks.ac.uk/wellbeing-and-welfare/welfare-support/welfare-training-and-courses/ and the University of Edinburgh https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/students/2021/consent-and-harassment-online-courses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with students, investigating their perceptions and experiences of the report and support tool • A combination of focus groups and interviews • Data analysis and monitoring of completion and attainment outcomes particularly for disabled and AMBO students (T2).
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Inclusive curriculum development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis assessment of staff knowledge, skills and development requirements • Staff attendance and completion of mandatory training • Increased confidence in designing and delivering inclusive content and supporting students – self reported through surveys and focus groups • Increase in continuation rates for ABMO students • Increase in completion rates for students who declare a disability • Improvement in closing awarding gap for ABMO students. • Lower rates of retrievals for target groups • Increased student satisfaction – measured by NSS and module / annual evaluations for targets groups 	<p>For staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis assessment • Record attendance and completion of mandatory training for all staff and evaluation of the training sessions and materials. • Measure knowledge and understanding regarding the diversity of our students' cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, health and learning profiles and the impact of these factors on student learning and educational outcomes • Self-reported through surveys using Likert scale responses to statements and focus group discussions related to confidence development in designing and delivering inclusive content and supporting students. <p>For students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student focus groups to explore impact of curriculum changes on student perceptions and experiences of inclusivity. • Sense of belonging at RUL (in end of course/year survey and NSS) • In-course attainment measured at the end of each semester and academic year. • Increased Continuation rates for targets students • Increased Completion rates for targets students 	<p>Each activity will be evaluated using a mixed methods approach to data collection to gather qualitative data using open questions and focus groups, and quantitative data using tools such as Likert scales to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of the staff development workshops and guidance materials on meeting staff development needs and increased understanding regarding the diversity of our students' cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, health and learning profiles and the impact of these factors on student learning and educational outcomes. • Increased staff confidence in designing and delivering inclusive content and supporting students as a result of the workshops and guidance materials. • Actions taken by staff at course, department and institutional levels to better support students from target groups and the impact of these actions on students' attainment, continuation and completion compared to matched comparison (control) groups, where possible. • Actions taken by Academic Heads and Heads of Service to address recommendations from the Student Diversity Forum recorded at the Forum and reported to the EDI Committee, in meeting identified needs and issues.
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Embedding mental health and wellbeing in the learning journey

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Strategy for students which sets out a university-wide approach to supporting students' wellbeing and addressing mental health needs. • Improved outcomes for continuation, completion, attainment and 	<p>Quantitative Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Rates: Measure the number of students and staff participating in the interventions. • Pre- and Post-Intervention Assessments: Compare baseline data with post-intervention data to assess changes in mental health awareness, attitudes, and behaviour, and validated measures of wellbeing, self-awareness and 	<p>The evaluation framework will adopt a mixed methods approach to assess the defined objectives for each intervention. Data collection methods will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys undertaken before and after the interventions to measure changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviour related to mental health.
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<p>progression for target groups compared with previous cohorts of target groups and relevant comparable groups where possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff and student awareness of mental health conditions and how to support and manage wellbeing in self and others Representative staff in each department and service trained as mental health first aiders Increased self-awareness and confidence of new and returning target students related to completing the micro-courses as part of the Transition to HE programme Improved attainment outcomes for ABMO students at module level Continued wellbeing, sense of integration and positive transition to university for target students supported by mentors Increased self-awareness and wellbeing management from professional life practice (PLP) module at level 4 (which includes an active learning project on wellbeing awareness and management) 	<p>management, stigma, self-confidence, mental health conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students engaging in help seeking behaviours – increases in students registering with student services and engaging in wellbeing activities. Percentage of students completing micro modules as part of the transition programme. Number of representatives in each academic department and service area trained as Mental Health First Aiders. Retention Rates: Track the retention rates of students who receive support through mentoring programs or micro-courses. <p>Qualitative Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Themes in Feedback: Identify recurring themes in qualitative feedback from focus groups to understand the perceived effectiveness and areas for improvement of the interventions. Testimonials: Gather testimonials from students and staff about their experiences with the wellbeing themed projects and how they have benefited from them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Groups to gather qualitative feedback from students and staff about their perceptions and experiences with the interventions. Interviews with students, staff, and mentors, to gain insights into the effectiveness of the interventions. Assessment of interventions regarding their impact on student services, student performance, staff engagement in workshops, training and actions taken in the curriculum to embrace wellbeing as a topic for students to explore. <p>Specific activities will be evaluated accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mental health strategy will have an accompanying action plan to measure progress and impact. Wellness promotional campaigns will be assessed through validated measures, Likert-scale surveys and focus groups with students. Mental Health First Aid training for staff to be evaluated through qualifying tests and follow-up focus groups. Training and workshops will be assessed through pre-post Likert-scale surveys and focus groups with staff, to explore relevant actions undertaken within the curriculum. Micro-courses for new and returning students will be assessed using online quizzes. Target students supported by mentors will be assessed through measures of integration, wellbeing and Likert-scale surveys of the transition experience. An active learning project which focuses on the theme of ‘wellbeing’ will be assessed through formative online quizzes and reflective learning journals to understand key themes arising from the project work.
<p>Establish a co-ordinated approach to implementing disability and learning plans</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase student and staff awareness of disability/learning support available. <p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase student registration with disability support service. Increased student sense of belonging. Increased continuation. Increased completion rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of belonging measure based on Imperial College London sense of belonging scale Survey tool adapted from Los Santos et al., (2019) Staff focus group themes Student focus group themes 	<p>A multi-method approach to data collection will be adopted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A literature review to cover requirements and evidence-based best practice. A survey of staff who have responsibility for designing and implementing transition support and/or reasonable adjustments and disability/learning support plans. A university-wide student survey to evaluate the transition support, which includes specific questions for students with disabilities. Focus groups with students with disabilities, investigating their perceptions and experiences of transition support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased on-course attainment. 		<p>and reasonable adjustments and current use of disability/learning support plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A combination of focus groups and interviews with staff exploring novel or interesting approaches to transition support, reasonable adjustments, and disability/learning support plans. Independent-groups data analysis for students with disability and support/learning plan/disability and no-plan/non-registered students (with or without disability) on module and course level attainment data where viable, and sense of belonging. Annual assessment of performance for continuation, completion, and attainment data.
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Intervention Strategy 3 – Address barriers to engagement

<p>Objectives and targets: This intervention strategy will contribute towards objectives 3, 4 and 5.</p>
<p>Risks to equality of opportunity (EORR): 6. Insufficient academic support, 7. Insufficient personal support, 8. Mental Health, 9. Ongoing impacts of coronavirus, 10. Cost Pressures, 11. Capacity Issues.</p>
<p>Student consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to stay on course and complete their degree – 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 31.3%, 2. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 17.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (don't have the knowledge and skills to complete work) - 16.4%. Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to achieve a good degree outcome – 1. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 23.4%, 2. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 20.9%, 3. Long term impact of COVID (the pandemic continues to impact your ability to get a good degree outcome) - 19.4%.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
<p>Financial support packages</p>	<p>We will continue our level of investment in financial support through bursaries and hardship funds, to address financial challenges for our students most in need. We will conduct a review of our current offer and update our packages in line with an evidence-based approach. There will be a minimum of £1,000 annual bursary available for care leavers, estranged students and carers. We will publish our full offer of financial support packages on our website annually for new students, which will be a commitment for their whole term.</p>	<p>Staffing for review Financial support investment</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance rates Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments Increase in continuation and completion rates 	<p>IS2</p>
<p>Assistive technology and the use of AI driven study skills tools</p>	<p>To increase academic understanding and the proactive use of student data including learning analytics and summative assessment data related to students' demographic profiles, to identify at-risk students; and then implement the use of assistive</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance rates 	<p>IS2</p>

	<p>technology and AI driven study skills as part of the student mentoring programme to support and increase students' academic performance and learning.</p> <p>One-to-one mentoring support for target students. This will aim to develop academic skills and knowledge, as well as socio-academic support (e.g. sense of belonging and engagement with the Student Diversity Forum)</p> <p>Mentoring programme will be supported by StudyCoach (Canvas VLE) dashboard for goal setting and Studiosity (support academic writing in a standardised way)</p>	<p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Online software</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates 	
<p>Data systems and Learning Analytics for academic support to students most 'at risk'</p>	<p>To identify and track students most 'at-risk' using learning analytics; enable academic support teams to identify early warning indicators related to reduction in engagement and performance at points of transition and deploy targeted intervention support accordingly; improve formative and summative assessment outcomes for target students; decrease the number of retrievals for target students.</p> <p>We will establish a learning analytics working group, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define terms of reference, aims and objectives and reporting structure • define how learning analytics will identify students most at risk and consider the use of quizzes, self-assessment tools and engagement data • Early warning indicators and predictive data to be discussed and agreed • Training and development for staff on using learning analytics and demographic data in identifying 'at risk' students and appropriate and relevant signposting and support available • Focus groups with staff and students on use of learning analytic data for reliable identification of 'at risk' students • Targeted interventions for identified students e.g. in person tutorials or use of AI driven study skills. 	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Online software</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement – measured by learning analytics based on early warning signs (to be defined) through the learning journey including at points in transition • Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates 	IS2
<p>Enhanced transition to HE support for learners from target groups</p>	<p>Pre-arrival 'RU Ready' transition programme.</p> <p>Specific needs of students identified from pre-arrival survey with diagnostic questions to guide students to specific information courses and materials.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>Transport</p>	<p>For students who engage with the transition programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills to allow them to engage with university digital systems with confidence. 	IS2

	<p>Students are given information on financial support (including DSA) available and how to access it. Early disclosure is encouraged and supported to inform disability / learning plans</p> <p>Target students will be given the opportunity pre-arrival to engage with a summer school programme before the arrive</p> <p>In-year transition activities are embedded to support transition to each semester with additional mentor support for target students.</p> <p>Returning students are included in the RU Ready programme including mentoring programme</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in applications for DSA and engagement with the disability support service • Students' confidence, and sense of belonging and mattering are at positive levels by the time they complete the Transition and Induction Evaluation Survey. • Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates • Students have increased level of knowledge and academic skills measured through Transition and Induction Evaluation survey and pre-post formative assessments using Canvas to deliver asynchronous transition programme. • Staff have a better understanding of each cohort and the barriers different groups face in learning and engagement, prior to the start of the academic year. • Staff understanding of the needs of their different groups of students allows them to put measures in place to better support students. 	
<p>Mentoring and Student Diversity Forum</p>	<p>Provide a mentoring programme with the employment of student mentors trained and supervised to provide mentoring support to target groups of students identified as most 'at-risk'</p> <p>Provide one-to-one academic and socio-academic support for individual targeted students</p> <p>Support and encourage students to engage with the Student Diversity Forum to facilitate sense of belonging by providing a safe forum to share experiences and voice concerns and needs to address barriers to engagement and success.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Workshop materials</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increased sense of belonging. • Students report an improvement in perception and experiences of being supported. • Students report an improvement in feeling safe to voice concerns and needs through the Student Diversity Forum • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates 	<p>IS2 IS4</p>
<p>Total cost for delivering this intervention strategy £223,000 over 4 years of the plan</p>				

Evidence base and rationale: The rationale for this intervention strategy is the current gaps in continuation, completion and attainment for specific underrepresented groups as evidenced by the OfS Data Dashboard; as well as sector evidence and consultation with academic and student facing staff. Our student consultation identified the biggest challenges to student success as being 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable), 2. Insufficient non-academic personal support, 3. Knowledge and Skills, and 4. Long term impact of COVID, which informed a rationale for the activities in this strategy.

To design this strategy, we carried out a literature review and gathered evidence which underpins these programmes and activities (this is referenced in Annex B). We developed this intervention strategy following a consultation with students, including student focus groups and outreach student ambassadors; and it has been designed using TASO theory of change measures, evaluation tools and methodologies.

Evaluation: As a baseline all interventions will be evaluated to Type 1 and Type 2. The results from these evaluations will be published in an annual impact report which will highlight key findings and insights from the intervention strategies. After 5 years, we will publish a summary report of our overall findings from this intervention strategy, and these findings will be used to inform the design of future intervention strategies. See evaluation plan for more details.

Cross intervention:

We recognise that the activity of this intervention strategy will be linked to IS3 and IS4. The work of this IS aims to support student metacognition and increased academic self-efficacy and confidence, sense of belonging and mattering; and will therefore have an impact on:

Continuation rates (IS 2&3), Completion rates (IS 2&3), Degree Outcomes (IS2&3)

Progression rates (IS4)

Evaluation Plan

Outcomes	Outcome measures	Methods of evaluation
Financial Support Packages		
For target students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance rates Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments Increase in continuation and completion rates 	Impact on continuation rates (Type 2) Impact on completion rates (Type 2) Impact on attainment rates (Type 2)	OfS financial support toolkit (statistical, survey and interview tools) Complete annually and review financial support offer.
Assistive technology and the use of AI driven study skills tools		
For target students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance rates Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments Increase in on course attainment Increase in continuation and completion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor training evaluation questionnaire related to the use of the online tools. Workshops evaluation questionnaire to assess academic staff understanding and effective timely use of student data including learning analytics and summative assessment data related to students' demographic profiles to identify at-risk students. Online tool monitoring data of users' engagement with the online tools. Analysis of users formative and end of semester assessment outcomes compared to non-users (matching of comparison groups required). Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore mentee perceptions and experiences of using the online tools. 	<p><i>Participants</i> All mentors and mentees will be asked to consent to participate in the data collection for this study.</p> <p><i>Design</i> A mixed methods approach will be adopted to include quantitative outcomes data, Likert scale data from questionnaires, and qualitative data from open questions in surveys and focus groups.</p> <p><i>Procedure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete systematic literature review according to defined objectives of the mentoring programme and the use of the online assistive tools

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post-mentoring programme questionnaire for mentors including questions related to the use of the online tools. • Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore mentor perceptions and experiences including themes related to the use of the online tools. • Data tracking of target students' continuation, and successful completion rates each semester and matched control comparison groups required. • Data tracking of ABMO students who use the online tools and their attainment in modules compared to White students who use the online tools and matched control comparison groups required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key indicators to measure the success of mentor support and assistive online tools (continuation rate, academic performance, satisfaction survey, focus groups) • Collect baseline data with each new cohort to serve as a comparison point for evaluating progress • Establish control group(s) with students who do not receive access to assistive online tools • Decide on appropriate assessment methods to evaluate each indicator (continuation rate, academic performance, satisfaction survey, focus groups) • Continuously evaluate and refine over the 4 year period, reviewing data collected from subsequent years to identify trends or patterns that can inform ongoing improvements
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Data systems and Learning Analytics for academic support to students most 'at risk'

<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement – measured by learning analytics based on early warning signs (to be defined) through the learning journey including at points in transition • Lower retrieval rates measured by end of semester summative assessments • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of the data and learning analytics as the focus of this study to be defined and embedded in Canvas course template – e.g., formative assessment tasks, discussion activities, self-assessment tasks, at agreed weeks for engagement and performance monitoring and at points of transition, for standardisation and comparison data set. • Likert scale questionnaire to staff with open questions to evaluate the use of student engagement data and learning analytics • Staff focus group themes • Student focus group themes 	<p>Mixed methods design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data: quasi-experimental pre-post intervention and control group comparison with some courses adopting use of learning analytics in y1 with matched courses not adopting use of learning analytics (e.g., January vs May cohorts at PG level, UG courses in Design and Business vs Games Development and Digital Marketing) • Use of Likert scale questionnaire to staff for quantitative data on perceptions and use of learning analytics • Qualitative data: open questions to staff and staff focus groups; focus groups with students to ascertain insight into student's thoughts, views, and experiences with learner analytics. <p>Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target student group • Academic staff including student mentors <p>Materials/Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas learning analytics data tracking target group performance compared to non-target group not provided with intervention support • Student formative assessment data • Student summative assessment data • Student focus groups to ascertain insight into student's thoughts, views and experiences with learner analytics. • Staff questionnaire on use of formative assessment tools and use of learning analytics
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff focus groups following on from staff survey data to understanding benefits, issues and developments.
Enhanced transition to HE support for learners from target groups		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved attainment outcomes for ABMO students at module level • Continued wellbeing, sense of integration and positive transition to university for target students supported by mentors • Increased self-awareness and wellbeing management from professional life practice (PLP) module at level 4 (which includes an active learning project on wellbeing awareness and management) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-arrival survey – assess expectations, prior learning experience, academic, digital and personal support needs • Induction – Brief resilience scale • Evaluation survey of pre-arrival ‘RU Ready’ programme and induction • Sense of Belonging to RUL scale • Academic confidence 	<p>A mixed methods approach to data collection will be adopted with qualitative data collected from open-questions in surveys and focus groups with students and staff, and quantitative data collected from Likert scale responses to statements, learning analytics engagement data from the “RU Ready’ transition support programme, and attainment, continuation and competition data.</p> <p><i>Participants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target student groups • Academic staff <p><i>Materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-arrival online transition to HE survey and diagnostics • Online asynchronous pre-arrival transition ‘RU Ready’ Programme – learning analytics engagement data • Measures of Sense of Belonging, Self-Efficacy, student attainment data, continuation and completion data. <p><i>Design</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each online transition activity to collect baseline data (on knowledge and awareness) for post-completion comparison. • Follow-up on use of pre-arrival transition survey data within each subject/course. <p><i>Data analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post transition activity engagement analysis of target students’ knowledge and skills related to each online transition activity • Analyse number and type of changes made by academic staff to support students as a result of the pre-arrival survey data and follow-up with student focus groups and surveys to assess impact on student perceptions and experiences, and attainment levels of target groups.
Mentoring and Student Diversity Forum		
<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increased sense of belonging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor training evaluation questionnaire. • Pre and post-mentoring programme questionnaire for target students which includes our measure of Sense of Belonging. 	<p>The evaluation framework will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor training evaluation questionnaire with Likert scales.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an improvement in perception and experiences of being supported. • Students report an improvement in feeling safe to voice concerns and needs through the Student Diversity Forum • Increase in on course attainment • Increase in continuation and completion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore mentee perceptions and experiences • Pre and post-mentoring programme questionnaire for mentors • Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore mentor perceptions and experiences • Student Diversity Forum evaluation questionnaire and follow-up semi-structured interviews for mentees. • Data tracking of target students' continuation, and successful completion rates each semester • Data tracking of ABMO students' attainment in modules compared to White students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post-mentoring programme questionnaire with Likert scales and open questions for target students to ascertain expectation-experience gaps and track sense of belonging. (Baseline measure taken at pre-arrival/re-induction point with follow-up at week 6 and week 12) • Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore mentee perceptions and concerns, and reasons why targets students may not participate or drop out of the peer-mentoring programme, as well as preparedness and issues arising and benefits of the experiences and further developments. • Pre and post-mentoring programme questionnaire with Likert scales and open questions for mentors to ascertain expectation-experience gaps. (Baseline measure taken at training event for mentors with follow-up at week 6 and week 12) • Follow-up focus groups at week 12 to explore the mentor experience – including training, preparedness and issues arising and benefits of the experiences and further developments. • Fortnightly one to one supervision and monthly group supervision of the mentors to identify arising issues and support needs. • Evaluation of the Student Diversity Forum – questionnaire with Likert scales and open questions and follow-up semi-structured interviews for mentees. • Tracking and analysis of ABMO students' continuation • Tracking and analysis of students who declare a disability successfully completing each semester • Tracking and analysis of ABMO students' attainment at module level compared to White students
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Intervention Strategy 4 – Enhanced progression and careers activity

Objectives and targets: This intervention strategy will contribute towards objectives 6.

Risks to equality of opportunity (EORR): 1. Knowledge and Skills, 2. Information and Guidance, 6. Insufficient academic support 7. Insufficient personal support, 8. Mental Health, 11. Capacity Issues, 12. Progression from Higher Education.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
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<p>Employability embedded in our curriculum</p>	<p>A scaffolded approach to progression interventions for all students managed by Careers and Creative Lab. Professional Life Practice (PLP) delivered at levels 4, 5 & 6 to strategically to embed knowledge and skills development across all years.</p> <p>Ongoing review of curriculum content to ensure we illustrate progression models that are appropriate for ALL students (with a specific focus on students from ABMO backgrounds). Integrate engagement with live projects, field work, guest speakers, extra-curricular events, WBL, employer engagement and other targeted activities into the learning journey within the PLP module to enhance employability outcomes for target groups.</p> <p>Identify and build upon excellent practice within certain courses and disseminate.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. 	<p>IS2 IS3</p>
<p>Rave LATE Programme</p>	<p>A series of evening events designed to decode careers in our industry. Using advice and guidance from key industry figures, these events are designed to help students look beyond portfolios and CVs to create a career on their terms. Each event is centred around a cross disciplinary theme related to employability, enterprise, and the world of work. Inclusion and the needs of ABMO students will be central to the curation of these events. They provide our students with relevant and relatable industry role models and examine subjects such as the value of diverse creative perspectives, how to effect change, networking and community creation.</p> <p>Each Rave LATE will be live streamed and archived via YouTube to ensure access for all students. Shortform advice clips are also shared via Instagram and TikTOK. Long term aim would be to establish a RaveLATE TikTOK channel to disseminate advice and guidance from the events. At the end of each year learning from Rave LATE will be compiled into an annual free publication available to students.</p> <p>Moving forward Rave LATE will support the establishment of a network of relevant industry mentors designed to support success for students from Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic backgrounds.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Professional development programme</p> <p>Production and event costs</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	<p>IS2</p>
<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Ravensbourne will work with our industry partners to enhance perceptions of ABMO and underrepresented groups and structures that limit the professional potential of disadvantaged young people. This will include a focus on educating and supporting employers to set and reach their diversity goals</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. 	<p>IS2</p>

	<p>and increase opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>We will build on the breakthroughs made by student collective Nuff Said who graduated in 2020 to create a forum to challenge lack of representation within the industry and partner with existing groups such as '10000 black Interns' and 'Where are the black designers?'</p>	Production and event costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	
Creative Lab	<p>Our in house creative agency working with alumni, students, practitioners & industry partners. Creative Lab initiates live projects and internships to support the Work Based Learning programme which is embedded into the curriculum. Inclusion and representation are a clear focus for the agency, and this has informed extracurricular opportunities that have been developed with the Obama Foundation, My Brother's Keeper and the Shawn Carter Foundation. We plan to expand these opportunities over the next 5 years.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Production and event costs</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	IS2
Enhanced and specialist careers IAG	<p>Priority access to dedicated careers appointments for learners with a disability and mature learners</p> <p>Neurodivergent friendly careers-advice</p> <p>Ensuring inclusivity in all events including growing our online and on-demand resources for those who experience a barrier to engaging live.</p>	<p>Staffing for project management, delivery & evaluation</p> <p>Production and event costs</p>	<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	IS2 IS3

Total cost for delivering this intervention strategy £112,000 over 4 years of the plan

Evidence base and rationale: The rationale for this intervention strategy is the current gap in progression 'graduate outcomes' for students from specific underrepresented groups (there is a significant gap in the performance of ABMO students who progress into further study or 'good' graduate employment compared to White students) as evidenced by the OfS Data Dashboard; as well as sector evidence and consultation with academic and student facing staff.

To design this strategy, we carried out a literature review and gathered evidence which underpins these programmes and activities (this is referenced in Annex B). We developed this intervention strategy following a consultation with students, including student focus groups and outreach student ambassadors; and it has been designed using TASO theory of change measures, evaluation tools and methodologies.

Evaluation: As a baseline all interventions will be evaluated to Type 1 and Type 2. The results from these evaluations will be published in an annual impact report which will highlight key findings and insights from the intervention strategies. After 5 years, we will publish a summary report of our overall findings from this intervention strategy, and these findings will be used to inform the design of future intervention strategies. See evaluation plan for more details.

Cross intervention:

We recognise that the activity of this intervention strategy will be linked to IS3 and IS4. The work of this IS aims to support student metacognition and increased academic self-efficacy and confidence, sense of belonging and mattering; and will therefore have an impact on:

Continuation rates (IS 2&3), Completion rates (IS 2&3), Degree Outcomes (IS2&3)

Progression rates (IS4)

Evaluation Plan

Outcomes	Outcome measures	Methods of evaluation
Employability embedded in our curriculum		
For target students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. Students report they are supported with their future career plans Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge and understanding of relevant industries and future employment sector Students supported in search for work placement for PLP module Students gain work placement for PLP module Increase in RUL graduates from target groups applying for careers in the creative and relevant industries Increase in RUL graduates from target groups entering careers in the creative and relevant industries Increase in RUL graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative and relevant industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups and surveys with students from target groups to understand effectiveness of embedding PLP knowledge and skills in different disciplinary contexts. Student feedback on field work and guest speakers and impact on their social network building, and relevance to their career plans and confidence in gaining employment in the associated industry. Qualitative analysis of student continuation, completion and attainment at course and module level will be used to understand the impact of our university wide WBL implementation on student progression.
Rave LATE Programme		
For target students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students report they are supported with their future career plans Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge and understanding of relevant industries and future employment sector Increase in RUL graduates from target groups applying for careers in the creative and relevant industries Increase in RUL graduates from target groups entering careers in the creative and relevant industries Increase in RUL graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative and relevant industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis of graduates from target groups accessing work opportunities in the creative industries Qualitative analysis of graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative industries Student feedback surveys on Rave Late events including impact on their social network building, relevance to career plans, and confidence in gaining employment in the associated industry. Quantitative analysis of progression outcomes for target groups compared to a relevant comparator group (graduate outcomes survey)
Advocacy		

<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence and sense of belonging of students and graduates from target groups of being in the workplace • Industry and employer partners report positive engagement with Careers Lab. • Students and graduates from target groups are supported in job search and gaining employment • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups applying for careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups entering careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative and relevant industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis of graduates from target groups accessing work opportunities in the creative and relevant industries • Survey of employer partners following Rave discussions and support with relevant industry employers • Quantitative analysis of progression outcomes for target groups compared to a relevant comparator group (graduate outcomes survey)
Creative Lab		
<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and graduates from target groups are supported in job search and gaining employment • Increased confidence and sense of belonging of students and graduates from target groups of being in the workplace • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups applying for careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups entering careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative and relevant industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis of graduates from target groups accessing work opportunities in the creative and relevant industries (survey) • Quantitative analysis of graduates from target groups applying and entering careers in the creative and relevant industries (graduate outcomes survey) • Quantitative analysis of progression outcomes for target groups compared to a relevant comparator group (graduate outcomes survey)
Enhanced or specialist careers IAG for target groups		
<p>For target students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report an increase in confidence in being in the workplace. • Students report they are supported with their future career plans • Students report an increase in sense of belonging in the creative industries or other sectors • Gap in graduate outcomes is reduced. • Improved outcomes from career readiness survey for target students compared to relevant comparator groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and graduates from target groups are supported in job search and gaining employment • Increased confidence and sense of belonging of students and graduates from target groups of being in the workplace • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups applying for careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups entering careers in the creative and relevant industries • Increase in RUL graduates from target groups in further study in subjects related to creative and relevant industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis of graduates from target groups accessing work opportunities in the creative and relevant industries (survey) • Quantitative analysis of graduates from target groups applying and entering careers in the creative and relevant industries (graduate outcomes survey) • Quantitative analysis of progression outcomes for target groups compared to a relevant comparator group (graduate outcomes survey) • Correlation between engagement with centrally coordinated professional experience and improved outcomes for target groups, compared to a relevant comparator group.

5. Whole provider approach

We are committed to collaboration and engagement with key stakeholders across the entire university, ensuring a whole-provider approach to achieve the successful delivery of our intervention strategies. We have introduced a strong governance and monitoring structure to the work we do, with a refreshed APP Steering Group, reporting to the University Executive and Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee, and an APP Operations Group.

The development of this new Plan is the outcome of a university-wide consultation process with all staff, a student consultation survey and student focus groups. The objectives and intervention strategies included in this Plan have been consulted on at key forums including an all-staff conference, academic staff development days, with professional services teams including student recruitment and marketing, admissions, student engagement and student services; as well as at EDI Committee, Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee, and Board of Governors. We ensure that all staff can input via a dedicated Learning and Teaching Community Intranet site, regular communications, and updates, and more widely through our knowledge exchange and research publication repository and support for external conference presentation. There is also the opportunity to develop understanding and practice at our annual Learning and Teaching Conference where, in the upcoming academic year, our focus is around key themes such as developing an effective learning environment for students, and supporting student needs, including student mental health and understanding neurodiversity.

Governance and strategic & operational structures

Strategically, RUL aligns the APP with the Institution's overarching 2030 Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy, both of which are currently in development. The APP is also included in the Institutional Risk Register. The University Executive are updated three times a year in line with APP Steering Group meetings. The Board of Governors receives updates on the APP and progress towards targets annually. Annual APP Reports are produced by the Access and Participation Manager and presented by the Executive Dean. Internally, APP monitoring is reported to the Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee.

The APP Steering Group determines our strategic approach to access and participation and leads the work in this Plan. The group meets three times a year and is chaired by the Dean, as the Executive lead for the Access and Participation Plan. Membership includes representatives from both academic and professional services departments across the University and the Student Union. The University Executive and Board of Governors have overall responsibility for agreeing the investment and targets in the Plan. The APP Operations Group reports to and advises the APP Steering Group. This Group meets quarterly to monitor the delivery and progress of the intervention strategies within this Plan. It is led by the Access and Participation Manager and includes the project leads for the 4 intervention strategies, the Director of Learning of Teaching, the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager (APP) and Head of Academic Partnerships who oversees collaborative provision APP targets.

Equality Diversity and Inclusivity

Our Plan and intervention strategies align with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and is underpinned by our People and Culture Professional Values and Behaviours Framework. Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy Review in 2023/24 aligns with the development and activities of this new Plan. The role all staff play in supporting an inclusive culture and sense of belonging for our students has been a focus of the review and many of the key stakeholders for the two agendas are the same staff and SU representatives, which means integrated activity and monitoring has been established.

Collaborative provision - working in partnership

We currently have four franchise partnerships with Oxford Business College (OBC), Fairfield School of Business (FSB), Victoria College of Arts and Design (VCAD), and the London School of Science and Technology (LSST) where we deliver collaborative provision. We have worked with our franchise partners to complete an assessment of current performance, identify risks for equality of opportunity for students on our courses (in the wider context of their institutions) and we will be setting targets for closing any gaps. There is currently very limited performance data available for our collaborative provision as all our partnerships are new. We will therefore share intervention strategies until we are able to take a more targeted approach as the performance data becomes available. Our approach to monitoring the performance and activity of our collaborative provision has been outlined in our monitoring and evaluation plan; it will be managed by our Head of Academic Partnerships and monitored by the APP Manager, reporting to

Academic Partnerships Committee and the APP Steering Group. We are currently reviewing our Partnerships Strategy and APP targets and investment have been included in this review to ensure there will be the opportunity to share and learn good practice for all partners.

6. Student consultation

A separate Student Submission will be included as part of this Plan, completed by our Student Union President. We have consulted with students to discuss and understand the risks to the equality of opportunity posed to our most 'at-risk' students, as identified by the gaps in our performance data. This has informed the intervention strategies in this plan. Our student consultant involved asking our students about which risks to equality of opportunity they felt most applied to students at RUL, least applied to students at RUL and which risk was most relevant to them. Analysis of this data found that:

The biggest barriers to our students when they were **deciding whether to go to university**:

1. Graduate outcomes (worried about employability/further study options after graduating) - 31.3%
2. Perception (worried they might not fit in) - 16.4%
3. Knowledge and skills (might not have the grades / skills to be accepted onto the course) - 13.4%.

The lowest score was given to 'Money – the cost pressures of being a student' with only 6%.

The biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **stay on course and complete their degree**:

1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 31.3%
2. Insufficient personal support (non-academic pastoral support) - 17.4%
3. Knowledge and skills (don't have the knowledge and skills to complete work) - 16.4%.

The lowest score was given to 'Money – cost pressures' with only 6%.

The biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **achieve a good degree outcome**:

1. Insufficient personal support (non-academic pastoral support) - 23.4%
2. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 20.9%
3. Long term impact of COVID (the pandemic continues to impact your studies) - 19.4%.

The lowest score was given to 'Money – cost pressures' with only 7%.

When asked if there are any other challenges they face in staying on course, completing their course and gaining a good degree outcome there were notably high responses for further study skills support – balancing workload and competing deadlines, organisation skills and motivation. When asked if there was anything the University should do to support learners from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds there were notably high responses for more support for students with additional learning needs and more mental health support.

The Students' Union (RSU) has also been a key partner in the design and development of this Plan. Our working relationship with the RUL Student Union is collegiate, supportive and productive. We work together in developing an inclusive culture. Student representation is embedded in our Committee and Board structures, Student Voice meetings and Co-Generation groups. Student representatives also play an invaluable role in our course validation process. The President of the RSU meets monthly with the Leadership Team as part of our approach to delivering a student-focused educational experience. The Students' Union sit on our APP Steering Group and APP Operations Group to ensure our work remains relevant. Details of our monitoring and evaluation plan have also been co-developed with students.

7. Evaluation of the plan

Working in partnership with the Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service, we will be engaged in an ongoing evaluation of our intervention strategies and will continuously respond to the evaluation findings to improve and develop our practices.

7.1 Strategic context for evaluation

Evaluation and research are part of our 'whole institution' approach to access and participation. Our academic, professional and leadership teams contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Targets, Intervention Strategies and Activities in this Plan. Staff with responsibility for data have skills in ensuring data capture is appropriate for the required monitoring and evaluation outputs, including designing new

reports and processes to capture, collate and extract data for various evaluation and research questions. We also draw on the skills of staff responsible for the delivery of the Activities in this Plan, and our student representatives, to effectively incorporate evaluation. In our assessment of our current context for evaluation, using the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool, we are 'emerging' across all areas. We have some foundations in place, but need to develop our practices, including embedding evaluation into activity design and delivery and ensuring feedback cycles operate effectively to improve practice. Therefore, as we are continuing to build our cross-institution capacities for effective evaluation and the application of findings to improve practice, staff and student representatives will be supported with relevant training in Theory of Change and evaluation methods, provided through our SEER membership.

Students are important in this work, and we will work in partnership with students on the design and implementation of evaluation and research. SEER provides us with the evaluation and research expertise we need to deliver our commitments in these areas. We will actively participate in this network, which provides us with opportunities to be part of collaborative research and evaluation projects as well as learning and sharing practice with other members and external stakeholders. We will also engage with TASO and other relevant organisations in calls for evidence, conferences and events and training.

7.2 Activity design

We have built effective evaluation practice into our intervention strategies which will enable us to build an understanding of which activities are 'working'. We have taken a Theory of Change (ToC) approach to the development of our Intervention Strategies, identifying clear intended outcomes and a supporting evidence base that has informed our activity development and challenged assumptions. With the help of SEER, we will continue to review, develop, and strengthen our ToC, adding to our evidence base as our evaluation findings emerge and developing enhanced activity-level ToCs where required.

7.3 Evaluation design

We have collaborated with SEER and drawn from OfS and TASO toolkits and guidance on effective evaluation approaches. We have considered how the outcomes of activities can be evaluated credibly, particularly as our context as a small and specialist provider. Employing mixed method approaches is particularly important, as we will need to rely on qualitative data to support our understanding, or fill gaps, in quantitative data. We will triangulate findings where possible and seek to deepen our insights through qualitative methods. Given the developmental stage of our evaluation practice, the majority of our evaluations are Type 1 (narrative), and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) of the OfS 'Standards of Evidence'. We will however explore and consider where Type 3 evaluation could be implemented in future.

Our evaluation approach has also considered the context and scale of the activities and, as we have proposed working with strategic partners (schools and colleges), in our Intervention Strategies. We wish to note that some flexibility and development may be required as our collaborations take shape, allowing for input and advice from partners. We have also considered our creative context and, where appropriate, will trial more creative evaluation instruments (surveying, focus groups and interviews). This may help to mitigate the issue of survey fatigue, which is a significant issue for effective evaluation and is compounded in small cohorts where the same students are more likely to be the subjects of multiple evaluation projects. We will continue to be cognisant of this in collection of feedback and have aligned our evaluation and measures across our activities to enable us to minimise the number of collection points, where appropriate.

Our evaluation approach has been formulated based upon the intended outcomes and objectives of our activities. Where appropriate, we will consider and employ validated scales to our evaluation practices. We have also considered evaluation that spans (a) process and (b) impact, to provide comprehensive understanding of how our activities are working. We will explore, with SEER, further research projects in relation to our activities and our ambition to better understand the experiences and challenges of target students and issues of equality of opportunity.

7.4 Implementing our evaluation plan

We will collaborate internally and with our strategic partners to deliver our evaluation plan. We will be guided by our school and college partners, and our students in respect of effective implementation of the plan. Our evaluation process will comply with our policies and with all legal requirements relating to data protection, following ethical, safeguarding, legal and risk considerations. We will work in partnership with SEER to deliver our evaluation plan. A Data Sharing Agreement has also been established. SEER provides

us with opportunities to collaborate on various evaluation and research items, including, for example, the evaluation of the impact of financial support, using the OfS toolkit.

The design of our evaluation plan has also been heavily informed by intended and projected standardised outcomes being adopted by SEER across its membership base, which not only increases efficiencies but provides opportunities to increase the sample size and evaluation, helping to mitigate the issue of small datasets. SEER incorporates and draws upon TASO guidance on best practices for evaluations with small cohorts. Further, such collaborations may provide us with access to tools that would otherwise be unaffordable. As a smaller provider we are also well placed to respond with agility to interim findings and emerging data and can be responsive in flexing our activity to keep us on track to achieve our objectives and continuously improve our practice.

7.5 Learning from and disseminating findings

We are committed to sharing our learning and findings internally, with our partners, networks and with the broader sector, to develop stronger evidence about what works and what can be improved. We are pleased to help to grow the evidence base and we will submit evaluation outputs to OfS's repository of evidence as appropriate. In Section 4 we have set out our publishing plan. In developing the format of our communications, we will consider creative and visual methods, and different audiences / purposes. Our SEER membership provides us with access to academic experts in evaluation, including in the access and participation space. In 2024-25, we will actively explore other networks and memberships through which we can share and present findings, for example, UniConnect, HELOA and FACE. It is anticipated that we will actively contribute to conferences, network events and publications. Internally, developing a community of practice (staff and students) regarding access and participation will help to facilitate improvements to the sharing of findings from evaluation. Shared practice across the institution allows for review and feedback on evaluation findings and reports, together with discussion regarding the improvements that could be made. We will publish the findings of our evaluation activities on our website as well as on our VLE.

8. Provision of information to students

We will ensure that all information is presented in a clear way, for students, prospective students and their supporters to access. The Access and Participation Plan summary will be available publicly on our website. Information about student fees and any additional course costs are on our website, along with our bursary and scholarship offer. This information is also available in our printed and digital prospectus. We also provide information, advice and guidance about course costs, student fees and financial support at outreach events, open days, and applicant and offer holder events.

The University communicates with applicants, offer holders, students and other key stakeholders in the following ways:

- Our fees are published on our website and in our prospectus (printed and digital).
- Applicants and offer holders receive information about course fees, other course costs and financial support at various stages of their communication plan through emails, letters and at in-person and online events.
- Current students receive information about fees, other course costs and financial support available to them through our student portal and via internal communications and campaigns.
- Our student support website page also directs students to information on government support from Student Finance England.
- There is representation from the relevant team at open days, enrolment and re-enrolment events. They also have a phone line and direct email address for queries.
- The University regularly alerts students and applicants to relevant student finance campaigns, such as 'apply now' and key dates for funding applications.
- Students identified as being from underrepresented groups receive additional information and support, for example, students with a disability are provided with support to access DSA.; and care leavers and estranged students are contacted directly by our student services team to offer support.
- We have a student information desk on campus which is open every day for students to access support as well as weekly 'drop ins' for students to access face to face support and our student support team promote student financial health at events across the year.

Annex A - Assessment of current performance

All information included below is taken from the latest OfS Access and Participation Plan dataset (published in March 2023, updated in July 2023), unless otherwise specified. The analysis looks at full-time, first-degree home-fee status undergraduate entrants, learners and graduates taught at Ravensbourne.

Definitions

The data includes indicators and gaps as measures of performance for each stage of a student's journey through higher education:

- **Access**
These measures show the makeup of students entering higher education.
- **Continuation**
These measures show whether students continue their studies or not.
- **Completion**
These measures track students through later stages of their studies to see whether they have qualified or remain studying.
- **Attainment (degree outcomes)**
These measures examine the numbers of graduates who achieve a first or upper second-class degree.
- **Progression**
These measures report on whether students are in highly skilled employment, further study or have other positive outcomes 15 months after leaving higher education. This data represents the results of the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey from 2017-18 onwards.
- **ABCS: Associations between characteristics of students (ABCS)** is a set of measures that seeks a better understanding of how outcomes vary for groups of students with different sets of characteristics (for example, ethnicity, sex and background).⁷³ The student characteristics selected when constructing these measures should not have an impact on students' outcomes, but the evidence shows that they do.
- **EFSM: A student's eligibility for free school meals (FSM)** can be used as an individual measure of disadvantage.
- **Ethnicity ABMO: Ethnicity information** is provided by the student on the basis of their own self-assessment. ABMO stands for Asian Black Mixed Other ethnicity as an aggregate measure of ethnicity.
- **IMD: The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019** is a measure of deprivation for small areas within England.
- **POLAR4: The participation of local areas (POLAR) classification groups areas across the UK** based on the proportion of young people who participate in higher education. It looks at how likely young people are to participate in higher education across the UK and shows how this varies by area.
- **TUNDRA: (Tracking UNDERRepresentation by Area)** is an area-based measure that uses tracking of state-funded mainstream school pupils in England to calculate young participation.

Data assessment

An assessment of performance of student groups has been completed to identify potential areas of risk within the Office for Students student data resources. The data assessment presented below provides the data-driven evidence for the objectives specified in the plan.

We have students enrolled on courses taught by sub-contractual partners and data is presented separately in Annex A (2). This provision is referred to as *collaborative provision* in our plan.

Table 1: Data timelines – for the 5 performance metrics of the student lifecycle

Lifecycle stage	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Access	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Attainment	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Continuation	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Completion	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Progression			2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21

We have reviewed our performance in relation to:

- Gaps between underrepresented groups and their peers
- Progress over time in the gaps

1. Access

Table 2: Access – percentages of entrants from underrepresented groups to HE (RUL) – measured as the number of entrants with a particular attribute as a percentage of all entrants.

Note - Highlighted rows indicate the risks we are addressing in our Plan.

		Current performance (2021-22)						Historic data		
Cohort	Indicator	Cohort size	Indicator value	Sector value	Position to sector	Distance from sector	Gap from sector	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Mature	Mature_Age21andOver	150	18.9	29	Below	-10.1	Narrowing	12.8	16.6	17.7
Disability	Disabled	190	23.3	17.4	Above	5.9	Widening	20.2	18.6	18.5
Ethnicity	ABMO	370	45.6	34.8	Above	10.8	Narrowing	42	44.6	50.1
Ethnicity	Asian	100	12	15.7	Below	-3.7	Widening	14.1	13.7	16.9
Ethnicity	Black	120	15.3	10.5	Above	4.8	Narrowing	13.9	14.6	15.7
Ethnicity	Mixed	100	12.2	5.6	Above	6.6	Widening	9.6	10.3	10.5
POLAR4	POLAR4 Q1	40	5.5	12.5	Below	-7	Widening	6.4	6.1	6.2
POLAR4	POLAR4Q1_2	100	15.3	28.2	Below	-12.9	Widening	17.2	16.9	17.4
TUNDRA	TUNDRA Q1	40	6.1	12.3	Below	-6.2	Narrowing	5.6	4.8	5.8
TUNDRA	TUNDRA Q1_2	100	15.8	27.8	Below	-12	Widening	16.6	16.8	17.4
ABCS	ABCS Q1	20	4.9	7.1	Below	-2.2	Widening	6	6	5.3
IMD	IMD Q1	130	16.1	22.8	Below	-6.7	Widening	15.8	18.2	17.9
IMD	IMD Q1_2	370	47.3	44	Above	3.3	Narrowing	43.1	44	51.4
FSM	EligibleforFSM	130	22.6	18.4	Above	4.2	Narrowing	25.9	26.1	24.5

Mature students

Ravensbourne has historically attracted comparatively small numbers of mature learners due to our digital focused creative portfolio. While we remain below the sector for mature entrants (18.9% in 2021/22 with the sector performing at 29%), we have seen a consistent increase in the enrolment of mature learners since 2018/19. This has been a priority objective for us, and we have been doing targeted access work aimed at this group for the past five years. In 2022/23 the university expanded its portfolio offering by introducing Business and Computing courses - BSc

Business Management, BSc Project management, BSc Computer Science and BSc Cyber Security and BSc Digital Marketing - which we're anticipating will have a stronger appeal to mature learners.

Reported Disability

From 2018/19 to 2021/22 the percentage of students with a reported disability at Ravensbourne averaged 20.15%. 2021/22 saw an increase in the proportion of students recruited in this cohort to 23.3%, which is above the national current sector indicator of 17.4%. Nonetheless, Ravensbourne remains 5.9% below the 29.2% OfS reported disability data for design, creative and performing arts subjects in 2021/22,¹ arguably a more like-for-like comparator group.

Ethnicity

Over the four-year period 2018/19 to 2021/22 Ravensbourne remained above the national sector indicator for recruitment of students of Black, Mixed and ABMO ethnicities. However, the proportion of Asian entrants is slightly below the national sector average (-3.7%) in 2021/22, and this gap has been widening over time. Nonetheless, Asian entrants made up a relatively significant proportion of total entrants in 2021/22 (100 students in 800 total entrants), and as such, the value of this indicator tends to fluctuate over the four-year period. Nonetheless, when we compare our data to the OfS student characteristics data², the national population size for design, creative and performing arts subjects remains below 5% for entrants in the Asian ethnicity category. Although 2021/22 saw the lowest intake of Asian entrants during the four-year period, we expect this indicator to increase in subsequent data publications due to the expansion of our undergraduate portfolio. In 2022/23 the university expanded the portfolio by introducing Business and Computing courses - BSc Business Management, BSc Project management, BSc Computer Science and BSc Cyber Security and BSc Digital Marketing – and we expect the percentage of Asian and students of other ethnic groups to be represented in greater proportion on these courses.

TUNDRA and POLAR4

Analysing our access data by geographical-based measures of representation in HE, we are below the 2021/22 national sector indicators for entrants from TUNDRA Q1_2 (-12pp), and TUNDRA Q1 (-6.2pp), as well as for POLAR4 Q1-2 (-12.9pp), and POLAR4 Q1 (-7pp). Until 2022/23 Ravensbourne specialised in design, media, and other digital creative related provision. Analysing our access performance against the OfS data for design, creative and performing arts data¹ indicates that our performance for TUNDRA Q1, and POLAR4 Q1 is also below subject-related Q1 percentages of 14.8% and 14.1% respectively (In 2021/22 Ravensbourne performed at 6.1% TUNDRA Q1 entrants and 5.5% POLAR4 Q1 entrants). The difference in the percentage of students from TUNDRA Q1 to Q5 and from POLAR4 Q1 to Q5 are statistically significant within a 90% confidence interval.

Increasing the number of entrants from POLAR4 Q1 has been a priority objective for us, and we have been doing targeted access work aimed at this group for the past five years without seeing an increase in our indicator performance. We are a London-based institution with a very high 'commuter student' population and very few POLAR4 and TUNDRA Q1 postcodes fit into this reach. According to the Sutton Trust, poorer students are more likely to live at home whilst studying, with a quarter of today's students choosing to do so³, this research was conducted in 2018 and is likely to have continued to increase due to COVID and the cost-of-living crisis.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/population-data-dashboard/>

² <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/population-data-dashboard/>

³ Michael Donnelly and Sol Gamsu (2018), Home and Away – social, ethnic and spatial inequalities in student mobility, The Sutton Trust, p. 11 https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Home_and_away_FINAL.pdf

IMD, ABCS and Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility

Analysing our access data by measures of deprivation and socio-economic inequality, we are performing below the national sector indicator for entrants from ABCSQ1 in 2021/22 (-2.2pp) and IMDQ1 (-2.8pp). We are currently performing above the national sector indicator for IMDQ1_2 by 3.3%, and for design, creative and performing arts subject-related data¹ for IMDQ1 entrants by 4.5pp in 2021/22. However, we are below the percentage of subject related ABCSQ1 entrants by 4.9pp in 2020/21.

For FSM eligibility we are above the national sector percentage by 4.2%, although significantly under the London percentage of learners with FSM eligibility who progress to HE, which was 60.8% in 2021/22⁴.

Priorities for Access:

Given that we are a London-based institution with a very high 'commuter student' population we have decided to focus on increasing access to RUL for students from IMD and ABCS Q1, as these measures are more relevant to our commutable reach compared to other geographical-based measures, and target students facing greater deprivation.

We have not included a purely geographical Access objective and target for TUNDRA Q1 because by addressing our ABCS Q1 gap we also hope to increase our TUNDRA Q1 enrolment rates. Increasing the number of entrants from POLAR4 Q1 has been a priority objective for us, and we have been doing targeted access work to this group for the past five years without seeing an increase in our indicator performance. We will continue to work with school and college partners in TUNDRA Q1 areas, but we have taken the decision to focus on increasing enrolments from IMD Q1 students. We are very aware of the current cost of living crisis facing many families, especially those on low incomes who may not be able to move away from home for university.

2. Continuation

Table 3 – Continuation: the gaps between underrepresented groups continuing their studies

Note - Highlighted rows indicate the risks we are addressing in our Plan.

Indicator Type		Current performance (2020-21)					Historic data			
Cohort	Indicator	IND value (gap)	Sector value (gap)	Position to sector	Distance from sector	YoY direction (gap)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Mature	Young_Under21/ Mature_Age21and Over	2.7	9.8	Above	7.1	Widening		8.7	0.8	3.9
Disability	NoKnownDisability / Disabled	1.2	0.2	Below	-1	Narrowing	-0.9	5	-2.1	-2.5
Ethnicity	White / ABMO	3.3	3.1	Below	-0.2	Narrowing	0.4	1.3	1.3	3.9
Ethnicity	White / Asian	3.6	1.4	Below	-2.2	Widening	0.5	2	-1.7	0
Ethnicity	White / Black	2.9	5.8	Above	2.9	Narrowing	4.3	2.4	9.3	8.8
Ethnicity	White / Mixed	3.5	2.2	Below	-1.3	Narrowing		-1	-0.7	3.1
IMD	IMD Q5 / IMD Q1	4.3	8.7	Above	2.4	Narrowing	2	1.3	-1.8	4.3
FSM	NotEFSM / EFSM	3.8	5.2	Above	1.4	Narrowing	6.7	2.7	3.3	1.4
POLAR4	POLAR4Q5/POLAR 4Q1		5.1	N/A		Narrowing		3.3	-1.3	-0.4
TUNDRA	TUNDRAQ5/TUND RAQ1		3.7	N/A		Widening		-2.8	-1	

⁴ Widening Participation in higher education

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education>

Mature

The performance gap for mature students continuing at Ravensbourne is 2.7% for 2020/21, 7.1pp narrower than the national sector gap of 9.8%. Historic data shows that this figure tends to fluctuate so we will continue to monitor performance of this cohort.

Disability

The performance gap for students with a declared disability has been narrowing over the past four years and is within 1pp of the national sector gap in 2020/21. Although the statistical certainty associated with this indicator is not high (below 75%), we will continue to monitor this gap. The proportion of students reporting a disability is growing each year, and Ravensbourne is committed to ensuring all outcomes for students declaring a disability match that of their peers.

TUNDRA and POLAR4

Data for students from Q5 and Q1 of these categories is not available for the most recent years of OfS published data 2019/20/21 and 2020/21.

Ethnicity

The difference in the percentage of White and Black students continuing to study at Ravensbourne has narrowed over the 4-year period to 2.9% in 2020/21. This gap is 2.9pp narrower than the national sector gap of 5.8%. The gap between White students continuing compared to Asian students has been widening over the four-year period and is 2.2pp wider than the national sector gap in 2021/21. The gap between White students and students of mixed ethnicity is 1.3pp wider than the national sector gap in 2020/21 and that for White and AMBO students is 0.2pp wider.

IMD and FSM Eligibility

The difference in the percentage of students in IMDQ5 and Q1 continuing at Ravensbourne in 2020/21 is 4.3%, which is 4.4pp narrower than the national sector gap of 8.7% for 2020/21. Similarly, for students studying at Ravensbourne eligible for FSM there is just a 3.8% difference in continuation rates compared to students not eligible. This difference is 1.4pp narrower than the national sector gap of 5.2% in 2020/21.

Priorities for Continuation:

We will focus on closing the gap between White and Asian Black Minority Other students continuing to study at Ravensbourne. We will monitor the performance of all underrepresented characteristics paying close attention to the performance of Mature learners, where we are currently performing above sector and the gap has been fluctuating.

3. Completion

Table 4 – Completion: the gap between underrepresented groups completing their degree

Note - Highlighted rows indicate the risks we are addressing in our Plan.

Indicator Type		Current performance (2017-18)				Historic data					
Cohort	Indicator	IND value (gap)	Sector value (gap)	Position to sector	Distance from sector	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Overall direction
Mature	Young_Under21/ Mature_Age21andOver	11	9.7	Below	-1.3	12.6	4.2	8.8	4.4	4	Narrowing
Disability	NoKnownDisability/ Disabled	7.9	2.1	Below	-5.8	12.5	-0.8	-2.6	1.7	1.2	Widening
Ethnicity	White / ABMO	0.7	3.9	Above	3.2	0.3	8	5.5	4.3	6.2	Narrowing
Ethnicity	White / Asian	-4	1.5	Below	5.5	-5.5	-1.6	3.8	5.9	2.4	Narrowing

Ethnicity	White / Black	2	7.8	Above	5.8	9.3	13.6	4.1	6.2	13.3	Narrowing
Ethnicity	White / Mixed	2.7	3.4	Above	0.7	1.5	12.3	9.6	2.4	4.5	Narrowing
IMD	IMD Q5 / IMD Q1	1.3	9.9	Above	8.6	3.4	2.3	13.2	5.4	9.4	Narrowing
FSM	NotEFSM / EFSM	6.8	7.8	Above	1			5.9	9.3	7.6	Narrowing
POLAR4	POLAR4Q5/POLAR4Q1	0.2	6.7	Above	6.5	5.5	-6.8	-0.7	-2.9	-2.9	Narrowing
TUNDRA	TUNDRAQ5/TUNDRAQ1	-2.2	4.9	Above	7.1	-0.5	-7	-1.7	0.6	-2	Narrowing

Mature

The performance gap for mature students completing their degree at Ravensbourne widened in 2017/18 to 11%, which is 1.3% wider than the national sector gap of 9.7% for the same year. Historical data shows that the performance gap for this group has been narrowing since 2012/13, with some fluctuation. As we continue to grow our mature learner cohort, we will focus on narrowing this gap in future years.

Disability

The performance gap for students with a declared disability and those with no known disability completing has been small and narrowing over previous years but increased to a 7.9% difference in 2021/22; 5.8pp above the national sector gap in the same year. Historical data shows that the performance gap for this group fluctuates year on year so we will be focusing on narrowing this gap as one of our key targets.

TUNDRA and POLAR4

Analysis of differences between students from TUNDRA Q5 and Q1 completing their study has been narrowing over recent years to -2.2% and 7.1% better than the national sector difference for 2017/18, however the statistical certainty associated with this indicator is below 75%, due to small cohort sizes for these split indicators. Similarly, the difference between students in POLAR4 Q5 and Q1 completing their study is just 0.2% at Ravensbourne in 2017/18; 6.5% narrower than the national sector gap that year of 6.7%. Again however, the level of statistical certainty for this gap is below 75%, due to small cohort sizes.

IMD and FSM Eligibility

The difference between students in IMDQ5 and Q1 completing at Ravensbourne in 2017/18 is just 1.3% which is 8.6pp narrower than the national sector gap of 9.9%, however the statistical certainty associated with this metric is low (under 75%). There is a 6.8% difference in completion rates between students who were not eligible for FSM completing their study at Ravensbourne and those eligible. This difference is 1pp narrower than the national sector gap in 2017/18, the statistical certainty is above 90%.

Ethnicity

The gap between the percentage of White and Black students completing at Ravensbourne is just 2%; for White and Asian students the difference is -4%; for White and mixed ethnicity students the difference is 2.7%; and the difference between White students and students in the AMBO ethnicity category completing their studies is 0.7%. Gaps at Ravensbourne are lower for that seen across the sector for all these indicators, apart from between White and Asian students where the gap at Ravensbourne is 5.5pp wider than the sector gap (1.5%). Nonetheless, these gaps narrowed over the four-year period 2014/15 to 2017/18, for all cohorts.

Priorities for Completion:

We will focus on closing the gap between students with a declared disability and those with no known disability. We will monitor the performance of all underrepresented characteristics paying

close attention to the performance of Mature learners, where we are currently performing below sector and the gap has been narrowing.

4. Attainment

Table 5: Attainment – data for underrepresented groups awarded a first or upper second-class degree
 Note - Highlighted rows indicate the risks we are addressing in our Plan.

Indicator Type		Current performance (2021-22)					Historical data		
Cohort	Indicator	IND value (gap)	Sector value (gap)	Position to sector	Distance from sector	Overall direction	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Mature	Young_Under21/ Mature_Age21and Over	6.5	8.6	Above	2.1	Widening	3.6	-2.6	3.1
Disability	NoKnownDisability/ Disabled	2.2	-0.5	Below	-2.7	Narrowing	7.4	-1.1	-6.8
Ethnicity	White / ABMO	12.8	11	Below	-1.8	Narrowing	14	9.5	16
Ethnicity	White / Asian	15.1	8.4	Below	-6.7	Narrowing	15.8	13.5	4.8
Ethnicity	White / Black	17.1	20	Above	2.9	Narrowing	17.4	11.9	24.1
Ethnicity	White / Mixed	9.8	3.4	Below	-6.4	Widening	10.5	-0.2	15.8
IMD	IMD Q5 / IMD Q1	17.8	18	Above	0.2	Narrowing	19.8	19.8	16.8
FSM	NotEFSM / EFSM	13.1	12.3	Below	-0.8	Widening	6.5	14.2	16.8
POLAR4	POLAR4Q5/POLAR 4Q1	30.5	10.3	Below	-20.2	Widening	9.2	3.8	5.5
TUNDRA	TUNDRAQ5/TUNDR AQ1	22.6	6.4	Below	-16.2	Widening	-2.1	-2.3	-10.6

Mature

The current performance gap for mature students awarded a good degree of 2:1 or above at Ravensbourne is 6.5%. This is better than the national 8.6% gap for 2021/22. Historical data shows that this gap widened in 2020/21 and 2021/22 after a significant reduction in 2019/20. As we continue to grow our mature learner cohort, we are monitoring this attainment gap closely.

Disability

The performance gap for students with a declared disability and those with no known disability awarded a good degree of 2:1 or above has narrowed at Ravensbourne since 2018/19 overall from 7.4% to 2.2%, however historical data shows fluctuation in the performance of this cohort. Our latest indicator (2021/22) is 2.2pp below the national sector gap of -0.5pp for that year. We continue to monitor this awarding gap.

TUNDRA and POLAR4

The awarding gap between students in POLAR4 Q5 and Q1 is 30.5% in 2021/22, which is 20.2pp below the national sector gap of 10.3%. The awarding gap between TUNDRA Q5 and Q1 students increased to 22.6% in 2021/22 from -10.6% the previous year and is 16.2pp wider than the national sector gap of 6.4% in 2021/22. Historical data shows a significant fluctuation for both groups. There are very small cohort sizes of POLAR4 and TUNDRA Q1 learners at Ravensbourne, and enrolments of this cohort are decreasing as a proportion of our population, however we will continue to monitor this gap closely.

IMD and Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility

Analysis of students' attainment data by IMD and FSM eligibility categories indicates a trend towards narrowing of awarding gaps in line with the national sector percentage gaps, however further reduction is required. Ravensbourne has made noticeable improvements in narrowing the

gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD Q5 and Q1, and in 2021/22 we performed 0.2 above the sector.

Ethnicity

The awarding gap between White and Black students has been narrowing and is 2.9pp narrower than the national sector gap in 2021/22. However, the awarding gap between White and Asian students in 2021/22 is 6.7pp wider than the national sector percentage gap, and 6.4pp wider than the national sector gap for White and Mixed ethnicity students. Both gaps are statistically significant within a 90% confidence interval. Over time, Ravensbourne has seen a narrowing of the awarding gap between White and ABMO students, and in 2021/22 this gap (12.8pp) is just 1.8pp wider than the national gap, down from 11.8pp in 2016/17. We continue to focus on closing all awarding gaps as one of our key targets, with the ambition to eliminate attainment outcome differences between all students.

Priorities for Attainment:

We will focus on closing the gap between White and Asian Black Minority Other students. We will monitor the performance of all underrepresented characteristics paying close attention to the performance of TUNDRA Q1 and POLAR4 Q1 and those eligible for FSM. We have not included a Success target for these groups because of small numbers in the target cohorts, however, we will continue to monitor these gaps closely.

5. Progression

Table 6: Progression - the gap between the proportion of disadvantaged groups in highly skilled employment, further study or have positive outcomes⁵ 15 months after leaving HE (Graduate Outcomes Survey)

Note - Highlighted rows indicate the risks we are addressing in our Plan.

Indicator Type		Current performance (2020-21)				Historical data			
Cohort	Indicator	IND value (gap)	Sector value (gap)	Position to sector	Distance from sector	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Overall direction
Mature	Young_Under21/ Mature_Age21andOver	2.5	2.8	Above	0.3	-0.5	0.2	9.7	Narrowing
Disability	NoKnownDisability/ Disabled	4.8	2.1	Below	-2.7	-3.2	8.5	0.3	Widening
Ethnicity	White / ABMO	6.1	2.6	Below	-3.5	-4.7	-6.4	1.2	Widening
Ethnicity	White / Asian	-1.8	2.9	Above	4.7	-4.3	-2.3	-2.2	Narrowing
Ethnicity	White / Black	13.1	3.6	Below	-9.5	-7.3		-8.5	Widening
Ethnicity	White / Mixed	10.5	-0.6	Below	-11.1			9.1	Widening
IMD	IMD Q5 / IMD Q1	8.8	9	Above	0.2	-3.3	7.1	8.5	Widening
FSM	NotEFSM / EFSM	12	6.8	Below	-5.2	-9.4	-9.4	0.4	Widening
ABCS	ABCSQ5 / ABCSQ1	20.4	15.3	Below	-5.1	16.6	4.8	5.8	Widening
POLAR4	POLAR4Q5/POLAR4 Q1	3.6	4.8	Above	1.2	4.5	6.9	9.3	Widening
TUNDRA	TUNDRAQ5/TUNDR AQ1	3.3	3.8	Above	0.5	9.8	5.8	-0.1	Narrowing

⁵ Positive outcomes include students who report being in managerial or professional employment, further study at any level, or travelling, caring for someone else or in retirement. They include students who report working in self-employment, voluntary or unpaid roles, 'doing something else', and that they are due to start a job or studying in the next month. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6fec91a8-2826-4b15-9447-7e3de2dd7526/description-of-student-outcome-and-experience-measures.pdf>

Mature

The current performance gap for mature students progressing from Ravensbourne is 2.5%, this is narrower than the national sector gap of 2.8% in 2021/22. This gap at Ravensbourne has generally been narrowing over time. Although the statistical certainty associated with this indicator is low (below 75%), good progression outcomes for mature graduates remains a key cohort of interest and one which is due to grow in number with recent changes to Ravensbourne's strategic direction.

Disability

In 2020/21 the performance gap for students with a declared disability and those with no known disability progressing from Ravensbourne is 4.8%, 2.7pp wider than the national sector gap for 2020/21 (2.1%). The performance of this cohort fluctuates year on year and we remain committed to monitoring this gap closely.

Ethnicity

The difference in the percentage of White and Black students progressing from Ravensbourne has widened and reversed in favour of White students to 13.1% in 2020/21 over the 4-year period (from -7.3% in 2017/18) and is 9.5pp wider than the national sector percentage gap of 3.6%. The percentage difference between White students compared to Asian students with positive outcomes in 2020/21 narrowed to -1.8% in 2020/21 (from -4.3% in 2017/18) and is 4.7pp narrower than the national sector gap (2.9% in favour of White students). There is an 10.5% gap in 2020/21 between Whites and Mixed ethnicity students, 11.1pp wider than the national sector gap (-0.6% in favour of Mixed students). However, the statistical certainty associated with this indicator is not high (75% - 90%) due to limited data - the Mixed ethnicity cohort at Ravensbourne tends to be small (less than 50) in any given year. Overall, there is a 3.5pp difference in 2020/21 between the gap in outcomes between White and ABMO students at Ravensbourne compared to the sector, however this gap appears to be narrowing over time. The gap in positive progression outcomes between White students in IMDQ5 and White students in IMD Q1 is 8.8% at Ravensbourne. The difference is statistically significant within a 90% confidence interval. Although below the sector gap in 2020/21 (9%), this gap in outcomes appears to be widening over time (up from -3.3% in 2017/18 in favour of students from IMDQ1). We will be monitoring the performance of these gaps very closely as one of our key targets.

IMD, FSM Eligibility and ABCS

The difference between students in IMD Q5 and Q1 progressing from Ravensbourne in 2020/21 is 8.8%, 0.2pp narrower than the national sector gap of 9% in 2020/21. The difference between students who were not eligible for FSM compared to those who were is 12%, 5.2pp wider than the sector indicator (6.8%) and notably wider than the gap in 2019/20 (0.4%). This gap has been widening over time and is associated with a high level of statistical certainty (above 90%). The same trend appears for students in ABCS category Q4_5 compared to Q1 in 2020/21 where the difference in positive outcomes increased to 20.4% (from 5.5% in 2019/20) and is 5.1pp wider than the national sector gap at 15.3%. This indicator is also associated with a high level of statistical certainty (above 95%), however due to small cohort sizes has a tendency towards greater fluctuations over time.

Males and Females:

The percentage difference between IMD Q1,2 Males and IMD Q1,2 Females with positive progression outcomes at Ravensbourne is 13.8% in 2020/21. This indicator is associated with a 95% confidence interval. The sector gap for 2020/21 is just 0.8pp.

TUNDRA and POLAR4

The difference between students in TUNDRA Q3-Q5 and Q1-2 progressing from Ravensbourne in 2020/21 is 3.3%; 0.5pp narrower than the national sector gap of 3.6%. Similarly, the gap between students in POLAR4 Q3_5 and Q1_2 progressing from Ravensbourne is 3.6%; 1.2pp narrower than the national sector gap in 2020/21 (4.8%).

Priorities for Progression:

We will focus on closing the gap between White and Asian Black Minority Other students. We will monitor the performance of all underrepresented characteristics paying close attention to the performance of students with a declared disability which has been fluctuating over recent years.

Summary:

Analysis of the data has identified key gaps associated with a 90% confidence interval i.e., where the differences are reliable and large (i.e., +10pp). The student characteristics we have identified as the focus of our APP are summarised below.

	Identified characteristics of focus in our Access and Participation Plan
Access:	IMD Q1 and ABCS Q1
Continuation:	ABMO
Completion:	Disability
Attainment:	ABMO
Progression:	ABMO

Annex A (2) - Collaborative Provision

We have students enrolled on courses taught by sub-contractual partners and their data has been reviewed separately.

1. Access

Cohort	Indicator	Year 1		
		Total cohort size	Indicator absolute value	Indicator as a % of cohort for year
Age	Mature_Age21andOver	618	606	97.9
Disability	Disability reported	618	21	3.4
Ethnicity	ABMO		89	14.4
Ethnicity	Asian		34	5.5
Ethnicity	Black		20	3.2
Ethnicity	Mixed		17	2.75
IMD	IMD Q1		361	58.4
FSM	EFSM		392	63.4
ABCS	ABCSQ1		80	12.9
POLAR4	POLAR4Q1		272	85.5

Notes - Data source: SITS (extracted 22/04/2024)

UG, Home students enrolled on OBC RUL collaborative provision for the 2023/24 academic year.

Mature

OBC focus their provision on a mature student body, principally those who are returning learners or students from hard-to-reach populations i.e. those whose needs and responsibilities are not necessarily supported by a traditional HE offer. The cohorts tend to be students originating from

Eastern Europe with settled status in the UK. Unusually, the balance is in favour of what is a typically marginalised group. As a result, OBC as a collaborative provider makes a positive impact in addressing the access gap between young and mature learners on an institutional level for RUL.

Ethnicity

The number of AMBO students entering Year 1 has increased in the short time we have collaboratively taught with this provider.

IMD, FSM Eligibility and ABCS

The proportion of learners from IMD Q1, ABCS Q1 and who are eligible for free school meals is higher than average. As a result, OBC as a collaborative provider makes a positive impact in addressing the access gap for these groups of students.

POLAR4

The proportion of learners from POLAR4 Q1 is high. As a result, OBC as a collaborative provider makes a positive impact in addressing the access gap for these groups of students.

Note: There is currently very limited performance data available for our collaborative provision as all our partnerships are new. We will assess the performance of our collaborative provision by individual provider as part of our monitoring and evaluation strategy.

Annex B - Evidence Base and Rationale for Intervention Strategies

This section details the evidence behind our risk identification process and our intervention strategies to mitigate our key risks. Our intervention strategies reflect our theories of change for achieving our strategic objectives; along with an evidence base and rationale for the activities, including EORR risks and the outcome of our student consultation process.

Intervention Strategy 1: Accessing STEAM and FUTURE careers

Key aims and objectives:

To mitigate the risk that there is a widening gap in applications and enrolments to RUL, and higher education generally, for learners from the most deprived areas in the UK. By doing targeted access work we hope to close the current gap and meet the target of ** enrolments to RUL, but also higher education generally.

Objective 1: The University will increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and RUL in particular, for students from IMDQ1 areas. The University is committed to reaching a gap of **pp in access between IMD Q1 and Q5 by 2028/29 .

Objective 2: The University will increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and RUL in particular, for students from ABCS Q1 areas. The University is committed to reaching a gap of **pp in access between ABCS Q1 and Q5 by 2028/29.

Identified risks to equality of opportunity (EORR) - 1. Knowledge and Skills, 2. Information and Guidance, 3. Perception of Higher Education, 4. Application Success Rates, 10. Cost Pressures.

Student consultation – Biggest barriers to our students when they were deciding whether or not to go to university – 1. Graduate outcomes (worried about employability or further study options after completing degree) - 31.3%, 2. Perception (worried they might not fit in) - 16.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (might not have the grades / skills to be accepted onto the course) - 13.4%

Following the assessment of performance process, we identified that students from geographical areas of underrepresentation (POLAR 4 and TUNDRA Q1) as well as students from areas of deprivation and socio-economic inequality (IMD and ABCS Q1) may be facing risks to equality of opportunity for Access. To further understand the potential reasons for this and the activities we may be able to employ to mitigate these risks we conducted a **literature review**.

A recent report from The Sutton Trust⁶ (October 2023) looks at trends in widening access since 1997, combining several data sources to give a comprehensive view on how patterns in access to higher education have changed in the years between 1997 and 2022. Notably, the proportion of learners from geographical areas of low participation (POLAR4 Q1) has increased from 7% in 1997 to 12% in 2022; which is assumed to be the result of a focus on this measure in university access and participation work. Many of the measures examined in this report which have worsened over this period are all areas which have had much less focus in widening participation efforts, therefore it appears to have been a case of 'running to stand still', and where efforts have not been present, inequalities have worsened.

⁶ 25 years of University Access. How higher education access has changed over time. Rebecca Montacute and Carl Cullinane, The Sutton Trust, October 2023

Going forward, tackling the access gap is likely to become more challenging. A population bulge is about to go through the HE system. There are also the long-term impacts of the pandemic and their impact on attainment, and we know there is a more considerable impact on the attainment of lower income students, with 10 years of progress in closing the attainment gap having been lost for the first cohort of students to sit GCSE exams post pandemic⁷. The cost-of-living crisis has also affected students and their families. Universities should make much greater use of contextual admissions when assessing candidates, taking wider information into account. The landmark recent study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Sutton Trust found that universities are real engines of social mobility, with disadvantaged young people four times more likely to become socially mobile if they attend university⁸. This provides a clear rationale for targeting our school partnership access work where we stand to have the greatest impact - IMD Q1 and ABCS Q1 areas.

A recent report from NEON⁹ (February 2024) looks at the geographical progress and differences in HE participation finds that ‘The shift has not been effective enough where increasing participation in HE for learners from FSM backgrounds is concerned. ... it has been more effective where increasing participation for learners from low participation neighbourhoods is concerned. But these learners are not necessarily those from the lowest income backgrounds.’ In most areas in England if you are a state school pupil in receipt of free school meals (FSM) you have less than a 1 in 4 chance of going onto higher education (HE) by age 19 and this increases to less than 1 in 5 in 29% of areas. Learners from FSM backgrounds are more than 5 times as likely to go to HE in the highest performing areas in 2021-22 than the lowest performing areas and within the top 10 areas where the HE participation rate for FSM learners has increased the least over 2011-23 to 2021-22 include 6 London Boroughs - Kensington and Chelsea, Newham, Wandsworth, Hackney, Camden, Lewisham. The OfS insight brief¹⁰ on the role of HE on school attainment highlights that universities are important local institutions with substantial influence, and their mission should include improving the prospects of their nearby populations, and also pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds further afield. This provides a clear rationale for targeting our school partnership access work locally to London where we stand to have the greatest impact for learners in the IMD Q1 and ABCS Q1 target.

Transition into Higher Education has received increased interest in recent years. Transition plays an important part in shaping overall outcomes, particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds¹¹ who have often described new educational spaces as alien and hostile. Transition is the starting point in developing so many needs that student success is built upon (Advance HE Student Needs Framework, 2023¹²), and this has led us to include targeted transition to HE activity for students from underrepresented backgrounds with this intervention strategy

Below we have included an evidence base by relevant EORR risks for this intervention strategy.

Risk to equality of opportunity	Evidence base
EORR Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills.	There have been significant barriers to access to higher education, including the impacts of socioeconomic disadvantage, geography and available guidance about options. At the core of many of these problems is the attainment gap – young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, even those who want to attend higher education,

⁷ <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-longer-term-impact-of-COVID-19-on-pupil-attainment-and-well-being.pdf>

⁸ **25 years of University Access. How higher education access has changed over time.** Rebecca Montacute and Carl Cullinane, The Sutton Trust, October 2023

⁹ **Universities not for everyone: Levelling up and who is missing out on higher education in England** Professor Graham Atherton, NEON 2024

¹⁰ **OfS Insight – Schools, attainment and the role of higher education** April 2022

¹¹ <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/is-it-students-or-universities-that-need-to-change/>

¹² <https://advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/psf>

	<p>have been unable to acquire and demonstrate the same levels of knowledge and skill as their more advantaged peers in relevant areas of learning¹³ (OfS, 2022)</p> <p>Disadvantaged students may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills (OfS, 2022)¹⁴. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have participated in HE have been more likely to drop out, less likely to graduate with a first or upper second-class degree, and less likely to progress into graduate level employment than their peers¹⁵. This provides a clear rationale for our targeted pre-entry programme.</p> <p>Our pre access programme focuses on knowledge and skills development, including subject specific workshops as well as holiday schools. Evidence suggests that participating in summer schools is associated with greater confidence and increased aspiration, and with higher GCSE grades and rates of progression to HE¹⁶ (TASO, 2023) Programmes of interventions related to metacognition and self-regulation has been found to be highly impactful¹⁷ this provides an evidence base for the activities in our intervention strategy.</p> <p>The gaps in development and attainment between advantaged and disadvantaged children are evident from the early years and widen throughout school¹⁸ (OfS, 2022). Evidence from the Sutton Trust report states that even when disadvantaged pupils perform strongly in primary school, they are much more likely to fall behind at secondary school, compared to other high attaining students, across a range of measures (Montacute, 2018)¹⁹. One in three applicants report first thinking about HE at primary school. Disadvantaged students are more likely to consider HE later, which can limit their choices. This suggests that careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) should be embedded within primary education (UCAS, 2021)²⁰ and provides a clear rationale for our commitment to work with primary schools.</p> <p>Evidence shows that high quality CPD for teachers has an average effect on pupil attainment equivalent to a month of extra learning²¹ hence our commitment to provide Teachers CPD as part of our school partnership work.</p>
EORR Risk 2: Information and Guidance.	<p>A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression. This can occur early on in a student's education and affect aspects such as their Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 course choice, or it may apply at the point of application, and limit both the choice and quality of a student's application (OfS, 2022).</p>

¹³ OfS Insight – Schools, attainment and the role of higher education April 2022

¹⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/schools-attainment-and-the-role-of-higher-education/> 07 April 2022

¹⁵ OfS Access and Participation data dashboard

¹⁶ TASO 'Schools in for the Summer' (November 2023)

¹⁷ EEF, 'Metacognition and self-regulation'

¹⁸ OfS Insight – Schools, attainment and the role of higher education April 2022

¹⁹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Parent-Power-2018.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.ucas.com/file/435551/download?token=VUdIDVFh>

²¹ EPI 'The effects of high quality professional development on teachers and students: A cost-benefit analysis' 28 April 2021

	<p>Evidence suggests that there is a need for earlier, broader, and personalised careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG). Two in five students believe more information and advice would have led to them making better choices, and almost one in three students report not receiving any information about apprenticeships from their school (UCAS, 2021).</p> <p>In each of the last 3 years, the Advance HE / HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey (SAES) found that more than 40 per cent of students regretted their choice of course or choice of university²². A recent article from WonkHE²³ (Jan 2024) puts forward the argument that students are subject to ‘choice overload’. We expect students to make such prodigious life-changing choices – particularly at the start of their time at university. And we expect them to make these decisions with very little knowledge or experience of university life. This is especially true for students from families and communities with little or no tradition of sending people to university.</p> <p>Careers IAG delivered in schools and colleges, aligns with Ravensbourne’s commitment to promoting diverse pathways into HE. Our outreach practice and APP school partnership agreements will specifically identify alignment with the Gatsby benchmarks (www.gatsby.org.uk) and provide evidence and practice for school and college reporting.</p> <p>Our student consultation placed ‘Graduate Outcomes – you were worried about employability or further study options after your degree’ as the biggest barrier when deciding whether to go to university, with 31.3% students reporting this is as their biggest concern, which reiterates the requirement for careers IAG as a key project strand of our widening access work.</p>
<p>EORR Risk 3: Perception of higher education</p>	<p>Even where a student has the grades and information or guidance required to choose a particular course or provider, they may not apply (OfS, 2022). This can be due to several factors, including (but not limited to): financial or familial circumstances, perception of the provider, limited course provision (such as having no part-time courses) (OfS, 2022), and perceptions of socio-economic mobility (Browman et al., 2017).</p> <p>Heaslip et al., (2020) systematic review of limited available peer-reviewed evidence regarding the impact of outreach on the underlying structural factors shaping access to higher education, suggests that successful strategies may include i) improving guidance and support in some schools regarding the transition between compulsory education and HE (Basit, 2012; Robb et al., 2007), ii) working with children in primary as well as secondary schools, focusing on parents in addition to their children as a whole family approach (Richardson and Hunt, 2013), and building rapport and positive attitudes with teachers to move away from deficit constructions of aspirations (Heaslip et al., 2020).</p> <p>Our student consultation placed ‘Perception - you were worried university might not be for you or you might not fit in’ as the second biggest barrier when deciding whether to go to university, with 16.4% students reporting this is as their biggest concern, this provides a rationale for the pre access programme in intervention strategy and providing</p>

²² <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-2023.pdf>

²³ **How to help students make better decisions**, *WonkHE* 11.01.24

	<p>participants in our programmes to experience Ravensbourne through workshops, holiday schools and meeting our students and staff.</p>
EORR Risk 4: Application success rates	<p>Students from less advantaged backgrounds are significantly less likely than their more privileged peers to meet the high academic entry requirements set by higher tariff providers (Boliver, Gorard & Siddiqui, 2021).</p> <p>Even when students from disadvantaged backgrounds have the same attainment at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 as another students, they may not have equal application outcomes. This can be due to admissions practices (such as the way a personal statement or interview is assessed, or the use of entrance exams), or the way in which a student makes an application. It may also be due to students applying in greater numbers to certain subjects, or differences in the perceived quality of qualification types (OfS, 2022).</p> <p>Contextual admissions policies can support the use of contextualized data may improve equity in admissions. Holistic admissions processes that consider a wide range of factors beyond just academic achievements, such as personal experiences, background, skills, and potential contributions to the campus community may be essential for promoting diversity, equity, and fairness in the admissions process (Bastedo et al., 2022; Montford et al., 2021). This provides a clear rationale for the contextual admissions policy in our intervention strategy.</p>
EORR Risk 10: Cost pressures	<p>The cost-of-living crisis may also impact on access to university, as students may be less likely to apply to higher education and/or limit their higher education choices according to financial need (e.g. a student may only apply to a provider near their home, or may limit their choice to part-time courses) (OfS, 2022).</p> <p>The most disadvantaged students - lower-class students, first-generation, those from the global majority, and lower-attaining students - are more likely to adopt approaches to minimize their costs which in turn constrain their choices of where and what to study (Callender & Melis, 2022).</p> <p>More than 70% of students are struggling with decisions around attending scheduled teaching²⁴ due to the cost-of-living crisis – prioritising earning money and saving money by not travelling.</p> <p>Notably, our student consultation placed 'Money - the cost pressures of being a student' as the lowest barrier when deciding whether to go to university, with only 6% of students reporting this is as their biggest concern. However, qualitative consultation (in person focus group) and the open field question of our survey to students revealed that students felt increasing our bursary offer would be a good way to support students from underrepresented backgrounds.</p>

Intervention Strategy 2: Create a sense of belonging to close continuation, completion, and awarding gaps for target groups.

Objective 3: The University will increase the percentage of **Asian Black Minority Other** students who successfully continue their studies

Objective 4: The University will increase the completion rate for students who declare a **disability, including neurodivergent students and those with declared mental health conditions.**

²⁴ <https://www.fenews.co.uk/student-view/30-of-students-unable-to-secure-part-time-jobs-due-to-poor-university-timetable/>

Objective 5: The University will close the awarding gap for **Asian Black Minority Other** groups getting a 1st or 2.1 compared to White students

Identified risks to equality of opportunity (EORR) - 6. Insufficient academic support, 7. Insufficient personal support, 8. Mental Health, 9. Ongoing impacts of coronavirus, 10. Cost Pressures, 11. Capacity Issues.

Student consultation:

- Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **stay on course and complete their degree** – 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 31.3%, 2. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 17.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (don't have the knowledge and skills to complete work) - 16.4%.
- Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **achieve a good degree outcome** – 1. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 23.4%, 2. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 20.9%, 3. Long term impact of COVID (the pandemic continues to impact your ability to get a good degree outcome) - 19.4%.

Following the assessment of performance process, we identified that students from the global majority (ABMO) and students who declare a disability, including neurodivergent students and those with a declared mental health condition, may be facing risks to equality of opportunity for success, including continuation, completion and degree awarding. To further understand the potential reasons for this and the activities we may be able to employ to mitigate these risks we conducted **a literature review and a consultation with students**. Following this process, we identified 4 major project strands to better create a sense of belonging.

Project	Evidence base
<p>Developing and maintaining a safe campus</p> <p>Provide a safe campus and university community through the implementation of mechanisms that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enable students and staff to report harassment through a 'report and support' online tool ii. Seek to proactively address and prevent discrimination, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour on campus by *** 	<p>According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2019), harassment can have a profound impact on an individual's mental health, educational outcomes, and career. In particular, research found that women report that they felt less safe than men on campus and experienced more psychological distress and sleep disturbances (Etopio et al 2018), which suggests perceived safety is a mediator between gender and mental health, and students' perceptions of safety can impact upon the ways in which students' study (Roberts & Uddin, 2023). Further to this, the EHRC (2019) found through their research that there is a low likelihood of members of university communities coming forward to report harassment and recommends putting in place mechanisms to enable students and staff to report harassment. Creating a campus environment where LGBTTIQA+ students do not experience discrimination and harassment (Allan et al, 2020) and BME students' sense of safety is improved by providing support at all levels within the university (Bunce et al., 2019) is essential. Evidence suggests that creating a positive social university environment where students receive support from academic and professional support staff can decrease the likelihood of students dropping out of their studies (Burke, 2019; Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2023).</p> <p>The Office for Students briefing report (2022) states that students are more likely than others to be subjected to sexual assault. Encountering this and other forms of sexual misconduct can have a devastating effect on their experiences of higher education. This brief looks at the role of universities in protecting students and summarises data on the prevalence and effects of sexual misconduct. It looks at what the Office for Students, universities and colleges have done in this area and what more needs to be done. The brief does not constitute regulatory or legal advice but summarises the issue and the actions related to it. The OfS (2021) statement of expectations:</p>

1. Higher education providers should clearly communicate, and embed across the whole organisation, their approach to preventing and responding to all forms of harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students. They should set out clearly the expectations that they have of students, staff and visitors.
2. Governing bodies should ensure that the provider's approach to harassment and sexual misconduct is adequate and effective. They should ensure that risks relating to these issues are identified and effectively mitigated.
3. Higher education providers should appropriately engage with students to develop and evaluate systems, policies and processes to address harassment and sexual misconduct.
4. Higher education providers should implement adequate and effective staff and student training with the purpose of raising awareness of, and preventing, harassment and sexual misconduct.
5. Higher education providers should have adequate and effective policies and processes in place for all students to report and disclose incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct.
6. Higher education providers should have a fair, clear and accessible approach to taking action in response to reports and disclosures.
7. Higher education providers should ensure that students involved in an investigatory process have access to appropriate and effective support.

Case study: University of Suffolk, Higher Education Online Safeguarding Self-Review Tool²⁵

The Higher Education Online Safeguarding Self-Review Tool was created by the University of Suffolk, with OfS funding, in 2019. It is a downloadable resource that any university or college can use to review its online safeguarding practices, with a specific focus on sexual violence, hate crime and harassment. The tool was revised in response to the media coverage of the Everyone's Invited website, the greater use of online learning since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the publication of the OfS statement of expectations. An updated version published in 2022 includes two new areas of focus: online delivery of higher education and assessing and supporting students' mental health. The tool invites universities and colleges to assess 25 features of online safeguarding policy and practice. Each feature can be self-assessed at four levels, graded from 0 (reactive) to 3 (holistic).

Chantler et al (2019) briefing report recommendations aim to address barriers identified in the study and promote a comprehensive and effective approach to tackling sexual violence and harassment in Higher Education Institutions. These recommendations are as follows:

1. **Accountability of Universities and Office for Students (OfS):** It was suggested that universities and the OfS should be held accountable for implementing the UUK agenda on sexual violence. This accountability could help overcome institutional barriers and improve standardization, strong leadership, and governance.
2. **Legal Duties:** The study recommended that mandatory legal duties should be imposed on universities to prevent and respond effectively to sexual violence. This could ensure more uniform progress across key areas explored in the study.

²⁵ <https://oars.uos.ac.uk/887/1/HE%20Online%20Safeguarding%20Self%20Review%20Tool.pdf>

3. **Robust Evaluations:** The study emphasized the need for robust evaluations to ascertain the effectiveness of interventions and develop evidence-based strategies. Evaluations are crucial to understanding the impact of activities and improving future interventions.
4. **Senior Management Buy-In:** To address institutional resistance, the study recommended gaining senior management buy-in and support to promote engagement of the whole institution. This support can help address fears about reputational risk and ensure commitment to the agenda.
5. **Appropriate Resources:** Adequate resources, including funding and dedicated staff, were highlighted as essential for sustaining efforts to address sexual violence and harassment. Institutions need to commit resources to realize the agenda effectively.
6. **Partnership Working:** Collaboration between student services, Student's Union, academic staff, and external stakeholders was recommended to enhance the effectiveness of interventions. Partnership working can bring diverse expertise and resources to address the issue comprehensively.
7. **Training and Support:** Providing training and support for key staff and stakeholders within universities was suggested to ensure they are equipped to respond effectively to sexual violence and harassment incidents.
8. **Champions:** The study emphasized the role of champions in promoting the agenda as a key catalyst for change. These champions can drive the agenda forward and create momentum for addressing sexual violence and harassment.

Case study: University of Bath, Be the Change²⁶

Be the Change is an initiative at the University of Bath that aims to tackle all forms of harassment on campus, including racism, homophobia, disability discrimination and sexual harassment. The university has worked closely with its students' union and involves students in the creation of elements of the initiative where possible. All incoming students complete Be the Change training as part of their induction. This training includes:

- Information on the university's expectations of appropriate behaviour
- How to act as a bystander (someone who observes but is not directly targeted in harassment)
- Encouraging students to seek support (if they need it)
- Empowering students to make a report (if they want to)
- Information on sexual consent.

Further training is also available to students throughout the academic year. The university also runs campaigns to raise awareness about issues of harassment. Be the Change is underpinned by two structures within the university:

- A professional and comprehensive support provision for students who have experienced harassment.
- A trauma-informed student misconduct process (including work by in-house investigators and trained panels of decision makers)

Students can access support and report via the 'Support and Report' online tool, as well as directly through the university's support services. Receiving support is not dependent on a report being made; it is entirely a student's decision whether to report harassment.

²⁶ <https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/be-the-change-project-re-launch/>

	<p>Roberts et al (2023) carried out a website analysis of all UK universities that focused on gathering data along these three themes to ascertain the extent to which their websites supported changing the culture of sexual violence at their university. Many universities' websites had an online reporting tool and defined sexual violence, but many universities' websites did not have information about bystander initiatives. The research raises implications for universities to enhance their website pages for in-person bystander initiatives and to standardise definitions of sexual violence used in online reporting tools.</p>
<p>Inclusive curriculum development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Deliver staff development workshops for student facing staff to develop a better understanding of the barriers and challenges different groups of students face in learning and engagement. ii. Undertake annual inclusive curriculum audit of all courses using our inclusive curriculum audit tool. iii. Actions implemented by student facing staff at institution, department and course levels to better support students from target groups. iv. Actions taken by Academic Heads and Heads of Services to address recommendations from the Student Diversity Forum. 	<p>The widening participation agenda has increased the diversity of students accessing higher education, but to date this has not been complemented by parity in terms of educational outcomes (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/inclusive-curriculum, 2020). One avenue for meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities within the formal curriculum is using an inclusive curriculum. Research at UAL on the attainment of art and design students suggests decolonising the curriculum improves the student experience by identifying and dismantling barriers to access and success in Higher Education (Burke & McManus 2009, Finnigan & Richards, 2016 and Sabri, 2017).</p> <p>The Higher Education Academy commissioned Morgan and Houghton to support the higher education sector with a guide Inclusive Curriculum Design in Higher Education: Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas (2011). It provides a framework for staff to think creatively about inclusive curriculum design from a generic as well as subject or disciplinary perspective.</p> <p>Ten years later and unfortunately, if one were to consider an inclusive curricular design when designing, implementing, or evaluating curricula, very few resources are available to support this goal (Smucker et al., 2022). Therefore, the purpose of Smucker's (2022) paper is to explore the available resources to identify the current meaning and use of inclusive curriculum design with the goal of operationally defining inclusive curriculum and delineating the characteristics of this curricular design. Similarly, Munna and Kalam (2021) analyse and evaluate the inclusive and innovative curriculum design and delivery practice in the sector. They explore how these developments demonstrate the effectiveness on diverse groups of individual students. In this respect, this review some established theories, principles and models of curriculum design including hidden curriculum that may be useful in different forms and levels of learning and planning for teaching and learning in the context of post compulsory education. However, evidence of effectiveness on students' outcomes is unclear.</p> <p>The realm of HE Universal Design for Learning (UDL) related research is also somewhat limited, hampered by competing definitions, aims, and constructs. Findings from Fornauf and Erickson (2020) suggest that ambiguity still exists as to UDL's application as an intervention or framework.</p> <p>Evidence based and critique of current approaches to developing inclusive curriculum frameworks Inequalities in student experiences and differentials in degree attainment for traditionally underrepresented groups, remain a major challenge with institutional approaches to inclusion that value diversity as an inherent source of learning being underdeveloped (McDuff et al., 2020). Organisational EDI policy frameworks may claim to be evidence-based, Wolbring and Nguyen (2023) find that the implementation of diversity plans, is rarely a subject of inquiry. At the curriculum level, 'inclusive pedagogies' have been recommended as an approach for addressing increased student diversity in the university classroom, Stentiford and Koutsouris (2021) conclude from their review that HE researchers do not share a common understanding of inclusive pedagogies, as they found</p>

inconsistency and fragmentation in perceptions of inclusive pedagogies is the result of inclusion itself being a philosophically contested matter. The evidence base for creating an inclusive curriculum framework to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, ultimately benefitting all students is still developing and it is questionable on what grounds such strategies are being promoted and what they might be 'doing' within educational spaces (Stentiford and Koutsouris, 2022).

An alternative approach is through the use of survey tools to explore staff awareness and knowledge of disadvantaged and under-representative groups accessing higher education and disability-specific difficulties and strategies, particularly in relation to extra-curricular activity and its impact on student learning, can be a useful approach to assess how widespread understanding is amongst respondents (Parker, 2001). As a needs-analysis assessment, the results of surveys can be used to plan staff training through workshops and materials, to enable change within the institution (Authur et al., 2003).

The **UUK** survey revealed the main contributing variables to degree awarding gaps as ranked by institutions to include a lack of role models from various ethnic minority backgrounds, curriculum delivery, a lack of ethnic diversity among senior staff, and curriculum design (UUK & NUS, 2019). Other variables such as a lack of sense of belonging, inadequate information, advice and guidance, subject choice, and first-generation entry have also been found to affect BAME students' attainment at the university (UUK & NUS, 2019).

The OfS (2020) advises reviewing curriculum, teaching and learning practices to narrow outcome gaps between student groups.

Reviewing the curriculum utilising an inclusive curriculum checklist with students (e.g., all literature, pictures, reading lists and guest speakers) to provide a more inclusive and diverse representation of academic and professional learning experience for ABMO and learning materials and experiences for students with disabilities (e.g., neurodiverse). The aim is to provide accessible and relatable learning materials and opportunities for students to make connections between their learning and personal experiences to more deeply engage with their studies (Paguyo, Sponsler & Iturbe-LaGrave (2022), and promote an inclusive experience and sense of belonging (Nieminen and Personen, 2022).

Separately, **Paguyo, Sponsler & Iturbe-LaGrave (2022)**, argue students who are enabled to make connections between their learning and personal experiences can more deeply engage with their studies. Understanding our students' needs and experiences is essential. This may mean that we consider embracing anti-ableist pedagogies in higher education to promote the belonging of disabled students and prevent their exclusion and marginalisation. We need to question the role of active learning environments for supporting disabled students' belonging. The narratives of disabled students show how *not belonging* might be more productive for these students, as the learning environments are often built on ableism (Nieminen and Personen, 2022).

From the perspective of BAME students and staff of colour, **Arday et al (2020)** explore the centrality of Whiteness as an instrument of power and privilege ensures that particular types of knowledge continue to remain omitted from our curriculums. The monopoly and proliferation of dominant White European canons does comprise much of our

	<p>existing curriculum; consequently, this does impact on aspects of engagement, inclusivity and belonging particularly for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) learners. The impact of a dominant Eurocentric curriculum and the Decolonising the Curriculum agenda within higher education and its influence upon navigating factors such as BAME attainment, engagement and belonging within the Academy requires further consideration. They argue that a narrow and restrictive curriculum on BAME students and staff and how the omission of diverse histories and multicultural knowledge canons facilitates marginalization and discriminatory cultures.</p> <p>Practical applications promoted by AdvanceHE (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/inclusive-curriculum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centred collaborative approaches, like small group work and clicker technology, allow students to draw on their own experiences and perspectives, enabling peer-led learning; • Encouraging students to work with different peers increases their knowledge acquisition and diversity skills. This could be achieved through ‘engineering’ discussion groups and insisting that students do not always work in their comfortable groups; • Multi-sensory delivery strategies. We should be exposing our students to a variety of mediums of delivery – preferably in an exciting, engaging and interactive way. For example, practical and authentic resources encourage participation as everyone can discuss concrete visual examples with interest; • Guest speakers. Inviting speakers from different cultural and social backgrounds, may reflect the current diversity of higher education (HE) students. These speakers can cover additional aspects of the curriculum or provide different perspectives on existing content. <p>Creating an inclusive curriculum framework involves careful planning and consideration of various factors to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or identities, feel valued, represented, and able to succeed.</p>
<p>Embedding mental health and wellbeing in the learning journey</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop a mental health strategy for students to provide a whole institution approach to support student wellbeing and address mental health needs. ii. Undertake wellness promotional campaigns at the start of each semester to raise awareness and support for student mental health iii. Provide Mental Health First Aid training for staff to understand different 	<p>The recent DfE Survey Student mental health and wellbeing. Insights from higher education providers and sector experts (Pollard, et al., 2021) found that half (47 per cent) of HE institutions had a working definition of mental health and wellbeing. These institutions either used definitions from health or sector bodies (e.g. the World Health Organisation, Student Minds), or developed their own working definitions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Definitions of mental health tended to stress the wide variety of difficulties/conditions included; the dynamic or temporal nature of mental ill-health; that mental health covers a spectrum ranging from good mental health to mental illness; and that poor mental health can have wide impacts and arise from a variety of factors. Mental health can often be framed in the negative. ii) Definitions of wellbeing tended to stress aspects associated with positive wellbeing such as flourishing, thriving, satisfaction, self-belief, balance; to cover emotional, spiritual, social, physical as well as mental dimensions; and recognise that it can change. Wellbeing is often framed in the positive. <p>Advance HE (Houghton and Anderson, 2017), draw a distinction between ‘mental wellbeing’, which we all have, and a ‘mental health problem’, which only some of us would identify as experiencing. Although there are questions of definition, when promoting mental wellbeing through the curriculum, they refer to all students regardless of their decision to disclose of a disability and recognise that student's sense of mental wellbeing may fluctuate and change. Frequently institutions saw mental health and wellbeing as highly inter-related, with wellbeing a broader concept within which mental health has an integral part and with resilience a key uniting theme. This interconnected nature meant that some institutions do not have separate definitions of mental health and wellbeing (Pollard et al., 2021).</p>

<p>types of mental health conditions and how to support students' different mental health needs and suicide prevention.</p> <p>iv. Identify and provide training and workshops to equip staff in supporting students' wellbeing and mental health needs, from the needs analysis assessment and actions from the Student Diversity Forum.</p> <p>v. Create and host micro-courses for new and returning students (e.g., 'what to expect', 'understanding and management your wellbeing', 'resilience building') as part of the Transition to HE "R U Ready" programme.</p> <p>vi. Support target students with mentors trained in wellbeing to support students' integration to university and buffer the transition.</p> <p>vii. Embed wellbeing awareness development and management through an active learning project in year 1.</p>	<p>Students reporting a mental health condition to their university or college when entering higher education in England increased from 0.7 per cent in 2010-11 to 4.5 per cent of full-time students in 2021-22, which is equivalent to 24,700 full-time students (OfS, 2023). However, Lewis and Bolton's, (2023) House of Commons report found that surveys of students, where responses are confidential, indicate much higher rates of poor mental health than disclosed to universities - nearly seven times as high as a decade earlier in England. This is supported by the 2022 survey by the mental health charity Student Minds.</p> <p>The increase in students reporting a mental health condition mirrors evidence of increased prevalence in wider society. Mental health is an issue that affects many people: latest estimates from the Nuffield Trust (Flinders, 2022) suggest that 1 in 6 adults experienced a 'common mental disorder' such as depression or anxiety in the past week.</p> <p>Sadly, mental health issues have become more common in children and young people. After a rise in prevalence between 2017 and 2020, rates of probable mental disorder remained stable in all age groups between 2022 and 2023. However latest data finds one in five children and young people in England aged eight to 25yrs had a probable mental disorder in 2023, and among 17 to 19-year-olds, the proportion was 23.3%, while in 20 to 25-year-olds it was 21.7% (NHS, 2023). Half of mental ill health starts by age 15 and 75% develops by age 18 (Kessler, et al., 2005). In 2022, the leading cause of death for people aged as young as 5yrs – 34yrs was 'intentional self-harm and event of undetermined intent' (ONS, 2022).</p> <p>In terms of demographic differences, OfS (2023) data analysis finds that female students are more likely to report having a mental health condition than male students (6.3 per cent of full-time female entrants, compared with 2.3 per cent of male full-time entrants in 2021-22). The rate of reporting for female students has increased dramatically throughout the time series (from year of entry 2010-11 to 2021-22). Also, since 2016-17, entrants to full-time courses who were eligible for free school meals when at school have been more likely to report having a mental health condition than those who were not eligible (5.7 per cent compared with 4.8 per cent in 2021-22).</p> <p>As noted by the OfS (2023) report, mental health conditions are self-reported to the provider, based on the student's own assessment. Therefore, under-reporting of mental health conditions is possible, and may vary across student groups. As a result, we cannot say with certainty that any particular student group suffers with mental health conditions more than another, only that they report mental health conditions more frequently. Similarly, an increase in the number of students reporting mental health conditions over time might reflect increased reporting, rather than increased prevalence.</p> <p>Why this is an essential development in higher education (HE)</p> <p>The increase in student numbers in HE has resulted in a corresponding increase in the diversity of student needs. The increased numbers of students disclosing that they have a mental health condition meets the legal definitions of a disability. The Equality Act (2010) places a legal duty on HE providers to ensure that students with protected characteristics have equality of opportunity (Stones and Glazzard, 2019). Data analysis across the HE sector suggests how mental ill health can impact detrimentally on students' continuation, completion and progression (OfS, 2023). Overall – looking at full-time undergraduate data, throughout the time series (starting in 2010/2011 to 2017/18 completion data; 2010/11 to 2021/22 for attainment data; 2010/11 to 2020/21 for continuation data and 2017/18 to</p>
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2020/21 for progression data), and without disaggregating by student groups – there are differences in outcomes in continuation, completion, and progression rates between those students who reported having a mental health condition and those who did not. Interestingly, across the time series, the attainment rate difference between students with a reported mental health condition and those without, whether positive or negative, has been close to zero and, generally, a lot smaller than the differences seen in continuation, completion, and progression rates (OfS, 2023).

Factors affecting student mental health

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2020) in addition to the increased risk of mental illness due to the typical age of students, the risk of mental health problems is thought to be further exacerbated in students by factors including:

- **Moving away from home** — coping with living independently, loneliness, and the absence of familiar social and emotional support networks are associated with a higher risk of mental health conditions.
- **Developing a new social identity** — is thought to be a potential stressor.
- **Workload pressures** — both from academic demands (including exams) and in some cases, the need to co-ordinate jobs and studying. Students who are focused on the possibility of failure, experience imposter syndrome, perfectionism, or low academic self-efficacy are also more likely to develop mental health problems including anxiety.
- **Financial pressures** — including managing own finances for the first time, worries about debt, and in some cases, poverty.
- **Chronic physical health problems** — are a significant risk factor for depression.
- **Social deprivation** — the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is increasing, and mental health problems are more common among people from more deprived socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **International students** may face unique challenges relating to isolation, integration, cultural expectations, and concerns about funding.
- **Mature students** may feel more isolated because they are unable to engage socially, may have parental care or other responsibilities, and may have greater financial pressures.
- **Moving beyond the first year of university** has been identified as potentially challenging possibly due to an absence of support initiatives that were present in the first year, as well as moving out of halls of residence, and increased workload.
- **Pre-existing neurodevelopmental conditions** such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may increase the risk of mental health problems, particularly at times of transition and change.
- **Identifying as ‘non-binary’ or ‘other’ gender** have been associated with greater risk of mental health conditions in a large survey of 21,000 students.
- **LGBT students and BAME students** have been identified in some studies as experiencing lower wellbeing and poorer mental health.

In addition, young people with pre-existing mental health conditions:

- May find relocation particularly stressful if they have cultivated a positive relationship with their GP, or a primary or secondary mental health practitioner, at their home location.
- May be at particularly high risk of exacerbation if they have *not* been able to access appropriate support prior to starting university.

The NUS survey of students in June 2022 also identified the **rising cost of living** as negatively impacting students' mental health. Few studies have focused on examining unique challenges faced by under-represented groups related to their mental health and/or identifying protective mechanisms for wellbeing, e.g., Black students (Mushonga & Henneberger 2020); LGBTQ students (Backhaus et al., 2021); mature students (Crawford et al., 2022); socio-economic status (Ahn & Davis, 2023). However, there is some evidence that **sense of belonging may be a protective factor** for student mental health, and this may be important in **supporting wellbeing across the student experience** (McBeath et al, 2018).

What actions are being taken in HEIs?

i) Whole institutional approaches

The [University Mental Health Charter](#) was published in 2019 and was part-funded by the OfS. It was created by the charity Student Minds in partnership with universities, staff and students. Its framework sets out good practice principles and advocates a whole-university approach. This builds on and aligns with **Universities UK's 'Stepchange: Mentally healthy universities' framework**. The website '[Student Space](#)' (led by **Student Minds**, part-funded by the OfS) was launched in August 2020 in response to the negative mental health impact of the pandemic. It continues to offer a range of expert online support and wellbeing advice for students.

Priestly et al (2021) found that students value clear, coordinated, and strategic approach to delivering accessible and inclusive student mental health support services that are responsive to the diverse needs of the whole student population.

The DfE commissioned survey of HEIs (Pollard et al., 2021) found that 52 per cent of HE institutions had a dedicated strategy for student mental health and/or wellbeing, 6 per cent covered these in a wider strategy, and, although 33 per cent had no strategy at the time of the survey, 25 per cent were planning one. Strategies tended to include: an understanding of the context, ambitions (goals, areas of activity, channels of support, roles and responsibilities), how it relates to what else the provider does or is happening in the sector, and how they will review and monitor progress.

Wellbeing support (offered to all students) involved:

- group sessions/workshops covering a wide variety of topics,
- campaigns and awareness raising,
- peer-to-peer support,
- self-help through digital resources. Topics covered included: mindfulness, meditation, resilience, alternative therapies, stress management, anxiety, loneliness, low confidence, and the transition to university life.

Support could also focus on helping students to deal with adverse life events, recognise and address unhealthy behaviours, promote exercise, and provide help with wider issues such as finance and accommodation. Providers

were planning to increase peer support/student-led activities and self-help, focus on physical health, and improve training for staff and students to recognise wellbeing and mental health issues.

Early intervention actions for mental health needs were generally part of activity to support and promote positive mental wellbeing. Key examples (often focused on vulnerable students) included:

- training to recognise deteriorating mental health and make appropriate referrals.
- monitoring of attendance/performance to identify potential needs or students at risk.
- working to educate and raise awareness of mental health issues.
- encouraging an open culture where mental health issues can be discussed.
- timing activities with key points when students could be most vulnerable.
- focus on suicide prevention.

Targeted services drawing on internal, specialist professionals were also offered. Most commonly (offered by virtually all providers) included a combination of:

- face to face counselling and therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT);
- online support in the form of online counselling and online CBT using purchased tools and apps (e.g. SilverCloud, Big White Wall (now called Togetherall) and Kooth).

Providers also collaborated/partnered with external organisations to support specific mental health needs, access funded support through DSA, provide crisis and emergency support, and offer out-of-hours services.

Providers anticipated increasing their work with external agencies to expand their services and increase their speed of response. Providers were also planning to: increase their capacity by recruiting more specialist staff and using online provision; and to target key at risk groups with new services (Pollard et al., 2021).

Use and effectiveness of services (Pollard et al., 2021).

- 95 per cent of HE institutions collected data to evaluate or review the services and/or support they provide for **mental health** needs. This involved:
 - o monitoring use (e.g. take-up, waiting times, use of apps),
 - o user feedback surveys, and
 - o assessing impact (via pre- and post-intervention clinical measures, comparing student outcome measures of users with non-users, and external evaluation).
- 70 per cent of HE institutions similarly collected data on their services and/or support for **wellbeing**. This was largely limited to:
 - o monitoring engagement with services/events and
 - o gathering user feedback.
 - o Collecting impact data was rare, and involved student self-reported impact, standardised wellbeing measures, and measuring student outcomes.

Pollard et al (2021) note the following **evidence gaps**:

- evaluation evidence on effectiveness of services.

- understanding the influence of HE (and transitions to HE) on students' mental health and wellbeing over and above that experienced by the general population.
- understanding students' expectations for and experiences of support and any mismatch.
- students most at risk and barriers to seeking help and
- understanding prevalence.

ii) **Evidence-based Interventions – what works?**

A systematic review of 46 studies of curriculum- embedded interventions that target student mental health and wellbeing at university found the literature in this field is overall of poor quality and cannot be synthesised for meta-analysis, due to poor reporting of methodology and results, lack of control conditions, and mixed outcomes across studies. Interventions included stress management, mindfulness, clinical skills, arts-based approaches, and behavioural self-care. There was no strong evidence to support the impact of such curriculum-embedded interventions for improving student mental health or wellbeing (Upsher et al., 2022).

However, **experiential learning opportunities that contain mental health literacy content** in addition to course content can be valuable without interruption to core learning aims (Reis et al., 2023). This reflects the Advance HE guidance on embedding mental wellbeing in the curriculum (Houghton and Anderson, 2017). This argues that mental wellbeing is core to the curriculum in the way we teach and what we teach. Integrating and embedding discipline-relevant mental health and wellbeing resources into the curriculum through a curriculum-infusion approach can develop students' understanding of mental wellbeing and related issues.

Given that a substantial proportion of **students do not seek formal help** (Macskill, 2012), many HEIs have recognised the need to move beyond traditional forms of support and provide alternative, more accessible interventions aimed at improving mental health and well-being (Worsley et al., 2020). This includes providing student-centred interventions focusing on self-efficacy, coping styles and physical activity which may help improve the mental health and wellbeing of students (Liverpool et al., 2023). There is some evidence that mindfulness-based interventions, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and interventions delivered via technology were effective when compared to a passive control, with the effects of CBT-related interventions sustained over time. Psychoeducation interventions do not appear to be as effective as other forms of intervention, with its effects not enduring over time (Worsley et al., 2022). However, a systematic review and meta-analysis of digital interventions for psychological wellbeing in university students concludes that while this may be a promising approach, their effectiveness remains unclear (Ferrari et al, 2022).

Many universities use peer **mentoring programmes** to support students (Law et al., 2020). However, there are currently no guidelines on the most effective way of facilitating emotional wellbeing in students. While a systematic review of evidence found social support to be the most important protective factor for mental wellbeing, there is little evidence that peer support improves mental wellbeing among university students (John et al. 2018; Leavitt et al., 2022), but it may play an important **mediating** role in increasing **levels of integration** which in turn increase students intentions to stay at university, and **moderate or buffer the effect of the transition** to University (Collings et al., 2014).

<p>Disability and learning support plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide a co-ordinated approach to developing and implementing disability/learning support plans with relevant academic staff for students with disability needs ii. Increase student and staff awareness and understanding of disability support services for students. iii. Increase student registration with the student support services to ensure access to necessary support services for students with disabilities. iv. Create clear and consistent guidelines for determining, developing, and implementing disability/learning support plans, ensuring that they do not lower academic standards or substantially modify essential requirements. v. Establish and continually develop a comprehensive list of disability/learning plan support actions to define what they look like and review their effectiveness to ensure consistency, clarity, and impact. 	<p>Narrow definitions of disability and/or underreporting can result in highly skewed and unreliable data on prevalence (Sida 2014) and a lack of identified need for support (Clouder et al., 2020). And although making reasonable adjustments attempts to ensure inclusivity, data suggests that some academic staff struggle to accommodate disabled students, due to a lack of knowledge, training and awareness of disability (Bunbury, 2020).</p> <p>Neurodiversity is an umbrella term, including dyspraxia, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia, autistic spectrum and Tourette syndrome. The increasing number of students with learning difficulties associated with neurodiversity entering higher education (HE) poses a shared and growing challenge internationally for teachers and institutional leaders (Clouder et al., 2020).</p> <p>Evidence from a narrative synthesis of neurodiversity in higher education finds that:</p> <p><i>“Most students with learning disabilities experience frustrations due to negative university experiences, especially if the necessary learning tools are not readily available (21). Leaving behind familiar structures, people and environments to face challenging situations such as variable course schedules is frightening (36; 44), and students can feel isolated, alone, stressed, anxious, unhappy, tired, depressed and overwhelmed (1). Dyslexic students experience helplessness and hopelessness as a result of a fear of stigmatization, feelings of inadequacy and a lack of understanding (13); they also have short-term memory problems and often feel too embarrassed to ask questions (10). Stigma in autism has been associated with cultural difference and perceived need to conform to societal norms (41). Cognitive impairment for students with ADHD can result in emotional difficulties (e.g. feeling hostile, overwhelmed and depressed) (27). They tend to act impulsively, are introspective, repeatedly think about and regret past events, underestimate themselves, engage in a continuous cycle of worry and are anxious about the future (24; 43). Impairment leads to lower levels of intrapersonal skills, engagement and self-evaluations of academic and psychosocial functioning, which can influence their persistence in HE (27). Similarly, students with ASD (and their parents) experience feelings of ambivalence, stress and anxiety when they are confronted with challenges in the HE environment (31; 35). Students with ASD and ADHD have high levels of anxiety about their future personal and professional lives because of the anticipated difficulties they might face (25; 36). Common disorders for students with ASD and ADHD include generalized anxiety, social anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, dyslexia and dysgraphia (22; 25; 30).</i></p> <p><i>.... Neurodiverse students feel anxious interacting with others and are inclined to isolate themselves from their peers (1; 36), despite a strong desire to make friends whilst at university (31; 36). Bullying, rejection and stonewalling from the peers are not uncommon (1; 13; 25). Students with ASD have particular problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and are oversensitive to change (23). Their inability to read social cues and other people’s expectations are barriers to initiating and sustaining social relationships (36). Social anxiety, fear of loneliness, nervousness and lack of spaces free from over-stimulation are the main barriers to socialization for students with ASD (31). Impairment associated with ADHD means that students have difficulties building and maintaining social relationships and with emotional outbursts (24; 25).</i></p> <p><i>... For autistic students, the transition to HE is characterized by apprehension (31), poor quality sleep, lack of structure, loneliness and sensitivity to noise, light or smells which affect their ability to cope or study (30). Unpredictability in HE programs impacts time management and the organization of daily activities (36), and students need assistance to foster daily living skills, such as cleaning, buying groceries and cooking (25). Students with ADHD experience similar challenges (24) but are less engaged in academic work, more inclined to health-risk behaviours, such as substances abuse (44), and spend more time playing video or computer games, partying and online social networking than their peers (27). Despite aiming to be independent (35), most students with AS and ASD require support to navigate university life (29)...</i></p>
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- vi. **Evaluate the effectiveness** of each disability/learning support plan for each student.
- vii. **Evaluate the impact of the project on student outcomes**

.... Although arguably integral to a university education, reading, writing, comprehension, decoding, word recognition, pronunciation, grammar and meaning-making (18; 12), or the technical aspects of writing, marginalize students with dyslexia (20). Academic achievement especially when higherorder skills, such as planning and organization, are needed (21) can also be compromised. Despite adopting a deeper approach to learning, compared to students without dyslexia (42), dyslexic students are easily distracted during lectures, note-taking is poor (10) and whilst face-to-face lectures with PowerPoint slides are helpful, they can be difficult to follow (9). UD initiatives, including clear instructions in multiple formats, optional group work, peer mentorship, digitally accessible materials and varied and flexible teaching approaches are helpful (2; 37; 39). Students with ASD have problems in identifying critical points amongst detail, information processing, directing and shifting attention and cognitive flexibility (23). They procrastinate, lack concentration and focus, struggle to prioritize and complete tasks efficiently, resulting in poor academic performance and achievement (24; 25), which despite creating anxiety (30) does not lead to seeking help.”

(Clouder et al 2020; p 768-9)

As summarised by **Clouder et al (2020)** support groups, counselling services (campus orientation, academic and psychological support and career advice), supervised social activities and summer transition programs are the most commonly provided support services in HE (29; 38). However, because support can come from several areas within an HEI, conflict and communication difficulties can lead to lack of consistency of support.

More importantly, the authors point out that to achieve deep learning in the light of cognitive impairment, students with learning disabilities require extra time to access specialized support and master technologies, alongside flexible learning opportunities (17; 39). An inclusive curriculum eradicates potential barriers to students’ academic achievement (20). Students with ADHD perceive that they benefit most from interactive teaching approaches, group work activities (22) and coaching interventions (26; 46), whereas tutoring is best for addressing academic skills and knowledge deficits (26). Autistic students preferred to be monitored and supported by a personal coach, in educational, student and personal life (36) but peer mentoring was also beneficial (37). Participatory transition programming, utilizing mentorship, fosters self-efficacy and social skills for students with ASD (33; 34) and ASD and AS students’ social and executive skills benefit from practical activities, such as giving a class seminar (29). Non-traditional educational approaches, such as tactile learning experiences, help dyslexic students learn more readily (14). For this reason, work-based learning experiences help to integrate theory and practice for these students (15). Given that strategies to support neurodiverse students depends on their unique needs, the aim should be to mainstream initiatives consistent with a UD strategy, to meet individual needs that avoid segregation and isolation (14; 26; 27; 29; 30; 37; 47) and enable students to study to their strengths rather than emphasizing deficits (30) (Clouder et al., 2020).

The review by Clouder et al., (2020) concludes that although support services and technologies are available to meet students’ specific needs, there is an apparent dislocation between the two. Fear of stigmatization and labelling worsens the divide between what is needed and what is available to ensure neurodiverse students’ success in higher education, where good intentions are evidently not enough.

Disability/learning support plans tailored to students’ individual needs may be a more effective approach, however evidence-based practice is limited (Bunbury, 2020).

La Trobe University found that when students with mental illnesses registered with the Disability Support Service, their academic achievement in the year following their enrolment in the service was approximately 10 percentage points higher on average. Moreover, their retention rates were comparable to the university averages (Simpson & Ferguson, 2014).

Students with disabilities are expected to perform academically at the same levels as their non-disabled peers (Couzens, Poed, Kataoka, Brandon, Hartley, & Keen, 2015). Therefore, it is important for institutions to identify and provide support for them (Kayhan et al., 2015). Findings from Los Santos et al., (2019) suggest that university administrators, disability offices, lawmakers, faculty and staff, and any other individuals or groups involved in decision-making for students with disabilities in higher education can use the data provided by this study to inform their practices. Their study highlights the need for developing more effective approaches to support disabled students which requires:

- Increase awareness and promote student registration with the campus office of disabilities to ensure access to necessary support services.
- Provide comprehensive professional development programs for faculty and staff to enhance their knowledge and understanding of accommodations and disability-related needs.
- Create clear and consistent guidelines for determining and implementing accommodations, ensuring that they do not lower academic standards or substantially modify essential requirements.
- Foster a supportive and inclusive campus environment by addressing accommodation needs promptly and effectively, including addressing accommodations with professors and providing academic support from the disability office.
- Establish a comprehensive list of accommodations used in higher education and define what accommodations look like within the university system to ensure consistency and clarity.

The **Los Santos et al (2019)** study adopted a quantitative design as a non-experimental research study which examined if academic success (GPA) in students with disabilities was affected by a student's registration with the disability office, use of accommodations, use of institutional support systems and interaction with a social support system. Participants were recruited using both purposeful and snowball sampling. Surveys from one hundred and twenty-two participants were used. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine if academic accommodation use, social support use, institutional support use, and/or registration (independent variables) predicted academic success (dependent variable).

The purpose of this retrospective, non-experimental research study was to examine how the academic success of students with disabilities were affected by a student's registration with the disability office, use of accommodations, use of institutional support systems and use of social support systems. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine if academic accommodation use, social support use, institutional support use, and/or registration (independent variables) predicted academic success (dependent variable). SPSS was then used to analyse the data. The findings resulted in none of the variables significantly predicting academic success as measured by GPA.

Los Santos et al., (2019) argue that the findings from their quantitative research suggest that although a student registers with the office of disabilities, it does not mean they are receiving adequate services. In the same way,

	<p>although a student with a disability is registered with the office of disabilities and receives accommodations, accommodation use is not a significant predictor of student academic success. This suggests that the current method of determining a student's needed accommodations and the actual implementation of these accommodations may not be the best solution. When considering the institutional services provided for students in higher education, the research suggests that these services may not be adequate for their needs. Even though students may have a strong social support system, it does not significantly impact their academic success and therefore suggests that students with disabilities must seek out other support systems.</p> <p>They conclude that more research is needed to identify the most effective ways to reach and appropriately support students with disabilities and educate their faculty and staff to improve their institutional processes with students with disabilities in higher education. The more awareness faculty and administrators have about students with disabilities, the more likely the student is to stay and the more successful the student can be (Walker, 2016).</p> <p>Evidence from a small-scale qualitative survey highlighted the benefits of having a Disability Access Plan, also known as a learning support plan. Participants reported positive outcomes, such as the ability to negotiate extensions on coursework submissions and additional time for exams, which alleviated the pressure they experienced (Kendall, 2016).</p>
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Intervention Strategy 3: Address barriers to engagement to close continuation, completion, and awarding gaps for target groups.

Objective 3: The University will increase the percentage of **Asian Black Minority Other** students who successfully continue their studies

Objective 4: The University will increase the completion rate for students who declare a **disability, including neurodivergent students and those with declared mental health conditions.**

Objective 5: The University will close the awarding gap for **Asian Black Minority Other** groups getting a 1st or 2.1 compared to White students

Identified risks to equality of opportunity (EORR) - 6. Insufficient academic support, 7. Insufficient personal support, 8. Mental Health, 9. Ongoing impacts of coronavirus, 10. Cost Pressures, 11. Capacity Issues.

Student consultation:

- Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **stay on course and complete their degree** – 1. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 31.3%, 2. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 17.4%, 3. Knowledge and skills (don't have the knowledge and skills to complete work) - 16.4%.
- Biggest risks identified by our students to them being able to **achieve a good degree outcome** – 1. Insufficient personal support (don't have enough non-academic pastoral support to complete work) - 23.4%, 2. Capacity issues (limited by resources, lack of accommodation, the timetable) - 20.9%, 3. Long term impact of COVID (the pandemic continues to impact your ability to get a good degree outcome) - 19.4%.

Following the assessment of performance process, we identified that students from the global majority (ABMO) and students who declare a disability, including neurodivergent students and those with a declared mental health condition, may be facing risks to equality of opportunity for success, including continuation, completion and degree awarding. To further understand the potential reasons for this and the activities we may be able to employ to mitigate

these risks we conducted a **literature review and a consultation with students**. Following this process, we identified 5 major project strands to address barriers to engagement.

Project	Evidence base
<p>Financial support packages</p>	<p>We have used The OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit to assess the impact our financial support packages have on student retention and success. A summary of our results revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in the highest income bracket (£42,601 and above and not in receipt of a bursary) are less likely than bursary students in the lowest household income bracket (£25,000 and under and in receipt of financial support) to continue their course of study. • Low-income students (£25,000 and under) in receipt of financial support, are more likely to complete their course of study than low-income student who do not receive financial support. • Students with a declared disability and not receiving DSA are less likely to achieve a ‘good’ degree outcome compared to students with no declared disability.
<p>Assistive technology and the use of AI driven study skills tools</p> <p>i. Increase academic staff understanding and effective timely use of student data including learning analytics and summative assessment data related to students’ demographic profiles to identify at-risk students.</p> <p>ii. Implement the use of assistive technology and AI drive study skills tools as part of the Student Mentoring Programme to support and increase students’ academic performance and learning.</p>	<p>Underrepresented student groups may struggle to ask for help when on course (Chiu & Li, 2023; Wong, 2018; Wong and Chiu, 2019) and that this is closely linked with student identity and their cultural beliefs (Gee, 2010). A lack of social networks, social capital, social support and role models impacts academic success in higher education for ‘underrepresented’ students (Mishra, 2020).</p> <p>The use of information technologies has the potential to promote inclusive education in universities. However, the absence or misuse of technological tools, such as inaccessible website designs or online materials, can act as barriers for students with disabilities (Claiborne et al. 2011; Kurt 2011; cited by Lopez-Gavira, Moriña & Morgado, 2021).</p> <p>Programmes involving mentoring, counselling, coaching and advising are associated with better outcomes for students in terms of attainment and retention/completion (Kerrigan and Maktelow, 2021). The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2023) suggests that one-on-one tutoring is an effective means of improving educational outcomes, particularly for students with low prior attainment or struggling in specific subjects. They also posit that feedback is also highly influential in enhancing learning outcomes for students.</p> <p>However, research identifying the key mechanisms responsible for improving student outcomes is scarce (Law et al., 2020). Findings that suggest first-generation undergraduate students prefer to engage in less formal help-seeking, with a preference for resources that are convenient, reliable, easy to access and online (Payne et al., 2021; Giblin & Stefaniak, 2021) may play a significant role breaking down barriers to help-seeking for underrepresented undergraduate students and allow them to see it as a normal aspect of university study (Delaney et al., 2023).</p> <p>Further to this, Nieuwoudt and Pedler (2021) identify assessments, academic writing, and referencing, all skills developed through our tutoring provision, as significant factors influencing students' consideration of leaving university without completing their studies.</p>

<p>Data systems and learning analytics for academic support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify and track students most 'at risk' using learning analytics. ii. Improve formative and summative assessment outcomes for target students. iii. Decrease the number of retrievals for target students. iv. Enable academic support teams to identify early warning indicators related to reduction in engagement and performance, and at points of transition to deploy targeted intervention support accordingly. v. Understand staff and students' perspectives on the use of learning analytics to improve student engagement and performance. vi. Evaluate the use of learning analytics for academic support. 	<p>Learning analytics refers to “the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for the purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs” (Siemens 2012; cited by Wong & Li, 2020). Given the increase in data available about learners and learning, it has been regarded as having significant potential for offering learners a better learning experience that focuses on their individual preferences, strengths and needs (Siemens 2012; cited by Wong & Li, 2020).</p> <p>Within the HE sector Sclater et al. (2016) promote the use of learning analytics in the JISC forum. They list a number of benefits of learning analytics, although lacking supportive evidence.</p> <p>One major objective of learning analytics is early identification and intervention for those students who are likely to fail in their studies and provide them with just-in-time and personalised support (Sclater et al. 2016; Wong et al. 2018). Data- and learning analytics-driven insights are used to better understand and support student learning through personalization and feedback as well as predicting and enhancing study success (Ifenthaler & Yau, 2020).</p> <p>Evidence from the use of learning analytics indicate improvement in students' study performance (e.g. course grades, pass rate in exams and mastery of knowledge) being most frequently reported. This is followed by a higher retention/registration rate; higher productivity/effectiveness in learning and teaching (in areas such as students' self-regulation, collaborative learning and teachers' readiness to react to students' situations) and better and easier understanding of study progress and performance (e.g. assessment of students' competency against teachers' expectations and identification of students who needed help). The predominant learning analytics approaches include personalized recommendations, visualization of learning data and personalized reports on progress or performance (Wong & Li, 2020).</p> <p>However, there numerous challenges to be considered in the use of learning analytics, such as the scalability of intervention (e.g. too many requests for help from students, and complexity of variable combinations); conditions for implementing the interventions (e.g. students' contribution of data, teachers' experience, being able to reach at-risk students and coordination of variable groups of professionals); limitations of the channels for interventions (e.g. email and visualisation); as well as evaluation of intervention effectiveness (e.g. difficulties in evaluation and generalisation of intervention results). These challenges are possible factors leading to the limited empirical research on learning analytics (Wong & Li, 2020).</p> <p>Thus, despite there being an increasing amount of research on small-scale, experimental implementation of intervention, there is not yet a comprehensive model supported by a strong evidence base for instructors to make effective interventions (Rienties et al., 2017). Wong and Li (2020) conclude from their systematic review of available evidence that while learning analytics intervention has the potential to further extend its scope of practices to serve a wider range of purposes, more empirical studies are needed to support its long-term effectiveness and sustainability.</p> <p>Shang et al. (2021) propose a classification model that predicts the student's ability to achieve excellent results during the study. The model is based on the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of passed or failed quizzes • Number of messages sent or read on the forum
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- Total time spent on assignments, quizzes, and forum
- Final grade received by the student in the course

Analysis of data revealed that students who have taken full advantage of the Moodle platform achieve higher grades. The achieved results are potentially beneficial in the early detection of students experiencing difficulties in a course.

Utilising student data on formative assessments and continuous weekly summative e-assessments concerning student engagement in a digital learning environment increased the overall engagement of students within the digital learning environment (Holmes, 2018).

Gasević et al. (2017) found four different behavioural patterns in which students focused either on formative assessments, summative assessments, reading course materials or combining videos with assessments. Students engaging in assessments showed better performance in the final exam. Jovanovic et al. (2017) clustered students in a flipped learning scenario based on their digital learning actions and identified five clusters of learners that used different learning strategies. They found that students' strategy use changed over time as they abandoned self-testing with formative self-assessments and engaged more in summative assessments and video watching plus reading which the authors considered less-effective strategies.

Tempelaar (2020) clustered students in a blended-learning scenario based on their self-reported learning strategies and found that a cluster of students named adaptive learning approach had the highest learning time in the digital learning environment, the highest number of attempts and worked-out examples plus correctly solved problems compared to three other clusters. Learning analytics studies currently focus on the usage of resources with only a few investigating learning processes through understanding learning pathways or students' learning progress (Vieira et al., 2018).

Fan et al. (2021) used process maps to analyse study tactics based on trace data and found that higher performing learners used more content and assessment-related tactics and used different study tactics more adaptively over the entire time of the course. In a study on students' expectations of learning analytics, students rated a feature in a digital learning environment offering self-assessments for self-testing including immediate feedback as the most supportive for learning (Schumacher & Ifenthaler, 2018). Accordingly, research on linking self-assessment with learning analytics has been of growing interest. Still, research on pedagogical driven perspectives on self-assessments associated with learning analytics approaches are scarce.

Ifenthaler et al (2023) exploratory case study used learning analytics methods for investigating students' engagement with self-assessments and how this relates to performance in the final exam and self-reported self-testing strategies. The research study was conducted in a twelve-weeks course of a Bachelor's program in Economic and Business Education including 159 participants. During the semester, students were offered nine self-assessments each including three to eight tasks plus one mid-term and one exam-preparation self-assessment including all prior self-assessments tasks. The self-assessment interaction data for each student included: the results of the last self-assessment attempt, the number of processed self-assessment tasks, and the time spent on the last self-assessment attempt, the total self-assessment attempts, and the first as well as last access of each self-assessment. Data analytics included unsupervised machine learning and process mining approaches. Findings

indicate that students use the self-assessments predominantly before summative assessments. Two distinct clusters based on engagement with self-assessments could be identified and engagement was positively related to performance in the final exam. The findings from learning analytics data were also indicated by students' self-reported use of self-testing strategies.

The review by **Wilson and Dauncey (2020)** finds that when learning analytics is defined as the collection and analysis of demographic, behavioural and digital trace data of students with the purpose of improving their experiences and outcomes by enabling more personalised interventions (Francis, et al., 2019), there are 8 studies categorised under this theme, 7 academic papers and one TASO call submission (a report from the Higher Education Statistics Agency). The majority of studies aimed to evaluate data-led ways to improve student retention, attainment and wellbeing and mental health. This broad grouping includes studies that review admission practises, the use of student tracking data to increase the effectiveness of interventions and coping strategies (Ooijen-van der Linden, et al., 2017); Bijsmans & Schakel, 2018; Tran & Lumley, 2019). Six of the eight documents were classified as empirical with the other 2 studies evidencing causality (Mayer, et al., 2019; Bijsmans & Schakel, 2018). All papers bar one used primarily quantitative methods which is unsurprising considering this theme's focus on data driven interventions. Mayer et al (2019), is the only exception to this, using both data analysis of student attainment records and data gained through interviews with intervention administrators. Like Mayer et al (2019), the majority of studies utilised administrative student data for research (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2019) to assess student attainment and retention rates.

Meanwhile, two studies assessing the effect of student wellbeing and mental health (Tran & Lumley, 2019) used self-report questionnaires to gain quantitative data. A detailed examination of learning analytics to guide interventions was not part of this review but will form the subject of further work by TASO.

The only study that explicitly used a control group used a randomized control trial research design (Mayer et al, 2019). This research design alongside the large sample group (8,011 students from three different American Colleges) and the use of interviews, aligned with the OfS description of best evidence.

Ooijen-van der Linda et al (2017), and the **HEAT-HESA (2018)** tracking report were the 2 other studies rated best evidence. Both these studies used data analysis via HEAT tracking data. Gaps were identified.

- Firstly, the use of primarily quantitative methods means we do not have an insight into student's thoughts, views and experiences with Learner Analytics.
- Secondly, the majority of the studies in this theme are internationally focussed rather than based on a British HE experience.

Lastly, only two studies are targeted at a disadvantaged student group. The HEAT-HESA (2018) tracking report focused on economically disadvantaged students and Tran et al (2019) looked at the experiences of university students with documented health issues.

Using data to identify and track students most at risk to adopt a proactive approach with intervention support

Foster and Siddle (2020) argue for

1. The effectiveness of learning analytics in identifying at-risk students in higher education institutions using data output from an in-situ learning analytics platform.
2. The generation of 'no-engagement' alerts by the platform if students have not engaged with any measured data sources for 14 consecutive days.
3. Testing the relationship between these alerts and student outcomes for two cohorts of first-year undergraduate students.
4. Comparing the efficiency of using these alerts to identify at-risk students with the efficiency of using demographic data, using widening participation status as a case study example 2.

These findings highlight the potential of learning analytics to provide early intervention and support for students who may be at risk of poorer outcomes in their academic journey.

Research by Foster and Siddle (2020) demonstrate how learning analytics can be utilized to identify at-risk students in higher education institutions through various methods and approaches, including:

1. **No-Engagement Alerts:** Platforms can generate alerts when students have not engaged with data sources for a specified period, indicating potential risk 2.
2. **Monitoring Student Engagement:** Tracking student engagement with online resources, course materials, and learning activities to identify patterns of disengagement or lack of participation.
3. **Predictive Modeling:** Using historical data and predictive analytics to forecast which students are at risk of underperforming or dropping out based on factors such as attendance, grades, and participation.
4. **Early Warning Systems:** Implementing systems that flag students exhibiting signs of academic struggle or disengagement early on, allowing for timely interventions.
5. **Comparative Analysis:** Contrasting student performance against benchmarks or cohorts to identify outliers who may need additional support.
6. **Integration with Student Support Services:** Connecting learning analytics insights with student support services to provide targeted interventions and resources to at-risk students.
7. **Personalized Interventions:** Tailoring interventions based on individual student data and needs to address specific challenges they may be facing.

Khahlil (2023) reports that learning analytics and inclusiveness for students with disabilities are as follows:

1. The field of learning analytics emerged in 2011, but none of the studies identified covered topics of inclusiveness in education before the year 2016.
2. Learning analytics has the potential to promote inclusiveness by reducing discrimination, increasing retention among disadvantaged students, and validating particular learning designs for marginalized groups.
3. The potential of learning analytics to support students with disabilities is significant, as it can inform the design of support systems such as enabling captions for hearing-impaired students and providing automatic text adjustment for students with poor vision based on data analytics.
4. The implementation of learning analytics applications for disadvantaged students should be done in an inclusive manner to challenge, motivate, support, and educate not only students with learning disabilities but also their peers and teachers.

	<p>These findings highlight the potential of learning analytics to promote inclusiveness and support students with disabilities, while also emphasizing the need for inclusive implementation and the importance of addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Khahlil's (2023) article "Learning analytics in support of inclusiveness and disabled students: a systematic review" highlights the potential of learning analytics to promote inclusiveness and support disadvantaged students in education. It emphasizes that learning analytics can reduce discrimination, increase retention among disadvantaged students, and validate particular learning designs for marginalized groups. The study also points out that learning analytics has the potential to detect the effects of disadvantage on student engagement, which can help in mitigating these effects. Additionally, it mentions the use of analytics to improve accessibility of e-learning and support disabled learners, as well as the development and application of serious games to support a range of intellectual disabilities. In summary, the article suggests that learning analytics can promote inclusiveness and support disadvantaged students by identifying and addressing the challenges they face, improving accessibility, and providing tailored support to meet their specific needs.</p> <p>Ethical considerations in the use of learning analytics Radkow et al (2023) <u>Privacy and surveillance, managing perceived threat and wellbeing</u></p> <p>Some participants perceived surveillance by lecturers as threatening and anxiety-provoking, because they did not want to be evaluated based on their VLE activity. Likening the use of learning analytics to Foucault's Panopticon, "where structural design allows a central authority to oversee all activity," Slade and Prinsloo (2013, 1511) highlight a power imbalance, when a student cannot access their own data that their lecturer can. Some of our participants' discussions support the concern that using learning analytics for surveillance could contribute to student performativity on the VLE (Gourlay, 2017; Macfarlane and Tomlinson, 2017). Indeed, Wintrup (2017) argues that surveillance could incentivize students to engage in behaviors that might not necessarily contribute to their knowledge or understanding. The JISC Code of Learning Analytics advises HEIs to "ensure that knowledge that their activity is being monitored does not lead to (...) negative impacts on their academic progress or wellbeing" (Sclater and Bailey, 2015). Responses from some participants exemplify a kind of negative effect on student wellbeing that the JISC Code of Practice warns against.</p>
<p>Enhanced transition to HE support for learners from target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Target students are supported with their transition to HE. ii. The specific needs of students can be identified from the pre-arrival survey with diagnostic questions to guide 	<p>Research exploring the reasons for student withdrawal tends to conclude that there is rarely a single reason why students leave. In most cases, the picture is complex, and students leave as a result of a combination of inter-related factors. Improving student retention and success by enhancing transition and the first-year experience is widely accepted as an effective institutional strategy (Kift et al., 2010, Krause et al., 2005 Tinto 2012, Troxel 2010 and Yorke and Longden 2008; all cited by Thomas, 2012).</p> <p>The importance of understanding and supporting students' transition to HE</p> <p>However, student transition to university offers considerable challenges to all parties involved (Briggs et al., 2012). Research reviews on transitioning to higher education (Morgan, 2013b; Kift, 2015; Blackmore et al 2021) and research on students' transition during the covid pandemic (Kyne and Thompson, 2020) highlight the importance of understanding new students. This includes understanding students' fear of academic failure and how best to support</p>

<p>students to specific information and asynchronous courses and materials.</p> <p>iii. Students have an increased awareness of how to access financial support (including DSA) and other student support from specific information and guidance on financial support available through targeted communications and transition support.</p> <p>iv. Early disclosure of any challenges is encouraged and supported leading to an increase in disclosures and disability/learning support plans.</p> <p>v. Target students are given the opportunity prior to arrival to engage with the mentoring programme.</p> <p>vi. In-year transition activities are embedded to support students transition to each semester with additional mentor support for target students.</p> <p>vii. Returning students are included in the pre-arrival and RU ready programme with additional mentor support for target students</p> <p>viii. Staff have a better understanding of each cohort and the barriers different groups face in learning and engagement,</p>	<p>students develop metacognitive skills to self-reflect (Cheng et al., 2023), identify and evaluate their own learning needs to successfully navigate their learning journey, seeking academic and pastoral support when needed (Sanagavarapu & Abraham 2021).</p> <p>The 'What works? Model' puts academic engagement and belonging at the heart of improving student retention and success. The model (Thomas, 2012) embodies the following research findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early engagement to promote belonging which continue across the student lifecycle. - Engagement and belonging are nurtured throughout the institution (academic, social and professional services), but the academic sphere is of primary importance to ensure all students benefit. - The capacity of students to engage and staff to offer an engaging experience must be developed, thus a partnership approach in which everyone is responsible for improving student engagement, belonging, retention and success is required. - At the senior level the institution takes responsibility for nurturing a culture of belonging and creating the necessary infrastructure to promote student engagement, retention and success. <p>In 2023 we began providing a 'pre-arrival and preparation programme' (RU Ready) of information and activities to support students starting university. Our approach has been informed by research and evidence-based practice on the value of transitional provision for new HE students, (Morgan, 2013a; Cheng et al., 2023) and explaining the 'hidden curriculum' which some students may find difficult to navigate with negative implications for their wellbeing, sense of belonging, and success (Birtill et al 2022). Thus, the overall aim of our programme is to facilitate students' successful transition, so they feel organised, prepared, and understood and connected with staff and other students, and less concerned and anxious before teaching begins.</p> <p>The pre-arrival information and activities take a relational and holistic approach to supporting students' transition to Ravensbourne. This means it is not just about the academic side of university. We recognise that starting university can impact individuals in every aspect of their life – financially, socially, emotionally, where they live, who they live with, the language they speak - and such changes can have implications for their physical and mental well-being. Successful learning journeys begin with feeling OK. For this reason, we want to support new students, and returning students, gain an insight into what to expect and feel prepared.</p> <p>Our 'Transition to HE' questionnaire for new students will be adapted and extended to returning students from Sept 2024, as we support students transition through higher education, as a significant part of their learning journey (Matheson et al., 2018), and take stock of our students' perception of mattering. This is to understand students' motivations, aspirations, and confidence in their different academic and digital abilities, successful learning experiences and academic aspirations, as well as their responsibilities and expectations regarding employment, and barriers to educational success such finances challenges, and difficulties regarding accommodation and travel to campus. This provides us with insights regarding all our students which we use to support students' needs and self-development, and signals to our students that they matter to us. This is also an opportunity to adopt a diagnostic approach to identifying students' challenges and provide them with tailored guidance and support to better prepare them (Egea et al., 2024).</p>
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<p>prior to the start of the academic year.</p> <p>ix. Staff understanding of the needs of their different groups of students allows them to put measures in place to better support students.</p> <p>x. Students' confidence, and sense of belonging and mattering are at positive levels by the time they complete the Transition and Induction Evaluation Survey.</p>	<p>In 2023 our pre-arrival information and activities were designed to be generic and useful for all students, easy to understand, engage with and not overwhelm. The Course Leader information needs to provide a warm and genuine welcome, which could be short (2-3min video) with relevant and motivating information, links to materials and voluntary engaging activities. This included a range of information such as links to podcasts, reading material, videos, short online courses, tasks, or discussions. For some courses a checklist of what to do and what to bring are helpful for students be prepared from day one, along with guidance on equipment, laptop specification and software. Guidance and information on bursaries and hardship funds were also provided. Building on this current resource will be informed from evidence-based research and student feedback.</p> <p>Transition through HE academic journey</p> <p>Tett, Cree and Christie (2017) have further observed that the transition is not simply 'a one-off event that occurs when students first enter universities but is an on-going process that is repeated over time.'</p> <p>Thus, we also supporting returning students transition to the higher level of their HE provision, and embedding transition support through the academic journey within each academic year as students progress from one semester to the next. This transition through the academic journey includes preparing students for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - each semester with inter-semester longitudinal feedback for feedforward, - pre-module activities as part of the VLE template, - inter-level activities – online and in person-group work - re-induction activities for returning students. - progression activities as part of the final year/semester pre-graduation support
<p>Mentoring and Student Diversity Forum</p> <p>i. To provide a mentoring programme with the employment of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) trained and supervised to provide mentoring support for targeted UG students from groups identified most as 'at risk' (disability, ABMO) of not continuing, completing, or achieving their potential.</p> <p>ii. To provide one-to-one academic and socio-academic support for individual target students.</p>	<p>Research suggests that peer mentoring has a positive impact on student retention within a course, as well as offering valuable opportunities for mentors to develop employment-related skills (Foy & Keane, 2018) mentors are instrumental in developing students' sense of belonging and fostering successful transition and retention (Sanders and Higham 2012). Peer relationships and sense of belonging may be beneficial in informing students' decisions to stay in higher education (Sanders & Higham 2012) and contribute to satisfaction (Wilkins et al. 2015). Pragmatically, social identity with one's subject and/or institution can be achieved through initiatives that promote social integration between learners, such as group-based assessments, and also peer mentoring schemes to foster positive supportive environments (McLoughlin et al. 2007). This pertains to the notion that 'transition' should be viewed as a more fluid and enduring component of the university experience, which extends beyond 'Induction week' across the duration of the first year. Therefore, practical and long-term efforts to maintain relational strategies between peer-networks should be a key theme within the workings of higher education delivery.</p> <p>Furthermore, in an Australian study focusing on students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), peer mentoring has shown promise in supporting these students, leading to improved study outcomes and enhanced metacognitive skills (Thompson et al., 2018). The realistic evaluation of this peer-mentoring program identified different social and environmental challenges as key contextual barriers to success for students with ASD (e.g., demands of studies, the need to self-advocate and negative social attitudes), with peer-mentoring helping to develop the 'soft skills' to improve outcomes for these students. Training and supervision for mentors to facilitate mentees' problem-solving and social communication development was an essential component of the program which resulted in mentee-mentor relationships and social competence that supported mentees successful management of the university environment.</p>

iii. To support targets in engaging in a **Student Diversity Forum** to facilitate a sense of belonging and a safe forum to share their experiences and voice their concerns and needs.

While social support and development are important components of peer-mentoring schemes, mentors providing content-related support to their peers, followed by serving as an effective feedback channel between students and instructors, and being a relatable teaching figure in the class is also a valuable experience for mentees (Petrescu et al., 2021). This Canadian study highlighted the importance of mentors as relatable figures who help connect students to instructors and contribute to student learning on an academic level.

An in-depth analysis of peer mentoring at Aston University found that in the short term, peer mentoring provides a semi-formal structure to enable students to make the transition to HE, make friends and take advantage of what is on offer academically, socially and from professional services. Just under 75% (n=281) of the students surveyed agreed that becoming involved in peer mentoring had helped them feel part of the university. In the longer term, reciprocal relationships developed that have benefits to both mentors and mentees (Andrews and Clark, 2011).

According to **Thomas (2012)** Sheffield Mentors is regarded as one of the largest peer mentoring schemes in the country and holds the Approved Provider Standard from the Mentoring & Befriending Foundation – the UK’s national mentoring organisation. The scheme’s aims are to support the transition of students entering the University, reduce the likelihood of withdrawal in the first semester, enhance students’ sense of belonging and community and contribute to an enhanced overall package of student support in the University. Mentors help their mentees with a variety of issues ranging from managing time and workloads, being responsible for finances and learning to adapt to shared living/living away from home for the first time. Mentors receive ongoing training and development opportunities. The voluntary scheme is managed centrally by the Student Services Department with a co-ordinator nominated in each of the 40 academic departments. It is available to all incoming undergraduate students within those departments and all mature students entering the University in any department. It is also available for all care leavers and students who have been involved in the University’s COMPACT scheme (an outreach scheme for local students). The impact evaluation focused on the positive benefits for students in the role of mentor and mentee rather than student outcomes.

Despite mentoring programs becoming common interventions in universities to address high attrition and low graduation rates among students a recent systematic review of student mentoring schemes highlights some of the challenges associated with implementing student mentoring programmes and the limited research on their effectiveness (Law et al 2020).

Although mentoring has been found to be significantly correlated with positive student outcomes such as behaviours, attitudes, and retention rates, there are major limitations in the research, including a lack of an operational definition of mentoring, theoretical guidance, and poor research designs.

The lack of theoretical frameworks in mentoring programmes hinders the explanation of the effects of mentoring on academic success (Law et al., 2020).

A key factor that is rarely discussed in the literature is the voluntary nature of peer-mentor schemes. While this can be an attractive cost-effective approach, the need for consistency, commitment, professionalism, and accountability in the mentoring relationship is essential, and more likely to be gained through the employment of GTAs recruited, trained, and

supervised to provide student mentoring. Establishing a formal structured and intentional mentoring relationships with clear expectations, guidelines, and support from the university with clear boundaries for mentee-mentor interactions provide a safe and respectful framework for mentoring to take place. It is also important to define the conceptual approach for mentoring (Law et al., 2020), i.e., to help mentees acquire necessary skills and knowledge, challenge them academically, and provide feedback on their progress (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Masehela & Mabika, 2017), as well as socio-academic role in facilitating a sense of belonging and social integration support (Hall and Jaugjeitis, 2011).

Student Diversity Forum

The creation of positive social communities plays a crucial role in enhancing students' institutional commitment and reducing the likelihood of dropout (Burke, 2019). Research indicates that students in higher education who feel a strong sense of belonging tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, increased academic self-confidence, greater academic engagement, and higher achievement (Pedler, Willis & Nieuwoudt, 2022). Additionally, cohort models, where students with a similar identity or focus move through their studies together, have been effective in improving overall retention rates among students and, in particular, among female and minority students (Dagley et al., 2016; Sithole et al., 2017, as cited in Burke, 2019).

Bringing individuals from target groups together as part of a Student Diversity Forum with the support of their mentors may provide a significant support system for vulnerable groups. By utilizing support systems, students with disabilities have a better chance of achieving academic success (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). **Jairam and Kahl (2012)** argued that social and institutional support networks are positive and needed to help students be successful. These support networks help alleviate stress, reduce physical and psychological problems, and lower mortality rates. Stress can lead to illness and destructive behaviours such as drug and alcohol consumption, poor diet, and lack of exercise. Types of support systems include emotional, practical, and professional support (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). Evidence of effectiveness is limited.

Intervention Strategy 4: Enhanced progression activity to close gaps in graduate outcomes for target groups.

Objective 6: The University will increase the percentage of **Asian Black Minority Other** who progress into further study or graduate employment

Identified risks to equality of opportunity (EORR) - 1. Knowledge and Skills, 2. Information and Guidance, 7. Insufficient personal support, 12. Progression from Higher Education.

Following the assessment of performance process, we identified that students from the global majority (ABMO) may be facing risks to equality of opportunity for progression and graduate outcomes. To further understand the potential reasons for this and the activities we may be able to employ to mitigate these risks we conducted **a literature review**. Below we have included an evidence base by relevant EORR risks for our intervention strategy.

Risk to equality of opportunity	Evidence base
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<p>EORR Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills.</p>	<p>Work-based learning embedded in the curriculum: Engaging in extended work placements may increase the likelihood of students achieving a good degree and securing employment in their area of interest (Bullock et al., 2009).</p> <p>Students who participate in placements report positive outcomes such as enhanced confidence, maturity, interpersonal skills, and learning capabilities (Lock et al., 2009), and evidence of higher employment rates among students who have completed placements (Hejmadi et al., 2012).</p> <p>Tomlinson and Anderson (2021) indicated the continued importance of bridging students' relationship to targeted professional areas via work integrated learning programmes and structured work experience. In terms of equity and mobility, it is imperative that less advantaged students are more empowered to acquire the social, cultural and economic resources associated with work experience, internships or other life experiences that signal their value in a crowded field through opportunities in their three-four-degree programmes.</p> <p>DfE (2021) research on employability programmes and work placements provides evidence of an association between involvement of students on work placements and positive outcomes for students, though less evidence of causality due to the problem of self-selection.</p> <p>Embedding work experience related opportunities within the curriculum, ensures all students, regardless of background or ability, commit time to extracurricular activity. TASO show emerging evidence on the small positive impact that work experience can have on impact of student behaviour / outcomes.</p> <p>Grosemans et al., (2018) increase in self-efficacy, learning-goal, and performance-approach orientation, indicating that the transition to work triggers change in these personal factors, as evidence of the importance of work-related learning for supporting students transition to careers.</p> <p>This provides a clear rationale for our targeted programme of progression activity.</p>
<p>EORR Risk 2: Information and Guidance.</p>	<p>Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) programmes focused on employment and employability can have a positive impact on students' career prospects and graduate employment outcomes. A meta-analysis conducted on 55 research papers examining IAG interventions indicates a reliable association between these interventions and recipients' ability to make effective career choices (TASO, 2023)</p>
<p>EORR Risk 7: Insufficient personal support</p>	<p>Differential access to personal support relating to careers progression and/or less time to participate in enrichment activities may lead to differential outcomes in terms of progression into further study and employment (OfS, 2023).</p>
<p>EORR Risk 12: Progression from HE</p>	<p>Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. Differences in equality of opportunity relating to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with particular characteristics It may also lead to low diversity in specific areas of the labour-market, lower earning for students with certain characteristics, and lower levels of job satisfaction (OfS, 2023).</p> <p>Social networking:</p>

OfS reported project – diversity & inclusion ambassadors - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equalopportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/abss-projectuniversity-of-manchester/>

Networking is related to increased internal and external perceived employability by boosting access to information and resources (Batistic and Tymon, 2017).

English et al (2021) highlight the importance of developing a professional network by cultivating social capital while at university. Alumni identify all forms of work-integrated learning (WIL), connectedness through social media, the role of university staff and volunteering as concrete ways to develop a professional network and enhance employability.

Advocacy:

An advocacy scheme which included BAME students advise employers on how to make their recruitment process and materials more attractive to BAME individuals, has resulted in increased confidence and sense of community amongst BAME students and increased awareness of the inequitable outcomes and experiences of BAME students across the whole University, as well as more widely across employers (Daramy et al 2021).

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Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Ravensbourne University London

Provider UKPRN: 10005389

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

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

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	*
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	6165
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 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	Fairfield School of Business Ltd	10033187	9250
First degree	London School of Science & Technology Limited	10008362	9250
First degree	Oxford Business College UK Limited	10020439	9250
First degree	UK College of Business and Computing Ltd	10022021	9250
First degree	VICTORIA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND DESIGN LIMITED - Victoria College of Art and Design	10094359	9250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	Fairfield School of Business Ltd	10033187	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	London School of Science & Technology Limited	10008362	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	Oxford Business College UK Limited	10020439	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	UK College of Business and Computing Ltd	10022021	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	VICTORIA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND DESIGN LIMITED - Victoria College of Art and Design	10094359	6165
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	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
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	*	*	*

