

# **The University of Leicester**

## **Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29**

### **Introduction and strategic aim**

The University of Leicester (UoL) is an inspiring and inclusive environment in which to live, study and work. The University was founded as Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland University College in 1921. The ambition was to create a university or university college to provide access to higher education for young men and women who did not have the financial means to move away to study at the established universities across the country. The University is proud of this heritage: social mobility and widening participation remains at the heart of our work today.

‘We have always pushed frontiers – in our research and in our education – to widen the horizons of our students, to empower them with the highest quality education, and to nurture in them a social conscience which positively impacts upon society. This commitment to inclusive and enriching education remains firmly in our DNA today; our diversity defines us. We deliver outstanding outcomes for our students, who leave us as ‘Citizens of Change’, uniquely equipped with the attributes of kindness and inclusion, social conscience and critical thinking, as well as an exceptional education, ready to make a positive impact on the world’ (TEF Submission 2023).

We are one of a small number of top 30 UK research-intensive universities, delivering a TEF Gold education to a particularly diverse student body, and are the most ethnically diverse research-intensive university outside of London.

Our university attracts students from across the world whilst remaining deeply rooted in the city of Leicester. In the 2021 census, Leicester was confirmed as one of the first super-diverse<sup>1</sup> cities, where 59.1% of residents identified as non-white British (the second highest outside London), with over 70 languages spoken and at least 14 different faiths practised. The city of Leicester is the 32nd most deprived of 317 local authorities nationally, with over one third of residents living in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally. Our mission drives our established relationships with partner organisations in the city and county, helping tackle educational disadvantage, enhance employability and enrich our local community. Maintaining community cohesion is a priority for both the City of Leicester in supporting its citizens, and UoL in supporting its student body. We learn from one another’s challenges and successes regarding the recognition and support of a global community. The super-diversity of Leicester is an attractive environment for our students for this very reason. Local community services, such as faith centres and supermarkets, are representative of a global population meaning that students from almost any heritage can find familiarity in Leicester.

We are a comprehensive university divided into four colleges: Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities; Business, Life Sciences; and Science and Engineering. Our expertise tends to on-campus, full-time modes of delivery and our subjects span a broad range of disciplines, with current growth in our healthcare provision.

As our university begins its second century, we are proud to deliver research-inspired education to a diverse student body in a super-diverse city.

### **Risks to equity of opportunity**

We have chosen to focus on equity, rather than equality, of opportunity because of our super-diverse student body and the diversity of their needs. Following our analysis of data across the student lifecycle and different student groups, and consultation with staff and students, we identified five risks to equity of

opportunity which were mapped to indications of risk, the [Equality of Opportunity Risk Register](#) and our [institutional strategy](#). The full analysis can be found in Annex One. The five risks identified as key risks for UoL, and addressed by the plan are:

Risk	Definition
1. Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation	<p>Sense of belonging has become a concept whose importance is more widely accepted in education. However, there is no sector agreed definition of belonging; a lack of belonging implies a deficit on behalf of the student, and belonging is hard to measure due to its intangible nature.</p> <p>Mattering puts the focus on us as a university and can be measured in a number of ways. At the simplest level this can be through measuring students' opinions about being recognised in class, a tutor knowing their name, and if they feel that they can be themselves. At the most complex, this relates to a university community with a strong sense of dignity, respect and the value of all individual contributions.</p> <p>Examples of mattering at UoL are students being recognised for their achievements which enables them to see themselves at UoL, and students seeing that their voices have been heard through feedback or co-creation, resulting in their successful course completion and good graduate outcomes.</p>
2. Financial pressures	<p>In the current cost-of-living crisis, affordability of higher education is a key factor in whether students can attend, engage with and complete their courses. Maintenance loans, NHS funding, scholarships and bursaries leave significant numbers of students concerned about covering their costs leading to a reliance on part-time work to cover basic needs where family support is not available.</p> <p>Financial pressures influence students' higher education choices regarding locality and whether to commute or enter student accommodation. Cost of living pressures mean that more students are taking on part-time work that may interfere with their studies, they lose independent study time due to work and may not be taking on extra-curricular activities that will broaden their networks or skills. Financial worry and instability may have a negative impact on mental health outcomes.</p>
3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital	<p>Universities traditionally assumed that all students arrive with particular experiences and skills from their previous education and backgrounds. The diversification of the student population and their prior educational experiences is a rapidly changing picture which is challenging for the sector to stay abreast of. This is often referred to as the 'hidden curriculum'. Students who arrive with gaps between their knowledge skills and capital must work harder to bridge these gaps. Their student experience is negatively impacted because more time is required to navigate new experiences with confidence and learn new skills, and gaps in capital, prior knowledge, and skills may put them at risk of not realising their full educational potential.</p> <p>As an institution we can do more to understand and minimise gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital. This can be through targeted interventions such as progression programmes for applicants, scaffolded support around new forms of assessment and UoL being specific in communications around student expectations.</p>
4. Inequitable processes and curriculum	<p>Structural inequities are prevalent across the higher education sector. The sector's curriculum is traditionally Western focused, leading to a lack of representation of global achievement or voices. The hidden curriculum and vocabulary that accompanies the HE experience further disempowers students from under-represented backgrounds and marginalised groups. We recognise that our processes and curriculum benefit the students who know how to navigate them and can see themselves reflected in the content. As an institution we need to demystify and dismantle inequitable processes and structural biases, and develop an inclusive curriculum that allows students to express and explore their own identities.</p> <p>Inequitable processes impact students' experience of the admissions processes and interviews during entry, their use of processes such as</p>

Risk	Definition
	mitigating circumstances and the appeals processes, and when seeking academic or pastoral support. Inequities within curriculum negatively impacts student satisfaction, continuation, completion and attainment metrics.
5. Mental Health	<p>We would like to support all students and staff to maintain positive mental health. Higher education is very positive for long term mental wellbeing however it can also impact students' mental health during their studies. Many students do not declare pre-existing mental health conditions on their applications and are hesitant to seek support during their studies due to concerns about disclosures and potential disadvantage they may experience as a result of disclosing.</p> <p>We are aware of the intersectionality of mental health conditions with students from low-income backgrounds, mature students and LGBTQIA+ identities for example, and through interventions in other risks seek to mitigate some of the compounded detrimental impact of the intersectional factors.</p> <p>Supporting, normalising and destigmatising students' mental health throughout their studies will ensure that they continue and succeed in their course, reducing the likelihood of students' reaching crisis point.</p>

Each risk is now considered in turn, with the UoL risks mapped against indications of risk, and the EORR. For a full list and further discussion about these indications of risk, please see the Assessment of Performance in Annex A.

### **Risk one: Barriers to maturing and a lack of representation**

Indications of risk and link to the EORR:

Access	<p>There are gaps in offer rate between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABMO and white students, Black and white students, Mature and Young Students</p> <p>We had lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students, and mature students</p>
Continuation rate	<p>There are significant gaps in continuation between: IMD Q1 and Q5 students, mature and young students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q5 students, and male and female students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersections for continuation are: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students and Young, FSM eligible, Male students</p>
Completion rate	<p>There are gaps in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students, students with a declared disability and those without a disability, students with a mental health condition and those without a declared disability (of any classification), students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, Minority Ethnic and white students, mature and young students, and male and female students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersections for completion are: Young males from IMD Q1/2 who are FSM eligible, and young females from IMD Q1/2 with a declared disability</p>
Attainment rate	<p>There are gaps in attainment between ABMO and white students, Black and white students, Students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, male and female students, and IMD Q1 and Q5 students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersection for attainment is ABMO males who are FSM eligible</p> <p>Lower levels of positivity reported by ABMO students compared to their white peers (14.6% gap in 2022/23) in the University's Student Academic Experience Survey.</p>
Progression rate	<p>There are gaps in progression between ABMO IMD Q1/2 and ABMO IMD Q3/4/5 students, ABCS Q1 and Q5, and young and mature students. There is a gap in preparedness to progress into employment or further study between Black students and the final year student population</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersection for progression is FSM eligible young students</p>
<b>Link to EORR</b>	<p>3: Perception of higher education</p> <p>5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode</p> <p>7: Insufficient personal support</p> <p>8: Mental health</p> <p>11: Capacity issues</p>

### **Risk two: Financial pressures**

Indications of risk and link to the EORR:

Access: Offer rate	There are gaps in offer rate between IMD Q1 and Q5 students
Continuation rate	There are significant gaps in continuation between: IMD Q1 and Q5 students.  The most disadvantaged groups for continuation are: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students and Young, FSM eligible, Male students
Completion rate	There are gaps in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, and students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible. The most disadvantaged intersections for completion are: Young males from IMD Q1/2 who are FSM eligible, and young females from IMD Q1/2 with a declared disability
Attainment rate	There are gaps in attainment between students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, students with a mental health condition and those without a declared disability, and IMD Q1 and Q5 students. The most disadvantaged intersection for attainment is ABMO males who are FSM eligible
Progression rate	There are gaps in progression between ABMO IMD Q1/2 and ABMO IMD Q3/4/5 students, and young and mature students. The most disadvantaged intersection for progression is FSM eligible young students
<b>Link to EORR</b>	7: Insufficient personal support 8: Mental health 11: Capacity issues

### **Risk three: Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital**

Indications of risk and link to the EORR:

Access: Offer rate	There are gaps in offer rate between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABMO and white students, Black and white students, Mature and Young Students We had lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students, and mature students
Continuation rate	There are significant gaps in continuation between: IMD Q1 and Q5 students, mature and young students, and ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students. The most disadvantaged groups for continuation are: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students and Young, FSM eligible, Male students
Completion rate	There are gaps in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students, students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible. The most disadvantaged intersections for completion are: Young males from IMD Q1/2 who are FSM eligible, and young females from IMD Q1/2 with a declared disability
Attainment rate	There are gaps in attainment between ABMO and white students, black and white students, students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, and IMD Q1 and Q5 students. The most disadvantaged intersection for attainment is ABMO males who are FSM eligible  Higher rates of academic appeals (2022/23) made by ABMO and IMD Q1 students, with lower levels of successful outcomes for ABMO students.
Progression rate	There are gaps in progression between ABMO IMD Q1/2 and ABMO IMD Q3/4/5 students, and young and mature students. There is a gap in preparedness to progress into employment or further study between Black students and the final year student population. The most disadvantaged intersection for progression is FSM eligible young students
<b>Link to EORR</b>	3: Perception of higher education 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode 7: Insufficient personal support 8: Mental health 11: Capacity issues

### **Risk four: Inequitable processes and curriculum**

Indications of risk and link to the EORR:

Access: Offer rate	There are gaps in offer rate between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABMO and white students, Black and white students, Mature and Young Students We had lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students, and mature students
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Continuation rate	<p>There are significant gaps in continuation between: IMD Q1 and Q5 students, mature and young students, and ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged groups for continuation are: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students and Young, FSM eligible, Male students</p>
Completion rate	<p>There are gaps in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students, students with a declared disability and those without a disability, students with a mental health condition and those without a declared disability, and students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersections for completion are: Young males from IMD Q1/2 who are FSM eligible, and young females from IMD Q1/2 with a declared disability</p>
Attainment rate	<p>There are gaps in attainment between ABMO and white students, and IMD Q1 and Q5 students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersection for attainment is ABMO males who are FSM eligible</p> <p>Higher rates of academic appeals (2021/22) made by ABMO and IMD Q1 students, with lower levels of successful outcomes for ABMO students.</p> <p>Statistically significant gap between ABMO and white students when asked 'To what extent has your course and its teaching provided inclusive, fair, and equal opportunities for you to succeed?' (SAES 2022/23)</p> <p>Statistically significant gap in response between ABMO and white students (4.7%) for all questions in the section relating to Outcomes and Academic Progress (SAES 2022/23)</p>
Progression rate	<p>There are gaps in progression between ABMO IMD Q1/2 and ABMO IMD Q3/4/5 students, and young and mature students. There is a gap in preparedness to progress into employment or further study between Black students and the final year student population.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersection for progression is FSM eligible young students.</p> <p>Large gaps between ABMO and white students (6.5pp) and IMD Q1/2 and Q3/4/5 students (7.4pp) when asked 'To what extent is your course enabling you to develop the skills and knowledge you require to fulfil your future aspirations (e.g. employment, further study, entrepreneurship)?' (SAES 2022/23)</p>
<b>Link to EORR</b>	<p>1: Knowledge and skills  2: Information and guidance  4: Application success rates  8: Mental health  9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus  10: Cost pressures  11: Capacity issues  12: Progression to further study</p>

### **Risk five: Mental Health**

Indications of risk and link to the EORR:

Continuation rate	<p>There are significant gaps in continuation between: IMD Q1 and Q5 students, mature and young students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students, and male and female students.</p> <p>We had lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students, and mature students</p> <p>The most disadvantaged groups for continuation are: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students and Young, FSM eligible, Male students</p>
Completion rate	<p>There are gaps in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q4/5 students, students with a declared disability and those without a disability, students with a mental health condition and those without a declared disability, students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, and male and female students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersections for completion are: Young males from IMD Q1/2 who are FSM eligible, and young females from IMD Q1/2 with a declared disability.</p>
Attainment rate	<p>There are gaps in attainment between ABMO and white students, black and white students, students who are eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible, male and female students, and IMD Q1 and Q5 students.</p> <p>The most disadvantaged intersection for attainment is ABMO males who are FSM eligible.</p>
Progression rate	<p>There are gaps in progression between ABMO IMD Q1/2 and ABMO IMD Q3/4/5 students, and young and mature students.</p>

	The most disadvantaged intersection for progression is FSM eligible young students.
<b>Link to EORR</b>	2: Information and guidance 6: Insufficient academic support 7: Insufficient personal support 8: Mental health 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus 10: Cost pressures 11: Capacity issues 12: Progression to further study

## Objectives

Based on our assessment of performance, we have identified a number of indications of risk which span the student lifecycle. We will address these through our six objectives and targets, and our whole provider approach. Table 1 sets out our institutional objectives and targets, and the associated risks to equity of opportunity from the EORR and our institutional APP risks. Each objective and target links to multiple risks to ensure a joined approach to tackling the identified risks and ensure meaningful impact.

**TABLE 1: Objectives, targets and risks framework**

Risk to equity of opportunity (UOL):	Risk to equity of opportunity (EORR):	Objective	Target
1. Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation 4. Inequitable processes and curriculum	1: Knowledge and skills 2: Information and guidance 3: Perception of higher education 4: Application success rates 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	<b>OA_1:</b> To ensure that students from Q1 IMD have equitable opportunity to receive offers on their university application to the University of Leicester by 2029/30	<b>PTA_1:</b> To decrease the offer rate difference between students from IMD Q1 and Q5 neighbourhoods by 5pp by 2028/29
2. Financial pressures 3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital	2: Information and guidance 6: Insufficient academic support 7: Insufficient personal support 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus 10: Cost pressures 11: Capacity issues	<b>OS_1:</b> To ensure that students from IMD Q1 neighbourhoods have equitable opportunity to continue through their degree by 2029/30	<b>PTS_1:</b> To decrease the difference in completion rate between students from IMD Q1 and Q5 to 1pp by 2027/28
2. Financial pressures 3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital	2: Information and guidance 6: Insufficient academic support 7: Insufficient personal support 11: Capacity issues	<b>OS_2:</b> To ensure that students from IMD Q1 neighbourhoods have equitable opportunity to complete their degree by 2029/30	<b>PTS_2:</b> To decrease the difference in continuation rate between students from IMD Q1 and Q5 to 1pp by 2028/29
1. Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation 2. Financial pressures 3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital 4. Inequitable processes and curriculum	2: Information and guidance 6: Insufficient academic support 7: Insufficient personal support 11: Capacity issues 12: Progression to further study	<b>OS_3:</b> To ensure that ABMO students have equitable opportunity to attain a degree award that reflects their academic capabilities by 2029/30	<b>PTS_3:</b> To decrease the difference in attainment/award rate between ABMO students and white students to 3pp by 2028/29

Risk to equity of opportunity (UOL):	Risk to equity of opportunity (EORR):	Objective	Target
1. Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation 2. Financial pressures  3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital	2: Information and guidance 6: Insufficient academic support 7: Insufficient personal support 10: Cost pressures 11: Capacity issues	<b>OS_4:</b> To ensure that IMD Q1 students have equitable opportunity to attain a degree award that reflects their academic capabilities by 2029/30	<b>PTS_4:</b> To decrease the difference in attainment/award rate between Students from IMD Q1 and Q5 neighbourhoods to 6.5pp by 2028/29
1. Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation 2. Financial pressures  3. Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital 4. Inequitable processes and curriculum	2: Information and guidance 7: Insufficient personal support 8: Mental health 11: Capacity issues 12: Progression to further study	<b>OP_1:</b> To support Black students, so that they are able to report preparedness to progress into employment or further study' in our annual Career Registration and Career Exit surveys, at rates that reflects their capabilities by 2029/30	<b>PTP_1:</b> To decrease the difference in reported 'preparedness to progress into employment or further study' in our annual Career Registration and Career Exit surveys, between Black students and the final year student population to 6% by 2028/29

- The risks above have been identified as key risks for the university, with publicly available data. Indications of risks that we have not included in this Plan will be monitored and addressed as appropriate. Where we have seen short-term indications of risk (i.e., a single year of data only) or where the data is volatile due to a small population, we will closely monitor the data and implement targeted interventions as necessary. We have also identified several intersections within sex, ethnicity and disability groups which will be monitored within our intervention strategies. Tailored support will be implemented as required.
- Our targets, along with their yearly milestones are detailed in Annex C. We have chosen to take a broader perspective with our targets to have maximum impact on larger populations of students. The intersections discussed in Annex A will be monitored; however, the associated populations are relatively small and, as a result, are prone to volatility.
- We have chosen not to have a target around progression which is based on our Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) due to a lack of statistically significant gaps, instead choosing to have an objective which is based up on our internal Careers Registration and Careers Exit surveys. Due to the lower base numbers in the progression population within GOS, the data is slightly more volatile than other stages of the lifecycle however we are proud of the progress made to date. We are aspirational for all of our students to achieve their full potential and a lack of gaps between different groups does not mean we can be complacent. We will continue to work at subject and faculty level to address any localised indicators of risk that arise, and we will revisit the need for an institutional GOS based target in 2025/26 when we have more data on which to base a decision.
- Due to the volatility of the data for some categories of ethnicity, we will not be focusing our targets on this level of granularity, choosing instead to focus on the broader category of Minority Ethnic or ABMO students. This also aligns our APP target to our institutional strategic target. We will carefully monitor the more granular datasets and introduce tailored interventions as necessary.
- We are committed to taking a whole institution approach to engaging underrepresented groups such as GRTSB (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Boater) students, LGBTQ+ students, carers, care-experienced students and estranged students but are not including an objective or targets around this. This is due to the small population sizes and the difficulties of using self-reported data.
- We have chosen to take a whole institution approach to supporting students with a declared disability, or a particular category of declared disability, but are not including an objective or targets around this. This is due to the small population sizes, the volatility of the data and ensuring our targets are supported by publicly available data. We will regularly review the data and investigate any manifestations of risk that arise. The categories of disability included are students with a declared mental health condition, students with a physical impairment or mobility issue, students with a declared social/communication impairment, a specific learning difficulty or multiple declared disabilities.

- We have not included an objective or target focused upon attainment raising, due to the difficulty in attributing causality to our activities in this complex area. We do, however, recognise the importance of this area of work and have included relevant activities within our intervention strategies.
- We have not included any objectives or targets which focus on students eligible for FSM because of the difficulties in accessing this data at a student level. Instead, we are using IMD data for our objectives and targets relating to socio-economic status.
- We have chosen not to include an objective or target around ABCS, believing that our focus on the likely demographics that are contributing to the indications of risk for ABCS Q1 students, will provide more accurate targeting for our interventions throughout the lifecycle.
- We have chosen not to include any objectives or targets based on TUNDRA because we recruit high numbers of students from London and this measure has fewer Q1 areas than POLAR4. This masks the inequities within London in relation to ethnicity and deprivation which we are focusing upon.
- We acknowledge that our access, continuation and completion rates for mature students are lower than the sector. For the reasons discussed in Annex A, however, we have decided against including a specific target for this group. We will continue to welcome and support all mature students who choose to study with us, ensuring that measures are in place to address any issues that emerge.
- Although our objectives use a mix of individual measures and area-based measures, it is important to note that when delivering activities, we will target these using individual measures where possible, but area-based measures where not appropriate/possible. For financial support we will always use individual measures.
- The inclusion of our internal annual Career Registration and Career Exit surveys provides early insight into progression for our students. Career 'readiness' is also closely linked to the institutional educational gains that we support all of our students to achieve. As detailed in our TEF 2023 submission. These gains include confidence, being socially responsible and being career ready.

## **Intervention strategies and expected outcomes**

We have developed four intervention strategic themes based on the risks (IS1 – IS4) identified at the University of Leicester (UoL). Within these themes sit the projects that contribute to the overall impacts and will support working towards the five targets.

We will continue to provide a wide range of access and success activities to support our entire student body, within which we will target certain projects at students from underrepresented groups to ensure equality of opportunity, to facilitate a cumulative positive effect on outcomes. This business-as-usual activity is not contained within the following intervention strategies but is part of our wider commitments to all students. This activity includes:

- Use of a diverse pool of student ambassadors as role models in outreach activities
- Our Personal Tutoring promise to demystify the system for all students
- Our use of student engagement data to provide tailored interventions for students at risk
- Our Wellbeing hub to provide a calm, safe space on campus for students
- A dedicated Careers and Employability service who support staff and students in and alongside curriculum



Intervention Strategy 1 (IS 1). Title and primary risk to equity of opportunity:	Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation
Related objectives	OA_1, OS_3, OS_4, OP_1
Related targets	PTA_1, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTP_1
Related risks to equity of opportunity	<b>UoL risk:</b> Barriers to mattering, including lack of representation <b>EORR risks:</b> 3,5,7,8,11
UoL Strategy Link	Create a welcoming, inclusive, and enriching environment where all students can develop a sense of belonging and achieve success

Activity	Input	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Role models and representation</b>					
<b>Inclusive Staff Recruitment</b> * Disability confident employer * Inclusive recruitment toolkit * Recruitment Health Checks * Hiring Manager training about inclusive practice		Greater diversity within the workforce so that it is more representative of the student body (16%-28% between 2018-2023) Students feel an increased sense of representation amongst staff at the university Increased sense of inclusion across the institution	IS 4	National Student Survey (NSS) results Student Academic Experience Survey (SAES) results Race Equality Charter (REC) survey results Annual monitoring of staff recruitment, retention and promotion data	Published annually on our website
<b>Diversifying library resources</b> * <u>Represent Library Project</u> Students can recommend fiction books to the library, and they are promoted for all students to read, encouraging	Academic Librarian time	An increase in borrowing of fiction titles An increase in student engagement with the library Students feel an increased sense of representation within library resources and reading lists	IS 4	NSS SAES Library engagement data Number of academic schools requesting support	Published internally

<p>greater representation in the library collection and supporting reading for leisure  * <u>Reading List Project</u>  The library supports academic schools in building their reading lists and ensuring that non-Western, ethnically diverse sources are included where available  * <u>Inclusive collections group</u>  This group works towards ensuring that the collections we hold are inclusive</p>		<p>An increase in the withdrawal of 'reading for leisure' books from the library  An increase in the diversity of authors and genres in the library collection that represents the student body  Academic school reading lists are more representative of the broad range of sources available and more representative of student population</p>		<p>with reading list development  Pre and post intervention survey for library users  Student module feedback</p>	
<p><b>Diversifying UoL Sports</b>  Creation of an action plan to reduce the disparity in diversity between students taking part in sports activities and students who organise sports activities</p>	<p>Sports Inclusion Officer with support from wider team where necessary</p>	<p>An increase in participation of students from under-represented demographics at sports committee level and in leadership/coaching roles  An increase in participation of students from under-represented demographics in sports generally  An increase in all students engaging in a sport or being more active  Students feel an increased sense of representation within UoL Sport</p>	<p>IS 3, IS 4</p>	<p>Individual interventions within the action plan will each have a pre- and post-evaluation  Monitoring of participant engagement with different levels of sport participation</p>	<p>Published internally</p>
<p><b>Mattering (Influencing)</b></p>					
<p>Reverse mentoring  Students are partnered with senior leaders in the institution and provide guidance and insight into their lived experiences.</p>	<p>4 members of university Senior Leadership and 4 student mentors for meetings throughout the year</p>	<p><u>Staff report:</u>  An increased understanding about student issues and lived experience   <u>Students report:</u>  An increased understanding about the management of HE</p>	<p>IS 3, IS 4</p>	<p>Reverse mentoring will have a pre-, mid- and post-process evaluation, combining Likert and qualitative questioning</p>	<p>Published internally</p>

<p><b>Training, resources and communications</b>  * EDI training  * Training and resources focused on characteristics of different cohorts (i.e.) care leavers, Carers, etc  * Improved staff/student communications via: Student Staff Networks; Listening Events; Town Halls; You said, we did activities; Student College and Course Representatives</p>	<p>Staff and student time from across the institution</p>	<p>An increase in awareness of the diversity of students who study at UoL amongst staff  An increase in understanding of the lived experiences of these different cohorts by staff  An increase in supporting members of these different cohorts by staff  An awareness of where to access information required to support these different cohorts by staff  An increased awareness, confidence and understanding in engaging with EDI issues among staff  Students feel more supported by staff (tutors, etc)  An increased awareness, confidence and understanding in engaging with EDI issues among students  Increased and varied methods of communication between students and UoL  Increased number of communications about progress and changes made in response to student voice  Increased staff and student engagement with different communication methods</p>	<p>IS 3, IS 4</p>	<p>NSS  SAES  Pre- and post-event feedback for all listening events  Resource engagement data  Student service engagement data  Feedback from Student/Staff Committees  Feedback from Student College and Course Representatives</p>	<p>Published internally</p>
<p><b>Students as change makers</b>  * <u>Black Student Experience Advisory board</u></p>	<p>Black Student Experience Project Coordinator, project budget</p>	<p>Increased student confidence that their voices are being heard within the university</p>	<p>IS 3, IS 4</p>	<p>NSS results  SAES results</p>	<p>The projects are presented annually at a summit and shared internally as best practice</p>

<p>This group meet twice termly, to provide extended student voice and input into interventions focused on improving the Black Student experience</p> <p>* <u>Curriculum Consultants and MedRACE</u> Following the co-creation of projects between Academic schools and student consultants, the student consultants investigate the project topic and report back. Results of the projects inform changes within school</p> <p>* <u>Library Champions</u> Students volunteer to become Library Champions to work on Library projects to create new or evaluate resources to provide a student view and learn new transferable skills</p>	<p>and student advisor wages</p> <p>Project lead and student consultants' wages, project resources and training material</p> <p>Academic librarian time to coordinate and oversee the project</p>	<p>Increased student confidence that they are able to influence change within the university</p> <p>Development of students' transferable skills</p> <p>Increased student engagement across the institution following student influenced change</p>		<p>Student and academic staff engagement data</p> <p>Increase continuation rates</p> <p>Increase completion rates</p> <p>Increased attainment rates</p> <p>Curriculum Consultants has a pre-, mid- and post-process evaluation, combining Likert and qualitative questioning</p> <p>Library Champions evaluate new initiatives within the library on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Library Champion project outcomes are published internally upon completion at the end of the academic year</p>
<b>Mattering (fostering connections)</b>					
<p><b>Mentoring Programmes</b></p> <p>* Black Excellence is a student led staff supported initiative in the School of Business. The group arranges for Black alumni and entrepreneurs to present to current students.</p> <p>* Zero Gravity is an online platform that connects ABMO school pupils to current students, and current students</p>	<p>Student volunteer project leads</p>	<p>Increased connections and networking opportunities for post-18 ABMO students</p> <p>Increased connections for pre-18 ABMO pupils when making decisions on courses and universities.</p> <p>Increased continuation rate</p> <p>Increased completion rates</p> <p>Improved progression rates</p>	<p>IS 3</p>	<p>Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes for:</p> <p>Targeted students who participate in interventions</p> <p>Targeted students who did not</p>	<p>Published internally</p>

<p>to alumni of different institutions for informal peer mentoring and presented sessions.</p> <p>* Global Alumni Mentoring Scheme, where students (mentees) will be paired with alumni (mentors) across a range of mentoring support options.</p>	<p>Mentoring Coordinator within our Development and Alumni Relations Team</p>	<p>Students' increased sense of belonging, self-esteem and confidence in developing peer connections</p>		<p>participate in interventions Whole year group</p> <p>Qualitative research with participants and mentors</p> <p>NSS SAES</p>	
<p><b>Peer Mentoring</b> All first-year students are allocated a peer mentor throughout their first semester. They are matched via subject and additional criteria such as ethnicity or identity. This is an opt out system.</p>	<p>Project staff: Support and Representation Manager, Peer mentoring and training co-ordinator, Peer mentoring and admin assistant</p>	<p>Increased continuation rate Increased completion rates Students' increased sense of belonging, self-esteem and confidence in developing peer connections</p>	<p>IS 3</p>	<p>Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes for: Targeted students who participate in interventions Targeted students who did not participate in interventions Whole year group</p> <p>Qualitative research with participants and mentors</p> <p>NSS SAES</p>	
<p><b>PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions)</b></p>	<p>Project lead: Centre for Academic Achievement Manager</p>	<p>Increased sense of community in the academic environment Students increased academic self-efficacy and confidence</p>	<p>IS 3, IS 4</p>	<p>Non-random comparison of continuation and</p>	<p>Published Summer 2026 on university website</p>

Study and revision sessions for year one students led by year two students.		Improved transition/ greater integration of first year cohorts into UoL Improved module outcomes Improved continuation rates		completion outcomes for: Targeted students who participate in interventions Targeted students who did not participate in interventions Whole year group Numbers of students taking part in PASS (leading sessions and attending sessions) Evaluation form per session Interview with the PASS student leaders, and module lead Post-intervention questionnaire following the module assessment	
<b>INTO University Partnership</b> * Local hubs which provide a safe space for schools and pupils to access for support and extra-curricular activities * Mentoring opportunities for learners	Centre costs: staffing, resources, location costs	Positive impact on students' academic skills and attainment Development of students' skills and personal capacities to succeed Students increased self-efficacy and self-belief Increased understanding of HE and careers options	IS 3	INTO University led reporting and evaluation of partnership based on quasi-experimental approaches	Published externally by INTO University (Annual Impact Report)
<b>Black Leadership Programme</b> An opportunity for final year Black students to develop their	Careers and Employability staff leading the workshops	Improved Career Readiness scores Improved progression outcomes Increased student confidence Improved student skills relating to their future careers	IS 3	Pre and post session evaluation	Published internally

leadership skills and prepare for their future career	alongside external employers			Internal Graduate Survey (6 months post-graduation) Graduate Outcomes Survey  Non-random comparison of continuation and completion outcomes for: Targeted students who participate in interventions Targeted students who did not participate in interventions Whole year group	
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Total cost of intervention strategy 1	£507,659
Evidence base and rationale	Each activity is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which contains a literature review.

Intervention Strategy 2 (IS 2). Title and primary risk to equity of opportunity:	Financial pressures
Related objectives	OS_1, OS_2, OS_3, OS_4, OP_1
Related targets	PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTP_1
Related risks to equity of opportunity	UoL Risks: Cost of living crisis, increasing part-time work for students EORR risks: 7,8,11
UoL Strategy Link	We are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment that fosters the best possible health and wellbeing for our staff and students to enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential

Activity	Input	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Information, Advice and Guidance</b>					
<b>UK Recruitment and Outreach</b>  Financial information, advice and guidance for potential students.	Pre-16 and Post-16 Outreach delivering workshops, and Student ambassadors time supporting the delivery of the workshops	Potential HE students are equipped with an understanding of all the financial support available to them Potential students understand the additional financial support that UoL can provide	IS 1	Pre- and post-session evaluation  HEAT - monitor pupils' HE destinations	Internal termly report Internal annual review
<b>Blackbullion</b>  Promotion of the Blackbullion platform to support students with budgeting and accessing additional external funding.	Cost of the platform, staff time for awareness raising and promotion of the platform	Number of students accessing the platform Number of resources within the platform accessed per user An increase in the number of students seeking advice due to anonymous nature of service	IS 4	Blackbullion monitor and evaluate their own content We will monitor: Hardship fund requests Continuation rates Completion rates Engagement with the Welfare Service Team	
<b>Financial Support Opportunities</b>					
<b>Targeted funding for external opportunities for students to engage in enrichment activities</b>  (i.e. field trips, placements, international exchanges, Study Abroad and Turing Scheme)	Study Abroad Team staff promote and administer the funds  Staff time for promotion and administration of other funding opportunities	Increase student awareness of funding opportunities and eligibility criteria Increased numbers of students taking part in externally funded activities Increased numbers of students from groups who do not normally apply, taking part in these activities	IS 3, IS 4	Continuation rates Completion Rates Attainment rates Progression rates Evaluation will be tailored to the specific fund and enrichment activity In curricula field trips will be evaluated via our internal module evaluation process	Study Abroad and the Turing Scheme outcomes are reported annually and externally published



				Study Abroad and the Turing Scheme have comprehensive pre- and post-trip evaluation methods	
<b>Financial Support packages</b>  Bursaries and the Hardship fund	Staff time for promotion and administration of the financial support Cost of the bursaries Cost of the Hardship Fund	Bursaries are administered efficiently to targeted students to reduce the burden on the Hardship Fund The Hardship Fund is available for those students most in need of it	IS 3, IS 4	Undergraduate bursaries will be evaluated using the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit.	Published biannually from Summer 2026
<b>Part time work opportunities for our current students</b>  The promotion of appropriate vacancies to our current student population	Careers & Employability staff – recruiting students into these roles Resource costs	Increasing number of opportunities for students to gain employment Increasing number of students engaging with the service to gain employment Increasing students taking up repeated employment through the service	IS 1, IS 3	Monitor service engagement Monitor number of roles advertised	Published internally

<b>Total cost of intervention strategy 2</b>	£3,186,710
<b>Evidence base and rationale</b>	Each activity is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which contains a literature review.

<b>Intervention Strategy 3 (IS 3). Title and primary risk to equity of opportunity:</b>	Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital
<b>Related objectives</b>	OS_1, OS_2, OS_3, OS_4, OP_1
<b>Related targets</b>	PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTP_1
<b>Related risks to equity of opportunity</b>	1,2,4,8,9,10,11,12

UoL Strategy Link	Work in partnership with our students to push frontiers, generate new knowledge and nurture creativity, critical thinking and curiosity
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Activity	Input	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Policy</b>					
<b>Contextual admissions policy</b> Students from targeted demographic groups who may not have received sufficient pre-entry support are offered a lower tariff for entry	Staff time to administer contextual offers	An increase in the offer rate for students from targeted backgrounds No negative impact trends seen for contextual offer holders' success or progression	IS 4	Quasi-experimental design to identify if contextual admissions have any impact on on-course attainment for entrants.	Internal report published annually
<b>Gaining Capital</b>					
<b>UK Recruitment and Outreach</b> * Post-16 Progression Programmes (in collaboration with the Sutton Trust and Realising Opportunities) * Summer Schools	Outreach staff, Progression programme resources and recruitment literature, student ambassador costs, summer school programme costs	Increased understanding of the HE experience Increased understanding about HE choices Increased ability to make informed decisions about their HE choices Increased confidence in peer interactions	IS 1	Pre-, mid- and post-programme surveys Qualitative enquiries during the programmes Summer school evaluation is based on the TASO model used in their Evaluation of Summer Schools (2023) Realising Opportunities evaluation is done by the central	Summer school report published in Progression Programme report published in collaboration with the Sutton Trust and Realising Opportunities partners report.  Summer School evaluation report published in collaboration with TASO (2023)

				team on behalf of the partnership Evaluation of the Pathways programmes is done by the Sutton Trust on behalf of the partnership HEAT data for tracking longitudinal outcomes	All reports are published internally on an annual basis
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**Developing Skills**

<p><b>Succeed at Leicester Transition, Induction and Transferrable/Study Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A series of scaffolded support sessions for students that address elements of the hidden curriculum</li> <li>* Group and drop-in sessions across for study skills, maths support and English language support</li> <li>* Bespoke sessions for whole cohort skill development</li> <li>* Blackboard VLE Resources</li> </ul>	<p>Programmes managed and delivered by:</p> <p>Transition Programme Manager, Academic Induction Programme Manager, two Academic Achievement Consultants, two Academic Achievement Advisors, four Maths Support Advisors, the Academic Librarians and the Academic Achievement Manager</p>	<p>Improved continuation rates Improved completion rates Reduced awarding gaps Greater evidence of students' skills Greater evidence of students' settling in Increased engagement by students and academic schools with the programmes and the Academic Skills Centre Increased engagement with resources Increased repeat engagement with resources</p> <p>An increase in student confidence, academic skills, awareness of how to access support, and sense of community</p>	IS 1, IS 4	<p>The transition element will be evaluated post session, and through a six-week impact survey</p> <p>The skills element will be evaluated using the student module feedback system each semester</p> <p>Continuation rates Completion rates Attainment rates Engagement data</p> <p>Once the engagement rates are sufficiently</p>	<p>Monitoring is reported internally twice yearly</p> <p>Evaluation published Summer 2027 on the university website</p>
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				increased, we will be able to complete a comparator quasi-experimental evaluation using a comparator group of non-attendees to compare retention, attainment and progression	
<b>Supporting progression into employment or further study</b>					
<p><b>Managed work experiences including micro-internships and internships</b></p> <p>* Micro-internships Programme - Short, project-based work experience as an accessible and flexible route for students to build skills and experience around existing commitments</p> <p>* Citizens of Change Internship Programme - Funded internships within the university and local community focused on having impact on the local community and societies, targeted at second year undergraduate students}</p> <p>* Graduate Internship Programme - Supporting</p>	<p>Internship Programme Delivery Team costs, student intern costs</p>	<p>Increase in students participating in an internship Increase in students gaining transferable skills and networking Increased career readiness Increased student confidence</p>	<p>IS 4</p>	<p>Internal Graduate Survey (6 months post-graduation) Graduate Outcomes Survey</p> <p>Pre and post comparison of career readiness scores of: targeted students who participated in the activities Students meeting eligibility criteria but who did not engage with the activities All students in the year group</p>	<p>Published internally</p>

recent graduates gain employment and develop skills and experience					
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Total cost of intervention strategy 3	£957,784
Evidence base and rationale	Each activity is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which contains a literature review.

Intervention Strategy 4 (IS4). Title and primary risk to equity of opportunity:	Inequitable processes and curriculum
Related objectives	OA_1, OS_3, OP_1
Related targets	PTA_1, PTS_3, PTP_1
Related risks to equity of opportunity	2,6,7,8,9,10,12
UoL strategy link	We are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment that fosters the best possible health and wellbeing for our staff and students to enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential

Activity	Input	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Institutional policy and processes</b>					
<b>Data led academic reflection (APR)</b> * Creating and prioritising actions during programme planning * <b>Inclusive curriculum development consultation</b>	Education Quality, Enhancement and Development Advisors x 5 who lead on the process	Increased levels of embedded inclusivity within our programme content Increased understanding of the needs of the student population by academic schools Increased responsiveness to the needs of their students by academic schools	IS 1	Annual documentary analysis of relevant programme documents and lifecycle datasets Regular conversations with programme leads to better	Internal publication. Possible scope for external publication about specific actions contained within the process

		<p>Increased engagement with Education Services by academic schools when working to making their programmes more inclusive</p> <p>Increase in inclusive practices embedded within new programme development</p>		<p>understand their programme needs and challenges</p> <p>Academic and Professional Service Team focus groups</p> <p>Monitoring consultations requests and content</p> <p>Student Module Feedback</p> <p>NSS</p> <p>SAES</p> <p>Continuation rate</p> <p>Completion rates</p> <p>Attainment rates</p>	
<p><b>Inclusivity in the digital learning environment</b></p> <p>Digital resources such as Blackboard VLE have accessible content</p>	Digital Learning and Innovation Advisor leads on digital inclusivity	<p>100% of our online resources meet the minimum accessibility score</p> <p>Increased satisfaction with digital teaching and learning resources</p>	IS 1	<p>Annual accessibility monitoring and feedback to the module convenor on how and what to improve</p> <p>NSS</p> <p>SAES</p>	Internal publication
<b>Curriculum and assessment</b>					
<p><b>Inclusive Curriculum Project</b></p> <p>including Race Inclusion Action Plans, Race Inclusion Toolkit, Inclusion in Assessment</p>	<p>Project Leads: Student and Education EDI Team</p> <p>Team of Educational Developers</p>	<p>All academic schools completing their Race Inclusion Action Plan</p> <p>All academic schools implementing the actions in their Race Inclusion Action Plans.</p>	IS 1	<p>Pre and post comparison of module outcome data</p> <p>Qualitative research with</p>	<p>Some elements are externally published on our website (Race Inclusion Toolkit, Inclusion in Assessment Report)</p>

		<p>Increasing numbers of academic schools implementing recommendations from the Race Inclusion Toolkit</p> <p>Increasing numbers of academic schools implementing recommendations from the Inclusion in Assessment Report</p> <p>Increased sense of student mattering and representation</p> <p>Increased continuation</p> <p>Increased completion</p> <p>Increased attainment</p>		<p>academic staff and students</p> <p>Documentary review of the Theory of Change for each proposed intervention</p> <p>Each Intervention will have a tailored evaluation plan</p> <p>Student module feedback responses</p> <p>SAES responses</p> <p>NSS responses</p>	<p>Individual action plans will be published internally</p> <p>Evaluation of individual interventions may be externally published from 2025/6 onwards</p>
<p><b>Inclusion Development Fund</b></p> <p>This fund support projects that promote and evaluate inclusion within UoL</p>	Project lead and resources	Increase in the evidence base for inclusion practices that can be adopted across the institution and/or sector	IS 1, IS 3	Each funded project is required to have a theory of change, full evaluation plan and clear outcomes before funding is approved.	Evaluation reports are presented and published internally, on an annual basis
<p><b>Co-creation of assessment practices and marking rubrics</b></p>	Individual academic staff programme development practice	<p>Increase in number of co-created marking rubrics across the university</p> <p>Increase in number of co-created marking practices across the university</p> <p>Increase in the evidence base for inclusivity in assessment</p>	IS 1, IS 3	Documentary analysis of co-produced programme assessment documents. This takes place throughout the academic year.	Published internally on an annual basis

				Student module feedback responses SAES responses relating to assessment and feedback NSS responses relating to assessment and feedback	
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<b>Total cost of intervention strategy 4</b>	£131,758
<b>Evidence base and rationale</b>	Each activity is underpinned by a Theory of Change, which contains a literature review.



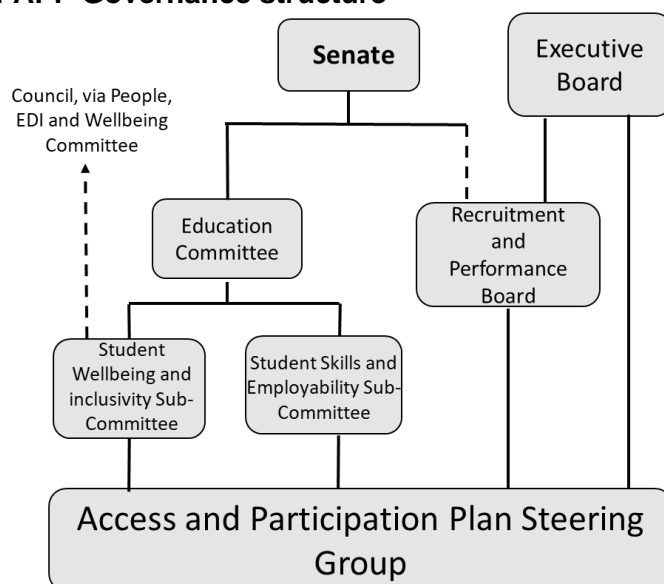
## Whole provider approach

To ensure the success of our intervention strategies proposed above, UoL is committed to a whole provider approach to access and participation. Our approach has oversight at all levels of our Governance structure (see below) and operational progress is monitored by our Education Services Team.

### Governance

The governance of this plan ensures access and participation are embedded in all facets of our university. It enables us to drive our institutional strategies related to access and participation, ensuring we achieve our aim of taking a whole-provider approach, and embedding this work in the business-as-usual work of the University. As well as the APP Steering Group, co-chaired by our PVC Education and Registrar, our commitment is further reflected in the responsibilities of numerous committees throughout our APP governance structure (see image 1). As discussed in our student consultation section, students are represented at all levels of governance.

#### **IMAGE 1: Overview of APP Governance structure**



The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team ensures that the University is compliant with all equity legislation, meets all good practice standards and fully considers and assesses the impact of the University's policies, procedures and practices on the protected equality groups. It has been fully engaged with the development of the Access & Participation Plan and the University's EDI Committee has considered the Plan as part of its business.

Day-to-day operational reporting of the university Access and Participation Plan takes place by our Education Services team who report quarterly to the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Sub-committee (SWISC). SWISC has oversight of the operational contents of the plan, and who monitor the outcomes and impact of interventions and progress against our targets and objectives.

### Development of this plan

A twelve-month consultation process took place, across the university during the development of this plan. This is set out in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Consultation process**

Phase one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial awareness raising and open conversations with key stakeholders took place</li> <li>• We sought insights from staff and students about potential risks to equality of opportunity, and the prominence of these risks for students at UoL. This included committees, academic staff, professional service teams and the SU</li> <li>• We consulted with our UniConnect partnership and other key partners (E.g. DMU, Realising Opportunities)</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Assessment of Performance took place which provided the basis for our targets and objectives</li> <li>• We engaged with Wave One institutions through the FACE SIG, to learn from their experiences</li> </ul>
Phase two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of Change workshops were developed and run with colleagues across the institution to inform our approach to producing our intervention strategies, and evaluating our strategic projects</li> <li>• We conducted a thorough audit, and gaps analysis, of institutional activities designed to support access and success</li> <li>• We conducted our literature review of sector best practice, policy reports and research papers to inform the development of our intervention strategy</li> </ul>
Phase three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We produced drafts of our submission which received input and feedback from the APP Steering Group, whose membership includes senior members of staff</li> <li>• The plan received approval at all stages of the governance structure, providing assurance to University Council of our whole approach to access and participation</li> </ul>

Whole provider approach to risks to equality of opportunity

Within the University of Leicester’s institutional risk register, educational inequalities leading to differential outcomes are identified as a key risk. Our institutional risk register also includes risks which are not covered above but may have a wider impact on equality of opportunity. We will address each of our main risks through our intervention strategies detailed above. We have chosen to address UoL Risk 5(EORR Risk 8): Mental Health, and EORR Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery model through a whole institution approach.

UoL Risk 5: Mental Health

We renewed our membership of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter scheme in August 2023 and are currently compiling the evidence base for our application for charter status. The 18 themes of the charter are arranged into 5 domains (see image 2 below). We will use this as a framework for our institutional approach to student experience inside and outside the classroom, from pre-entry through to their graduate destination.

**IMAGE 2: Overview of Student Minds Charter framework**

Student Minds Mental Health Charter				
<b><u>Learn</u></b>	<b><u>Work</u></b>	<b><u>Live</u></b>	<b><u>Support</u></b>	<b><u>Enabling</u></b>
Transition into University, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Progression.	Staff wellbeing, Staff development.	Proactive interventions and a mentally healthy environment, Residential accommodation, Social integration and belonging, Physical Environment.	Support Services, Risk, External partnerships and pathways.	Leadership, strategy and policy, Student voice and participation, Cohesiveness of support, Inclusivity and intersectional mental health, Research, innovation and dissemination

Students with declared disabilities are also at risk at various stages of the lifecycle (Access and Completion). However, the numbers of students with a declared disability are relatively low, making the dataset quite volatile year on year. Internal data indicates that instances of undeclared, or undiagnosed disabilities (including mental health conditions) are rising, with students reaching crisis point before support is accessed. We are committed to supporting students to declare any disabilities, to ensure that appropriate support is in place throughout their degree. As part of this process, we will support eligible students with the financial burden of diagnostic assessments. We are also introducing Step Care, an early intervention programme which contains easily accessible health and wellbeing information and signposting for students prior to their individual interventions.

Health Assured, our partner organization, allows students to speak with someone who can relate to their personal circumstances such as gender identity or religion, etc. where we do not have this representation.

**EORR Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery model**

Our degree apprenticeships sit within our research-intensive ethos and current degree programmes that lend themselves to an apprenticeship structure. Degree apprenticeships are more flexible and allow students to work alongside their studies making them attractive to some demographic groups, such as students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students from particular religions. Locally, De Montfort University and Nottingham Trent University also offer several degree apprenticeships which are complementary to our current and future portfolio.

The university was approved on the ESFA Register of Apprenticeships Training Providers (RoAPT) in early 2022. The apprenticeships team and ODP programme team welcomed an informal visit from the DFE and ESFA over the summer 2022 who gave good feedback on our application and current Operating Department Practitioner provision. UoL have now been approved to make further applications for additional apprenticeships programmes at any time. Further to this the ODP Apprenticeship programme had an external ESFA Control visit (March 2023) with positive outcomes.

We have also participated in the OfS pilot programme which looked at modular short courses for professional learners. The programme of short courses for lifelong learners made of micro-credentials with commercial partners was piloted in 2022-23.

Our alternative routes are all monitored as part of a self-assessment review (SAR) and a yearly programme review. We have operational groups within the colleges where apprenticeships exist. These report into the Apprenticeship Management Board (AMB) which reports to the Curriculum and Quality Sub-committee (CQSC). The delivery and student feedback framework exists within the programmes with additional evaluation around employer engagement and satisfaction.

Alignment with University strategies

Our university strategy sets out our vision to ‘...become a truly inclusive university’ across three strategic themes: Research-inspired Education, World-changing Research, and Our Citizens. Our APP fits within the theme of Research-inspired Education - we aim to ‘enable students to achieve their full potential, regardless of background’. Several university enabling plans align to this aim. These are detailed in table 3 below.

**TABLE 3: Overview of university strategies and enabling plans which align to our APP**

University Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-28 and 5-year Delivery plan	Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is integral to the success of Leicester as a university of choice for students and as a progressive and innovative workplace for staff. The University’s EDI strategy, commits the University to ensuring that all aspects of its activities contribute to developing a community that is fully inclusive, recruiting and retaining students and staff from all sectors of society.
Student Wellbeing Enabling Plan	The Student Wellbeing plan is structured around 8 key themes: leadership, staff, systems, data and communication, partnerships, support and response, transition, prevention and lastly early intervention. It is closely aligned to the domains and principles of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter, and the University’s Education Strategy. It strives to promote a culture of good mental health and wellbeing right across our community, and enables events, initiatives, wellbeing programmes, groupwork, drop-ins, as well as 121 support and NHS referral for those most in need. This layering of self-awareness, self-help and appropriate support interventions centres around effective use of digital, a wellbeing hub, as well as a hub and spoke model with schools and colleges.
Careers and Enterprise Enabling Plan	The Careers and Enterprise Enabling plan, aligns directly to the Education Strategy, supporting all students to build and develop their employability skills, knowledge and experience. The plan strives to increase student opportunities to engage in work related experience, inspiring all stakeholders to work together. Data is key to the plan, identifying priority cohorts,

	programmes and student groups to ensure all students have parity of opportunity.
Athena Swan Action Plan	In 2018 the university achieved an institutional Silver award recognising a significant record of activity in addressing gender equality challenges and implementing actions across the institution. This award demonstrates both our impact and continued commitment to addressing gender equality challenges.
Race Equality Charter Action Plan	In 2022, the University of Leicester was awarded a Bronze Race Equality Charter Mark. Our submission and our Race Equality Charter Action Plan ensure progress towards our commitment to cultural change which will address the evidenced racial inequities across the University.

### Complementary and Collaborative Working

The university is very active within the local region, and across the sector, and is a member of numerous relevant collaborative communities, to improve the quality and range of our access and participation work, as well as being an active voice in the national conversation about access and participation. Table 4 details our membership in some of our key collaborative communities.

**TABLE 4: Overview of UoL membership in collaborative communities**

Type of Collaborative Community	Name of Collaborative Community	Explanation
Pre-entry Outreach	UniConnect: Pathways	The University of Leicester is the lead institution for Pathways, the Office for Students (OfS) UniConnect collaborative outreach programme which also includes De Montfort University, Loughborough University, Leicester College and Loughborough College. The funding provided by the OfS to deliver the programme is currently due to end in July 2025.
	Realising Opportunities (RO)	National, collaborative progression programme comprising of 14 (currently) research-intensive universities that aims to support students from underrepresented groups into higher education.
	IntoUniversity	The University is working in partnership with De Montfort University/University of Leicester to officially launch a new IntoUniversity centre in March 2024. In 2024-25 the centre aims to engage 550 local students from disadvantaged areas in the city, rising to 900 in 2025-26, and 1,000 annually after that, inspiring young people to consider higher education.
	The Sutton Trust	The University of Leicester partners with the Sutton Trust to deliver two two-year progression programmes, Pathways to Law and Pathways to Banking and Finance supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds into higher education and into highly competitive professions.
	Zero Gravity	New partnership held with Zero Gravity who provide opportunities for students from underrepresented groups to gain access to student mentoring, masterclasses and career accelerators. This partnership supports prospective and current students at the University of Leicester.
Collaborative communities within the sector	Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO) sector network National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA) Forum for Accessing and Continuing Education (FACE) Network of Northern Medical Schools WP Forum Research, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) Network	
Quality commitments	Carers Federation Quality Mark, Care Leavers Covenant, NNECL quality mark, Armed Forces Covenant, and prior to its dissolution, the Standalone Pledge	
Leicestershire Partnership	Civic University	The <a href="#">Civic Agreement</a> is a commitment between the University of Leicester, De Montfort University and

Type of Collaborative Community	Name of Collaborative Community	Explanation
		Loughborough University, and the city and counties of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to work together for the benefit of local people and the prosperity of our places. 'Universities Partnership' combines the collective strengths of our universities and civic institutions to make a greater impact through collaboration for, with and among our communities. This Civic Agreement marks the beginning of a journey, signalling a commitment by the partners to bring together our collective skills, expertise and social capital and collaborate in the long-term interests of our communities.
Data Tracking	HEAT	The University of Leicester is a subscriber of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) and utilises the platform to track all schools and colleges recruitment and outreach activity as well as applications for our progression programmes and other events aimed at providing advice and guidance to students.
Recruitment platforms	Unibuddy	Unibuddy provides prospective students with the opportunity to chat to current University of Leicester students to help establish whether Leicester is a suitable study destination. Leicester also provides its offer holders with an online community space to connect with fellow offer holders to support transition into higher education.

## Student consultation

Student consultation and co-creation is at the heart of this plan. The university has engaged students from a range of backgrounds as part of the creation of this Plan, and student representatives sit on the University Council, Senate, Education Committee and its sub-committees, which are all involved in considering and approving this plan.

Student engagement with the APP needs to be seen in the context of an extremely strong partnership between the University and the SU, and a culture of student engagement and consultation, which will continue throughout monitoring and annual review of this plan. Recent examples of our partnership working have included:

- The creation of the Education Strategy Student Consultants
- The Black student experience, which is co-led by students and governed by a student advisory panel
- Co-creation of marking rubrics
- Changes to the membership options for university sports facilities
- Delivery of the Study Well programme for first year students
- Curriculum consultants project
- Student action groups including MedRACE and Psychdiverse

The Students' Union also participated in the consultation phase of this plan; they provided feedback from their executive officers, sabbatical officers and college level and course level representatives to inform its development.

## Evaluation of the plan

Our aim is to provide robust and consistent evaluation for the projects listed in this plan and contribute to the OfS evidence base of what works (and what does not). This will also support our internal evaluation network, that will bring together colleagues from across the institution who have contributed to, or would like to contribute to, similar projects. We will evaluate to OfS Type 2 standards wherever possible, comparing outcomes for participants and a non-random group of

non-participants (empirical enquiry). We will also develop our capacity to evaluate to Type 3 standards.

To assess our evaluation provision, we completed the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool. The results of this are shown in table 5.

**TABLE 5: Summary of our evaluation strengths and weakness from use of self-assessment tool**

Area	Score	Strengths	Weaknesses	Plans for improvement
<b>Strategic context</b>	16 - Good	Training opportunities for staff, awareness about the importance of evaluation, development of a whole institutional approach to evaluation	Consistency across all programmes of activity	Further establishment of staff skills base,
<b>Programme design</b>	15 - Good	Programmes underpinned by clear objectives, programmes are evidence informed, clarity about how to measure outcomes/impact	Lack of benchmarking against which we can measure our outcomes	Setting of benchmarks based on previous experience or results from other universities
<b>Evaluation design</b>	4 - Emerging	Evaluation plans are in place for the majority of strategic activities,	Need greater clarity about the intended audience for findings	Include intended audience as part of the initial ToC for projects
<b>Evaluation implementation</b>	14 – Emerging	Partnership working on evaluation, measure change on a student level, use longitudinal tracking methods, compliant with GDPR and ethical approval processes,	Need to improve use of validated or sector standard tools and techniques	Greater development of risk analysis for evaluation, investigate appropriate use of validated scales in our evaluation
<b>Learning</b>	13 - Emerging	Evaluation influences activities internally, evaluation findings are triangulated,	Limited amount of type 3 evaluations are done, we have low numbers of evaluation publications	Contribute to sector knowledge through publication, Increase type 3: causal evaluation skill base

#### Whole provider evaluation

Our strategic reporting structure via our internal governance requires each project to have a Theory of Change based cover sheet and evaluation plan. This has improved project monitoring and reduced duplication of reporting. For smaller projects that fall outside of the university strategy and committee reporting structure, we are able to monitor progress and offer support throughout the project and request final reports upon completion.

#### Evaluation Resources

We have developed a suite of evaluation training and development resources to support staff in their implementation of evaluation. This includes:

- Workshops which focus on using a Theory of Change, creating evaluation plans and being creative with evaluation methods where appropriate.
- An Education Hub which hosts advice and guidance on the most appropriate evaluation methods for a project, taking into account the age and demographics of participants, and proposed outcomes of the project.
- Support with ethical considerations for project evaluation, and the ethical approval process

#### Dissemination of findings

We will be producing an annual impact report each summer on our overall progress with our targets and project overview which will be shared externally on our website. Individual project

reports will be published for staff and students, with large scale evaluation being published on the University website. We host an annual symposium which showcases institutional priority and student-led projects. This is followed with the publication of all symposium papers as part of an internal journal series. We will also continue to share our findings at appropriate sector conferences such as NEON, FACE and RAISE conferences.

## Provision of information to students

The University provides clear information to students and prospective students about its fees, scholarships and other student support, for the duration of a student's course, on our [website](#) and through targeted communications. This includes eligibility criteria and the level of financial support students may be entitled to for each year of their studies.

The University provides comprehensive guidance for enquirers and also makes clear each student's financial entitlement and support package (in so far as they can be known) in communications with applicants at the point an offer of a place is made. These communications are regularly reviewed to ensure they are accurate and accessible.

The University provides timely and accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) so they can populate their databases in good time to inform applications.

Details of the financial support package, including eligibility criteria and the amount that students will be offered in each year of their studies, which is included within intervention strategy 2 of this plan are set out below:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>Amount per year of course</b>
University of Leicester Bursary	Household income £30,000 or less, and IMD Q1 home postcode; or Progression Programme Participant	£1000
University of Leicester Experience Fund	Household income £30,000 or less, and IMD Q1 home postcode	On application, for costs associated with the wider university experience
SpLD Assessment Fund	Require a SpLD assessment and household income of less than £60,000	Payment for the SpLD assessment
Carers and Estranged Students' Bursary	Carer or estranged student	£1000
Care Leavers Bursary	Care Leaver	£2000
University of Sanctuary	Asylum Seeker	Fee Waiver (2 UG available) and support package based on needs assessment

Our approved Access and Participation plan, will be published online on our [Access and Participation webpages](#), alongside our summary of the plan, our fee information documents from the Office for Students and a link to an archive of our historical Access and Participation Plans on the Office for Students website, with clear signposting for students and prospective students. This is approved and regularly reviewed by the university governance structure, which includes student representatives.

All of our published information adheres to Competition and Markets Authority's guidance, to ensure we are compliant with consumer law.

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

### **Overview/Introduction**

We aggregated a wide selection of data to inform our decisions. These datasets included:

- Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation data
- HESA data
- UCAS end of cycle data
- National Student Survey (NSS) data
- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) data
- Graduate Outcomes Survey
- Careers Readiness Survey
- Internal lifecycle data
- Internal Student Academic Experience Survey
- Engagement with services such as Welfare, academic support and Sports and Active Life
- Internal consultation with the Students' Union, colleges, schools, personal tutors and central professional services for qualitative narrative data to support the numerical data.

The quantitative data was assessed for statistical significance and small cohorts were omitted due to their low population sizes. Cohorts of less than 10 were suppressed. Where data is available over three, five or six years, these time series were used to determine trends. Where there was a trend towards improvement the statistical significance of the data was considered, for example, the attainment gap between Black and white students. Small cohorts of students by student characteristic that are relevant to the University of Leicester were reintroduced at the plan development stage and now form one of our whole lifecycle approaches. A CHAID analysis was conducted on the internal lifecycle data to determine intersectional demographics most at risk at each stage of the student lifecycle.

### **National Student Survey (NSS) Data**

The data from the 2022/23 National Student Survey was analysed alongside the lifecycle data (discussed above), noting the years impacted by the pandemic (2019/20 and 2020/21). The trends identified will be monitored over the coming years as part of our ongoing NSS analysis in conjunction with internal student voice activities, these trends will influence the content of our Intervention Strategies.

Our analysis revealed a correlation between the completion rate gap in the 5-year times series between students without a declared disability and those with a declared disability, and our NSS results which indicated lower satisfaction in learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, mental wellbeing and organisation/management for students with a declared disability. Furthermore, the persistent gap in the institutional attainment rate between students from IMD Q1/2 compared to those from IMD Q3/4/5 over 5 years mirrors our institutional NSS results which indicated lower satisfaction in teaching, assessment and feedback, student voice, learning opportunities, and learning resources for our IMD Q1/2 students.

Finally, the persistent institutional attainment rate gap between ABMO students and white students over the last 5 years mirrors our institutional NSS results which indicated lower satisfaction in learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, teaching, and learning resources for ABMO students.

### **TEF 2023 data**

We were awarded TEF Gold overall in 2023, with a gold rating in student outcomes and silver rating in student experience. All the ratings from the data were above the Office for Student baseline indicators. The data that informed these ratings show where we have areas we can



improve. From the table below, the areas of focus are around the Black student experience, supporting students who have been in receipt of free school meals in the past and students from IMD Q12 and male students.

This data correlates with the findings from the analysis below the NSS data above. This will be used to help inform the content of our Intervention Strategies.

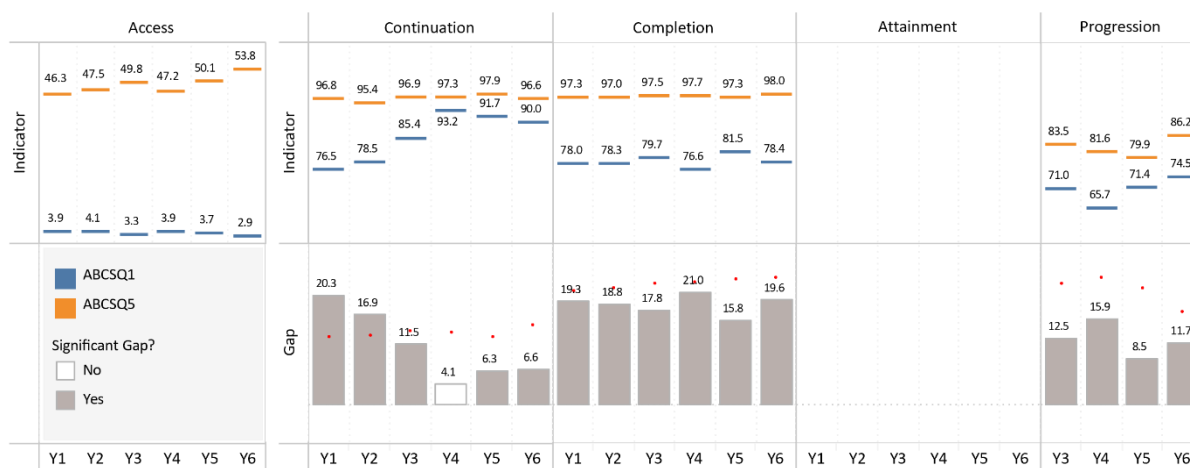
## Data Analysis

The analysis is done one dataset at a time, considered the entire lifecycle for each dataset. The section concludes with consideration of our intersectional analysis and a summary table of the indications of risk that the analysis has revealed.

### ABCS

**ABCS Quintile** (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (●)

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



In 2021/22, ABCS Q1 students made up 2.9% of our access population, 4.2pp lower than the sector average, and it has remained lower than the sector for the preceding 5 years.

**Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 we had a lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students**

For the remaining three stages of the student lifecycle, our success rates for ABCS Q1 students are consistently lower than the sector over the 6-year time series for completion and progression (see image above) and lower than the sector since 2017/18. Despite this, the gaps between our ABCS Q1 and Q5 students are all statistically significant and have been for the majority of the 6-year time series (4-year time series for progression). We do not have ABCS data for attainment.

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 6.6pp**

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 19.6pp**

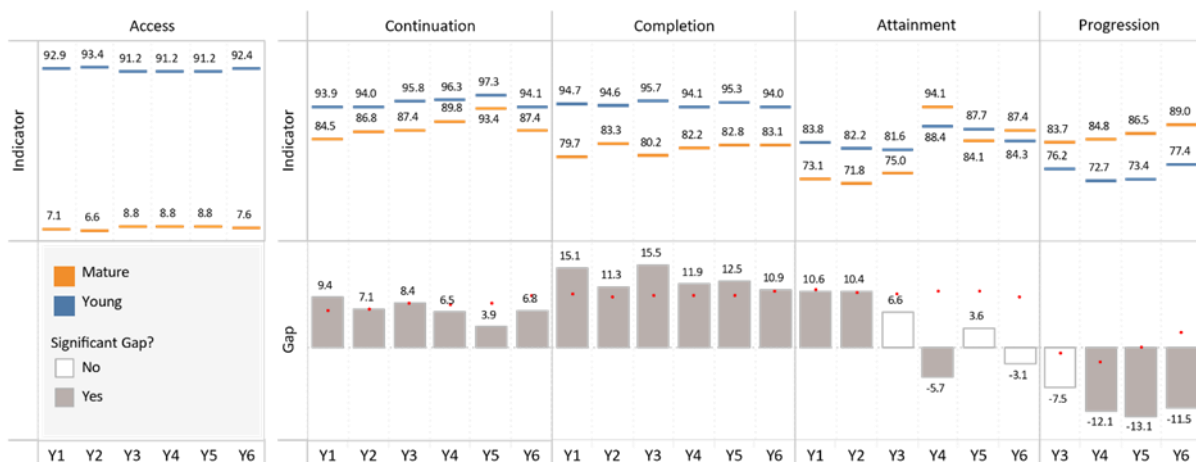
**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in progression rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 11.7pp**

We have chosen not to include an objective or target around ABCS, preferring instead to focus on the likely demographics that are contributing to the indications of risk for ABCS Q1 students throughout the lifecycle.

## Age on entry

### Age on Entry (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (●)

SOURCE: Ofs APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



Our offer rate to mature students has decreased by 6.8% since 2020/21. This is lower than our decrease in offer rate to young students (8.2%) and our overall decrease in offer rate (7.7%).

### Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 our recruitment of mature students was 21.4% lower than the sector average

Only 7.6% of our 2021/22 entrants were mature students. This is lower than the sector and compares to an 8.5% 4-year aggregate. The largest concentration of these students is in our Schools of Healthcare and Archaeology and Ancient History.

In 2020/21 the continuation rate for mature students was 87.4%, a 6.8pp gap to young students, and for the last three years the university's gap in continuation rates between mature and young students has been smaller than that of the sector, ranging from 3.9-6.8pp.

### Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between mature and young students of 6.8pp

Our gap in completion rates between mature and young students in 2021/22 was broadly in line with the sector, following a decrease of 1.6pp from the previous year. A 4-year aggregate of our mature student's completion rate is 82% which is higher than the sector aggregate rate of 80.2%. It is promising to see that the attainment gap between our mature and young students has a 4-year aggregate of -0.6pp compared to 10.2pp for the sector, with the 87.4% of mature students achieving a 1<sup>st</sup>/2:1 in 2021/22.

### Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between mature and young students of 10.9pp

Our progression rate for mature students is consistently higher than the sector, and has increased year on year since 2017/18. The gap in progression rates between our mature and young students has increased by 4pp since 2017/18, with a slight decrease (1.6pp) between 2019/20-2020/21; our mature students' progress at a higher rate than our young students.

### Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in progression rate between mature and young students of -11.5pp

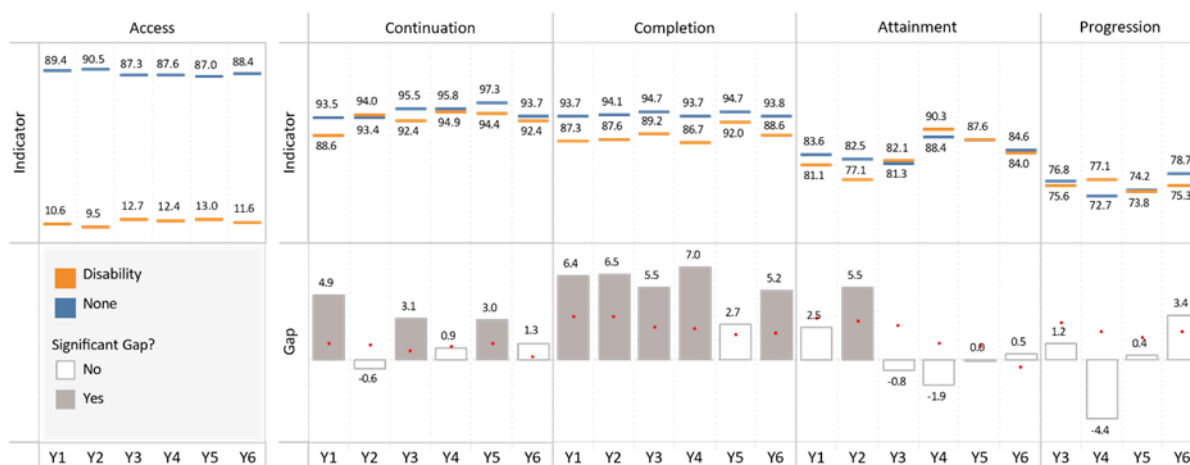
Due to the expansive local provision, with 7 other HEIs offering a range of programmes within Leicestershire and a further 11<sup>+</sup> HEIs provision in the East Midlands, there is no risk to equality of

opportunity. Therefore, we will not be committing to any targets concerning mature students and instead will focus on the experience of young students who make up the vast majority of our student population.

## Disability

**Disability** (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (♦)

SOURCE: Ofs APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



We have analysed data for each stage of the student lifecycle, as two category and five category breakdowns<sup>2</sup>. Due to the small population size of those declaring a disability, the data is volatile year on year. Currently the only stage of the lifecycle with a statistically significant gap between students without a declared disability and students with a declared disability, is completion (5.2pp).

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between students with a declared disability of 5.2pp.**

The gaps in continuation and progression rates between students with a declared disability and those without a disability are not significant, however they are slightly larger than the sector.

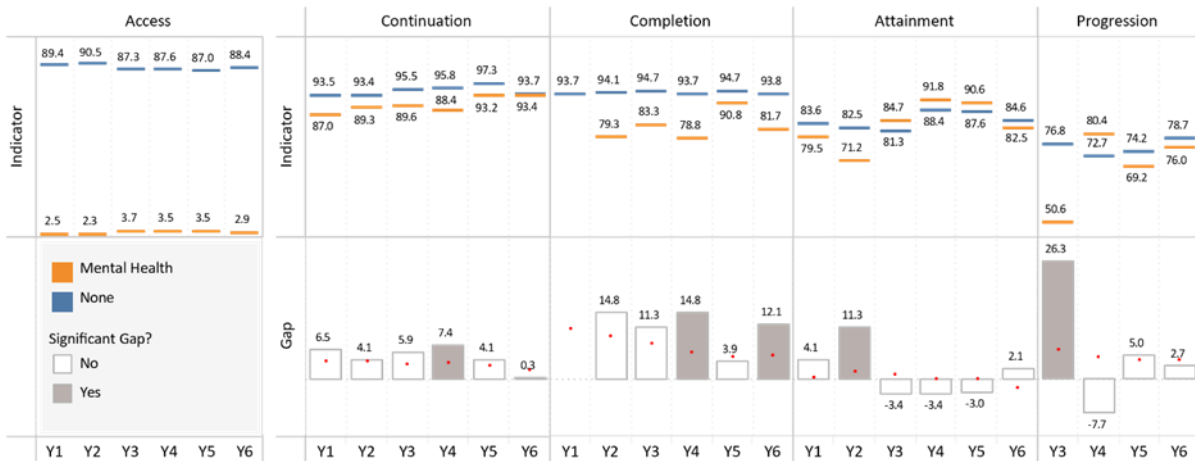
**TABLE 6: 4-year aggregates for each stage of stage journey (2018/19-2021/22)**

	Access	Continuation	Completion	Attainment	Progression
<b>UoL rate</b>	12.4%	93.5%	89.2%	86.1%	75.5%
<b>Sector rate</b>	16.7%	89.4%	85.7%	79.7%	70.9%
<b>Difference</b>	-4.3pp	4.1pp	3.5pp	6.4pp	4.6pp

Table 6 sets out our 4-year aggregate rate for each stage of the lifecycle for students with a declared disability compared to the sector. This demonstrates that our rates are higher than the sector at all stages of the lifecycle except for Access, where our disabled student population is 4.3% smaller.

**Declared Mental Health Disability (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



Student with a declared mental health condition represent 2.9% of our access population in 2021/22. This has declined from 3.7% in 2018/19. For other stages of the lifecycle, there are no statistically significant gaps in rate between students with no disability and students with a declared mental health condition. The exception to this is the completion rate for students with a declared mental health condition, which is 12.1pp lower than those with no declared disability.

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between students with a declared mental health condition and those without a disability of 12.1pp**

Table 7 illustrates that students with a declared social impairment make up the smallest proportion of our access population in 2021/22 (0.7%) and students with a declared specific learning difficulty constitute the largest category of declared disability (4.1%) in this population. The largest gaps throughout the lifecycle are:

- The gap in continuation rate between students with no declared disability and those with a declared physical disability (4.8pp)
- The gap in continuation rate between students with no declared disability and those with a declared mental health condition (12.1pp)
- The gap in attainment rate between students with no declared disability and those with multiple declared disabilities (-4.6pp)
- The gap in progression rate between students with no declared disability and those with multiple declared disabilities (9.5pp)

**TABLE 7: 2021/22 rate for each stage of lifecycle (Gap)**

Category of declared disability	Access	Continuation	Completion	Attainment	Progression
No declared disability	88.4%	93.7	93.8	84.6%	74.2%
Cognitive (spld)	4.1%	92.1 (1.6pp)	92.1% (1.7pp)	83.1% (1.5pp)	78.3% (-4.1pp)
Mental Health	2.9%	93.4 (0.3pp)	81.7% (12.1pp)	82.5% (2.1pp)	69.2% (5pp)
Multi	1.8%	95.2 (-1.5pp)	85.3 (8.5pp)	89.1% (-4.6pp)	64.7% (9.5pp)
Physical	2%	88.9 (4.8pp)	89.8 (4pp)	84% (0.6pp)	73.3% (0.9pp)
Social	0.7%	90.9 (2.8pp)	93.8% (0pp)	90% (-5.4pp)	80% (-5.8pp)

Due to the small population sizes when using the 5-category breakdown of declared disability, we will not have a target focused on declared disabilities, choosing instead to focusing an objective on supporting students in early identification and declaration (especially in relation to mental health) to

minimise the number of students reaching crisis point. This objective will form part of our whole institution approach to supporting students, particularly through our mental health charter commitments and wellbeing strategy.

### Ethnicity

An analysis of UCAS end of cycle data across a 5-year time series has highlighted that Black students and ABMO students have significantly lower application-to-offer rates than the overall university, as illustrated in table 8. We will investigate and tackle the causes of the lower offer rate of Black and ABMO students but due to the low population sizes, it will not form the basis of any of our targets in this plan. Some intersectional analysis of offer rates for ABMO IMD Q1 is included below under the IMD heading.

**Risk Indicator: In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between Black and White students of 17.6pp**

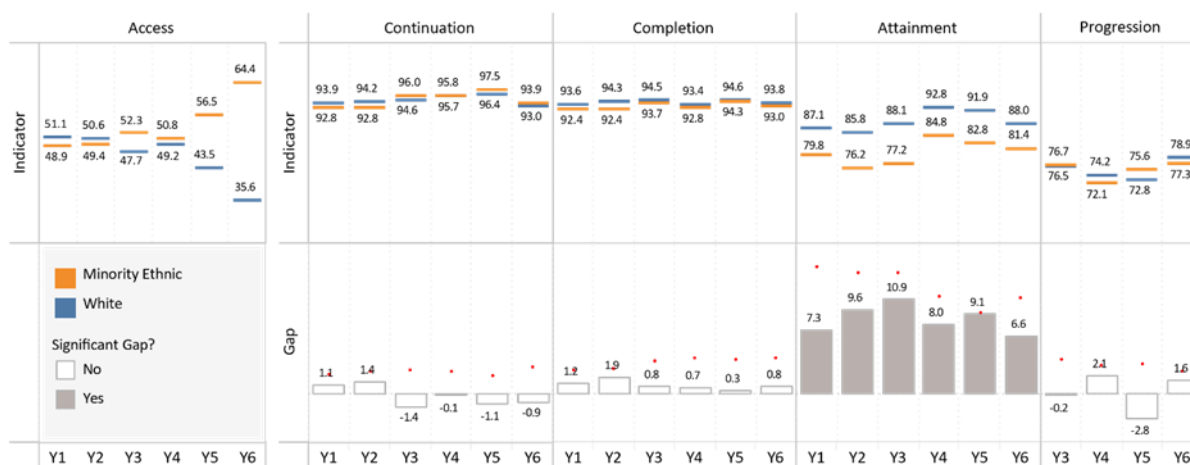
**Risk Indicator: In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between ABMO and White students of 17.1pp**

**TABLE 8: Application to offer rate by ethnicity and overall for the University of Leicester**

	Overall	Black Students	ABMO Students	White Students
2018/19	82.6%	75.0%	76.3%	89.4%
2019/20	79.6%	66.4%	71.4%	87.0%
2020/21	78.2%	63.9%	69.1%	86.8%
2021/22	73.2%	63.1%	65.6%	80.4%
2022/23	70.5%	62.6%	63.1%	80.2%

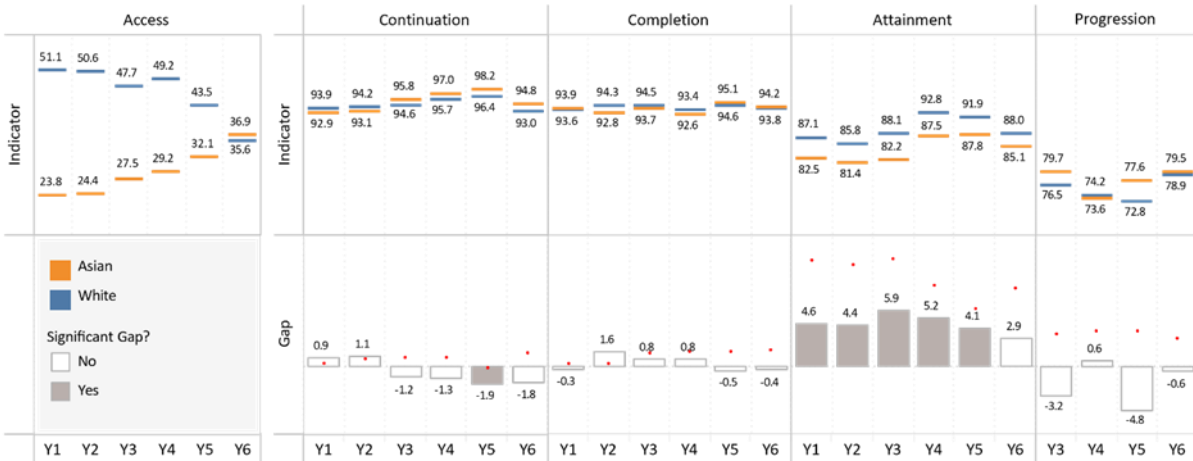
### Minority Ethnic (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)

SOURCE: OfS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



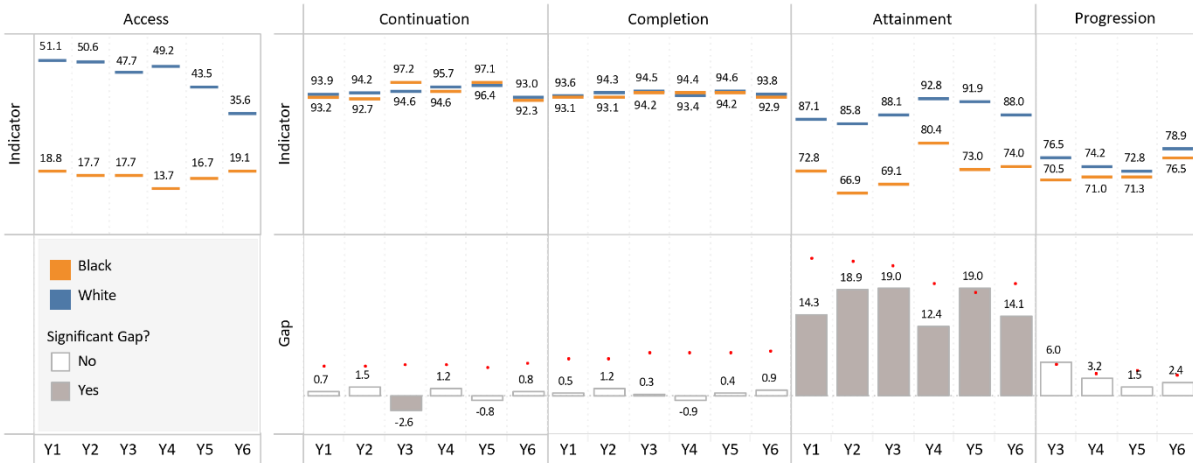
**Asian Ethnicity (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



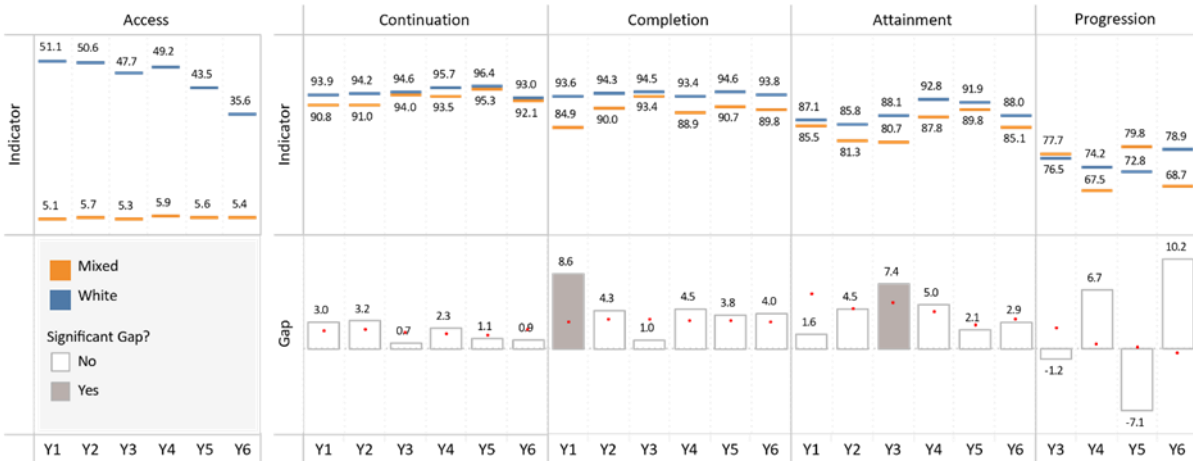
**Black Ethnicity (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



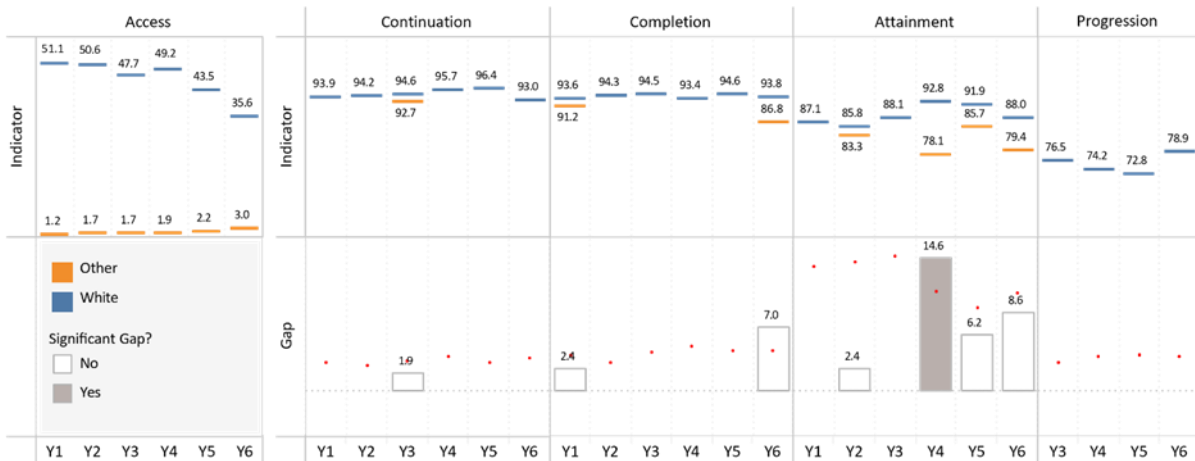
**Mixed Ethnicity (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



**Other Ethnicity (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (●)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



In 2021/22, 64.4% of our entrants were from Minority Ethnic (ME) backgrounds (otherwise referred to as ABMO). The highest proportion of ME entrants were Asian (36.9%), followed by Black (19.1%), Mixed ethnicity (5.4%) and Other ethnicity (3%). 35.6% of entrants were white. This is in stark contrast to the sector where 65.8% of entrants were White, 18% were Asian, 8 were Black, 5.7% were Mixed Ethnicity and 2.4% were Other Ethnicity.

Continuation and completion rates for ME students has remained high over the six-year time series, with the gap between ME and white students remaining lower than the sector for both stages of the lifecycle. The same trend applies to our Asian and Black students. Although the gaps in continuation and completion between Mixed Ethnicity students and white students are slightly higher than the sector, they have not been statistically significant for the past five years. The numbers of our Other Ethnicity students are suppressed in five of the six past years for continuation, and four of the past six years for completion.

Although the gap in attainment rates between ME and white students is lower than the sector (and has remained so for the full six-year time series), it has remained statistically significant.

**Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 there was a gap in completion rate between Minority Ethnic and White students of 6.6pp**

The gap in attainment between our Asian and white students is no longer statistically significant at 2.9%. It has decreased year on year for the past four years and has been consistently lower than the sector for the past six years. The rate of attainment of our Asian students is also higher than the sector at 85.1% compared to 74.8% (2021/22).

The gap in attainment between our Black and white students has remained statistically significant for each of the past six years although it is currently lower than the sector. Our 4-year aggregate attainment gap between Black and white students is also lower than the sector at 16pp compared to 20.2pp for the sector.

**Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 there was a gap in attainment rate between Black and White students of 14.1pp**

The volatility of the gaps in attainment rate between our Mixed Ethnicity and Other Ethnicity students compared to their white peers is due to the low population sizes. For the past three years the attainment gap between Mixed Ethnicity students and their white peers has been below the sector and not statistically significant. The attainment gap between our Other Ethnicity students and their white peers has been lower than the sector and not statistically significant for the past two years. Due to the volatility of the data, we will not be focusing our targets on these groups of students, choosing instead to focus on the broader category of ME or ABMO students.

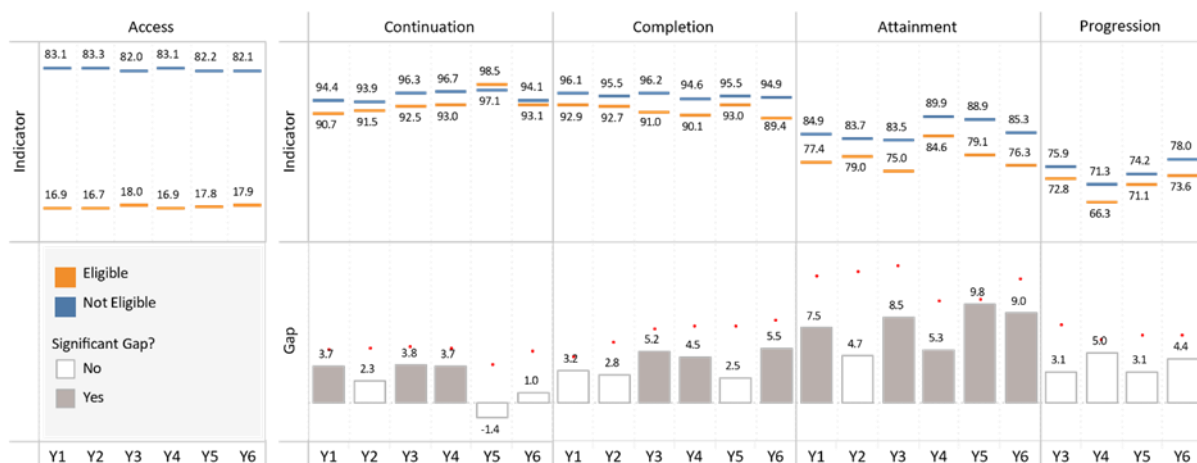
The progression rates for ME students has remained in line with the white student progression rate, and the gap between the two has remained lower than the sector. There are no statistically significant gaps in progression rates between our Asian, Black, Mixed or Other Ethnicity students and their white peers at any point in the past four years. Our gaps in progression rate between Asian and white students has remained below the sector for the past four years, and the gaps between Black and white students has remained largely in line with the sector (see visuals above). The 4-year aggregate progression gap between Black and white students is 4.4pp for the sector compared to our 3.3pp aggregate gap. Despite this, our internal Careers Registration and Careers Exit surveys indicate that only 46% of Black students reported that they were ready to progress into employment or further study (compared to 59% of the final year population). In contrast, Black students reported a higher rate of significant experience than the overall final year population; a rate of 69% by graduation compared to 67% or the final year population.

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap of 13pp, in preparedness to progress into employment or further study between Black students and the final year student population**

### Free School Meals eligibility (FSM)

**Free School Meals Eligibility** (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)

SOURCE: Ofs APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



The proportion of students eligible for free school meals entering the university has remained stable over the past four years with a 4-year aggregate of 17.7%, 1.5% lower than the sector 4 - year aggregate rate (19.2%).

Our continuation, completion and attainment rates for students eligible for free school meals are all consistently higher than the sector as illustrated in the visual above, and the gaps in rates throughout the lifecycle between students who are eligible for free school meals and those students who are not eligible, remain smaller than the sector (see visual above).

Although there are statistically significant gaps in completion and attainment rates, between students who are eligible for free school meals and those students who are not eligible, we will not be focusing a target on these groups of students, instead we will focus our targets on the experience of Q1 IMD students. This is due to the limited availability of verifiable student level FSM data.

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible students of 5.5pp**



**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in attainment rate between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible students of 9pp**

Over the 4-year time series in the visual above (2017/18-2020/21), the progression rates of our students who are eligible for FSM has remained higher than the sector (7.7pp higher in 2017/18 and 5.8pp higher in 2020/21). The gap in progression rate between FSM eligible students and non-FSM eligible students is also consistently higher at the university than the sector over the 4-year time series, with no statistically significant gaps present.

**Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1**

An analysis of UCAS end of cycle data across a 5-year time series has highlighted that IMD Q1 students have significantly lower application-to-offer rates than the overall university, as illustrated in table 9. Of these three populations, students from IMD Q1 have the lowest application to offer rate and this will be a priority for the university across the four-year period of the plan.

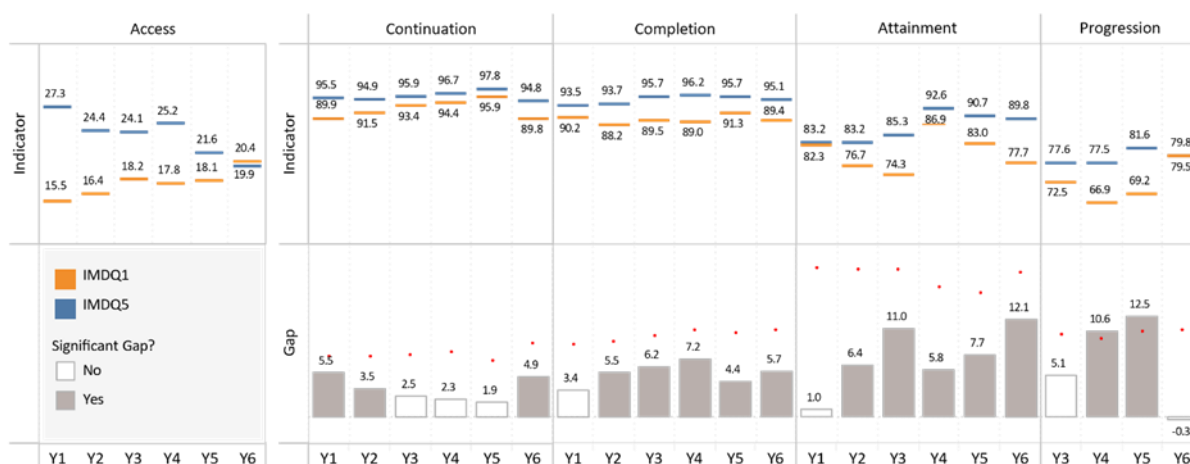
**Risk Indicator: In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 10.3pp**

**TABLE 9: Application to offer rate by IMD quintile and overall for the University of Leicester**

	Overall	IMD Q1	IMD Q1/2	IMD Q5
2018/19	82.6%	75.8%	77.7%	88.5%
2019/20	79.6%	69.1%	72.6%	85.1%
2020/21	78.2%	66.5%	69.7%	85.5%
2021/22	73.2%	64.5%	66.7%	78.3%
2022/23	70.5%	62.5%	65.4%	76.7%

**IMD 2019 (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (•)**

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



Although during the past 5 years, the university has recruited a lower proportion of Q1 students than the sector, we saw an increase of 2.3% in 2021/22, and an overall increase of 4.9% Q1 students at the university over that five-year time series. Our intake of students from IMD Q1/2 (40% most deprived areas in England) reached 42.5% in 2021/22, almost identical to the sector average of 42.8%.

Across the lifecycle, the gaps between our IMD Q1 students and IMD Q5 students remains lower than the sector, however the gaps in continuation, completion and attainment rates are all statistically significant.

**Risk Indicator: In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 4.9pp. This forms the basis for PTS\_1.**

**Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 there was a gap in completion rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 4.7pp. This forms the basis for PTS\_2.**

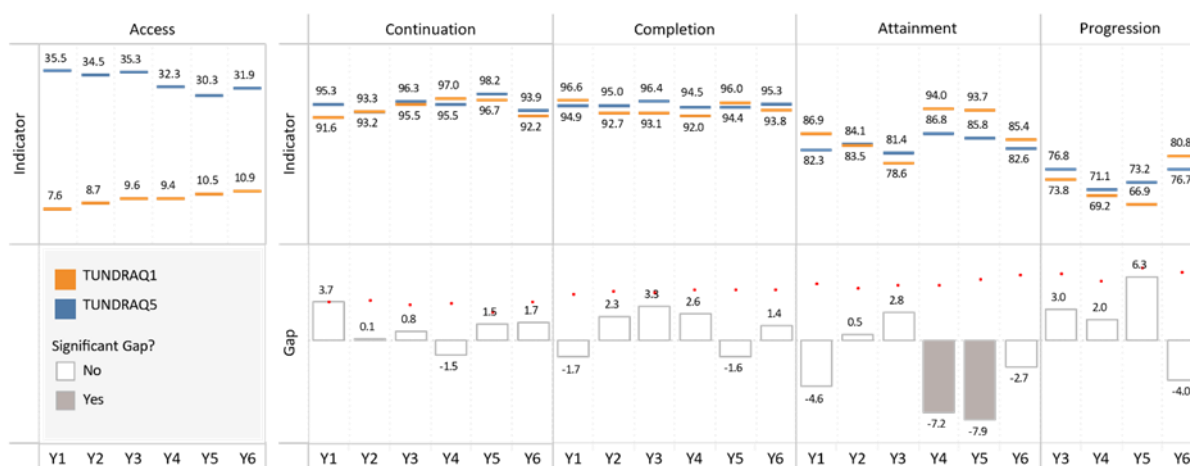
**Risk Indicator: In 2021/22 there was a gap in attainment rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 12.1pp. This forms the basis for PTS\_4.**

Progression rates for students from IMD Q1 neighbourhoods increased by 10.3pp in 2020/21, closing the gap in progression between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 to -0.3pp. Whilst we are pleased with this positive outcome, we are cautious about dismissing a target around a single year's worth of data. We also keen to improve our understanding of these results, and improve the quality of this dataset; currently the dataset is prone to volatility on due to the lower population rate (based on Graduate Outcome Survey response rates rather than the entire finalist population). Due to these reasons, we will not be focusing a target on the progression rates on IMD Q1 students.

## TUNDRA

**TUNDRA** (Full-time, all undergraduates) - UoL indicators and gaps with sector gap (●)

SOURCE: OFS APP Dataset and Individualised Files (July 2023)



From continuation through to progression our rates of students from TUNDRA Q1 neighbourhoods have stayed closely aligned to the rates for our students from TUNDRA Q5 neighbourhoods. All gaps in rates between these two groups of students are consistently below those for the sector and remain not statistically significant. The only exception to this is the gap in attainment for 2019/20-2020/21 where the gap was statistically significant with Q1 students outperforming their Q5 peers. For these reasons we will not be focusing a target on our TUNDRA dataset.

## Intersections

As part of our Assessment of Performance we completed a CHAID Analysis. The results of this are as follows:

### Continuation

The primary driver of non-continuation is age on entry with mature students more than twice as likely not to continue as the general population - 11.9% (174/1459) compared to 5.4%.

For mature students the next most significant interaction is with IMD grouping. The intersection of mature with IMD Q12 raises the non-continuation rate to 15.6% (90/578).

When mature and IMD Q12 students intersect with the White ethnicity category, the result is the most disadvantaged group of all combinations. These students are nearly four times as likely not to

continue as the general population – 20.8% compared to 5.4%. However, this pocket contains just 264 students, around 1.5% of the total analysis population.

**Risk Indicator: Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students are the most disadvantaged group of students at the continuation stage of the lifecycle**

Whilst mature students from IMD Q345 areas are not as at risk of non-continuation as Q12 mature students, there is a significant intersection for male students within this grouping. Here students are more than twice as likely not to complete as the general population – 12.2% compared to 5.4%. This grouping includes 392 students (2.2% of the total analysis population).

For young students there is really only one analysis group where the non-continuation risk is significant: males who are eligible for free school meals. This group contains 1049 (approximately 6% of the total analysis population) and has a non-continuation rate 9.3% (n=98) so just short of twice that of the general population.

**Risk Indicator: Young, FSM eligible, Male students are disadvantaged at the continuation stage of the lifecycle**

**Completion**

The key controlling demographic in completion rates is age on entry with mature students nearly three times more likely to not complete than the general population – 18.2% (251/1379) compared to 6.4%.

For mature students the next most significant contribution comes from disability with mature students who have declared a disability being more than four times as likely to not complete compared to the general population – 26.9% compared to 6.4%. There are 234 students in this category representing 1.4% of the analysis population.

**Risk Indicator: Mature students with a declared disability are the most disadvantaged group of students at the completion stage of the lifecycle**

For young students, there are many more intersections at play but it is only when three additional layers of demographics are added that there is any significant variation in non-completion rates compared to the general population. There are two significant sub-groups of young students:

- 1) Males | IMD Q12 | FSM Eligible – These students are about twice as likely to not complete as the general population (13.3% compared to 6.4%). There are 489 students in this group, around 3% of the analysis population
- 2) Female | IMD Q12 | Declared Disability – These students are about 1.5 times as likely not to complete as the general population (9.7% compared to 6.4%). There are just 176 students in this group, 1.1% of the analysis population.

**Risk Indicator: Young, Males from IMD Q1/2 neighbourhoods who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the completion stage of the lifecycle**

**Risk Indicator: Young, Females from IMD Q1/2 neighbourhoods with a declared disability are disadvantaged at the completion stage of the lifecycle**

**Attainment**

For attainment the primary driver is ethnicity. Whilst non-White students have an increased likelihood of not achieving a good honours degree, the analysis actually signals those students with an unknown ethnicity as being particularly concerning. These students are about 2.5 times to come out with something other than a good honours degree (39% compared to 15.4%). There are 331 students with an unknown ethnicity, about 2.4% of the analysis population. More work needs to be done to understand if there is something systematic in the characteristics of these students.

**Risk Indicator: Students of unknown ethnicity are disadvantaged at the attainment stage of the lifecycle**

For non-White students it is the combination of males and FSM eligible that creates the biggest disadvantage. These students have a non-attainment rate of 29.3% (about twice that of the general population (15.4%). There are 457 students in this group, 3.3% of the total analysis population. Even without further combination, the intersection of male and non-White represents a problem in attainment. This is particularly important because these students make up near 20% of the analysis population (2653 students) and the non-attainment rate here runs at 24.2%, just over 1.5 times that of the general population (15.4%).

**Risk Indicator: ABMO, Male students who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the attainment stage of the lifecycle**

**Risk Indicator: ABMO Male students are disadvantaged at the attainment stage of the lifecycle**

### Progression

This is by far the simplest analysis. **There are really no intersections that are particularly significant.** The only demographics that contribute in any way to the statistical mode are age on entry and FSM eligibility, but even then, no combination of factors causes particular concern. Young student who are eligible for FSM are slightly more likely to have a negative progression outcome (just 1.2 times that of the general population – 29.2% compared to 24.6%). There are 497 students in this group, around 10% of the total analysis population.

**Risk Indicator: Young students who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the Progression stage of the lifecycle**

Due to the size of the cohorts above, we will not focus primarily on these intersections, however elements of these intersections will form the basis of broader objectives and targets.

### Summary of indications of risk

	Indication of risk	Student characteristic	Lifecycle stage	Link to final objective and/or target
1	In 2021/22 we had a lower than sector average recruitment of ABCS Q1 students	ABCS Q1	Access	N/A
2	In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 6.6pp	ABCS Q1	Continuation	N/A
3	In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 19.6pp	ABCS Q1	Completion	N/A
4	In 2020/21 there was a gap in progression rate between ABCS Q1 students and ABCS Q5 students of 11.7pp	ABCS Q1	Progression	OP_1
5	In 2021/22 our recruitment of mature students was 21.4% lower than the sector average	Age	Access	N/A
6	In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between mature and young students of 6.8pp	Age	Continuation	N/A
7	In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between mature and young students of 10.9pp	Age	Completion	N/A

	<b>Indication of risk</b>	<b>Student characteristic</b>	<b>Lifecycle stage</b>	<b>Link to final objective and/or target</b>
<b>8</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in progression rate between mature and young students of -11.5pp	Age	Progression	OP_1
<b>9</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between students with a declared disability of 5.2pp.	Disability	Completion	Whole Provider Approach
<b>10</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between students with a declared mental health condition and those without a disability of 12.1pp	Mental Health	Completion	Whole Provider Approach
<b>11</b>	In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between Black and White students of 17.6pp	Ethnicity	Access	N/A
<b>12</b>	In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between ABMO and White students of 17.1pp	Ethnicity	Access	N/A
<b>13</b>	In 2021/22 there was a gap in completion rate between Minority Ethnic and White students of 6.6pp	Ethnicity	Completion	N/A
<b>14</b>	In 2021/22 there was a gap in attainment rate between Black and White students of 14.1pp	Ethnicity	Attainment	OS_3, PTS_3
<b>15</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in preparedness progress into employment or further study between Black students and the final year student population of 13pp	Ethnicity	Progression	OP_1, PTP_1
<b>16</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in completion rate between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible students of 5.5pp	FSM	Completion	N/A
<b>17</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in attainment rate between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible students of 9pp	FSM	Attainment	OS_4, PTS_4
<b>18</b>	In 2022/23 there was a gap in offer rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 10.3pp	IMD Q1	Access	OA_1, PTA_1
<b>19</b>	In 2020/21 there was a gap in continuation rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 4.9pp. This forms the basis for PTS_1.	IMD Q1	Continuation	OS_1, PTS_1
<b>20</b>	In 2021/22 there was a gap in completion rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 4.7pp. This forms the basis for PTS_2.	IMD Q1	Completion	OS_2, PTS_2
<b>21</b>	In 2021/22 there was a gap in attainment rate between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students of 12.1pp. This forms the basis for PTS_4.	IMD Q1	Attainment	OS_4, PTS_4
<b>22</b>	Mature, IMD Q1/2, White students are the most disadvantaged group of students at the continuation stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Continuation	N/A

	<b>Indication of risk</b>	<b>Student characteristic</b>	<b>Lifecycle stage</b>	<b>Link to final objective and/or target</b>
<b>23</b>	Young, FSM eligible, Male students are disadvantaged at the continuation stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Continuation	N/A
<b>24</b>	Young, Males from IMD Q1/2 neighbourhoods who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the completion stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Completion	OS_2, PTS_2
<b>25</b>	Young, Females from IMD Q1/2 neighbourhoods with a declared disability are disadvantaged at the completion stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Completion	OS_2, PTS_2
<b>26</b>	ABMO, Male students who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the attainment stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Attainment	OS_3, PTS_3
<b>27</b>	Young students who are FSM eligible are disadvantaged at the progression stage of the lifecycle	Intersections	Progression	N/A

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

### **Intervention Strategy 1 (IS 1): Barriers to mattering and a lack of representation**

Belonging has been identified as an essential need, required to be fulfilled in order to successfully achieve in a learning environment (Maslow, 1970; Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Belonging in itself is an innately individual emotion and hard to specifically define in relation to tackling a lack of a sense of belonging. Blake et al (2022) identify four foundations of belonging: connection, inclusion, support, and autonomy (p.5). There is greater volume of literature focused on a lack of belonging than there is about creating a sense of belonging (Clegg, 2006; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty et al. 1996). Due to the nature of belonging, we focus on mattering, which has some similarities with belonging such as feeling valued and accepted but does not focus on “fitting in”. Elliot (2009) elaborates on how belonging and mattering differ, and in doing so outlines how we, in higher education, can make a difference to and show students that they matter. Mattering is met by showing individuals or students through our actions that we care; we pay attention and we can demonstrate that we have the best interests of the students in mind. Corbière and Amundson (2007) link mattering to belonging as a stepping stone, and this has been measured in an educational setting by France and Finney (2009) and Tovar et al (2010).

In order to matter, universities need to recognise their students’ needs as a society (France and Finney, 2009), recognise them as part of that society or community and respond to needs as they arise. Dixon and Tucker (2008) define mattering as an “individuals’ perceptions that they are important and are valued by other people in interpersonal relationships and within systems” (p.123). This leads on to the importance of representation within that society or community. McIntosh et al (2020) and Thijm (2023) agree that within the system building successful relationships will increase the sense of mattering. Scales to measure mattering have been developed such as the General Mattering Scale (Marcus & Rosenberg, 1987), the Mattering Index (Elliott et al., 2004), the Anti-Mattering Scale (Flett et al., 2022) and the University Mattering Scale (UMS) (France and Finney, 2010). Flett et al (2022) link mattering to success within the student lifecycle from access/recruitment, retention, success and alumni engagement. This is supported by Kerrigan and Maktelow (2021) around attainment and retention improvements. As part of mattering, it is important to recognise representation within the system. The NUS (2011) report identified that there is evidence that diversity at senior leadership levels improves belonging (and therefore mattering). The representation impacts decisions made at senior leadership level in relation to underrepresented groups in the student body (Arday, Branchu & Boliver, 2021).

In Blake et al (2022), within the four foundations they identified around belonging, connection was found to have the greatest impact through opportunities for students to meet their peers, which helps them to develop networks and build their confidence.

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### **Intervention Strategy 2 (IS 2): Financial Pressures**

There is evidence of students from low socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to complete their studies (OfS, 2023). This also impacts their wellbeing more generally and their mental and physical health (Richardson, Elliott, Roberts et al, 2017; Save the Student, 2022). The impact of the cost-of-living is intersectional, with small targeted cohorts at more risk from the effects such as carers, GRT and care experienced students more likely to require additional support (OfS EORR 2023). From a recent survey by the ONS (2023) on the cost of living crisis:

- “92% said cost of living has increased compared to a year ago
- “More than 9 in 10 (91%) students were either somewhat or very worried about the rising cost of living
- “46% of students reported their mental health and well-being had worsened since the start of the autumn term 2022
- “More than three-quarters (78%) of students were concerned that the rising cost of living may affect how well they do in their studies (UUK, 2023)

There is evidence of positive outcomes from needs based financial support and bursaries improving retention rates, engagement levels and engagement in employment opportunities relevant to their career goals (Harrison & Hatt, 2012). There is also evidence around financial security impacting the awarding gap, Murphy and Wyness (2016) found that £1,000 increase in student income increased the likelihood of gaining an upper-second class degree by 3.7 percentage points. By reducing the need for students to work alongside their studies, taking engagement off campus increased academic performance (Broton, Goldrick-Rab, & Benson, 2016; Zhang & Yang, 2020). This has knock on impact on retention and completion for students from low socio-economic backgrounds (Bettinger, 2015; Castleman & Long, 2016; Denning, 2017; Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen, Harris, & Benson, 2016).

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### **Intervention Strategy 3 (IS 3): Gaps in students' knowledge skills and capital**

Gaps in skills, knowledge and capital begins prior to entering higher education. The OfS has evidence that GCSE attainment is a good predictor of access to higher education and gaps are a barrier (2017). This is supported by evidence from the Russel Group (2020) and Sammons et al, (2015) that this is impacted by the structures in the student's education such as their socio-economic status, which secondary school they attended, and extra-curricular support available.

Scaffolded, embedded support means that students do not have to access support centrally, mitigating feelings of inadequacy or where there is a lack of recognition that support is required (Wingate, 2006). Goldingay, Sophie et al, (2014) show that self-referral is low in widening participation groups and this impacts on attainment. Multi-intervention support and embedded signposting, academic skills and pastoral support has been successful in the US to address gaps in student attainment (Angrist, Lang, & Oreopoulos, 2009). This has been recommended as best practice where central and academic schools have adapted programmes to ensure the right skills are delivered at the right time (Bohemia et al; 2007; McWilliams et al, 2014; Lea and Street, 1998; Wingate and Tribble, 2012).

Peer assisted learning (PAL) supports learning and social activities in the curriculum. While this is more predominant in the US, more UK universities are piloting PAL programmes. The outcomes indicate that PAL has an impact on attainment, resilience and self-efficacy (Capstick, Harrell-Williams, Cockrum, & West, 2019; Fox, Stevenson, Connelly, Duff, & Dunlop, 2010; Kerrigan & Manktelow, 2021; Sandner, 2015) as well as contributing to a sense of belonging (Bailey, 2021; Young, Hoffman, & Reinhardt, 2019).

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#### **Intervention Strategy 4 (IS 4): Inequitable processes and curriculum**

Higher education is full of jargon, processes and policies that disadvantage some students more than others. UUK and NUS (2019) and NUS (2011) identified that institutional culture and curriculum content, design and delivery all contributed to inequities for students. There has been a body of work around the experiences of disabled students in higher education and the additional burden of systems to navigate (Higher Education Commission, 2020; Disabled Students' Commission 2023). This is mirrored in the literature around students with Autism and ADHD and their experiences of navigating transition and success in higher education (Sedgwick-Müller et al, 2022, Hillier et al 2018, Murin et al 2016). Each of the studies suggests that ongoing scaffolded support from transition onwards is required to support students with Autism or ADHD through their educational journey.

Inclusivity in the curriculum and assessment practices has also been a focus in particular relation to the race awarding gap. The OfS (2020) and TASO (2023) have advice on reviewing the curriculum, in relation to racial diversity. This work has been supported by research completed at the University of Leicester Institute for Inequality in Higher Education (ULIHE) around assessment (Campbell, 2022; Campbell, Hawkins and Osman, 2021). These publications make recommendations on how to address some of the student satisfaction issues around ethnicity and assessment. Alongside this, Campion and Clark (2022) warn that race equality initiatives are only successful when there is senior leadership support.

Student transition has become a key area for development. Lowe and Cooke (2003) identify transition as the key point where a poor experience can lead to poor retention. Chemers et al (2001) link this to students' self-efficacy beliefs, students confident in their abilities will see change as a challenge rather than a demand. This is particularly predominant with students who have Autism, where adapting to new surroundings and experiences can have more of an impact on their mental health (Murin et al, 2016). Paguyo, Sponsler & Iturbe-LaGrave (2022) support this with linking personal experiences, self-reflection and learning leading to better outcomes and increased engagement.

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### **Whole institution intervention: Mental Health**

There is an increasing number of students declaring mental health conditions, reporting feeling stressed or who are looking at support for their wellbeing (Johnson & Crenna-Jennings, 2018). This is a leading factor in students who are withdrawing from studies, or who are not fully participating or engaging in activities that contribute to their education (Robertson, Mulcahy and Baars, 2022; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011; Nieuwoudt

and Pedler, 2021). Simpson and Ferguson (2014) in Australia, identified a that students who had declared a mental health condition and who had registered for support with their Disability Support Service achieved grades 10 percentage points higher than those who had not registered and retention rates were similar to their peer group who had no declared disability.

The Mental Health Charter is a whole institution approach that aims to support students from transition to graduation through embedding measures that promote general good mental health, wellbeing and specific mental health conditions (Hughes and Spanner, 2019). By embracing the concepts of the Charter, we should be able to increase the awareness of our services and the adjustments that can be made for all students, whether they have a declared, non-visible or may just need extra help during their course to all staff and students. This would then make providing signposting and advice an easier and normalised action (O'Neill, Markward, & French, 2012, as cited in Dong & Lucas, 2016; Murray & Sotardi, 2022).

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### **Whole institution intervention: Small cohorts**

The University of Leicester has small cohorts of care experienced, estranged, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Boatmen and Showmen, and Refugee and Asylum Seeker students. There are a number of organisations who provide resources for an accredited quality mark that also undertake research into the experiences of these groups of students, such as the

National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL), Carers' Trust and the Universities of Sanctuary.

For care experienced students, it has been identified that financial security such as providing discounted or free accommodation can improve the students' outcomes (Jisc Analytics, 2022). There is also evidence for ongoing support from preparation for higher education to on course participation motivation and having a named contact as beneficial for care experienced and estranged students (Cotton, Nash and Kneale, 2014).

Brassington (2022) calculates that there are less than 20 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, Showmen and Boatmen (GRTSB) students in each higher education institute on average across the UL in 2020/21 (p.9). The report highlights inconsistencies in terminology around how students in this cohort identify themselves and how that is reported, that GRTSB histories should be included in the curriculum and staff should receive anti-racism training that includes information on the prejudice faced by GRTSB communities.

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## **Annex C: Targets, investment and fees**

The OfS will append the information from the fees, investment and targets document when an access and participation plan is published.