

# **SAE Education Ltd.**

## **Access and participation plan**

**2020-21 to 2024-25**

SAE Institute UK is a specialist Higher Education provider with just under 700 students and three campuses in the UK: London, Liverpool and Glasgow. SAE specialises in creative media education and offers seven accelerated 2-year degree programmes from film production to audio and animation, and a series of validated online Masters programmes. Over 95% of current students are undergraduates. Recently we expanded our SAE-accredited professional diplomas which are more vocational in nature in Audio, Animation and Film, which have enabled more students from diverse backgrounds to improve their career prospects. These Diplomas also represent the first time that SAE has introduced a part-time study mode.

The SAE vision is to be the leading educator for the creative media industries. There is a strong commitment to widening participation for learners who are seeking to gain experience and obtain qualifications that will enable them to enter the creative media industries. Learners are offered the opportunity to access accelerated degree-level programmes of study which reduces the overall cost of study for individual learners, making it more affordable to gain qualifications. Our arrangements for alternative entry for those that do not meet the minimum entry requirements are designed to encourage applicants who might otherwise not consider higher level study. SAE has a diverse mix of learners. Our project-based teaching and learning approach enables students to develop strong communication skills and intercultural awareness.

We aim to significantly improve the diversity of our student body, where finances will not be a limiting factor through our financial support and fee waiver programme which will more than double. By the end of the five year plan we will be working with 30 schools, and engage more collaboratively with them and our existing school partners, to significantly raise aspirations of school pupils wherever they may study. Our outreach work will touch over 3000 individuals who will benefit from the enhanced information, advice and guidance about our 2 year accelerated study format and alternative entry routes to support every type of student.

Underpinning this will be a joined up approach so that our access plan is connected to our institutional strategic plan and supporting strategies, to achieve our overriding vision of supporting students and being the most trusted and leading creative media education provider.

# 1. Assessment of performance

SAE's first Access and Participation Plan (APP) was agreed in 2019-20. While SAE has adopted a pro-active approach, trialing and building foundations for practice over 2018-19, the majority of this work and its outcomes are yet to be realised. However, data from early initiatives, and from other sources of data (e.g. the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework), show early improvements for a number of underrepresented groups.

Due to the small student cohorts at SAE Institute, many of the metrics and data included are lacking in statistical significance and percentage data is particularly volatile. This makes trend analysis, and the subsequent setting of targets, very difficult. Where possible, to try and mitigate some of this effect, we have used analysis of trends over several years, and in groupings rather than at disaggregated levels. This is reflected in the wide confidence limits shown in the Access and Participation dashboard provided by the OfS.

## 1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

### Access — POLAR4

We have seen steady year-on-year progress in the proportion of new entrants from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2, with a percentage increase of 4.1% between 2014-15 (at 19.7%) to 2017-18 (at 23.8%). Most recently, we have seen an increase of 0.9% from 2016-17 to 2017-18. Whilst we are tracking very slightly behind our 2018-19 milestone of 25% (by -1.2%), this demonstrates positive progress in this metric.

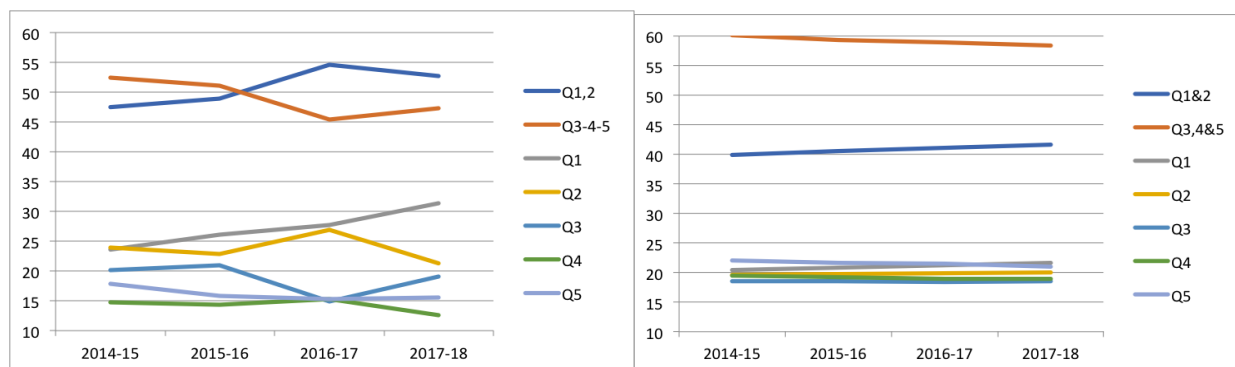
In respect of enrolments of students from POLAR4 Q1 backgrounds, SAE has similarly increased year-on-year, with 14.6% (25/165) entrants in this category in 2017-18. This compares with the percentage of POLAR4 Q5 students, at 34.1% in the same year, representing a gap in access between the groups of 19.5pp.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
POLAR4 Q1 entrants	8.4% (20/225)	9.9% (20/180)	12.9% (20/170)	14.6% (25/165)
POLAR4 Q5 entrants	31.4% (70/225)	32.4% (60/180)	33.5% (55/170)	34.1% (55/165)
Ratio of Q5:Q1 entrants	<b>3.7 : 1</b>	<b>3.3 : 1</b>	<b>2.6 : 1</b>	<b>2.3 : 1</b>

Addressing the first two KPMs as described in the Access and Participation plan Guidance document,<sup>1</sup> SAE can evidence that it has surpassed the expected target of a 3:1 ratio between participation gaps between most and least represented groups: as shown above, an improving trend across four years has brought the Institute to the most recent ratio of 2.3:1.

<sup>1</sup> OfS Regulatory Advice 1. Accessed 24 June 2019. (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/>, p.19)

## Access — Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

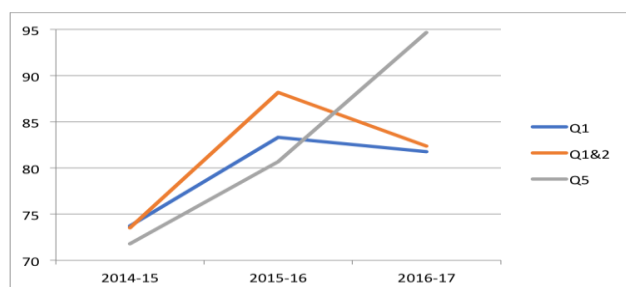


Access for SAE Institute by IMD quintile (left), compared with national sector performance (right)

SAE Institute performs extremely well in recruitment of students from the most deprived backgrounds. Enrolment of students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 show a general steady increase across a four-year period, reaching 52.7% (145/247 students) in 2017-18. The gap between Q1 and Q5 favours students from the former, with access levels for students from Q5 remaining largely static, within +/-1.7pp around the average of 16.1%; access for Q1 has increased to over 30% by 2017-18.

## Continuation — POLAR4

2016-17 figures for continuation of students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 show a decrease on the previous year's performance, with 82.1% (rounded to 30/40) continuing; individually, Quintiles 1 and 2 show a 1.5% and 5.9% drop in continuation respectively. In contrast, Quintile 5 students saw a 14% increase in continuation. This increase balanced further drops in the remaining quintiles, where Q3, 4 and 5 aggregated saw an 88.5% continuation rate (115/130 students). Most notably, however, the gap between Quintile 1 and 5 continuation has widened over a three year period.



Continuation rates for SAE students, shown by POLAR4 quintile

This relates directly to the OfS KPM 2.<sup>2</sup> While the gap has risen slowly on a national scale, reaching 5pp in 2016-17, the same year saw the gap for SAE students rise to 12.9pp.

## Continuation — IMD

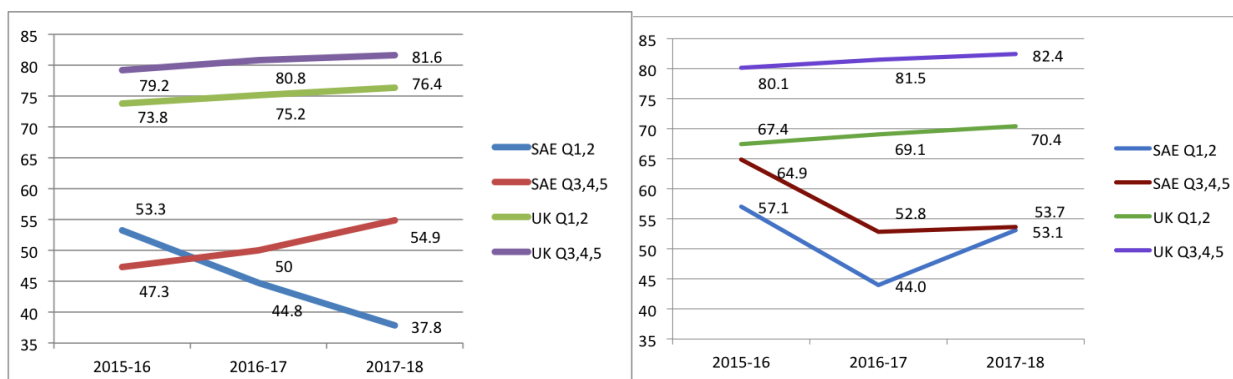
The overall trend in improved continuation for SAE across three years is also apparent when breaking the population down by IMD Quintiles. Each Quintile has improved in continuation rates by between 6.6–13.4%, with the aggregate of areas of highest deprivation (Q1 and 2) improving by 7.7% to a continuation rate of 83.1% in 2016-17.

<sup>2</sup> OfS Regulatory Advice 6. Accessed 24 June 2019. (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1413599d-37bc-42ae-938a-d760d98c285b/regulatory-advice-6-how-to-prepare-your-access-and-participation-plan-guidance.pdf>, p.4)

The gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 averages 1.2 percentage points over a three-year period; while the gap between aggregated groups of highest deprivation (Q1 and 2) and lowest deprivation (Q3, 4 and 5) averages 1.5pp. Overall performance by SAE remains strong, approaching the national average figure and showing smaller gaps between disaggregated groupings, while also showing a contrasting trend to the nationally decreasing rate of continuation for students from IMD Q1 and 2.

### Attainment — POLAR4

Rates of attainment for students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 have decreased over a three-year period, from 53.3% in 2015-16 to 37.8% in 2017-18. This is in contrast with the national sector trend of steady improvement, with attainment rates rising from 74% to 76% over the same timeframe. Disaggregating groups to individual Quintiles in this measure results in very small datasets ( $n < 10$ ) with volatile percentage figures; however, an aggregate of Q1 and 2 compared to Q3,4 and 5 shows a clear trend across three years. The average gap of 5.4 percentage points across this timeframe has favoured students from the highest areas of participation (Q3,4 and 5) more over time, and stands at 17pp in 2017-18. As identified in SAE's previous Access and Participation plan, it is clear that the widening gap between POLAR4 Q1 and 2 and students from Q3,4 and 5 still needs to be addressed, especially in relation to sector-wide performance.



Attainment rates for SAE students by POLAR4 (left) and IMD (right), compared with all English providers

### Attainment — IMD

An examination of IMD quintiles shows a slightly different situation, with a broad downward trend in attainment rates. By this measure, as with POLAR4, aggregated performance in Q1 and 2 is poor in comparison to the sector average (53.1%, or 70/130 students, compared to an English average of 70.4% in 2017-18); while the average gap between the aggregation of Q1 and 2 against Q3, 4 and 5 stands at 5.7pp across three years. However, neither the downward trend for students from areas of highest deprivation, nor the gap between the two aggregated groups shown, are as significant as those measured by POLAR4.

### Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study — POLAR4

Progression data for SAE Institute is available from 2015-16 to 2016-17 through the OfS Access and Participation dataset; however, initial validated results from Graduate Outcomes surveys in 2017-18, provided by HESA (results for Cohorts A and B are available at the time of writing) are

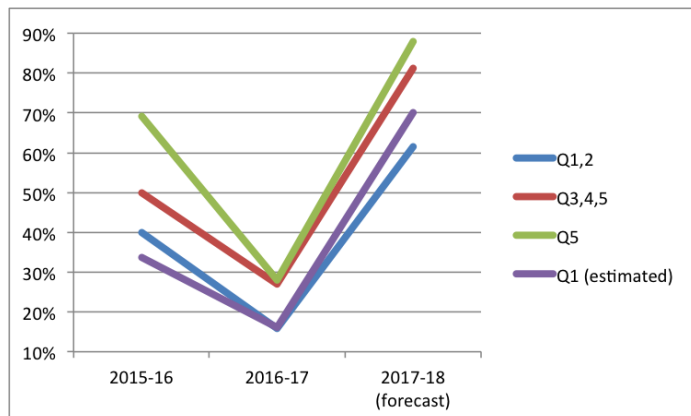
available, enabling a three-year trend analysis. These results forecast a significantly improved performance for SAE - likely factors contributing to this are the inclusion of portfolio careers, common for creative media graduates, in the Graduate Outcomes results; and the greater length of time between completion of studies and surveying when compared to the previous DLHE survey.

Whole cohort progression rates to further graduate study or highly-skilled employment from SAE are generally quite low in comparison to the sector, averaging 28% (2015-16 to 2016-17). While this is in the context of small datasets, a negative trajectory is observed between these two years of -20% (35/85, falling to 35/165). In this, students from POLAR4 Quintile 4 saw the largest fall (-38.1%), though aggregates of Q1,2 and Q3,4,5 all fall along the average.

Progression rates for the two aggregated groups (Q1&2 v. Q3,4&5) were poor in 2016-17, at 16% and 19.7% respectively. Whilst this data suggests no material progression gap between the most and least represented groups, general performance and trajectory is of concern.

### Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study — IMD

Examining progression by IMD quintile, it is noted that the figures for students from the least disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD Q5) show a larger fall (-41.2%) than other Quintiles in 2016-17; particularly in comparison to Q3 (-7.7%). Aggregating Q1&2 shows a progression rate of 15.8%, compared to 27% for remaining quintiles. This gap, though only widening slightly from the previous year, may be the most notable area for improvement under this demographic. Similar providers such as BIMM and ICMP have generally shown improvement in the last year, with gaps of 1pp and 9pp respectively. Average performance across 3 years for these 2 providers averages to c.68%, also notably outperforming SAE.



*Progression rates for SAE students by IMD quintile*

Forecasts for 2017-18 based on validated Graduate Outcomes data provided by HESA are hampered by a very low response rate (c.35% for SAE Institute), but do provide the only measure currently available. These figures indicate a large rise in the number of graduates in highly skilled employment or further education,<sup>3</sup> to 73% overall (54.74 students). Students from Q1, in particular, are estimated to surpass a 70% attainment rate, which would represent a performance very close to the sector average (68.8% for 2016-17). While this general, but significant, increase in performance is encouraging, the gap between IMD Q1,2 and Q3,4,5 groups is forecast to widen to 19.6 percentage points.

<sup>3</sup> Established by taking figures for Major groups 1-3 of the given SOC codes.

Across a three-year average, progression rates for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 stand at 39%, notably below the sector average of 67.2% for the last three years of published data (and likely higher once 2017-18 figures are published, continuing the upward trend).

## **1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students**

### **Access**

The most recent internal student enrolment data shows that 27% of the student population recruited in 2018-19 are BAME, exceeding the milestone of 20% proposed in our previous Access and Participation plan by +7%, and being just short of the sector average of 31% .

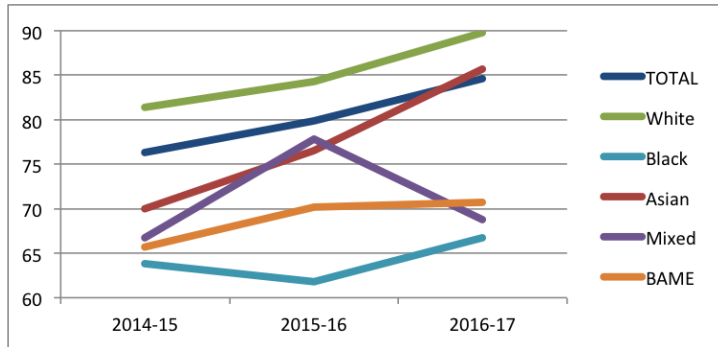
We have seen a decrease of 8.7% in the gap between recruitment of BAME and white students from 2016-17 to 2017-18. This gap appears to be narrowing slightly over time, as the three-year average from 2014-7 was 46.1pp, dropping for 2015-18 to 43.6pp, and standing in 2017-18 at 41.8pp. When disaggregated by ethnicity, gaps between white and Asian or 'Other' ethnicities are highest on average, though all sub-groups are showing significant gaps, reflecting the national performance in this area. The gap between white and Asian students can be identified as a target area, with a gap of 66.2pp for 2017-18 that SAE will seek to reduce.

### **Continuation**

Continuation for BAME students was highlighted as a target area in the Institute's 2019-20 plan, and some improvement has been evident. The milestone for the current year has been surpassed by 3.4%, with a positive overall trend maintained, increasing from 65.7% (70/110) in 2014-15 to 70.7% (40/60) in 2016-17. Internal forecasts for 2017-18 data indicate that these figures are likely to remain static; however, we see this as a year of consolidation, with new practices and support that have been put into place expected to have further decisive impact the following year.

Breaking down the demographics further, the Institute can show a marked increase in continuation for Asian students. However, two particular elements are highlighted for improvement: following an increase in the previous year, continuation of mixed-race students decreased by 9% in 2016-17, and the average gap in continuation rate between white and mixed-race students across three years stands at 14.1pp. Black students remain consistently and notably at a greater risk of non-continuation than any other ethnicity: the gap between white and black continuation rates has increased steadily over three years with an average of 21.1pp, considerably higher than the national figure of 6.3pp in 2016-17.

SAE believes that identifying a target to improve the gap in continuation rates between white and aggregated BAME students will address mixed-race student continuation, while also improving the metric more broadly. The gap between black and white students may be viewed as more significant, both due to the larger student numbers involved and the larger gap present; a second target to address this more specifically can therefore be developed.



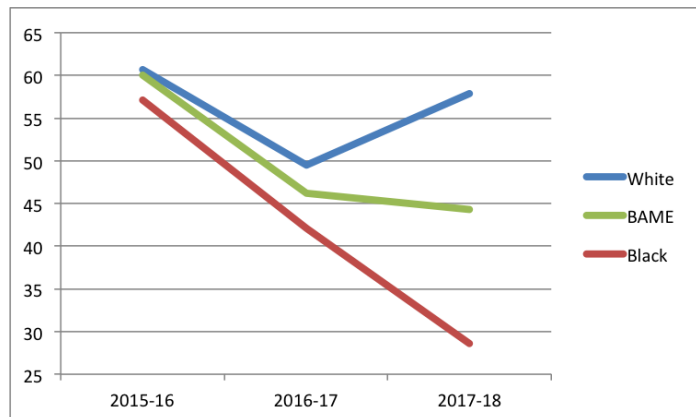
The Institute's aggregated BAME continuation remains lower than the national sector average of 88.4 over the last three years.

*Continuation rates for SAE students, shown by ethnicity*

### Attainment

As identified in the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan, BAME students are underperforming with regards to attainment of first and upper second class degree outcomes. In 2016-17, there was a dip in attainment levels for all students; in 2017-18, attainment for white students improved by 8.4%, while for BAME students a further 1.9% drop was recorded. Considering outcomes by disaggregated ethnicity, it is clear that black students' attainment is an area of particular concern. Despite small cohort numbers which impact heavily on individual figures, an average of three years' data shows attainment rates for black students to be at 42.6%, with an average gap of 13.4pp from white students' attainment rates.

*Fig. - Attainment rates for SAE students, shown by ethnicity*



This contrasts with national performance, as across all English providers black students' attainment rose by 1.6pp to 58.9% for 2017-18; while BAME students more generally have steadily improved to 68.8% for the same year. As a similar provider, comparison with BIMM shows a similar trend in music and creative media, with a 13pp drop in 2017-18 (to 47% attainment for BAME students), and a significant 30pp gap between white and black students' attainment in the same year.

Internal forecasts made by analysis of HESA AP Student data suggest that SAE's figures will see an improvement in the coming year, arresting the downward trend evident above; considerable further improvement is needed to address the gap between white and black student attainment, which is forecast at 21.9pp for 2017-18, and is a national priority under the OfS KPM 4.

### Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study

Progression for all students dropped significantly in 2016-17, with white students following the overall trend in dropping by 22.5% (30/65 from the previous year, to 35/140). Data for BAME students is volatile due to the small cohort numbers, but saw a steeper drop in progression for 2016-17, giving an average gap in progression rates between white and BAME students of 9.2 percentage points (standing at 19pp in 2016-17). Figures for individual ethnic groups are not

available due to very small populations, but cross-examination of the aggregates of multiple ethnicities indicates that no subset of the BAME grouping is performing at a significantly lower level than another. To improve reporting on disaggregated groups, SAE will be adopting a proactive strategy to improve Graduate Outcomes responses from 2018-19, thereby providing a larger student population from which to disaggregate in a meaningful way.

Forecasted progression rates for 2017-18 suggest an institutional improvement, with 100% (11/11) BAME students achieving progression, from which 63.6% (7/11) of BAME students and 75.8% (50/66) of white students have entered highly-skilled employment or further study.

Due again to small population sizes, the three-year average gap between white and BAME students' progression provides a better indicator: this stands at 12.2pp, wider than the average over the previous two years, despite the overall improvement in BAME progression rates which should surpass the milestones for 2018-19 proposed in SAE's previous Access and Participation Plan.

This is set against national performance in this measure shows a trend towards improvement for all student groups, with BAME students achieving a 70% progression rate for the first time last year, and the gap between white and BAME students continually narrowing to the current figure of 3.9pp. Comparable providers such as BIMM and ICMP show gaps of -4pp and 5pp respectively for 2016/17, closer than SAE to national averages.

### **1.3 Mature students**

#### **Access**

Access for mature students is very strong at SAE, with an average 50.2% of enrolments across the last four years considered mature. Individual years have varied little from this average, with figures for 2017-18 at 51.5% (175/340 students). As a result, the gap between mature and young entrants has averaged at -0.3pp. In this area, SAE is significantly outperforming the national average, which has maintained an average proportion of mature enrolments over the same period of 27.1%, and an average gap between mature and young participation of 47.5pp (albeit with a clear trend towards reduction).

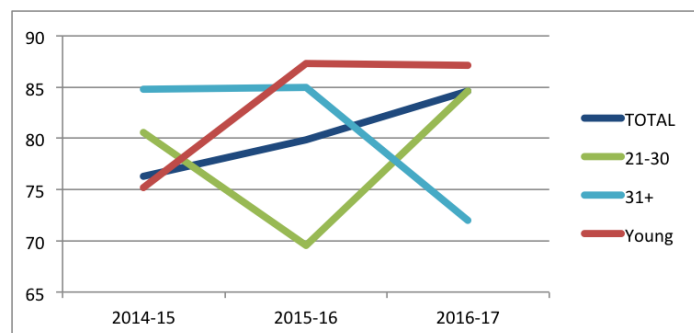
#### **Continuation**

Mature students were identified in the Institute's 2019-20 Access and Participation plan as an underperforming group with regards to continuation. Milestones have been met successfully, with a drastic improvement (32%) on the target for mature students in 2018-19, which had been set on the back of disappointing performance in 2015-16. The gap in continuation rates between young and mature students has averaged 5.9 percentage points over the last three years, which is slightly lower than the national average of 7.1pp.

The current Access and Participation dataset highlights statistical significance in the gaps between young students, students aged 21-25 and those aged 31-40 in the most recent data. While continuation rates for young students have remained steady from 2015-16 to 2016-17, continuation for those in the 21-30 ranges have improved notably (an average of 15.1%); while the rate for those in the 31-40 range has decreased (-13%). From this breakdown, it is clear that the actions being taken to improve success for mature students are impacting those in the younger ranges; however, the older mature students (those 31 and older) are not seeing the same positive impact, and if anything may be even further at risk of non-continuation. While the overall trend is good, this subset of students requires specific intervention for success.



Fig. - Continuation rates for SAE students, shown by age on commencement



### Attainment

Following a significant drop in attainment for mature students in 2016-17, 2017-18 figures showed an improvement to bring SAE's figure back up to 58% (80/140 students); this gives a three-year average of 59.9%. By comparison, attainment for young students over the same period increased steadily from 47.9% to 50.7%. In contrast to the trends shown for continuation, students aged 31 and over have maintained an attainment rate over 70%; while those from 21-30 have not performed so well, with the gap between these splits of mature students standing at 21.1pp in 2017-18. In the same year, the gap in attainment rates between young students and those aged 31-40 stood at -23.2pp, with the older students performing to a notably higher level.

From 2015-16, mature students at SAE were attaining good degree outcomes at a level above the national average; despite dropping below that threshold, the downward trend has been arrested and we hope to see further improvement in coming years, in line with the gradual upward trend in attainment for young students. The gap between demographics stands at -7.3pp for SAE, in comparison with a national figure of 10pp.

### Progression to employment or further study

As noted above, progression figures fell across all student groups in 2016-17 by an average of c.26%. Mature students have slightly outperformed young students in both years, though the gap narrowed to 4.4pp in 2016-17. This compares favourably with the sector average of 3.4pp in 2016-17, and with similar providers such as BIMM and ICMP who average a -2pp gap in the same year.

Predicted figures for 2017-18 suggest that 87.9% (29/33) mature students will progress into employment or further study, of which there were 81.8% (27/33) of mature students progressing into highly skilled employment or higher level further study; this further improves performance against young students also progressing into highly skilled employment or higher level further study, predicted at 68.6% (35/51), with the gap widening to 13.2pp.

These figures suggest that this area is not a major concern for SAE. Due to the small population, further breakdown by age band is not currently possible.

## 1.4 Disabled students

### Access

2017-18 saw a continuation of the trend in increased enrolments with declared disabilities, with 22.4% (75/340 students) falling into this category. Across four years, the gap between disabled

and non-disabled students has fallen faster than the national average, now standing at 56pp (outperforming the 70.8pp national gap).

Of these declared disabilities, the two trending generally upwards with the highest numbers of students have been cognitive and learning disabilities, and mental health impairments. However, 2017-18 saw a fall in almost all individual disability groups (except for mental health) and a significant rise in students declaring multiple disabilities (55/75 with disability, or roughly 73% of disabled entrants).

### **Continuation**

In keeping with the Institute's improving trends in continuation figures, disabled students are a low risk for non-continuation. Despite a dip in the previous year, figures for 2016-17 show a 10.9% improvement in continuation for this group, with an overall continuation rate of 88% (45/50 students), rising from 83.8% (30/35) in 2014/15. SAE's three-year average of 83.3% compares reasonably favourably with the national average of 89.5% over the same period; while the average gap of 3.3pp has fluctuated to either side of the national 1.0pp average.

### **Attainment**

The gap in degree outcomes disabled students between disabled and non-disabled students is identified nationally as KPM 5. Due to small population sizes, meaningful analyses of splits by type of disability are not currently possible for SAE. We have sought to tackle this lack of disaggregated data by providing averaged data over three years for more meaningful analysis; in future, we believe that an increase in both access and continuation rates will in turn deliver a larger attainment figure for disabled students, allowing further analysis of disaggregated groups.

Disabled students have an upwards trend in attainment figures at SAE Institute, though due to small cohort sizes a three-year average may be more meaningful: this stands at 45.7% from 2014-17, and is notably lower than the national average of 74.7% over the same timeframe. The gap between SAE's attainment rates for disabled and non-disabled students has, however, narrowed over the same three-year period, remaining within 5pp for the last two years. In raising attainment rates for disabled students more generally, SAE must ensure that this gap does not widen.

Comparison with similar providers shows that SAE is in line with the creative media education sector: BIMM have shown a very similar increase in attainment for disabled students over a three-year period, with a current gap of 8pp from non-disabled students.

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

Less data is available for progression of disabled students to highly-skilled employment or further education, as the qualifying population in 2015-16 was too small to be reported. SAE Institute showed a 22.7% progression rate for 2016-17, significantly below the average of 71.5% across all English providers. Progression for students with no known disability fell in line with other student groups (discussed in previous sections) in 2016-17, contrasting with the national positive trend. The gap between disabled and not disabled students for progression, however, stood at 2.4pp, comparable to 1.8pp across the sector.

Forecasting 2017-18 results with the available Graduate Outcomes data, progression for disabled students has improved enormously to 90.0% (9/10 students) going into employment. Progression for disabled students going into highly skilled employment is now at 70% (7/10 students), in line with performance for non-disabled students (55/74). Concurrently, the gap between the two groupings has widened slightly to 4.3pp. While this data is based on a low response rate to the

Graduate Outcomes survey, and as such comes with a wider margin for error, it seems to indicate significant progress for SAE Institute on this measure.

### 1.5 Care leavers

SAE Institute has only been collecting information on whether students are care leavers since September 2018, in preparation for the new requirements of Data Futures. Less than 1% of the registered student population to date has been identified in this group within the current data reporting window. As such, we do not have any reportable data under this heading.

SAE will **continue to monitor data for Care Leavers** over the life of this Plan in order to gain some meaningful analysis on this underrepresented section of the student body. Particularly with regards to access, the Institute **will seek to enrol a greater number of care leavers** in order to gather data, and will seek to amend targets if material gaps emerge in future years.

### 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

SAE Institute has not identified any statistically significant intersections of disadvantage that are not reflections of trends noted in the demographics discussed in sections 1.1 to 1.5. Gaps between access for white and BAME students, for example, are significantly reduced in POLAR4 low-participation neighbourhoods when compared to the broader ethnic gap.

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

### 2.2 Target groups

Given the thorough assessment of our performance earlier, SAE has identified the following target groups in the given stages of the life cycle.

Target group	Access	Success (continuation)	Success (attainment)	Progression
POLAR4 Q1&2	<i>none</i>	Gap between Q1 and Q5	Gap between Q1&2 v. Q3,4&5	<i>none</i>
IMD Q1&2	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	Gap between Q1&2, v. Q3,4&5
	Gap between white and Asian students.	Gap between white and black students	Gap between white and black students	Gap between white and BAME students
Mature	<i>none</i>	Gap between young and mature, particularly 31-40	<i>none</i>	<i>None</i>
Disabled	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	Gap between disabled and non-disabled	<i>none</i>

## 2.2 Aims and objectives

### Access

We have few notable gaps in our access and therefore have set only one formal target in this access plan. We will continue to strive to maintain the good work undertaken in this area. Though we wish to support more care leavers, our data set is so limited that we are unable to set a baseline at the present time.

In order to meet the requirement of OfS on raising school attainment, we will be collecting data during 19-20 on improvements in soft skills resulting from workshops in schools measured by self-efficacy and maths literacy. From this, we will seek to establish baseline figures for further potential future objectives and targets to be set.

**Aim:** To improve access to Higher Education for underrepresented student groups.

1. **Objective 1:** To reduce the gap in access between white and Asian students to 55.2 percentage points by 2025.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
66.2pp	64pp	61.8pp	59.6pp	57.4pp	55.2pp

### Success - Continuation

**Aim:** To reduce gaps in continuation for students from underrepresented groups.

2. **Objective 1:** Eliminate the gap in three-year averaged continuation rates between Low Participation Neighbourhoods POLAR4 Q1, when compared with Q5, by 2024.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
2.8pp	2.1pp	1.4pp	0.7pp	0pp	0pp

3. **Objective 2:** Reduce the gap in continuation rates between white and BAME students to 3pp by 2025.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
19pp	15.8pp	12.6pp	9.4pp	6.2pp	3pp

4. **Objective 3:** Reduce the gap in continuation rates between white and black students from 23pp to 10pp.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
23pp	20pp	18pp	16pp	13pp	10pp

5. **Objective 4:** Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between mature students and young students, particularly by focusing on those between the age range of 31 and 40, from a three-year average of 5.9pp to 0pp.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
5.9pp	4.7pp	3.5pp	2.3pp	1.1pp	0pp

### Success – Attainment

**Aim:** To improve the degree attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1) for all students in target groups.

1. **Objective 1:** Reduce the gap in attainment rates for students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2), when compared to those from Q 3-5, to 3pp by 2025.

Baseline 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
17pp	14.2pp	11.4pp	8.6pp	5.8pp	3pp

2. **Objective 2:** Improve three-year averages of attainment rates for black students, in comparison to white students, to 3.4pp by 2025.

Baseline 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
13.4pp	11.4pp	9.4pp	7.4pp	5.4pp	3.4pp

3. **Objective 3:** Reduce and eliminate the gap in attainment rates between disabled students and non-disabled students by 2024.

Baseline 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
5pp	3.5pp	2pp	0.5pp	0pp	--

## Progression

**Aim:** To improve the percentage of students from target groups entering highly-skilled employment, or going into further graduate study.

1. **Objective 2:** Reduce the gap in progression outcomes between those from areas of highest and lowest deprivation (groups IMD Q1/2 and Q3-5, respectively) to 2pp by 2025.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
11.2pp	9.4pp	7.6pp	5.7pp	3.9pp	2pp

2. **Objective 3:** Reduce the gap in progression outcomes between white and BAME students to 5pp by 2025.

Baseline 2016-17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
19pp	17pp	15pp	11.4pp	7.2pp	5pp

## 3. Strategic measures

### Context

SAE is predicting growth over the next five years, and in this ambition seeks to maintain and further the diversity of its student body. This Access and Participation Plan is aligned to these strategic growth priorities, and we are committed to ensuring that the growth is delivered against the target groups identified. We have planned for additional resources to support our access and participation activities. However we recognise that there are some structural challenges beyond our control that may impact the achievement of our targets<sup>[et1]</sup>. Not least of these is the impact of small datasets. As a specialist provider SAE has small cohorts, and small programmes (e.g. Music Business). This makes it difficult to collect and rely on any data and the trends that it may suggest.

In the access area the decreased support for creative media and the arts from central government, which has impacted the schooling system, impacts our ability to recruit students and meet our access objectives. The number of GCSEs and A-levels being taken in creative arts related subjects has decreased over time<sup>4</sup>, leading to a squeezed talent pipeline.

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<sup>4</sup> Creative Cultural Alliance (2018). Further decline in arts GCSE and A Level entries. Available at: <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/further-decline-in-arts-gcse-and-a-level-entries/> [Accessed 5th April 2019].

In relation to continuation measures, as a provider offering two-year accelerated degrees, students have already progressed to year 2 of their degree whilst still in year 1, when compared to a traditional 3 year degree. The measure of the non-continuation is therefore not suitable to correctly measure continuation on accelerated degrees. Hence this can impact our ability to improve non-continuation rates. In addition, the UK Performance Indicators lag at least two years behind the current academic year and therefore by the time the results may actually be seen in the non-continuation rates, there has been some significant time gap to be able to determine the effectiveness of an intervention. However, SAE has commenced its own predictive capabilities to assess such an impact in advance.

In considering progression outcomes, the creative media sector in which our graduates are employed has different employment trends compared to other sectors, with many being self-employed and having portfolio careers. This impacts our ability to meet the highly skilled quotient for our progression targets, as many will enjoy their employment and prefer the flexibility their careers offer, and as research suggests would gain jobs with higher skills and salaries later in their career journey beyond 15 months after graduation. These measures are being challenges more broadly by a number of providers like ours.

Our long-term plans are to ensure that there are no differential outcomes for different target groups, and to eliminate the gaps in access and success which will be beyond the timeframe of this current plan. We aim to do this by placing access and participation at the forefront of our broader institutional strategic priorities. This whole provider approach will help eradicate the largest gap we currently have which is in student attainment, through involving cross-institutional staff, learning and teaching initiatives and targeted, effective student support.

That said, there are some opportunities that SAE foresees. For instance, by successfully registering with the Office for Students in the Approved (Fee Cap) category, applicants to SAE applying for the September 2019 intake onward will for the first time be able to gain full tuition fee funding. Prior to this, as SAE was deemed an alternative provider, whereby applicants were only able to apply for up to two thirds of fee funding (i.e. c.£6,000 p.a.). Changes to student access to support for the full higher fee funding will help us meet our access targets as more students from LPN backgrounds will be able to enrol with us, and better meet our continuation rates for our students; for example mature students who cited “financial concerns” as one of the major reasons for dropping out.

SAE is excited about opportunities to develop and improve curriculum and pedagogy, as a key activity in delivering successful outcomes. There is an opportunity to build in new course structures in the forthcoming revalidation of all our courses due to complete early 2021. This shall positively influence our ability to develop students' knowledge and industry readiness.

## **Access**

1. To reduce the gap in access between white and Asian students to 55.2 percentage points by 2025.

## **Success - Continuation**

1. Eliminate the gap in three-year averaged continuation rates between Low Participation Neighbourhoods POLAR4 Q1, when compared with Q5, by 2024.
2. Reduce the gap in continuation rates between white and BAME students to 3pp by 2025.
3. Reduce the gap in continuation rates between white and black students from 23pp to 10pp.
4. Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between mature students and young students, particularly by focusing on those between the age range of 31 and 40, from a three-year average of 5.9pp to 0pp.

## **Success – Attainment**

5. Reduce the gap in attainment rates for students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2), when compared to those from Q 3-5, to 3pp by 2025.
6. Improve three-year averages of attainment rates for black students, in comparison to white students, to 3.4pp by 2025.
7. Reduce and eliminate the gap in attainment rates between disabled students and non-disabled students by 2024.

Some gaps are structural such as qualifications students enter with (e.g. which may be essay based), where students may struggle with a production, portfolio style programmes/assessment. We will understand the unexplained attainment gap through a number of means including controlling for such structural factors in our data analysis, strengthening our data analysis through empirical and causal studies, and with greater granularity and intersectionality of data. Learner analytics has been proposed as a core development (see pg 17).

## **Progression**

1. Reduce the gap in progression outcomes between those from areas of highest and lowest deprivation (groups IMD Q1/2 and Q3-5, respectively) to 2pp by 2025.
2. Reduce the gap in progression outcomes between white and BAME students to 5pp by 2025.

In the creative media sector there are clear structural barriers in that the market does not offer highly skilled work to commence with and students undertake portfolio careers. As such SAE will seek to overcome these barriers in placing graduates in highly skilled employment. The Graduate Outcome data now captures those with portfolio careers fifteen months after graduation; however, this dataset is relatively new.



## 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

### Overview

SAE is committed to improving access and success for an increasingly diverse student body. Over the life of this Plan, and beyond, our ambition is to significantly improve overall performance in our continuation, attainment and progression outcomes, as we note that these are generally lower than sector averages. SAE takes a whole provider approach including a range of staff across the institution, in a distributed leadership and responsibilities model. This includes staff who are not directly working on the access and participation, but who have significant influence on performance measures as part of an embedded approach. For example, faculty members who are now part of our access and participation governance and monitoring model have been extensively involved in the development of pedagogic and curriculum interventions. Our library services and student experience teams contributed to the plan, with the creation of a new post in May 2018 (national Student Experience Manager) who supports the activities of the plan.

As part of the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan ‘variations’ requirements in Summer 2022<sup>5</sup>, we note the focus on evaluation, and the requirement that providers should, ‘significantly increase the volume and quality of evaluation across their access and participation activity’, as well as considering how findings are recorded, published and shared to grow sector understanding of what works. We also note OfS’s intention to require independent evaluation in the future, and we are already a member of the ‘SEER’ (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research) service to support our evaluation and research efforts. Membership means that much of our evaluation is already being carried out by an independent body, who support us in strengthening our own practices and provide a range of evaluation tools, processes and training, as well as conduct a range of evaluation and research into key areas on our behalf, providing recommendations into improving practices.

SAE has developed a Theory of Change model where our long-term goal is to enable more young people and adults from all backgrounds to take creative media as their chosen study and career option thereby improving their industry prospects. In order to fulfil this goal we recognise that there are certain preconditions that must be met as follows which, unless otherwise specified, we plan to address by 2025:

### Theory of Change - Access

Despite these structural barriers SAE has performed well in this area. That said, the issues still remain, where factors such as a lack of awareness of creative media programmes, and low levels of maths and computer literacy impact on access (as well as continuation and progression) of students in the success stage of the student journey.

- Raise awareness of the breadth and contribution of the creative industry

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/advice-on-requests-to-vary-access-and-participation-plans-2023-24/>

The sector is often coupled with creative arts, an area that has seen an overall decline in student numbers,<sup>6</sup> along with a general rhetoric and focus on preference for STEM subjects at GCSE and A-levels. This means less students being inspired to pursue creative media at higher education level. Research has shown that an overwhelming majority of employers believe young people do not understand the breadth of the creative industry.<sup>7</sup> A general awareness needs to be created of creative 'media' being distinct within the creative industry, covering a range of disciplines and technical and technological subjects. Raising awareness of the breadth of the creative industry is crucial to overcoming the barriers to entry for our target groups. For example, though mature students are more likely to join creative industries, our other target groups are still impacted where the industry has a lower number of BAME students and creatives compared to other industries<sup>8</sup> and only one third of jobs are held by those from less advantaged backgrounds.<sup>9</sup> This makes our target students in this plan less likely to enrol on a creative media course, which can be averted to some extent through raising awareness.

- Improving maths literacy required for technical subjects such as Audio Production and Games Programming

Maths literacy is a barrier for a number of our target groups in this plan. For instance those from the lowest deprivation/socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have high maths literacy,<sup>10</sup> Black students are also less likely to study maths,<sup>11</sup> and only around a quarter of mature and adult students possess numeracy at level 2 or above.<sup>12</sup>

This presents a knock-on barrier to widening access as students are unable, for example, to meet the minimum C grade or equivalent in GCSE Maths for our most popular programme, Audio Production, and also our Games Programming course. Students are thus less likely to apply and/or be admitted.<sup>13</sup> Improving maths literacy and increasing opportunities for students to have their maths abilities assessed/confirmed would assist in reducing this barrier.<sup>14</sup> This will be done

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<sup>6</sup> Creative Cultural Alliance (2018). Further decline in arts GCSE and A Level entries. Available at: <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/further-decline-in-arts-gcse-and-a-level-entries/> [Accessed 5th April 2019].

<sup>7</sup> 83.9 per cent of businesses agreed that young people were unaware of the breadth of career paths available in the creative and cultural sector. See Report: Building a Creative Nation: Current and future skills needs, by Creative Cultural Skills and the National Skills Academy in 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Creative Industries Federation (2017). Creative Diversity The state of diversity in the UK's creative industries, and what we can do about it. Available at: [https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-06/30183-CIF%20Access%20&%20Diversity%20Booklet\\_A4\\_Web%20\(1\)\(1\).pdf](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-06/30183-CIF%20Access%20&%20Diversity%20Booklet_A4_Web%20(1)(1).pdf). [Accessed 30th August 2019].

<sup>9</sup> Department for Culture, MEdia and Sport (2016). Creative Industries: Focus on Employment/

<sup>10</sup> see National Numeracy report 2017

<sup>11</sup> Miller, M. (2016). The Ethnicity Attainment Gap: Literature Review. The University of Sheffield, Widening Participation Research & Evaluation Unit.

<sup>12</sup> Government Office for Science (2016). How can we motivate adults to engage in literacy and numeracy learning? Future of Skills & Lifelong Learning Evidence Review

<sup>13</sup> Creative Industries Federation (2017). Creative Education Agenda How and why the next government should support cultural and creative learning in the UK. Available at: [https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/CIF\\_EduAgenda\\_spreads.pdf](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/CIF_EduAgenda_spreads.pdf). [Accessed 30th August 2019]

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

through pre-application support whilst developing our own diagnostic tests at admission stage (for September 2019).<sup>15</sup>

- Developing computer literacy required for all programmes

An important ability for students to secure admission on creative media programmes for all our target groups relates to their computer literacy which is needed to operate software and hardware equipment, creating and presenting a suitable portfolio, etc. This is supported by research showing that tech skills are among the top five skills for the creative industry.<sup>16</sup> Yet a number of young people do not have digital skills.<sup>17</sup> Those with low numeracy literacy (linked to maths literacy above), and from low socioeconomic groups (a key target group in this plan) are also more likely to have low digital literacy.<sup>18</sup>

There are several overarching interventions that will create our desired change throughout the period of this plan. These include: increased engagement with schools to deliver literacy projects, better use and tracking of data analytics with segmentation techniques to better understand our student demographics. We would need to develop more sophisticated methods of learner analytics by 2021.

Our focus on supporting maths and computer literacy meets the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan 'variations' requirements that were provided in Spring/Summer 2022 (Priority B)<sup>19</sup> regarding supporting raising attainment of learners in schools. To further this activity, we have added a commitment in our strategic measures section to explore developing some additional activities with partner schools that focus on supporting attainment in schools. During 2022-23, we will collaborate with a small number of schools to understand how we can positively impact attainment in key curriculum areas linked to our specialist provision. Particularly as a smaller provider, we have also acknowledged the value of linking up with our local UniConnect partnerships to collaborate and offer attainment focused work for their partner schools. We have provided an undertaking in our strategic measures section.

### **Theory of Change - Success (Continuation and Attainment)**

- Continue to build understanding of the heterogeneity of students needs

In order to understand how what we should be doing to improve continuation and success, we need to understand our students' needs and how they engage with us. This will then able us to develop interventions are tailored to our students based partly on the improved learner analytics discussed above.

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<sup>15</sup> LTSN Engineering. Diagnostic Testing for Mathematics. Available at: [https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/CIF\\_EduAgenda\\_spreads.pdf](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/CIF_EduAgenda_spreads.pdf). [Accessed at: 30th Aug 2019].

<sup>16</sup> A survey for Department, Culture Media and Sport by NESTA. Available at: <https://data-viz.nesta.org.uk/creative-skills/index.html>. [Accessed 29 August 2019]

<sup>17</sup> Nominet Trust, Digital Reach: Digital Skills for the Hardest-to-Reach Young People, 6 July 2017, p 2

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/advice-on-requests-to-vary-access-and-participation-plans-2023-24/>

- Build in structural learning, teaching, assessment into the course design

Attainment can considerably improved with initiatives that are on course and part of the teaching and delivery rather than offered just as part of the extra curriculum. For instance our forthcoming revalidation (to be completed by early 2021), as discussed earlier would be a great opportunity to embed effective approaches into the curriculum.

As such increasing teacher involvement in design and delivery of our access plan is crucial. Increasing faculty engagement will improve continuation and attainment as faculty deliver the teaching related initiatives to our target groups and can add valuable expertise in innovative approaches, and have theoretical and research knowledge that can benefit our understanding of 'what works'.

We broadly consider that this Plan meets the requirement of the new (2022) OfS access and participation variations priorities, to ensure under-represented students are fully supported to succeed in higher education and into positive graduate outcomes (Priority C). The range of measures (detailed in the Strategic Measures section) are targeted towards ensuring our under-represented students have positive outcomes and equality of opportunity. We have however provided some brief updates in the Strategic Measures section. We would also note the critical importance of the first strand of this Theory of Change, in terms of building deeper understanding of our target student's needs. This is being achieved through the implementation of a more accurate behavioral engagement tracking, observing and triangulating data such as attendance, interactions over the VLE and learning attainment. In 2022-23, we are also running research and evaluation projects via our SEER membership to explore experiences for target groups.

### **Progression Theory of Change - Progression**

- Understand career aspirations of students

Working with students from the commencement of their course to raise their career aspirations is just as important in raising their educational aspirations. Specific activities and timeframes are in the strategic measures of this plan.

- Work more closely with our alumni and industry as part of the course and extra curricular support

We will take the opportunity to embed alumni and industry mentorship in the course structure. A survey was conducted in October 2018 to explore the challenges our alumni and graduates face which showed that 93% were in employment three years after study and the challenges they faced included securing jobs and dealing with cultural barriers.

## **Alignment with other strategies**

The Access and Participation Plan is closely aligned with our Student Support Strategy, such as supporting mature students through study skills. This strategy was developed to provide a holistic framework setting out our strategic aims to enhance our student support across the student life cycle including pre-arrival and on course support, tailored to different student groups. This strategy is cross cutting, implemented across SAE's campuses and thus ensures that our access and participation work is not conducted in isolation.

### Equality and Diversity

There is also a close link to our Equality and Diversity activity given our target to increase the number of BAME staff who would act as role models for BAME students. An annual impact assessment of Equality and Diversity was discussed at a governing body meeting in April 2019 where it was determined that increased data collection is needed via a new quality monitoring process at the staff recruitment application stage. This will assist in monitoring the progress of our role modelling target.

As set out in SAE's Equal Opportunity, Disability and Inclusion Policy, and due regard has been given to this policy. SAE has ensured that there is equality of opportunity for all and that our services and activities mentioned in this action plan such as outreach activities will benefit all prospective students. SAE has taken the approach that in addition it will seek to support certain target groups such as BME and mature students. The groups chosen fall under the definition of underrepresented groups outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

SAE believes that all students should benefit from higher education and they should not just have improved access to higher education, but to also to have a successful experience during their studies and to progress onwards to enriching lives and careers. SAE has a good culture of collaboration among students. From our student representative structure 40% can be classed as having a protected characteristic and therefore good relations are fostered between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### Teaching and Learning

We recognise an opportunity to further align our learning, teaching and assessment strategy with our access plan. As a result, a number of faculty members are now part of the wider Access and Participation Implementation Group mandated to provide specific ideas to consider how our curriculum and teaching in its broadest sense (inside and outside of the classroom) could be made more inclusive to support underrepresented groups. The faculty members immediately influenced the design of this plan: a) the access plan is strongly underpinned by research on effective approaches which faculty members are experienced in; b) some useful initiatives are therefore now part of the Access and Participation Plan tailored by programme and target group such as the Curriculum Diversification initiative. For instance our Audio department will seek to diversify the curriculum through covering 'world music'.

## Strategic measures

Considering the performance assessment aligned with institutional priorities and context, SAE have identified 8 key Strategic Measures to improve performance. These are aligned to the Theory of Change framework, detailed above. Areas are: **Outreach Strategies; Student Support Strategies, and Skills and Careers Support Measures.**

### Outreach strategies

A broad range of outreach initiatives will be put in place to increase the number of applicants from our target groups, primarily focused on:

- Increasing our reach and engagement with a larger pool of potential applicants
- Expanding our school and college partner engagement programme
- New, more tailored access, information and advice
- Targeting financial support

### Access events and admissions

#### **Student journey:** Access

**Background:** SAE has a good outreach programme filled with events, however, the content/activities of the events have been tailored to our target groups and goals of the access plan

**Aim:** through specific events, SAE aims to reach targeted audiences that can ultimately positively increase the number of applicants and enrolments from our target groups

**Activities:** we will deliver creative media skills workshops, held on and off-site, targeted at our student groups in this plan. For example students from low economic backgrounds are less likely to understand the application process including portfolios and thus our access events will address this challenge.<sup>20</sup> Such students, including those unlikely to meet the standard entry criteria who wish to progress to a Creative Media Degree will attend access events/workshops that will raise awareness of creative media generally and support students in understanding our application process, how to produce a professional portfolio, basic maths and provide techniques and tips for writing enhanced personal statements, with Creative Media in mind. This will also include support on understanding and preparing for alternative entry pathways, i.e. the production of a portfolio and comprehensive personal statement.

As part of the new (2022) Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan 'variations' requirements regarding supporting raising attainment, in 2022-23 we will review and consider these activities with a small number (3-5) of our school partners, to determine any developments and improvements that might better support attainment. Whilst there is a raising attainment element in our maths and professional portfolio workshops, we consider we can strengthen these activities in respect of linking to school curriculum and attainment. We will also ensure that a robust evaluation plan is in place for these activities, which will help us to understand what works and whether attainment is being supported. We consider that a consultative approach is required to determine school needs and best practices, rather than a pre-designed offer from SAE.

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<sup>20</sup> Wyness, G. (2017). RULES OF THE GAME - Disadvantaged students and the university admissions process. Sutton Trust

Consultations will occur in 2022-23, with a view to developing changes and a pilot programme by the end of the year for roll out in 2023-24.

We are also introducing a new maths assessment at admission stage for our Audio (for Sep 2019 intake) and Games programmes (early 2020) in order to help those without formal maths GCSE or equivalent to have a chance of demonstrating their maths competency. These have been shown to improve access for our target groups including low socio-economic groups.<sup>21</sup>

**Monitoring and evaluation:** these will be monitored by the number of events/maths assessments held and the number of attendees, with a break down of demographic and socioeconomic data. From 1st August 2019 we intend to analyse the profile of the leads we are collecting at each event as we have added ethnicity as a required field in our lead capture form. They shall be evaluated using data captured via a survey to determine whether for instance they are attracting the right candidates. A survey shall be used to judge attendee feedback and satisfaction. We have already surpassed our 2018/19 access related milestone by 8%, reaching 3348 potential applicants via external outreach events as at the publication of this report. We will use this data to help inform our decision making around future event attendance.

### School and college partner engagement programme

#### **Student journey:** Access

**Background:** Prior to October 2017, SAE did not proactively engage with schools and relied heavily on direct marketing and admissions. As a result, we believe our outreach and access to underrepresented groups suffered. Since 2018 we have made a concerted effort to correct this.

**Aim:** Since the submission of our 2019/20 Access plan, SAE UK has updated it's formal SAE schools partnership programme which requires partners to sign a memorandum of understanding to increase the number of schools we work with (from 20 at present to 35 by 2024 and 50 by 2025) to ensure our fee waiver programme benefits those from our target groups, and to widen our pool of applicants. The school membership model has proven successful in raising attainment and pupils aspirations for higher education<sup>22</sup>. We will seek to move beyond a 'cooperative' model to a collaborative and integrated model with schools over the five years by 2025<sup>23</sup>.

**Activities:** Our schools and college engagement programme enabling schools to sign a memorandum with us is continually rolled out. We have appointed a full-time Schools Outreach Officer to build relationships with secondary schools and colleges, and provide coordination for resources already in place at each of our three UK campuses. We have updated the criteria for selecting new school and college partners reflecting our target groups. Potential new school

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<sup>21</sup> Highton et al (2017). Effective practice in the delivery and teaching of English and Mathematics to 16-18 year olds. Department for Education

<sup>22</sup> Universities UK (2017). Raising attainment through university-school partnerships. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/Raising-attainment-through-university-school-partnerships.pdf> [Accessed 15 May 2019].

<sup>23</sup> Dent, P., Garton, L. Hooley, T., Leonard, C. Marriott, J. and Moore, N. (2014). Higher Education Outreach to Widen Participation Toolkits for practitioners. Third edition. International Centre for Guidance Studies and The Progression Trust, for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

partners are now assessed for example, using POLAR4 data and schools own published reports on Equality and Diversity.

By way of update in response to the OfS new (2022) variation requirements, which note effective school partnership working as a means to deliver attainment-raising activity, we currently have a target of 20 school partners per campus (3). At present, each school partner accesses three workshops per year, which can be on campus, in school or virtual, based on school preference. We will continue to build on these relationships to further our outreach work in respect of raising attainment, as detailed in the previous section. We also now have dedicated campus-based Campus Recruitment Officers (CROs), who are responsible for the schools partnerships for their campus. The access and participation agenda is a key workstream for the CRO that is reviewed each week.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** we will monitor delivery through the number of schools who sign up, the number of applicants they refer, the number of fee waivers taken up. We will evaluate this measure using the OfS financial support toolkit (the qualitative method since we do not have large numbers on fee waivers), along with using secondary student data to determine the success rate of applicants from the schools in being issued an offer and enrolling with us.

Five new school partners have joined the programme since adopting the new approach, two with 70%+ BAME populations and three recruiting from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 areas. We have already seen 64 applications from partners school in the current 2018/19 academic year. We have updated the application process and systems in order to track the LPN and BAME characteristics of school partner applicants and will be able to report on this from 1st August 2019.

The new approach has been trialed at two partner school workshops so far via two workshops, although survey responses have been limited due to small student numbers. From 1st August 2019, all interventions will be tracked via a student survey tool to determine the outcome and any improvement in attainment. At the start of the workshop, attendees are asked to rate their confidence levels around creating a portfolio and also how positive they feel about progressing on to higher education, both using a 10 point scale. At the end of the workshop, attendees are again asked to rate their responses to the same questions. The survey takes the form of a QR code/link to a SurveyMonkey which workshop attendees can complete on their phones, increasing engagement and likelihood to complete.

### Tailored access, information and advice

#### **Student journey:** Access

**Background:** there was a need to deliver access, information and advice in a more tailored manner, in order to better meet the requirements of different groups of applicants with different needs.

**Aim:** provide tailored advice across the range of information and guidance provided to BAME and LPN students which research suggests can raise awareness and build confidence of target groups.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Stevenson, J., O'Mahony, J. , Khan, O., Ghaffar, F. and Stiell, B. (2019). Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds. Available:<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf> [Accessed 20 June 2019].



**Activities:** based on the research, a greater number of external recruitment events have been booked for 19/20 to help potential students have access to speak to representatives and explore questions without the need to travel great distances. A new video / photographic brief has been created for all photo shoots and video creation to increase the representation of BAME and mature students. Revised 2019/20 event guidelines have been created and are progressing through sign-off. The revised guidelines provide new activities focused around our target groups, such as presentations highlighting the work being done by organisations such as BAFTA to encourage people from BAME communities to pursue a creative media careers. Student ambassadors as role models will attend events, are diverse and interact with BAME and mature students to support them. The new guidelines also seek to enhance staffing of the events so there are more representatives from underrepresented demographics. Alumni guest speakers are selected from a diverse background who can paint a clear picture of the challenges that face creative professionals today while offering invaluable advice to prospective students on how to overcome these challenges. These activities are ready for 2019-20.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** this will be monitored among other factors including the range of material produced, number of views or clicks on videos/web pages. To evaluate, from September 2019 SAE will conduct surveys with students who enrol to determine the extent to which these initiatives played a role in applicants decision to apply to study with us.

**Community and third-party partnerships:** As part of the new (2022) OfS variation requirements, we have considered a commitment to link specifically with our local UniConnect partnerships<sup>25</sup>. We recognise the key role of other providers in contributing to the access agenda, and maximising use of resources (Moore et al, 2013). As such we have already reached out to our local UniConnect partnerships to determine how SAE might support their work (specifically that relating to raising attainment). We intend to develop an activity plan in 2022-23, which may commence in the new year if not before.

**Pathways:** As part of the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan 'variations' requirements in Spring/Summer 2022 (Priority D)<sup>26</sup>, the sector is required to consider developing more diverse pathways into and through higher education via Level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships. Whilst SAE do not have any current plans to develop these courses, we note the opportunity that students are provided to obtain a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education as an exit award, should they discontinue with their full degree programme. These awards would support entry into higher education at an alternative provider, or at a later stage, depending on the student's ambitions.

## **Student Support Measures**

### Financial support

#### **Student journey:** Access and Success (continuation)

**Background:** prior to 2019 our fee waiver programme was general and open to anyone to apply which meant we could not support our target groups. Before 2019, SAE UK students also had to

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<sup>25</sup> These are: Shaping Futures (Liverpool); Access HE (London, North and East); and Aimhigher London (London, South).

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/advice-on-requests-to-vary-access-and-participation-plans-2023-24/>

pay top-up fees of £3,000 per year as only £6,000 was funded at that time. This meant a fee waiver of £1,500 per year provided immediate tangible financial support against fees students had to pay from their own funds.

**Aim:** The focus is now solely on those applicants from our underrepresented target groups who are identified through contextual information. Whilst research on the impact of financial aid is mixed there is still a research suggesting scholarships / financial support influence an individual's choice to study HE<sup>27</sup>, with positive impact on retention<sup>28</sup> and attainment<sup>29</sup>

**Activity:** to revise the criteria for financial support and to increase choice in the way financial support is delivered, either in the form of:

- a. A fee waiver, providing up to a 16.66% reduction (up to £1,500) in the yearly tuition fees (deducted off of the amount payable to the Student Loans Company where funding is via a tuition fee loan)
- b. A cash bursary of up to £1,500 per year, paid each trimester in equal installments of up to £500 each

The criteria is:

- Be a Direct or UCAS applicant or nominated by an SAE School Partner; AND
  - live in a region/postcode in a Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN); AND/OR
  - be of BAME ethnicity

Priority will be given to applicants meeting more than one of the above criteria.

Applicants are supported to identify whether they meet the criteria, such as if they are from an LPN. Students are offered the choice of fee relief or a cash bursary of up to £1,500 per academic year for two years (totaling £3,000) depending on individual circumstances.

SAE has one scholarship fund specifically targeted at underrepresented groups in this access plan. SAE does not have a separate scholarship scheme for school partners to ensure fairness and equality. Students from partner schools apply to the same fund as all applicants who fall into our target groups. The partner schools are able to nominate a recipient however, and they are informed that any recipient they put forward for a scholarship must meet the criteria of the scholarship as above. Potential new school partners are now assessed for example, using POLAR4 data and schools own published reports on Equality and Diversity.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** this will be monitored by the number of fee waiver scholarships / cash bursaries taken up by our target groups. SAE use the OfS financial support and evaluation toolkit to evaluate the effect of financial support. As a smaller provider and due to the small

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<sup>27</sup> Vergolini, L. and Zanini, N. (2015). Away, but not too far from home. The effects of financial aid on university enrolment decisions. *Economics of Education Review*, 49, pp. 91–109 (see page 102)

<sup>28</sup> Reed, R. J. and Hurd, B. (2014). A value beyond money? Assessing the impact of equity scholarships: from access to success. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(7), pp. 1236-1250

<sup>29</sup> Van Dyke, R., Little, B. and Callender, C. (2005) Survey of higher education students' attitudes to debt and term-time working and their impact on attainment. HEFCE, Bristol. Callender, C., and Jackson, J. (2008) „Does the Fear of Debt Constrain Choice of University and Subject of Study?“ *Studies in Higher Education*. 33 (4), pp.405-429

number of recipients of financial support SAE use a combination of both the survey and interview tools rather than the statistical tool which is suitable for institutions with more than around 300 financial support recipients.

During 2018/19, 25 financial scholarships as fee waivers were awarded (aligned to the launch of the SAE school partnership programme). Prior to 2018/19, scholarships were in single figures annually. The 2018/19 scholarships were all awarded before the criteria was changed in line with our first access plan which provides priority for BAME and LPN applicants. In 2018/19, applicants in receipt of student finance were also required to pay tuition top-up fees of £2,850 per year to cover the gap from student finance.

The breakdown of 2018/19 scholarship applicants were:

School partner applicant	Mature applicant	LPN	BAME
14 (56%)	10 (40%)	7 (28%)	1 (4%)

From the 25 2018/19 scholarships awarded, 22 of the recipients students remain on roll at the time of this plan, and were surveyed using the recommended questions from the financial support and evaluation toolkit, with a response rate of 36% (8). Of the respondents, face-to-face interviews were also conducted with half (4) using the recommended interview questions from the financial support and evaluation toolkit.

All of the 2018/19 scholarship recipients are in their first year of study, and 7 of the 8 survey respondents (87.5%) highly rated (scale point 4 or 5) the importance of the financial support on their ability to financial continue with their studies.

This is the first time the toolkit has been used and so it may be premature to change our policy and practice around scholarships. However 20% of the respondents stated that they did not know the financial value of the scholarship open to them and a further 20% were unsure. Therefore there is an early indication that we may need to enhance our communications in this regard.

### Teaching and assessment practices

**Student journey:** Success (continuation)

**Background:** SAE has previously focused on increasing continuation rate and has not had long term strategies to address the underlying causes of non-continuation. However not all these measures were effective and they did not include a revised approach to our curriculum

**Aim:** to develop a range of student support measures to improve continuation utilising an inclusive curriculum and blended learning pedagogy.

**Activities:** we will put in place enhanced assessment and feedback practices that have been shown to be effective for non-traditional students from 2020 onward<sup>30</sup>. This includes the use of voice recorded feedback from late 2021 and also engaging students in peer feedback in 2020. Enabling students greater accessibility of course content from home through the use of podcasts and recorded lectures will be encouraged by 2022. Research shows that this could be achieved through students being able to access materials frequently, revisiting content regularly to enable information processing at a pace that suits their learning need<sup>31</sup>. It would also enable students to access materials around work schedules without impacting their ability to study. This would also limit the amount of physical travel time/cost to college for selective modules. Finally we will diversify the curriculum in 2021 to include greater examples diversity which have been known to improve attainment and performance because of the powerful affirmation of cultural identity<sup>32</sup>. For SAE this would include aspects such as introducing independent or overseas film industries on our Film course or covering world music in addition to mainstream music with our Audio students

**Monitoring and evaluation:** we will monitor this through factors such as number of mature students at risk, number of initiatives such as counselling sessions, number of online courses. This shall be evaluated using secondary data to analyse those at risk of non-continuing and whether the initiatives have reduced such risk, student feedback on the online courses and any link to improved attendance/grades. The number of students will be low and this may prove a challenge in the reliability of a sample or study results.

These measures support the new (2022) OfS access and participation variations priorities, and particularly the requirement to ensure under-represented students are fully supported to succeed in higher education and into positive graduate outcomes (Priority C). By way of update, our newly validated programmes (2021) we have implemented regular feedback cycles throughout the modules, allowing for feedforwarding students with feedback in order to improve their module attainment capacity throughout their learning within the module. This should further support our target groups, to whom we can respond quickly with input on module assessments with a view to positively impacting longer term attainment.

### Welfare support

**Student journey:** Success (continuation and attainment)

**Background:** SAE has an increasing number of students declaring mental health challenges which has an impact on their ability to succeed in their studies and their lives<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Cramp, A. (2012). Empowering 'non-traditional' students in the UK: feedback and the hidden curriculum. In: T. Basit and S. Tomlinson, ed., Social inclusion and higher education. Bristol: Bristol University Press, Policy Press., pp.237-254

<sup>31</sup> van der Stap, N. (2017). Ensuring Effective Flexible Learning through Blended Learning. Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics, 15(1), pp.7-9

<sup>32</sup> ECU and HEA (2016). Equality and diversity in learning and teaching in higher education Papers from Equality Challenge Unit and Higher Education Academy joint conferences. Available at: <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Equality-and-diversity-in-learning-and-teaching-Full-report.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2018]

<sup>33</sup> Andrews, B. and Wilding, J.M. (2004). 'The relation of depression and anxiety to life-stress and achievement in students', British Journal of Psychology, 95(4), pp.509–521

**Activities:** we will continue to positively promote equality and openly raise awareness of learning needs and mental health challenges such as celebrating Mental Health Awareness day and collaborating with external agencies such as the charity MIND where in the past their counsellors provided dedicated sessions to students. We seek to break down the stigma of ‘seeking help’ and raise awareness of the positive benefits and how one can face life and personal challenges which can improve students’ confidence and ability to continue<sup>34</sup>. This extends to SAE staff through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and the training and support line managers receive to support staff from underrepresented groups. MIND are also providing training to staff who are required to assist people from underrepresented groups. We are actively making our recruitment and promotion frameworks more inclusive through 2020-21. These activities help SAE tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people from different groups.

These targeted measures correspond to the new (2022) OfS access and participation variations priorities, and particularly the requirement to ensure under-represented students are fully supported to succeed in higher education and into positive graduate outcomes (Priority C). By way of update, SAE have further developed this support and mechanisms for ensuring target students are reached and supported, for example via strengthening analysis of data and signposting for one-to-one support. Student support plans are also put in place in appropriate cases. We also take a whole campus approach to wellbeing and inclusivity, acknowledging the critical importance of building community and belonging for target groups. This starts from pre-enrolment, through the whole student journey and includes student advisory bodies (e.g. global majority, LGBTG+, disability) which all feed into the access and participation agenda.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** this activity will be monitored by the number of factors including wellbeing sessions delivered, number of referrals among others. Their impact will be evaluated through a new wellbeing survey that is being devised based on proven scales to determine improvement in wellbeing, and with sufficient data how improved wellbeing has impacted success on course.

## **Skills and Careers Support Measures**

### Study Skills

**Student journey:** Success (continuation and attainment) and Progression

**Background:** it is recognised that more needs to be done to develop students skills that will then enable them to improve their attainment

**Aim:** to offer a new series of student skills and drop-in sessions will be offered at all UK campuses building on work that commenced in September 2019 onward to help on-board students and provide support throughout their studies at SAE.

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<sup>34</sup> Thorley, C. (2017). Not by degrees: Improving Student Mental Health in the UK’s Universities, Institute for Public Policy Research.

**Activities:** This will be supported by a completely new online section of our current Virtual Learning Environment by 2021. This portal and the sessions will provide support on: a) New mature student sessions to address specific work/life balance issues b) Mental health guidance, tailored for different groups, such as BME c) Finance and accommodation support, with sessions tailored for mature students; e) computer literacy e) independent learning.

SAE has instituted formal assignment surgeries since the September 2017 academic year which provide students feedback on their written work to raise their attainment and chances of success on the programme. The sessions are well attended, but to-date we have not recorded data on which students attend and we will now do so to inform if any additional targeting is required. There is strong support of such interventions raising success<sup>35</sup>. Therefore though these surgeries are already taking place, there will be a change in the way they are delivered to target and support the target groups. They will be tailored around the work produced by students.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** the activities will be monitored through factors such as number of assignment surgeries delivered, number of skills sessions delivered and attended, etc. They will be evaluated using surveys to determine if students self-report an improvement in skills and secondary data to examine whether the attendees have a higher level of attainment as a result of taking part in such initiatives.

#### Careers advice, Alumni and industry mentor schemes

##### **Student journey:** Progression

**Background:** students career aspirations need to be raised as much as their aspirations to engage in higher education. They need direct contact to navigate their career path

**Aim:** to offer a range of careers support to students, particularly those from our target groups

**Activities:** SAE enjoys strong industry links allowing students to gain real world insight and application of their knowledge which can boost employability<sup>36</sup> for our target groups. For example, low socio-economic, white and BAME students can increase their employability through career placements<sup>37</sup> and thus SAE has committed to working with 50 employers in the next five years and has developed a package to engage employers to offer placements to our students. This will help reduce the progression gap between our white and BAME students and improve progression of students from deprived backgrounds identified in this plan.

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<sup>35</sup> [https://www.surrey.ac.uk/psychology/files/Mature\\_student\\_report\\_2011.pdf](https://www.surrey.ac.uk/psychology/files/Mature_student_report_2011.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Rich, J. (2015). Employability: degrees of value. Occasional Paper 12, Higher Education Policy Institute

<sup>37</sup> Worrall-Hill, C. (2014). Employability and students from BME backgrounds (2013 / 2014) Project Evaluation. Staffordshire University

In addition, a number of CV writing and career workshops are not provided to the student body. These will commence in 2019-20. These will be delivered at all times of the year but particularly targeted to final year students including students from deprived backgrounds to increase their chances of progressing into employment.<sup>38</sup>

Further, SAE will bring on board a number of industry/career mentors. Though these will be offered to all students, in particular we will target, and track attendance of students targeted in this plan e.g. deprived students. Such mentor schemes are effective in improving employability skills and thus improving chances of progression.<sup>39</sup> The method for recruiting and delivering mentoring schemes include:

- a) SAE Extra' - a national programme delivered by SAE where leading industry guest speakers and independent artists and entrepreneurs are invited to provide insight into the Creative Media industries, who provide career advice and become mentors to students.
- b) SAE also launched an Alumni Engagement Strategy with a revamped Alumni event in October 2018. A number of former graduates of SAE have excelled in their careers who can provide both insight into the world of work but also internship opportunities to our current students. This will improve the chances for progression into employment for all students.

SAE has already seen an increase to 85% of students in employment or further study (DLHE 2018).

**Monitoring and evaluation:** this shall be monitored through number of students in receipt of careers advice, number of SAE extra events and the attendees data, and observations during workshops. The impact of the intervention will be measured by an increase % in employment and further study for the target groups.

### 3.2 Student consultation

Our Access and Participation plan is written in collaboration with our students and lead representatives in two ways: a) useful initiatives within this plan come directly from their consultation feedback; b) as well as calling on their own personal experiences of being students that fall under the groups represented within i.e mature students. Their feedback has directly influenced targets, for example the Lead Representative for SAE Liverpool provided feedback on the non-continuation rate for mature students; *"It could prove helpful to run some kind of workshop or drop in sessions like we have at Liverpool for academic writing and research but with a focus on basic computing, as I think this knowledge is often taken for granted with mature students"*.

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<sup>38</sup> Shury et al (2017). Planning for success: Graduates' career planning and its effect on graduate outcomes. Department for Education

<sup>39</sup> Hyams-Ssekasi, D. (2013). Developing business students' employability skills through working in partnership with a local business to deliver an undergraduate mentoring programme. University of Huddersfield

This is in recognition that mature learners generally come to HE with a different range of potential barriers and challenges to the young cohort, for example Non-traditional qualifications, competing responsibilities and commitments; and challenges associated with being out of education for a longer time, etc.

The Lead Representative for SAE Glasgow made suggestions for “*More direct interaction with primary/high schools and colleges, [with] visits to them with a diverse student body*” and “*Putting an emphasis on students that can start from very little to no prior knowledge of subjects beforehand, reducing the potential that some students may alienate themselves from even joining*”. The Lead Representative for SAE Oxford shared commentary on care leavers being represented in our target groups; “*Care leavers category needs more consideration and research in terms of continuation and what [...] can be done to lessen the impact of care leavers beginning their studies and how they can continue their career after their degree.*” Full commentary from lead representatives has been considered by the Access and Participation Implementation Group and useful initiatives will be covered in the plan.

In our Board of Studies, the Student Experience Manager delivered an Access and Participation consultation. We included a range of discussion points, such as how we can improve continuation for under-represented groups into the second year of our programmes and how we may approach improving student achievement for BAME and under-represented student groups. We reviewed our current plan and openly discussed actions and targets for our new plan, as well as providing information as part of training and discussion questions to promote engagement. One such question was whether our current approach to SAE Extra events was diverse enough, and whether we are representing gender and demographics suitably. It was noted by the representatives that our events lack BAME and female representation and that SAE should actively work on engaging these under-represented groups in a range of student experience opportunities going forward; **such student feedback has been fully considered within our plan.**

Student consultation is at the forefront of developing, delivering, evaluating and monitoring our access and participation plan. Continually consulting students in our performance will ensure that we maintain collaboration and a transparent approach to our initiatives. Our access and participation plan will be published online on our website, as well as hosted on our Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, to ensure easy access for current and prospective students. We will remain transparent in ensuring timely communications are made to students in relation to our plan.

Student collaboration across key areas			
Development & Planning	Delivery	Evaluation	Monitoring
Lead representatives were asked to review our old access plan to provide commentary on targets and actions. These	Student ambassadors will collaborate with us to promote	Our target dashboard will be shared with representatives	The plan will be a standing item at key student feedback events, such as Board



<p>were then carried over to the new plan. We also held consultation presentations at campus Board of Studies with all representatives, with focus questions to promote engagement, with commentary informing our new plan.</p>	<p>awareness on campuses, helping us to achieve our targets.</p> <p>Curriculum reviews will involve diverse groups in order to ensure we are representing fairly.</p>	<p>and students will be included in relevant review meetings.</p>	<p>of Studies and Lead Representative meetings.</p>
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**3.3 Evaluation strategy**

Our evaluation strategy shall be reviewed frequently as a new area of work for SAE within the Directorate of Academic and Student Services in partnership with our Recruitment Directorate. The outcomes from the evaluation will then feed into refinements to our interventions. This may be refining an activity so it has greater impact, or increasing the scale of an activity while maintaining impact. Regular evaluation will provide the opportunity to reflect and amend our provision of support where needed and is key to our planning. We will use formative as well as summative approaches to evaluation to collect data on entry profiles, attendance and uptake of workshops, and others expressed in Table 5. We will undertake an impact as well as process evaluation to determine whether our interventions are having the desired impact and leading to improvements, and whether the intervention itself has been appropriately designed and delivered.

Context

SAE is part of the IndependentHE (IHE) Access and Participation Working Group which brings together providers to share best practice. At two recent network meetings in May 2019, ideas were exchanged on the best sources of data to use, and effective evaluation methods including survey based methods. Our findings shall also be discussed in ongoing external forums and meetings such as of the IHE as discussed above, and we will engage with the TASO both to access other institutions good practice and to share our own.

The access plan is now a core activity in the way SAE operates. As such it is shared operationally in Campus Based leadership meetings and Executive Leadership meetings. Student representatives and lead student representatives now have the opportunity to report on our findings and activities as part of their Boards of Studies. A report is to be provided to the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board on an annual basis evaluating achievements in the access plan and improvements that we may need to make in our approach. These shall precede the annual impact statements submitted to the Office for Students.

Evaluation Methods

The main methods we will use to collect data to evaluate the impact and process will be tailored questionnaire surveys for each intervention, and also observations in the cases of practical workshops and use of secondary data. The survey will provide quantitative as well as qualitative responses such as increase in confidence levels or percentage of improvement in various domains such as employment or further study. The data will be collected particularly after the intervention, and before in two cases which relate to the target to raise aspirations/confidence of school pupils and level of understanding of higher education by mature students.

Consent will be sought from all participants and information sheets will be provided in line with ethical practice as prescribed by the British Educational Research Association. Sampling of participants will be random.

### Self-Assessment

SAE has completed the self-assessment tool provided by the Office for Students and has identified some areas that it can enhance its evaluation strategy.

The self assessment revealed three areas for enhancement where we are currently rated as ‘emerging’: programme design, evaluation design and evaluation implementation. Our desired future rating is a minimum of ‘good’ in all three areas. We have identified that programme design capabilities will be enhanced by mid-2020 moving from ‘emerging’ to ‘good’, given the in-house expertise from other SAE staff not currently involved in access work who will share expertise. For both evaluation design and implementation (e.g. at type 2 level) are new areas for SAE and thus we plan to be judged as ‘good’ by mid-2021. During 2019-20 extensive staff training will take place and we are in negotiations with an external provider to provide expertise in conducting robust evaluation (empirical) of our interventions. Data protection and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Evaluation area	Critical analysis
Strategic context - self assessment grade: Advanced	<p>We have a dedicated team and regular conversations about evaluation. We have an Access and Participation Implementation Group which consists of staff from student services, access and participation mechanism for strategic overview specifically of the evaluation strategy and from July 2019 this will also include faculty nominees.</p> <p>We have created a new post responsible for developing evaluation work as a distinct practice area within SAE.</p>

	<p>Resources will only be committed to those activities deemed to be successful via robust evaluation.</p> <p>We are currently developing a whole institution approach to widening participation. This is an emerging area that will be monitored closely.</p>
<p>Programme design -self assessment grade: Emerging</p>	<p>We are adopting a theory of change approach to reviewing our outreach activities and developing evaluation measures that are causally related to our understanding of the mechanisms that underpin the impact of interventions (see below).</p> <p>Prior to the Access and Participation of 2019-20, SAE had designed interventions based on sector practice but had not proactively taken a research or scholarly approach to its access and participation work. However, by increasing our work with different stakeholders, and particularly faculty staff engaged in discipline specific research work, we will draw on their expertise to enhance our evaluation capability – and ensure that this expertise is shared with delivery staff via a budget allocation for staff training and capacity building.</p>
<p>Evaluation design - self assessment grade: Emerging</p>	<p>As we develop our evaluation capacity we will seek to move from Type 1 (narrative) standards of evidence to Type 2 (empirical). We will also look for options to undertake Type 3 (casual) evaluations where we can arrange for a counterfactual or stepped design.</p>
<p>Evaluation implementation - self assessment grade: Emerging</p>	<p>SAE needs to work more closely with its school partners to securely collect relevant data and are attempting to secure ongoing data sharing agreements Though an agreed research protocol is in place for staff research, our policy and appropriate training is being put in place to include access and participation research work.</p> <p>Moreover, the research with students is designed to be cross sectional, but could be designed to adopt a panel approach providing evaluation data over a longer period of time which may be done through following up with participants.</p> <p>A risk assessment is also being put in place.</p>
<p>Learning to shape improvements - self assessment grade: Good</p>	<p>At present there are no mechanisms to triangulate quantitative evaluation data with other data sources, such as qualitative approaches (speaking to participants (students) and their parents or other stakeholders).</p>

	<p>With the increase in investment in evaluation, we will ensure that evaluation outcomes and practical delivery continue to inform each other (as per the feedback cycle below).</p> <p>Activities that have had the greatest impact include a tailored induction process and assignment surgeries as discussed earlier. For now given the small sample the qualitative survey for the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit will be used.</p>
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**3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

The SAE UK Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is overall responsible for the monitoring of the plan, with the UK Dean designated as the lead ELT staff member. It has delegated the routine monitoring and implementation of the plan to the Access and Participation Implementation Group (APIG) newly formed in April 2019 as the first cross functional operational group comprised of members from student services, recruitment and from July 2019, faculty members. The APIG meets frequently to assess the impact of work and reports to the ELT and has a dashboard that has been created to monitor progress against the targets.

Implementation is also discussed across other governance and quality channels. A clear governance chart shows that the APIG submits a report every three months to the ELT alongside a new report to the governing Board of Directors and Academic Board, which all meet at least three times a year. In the June 2019 round of Boards of Studies across all campuses, the access plan was reported on and from October 2019 shall feature as a standard item in the Student Representative Reports where they will be required to comment on progress. From July 2019 the Learning and Teaching Committee shall also receive updates.

If progress deteriorates then there shall be an emergency meeting with the APIG Stream Leads and Leadership Sponsors to determine a course of action. This will include conducting a deeper dive into the issues and conducting further data research work. We will also hold relevant meeting with stakeholders/staff dealing with targets in the plan. If required, we may increase resource for more activities where this is identified as a hindrance.

**4. Provision of information to students**

This Access and Participation Plan will be published on our website at the following link once approved by the Office for Students: <http://www.sae.edu/gbr/access-and-participation-higher-education-sae>. It will therefore be easily accessible and our website is easy to navigate with large font and white space to support those with visual impairments.

The information related to fees will be clearly set out on the SAE UK website, with a specific section dedicated to fees and funding within the overall ‘how to apply’ pages of the website. We provide timely, accurate, unambiguous, clear and easily accessible information to existing

students and prospective applicants about: The Institute, academic programmes, entry requirements, fees, financial support and total costs. This will be in accordance with guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority for prospective applicants during the admissions & enrolment process: application/enquiry, offer/acceptance and enrolment.

Attention is drawn to any surprising rules or regulations, no important information that could affect a student's decision is omitted. Full information on fees for the duration of the course is highlighted in the student offer letter and within the terms and conditions which are also available on the SAE website and signposted in the offer letter. The website is the key source of information and is updated in real time whenever changes occur.

Full information about the Institute, academic programmes, entry requirements, fees, financial support and total costs are also set out in the annual updated prospectuses and presented at all open events.

## **5. Appendix**

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)

# Access and participation plan

## Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: SAE Education Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10007839

### Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

#### Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	Glasgow Campus	£7,500
Accelerated degree	London, Oxford and Liverpool Campuses	£9,000
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	N/A	£5,000
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan

## 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: SAE Education Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10007839

### Investment summary

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

#### Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£87,800.00	£100,000.00	£114,000.00	£138,000.00	£154,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£17,800.00	£20,000.00	£24,000.00	£28,000.00	£34,000.00
Access (post-16)	£70,000.00	£80,000.00	£90,000.00	£110,000.00	£120,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£93,000.00	£144,000.00	£189,000.00	£240,000.00	£285,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£20,000.00	£25,000.00	£25,000.00	£28,000.00	£30,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£952,500.00	£1,103,300.00	£1,225,300.00	£1,347,300.00	£1,470,800.00
<b>Access investment</b>	9.2%	9.1%	9.3%	10.2%	10.5%
<b>Financial support</b>	9.8%	13.1%	15.4%	17.8%	19.4%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	2.1%	2.3%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	21.1%	24.4%	26.8%	30.1%	31.9%

