

Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP)

Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

1. Introduction and strategic aim

During the summer of 2024, The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) and the SAE Institute UK (SAE UK) will have formally joined together as one registered provider, bringing together a shared mission to shape the future of the creative arts professions. We pride ourselves on being organisations that aim to support access to higher education; to facilitate the development of creative skills and qualities; and to provide clear pathways in the creative industries and beyond, for students from all circumstances or backgrounds.

A strong feature of ICMP and SAE UK is the diverse student communities within them; the organisations are home to a total student population of approximately 1,900 students. 76% of the 2022-23 cohorts were UK domiciled and of those 29% were Black, Asian, Mixed and from other underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Around 30% of students had declared a disability and 40% of those that declared a disability reported a mental health condition. We also have a significant number of mature learners at our institution. Across five sites ICMP and SAE UK can ensure local engagement opportunities, offering access to creative arts education to a broader audience. Diversity is a strength underpinned by a commitment to equality of experience, opportunity, and outcome for every student. We recognise that to achieve equality of opportunity, we must first ensure there is true equity. The new Access and Participation Plan (APP) will be a key vehicle for achieving this, alongside our Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. Our strategic approach to equality of opportunity is based on a clear theory of change methodology, which rejects any kind of deficit model and places the responsibility to change with the institution.

Whilst we recognise that school experiences and academia may not be for everyone, we believe that creative education can be truly universal. We offer supportive alternative routes to entry at both ICMP and SAE UK and the accelerated degree at SAE UK provides an alternative mode to study. Students will be provided with the opportunity of a high-quality creative education, will be able to access flexible assessment options and will develop graduate-level employability skills that can be used in any profession. ICMP and SAE UK are committed to supporting students in not only accessing creative arts education but also in finding employment within the creative industries. Embedding industry experts within the teaching faculty and curricula ensures progression and employability is at the centre of what we do. The creative arts cannot operate in isolation and the industry requires cross discipline working and collaboration. By coming together ICMP and SAE UK can offer a broader and stronger connection to the industry that can be utilised from the point of access right up until graduation.

Our strengths are within access and progression, with a very diverse student body and strong graduate outcomes. We recognise that we still have work to do to ensure equality of opportunity within the success stage of the student lifecycle. Our APP is strongly linked with the institutions' overall strategic priorities to improve continuation rates, to ensure strong graduate outcomes are enjoyed by all, and to provide an inclusive culture and environment focused on diversity, equity, and inclusive practice. Work in our APP will ensure connectedness throughout the student lifecycle, so that mental health support and careers and employability opportunities will be further embedded in all provision, to guarantee that equality of opportunity and support is always present. We are a small

and specialist provider, which allows us to be agile and responsive to our context and situation. However, this also means we have small datasets, which presents a challenge in identifying and addressing areas of risk to equality of opportunity.

2. Risks to equality of opportunity

After conducting our assessment of performance (see *annex A*) and reviewing the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), we have identified the key risks to equality of opportunity that will be addressed through our APP.

A large proportion of our student cohort represent one or more main target groups in the access and participation agenda. As a small specialist provider, with limited resource and capacity, and considering our performance assessment, we consider that we can make most impact in our APP by focusing on the Success stage of the life cycle. With a strategic priority to improve continuation across ICMP and SAE UK, multiple 'On Course' risks noted in the EORR and significant gaps to continuation and attainment, which fall below sector averages in some cases, it is appropriate to prioritise these risks.

We have identified the following key risks to equality of opportunity, which are manifesting at ICMP and SAE UK.

2.1 Risk 1: There is a risk that Black students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2:1 degree classification).

There are lower proportions of Black students being awarded a first-class or 2.1 degree at our institution. This is a national issue, and the Black Awarding Gap is a sector priority, which we wish to contribute to understanding and reducing. Low on-course attainment, as evidenced in the EORR, can be attributed to gaps in prior skills and knowledge, limited accessibility to information and guidance, insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support, mental health, the impact of Covid-19, cost pressures and limited resources. Kirby and Cullinane (2016) explored the effects of ethnicity and disadvantage on GCSE attainment and found Black Caribbean students had lower attainment rates than other ethnically diverse groups. Prior attainment can be a contributor to awarding gaps, however when controlled for, there is still an unexplained gap between white and Black students' attainment (UUK and NUS, 2019). Evidence suggests factors such as sense of belonging, curriculum design and representation can also contribute to reducing awarding gaps (Annex B, Intervention Strategy 4.1, pp.54-65).

2.2 Risk 2: There is a risk that students from the Global Majority, Disabled students and the most Disadvantaged students are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue their studies.

There are lower proportions of students from ethnically diverse backgrounds continuing to level 5 study at our institution. Our internal datasets are small; however, we can see continuation rates are lower for all ethnically diverse students. In particular, the data demonstrates a gap between the continuation rate of white and Black students. The Office for Students' (OfS) Associations Between Characteristics (ABCs) dataset further highlights that ethnically diverse students are less likely to continue in higher education. This is amplified when intersected with mental health and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2. Considering our subject specialism, the wider context of music and creative education is of importance. Hendry (2023) identified that there is an extreme underrepresentation of non-White individuals within music education in schools and further

education. This may contribute to ethnically diverse students feeling alienated in the creative classroom and unable to make connections between themselves and careers in the creative industry. To ensure continuation for these students we must consider prior negative education experiences and ensure representation within the curriculum. Evidence from the EORR suggests lower proportions of continuation are the result of prior knowledge and skills gaps, varied accessibility to information and guidance and on-course risks such as insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support, mental health, cost of living, resource shortages and the longer-term effects of Covid-19.

Lower proportions of disabled students are continuing to level 5 study at ICMP specifically, particularly those reporting a mental health condition. There is almost no gap in continuation between disabled students and those with no disability reported in the sector, however our gap is over 10pp. This suggests there are some risks to continuation for disabled students that are specific to our context and therefore needs to be prioritised in the APP. Our internal data details that students with mental health and cognitive or learning difficulties are at greater risk of non-continuation, which we need to address through our institutional approach. We have also identified a difference between the number of students reporting a disability and the number applying for support via the Disability Support Allowance (DSA). From ABCs data, we know mental health can decrease likelihood of continuing, particularly when intersected with ethnicity or IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, which is another reason for prioritising this risk in our APP. The EORR suggests this is a function of insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support; world issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis, resource shortages; mental health and limited choice of course type and delivery mode.

Finally, there are lower proportions of students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 continuing to level 5 study at SAE UK and ICMP. Using our merged dataset, the gap between those from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and those from IMD Quintiles 3 to 5 was 5.5pp for 2020-21. We note that students may not be familiar with IMD Quintiles and are unlikely to self-identify with this measure. As such, our work to reduce this area of risk will also be dovetailed with interventions targeting groups such as first in family, free school meal eligibility and low household income. Evidence from the EORR suggests cost of living, mental health and resource shortages can contribute to risks under this category. The evidence (Annex B, Intervention Strategy 4.3, pp.61-64) and the wider context of an ongoing cost of living crisis means SAE UK and ICMP wish to address this risk.

2.3 Risk 3: There is a risk that Disabled students at SAE UK are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2.1 degree classification).

There are lower proportions of disabled students being awarded a first-class or 2.1 degree at SAE UK specifically. There is almost no gap in awarding between disabled students and those with no disability in the sector, however our gap is 6.5pp. Low on-course attainment, as evidenced in the EORR, can be attributed to gaps in prior skills and knowledge, limited accessibility to information and guidance, insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support, mental health, the impact of Covid-19, cost pressures and limited resources. When disaggregating for disability type, we note that students declaring a mental health condition are at greater risk of not being awarded a first-class or 2.1 degree outcome. Alongside internal recognition that there is a disparity between those students declaring a disability and applying for DSA, we feel this is an important area to prioritise in our APP. The EORR suggests this is a function of insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support, mental health and limited choice of course type and delivery mode.

2.4 Other Risks

Through conducting our assessment of performance, we identified other risks to equality of opportunity, which will not be addressed through this APP due to our size, capacity, and resource. These decisions have been carefully considered and we will continue to monitor these performance areas annually and consider them through our whole provider approach. The additional risks, not covered in the APP, are:

2.4.1 Risk 4: There is a risk that Asian students are experiencing inequalities of opportunity relating to access that mean they are less likely to enrol at ICMP or SAE UK.

The proportion of undergraduate entrants of Asian ethnicity at our institution is lower than the sector average. However, the proportion of students of Asian ethnicity has been increasing through our target in our previous APP and our rates are on par with similar creative providers. From an ICMP perspective, further research into the demographics of music students demonstrates that Asian students make up 2% of those students studying music in higher education (Bull et al., 2022). At our provider, Asian students made up 3.7% of entrants in 2021-22, which is higher than the national statistic. Those of Asian ethnicity working within the music industry make up 22.5% of those who are ethnically diverse. However, the proportion of those from all ethnically diverse groups in the industry is 22%, whilst 75% are white (UK Music, 2020). We recognise that the representation of students of Asian ethnicity within music and/or creative industries is low and further improvement is required across the sector. Whilst not a target for this APP, work through our access and outreach activity will continue to support students from this underrepresented group and be considered in our intervention strategies for Risk 2. Rather than having an access target related to admissions at ICMP and SAE UK for this risk, we have aims outside of the APP to work creatively with younger Asian school students, to increase awareness of creative arts as a potential pathway earlier on in their education.

2.4.2 Risk 5: There is a risk that mature students are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue their studies.

Continuation rates for mature students are lower than students under 21 with a 9pp gap at our institution that is reflected across the sector. This gap is smaller than some of our others so whilst this is a focus for intervention, it is not our top priority for the APP. Improving continuity is an overall strategic priority for ICMP and SAE UK and we are confident this gap will be addressed through the institution focus on improving continuation rates for all students. Furthermore, with a high proportion of our students being mature, the APP continuation targets that have been selected will be intersectional and the intervention activities detailed in the APP will be enjoyed by many of our mature learners.

2.4.3 Risk 6: There is a risk that students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2:1 degree classification).

There is an awarding gap for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and students from IMD Quintiles 3 to 5 at our provider. A similar gap exists across the sector. We recognise the importance of ensuring students from disadvantaged backgrounds have the same opportunity to be awarded a first class or 2:1 degree, particularly as prior attainment for students eligible for free school meals or from the most disadvantaged areas is significantly lower than their peers. As a small specialist provider, we have looked at the ways we can maximise the support offered to our students through our APP

targets. For students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, our priority is to address rates of continuation and support students to continue on-course. This intervention strategy will provide enhanced academic and non-academic support aimed primarily at improving retention but will have a dual benefit of positively impacting academic performance to improve attainment.

2.5 Other Challenges

2.5.1 Small datasets

In determining which risk areas to focus on in this APP, we considered our size as a small provider, and our specialism in the creative industries as key contextual factors. As a smaller provider, the data we have drawn upon is small cohort data, which means that analysis of data and statistical significance is limited. This also limits our ability to make valid assessments and interpretations, particularly in exploring disaggregated data and intersections of characteristics. We have explored and provided assessment where we considered it meaningful.

While noting the small datasets, we consider the following analyses of interest:

- Progression rates are strong for all students. In Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 metrics we are above benchmark for all student groups. Whilst progression rates and graduate outcomes are positive, and an area we are extremely proud of, we recognise there are disparities in progression rates for disabled students and students of Black ethnicity. As a small provider our datasets for this are small, so the conclusions we can make about the gaps to progression are limited. We will continue to strive for the best progression outcomes for all students and include progression activity within our intervention strategies for these target groups.
- Our internal datasets for care experienced and estranged students are extremely small and as such it is difficult to identify specific risks to equality of opportunity. However, we know through national data and the EORR that students who are care experienced or estranged face multiple barriers to equality of opportunity. Whilst we do not have a target within the APP, our work to support this group will continue through our whole provider approach, financial support, and wraparound care.
- There are some risks to equality of opportunity in continuation and attainment for students who were previously eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). With minimal internal data this is an area for us to strengthen in future years. The OfS dashboard data suggests similar gaps in continuation to our IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 students. We anticipate work done through that intervention strategy will support students previously eligible for FSM. FSM Eligibility will be a priority target group for our Access and Outreach work.

2.5.2 Systemic Challenges impacting Equality of Opportunity

In respect of our specialist provision, we note the systemic challenges present in arts education and in the creative industries we link with, which pose risk to equality of opportunity. Downstream, in the education pipeline, we note the continued de-prioritisation and under-valuing of creative arts in secondary curricula, which limits access to and engagement with the subject area and has subsequent negative influence on education and career choices in our specialist area. While the National Plan for Music Education 2023 is a step to potentially address some of the historic de-prioritisation of the music curriculum and creative arts subjects, this will require engagement and resourcing decisions from senior school leaders. Upstream, in industry, we experience risks to equality of opportunity arising from the under-representation of female and Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. These risks present challenges for our target

groups. These systemic challenges require collaborative approaches and understanding, as part of our sector networks.

Finally, we wish to explicitly note the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. This impact will continue to flow through the system over the lifetime of this APP. Potential risks to equality of opportunity in access to higher education, success through higher education, and progression into good graduate outcomes, which have been highlighted to disproportionately affect underrepresented and disadvantaged students, have not yet been fully realised or understood. ICMP and SAE UK will remain vigilant of this context over the lifetime of this APP, considering and closely monitoring our data to ensure that any further gaps in performance are identified and addressed; and, that our general support for students is effective and responsive to emerging needs. Understanding the experiences of students coming through higher education at our institution will be enabled through our commitment to evaluation and research, as detailed in our Evaluation Strategy and as supported in collaborative work through our Specialise Evidence Evaluation and Research (SEER) membership.

3. Objectives

Through our assessment of performance, we have identified several indications of risks. Our APP will address five of these indications of risks to equality of opportunity through activities embedded across the student lifecycle.

Reference (Table 5d, Annex C)	Objectives	Intervention Strategy
PTS_1	<p>Aim: To reduce the awarding gap between Black and white students, over and beyond the life of this Plan.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt a whole-lifecycle approach to supporting Black student attainment. • To provide curriculum design leadership opportunities to promote inclusivity and connection through identity. • To increase sense of belonging. • To ensure students are equipped to enter and supported to achieve their potential at ICMP and SAE UK, and to achieve good degree outcomes at comparable rates to their peers. 	IS1
PTS_2	<p>Aim: To reduce the continuation gap between Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students compared to white students, aligning it with current sector averages by 2027-28.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide personalised academic and non-academic support and development that starts early and promotes continuation of study, mitigating barriers to continuation. • To create and mobilise a range of supportive networks including peers, tutors, professional staff, and schools/college partners, creating a community that supports belonging, good mental health and wellbeing and positive university experiences. 	IS1
PTS_3 ICMP only Target	<p>Aim: To reduce the continuation gap between disabled students and students with no known disability, eliminating the gap completely by 2031-32.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a holistic approach that: 	IS2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Builds institutional capability to provide effective support. ○ Provides personalised academic and non-academic support, with a focus on mental health. ● To facilitate access to support (DSA). ● To promote accessibility of and engagement with learning. 	
PTS_4 SAE UK only Target	<p>Aim: To reduce the awarding gap between disabled students and students with no known disability, eliminating the gap completely by 2031-32.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide a holistic approach that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Builds institutional capability to provide effective support. ○ Provides personalised academic and non-academic support, with a focus on mental health. ● To facilitate access to support (DSA). ● To promote accessibility of and engagement with learning. 	IS2
PTS_5	<p>Aim: To eliminate the continuation gap between students from the most disadvantaged, compared to students from the least disadvantaged, backgrounds by 2027-28.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide personalised academic and non-academic support and development that starts early and promotes continuation of study, mitigating barriers to continuation with specific attention to the impact of the Cost of Living crisis. ● To provide financial support to the most disadvantaged learners, to enable full participation in the university experience. ● To focus on ensuring a sense of belonging to support engagement and continuation outcomes. 	IS3

4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention Strategies that we will put in place to meet our objectives and targets are as follows. Dissemination of findings of evaluation across all our Intervention Strategies is summarised below:

Summary of publication plan	
Format of findings	Sharing findings
<p>We will produce an annual summary progress and review report, which will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide insights on the effectiveness and progress of relevant activities in this Strategy based on the achievement of intended outcomes. 2. Capture learning and insights that inform practice improvements and any appropriate changes and developments. <p>Highlights and themes from this report will be shared online, for example through our website/SEER website.</p> <p>Findings will also be shared internally to relevant committees and fora, to inform practice and decision-making. See 'Evaluation Strategy' section.</p>	<p>Progress 'highlights' of what both works and doesn't work will be shared annually.</p>
We will produce an 'Evaluation to Date' or an 'End of Project' Report (whichever is relevant) capturing all evaluation and findings,	4 years on from Plan commencement (Autumn/Winter 2028)

disseminated online via our website and the SEER website, and via channels mentioned below where appropriate.	and/or at the conclusion of projects. For Financial Support evaluation, this will be every 2 years, from 2026-27.
We will also contribute at conferences and through workshops and events hosted by networks such as SEER, NEON, IHE and GuildHE.	At minimum every 2 years, starting from 2025-26.
We will contribute to other calls for evidence, such as through TASO.	As they arise, at minimum every 2 years.

4.1 Intervention Strategy 1: A Whole-lifecycle, inclusive and personalised approach to supporting students from the Global Majority.

Objective and targets

Objective: To progressively reduce the continuation and awarding gaps between Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students and their white peers. In respect of continuation, to reduce this gap to 3% over the life of this Plan (by 2027-28). For the awarding gap, to reach 12.8% over the life of this Plan and thereafter continue to reduce the gap, eliminating it completely by 2035-36.

Targets: PTS_1: To reduce the on-course awarding gap between Black and white students to 12.8% by 2027-28, with target continuing to 2031-32.

PTS_2: To reduce the continuation gap between Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students and white students to 3% by 2027-28.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Insufficient academic support; insufficient non-academic support; mental health; knowledge and skills; information and guidance; cost pressures.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Outreach to schools and communities. This activity has two strands: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-16 Attainment Support. This will include a Creative Arts Education Network for creative arts education practitioners and a programme focusing on metacognition and skills for Black and Asian secondary school students. (New activity). Access and Outreach Offer for Schools and Communities. A programme of activity 	Access and Outreach Coordinator. Recruitment and Event Team Structure Student Ambassadors (Training and delivery). Administration and Resource.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. Improved sense of belonging in HE /pathways to HE. Increased knowledge and awareness of HE. Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process. Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans. Improved confidence and preparation for HE selection process.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
<p>providing information and guidance on both higher education and the support available for underrepresented groups, including IAG for key supporters e.g., teachers, parents/carers. (Existing Activity).</p> <p>We hope to engage 12 schools, colleges and/or community organisations per year. Participant numbers will be determined in collaboration with partners.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Practitioners) Improved confidence and knowledge in creative arts education and creative arts HE pathways. • (Practitioners) Improved support and development through the network. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mock assessment and/or predicted grades. • Improved creative skills. • Applications to HE. • Offers from HE providers. • Enrolments in HE.
Cross Intervention: IS2, IS3		
<p>Decolonising Study and Support. This activity explores decolonisation across the student experience, in two key strands:</p> <p>1. Decolonising the Curriculum. A collaborative project with the academic team and students to decolonise the curriculum and diversify the offer available to all students. This will include students co-creating curriculum change through a Leaders programme, coordinated by a staff member, which offers skills, development, and pastoral support. (New Activity).</p> <p>2. Decolonising Professional Services. A collaborative project with professional services teams and students to decolonise the structures, processes, and policies. Including awareness raising and training for staff. (New Activity).</p>	<p>Student Consultant/ Leader costs.</p> <p>Percentage of staff role for coordination.</p> <p>Training.</p>	<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved student self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • (Tutors and Professional Services Staff) Improved understanding of student diversity and identity, experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Personal Tutoring/Mentoring. One-to-one support for students offering a named contact for personalised academic and pastoral support. Embedded into the degree programme to be able to signpost and address concerns early. (Existing Activity, ICMP) (New Activity, SAE UK).	Personal Tutor Staff Costs. Training.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. Increased knowledge and understanding of subject, creative industry, professional standards, and competencies. Improved module/assessment grades. Improved mental health and wellbeing. (Tutors/Mentors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. Longer-term Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. (Tutors/Mentors) Improved confidence and career development.
Cross Intervention: IS2, IS3		
Peer Support. Projects aimed to provide peer links to students to help with the transition to Higher Education and beyond by making connections through their courses, skills, or shared interests. (New Activity).	Training and institutional support for peer supporters.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved motivation and engagement in learning and community. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. Improved mental health and wellbeing. Longer-term Outcomes Improved continuation rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS2, IS3		
Understanding Student Experiences. A programme of activity exploring reverse and reciprocal mentoring/leadership techniques allowing for student experiences to be understood and heard by the institution's staff. The intention would be to have preparation and training activities	Student Consultant/ Leader/Mentor costs. Training for student mentors and staff mentees.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about confidence and belonging. Increased knowledge and understanding of organisational leadership and decision-making.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
<p>for all stakeholders followed by a series of activities that allow for experiences and perspectives to be shared.</p> <p>(New Activity).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Institution Staff) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; issues relating to inclusion and race; and strategies for effective student support. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • (Institution Staff) Improved confidence in decision-making in relation to strategies to improve student experience, support, and outcomes. • (Institutional) Student insights are reflected in institutional policy, governance, development, and planning.
<p>Belonging and Mattering</p> <p>A series of activities to support the belonging and mattering of our students. Including campaigns such as 'Say my Name', spaces for conversation and sharing lived experiences and opportunities to celebrate and have pride in identity through activities like Be Heard! spotlights.</p> <p>(New Activity).</p>	<p>Event costs.</p> <p>Administration and Resource.</p>	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with students, identification and roll-out of a range of campaigns. • Improved connections and engagement between students and with SAE UK and ICMP, particularly amongst diverse groups. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student sense of belonging. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. • Increased continuation rates for target students. • (Institutional) ICMP and SAE UK are safe, inclusive environments that support good mental health and wellbeing of its communities.
<p>Line of Sight Project</p> <p>A project for first-year students to develop their awareness of employment opportunities and develop the skills needed including confidence, tackling imposter syndrome, and navigating a career in creative industries. Within this project a series of networking events will take place to support students' professional development in</p>	<p>Percentage of Access and Participation Manager.</p> <p>Administration and Resource.</p> <p>Guest Speaker costs.</p>	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and capacity relating to career and employability pathways and skills. • Increased level of professional networks and contacts. • Increased knowledge and understanding of the labour market, professional standards, and competencies. • Improved self-perceptions about career and employability capacities, readiness, and confidence.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
collaboration with external organisations and groups. (New Activity).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding and articulation of goals and links between study and career goals. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved progression rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS2, IS3		
Approx. Costs: £181,000 per year		

Evidence base and rationale:

We have conducted a literature review, alongside attending conferences on ethnicity awarding gaps and a focus group with our current Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students. Evidence for the impact of personal tutoring and peer support schemes in the sector has been considered. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 1 for further information.

Evaluation

We will evaluate the activity within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and 2 standards, which will establish whether the intended outcomes are being met. The strategy will begin from academic year 2024-25, with findings published as outlined in Section 4. Table 1 outlines how we will evaluate each activity within this strategy.

Table 1: Evaluation Plan for Intervention Strategy 1

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation <i>Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).</i>
Outreach to schools and communities	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. Improved sense of belonging in HE /pathways to HE. Increased knowledge and awareness of HE. Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process. Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis: Number and % of pupils attending activities with target characteristics (T1). Output analysis: the number of activities delivered (T1). Output analysis: the number of practitioners part of the Network (T1). Output analysis: the number of events delivered for the Network(T1). Annual end-of-year Teacher/Staff/Practitioner Survey exploring whether content was appropriately aligned to School curriculum LOs (Creative Arts) and Gatsby Benchmarks (T1). Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder (practitioner and students) experiences and perceptions (T2).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved confidence and preparation for HE selection process. • (Practitioners) Improved confidence and knowledge in creative arts education and creative arts HE pathways. • (Practitioners) Improved support and development through the network. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mock assessment and/or predicted grades. • Improved creative skills. • Applications to HE. • Offers from HE providers. • Enrolments in HE. 	<p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and annual student survey exploring interim outcomes and perceptions of Improved creative skills outcome (T2). • Annual end-of-year Teacher/Staff/Practitioner Survey exploring: (a) perceptions of achievement of interim outcomes for students; and (b) interim outcomes for practitioners (T2). • 2-3 student focus groups per annum from 2025-26, to explore key themes from surveys (T2). • Data Analysis: analysis of predicted grades and/or mock assessments (T2). • <i>TBC: Subject to availability of school data and timing, could include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Analysis of mock v. predicted exam results.</i> ◦ <i>Analysis of pre/post mock assessment results</i> ◦ <i>Tracking participant results / predicted results across year groups.</i> • (Y12-13 cohorts) Data Analysis: Number and % of participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Applying to HE ◦ Receiving offers from HE providers <p><i>At present, we do not have a mechanism for tracking student enrolments into HE. We will explore this (particularly associated costs) collaboratively with our SEER partners in 2024-25, with a view to establishing a tracking mechanism.</i></p>
Decolonising Study and Support.	<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved student self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • (Tutors and Professional Services Staff) Improved understanding of student diversity and identity, experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils with target characteristics involved in the Leaders programme to co-create curriculum change (T1). • Output analysis: the number of activities delivered as part of the Leaders programme (T1). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with participating students exploring intermediate outcomes (T2). • Focus groups with academic and professional services team staff exploring intermediate outcomes (T2). • Enhanced module evaluation questionnaires exploring student experiences and feedback (T2).

	<p>strategies for effective support.</p> <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: continuation rates for target students (T2). • Data Analysis: completion and attainment rates for target students (T2).
Personal Tutoring/Mentoring	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • Increased knowledge and understanding of subject, creative industry, professional standards, and competencies. • Improved module / assessment grades. • Improved mental health and wellbeing. • (Tutors/Mentors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • (Tutors/Mentors) Improved confidence and career development. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils engaging with PT and % with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1). • Data analysis: Analysis of referrals vs. self-sign, by student characteristics (T1). • Some post-PT polls gathering student experience /perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and annual student survey exploring perceptions and confidence in respect of outcomes (T2). • 2-3 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore key themes from polls and surveys (T2). • Annual end-of-year Staff Survey exploring confidence in providing PT and perceptions on impact for students (tutees) (T2). • Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2). • Data Analysis: module attainment and attainment (degree outcome) by target students (T2). <p><i>If possible:</i> Comparative analysis of outcomes (continuation, completion, attainment) between students who have engaged with PT and those who have not (T2→T3).</p>
Peer Support	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved motivation and engagement in learning and community. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • Improved mental health and wellbeing. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p>	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: Number of projects delivered (T1). • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils engaging with projects and % with target characteristics (T1). • Some post-project polls gathering student experience /perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <p>Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2).</p>

	Improved continuation rates for target students.	
Understanding Student Experiences	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about confidence and belonging. Increased knowledge and understanding of organisational leadership and decision-making. (Institution Staff) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; issues relating to inclusion and race; and strategies for effective student support. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. (Institution Staff) Improved confidence in decision-making in relation to strategies to improve student experience, support, and outcomes. (Institutional) Student insights are reflected in institutional policy, governance, development, and planning. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students with target characteristics engaging with mentoring (T1). Data Analysis: Number of senior leaders engaging with mentoring (T1). Output analysis: Number of sessions (T1). Some post-mentoring polls gathering staff and student experience/perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Institution Staff and student Surveys exploring experiences and outcomes (T2). Student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore experiences and perceptions of programme and outcomes (T2). Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2). Data Analysis: module attainment and attainment (degree outcome) by target students (T2).
Belonging and Mattering	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with students, identification and roll-out of a range of campaigns. Improved connections and engagement as between students and with ICMP, particularly amongst diverse groups. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p>	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output analysis: the number of campaigns (T1). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey (drawing on, for example, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) and/or creative focus groups with engaged students to understand the effectiveness of campaigns in promoting increases in sense of belonging and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student sense of belonging. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. • Increased continuation rates for target students. • (Institutional) ICMP and SAE UK are safe, inclusive environments that support good mental health and wellbeing of its communities. 	<p>emotional and mental wellbeing (T1, T2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2).
Line of Sight Project	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and capacity relating to career and employability pathways and skills. • Increased level of professional networks and contacts. • Increased knowledge and understanding of the labour market, professional standards, and competencies. • Improved self-perceptions about career and employability capacities, readiness, and confidence. • Increased understanding and articulation of goals and links between study and career goals. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved progression rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: Number and % of students engaging and % of students with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1). • Some post-activity polls gathering student experience and perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and annual student survey exploring perceptions and confidence in respect of career development and management / employability skills and professional networks (T2). • 2-3 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore key themes from polls and surveys (T2). • Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2). • Data analysis: progression into employment and into highly skilled employment or post-graduate study pathways for target students (T2). • <i>If possible</i>: Comparative analysis of outcomes (attainment, progression) between students who have engaged with the activity and those who have not (T2 → T3).

4.2 Intervention Strategy 2: Accessibility and Support for Disabled Learners

Objectives and targets

Objective: To reduce the continuation gap for disabled students by ensuring a holistic approach that builds institutional capability to provide effective support as well as facilitating access to support and appropriate flexible study provision.

Targets: PTS_3: To reduce the continuation gap between disabled students and students with no known disability to 3% by 2027-28, and then further reductions to eliminate the gap by 2031-32.

PTS_4: To reduce the awarding gap between disabled students and students with no known disability, eliminating the gap completely by 2031-32.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Information and guidance; insufficient academic support; insufficient non-academic support; mental health; cost pressures; resource shortages.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
<p>Staff Training, Awareness and Development opportunities.</p> <p>Across AP and EDI matters including disability, race, and inclusive teaching practices. Including training days, workshops and the Access and Participation Awareness Library.</p> <p>(Existing Activity).</p>	<p>HPL Tutor Costs for training.</p> <p>Training delivery costs.</p> <p>Resources for AP Awareness Library.</p>	<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff awareness of inclusive practice and universal design. • Improved staff knowledge and confidence in range of AP and EDI areas and effective support for students. • Teachers feel supported in their teaching and professional development. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff confidence in discussing topics and embedding inclusive practice in their work. • Improved staff understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support.
Cross Intervention: IS1, IS3		
<p>Specialist Staff and Wraparound Care</p> <p>Access to and support from a variety of specialist staff and wraparound provision to ensure personalised non-academic support throughout the student journey and to support success on course.</p> <p>(Existing Activity, ICMP).</p> <p>The development of access to and support from specialist staff to be created within SAE UK.</p> <p>(New Activity, SAE UK).</p>	<p>Staffing costs for:</p> <p>Mental Health Advisors</p> <p>Mental Health Advisor for Neurodivergence</p> <p>Disability Advisors</p> <p>Finance and Accommodation Officers</p> <p>Wellbeing Advisor</p> <p>Study Support Assistants</p>	<p>Intermediate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. • Improved module / assessment grades. <p>Longer-term Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS1, IS3		

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Supporting Study Pilots A scheme to pilot ways to further support disabled students to engage with their course. This work will be done in conjunction with students to understand the ways in which this will be most effective. (New Activity).	Inputs for this activity are being considered post-merger and will be presented to the Academic Board alongside student consultation.	Intermediate Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of supporting study options. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. Longer-term Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.
Wellbeing Initiatives A series of activities and campaigns to support and promote positive wellbeing and care. This will include the wellbeing circle, drop-in sessions, Place to Be, calm spaces and campaign weeks, like Exam Stress etc. This work will be co-created with students. (New Activity).	Percentage of Access and Participation Manager. Resources for events and campaigns.	Intermediate outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. • Improved module/assessment grades. Longer-term Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved attainment rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS1, IS3		
Disability Support Allowance (DSA) Engagement Addressing that there is a current difference between those reporting disability and engaging with DSA at our institution. Continue to work to promote early intervention and engagement with the DSA process and disability advisors, as soon as possible, as well as informed IAG for applicants.	Access and Participation Manager and Wellbeing staff time.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased applications for DSA • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to ability to obtain DSA support. • Student needs are supported. Longer-term Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Students are personally and appropriately supported with study. • Improved module / assessment grades. • Improved continuation, completion, and attainment rates for disabled students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
(Existing Activity, ICMP) (New Activity, SAE UK).		
Approx. Costs: £308,000 per year		

Evidence base and rationale:

We have conducted a literature review, which includes specific references to the range of materials OfS has identified in its guidance, plus a range of other research and best practice references. We have also used internal data; alongside best practice literature and research and specialist staff have facilitated discussions with students about their experiences. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 2 for further information.

Evaluation

We will evaluate the activity within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and 2 standards, which will establish whether the intended outcomes are being met. The strategy will begin from academic year 2024-25, with findings published as outlined in Section 4. Table 2 outlines how we will evaluate each activity within this strategy.

Table 2: Evaluation Plan for Intervention Strategy 2

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation <i>Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).</i>
Staff Training, Awareness and Development Opportunities	<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff awareness of inclusive practice and universal design. Improved staff knowledge and confidence in range of AP and EDI areas and effective support for students. Tutors feel supported in their teaching and professional development. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff confidence in discussing topics and embedding inclusive practice in their work. Improved staff understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number of staff participating in training (T1). Output analysis: Number of training sessions run (T1). Post-training feedback survey (T1). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual end-of-year Staff Survey exploring confidence in Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Access and Participation (AP) areas and in providing effective and tailored student support to meet diverse needs (T2). Data analysis: Monitoring student complaints data (T1). Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2).

Specialist Staff and Wraparound Care	<p>Intermediate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. Improved module/assessment grades. <p>Longer-term Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students with target characteristics receiving support (T1). Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1). Data analysis: Analysis of referrals vs. self-sign up, by student characteristics (T1). Some post-activity polls gathering student experience and perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore student experiences and outcomes in respect of support activities (T2). Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2). Data Analysis: attainment rates by target students (T2).
Supporting Study Pilots	<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of supporting study options. Improved motivation and engagement in learning. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output Analysis: Amount/ type of flexible study options available, by when (T1). Data Analysis: Number and % of students with target characteristics enrolling to flexible options (T1). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates for students on flexible options, by target groups (T2). Data Analysis: attainment rates for students on flexible options, by target students (T2).
Wellbeing Initiatives	<p>Intermediate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. Improved module/assessment grades. <p>Longer-term Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. Improved attainment rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students with target characteristics receiving support (T1). Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1). Data analysis: Analysis of referrals vs. self-sign up, by student characteristics. (T1). Some post-activity polls gathering student experience and perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore student experiences and outcomes in respect of support activities (T2). Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups (T2).

Disability Support Allowance (DSA) Engagement	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased applications for DSA • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to ability to obtain DSA support. • Student needs are supported. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Students are personally and appropriately supported with study. • Improved module / assessment grades. • Improved continuation, completion, and attainment rates for disabled students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis: Number and % of students with reported disability accessing DSA support. • Output Analysis: Number of support sessions delivered. • Data Analysis: Monitoring of DSA engagement. <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, with target students exploring experiences and impact of DSA support (T1). • Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates for target students (T2). • Data Analysis: attainment rates for target students (T2).
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4.3 Intervention Strategy 3: Targeted Transition and Financial Support for the most Disadvantaged students.

Objectives and targets

Objective: To close the continuation gap between students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, through an early and targeted focus on ensuring a sense of belonging and longer-term financial support to enable full participation in the university experience.

Target: PTS_5: To eliminate the continuation gap between students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and students from IMD Quintiles 3 to 5 by 2025-26.

We would also acknowledge that our Offer Holder/New Student Programme will likely and naturally support other underrepresented groups (particularly where there is intersection with IMD). In the other activities in this Strategy, we also recognise that students may not easily or readily self-identify as from various IMD quintiles and therefore we also use low household income, first in family to HE and previous free school meal eligibility as proxy measures. Again, we have therefore recognised this in the activities under this Strategy.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Information and guidance; insufficient academic support; insufficient non-academic support; mental health; cost pressures; resource shortages.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
<p>Offer Holder/New Student Programme.</p> <p>A week of activities prior to enrolment to support with navigating university</p>	<p>Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>Administration (Transport).</p>	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and awareness about HE. • Improved sense of belonging in HE. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
<p>and building a sense of community.</p> <p>Students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. <i>(However it will likely support other underrepresented groups (particularly where there is an intersection with IMD)).</i></p> <p>(New Activity).</p>	<p>Programme resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved confidence and preparation for HE life and learning. Improved connections and engagement between students and with SAE UK and ICMP, particularly amongst diverse groups. Improved mental health and wellbeing. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS1, IS2		
<p>Financial Support</p> <p>A £800 My ICMP Bursary spilt across the two terms for ICMP students on a 3-year undergraduate programme with a household income <£30,000 for every continuous year of study.</p> <p>A £800 My SAE UK Bursary spilt across the two terms for SAE UK students on a 3-year undergraduate programme with a household income <£30,000 for every continuous year of study.</p> <p>A £900 My SAE UK Bursary spilt across the three terms for SAE UK students on a 2-year accelerated degree programme with a household income <£30,000 for every continuous year of study.</p> <p>The Additional Support Fund, which can be applied to when in immediate financial difficulty by ICMP and SAE UK students with a</p>	<p>Bursary for students.</p>	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to financial security. Student's financial needs are supported. Students able to participate in various academic and social facets of university life (positively impacting sense of belonging). Job/ income pressure is decreased. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased continuation and completion rates for target students. Increased attainment rates for target students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
household income <£30,000. (Existing Activity).		
Cost of Living Response A series of activities to reduce costs for students including free food events, budgeting workshops, cooking classes etc. Plus, a Transport and Food voucher scheme for students struggling with costs of travel or food whilst at ICMP or SAE UK. (New Activity).	Percentage of finance and accommodation role. Workshop costs. Resources for food events. Vouchers.	As above, and: Longer-term outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved financial literacy and management skills.
First in Family Network Building a community of support whilst studying at Higher Education. Opportunities to meet, socialise and experience new things. For students who are the first in family to attend Higher Education or creative industries education. (New Activity).	Administrative costs.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved connections, support, and engagement between students, particularly amongst diverse groups. Student participation and collaboration in a range of events and opportunities. Longer-term Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased student sense of belonging. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. Increased continuation rates for target students.
First in Family Named Staff Contact The named contact will support students with transition to HE and to access personalised academic and pastoral support services. (New Activity).	Percentage of Access and Participation Manager Role.	Intermediate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved connections, support, and engagement between target students and ICMP and SAE UK. Student participation and collaboration in a range of support activities. Improved self-perceptions about belonging, academic abilities and confidence. Students are personally and appropriately supported with study. Longer-term Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased student sense of belonging. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased continuation rates for target students.
Cross Intervention: IS1, IS2		
<i>Approx. Costs: £29,000 in 2024-25 and £40,000 from 2025-26, excludes financial support monies in Annex C, Table 6d.</i>		

Evidence base and rationale:

A literature review has been conducted into specific interventions such as financial support as well as more broadly on the cost of living. Focus groups with students and staff also focused on cost of living support for students. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 3 for further information.

Evaluation

We will evaluate the activity within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and 2 standards, which will establish whether the intended outcomes are being met. The strategy will begin from academic year 2024-25, with findings published as outlined in Section 4. Table 3 outlines how we will evaluate each activity within this strategy.

Table 3: Evaluation Plan for Intervention Strategy 3

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation <i>Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).</i>
Offer Holder/New Student Programme	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge and awareness about HE. Improved sense of belonging in HE. Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans. Improved confidence and preparation for HE life and learning. Improved connections and engagement as between students and with ICMP, particularly amongst diverse groups. Improved mental health and wellbeing. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuation rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students with target characteristics receiving support (T1). Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1). Some post-activity polls gathering student experience and perceptions (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: on-course engagement monitoring (T2). Student survey exploring outcomes (T2). Data Analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2).
Financial Support	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to financial security. Student's financial needs are supported. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students receiving bursaries (T1), analysed by student characteristics.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students able to participate in various academic and social facets of university life (positively impacting sense of belonging). Job/ income pressure is decreased. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased continuation and completion rates for target students. Increased attainment rates for target students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output Analysis: Total spend on fee waivers and bursaries, including by student characteristics (T1). Poll gathering bursary holder's experience and perceptions (students and staff) of the process / allocation (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per relevant parts of the OfS <i>Evaluating the Impact of Financial Support</i> toolkit, every two years from 2024-25 (T2 → T3).
Cost of Living Response	<p>As above, and:</p> <p>Longer-term outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved financial literacy and management skills. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students receiving support (T1), analysed by student characteristics. Output Analysis: Spend on additional support, including by student characteristics (T1). Poll gathering student experience and perceptions on support provided (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey to students exploring outcomes and experiences (T2). Data Analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2).
First in Family Network	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved connections, support, and engagement between students, particularly amongst diverse groups. Student participation and collaboration in a range of events and opportunities. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased student sense of belonging. Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. Increased continuation rates for target students. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students attending events/ network (T1), analysed by student characteristics. Output Analysis: number of events delivered (T1). Poll gathering student experience and perceptions on activities (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2).
First in Family Named Staff Contact	<p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved connections, support, and engagement between target students and ICMP and SAE UK. Student participation and collaboration in a range of support activities. Improved self-perceptions about belonging, academic abilities and confidence. 	<p>Process Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: Number and % of students with Named Contact. (T1), analysed by student characteristics. Output Analysis: number of targeted events delivered (T1). Poll gathering student experience, perceptions on support and outcomes (T2). <p>Impact Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are personally and appropriately supported with study. <p>Longer-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student sense of belonging. • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing. • Increased continuation rates for target students. 	
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5. Whole Provider approach

Our Institutional Journey

Collaboration is at the core of everything we do as a small and specialist provider. Access and Participation is no exception and has become embedded in the structures and practices of our institution. We have worked hard to develop our understanding of Access and Participation and its importance across the student lifecycle and its relevance to all departments. ICMP and SAE UK are approximately four years into their Access and Participation journeys and have been successful in supporting students from underrepresented groups to access our provision with alternative routes to entry and progress to strong graduate outcomes. ICMP and SAE UK have also focused on developing a culture around Access and Participation bringing colleagues into the conversations and work relating to this area. We now proudly speak about ourselves as an inclusive provider, keeping our barriers to entry low, and designing programmes that accelerate the prospects of the widest possible demographic. With the merger of SAE UK and ICMP in Summer 2024, we have an opportunity to further expand this work and build a new shared culture that considers Access and Participation in everything we do, but with a focus on those areas we know we need to improve. This Plan will also focus on embedding success activities and initiatives to ensure students are further supported during this stage of the lifecycle.

Our WPA Student Experience: Working across the student lifecycle and experience for all students

We recognise the importance of the whole student lifecycle and embedding progression into our access offer as well as into success initiatives. Whilst a whole provider approach embeds Access and Participation into all roles, we also have a dedicated Access and Participation team that focus on different areas of the student lifecycle. This team can provide support across the institution, represent Access and Participation matters within committees and ensure evaluation and impact monitoring is a priority. The recently appointed Associate Dean for Student Engagement will further enhance the institutional support for underrepresented groups by facilitating connections between all stakeholders to encourage engagement in access and participation activities, across the student lifecycle, to enhance the student experience.

We take an holistic approach when considering the student journey, and this is reflected in the institution's wider activities. As a small and specialist provider, with a commitment to small class sizes, we have agility in the way we respond to need and are also able to take a whole cohort approach. This benefits student experience more broadly as well as addressing barriers for students from underrepresented backgrounds. This embedded and agile approach means that additional

initiatives will continue to be delivered across the institution to support students. This includes our alternative routes to entry, developing more inclusive and adaptive assessment practices, a specific package of financial and holistic support for care experienced and estranged students, and continued targeted financial support and bursaries. We continue to grow, enhance, and develop our understanding in this space and implementing this across the institution continues to be of importance to us.

Our Institutional and Senior Leadership Commitment

Within our strategic plan, we have objectives to '*continually enhance equality, diversity and inclusivity across the student body*' and '*further develop an integrated approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across both staff and student body*'. The APP aligns with these objectives and supports creating inclusive environments and developing awareness and training on these matters through our intervention strategies. Furthermore, our work in access and participation has evolved since our first plan in 2019 and we have now embedded our AP targets as KPIs at the highest level of governance, Corporate Board, alongside our other internal and external metrics. Our senior leadership is committed to this work and understand it is an institutionally owned piece of work. Access and Participation governance is delegated to the Academic Board, with the detail overseen by a dedicated Access and Participation sub-committee. These committees include student representation. Where required, information and actions are fed into the Executive Committee to ensure our Access and Participation activity is properly resourced and effective. All relevant committee members have also been involved in sessions enhancing their understanding of this work.

Alignment of our HEP Policies and Processes

Access and Participation is further embedded within the wider structures and strategies of the institution's policies and processes. One of our core values as an institution is '*championing inclusivity and diversity*'. This consideration is at the centre of what we do, from our admissions processes to our progression and alumni support and reflected through our APP and diverse student cohort.

Our EDI work continues to evolve and whilst our APP is in line with our Equality & Diversity policy, we have also worked to ensure synergy with the newly restructured EDI committee, sub-groups and our EDI Strategy. The groups were institutionally launched in September 2023 and the strategy outlines work in this space from 2023-2026. Through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Committee, there is an Equality of Opportunity working group. The Strategy prioritises developing an inclusive environment and culture, enhancing diversity and equity, and ensuring inclusive and adaptive practice. We have considered these priorities within the development of this APP, particularly in the intervention strategies where we have designed activity that meets these objectives. Representatives from the Access and Participation Team will also be involved in the new EDI committee, sub-groups and working group structures to ensure synergy between the areas.

Staff and Student Engagement and Partnership in WP/WPA

We place great importance in ensuring staff awareness of Access and Participation, which is achieved through staff briefings, discussions and having an Access and Participation meeting as part of the new staff induction process. EDI training is also mandatory as part of the staff induction process and is retaken every 3 years. We hold an annual EDI Symposium, LTA Conference and regular Research, Scholarly and Professional Practice (RSPP) conferences and seminars, all of

which intersect with our AP agenda. We recognise risks to equality of opportunity are ever-changing and offer staff ways of engaging and updating their knowledge; through networks and memberships addressing access and participation issues and through our new Access and Participation Awareness Library, an informal community to share knowledge through books, podcasts and other medias. This approach supports our ambition to further develop a culture where access and participation is a consideration for all.

The APP has been developed in conjunction with staff providing specialist advice, guidance, and support for students from underrepresented groups including the Wellbeing, Disability and Mental Health Advisers, the Student Money and Accommodation Adviser and ICMP's Careers and Employability team. Staff who have responsibility for the EDI strategy, were also consulted. Ensuring collaboration with the academic and professional services teams has been vital, so that we can truly embed Access and Participation within existing practices. All staff were also invited to consult on the APP through facilitated discussions and meetings with the Access and Participation Manager. This has ensured the APP is an institutionally owned document.

Through the lifespan of this Plan, we will be enhancing our engagement and partnership with students. Whilst student consultation is strong, a key feature of the new Plan is co-creation opportunities which allow students the chance to develop this work in conjunction with us. Alongside this we continue to work with our Student Ambassadors to support this work as well as offering them opportunities to develop also.

Our Use of Data and Evidence

We continue to develop our use of data and evidence as an institution to understand our performance and what works well. Whilst we have small datasets, we can draw upon wider data sources including qualitative work. Our Learning Analytics project and membership with SEER ensure our data capabilities are evolving as outlined in our Evaluation Strategy.

Our Commitment to Review, Develop and Evaluate our WPA

Throughout the APP process we have reviewed and considered our WPA, alongside the merger we have an opportunity to develop our WPA around engagement and communication. We commit to exploring and developing this work utilising our SEER resources and Liz Thomas' WPA Toolkit.

6. Student consultation

ICMP has a comprehensive student representation structure with a Student Senate and a part-time President and Vice President drawn from the student body as well as Student Officers for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Societies and Co-Curricular; and Facilities and Sustainability, among others. These elected representatives hold places on our key deliberative committees, including Academic Board and the Access and Participation Committee (APC). Since 2021-22, we have introduced two working groups reporting into the APC; one for Access and Transition and the other for Success and Progression, each attended by elected student representatives. Our Access and Participation Advisory Group (APAG) is a voluntary panel for students from under-represented backgrounds where attendees address any concerns and feedback on ICMP strategy. Our EDI structure includes student and staff EDI Champions for different protected characteristics, providing another mechanism for feedback from underrepresented groups. SAE UK have Student Representatives

across their four campuses and these representatives participate in key SAE UK committees and collect the wider student voice of their campus. Following the merger with SAE UK, we are reviewing the student representation structure to ensure students from ICMP and SAE UK are appropriately reflected in the established governance moving forwards.

To develop our APP, we have worked with the current and incoming elected representatives and students from underrepresented groups, via a series of specific focus groups. In one case we collaborated with our EDI student champion, who was trained to facilitate the discussion with their peers. Our APAG also had the opportunity to feedback to the Access and Participation Manager. These students helped us to understand the risks to equality of opportunity and feedback ideas for the Intervention Strategies. Students were asked to reflect upon the risks detailed in the EORR and the ways in which these impact different target groups. A similar exercise was conducted for staff across ICMP. Students felt additional resource and support for their mental health and wellbeing was vital, as well as further support with life skills that help them to support themselves, especially around addressing the cost of living. Students felt the financial support offer, revised in 2022-23, was appropriate but there was recognition that further considerations around supporting cost of living increases would be important, which has been reflected through our intervention strategies. Students were pleased to see plans to address awarding gaps and agreed with the co-created approach proposed to take as well as proactive campaigns such as Say My Name and building community. Focus groups with SAE UK students highlighted the need for a campus-specific approach to cost of living, which addresses the context of the area students are living in and the need for a more structured financial support offer including hardship funding. Students also cited more extracurricular opportunities as an area of importance with the offer of more activities or societies outside of the subject specialism. This has been reflected in proposals for financial support, wellbeing initiatives and cost of living responses in the APP.

Student voice is an important and valued strength of life at our institution. The consultations described above are the beginning of the conversation with our students. We will have feedback mechanisms in place throughout the duration of this APP, including opportunities to be involved in the creation of activity and evaluation. Student representatives will continue to be involved in the Access and Participation governance process, as well as ensuring our APAG continues to contribute and grow. Our Student Engagement Officer is an integral staff member in enhancing student voice for the institution and we aim to work collaboratively to ensure access and participation is embedded. We will enhance opportunities with underrepresented groups through our student EDI champions and upskill them to be able to facilitate discussion and conversation, as well as finding informal ways to feedback. The Success and Transition Coordinator, through the delivery of various projects, is another role that students can provide feedback to. Externally, through our SEER membership, students can sit on their Advisory Panel, and we can take learnings from this student panel also. We believe this varied approach will ensure we can continue to keep student voice at the centre of what we are doing.

7. Evaluation of the plan

We will be engaged in an ongoing evaluation of our intervention strategies and will continuously respond to the evaluation findings to improve and develop our practices.

7.1 Strategic context for evaluation

Evaluation and research are part of our 'whole provider approach' to access and participation. Our academic, professional and leadership teams contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Targets, Intervention Strategies and Activities in this APP through supporting and inputting on the range of evaluation measures. Our data team have skills in ensuring data capture is appropriate for the required monitoring and evaluation outputs, including designing new reports and processes to capture, collate and extract data for various evaluation and research questions. We also draw on the skills of staff responsible for the delivery of the Activities in this APP, and our student representatives, to effectively incorporate evaluation.

In our assessment of our current context for evaluation, using the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool, we are 'emerging' across all areas. We have some foundations in place, but need to develop our practices, including embedding evaluation into activity design and delivery and ensuring feedback cycles to improve practice. Therefore, as we are continuing to build our cross-institution capacities for effective evaluation and application of findings to improve practice, staff and student representatives will be supported with relevant training in Theory of Change and evaluation methods, provided through our SEER membership. Training and CPD in theory of change and evaluation is offered annually for both new starters and as a refresher. Students are important in this work, and we will work in partnership with students on the design and implementation of evaluation and research, particularly where this pertains to current students.

SEER provides us with the evaluation and research expertise we need to deliver our commitments in these areas. We will actively participate in this network, which provides opportunities to be part of collaborative research and evaluation projects, as well as learning and sharing practice with other members and external stakeholders. SEER host an annual Symposium and regular workshops, roundtables and 'learning lunches', as well as providing us with opportunities to showcase our practice and insights. We will also engage with TASO and other relevant organisations in calls for evidence, conferences and events, and training.

7.2 Activity design

We have built effective evaluation practice into our Strategies by establishing a range of evaluation attached to the individual activities that contribute towards the overall objective of each Strategy. We can therefore build up an understanding of which activities are 'working', and which are not. We have taken a Theory of Change approach to the development of our Intervention Strategies, identifying clear intended outcomes (intermediate and end) and a supporting evidence base that has informed our activity development and challenged assumptions. With the help of SEER, we will continue to review, develop, and strengthen our Theories of Change (ToC), adding to our evidence base as our evaluation findings emerge and developing enhanced activity-level ToCs where required.

7.3 Evaluation design

We have collaborated with SEER and drawn from OfS and TASO toolkits and guidance on effective evaluation approaches. We have considered how the outcomes of activities can be evaluated credibly, particularly as our context as a small and specialist provider means that we are likely to be dealing with small cohorts. Employing mixed method approaches is particularly important, as we will need to rely on qualitative data to support our understanding, or fill gaps, in quantitative data. We will triangulate findings where possible and seek to deepen our insights through qualitative methods. Given the developmental stage of our evaluation practice, most of our evaluations are type 1

(narrative), and type 2 (empirical enquiry) of the OfS 'Standards of Evidence'. We have however noted that we will explore and consider where type 3 evaluation could be implemented in future.

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

Our evaluation approach, data collection and analysis have been formulated on the intended outcomes and objectives of our activities. Where appropriate and possible, we will consider and employ validated scales to our evaluation practices. We have also considered evaluation that spans (a) process and (b) impact, to provide comprehensive understanding of how our activities are working. We will explore, with SEER, further research projects in relation to our activities and our ambition to better understand the experiences and challenges of target students and issues of equality of opportunity. For example, consultation with students as part of the development of this APP supports the identification of risks relating to insufficient personalised academic and non-academic support; however, we consider that there is further research, supported by our learning analytics activity, that would add insight to this area.

7.4 Implementing our evaluation plan

We will collaborate internally across our team and with our strategic partners to deliver our evaluation plan. We will be guided by our school, college and community partners, and our students in respect of effective implementation of the plan. Our evaluation process will comply with ICMP and SAE UK policies and complies with all legal requirements relating to data protection, following ethical, safeguarding, legal and risk considerations.

As noted above, we are members of the Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service, with whom we will work in partnership to deliver our evaluation plan. A Data Sharing Agreement has also been established. SEER provides us with opportunities to collaborate on various evaluation and research items, including for example the evaluation of the impact of financial support, using the OfS toolkit.

The design of our evaluation has also been heavily informed by intended and projected standardised outcomes being adopted by SEER across its membership base, which not only increases efficiencies but provides opportunities to increase the sample size and evaluation, helping to mitigate the issue of small datasets. SEER incorporate and draw on TASO guidance on best practices for evaluations with small cohorts (small n). Further, such collaborations may provide us access to tools that would otherwise be unaffordable. For example, in respect of our access activity, we have noted the possibility of implementing tracking, which will be explored via SEER. As a practice network, we are also able to participate in peer review of practice and evaluation and share practice and findings.

As a smaller provider we are also well placed to respond with agility to interim findings and emerging data. We can be responsive in flexing our activity accordingly to help to keep us on track to achieve our objectives and targets, and continuously improve our practice.

7.5 Learning from and disseminating findings

We are committed to sharing our learning and findings internally, with our partners, within our close networks and with the broader sector, to develop an increased volume of, and stronger, evidence about what works, what does not work, and what can be improved. We are pleased to help to grow the evidence base for equality of opportunity in higher education and we will submit evaluation outputs to OfS' repository of evidence as appropriate. In Section 4 we have set out our publishing plan, which includes publishing findings on interim and longer-term outcomes through a range of channels. In developing the format of our communications, we will consider creative and visual methods, and different audiences/purposes. We will ensure that our findings are open access.

Our SEER membership provides us with access to academic experts in evaluation, including in the access and participation space and broader teaching and learning arena. These staff are involved in design, delivery, and analysis. ICMP and SAE UK are members of Guild HE, UKADIA, NEON, NNCEL, Action on Access and IHE, through which we can share and present findings. We will continue to actively contribute to conferences, network events and publications. Where appropriate we will draw on existing networks to collaborate and engage with similar organisations. We also look forward to sharing our findings and our thinking with other small specialist institutions and SEER members and collaborating on the development of effective practice for this part of the sector.

Internally, developing a community of practice (staff and students) regarding access and participation will help to facilitate improvements to sharing findings from evaluation, and subsequent improvements to practice. Shared practice across the institution allows for review and feedback on evaluation findings and reports, and discussion regarding the improvements that could be made. More broadly, evaluation findings related to access and participation work will inform other agendas and practice, such as programme review and revalidation, communications and recruitment strategies and community engagement. We will publish the findings of our evaluation activities on our website as well as on our VLE. Further details about how we will evaluate our intervention strategies is included in Section 4.

7.6 Governance arrangements

The Access and Participation Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the APP, monitoring underrepresented groups in our student population, ensuring commitments are delivered, and embedding access and participation across the institution. As part of the monitoring and reporting process we have an APC, reporting to the Academic Board, which in turn reports to the Corporate Board. Membership of the Committee includes representatives from student services and wellbeing, registry, the academic team, finance, marketing, events, careers and employability, and student representatives. The group oversees the implementation, monitoring, review, and evaluation of the APP, advise on research, and make reports and recommendations to the Academic Board, including highlighting risk and making any necessary changes to the APP. If the group finds that progress towards objectives set out in the APP is not being achieved or is going backwards, it may recommend to the Executive Committee to increase investment levels.

8. Provision of information to students

As an institution, we use our websites and staff expertise to convey key information to both prospective and current students. This can be accessed throughout the student lifecycle. Our information, advice, and guidance, delivered via both our recruitment and access and outreach activity, provides students and their supporters with information about support available in Higher Education, the benefits of study for a life in the creative industries including the pathways available after a degree. We intend to continue developing explicit and targeted promotions of specific opportunities such as outreach programmes via our website, via social and digital media, promotion through partners and collaborators and email communication. As well as strategically targeting specific schools and community groups to encourage take up. The APP and accessible summary will be published on both brands' websites (<https://www.icmp.ac.uk/about-icmp/quality-and-governance/access-participation>) (<https://www.sae.edu/gbr/about-us/access-and-participation>), the OfS site and referred to where appropriate to ensure it is effectively communicated across a wide range of stakeholders.

In response to OfS' priority to ensure APPs are more accessible to students and their supporters we intend to work collaboratively with our students and target schools to design materials that provide beneficial information. Our policies and practices will ensure that we provide fair and accurate information. The marketing materials will also strive to use diverse role models, responsibly, across all promotional activity.

Course Fees, Bursaries, and other Financial Support Information

Information regarding course fees and additional financial support is made available via our website, associated marketing materials and through our Admissions teams. Information provided will be for fees to be charged for the duration of the course. We also provide timely information to UCAS and the Student Loan Company, which are key sources of information for prospective students.

During the 2024/25 academic year, our financial support was funded through our parent company, AD Education. Criteria for eligibility and the levels of support that can be expected will be made clear, as follows:

Financial Support Scheme	Purpose	Criteria for Eligibility	Number of awards	Level of Support	Level of support in subsequent years of study
My ICMP Bursary (ICMP three-year undergraduate degree Students only)	To support students from a low-income household to fully engage with the student experience, leading to student success.	UK-domiciled students on an FT ICMP on 3-year undergraduate degree programme with a household income <£30,000.	Available to all eligible students.	£800 paid across the two terms.	The bursary is paid for each continuous year of study (not repeat years), subject to satisfactory continued attendance and academic progress.
My SAE UK Bursary	To support students from a low-income	UK-domiciled students on an FT SAE UK	Available to all eligible students.	£900 paid across the three terms.	The bursary is paid for each continuous year of study (not repeat

(SAE UK two-year accelerated degree Students only)	household to fully engage with the student experience, leading to student success.	accelerated two-year undergraduate degree programme with a household income <£30,000.			years), subject to satisfactory continued attendance and academic progress.
My SAE UK Bursary (SAE UK three-year undergraduate degree Students only)	To support students from a low-income household to fully engage with the student experience, leading to student success.	UK-domiciled students on an FT SAE UK three-year undergraduate degree programme with a household income <£30,000.	Available to all eligible students.	£800 paid across the two terms.	The bursary is paid for each continuous year of study (not repeat years), subject to satisfactory continued attendance and academic progress.
Care-Experienced and Estranged Student Bursary	To provide specific support tailored to the needs of care leavers or students estranged from their families.	UK domiciled students on an FT ICMP undergraduate degree programme who are care experienced or estranged from their families.	Approx. Twenty awards per year – our intention is that an award is made to every student who meets the criteria.	£2000 bursary per year plus specific items (such as named staff contact, Christmas package and wraparound support). Payments are made 4 times to ensure support all year round including in the summer holidays.	The bursary is paid for each continuous year of study (not repeat years), subject to satisfactory continued attendance and academic progress.
Additional Support Fund	To support student in immediate financial difficulty.	UK-domiciled students on an FT ICMP undergraduate degree with a household income <£30,000 or those who are care experienced or estranged from their families.	Approx. 33 awards available per pay point.	Up to £900 p/a. Students can apply to the fund up to three times. The fund is open September-December, January-April and April-July plus non-cash items such as travel and food vouchers.	The fund can be accessed in each subsequent year of study if there is immediate financial difficulty.

Annex A: Assessment of performance

ICMP and SAE UK have conducted a thorough assessment of performance as part of writing this Plan and considered both external and internal datasets. As a small and specialist provider, there is some data that is not fully available within the OfS dataset due to low numbers or data protection. There are several cases in which sustained gaps in performance between different groups fail to meet OfS tests for statistical significance, again primarily because the numbers involved are low. However, in recent years, our data collection and processes have been improving and we have a much more robust way of internally analysing performance including the development of an Access and Participation Dashboard. Since September 2023, ICMP has embarked on a Learning Analytics project, which will further enhance the data we have and how we use it including analysing this from the perspective of underrepresented groups. SAE UK also use Learning Analytics as part of their data and monitoring. To support with this assessment of performance we have also used national datasets and for intersectionality have drawn upon the Association Between Characteristics (ABCs) dataset to understand how they might be manifesting in our own context and with our own risks or indications of risks.

This section outlines the assessment of performance conducted and the data analysed, which led to the identification of the indicators and risks that can be impacting equality of opportunity. As part of the assessment of performance we analysed our completion data using the OfS APP Data Dashboard, TEF data dashboard and SEER's merged data dashboard for SAE UK and ICMP. Our completion rates for underrepresented groups were aligned with our continuation rates. Therefore, we have chosen to focus on the risk of underrepresented groups not continuing to Level 5 study. However, naturally by focusing on continuation within our Plan it is anticipated that the activities within intervention strategies may also have an indirect and positive impact on completion across underrepresented groups. Therefore, we have included some metrics for this as part of our ongoing evaluation and commitment to monitoring across all key measures.

In Section 2 of the APP, we have detailed the risks to equality of opportunity, the indicators and reasonings for prioritising the 5 risks we have. We have also noted those gaps, which will not be addressed in the plan and the reasonings for this.

1. There is a risk that Black students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2:1 degree classification).

We identified a gap between the proportion of black students being awarded a good degree outcome in comparison to White students. Whilst our datasets are small and suppressed on the OfS APP Data Dashboard for ICMP and SAE UK, Figures 1 and 2 shows a clear difference in good degrees being awarded for Black students across both the 2 and 4-year aggregates. Figure 2 highlights an emerging difference for Asia students, but the datasets are too small to determine this as yet.

Figure 1: Attainment rates for good degree outcomes by Ethnicity at ICMP

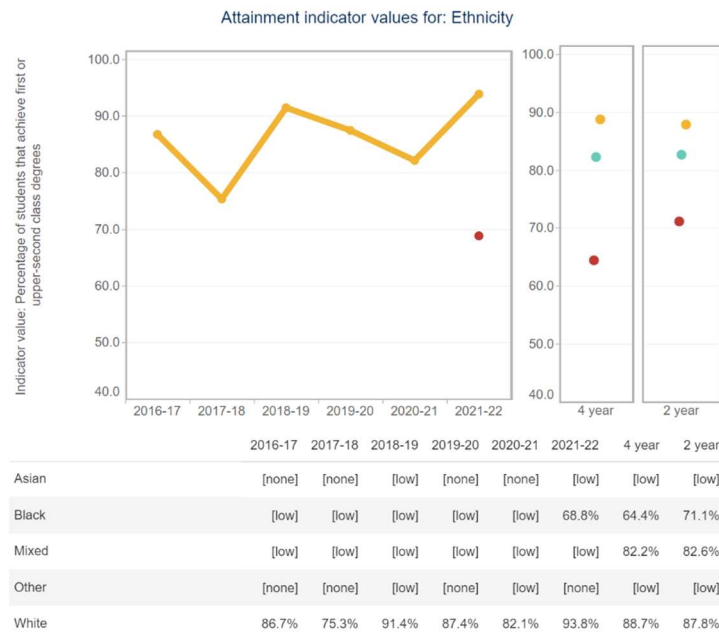


Figure 2: Attainment rates for good degree outcomes by Ethnicity at SAE UK



The gap is currently 24.3pp and 31.9pp respectively in the 4-year aggregate data, significant gaps for ICMP and SAE UK, which is also reflected across the sector. Figures 3 and 4 highlight the gap between Black and White students being awarded a first- or 2.1-degree classification.

Figure 3: Attainment gap by ethnicity between Black and White students at ICMP

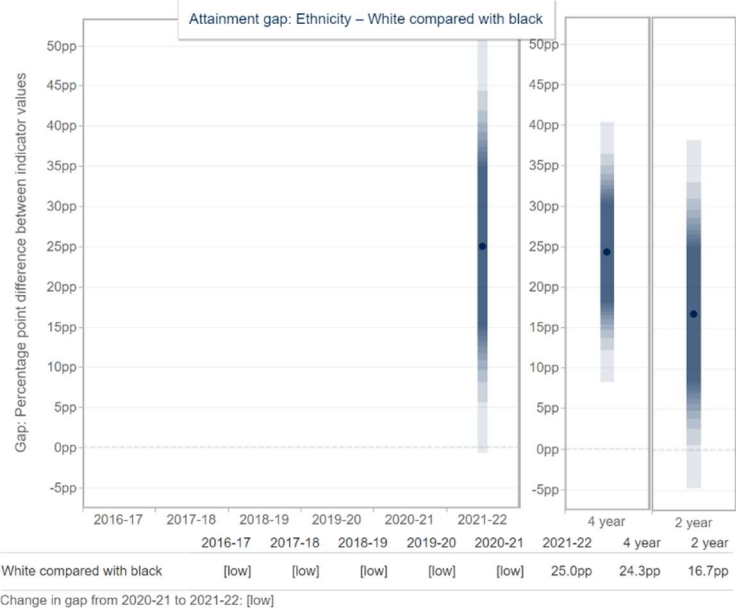
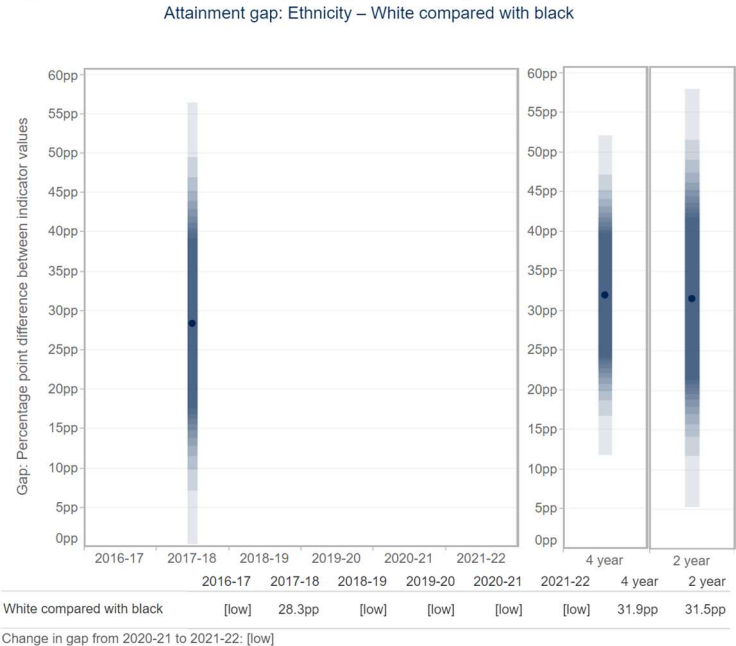


Figure 4: Attainment gap by ethnicity between Black and White students at SAE UK



We looked at the ethnicity awarding gap more broadly and identified, as shown in Figure 5, a smaller gap of 16.4pp for 4-year aggregated data for ICMP students and in Figure 6, a gap of 19.3pp for SE UK students. We have concluded that this is masking the larger gap occurring for our Black students and as such it is necessary to disaggregate ethnicity and work to address the specific risks impacting Black students.

Figure 5: Attainment gap by ethnicity between White students and all ethnicities except White at ICMP

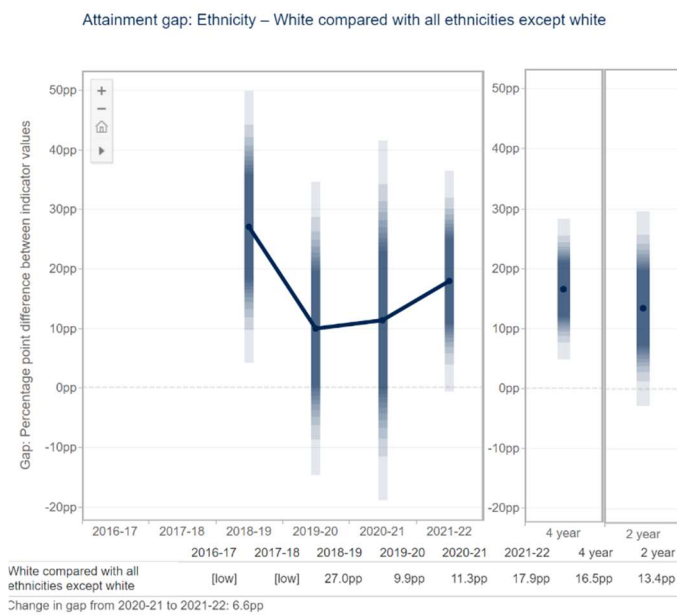
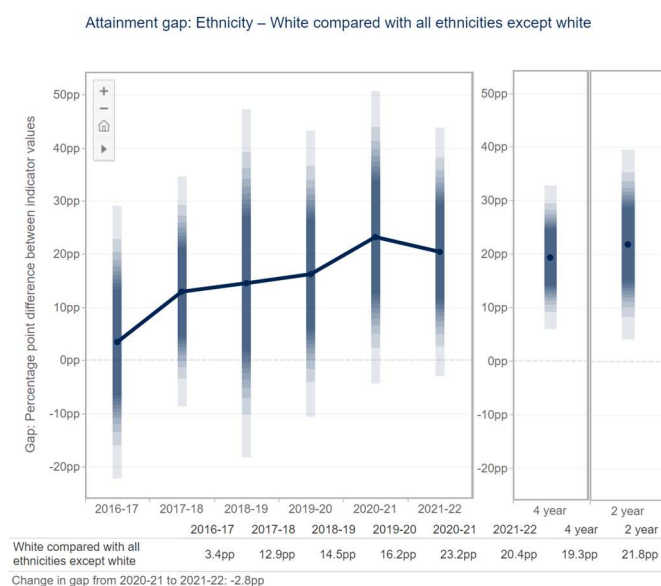


Figure 6: Attainment gap by ethnicity between White students and all ethnicities except White at SAE UK



Using our merged dashboard provided by SEER shows the gap becomes 17.6pp and as a shared target this is the milestone we have used. Internally, we examined attainment data and disaggregated into the different ethnicity categories. Due to small datasets, we cannot share this, but it helped to build a picture of the students the awarding gap is disproportionately affecting.

- 2. There is a risk that Black, Asian, Mixed and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue to Level 5 Study.**

The OfS APP Data Dashboard demonstrates that the continuation rates for ethnically diverse students are on average lower than White students at our institution. Figures 7 and 8 highlights that Black and Mixed students are less likely to continue to Level 5. However, our datasets are small, and it is difficult to make a judgement as to which ethnically diverse students might be at greater risk.

Particularly, when also examining our internal data, which suggests continuation rates fluctuate annually and change for different ethnicity categories.

Figure 7: Continuation rates for Ethnicity at ICMP

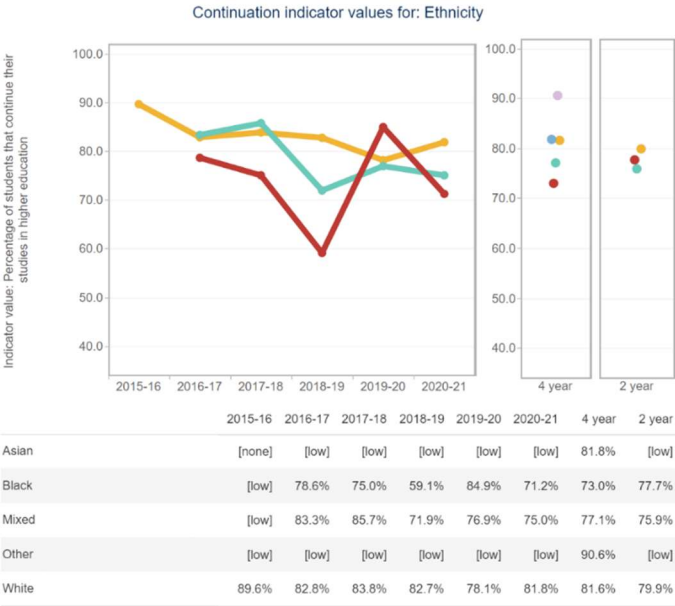
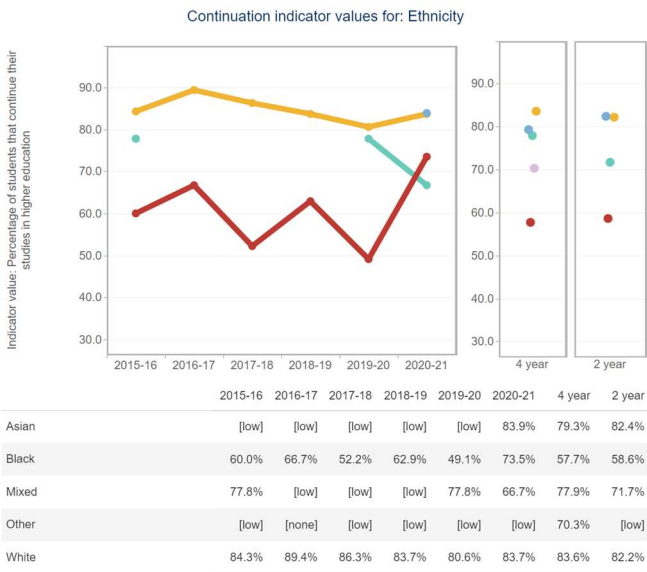


Figure 8: Continuation rates for Ethnicity at SAE UK



Our merged continuation gap, using our SEER dashboard, for ethnically diverse students is currently at 8.1pp for 2020-21. We have seen some fluctuation with the gap at both ICMP and SAE UK in recent years. For ICMP, we saw an increase in ethnically diverse students continuing in 2019-20, which caused a reverse gap. This is a trend seen across the sector but also seen similarly for students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. However we can see the gap already reversing back for 2020-21, making this a continued risk to equality of opportunity at both ICMP and SAE UK.

Using the ABCs dataset, we were able to further understand the risk to continuation for ethnicity, disaggregated to a much more detailed level than our own data can allow. From Figure 9, we know ethnically diverse students are less likely to continue but also how this might be displayed for different ethnic groups. We also considered intersectionality in relation to continuation for ethnically diverse

students particularly with regards to mental health. This information has informed the activities within intervention strategies and the need for crossover.

Figure 9: Heat Map showing proportion of those least likely to continue (Quintile 1) by ethnicity and disability from ABCs data.

	Any ethnicity	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian or Asian British - Chinese	Asian or Asian British - Indian	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	Asian or Asian British - other	Black or black British - African	Black or black British - Caribbean	Black or black British - other	Gypsy or Traveller	Mixed - white and Asian	Mixed - white and black African	Mixed - white and black Caribbean	Mixed - other	White students	Other ethnic group
Any disability	20%	27%	9%	6%	17%	23%	45%	48%	49%	47%	9%	32%	26%	24%	16%	24%
Cognitive or learning difficulties	13%	28%	9%	4%	11%	15%	39%	46%	47%	28%	6%	25%	24%	22%	9%	17%
Mental Health Condition	28%	29%	24%	14%	23%	41%	59%	64%	52%	55%	18%	43%	44%	31%	26%	31%
Multiple or other impairments	22%	31%	24%	7%	18%	33%	47%	52%	34%	32%	10%	29%	29%	28%	18%	34%
Sensory, medical or physical impairments	25%	25%	8%	5%	21%	32%	56%	57%	53%	52%	15%	41%	23%	30%	21%	24%
Social or communication impairments	13%	36%	9%	1%	5%	7%	21%	24%	15%		5%	25%	21%	8%	13%	14%
No disability reported	20%	26%	8%	6%	17%	22%	45%	47%	49%	49%	8%	32%	25%	24%	16%	24%

3. There is a risk that disabled students at our ICMP are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue to Level 5 Study.

There is a significant gap in continuation between students not reporting a disability and disabled students at ICMP specifically. SAE UK are not experiencing the same risk to equal opportunities here, as seen in Figure 10. Continuation rates for disabled students across the sector are at a similar rate to those with no disability reported. Figure 11 illustrates the difference and significant risk to ICMP as an institution. Figure 12 shows our gap is currently at 11.4pp for 2020-21, over 10pp above the sector average and a 4-year aggregate of 11.1pp.

Figure 10: Continuation rates between disability reported and not reported for SAE UK

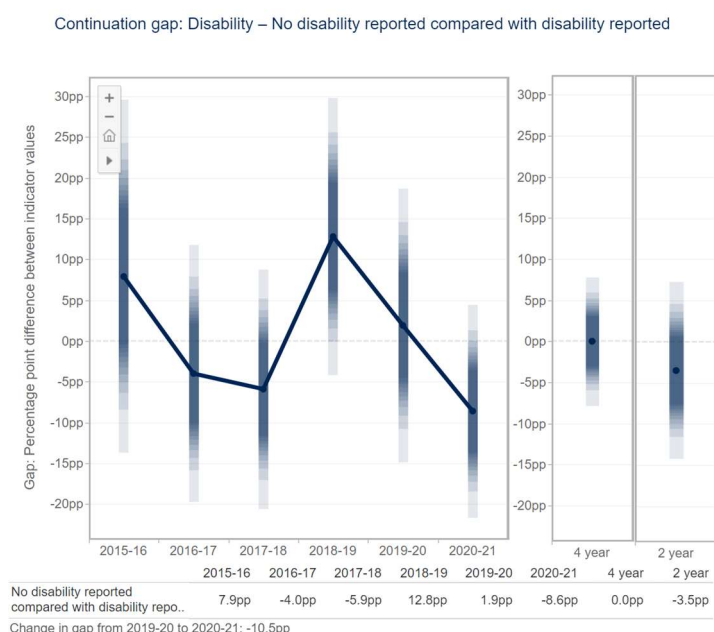


Figure 11: Continuation rates between disability reported and not reported for ICMP and All Providers

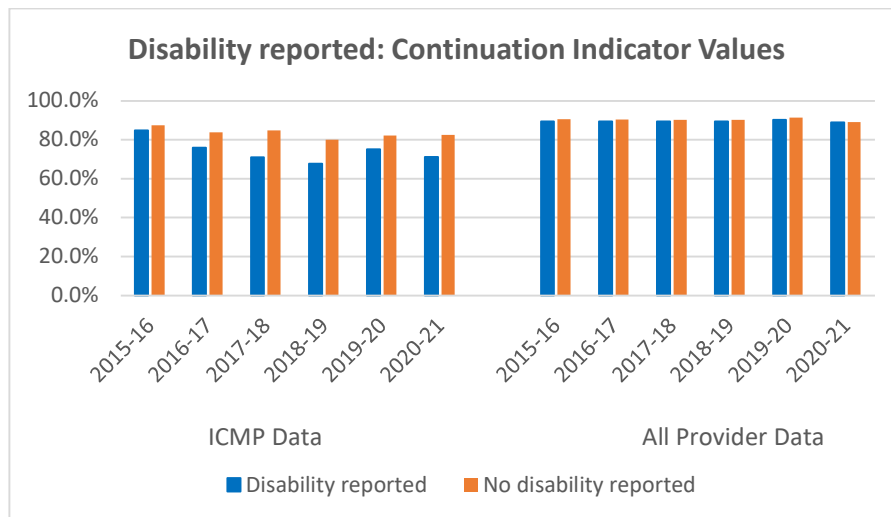
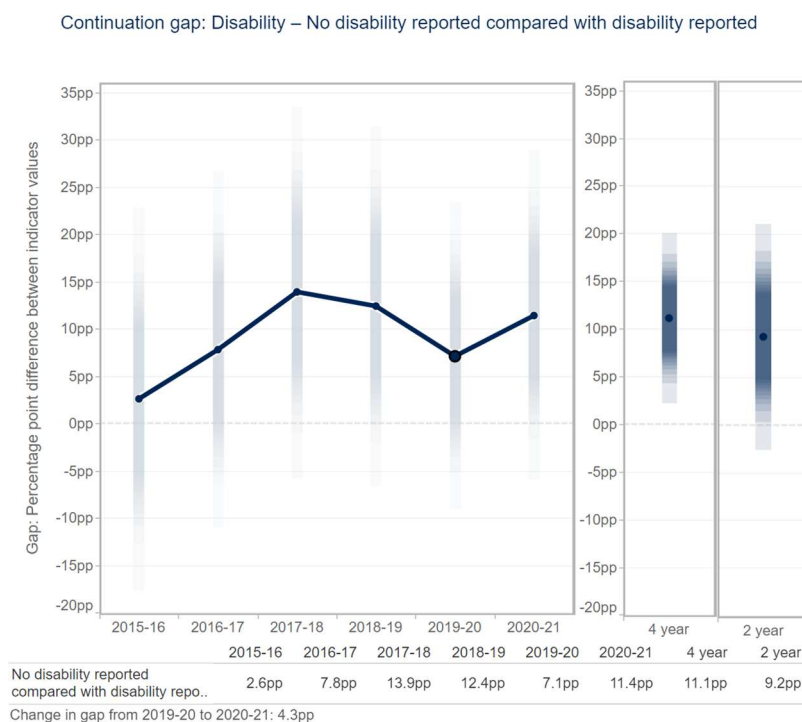


Figure 12: Continuation gaps between disability reported and not reported for ICMP.



Using the OfS Dashboard we have been able to disaggregate for disability type in some cases, some types have suppressed information, which further demonstrates those students who may be at greater risk of not continuing to study at ICMP. Figures 13 to 15, alongside the Figure 9 demonstrates that those students with mental health conditions are at greater risk of not continuing into Level 5 study. It is important to consider ethnicity intersected with disability also. Figure 9 and ABCs data identifies that Black students or Gypsy or Travellers with mental health conditions are at greater risk of non-continuation. This is followed by Sensory, medical, or physical impairments and then cognitive or learning difficulties. We will give regard to this data, which has been reflected in our selected targets and intervention strategies.

Figure 13: Continuation gaps between no disability reported and a mental health condition at ICMP.

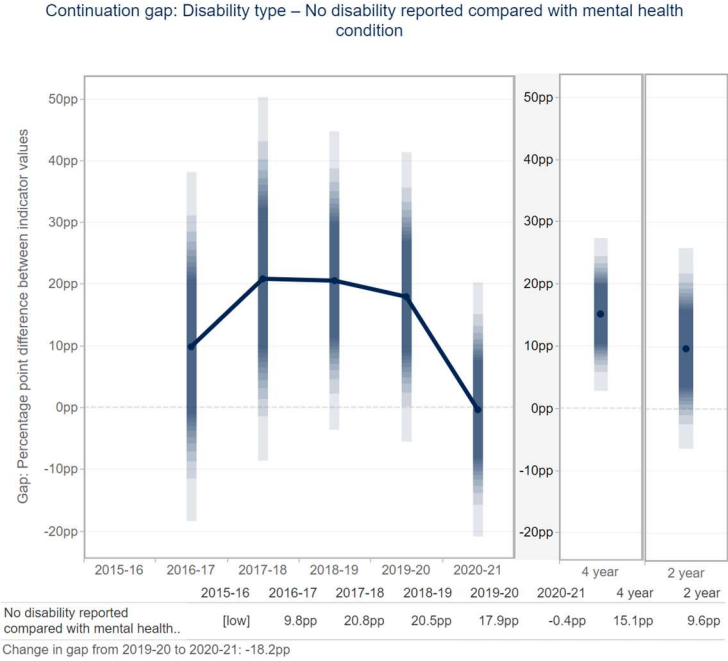


Figure 14: Continuation gaps between no disability reported and cognitive or learning difficulties at ICMP.

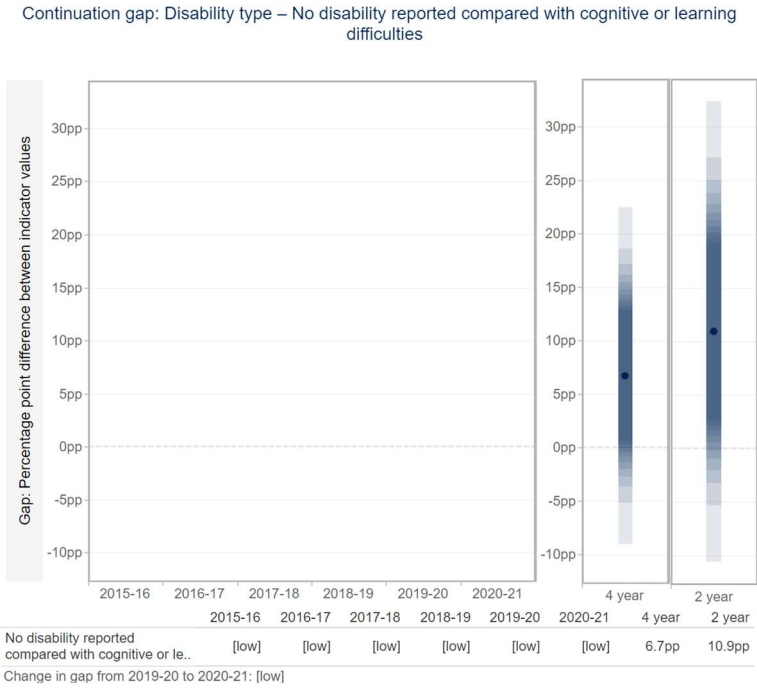
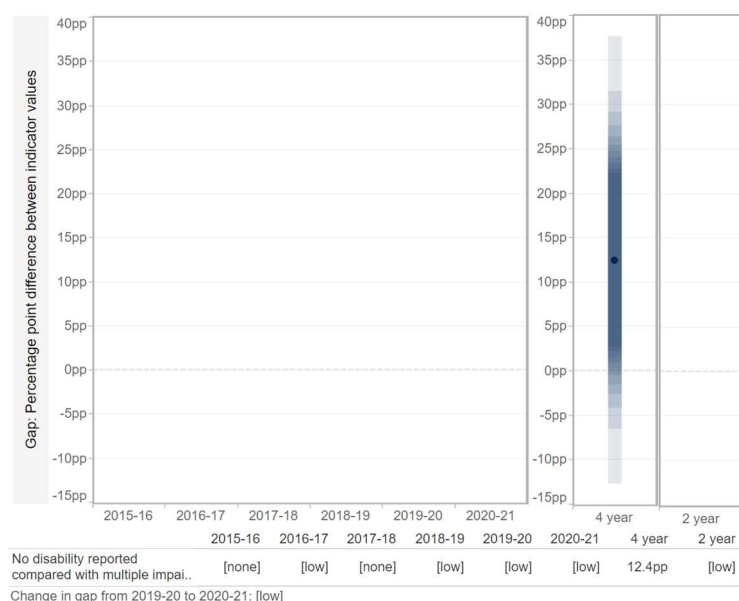


Figure 15: Continuation gaps between no disability reported and multiple impairments at ICMP.

Continuation gap: Disability type – No disability reported compared with multiple impairments



To further understand the risk to equality of opportunity and the indicator of lower continuation rates, we have also examined our HESA and DSA data. Figure 16 illustrates the number of students reporting a disability via our HESA reporting and those applying for DSA. Over the past 4 years, we have averaged 27% of those reporting a disability applying for DSA. With only a quarter of students reporting a disability accessing the additional funding or support that might have a positive impact on their success, we can see a clear risk to equality of opportunity appearing at ICMP. When considering the continuation of our disabled students, DSA engagement will be a key area for consideration.

Figure 16: Rates of disabled students applying for DSA at ICMP.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Disability Reported via HESA Data	190	221	271	267
Number with DSA	44	60	73	82
Percentage of those with disability reported on DSA	23%	27%	27%	31%

4. There is a risk that disabled students at SAE UK are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2.1 degree classification).

There is a gap in awarding between students not reporting a disability and disabled students at SAE UK specifically. ICMP are not experiencing the same risk to equal opportunities here, as seen in Figure 17. Attainment rates for disabled students across the sector are at a similar rate to those with no disability reported. Figure 18 illustrates the difference and risk to SAE UK as an institution. Figure 19 shows our gap is currently at 6.5pp for 2020-21, over 10pp above the sector average and a 4-year aggregate of 11.1pp.

Figure 17: Attainment rates between disability reported and not reported for ICMP

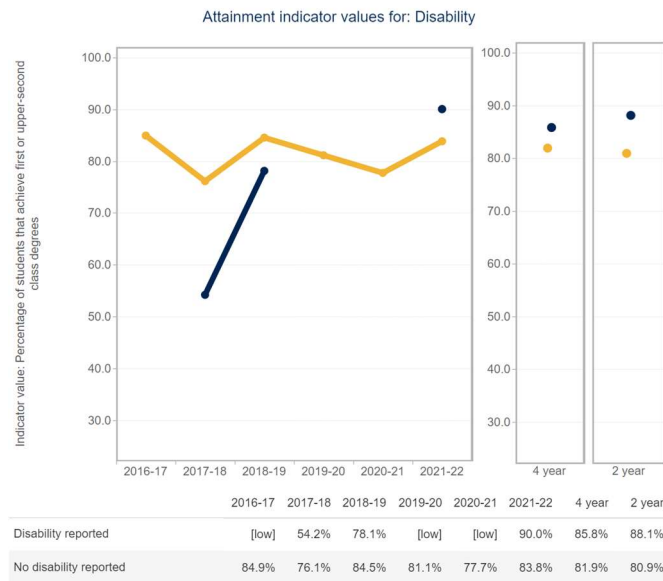


Figure 18: Attainment rates between disability reported and not reported for SAE UK and All Providers

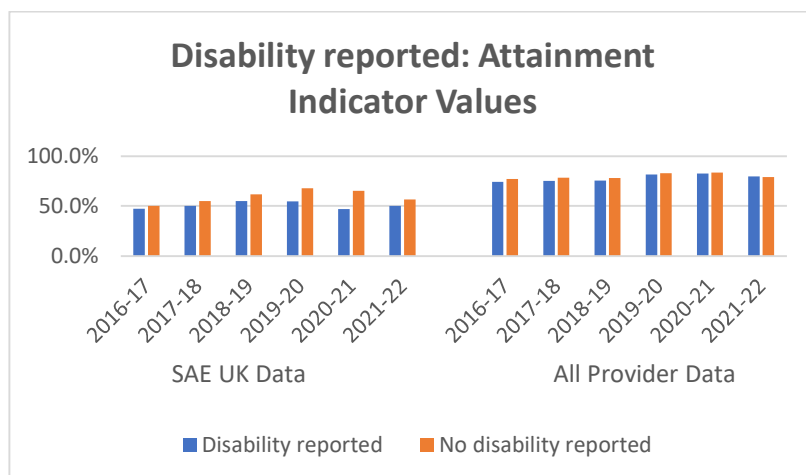
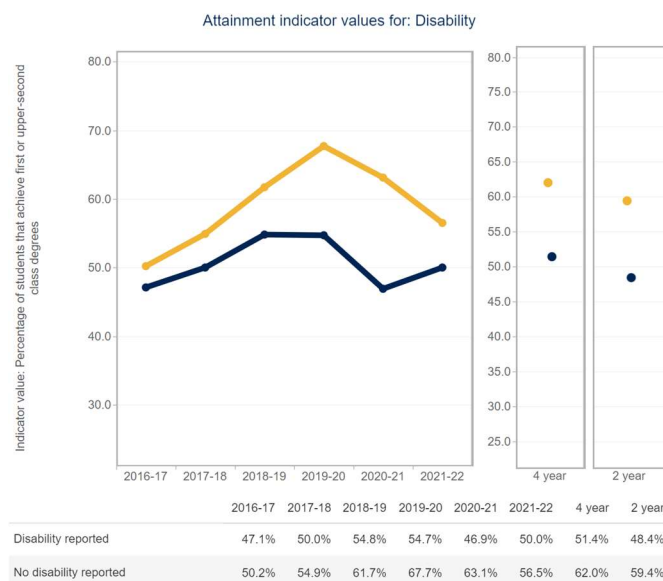


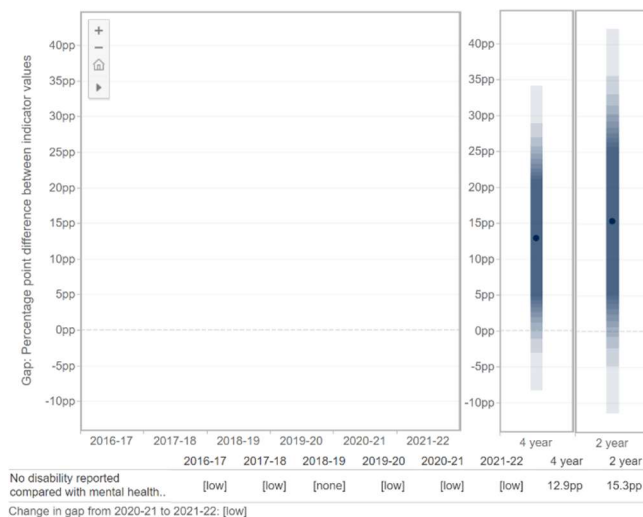
Figure 19: Attainment gaps between disability reported and not reported for SAE UK



Using the OfS Dashboard we have been able to disaggregate for disability type in some cases, some types have suppressed information, which further demonstrates those students who may be at greater risk of not being awarded a good degree at SAE UK. Figure 20 demonstrates that those students with mental health conditions are at greater risk of not being awarded a good degree. We will give regard to this data, which has been reflected in our selected targets and intervention strategies.

Figure 20: Attainment gaps between no disability reported and with a mental health condition at SAE UK

Attainment gap: Disability type – No disability reported compared with mental health condition



5. There is a risk that students from the most Disadvantaged backgrounds at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue to Level 5 Study.

As a merged institution, ICMP and SAE UK have identified a gap of 5.5pp in continuation rates of students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and those from Quintiles 3 to 5. SAE UK had a gap of 5.9pp in 2020-21, as shown in Figure 21. Prior to 2019-20, as demonstrated in Figure 22, ICMP's IMD Quintile 1 and 2 continuation rates were approximately 10% lower than Quintile 5. We then saw a reverse trend for 2019-20 and 2020-21, with students from Quintiles 1 and 2 more likely to continue than students from Quintile 5. We anticipate this could be a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and choices made by students during this period. In 2020-21, we did see the difference in these continuation rates decreasing, suggesting the gap will begin to widen in future years if not addressed.

Figure 21: Continuation gaps for deprivation quintile (IMD 2019) at SAE UK

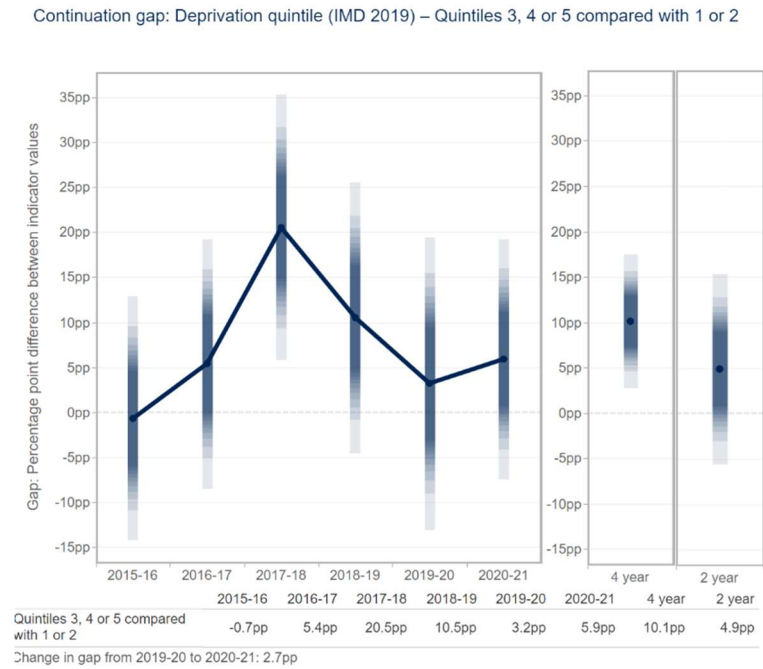


Figure 22: Continuation rates for deprivation quintile (IMD 2019) at ICMP

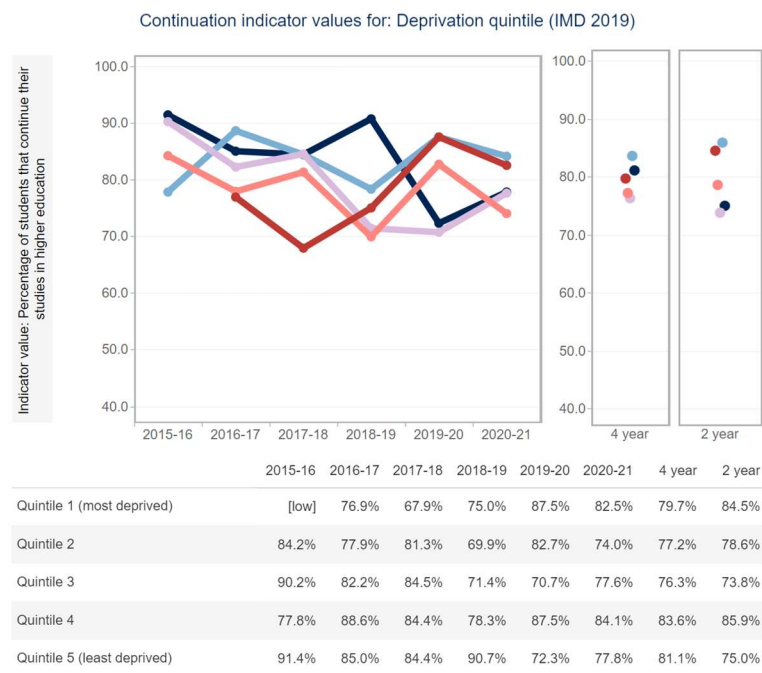
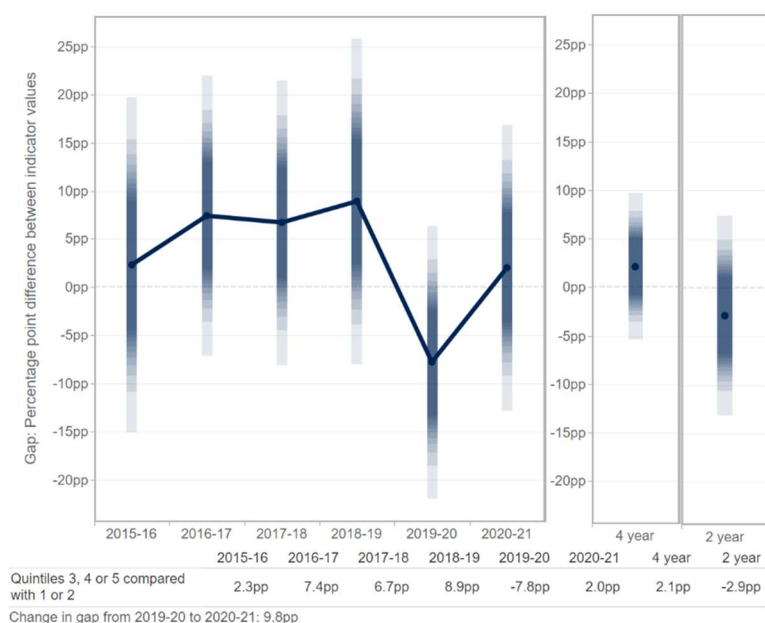


Figure 23: Continuation gaps between IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and IMD Quintiles 3 to 5 at ICMP.

Continuation gap: Deprivation quintile (IMD 2019) – Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 compared with 1 or 2



We have used our internal data to examine withdrawals for 2022-23 and found there has been a disproportionate number of students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 withdrawing from their courses this academic year. Figure 24 shows the number of students from IMD Quintiles 1 to 5 that withdrew in 2022-23.

Figure 24: Withdrawal rates for English IMD Quintiles in 2022-23 at ICMP.

English IMD Quintiles	Number of Students	% of withdrawals
Q1	13	25%
Q2	13	25%
Q3	9	17%
Q4	8	15%
Q5	9	17%
Total	52	

With 50% of our 2022-23 withdrawals being students from quintiles 1 and 2, we are rightly concerned that there is an increasing risk to equality of opportunity for students from this group. IMD Quintile 1 students make up 19% of our student population, so were disproportionately withdrawing. This evidence suggests there could be an increased likelihood of non-continuation moving forwards, alongside SAE UK's continuation gap, we believe this is a risk to equality of opportunity. This internal evidence supports our reasonings for including this as a target within the APP.

6. There is a risk that Asian students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to access creative arts degrees.

The proportion of undergraduate entrants of Asian ethnicity at ICMP and SAE UK is lower than the sector average. However national research into the music student demographic states that Asian students make up 2% of those studying music in higher education, a trend seen across the creative arts sector. Our rates are higher than this, so whilst there is a risk to equality of opportunity, we feel addressing this through our wider access and outreach programme will have a greater benefit.

Figures 17 and 18 show the percentage of student entrants of Asian ethnicity overall and for 18-year-olds.

Figure 25: Access rates for Asian students entering ICMP.

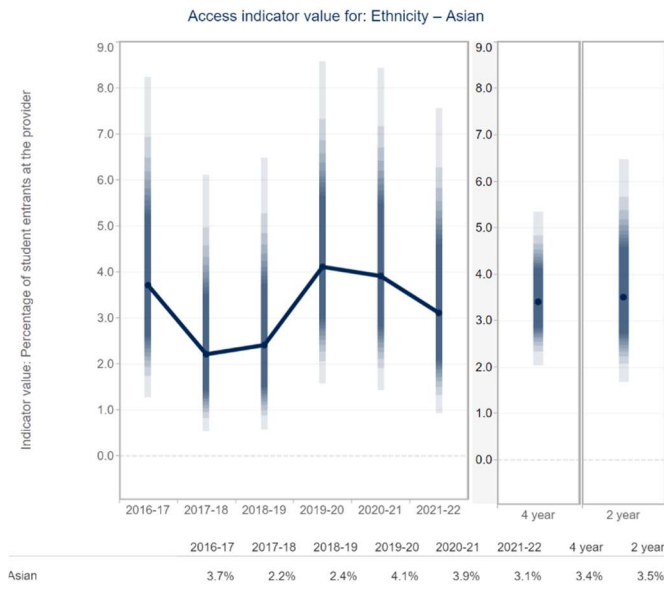


Figure 26: Access rates for Asian 18-year-old students entering ICMP.

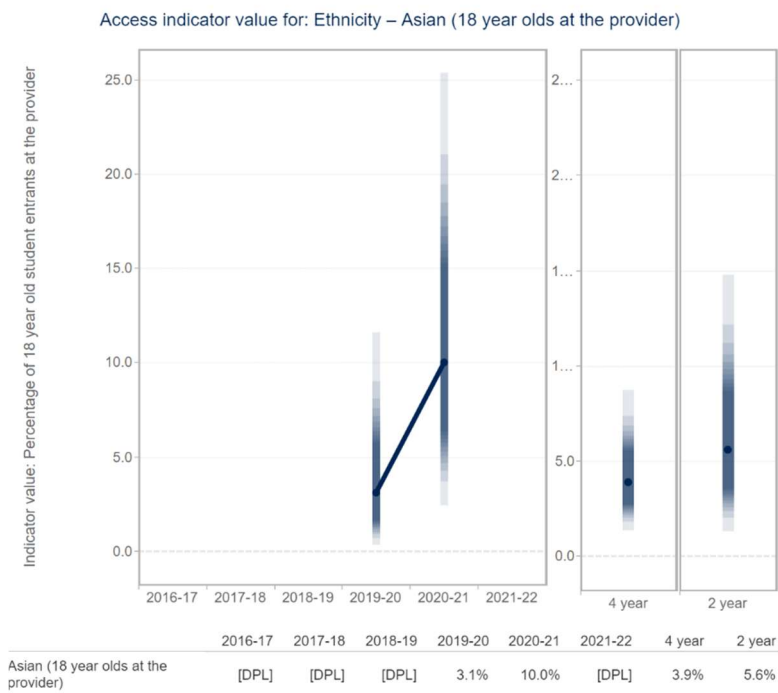
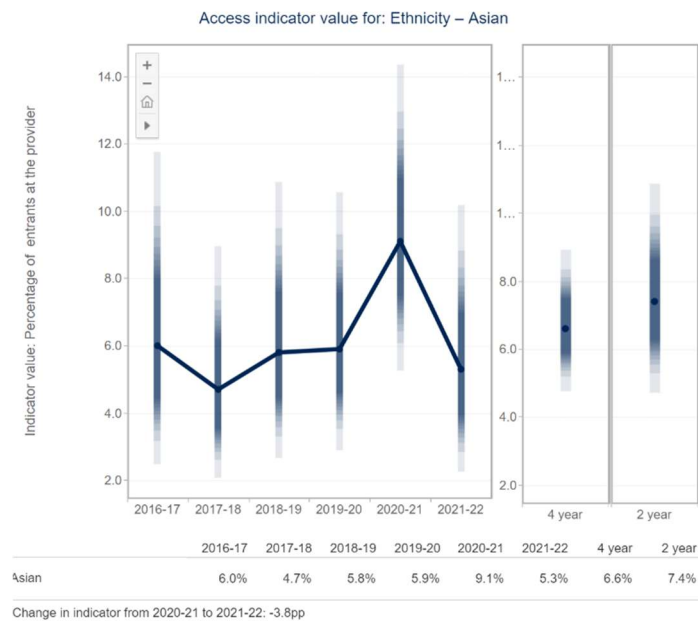
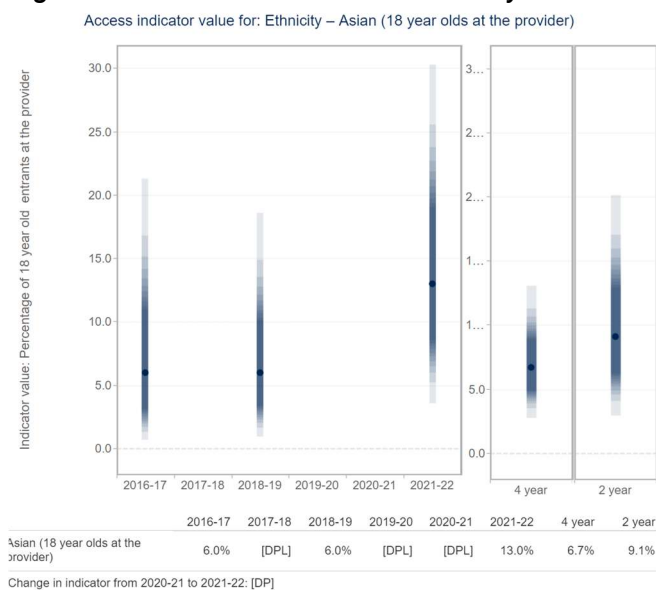


Figure 27: Access rates for Asian students entering SAE UK.



Figures 28: Access rates for Asian 18-year-old students entering SAE UK



7. There is a risk that mature students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to continue to Level 5 study.

There is a gap in the continuation rates of our mature students in comparison to students under 21. The merged gap is currently at 9pp and reflected across the sector, whilst also being smaller than other continuation gaps at ICMP and SAE UK. Figures 29 and 30 show the continuation rates for mature students at ICMP and SAE UK in comparison to all providers and Figures 31 and 32 show the current gaps at both institutions. With a high proportion of our students being mature, we recognise that the intervention activities selected to support the continuation targets we have selected will have an impact for mature students.

Figure 29: Continuation rates for age at ICMP and All Providers.

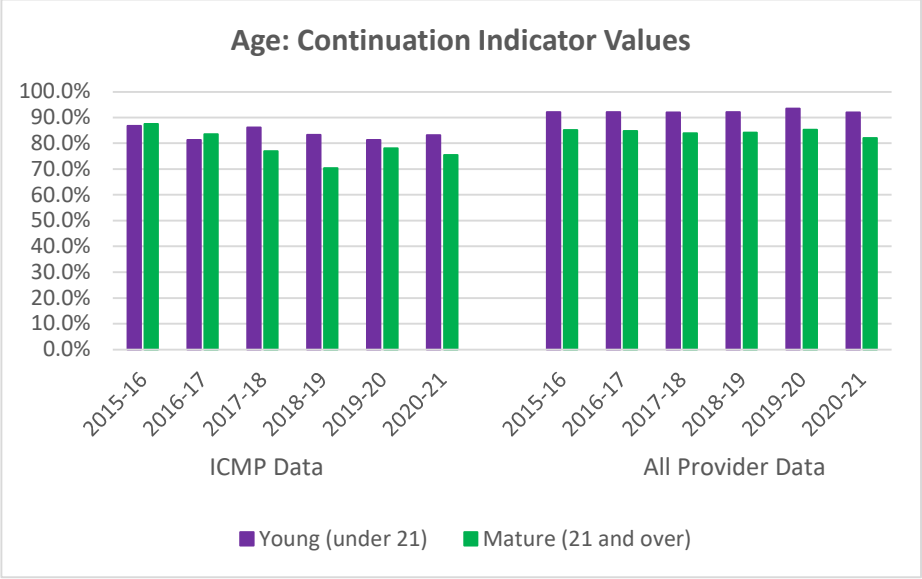


Figure 30: Continuation rates for age at SAE UK and All Providers

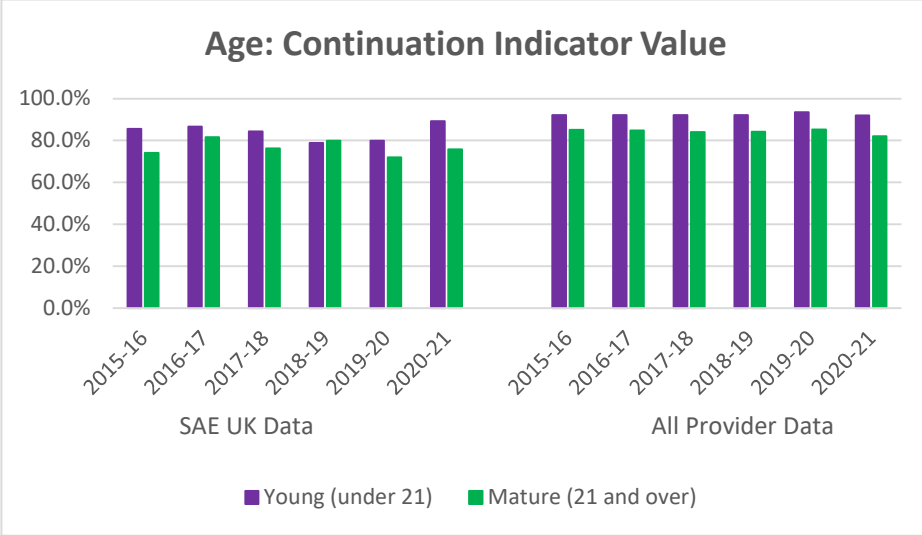


Figure 31: Continuation gaps between mature students and students under 21 at ICMP.

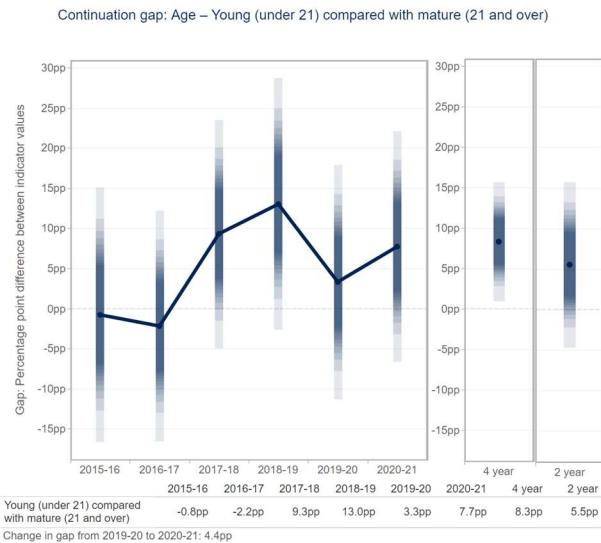
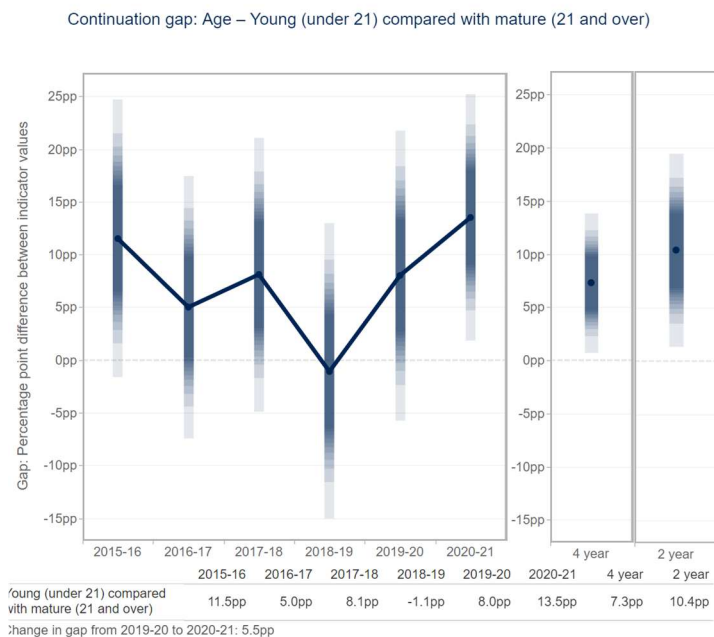


Figure 32: Continuation gaps between mature students and students under 21 at SAE UK.



- 8. There is a risk that students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2:1 degree classification).**

We identified a gap between the proportion of students from English IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and those from English IMD Quintiles 3 to 5. There was a merged 6.0pp gap on our SEER dashboard for ICMP and SAE UK in 2021-22, which is like the sector. We intend to address this risk through other targets and monitor the awarding gap for IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. As a small provider with limited resource we wish to initially prioritise reducing the risk to equal of opportunity affecting continuation and indirectly support attainment.

- 9. There is a risk that Black students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities for further progression after Higher Education Study.**

We have identified a risk to equality of opportunity for Black students at our institution progressing after higher education. Our progression rates for all students, including underrepresented groups is strong and above benchmarks, however there are larger than average gaps. The datasets for this are very small so it is difficult to attribute risk at this stage, however progression opportunities will be embedded into intervention strategies supporting this underrepresented group.

Figure 33: Progression gaps between Black students and White students at ICMP.

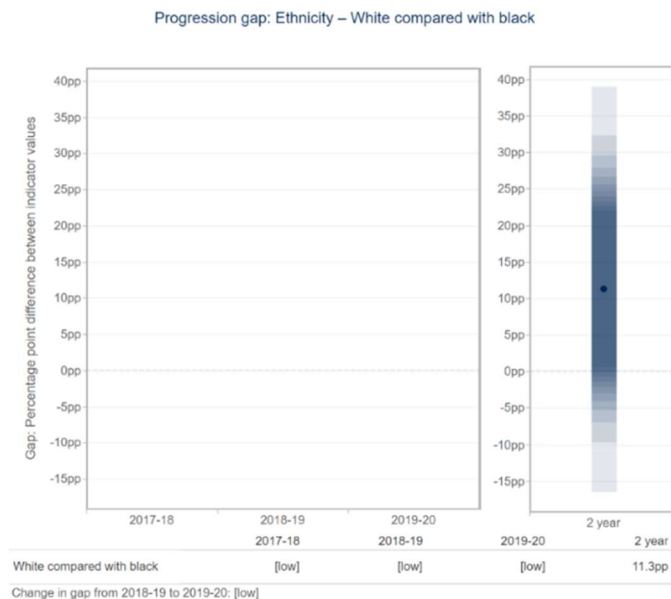
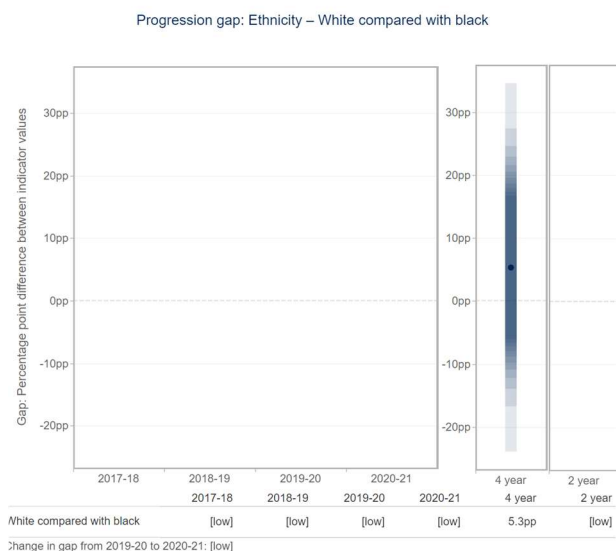


Figure 34: Progression gaps between Black students and White students at SAE UK



10. There is a risk that disabled students at our institution are not experiencing equal opportunities for further progression after Higher Education Study.

We have identified a risk to equality of opportunity for disabled students at ICMP and SAE UK progressing after higher education. Our progression rates for all students, including underrepresented groups is strong and above benchmarks but there is a larger than average gap for disabled students. The datasets for this are very small so it is difficult to attribute risk at this stage, however progression opportunities will be embedded into intervention strategies supporting this underrepresented group.

Figure 35: Progression gaps between disability reported and no disability reported at ICMP.

Progression gap: Disability – No disability reported compared with disability reported

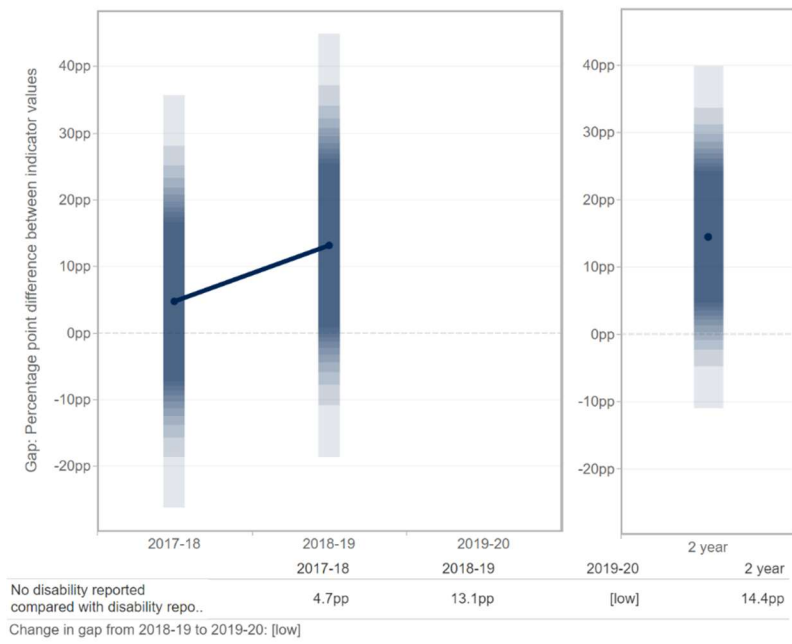
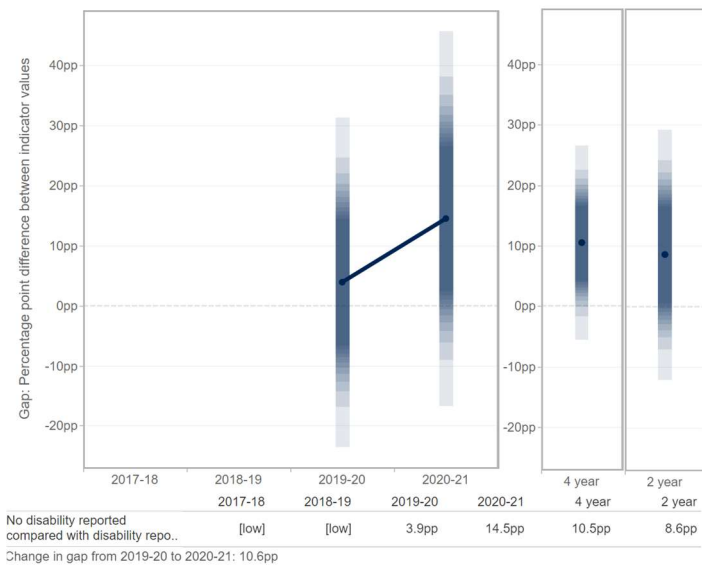


Figure 36: Progression gaps between disability reported and no disability reported at SAE UK.

Progression gap: Disability – No disability reported compared with disability reported



Annex B: Evidence base and rationale for intervention strategies (further detail)

Intervention Strategy 4.1: A Whole-Lifecycle Approach via Inclusive Communities and Personalised Support and Staff Development to Increasing Attainment

This intervention strategy focuses on closing the awarding and continuation gaps between global majority students - black students in particular - and white students, and easing access to higher education for students from disadvantaged groups, through:

- *curriculum enhancements that promote inclusivity and sense of belonging,*
- *effective partnerships with schools,*
- *supportive networks with peers, tutors, and professional services staff.*

Our choices of activities related to this Strategy have been informed by feedback from a focus group with Global Majority students and a discussion with our Student Officers that we conducted in the past year.

We learnt from the *focus group* with UK domicile Global Majority students that:

- Global Majority and SEN/disabled students would benefit from sitting down with tutors to discuss concerns and preferred/best modes of working.
- Staff are approachable, and there are a lot of community events meet diverse groups of people.
- ICMP feels like a community, but Global Majority students do not necessarily feel a part of it, because they may feel different to others due to e.g., race discomfort, there being too few “brown” people, having to step out of one’s comfort zone, feeling like standing out more because of one’s origin, etc.
- The curriculum range is not wide enough as it caters too much to contemporary POP music; it can benefit from an injection of more multi-perspective viewpoints and inclusion of more genres.
- Making friends can sometimes be hard and that one can be subject to sexism and microaggressions, including around gender and disability.
- Certain lifestyles or personal commitments are not considered at ICMP, which can affect learning and experience of classes negatively. An example is students having to navigate teaching scheduling and travelling far to pray, as prayer spaces are limited or not available on site.

The discussion with the Student Officers around ethnicity highlighted:

- The need for a more representative curriculum that can be achieved through diversifying and decolonising and involving students as co-creators.
- The need for more staff training around cultural sensitivity, the issues facing students, and EDI.

Global Majority students in the UK are more likely than their White peers to participate (take a qualification) in HE, in part due to higher aspirations, valuing a university qualification, and parental and family encouragement to go to university¹. These students are also more likely to go on from a

¹ Connor, H., C. Tyers, T. Modood & J. Hillage. 2004. Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates. Research Report RR552, DfES. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/ethnicity/documents/educationreport.pdf>

first degree to further study or training. However, despite the higher participation in HE, they do less well at degree performance and on the labour market¹.

The Office for Students (OfS) reports² that Black students (22%) and Asian students (11%), are less likely to achieve a good degree outcome (First or 2.1 classification) in full-time higher education than their white counterparts.

Most of the degree awarding gap (17% and 10% for Black and Asian students, respectively) appears unrelated to differences in prior academic achievement (the entry tariff)¹ and may therefore arise from factors during the student journey at university.

The gap across the ethnic and racial continuum is even bigger for part-time students².

Differences in degree classification explain most of the difference in graduate outcomes, i.e., obtaining highly skilled employment post-graduation¹.

In addition to being least likely of all ethnic groups to achieve a 'good' degree, Black students are also most likely to drop out from higher education (in England). Their non-continuation rate is higher than the average for students from the lowest IMD groups (IMD 1 and 2) and second highest overall, with only mature students having a greater rate of dropping out³.

The most recent reporting on outcomes from higher education³ also shows that creative subjects, including music, are not among the top study choices at university for Black students (although they are not among the least popular subjects either). By contrast, creative subjects are among the top choices of Mixed-Race and White students, and among the least favoured subjects to study by Asian students.

The evidence base indicates therefore the necessity for universities to do more to recruit Black students to creative arts subjects, and to support them towards better degree and graduate outcomes.

The Black students' awarding gap has been at the forefront of research linking inclusivity and attainment to strategic efforts to move away from a student-deficit model and to an institutional-deficit approach when considering the reasons for and the ways to tackle gaps in attainment⁴.

Vincent Tinto's institutional departure model⁵, which states that retention depends primarily on the level of student integration and socialisation into academia, underpins much of the research and evidence in attainment inequalities.

² OfS. 2021. Differences in student outcomes. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/differences-in-student-outcomes/ethnicity/>

³ Bolton, P. & J. Lewis. 2023. Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England. Research Briefing, House of Commons. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf>

⁴ Ross, F. M., J. C. Tatam, A. L. Hughes, O. P. Beacock & N. Mcduff. 2018. "The great unspoken shame of UK Higher Education": addressing inequalities of attainment. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 12(1), ISSN (print) 1817-7417. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15249/12-1-172>

⁵ Tinto, Vincent. "Stages of Student Departure: Reflections on the Longitudinal Character of Student Leaving." *The Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 59, no. 4, 1988, pp. 438–55. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1981920>

Effective interventions in terms of what teachers do to foster student integration, and hence increase student retention, include demonstrating explicitly an interest in students' success and learning, giving them encouragement, and acting as a mentor⁶.

Setting up peer-learning communities has also proved effective at narrowing retention and other equity gaps for Global Majority and disadvantaged students⁷.

Other possible approaches to increasing retention and attainment of such students⁸ are:

- Active learning, including problem-based learning and experiential learning^{9,10,11}, and research-based learning¹²,
- Technology-enabled teaching models like blended learning^{13,14}, and
- Learning support initiatives like annotated learning resources, visual factsheets for tutorials, and video annotations of research papers¹⁵.

Examples of a successful whole-institution approach to reducing the Black and broader Global Majority attainment gap are Kingston University's ABSS (Addressing Barriers to Student Success) project^{16,17,18,19} and its UCL off-shoot²⁰. The approach⁶ involves:

- Changing organisational culture in ways related to addressing the attainment gap,
- Implementing a value-added score to track students and changes in the gap²¹,

⁶ Arshad-Snyder, S. 2017. The Role of Faculty Validation in Influencing Online Students' Intent to Persist. Dissertation/thesis. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/66e6a3d8bd6df22a927bb5eebdfc8e82/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>

⁷ Johnson, M. D., A. E. Sprowles, K. R. Goldenberg, S. T. Margell & L. Castellino. 2020. 'Effect of a Place-Based Learning Community on Belonging, Persistence and Equity Gaps for First-Year STEM Students', *Innovative Higher Education*, 45: 509-531. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-020-09519-5>

⁸ Austen, L., R. Hodgson, C. Heaton, N. Pickering & S. O'Connor. 2021. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review of demonstrable impact on student outcomes. *Advance HE*. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/access-retention-attainment-and-progression-review-literature-2016-2021>

⁹ Safari, M., B. Yazdanpanah & S. Hatamipour. 2020. 'Learning Outcomes and Perceptions of Midwifery Students about Peer-Teaching and Lecture Method in Gynecology and Infertility Course', *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 4 (3): 291-298. <http://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2020063039>

¹⁰ Martinez-Rodrigo, F., L. C. Herrero-De Lucas, S. de Pablo & A. Rey-Boue. 2017. 'Using PBL to Improve Educational Outcomes and Student Satisfaction in the Teaching of DC/DC and DC/AC Converters', *IEEE Transactions on Education*, 60 (3): 229-237. <http://doi.org/10.1109/TE.2016.2643623>

¹¹ Song, W., I. Lopez, A. Furco & G. M. Maruyama. 2017. An Examination of the Impact of Service Learning on Underrepresented College Students' Academic Outcomes, *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Fall 2017, pp23-37. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1167124.pdf>

¹² Ing, M., J. M. Burnette III, T. Azzam & S. R. Wessler. 2021. 'Participation in a Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience Results in Higher Grades in the Companion Lecture Course', *Educational Researcher*, 50 (4): 205-214. <http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20968097>

¹³ Yen, S-C., Y. Lo, A. Lee, & J. Enriquez. 2018. 'Learning Online, Offline and In-Between: Comparing Student Academic Outcomes and Course Satisfaction in Face-to-Face, Online and Blended Teaching Modalities', *Education and Information Technologies*, 23 (5): 2141-2153. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-018-9707-5>

¹⁴ Grønlien, H. K., T. E. Christoffersen, Ø. Ringstad, M. Andreassen & R. G. Lugo. 2021. 'A blended learning teaching strategy strengthens the nursing students' performance and self-reported learning outcome achievement in an anatomy, physiology and biochemistry course – A quasi-experimental study', *Nurse Education in Practice*, 52, 103046. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2021.103046>

¹⁵ Dracup, M., T. King & J. Austin. 2016. Simple techniques for a more inclusive curriculum. STARS (Students Transitions Achievement Retention & Success) Conference, Perth. <https://unistars.org/papers/STARS2016/02E.pdf>

¹⁶ Office for Students. 2020. Kingston University: Using a value added metric and an inclusive curriculum framework to address the BME attainment gap. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/abss-project-kingston-university/>

¹⁷ McDuff, N. 2020. Use of a Value Added Metric and an Inclusive Curriculum Framework to Address the Black and Minority Ethnic Attainment Gap. Report to the Office for Students. Office for Students. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/c8484f11-ef3f-4c59-9fdb-f9c201b54205/abss-final-project-report-kingston-university.pdf>

¹⁸ Advance HE. 2020. What works in approaches to the BME. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/student-retention-and-success/what-works-approaches-bme-attainment-gap>

¹⁹ McDuff, N., J. Tatam, O. Beacock & F. Ross. 2020. Closing the attainment gap for students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds through institutional change. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 20, No 1, Open University. <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.20.1.79>

²⁰ Duhs, R., J. Evans, P. Williams & P. Chaudhary. 2019. The early impact of initiatives to close attainment gaps at UCL. Case Study. *Compass: Journal of learning and teaching*, Vol. 12, No 1, Greenwich University. <https://journals.gre.ac.uk/index.php/compass/article/download/1026/pdf>

²¹ Advance HE. 2020. Challenging the BAME attainment gap using the value-added score metric. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/challenging-bame-attainment-gap-using-value-added-score-metric>

- Developing an inclusive curriculum to foster belonging, and
- Implementing student support initiatives around mentoring (Kingston University's Beyond Barriers scheme), employability (University of Hertfordshire's promotion of global majority diversity scheme, network, and role-models), and recognition for developing social capital (Kingston University's Kingston Award for engagement and achievement, beyond strictly academic achievement, in university life and the wider community).

The following Strategy 4.1 activities are based upon the evidence, considerations, and examples above around closing the attainment gap.

Our **Pre-16 Attainment Support** activity (*Strand 1, Activity 1*) aims at creative arts education practitioners and Black and Asian students.

When offered opportunities to engage with creative subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4 (11–15-year-olds), global majority students engage the same as their white peers²².

Active engagement with music (as well as creative subjects more broadly) at school- and pre-university level (14-19 years old) appears to impact positively on students' language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, motor-coordination, spatial orientation, concentration, confidence, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and mental health^{23,24}.

Engaging students in music activity, e.g., creating music or playing an instrument, works particularly well when the creative activity is 'culturally meaningful and relevant'⁶. Yet, students from disadvantaged groups, including based on race and ethnicity (but also disability and deprivation), are often less likely than their peers of more advantageous backgrounds to have access to music education at school and to hold relevant qualifications for studying music at university²⁵.

Helping music educators at school enhance their pedagogic skills, particularly in terms of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity, can increase their students' – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and Black students' - engagement with music and aspirations for studying music at university²⁶.

That is precisely the goal of our **Creative Arts Education Network** for creative arts education practitioners including music practitioners. The Network will also provide information and guidance around HE pathways for studying creative arts programmes that the practitioners can pass to their students.

Information and guidance directly to the students around career prospects from studying particular subjects at university shows small positive effects on attitudes, aspirations, and HE progression²⁷.

²² Mak H.W. & D. Fancourt. 2021. Do socio-demographic factors predict children's engagement in arts and culture? Comparisons of in-school and out-of-school participation in the Taking Part Survey. PLOS ONE 16(2): e0246936. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246936>

²³ Hallam, S. 2010. The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. International Journal of Music Education, 28 (3), 269-289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761410370658>

²⁴ Hampshire, K. R. & M., Matthijsse. 2010. Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach. Social Science and Medicine, 71, 708-716. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.05.015>

²⁵ Connor, H., C., Tyers, T., Modood & J., Hillage. 2004. Why the Difference? A closer look at higher education minority ethnic students and graduates. Research Report RR552, Department for Education and Skills.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR552.pdf>

²⁶ Hallam, S. & S. Burns. 2017. Progression in instrumental music making for learners from disadvantaged communities: A Literature Review. Arts Council England. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/In_harmony_Literature_review.pdf

²⁷ TASO. 2023. Evidence Toolkit. <https://taso.org.uk/evidence/toolkit/>

Knowing how to apply for, linking a future career to studying a particular subject at university, as well as being motivated to improve attainment at school to succeed at applying to university:

- Increases student motivation and application to studies²⁸,
- Enhances motivation to apply to university, and confidence in getting in²⁹,
- Promotes metacognitive, self-regulation, problem-solving, creativity, and other employability relevant skills³⁰,
- Develops forms of social capital that are implicit in the admissions and selection processes³¹.

Our ***Student Metacognition and Other Skills Programme*** for Black and Asian secondary school students situates the development of such skills within engagement with creative arts and learning about how to pursue creative arts degrees at university.

The latter part of **Outreach to Schools and Communities (Activity 1)** in Strategy 4.1 seeks to ease the access to higher education for students from disadvantaged groups, through effective partnerships with schools and supportive networks with peers, tutors, and professional services staff.

In terms of access to higher education, TASO's evidence toolkit³² finds little causal evidence that typical outreach interventions like open days, campus visits, summer schools, subject tasters, and pre-entry mentoring have a positive effect on raising prospective students' aspirations to study in HE.

Information, advice, and guidance (IAG) on choice, application process, funding, etc., on the other hand appears to associate with small positive effects³³.

Personal assistance with applications³⁴, focus on attainment- rather than aspiration-raising (Harrison & Waller, 2018)³⁵, and mentoring or role-modelling by experienced older individuals with relevant industry experience or university student ambassadors^{36,37} have all shown potential to increase access, particularly for underrepresented groups.

Our planned activities that to relate to pre-entry and school partnership– are based on evidence from research around raising attainment (*Strand 1, Activity 1*) and implementing an IAG provision (*Strand 2, Activity 1*).

In terms of enhancing participation, continuation, and inclusion post-entry, particularly for Black and other Global Majority students, approaches that have an impact involve increasing:

²⁸ EEF. 2016. Careers education: International literature review.

https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidance/Careers_review.pdf?v=1684350662

²⁹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 2010. Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour? <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poorer-children%E2%80%99s-educational-attainment-how-important-are-attitudes-and-behaviour>

³⁰ Kingston University London. 2022. Future Skills: League Table. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/documents/user-upload/kingston-university-d2606ad3a3d-future-skills-report-2022-final.pdf>

³¹ Hayton, A., Haste, P., and Jones, A. (2015) 'Promoting diversity in creative art education: The case of Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London'. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36 (8), 1258–76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.899891>

³² TASO. 2023. Aspiration-raising interventions (pre-entry). <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/aspiration-raising-interventions-pre-entry/>

³³ TASO. 2023. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) (pre-entry). <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/information-advice-and-guidance/>

³⁴ Oreopoulos, P. & R. Ford. 2019. Keeping College Options Open: A Field Experiment to Help All High School Seniors through the College Application Process, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 38 (2): 426-454. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22115>

³⁵ Harrison, N. & R. Waller. 2018. Challenging discourses of aspiration: The role of expectations and attainment in access to higher education. British Educational Research Journal, 44 (5): 914-938. <http://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3475>

³⁶ Robinson, D. & V. Salvatrini. 2020. The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education: A review of the evidence. London: Education Policy Institute. http://taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Widening_participation-review_EPI-TASO_2020.pdf

³⁷ Sanders, M., S. Burgess, R. Chande, E. Kozman, C. Dilnot & L. Macmillan. 2018. Role models, mentoring and university applications – evidence from a crossover randomised controlled trial in the United Kingdom'. Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 20 (4): 57-80. <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.20.4.57>

- Peer interactions through e.g., mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning.
- Staff-student interactions, including through effective personal tutoring.
- Personalised and culturally sensitive support services³⁸.

(Non-)continuation is an important facet, and a measure of participation in higher education. The Office for Students reported in 2020³⁹ that between 2013-14 and 2017-18:

- Black students were least likely to continue into a second year of study for each of the above academic years, across subject groups (STEM vs. Non-STEM), and across HE provider type (higher- vs. non-higher tariff),
- Continuation rates in non-STEM university subjects fell year-on-year, with Black students in such subjects experiencing the most pronounced drop, and,
- The continuation gap between Black and White students was wider in non-higher vs. higher tariff HE providers.

A small-scale examination of the possible reasons for Black students withdrawing from university⁴⁰ highlights, as potential challenges and barriers to continuation, the perceived lack of academic and personal support from staff and professional services, lack of awareness of support services, insufficient social integration, and peer support, and having to balance learning with term-time work and family obligations.

As with our pre-entry activities, we have developed an evidence-informed approach to addressing an existing continuation gap between our Black and other Global Majority students, and our White students.

Many of the factors that affect continuation, especially for our target student groups (economically disadvantaged students, Global Majority students, and students with disability), relate to students' sense of belonging to the university.

Belonging correlates with enhanced retention⁴¹ and successful learning⁴², and our target groups are among the least likely to feel they belong and most likely to drop out⁴³.

The **Access and Outreach Offer for Schools and Communities** activity (*Strand 2, Activity 1*) involves the provision of information and guidance (IAG) to prospective students on their options to studying creative arts at university. The IAG aims to counter concerns about the precarity of careers in the arts and creative subjects that many prospective students from economically disadvantaged or Global Majority backgrounds, as well as their families/parents may have^{44,45}.

³⁸ Austen, L., R. Hodgson, J. Dickinson, C. Heaton & N. Pickering. 2021. Access, retention, attainment and progression: a review of the literature 2016-2021. Advance HE. <https://documents.advance-he.ac.uk/download/file/document/10204>

³⁹ OfS. 2020. Access and continuation data by ethnicity, provider tariff group and subject group. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/access-and-continuation-data-by-ethnicity-tariff-and-subject/>

⁴⁰ Kauser, S., S. Yaqoob, A. Cook, M. O'Hara, M. Mnatzios & H. Egan. 2021. Learning from the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) university students who withdraw from their undergraduate degree. SN Soc Sci 1, 121. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00115-8>

⁴¹ Thomas, L. 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme Summary Report. Paul Hamlyn Foundation. <https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Works-Summary-report.pdf>

⁴² Meehan, C. & K. Howells. 2019. In search of the feeling of 'belonging' in higher education: undergraduate students transition into higher education, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 43:10, 1376-1390, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2018.1490702>

⁴³ Mi Young Ahn & Howard H. Davis (2023) Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach, Teaching in Higher Education, 28:1, 136-149, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1778664>

⁴⁴ Broadhead, S. 2022. Access and Widening Participation in Arts Higher Education. Practice and Research. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97450-3>

⁴⁵ Alberts, N. & G. Atherton. 2016. The more colours you add, the nicer the picture. Access HE. <https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdlx0u7/The-more-colours-you-add-AccessHE-Creative-report.pdf>

The reported small positive effect of IAG interventions on attitudes, aspirations, and HE progression⁴⁶ could be especially useful to first-generation prospective university students, who cannot be guided and advised on applying to university by their families as effectively as students with family members with prior HE experiences can be⁴⁷.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may also lack some of the forms of social capital that are implicit in the admissions and selection processes⁴⁸.

IAGs like the one we plan in Strand 2; Activity 1 show causal relationship with boosting enrolment into HE for prospective students from families with no previous graduate experience⁴⁹.

The **Decolonising Study and Support** activity (*Activity 2*) focuses on making what we offer for our students more inclusive and diverse. The first strand of Activity 2 is ***Decolonising the Curriculum***.

Decolonising curricula is a recent approach to enhancing inclusivity and belonging for students at university. It advocates the interrogation of curricula through critical pedagogy, e.g., Critical Race Theory, to identify issues, gaps, and solutions to the negative impact of 'exclusionist' epistemology, exclusion from knowledge creation, and denial of role models to Black and other underrepresented racial and ethnic students, all of which arguably leads to negative outcomes in terms of sense of belonging, intrinsic motivation to study, retention, and attainment^{50,51}.

As with the broader inclusivity pedagogic and policy agenda, curriculum decolonisation has generated a plethora of implementation models and frameworks that seek to provide a blueprint for engaging students in curriculum co-creation and making curricula more inclusive^{52,53}.

Not much evidence exists currently around the impact of curriculum decolonisation on student outcomes, from sense of belonging to retention and attainment.

Campbell et al.⁵⁴ report positive impact on the sense of belonging and enjoyment of learning, but not on the awarding gap, for Global Majority students from implementing a racially inclusive curricular toolkit on a sociology course at the University of Leicester. The toolkit instigated curricular changes to reading lists, terminology, and teaching that helped make quantitative sociology more relevant to all students.

⁴⁶ TASO. 2023. Evidence Toolkit. <https://taso.org.uk/evidence/toolkit/>

⁴⁷ Thomas, L. and J. Quinn. 2007. First Generation Entry Into Higher Education: An International Study. Society for Research into Higher Education.

⁴⁸ Hayton, A., Haste, P., and Jones, A. (2015) 'Promoting diversity in creative art education: The case of Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London'. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36 (8), 1258–76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.899891>

⁴⁹ Frauke P., C. Spiess, C. Katharina & V. Zambre. 2018. Informing Students about College: An Efficient Way to Decrease the Socio-Economic Gap in Enrollment: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment. DIW Berlin Discussion Paper No. 1770, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3287800> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3287800>

⁵⁰ Ferguson, R., T. Coughlan, K. Egelanddsdal, M. Gaved, C. Herodotou, G. Hillaire, D. Jones, I. Jowers, A. Kukulska-Hulme, P. McAndrew, K. Misiejuk, I. Johanna Ness, B. Rienties, E. Scanlon, M. Sharples, B. Wasson, M. Weller & D. Whitelock. 2019. Innovating Pedagogy 2019: Exploring new forms of teaching, learning and assessment, to guide educators and policy makers. Open University Innovation Report 7. Milton Keynes: The Open University.

https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/2569410/mod_resource/content/1/innovating-pedagogy-2019.pdf

⁵¹ Arday, J., D. Z. Belluigi & D. Thomas. 2021. Attempting to break the chain: reimagining inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 53:3, 298–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773257>

⁵² Ahmed-Landeryou, M. 2023. Developing an evidence-Informed decolonising curriculum wheel – A reflective piece. Equity in Education & Society, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461231154014>

⁵³ SOAS. 2018. Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit for Programme and Module Convenors. <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/learning-teaching/toolkit-for-programme-and-module-convenors/>

⁵⁴ Campbell, P. I., A. Ajour, A. Dunn, H. Karavadra, K. Nockels & S. Whittaker. 2022. Evaluating the Racially Inclusive Curricula Toolkit in HE: Empirically Measuring the Efficacy and Impact of Making Curriculum-content Racially Inclusive on the Educative Experiences of Students of Colour in the UK. University of Leicester. Report. <https://doi.org/10.25392/leicester.data.21724658.v1>

A similar curricular intervention at the University of Kent⁵⁵ had global majority students audit module reading lists, discuss their inclusivity and representativeness in focus groups, and work with the library to implement changes. The evaluation of that intervention detected only a small positive, but not statistically significant uplift of 2% in the attainment of global majority students, which appeared off-set by an even larger, 3.5% uplift for white students.

Nevertheless, research in the effects of decolonising curricula projects consistently finds that they result in greater enjoyment of and engagement with their course for minoritized students.

Decolonising Professional Services is the second strand of Activity 2 (Decolonising Study and Support) and focuses on the enhancement of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity of the support staff, processes, and services available to our students.

An example of an approach to raising the inclusivity of support provision and processes is the whole-student-journey change model for reshaping professional services at Liverpool John Moores University⁵⁶.

Thomas⁵⁷ suggests that students who have a clear understanding of the support available to them and how to access it, are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and therefore continue with their studies. This underpins our work towards a whole-institution approach to providing student support, as recommended by Thomas⁵⁸ in order to enhance our students' belonging, continuation, and attainment.

The **Personal Tutoring** activity (*Activity 3*) aims to enhance the academic and personal support provision for our students⁵⁹.

Personal tutoring has been linked to an increase in students' sense of belonging and satisfaction through the development of a sense of connectedness⁶⁰, which is of particular importance to undergraduates in their first year, during their transition to higher education^{61,62}.

Belonging, in turn, appears to depend on the extent of students' academic and social integration at university.

Belonging, itself, is a major determinant of retention (and persistence) and as discussed previously particularly impacts students from disadvantaged groups such as students from lower socio-economic quintiles, mature students, and Global Majority students^{63,64}.

⁵⁵ TASO. 2022. The impact of curriculum reform on the ethnicity degree awarding gap. <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Full-report-the-impact-of-curriculum-reform-on-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf>

⁵⁶ Atkins, C. 2022. Professional Services Team's Role in Supporting Inclusive Practice. Liverpool John Moores University. <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/-/media/files/ljmu/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy/professional-services--dtc-report.pdf>

⁵⁷ Thomas, L. 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme Summary Report. Paul Hamlyn Foundation. <https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Works-Summary-report.pdf>

⁵⁸ Thomas, L. 2020. Excellent Outcomes for All Students: A Whole System Approach to Widening Participation and Student Success in England. Student Success, 11(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v11i1.1455>

⁵⁹ Yale, A. T. 2020. Quality matters: an in-depth exploration of the student–personal tutor relationship in higher education from the student perspective, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 44:6, 739-752. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1596235>

⁶⁰ Palmer, M., P. O'Kane & M. Owens. 2009. Betwixt spaces: student accounts of turning point experiences in the first-year transition, Studies in Higher Education, 34:1, 37-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802601929>

⁶¹ Thomas, L. 2006. "Widening Participation and the Increased Need for Personal Tutoring." In Personal Tutoring in Higher Education, edited by Liz Thomas and Paula Hixenbaugh, 21–31. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

⁶² Reinheimer, D. & K. McKenzie. 2011. The Impact of Tutoring on the Academic Success of Undeclared Students, Journal of College Reading and Learning, 41:2, 22-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2011.10850340>

⁶³ Pedler, M. L., R. Willis & J. E. Nieuwoudt. 2022. A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 46:3, 397-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1955844>

⁶⁴ Ahn, M. Y. & H. Davis. 2023. Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach. Teaching in Higher Education, 28(1), 136-149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1778664>

As many as 40% or more of university students in the UK have thought about dropping out, often due to personal circumstances, lack of self-efficacy, prior to an assessment, or after failing an assessment⁶⁵.

Unsurprisingly, most UK universities run a personal tutoring system⁶⁶ that aims to provide 'proximity of staff to students, teaching methods centred on the idea of learning as a partnership, and students receiving personal attention from staff'⁶⁷.

Effective tutoring systems enhance student success in terms of grades, attendance, and engagement through academic and wellbeing support⁶⁸.

The effectiveness appears to derive from personal tutoring features like, how often tutors meet with tutees, how meetings are initiated, what records of meetings are kept, whether meetings run individually or in groups, and what meetings are for⁶⁹.

Students experiencing poor personal tutoring may deem it worse than having had no personal tutor at all⁷⁰.

Student expectations and perceptions of personal tutoring do not always match, but the gap – e.g., around the frequency and regularity of meetings with the personal tutor - appears to be closing⁷¹.

The **Peer Support** activity (*Activity 4*) aims to aid our students' transition and build peer capital through peer-support and peer-learning⁷².

Peer and social capital affect self-efficacy and hence student success.

Self-efficacy varies with the level of preparation for HE studies, with disadvantaged students, including first-generation at university students, tending to exhibit lower self-efficacy.

It does not relate just to the academic subject, but the wider enculturation of students to the institution, course, and mode of learning, as well as their socialisation with staff and peers (*see discussion around belonging on pp.7-8*). These aspects of the student experience have been described as a hidden curriculum⁷³.

⁶⁵ McCary, J., S. Pankhursts, H. Valentine & A. Berry. 2011. A comparative evaluation of the roles of student adviser and personal tutor in relation to undergraduate student retention. Final report - Anglia Ruskin University. Advance HE. https://documents.advance-he.ac.uk/download/file/document/3999?_ga=2.218349017.1759162373.1687938256-1083746230.1676498658

⁶⁶ Grant, A. 2006. "Personal Tutoring: A System in Crisis." In *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education*, edited by Liz Thomas and Paula Hixenbaugh, 11–20. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

⁶⁷ Attwood, R. 2009. "The Personal Touch." *Times Higher Education*, May 7. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/the-personal-touch/406424.article>

⁶⁸ Stuart, K., K. Willocks & R. Browning. 2021. Questioning personal tutoring in higher education: an activity theoretical action research study, *Educational Action Research*, 29:1, 79-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1626753>

⁶⁹ The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2014. "What Students Think of Their Higher Education Analysis of Student Submissions to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 2012-13."

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/What-Students-Think-of-Their-Higher-Education.pdf>

⁷⁰ Yale, A. T. 2019. The personal tutor–student relationship: student expectations and experiences of personal tutoring in higher education, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43:4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1377164>

⁷¹ Calabrese, G., D-L. M. Leadbitter, N. Trindade, A. Jeyabalan, D. Dolton & A. ElShaer. 2022. Personal Tutoring Scheme: Expectations, Perceptions and Factors Affecting Students' Engagement. *Frontiers in Education*, Vol. 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.727410>

⁷² Brouwer, J., E. Jansen, A. Flache & A. Hofman. 2016. The impact of social capital on self-efficacy and study success among first-year university students. *Learning and Individual Differences*, Vol 52, pp. 109-118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.09.016>

⁷³ Sambell, K. & L., McDowell. 1998. The construction of the hidden curriculum: messages and meanings in the assessment of student learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 23(4), 391-402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293980230406>

Students who are coached and supported to ‘know the ropes’⁷⁴ within that curriculum are likely to do better in their studies than those who do not know ‘the rules of the game’ – usually, students from disadvantaged or lower socio-cultural backgrounds⁷⁵.

The **Peer Support** activity is geared precisely towards increasing the opportunities for our students to collaborate and engage in peer-support, as well as to learn how to successfully navigate the ‘hidden’ curriculum.

The **Understanding Student Experiences** activity (*Activity 5*) relates to existing practice in the UK HE sector, around engaging senior university leadership in a mentoring process where they are the mentees of (reverse mentoring) or equal partners with other staff^{76,77} or students^{78,79}. The staff and students entering into a mentoring relationship with senior leaders usually represent disadvantaged groups based on race and ethnicity, disability, or sexuality.

This type of mentoring aims to help the senior leadership develop e.g., digital skills, or acquire contextual knowledge and insight into their mentors’ lived experience and developmental needs. The latter aim seeks to influence the senior leaders’ decision-making and the resultant institutional policies and processes in ways that improve conditions and tackle barriers to participation, engagement, and achievement of the minority groups represented by the mentors.

Reciprocal mentoring involving Black and other Global Majority students pairing up with senior executive staff has been implemented successfully at the University of Gloucestershire²³ as part of an institutional drive to increase inclusion and to reduce such students’ 35% awarding gap and perceived unfavourable treatment compared to that of their White peers. The mentoring scheme, running since 2017-18, has been reported to impact positively on the experience of participating students, the insight of participating staff into the lived experience of the students, and the institutional actions to alleviate the student experience. Intended longer term impact, e.g., on the employability skills of participating students or the reduction of the awarding gap, has not yet been reported.

Still, given the experiences of similar schemes at the Universities of Gloucestershire⁴⁰, Northumbria³⁹, Bristol³⁷, London City³⁸, and Liverpool John Moores⁸⁰, to name a few, introducing our own version would seek to foster a closer relationship with our students and aid our pursuit of solutions to the challenges faced by our target groups.

The **Belonging and Mattering and Line of Sight Project** activities (*Activity 6 and 7*), centre around our students’ feeling of belonging to their programme and university, and role-modelling for them the subject-related careers they could pursue through exposure to and networking with Black professionals from industry.

⁷⁴ Whitty, G., Hayton, A. & Tang, S. 2015. Who you know, what you know and knowing the ropes: a review of evidence about access to higher education institutions in England. *Rev Educ*, 3: 27-67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3038>

⁷⁵ Bathmaker, A.-M., N. Ingram & R. Waller. 2013. Higher education, social class and the mobilisation of capitals: recognising and playing the game, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34:5-6, 723-743. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2013.816041>

⁷⁶ Bristol University, 2023. Reciprocal Mentoring Programme. <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/mentoring/reciprocal-mentoring/>

⁷⁷ Association of Heads of University Administration. 2023. AHUA Reciprocal Mentoring Programme. <https://www.ahua.ac.uk/resources/ahua-reciprocal-mentoring-programme/>

⁷⁸ Foster, M. 2023. How reverse mentoring helps co-create institutional knowledge. *Times Higher Education*. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/how-reverse-mentoring-helps-cocreate-institutional-knowledge>

⁷⁹ Peterson, C. & D. Ramsey. 2020. Reducing the gap! Reciprocal mentoring between Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students and senior leaders at the University of Gloucestershire, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 25:1, 34-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2020.1738583>

⁸⁰ Holly, N. 2023. Reciprocal Mentoring Programme involving BAME Staff, Black Students and Senior Leaders. Liverpool John Moore University. <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/news/articles/2020/10/16/reciprocal-mentoring-programme-involving-bame-staff-black-students-and-senior-leaders>

Belonging is often defined as students' academic and social integration and appears to be a major determinant of retention and attainment, particularly for disadvantaged and non-traditional student groups^{81,82}. It is the unifying and underlying feature of approaches to making curricula and the student experience more inclusive.

Inclusivity appears to intersect with and strongly influence retention - the continuation of study, persistence - attitudes and behaviours to attainment^{83,84}, and attainment.

A number of factors may affect negatively students' sense of belonging and inclusion: perceived lack of representation in the curriculum, needing to be in in-term employment for financial reasons, having care responsibilities, living away from campus (many Global Majority students are commuter students), as well as heightened sense of isolation due to perceived discrimination, lower self-efficacy, and lack of positive role-models⁸⁵.

Representation and role-modelling, including for the staff themselves, likely enhances Black and other Global Majority students' senses of belonging and persistence⁸⁶. And although research in the higher education context does appear to exist, teacher-student racial congruence (i.e., being taught by a teacher of the same ethnicity/race) has been shown to have up to a moderate effect on attainment in early and secondary education in the US (e.g., Penney, 2017)⁸⁷.

Curriculum inclusivity encompasses teaching, learning, and assessment, and boils down to ensuring quality of access and participation for all students in a university course (Morgan & Houghton, 2011)⁸⁸.

As part of the **Belonging and Mattering** (Activity 6) activity, our **Say My Name campaign**, **'Be Heard!' project**, and initiatives to create spaces for conversations, sharing of lived experiences, and celebration of achievement aim to enhance our Black students' sense of belonging to their course, teachers, and the university.

Similarly, the proposed **collaboration with external organisations and networks**, as part of the **'Line of Sight Project'** activity, will seek to provide Black students with role-models in the face of Black creative arts professionals.

The **Line-of-Sight Project** (Activity 7) extends tutoring, mentoring, role-modelling, networking, and peer support to include career planning and the development of employability skills.

⁸¹ Pedler, M. L., R. Willis & J. E. Nieuwoudt. 2022. A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46:3, 397-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1955844>

⁸² Ahn, M. Y. & H. Davis. 2023. Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(1), 136-149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1778664>

⁸³ Arshad-Snyder, S. 2017. The Role of Faculty Validation in Influencing Online Students' Intent to Persist. Dissertation/thesis. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC. search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED576756&site=ehost-live

⁸⁴ Hall, M. M., R.E. Worsham, & G. Reavis. 2021. 'The Effects of Offering Proactive Student-Success Coaching on Community College Students' Academic Performance and Persistence', *Community College Review*, 49 (2): 202-237. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0091552120982030>

⁸⁵ Seuwwou, P., N. Dodzo, Y. I. Osho, W. Ajaefobi & T. Ngwana. 2023. Exploring the Factors that Impact Ethnic Minority Students' Attainment at a British University. *Journal of Educational Research and Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1. https://pure.northampton.ac.uk/files/53108418/Seuwwou_et_al_2023_Exploring_the_Factors_that_Impact_Ethnic_Minority_Students_Attainment_at_a_British_University.pdf

⁸⁶ Karan S., B. Amreen, F. Begum & H. Bartlett. 2022. Bridging the BAME Attainment Gap: Student and Staff Perspectives on Tackling Academic Bias. *Frontiers in Education*, Vol.7. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/educ.2022.868349>

⁸⁷ Penney, J. 2017. Racial Interaction Effects and Student Achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 12 (4), pp. 447-467. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp_a_00202

⁸⁸ Morgan, H. & A-M., Houghton. 2011. Inclusive curriculum design in higher education. Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas. *Advance HE*. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-curriculum-design-higher-education>

Just as students may differ in the amount of cultural and social capital they have when they start university, so they will vary in the extent to which they bring and can valorise employability capital.

Disadvantaged students continue to have less positive employment outcomes than their more advantaged peers⁶³. There is evidence that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may have a more naïve or idealised view of the labour market or assume that their degree is sufficient^{89,90}.

McCafferty (2021)⁹¹ suggests that disadvantaged students often perceive the labour market as meritocratic, whilst more advantaged students see it as a game. The former students may also lack the 'hot' networks and contacts of their peers. In the broader context of employability and our aim to enhance the development of related skills in all our students, analysis of graduate destinations⁹² identifies the following key features of university experience that positively associate with higher career satisfaction and higher earning potential of UK graduates:

- Focus on the development of transferrable skills.
- Relevance of the curriculum for the graduate job.
- Relevance of degree, degree classification (grade), and the qualification for the graduate job.
- Relevant work experience during the degree.
- Whether the graduate job was obtained through the university.

The most important factor for career satisfaction appears to be whether graduates are confident they can perform effectively across a range of transferrable skills. Cohort tailored, needs based support with the development of employability skills has been recommended by graduates reflecting on their experience of employability skills development at university⁹³.

Our **Line-of-Sight Project** aims to identify needs and tailor support across most of the dimensions referenced above of effective development of skills for employability.

While there is no causal evidence that interventions aimed at teaching employability skills and related competencies affect graduate prospects⁹⁴, small-scale and anecdotal research suggests that a targeted (subject and industry specific) approach might be more effective than teaching generic employability skills. However, our approach will involve established practitioners from industry talking to, role-modelling, and coaching our students, which demonstrably result in positive outcomes including improved transition, sense of belonging, continuation, motivation, and self-efficacy⁹⁵.

⁸⁹ Burke, C., Scurry, T. & Blenkinsopp, J. 2020. Navigating the graduate labour market: the impact of social class on student understandings of graduate careers and the graduate labour market. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(8), 1711-1722. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1702014>

⁹⁰ Bathmaker, A-M. 2021. Constructing a graduate career future: Working with Bourdieu to understand transitions from university to employment for students from working-class backgrounds in England. *Eur J Educ.*, 56: 78– 92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12436>

⁹¹ McCafferty, H. 2022. An unjust balance: a systematic review of the employability perceptions of UK undergraduates from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 27:4, 570-593. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2022.2110774>

⁹² Percy, C. & K. Emms. 2020. Drivers of early career success for UK undergraduates: an analysis of graduate destinations surveys. Edge Foundation. https://www.edge.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/edge_hesa_analysis_report_web-1.pdf

⁹³ Scott, F. J. & D. Willison. 2021. Students' reflections on an employability skills provision, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45:8, pp. 1118-1133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1928025>

⁹⁴ TASO. 2023. Teaching employability skills (post-HE). <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/teaching-employability-skills-post-he/>

⁹⁵ Lunsford, L., G. Crisp, E. Dolan & B. Wuetherick. 2017. *Mentoring in Higher Education*. SAGE Publications Ltd, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Brad-Wuetherick/publication/316492391_Mentoring_in_Higher_Education/links/5900ec670f7e9bcf65465ff3/Mentoring-in-Higher-Education.pdf

Intervention Strategy 4.2: Accessibility and Support for Disabled Learners

This intervention strategy focuses on closing the continuation gap and awarding gap for students with disability.

The activities we include here have been informed by feedback from staff and students through our consultation around access and participation and a focus group on disability support and the inclusivity of in-class teaching and learning with teaching staff, as well as our discussion of how best to support students with disabilities with our Student Officers.

The access and participation consultations with staff around risks to equality of opportunity for Mental Health highlighted:

- The need to consider the physical environment at ICMP, think about what environment the decoration of the buildings provides, with the current dark grey areas affecting mood negatively, and increase the quiet spaces.
- The need to find ways to create a more open environment that gets students to engage with each other and talk more openly.
- That the lack of resources and demand on resources ensures only working with the most at-risk students. Early interventions are difficult, and the current NHS context of long waiting times exacerbates the issue.
- The need for more staffing and resources for the Wellbeing team, as well as a general consideration of how best to support staff wellbeing and those working in the most complex situations.
- The difficulty of community building for commuter students and students whose accommodation is away from the campus; It is more difficult for those students to spend time on site and engage with events and activities.
- The drop-off in student engagement in extra-curricular events during assessment periods, as well as the likely increase of support needs of students in those periods.
- The need to consider students' emotional development and emotional intelligence.
- Financial concerns students may have that can create more issues for them, including embarrassment and shame.
- The challenges brought about by our creative context – creating music/art can be an outlet but also a breeding ground for insecurity and a stressor.
- The need to consider the training and CPD needed for hourly paid lecturers (HPLs), including in the context of their possible disconnect from the students, which may affect the HPLs ability to empathise with the variety of students' needs and experience.

From the focus group discussions around disability support and inclusivity of teaching and learning in class we learnt that we need:

- More in-class support for SEN and non-native English speakers to help prevent students facing barriers to their learning.
- More training for tutors around how best to meet SEN needs, and a mechanism for informing the tutors of support agreements in place for individual students with additional needs.
- To improve the clarity of instructions for assessments.
- To increase our students' engagement with flexible assessment options.

The discussion around disability with the Student Officers revealed that:

- Some students may feel overlooked or unsupported around mental health.
- Our buildings may have inaccessible areas and spaces within it require consideration around access, visibility on stairs and stages, etc.

- The accessibility of slides and presentations can be improved, and that staff should be encouraged and trained accordingly.
- We need a systematic approach to accessibility reporting to help identify issues and have them fixed more efficiently.
- More resources and funding are needed for the Wellbeing team to meet demands for more accessibility related support by staff and students.
- The decor and colour schemes in the buildings could be re-considered towards less grey. Students have also commented on the NEON colouring of doors.
- Investing and displaying inclusive posters and flags around the buildings to emphasise the mission of ICMP may be useful.
- More community boards and a greater variety of posters on the TV screens (specifically about societies and events) would also be useful.
- Using social medias to share positive affirmations and support students mentally, like in the @classicalwellness on Instagram, could be of benefit.

How effective the curriculum is at providing equality of opportunity depends greatly on what teachers do. Their choices of teaching methods can substantially affect student outcomes⁹⁶. Inclusivity extends beyond the curriculum, to institutional policy, resources and funding, staff development, and leadership⁹⁷.

Widely used approaches to implementing, enhancing, and evaluating the inclusivity of curricula include models of inclusive pedagogy and universal design for learning⁹⁸, the inclusive curriculum framework⁹⁹, and the connected curriculum model¹⁰⁰.

Curriculum design approaches based on the above models have been developed with the express aim to increase inclusivity for certain student groups, e.g., Global Majority students and disabled students.

For example, the Inclusive Course Design Tool by Smith et al. (2021)¹⁰¹ seeks the make curricular changes aimed at reducing the BME attainment gap. Ditto the UCL's BME inclusive curriculum toolkit¹⁰², and the Advance HE guidance on inclusive curriculum design¹⁰³. Context, specifically of the academic subject, is important for understanding and effecting inclusion¹⁰⁴.

The Advance HE subject toolkits for inclusive curriculum design, like the 'Dance, Drama, and Music' toolkit (2011)¹⁰⁵, reflect just that and highlight matching of curricula to students, embedding

⁹⁶ Schneider, M., & Preckel, F. (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *Psychological bulletin*, 143(6), 565. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000098>

⁹⁷ Schuelka, M. 2018. Implementing inclusive education. Helpdesk Report. K4D.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6eb77340f0b647b214c599/374_Implementing_Inclusive_Education.pdf

⁹⁸ Sanger, C.S. 2020. Inclusive Pedagogy and Universal Design Approaches for Diverse Learning Environments. In: Sanger, C., Gleason, N. (eds) *Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1628-3_2

⁹⁹ McDuff, N., A. Hughes, J. Tatam, E. Morrow & F. Ross. 2020. Improving equality of opportunity in higher education through the adoption of an Inclusive Curriculum Framework. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Volume 22, Number 2, July 2020, pp. 83-121(39). <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.22.2.83>

¹⁰⁰ Fung, D. 2017. A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education. UCL Press. <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1558776/1/A-Connected-Curriculum-for-Higher-Education.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Smith, S., R. Pickford, R. Sellers & J. Priestley. 2021. Developing the Inclusive Course Design Tool: a tool to support staff reflection on their inclusive practice. *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*. ISSN 2044-0073 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21100/compass.v14i1.1115>

¹⁰² UCL. 2020. Creating an inclusive curriculum for BAME students. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2020/apr/creating-inclusive-curriculum-bame-students>

¹⁰³ Morgan, H. & A-M., Houghton. 2011. Inclusive curriculum design in higher education. Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas. *Advance HE*. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-curriculum-design-higher-education>

¹⁰⁴ Stentiford, L. & G. Koutsouris. 2022. Critically considering the 'inclusive curriculum' in higher education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 43:8, 1250-1272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2022.2122937>

¹⁰⁵ Advance HE. 2011. Inclusive curriculum design in higher education: DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC. Advance HE. https://www.yorks.ac.uk/media/content-assets/academic-development/documents/dance_drama_and_music.pdf

employability, and addressing issues of wellbeing as effective approaches to making curricula in these subjects more inclusive.

TASO's 2023 report 'What works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students'¹⁰⁶ highlights evidence of the positive impact of supporting disabled students to transition into HE.

We will therefore provide **Staff Training, Awareness, and Development Opportunities** (*Activity 1*) around embedding inclusivity into curricula, teaching practice, assessment, personal tutoring, and supervision.

The number of disabled students entering HE continues to increase, yet such students are still less likely to be awarded a first class or 2:1 degree compared to students without disabilities (OfS, 2021)¹⁰⁷. Students with disability, including those with mental health conditions, are also more likely to consider dropping out¹⁰⁸, although allocating targeted, disability-specific support increases continuation¹⁰⁹.

Hence, we have employed our **Specialist Staff and Wraparound Care and Wellbeing Initiatives** activities (*Activities 2 and 4*).

Factors that affect continuation and attainment of students with disability vis-à-vis the receipt of appropriate support include¹¹⁰:

- Provision of support as early as in the first semester/term of study has a positive effect on the continuation of students with disability.
- Hearing impairment students, regardless of provision of interpretative support, as well as students with ASD tend to have lower attainment; STEM subject students with disability have lower attainment and continuation rates (although, that seems to apply generally to STEM students, so may not be related to disability).

Global Majority students with disability may be less likely to do as well (and/or take up available support) as their White comparator group, so culturally responsive support and teaching may be necessary. Male students with disability are also less likely to take up support and may need more encouragement to do so.

Alongside other established forms of support (e.g., making 'reasonable adjustments') for students with disabilities, we will provide such students with **Supporting Study Pilots** (*Activity 3*), as part of a portfolio of recommendations in the Williams et al. (2019)¹¹¹ review of the support for disabled students in Higher Education in England.

¹⁰⁶ TASO. 2023. What Works to Reduce Equality Gaps for Disabled Students? <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/TASO-report-what-works-to-reduce-equality-gaps-for-disabled-students.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Office for Students. 2021. Annual report and accounts 2021-22. Pp.43-44. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1c5f4fef-0c93-45fd-ae21-51c8e9a04fd1/ofs-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-22.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ Office for Students. 2020. English higher education 2020: The Office for Students annual review: Supporting all students to succeed. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/annual-review-2020/supporting-all-students-to-succeed/>

¹⁰⁹ Newman, L. A., J.W. Madaus, A.R. Lalor & H.S. Javitz. 2019. Support Receipt: Effect on Postsecondary Success of Students With Learning Disabilities. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 42(1), 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143418811288>

¹¹⁰ Safer, A., L. Farmer & B. Song. 2020. Quantifying Difficulties of University Students with Disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, v33, n1, pp. 5-21. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1273641.pdf>

¹¹¹ Williams, M., E. Pollard & H. Takala. 2019. Review of Support for Disabled Students in Higher Education in England: Report to the Office for Students. the Institute for Employment Studies and Researching Equity, Access and Participation. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/a8152716-870b-47f2-8045-fc30e8e599e5/review-of-support-for-disabled-students-in-higher-education-in-england.pdf>

TASO's evidence toolkit on online teaching and learning¹¹² reveals that it can be at least as, if not more efficient than its in-person alternative, although evidence of effectiveness in terms of increased attainment is limited.

Randomised control trials in a statistics course taught both in-person and online did not establish that the students taking the online version of the course had any better attainment^{113,114,115}.

Specifically for students with disability, flexible learning via online taught modules appears to remove physical barriers for students with particular disabilities¹¹⁶, provides more time to complete assessments¹¹⁷, and more control over learning, scheduling, pacing, and course navigation¹¹⁸.

Finally, our **Disability Support Allowance (DSA) Engagement (Activity 5)** aims at promoting early engagement with the process and application for that allowance. Disability disclosure rates among university students have nearly doubled since 2011, reaching 15% in of all students in 2020-21. Nearly 30% of students disclosing disability define it as a mental health condition. More students with disability drop out from university than do those who are not disabled. Students who report a mental health condition are at the greatest risk of discontinuing studies.

In addition to the small (<1%) continuation gap, students with disability also experience an awarding gap (between 1 and 1.5%) and a graduate outcomes gap in terms of employment and earnings post-graduation (9% and 4%, respectively, compared to students without a disability) (Hubble & Bolton, 2021)¹¹⁹.

The number of disabled students claiming DSA has been on the increase since 2010-11, yet the average monthly payment has been decreasing, e.g., from £2,350 in 2010-11 to £1750 in 2016-17.

There is indication that DSA broadly meets the needs of students, which probably explains that most students (c.55%) receiving DSA are satisfied with it and think it meets all their need, vs. the c.28% who disagree. And despite the worse continuation and attainment outcomes compared to non-disabled students, receipt of DSA in combination with good support during HE studies appears to enhance the experience and confidence of disabled students in their ability to complete and pass a degree course. Still, many eligible students do not know of the existence of the funding support; in fact, only about 40% of such students have heard of DSA before entering university. Our DSA-related activity specifically targets the increase of applying for DSA by students declaring a disability.

¹¹² TASO. 2023. Online teaching and learning (post-entry). <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/online-teaching-and-learning-post-entry/>

¹¹³ Bowen, W. G., M. M. Chingos, K. A. Lack & T. Nygren. 2014. Interactive learning online at public universities: Evidence from a six-campus randomized trial. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 33(1), 94-111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21728>

¹¹⁴ Lovett, M., O. Meyer & C. Thille. 2008. The Open Learning Initiative: Measuring the Effectiveness of the OLI Statistics Course in Accelerating Student Learning. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ840810>

¹¹⁵ Schunn, C. D. M. & Patchan. 2009. An evaluation of accelerated learning in the CMU Open Learning Initiative course Logic & Proofs. Report, Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh. http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/projects/apros/overview/documents/landp_report.pdf

¹¹⁶ Policar, L., T. Crawford & V. Alligood. 2017. Accessibility Benefits of E-Learning for Students with Disabilities. *Disabled World*. www.disabled-world.com/disability/education/postsecondary/e-learning.php

¹¹⁷ Verdinelli, S., & D. Kutner. 2016. Persistence factors among online graduate students with disabilities. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 9(4), 353–368. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039791>

¹¹⁸ Djenana, J. 2016. Post-secondary students with disabilities and digital learning: What do we know about their lived experiences? Conference: E-Learn: World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education 2016At: Washington, DCVolume: Proceedings of E-Learn: World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education 2016, pp. 997-1001. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Djenana-Jalovcic/publication/311664912_Post-secondary_students_with_disabilities_and_digital_learning_What_do_we_know_about_their_lived_experiences/links/5852c3a208ae7d33e01aaed0/Post-secondary-students-with-disabilities-and-digital-learning-What-do-we-know-about-their-lived-experiences.pdf

¹¹⁹ Hubble, S. & P. Bolton. 2021. Support for disabled students in higher education in England. Briefing Paper. House of Commons

Intervention Strategy 4.3: Targeted Transition and Financial Support for the most Disadvantaged students.

This intervention strategy focuses on closing the continuation gap for the most disadvantaged students (IMD Quintiles 1 and 2) through interventions aimed at increasing inclusion, sense of belonging, and financial support.

We plan several interconnected activities within this strategy, from orientation, study support and soft skills development for offer holders prior to commencement of study (**Offer Holder/New Student Programme, Activity 1**) and targeted support for first-generation students (**First in Family Network, Activity 4** and **First in Family Named Staff Contact, Activity 5**) to **Financial Support (Activity 2)** and **Cost of Living Response (Activity 3)**.

These activities have been informed by the feedback we collected from our staff and Student Officer around access and participation, equality of opportunity, and cost of living support.

From the discussion with our Student Officers around access and participation, and specifically cost of living and finances, we learnt that:

- While key costs to our students beyond the cost of tuition are well known and include rent and transport, there remain many smaller hidden, daily costs that we need to factor into our financial support packages. For example, while our meal deal on campus is subsidised, it still costs a lot and may be inaccessible for some students. We have provided microwaves for students in designated spaces, but perhaps need to work on developing a culture for using them more. We could also do more to support students with planning their day-to-day costs on food, including e.g., reheating meals, and preparing meals that can be reheated, as well as creating more of a community with respect to food.

Our consultations with staff around risks to equality of opportunity and the cost of living revealed that:

- Lack of attendance on campus diminishes students' sense of belonging, and that especially impacts on commuter students and those who are financially restricted to come to campus outside of their timetabled teaching.
- Most student withdrawals appear to link to cost pressures and that applications for additional financial support have increased.
- We need to consider including equipment support for students who might suffer from digital poverty.
- Travel is a large financial barrier for ICMP students currently and we could explore the experience of HE providers that support their students, so they do not have to pay for travel.
- There is a conflict between work schedules and timetables.
- Lack of resourcing of the provision of student support likely means that our students may decide not to reach out.
- Loans are not enough to cover cost of living, given the increasing gap between the size of loans and that of the cost of living, with the difference currently being made up through financial support from the students' families if they can afford it.
- We need to think of ways to enhance social spaces, community building, and a sense of a magnetic campus to encourage our students to choose to stay and do more things on site and be supported with e.g., free food, etc.

Research into the effectiveness of pre-enrolment orientation and induction programmes like our proposed **Offer Holder/New Student Programme**, (*Activity 1*), has produced inconclusive results. Some studies report positive effects on retention and success in the first year and beyond¹²⁰, while others find insignificant uplifts of <1% marks in attainment during the first year at university¹²¹. A more recent study establishes that such programmes can boost the generation of self-advocacy skills and peer capital by first-generation, low-income students in the US¹²².

There is sufficient evidence of the impact of **Financial Support**, (*Activity 2*), (grants, bursaries, scholarships, and fee-waivers), on student recipients, although that evidence relates mainly to impact on retention and completion in HE. Evidence of impact on attainment and degree outcomes is less strong¹²³. Financial support tends to be seen as mechanism for supporting students' continuation and progression¹²⁴. Given that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to discontinue their studies than their wealthier peers¹²⁵, appropriate allocation of financial support can effectively close the continuation gap¹²⁶.

Harrison et al. (2018)¹²⁷ point to a range of positive impacts that students derive from the receipt of financial support, including capacity building around the ability to focus on their studies, having a social life, building a social network, and developing self-esteem. Financial support can also have positive affective impact, i.e., increase the recipient student's sense of belonging¹²⁸ and 'mattering'¹²⁹.

Elsewhere, in Hordósy et al. (2018)¹³⁰, the suggestion is that financial support can reduce a student's need to take on term time part time work.

Means-based financial support that meets students' previously unmet needs consistently improves completion rates of disadvantaged students¹³¹. Bursaries in particular are claimed to have such an effect on continuation^{132, 133}. The impact of merit-based financial support like scholarships is less straightforward. Some research,¹²⁶ suggests it only rarely improves outcomes for disadvantaged

¹²⁰ Gorard, S. 2006. Review of widening participation research: addressing the barriers to participation in higher education. A report to HEFCE by the University of York, Higher Education Academy and Institute for Access Studies. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6204/1/barriers.pdf>

¹²¹ Perrine, R. M. & J. W. Spain. 2008. Impact of a Pre-Semester College Orientation Program: Hidden Benefits? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 10(2), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.10.2.c>

¹²² Beard, L.M., K. Schilt & P. Jagoda. 2023. Divergent Pathways: How Pre-Orientation Programs Can Shape the Transition to College for First-Generation, Low-Income Students1. *Social Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12923>

¹²³ TASO. 2023. Financial support (post-entry). <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/financial-support-post-entry/>

¹²⁴ Nursaw Associates. 2015. What do we know about the impact of financial support on access and student success? OFFA. <http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/382381>

¹²⁵ Vignoles, A. & Powdthavee, N. 2009. The Socioeconomic Gap in University Dropouts. *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9, issue 1, p. 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-1682.2051>

¹²⁶ OfS. 2020. Understanding the impact of the financial support evaluation toolkit: Analysis and findings.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/474c9580-e99a-4d24-a490-3474e85ae199/financial-support-evaluation-report-2016-17-2017-18.pdf>

¹²⁷ Harrison, N., S. Davies, R. Harris & R. Waller. 2018. Access, participation and capabilities: theorising the contribution of university bursaries to students' wellbeing, flourishing and success. *Cambridge Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2017.1401586>

¹²⁸ Thomas, L. 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme Summary Report. Paul Hamlyn Foundation. <https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Works-Summary-report.pdf>

¹²⁹ Clark, T., & R. Hordósy, 2019. Social Identification, Widening Participation and Higher Education: Experiencing Similarity and Difference in an English Red Brick University. *Sociological Research Online*, 24(3), 353–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780418811971>

¹³⁰ Hordosy, R., T. Clark & D. Vickers. 2018. Lower income students and the 'double deficit' of part-time work: Undergraduate experiences of finance, studying, and employability. *Journal of Education and Work* 31(4):1-13. DOI:10.1080/13639080.2018.1498068

¹³¹ Herbaut, E. & K. M. Geven. 2019. What Works to Reduce Inequalities in Higher Education? A Systematic Review of the (Quasi)Experimental Literature on Outreach and Financial Aid Policy Research Working Papers. <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-8802>

¹³² Murphy, R. & G. Wyness. 2015. Testing Means-Tested Aid. CEP Discussion Paper No 1396, Centre for Economic Performance. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/35438856.pdf>

¹³³ Harrison, N. & R. Waller. 2017. Success and Impact in Widening Participation Policy: What Works and How Do We Know? *Higher Education Policy* 30(2):141-160. DOI:10.1057/s41307-016-0020-x

students while other research¹³⁴, claims the opposite - that it does improve retention, particularly of students from households with low- to medium income.

Moore and Burgess (2023)¹³⁴ stress that if continuation is the goal, then scholarships should be means-based only, i.e., given to those who most need the financial support. They point out also that students eligible for means-based support sometimes do not receive it because their household income has not been officially assessed (meaning they miss out also on a maintenance grant) and/or because they find it very difficult to navigate the bursary system. The consequence for such students is an increased likelihood of dropping out. This heightened probability of dropping out in the absence of appropriate support highlights the 'need for a consistent method to identify those groups of students who are most vulnerable to being under-represented in HE before provision of financial support can be effective'¹³⁵.

However, it is important to remember that financial support on its own does not remove non-financial barriers to participation and success in higher education, and that other types of support for target groups of students would also be required¹³⁵.

Our **Cost of Living Response** activity (*Activity 3*), is based on recently reported practice in the literature around means of support other than financial support that universities can and have been providing their students^{136,137}. Those include:

- Providing free and subsidised meals and hot drinks on campus.
- Opening food banks.
- Providing cooking and refrigeration utilities to enable students to cook on campus.
- Distributing food vouchers.
- Providing warm spaces on campus.
- Providing adapted spaces for bringing children by student parents and carers.
- Providing bus passes or free campus transport, etc.

These initiatives respond to reported statistics over the last two years that 9 in 10 HE students have experienced a rise in their cost of living, more than 9 in 10 are worried or very worried about that, nearly 50% of students nationally feel they are in a financial difficulty, 60% of students in receipt of a student loan think it is insufficient to cover their cost of living, 30% have taken on more debt, and nearly 80% are worried about the impact of the financial squeeze on their learning¹³⁸.

A particular target group of students, first-generation-at-university, intersects across our previously discussed target groups (Black and global majority students, and disabled student) and is subject to the last two activities we have included in this Strategy: **First in Family Network** (*Activity 4*), and **First in Family Named Staff Contact** (*Activity 5*).

¹³⁴ Moore, E. & A P. Burgess. 2023. Financial support differentially aids retention of students from households with lower incomes: a UK case study, *Studies in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2125950>

¹³⁵ Kaye, N. 2021. Evaluating the role of bursaries in widening participation in higher education: a review of the literature and evidence, *Educational Review*, 73:6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1787954>

¹³⁶ OfS. 2023. Studying during rises in the cost of living. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6981/insight-brief-17-studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living.pdf>

¹³⁷ Morgan, M. 2022. How can universities support students through the cost of living crisis? WonkHE. <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/how-can-universities-support-students-through-the-cost-of-living-crisis/>

¹³⁸ Johnston, C. & A. Westwood. 2023. Cost of living and higher education students, England: 30 January to 13 February 2023. Office for National Statistics. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/costoflivingandhighereducationstudentsengland/30januaryto13february2023>

First-generation university students – often of immigrant background and belonging to one or more recognisable disadvantaged groups – are more likely than their peers to experience challenges during transitioning into HE. These students appear also less confident about their readiness for HE¹³⁹. In terms of outcomes, first-generation university students may have lower academic engagement and retention¹⁴⁰, as well as lower ratings of belonging, lower levels of using support services, and higher levels of depression and stress¹⁴¹.

To mitigate for such possible outcomes, we have selected interventions (*Activities 4 and 5*) that reflect policy recommendations from best practice internationally¹⁴², including:

- Assigning a mentor or a buddy-peer from the older student cohorts to first-generation university students in Year 1, in order to facilitate networking and peer-support, as well as generate social- and peer-capital,
- Providing all first-generation university students with a regular point of contact from among the academic staff – could be the assigned personal tutor, with regular meetings,
- Prioritise the allocation of university accommodation to such students, and generally students who are most at risk of non-completion, unless they are commuter students, in which case consider how best to accommodate them in the timetabling of teaching and scheduling of events on campus.

¹³⁹ Coombs, H. 2022. First-in-Family Students. HEPI. <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf>

¹⁴⁰ Soria, K. M. & M. J. Stebleton. 2012. First-generation students' academic engagement and retention, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17:6, pp. 673-685. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2012.666735>

¹⁴¹ Stebleton, M.J., SK. M. Soria & R. L. Huesman, Jr. 2014). First-Generation Students' Sense of Belonging, Mental Health, and Use of Counseling Services at Public Research Universities. *Journal of College Counseling*, 17, pp. 6-20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2014.00044.x>

¹⁴² Coombs, H. 2022. First-in-Family Students. HEPI. <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf>

Annex C: Targets, investment and fees