UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University of Leeds

Access and student success strategy 2025: Implementation roadmap

1 Implementation framework

The Access and Student Success Strategy brings together activity across the whole university for the next five years and provides an access and student success lens. Some of the initiatives are relevant to areas beyond student engagement such as sustainability and equality and inclusion, but all have an impact on access and success at Leeds. As such, the strategic alignment of this work with other areas will be crucial.

The ownership of the strategy by different areas means that much of the implementation can take place simultaneously, and much of the work is already underway. However, the burden on faculties and schools, who will be responsible for embedding many of the initiatives is a potential key risk to implementation and one that needs careful management.

The next sections outline the key principles for implementation; the timeline for implementation; governance and accountability to support the strategy; strategic risks and key stakeholders to engage.

1.1 Structured approach with clear principles

Leeds should adopt a 'systems approach' to the strategy implementation, which recognises the impact the different initiatives will have on one another. It must also be staged in a way that recognises the dependencies between different initiatives. For example, there are dependencies between effective learning analytics and personal tutoring. Where relevant, initiatives should not exist in isolation or compete for resources, but rather feel they are all working together towards a mutual goal. Crucially the implementation should also be cognisant of the fact that different parts of the university are engaged in different aspects of the strategy implementation, some of which is already underway.

Five design principles should underpin successful implementation. The principles recognise the scale of the task at hand and the need for effective joined-up approaches. These are:

1. Clarity and accountability. Implementing this strategy will require effort from staff across the university, not just those involved in Educational Engagement and the Lifelong Learning Centre. To make real progress, there must be clear lines of accountability so that staff understand their responsibilities and this agenda remains a focus in light of various priorities.
2. Support and enable those that are accountable to deliver. In relation to the above, staff responsible for the success of this strategy will face competing priorities and the university must provide the appropriate support by considering the staging of initiatives and the culture and training to successfully affect change.
3. Build empathy and awareness. While implementing the strategy, listening to the challenges facing students and staff will be crucial for overcoming barriers and allowing continuous improvement.
4. Bring stakeholders (staff and students) along. As this is a university-wide endeavour, successful communication and stakeholder engagement will be crucial. Those responsible for driving the strategy must be clear on the input required from different stakeholders to deliver, including students.
5. Use data to better inform progress. A key enabler for the strategy is effective evaluation underpinned by the student voice. Throughout the five years, continually reviewing and improving initiatives through the effective use of data will be key.

Strong project management through governance, risk management and stakeholder engagement will be fundamental to the delivery of the initiatives outlined above. The next section provides further details in relation to these areas.

1.2 Clear project governance

Successful implementation will rely in part on clear project governance and lines of accountability for decision-making. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the governance structure surrounding the strategy, including the relevant boards, committees and groups and lines of reporting. Table 1 provides further details of the roles and responsibilities of each group.

Figure 1 | Governance structure

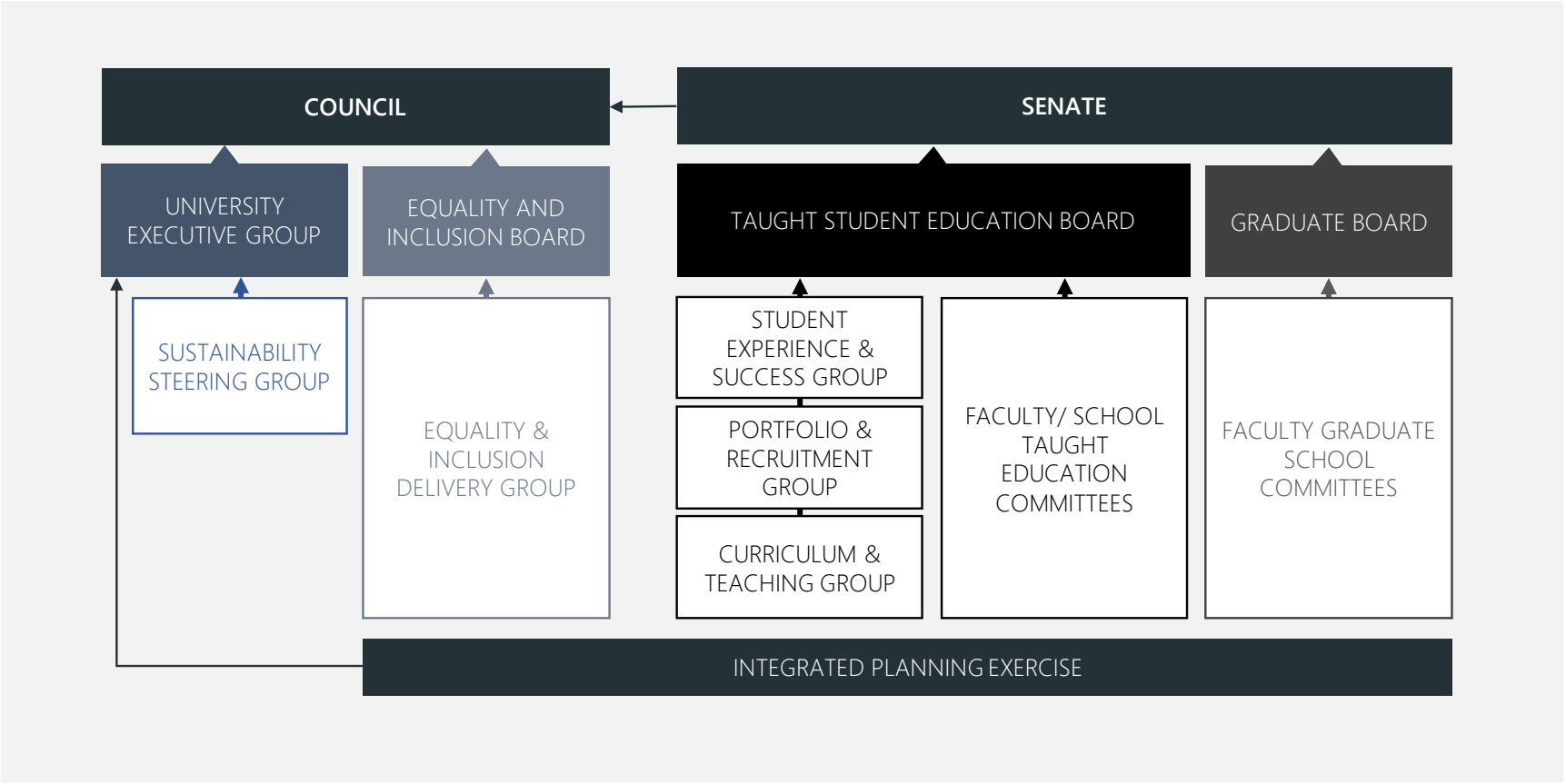


Table 1 | Governance structures and responsibilities

Governance body	Chair	Role and responsibility
University Executive Group	Vice-Chancellor	• Set the strategic context and environment within the culture and behavioural change is enabled • Commit to supporting appropriate resourcing and funding where appropriate • Oversight of integrated planning exercise (IPE)
Taught Student Education Board (TSEB)	DVC Student Education	• Ultimate responsibility for strategy delivery • Sign-off initiatives • Sign-off budgets (where appropriate escalating to UEG)
Graduate Board	Dean of the Leeds Doctoral College	• Responsible for graduate research initiatives • Sign-off relevant initiatives and related budgets (where appropriate escalating to DVC R&I and UEG)
Equality and Inclusion Board	Vice-Chancellor	• Responsible for setting institutional E&I priorities • Receive assurance on E&I issues on behalf of Council • Liaise with UEG to support appropriate resourcing and funding
Curriculum and Teaching Steering Group	Laura Treadgold, Pro-Dean (Student Education)	• Review curriculum and teaching policies as they relate to access and student success including decolonisation • Keep TSEB abreast of any issues arising from strategy implementation
Learning Analytics Steering Group	DVC Digital Transformation	• Responsible and accountable for providing curriculum analytics insights
Recruitment Committee	Kenny McDowell, Pro-Dean (Student Education)	• Review outreach and admissions policies and procedures resulting from the strategy and coordinate a university-wide approach • Keep TSEB abreast of any issues arising from strategy implementation
Student Experience and Success Steering Group	Anne Tallontire Pro-Dean (Student Education)	• Review policies and procedures resulting from the strategy and coordinate a university-wide approach • Keep TSEB abreast of any issues arising from strategy implementation
Faculty Taught Student Education Committees	Heads of Faculties	• Implement policies and procedures at faculty-level
School Taught Education Committees	Heads of Schools	• Responsible for implementing school-level targets around access and student success
Faculty Graduate School Committees	Heads of Faculty Graduate schools	• Implement policies and procedures at Faculty Graduate School level
Sustainability steering group	Member of University Executive Group	• Review sustainability policies and procedures, including those that support this strategy, e.g. progress towards the UN sustainable development goals

1.3 Active risk management

The University of Leeds will need to take an active risk management approach to deliver the strategy. Some of the risks relate to uncertainties resulting from the pandemic, including funding, institutional priorities, student pipeline, student experience and opportunities to progress. The list of key risks in Table 2 were developed in a workshop with the strategy taskforce.

Table 2 | Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Financial			
Budget is not available to implement the strategy	Medium	High	• UEG discuss and allocate sufficient budget from the outset and continually review
Projects exceed budget, e.g. learning analytics, CRM	Low	Medium	• Careful (and realistic) budgeting of all projects prior to and during Horizon 1 • Rigorous project management including management of budgets
Operational			
COVID impacts on the student pipeline, student experience and student progression opportunities	High	Medium	• Engage closely with schools and colleges through sustained outreach, including attainment raising initiatives • Invest in resources to support online engagement with students and draw on sector best practice • Engage with employers to understand their changing needs • Consider new innovations, e.g. offering micro-credentials to meet mutual employer and student needs
Cultural & leadership			
Competing priorities mean focus on this agenda is limited, e.g. global ambitions, COVID	Medium	Medium	• Consider the priorities of this programme alongside other priorities to establish mutual opportunities • Awareness of and communication of priorities
Staff have insufficient time to implement the various initiatives	Medium	Medium	• Stage initiatives over three horizons • Provide support to managers and practitioners to implement the initiatives
Limited accountability results in disengagement with initiatives	Medium	High	• Update integrated planning exercise (IPE) and school annual reviews (SAR) to include access and student success targets
Insufficient whole provider approach to deliver the strategy	Medium	Medium	• Careful communication plan and guidance to ensure all departments are engaged with the process • Formal governance structures and working processes designed with key teams, e.g. human resources, equality and inclusion, employability etc.

Students unhappy with initiatives, e.g. learning analytics and data	Low	High	• Close partnership working with LUU to socialise and test initiatives with the student body
Strategy misaligned with new Vice-Chancellor priorities	Medium	Medium	• Brief the incoming VC at the earliest appropriate opportunity and seek endorsement

1.4 Careful stakeholder engagement

Successful implementation will rely on engagement and buy-in from staff and students across the whole university as well as external partners. Table 3 highlights the key stakeholder groups and the key goals and methods for engagement.

Table 3 | Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder group	Key goals	Methods
Internal		
Undergraduate and postgraduate (PGT/PGR) students	• Co-design and evaluate approaches • Ensure they are aware of opportunities available to them	• Engage in strategy launch • Strong partnership approach with LUU • Student representation in governance structures • Marketing of opportunities
Academic leaders (e.g. Pro-Deans; Heads of Schools)	• Ensure awareness of strategy aims and priorities • Incentivise successful strategy delivery through clearly communicated lines of accountability • Co-design and evaluate approaches • Support them to deliver the strategy	• Socialise through governance structures • Engage in strategy launch • Clearly communicate responsibilities through target setting process, IPE and SAR • Deliver relevant training
Other academic staff	• Ensure awareness of strategy aims and priorities • Incentivise successful strategy delivery through rewarding work in this area	• Engage in strategy launch • Clearly communicate responsibilities through target setting process, IPE and SAR • Deliver relevant training
Professional services managers	• Ensure awareness of strategy aims and priorities • Incentivise successful strategy delivery through clearly communicated lines of accountability • Co-design and evaluate approaches • Support them to deliver the strategy	• Socialise through governance structures • Engage in strategy launch • Clearly communicate responsibilities through target setting process, IPE and SAR • Deliver relevant training
Professional services staff	• Ensure awareness of strategy aims and priorities • Incentivise successful strategy delivery through rewarding work in this area	• Engage in strategy launch • Clearly communicate responsibilities through target setting process, IPE and SAR • Deliver relevant training

External		
Schools and colleges	• Understand changing needs of schools and colleges, particularly in light of COVID • Raise awareness of sustained outreach opportunities with current partners • Develop new relationships with local schools and colleges	• Consult with current partners through existing relationships to understand changing needs • Co-design approaches to sustained engagements with current and new partners • Consult with prospective students to understand changing needs
Community organisations	• Raise awareness and engage in sustained outreach • Foster and develop links to support employability opportunities for mutual benefit	• Initiate meetings with new partners and communicate the strategy goals
Employers	• Communicate mutually beneficial opportunities • Understand changing needs in relation to progression activities, particularly in light of COVID	• Consult with employers (existing and new partnerships and including PGR-industry) to understand changing needs and opportunities for students and graduates • Co-develop placement, internship and other opportunities
Other external organisations including PSRBs	• Engage with specific relevant areas to support strategy delivery	• Arrange initial meetings to discuss needs and maintain regular contact

1.5 Measuring success

Measurable targets will be fundamental to understanding the success of the strategy. Leeds set targets across access and student success as well as enablers. The measures include those laid out in the access and participation plan to 2025, as well as stretching undergraduate targets to 2030. In addition, postgraduate access and success targets have been set. Measuring progress against the enablers will also be important. Table 4 provides the measures of success along with a description of how they will be measured.

Table 4 | Success measures

Target	Measured by…
Access	
Reduce the gap in access between POLAR Quintile (Q)1 and Q5 UG students from a ratio of 5.5 in 2017/18 to 3.5 by 2025	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Work with the Dean of the Doctoral College and Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation to agree targets for access and progression at postgraduate research level	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Student success	
Reduce the awarding gap to 5.5% for UG BAME students by 2025 and eliminate by 2030	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Reduce the awarding gap to 6.8% for UG mature students by 2025 and eliminate by 2030	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board

Reduce the gap in non-continuation for UG mature students to 4.4% in 2025 and eliminate by 2030	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Reduce the gap in non-continuation for UG POLAR Q1 students to 1.5% in 2025 and eliminate by 2030	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Reduce the gap in non-continuation for PGT BAME students to 2.5% in 2025 and eliminate by 2035	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Reduce the awarding gap for PGT BAME students to 6.5% in 2025 and eliminate by 2030	Student data reviewed annually by TSEB and the Graduate Board
Our students feel they matter to the university	Evaluation framework and student engagement
Enablers	
We will increase the proportion of professors from BAME backgrounds in-line with the sector average to 10%	Staff data monitored by EPU and E&I board
We will increase the proportion of female professors from BAME backgrounds in-line with the sector average to 2.3%	Staff data monitored by EPU and E&I board
A mature data environment is set-up and running effectively	Learning analytics and CRM in operation and used effectively across the university widely
The student voice is embedded in all our evaluative processes across the university	Review of use of evaluation framework and student engagement

2 Implementation roadmap

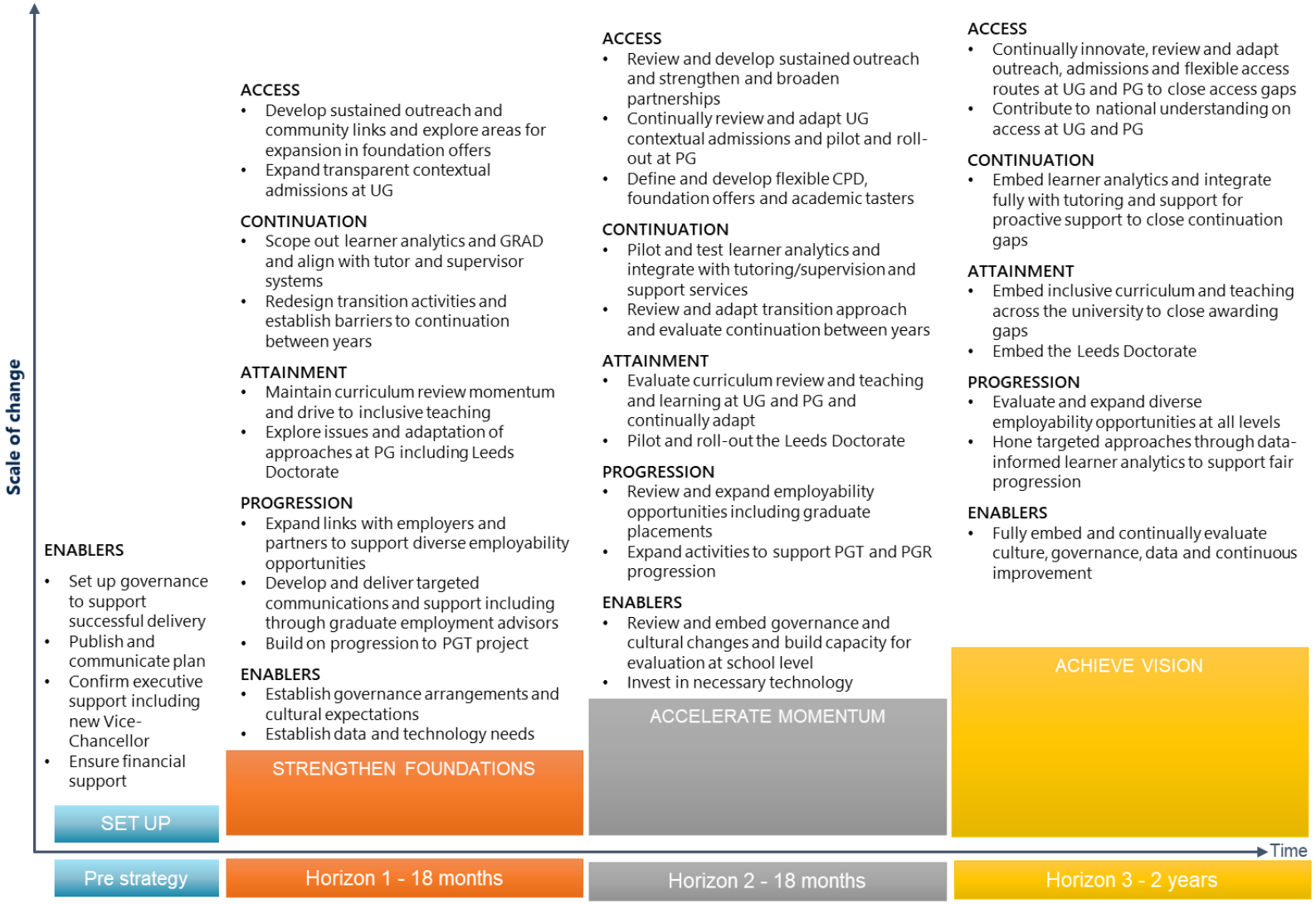
The ownership of the strategy across the university means that teams can work simultaneously in a joined-up way to deliver the various strands. However, a lot of the delivery lies with the Educational Engagement team alongside academic staff in faculties. it is therefore important to take a staged approach where necessary and to be cognisant of dependencies. This section plots the strategy implementation roadmap over three horizons, highlighting dependencies where they exist, and has been designed with input from the strategy steering group.

2.1 Access and Student Success initiatives overview across Horizons 1-3

The University of Leeds should take a staged approach to successfully deliver the strategy. **Horizon 1** will focus on establishing the key enablers such as governance processes, progressing the initiatives that are already planned and underway for the next 18 months and establishing the foundations for those that are new. In **Horizon 2** the focus will be on firmly embedding initiatives, focus on developing those with a longer lead-in time and reviewing progress. In **Horizon 3**, the aim will be to test the progress being made and plan for future change. The university should review progress against the three horizons as part of the annual planning process to ensure the activity is on track and readjust as necessary.

Figure 2 below provides a high-level overview of the activity in each horizon. It includes a pre-launch phase which will involve establishing the necessary governance arrangements to support successful delivery. The activity is then broken down by pillar in more detail below.

Figure 2 | Three horizons overview



2.1.1 Detailed breakdown of activities over three horizons

The tables below break down the activities associated with each priority for each of the pillars in turn.

Table 5 | Access over three horizons

PRIORITY	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
1A	Sustained and evidence-based outreach interventions	Educational Engagement/ LLC	Build interventions	Review and enhance	Review, enhance and scale
1B	Links with Leeds' communities	Sustainability/ Educational Engagement/ LLC	Strengthen existing connections and identify new ones	Develop and strengthen new community links	Review and assess any gaps
1C	Innovate and test new outreach initiatives	Educational Engagement/ LLC	Continually innovate and review approaches	Continually innovate and review approaches	Continually innovate and review approaches
2A	Transparent contextual UG admissions	Educational Engagement/ LLC	Clear messaging and communications around contextual offer opportunities for LPN students	Continue to refine UG contextual admissions models	Continue to refine UG contextual admissions models
2B	Contextual admissions at PGT and PGR	Pro-Deans (Student Education) Admissions/Graduate College/ TSEB/ Graduate Board	Engage staff, understand issues and develop the process	Pilot, evaluate and scale-up	Roll out and embed
2C	Contribution to sector-wide knowledge base on PG access (Dependency: 2B)	Educational Engagement/ TSEB/ Graduate Board	Continue work with NEON access group	Share learning on PG contextual admissions	Continue to share, learn and promote
3A	Expand foundation programmes	Lifelong Learning Centre	Establish growth areas	Develop new offers	Review and refine

PRIORITY	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
3B	Academic tasters	Lifelong Learning Centre		Define and develop	Provide free online courses
3C	Flexible delivery	Lifelong Learning Centre		Define and develop CPD and lifelong learning offer	Review and refine

Table 6 | Continuation over three horizons

PRIORITY	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
4A	Learning analytics (Dependency: 2B)	Digital Education Service/ Doctoral College Operations/ Student Experience and Success Steering Group/ TSEB;Graduate Board	Lay the foundations for learning analytics (data, system, training for staff and personal tutors etc.) and consider use of GRAD to support the process at PGR. Establish the processes and cultures that will enable successful implementation.	Pilot and test learning analytics in key areas and fully integrate with personal tutoring system	Roll out learning analytics across the whole institution
5A	Expand the Plus Programme	Educational Engagement	Expand the capacity of the Plus Programme to incorporate more LPN students	Continually review the programme	Continually review the programme
5B	Advance personal tutoring and graduate research supervision (Dependency: 1A)	Simon Lightfoot, Pro-Dean (Student Education)/ TSEB Graduate Board / Graduate School Champion	Review tutoring and supervision in line with best practice across the university and consider learning analytics integration	Integrate personal tutoring with learning analytics	Continually refine
5C	Enhance mental health and wellbeing support	Chris Warrington, Student Education Service		Review and update support services	Review changes and adapt services
6A	Redesign inductions for students from under-represented groups	Anne Tallontire, Pro-Dean (Student Education)/ TSEB Graduate Board	Review and redesign inductions and transition processes	Continue to refine processes	Continue to refine processes
6B	Remove barriers to continuation between years	Secretariat/ Assessment Strategy Group/ Faculties/ SES	Establish barriers through reviewing impact of re-sits removal and exploring standards interpretations	Remove unnecessary barriers identified	Remove unnecessary barriers identified
6C	Engage early with PGT students with online modules	Matt Dollery, Educational Engagement; SKills@Library	Refine and develop online modules for new PGT students	Continually refine	Continually refine

Table 7 | Attainment over three horizons

PILLAR	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
7A	Holistic review of the Leeds Curriculum	Nina Wardleworth and Jenny Brady, LITE/ Curriculum and Teaching Steering Group	Continue to review the curriculum with expanded scope	Review progress on inclusive teaching and learning through SALIPs	Review progress on inclusive teaching and learning through SALIPs
8A	Design an inclusive and accessible pedagogical delivery model	Nina Wardleworth and Jenny Brady, LITE/ Curriculum and Teaching Steering Group	Embed new inclusive curricula across the institution alongside updated pedagogical delivery model informed by LITE and OD&PL	Review progress on inclusive teaching and learning through SALIPs	Review progress on inclusive teaching and learning through SALIPs
9A	Review data, design change and embed changes to address PG awarding gaps	Educational Engagement, Pro-Deans (Student Education) and Graduate College/ Student Experience and Success Steering Group	Review data and understand PG awarding gaps issues	Design and embed PG awarding gaps initiatives	Design and embed PG awarding gaps initiatives
9B	Develop a Leeds Doctorate	Dean of the Doctoral College/ R&I/ Graduate Board	Design the Leeds Doctorate	Pilot and roll out	Review and adapt

Table 8 | Progression over three horizons

PILLAR	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
10A	Communications plan to target students with progression opportunities	Jane Campbell, Careers	Develop and implement	Review and adapt as necessary	Review and adapt as necessary
10B	Targeted work with graduates	Jane Campbell, Careers	Continue to build evidence base	Refine and expand work	Refine and expand work
10C	Build programme of graduates delivering progression support	Jane Campbell, Careers	Develop Employability Progress Adviser programme	Review and expand	Review and expand
11A	Expand flexible employability opportunities with broad-ranging partners	Jane Campbell, Careers/ TSEB Graduate Board	Strengthen existing connects	Establish new relationships and establish opportunities	Review and expand
11B	Develop graduate placements	Jane Campbell, Careers	Scope out and pilot	Review and scale-up	Continually review
11C	Expand mentoring schemes	Jane Campbell, Careers	Identify additional student groups for targeted mentoring	Continually grow alumni and employer mentor networks	Review and refine
12A	Develop progression to PGT project activities, targeting and supporting progression for target groups	Matt Dollery, Educational Engagement	Refine activity based on evaluation findings	Scale up approach where appropriate	Review and refine

Table 9 | Enablers over three horizons

PILLAR	INITIATIVE	OWNER	H1 (18 MONTHS)	H2 (18 MONTHS)	H3 (2 YEARS)
13A	Diversify workforce	Human Resources/ EPU/ E&I board	Set the strategy and review hiring processes	Embed new processes	Review and adapt
13B	Clear and consistent messages through leadership team	University Executive Group	Socialise with new VC and UEG and align with other priorities	Maintain focus at UEG	Maintain focus at UEG
13C	Recruitment and promotion criteria to incentivise focus on student success agenda	DVC Student Education/ HR/ Educational Engagement/ Faculties	Establish criteria and roll out	Review effectiveness and any unintended consequences	Adapt and refine
13D	Staff training (including those relating to Vitae research concordat)	OD&PL/ Human Resources/ PGR Directors/ Faculties/ Graduate Schools/ TSEB/ Graduate Board/ E&I	Scope out training needs to deliver strategy and pilot	Roll-out across the university	Continue to refine
14A	Strong and clear governance	QA/ Educational Engagement	Establish governance arrangements, including with linked strategic areas (pre-launch) and embed	Evaluate and adapt governance processes as the strategy evolves	Evaluate and adapt governance processes as the strategy evolves
14B	Embed targets into integrated planning exercise and School Annual Reviews	Paul Taylor, Nina Wardleworth, QA/ Dean of the Doctoral College/ UEG/ TSEB/ Graduate Board	Set targets and integrate into relevant processes	Evaluate impact of exercise and measures of success	Evaluate impact of exercise and measures of success

15A	Embrace new technology and address data deficiencies to support learning analytics, CRM system and digital learning	Alistair Knock, S&P; RIchard Kemp, Educational Engagement/ Doctoral College Operations/ TSEB/ Graduate Board	Scope the requirements, invest in systems and resolve underpinning data deficiencies	Roll out systems, join-up systems and evaluate investments	Embrace systems and digital learning across the university
16A	Student voice	Jenny Lyon, QA/ Leeds University Union/ Educational Engagement/ S&P	Review and refresh the LUU partnership with new leadership and ensure effective representation in relevant governance processes	Continually review and enhance partnership and governance	Continually review and enhance partnership and governance
16B	Evaluation framework	Matt Dollery, Educational Engagement	Continue to embed evaluation framework across the institution	Continually review and adapt	Continually review and adapt
16C	Embed school-level student success and inclusive academic practice roles	Student success project team/ Faculties/ Schools/ PGR Directors/ Graduate schools/ TSEB/ Graduate Board/ E&I	Embed Student Success Officers and SALIPs and enhance capabilities in evaluation	Review and adapt role scope and scale up where necessary	Review and adapt