# UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS Access and Participation Plan 20-21 to 24-25

## ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. The text below outlines the University of Leeds’s performance across the student lifecycle in relation to a number of under-represented groups.

## Higher Education (HE) participation

### Access

1. Our progress in recruiting students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) (defined herein as those students from POLAR 4 quintile 1) has been positive, but there is more work to do. [HESA experimental statistics](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/07-03-2019/experimental-uk-performance-indicators) show that from 2015 to 2017 we either met our HESA benchmark or were 0.1% point below this figure. However, we did not meet our location adjusted benchmark during this three-year period. The OfS data release also outlines progress with the ratio of POLAR 4 Quintile 5 (Q5) to Quintile 1 (Q1) students progressing to Leeds dropping from 6.7 in 2013/14 to 5.7 in 2017/2018. In addition, we can identify a year-on-year trend of growth in numbers and proportion of Q1 students.

1. The percentage gap between Q1 and Q5 students registering at Leeds has narrowed between 2013/14 and 2017/2018 (38.9% to 36.1%); however, this figure fluctuates as does the percentage of Q5 students progressing to Leeds. In 2017/2018 we can see a lower proportion of Q5 students registering than in 2013/14 but it would be unsafe to categorise this as a trend.

1. Whilst we are making progress, we know that we are not progressing as quickly as we would like, and that the gap between the proportion of Q1 and Q5 students (mean average of 37.2%) remains wide with fluctuations. We have taken steps to accelerate our progress as illustrated in the **Access: Strategic approach and Access: Strategic measures** sections**.**

### Success: Non-Continuation

1. We have traditionally performed well in the sector for ensuring the continuation of students; the Office for Students (OfS) dataset shows mean average of 90.6% continuation for the sector between 2012/13 and 2016/17 compared with 94.9% at Leeds for the same period. However, combining the OfS dataset with more recent internal data, we have identified a growth in the continuation gap between Q1 and Q5 students for the years 2016/17 (both in OfS and internal data) and 2017/2018 (internal data).

1. These data suggest a widening in the percentage continuation gap between Q1 and Q5 students from 1.7% for 2015/16 entrants to 3.8% for 2016/17 entrants. This figure is higher than the five-year average of performance (2.5% gap) and higher than any one year across the period. Internal figures suggest that this gap will remain higher than the average for 2017/2018 starters.

1. We are well placed to address this gap and will be working to identify areas of strength and areas for development in our student success processes and interventions across the institution over the next two years. This has included the inception of a student success project, data analysis of student groups likely to discontinue their studies and other measures detailed in more depth in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections.

### Success - Attainment

1. Within the sector, the mean average gap in attainment of a ’good degree’ by Q5 vs Q1 students, between 13/14 and 2017/2018, is 10%. However, the mean average gap at Leeds is 11.8% over the same period.

1. In 2017/2018 there remains a 7.9% gap between Q1 and Q5 students, which is statistically significant, although below the sector-level gap of 9.4% for the same year. There has been a 10% increase in the attainment of good degrees by Q1 students since 2013/14 compared with a 3.7% increase by Q5 students; therefore, we can show positive progress. However, it is important to note that the gap between Q1 and Q5 attainment fluctuates (between 2016/17 and 2017/2018 by 8.7%) across the five-year OfS dataset. We outline how we are working towards more consistent progress in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections.

### Progression

1. Interrogation of the OfS dataset identified positive outcomes in progression for Q1, mature, disabled and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students. Using internal figures, we have identified a gap in progression between the progression rate of Access to Leeds (A2L) students and the University average. Access to Leeds is our flagship contextual admissions scheme which gives students who meet several WP criteria the opportunity to receive a two grade reduction in their University offer. Work is already underway to address this gap and was highlighted in our previous APP.

## Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students

### Access

1. The OfS dataset shows a difference between Leeds and the Sector when considering the proportion of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students registering. The five-year average suggests this gap is 14.5%; however, when comparing the progress of the sector and Leeds across the five-year period, the Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group cohort in Leeds grew by 5.5% whereas the sector grew by only 4.5%.
2. When investigating the gap between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and White student recruitment at Leeds we can see that the gap dropped by 11% between 2013/14 and 2017/2018, compared with a sector gap in Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group vs White recruitment that closed by 9% across the same period. Trend analysis of performance suggests that our Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group recruitment performance grew at the same rate as the sector until 2017/2018 at which point there was a more pronounced increase in Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group recruitment at Leeds, which coincided with a 5% increase of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students progressing through A2L.
3. Internal figures show a 1% growth in recruitment from Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic groups in 2017/2018. When reviewing at a more granular level, internal data suggests we are near or achieving numbers representative of the general population, except for Black students where we are achieving a 3% recruitment rate compared with the 3.4% population figure as per the last Census data. Using the 2018/2019 internal figures, we can see that Black Caribbean students are underrepresented by 0.4% (0.5% in 2017/2018), Black African students are overrepresented by 0.3% and students identifying as Other Black background are underrepresented by 0.4%.
4. Whilst the differences are less than a percentage point, we remain committed to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and our work to attract more students from underrepresented ethnicities is detailed in the **Access: Strategic approach and Access: Strategic measures** sections.
5. Our review of Access to Leeds recruitment figures shows that the scheme continues to facilitate the recruitment of a significant proportion of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students to Leeds (14.1% Black Caribbean, 27.3% Black African). There was modest (0.6%) overall growth in Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group recruitment through our contextual admissions scheme after we narrowed our eligibility criteria to use the lowest POLAR3, POLAR4 and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile for 2018 entry. There was also a more pronounced growth in the recruitment of White males from LPN, which increased from 6.8% of the A2L cohort to 8.2% in 2018. Thus, A2L facilitated the recruitment of 47.9% of the University undergraduate cohort from this background. We will continue to monitor the performance of A2L in recruiting Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students.

### Success: Non-Continuation

1. Continuation gaps between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group groups and White students are identifiable both at an aggregated Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group level and within more granular groupings (e.g. Black, Asian). We identify a mean average gap in non-continuation of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students compared with White at 2.7% with a spike in the most recent year to 3.1%. These figures are statistically robust and mask higher figures within the Black and Asian groupings (4.8% and 3.3%, respectively). The data for the gap between Black and White student non-continuation fluctuates in statistical significance due to sample sizes; however, in the years where this gap spikes (5.9% and 5.7%) the data can be relied upon as significant.

Success: Attainment

1. There is a significant disparity in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students attaining a 2:1 or above when compared with White students. We had already invested into this area as a result of our work on last year’s APP and the OfS dataset has helped underline the significance of this gap. At an aggregated Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group level, the gap between 2013/14 and 2017/2018 has risen from 11.6% to 12.7% with a three-year trend of this gap widening.
2. Aggregation of ethnic groupings up to Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group level does mask larger disparities in attainment: the gap between Black and White students was 28.9% in 2017/2018 (mean average of 25.9%); the gap between Asian and White students was 16.6% in 2017/2018 (13.3% mean average gap). Our approach to addressing these gaps can be found in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections**.**

### Progression

1. As outlined above, the OfS dataset identified positive outcomes in progression for Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students with the gap between White and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students’ progression being less than 1%. The figures are not considered statistically robust at Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group level and figures have been redacted at a more granular level making it more difficult to identify the performance of specific ethnicities. However, we continue to review our performance and have introduced measures as outlined in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections**.**

## Mature Students

### Access

1. Analysis of the OFS dataset reveals a trend showing a widening gap between mature and non-mature students. The proportion of mature students in 2013/14 was 7.0% compared with 6.3% in 2017/2018. Figures have fluctuated within this period, with year-on-year reduction in 2016/17 and 2017/2018. Our performance against the sector also looked similar when comparing the gap in access between mature and young students, which has widened from 15.5% in 2013/14 to 17.2% in 2017/2018. Internal data suggests a modest increase in the proportion of mature students recruited in 2018/2019 compared with 2017/2018 (+0.6%).

### Success: Non-Continuation

1. There is a significant gap in continuation between mature and young students with a 7.1% five-year mean average, which is close to the mean for the sector, although slightly higher (+0.5%). The latest internal figures point to another rise in non-continuation for this group and a widening of the gap between young and mature continuation.

Success: Attainment

1. There is a significant gap in attainment between young and mature students of 14% (five-year mean) and fluctuating performance annually. The proportion of mature students attaining a 2:1 or above has improved over the five-year period covered by the OfS dataset and the growth has been more pronounced within the mature group (8.3% from 2013/14 and 2017/2018 compared with 3.5% for young students). However, the gap in attainment between the two groups has widened in 2017/2018 (12.1%) and is now wider than that of the sector (9.5%). Our approach to addressing this is outlined in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections.

### Progression

1. The performance of mature students is positive in comparison to younger students and we will continue to work to support the progression of this group into graduate destinations and further study.

## Disabled students

### Access

1. Our work to support the access of disabled students has led to annual increases in the identification of disabled students at Leeds every year since 2012/13 (growing by 6.3%). We remain at 12.8% in 2017/2018 compared with a sector average of 14.8% and have measures to address this as outlined in **the Access: Strategic measures** section.

### Student Success: Non-Continuation

1. The OfS data shows a small gap in continuation when comparing disabled and non-disabled students, although the dataset lists this as not statistically significant. The gap has remained largely static for 5 years with a mean average of 1.8%. The sector shows an even more static picture but a slightly better gap in performance (0.9% average). However, the continuation rate average for Leeds compared with the sector is much more favourable with average disabled student continuation at 94.3% compared with 90% in the sector.

1. A granular analysis of internal data on the gaps in non-continuation amongst disabled students, over the last ten years, shows that some students in specific disability groups are less likely to continue. They include those who have mental health conditions; are blind or have a serious visual impairment, or who have multiple disabilities.
2. We remain committed to supporting the continuation of these students and details can be found in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** sections.

### Success: Attainment

1. The OfS dataset shows a five-year mean attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students, at the University of Leeds, of 2.8%. We have seen a steady improvement in the attainment of 2:1s (or above) within the disabled student cohort between 2012/13 and 2017/18. Our improvement (by 4.7%) compares favourably with the improvements in attainment amongst non-disabled students who showed only a 3.7% growth across the same period.

1. The gap in performance has closed between these two groups from 3% in 2012/13 to 2% in 2017/18. In comparison, the attainment gap within the sector has closed by 0.7%. We are also able to show a lower gap in performance between disabled and non-disabled students when compared with the sector over the last two years and taken as a five-year average.

### Progression

1. Progression of disabled students holds up strongly against non-disabled students with the disabled cohort evidencing higher graduate progression rates than non-disabled students for three of the five years included in the OfS dataset. We can discern a negative gap in performance for students with cognitive and learning difficulties in 2017, but the gap is small, and the trend has shown fluctuation with these students outperforming non-disabled students in three of the five years. In addition, even at the aggregated level of ‘disabled’ the gap between the two groups is not statistically significant.

## Care leavers

### Access

1. Our work to identify care leavers entering the University has meant we are working with increasing numbers of this group through the Plus Programme. We worked with 17 students in 2016/17 and 13 in 2017/2018, compared to only one in 2015/16.

### Student Success: Non-continuation

1. The non-continuation rate for care leavers was 0%, except for 2016/17 when it was 23.5%. As numbers are so low, variance is to be expected and the statistical significance is low. We continue to be aware that this group is particularly vulnerable and have planned interventions outlined in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** section.

### Student Success: Attainment

1. Our last two years of attainment data has been encouraging, with 83% and 75% of care leavers receiving a first or 2:1 degree in 2016/17 and 2017/2018, respectively. These figures need to be treated with caution though as the cohort sizes were six and four respectively.

### Progression

1. We cannot currently report on progression data as only three identified care leavers have completed the destination survey and any statistical survey of this could potentially compromise their personal data. More data will be gathered as current student cohorts’ graduate and, longer term, we will use the Graduate Outcomes survey. We will also work to increase the rate of destination survey completion among care leavers, as it is currently lower than other students.

## Intersections of Disadvantage

### Access

1. Access to Leeds students are required to meet WP criteria to progress onto the scheme. Figures below show the contribution the scheme makes to recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds who are consequently more likely to encounter a variety of different intersections of disadvantage. We continue to work with A2L students to improve their progression into graduate destinations or further study.

### Table 1: 2018/2019 % of University cohort progressing to Leeds through Access to Leeds by Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | % of University ethnic grouping progressing through A2L in 202018/2019 |
| --- | --- |
| Arab | 24.0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 44.6 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 25.7 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 41.6 |
| Black or Black British – African | 27.3 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 14.3 |
| Chinese or Other Ethnic Background – Chinese | 20.7 |
| Mixed - White and Asian | 14.1 |
| Mixed - White and Black African | 18.2 |
| Mixed - White and Black Caribbean | 26.7 |
| Other Asian background | 23.7 |
| Other Black background | 25.0 |
| Other Ethnic background | 24.4 |
| Other Mixed background | 12.9 |
| White | 11.8 |

### Student Success: non-continuation

1. We have, in previous years, identified intersections of disadvantage amongst particular groups within the Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic groupings. These are also evident when looking at continuation within the OfS dataset. Our latest internal data supports the OfS dataset. When reviewing the latest continuation results of Black students from Quintile 1 compared with White students from Quintile 1 we find a disparity of 6.7%. The numbers are small and not statistically robust; however, they are a subset of the Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students highlighted within the OfS dataset as less successful at progressing from year 1 to year 2 than their White peers and therefore worth noting.

### Student Success: Degree attainment

1. There is a trend showing an increasing attainment gap between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students from Quintiles 1 and 2 and their Quintile 1 and 2 White peers: 4.7% in 2013/14 rising to 13.1% in 2017/2018.
2. We outline in the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** how we will address these continuation and attainment issues and how these feed into our higher-level continuation targets.

## Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

### Estranged students

1. From 2016/17 onwards, we have been working to identify estranged students entering courses at the University. Numbers are low but growing, with two identified in 2016/17 and 14 in 2017/2018. Amongst the students identified, continuation is 100%. We do not yet have data on attainment or progression.

### Students from military families

1. Review of four years of internal data on occupational background of UCAS applicants found that 95 undergraduate entrants were from a military family background. Of those, 15 were mature students, who may have been in the military themselves.

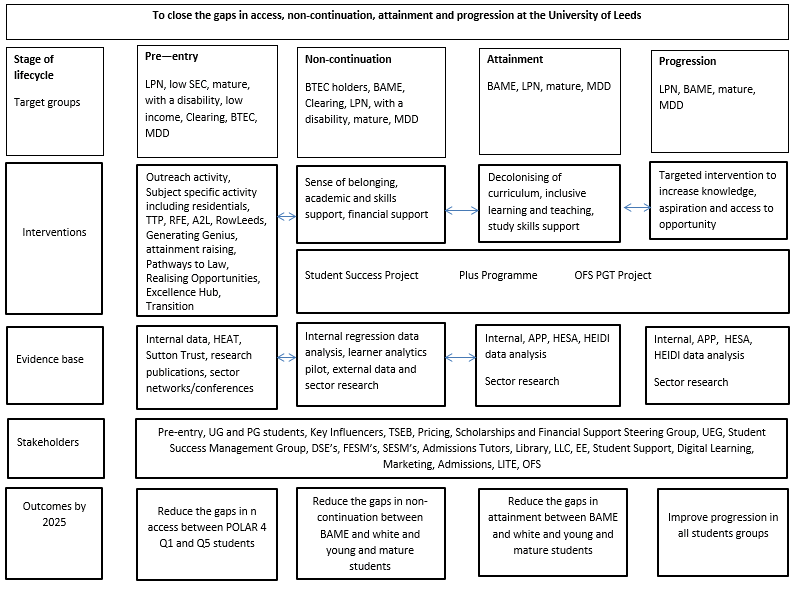
## STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Leeds has a strong commitment to attracting and retaining students from diverse backgrounds, equipping them to succeed in a competitive global market and to make a difference.

1. Our Access and Participation Plan’s strategic aims are to:

* Target and deliver sustained engagement to attract and retain taught students;
* Narrow the gaps in progression, retention and student success through systematic support for students at every stage and in all aspects of their learning journey; and
* Ensure an evidence-based approach through a robust approach to research, evaluation and monitoring.

1. Case studies on work to meet these aims are included in our [Access and Student Success annual report](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/2987/access_and_student_success_annual_report.pdf).
2. The targets set out in the plan build on those identified in earlier Access Agreements and are underpinned by our institutional values of integrity, inclusiveness, community, professionalism and academic excellence. The theory of change strategy outlined to support meeting these targets is in the following diagram:



1. Our interventions across each stage of the student lifecycle are directed by both internal and external data, consultations with beneficiaries and key influencers and sector level research. We continue to monitor not only the estimated impact of our activity but also the groups we target, for example, we regularly review the criteria for our A2L scheme to ensure that we make use of all relevant contextual data to benefit under-represented groups. We have also combined numerous one-off interventions where there is evidence to suggest impact to deliver more robust packages of activity and sustained programmes of engagement for each stage of the lifecycle.

## Target groups

1. Our consistent approach to targeting is informed on a regular basis by our evaluation and monitoring team and others that deliver and report on the impact of their programmes, against objectives. This work is outlined in the **Evaluation Strategy** section. As a standard, our work targets: low income students, LPN students (mature and young), disabled students, students with particular ethnicities; care leavers, estranged students, first-generation students, and refugees.
2. Our work to date has seen:
   * Progress in recruiting students from areas with the lowest 20% of learners progressing to higher education (POLAR Quintile 1) and mature learners.
   * Progress in closing the gap in non-continuation and degree outcomes for our disabled students and WP entrants via Access to Leeds when compared with the wider undergraduate cohort
   * Positive outcomes in progression to graduate employment and further study for under-represented groups.
3. The above reflects the success of our contextual admissions scheme, Access to Leeds, Lifelong Learning Centre and WP support scheme, Plus Programme.
4. However, analysis of internal data sets and our assessment of performance identifies that significant gaps remain for POLAR 4 Q1, mature and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students particularly at the access, continuation and degree attainment stages of the lifecycle. It is important to note that throughout this document, wherever there is a reference to the grouping: “Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group” our standard practice is to evaluate and monitor differential outcomes within this cohort’s constituent sub-groups at the level of specific ethnicity e.g Black Caribbean or Black Other.
5. These groups are at the heart of our Access and Student Success Strategy from 2020/2021. We aspire to significantly close gaps over the next five years and we anticipate our work will inform the University’s and sector’s understanding of the causal factors and the impact of strategic initiatives. This broader strategy has been implemented through incorporating and building on existing work and ambitions summarised in the last Access and Participation Plan. Our work over the last year has enabled us to identify areas of intersectionality; therefore, we are confident that work focusing on the groups listed above will also benefit groups where gaps are smaller or sub-groups who also experience barriers to higher education.
6. It is anticipated that by 2022/2023 there will be sufficient understanding and evidence of impact to project the timeframe by which all gaps will be closed. Alongside this, we will continue to maintain progress in areas where we are performing well, thereby strengthening our evidence base to refine our programme design for these areas. Our annual milestones for each aim reflect the anticipated rate of change as the strategy is implemented.

## Access Target Groups: POLAR 4 Q1 students

**Access Target 1:** Close the gap in access to the University of Leeds between Q1 and Q5 students from a ratio of 5.5 in 2017/2018 to 3.5 by 2024/2025

**Access Target 2:** By working in collaboration, Realising Opportunities (RO) will contribute to national improvement in closing the gap in entry rates at highertariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups. This will be achieved by increasing the percentage of RO students progressing to a research intensive university from 42% in 2015/2016 to 54% in 2024/2025.

These targets relate to our overall strategic aims of:

‘Targeted and sustained engagement to attract and retain taught students’, and,

‘Ensure an evidence-based approach through a robust approach to research, evaluation and monitoring’.

## Evidence base:

1. Young and mature students are integral to our strategy to close the gap in access to University between Q1 and Q5 students (identified through POLAR 4 and IMD data).
2. Whilst the University of Leeds recruits high numbers of Q1 undergraduate students (490 entrants in 2017/2018), the growth of Q5 students has been more rapid. This is, in part, linked to the higher attainment of the latter. Access to Leeds and our foundation year programmes provide opportunity for both young and mature students to demonstrate potential through more than grades alone.
3. Our internal data shows that whilst many students from under-represented groups progress to the University through Access to Leeds and our foundation year offer, a significant minority choose not to and apply via the standard route. Review of the application, offer and acceptance rates suggest that there could be improvements made to admissions processes.
4. The recent introduction of the one grade reduction offer for IMD Q1 students and broadening of A2L eligibility will help us to better gauge the speed at which we can close the recruitment ratio between IMD Q1 and Q5 students.
5. The success of Access to Leeds has reinforced the importance of continuing to use a basket of measures to address social disadvantage and we will continue to utilise this alongside refinements to strengthen targeting of underrepresented groups such as increasing the number of IMD students from the lowest quintiles who are eligible to apply through A2L. Work will continue to enable access for disabled students. Our commitment to support estranged students (including via the [Stand Alone pledge](http://www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk)) and care leavers is expected to increase visibility of the agenda and encourage more students to self-identify and apply to the University.
6. However, there is a need for additional focus, working in partnership with other organisations, to increase the pool of eligible students and in turn those who are made offers. This will include a contribution to equality of opportunity for under-represented groups nationally.
7. We have not set a target for access for Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students; however, additional work is planned to maintain progress in access for this group with additional activity planned aimed at increasing the number or proportion of Black Caribbean students entering the University. Our internal data highlights the overlap between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and POLAR4 Q1; therefore, our strategy to close the gap between Q1 and Q5 students will include monitoring of access by ethnicity.
8. We also work in close collaboration with other research-intensive universities through the Realising Opportunities (RO) programme. RO is expanding its geographical range, with new university partners joining to increase the number of students able to take part, including in higher education cold spots.

Objectives to achieve Access Targets 1 and 2

1. Refine programme of outreach, to increase awareness and understanding of routes into higher education, through review of impact using theory of change model – December 2021, Ongoing
2. Increase the pool of high attaining students who can apply to the University of Leeds through raising attainment work with KS1 to KS3 students – Lifetime of Plan
3. Review and refine admissions processes to increase offers and acceptances amongst target groups – Offer a one grade reduction to students from POLAR 4 Q1 or from IMD Q1 December 2021, Ongoing
4. Widen eligibility to Access to Leeds to incorporate students from IMD Q2 – September 2020
5. Contribute to national social mobility by supporting progression to higher education at all levels and any institution – Lifetime of plan

**Success Target 1:** Close the gap in non-continuation between POLAR Q1 and Q5 students from 3.8% in 2016/2017 to 1.5% in 2024/2025

These targets relate to our overall strategic aims of:

‘Targeted and sustained engagement to attract and retain taught students’,

‘Narrow the gaps in progression, retention and student success through systematic support for students at every stage and in all aspects of their learning journey’, and,

‘Ensure an evidence-based approach through a robust approach to research, evaluation and monitoring’.

### Evidence base

1. Our internal research has identified key factors that influence non-continuation across all under-represented groups and they have informed our approach to supporting the most disadvantaged students across the University. The Plus Programme, which supports students who have progressed via our contextual admissions scheme alongside other groups such as care leavers, includes opportunity to develop networks, establish a sense of belonging and engage with dedicated staff who can support or signpost to services and curricular opportunities. Around 1000 students join the Plus Programme each year and a review of internal data shows that students who participate in the Plus Programme, have better non-continuation rates than non-participating POLAR 4 Q1 students this holds true for IMD Q1 students.
2. In addition to groups identified as at risk in the **Assessment of Performance**, analysis of five years of internal data found that students holding a BTEC qualification and entering via Clearing were also at risk.

1. Given the fluctuation in data robustness, it was felt that it would not be appropriate to set a target for non-continuation of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students. However, we will continue to monitor performance, at the level of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and more granular ethnic groupings, particularly in the context of the Q1 cohort. We will also continue to target our work at Black students specifically.
2. Whilst we know some groups of disabled entrants have higher non-continuation rates than others, there is more work to be undertaken to understand how to address this.
3. We are investing in research/projects to improve our students’ sense of belonging and working to measure whether and how this activity positively contributes to addressing awarding gaps and non-continuation. Sector research suggests there are positive links between increased success and increased belonging. Suhlmann et al (2018) - Suhlmann et al (2018 ) [Belonging Mediates Effects of Student-University Fit on Well-Being, Motivation, and Dropout Intention](https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/10.1027/1864-9335/a000325), Gopalan and Brady (2019). College Students’ Sense of Belonging: A National Perspective;

Objectives to meet Success target 1

a) Review institutional approach to Clearing and communications to entrants via this route – **December 2020**

b) Improve pre-HE engagement with a focus on BTEC students to enhance transition to the University – **December 2020**

c) Draw on internal research to refine our approach to induction and transition for all students with a focus on target groups – **December 2021**

d) Improve capacity to enable early identification of students at risk of non-continuation using additional datasets and staff resource – **1st phase December 2021, Ongoing**

e) Expand Plus Programme to provide support for a wider group of POLAR 4 Q1 students and IMD Q1 students - **1st phase December 2021, Ongoing**

f) Creation of sense of belonging strand within University Governance to oversee and coordinate belonging related activities. Dedicated staff resource to support the work. **Ongoing June 2020**

**Success Target group: mature students**

**Success Target 3:** Close the gap in non-continuation between young and mature students from 7.8% in 2016/2017 to 6.5% in 2024/2025**.**

**Success Target 4**: Close unexplained gap between mature vs young student attainment from 12.1% in 2017/2018 to 9.4% in 2024/2025.

These targets relate to our overall strategic aims of:

‘Targeted and sustained engagement to attract and retain taught students’,

‘Narrow the gaps in progression, retention and student success through systematic support for students at every stage and in all aspects of their learning journey’, and,

‘Ensure an evidence-based approach through a robust approach to research, evaluation and monitoring’.

Evidence base**:**

1. Like the sector, the gap between mature and young students for non-continuation and degree attainment is significant. Our commitment to mature learners who often have additional indicators of social disadvantage and lower prior attainment has informed the growth of our highly successful foundation programmes, degree apprenticeships, the development of the Lifelong Learning Centre Hub and in turn our approach to maximise outcomes in non-continuation and degree attainment amongst the target group.
2. Our research suggests that the external environment and pressures can be particularly difficult for mature learners who may also have caring responsibility. Similarly, programmes offered by our School of Healthcare, including Nursing, are popular with mature learners but present additional challenges for students from low-income households. For this reason, it is likely that some of the gap can be explained by structural factors. Understanding this will enable us to understand the unexplained factors and bring about change. Sense of belonging work is also intended to support these targets.

Objectives to meet success targets 3 and 4

1. Enhance understanding of the structural and unexplained gaps in non-continuation amongst this group – **1st phase September 2021; ongoing**
2. Review and make changes to curriculum, assessment and feedback to provide an inclusive curriculum to an increasingly diverse community of students – **Baseline standards, September 2021; roll out September 2023**
3. Improve capacity to enable early identification of students at risk using additional datasets and staff resource – **1st phase December 2021, Ongoing**
4. Build on work to test new programme design, such as degree apprenticeships, to develop routes for higher education study which may reduce non-continuation – **Lifetime of plan**
5. Creation of sense of belonging strand within University Governance to oversee and coordinate belonging related activities. Dedicated staff resource to support the work. **Ongoing June 2020**

**Target groups:** Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students

**Success Target 2**: Close unexplained gap between proportion of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students attaining a 2:1 compared with proportion of White students attaining 2:1 or above from 12.7% in 2017/2018 to 6.5% in 2024/2025.

These targets relate to our overall strategic aims of:

‘Narrow the gaps in progression, retention and student success through systematic support for students at every stage and in all aspects of their learning journey’, and,

‘Ensure an evidence-based approach through a robust approach to research, evaluation and monitoring’.

### Evidence base:

1. Institutional research is underway to review quantitative data and qualitative information and develop our understanding of the reasons behind this gap. Whilst the data on attainment of Black students is not statistically robust, work will continue to ensure that the gap is monitored. In the meantime, sector research has informed our work to pilot projects ahead of institutional roll-out from 2020/2021.

1. We intersected the number of black students recruited to Leeds (African, Caribbean and other) with IMD, and found that 49% of this cohort were within IMD Q1. We found a similar pattern in 2017-18 and 2018-19 and this proportion is higher than the proportion of Black students who were also POLAR 4 Q1 (The proportion of the black cohort recruited in 2018-19 who are also POLAR 4 Q1 students was 28% (and lower in previous years) compared with the 49% of black students who were IMD Q1). It is therefore expected that the measures to address the Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group/White awarding gap will impact on the IMD Q1 group also. It supports our increased focus on working with IMD groups (e.g. through the Plus Programme).

1. Alongside this, work has started to review the curriculum content building on the work of our Students’ Union campaign, ‘Why is my curriculum White?’ and to make changes to the institutional approach to assessment.
2. Further work will be undertaken to inform our understanding of the timeframe by which any unexplained gaps can be closed.

Objectives to meet Success target 2:

1. Develop an inclusive curriculum – **Lifetime of plan**
2. Develop additional opportunities to foster a sense of belonging. This will include work with our Students’ Union, including Clubs and Societies and within academic communities – **1st phase September 2021, then lifetime of plan**
3. Provision of additional opportunities to develop social and cultural capital. We will ensure that we understand and minimise barriers some students may face in accessing co-curricular opportunities - **1st phase September 2021, then lifetime of plan**
4. Address psychosocial and identity factors experienced by target group – **Lifetime of plan**
5. Implement recommendations outlined in the UUK/NUS Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group attainment pledge – **September 2021**
6. Expand Plus Programme to provide support for a wider group of POLAR 4 Q1 students and IMD Q1 students - **1st phase December 2021, Ongoing**
7. Creation of sense of belonging strand within University Governance to oversee and coordinate belonging related activities. Dedicated staff resource to support the work. Ongoing June 2020
8. As well as success target 2, all the objectives listed above will help close the gap between the continuation of white and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students and IMD Q1 and Q5 students.

1. We currently have existing targets from our 2019/20 Access & Participation Plan which we propose to replace with the new targets identified, in this Plan from 2020/21:

* T16a\_02 Improve access for mature applicants with no previous HE experience and from LPNs (POLAR 3)
* T16a\_05 Improve continuation for full time students from NS SEC 4-7
* T16a\_06 Improve access for young students from LPNs (POLAR 3).

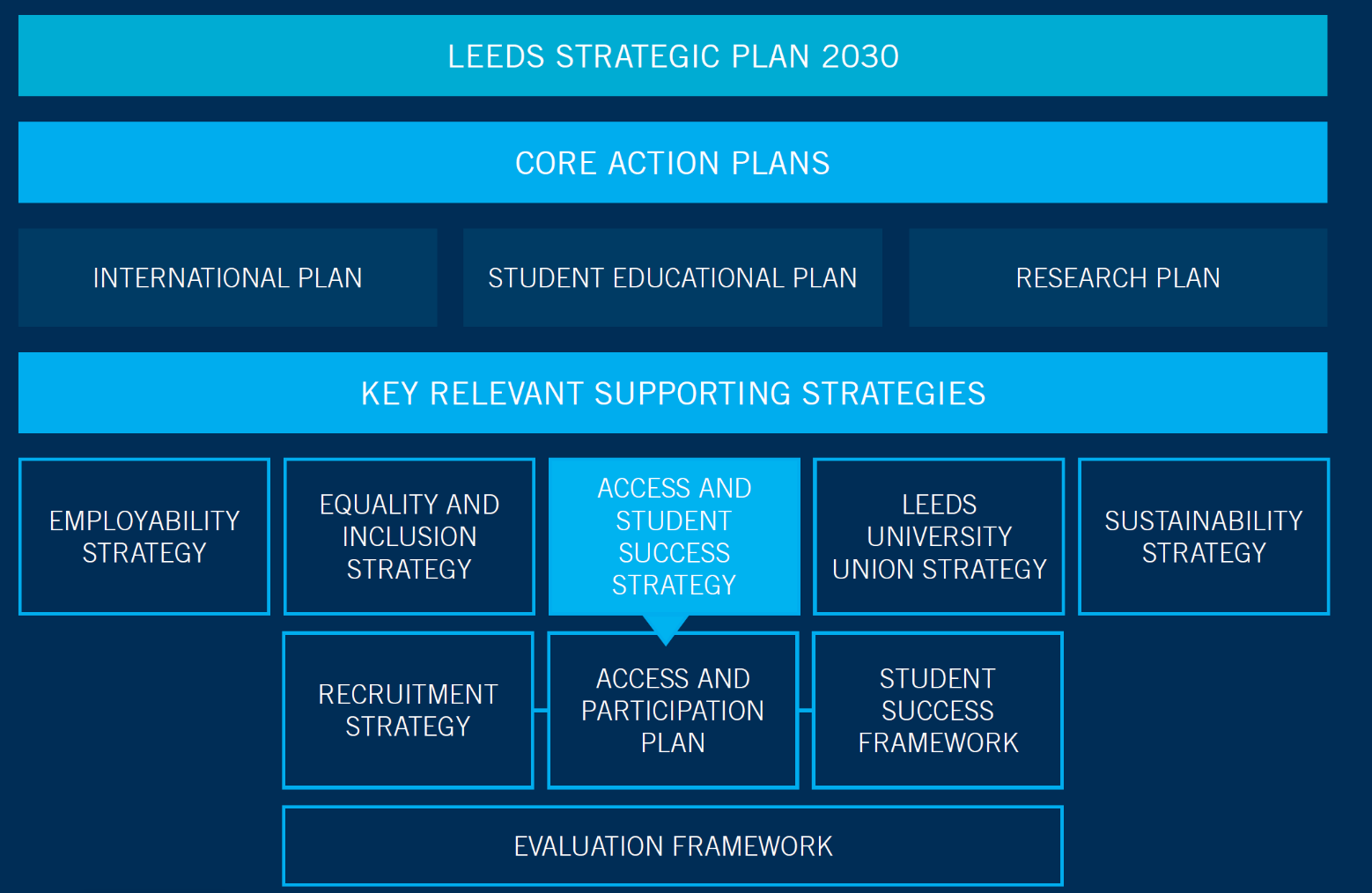
1. As these targets have been subsumed within, or replaced by, the new targets above, we would like to strategically realign to provide clear strategic objectives internally. As we look to refine our admissions processes, as outlined in the **Access: Strategic approach and Access: Strategic measures** sections, we would like to give a clear message that POLAR 4 Q1 is the key target group and that mature students should be prioritised alongside young students. Our contextual admissions scheme, Access to Leeds, and our foundation programmes allow access to the University for WP students using a wider basket of measures and this will continue.

## STRATEGIC MEASURES

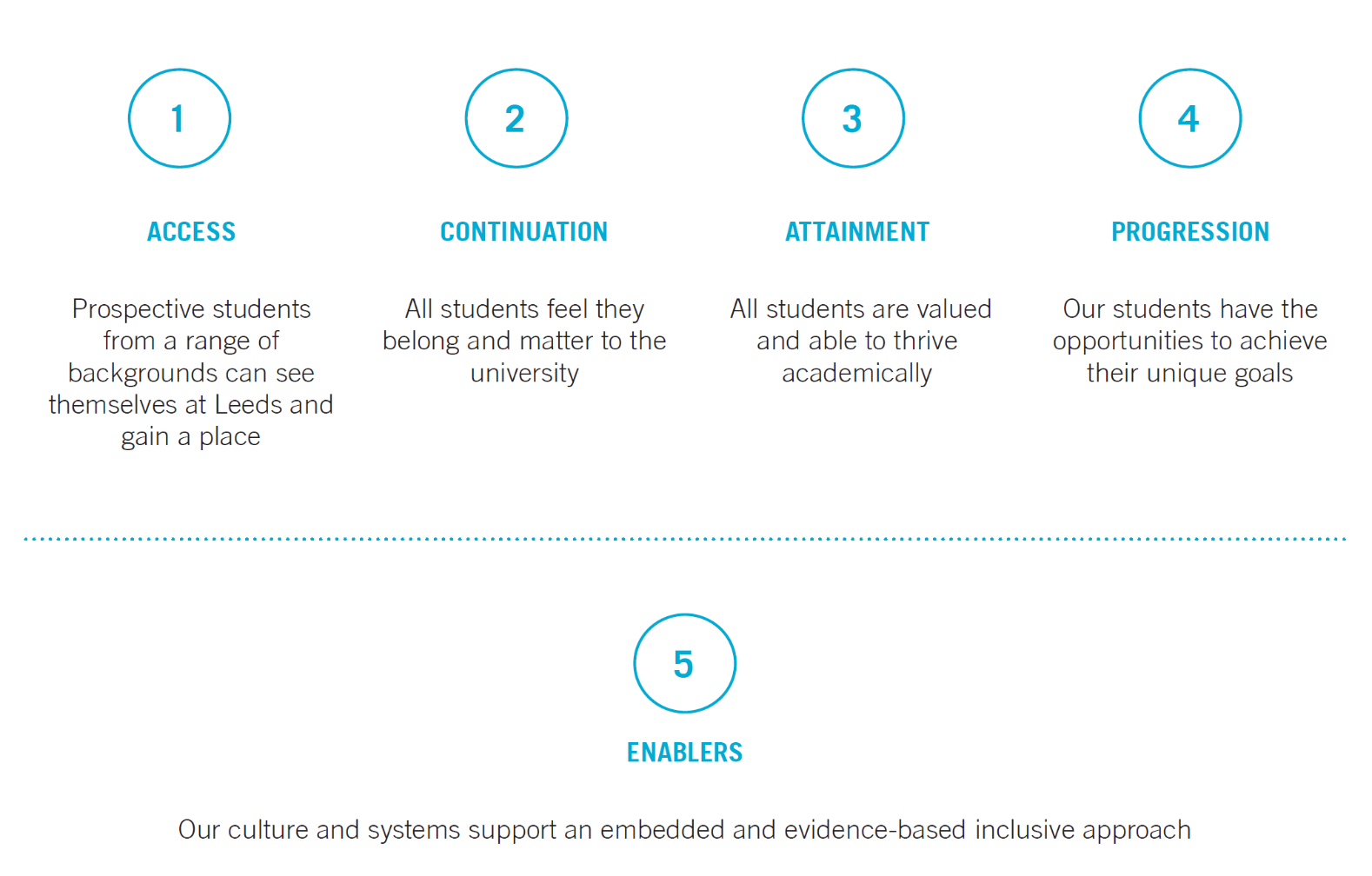
### Whole provider strategic approach: Overview and alignment with other strategies

1. Our commitment to widen participation is embedded within our University of Leeds Strategic plan from which all other strategies flow.
2. Students are core to what we do at Leeds and our ambition is to be a place where all students feel they belong and matter to the university. We have a moral and ethical obligation to our students: our students invest in us, we should be investing in them. We have adopted a whole-university approach to access and student success and as such, our [Access and Student Success Strategy](https://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22252/access_and_student_success/1250/access_and_student_success_strategy) is one of the key supporting strategies that feed into [University’s 10 year strategic plan](https://spotlight.leeds.ac.uk/strategy/#group-section-Community-culture-and-impact-r3jjXFfaW9).

1. The strategy was developed with direct input from stakeholders across the institution and progress against the strategic priorities and targets is monitored alongside strategies outlined in the image below. Our institutional key performance indicators for widening participation are incorporated in the annual refresh of related plans outlined in the image below and speaks to the institutional approach we have taken to ensuring the best experience for students from all backgrounds.



1. The Access and Student Success strategy spans the full undergraduate student lifecycle but also sets out our commitment to tackle issues at postgraduate (taught and research) level. Our undergraduate Key Performance Indicators (within the Access and Student Success Strategy) utilise those already within our Access and Participation Plan but also include some that focus on staff or postgraduate diversity and success. It was essential to us that the undergraduate, staff and postgraduate strands of the Access and Student Success Strategy cohered to and complemented the work set out within our Access and Participation Plan. One of our core goals was for the Access and Student Success Strategy to further the aims of APPs by supporting progression of diverse groups into PGT and PGR study and on into academia, to ensure that our staff is representative of society as a whole, providing role models and promoting a sense of belonging within our student cohort.
2. When designing our access plans, the University adheres to the principles of equality and diversity as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Equality considerations are embedded throughout our access and success activity. Equality and Inclusion Unit (EIU) staff serve on committees and working groups responsible for inputting into the creation, reporting and monitoring of our APP. In addition, there is clear senior leadership for WP which is aligned to the institutional vision. A fuller description of how our access and participation plans align can be found in our Equality Impact Assessment (Annex A).
3. It is our strategy to work in partnership in our local area via Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY), a consortium of diverse HE providers, to improve the access, success and progression of under-represented groups.
4. Our targets outlined in the **Target Groups** section demonstrate areas that we will prioritise over the period of this plan. From our assessment of performance, we will prioritise work to narrow the gaps in access between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and White students, disabled student access compared to the sector, non-continuation between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and White students and attainment between Q1 and Q5 students.
5. Our commitment to narrowing all these gaps is demonstrated by the strategic approach outlined below, in addressing access through outreach, strategic partnerships and strategic admissions; non-continuation and attainment through curriculum redesign, student support and skills support; progression through employability and skills development. Our Access and Student Success Strategy has five pillars articulating our intentions:



## Access

### Access: Strategic approach

1. As part of our Access and Student Success strategy goals, work will continue to increase awareness and understanding of routes into higher education through our extensive outreach programme, which runs through all the key stages. Our review of impact of initiatives will facilitate refinement of the programmes by 2020/2021, with success defined as sustained engagement, increased awareness of routes into research intensive HE and increased attainment.
2. Refinements to our admissions approach, to increase applications, offers and acceptances is underway will be embedded by 2020/2021.
3. Mature students are a key part of our access strategy and part of our high-level target to close the Q1/Q5 access gap. The work of our Lifelong Learning Centre will continue to focus on pre-entry interventions with mature learners and we will also focus on the admissions process for Access to HE candidates
4. We will ensure that we continue to make progress in increasing access for groups where a high-level target has not been set. This will include increased investment to improve access for disabled students and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group, particularly Black Caribbean, students following the piloting of interventions to measure impact. Work with other groups that face barriers will include students from military families and estranged students which will include additional consideration to improve access and maximise student success.

### Access: Strategic measures

1. Our existing work on raising attainment and analysis of sector data has highlighted the importance of work in this area. From 2018/2019, additional models of raising attainment are being trialled and they include pre-HE work with the community to support attainment in maths amongst mature learners and projects with Tutor Trust, Brilliant Club and IntoUniversity. As institutional lead for the Born in Bradford project, we have a unique opportunity to research the impact of social, health and educational factors on learning to inform policy and practice at an institutional and national level. Review of the impact will inform where our additional investment to raise attainment amongst learners from KS1 and upwards will be targeted from 2020/2021.
2. Our Art and Design Saturday Clubs and STEM After School Clubs aim to increase participation in these subjects, particularly in schools where they may be at risk, to ensure opportunity is accessible to WP students. In the Art and Design Saturday Clubs specifically, the aim is to encourage progression to Key Stage 5 and then university and through working with targeted schools, we have ensured that 67% of students engaged on the programme meet A2L criteria (including LPN) and 22% are from BAME backgrounds. Outcomes of the project will be monitored through continuation to Key Stages 4 and 5 in Art and Design, measured in 2020 and progression to University of Leeds. The first HEAT, **as outlined in the Evaluation Strategy,** outcomes data will be available in 2022 and will inform discussions around broadening the projects to include other subjects.

1. The University is also in the process of opening a specialist 16-19 Maths School in Leeds in partnership with a local MAT. Recruitment is underway to appoint an outreach lead at the MAT who will be responsible for developing a programme of activity to raise aspirations and attainment in mathematics across the city region. This will be done in close collaboration with outreach and academic specialists at the University.
2. Our approach to outreach, on a local and national scale, generates significant numbers of applications through our contextual admissions scheme, A2L. It operates across every course at the institution and enables students to demonstrate their potential through more than grades alone. Applicants who meet two or more criteria using a basket of measures, including LPN, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Care experience, low income and no family history of HE, are made an offer two grades below the standard entry offer or equivalent. Criteria changes are approved at the University Recruitment Committee to ensure match with University WP objectives. Consequently, A2L has been successful in recruiting 57.1% of University’s LPN cohort and a high proportion of the University’s Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students as outlined in **table 1**. A2L criteria will be reviewed each year to ensure relevance with our WP objectives.
3. Our approach has resulted in an increasing number of undergraduate entrants from WP backgrounds; however, our analysis of internal data has identified potential for improvement in conversion between application, offer and acceptance. Our priority for access will focus on our admissions processes and a review of entry requirements for BTECs and Access to HE candidates and increasing use of contextual data to support the offer making process for students. We have implemented new admissions processes making one grade reduction offers available to students from POLAR 4 Q1 and, more recently IMD Q1 backgrounds. This work is expected to address the access gaps in the polar quintiles in our assessment of performance and the high proportions of Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students in POLAR and particularly IMD Q1 mean that we also expect to see increases for this group. This work is set in the context of our rebalancing of our cohort through reducing home numbers and diversifying our student intake.
4. There is a risk that external factors may limit the potential for growth to enable reduction in home numbers. Furthermore, the volatility of funding for adult education across the sector may also be a risk to the pipeline of mature students from Q1.
5. We are committed to working collaboratively in our local area through Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) to take a coherent, county-wide approach to reducing inequalities in access to, success in and progression from higher education. We co-fund and host the core function of the partnership which covers the whole student lifecycle, support our staff to contribute to collaborative activity for the benefit of the wider partnership, and contribute to the governance of GHWY as well as Accountable Institution for] its Uni Connect programme. The aim of the partnership is to bring together members and stakeholders to ensure that higher education – in all its varied forms – is an accessible option that is considered by a wider and more inclusive audience in our local area, and to support these prospective students in and through our institutions.
6. We commit to working together through GHWY over the upcoming 12 month period to investigate opportunities and understand the potential to undertake a collaborative approach to pre-higher education attainment-raising activity as well as collaboration around evaluative activity. This will allow sufficient time to develop our strategic approach by undertaking liaison with key local stakeholders and scoping current provision, to ensure we do not risk duplicating or disrupting existing activity.
7. We are a signatory to the national Care Leaver Covenant and the Stand Alone pledge, with collaborative versions of each drawn together by GHWY to showcase our local offer and commitment.
8. Key to all of this work has been the impact evaluation, despite some innovative ideas and delivery our Robo-Maths scheme piloted with the University Technical College in Leeds showed little demonstrable impact on the attainment of participating pupils and was therefore discontinued in favour of increasing investment in projects with more proven impact (such as Tutor Trust, IntoUniversity and Brilliant Club work).

1. As part of the University Maths School Network we have committed to a collaborative approach for evaluating the impact of the schools’ outreach programmes. This will include identifying effective and efficient methods of evaluation, contributing to the evidence base and sharing good practice relating to local and collaborative outreach initiatives.

**The work in the previous paragraphs is designed to meet Access Target 1: Close the gap in access to the University of Leeds between Q1 and Q5 students (POLAR 4).**

1. We are part of Realising Opportunities (RO) a collaboration of research-intensive universities working with shared objectives to eliminate the national gap in entry rates at higher-tariff providers between the most and least under-represented groups. The programme is underpinned by robust evaluation, undertaken by independent evaluators, which is a theory of change model using narrative, empirical research and causality evaluation types to evidence impact. **This work will contribute to Access Target 2: By working in collaboration with Realising Opportunities, will contribute to national improvement in closing the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups**
2. Our Disability Services team is increasing its work in the induction period to raise its profile with students who have not declared a disability during the application process, with an increased social media presence and range of welcome events. Disability will also continue to feature as one of the qualifying characteristics of the ‘disrupted studies’ criterion of A2L. **This work will contribute to increasing the proportion of disabled entrants to the University of Leeds.**

## Student Success

### Strategic approach to non-continuation:

1. Qualitative and quantitative research will be undertaken to determine the reasons for higher levels of non-continuation amongst target groups.
2. From 2020/2021, pre-HE engagement with schools and students will support prospective students holding BTEC and Access to HE qualifications to ease transition to University. This will be complemented by the findings from a research fellowship in the Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence on induction and transition which will inform recommendations, relevant to all students but particularly those at risk.
3. New programme design is underway to test models such as degree apprenticeships. Their impact on non-continuation will inform our approach from 2020/2021 onwards.

1. Review of our curriculum and feedback, commencing in 2018/2019, will assess the extent to which changes are required from 2020/2021 onwards to teach an increasing diverse community of students.
2. We know from research across the sector and the success of the Plus Programme that the early identification of students at risk of lower engagement in learning enables timely intervention to support and encourage in their daily interactions. We aim to replicate through enhanced use of data and will trial employment of dedicated student success officers with a mature model of delivery in place by 2021/2022.
3. Whilst the testing of models has commenced, it is expected that incremental change will be seen from 2022/2023 onwards.

### Strategic approach to attainment:

1. We will work to ensure all aspects of the university experience are inclusive, using targeting where needed, to empower all students to succeed. This will include exploration of the needs of individual groups, in 2018/2019, as part of our work to close the gap in attainment between White and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students. This will ensure our work to meet the high level target does not conceal unaddressed differential performance.
2. We know that the student voice is crucial and will be developing additional ways to facilitate this through the University’s Partnership Agreement. This will include the appointment of diversity ambassadors and exploration of alternative ways to share student experience to bring about change.
3. A diverse academic and professional community is likely to contribute to diverse perspectives and approaches. With this in mind, we will work with HR, and related areas, to explore how we will develop this. It will include a review of the ways in which we can diversify the pipeline of potential staff through work at PGT and PGR level as well as the opportunity for apprenticeships for professional staff.
4. Work on agendas such as gender equality, through Athena Swan for example, highlights the importance of a whole institution approach and this will be crucial. It is relevant to all targets but is particularly pertinent to closing gaps in degree attainment where the greatest change is required.
5. The timing for closing the gap is influenced by the time it will take for a student to have experienced the changes planned. It is expected that it will take three years for the changes to be experienced across a students’ educational experience at Leeds. This may be slightly longer for mature learners who may study a foundation year with the Lifelong Learning Centre.
6. The gap in degree attainment between disabled and non-disabled students is not statistically significant and we are confident in our progress in this area. On this basis, a target has not been set. However, investment is underway which is expected to continue to narrow the gap.

### Student Success: Strategic measures

1. Identification of gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment led to consultative workshops and meetings taking place with colleagues in the summer/autumn of 2018 with several institution and faculty-wide initiatives developed as part of a Student Success framework. The resulting work commenced in 2018/2019 spanning areas identified as factors required to influence positive change in student success, including the following:

* Curriculum and pedagogy interventions, ensuring teaching and assessment practice is inclusive and reflective of a diverse student community
* Relationships between staff and students, with an understanding that sense of belonging is a key determinant of student outcomes
* Social, cultural and economic capital, including understanding of how students experience university, how they network, their external support and their financial situation
* Psychosocial and identity factors, including an understanding of how students feel supported and encouraged in their daily interactions.

1. Linked to our work on the inclusive curriculum is our work on mainstreaming belonging into standard University practice at all levels. Governance has been created and staffing recruited to deliver research, coordination and interventions designed to increase the likelihood of more students feeling that they belong and matter at Leeds. This work is a core aspect of the [Access and Student Success Strategy](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/3166/access_and_student_success_strategy.pdf) with the University.
2. As a result of this work we will take measures including the development of diversity ambassadors, collaboration and financial support. We will increase use of data and appoint student success officers to combine early identification of students at risk. This will ensure a person-centred approach to mitigate risk of non-continuation, introduce an effective pre-entry engagement activity/intervention with BTEC offer holders to aid transition to University courses, use learner analytics and monitoring in all Faculties and increased effective means of communicating support available to students. **This work will contribute to meeting targets for non-continuation and degree attainment (Success Targets 1, 2, 3 and 4 ). It is expected to contribute to a reduction in non-continuation across the wider student population. All student success activity will be ready to report 2023**
3. Leeds aims to equip all students to succeed in a competitive global environment and make a difference to the world around them. The Leeds Curriculum provides students with an outstanding education through our pioneering approach to teaching. This enables students to broaden their knowledge, participate in a range of co-curricular opportunities to enrich their experience and apply their learning as well as specific skills development to reinforce employability outcomes. All students experience the Leeds Curriculum and engagement amongst under-represented groups, in optional elements such as Study Abroad or Work Experience are monitored to ensure barriers are addressed.
4. Building on existing work, a priority is to continue to develop the **curriculum**, pedagogy and assessment to ensure that learning is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. A project on inclusive curriculum design has commenced in the Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence (LITE) with the objective of designing more inclusive and decolonised curricula across the University, increasing belonging, and narrowing the attainment and non-continuation gaps for students from lower socio-economic groups and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group backgrounds identified in our **Assessment of Performance.** There will be curriculum change pilots in five university faculties, in the academic year 2019/20 to measure how module course, content and design has become more inclusive, surveying and interviewing both academics and students. Baseline standards will be developed in 2020/2021. These will monitor progress on the initiative with improvements expected in **2024.** In addition, Diversity Ambassadors are being recruited across the University to promote study abroad and year in industry opportunities to Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and Disabled students, supporting objectives in narrowing gaps in non-continuation and attainment. Our work in this area is underpinned by our commitment to meet the expectations set out in the UUK/NUS Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group attainment pledge. **This work will contribute to closing the gaps in degree attainment (Success Targets 2 and 4) It is also expected to contribute to degree attainment amongst additional under-represented groups.**
5. Over the last two years, we have increased focus on inclusivity and diversity on the **curriculum**. This has included widespread change to assessment and feedback to improve the student experience and degree attainment for students from under-represented groups including those with a disability. Our Taught Student Education Board has agreed to an institution-wide adoption of a set of Baseline Standards of Inclusive Learning and Teaching, with a commitment to working towards embedding these standards into all taught student provision: starting with a review of our current practices in 2019-20. This will be a comprehensive institutional approach to produce materials that are inclusive and accessible to disabled students, with an acknowledgement that these students come from a wide range of educational, social and linguistic backgrounds. The project will consequently be addressing our performance gaps outlined in our **Assessment of Performance.** School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice (SALIPs) will raise awareness of inclusivity, share good practice and evaluate the extent to which the baseline standards are currently being met in the school throughout **2019-20** and throughout **2020-22** will lead on change initiatives to ensure the baselines are met. **This work will contribute to closing the gaps in degree attainment (Success Targets 2, 4). It is expected to contribute to degree attainment amongst additional under-represented groups.**
6. We know that our mature students and others from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have the same access to pre-HE qualifications or there may be barriers to full-time study. Our diverse programme portfolio provides opportunity to study at foundation level and via part-time options. The University offers seven Higher and Degree Apprenticeships that have been developed in collaboration with businesses and organisations. Our Registered Nursing Apprenticeship, run in collaborations with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, offers an alternative route into Nursing for those who may not otherwise have had the opportunity. This programme and the Higher Apprenticeships for Nursing Associates and Assistant Practitioners are of particular benefit to mature learners, working in the local region. **This work will contribute to non-continuation and degree attainment gaps for all target groups.**
7. The work of the Plus Programme has been successful in engaging students who progress via access to Leeds, estranged students and care leavers and the impact includes positive non-continuation rates and degree attainment in line with peers. We plan to build on this by testing the rollout to additional groups of students including BTEC, POLAR 4 Q1 and IMD Q1 students who have opted not to progress via Access to Leeds. This will include pre-HE engagement with all groups referenced. The work outlined in the student success framework is part of a three-year plan that will provide pre-entry and on course support, through appropriate and timely interventions, for identified cohorts of students. **This work will contribute to closing the gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment (Success targets1, 2, 3 and 4)**
8. In light of sector changes, the University continues to work to transform its approach to the assessment and support for disabled students. We are moving from a funding led, individual ‘reasonable adjustments’ model to a proactive, student-centred and guided model, supporting the University’s vision, values and aspirations for embedding inclusivity across its culture, systems, structures and processes.
9. Since 2015/16 we have seen a 33% increase in service users; we are therefore working to ensure we continue to deliver an effective, student-centred and streamlined approach. We are particularly focussing on developing our communication systems (to ensure the student voice is represented and informs practice) and infrastructure for storing and analysing data. This approach will drive continuous improvement and contribute to reducing the risk of non-continuation amongst disabled students. **This work will contribute to closing the gaps in non-continuation amongst disabled students.**
10. **Financial support** is a strategic measure targeted at students from disadvantaged backgrounds using family income as the indicator for eligibility. The aim is to maximise continuation and degree attainment. The objective is to ensure that students can participate all aspects of university life without financial barrier. Leeds Bursary offers full- and part-time students a choice of a fee discount, cash award or contribution towards accommodation, giving them the opportunity to choose the support most appropriate to their individual circumstances. The amount of Leeds Bursary a student receives depends on:

* their household income
* whether they are studying a foundation year
* the year they started at Leeds.

1. This an automatic award, which the students do not have to apply for. Full time students starting at Leeds in 2019, (all financial support packages are reviewed annually, so all figures quoted are only certain for students starting their studies in 2019) will receive the following, subject to an assessment of household income for each year of study using data from the Student Loans Company:

| **Household Income** | **Award Amount Year 0 (foundation year only)** | **Award Amount (First & subsequent years at Leeds)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| £0 - £25,000 | £3,000 | £2,000 |
| £25,001 - £30,000 | £1,500 | £1,500 |
| £30,001 - £36,000 | £1,000 | £1,000 |
| £36,001 - £42,600 | £500 | No award |

UK students can choose between a cash sum, tuition fee discount and a discount on University owned accommodation.

Part time students receive a **pro-rata** proportion of the following financial support package (see [details on awards for specific intensities of study](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/128004/fees_and_funding/28/leeds_financial_support_non-repayable)):

| Household Income | Award Amount  Year 0 (Foundation Year) | Award amount  Year 1 and subsequent years |
| --- | --- | --- |
| £0-£25,000 | £3,000 | £2,500 |
| £25,001-£30,000 | £1,500 | £1,500 |
| £30,001-£36,000 | £1,000 | £1,000 |
| £36,001-£42,875 | £500 | £500 |

1. We also offer means-tested WP scholarships. To be eligible to apply for the higher value WP scholarship, a student’s annual household income must be assessed as being £42,875 or below. The scholarships are worth £3k per year (for 3 years). Students are paid in 8 instalments of £375, across each academic year. These are more valuable because they are intended to target WP students who are most in need of support (e.g. care leavers and estranged students). The selection criteria of these awards takes in account a range of indicators which may show an applicant is from a less advantaged background; these include:

* Students who progressed to Leeds after successfully completing one of our fair access initiatives (Access to Leeds, Realising Opportunities, Reach for Excellence or a Foundation Year)
* Students who are first generation in their family to enter higher education
* Students whose studies have been disrupted by circumstances in their personal, social and domestic lives
* Student who live in a geographical area with low levels of progression to higher education
* Students who have experienced time in Local Authority Care or Kinship Care or who are Estranged from both of their parents
* Student with caring responsibilities
* Students who have been recognised as a refugee by the UK government, or been granted humanitarian protection status

1. The quantitative aspect of our evaluation of our funding package (using the OFFA toolkit) suggested that students in receipt of £3k and above are proportionally more likely to progress from year 1 to year 2 than non-Leeds Bursary recipients. It also found that students with a financial award ranging from £2001-£3000 are proportionally more likely than non-bursary students to achieve a first or upper second, therefore our WP Scholarships extend to £3,000.
2. We, however, interpreted the evaluation findings above with caution given the relatively wide confidence interval; therefore, our decision to maintain our award level for Leeds Bursary at £2,000 was based on further evaluation findings (Wyness G (2017), Higher Education bursaries: distribution and impact). These suggested the impact of financial support increased up to £2,000, thereafter there appeared to be less additional benefit.
3. Whilst the Leeds Bursary model and funding by income band is unchanged, the last two years has seen a decrease in eligible students entering the University and a continuation of this decline is projected in the reduction in spend on financial support within the five-year plan.
4. As preparation for the full APP submission in 2023, we will be reviewing our financial support package over the coming academic year. Our aims are to identify ways in which we can enhance and target additional support for specific groups, which may include Estranged, Care Experienced and intercalating students as well as offer support with the increasing costs of living.
5. Our analysis of internal data points to structural differences that explain some of the differences in non-continuation and degree attainment between mature and young students. Additional research will be undertaken to understand these gaps. We will also pilot activity to ascertain the effectiveness of support aimed at ensuring a high level of continuation and attainment for mature students. There will be a focus on academic support for mature students including building capacity and confidence in numeracy skills. Both areas have been highlighted as benefiting mature students in an ongoing qualitative longitudinal survey of Lifelong Learning students’ life cycle and will be working to address the attainment gap between mature and young students.

**Our Finance Support work will contribute to closing the gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment between young and mature students (Success Targets 3 and 4)**

1. Whilst a target has not been set for reduction of the gap in non-continuation and Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students, we’re confident that our understanding of the factors that influence this and the approach to closing gaps for mature and POLAR4 and IMD Q1 students will also have a positive impact on this group with monitoring to review this.

## Progression: Strategic measures

1. Our **Assessment of performance** shows that, despite progress, the gap in performance is still not entirely closed between under-represented groups and the wider undergraduate population. We do not intend to set a target but work will continue to close the gap. This includes work to enhance **employability**. The Access and Participation Plan for 2019/2020 set out a plan for the recruitment of Graduate Employability interns. A team of graduates living locally have now been recruited to support WP students with their progression after graduation. They work with an identified cohort to ensure progression into a desired employment or postgraduate route. They are using specific data sets which have been compiled through Careers and registration data. This work is supported by an Employability Officer in our Careers Centre. **This work will contribute to closing the gap in progression to further study or graduate employment between Q1 and Q5 students.**
2. We are working in **collaboration** with an external Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group mentoring consultant to provide coaching for 1st and 2nd year Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students, with the objective of narrowing the non-continuation gap between Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and White students outlined in our **Assessment of Performance** but also to provide leadership skills to help progression outcomes. Early evaluation feedback indicates that the Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group-specific nature of this scheme has helped with participation. **This work will contribute to closing the gap in progression to further study or graduate employment among Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group and white students.**
3. The University of Leeds, has led an OfS funded ‘Barriers to Student Success’ project, working in collaboration with four additional institutions, testing interventions to maximise progression to, and success in taught postgraduate study. The evaluation, including the use of a randomised control trial, will shape the institutional approach and findings will be shared with TASO to inform the wider sector.

## STUDENT CONSULTATION

1. Our University ‘Partnership’, developed by students and staff, describes our mutual expectations as members of the University community. Leeds University Union (LUU) staff and Sabbaticals have regular meetings with key partners in the University, (the Vice Chancellor, Head of Student Cases and Head of Student Support) enabling issues to be raised and the student voice to be heard. Annex B provides more information on how the LUU works in partnership with the University to support access and participation.
2. The development of the APP includes a specific student consultation process whereby the LUU works with the University to facilitate the direct contribution of a diverse range of students. The contributions arising from the consultation are, where possible, built into the APP. Where a contribution is not included, the reasons for this are fed back to the group and the LUU. In the development of this APP, there weren’t any recommendations that could not be built in. Students also help monitor the APP through representation on University Committees, including the Recruitment Committee.
3. Training on social mobility is embedded from the recruitment stage of all academic representation roles for students. This continues formally and informally with the opportunity to undertake specific roles to work on the agenda.
4. Student voice is crucial to the success of the Plus Programme, our Student Steering Group helps to shape the direction and delivery of the scheme. The group is modelled on the governance and co-production principles that underlie successful public engagement in health research (Greenhalgh T, et al (2016), Achieving Research Impact through Co‐creation in Community‐Based Health Services: Literature Review and Case Study). Plus Programme students from a variety of subject areas, ethnicities and level of study (e.g. undergraduate and postgraduate) are employed to influence, steer and evaluate elements of the scheme, including methods of communication and the development of social media and web materials and interventions.
5. We employ students to deliver outreach activities on campus or in schools (often students who have progressed to Leeds through WP routes). Mature Student Learning Champions are involved in a range of activities with adults from local communities to encourage HE progression. We offer a variety of outreach roles to students, with WP students specifically targeted to apply. These include student host and Education Outreach Fellow roles and also student led subject initiatives such as Widening Access to the Medical School (WAMS).

## EVALUATION STRATEGY

### Strategic context

1. Resource for evaluation, research and monitoring is allocated with strategic oversight, informed by a dedicated evaluation and monitoring team in Educational Engagement, linking closely with our Lifelong Learning Centre. A consistent approach to evaluation is embedded across teams directly involved in widening participation with opportunities to develop understanding and refine processes. Research, monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by a wider team of professional and academic colleagues with a permanent working group, the Evaluation Strategy Implementation Group (ESIG) dedicated to the review of progress on this agenda. We engage with pre-entry students, current UG and PG students, academic and service staff and PhD students to inform our programme development and to evaluate our progress against targets and to commission research.
2. An evaluation culture is supported at an institutional level and it is embedded within our Access and Student Success Strategy as a core objective. The [Higher Education Action Tracker](https://heat.ac.uk) (HEAT) is now embedded and will be used to monitor the success of our activities over the period of the APP. WP practitioners are using logic models to understand the inputs required to produce our outcomes, with linked timescales.
3. Our work to provide opportunity for honest reflection on effectiveness of our approach to evaluation, and in turn our activities, will start with an independent evaluation by an external agency to report in 2020/2021, with recommendations which will inform future practice. Priorities for 2020/2021 onwards are to embed the evaluation programme across all widening participation across the institution, particularly through the student success project. Expected outcomes include a greater understanding of how to evaluate, and share, best practice and enhanced opportunity to apply learning into related policy and strategy, and a continued focus on availability of data with a culture of evidencing impact.
4. One essential strand of our work is ensuring that we continue to have evaluation and/or research delivered by:

* Academics at the University of Leeds. Utilising our realist researcher expertise to help deliver projects which will inform our practice such as delivering surveys or holding ‘Listening Rooms’ with students to increase our understanding of what belonging means to different student groups.
* Agencies and partners external to the University: we are currently in the second phase of a research project with TASO and other HEIs to investigate the impact of summer schools on entry to HE. The project comprises a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) to investigate causal links and and Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE) which will tell us more about whether, why and how summer schools have an effect on students’ decisions to progress to higher education.
* We have also contributed to phase one of a TASO funded project with Brilliant Club to review existing survey scales used in the sector. Phase two will see the Brilliant Club develop and validate a multi-scale questionnaire for HEPs.
* Our Lifelong Learning Centre are also partnering with TASO to explore small-n evaluation of a pre-entry intervention for mature students.

1. Where possible/appropriate our research and evaluation, whether delivered in-house or through external partners, will be shared or published in peer reviewed journals evidencing the robustness of our approach.
2. The focus for research over the next two years includes gaps in degree attainment, non-continuation and admissions policy to widen access. The University’s Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence enhances this further through the provision of research fellowships for priority areas to address social mobility. Current research includes work on induction, transition and the experience of curriculum and learning by our Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group students. In addition, our longitudinal study of mature student experiences is coming to an end and will be reporting in 2023/24.
3. There is opportunity for staff employed in this area to enhance their skills and develop their knowledge through conferences and involvement in organisations or external projects. To continue the trajectory of continuous improvement, we will include opportunities for our university ambassadors to develop their areas of interest, enhance their learning and support their sharing of lived experiences and perspectives.

**Objective:** The evaluation model, at the University of Leeds, is embedded across work aimed at addressing gaps in social mobility by 2025.

**Outcomes:**

* The approach to evaluation is embedded across all widening participation initiatives
* Independent evaluation will enable honest reflection of our effectiveness of approach
* The staff and student community across the University of Leeds will have increased opportunity to develop their skills base and expertise
* Focus on availability of data and culture of evidencing impact

### Programme design

1. Our Student Success Project, as outlined in our the **Student Success: Strategic measures and Student Success: Strategic approach** section, has been developed using both the findings from our research into retention trends at the University of Leeds and a pilot trial of additional data sets. We looked at five years of data using a regression analysis to identify unexplained differences in retention rates amongst students from WP or under-represented backgrounds including POLAR 4, Black, Asian and minority/minoritised ethnic group, mature, disability, SEC, and gender (15 variables in total) at both school and faculty level. The findings were disseminated across the institution to inform the development of a full programme of student success activity for all Leeds students including improvement to teaching and pedagogy methods, a review of the curriculum in collaboration with students to make it more inclusive and student support embedded within faculties. Interventions are being developed and piloted in three faculties during 2018/2019 with details of impact expected to be reported during 2021/2022.
2. We are also reviewing student attainment, controlling for entry tariff, as well as student views on how they perceive their University experience through the four explanatory factors identified in HEFCE’s 2015 report *Causes of differences in student outcomes.* The findings are due to be released in late 2018/2019 and will be disseminated across the institution through the Student Success Management Group and used to develop changes to the curriculum and learning and teaching methods across the University.
3. Measures with outcomes are applied across all core programmes and this approach is embedded into the planning stage for all interventions. Our focus will be to support the wider institution to apply this approach providing a wider body of evidence and directing activity to where impact is greatest.
4. We will use learning from GHWY by engaging in dissemination and considering how this relates to our work. We will consider if and how we can use the GHWY Progression Framework as part of ensuring our outreach work is evidence informed. As a multi-layer consortium spanning universities and HE providers with FE provision, there is the potential to bring together relevant data sources to evidence impact, as well as test interventions in a variety of HE settings. Evaluation expertise within the consortium can be utilised by all partners, which hosts good practice events to share and disseminate learning.

**Objective:** All activity intended to meet targets outlined in the Access and Participation plan will be informed by existing evidence with evaluation at design stage

**Outcome:** Good practice in this area, as outlined in the evaluation self-assessment will be applied across all programmes.

### Evaluation design

1. Work began during 2018/2019 to develop a new evaluation framework in line with the new OfS expectations for types of evaluation. The framework is currently being piloted with feedback and amendments to the framework to be implemented by the end of 2018/2019. All cross-institutional activity and investment will be evaluated using both the framework and monitoring of high-level institutional targets from 2019/20 to continually improve the effectiveness of our work.
2. All activity is currently being reviewed to ensure that it is underpinned by an evidence-based theory of change and where there is little or no evidence to support the theory, we are investigating how we can gather our own data to inform our practice. We are committed to the use of different research designs and have recently used Randomised Control Trials as the lead institution for a collaborative project that tested interventions to support progression to, and success in taught postgraduate study. We intend to develop our approach further by developing capacity in the use of business intelligence and data analytics.

**Objective:** Evaluation of activity, to meet Access and Participation Plan targets, will be proportionate to the complexity of the programme and context for delivery

**Outcome**: Practitioners involved in WP activity will have increased opportunity to develop skills to evaluate using a range of methodology, including the use of business intelligence and data analytics.

### Evaluation implementation

1. We use various methods of evaluation to ensure that our findings are both robust and ethically obtained. We use HEAT for our sustained programmes of engagement, using consent as the legal basis for data processing, having sought ethical approval for this evaluation.
2. When developing and completing complex data analysis, we engage with our academic community. For example, we investigated non-continuation using a complex, multi-variable, binary regression analysis model to ensure that our findings were robust and controlled for various relevant factors such as qualification type on entry, gender, ethnicity and POLAR data.
3. We also work collaboratively with external stakeholders to design and deliver effective evaluation. For example, we work with the Tutor Trust, The Brilliant Club, IntoUniversity (IU), sharing good practice and support. We are currently working with IU to support a one-year trial of the HEAT system, in collaboration with the HEAT service. This work will contribute to the national evaluation of the IU programme.

**Objective:** Data collection mechanisms will be standardised across all programmes

**Outcome:** The evaluation framework will include the use of data incorporating validated or sector-standard tools and techniques.

### Learning to shape improvements

1. We identified during 2017/2018 that we have a strong record in evaluating the impact of activity, particularly our sustained programmes of engagement, but tend to share our findings inside the institution. Therefore, we are currently recruiting to a post with the remit of gathering all of our findings to share threefold – a conference for practitioners and researchers, a summary of our research to be published online and sharing our findings across the sector and the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes.
2. We have appointed a data analyst to our evaluation and monitoring team as we have recognised that additional resource and investment is needed to support our work when evaluating robustly using quantitative data. We expect to share our findings from these changes.
3. We will consider and seek opportunities to collaborate with the GHWY NCOP research and evaluation team to assess the effectiveness of collaborative activities and/or activities delivered by University of Leeds as part of a progressive programme of outreach activity.

**Objective:** Evaluation and Monitoring team will be a priority for investment

**Outcome**: Increased level of data will be available to inform programme design, evaluation design will be improved through collaboration and our outcomes will be widely shared.

## MONITORING PROGRESS AGAINST DELIVERY

1. Enhancing institutional confidence and self-awareness sit at the centre of performance monitoring. Through effective progress monitoring we should demonstrate:
   1. Continuous improvement against APP aims
   2. Effective identification of risk (and mitigations) in year and monitor impact of corrective action.
   3. Fully understand and be able to articulate our successes underpinned by evidence
   4. Ensure effective use of limited resource at targeted initiatives.
   5. Enhance whole institutional ownership of progress against targets.

### Engaging the governing body with APP monitoring

1. **Council is already engaged in the monitoring and performance of our APP through receiving reports, in-year, on Recruitment Performance; Graduate Outcomes; Non-Continuation; Gaps in Attainment and Degree Classifications.**
2. **In addition we will provide an in-cycle Progress Report on APP objectives (May).**
3. **Underpinning this work, the Audit and Risk Committee (with members and Chair appointed directly from Council) provide an assurance mechanism supporting the APP.**

### Student engagement with performance monitoring

1. Leeds’ University Union are invited to attend a briefing to understand the changing landscape for APP progress and performance monitoring.
2. In addition, we will:

* Meet with the incoming LUU executive at the start of session to understand APP aims, objectives and establish progress to date
* Student officers with membership of APP-related governance mechanisms will be supported to develop their role and contribute proactively to our in-cycle monitoring of APP.
* An end of year workshop will be held following the submission of APP Impact report which will include students as key stakeholders in defining next steps for the APP.

### Progress monitoring and what actions will be taken if progress is worsening

1. Building on systems and processes already in place through the implementation of a risk register, we will identify areas of higher risk (responding robustly with mitigations) and highlight opportunities ensuring we can articulate and understand fully the reasons for a positive trajectory and identify where performance is falling short. This mechanism has already worked effectively. For example, Leeds responded immediately to a rise in non-continuation through the implementation of the Student Success Framework which, amongst other things, set up a programme to support the needs of students entering through Clearing.
2. For 2019/20, we will report through to Taught Student Funding and Impact Group four times per year. This Group, with student representation, will identify remedial actions across the APP landscape or, where appropriate, charge other related governance mechanisms with implementation. Progress will reported to Pricing, Scholarships and Financial Support Steering Group.

## PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

1. We recognise that fee levels and the financial support system available in universities and nationally might be difficult to understand so we are committed to making our information as accessible as possible as outlined below:

Information provided to students

* The fees a prospective student will be charged for the duration of their course (this information will be made available prior to students committing to the course).
* Government financial support arrangements.
* Details (for prospective, new and continuing students, including care experienced students) of financial and other support available including annual value, eligibility criteria and the arrangements surrounding any means-testing based on students sharing financial data.

Way in which information will be shared

* Our finance webpages, Propel website, student Portal.
* Dedicated parent and advisor information via the web and through conferences and sessions at Open Days.
* Integrated messages within our WP and non-WP outreach
* Appropriate hard-copy publications (e.g. the University Prospectus).
* Individual financial literacy and budgeting support for students on our talent-spotting schemes.

1. Our approved Access and Participation Plan will be available on our student finance webpages; these are approved and reviewed through committees which have student representation.
2. All of our information regarding financial support adheres to the Competition and Markets Authority's advice to ensure that we comply with consumer law.

## Annex A

## Equality Impact Assessment

The University of Leeds confirms that due regard has been paid to equality and inclusion issues in the development of this Access and Participation Plan. We evidence this through:

A collaborative approach to the development of our plan, with high levels of partnership between senior institutional leads for Educational Engagement, Equality and Inclusion, Student Support (including Disability

Services) and Lifelong Learning (for a focus on PT and Mature Learners).

This Access and Participation Plan is also developed in the context of the University’s Equality and Inclusion

Strategy, specifically Priority 4, which strives to embed equality and inclusion holistically across the whole of the student lifecycle, an aim that is strategically accountable to the University’s Equality and Inclusion

Committee (a Committee of University Council) and our Taught Student Education Board.

Our Plan seeks to make a substantial and positive difference (including taking positive action measures) to students from all protected characteristics and aims to improve the outcomes for all groups. Our Plan also sits alongside our own strong internal institutional commitment to accelerating equality progress for students from all backgrounds.

Alongside these considerations, we are taking a targeted approach where this is necessary to ensure that any disproportionality in access, engagement with key opportunities and services, and outcomes, for any specific equality group of students is identified and addressed.

We have sought the views of the student community in the development of this Plan, through our Partnership model and relationship with Leeds University Union.

Our in-year monitoring and regular assurance reporting will ensure that our commitments to paying due regard to equality and inclusion issues are maintained throughout the life of this Plan.

Our Plan provides more detail of our approach and specific activities to enable us to reach out to all of our diverse groups of students, address their needs and improve their access and outcomes.

## Annex B

## Leeds University Union Strategy

At Leeds University Union (LUU) we develop our Strategic Plan every four years based on direct feedback from our members. Our current four year plan (2018-2022) focusing on supporting our students to achieve their goals, stay healthy and happy and find value in their membership of the Student Union. The current plan is divided into four areas, Enrich, Empower, Drive and Inspire. Our Strategic Plan is reliant on forging strong partnerships within the University as well as the City of Leeds and our ever widening student Community which is both local and global. We see this as an effective mechanism for ensuring our students receive the best they can from both us as a Student Union and the University.

## Consultation

Consultation is a key part of policy work within LUU, both in consulting students but also in responding to consultation on behalf of students. Each year students at the University of Leeds elect 6 officers to represent them. Included in those officers, we have an Equality and Diversity officer, a Welfare officer and a Community Officer. The elected officers’ manifestos become part of their objectives for the next year and directly inform project work and campaigns throughout their term in office which also influences their work and discussions with University partners.

There are over a 1000 student course reps across all departments at the University. They pick up on any localised issues or concerns that students may have and this in turn feeds back into improvements within that department. LUU are involved in the recruitment, training and support of the course reps.

LUU is often consulted on a wide range of areas with the University and external sources such as NASMA or Government consultations. LUU is a part of the University decision making process at every level and is consulted with when policies are made. An LUU student exec officer and staff member sit on University committees for example Taught Student Recruitment Committee, Taught Student Financial Impact Group Inclusivity Strategy group. As part of these committees student opinion is sought and represented in policy development, review and monitoring. Examples of this are the new scholarship offer and the annual Leeds Bursary offer each year. Elected Officers have staff support from LUU for each of these meetings to help inform on issues and trends that are being seen within the student community.

One mechanism within LUU that we use to consult with our students is our forum system. Students bring ideas to the forums which fall into the areas of Better Leeds (changes relating to the City), Better Union (changes proposed within LUU), Better University (changes they want to see within the University). For each idea submitted, a jury of randomly selected student peers vote whether the idea becomes policy. If it is a close vote it goes to referendum. This year some of the key issues that have come to through forums are: working with the University to ensure students receive quicker mental health support from the University, should LUU do more to engage students politically and should LUU lobby the University to provide free sanitary towels across campus. Following the outcome of forums staff within LUU are assigned to passed policies and responsible to put them into action.

## Widening Participation

LUU is embedded within the raising aspiration work of the University of Leeds. LUU supports the following programmes: Access to Leeds, Realising Opportunities and Thomas Transition. LUU participates in the Reach for Excellence summer residential and when they arrive in Leeds at the welcome talks. This has been a long running partnership and a current member of our sabbatical team came through on this programme.

Our Equality and Diversity officer has also been consulted with the Plus Programme offer to see how we can improve support for Access to Leeds students after they are accepted into the University of Leeds. The Plus Programme sessions are offered to students to improve their skills, including confidence building and presentation skills workshops, study skills (i.e. – essay support, time management, exam preparation, research skills and report writing) in the hope that this will support students whilst they are studying at the University of Leeds. A staff member from LUU Advice helps to deliver some support and information to students on the programme.

We have also successfully piloted our Societies into Schools programme with LUU societies taking up the opportunity to deliver inspiring aspiration raising activities in targeted local and regional primary schools. The flagship partnership programme between the University and LUU will be further developed to ultimately allow members of every society in the LUU to have the opportunity to participate in outreach activities in the schools and the community.

## Equality and Diversity

LUU have focused on diversify their Help and Support staff team to ensure that it is representative of the wider student body. The number of staff with BME backgrounds has increased by 50%.Their role will help broaden the reach and understanding with the intention of encouraging more BME students to access support earlier.

As part of the DSA reforms our Equality and Diversity officer has been integral in supporting students and communicating with the University. LUU is consulted throughout the University’s reporting structure and in developing the University’s response to the reforms and supports with key messages to concerned students. The Equality and Diversity officer sits on the working group focusing on this and feeds back concerns from students about these changes

We have a successful Liberation Co-ordinators programme. These students volunteer to support other students in running and feeding into Liberation Campaigns both on campus and nationally. The liberation areas are: Black students/BME, Women students, LGBT and Disabled students. The Liberation Campaigns exist to defend and extend the rights of those particular groups of students (who often face discrimination in education and who are also oppressed in wider society). The students in these roles feed into key activity throughout LUU such as LGBT History month but also develop their own activity. The BME Liberation Co-ordinators ran local events to support the Black Lives Matter movement and the LGBT Liberation Co-ordinators ran stalls and social media campaigns about LGBT youth homelessness targeting MPs to raise awareness. This is the first year of the scheme and we are working with students to develop this programme.

Black History Month- This work is important to engage with our Widening Participation students who identify with these ethnicities to help foster a sense of belonging. This helps with engagement and retention. We have been running events in Black History Month for several years. This year’s programme involved film showings and talks on history and career access to young people from under-represented and under-served backgrounds.

One area of work being developed is to work with the University and Private Landlords to increase affordable and accessible private accommodation for student with disabilities who want to live off campus.

## Welfare

LUU and the University launches a new University funded service that operates within LUU. A daily Health and Wellbeing drop in service that is staffed by experienced Health and Wellbeing practitioners based within LUU. This service enables students who are struggling or distressed to have access to immediate support which can help students identify strategies to deal with how they feel as well as signpost for further emotional support if needed. It has helped to support over 200 students this academic year with a range of difficulties including, the transition from home to University, relationship breakdowns, failing exams or assignments as well as serious cases of assault. The feedback from students for this easily accessible service has been very positive.

The University and LUU have begun a two year project aimed at increasing students Health and Wellbeing across key Schools on campus. The project is funded by the University and run by LUU. It focuses on 6 Schools, Medicine, Civil Engineering, Lifelong Learning, Maths, Institute of Transport and the Business School. A Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator supervisors 8 student Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors. They deliver on the ground tailored events, activities and support within each targeted school. The Student Support leads and Managers for each of these Schools are involved in identifying the areas to focus on to help support the broad range of health and wellbeing for their students. The project is regularly evaluated and can be flexible depending on the change of needs for each group of students.

We are also an active member of Leeds SUs together- a partnership of staff and officers across all Universities in Leeds. This enables the different institutions to get together to see what issues may be facing students across the city and to identify areas where collaboration can take place.

Through our joint Hate Crime Project and the Universities Task Force group on preventing sexual assault and harassment, we have developed an online reporting system. This enables students or staff to report any form of harassment or assault on/off campus and they can receive direct support if needed or remain anonymous. The data collected forms part of the reporting processes and feeds into training and direct campaign activity if trends are identified. This report system was a partnership piece between the University and LUU and is now firmly embedded into the Universities reporting and support structures.

## Recruitment

LUU is a key focus point in recruitment including supporting the University open days. Welcoming students on Open days allows staff and student led groups to engage and promote the activities and support that students would receive from LUU and also shows how we work in partnership with the University and how this benefits students.

LUU Advice also offers information and advice to prospective students, this can be on a wide range of topics but generally most questions are asked in relation to financial support. This allows us to promote what support the Union offers but also the different support that can be offered by the University.

## Lifelong Learning Centre

We work closely with the Lifelong Learning Centre, supporting part time and mature learners. We support social events, provide advice, information and representation. We have a mature and part time society; our Equality and Diversity Officer and our Education Officer are supporting the society’s campaign against the age cap on Post Graduate loans.

We also deliver tailored talks to Lifelong Learning Students as well as offering introductions to the Student Union so that students can see the range of activities on offer than can meet a diverse range of interest

## Partnership

The University and LUU have had a formal partnership agreement since 2011. This partnership is still active as demonstrated with the level of consultation and joint project working

Our partnership is celebrated with the Partnership awards each year. Last year we had over 1200 nominations and are currently shortlisting nominees. The categories are Wellbeing Champion, Academic Rep, Best Feedback, Innovation Award, Inspirational Teaching Award, Mentor Award, Outreach Award, Personal Tutor Award, Postgraduate Teaching Award, Positive Impact Award, and the Supervisor Award. In particular the outreach award is for the person who has made an exceptional effort towards encouraging and working with potential students and supporting a diverse and inclusive environment.