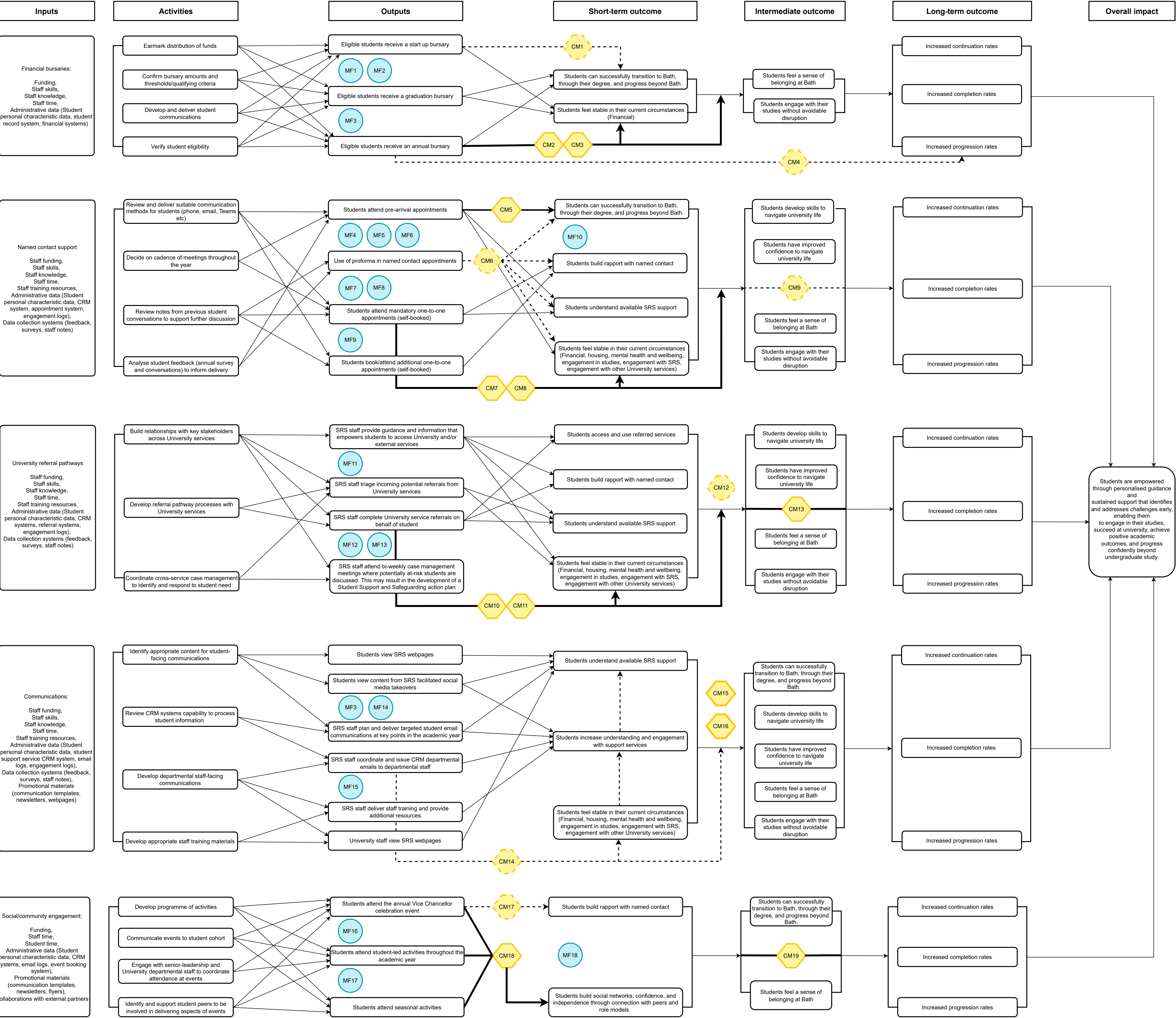


Student Retention and Success (SRS) Interventions: Enhanced Theory of Change (eToC)

The SRS team has operated since 2017, supporting care experienced, estranged, young adult carer, and refugee/asylum seeker students to navigate and succeed in their undergraduate degree at the University of Bath. Over time, the SRS team have continued to develop holistic interventions that are captured in this eToC. The eToC outlines the intervention strands, activities, and intended outcomes and impact that underpin this provision. It also articulates the change mechanisms (CM) and moderating factors (MF) that link activities to outcomes, setting out the causal pathways through which the service supports student retention, engagement, and success.



Key		
	Change mechanism	→ Pathway link
	Moderating factor	- -> Emerging evidence of change

- CM1 Start-up bursaries support early engagement with induction, community building and university support.
- CM2 Bursary processes are flexible and relational to provide students with personalised support.
- CM3 Bursary payments support students' stability across the academic year, including accommodation, work commitments, and further basic needs.
- CM4 Graduation bursaries prepare students for life after university, providing further motivation to support completion of studies.
- CM5 Proactive communications prior to arrival reduces potential difficulties in transition to University. Raising awareness of SRS services and signposting to webpages/resources within early discussions can identify support needs and provide access to tailored support.
- CM6 A structured proforma and appointment model provides a reliable, consistent framework for students. This ensures staff deliver consistent holistic triage, via recognition of common themes, scaffolding disclosure, and building self-advocacy, autonomy and independence.
- CM7 Attending regular one-to-one appointments enables early identification and resolution of risk.
- CM8 Named contacts provide dependable relationship-based support that provides sustained help-seeking for students, which will positively impact academic engagement, wellbeing, and retention.
- CM9 Students build confidence, autonomy, and self-advocacy skills that enable meaningful engagement.
- CM10 Positioning students as partners and SRS staff-led advocacy ensures students' needs are met, with students connected to most appropriate internal and external support, which builds student trust in service.
- CM11 Urgent needs are addressed promptly with fast-track referral routes and regular cross-service case management meetings, supporting effective coordination for complex cases.
- CM12 SRS staff complete regular reviews of referral uptake, and conduct follow-up conversations with students to create a feedback loop that informs support service adjustments.
- CM13 SRS staff-led advocacy within referral pathways supports University services responsiveness to student needs, supports students' capacity to focus on studies and develop self-advocacy skills.
- CM14 Targeted CRM emails and training to departmental teams equip departmental staff with skills, clear expectations, and resources to support student needs and provide appropriate SRS referral pathways.
- CM15 Use of timely communications across multiple channels provides clear information to potential applicants, students and staff about SRS intervention and support.
- CM16 Student and engagement records are updated in CRM and accessible to relevant staff to ensure students experience coordinated support.
- CM17 Senior leadership representation at events increases institutional buy-in and students feel taken seriously.
- CM18 Events provide safe and supportive spaces for students to meet others, which supports confidence-building through shared experiences.
- CM19 Students are given a platform to connect with similar peers and role models, supporting the sharing of lived experiences that build social confidence and help them develop the attitudes and behaviours needed to interact positively, support others, and feel part of a community.
- MF1 University financial decision makers have the necessary understanding of the service which ensures funding is sustained, and continually committed to within the Access and Participation Plan.
- MF2 Eligibility criteria correctly identifies the students most likely to benefit from SRS support and the verification process is fair, robust, equally applied, and documented.
- MF3 Student communications are timely, understood by students, and students will engage with UCAS application and/or enrolment processes.
- MF4 SRS staff can accommodate students' preferred channel for communicating with named contact (e.g. phone/Teams/face-to-face).
- MF5 Students feel comfortable to disclose information via their preferred method (emails, calls, 1:1 appointments, within events etc.)
- MF6 SRS staff apply their professional judgement in deciding when and how the proforma content can scaffold conversations in a manner that is relevant to the students and their needs.
- MF7 External factors (e.g. housing insecurity, financial hardship, life events, wellbeing) will not discourage engagement with named contact.
- MF8 Students engage in a sufficient number of appointments to receive benefits from the SRS team.
- MF9 SRS staff provide a consistent approach to communications and appointments, with named contacts/students actioning items committed to within appointments.
- MF10 Students who engage with pre-arrival contact experience a better transition experience, as staff have implemented support requirements early and can consult with relevant internal departments.
- MF11 SRS staff are knowledgeable about internal and external services that may provide beneficial support to students and are confident in relaying this information with care to students.
- MF12 Where students have complex or urgent needs and limited self-advocacy, SRS identifies these needs and advocate for students in referral conversations with departments, helping enable appropriate, timely, and student-centred referral pathways.
- MF13 An integrated case management review process will identify students who require additional support and appropriate mechanisms are put in place.
- MF14 Student Support and Safeguarding's CRM system maintains accurate, up-to-date records of student information and staff interactions, supporting continuity of care and reducing the need for students to repeat their circumstances.
- MF15 Departmental staff acquire the right knowledge and skills through training resources to confidently create the conditions for successful referral processes to SRS.
- MF16 The wider University staff community are interested in attending engagement activities
- MF17 Appropriate space and facilities are sourced to deliver activities that students feel comfortable in attending and participating fully.
- MF18 Students are willing to engage with their peers, sharing information about their university experiences and using events to connect with others.