

# Belong at Bath



Access and  
Participation Plan  
2020-2024



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**

## Access and Participation Plan (updates 2022)

This Access and Participation Plan sets out how the University will support under-represented groups of students getting into and through the University. It also sets out how we will address any gaps in its access or degree outcomes for under-represented students.

The Plan was originally written in 2018/19 and approved in 2019/20. The original Plan covered the period 2020/21 to 2024/25.

In late 2021 the Department for Education (DfE) gave new guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) to set new priorities in respect to Access and Participation. New guidance was issued in early 2022<sup>1</sup> and the University was asked to undertake a variation process to edit the current Plan. The new priorities are:

- **Priority A:** Make access and participation plans more accessible in a way that prospective and current students, their parents and other stakeholders can easily understand.
- **Priority B:** Develop, enhance and expand their partnerships with schools and other local and national organisations, to help raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented groups across England.
- **Priority C:** Set out how access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups leads to successful participation on high quality courses and good graduate outcomes.
- **Priority D:** Seek to develop more diverse pathways into and through higher education through expansion of flexible Level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships.

As a result of this new guidance, this edited Plan now covers the period 2020/21 to 2023/24 (one year less than the original).

The main bulk of the Plan has remained the same, and data or commitments have not been updated from the original Plan. New sections have been added at 3.1.4, 3.1.6 and 3.1.9 to address the new priorities, these are marked in the headings as addressing the priorities above.

Priority A is addressed through a reformatting of the document including the introduction of a summary (which is published separately from this Plan, introduction of a contents page and clearer highlighting of the targets set.

Throughout the remaining years of this Plan, we will undertake reviews and begin to look forward to the new Access and Participation Plan beginning in 2024/25.

Throughout this plan the term BAME is used. The University of Bath acknowledges that the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) has become more contested over time. This Plan was written in mid-2019 and the term BAME was included in this report mirroring guidance documents from the Office for Students which used this term. Disaggregated ethnicity data from the OfS APP dataset are presented throughout the report. Within this Plan a commitment is included to disaggregate ethnicity data where possible, and the importance of doing that within our work is continually stressed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/variation-requests/>

## Glossary

Through this plan we use the following terms with the definitions given below:

### Access

Access refers to students' entry to university.

### Access and Participation Plan (APP)

Access and participation plans (APPs) set out how Universities will support under-represented groups of students getting into and through the University. It also sets out how Universities will address any gaps in their access or degree outcomes for under-represented students.

### Attainment

Attainment refers to the academic outcome that a student achieves at higher education. This can also be referred to as **Degree Outcomes**.

### Attainment Gap

Attainment Gap refers to a difference in the academic outcomes that different students achieve at higher education. Our data shows that students with disabilities or students from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds are less likely to achieve the same grades as students without disabilities, or White students. The difference between these student's grades is the Attainment Gap.

### BAME

BAME is the abbreviated term for the ethnicities Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

### Contextual Admissions

A process where a Higher Education Provider considers an individual student's circumstances when assessing their application and earlier attainment and makes them an offer based on the context of those circumstances.

### Continuation

Continuation refers to students who continue their studies into their second, or later, years of study.

### Higher Education Provider (HEP)

Higher education Provider (HEP) means an institution which supplies higher education

### Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a tool which can be used by HEPs to identify the levels of deprivation across different neighbourhoods. This data can help HEPs when assessing an individual student's application, or when considering where to target their access activities.

### Degree Outcomes

Degree outcomes refers to the academic outcome that a student achieves at higher education. This can also be referred to as **Attainment**.

## Participation rates Of Local AREas (POLAR)

The Participation rates of Local AREas (POLAR) refers to a way of measuring areas or neighbourhoods across the UK according to the participation of young people in higher education from those areas or neighbourhoods. You may see this referred to as high or low progression areas – see **Progression** for more details.

## Progression

Progression refers to students leaving the University and going into graduate level careers or further study.

## Underrepresented Groups or Disadvantaged Groups

These terms refer to groups which are currently underrepresented in higher education. This includes, but is not limited to:

- people from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where higher education participation is low
- people from low-income backgrounds (we define 'low income' as up to £42,875 per year household income)
- some ethnic groups or sub-groups, including White males from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- disabled people
- mature and part-time learners
- care leavers
- carers
- people estranged from their families
- people from gypsy and Traveller communities
- refugees
- students with mental health problems, Specific Learning Difficulties and/or who are on the autism spectrum
- children from military families.

## Target Groups

This refers to underrepresented groups which have particular gaps in equality of access, success, progression, continuation or attainment at the University of Bath, according to our data. Our APP is focused on narrowing or eliminating these gaps for our target groups.

## Widening Access Activity

Any activity which takes place to encourage underrepresented groups to apply to and enter higher education. This may include programmes or activities which take place at a university or in schools or colleges and could range from a talk by a current student, to a summer school which takes place over several weeks.

## Widening Participation (WP)

Removing the barriers to higher education, including financial barriers, that students from lower income and other under-represented backgrounds face.



# University of Bath Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2023-24

(Updated from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in 2022 in line with OfS guidance)

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# Summary

## University of Bath: Summary of 2020-21 to 2023-24 access and participation plan

### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans (APPs) set out how Universities ensure everyone, no matter their background, can gain places at and succeed at university as well as getting good employment (or further study) after they leave.



You can see the full access and participation plan for the University of Bath at <http://go.bath.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan>

### Key points

The focus of our Access and Participation plan is on improving the diversity of students getting in (**access**) to the University of Bath and narrowing the degree outcome (**attainment**) gap between specific groups of students.

- Our data shows that students are less likely to access the University if they come from low-income backgrounds or live in neighbourhoods where few people go on to higher education.
- Our data also shows that some groups of students are less likely to achieve the same grades as others. These are:
  - Students with disabilities
  - Students from Black, Asian, and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds.

Our data shows that there are no gaps in our continuation, attainment and progression rates for other underrepresented groups identified by the Office for Students. We will continue to monitor these areas for any changes.

### Fees we charge

At the University of Bath, the maximum fees charged are:

- **£9,250** for full time students.



You can see a full list of fees for courses at the University of Bath at <https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/tuition-fees/>

See page 44 of the full plan.

### Financial help available

The key aims of our financial support programme are:

- To provide support to the students with the **greatest additional need** so that they can fully take part in life at university,
- To make sure students who already receive scholarships and bursaries can also receive **additional support and opportunities** to build their skills and expertise, and,
- When necessary, to provide **targeted financial support** to students experiencing specific financial burdens.

See page 34 and pages 42 – 43 of the full plan.

We offer a range of financial support for our students from underrepresented groups, including:

- An annual bursary of **£3,000** for the duration of the course if a student's household income is below £25,000 and if they meet one of our additional widening participation criteria. Or an accommodation bursary of up to **£1,250** for students of household incomes up to £60,000 who meet one of our additional widening participation criteria
- An annual bursary of **£1,000** for the duration of the course, plus **£1,000** for start-up costs and a further **£1,000** on graduation for care leavers, refugee students and students who are irreconcilably estranged from their parents or guardians.
- **A hardship fund** to support students experiencing financial difficulties during their studies.



For the most up to date information, see

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/undergraduate-scholarships-bursaries-and-other-funding/>

## Information for students

- **Future students** receive information on fees and financial support via our website and at in-person events, such as our open days or school visits.
- **Current students** receive information about fees and financial support available to them through our student portal, from our dedicated Student Money Advice team, or via internal communications and campaigns.
- We regularly update our information for care leavers on the [Propel](#) website.

See page 42 of the full plan



For the most up to date information, see our [university website](#)

## What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aims and targets focus on providing support for specific groups of students so that they can access higher education. We are also striving to create an environment where all students at the University of Bath will achieve their full potential.

See pages 15 - 23 of the full plan

Based on an assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

- **Support attainment at school and access to higher education**
  - We are working with schools to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification. We have a dedicated outreach team who works with target schools to support our attainment raising goals.
- **Diversifying our provision.**
  - We will review our current degree apprenticeships offer during 2022 – 23. We will also review the feasibility of offering a Foundation Year programme or working with local Further Education colleges to offer more flexible courses.
- **Reducing the gap in access to the University between:**
  - Students from areas with low participation in higher education, and students from areas with high participation.
  - Students from low-income and high-income backgrounds
- **Tackling the attainment gap**
  - By 2023 – 24, we will narrow the degree attainment gap between White students and students from Black, Asian, and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds.
  - By 2023-24, we will close completely the degree attainment gap between students with and without disabilities.

## What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 23 - 34 of the full plan.

### Access

Our aims and targets to improve our access rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods and low-income backgrounds are ambitious. To achieve these aims by 2023-24, we will:

- Continue to consider a student's circumstances when deciding what offer to make them (our Contextual Admissions system)
- Increase the number of students from our target groups on our outreach programmes
- Continue working with external partners who support underrepresented communities, including IntoUniversity and the Brilliant Club.
- Continue to offer bursaries for low-income students to counter the high cost of living in Bath.



## Attainment

To achieve our aims and targets to support attainment for students from underrepresented groups, we will:


- Transform and decolonise our curriculum so that all of our learning and teaching approaches are inclusive and create an institution wide culture of inclusion and belonging.
- Enhance the support available through the Student Union led Peer mentoring & Peer Assisted Learning Programmes.
- Strengthen our support provision for students with disabilities and increase access to student Health and Wellbeing services for all students. This will include specific provisions for students with mental health issues.
- Review our curriculum and assessment methodologies to improve the learning experiences of students with disabilities.

## How students can get involved

We worked closely with the Student's Union throughout the process of writing this APP and gathered student feedback via an online survey, interviews, and a focus group. This feedback was used to inform our APP strategy.

Today, representatives from the Students' Union sit on our APP Oversight Group, which monitors progress towards our targets.

See pages 34 - 38 of the full plan.

-  To provide **feedback on the APP**, students can [contact their student union representative](#).  
To **get involved**, students can [contact our Access and Participation Impact Manager](#)

## Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved


We aim maintain a strong culture of evaluating our progress towards APP targets, and we are always working to meet high standards with our evaluation work. Our evaluation commitments are to:

- Ensure that all work and projects throughout the University which contribute to us meeting our APP targets are correctly evaluated
- Improve staff confidence with evaluation through training and support,
- Continue to develop our Programme and Evaluation Framework, including adapting to work delivered on-course.
- Share our evaluation findings with schools and colleges

Our Access and Participation Oversight Group will report on our progress towards our targets and our evaluation activities to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) and the University Executive Board.

See pages 38 - 42 of the full plan.

## Contact details for further information

-  You can contact Dr Andrew Ross at [accessandparticipation@bath.ac.uk](mailto:accessandparticipation@bath.ac.uk) for further information.

# 1. Assessment of performance

## 1.1. Higher education participation, household income, or socio-economic status

### 1.1.1. POLAR/IMD Access

The University continues to face challenges in this area and therefore our primary focus remains Access, particularly linked to applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged postcodes and those where there is low progression to Higher Education (HE). We are highly polarised on IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) compared with the sector as a whole and with other higher tariff institutions, with one of the lowest proportions from the bottom two quintiles and very high proportions from the top quintile (quintile 5). The absolute gap in 2017/18 between the top quintile and bottom two IMD quintiles was 26 percentage points which is large but an improved position on 2016/17 when the gap was 30 percentage points. Although we have a wider gap than the sector average we do slightly better on the POLAR4 measure compared with other higher tariff institutions, however we still have very low proportions in the bottom two quintiles and a high proportion of students from the top POLAR quintile (quintile 5). The gap in POLAR access between the top and bottom two quintiles is 34 percentage points, and there has been no narrowing of this gap over the past five years.

Figure 1 Access: Bath entrants by percentage from each POLAR4 Quintile

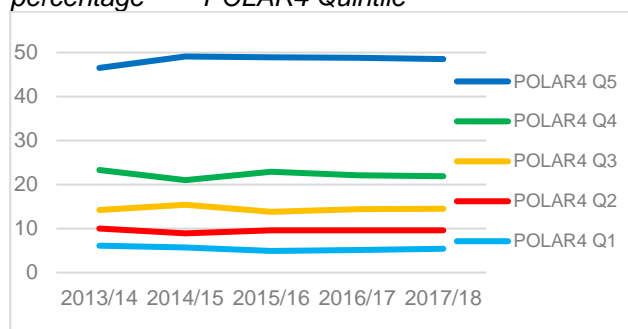
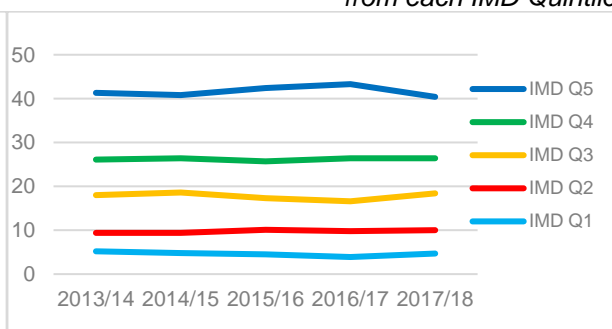


Figure 2 Access: Bath entrants by percentage from each IMD Quintile



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time Bath UK undergraduates

OfS has a particular mission to open up Access to high tariff institutions for those from lower socio-economic groups, and has made the elimination of the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers a long term target for the sector, as well as a key performance measure for itself. This is a key area for us to contribute to and we address this later in our widening access strategy and targets.

Although our entrants data show little improvement in recent years our analysis of the UCAS annual Equality Reports has shown that in the period from 2014 to 2016, where we focused particular effort on improving the offer rate for POLAR3 Q1 students there was an appreciable improvement in offer rates. This declined in subsequent admissions cycles when we introduced a basket of measures that also considered declared disability and school performance. As Access is the largest challenge for the University we will direct activity primarily to increasing our pool of applicants where their home postcode indicates low levels of HE participation (using POLAR4) and high levels of socio-economic disadvantage (IMD). To assist candidates and their advisers, the University commits to developing a postcode look-up tool which will indicate to applicants if their home postcode would qualify them for additional contextual consideration in the admissions process. The postcode tool will focus on POLAR4 and IMD data in the first instance, and we will investigate the potential to incorporate ACORN postcode data, which provides additional nuance on socio-economic deprivation to the IMD dataset.

### 1.1.2. POLAR/IMD Success: Non-continuation

APP data, HESA data and TEF metrics confirm our student retention figures are very good, with few students leaving the University before completing their courses (2-3%). This is the case both for all students and those from the lowest participation areas (using POLAR) and lower socio-economic groups (using IMD), who in some years have better continuation rates than students from higher progression areas and higher socio-economic groups. We have positive flags for both these groups in our TEF4 data.

Figure 3 Continuation rates: by POLAR4 Quintile

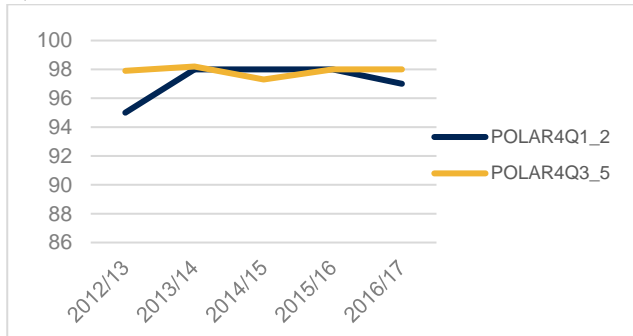
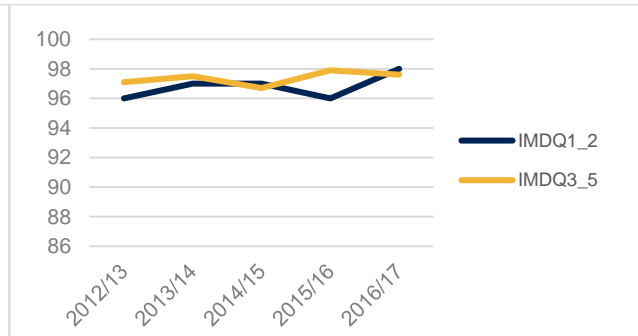


Figure 4 Continuation rates: by IMD



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time Bath UK undergraduates

### 1.1.3. POLAR/IMD Success: Attainment

We have made good progress supporting the attainment of students from underrepresented groups. We have halved our attainment gap for students from different socio-economic groups (IMD data) over the past five years from 10 percentage points to 5 percentage points. The most recent gap is now less than half the sector average (12 percentage points). The attainment differential for students from different progression areas (POLAR) shows no clear trend but students from lower progression areas did as well or better in two of the five most recent years. The gap for students from lower and higher POLAR quintile groups is now around 5 percentage points which is the same as the sector average.

Figure 5 Attainment rates: by POLAR4 Quintile

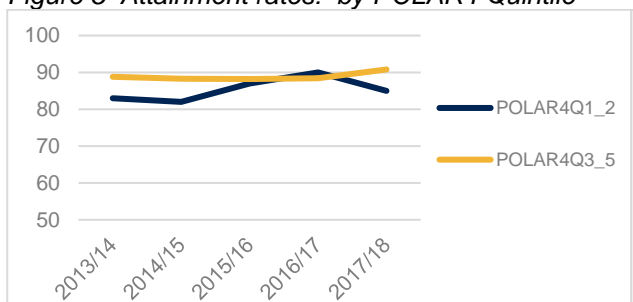
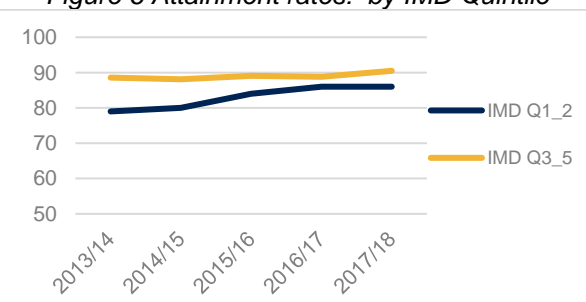


Figure 6 Attainment rates: by IMD Quintile



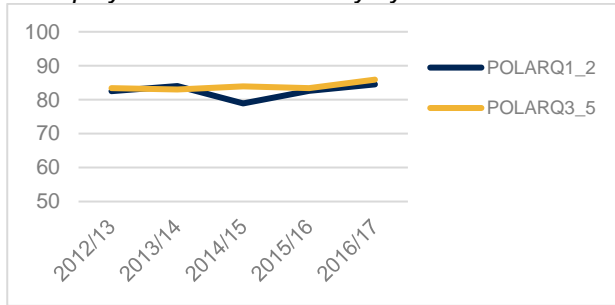
Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time Bath UK undergraduates

### 1.1.4. POLAR/IMD Progression to employment or further study

Progression rates into graduate employment or further study at Bath are very high relative to the sector as a whole, and remain high and steady for students irrespective of socio-economic background or whether or not students come from areas with lower participation in HE. Between 80% and 85% of students progress into graduate employment or further study including students across protected characteristic groups in the most recent year. TEF metrics confirm the University's strong record on progression into employment or further study with a double flag for IMD Q1/Q2 and a single flag for POLAR Q1/Q2. TEF metrics also show double positive flags for earnings above the median or further

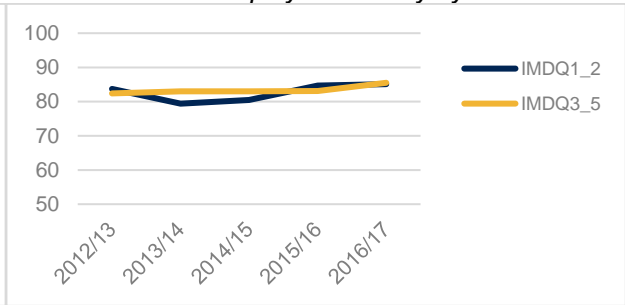
study for all the disadvantaged groups included (mature students, POLAR Q1/Q2, IMD Q1/Q2, BAME students, students with disabilities, males and females).

Figure 7 Progression: Percentage Bath students in employment or further study by POLAR4



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time undergraduates

grouping Figure 8 Progression: Percentage Bath students in employment study by IMD Quintile



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All

### Intersections

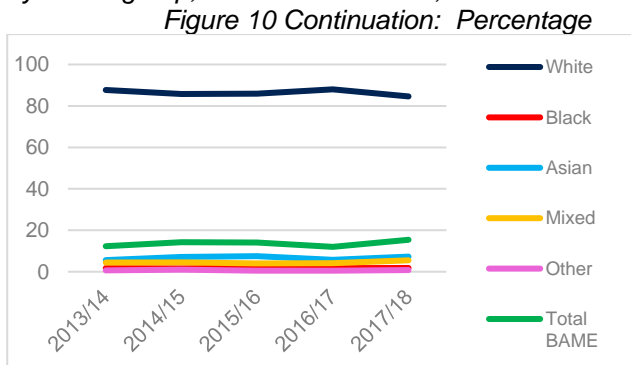
We analysed POLAR4 and IMD variables by gender, ethnicity and disability. We see no clear issues in Access by gender. Differences by ethnicity and disability and more on gender are contained within sections below.

## 1.2. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students

### 1.2.1. BAME Access

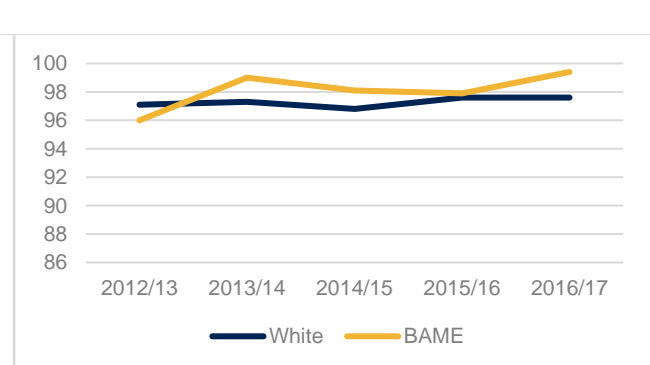
The proportion of the University's UK born ethnic minority students is low relative to the sector as a whole. The APP Dataset shows that the gaps between the University's ethnic group percentages and those for 18 year olds in the total population are statistically significant for Black and Mixed students in all years and for Asian and White students in some years. The data show a small increase in the percentage of students from BAME groups in 2017/18 (15.4%) compared with previous years where it varied between 12% and 14.2% – due to a small increase in proportions of students in the Asian group (from 5.7% to 7.3%) and Mixed ethnic groups (from 4.1% to 5.5%). There were very small increases in the proportion of students in the Black ethnic group in 2017/18 (from 1.7% to 1.8%) and in the Other ethnic group (from 0.5% to 0.8%) – see Figure 9.

Figure 9 Percentage all undergraduate entrants by ethnic group, 2013/14 to 2017/18, Bath



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time Bath UK undergraduates

continuation by ethnic group, 2012/13 to 2016/17, Bath



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time Bath UK undergraduates

We have seen an equal increase recently for numbers of BAME students in Q1/2 compared with Q3/4/5 - POLAR and IMD, an increase for both males and females but slightly more for females, and an equal increase for those with and without disabilities. Our own data for 2018/19 show a continuing increasing trend in the proportion of BAME student entrants (18%). We acknowledge that the percentage of BAME students at Bath is still below the sector average yet the University does still contribute to the diversity of the population in the region. Research demonstrates that geographical location of universities in relation to the location of larger ethnic minority communities does have a bearing on student choice with students from all ethnic minority groups less likely to move out of their local area to go to university than the students from the White ethnic group<sup>2</sup>.

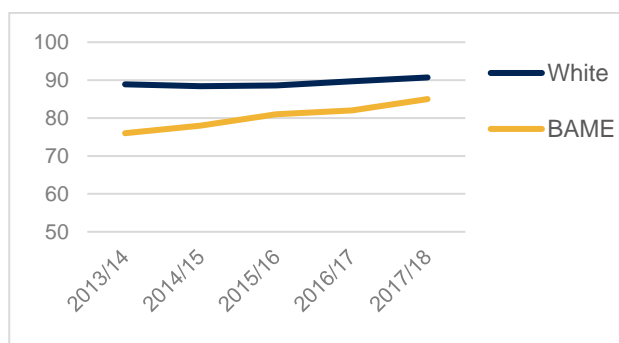
### 1.2.2. BAME Success: Non-continuation

BAME students as a whole have slightly better continuation rates than White students (see Figure 10). This includes both BAME students in the lower and higher POLAR quintiles. For the lower IMD groups White students have the highest rate of non-continuation. Continuation rates for all individual ethnic minority groups are suppressed to some extent by OfS (small numbers), but our own data show that Asian, Black, Mixed and Other groups all have better continuation rates in some years than the White group so no ethnic differentials for this indicator are seen.

### 1.2.3. BAME Success: Attainment

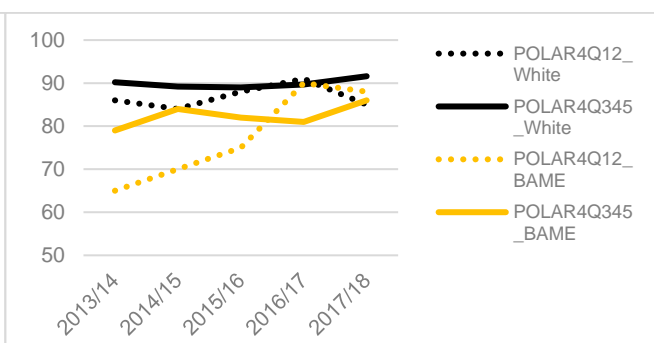
Our BAME/White degree attainment differential has halved between 2013/14 and 2017/18 from 13 to 6 percentage points (see Figure 11). This gap is now around half the sector average. Our data are completely suppressed for the Other ethnic group. In the most recent year's data (2017/18) the attainment of students in the Mixed ethnic group was two percentage points higher than the White group (93% v 91%), whilst the Black and Asian groups had lower attainment than those in the White group with a gap of 16 and 10 percentage points respectively.

Figure 11 Attainment: percentage obtaining firsts or upper seconds, White v BAME students, Bath



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time UK undergraduates

Figure 12 Attainment: percentage obtaining firsts or upper seconds, POLAR4 by ethnic group



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time UK undergraduates

Our analysis of the intersection of ethnic group and POLAR data shows that we have made the largest impact on closing the attainment gap for BAME students from the lowest POLAR quintiles over the five year period (see Figure 12). The intersection of ethnicity and IMD data shows a very similar picture. White students from the lower quintiles 3, 4 and 5, as well as BAME students from all socio-economic

<sup>2</sup> Donnelly and Gamsu (2018) Home and Away: Social, ethnic and spatial inequalities in student mobility. Report. University of Bath and The Sutton Trust



groups now have similar attainment which is all around 6 percentage points lower than the most privileged White students. We have small numbers in the Black ethnic group (around 20 graduating in 2017/18), so figures show great variation from year to year with wide confidence intervals. However, on average, Black students and Black females in particular show lower attainment than other groups.

#### 1.2.4. BAME Progression to employment or further study

Progression for all groups is high as shown in Figure 13. Data from OfS for the University of Bath show that there is no significant difference in graduate outcomes between BAME students and White students. TEF data show a double positive BAME proportion going on to highly skilled employment or further study. Our own analysis combining three years of HESA DLHE data show that White graduates obtain equivalent destination outcomes to the BAME group as a whole (BAME outcomes are very slightly higher). However, when disaggregating the data Black students on average have lower progression rates than White students.

Figure 13 Rates of progression into graduate employment or further study, 2012/13 to 2016/17, all full-time undergraduates, by type of disadvantage

Group	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7	Population graduating in 2016/17
All students	82.5	82.7	83.2	83.2	85.5	1620
BAME	79.7	81.4	86.4	83.0	84.7	185
Mature_Age21andOver	73.7	77.7	83.3	81.6	80.0	50
With disability	83.2	82.2	78.8	77.7	81.9	190
POLAR4 Q1 and Q2	82.5	84.0	78.9	82.6	84.5	240
IMD Q1 and Q2	83.7	79.4	80.5	84.7	85.1	175

Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time UK undergraduates

Progression rates for Black students at Bath are not included in the APP Dataset because of small numbers. Progression rates are also completely suppressed for the Other ethnic group. Progression rates for the Asian and Mixed ethnic groups are high and are sometimes a little higher and sometimes a little lower than those for the White group. Numbers of BAME students graduating with disabilities are very small at Bath. We are not able to see any clear patterns in these data.

#### 1.2.5. Intersections

Our analysis included the intersections of ethnicity data by gender, disability, POLAR and IMD. We have commented on this analysis in the text above where we believe that the data identify issues that we need to focus on. Where an intersection is not discussed there is no clear differentiation or enough data to draw robust conclusions.

### 1.3. Mature students: Access, Success and Progression

We have a small number of mature learners, only approximately 60 a year aged 21 and over out of 2,750 full-time undergraduate Home entrants in 2017/18. We also have very few part-time learners – around 30 (almost all data were suppressed in our APP Dataset) and they are concentrated in one franchised programme run in conjunction with the charity Action on Addiction. Our own data show that

mature learners are more likely than other students to be part-time because there was only scope to do this on the franchised degree schemes run with partner organisations.

Continuation rates for mature learners are good – between 87% and 93% for the past five years but with wide confidence intervals. These continuation rates are lower than those for younger students who have excellent continuation rates (97% - 98% for the five years of APP data) and we have identified this as an area of concern. The gap between continuation rates of younger and mature students ranges from 5 to 11 percentage points over the five years of APP data – 5 in the most recent year (2016/17). The gap is not statistically significant. Our mature learners attain on average lower than our younger students – but still 82% in 2017/18 graduated with firsts or upper second class degrees. In the last year of APP data (2017/18) there was an 8 percentage point difference in attainment between older and younger students with around 50 mature learners graduating.

Our own data show that mature students have slightly lower progression into graduate employment or further study than other students. In the past four years young and mature students were within 5 percentage points of each other with mature students lower in all four years. APP data show graduate outcomes within 5.5 percentage points in three years, within two percentage points in another and a mature students with slightly better outcomes than the total for all students in one year.

The University welcomes the introduction of enhanced questions in the 2021 UCAS cycle that will enable more granularity on identifying the particular circumstances of mature students, and scope to gain additional information on care responsibilities.

## **1.4. Disabled students**

### **1.4.1. Disability Access**

The number of student entrants with declared disabilities – historically an under-represented group at the University – has seen a significant increase over recent years. In the most recent three years of the APP dataset our overall undergraduate numbers have remained constant as we had planned but the number of entrants declaring a disability has increased by 76% from 210 in 2013/14 to 370 in 2017/18. In the most recent year the number of students with cognitive/learning disabilities has increased substantially, as has the number of students with mental health conditions. Numbers of students with Sensory medical & physical conditions, multiple impairments and social & communication have remained fairly stable over the five years of the APP dataset. Our own data show that there are growing numbers of students on the autistic spectrum entering the University and disclosing their conditions, and the number with complex issues has nearly doubled in the past five years. We welcome the introduction of more nuanced data collection at point of application by UCAS from 2021 onwards, which will potentially assist in targeting appropriate support and information to candidates during the admissions process.

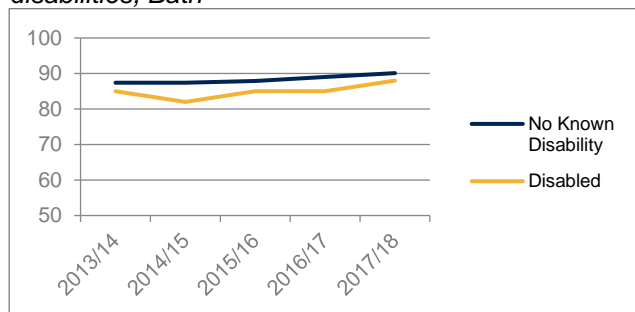
### **1.4.2. Disability Success: Non-continuation**

The continuation rates by disability are excellent – most recently at 96% compared with 98% for students with no known disability. Figures by disaggregated disability (Cognitive & learning, Mental health, Sensory medical & physical conditions, multiple impairments and social & communication) are almost completely suppressed by OfS due to small numbers but our own data show no clear differentials. One year of Mental health data does show a lower continuation rate (90%) but with a very wide confidence intervals attached. We see no clear differences by gender for students with disabilities over time – in some years female students with disabilities have higher rates and in some males have higher rates.

### **1.4.3. Disability Success: Attainment**

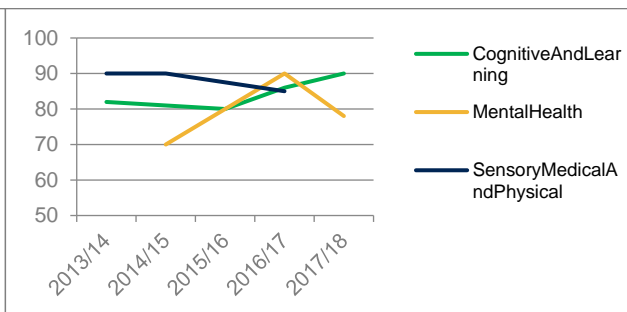
We have a relatively small but persistent gap between the attainment of students with and without disabilities. We have worked hard to close this gap but it persists. Closer collaboration between Undergraduate Admissions and Student Services at point of application has allowed greater consideration of candidates with disabilities for offers which has resulted in more students having a Disability Action Plan (DAP) in place at commencement of their degree. Attainment for disaggregated disability groups, where data have not been suppressed, is shown in Figure 15. The data show large fluctuations from year to year. In the most recent year of APP data (2017/18) there is a small attainment gap of 2 percentage points between those with (88%) and without a disability (90%). There is no attainment gap for those with a cognitive and learning disability (90%) in 2017/18 but that gap fluctuated between 3 and 8 percentage points for the four previous years. The gap between those with a mental health disability and with no disability in the most recent year of APP data was 12 percentage points but in the previous year those with a mental health condition had higher attainment than those without such a condition. Students themselves have mentioned that they are particularly concerned about wellbeing and mental health issues on-course, and they cite any reduction of support for this as a key threat to their attainment. In years where data have not been suppressed students with Sensory, Medical and Physical disabilities on average have no attainment gap. Our own data show that students with complex disabilities do not attain as well as other students. Females with a disability tend to have slightly higher attainment than males with a disability in four years out of the five reviewed, which mirrors the total female and male attainment at Bath.

Figure 14 Attainment: percentage obtaining firsts or upper seconds, students with and without disabilities, Bath



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All full-time UK undergraduates

Figure 15 Attainment: percentage obtaining firsts or upper seconds, by disability type



Source: APP Dataset 2019 All

#### 1.4.4. Disability Progression to employment or further study

TEF metrics show between 80% and 87% graduate employment/further study rates for students in all protected characteristic groups over the past four years (2015/16 graduates and those graduating in the preceding three years). Students with disabilities have graduate progression rates which average 80% (82% in the last year of the APP Dataset). Students with Cognitive & Learning disabilities do particularly well – above average in some years. There are no significant gaps for any of the disaggregated disability groups apart from one outlier year (2014/15) for students with multiple impairments. There are small numbers progressing for those with Mental health, Multiple Impairments, Sensory Medical & Physical, and Social & Communication disabilities so progression rates fluctuate but are generally lower than average.

We are aware that there are challenges nationally for progression into employment of students with autism, and there is an increase in the number of students disclosing autism at Bath. Students on the spectrum need more careers support than a neuro-typical student in order to think about options and navigate through a challenging graduate recruitment process. When looking at national employment destinations for disabled graduates, those graduates with a condition related to autism have the lowest proportion in full time work (33%) and also the highest levels of unemployment at 17%<sup>3</sup>. The University is utilising expertise from our Careers Service, our Student Services teams (disability, counselling and wellbeing) and from the Centre for Applied Autism Research (CAAR) in our Psychology Department, as well as partnerships with some of our placement providers (JP Morgan, Santander) to support progression into employment for this group of students.

## **1.5. Care leavers: Access, Success and Progression**

The number of care leavers at Bath is small but steady, numbering just under 10 a year. We are active in encouraging access for this group. We are part of two collaborative initiatives: LACES which consists of local universities, Virtual Heads and local councils and is hosted by UWE; and the south western regional group of universities which coordinates work with NNECL and Virtual Heads. The University is also a signatory of the Care Leavers' Covenant. Candidates who are care leavers are given priority for participation in the University's main outreach programmes and are also eligible for a bespoke bursary that provides start-up funding and assistance with graduation expenses. Accommodation contracts are now in place to support care leavers who require year-round accommodation.

Non-continuation rates for care leavers at Bath are very low, unlike the rates for this population in the sector as a whole<sup>4</sup>. This group has one of the greatest disparities in degree outcomes, with only two thirds gaining a first or upper second degree. This was achieved however in a timeframe where there was no dedicated staff support, and very limited additional financial assistance or support in securing accommodation outside the academic year. The appointment of an adviser in the Student Services team, extended accommodation contracts, and priority consideration for a Gold Scholarship award means that those starting at Bath from October 2017 have much greater stability and support.

Progression rates for our small number of care leavers are very good. They are not reported here to protect individuals. We will continue to monitor these outcomes.

## **1.6. Intersections of disadvantage**

Intersectional analyses have been included in the relevant sections above. Where an intersection is not discussed there is no clear differentiation or enough data to be able to draw conclusions.

## **1.7. Other groups who experience barriers in higher education**

### **1.7.1. Part-time students**

The APP and TEF datasets are based on our own submitted data and all show the very small numbers of part-time students enrolled at Bath (TEF data show approximately 30 students compared with a full-time headcount of 11,950). These students are primarily on the Addictions Counselling degree provided through our franchise partner, Action on Addictions. TEF data show that the part-time students have an equal gender split, are more likely to have a disability (approx. a third compared with 8% of full-time students), are a little more likely to be White, and have the same socio-economic profile

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<sup>3</sup> The National Autistic Society (2016) The autism employment gap: Too Much Information in the workplace. Report p5

<sup>4</sup> Harrison, N (2017) Moving on Up: Pathways of care leavers and care-experience students into and through higher education. NNECL

as the full-time Bath UK undergraduate population. Part-time students are more likely to enter their course with slightly lower tariff points or with non-traditional qualifications. Almost all our APP Dataset for this group was suppressed by OfS because of such small numbers.

### **1.7.2. Gender**

We have a strong STEM focus with our subject mix at Bath and we assess gender differentials across the student lifecycle in order to ensure that there are no large differentials in access, success and progression between males and females as can sometimes be seen in STEM subjects<sup>5 6</sup>. The gender split of our student body is 57:43 male/female which has narrowed slightly in the past five years – moving from 59:41 in 2013/14. We do have gender differentials in access on some courses which reflect the sector issues as a whole encouraging women into STEM subjects. It should be noted that for some of our subjects, such as Education with Psychology, there is a significant underrepresentation of male students, as seen in the sector as a whole. We also see this in some STEM subjects for example Biosciences and Psychology, which also reflects national trends. Our attainment rates do vary by gender with females having higher attainment rates than males, and there are some differences which are significant in some years with females from more advantaged groups (POLAR and IMD) doing better than more advantaged males. Continuation and progression do not vary significantly by gender.

### **1.7.3. Postgraduates**

The University has researched the progression of under-represented groups to postgraduate taught (PGT) degrees through use of targeted scholarships and bursaries for existing undergraduates who wish to progress into postgraduate study as well as new applicants to PGT programmes at Bath from other UK universities, which were agreed with the previous Director of the Office for Fair Access. In 2017 recipients of the PGT Scholarships were surveyed, and the findings supported the value of such support in promoting study beyond a first degree. APP Guidance indicated that from 2019-20 this type of support for PGT applicants who were not Bath undergraduate alumni could no longer be set against OfS spending priorities so the University is now assessing whether this provision can be continued using other funding resources. We will continue to offer PGT scholarships to Bath alumni from under-represented groups to support progression into academia and professional careers. We have actively promoted postgraduate study options to our Gold Scholars, with the intention of diversifying progression to PGT study and beyond. We will monitor the impact of this intervention on the destination of the GSP cohort.

### **1.7.4. Estranged students**

The HE sector has identified the challenges entering HE for those students who are estranged from their parents<sup>78</sup>. We support access of estranged students through directing specific bursary support, and then evaluating the impact on their decision to select Bath. This builds upon research we have undertaken linked to Gold Scholars and Bath Bursary holders. In April 2018 the University committed to the Stand Alone Pledge, providing: a bursary of £1,000 per year to estranged students in addition to any other financial support they are entitled to receive; additional start-up and graduation payments of

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<sup>5</sup> Rachel Cassidy, Sarah Cattan and Claire Crawford Why don't more girls study maths and physics? An Institute of Fiscal Studies Observation <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/13276>

<sup>6</sup> Where Are the Women in STEM? Higher Education Today. Blog by American Council on Education.

<https://www.higheredtoday.org/2015/03/03/where-are-the-women-in-stem/>

<sup>7</sup> OFFA (2018) Topic Briefing: Estranged Students

<sup>8</sup> Unite Foundation and Stand Alone (2015) New Starts – the challenges of HE without the support of a family network.



£1,000 in their first and final years of study; a guaranteed place in University accommodation for the duration of their course; and a named member of staff in Student Services who is a regular point of contact from pre-entry and throughout their course to offer specialist advice and guidance. The University has also worked with UCAS to ensure that there will be scope for estranged students to self-identify in future admissions cycles.

#### 1.7.5. Carers

Research has shown that carers face elevated financial hardship when studying within HE<sup>9</sup>. We support access of young carers (under 25) through a specific Young Adult Carer bursary. This group of students also has a named member of staff in Student Services who is a regular point of contact from pre-entry and throughout their course to offer specialist advice and guidance, and have additional careers support.

#### 1.7.6. Student parents

Our Students' Union (SU) has identified undergraduate student parents as a particular group requiring support at the University. 80 undergraduate and postgraduate student parents completed a survey conducted by the SU and Student Services in 2019 into the experience and needs of student parents at the University of Bath. Key areas of improvement identified by students included: timetabling of lectures; increased promotion of financial support available; more opportunities for student parents/mature students to meet up on campus or share experiences on-line; alignment of University term dates with school holidays in the local area; access to childcare on campus; clearer information of support for student parents pre and post arrival. Our Students' Union will continue to work with our Student Services Team to address these issues. Student Parents is a very specific group that we will support as part of our wider commitment to supporting students who have care responsibilities, and the introduction of a specific question to gather enhanced information from student parents in the 2021 UCAS application cycle will significantly improve our engagement with this group at an early point in their application.

## 2. Aims and Targets

### 2.1. Target groups

Given our assessment of our current position, we are choosing to focus on the following groups of students at the following lifecycle stages:

**Access:** Focus on recruiting students from lower socio-economic groups (using IMD) and specifically narrowing the gap between the percentage of students from the top quintile 5 compared with those from quintiles 1 and 2; Focus on students from lower POLAR (progression to HE) areas and specifically narrowing the gap between the percentage of students from the top quintile 5 compared with those from quintiles 1 and 2. Note that we will continue to use ACORN datasets to help target and triangulate our activity, but not set a specific target on access based on ACORN postcodes.

**Attainment:** Narrow the degree outcomes for students with and without disabilities; narrow the degree outcomes between White and BAME students whilst monitoring attainment for students by POLAR and IMD and the intersections of those with ethnicity.

**Continuation:** Continue with our work to maintain high levels of continuation for all students.

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<sup>9</sup> NUS (2015) Learning with Care: Experiences of student carers in the UK

**Progression:** Continue with our work to maintain high levels of progression for all students.

## 2.2. Aims and objectives

### 2.2.1. Access: Students from lower socio-economic groups and from low progression to HE areas

We have identified that the main area we need to focus on is recruiting more students from lower socio-economic groups and, specifically, narrowing the gap between the percentage of students from the top POLAR4/IMD quintile 5 compared with those from POLAR4/IMD quintiles 1 and 2. This is our aim and the measurable outcome will be two targets narrowing these gaps over the duration of this Plan. We have just appointed a new Head of Access and Participation who will bring a new focus on delivering a step change in the access and outreach work we have been doing. Better collaboration and integrated working across teams such as our Admissions and Recruitment Teams with our academic departments as well as our marketing, senior management, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Teams and other University-wide teams will deliver a stronger response to widening access. Our student community will and do play a key role in widening access, both through the activity of the Students' Union clubs, societies and teams, and specific groups of students who engage in outreach work (e.g. Student Ambassadors, departmental volunteer groups, Lloyds Scholars, Gold Scholars). We intend to use a stepped approach where we aim for increases throughout the five year period, allowing new admissions, recruitment and outreach strategies time to impact on the figures.

The University has completed a feasibility study on the development of a Foundation Year programme working with a local FE provider, and also had discussions with an FE College serving a socio-economically disadvantaged area in Wales with low progression to HE. Discussions have not progressed since the publication of the Augar Review on Student Funding as there is concern that the recommendation to withdraw funding for foundation years will make the programmes unviable. We will review this during the 2019/20 academic year.

The University will continue with its intensive contextual admissions system. It will also continue with the contextual offers it makes and will assess scope to introduce more contextual offers by the end of the 2020/21 academic year. Work is underway to assess appropriate grade levels where a contextual grade offer would not then have a detrimental impact on student outcomes and progression. In particular there is a challenge in ensuring that students admitted on a lower contextual offer do not face greater obstacles when applying for internships or placements, given the very limited understanding of context amongst graduate employers and the continued reliance on post-16 qualifications when selecting students in the early phases of graduate employment programmes.

Our three targets on this will be:

**Target 1: Reduce the percentage point gap between entrants from POLAR4 Quintiles 1/2 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 (33.5ppt in 2017/18) by 10 percentage points between 2020-21 and 2024-25 - using a stepped approach:**

2020 entry gap reduced by 1 percentage point from 2017/18 entry gap; 2021 entry - gap reduced by 2 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2022 entry - gap reduced by 4 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2023 entry - gap reduced by 7 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2024 entry - gap reduced by 10 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap.

**Target 2: Reduce the percentage point gap between entrants from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 (43.1ppt in 2017/18) by 7.6 percentage points between 2020-21 and 2024-25 - using a stepped approach:**

2020 entry gap reduced by 0.6 percentage point from 2017/18 entry gap; 2021 entry - gap reduced by 1.1 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2022 entry - gap reduced by 2.6 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2023 entry - gap reduced by 5.1 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2024 entry - gap reduced by 7.6 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap.

**Target 3: Reduce the percentage point gap between entrants from IMD Quintiles 1/2 and IMD Quintile 5 (25.7ppt in 2017/18) by 7 percentage points between 2020-21 and 2024-25 - using a stepped approach:**

2020 entry - gap reduced by 0.5 percentage point from 2017/18 entry gap; 2021 entry - gap reduced by 1 percentage point from 2017/18 entry gap; 2022 entry - gap reduced by 2 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2023 entry - gap reduced by 4 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap; 2024 entry - gap reduced by 7 percentage points from 2017/18 entry gap.

These three stretching and ambitious targets require a significant re-orientation of our outreach activity and targeting, which commenced in September 2018 following approval of the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan. The proposed gap reduction is initially quite small, but accelerates as activity builds. We believe that this is a most ambitious programme; these targets have not been achieved previously by other providers with entrance requirements matching those of the University of Bath, particularly those in years 4 and 5. We believe that the scale of this ambition is only feasible if there is demographic growth of UK school leavers entering university from the 2021 entry cycle onwards. This will also coincide with the maturing of our collaborative relationships with educational charities (e.g. IntoUniversity, Brilliant Club) who are working with cohorts of students who are currently 4+ years from making applications to university. These targets are also predicated on having a period of stability with no significant reform of pre-University qualifications, and also greater clarity on student funding, both for the sector as a whole and for individual student maintenance. The targets are only feasible if alternatives to residential university studies or other causes do not reduce the pool of applicants to high-tariff UK universities. Adverse changes to the above will lead to lower target levels only being feasible. Geographically, the University relies on students coming from outside the immediate region if we are to succeed in making significant headway on these targets, and whilst bursary support from the University provides a partial resource to encourage student mobility, this will need to align with additional support for undergraduate maintenance. Our experience working with Welsh students through the Seren programme, where the reintroduction of generous maintenance grants appears to have promoted greater mobility, is a key element in our ambition to meet these demanding Access targets.

Our main threat to meeting these targets is that the pool of disadvantaged students who can meet or get close to the entry tariffs for our courses is limited and we are under fierce competition with other higher tariff universities for the same relatively small group of students. In addition to this Bath is a smaller university than many of the other higher tariff pre-1992 institutions with a limited, predominantly STEM focussed subject mix. Our strategy has been not to grow numbers of undergraduates for the past three years and so places on courses are limited and highly competitive. We will continue to identify barriers to progression in existing degree schemes and seek to develop alternative routes to support entry (e.g. introduction of an Accounting degree that does not require A-level Mathematics or an equivalent level qualification; providing routes to all six of our modern languages for those who are beginners, rather than restricting access to French, German or Spanish to post A-level candidates;

development of an intensive three-week pre-session course for students who narrowly miss their required grade in A-level Mathematics for degrees in engineering, science and social sciences). The University is keen to secure as many students as possible from the pre-Clearing applicant pool, which allows our targeted interventions to have impact.

Our outreach strategy is to significantly expand participant numbers on our more intensive contact programmes which include Summer Schools, sustained on-campus programmes, and sustained on-line programmes that we can deliver at a distance, with a clear aim of improving recruitment to Bath. We aim to more than double the number of students on our intensive programmes between 2016/17 and 2020/21, and triple the number between 2016/17 and 2024/25. We will continue with our newly developed distance and blended learning programmes which will increase our geographical reach. We have more recently developed a focussed programme of conversion work, supporting applicants from underrepresented groups to make their final choices. We will continue with this conversion activity as we see that drop-off between application and firm choice is an area where we can have an influence.

We also plan to continue our collaborative work with educational charities that support under-represented communities, particularly those with targeted selection on students from postcodes with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and lower progression to HE, most notably our work with IntoUniversity, the Brilliant Club, and the Welsh Government's Seren programme. We will continue to work with other charitable groups as long as we see impact that supports student access, such as the Nuffield Foundation's Research Placement Scheme in the South West, the residential programme for the Social Mobility Foundation, and local educational charities that support under-represented groups and communities.

We will continue with our direct financial support for low income students. Our commitment totals £4.5 million for each of the five years of the Plan. We have opted to have a universal core bursary (the Bath Bursary) that is available to all students on household incomes under £25,000 who demonstrate at least one of the widening participation characteristics in Section 4. There are then a range of *additional* opportunities for funding for Bath Bursary students who demonstrate greater need or who have characteristics aligned with OfS priority groups (e.g. care leavers, refugees, estranged students). Those in these OfS priority groups also have direct access to these specific bursaries irrespective of income. We have a comprehensive programme of supplementary support for those students demonstrating the greatest level of need within our other main bursary, the Gold Scholars Programme (GSP). This combines offering financial support with a programme of activities to ensure that its scholars are equipped with the funding, skills, knowledge, experience and social capital needed to maximise their Bath experience and to succeed in the graduate job market/postgraduate study. Sector evidence shows that students who face the greatest barriers in access and participation within HE frequently have lower levels of social capital than other more privileged students<sup>10</sup>. We will be assessing whether or not we can introduce any of these additional elements into other financial support packages using interim milestones from our evaluation of the GSP as we will not have full destination data on a GSP graduating cohort until 2023. The importance we place on financial support is informed by evidence from our own students and Students' Union as to the value of this as well as sector evidence supporting this view. For example, we note that the review of student finance in Wales in 2016 stated "*The recommendations respond to consistent representations from students that it is maintenance assistance that gives them the flexibility to manage their finances and, for some students,*

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<sup>10</sup> Bathmaker, A, Ingram, N and Waller, R (2013) Higher education, social class and the mobilisation of capitals: recognising and playing the game. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 34 , no. 5-6 , pp. 723-743.

*to overcome the real financial challenges associated with a period of higher education study.”*<sup>11</sup> Other sector research, such as that examined for the OFFA commissioned project looking at the impact of financial support<sup>12</sup> illustrates the complexity of investigating the impact of financial support and we are aware of these issues. A study in 2013<sup>13</sup> concluded that bursaries have less of an effect overall on student choice but that students attending Russell Group universities with higher tariffs like our own are more likely to think that bursaries are important in their decision making process. Our own students report that those from lower household incomes going to higher tariff institutions like ours are more likely to fit in if the ‘playing field’ is levelled to some extent. In addition there is evidence of the high cost of living in Bath<sup>14</sup>. Accommodation is particularly expensive in Bath - a Lloyd’s Bank study showed that in 2017 it was the fifth least affordable city in terms of accommodation in the UK behind Oxford, Cambridge, London and Brighton<sup>15</sup>. Our own evaluation and feedback from bursary receiving students undertaken as part of our APP consultation, as well as consultation with our Students’ Union confirms the high value that students place on their bursaries. In their view bursaries are the most important tool the University can use to encourage other low income students to the University and also support them whilst they are on-course, enabling them to socialise more and take up less part-time work which can interfere with studies.

For all of these reasons our bursary offer will be a key strand of our Access and Participation work with a focus on highly targeted bursaries as detailed in Section 4 of this report.

Our financial support is underpinned by the following broad aims/principles:

The University will target the most resource to those students who are able to demonstrate the greatest additional need, in order to ensure they can fully engage with the wider opportunities provided through active participation in the student experience. This will be determined through analysis of a basket of measures (including household income below a set threshold, postcode factors linked to socio-economic circumstance and HE participation rates, and additional statements sourced from the applicants). Recipients for our main undergraduate bursaries and scholarships need to demonstrate at least one measure of disadvantage in addition to having a household income below the agreed threshold.

In addition to receipt of financial support, bursary and scholarship recipients may receive additional support that supplements their academic studies, and helps build skills and expertise that supports onward progression.

Where a specific financial burden is identified and evidenced, the University will consider additional targeted financial support. Examples could include costs linked to undertaking placements, or accommodation expenses. In each instance there will be a clear and transparent application process to assess need, and clear terms of reference for recipients.

Bursary and scholarship programmes will be subject to an annual review.

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<sup>11</sup> The Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales (2016). Final Report – Executive Summary. Welsh Government Skills, Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

<sup>12</sup> Sheffield Hallam University; Sheffield Institute of Education (2016) Closing the gap: understanding the impact of institutional financial support on student success: Final Project report for the Office for Fair Access

<sup>13</sup> Callender, C and Wilkinson, D (2013) Student perceptions of the impact of bursaries and institutional aid on their higher education choices and the implications for the National Scholarship in England, *Journal of Social Policy*, 42(2), 281-308.

<sup>14</sup> Times Higher Education 2015 The UK’s regional student living costs revealed.

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/documents/media/press-releases/lloyds-bank/2018/020218\\_affordable\\_cities\\_lb.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/documents/media/press-releases/lloyds-bank/2018/020218_affordable_cities_lb.pdf)



We will ensure, as at present, that the eligibility criteria for bursaries is aligned with selection criteria in Admissions and Outreach activities and OfS priorities. These include POLAR, IMD, care leavers, refugees, young carers, estranged students and Access to HE students in addition to low household income (mainly under £25,000) as verified by the student loans company. The continuation of support is predicated on the current tuition fee level.

Overall our spend on access is slightly lower in this Plan than in the previous few years. This is due to reduced programme costs rather than any reduction in delivery. Numbers on our intensive programmes are set to more than double between 2016/17 and 2020/21, and triple between 2016/17 and 2024/25. Our re-orientated access spend, with our new on-line and digital programmes, allows greater geographical reach and increased numbers on sustained programmes, but once developed doesn't cost as much to maintain as sustained programmes delivered on campus. This work is being undertaken by new appointments located in academic departments who work closely with our centrally located widening participation team. Departments previously were given the opportunity to buy out existing staff time, but this was never fully effective. By re-allocating existing resource to employ dedicated outreach staff we have achieved additional capability at no extra cost.

We have re-focused our work encouraging progression to university for students in the local area, instead focusing on recruiting students to Bath. We have developed a much more comprehensive targeting process working in collaboration with government and third sector educational charities, supplementing their work with sustained contact and residential opportunities and have also streamlined our summer school offer. These two elements combined have resulted in fewer but larger cohorts engaging in summer residential programmes.

### **2.2.2. Access: Ethnic diversity**

Our strategy is to continue with the elements of our work which can feed in to growing numbers of BAME students at Bath. These include:

our admissions strategy to use a basket of measures to identify disadvantage, and then using a team of staff to examine every individual flagged WP applicant to ensure offers are made where possible. We have identified that Black students are over-represented in the group flagged by our measures, so directly benefit from that approach;

our recruitment strategy which has widened its geographical reach and is therefore now working in more areas with larger BAME communities;

our outreach intensive activity selection policy which gives priority to ethnic minority students when indicators of socio-economic disadvantage and attainment are equal.

engaging with the recommendations and insights identified in our APP-funded doctoral research projects which are looking at the experience of black students in the student journey, and the geographies of applicant course and university choice, as well as the 2019 UUK report #Closing the Gap<sup>16</sup>, and the research carried out by our Student Engagement Ambassador for Inclusivity as part of the University's curriculum transformation project. A number of departments have identified decolonising the curriculum as a priority in Curriculum Transformation and our Centre for Learning and Teaching will be supporting them in that work.

supporting those who influence student choice (parents/carers, teachers and guidance staff) with resources and material to assist in making informed decisions on courses and opportunities for career development provided through our degree programmes.

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<sup>16</sup> UUK/NUS (2019) BAME student attainment at UK Universities: #Closingthegap.

Within these areas we will be doing more work to encourage Black students in particular. We will not set a specific target for BAME or Black student access because we do not have information on ethnicity at the point of admission so cannot more actively design our admission system with this in mind. We will continue to monitor our position closely, and would be open to further discussions with the OfS if we see our current proportion of BAME entrants fall back to levels experienced prior to 2018 entry.

As an institution we are working hard to improve the culture of inclusion and we are anticipating that this will do more to raise the reality and perception of Bath as an inclusive institution. We value, promote and celebrate inclusion, challenging discrimination and putting equality, diversity and belonging at the heart of everything we do. We aim to be an inclusive university, where difference is celebrated, respected and encouraged. Our ED&I team has undertaken a great deal of work cross-campus to build an inclusive environment through #NeverOK campaign that includes tackling racial harassment, the launch of the Report and Support tool to report any kind of inappropriate behaviour online anonymously or named and receive support, and training staff on Cultural Awareness, Privilege and the Invisible Problem. Our Students' Union has made campaigns about inclusivity a priority in its work and currently supports eight Diversity and Support Groups. Our Curriculum Transformation initiative has inclusivity as a key principle and a team of staff is working with academics across all departments to embed inclusivity within learning and teaching approaches, as part of fostering an institutional culture of inclusion and belonging. We will use this, alongside other work which we are doing which is likely to appeal to many disadvantaged students, as key messages in targeted communications.

Access: Students with disabilities

Our Outreach Team uses disability as a selection criterion within a basket of indicators of disadvantage for outreach activities and will continue with that strategy. We will continue to encourage students to declare their disabilities on application and/or tell us how their disability has affected their studies so we can take these into account at the point of offer-making. Our current approach has meant that students with disabilities are not under-represented at our institution. We will continue with our approach and ensure that we welcome all applicants and continue to encourage students with disabilities to apply through our work in Admissions, Recruitment and Outreach. We will continue to monitor the proportion of our entrants who have disabilities.

Access: Mature Students, Care Leavers, Refugees, Estranged Students, Carers, Student Parents

We will continue to encourage applications from students from all these small number groups by focussing on collaborative initiatives in order to coordinate work, using whichever networks are operating effectively. We will also continue to explicitly encourage care leavers and refugees through our outreach work, and care leavers, estranged students, carers and refugees through our bursaries and the bespoke support we offer. We will continue with our specialist team within Admissions which gives extra consideration to all students from underrepresented groups declaring through the UCAS form or through mitigating circumstances forms. We are examining our policies on Student Parents and our EDI and HR teams have released a breastfeeding support and guidance document and the campus is breastfeeding friendly. Student Services and the Students' Union are currently undertaking a needs assessment for student parents and will revise our support for this group if necessary. We will continue our collaborative work with other HEIs supporting Lifepilot (based at the University) encouraging mature students into Higher Education, and will continue to review needs for this group together with those of all these more vulnerable student groups as more information on their status becomes available during the application process.

### **2.2.3. Attainment: students from different ethnic groups and students from lower socio-economic groups/lower participation in HE areas**

We know from our current assessment that our BAME/White attainment gap has closed considerably over the past five years. We would like to continue our work in the area of ethnicity to ensure that the White/BAME gap continues to narrow and that our minority ethnic students achieve their potential. Our Degree Outcomes group will continue to drive forwards our cross-university approach on this. We are also aware that it is a KPI for OfS and all institutions are expected to contribute to sector progress. We have collected a large amount of feedback from BAME students giving their views on why this attainment gap exists at Bath, and we will continue to work cross-university to address these issues. The strategy to do this includes our large Curriculum Transformation programme with its emphasis on ensuring an inclusive approach to learning and teaching, together with an increased focus on ensuring that our BAME students are aware of the support that our Skills Centre provides and our institutional focus on creating a more inclusive environment for all students. We will also look to enhance the support available through the Student Union-led Peer Mentoring and Peer Assisted Learning Programmes by 2021.

#### **Target 4: Degree Outcomes – BAME/White attainment gap (percentages getting a first or 2i):**

Using an average of 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a baseline percentage point gap (7.0) the gaps will be: 2020/21 = not more than 6.0 percentage points; 2021/22 = not more than 5.0 percentage points; 2022/23 = not more than 4.0 percentage points; 2023/24 = not more than 3.0 percentage points; 2024/25 = not more than 2.0 percentage points.

We will disaggregate BAME data. We have identified that the attainment of Black students is low in some years and we will ensure work includes those students (currently there are only around 20 a year graduating so there is considerable year to year fluctuation and large confidence intervals). Our target group in this area will be BAME students as a whole but with a particular internal focus on Black students. We will monitor outcomes of all ethnic group degree outcomes annually through our Degree Outcomes Group which reports to our University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (ULTQC). We will monitor attainment for students by POLAR4 and IMD and the intersections of those with ethnicity. We will monitor outcomes for 'white working class' students closely as attainment dipped in the last year of data and act if this dip becomes a trend. The role of Students' Union peer mentors and peer assisted learning is a key focus for further development to support these students, including a robust evaluation of the impact of additional resource committed to this activity. We will also build upon the existing expertise in Academic Skills and the Mathematics and Statistics Help team, providing additional resource from September 2019.

### **2.2.4. Attainment: Disability**

Our current assessment shows a small but persistent attainment gap between students with and without disabilities which is similar to the sector average. This, together with our growing numbers of students with disabilities, contributes to our desire to keep prioritising this area at our institution. In response to this we will continue to strengthen our student support provision in this area, aiming to maintain and enhance services for students with disabilities, and increase access to student Health and Wellbeing services for all students, with specific provision for those with mental health issues. Mental health issues have been identified by our students as a key area which they believe the University should focus on. Student Services is instigating a remote counselling and wellbeing service that will enable all students, particularly those on placement and those with mental health difficulties, to access emotional support 24 hours a day from the 2019/20 academic year. This tool will also assist students

who can be more reluctant to engage with support services (including BAME, LGBTQ+ and white working class male students) to access the mental health support they may need.

The University is also seeking to use the review of the curriculum and assessment methodologies to improve the learning experience of students with disabilities. We aim to review all undergraduate courses by the end of 2020. We will also continue with our commitment to ensuring that learning resources offer appropriate and suitable support for students with disabilities. Students can request advice and support with assistive technology from the Computing Services Team.

We have identified that students with mental health issues and particularly those students with complex disabilities (around 40 entrants a year) have lower attainment than others, and will ensure that work is inclusive of those groups, but we will match our target with the OfS KPI in this area to ensure work covers students with all types of disability.

**Target 5: Degree Outcomes – Narrow attainment gap between students with and without disabilities:**

Using 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a baseline percentage point gap (3.0) the gaps will be:  
2020/21 = not more than 2.5 percentage points; 2021/22 = not more than 2.0 percentage points;  
2022/23 = not more than 1.5 percentage points; 2023/24 = not more than 1.0 percentage point;  
2024/25 = no gap.

**2.2.5. Attainment: Mature Students, Care Leavers, Refugees, Estranged Students, Carers, Student Parents**

We have very small numbers in these groups and up to now we have not been comprehensive in our monitoring of attainment outcomes for all these students. We commit to improving this so that annually we monitor outcomes for students in all these groups. We support transition for these groups by running bespoke activities such as the library sessions for care leavers, mature students and students with disabilities. We know additional support can be very helpful for students who may find the HE study environment, resources and facilities more difficult to navigate than others. Our Library has supported the University's part-time mostly mature students on the Action on Addiction course for some years, with one of our Subject Librarians running introductory workshops for them at Clouds House. This year library staff have been working with course tutors to find the best way of supplying requested library materials for the Action on Addiction students through our scanning service, and are now investigating ways of providing them with targeted information skills tutorial materials online. We had already identified through the work of University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (ULTQC) and the Degree Outcomes Group that there are issues relating to retention of mature students and that there are implications on degree success for students who do not take-up placement and study abroad opportunities. The University is looking at how these challenges could be moderated, potentially through the introduction of shorter internship periods and development of placement opportunities that are local to the home location of the student. Departments have been encouraged to also be very explicit in their support for placements/study abroad as part of Curriculum Transformation. Our mature students number only around 60 a year and are primarily concentrated in two courses – Social Work and Addictions Counselling. We will investigate the value of specific additional interventions for students in these subjects and will complete this by July 2021.

**2.2.6. Continuation – all groups**

We will continue with our work in this area and will monitor continuation by disadvantage to ensure all students retain their high continuation rates and work continually to ensure that we meet our aim that all students should have a good student experience whilst at the University.

### **2.2.7. Progression: Students from lower socio-economic groups and from low progression to HE areas**

Our aim is to ensure that all students from lower progression and lower socio-economic areas continue to do well accessing further study and graduate employment opportunities. We will continue with our work in this area.

### **2.2.8. Progression: Students with disabilities**

We aim to maintain our high progression rates for this group. Our Careers Service will continue with our collaborative work to support progression from university to employment for students on the autism spectrum. For example we have established a programme of activity with sponsorship from JP Morgan which draws upon the expertise in our Centre for Applied Autism Research (CAAR)<sup>17</sup>, with contributors from the Careers Service and Student Services. The programme provides a free two-day programme to prepare participants for applying for a job, understanding the strengths and challenges for those on the autism spectrum in commencing work, and providing real-world work-environment experience at JP Morgan's Bournemouth Corporate Centre.

### **2.2.9. Progression: BAME students**

We aim to maintain our high progression rates for this group. Research commissioned by the University and carried out by Rare Recruitment recommended the following support for BAME students: introduce tailored support for BAME students, with the aim of increasing knowledge and skills to enter competitive industries; increase student awareness of alternative routes into graduate employment; increase the amount of information and support available for students who are not interested in STEM industry or roles in finance; ensure first year students are more aware of short internship opportunities and Careers Service support. These recommendations have been incorporated into the work of the University's Careers Service and we will continue to implement them.

### **2.2.10. Progression: Mature Students, Care Leavers, Refugees, Estranged Students, Carers, Student Parents**

We have very small numbers in these groups and up to now we have not been comprehensive in our monitoring of progression outcomes for these students. We will expand the monitoring of outcomes to include students from these groups.

### **2.2.11. Gender**

The University Careers Service now has licenced trainers to deliver the Springboard Sprint course for female undergraduates to provide them with an excellent opportunity to develop their skills and encourage them to pursue their ambitions. The University is strongly committed to the Athena SWAN Gender Equality Charter and is actively engaged through an EPSRC-funded project (*Reimagining Recruitment*) in identifying ways to enhance the progression of female STEM postgraduate and postdoctoral students into academic careers in HE, to increase the number and visibility of senior female academics. With regard to the attainment of male students with low participation and high socio-economic deprivation, we will be working with IntoUniversity to identify approaches to improving attainment in their centres, and will be considering how we revise teaching and assessment methodologies in our Curriculum Transformation activities. We will continue to look at gender as a characteristic when undertaking intersectional analysis of our APP outcomes.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/university-and-jp-morgan-chase-collaborate-to-improve-employment-chances-for-people-with-autism/>

## 3. Strategic Approach

### 3.1. Whole provider strategic approach overview

The strategic direction of the Access and Participation Plan (APP) is the responsibility of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) (Education) and is an underpinning element of the University's Education Strategy. The PVC (Education) is a member of the University Executive Board, which has overall responsibility for agreeing the content of the APP.

Our APP requires approval from our accountable officer – the Vice Chancellor, and the University Executive Board, which includes the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee. It is given final sign-off by the Chair of University Council and University Treasurer, on behalf of University Council. As part of a wider set of activity following a governance review the University will be incorporating detailed briefings to Council on the performance against APP targets, providing greater scrutiny of institutional access and participation work. Operational responsibility for the drafting and implementation of the Access and Participation Plan sits with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, working with team Heads in the Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach directorate, Students' Union senior leadership, Deans and Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching, and Directors of Professional Services teams. We note the recent recommendations from the OfS relating to the *Effective Practice Advice for Governing Bodies* issued in June 2019, and the Chair of University Council will consider how these can best be implemented for future APP cycles.

Activity to support the aims of the APP takes place across the University with input from Academic Department representatives, new Departmental Outreach Officers, academics (including discussion at the University's Academic Assembly), the Students' Union, Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, Student Services, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office, Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Skills Centre, the Library, Computing Services, Careers Service, Faculty-based Student Experience staff, Placement teams, the Department of Sports Development and Recreation, The Edge Arts Centre and our Department of Development and Alumni Relations. All these sections have been included in our consultation work on this Plan and either have or will be tasked with developing plans to achieve our aims.

The first stage of this alignment is to ensure there is a good understanding of the APP requirements and OfS guidance across the institution. We have launched a full information and discussion programme to work with stakeholders on the APP. We have followed this with meetings with relevant stakeholders including detailed presentations to the University Executive Board – our senior management team, as well as cross-university meetings setting out requirements to align strategies, and further meetings with colleagues writing strategies in Learning and Teaching, Student Services, EDI, Admissions and Outreach, and the Students' Union to discuss content and targets and to discuss alignment with University strategies.

There has been wide discussion across the University on the strategy and institutional targets within the APP. This has included consultation with senior management, academic staff and professional services teams, as well as the Students' Union. There has been specific discussion with the School of Management, where there is a particular set of challenges on the diversity of their current undergraduate intake.

We have a number of cross-university strategies. These include: University Strategy 2016-21; Education Strategy 2016-21; Research Strategy; Employability Framework; SU Strategy; EDI Objectives 2019, Student Engagement Strategy; Health and Well-being Action Plan; Disabled Students Policy; Digital Strategy; Workforce Strategy; Finance Strategy and our forthcoming Employability Strategy. We have engaged with all the leads of these to emphasise the importance of aligning strategies with the APP strategies, and will ensure that all leads consider how these strategies affect our more disadvantaged groups. Both the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach and the Head of Widening Access and Participation are members of the Equality and Diversity Committee and



provide regular updates to ensure synergy with access and participation initiatives. The EDI Team is producing an Action Plan against their overarching objectives and is already engaging with the APP Team to ensure alignment with APP objectives. The recent Student Recruitment Strategy includes re-alignment with the APP focus on the recruitment of underrepresented students to the University. The Education Strategy includes a key focus on developing learning and teaching and assessment methods which support learners from all backgrounds. The Head of the Skills Centre is currently reviewing the Skills Centre Strategy and has been involved at multiple stages in our work to develop institutional APP targets. She is incorporating a key strand of work to ensure support for students with disabilities and to move forwards work on technology-enhanced learning. Careers work is closely aligned with APP objectives with a strategy for working with WP students which is already aligned with OfS guidance. There is dedicated resource within the team to work exclusively on supporting disadvantaged students into graduate employment or further study. The University will be reviewing all of the main strategies and policies over the next few years. When the reviews take place there will be a specific consideration of the alignment with the APP when drafting new content. Colleagues in the relevant drafting teams (Planning, Vice-Chancellor's Office) have been briefed on the APP submission.

We have been aligning our APP work with the TEF work we have undertaken in the past few years. Analysis of the Year 4 dataset as well as the subject level pilot data has contributed to our knowledge of our current position and allows us to identify areas of student experience with reference to students from POLAR and IMD quintiles 1/2 and 3/4/5, ethnicity groupings, age, disability and gender. The subject level data provide us with further detail, adding to our own internal data on the differences across departments and subjects.

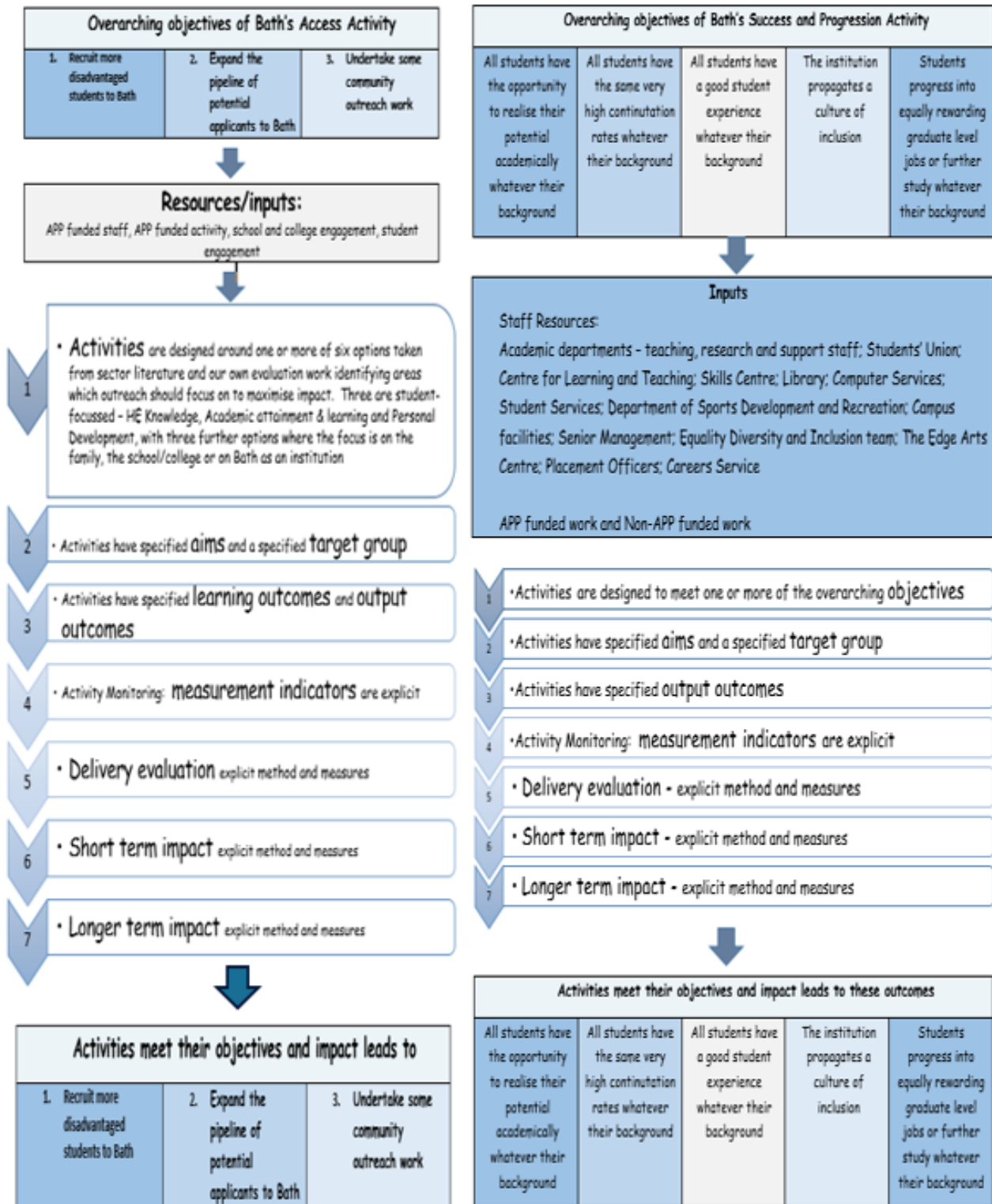
### **3.1.1. Strategic measures: Access**

Our strategy on Access is focussed on three elements (in order of resources allocated) as shown in Figure 16: recruitment to Bath; growing the pool of potential students; community outreach work.

We are using our Access targets to focus on the measures of POLAR and IMD to reduce the polarisation of our entrants between lower and higher social and economic groups. Our Outreach, Recruitment and Admissions strategies have been written and redesigned to meet these targets. Our senior management is working with our academic community and our professional service teams to achieve these aims. We have expanded our contextual offers over the past two years and will continue with our bespoke service offering extra consideration for flagged WP applicants within our Admissions system.

We will continue investigating course requirements and courses offered in order to encourage as many students from underrepresented groups as possible to apply to us. We will also continue with direct financial support – low income students themselves have reported through our APP consultation that this what they think the University should focus on to encourage low-income students to Bath. We will also continue to focus on specific post-offer conversion work with candidates demonstrating access characteristics as we have found the activity has a positive impact upon their confidence to accept an offer from the University.

Figure 16 Theory of change for Access, Success and Progression Programmes



### 3.1.2. Strategic measures: Success

Our on-course strategy is to align our work with the five overarching objectives shown in Figure 16. We will develop cross-university action plans to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed, particularly the target groups that OfS has identified and those that we have identified who have lower attainment than others, even if there are small numbers in these groups. We will continue our more recent improvements aligning work in this area.

TEF data confirm our strong continuation rates and highlight that we are amongst the top providers for this metric. Our aim is to maintain this strong position with good monitoring systems to ensure that students who are in OfS target underrepresented groups do equally as well as all students. Student Services, the Students' Union, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team, our Curriculum Development Team, our Library and Computing Services teams are already highly engaged with work supporting disadvantaged students.

Our Skills Centre has an embedded programme at present reaching all students as well as drop-in sessions for those needing individual support. Monitoring has shown that the support is disproportionately taken up by students from more disadvantaged groups which we believe is a sign that the offer is accessible to all and that there is no stigma associated with getting extra support. The peer support programmes offered by the Students' Union have been reviewed and will be enhanced over the duration of the Access and Participation Plan, along with increased focus to evaluate their impact. Our Library Service commits to providing equality of opportunity for all users of services and facilities. This is realised by providing appropriate facilities, including assistive software and equipment, as well as assistance with using the Library and accessing its resources. We are currently finalising our new Digital Strategy which describes how our vision of accessible learning and teaching for all students, as well as effective working practices for Professional Service teams, can be supported by new developments in the digital environment. We are also investigating how University staff and students can use technology to improve collection, analysis and presentation of data to inform their services.

### **3.1.3. Strategic measures: Progression**

Our aim is to ensure that all students continue to do well accessing further study and graduate employment opportunities, and where specific gaps exist continue to try to reduce or eradicate them over the five year period of the Access and Participation Plan. We will continue dedicating resource to this area and will continue with our focus on placements and internships. We have a dedicated resource within our Careers Service running bespoke events and ensuring an inclusive approach is incorporated across the Service. Students have asked us to do more to promote opportunities to disadvantaged students so we will review this work and consider opportunities to do more. We will also investigate the relatively small numbers of students who do not go on to graduate employment or further study to explore their outcomes further.

### **3.1.4. Strategic measures: How access leads to successful participation (OfS Priority C)**

**This section has been added in 2022 as part of the variation process initiated by OfS.**

Data discussed in Section 1 (assessment of performance) demonstrates we have a strong record of ensuring that all students who enter the University have high quality degree outcomes. We are aware of some gaps in this and have set targets in section 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 to address these. We have always taken the approach of only admitting students to the University who we know have the academic potential to succeed at Bath, we have never set out to admit students who will drop-out or fail. We are proactive to ensure that all groups of students have a good academic experience as well as a good student experience – one without the other will not provide a rounded and fulfilling experience for students. To best support the diverse cohort of students at the University and to ensure that our continuation, completion, success, and progression gaps do not widen we have introduced several programmes of work across the institution.

Our outreach provision is considered across the University and is focused on preparing students for study at Bath. Work with year 12 and 13 students is focused on experience and knowledge of their

course and the University. Our transition work begins at the point the students have an offer from Bath and includes experiences and support such as Offer holder visit days, student to student calling campaigns, a transition toolkit (focused on skills and signposting) and an in-depth induction programme. We will continue to ensure our outreach provision is linked up to our on-course support in particular for vulnerable groups (i.e. care experienced, young carers, student parents, refugees, asylum seekers or students who are estranged from their family) we work collaboratively with other universities to support students considering university study. Our Student Services Department then provide a dedicated team who support these groups at the point of offer and then through their time at Bath.

We will continue to offer a contextualised admissions process with the dedicated Admissions Progression Team who focus on applicants who are from under-represented groups. This approach allows us to identify barriers students may have faced to achieving their academic potential. Alternative offers will continue to be made to students who demonstrate they have undertaken additional activity to develop their skills for university study such as Access programmes and the Extended Project Qualification. We will review this approach during the lifespan of this plan in order to inform the direction of future plans.

We embed consideration of ED&I from outreach and throughout the student journey beginning with foundational ED&I modules in schools and on our outreach programmes, this is then expanded through training during induction. A programme of training and support is offered through our #BetheChange campaign which engages all students. We've had a strong focus on 'Report and Support' encouraging students to report incidents with the confidence that appropriate action will be taken to stamp out negative behaviour across the University. This is supported by senior boards set up across the University including the Student Experience Board, chaired by the PVC (Student Experience), where all matters are considered and acted upon. The Race Equality Taskforce was initiated to undertake a review across the University and is developing an action plan towards applying for the Race Equality Charter. Intermediate changes have been made through this review including the introduction of specialist services such as a hairdressing salon. A working group has been set up to review our provision to support student mental health and will develop action planning to support our intention to apply for the Mental Health Charter.

Our academic support is managed through the Education Board, reporting to the PVC (Education) where considerations from the Degree Outcome Group are taken to be acted upon. Our Curriculum Transformation programme (section 3.1.5) will be complete during the lifetime of this plan and will begin to deliver changes to the academic experience of students. Our students are an integral part of the conversation and alongside sitting on senior boards and governing bodies (Senate and Council) they are also supporting change through our decolonising the curriculum work across the University. Our Centre for Learning and Teaching continues to have a strong focus on supporting inclusive teaching, embedding content in induction of new academic staff and working closely with the academic community to improve practice where needed.

Our Student Experience Board considers all elements of the student experience for all groups of students and acts on areas where gaps in provision are identified. We consider the whole student experience and provide embedded and on-demand support through our Skills Centre, Library and Student Services (see section 3.1.5) including using a social prescribing model. Through the social prescribing we are piloting methods to monitor student engagement with learning as an indicator of wellbeing so that both educational and pastoral support can be given to those in danger of failing or leaving their course.

Our strong employability rankings in the QS rankings demonstrate our commitment to ensuring all groups of students progress well after their time at Bath. To ensure all students continue progress into graduate level careers or further study from Bath alongside the Careers Service support (embedded

and on-demand) we will continue to have a large-scale placement programme and faculty-based support teams as well as internships and a suite of Vertically Integrated Projects – offering students the chance to work on a cross-cutting project with peers from all levels of UG and PG study. We will offer international experiences through the Turing Scheme and international research experience placements, specifically targeting under-represented students.

### **3.1.5. The curriculum, pedagogic and student support**

Curriculum Transformation is a university-wide change project to deliver a curriculum that maintains our reputation for excellence in teaching and learning, producing students ready to navigate their future. Academic departments evidence their approach to supporting the needs of all learners and integrating professional and transferable skills in their redesigned courses (including supportive approaches to content and assessment and the impact on transition into the first year of our undergraduate courses).

In line with our Education Strategy 2016-2021, we aim to redesign all undergraduate and postgraduate courses by 2021:

- to ensure that our educational offering reflects our strengths, values, and strategy within the changing landscape of Higher Education in the UK and the world beyond;
- to collaboratively work with colleagues to recognise, share, and build on the many areas of strength and good practice that currently exist across our community;
- to equip each of our students with the knowledge, skills, and vision to achieve local and global impact throughout their lives;
- to reduce workload burdens and place wellbeing at the heart of its provision;
- to help students thrive today, and in the future.

The redesign of each course involves all teaching staff and students, alongside professional services and other key stakeholders, including employers, accrediting bodies, and alumni; with the aim to clearly communicate the distinctiveness of their educational offering and integrate new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. All course teams are partnered with and supported by a team of Curriculum Development Officers within the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) for the duration of the project. A dedicated Curriculum Development Officer (Inclusion) works across the institution to ensure the needs of future students and underrepresented groups are explicitly addressed in course design, and joins up course design with institutional and sector-wide approaches to Equality and Diversity, Admissions and Outreach, student support and staff development. There has been a wealth of feedback from students as part of this process, including from specific underrepresented groups (see Student Engagement Section).

Our Subject Librarians are now involved in Departments' consultations and planning for curriculum transformation, and provide advice and support to help in extending the breadth of recommended reading for initiatives to increase diversity in the curriculum. The curriculum transformation process additionally offers an opportunity to embed information skills teaching and learning at appropriate points within students' programmes, which should help support retention and outcomes, by ensuring equality of opportunity and skills acquisition, irrespective of a student's pre-University experience.

Our Student Services has its overall mission to lead the delivery of innovative, efficient, evidence based, high quality learner support services that enhance academic success, personal development and employment outcomes of all students. Its operational priorities include:

- in consultation with students, academics and professional staff, support the implementation of the University's Disabled Students' Policy, develop the effectiveness of Disability Access Plans

and support academic staff in anticipating student needs and implementing reasonable adjustments;

- support the implementation of the University's Mental Health Action Plan to reinforce the University's commitment to addressing mental health needs;
- develop self-help resources and peer support programmes that enhance resilience and reduce the need for specialised services;
- develop, implement and evaluate evidence based strategies to improve success rates for students with protected characteristics and from non-traditional backgrounds;
- develop an effective case management mechanism that minimises risk, enables coordination of support, ensures effective recording and informs policy development;
- develop procedures to identify students at risk of leaving (including those suspending) and target support services to ensure success;
- provide Wellbeing Services that provide appointment free, drop in services that promote resilience while supporting students with their welfare and pastoral care needs;
- coordinate a streamlined, extended induction programme to enhance the transition of new students from diverse backgrounds, in consultation with students, academics and professional staff.

### 3.1.6. **Diverse pathways into and through Higher Education (OfS Priority D)**

**This section has been added in 2022 as part of the variation process initiated by OfS.**

At Bath, we pride ourselves on offering high quality degree courses that support all students to achieve their potential. We have a strong history of providing students with the knowledge, experience, and network to leave the University and be successful. We committed to exploring Foundation Years when we originally wrote this plan (section 2.2.1), and we commit to reviewing the viability of these in the future. At the time of writing this variation in 2022, the DfE are undertaking a consultation following the Augar Review. This consultation has proposed cutting the tuition fees for Foundation Years. If this does occur, we will need to understand if a model of delivery can be found that is value for money for the University and can deliver high quality outcomes for the students.

We currently offer a small number of Degree Apprenticeships at Level 7 and we will undertake a review of our provision in line with the OfS' new priorities. We will identify if we feel we can run a programme of Degree Apprenticeships and deliver the high-quality degree outcomes we would expect of a Bath course whilst still maintaining our strong degree outcomes for students on our traditional degrees. We will also consider the implications of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and what our course offer/portfolio could be. The review will inform our direction when writing our new Access and Participation Plan.

### 3.1.7. **Employability**

Our students do well progressing into graduate jobs and further study. This is a key feature and strength of the University, and is enhanced by having work-based learning experience available in all our subject disciplines. This success is assisted by the investment in relevant support: our large team of placement officers who support students into and during placements; our Careers Team which has dedicated resource for supporting disadvantaged students; our highly engaged alumni who are coordinated by our Alumni Relations Team to support students into employment, and our Students' Union which encourages and facilitates students to take up volunteering opportunities and develop



skills through both social and academic opportunities. We will continue with our successful strategies in this area.

The Bath Connection e-networking platform is open to all students and alumni to source advice and mentors. There are currently nearly 4,000 student and alumni users on this platform. Mentors are able to self-identify as 'inclusivity mentors' if they would like to give advice on inclusion issues, such as their experiences in the workplace as member of an under-represented group (i.e. BAME or LGBTQ+). A series of events (between 8 and 12 each year) are held in the UK and internationally to allow alumni and students to network and gain insight.

Alumni are also involved in supporting students through more structured mentoring, such as the Gold Scholarship Programme. Alumni are recruited to share their skills and experience with Scholars in order to 'level the playing field' and support them through their studies and into their careers. Our Lloyds Scholars also have a dedicated Lloyds mentor and a paid internship as part of the scheme.

We have developed an institutional Employability Framework which outlines the key objectives we will meet in order to deliver on this commitment. One of three strands is 'Embedded and adaptive provision'. This includes the aim to deliver an inclusive and adaptive approach to our provision, informed by the student voice.

### **3.1.8. Collaboration**

We take a collaborative approach to our work across the student lifecycle. Our large Outreach Team delivers hundreds of events each year to thousands of students and depends very much on developing positive relationships with target schools and colleges. Collaborative work which is funded through our APP includes the money we contribute to the three IntoUniversity Centres: Weston-Super-Mare (sole funder), South Bristol (part-funder) and Hammersmith (part-funder). We fund these centres for their success in raising rates of progression to HE in the areas in which they work. They contribute to all three of our overarching aims of our outreach work as shown in Figure 16 but mostly growing the pipeline of potential entrants and work supporting local communities (the WSM and South Bristol centres). The centres are embedded within the communities in which they are located and the growing network of IntoUniversity centres nationally, with similar programmes of activities, allows some economies of scale which would not be there if we were to set up the centres ourselves.

We host the Western Outreach Network which is a legacy of the NNCO programme and coordinates outreach with our seven local partner universities and colleges. We are members of a consortium of higher education institutions in the South West which has developed the award-winning Careerpilot and Lifepilot. Careerpilot is the free-to-use, impartial website which helps young people find out about a range of pathway and progression choices and is hosted by the University of Bath. It is currently co-funded by 19 other partner HEIs to provide independent careers advice to young people. Lifepilot is a web-based tool to engage and support mature and potential part-time learners in progressing to higher level education. We host the NERUPI team which the University has seed-funded and which is now a self-governing body supporting HEIs in evaluating outreach. We also work with third sector organisations as appropriate, including for example, the Brilliant Club and Brightside for e-mentoring.

On-course we have many collaborations with local, regional and national partners. Some of the many examples of this include: Bath Mind and NHS IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapy) services to deliver group and individual services to students to support their mental health and wellbeing; with the NHS - we have an NHS GP surgery on site with which we have a close working relationship; with SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) to provide training, support our work in campaigning on issues of racism and other hate crime and to provide us with specialist support in

handling reported cases appropriately; with SARSAS (Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Assault Support) and The Bridge to ensure we provide appropriate support to students who have been subject to rape or sexual assault; with a local counselling organization 'Off the Record' to provide students with an alternative to our in-house service and to help us manage peaks in demand for counselling; with the Bath and North East Somerset Council key contact for Young Adult Carers to enrich our support for this cohort; with Health Promotion teams at the local council and we have been awarded the Meningitis Aware Recognition Mark by Meningitis Now; with Bristol Autism Spectrum Service to provide training to us and to provide enhanced support and services to our autistic students.

Finally we have a great many collaborative links with employers which allow so many of our students to go on placement. We recognise that without those links our students would not get the experience which allows them to have such good progression outcomes.

### **3.1.9. Partnerships with schools and other local and national organisations to raise pre-16 attainment (OfS Priority B)**

**This section has been added in 2022 as part of the variation process initiated by OfS.**

As described in Section 3.1.8 we have a large outreach team that have developed strong relationships with schools and third sector organisations. Our outreach work was refocused in 2019/20 and a new schools targeting approach implemented. Through this refocusing, our outreach activity is designed to support students to achieve the degree outcomes they need to apply to and to be successful at a highly selective university like Bath.

Whilst we will continue to engage and support our local schools through our community engagement work and our Student's Union activities, our targeting of schools will continue to focus beyond our local community. We are located in an area of high advantage and although there are some pockets of disadvantage, working in these areas alone would not provide enough engagement to meet our widening access ambitions. The national targeting of schools will continue to allow us to build deep and engaged partnerships with schools in order to support their under-represented students to apply to high tariff universities. This approach has demonstrated an increase to the number of applicants to Bath from these areas and therefore we will maintain this approach throughout the lifetime of this plan.

Our sustained outreach activities for sixth-form students continue to be focused around preparing students for study through skills development and engagement with project work, applying their curriculum knowledge to a broader question. They will continue to be supported through this by academics, postgraduate students and current undergraduates. Some of our outreach programmes focus on groups of students interested or engaged in sports and exercise. This work engages thousands of students through visits to our sports facilities through to partnerships with sporting foundations. We will continue this work to support disadvantaged students in their locality through sporting provision.

As well as students, our outreach work also supports teachers and parents. We will continue to deliver a programme of Teacher Champions, working together to understand the diverse school requirements and how the University can support those needs.

While much of our outreach will continue to be concentrated at post-16 groups, our partnerships with the third sector allow us to continue to support pre-16 students. Work with IntoUniversity begins at primary school, Brilliant Club works from ages 8-18, Villiers Park works with year 10-13. Through partnerships with other third sector organisations and universities we will continue to work with schools and colleges to support students' decisions and attainment at pre-14, pre-16 and post-16.

Through the lifetime of this plan we will continue to work with our local UniConnect, which we host. Using the new direction of the UniConnect we will work together to understand the research base and the best ways to support a student's attainment without the need to deliver the curriculum content.

### **3.1.10. Alignment with other work and funding sources**

Our Access work is aligned with a number of externally funded projects. The University hosts the Wessex Inspiration Network, the NCOP covering Wiltshire, BaNES and North Somerset, as well as the associated Outreach Hub. The University works closely with the partner HE and Colleges (Bath Spa University, Wiltshire College, Weston College and Bath College) and the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach is the Chair of the NCOP which allows an excellent overview of both the NCOP outreach and the work of the University's Outreach Team. The University Outreach Team also works with the NCOP team at an operational level to ensure work with overlapping schools is coordinated.

The University of Bath was awarded Catalyst funding for three projects: tackling sexual misconduct, tackling hate crime and online harassment, and addressing hate crime/incidents on the grounds of religion or belief. These projects were brought together by our Anti-Harassment Campaign Manager under the umbrella of the #NeverOK campaign. #NeverOK is a wide-reaching awareness-raising campaign that was launched on campus by the University and Students' Union (SU). The SU has continued to deliver training to their student leaders to increase their awareness of campaign efforts, support services, and how they can build an inclusive environment in their group, society, club etc. Inclusivity training and Bringing in the Bystander training has been delivered to over 600 student leaders, including Welfare and Inclusivity Officers in sports club (a new role for the 2018/19 academic year), the sports executive committee, accommodation hall representatives, and Freshers' Week volunteers. Report and Support, launched in September 2018 using Catalyst funding, is a tool through which all staff, students (including those on placement), and visitors can report discrimination, misconduct, harassment or assault. The tool has been successful in encouraging reporting with over 100 reports in the 2018/19 academic year, the majority of which have been made by students. Evaluation work with students and staff from vulnerable groups is planned for the 2019/20 academic year. The University set up a cross-university Harassment Working Group as part of the Catalyst funding which will continue beyond the lifetime of the allocated funding which ends in early 2020.

Our staff training centres on Bringing in the Bystander (responding to sexual harassment and sexual violence) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Bystander (more reflective of the projects in the #NeverOK campaign and includes information on the Equality Act, Micro-aggressions and being an equality ally). In the last year we have trained over 300 members of staff in these training packages. We have also created a suite of 30-minute 'masterclass' sessions that are proving popular with staff groups – sessions include responding to micro-aggressions, the invisible problem, and cultural awareness. These projects support our APP overarching aim that the institution propagates a culture of inclusion (see Figure 16).

Our APP funded bursary spend is supplemented by donations for bursaries from other sources. Our alumni contribute to the 50 bursaries a year for our Gold Scholarship Programme, with the remainder and the operational costs of the programme coming from our APP spend. We also currently have the following individual and corporate scholarships: Roper Scholarship (10/year); Meri Williams Scholarship (1/year); Santander Widening Access Scholarship (10/year forthcoming); AB InBev (3/year); Lloyds (15/year); Winning Women in Technology: JP Morgan Scholarship (10/year). Our strategy is to continue funding underrepresented students where possible from money donated by alumni and other individual and corporate donors.

We were recently successful in obtaining funds through the OfS Challenge Competition: Industrial Strategy and Skills to support local graduates to find work with local employers. Our Careers Service is working with Bath Spa University, Bath College and Swindon and Wiltshire LEP on this project.

The University has reviewed the allocation of funding set against the APP and that received from the OfS Student Premium funding. Student Premium funding is directed at underlying activity to support the wider on-course student population, particularly in areas such as Student Services and Academic Skills, where there is alignment with our student success and progression objectives.

### **3.1.11. Financial support (where applicable)**

Our APP work includes direct financial support with a number of bursaries. These schemes are highly targeted on students from low income households. Feedback from our low-income students showed that in their opinion direct financial support was the most important element of an access strategy to encourage others like them to the University. Our largest bursaries include large wrap-around programmes of support where students are directed into volunteering opportunities, are linked with an alumni mentor and are supported to sign up for volunteering opportunities. As well as these bursaries for low income students we also have a number of financial support packages for vulnerable students. Currently these include bursaries for care leavers, Foyer residents, students estranged from their parents, young adult carers, and refugees. Our strategy is to continue financial support for these small student groups. Tuition Awards are available for students in receipt of a Bath Bursary or Gold Scholarship Programme or income-related scholarship who want to receive tuition in music, dance or visual arts. The award covers the cost of a semester of tuition classes at The Edge.

## **3.2. Student consultation**

### **3.2.1. Improving consultation with our Students' Union on current performance**

We have improved our on-going consultation with students on our current performance. The Students' Union and Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been part of a monitoring group, newly formed this academic year, which has been reviewing our current Plan and has provided a forum to enable members to keep up to date with the new regulations and guidance that have been issued by the OfS. Our aim is continual improvement in this area.

### **3.2.2. Improving consultation with our Students' Union on future strategy in this area and the production of the APP**

The Students' Union has been more involved than before with this APP, with communication throughout the process as compared with just at the beginning and towards the end of the process as has happened previously. This has included a series of meetings and discussions, exchange of data and discussion of issues, and incorporating comments from the SU on a series of APP drafts. Staff involved have included senior management, officers, the SU President, and other sabbatical roles. Specific issues that the SU has highlighted have been addressed within the APP. There are many examples of this including ensuring that work supporting the mental health of students is a key commitment for the University, adding Student Parents as a target group; ensuring that work specifically on black students and white working class students is included, ensuring that we do not lose sight of the minority of students who do not progress into graduate employment or go on to further study; further comments on internships; including the Lloyds Scholars who are supported by the SU, recommendations on the future focus of Bursary and Scholarship support, and working together on our theory of change.

### **3.2.3. Student Voice into the APP**

In order to gather student views on this APP, in addition to the Students' Union views, three strands of work have been completed. An online survey was sent out to all students in both first and final years receiving a bursary which included APP related questions about the different lifecycle stages and asked students to respond with examples of things the university could do to support disadvantaged students into Bath, whilst on-course and into employment or further study. Responses were received from 182 low income students with approximately half from end of first year and half from final year students. A small focus group of WP ambassadors was held to elicit views on the APP of current students who support our Outreach Team encouraging more disadvantaged students into HE and Bath. These students often work with us for long periods and some have come through our own outreach programmes so they build up a good depth of knowledge about different disadvantaged students. In-depth interviews were held with a small number of alumni, identified by our Alumni Office as from underrepresented groups themselves, in order to gain a retrospective perspective from some of our graduates of their experience at Bath. The responses from the three sources were compiled and reviewed and used to inform our proposed APP strategy such as the students' endorsement of our bursaries and their desire for us to support them with mental health issues. Their detailed contributions have been disseminated across the University, have led to much discussion internally, and will continue to be used to inform future work.

### **3.2.4. Involvement of students in shaping and delivering APP work**

The involvement of the Students' Union and students as active partners in fulfilling aims of the APP is achieved through a number of ways including involvement in University structures, delivering inclusion work directly, channelling student voice into programmes and providing active support for student success through peer mentoring, peer assisted learning and student volunteering.

Students sit on the majority of our committees. Institutional structures related to this work which include student representation include the Equality and Diversity Committee which has representation from two SU staff as well as two elected student representatives; the Equality and Diversity Network which includes 10 students representatives from different SU Student Groups as well as well as three SU representatives; the Boards of Studies which include one SU staff member and two students representatives; and the Council/Senate/Students' Union committee which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and reports to Council and Senate on matters affecting the student experience which has two SU staff and three student representatives; the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee which has three SU representatives and which the Degree Outcomes Group sits under.

The SU directly supports degree attainment through the extensive peer-mentoring and peer-assisted learning programme which it coordinates. These programmes are extensive: 870 Peer Mentors were trained by the SU in 2018/19 – with every first year student offered a Peer Mentor. Peer Assisted Learning involves weekly study sessions led by a student in the year above. There are currently 15 schemes in 13 departments.

The Students' Union also has a large influence on the social cohesion of the University and extra-curricular activities and volunteering opportunities which also contribute to employability, and through skills development work such as the enhanced student leadership training. The SU empowers students to shape their education experience e.g. by electing, training & briefing student representatives such as Academic Reps and Hall Reps. It also lobbies on behalf of students, identifying an annual Top Ten list of issues to focus campaigns on. It provides advice and support to student support groups (mature, race, student parents, Enable).



We have Student Ambassadors who support our general outreach work. All ambassadors receive training on working with underrepresented students. Those who work on more intensive activities are given additional training, for example those working on residential activities or sustained contact programmes.

### **3.2.5. Channelling student voice into programmes**

#### **Access work**

Outreach evaluation is embedded within the outreach programme and numerous opportunities are taken to gather students' views. School and college students provide detailed feedback on our outreach activities and activities are adapted as a result of that process. The more intensive the activity the more students are involved. Student Ambassador feedback on event content is sought after events – with more intensive evaluation formalised after more intensive activity and more informal feedback encouraged after less intensive activities such as campus tours. We will continue to work closely with our own students as we value their feedback, and previous evaluation work has shown that pupils on our activities are sometimes more open with our ambassadors than they are with our own staff. A review session with ambassadors is held after all our more intensive activities.

A number of departments are building programmes of outreach activity designed and run by our current students, for example our Bathemathicians who are students with a mission to communicate maths to the public.

We gather feedback from students at different points in their journey into university, for example we survey those who decline our offers to understand how they are making their choices. This information is fed back into the design of our outreach and recruitment programmes.

#### **On-course**

Bath as an institution is very keen to obtain feedback from its own students and the Students' Union is active in coordinating that feedback. In fact the Students' Union and many professional service staff as well as academics have sometimes advised caution in order to avoid impinging too much on students' time and in order to avoid survey fatigue amongst students.

Student engagement has been purposefully embedded within our curriculum redesign process, covering every taught course by 2021. As of April 2019, over 1,000 current and former students have been engaged as part of curriculum redesign. In the early phase of strategic positioning, departments were required to engage with current students and alumni to inform their course vision and their engagement with our institutional principles of redesign, including supporting the needs of all learners. Departments produce a student engagement plan which aims to involve students at four levels: consultation, involvement, participation and partnership, including through delivery of the redesigned course.

Four Student Engagement Ambassadors (SEAs) were recruited from August 2018 until June 2019, to provide guidance and support to students as they contribute to the institution's Education Strategy. Jointly managed by Student Engagement in the Centre for Learning and Teaching and the Students' Union, the SEAs have worked to ensure students made meaningful and sustainable contributions to the University's curriculum transformation project. One of the roles focused on inclusivity, exploring how students from different backgrounds and experiences might be identified and engaged within curriculum redesign. This role has actively engaged with our Gold Scholarship Programme and Students' Union Diversity and Support groups to ensure that the perspectives of underrepresented groups are built into an inclusive approach to student engagement. The SEA (Inclusivity) also worked with the Library and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to engage students in 'Broaden my Bookshelf', a campaign to



diversify reading lists, which resulted in 165 book suggestions, three websites and six new themed reading lists.

Across the Student Engagement Programme which reached c. 900 students, examples of impact include: 17 focus groups and workshops, training 30 student academic representatives, social media and in-person events in Skills and Employability week, student-led research on inclusivity, citizenship and sustainability, employability and research-engaged learning, a suite of digital resources, good practice examples and workshop templates, sessions for academic staff, analysis of student voice data and a report to the University's Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. Externally, the SEAs have shared their practice at multiple events.

Future practice related to learning and teaching will build on and learn from these approaches. Areas for development already identified include: disseminating and acting on recommendations and results of the SEAs' student-led research, monitoring ongoing impact of curriculum redesign and assessing impact of curriculum on attainment gaps, engaging prospective students with curriculum redesign (within existing schools and teacher programmes and with partner organisations), enhancing resources on transition, developing the role of Peer-Assisted Learning in inclusive curriculum, new resources for departments on inclusive course design and more coordinated inclusion staff training and development. The Curriculum Development Officer (Inclusion) will provide some resource for this work, working with Admissions and Outreach, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Academic Skills Centre and Student Services and others, towards an evidence-based legacy of inclusion in and beyond curriculum redesign.

Our Student Services Team works very closely with students across all their programmes in order to ensure that the needs of all students are being addressed and that resources are distributed in a strategic manner. There are many examples of this but one survey undertaken is to gather feedback from the small number of our students who leave their courses early. This allows us to understand whether or not stronger interventions or earlier support could have made a difference. Key themes which have emerged in our latest survey this year are loneliness, mental health issues and the course not being what they expected. We are putting in place specific interventions to address these issues.

We have named Professional Services staff, located within each faculty, with a specific focus on and responsibility for student experience. They work with Directors of Study, Personal Tutors, academic staff and other professional support staff from across the university to make sure that the needs of all students are addressed and to seek and implement innovative and inclusive ways of enhancing the student experience, addressing the needs of the University's diverse student body.

The Edge, our Arts Centre, offers a student programme which provides an opportunity for students at the University to develop their creative skillset alongside their academic studies. We deliver a student membership scheme called The Edge Arts Community which aims to provide opportunities for every student to engage with an array of creative activities and professional development opportunities. The programme is run by students and is free for all University students to attend therefore removing financial hardship as a barrier to participate. Activities are based in our purpose built creative centre The Edge, engaging with a variety of art forms, therefore ensuring complete accessibility for all students. By offering creative approaches and new ways of thinking, we will better prepare our graduates for life after University and enhance the overall student experience.

Finally we have just recruited a Vice-President for Student Experience. This new post will report to the Vice Chancellor, will sit on the University Executive Board and will focus on student experience, engagement and wellbeing. The role requires a commitment to, and understanding of inclusivity issues relating to student matters within a diverse and multicultural environment, and one of the main duties is

to lead cross-University work on the development of our multi-cultural and intercultural community, encouraging and enabling a friendly and welcoming cross-campus culture.

## **Progression**

The Careers Service has a Student Advisory Board which covers undergraduates and postgraduates, is made up of 10-12 students and meets three times a year. The Board discusses a wide range of subjects on employability including our Careers Service offer in terms of events, workshops, resources and fairs to gauge students' perceptions and views to inform future direction and improvement of our offers. Support for underrepresented groups is also covered in these meetings and views sought from students. For example we asked about views on targeted emails to specific groups to inform how we supported engagement. In addition, these students are also canvassed in-between formal meetings for their views on a specific event or activity. In addition at least once a year a member of the Careers Service meets with student groups, for example the Afro-Caribbean Society and the Race Equality Group, to discuss engagement with BAME students to inform our activities.

## **3.3. Evaluation strategy**

### **3.3.1. Strategic context**

The University aims to be at the forefront in developing strategies to evaluate its admissions and widening participation activities and actively engages with national discussions through ongoing research activity and contribution to sector bodies working in this area. We are constantly working to undertake the most meaningful evaluation possible and meet the highest standards, contributing to the sector's push to produce better evidence of impact<sup>181920</sup>. We will continue with this mission.

Since 2012 there has been a strong culture supporting the importance of evaluation within our Outreach Team and as there has been low staff turnover this has resulted in a team well versed in evaluation issues. We invest heavily in Widening Access activities and support the need for robust evaluation. We were one of the first universities to underpin our outreach evaluation with an explicit theoretical framework (the NERUPI Framework). On-course there is a strong skills base of data analysis and frequent opportunities for reflective practice but there is not always a coherent explicit journey through data analysis, strategy, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and assessment of impact. Some areas, for example our large Maths Support Programme and our work within the Psychology Department have excellent explicit evaluation plans and good implementation, whereas other areas do not. During 2018-19 we have directed staff resource towards a whole provider approach to this work. This has resulted in a higher awareness amongst on-course staff implementing APP funded activity of the expectations of the institution in this area and also the guidance, support, tools and expectations of OfS. The need to evaluate spend is frequently mentioned by staff leading on the APP work including the Director of Admissions and Outreach who has responsibility for the APP. We have an experienced evaluator who now works across the university to gather what is already being done well and to build up knowledge and skills within teams, and we are looking to supplement this resource. We also have a growing number of senior managers and advocates of evaluation across the University. We will continue improving the culture of evaluation on-course and commit to building capacity within this area.

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<sup>18</sup> University of Exeter (2019) Access and participation standards of evidence. Office for Students

<sup>19</sup> University of Exeter (2019) Using standards of evidence to evaluate impact of outreach. Office for Students

<sup>20</sup> Crawford, C., Dytham, S. Naylor, R. (2017) The Evaluation of the Impact of Outreach: Proposed Standards of Evaluation Practice and Associated Guidance, Office for Fair Access

We have completed the OfS self-assessment tool and have identified areas for improvement. We are making three overall commitments in this area:

- build on recent improvements to further improve the strategic overview of evaluation of APP funded programmes. This will include working more closely with senior management and increasing the impact of the APP Monitoring Group and will commence in 2019/20;
- improve the whole institutional approach of evaluating WP work and access to data, monitoring and analysis work as part of a broader information strategy in the University, scheduled for completion by 2023;
- encourage staff to undertake professional development on evaluation by designating responsibility for this to a member of staff and increasing financial resource available for this commencing from the 2019/20 academic year.

### **3.3.2. Programme and Evaluation design**

We have recently undergone a major review of our outreach programmes to focus more on recruitment to Bath as guided by the OfS. We have underpinned the programme with clear objectives. On-course work is also generally underpinned by clear objectives. We use sector evidence in the design of our programmes. This is a research intensive university and staff are very good at keeping up to date with sector evidence and there is a strong culture of sharing and discussing the latest evidence with other staff.

A Programme and Evaluation Design Framework has been developed this academic year (2018/19) to provide a coherent structure for APP funded Access work at the university. This has been developed by an experienced evaluator in conjunction with the Management Group of the Access Team. The Framework is underpinned by our three overarching objectives for our Access work in priority order: recruitment to Bath, growing the pool of potential students who could get to Bath, and community outreach.

Activities are designed around one or more of six options taken from sector literature and our own evaluation work identifying areas which outreach should focus on to maximise impact. Three are student-focussed – HE Knowledge, Academic attainment & learning, and Personal Development, with three further options where the focus is on the family, the school/college or on the University as an institution. All activities have specified aims and a specified target group. All activities have specified learning outcomes and output outcomes which are specified by practitioners or taken from the NERUPI Framework or from other Frameworks depending on the activity. Activity monitoring measurement indicators are explicit. Delivery evaluation is outlined with explicit method and measures. Short term impact is outlined with explicit method and measures. Longer term impact is also outlined with explicit method and measures.

This new Framework has been completed by our Access Team Managers for all strands of activity and provides our theory of change for our access work as it shows, for each activity, what change is anticipated, how it will be measured and how this fits into the overall goals of the programme. Our future strategy is to continue to develop this Programme and Evaluation Design Framework, updating and amending where necessary. We will also adapt this for on-course work linked into the overarching aims from our theory of change model. The logic will remain the same for on-course support but the types of activity will be different and will draw down from literature outlining the strategies which are known to work when supporting disadvantaged students on-course.

Our main focus of Access work is to encourage the diversity of the student body at Bath and we are able to obtain a lot of our tracking data internally by matching up our outreach data with admissions data which we do at regular points during the admissions cycle. However, our strategy is to continue

with our subscription to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service as it provides us with information on where those who do not apply to us choose to go, some useful contextual summary information about our participants as well as useful schools information which informs our schools targeting, and also undertakes some valuable research by pooling data from its many members.

### **3.3.3. Evaluation implementation**

There are many examples of good evaluation implementation across the University using a range of methodologies including the three OfS recommended types: narrative, empirical and causal work. Our aim is to undertake Type 2 or 3 level work where possible. Using the OfS self-evaluation tool we have identified three areas where we do less well which we intend to take forwards and address: we do not at present have official documentation for the ethical approval of our outreach evaluation work; we only undertake risk analysis for a limited number of activities; up to now, we have not explicitly allocated the level of evaluation resource necessary to undertake the work in this area. We have developed a ten question tool, drawn from concepts from within the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool, which provides an easier resource for practitioners to use when assessing their individual programmes. This has been disseminated and used across the University.

Our data collection techniques are good and we do a lot of data analysis on our Access participants and our on-course students. The data analysis skill levels within our Admissions, Recruitment and Outreach work are particularly strong. We have improved our capacity to monitor progression from application through to graduation through changes to our internal reporting systems, and can use HESA data to assess our progress in supporting applicant success and progression. This has not only assisted in identifying areas of the admissions process which are inhibiting the success of potential students, but has also enabled the University to spot the interventions that improve applicant success rates.

### **3.3.4. Learning to shape improvements**

Our Access Team has a strong culture of reflective practice and there are many examples of evaluation leading to improved practice. The Team is constantly reviewing their work to ensure it has as much impact as possible. An element which could be improved is sharing findings more widely. We have improved the sharing of findings with academics who support our outreach work, but we do not share our evaluation findings to a great extent with schools and colleges. This is an area of action for us. We are doing more work on conversion, using evaluation to identify factors which bring students to Bath, and with comparison groups to explore the difference in outcomes between those who do and do not receive interventions delivered by us and our partners. This is cross-university work linking the teams in Outreach, Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing. On-course there are also many examples of reflective practice and evaluation leading to improved practice but there are areas where this could be improved. We have improved the sharing of evaluation internally within the University across different departments, and we aim to make further progress on this in the future. Many teams have review days and we will continue work, already started this year, to offer bespoke tools and resources for teams to review their APP funded work within these review days and throughout the year at department, team and other planning meetings. Our APP Monitoring Group, outlined further below, has a remit to monitor APP activity and this includes assessing evaluation of activities and shaping improvements.

There is scope to improve the communication between WP outreach staff/professional service staff supporting disadvantaged students on-course, and academics supporting outreach work and those involved in the learning and teaching of students at the University. This will be a particular area of focus for us over the lifetime of this Plan.

Outreach and professional service staff are well informed by sector research and we will continue to be highly engaged in sector-wide research. We have already uploaded material on the new TASO-HE site and previously submitted eight examples of good practice to OfS within our last Monitoring Return. Staff attend external events to stay in touch with sector issues. We are also highly engaged in many local and national networks e.g. Western WP Research Cluster, HEAT Research Group, Seren Evaluation Group, as well as providing regular input on access and inclusive admissions practices at national conferences (e.g. UCAS Teacher and Adviser Conference, NETSixth Conference, Seren teacher and adviser briefings).

### **3.3.5. Evaluation of financial support**

This academic year we have a new officer in place, whose remit includes the evaluation of our bursary work. This dedicated resource has enabled us to complete a more in-depth review of the OfS Toolkit. Although a reasonable proportion of our spend goes on bursaries and direct financial support to students, we are a relatively small institution and our main bursary scheme, the Bath Bursary, currently reaches 250 students a year. Following a campaign from our Students' Union the household income threshold has been raised to £25,000 a year. This is likely to add 30-50 extra bursaries a year. We introduced a new bursary scheme (Gold Scholars) in 2017 which makes 50 awards a year. This new scheme has substantially affected the composition of the Bath Bursary students as many of the more disadvantaged students are now eligible to receive the larger financial package and wrap-around programme relating to the Gold Scholars. This means that the composition of the Bath bursary students before and after 2017 is not comparable. Guidance for the statistical tool states that the statistical tool is 'suitable for institutions with more than around 300 financial support recipients per year', 'institutions with between around 300-800 financial support recipients per year will need to combine data from multiple years to increase their sample size and achieve meaningful evaluation.'<sup>21</sup> Given the need to combine three years and the fact that approximately 65% of Bath undergraduates complete a placement or study year abroad, it would be expected that the majority of the three full cohorts that would be required would have graduated by the summer of 2020. To avoid an incomplete dataset, and given the fact that many students at Bath complete five year courses, it would be expected that excluding those repeating years all students would have graduated by the summer of 2021. For reference, since 2014, 221 Bath Bursary students have graduated, and 262 additional students are due to graduate in the summer of 2019.

The statistical evaluation toolkit has been designed to be carried out using HESA data sets. The following data sets, were released by HESA in April 2019: degree and graduate outcomes for 2013-14 student cohorts, continuation outcomes for 2016-17 student cohorts. The required data set for degree and graduate outcome, 2014-15 cohort, is anticipated to be released by HESA in March/April 2020. The OfS guidance states that if the analysis was to be carried out before the release of the required HESA data sets additional resource would be required to develop an internal data set.

Acknowledging our small numbers and timing of graduating cohorts following major bursary changes, our proposal is therefore to apply the concepts from the OfS quantitative tool adapted for our context. The quantitative analysis will therefore include, from 2019/20, an annual examination of degree outcome, continuation and progression rates for those receiving different bursaries and these will be reviewed against figures for comparison groups. We will continue to review this decision and investigate what other quantitative analysis we can undertake to provide a meaningful comparison of outcomes. By the end of February 2020 we will deliver a detailed financial support evaluation plan to OfS for 2020-25 which will include information on timings. We already use an expanded version of the

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/>

OfS survey tool and we propose to extend the qualitative evaluation of these students from 2019/20 by using the interview tool which OfS has developed. We currently administer online surveys which include questions from the OfS financial support toolkit as well as additional questions addressing the specific areas being investigated and will continue with this. Gold Scholars are surveyed as well as students who have received a Bath Bursary or an income related scholarship. Versions are slightly tailored for each group, but the majority of the survey remains unchanged. A pre-entry survey is emailed to students just before they arrive. A second survey then captures end of first year experiences and a third survey is sent to these students on completion of their final year. A separate group of final year students also completes an online survey. Gold Scholar students take part in compulsory focus groups during the year to provide Student Voice feedback on the Gold Scholars Programme.

### **3.4. Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

Following consultation with the Students' Union and Head of EDI the University intends to slightly modify arrangements set up in 2019 to monitor progress. The SU, Head of EDI and other relevant parties from across the University will meet a minimum of three times a year with relevant staff in Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach to discuss progress and hold thematic "deep dives" to look at various topics. This group will report their conclusions to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), who has strategic responsibility for the APP and overall responsibility for monitoring progress. If concerns arise over progress in a specific area of the APP, a task and finish group will be convened by the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, drawing upon relevant expertise from within the University community. This Group will make recommendations to the DVC and University Executive Board on appropriate corrective action to facilitate progress.

The progress on the APP will also form part of the annual discussion of Access, Admissions and Outreach activity considered by the University's Equality and Diversity Committee. Progress on meeting APP targets is already incorporated into the annual report on the outcomes of the undergraduate admissions cycle that is considered by Senate and Council, and by University Executive Board, and in recent years substantial discussion time has been allocated to consideration of this information at the relevant meetings. The specific consideration of degree outcomes is undertaken by the ULTQC, and their Degree Outcomes subgroup (DOG), which has membership drawn from the SU, the three academic faculties and the School of Management, the Centre for Learning and Teaching, Academic Registry, Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, and EDI. The use of the OfS datasets and the enhanced analysis of degree performance through use of intersectional characteristics has now been incorporated into the DOG evaluation.

The University will also complete the Annual Monitoring Return for the APP, which will be considered prior to submission by relevant University committees.

## **4. Provision of information to students**

The University will publish the annual APP on the University website, alongside the existing historical Agreements with the Office for Fair Access. Clear guidance on fees, bursaries and scholarships will continue to be provided for students. This will take the form of information on the University website which includes eligibility criteria, and in documentation relating to courses. Bursary holders receive clear guidance on annual amounts within the Terms and Conditions supplied with the bursary offers. This includes details on placement years which many of our students undertake.

Our bursary eligibility criteria include POLAR Q1 and Q2, IMD Q1 and Q2, care leavers, refugees, young carers, estranged students and Access to HE students in addition to low household income.



Bursaries funded by our APP scheduled for 2020/21 onwards include those outlined in the table below:

Figure 17 APP funded Bursaries from 2020/21

Bursaries including amount provided	Target Groups/Eligibility
<b>Gold Scholarship Programme</b> <i>£5,000 a year (excl paid placement period/repeat years)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income - £25,000 or below who also meet at least one or more of our other WP criteria (set out above in Section 4).</li> </ul>
<b>Bath Bursary</b> <i>£3,000 a year (excl paid placement period/repeat years)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income - £25,000 or below and meet at least one or more of our other WP criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Unpaid Placement Bursary</b> <i>£2,000 per award - one off payment in placement year. Pro-rata for thin sandwich/combo placement years</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bath Bursary and Gold award holders only</li> <li>On an unpaid placement year (e.g. unpaid work or study year abroad)</li> </ul>
<b>Foundation degree in Additions Counselling Bursary</b> <i>£3,000 a year for two years</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income - £25,000 or below (Many come from non-traditional/limited education routes)</li> </ul>
<b>Master's in Architecture Bursary</b> <i>£1,000 in first year if unpaid placement/ £500 if paid placement, £1,000 in second year.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income - £25,000 or below and meet one or more of our current WP criteria.</li> <li>Students can have up to a 3 year gap between BSc and Masters- and retain tuition fee and funding as per BSc year</li> </ul>
<b>PGT Masters Bursary</b> <i>£10,000 for Bath BSc/BA graduates only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bath undergraduate degree holders only who meet one or more of our WP criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Discretionary student support fund</b> <i>Amount offered varies by circumstance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who were previously not eligible for the Bath Bursary/Gold but have had a change in circumstances</li> <li>Awards for social work students in Yr1</li> </ul>
<b>Discretionary internship bursary</b> <i>Amount available variable up to £2,000</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income students who do not meet our other WP criteria who are planning a placement period outside of a normal placement year e.g. summer internship</li> </ul>
<b>Care Leavers and Foyer Bursary</b> <i>£1,000 per academic year plus £1,000 to help with start-up costs and a further £1,000 on graduation – a maximum of £7,000 over a 5-year programme including placement.</i>	<p>This bursary is for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have lived in a Foyer, or who have been supported by a local authority Leaving Care Service and who have been in the Care of the Local Authority for 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday.</li> <li>and who are enrolled on a full-time undergraduate or foundation degree and registered as a student at the University of Bath</li> <li>and who are aged 25 years or under at the start of the course</li> </ul>
<b>Estranged Student Bursary</b> <i>£1,000 per academic year of study, plus £1,000 for start-up costs and a further £1,000 on graduation – maximum of £7,000 over a 5 year programme incl a placement year.</i>	<p>This bursary is for new UK undergraduates who are irreconcilably estranged from their parents i.e. no verbal or written contact with both their biological or adoptive parents or their only living parent for a significant period of time and this will not change. The time period is usually twelve months or longer, but this depends on exact circumstances. To be eligible, you must also be enrolled on a full-time undergraduate or foundation degree and registered as a student at the University, and be aged 25 years or under at the start of the course.</p>
<b>Refugee Bursary</b> <i>£1,000 per academic year plus £1,000 for start-up costs and a further £1,000</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those with refugee status or humanitarian protection with three years of ordinary status</li> </ul>

<i>on graduation. Max – £7,000 over a 5-year programme including placement.</i>	
<b>Young Carers</b> <i>The University offers eligible new UK undergraduate students a bursary of £500 per academic year.</i>	You are classed as a young adult carer if you are a carer between the ages of 18 and 25 who looks after a relative or friend, of any age, due to disability; chronic or terminal illness; mental health problems; alcohol or drug addiction/dependency
<b>University Hardship Fund</b> <i>Award amounts variable up to £3,500</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK students experiencing financial difficulties during studies</li> </ul>
<b>Income related scholarships:</b> <b>Roper:</b> £1,000 year for 3 years <b>Meri Williams:</b> £3,000 a year for 3 years <b>Santander Widening Participation Scholarship:</b> up to £2,000 for first yr only <b>Veronica Hope Hailey Scholarship:</b> £1,000 a year for 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with a household income of less than £42,875 with some subject related criteria and who also meet at least one or more of our other WP criteria (set out above in Section 4).</li> </ul>
<b>Travel Bursary</b> <i>Awards of up to £80 for travel costs for applicants coming to Applicant Visit Days or Interviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those from low household incomes of £25,000 or below</li> </ul>

We also provide targeted email information to applicants about funding opportunities and our Outreach Team undertakes a significant programme of finance-related IAG within the region. In addition, a detailed fees schedule will be published annually by the University's Student Finance Office on its web pages.

The University will continue to develop the prospective student information sections within the website. The specific needs of under-represented groups will be supported, in particular: those from families without a tradition of higher education study; mature students; those with vocational qualifications; care leavers; those from certain BAME groups; students with disabilities; refugees, estranged students, and males and females under-represented in certain subject areas. This will be continuously developed and added to over time.

**Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees**

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
First degree	Honours year - top up to campus based Foundation Degree	£9,250
First degree	MArch Architecture Year 1	£5,550
Foundation degree	Campus based Foundation Degree	£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Action on Addiction 10032035 - Honours year - top up to Foundation Degree	£7,710
Foundation degree	Action on Addiction 10032035 - Foundation Degree	£7,710
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Action on Addiction 10032035 - Part-time Honours years (two-years part-time top-up from Foundation degree); BSc (Hons) Addictions Counselling	£2,130
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The University of Bath

Provider UKPRN: 10007850

## Investment summary

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

### Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£2,272,111.00	£2,272,111.00	£2,272,111.00	£2,272,111.00	£2,272,111.00
Access (pre-16)	£428,747.00	£428,747.00	£428,747.00	£428,747.00	£428,747.00
Access (post-16)	£1,782,374.00	£1,782,374.00	£1,782,374.00	£1,782,374.00	£1,782,374.00
Access (adults and the community)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Access (other)	£40,990.00	£40,990.00	£40,990.00	£40,990.00	£40,990.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£4,591,500.00	£4,591,500.00	£4,591,500.00	£4,591,500.00	£4,591,500.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£445,306.00	£445,306.00	£445,306.00	£445,306.00	£445,306.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HF1)</b>	£30,536,750.00	£30,380,930.00	£30,469,730.00	£30,429,520.00	£30,327,715.00
<b>Access investment</b>	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
<b>Financial support</b>	15.0%	15.1%	15.1%	15.1%	15.1%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
<b>Total investment (as %HF1)</b>	23.9%	24.1%	24.0%	24.0%	24.1%

