

University of Kent

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of performance

The University serves an increasingly diverse population of students. We have increased our understanding of our entrant profile recognising the significant changes in this population over the past decade and the extent to which we must adapt to their needs.

Extensive analysis of our student entrant data and where we sit nationally in terms of access and participation performance has fed into University-wide discussions. The information is also provided to academic schools and professional services through a dashboard: this helps to raise awareness of performance differentials across the University. Closing the gaps between under-represented groups and their peers will only be solved if there is a universal commitment to delivering equality of opportunity and outcomes from all staff involved in delivering the student experience. A better understanding of our widening participation cohort acknowledges the range of characteristics that this group of students has, they are individuals with different needs. Our assessment of performance includes how we address these needs so that individuals realise their potential, and we recognise that the admissions tariff system is not necessarily a level playing field and that some individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds have a longer distance to travel in terms of the capital they bring to their studies.

We have been able to assess our performance across the life cycle and the evidence used to feed into our targets is from multi sources: the OfS dataset(s); outreach participant data and outcomes; and internal student data. We have a significant outreach participant tracking study through HEAT that informs our access delivery as well as a range of qualitative data collected from partner secondary school students and staff. We have invested in an equality dashboard and dedicated data, research and evidence resource to gather and analysis data on our student population. We will continue to improve upon this evidence in the coming years to feed into continual monitoring and assessment of performance, with checks for reliability and validity. One of the key challenges in an assessment of performance is the amount of flux observed in time series analysis, especially where cohort sizes are small. This can make year on year comparisons unreliable and identifying real change is sometimes difficult.

Our work has shown us the importance of understanding intersections of characteristics and the multi-dimensions of disadvantage, particularly in disentangling the explained and unexplained gaps in access and performance. For example, understanding and assessing disadvantage levels and prior attainment intersections will help us to target more effectively and deliver interventions according to individual need. A case mix adjustment of student data is essential to take into consideration cohort characteristics and this requires an in-depth investigation. We are committed to developing, testing and evaluating equity measures with the aim of achieving equality of engagement and outcomes for our diverse student body.

All analysis and targets within the Plan are based upon Home/EU populations.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

Trend data shows that the gap in proportion of entrants from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 to the University has been reducing year on year for the last four years (gap of 20.6% in 14/15, reduced to 20.5%, 18.1% and 18.7%¹ in subsequent years). There is more work to be done, there remains a 18.7% point gap between these two groups of entrants and this is just below the sector (OfS A&P dataset). Our admissions offer rate for Q1 applicants has improved from 78% in 2012 to 86% in 2017 but there is a 5.7% point gap in offer rates between POLAR3 Q1 and Q5 applicants (UCAS equality data). Our assessment of gaps with

¹ Where figures quoted in the Plan differ from the figure in our Targets and Investment this is due to rounding differences in the OfS datasets

disadvantaged outreach participant groups has taken into consideration intersections with prior attainment and levels of disadvantage and we have a much better understanding in the progression to HE patterns of different outreach groups through our HEAT track study. We have increased the access rate of our outreach cohort with Level 2 KS4 attainment and high disadvantage (POLARQ1-Q2) over a four year period: Year 1 28%, Year 2 34%, Year 3 34% Year 4 37% but further work is required to close the gaps between this cohort and POLAR Q5 cohort. Working collaboratively with local partner providers and schools and colleges, we have also identified a gap in attainment at KS4 (5 GCSEs at grades 4-9 including English and Maths) which research indicates is a predictor of progression to HE; there is a 16% gap in good attainment between POLAR3 Q1 outreach participants and the Local Authority average (HEAT data). POLAR4 Q1 students are one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below. Using another disadvantage indicator, IMD, trend data shows that the gap in the proportion of entrants from IMD Q1 and Q5 to the University has been reducing year on year over the last five years (Year 1 gap of 11.9%, Year 2 9.2%, Year 3, 9.4%, Year 4 7.9% and Year 5 8.1%; OfS A&P Dataset). We will continue to monitor IMD differentials.

Success

Non-continuation

Trend data shows that this gap has fluctuations over a 5 year period (2% in Year 1, 2.5% in Year 2, 0.9% in Year 3, 4.4% in Year 4 and 2.3% in Year 5) (OfS A&P data). Intersectional data shows that smaller populations of Q1 entrants contribute to gap fluctuations year on year: key characteristics such as mature, prior qualification type/grade will impact gaps and explain fluxes in time series data. Intersectional analysis also shows that entrants with particular characteristics, particularly economic disadvantage (household income), are more likely not to continue their studies and are one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below. There is a 3% gap in non-continuation between IMD Q1 and Q5 students (Year 1 4%, Year 2 2%, Year 3 4%, Year 4 3%, Year 5 3%). As with POLAR4, smaller populations contribute to the fluctuations year on year.

Attainment

Trend data shows that there has been a 'good degree' attainment gap between POLAR Q5 and Q1 students over time with some fluctuation. Latest data shows a 4% point gap (OfS A&P data) where Year 1 the gap was 2.8%, Year 2 6.8% Year 3 3.7% and Year 4 4.4%. Internal analysis however, shows that this gap is explained when we normalise the cohort using entry qualification and tariff and the gap disappears. If we control for entry qualifications, the gap between POLAR4 Q5 and Q1 students with A-level entry qualifications is narrower at 1%. Furthermore, when we control for entry tariff as well as qualification POLAR4 Q1 students perform better than Q5 (A-level entrants with ABB tariff, 2015/16 entry year, 100% of Q1 students achieved a good degree, compared to 90% Q5; Internal Dataset). Internal intersectional analysis show that 'good degree' attainment gaps are determined by ethnicity, prior qualification and grades rather than disadvantage: where we compare Q5/Q1 students with similar qualifications and tariff, the gap disappears, there is no difference in the performance of Q1 A level students with the same A level grades as their Q5 peers. We will not identify a target for this area but will continue to monitor differentials.

Using another disadvantage proxy, IMD, there is a 21.2% gap in 'good degree' attainment between IMD Q1 and Q5 students with fluctuations in the gaps reported over a five year period: Years 1 15.9%, Year 2 14.8%, Year 3 18.5%. Year 4 23.9% and Year 5 21.2% (OfS A&P Dataset). We will set a target in this area and monitor this closely using our intersectional data recognising that attainment gaps are due to a complex mix of cultural, economic and educational factors and that the IMD differential requires contextualisation. This is discussed further in 1.6.

Progression to employment or further study

We have made significant progress over the last few years in reducing the gap in progression of POLAR Q5/Q1 students where latest data indicated that our Q1 students were performing slightly better than our Q5 students with a -0.8% gap. There are considerable fluctuations in gaps reported over a five-year period: Year 1 8.7%, Year 2 1.6%, Year 3 4.9% Year 4 2.1% and Year 5 -0.8%. This may be due to small cohort sizes. (OfS A&P dataset). Our own internal analysis of the latest cohort tracked through the DLHE

in 2016-17 shows a slight gap between Q5/Q1 of 1.7% points. Using IMD, gaps have also fluctuated over a 5 year period: Years 1 and 2 5%, Year 3 -2%, Year 4 6%, Year 5 1% (OfS A&P dataset). Reliable assessment using internal data has limitations due to small population sizes when we intersect characteristics. At this time, we will not identify a target for this area but will continue to monitor differentials.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)

Access

We have reduced the gap in access between white and BAME groups of students and perform well above the sector. The gap has reduced over the years, in Year 1 it was 38.8 % points, Year 3 30.4% points, and Year 5 26.5% points; a reduction of 12.4% points over the five-year period (OfS A&P Dataset). The University continues to enjoy a growth in the diversity of its student body in terms of ethnicity. Time series data at ethnicity sub-group level shows a reduction in gap year-on-year for all ethnic groups, and Kent performs above the sector at sub-group level. For example, the gap between Asian and White students in Year 1 was 59.4% and in Year 5 this had reduced to 51.5% in Year 5. There has also been a 3% point reduction in the gap in admissions offer rates for White and BAME applicants over the past five years, the gap in offer rate was 8% for 2012 admissions cycle and this has been reduced to 5% for the 2017 admissions cycle (UCAS equality data). We believe it is not necessary to set a further specific target for this area, as the key factors are covered by targets related to overlapping measures but of course will continue to monitor progress against this gap.

Success

Non-continuation

There is no gap in continuation between BAME and White groups of students (current gap -0.3%, OfS A&P Dataset); the University performs above the sector. The gap has been consistently negligible over the last 5 years, Year 1 gap of -0.1% points, with the largest gap being 0.2% in Year 4. Time series data for ethnic sub-groups also shows no gap Year 5 for any sub-group, and where there has been a gap in a year it was negligible. For example, the gap between Black and White students was -0.5% in Year 1, in Years 2 and 3 there was a negligible gap of 0.6%, and by Year 5 there was no gap at -0.3%. Internally we monitor achievement and drop-out rates at individual ethnic group level, including intersections with those characteristics that may impact continuation including household income or prior qualification type. Our assessment shows that we have more Black students entering with lower household income and/or non A level qualifications and higher non continuation rates can be observed for this group. Population sizes for these intersected groups are smaller with significant gap fluctuations over time. We will not identify a target for this area but will continue to monitor progress against this gap.

Attainment

Trend data shows there has been a 'good degree' attainment gap over the past 5 years: Year 1 19.%, Year 2 13.6%, year 3 15.7%, Year 4 18.5% and latest data in Year 5 shows an overall 18.3% point gap between White and BAME groups of students. Gaps persist at ethnic group level but to varying degrees: White and Black (27.8%), Asian (13.4%), Mixed (5.7%) and Other (22%). Mixed and Other combined has a 9% point gap. (OfS A&P dataset). There are some fluctuations in time series gaps and population sizes also vary for ethnic groups but an internal analysis of a combined cohort (Year 3-5) also showed a significant gap between White and Black groups of students, the highest gap identified at ethnic group level. Intersectional analysis shows that gaps can be partly explained by entry qualification and tariff; if we control for both these variables, the gap between White and Black students narrows significantly to a range of 7%-15% points dependent on entry grades. Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic group students are in our target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below. We will continue to monitor all ethnicity sub-groups using intersections with other characteristics.

Progression to employment or further study

Overall, there is a 0.1% gap in progression between White and BAME students; the University performs above the sector and the gap has been consistently narrow over the last five years: Year 1 0.4%, year 2 0.1%, Year 3 -3.2%, Year 4 -1.5% and Year 5 0.1%. At ethnicity sub-group level, there is a mixed picture with no gaps between White and Black students and White and Asian in Year 5, but gaps observed between White and Mixed and White and Other. For example, there is gap between White and Other students of 3.8% in Year 1, and by Year 5 this had increased to 7.5%. However, our own internal data indicates very small populations with this group and gap fluctuations are highly likely. We will continue to monitor the gaps for both groups, White and Mixed and White and Other (OfS A&P and Internal Data). There is a 5.1% gap between White and Black students progression to higher postgraduate degrees at Kent, which although lower than the 10% gap nationally (DHLE Data), is an area that we wish to focus upon over the next five years. In particular, we will focus upon students who are Black and economically disadvantaged, to enable appropriate progression to educational opportunities and to grow the pool of talent from which future academics can be drawn.

1.3 Mature students

Access

In the past five years, the University has seen a reduction in the proportion of entrants classified as Mature but this follows sector trends. This is consistent with a drop in the number of applications from mature students. In 2013, 15% of our intake was mature students and this dropped to 9% in 2018 (Internal dataset). The OfS dataset also shows a decrease in the proportion of entrants (Year 1: 12.6% Year 2: 9.8%, Year 3: 11.5%, Year 4: 10.3% and Year 5: 8.6%). Mature students are one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below.

Success

Non-continuation

The University performs above the sector, and trend data shows this gap has persisted over a 5-year period (Year 1: 7.8% gap, Year 3: 9% gap, and Year 5: 6.7% gap; OfS A&P Dataset). Our own internal analysis also shows higher non-continuation rates for mature entrants. Our assessment using intersectional data shows that our mature group of students are more likely to be from lower household incomes and this may be a determining factor for non-continuation. They are also more likely to enter with non A level qualifications. Mature students are one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below.

Attainment

Trend data shows a fluctuation over the past 5 years in 'good degree' attainment between mature and young students (Year 1: 4.8% gap, Year 3: 9.3% gap, Year 5: 5.2% gap; OfS A&P Dataset). Internal Intersectional data analysis shows an unexplained gap where mature entrants entering with A levels on the same tariff as their younger peers are still more likely not to achieve a 'good degree' when compared to their younger peers. Mature students are one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below.

Progression to employment or further study

Mature students perform better than their younger peers, latest data shows that there is a -4.4% gap in progression to employment or further study between the two groups. Trend data shows that the University performs above the sector and there has been some fluctuation over the past five years (Year 1: -0.4% points, Year 2: -3.9% points, Year 3: -3.2% points, Year 4: 1.6% points, Year 5: -4.4% points; OfS A&P Dataset). We will not identify a target for this area, but will continue to monitor performance in this area.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

Over the past five years, the University has seen an increase in the proportion of students with a declared disability: Year 1 13.3%, Year 2 14.9%, Year 3 16.3%, Year 4 15.8% and Year 5 16.6% and performs above the sector (OfS A&P Dataset). For the latest cohort of entrants (2018/19 academic year) 15% of students declared a disability (Internal Data). At sub-group level, Kent has seen an increase in entrants from each group and the gap has reduced from Year 1 to Year 5. For example, mental health group in Year 1 the gap was 84%, in Year 2 81% and Year 5 it had reduced to 77.7%. Kent performs above the sector across all sub-groups. We will not identify a target in this area, but we will continue to monitor and ensure that this reduction in gaps is not reversed.

Success

Non-continuation

Trend data shows there has been fluctuation in the non-continuation gap between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability (OfS A&P Dataset). Overall, students with no declared disability perform slightly better with continuation than those with a declared disability (2.2% points gap), but this gap has been variable over the past 5 years (Year 1: -2% points, Year 2: 1.1% points, Year 3: 0.6% points, Year 4: -0.5% points, Year 5: 2.2% points; OfS A&P Dataset). At disability sub-group level there are small gaps between students with no known disability and groups with mental health, multiple impairments and cognitive and learning disabilities. For example cognitive and learning had a positive gap in Year 1 (students with a declared cognitive and learning disability had better continuation rates), in Year 2 it was a gap of 0.1%, Year 3 1.6%, Year 4 -1.5% and Year 5 0.2%. Combined three year cohort analysis (Internal Dataset) shows a positive 1% point gap between students who declare a disability (91% continuation rate) and those with no declared disability (90% continuation rate). We will not identify a target in this area but will continue to monitor progress against these gaps.

Attainment

We have made significant progress over the last few years in reducing the gap in attainment between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability where our latest data indicates a small gap in percentage points between these two groups of students: Year 1 -2.3%, Year 2 1.5% Year 3 1.5%, Year 4 0.5% and Year 5 0.3%. OfS A&P Dataset). At sub-group level there is a gap between students with a declared mental health disability and no known disability, and students with a social and communication disability. Fluctuations are observed in all groups most probably due to small populations. For example, the gap between students with a declared mental health disability and those with no disability was -3.8% in Year 1, -1.6% in Year 2, 3.8% in Year 3, 3.4% in Years 4 and 5. Although OfS data shows a gap for three years with this sub-group, our own internal analysis shows that once controlled by entry qualification, there is no 'good degree' attainment between students who declare any disability and those with no known disability. (Internal Dataset). We will not identify a target in this area but will continue to monitor against these gaps.

Progression to employment or further study

Current OfS data shows some flux in time series progression data for gaps between students with disabilities and without a disability (Year 4.8%, Year 2 1.2%, Year 3 1.8%, Year 4 5%, Year 5 3.1%). Our own internal data shows a 1% point gap between those two groups (DHLE Data), at individual disability group level the populations are very small and intersectional analysis is not reliable. At a disaggregated level, students with a social and communication disability are the only sub-group with a gap, although there are significant fluctuations due to small populations: Year 1 positive gap of 14.9%, Year 2 no gap could be recorded due to small population; Year 3 0.4%; Year 4 4.6% and in Year 5 -10.9%. We will not identify a target for this area, but will continue to monitor progress against the Year 5 gap.

1.5 Care leavers

Access

The University is part of a local collaborative partnership, the Care Leaver Progression Partnership (CLPP) and links with partner schools and local virtual school(s) to ease pathways for Care Leavers. Kent and Medway has one of the largest populations of Looked after Children in the region, over one in five of this group of the children in the South East are in the Kent local authority. 43% of Looked after Children have been placed from other areas, this is often on a temporary basis and 62% are recorded with Special Educational Needs. (CLPP 2015-16). Working with local authorities, we are able to monitor the number of Looked after Children in partner schools and colleges but identification of these children at point of engagement proves challenging for a range of reasons. Sustained engagement in outreach also proves difficult and this may be due to the transient nature of the cohort. In 2015-16, a small number of entrants were verified with care status. This number increased to 16 in both 2016-17 and 2017-18. There were 14 care leaver entrants in the latest academic year, 2018-19. It is challenging to monitor trends in access to HE with this hard to reach group of students. We will continue to work in partnership with local schools to monitor our performance in improving access for this group.

The CLPP has commissioned research on local Looked After Children involving a longitudinal study. This will help us to better understand the progression to HE patterns of Care Leavers. Previous results show a very low progression rate to HE nationally, where 9% were found in HE (CLPP Report, 2015-16). We will use the results of this research to help us better baseline our performance and monitor progress. The University will also continue to monitor access on a case-by-case basis and assess our performance annually. Care Leavers are one of the groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below.

Success

Non-continuation

Given low numbers, monitoring trends and assessing performance concerning care leavers is too volatile, and needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. Data analysis (especially with intersections) is extremely challenging for this group. There is some evidence to suggest that care leavers are a greater risk of non-continuation, and we have addressed this by having a dedicated specialist post within the University to support this group of students. We will not identify a target in this area but will continue to monitor on a case-by-case basis.

Attainment

As above, monitoring trends and assessing 'good degree' attainment gaps of care leavers is too volatile, and needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. Longitudinal local research shows that, of those who completed a First Degree, 49% of the tracked cohort achieved a good degree (CLPP Report, 2015). We will not identify a target in this area but will continue to monitor on a case-by-case basis.

Progression to employment or further study

As above, monitoring trends and assessing progression to employment or further study for care leaver group is too volatile, and needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. Low numbers would mean that students would potentially be identifiable from the data. We will not identify a target in this area but will continue to monitor on a case-by-case basis.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

In assessing our performance, our extensive intersectional analysis has helped us understand the nuance of some broader target and gap areas identified across the sector and in our Office for Student APP data sets. Intersected data helps us to control for confounding characteristics recognising that disadvantage is multi-dimensional and that there is more than one determinant of access, attainment and progression. For example, we now contextualise our outreach cohort in terms of both disadvantage level and prior attainment (HEAT groups) and this helps us better understand our performance in terms of what we can do to improve upon gaps. We rely less on the use of postcode proxy at individual level but rather on a

basket of individual measures such as qualification type, educational background, entry tariff and personal circumstances to target intervention and monitor performance. A further example is where we explore attainment differentials using data intersections. Where we have identified gaps in good degree attainment, we now have a better understanding of the variances.

For example, when we use IMD, there is an attainment gap between Q5 and Q1 students of 21.2% (OfS dataset) but further interrogation using intersected data shows varying differences and again indicates the significance of other characteristics such as ethnicity. Inter-ethnic group analysis between IMD Q1-2 and IMD Q3-5 finds smaller gaps: there is an attainment gap of 5.4% between White IMD Q1-2 and White Q3-5 students and a gap of 7.3% between ABMO Q1-2 and ABMO Q3-5, internal analysis indicates that these gaps are explained by prior qualification and school background. Meanwhile, when you compare across ethnic groups with the same IMD there are higher gaps; there is a 17.4% point gap between White IMD Q1-2 students and ABMO IMD Q1-Q2 students and these are partly explained by prior qualification and school background (OfS A&P dataset).

Similarly, intersections of entry qualification and disadvantage are highlighted when assessing gaps between young and mature entrants. Mature BTEC entrants do significantly better than their younger peers with a BTEC but mature A level entrants do not attain good degrees at the same rate as their younger A level peers.

Intersections of disadvantage will be used throughout our lifecycle monitoring, however, it should be acknowledged that evaluation of impact exploring multi-dimensional disadvantaged is often limited by small populations.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Our assessment of performance with other groups who experience barriers in higher education is limited by a) disclosure to assist monitoring and b) very small populations. Where possible, we will monitor performance on a case-by-case basis recognising that some individuals from particular groups may be at a disadvantage and require further support.

Through our collaborative work and tracking of outreach participants, we have identified a gap in outreach participant progression to HE for white male students from a lower-socio economic background. There is a 9% gap in progression to Higher Education between white male students from a lower-socio economic background and POLAR4 Q1-2 participants (HEAT Data). This gap has persisted over the years (12% gap in 14/15, 20% gap in 15/16). Disadvantaged white males is one of the target groups identified and discussed in section 2.2 below.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The University will continue to work collaboratively and successfully to effect positive change within economically deprived communities and to negate the impact of selective education within the county on progression rates to HE. In addition to our work with partner schools and FE colleges we will also continue to develop community based strategies for mature learners.

For the students choosing Kent we will work to ensure that there is no significant impact of prior educational disadvantage experienced within our undergraduate body and we outline our intersectional analysis that underpins this aim in more detail throughout this document. Equally, we will also work to ensure that our undergraduate and postgraduate students are active participants in the University's outreach engagement strategy. This in turn will support progression opportunities, alongside the other offers within our portfolio.

The University will also be undertaking an innovative major development to underpin a series of projects comprising outreach, community engagement, social enterprise, research and civic responsibility that will include participants from community, university and school settings. This strategic development will be undertaken in partnership with HEAT and will be called *Kent Civic*. It will build upon our considerable expertise in tracking large populations and assessing impact by using this methodology to engage learners and communities in their world and, through investing in their skills and knowledge required within this burgeoning professional area, will contribute a core element to Kent's civic mission in addition to meeting the targets across the student lifecycle as set out in this Plan.

A key focus of our widening participation strategy (2020-25) within the next five years is to make our new collaborative medical school a success and to invest in outreach to ensure that non-traditional learners can progress to a medical career. This will impact directly on outreach and access, and student success and progression measures in the Plan.

During the timeframe of this APP the University will also diversify its teaching portfolio and begin to provide a range of apprenticeship opportunities, building upon our successes via CHDA and the Government Economics Service, both to local learners and nationally. We have prepared for a further uplift in activity in this area by engaging with Ofsted, and we had our first inspection in Spring 2019, with a successful outcome of Good. Our intention is also to build upon our expertise in quantitative and qualitative analysis by offering apprenticeship and postgraduate routes in these areas.

2.2 Target groups

Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access:

Students living in POLAR4 Q1-Q2 with low higher education participation rates will be targeted using contextual admissions.

Disadvantaged students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in local schools and colleges will be targeted for outreach in Years 7 onwards and we will use levels of disadvantage and attainment to nuance our work with target groups (HEAT groups).

This target group relates to the OfS KPM 1.

Non continuation:

Entrants domiciled as living in POLAR Q1-Q2 with low higher education participation rates and/or with low household income and/or non A level qualifications will be targeted for interventions focussed on increasing retention.

This target group relates to OfS KPM 3.

Attainment:

Disadvantaged entrants living in IMD Q1 will be targeted for interventions to close the attainment gap between this group and their IMD Q5 peers

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Attainment:

Black, Asian, Other and Mixed ethnic group entrants, especially those from low household incomes and/or with non A level qualifications will be targeted for interventions.

This target group relates to OfS KPM 4.

Progression

Black students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will be targeted for interventions designed to enable progression to further educational opportunities at post-graduate level.

Mature students

Access:

Mature applicants will be targeted through our contextual admissions policy to increase conversion to accepted applicant. Mature students in local colleges and the community will be targeted for outreach and participation in Access to HE to increase progression to HE rates.

Non-Continuation

Mature entrants will be targeted for early intervention to increase retention rates.

Attainment

Mature entrants will be targeted for early intervention to ensure parity of good degree attainment rates with young peers.

Care Leavers

Access:

Care Leavers (Looked after children) will be targeted in years 7 onwards for outreach in local schools and colleges to increase progression rates to HE.

Male students from lower socio-economic background:

Access:

Disadvantaged white males will be targeted in Year 7 onwards for outreach in local schools and colleges.

2.3 Aims and objectives

Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access:

We are committed to increasing our offer rates and conversion to accepted applicant rates of disadvantaged students (Q1) applying to the University through contextual admissions. Over the next five years we expect to see a 4.2% reduction in the gap in conversion rates between POLAR Q5 and Q1 applicants where the gap will reduce from 5.7% points (OfS Dataset) to 1.5% points in 2024-25.

We will deliver a programme of outreach to targeted students from Year 7 upwards in local partner schools and colleges, using evidence based practice to deliver programmes that change progression to HE behaviour. We want to close the progression to HE gap that exists in access between advantaged (HEAT Group 4) and disadvantaged (HEAT Group 2) students who attain at similar levels at KS4 and our evidence shows that sustained work with this group can make a difference. HEAT Group 4 progress at a rate of 47% compared to 32% for HEAT Group 2, we aim to reduce the 15% point gap (HEAT Data) to 10% points by 2024-25.

We will also work collaboratively through KMPF to reduce the attainment gap between good GCSE attainment (5 GCSEs at grades 4-9, including English and Maths) between outreach participants in POLAR4 Q1 and the LA average. Currently there is a 17% gap (HEAT Data) and we expect to reduce this gap by 6% points over a five-year period to 11% in 2024-25 through delivery of a progression to HE framework and working with Years 7 upwards. We expect this to result in an increase in local POLAR4 Q1 student applications to HE institutions nationally thus contributing to closing sector gaps.

Further collaborative work will focus on attainment raising activity targeted at young, disadvantaged males Year 7 upwards: there is a persistent gap in attainment between disadvantaged males and other disadvantaged groups, this in turn acts as a barrier to progression. The gap between disadvantaged

white, male students and other disadvantaged (POLAR4 Q1/2) students is currently 9% (HEAT Data), and we will aim to reduce this by 5% points to reach a 4% gap by 2024-25.

Our Access work will all contribute to reducing the overall gap in access between POLAR Q1 and Q5 students entering the University. We will aim to reduce the existing 18.7% point gap to 8% points in 2024-25.

These aims and objectives support the OfS KPM1. Our ultimate aim is to achieve full equality of opportunity, and by 2030 we hope to have sustained year-on-year reductions in these areas and have no access gaps.

Non continuation:

There is small but persistent gap (2.3%; OfS Dataset) in the non-continuation rates of our disadvantaged entrants compared to their advantaged peers (Q1-Q5). There are year on year fluctuations that will be closely monitored, for example, data for Year 2 is 4.4, Year 3 is 0.9, then in Year 5 this is 2.3%. We have worked with this cohort for a number of years and have seen evidence of the impact that this has on retention, therefore we will continue to deliver interventions such as our Work Study programme in order to reduce this gap further to 0.5% by 2024-25.

This aim and objective supports the OfS KPM 3. Our ultimate aim is to achieve a statistically insignificant non-continuation gap by 2026.

Attainment:

We will work collaboratively through KMPF to reduce the 'good degree' attainment gap between outreach participants who enter Higher Education with a BTEC, compared to those entering with A-level qualifications. This work will focus on preparing students for entry. Currently HEAT data shows a 9% 'good degree' attainment gap between these two groups of students, and we will aim to reduce this gap over a five-year period to 4% in 2024-25.

There is an attainment gap of 21.2% points between IMD Q5 and Q1 students and we will work with IMD Q1 students to reduce the gap to 8% points in 2024-25. We will target this work more effectively by using intersectional data which gives us a better understanding of the complexity of this differential.

Our ultimate aim is to eradicate the attainment gap by 2030, and sustain a position of no gap ongoing.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)

Attainment:

Our aim is to reduce the explained and unexplained gaps in good degree attainment between White and BAME students at the University. Although, we will deliver interventions across all ethnic groups, we will focus on the largest attainment gap(s). We will set gap reduction targets by 2024-25 for three groups: the White – Black gap of 27.8% points to 8% points; the White – Asian gap of 13.4% points will be reduced to 4% points and the gap of 9% between White and Other/Mixed will be reduced to 2% points. We will particularly target working with ethnic entrants from low household incomes and/or with non A level qualifications. We will also focus on early intervention where research has indicated that intervention on entry and through stages into final year will be necessary to close gaps. Our approach will include working with staff to address unexplained gaps through a number of race equality initiatives.

These aims and objectives support the OfS KPM 4. These will also contribute to reducing the attainment gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, as discussed in 1.1 and 1.6. Our ultimate aim is to achieve equality of performance between white and BAME students; by 2030 we hope to have sustained year-on-year reductions in gaps and have no statistically significant differentials at the University.

Progression:

Black students are under-represented at PhD level, a potential contributing factor to the under-representation of Black academics (Shilliam, 2014). Though the gap in progression to PhD study between

White and Black students is lower at Kent than found nationally, we will aim to start work in this area to increase the number of Black students, and particularly those from a lower socio-economic background who progress to PhD study. Currently the gap in progression to PhD study between White and Black students is 5.1% (DHLE Data) and we will aim to reduce the gap to 2% in 2024-25 and eradicate the gap by 2030.

Mature students

Access:

Against a backdrop of decreasing numbers of mature students entering HE nationally, we will aim to increase mature entrant numbers at the University by continuing to work locally with mature students in our partner colleges and those on Access programmes offered by the University. We have set ourselves an ambitious target of increasing the proportion of mature entrants coming to the University, latest data shows that 8.6% of students are mature and we will aim to increase this significantly year on year with a target of 24% by 2024-25, close to sector average. Our contextual admissions policy should also help to increase the conversion rates of local mature outreach participants.

Non-Continuation:

We aim to reduce the non-continuation rates of our mature entrants so that the mature/young gap decreases from 6.7% points (OfS Dataset) to 3% points in 2024-25. We will do this through early intervention support and continue to work with students through to their final year. Ongoing, we will focus on maintaining a minimal gap through the next decade.

Attainment:

Our aim is to reduce the 'good degree' attainment gap that exists between mature and young students from 5.2% points (OfS Dataset) to 1.5% points in 2024-25 through offering support to students from entry through to final year.

Our ultimate aim, is to achieve equality of performance in Access, Non-Continuation and Attainment, and by 2030 we hope to have no statistically significant differentials at the University between young and mature students.

Care Leavers

Access:

We will aim to work collaboratively with local care experienced children to increase local access rates. We will monitor the effect of our contextual admissions policy on offers to this group and conversions to entrants. Through targeted interventions with local students in care and working collaboratively with local partners, we hope to be able to increase rates to higher than national average progression to HE for care experienced children by 2024-25. Local looked after children progress to HE (nationally) at a rate of 8% (CLPP Dataset) and we will aim to increase this to 11% by 2024-25.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The University will build upon its established yet evolving evidence-based approach to all stages of the student lifecycle. We will continue to offer a distinctive educational outreach offer to both younger learners and adults with the shared aimed of improving access to HE as a whole and where appropriate to our own institution. Equally we will continue to contribute fully to the well-rounded education of our students within the two sponsored University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) secondary schools. We will continue to refine the successful targeted strategies that have been employed in our award winning

student success projects (THES 2017 and 2018) and mainstream those approaches across the entire student body to improve retention and degree outcomes. In addition to consolidating and mainstreaming our successful strategies to date we will also, based upon our evidence based track record, bring on stream well constructed innovative partnership-based developments that not only support learners to transition through the more traditional full student cycle, but also offer complementary and alternative access, engagement and progression/exit routes.

Alignment with other strategies

In developing its Access and Participation Plan, the University has worked continuously to secure alignment with other key and emerging strategies within the institution. There is common membership of the APP working group, comprising senior specialists and student representatives, and the University's main committees ensuring synchrony across all of our major strategies. The evidence base for the APP also feeds into our Recruitment Board, Education Board, Student Experience Board, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) review, the Equality and Diversity Network, and the Student Wellbeing Strategy. In addition the review of the existing APP, subsequent versions and this final new Plan have been presented to, and discussed by, the University's Executive Group, which includes all portfolio holders within the Institution.

In Kent 2025², Kent's current institutional strategy, it states that in order to become one of the very best universities in the country for education and student experience, it will act to embed our best practice in access and widening participation, supporting student attainment, providing mental health support and enabling employability. This and other specific strategies which address the student experience are ably supported by a range of embedded activity across the University and developmentally by the Student Success EDI project³. The project evidences the richness of research and development which has grown out of our strategic approach during the last 5 years and how we intend to build upon this and continue to meet the challenges holistically.

The University has also sought to align retention strategies that feed directly into APP and TEF metrics. For example the 'Hello Kent Campaign' which focuses upon transition into the University, the Welcome, Introduction and Transition (WIT) working party and a new group with a remit to consider support for mature, commuting, and part time students and those with dependants, all give focus to strengthening overarching implementation and evaluation of key strategies.

The University has given due consideration to the Equality Act 2010 and considers equality issues when developing policies throughout the life cycle. The University has an increasingly culturally diverse home population and we are responding to differences in social, economic and cultural capital with our entrant cohorts in order to fully support the needs of students from a range of backgrounds. As outlined above significant investments in student success initiatives are addressing the gaps in performance that persist with students from different equality groups including BAME groups, disadvantaged students and students who enter with other qualifications than A levels. Our intersectional analysis of student data has identified groups of students whom we believe to be at risk of non-retention or under-performance and interventions will continue to be focussed on these groups.

Employability and further study trends under the new fee levels will be monitored to ascertain if progression into work or postgraduate study remains broadly equitable for all groups. Where under-representation is identified we will continue to target activity to support student employability. Targeted activity such as our Work Study Scheme is monitored closely to ensure we are engaging students who may need this support most. In addition our commitment to increase progression to postgraduate opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged black home students will help to ensure our performance remains above the sector in this measure.

The other protected characteristics that are not included here are subject to new data collection and trend analysis in the future will be able to inform new targets in these areas if they are required.

² <https://www.kent.ac.uk/strategy/#>

³ <https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsuccess/>

Each strategy is supported by a series of operational plans that are reviewed and updated. This Plan, equally, is and will be supported by a raft of operational plans, in addition to assessment of progress via annual monitoring and progress measures as outlined in the Plan's accompanying template.

Theory of Change

The University's APP is informed by a theory of change model, to ensure that our provision across the lifecycle is evidence based, as displayed in our logic chain overview below. Our assessment of performance has identified our aims and objectives with targets for the medium and longer term. This approach allows us to critically and systematically reflect upon our practice and ensure that we continuously improve our provision through the life cycle. Where we implement an intervention, we will monitor outputs and outcomes to assess impact. This will help us to evaluate whether our interventions are associated with positive outcomes. We will review our approach and assumptions on an ongoing basis and use the evidence generated to adapt and improve our practice.

Inputs & Resources (and Enablers)	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators of Outcomes
The identified necessary resources	<p>A range of interventions of varying intensity delivered to students across their educational journey (from Year 7 to learners in the community, and including undergraduate students)</p> <p>Aims, Objectives and Targets</p> <p>Strategic Measures</p> <p>To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups (PTA_1, PTA_2, PTA_3, PTA_4, PTA_5, PTA_6, PTA_7)</p> <p>To increase the proportion of mature students to University of Kent (PTA_8)</p> <p>Institutional funding and whole institutional approach to meeting aims, objectives and targets of the plan.</p> <p>Close relationship with the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)</p> <p>Collaborative working with schools and other HEIs through the Kent and Medway Progression Partnership (KMPP)</p> <p>Sponsorship of the University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT)</p> <p>Design and development of activities for a range of year groups that have the intention of meeting the aims, objectives and targets set in the plan</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation plan and operational plans</p> <p>Collaboration with academics to strengthen monitoring and evaluation across whole student lifecycle.</p> <p>Data collection and data mining on ward profiles, school profiles along with use of the HEAT database.</p> <p>Design of logic models, baseline, pre and post activity surveys and focus groups or interviews for individual projects.</p> <p>Training of student ambassadors and practitioners to deliver activities, collect and input data</p>	<p>Evidence that activities have taken place as planned</p> <p>Partner Schools engaged with the University and KMPP to facilitate delivery of outreach work to targeted students</p> <p>Engagement of young people from target groups (e.g. POLAR Q1, Care Leavers, Disadvantaged White Males) in outreach interventions</p> <p>Engagement with mature learners through adult learning provision and Access to HE programmes.</p> <p>Uptake and engagement from learners in package of activities designed to support learners undertaking BTEC qualifications.</p> <p>Engagement with teachers and parents</p> <p>Collection of demographic and intervention data (recorded in HEAT) for all outreach work</p> <p>Progressive engagement of learners through outreach strands</p> <p>Contextual admissions policy analysis as evidence of increased offer rates and acceptance of disadvantaged students to the institution.</p> <p>Financial support taken up by groups of students identified as being at risk of non-continuation</p> <p>UG students' participation and engagement in student success interventions</p> <p>Black students' engagement in activities designed to help progression to Higher Postgraduate Degrees</p>	<p>Expected observable and measurable change</p> <p>Short Term Medium Term Longer Term</p> <p>Increase in awareness and positive perceptions of HE as an option from a young age</p> <p>Strengthened familiarity, and sense of belonging with a HE setting</p> <p>Increased attainment at ISA to enable progression to HE for Partner School students</p> <p>Increase in academic skills to support career aims</p> <p>Look to offer different progression routes (e.g. UMEED and Apprenticeships) to enable progression to HE</p> <p>Increase in awareness of application process and the types of support available to help them transition to the next phase of their education/career</p> <p>Increase in intention to apply to HE</p> <p>Increase in conversion of applications to HE as a general POLAR Q1 at the UoK</p> <p>Increase in offer rates to POLAR Q1 enrolling at the UoK</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Use of financial provision to minimise non-continuation rates</p> <p>Evidence of young people making informed decisions about their future education</p> <p>Increased number of applications to HE in general, and conversion at the institution, results in reduced gap in HE participation for students from underrepresented backgrounds</p> <p>Increased proportion of mature students progressing to any HE institution, as well as UoK</p> <p>Evidence of impact of financial support in lowering non-continuation rates for students from underrepresented groups</p> <p>Increased sense of belonging at UoK</p> <p>Increased uptake in early interventions designed to support students and lower drop-out rates</p> <p>Participation in Kent Civic</p> <p>Evidence of work-study programme targeting students who are at risk of non-continuation</p> <p>Uptake of financial support resulting in lower drop-out rates</p> <p>Student participation in activities designed to reduce the attainment gap</p> <p>Increased staff awareness and training</p> <p>Students will be involved in the design and development of inclusive curriculum</p> <p>Increase in confidence in academic writing skills as well as exam techniques</p> <p>Increase in marks for students who enter with a BTEC qualification</p> <p>Increase in awareness and positive perception of academia, and progression into research studies</p> <p>Increased awareness of possible career paths and funding opportunities</p>	<p>OS Standards of Evidence</p> <p>Type 1. Narrative: Qualitative analysis, theme or trend is evident in data</p> <p>Type 2. Measuring Change: Pre- and post-activity surveys to show increases in attitudes, behaviour (intentions) and knowledge judged using statistical significance</p> <p>Type 3. Causality: Statistical changes over time contrast with counterfactual with control for confounding variables; Triangulation with qualitative data</p> <p>Attitudes Knowledge Behaviour Skills</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Knowledge of HE questions (Type 3)</p> <p>Self-reported intention to apply to HE</p> <p>Analysis of uptake of financial support provision</p> <p>Analysis of cost, application, acceptance and enrolment data (Type 2, 2 and 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales exploring different themes, including sense of belonging (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions and impact on attainment - both coursework and exams (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions (Type 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify goals and steps to achieve them (Type 1 and 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify goals and steps to achieve them (Type 1 and 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify goals and steps to achieve them (Type 1 and 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify skills necessary for academic success (Type 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify goals and steps to achieve them (Type 1 and 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions (Type 2)</p>
	<p>To reduce the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups (PT3_1, PT3_2)</p> <p>Work-study programme</p> <p>Financial support provision</p>	<p>Extractions from target groups (e.g. identified as being at POLAR Q1-Q2 with low higher education participation rates and/or with low household income and/or non A level qualifications and/or mature) will be targeted for interventions focused on increasing retention.</p> <p>Black students' engagement in activities designed to help progression to Higher Postgraduate Degrees</p>	<p>Minimal non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups</p> <p>Evidence of effective and impactful local collaboration by HE providers working together with schools, colleges, employers and other partners</p> <p>Evidence of 'what works' in HE access, success and progression</p>	<p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales exploring different themes, including sense of belonging (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Analysis of assessments and exams using comparator groups where possible (Type 2 and 3)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions and impact on attainment - both coursework and exams (Type 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify goals and steps to achieve them (Type 1 and 2)</p>
	<p>To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups (PT3_3, PT3_4)</p> <p>Kent Civic</p> <p>Design and development of inclusive curriculum in collaboration with students</p> <p>Assisted technologies and well-being approaches</p>	<p>Students will be targeted (based on their ethnicity and age on entry) for early interventions designed to reduce the attainment gap</p> <p>Design and development of inclusive curriculum in collaboration with students</p> <p>Assisted technologies and well-being approaches</p>	<p>Increased sense of identity with the UoK</p> <p>Reduction in 'good degree' attainment gap</p>	<p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions and impact on attainment - both coursework and exams (Type 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify skills necessary for academic success (Type 2)</p>
	<p>To reduce the gap in good degree attainment between students who enter HE with an A level vs BTEC qualification (PT3_5)</p> <p>Through collaborative work, secondary school and FE students will be targeted for transitional support, designed to equip them with the necessary skills for attainment at degree level.</p>	<p>Through collaborative work, secondary school and FE students will be targeted for transitional support, designed to equip them with the necessary skills for attainment at degree level.</p>	<p>Reduction of 'good degree' attainment gap between students who enter with an A level and BTEC qualification</p>	<p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions and impact on attainment - both coursework and exams (Type 2)</p> <p>Qualitative students can identify skills necessary for academic success (Type 2)</p>
	<p>To reduce the gap in progression to Higher Postgraduate Degrees for underrepresented groups (PT3_6)</p> <p>Black students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will be targeted for interventions designed to enable progression to further educational opportunities</p> <p>Participation in Kent Civic</p>	<p>Black students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will be targeted for interventions designed to enable progression to further educational opportunities</p> <p>Participation in Kent Civic</p>	<p>Increase in awareness and positive perception of academia, and progression into research studies</p> <p>Increased awareness of possible career paths and funding opportunities</p> <p>Increased progression to Postgraduate Higher Degrees</p>	<p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of comparator groups where possible (Type 3)</p> <p>Baseline of participants, and follow-up surveys using validated scales (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions (Type 2)</p> <p>Use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate interventions (Type 2)</p>

Outreach Overview

The University will build upon its established yet evolving evidence-based outreach offer to younger learners in our sponsored academies, partner schools (pre and post 16) and FE colleges (post 16 and adult) and within the community (pre-school and adult) to address reducing the gap in progression to HE between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 learners and entrants. Evidence accrued from over a decade via HEAT demonstrates the positive impact of working in a sustained way with non-selective schools within the Kent and Medway selective secondary schools system. The work has resulted in consistently improving students' attainment and their chances of progression to HE despite being from economically deprived backgrounds. We will continue to work within our partner schools to ensure that this impact is maintained. For mature students, we will also continue running our Access to HE programme. However, in addition the University will also establish a focused medical education outreach programme to ensure that students from widening participation backgrounds are able to access medical education and enter a medical profession. This will include a new pathway into medicine that supports students on A-level routes and in addition we will provide a new access to Medicine HE Diploma (UMed) route. It is also anticipated that a number of other medical schools will provide entry pathways for students on our new UMed programme. Therefore, to our broad ranging outreach provision which has been shown to have impact, and to benefit students and the sector as a whole, we will also develop over the next five years both independent and collaborative provision to raise attainment and to secure entrants into the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS).

With regard to successful collaboration and alignment with other work the development of the UEd to UMed is a prime example. KMMS is a joint venture between the universities of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church and we have been devising through our own resources and through NCOP funding innovative approaches to outreach curriculum. The UEd's initial phase, which was funded via NCOP, has now been mainstreamed by Kent and the Science-based UEd to UMed will similarly be funded through NCOP in its initial phasing. The plan for the next five years for outreach engagement already exists in the plans that have been submitted to the GMC. These plans are ambitious, difficult to fulfil but necessary if we are going to build the school as set out in our original vision. KMMS will also allow us to contribute fully to other exciting innovations within our local and regional communities.

The University, in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University and University for the Creative Arts will continue to support the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) through their core delivery outreach budgets. Kent, as lead institution for KaMCOP (Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme), will also work with partners to ensure that the newly funded outreach hub is effective and works seamlessly with the established partnership throughout its externally funded period and is retained through APP allocation thereafter (currently expected to be 2021).

Through working collaboratively, we aim to extend our outreach provision to a larger and wider cohort of disadvantaged learners, contributing to a programme of sustained activity to students from year groups 7 upwards. Collaboration will also help us to extend the breadth of our offer and to work more intensively with hard to reach groups such as disadvantaged males and care leavers. We are also committed to increasing the access and academic preparedness of students coming through different pathways, for example through the development of an academic writing module (for BTEC entrants) which can be delivered in a number of ways either pre-HE or during transition to HE. Our targets for the collaborative partnership are greater in number than those submitted to the Office for Students as we have worked closely with local schools and colleges to identify our shared priorities for this work in some detail.

We also work collaboratively through the Care Leaver Progression Partnership (CLPP) to smooth local HE pathways for students leaving care locally. This work is extended to Care Leaver entrants to the University through the provision of a dedicated post to provide one-to-one support to these students, in order to help with transition to HE as well as ongoing pastoral support. By signposting these students to a dedicated person responsive to their individual case-by-case needs, we can more easily address the multitude of challenges faced by this group. These students are not homogenous and have a variety of individual needs depending on their circumstances. These students may be at higher risk of non-continuation, and this dedicated post aims to address these issues from the outset. Where students have issues with accommodation in holiday periods, we offer guaranteed on-campus accommodation throughout their studies at the University including any holiday periods. This is addition to the Financial Aid package for this disadvantaged group. Some students who have left care do not come forward and

identify as part of this group, but the University makes every effort to encourage students to come forward for support.

Outreach with learners in communities and students within partner schools and further education colleges leading to improved engagement and participation in further and higher education: specific measures to meet the targets as set out within the Plan

Outreach provision that will lead to reducing the access gap between able and economically deprived students and able non-deprived students will be achieved by investing in the following for the full duration of the Plan:

- Full embedding of the *progression curriculum strands* within the University's partner schools. The process of a full evidence-based review began in 2016 and testing of content is underway. By 2020 we will have in place a number of complete *strands* for testing and a full complement of student focus/tester groups to respond knowledgeably to the curriculum. This will continue between years 7-13 and impact monitored over time from the original baseline. The whole approach will be situated within the wider tracking of outreach provision participants through the HEAT database to support the longer-term assessment of impact.
- Access to HE provision, for younger mature and mature learners located within high areas of deprivation, will continue to be an important focus for the University, and one that we will continue to grow to address the targets within this Plan.
- Collaborative outreach provision with other local universities through the Kent & Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) and the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme (KaMCOP), the latter until the cessation of the programme in 2021.

Outreach and transition phases

The University's partnership work with our FE partner colleges will become more focussed over the duration of the Plan. In particular, we will focus upon the following two areas:

- Working with colleagues in FE to support, in particular, BTEC students who may wish to progress to higher education. Providing outreach within FE settings has often been precarious with the level of staff changes within FE and it is likely that this will remain a difficulty for HE liaison. However, we aim to reinvigorate and foster strategic partnerships with the practical focus of supporting academic writing skills for BTEC students to impact positively on student success outcomes within their degree.

School sponsorship

The University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT), formed in 2017 from an existing single academy trust, at the time of writing includes two secondary schools. The Trust's priorities, which will support outreach and Access targets and student progression targets in the Plan, include the following:

- Continue to build a cosmopolitan and excellent 6th form provision across the two schools. In particular, we will build an effective hub to support access to medicine, science and to quantitative methods for students from economically poorer backgrounds.
- UKAT to provide the locus of the University's medical school outreach provision, through testing innovative all-age engagement within and throughout our communities.
- Pursue the further development of the Trust, particularly with a focus upon including local primary schools.
- Develop a new broad based leadership programme throughout the schools.
- Design, development and review outreach curriculum with the 2800 students served by UKAT. This will be underpinned by qualitative methods and longer term tracking based on baselining all students and participants.
- Continue to explore and pilot innovative approaches to tackling chronic teacher shortages through engagement of undergraduate ambassadors and internships, joint teacher-training and postgraduate study pathways, and direct entry programmes.

Access

In 2018-19, the University implemented a contextual admissions policy aimed at recognising a student's achievements and potential to succeed at university in relation to their background and prior experience, rather than reliance purely on exam results. This policy also includes contextual admissions for our outreach participants and mature students who are participating in our Access programmes. The aim of the policy is to increase our offer rate to disadvantaged students and in turn, increase the numbers of Q1 entrants to the University.

The University is in an enviable position of hosting the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), a data and analytics service which is fully funded through the subscriptions of 82 HEIs in England. It has recently partnered with the successful bid providers for the new TASO-HE which will underpin the evaluation of the 'student cycle' across the sector. As a founding member of HEAT, as well as host, Kent has embedded the HEAT service and system into processes underpinning evidence for the University's Access and Participation plan. This commitment to optimising the use of data ensures we take an evidence led approach to planning interventions: an example of which is the in-depth intersectional knowledge of the University's student body, on which we were able to build the award winning student success project.

Student Success

Overview

We are now planning to take the considerable benefits of HEAT a step further, by using the data to engage our outreach and current students within *Kent Civic*. Within the initial stages we will also develop our local and national apprenticeship programme as part of the *Kent Civic* programme which will also contribute to student success and progression measures. In stage two by 2021 we will use data to engage the wider community and social enterprises. Thirdly by 2022 we will engage the broader research community. When all strands of *Kent Civic* are in place it will provide a systemic underpinning of informed student engagement which can support reducing gaps in performance and demonstrate the required impact to meet the targets laid out in the Plan.

The University has fully utilised the data and analysis that HEAT has made available making it one of the premier evidence-based outreach development and delivery centres in the country. For a number of years we have been supporting the academic schools to work on an evidence base with regard to student engagement and success, with pockets of impact in target schools.

We plan to engage students in using data with the aim of helping to underpin both their feeling of belonging within education but also to support students to assess themselves within a broader societal, economic and cultural context. So, for example, we will draw inspiration from the highly engaging models which have been developed by the Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) and the 'Lives on the Line' analysis⁴, originally undertaken by James Cheshire in 2012 (UCL), underpinned by HEAT's own data, to help students model their own experience and their own trajectories. One of the recent and successful student voice projects 'Not Black. Not Asian. Just ME' articulates some students' views, including that BAME initiatives can create further divides between students and that there should be a whole student body approach to engagement. Using data as outlined above would allow all of our students to analyse and understand current actual difference and engage them in a raft of projects to address and effect change. Not only will this initiative provide underpinning of our strategy for university-wide student engagement and curriculum review it will provide the basis for focussed community-based projects and also allow a wider pool of students to gain qualitative and quantitative skills. In essence this approach will aim to fully engage students in their learning but also engage them in helping us all consider, understand and address 'unexplained' gaps in degree performance. Only through representation on this scale, underpinned by trend data, can a meaningful and effective response emerge.

We would also seek to broaden the routes open to our outreach and undergraduate student body by offering apprenticeships in data analytics at Level 3 for partner school entrants. In addition, through the existing Kent hub we would also offer a distance learning higher-level programme (into which our local learners could also progress on a part time or distance learning mode).

⁴ A tube map of London representing differences in life expectancy.

The maps illustrating life expectancy seen in 'Lives on the Line' or HEAT's demographic maps of local participation vividly demonstrate the link between deprivation and life chances. In addition to supporting student engagement we will also build on this evidence base to devise and promote innovative projects with a range of partners to improve the local situation for people who live in Kent and Medway. For example many social enterprises are evolving to meet the needs of local communities. Kent partners with others in a myriad of ways, through the undergraduate student body (either voluntary, paid, internships or credit bearing), via staff, enterprise, and through engaging PhD and masters students in hybrid research programmes. Given our successful school sponsorship programme in Medway and the commitment to the local NHS through KMMS we are well placed to begin developments within educational and health projects and with the communities that live around these burgeoning outreach hubs.

Students within the University: Student Success

Phase II of the Times Higher Education award winning student success project (SSP) will have completed by 2020. Our focus in Phase iii will continue to be upon targeting 'good degree' performance gaps, and in particular where these gaps occur through intersectionality, through mainstreaming this approach throughout all of our academic schools. As an institutional research project, the SSP has established an iterative and heuristic environment to test approaches to addressing attainment gaps. Allowing research to guide intervention development and interventions to feed back into research requires a considerable commitment of time and resource. The approach has taught the University a number of things: firstly some interventions work in one context (e.g. one academic school) but not in others. Secondly single year data can often be cause for celebration but does not necessarily indicate a downward trend in the longer term and therefore we favour trend analysis as this is more suited to demonstrate improvement in complex change projects. Thirdly, proving a link between a single intervention and academic outcomes is highly problematic.

For these reasons Kent has taken, and will continue to take, a multi-modal approach to reducing attainment gaps:

- A number of academic schools are funded to investigate and respond to attainment gaps at a local level, with the flexibility to design, implement and evaluate interventions that are tailor-made to their specific environment.
- Other academic schools are supported by central Development Officers, who disseminate best practice from the funded schools as part of the University's mainstreaming programme. These schools are provided with demographic and attainment data, as well as guidance on 'best fit' interventions, cohort targeting and impact evaluation.

Within both approaches engagement with interventions is tracked across the SSP schools to ensure that our target groups are benefitting from initiatives designed to support retention and attainment. Evidence from earlier phases of the SSP indicated that students who attended interventions were able to improve their attainment and that schools involved in testing initiatives reduced their attainment gaps compared to schools not involved in the first phase. Through mainstreaming this approach with target groups across the life of this Plan we aim to be able to demonstrate positive impact upon student success and evidence the meeting of our targets in this area.

There is a caveat however, in that different schools linked their successes to different interventions and, when some of these were replicated in other schools, the same success was not necessarily evidenced. This suggests that local interventions, while useful within specific academic environments, are not necessarily applicable for roll out on a wider scale. They may (and do) have a massive impact on groups of students and staff locally. However, there is still much work to do to ensure that interventions can demonstrate that they can deliver impact consistently and therefore contribute to on-going improvement. By undertaking sophisticated tracking and trend analysis we will be able to assess which interventions contribute to success when in different settings, rather than being driven by top line snap shot annual data only, as our experience demonstrates that utilising snap shot data does not provide an adequate method of assured improvement. Using this approach we will aim to demonstrate which of our approaches has been most successful reducing gaps in attainment.

Provision for all schools is supplemented by a number of holistic initiatives, designed to improve practice and to support our target groups. These will be mainstreamed throughout the duration of the Plan. In summary these include:

- *Diversity Mark*. This is a race equality initiative working with staff and was developed to start the institutional conversation about diversification of teaching, curriculum and reading lists. This work is linked to a number of initiatives developed more recently (Diversify the Curriculum, Kaleidoscope Network, BAME Staff Network).
- *One Hour Degree*. This is a transition game designed to guide new and prospective students through life at the University. Linked to our research into student acculturation and belonging, the game will be part of the Hello Kent programme, and allows students to make choices about how to manage their degree journey in a safe online space, learning about the many facets of student life as they go. The One Hour Degree will be particularly beneficial for students from non-traditional backgrounds (low participation areas, non-A Level, black students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, mature entrants).
- *Virtual Student Adviser*. An online needs-based app that allows students to search for services according to the issue being faced, reducing search fatigue. Our research indicates that non-traditional students (in particular Black students) are less likely to display help-seeking behaviours, particularly in an institution where the majority of staff may not 'look like me'. This is part of our self-help suite of interventions, designed to facilitate transition, orientation and belonging.
- *Progress Profiles*. Students' online attainment record to be used in conversation with their Academic Adviser (personal tutor). This was developed with students in response to staff requests for easier access to their students' data, to facilitate their support for their advisees. The Profiles also provide the information on attendance and attainment required for students to have an interactive relationship with their progress, as well as signalling the importance of Academic Adviser discussions.
- *Inspirations*. Following a popular series of inspirational speakers throughout 2017-19 the SSP is developing a website to profile our inspirational staff from non-traditional backgrounds. This initiative is focused particularly on representing our BAME students, allowing them to see themselves in the institution, and responds to recommendations made in the Student Union research report 'BME Student Voices'.

Building upon the SSP and other mainstream activities we will focus upon the following complementary and overlapping areas to address all of our student lifecycle gaps in performance, as detailed in our targets.

By 2024 we will be in a position to assess how well our apprenticeship programme is developing, both locally and nationally, and whether we are in a position to offer higher level qualifications in this crucial area. We will also be in a position to review the success of local projects and to see if there are the opportunities to lever in additional research, private or enterprise funding for the rolling out of our approach.

The University recognises that the investment that it has made in supporting students with disabilities and mental health issues has resulted in positive results. We will continue to invest and innovate in this area to ensure that the gap is negligible.

A number of interventions have been developed in response to issues related to student success: attainment, continuation and progression. Evidence-based practice, which will be built upon throughout the entire duration of the Plan in order to meet our challenging targets, includes:

- Transition, orientation and early intervention programmes for outreach participants who choose to study at the University at undergraduate level (in addition to those above under SSP).
- A range of subject-based engagement projects for students targeted at students who may be at risk of lower performance (e.g. BAME, Mature). These projects support an applied academic approach to their engagement, attainment and employment opportunities and include early intervention, and close monitoring of performance.
- A work-study programme targeted at disadvantaged entrants to support continuation and progression.
- A bursary and learning support programme for mature students to support continuation.

- An increasing number of internships within the University and within UKAT to provide a range of subject-based, professional and management experiences for widening participation students and students with disabilities.
- Under school sponsorship, continue to develop and innovate in the provision of subject-focussed teacher training routes within secondary schools.

Students progressing from undergraduate study

We will extend our offer to a number of programmes and projects to support the progression of students where evidence has identified gaps in progression rates throughout the lifetime of this Plan.

The University will continue to build upon its successes in student progression, developing innovative employment bridging programmes for students with disabilities.

We will target support for Black students who are economically disadvantaged to enable them to progress into higher degree study in increasing numbers, as outlined in our Progression target. Although the gap at Kent is lower than the national average for progression we wish to actively improve the number of Black students entering, particularly research-based, higher degrees and seeing no gap in progression by 2028.

Financial Support

Our financial support package is evidence based, where we target support to economically disadvantaged students more specifically to reduce non-continuation rates and to increase progression. Evidence compiled from an analysis of student outcomes (mirroring the OfS toolkit methodology, as we had implemented this approach two years prior to a toolkit being available from OfS), who have been in receipt of bursaries is clear, higher continuation rates are found for this group of students and this supports the feedback received in focus groups. Mature entrants, in particular, have higher non continuation rates and our research showed that financial pressures contributed to drop out rates. Similarly, other groups such as care leavers are supported.

We have consulted students and feedback from our student body has questioned the fall-out from any decrease or withdrawal of financial support for disadvantaged entrants. We will continue to monitor the impact of financial support on student outcomes to refine eligibility criteria and support levels, for targeted groups, and this is likely to include entry level and other disadvantage measures. We are committed to improving our evaluation in this area, for example, trying to account for the confounding variables that may impact outcomes and disentangling the effect of finance and other activities targeted at disadvantaged groups of students who are engaging in a basket of interventions, as well as receiving financial support.

3.2 Student consultation

The Student Union has been consulted in the formulation of this agreement through attendance at all key planning meetings of the Access and Participation Plan Steering Group which meets a minimum of four times annually. Student members are involved throughout the annual review cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Group. New sabbatical officers of the Student Union are given an induction on the University's Widening Participation Strategy and its APP as soon as they take up office. In order to ascertain and represent students' views at all key planning meetings, the Union has a number of channels through which students can feedback and help shape their student experience. These channels are designed to reach a cross-section of students, and ensure representation across the University's diverse student body. One of these channels is an online petition forum (Changelt!) where students' votes can determine implementation of an idea. As a result of consultation, the Union has also recently implemented student networks to ensure students' views are fairly represented. In addition, the Union conducted a project on *BME Student Voices* to report on the experiences of BAME students at Kent. The resulting report and recommendations are currently being taken forward by the Union and the Student Success Project, and inform the Student Success strategy detailed in this Plan. As outlined above it is our intention to significantly strengthen informed student engagement through *Kent Civic*.

This Plan has been informed by students' views and recommendations, and therefore the Union fully endorses our Access and Participation Plan. The Union is supportive of the University's commitment to financial support whilst studying and we are in agreement upon the priorities as laid out in the Plan. In particular there is support for trying to improve mature students' progression to higher education within the County and the change within bursary funding that is linked more firmly to engagement strategies.⁵ The latter is based partly on a growing recognition in the Union about the importance of the contribution that engagement can make to students achieving rounded success, and a mutual understanding of the practical difficulties that can exist in regard to increasing engagement for some cohorts. The process of development of policy, implementation and review is cyclical and therefore students are involved at every stage of the process. The Union supports the guarantee that full and accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs are transparent. The current Plan builds upon the clearly stated targets to develop joint working in outreach and student employability with Kent Union, as well as fully supporting the commitment for improving student success.

The University is also working to improve student voice throughout its committee structure by ensuring that there are standing items throughout the governance structure which give adequate space to students' perspectives. In addition to this we will work on a number of pilots whereby we test information and guidance with current students and recent alumni, and work collaboratively to provide case studies to promote wider understanding of opportunities and support. Equally we will build upon our current cohort of student ambassadors who specifically support evaluation work to engage them more broadly in peer to peer activity, in addition to their current outreach evaluation roles.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic Context

In order to monitor and evaluate the impact of the work detailed in the Strategic Measures section of this plan, we will continue to improve and build upon our evaluation to ensure that we are on track to meet our longer-term strategic aims within acceptable tolerance levels. Our relationship with local schools and colleges is critical to data collection and our research with outreach participants, this collaborative approach has reaped rewards over the years and we will continue with this strategy ongoing. We will also continue to collaborate with other partners and providers through a number of networks - sharing any evidence for mutual benefit. It is also important to us that we improve our evidence base year on year, continually reflecting upon how effective our evaluation is at measuring change so that our access, success and progression delivery can be adapted accordingly. Collaborative evaluation locally with our partner universities and colleges in the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) allows us to evaluate the impact that our combined work has on local student outcomes, sharing data and using shared resource to collect student baselines underpinning the evaluation. By collating student engagement data through HEAT we are able to get a better picture of the extent of engagement across universities and the journey that these outreach participants make longitudinally.

The Access and Participation Steering Group has oversight of the monitoring and evaluation, and across the institution different stakeholder groups are involved with monitoring and evaluation at different levels (as per section 3.4 below) ensuring an institutional approach to evaluation. In addition to the evaluation of our own work, the University remains committed to support building the evidence base across the sector, contributing to wider trend analysis nationally and within the region. Our ongoing commitment to HEAT and its membership, is an example of this.

Evaluation and Evidence Shape our Programme Design

The internal evaluation of our own programmes, as well as national research, helps shape our programmes and is integral to the design of our activities. From an access perspective, being part of the HEAT service allows us to share the costs of a monitoring and evaluation system and it underpins the collaborative delivery of evidence-based evaluation. Our national community of HEAT members work together in the research and development of effective, fit-for-purpose evaluation practice with the ultimate goal of informing outreach planning and assessing impact. We also undertake a programme of qualitative evaluation with students within our partner schools, colleges, community groups and undergraduate cohorts to inform our wider offer. In addition, we gather evaluative evidence to assess the impact that our outreach programmes have on partner school staff awareness and attitudes. We are able to combine longitudinal track data with qualitative data collected from students thus enabling a deeper, layered

⁵ Please see change to financial support package under 4. Provision of information to students.

picture of how our progression curriculum strands and student success and progression work impact change and adapt our programmes accordingly. Similarly, we utilise software to interrogate and analyse entrant data in order to evaluate the impact of interventions with targeted groups of entrants. We link intervention data to outcomes to explore associations and look to improve our impact evaluation of attainment and progression activity through systematic investigation at key outcome milestones, this will ensure that we can act earlier to affect any change in outcomes. In order to maximise the impact and reach of our work, our programmes across the student lifecycle are continuously improved and adapted based on process or impact findings.

Evaluation Design

As described in section 3.1, we will apply a theory of change approach to our impact evaluation investigating the impact that our outreach and student success work has on students. Each outreach strand and student success intervention is mapped against aims and objectives with defined outputs and intended outcomes identified.

Our evaluation framework aims to provide evidence that engagement in our targeted activities across the student's educational journey has a positive impact on student outcomes and to assess whether our work is:

- Reaching and engaging disadvantaged students
- Delivering a progressive and complementary set of outreach activities to a range of year groups
- Increasing disadvantaged student's awareness and knowledge of HE
- Contributing to increased student attainment at KS4 and KS5
- Contributing to increased retention in education rates at age 16, 17, 18 years
- Increasing the applicant and accepted applicant UCAS rates of disadvantaged students
- Increasing the HE entrant, success and progression rates of disadvantaged students
- Increasing the retention, success and future employability of our undergraduate ambassadors who are part of the Student Ambassador Scheme
- Improving educational outcomes through financial support

Where possible we will aim for a Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) or Type 3 (Causality) evaluation approach. To this end, our evaluation will be mixed method, combining different quantitative and qualitative approaches. As a minimum, longitudinal tracking underpins the quantitative evaluation for all programmes. As well as larger scale studies with comparator groups to assess impact on longer term outcomes we will also use smaller scale studies to explore impact of interim outcomes.

Evaluation Implementation

The HEAT database is integral to the operational day-to-day running and monitoring of our outreach work. There is institutional commitment to HEAT and all outreach activities across the institution, and respective participants, are recorded. HEAT allows annual monitoring of outcomes against baselines and this helps us to keep check on progress and reflect upon the success of our outreach against a set of quantitative measures. Moreover, data sharing across local partners via HEAT provides information to enable the University and our collaborative partners to examine NCOP delivery in combination with other outreach activity and to assess how the work complements each other. We will also be able to differentiate our NCOP beneficiaries from other outreach participants so that we can monitor groups, areas and age ranges not targeted through the NCOP.

The University is also committed to qualitative evaluation of our outreach programme, and we employ a series of methods to ensure that qualitative information is being captured. Moreover, we aim to incorporate students' views into the development of our programmes, and our qualitative research is integral to this. We deploy Research and Evaluation Ambassadors (current University students) to collect student feedback on individual outreach activity and our overall programme, and consult them on their views about the programmes.

Internal systems are used for the monitoring and evaluation of Student Success and Progression interventions. We are committed to providing systems that facilitate the implementation of evaluation across the institution, encouraging staff to collaborate on evaluation and the generation of evidence.

Learning from evidence and insight from evaluation

An evidence led approach will ensure that we continue to adapt to the changing composition of learners and that interventions are focussed on student need. We are continually trying to deepen our understanding of our cohort and how our outreach and student success strands might be best mapped to their needs. The HEAT research allows for deeper understanding of our outreach cohorts, with the HEAT groups allowing for greater and more sophisticated segmentation of groups of learners to ensure effective targeting. The longitudinal tracking allows for monitoring of applicants and entrants to other HEIs and to HE in FE settings. We recognise that not all students will progress to our University but that it is our civic duty to contribute to increasing the HE access rates of our local young regardless of where they end up studying, or when. Our evaluation allows the exploration of the association between participation in outreach and student outcomes throughout the student life cycle. For example, longitudinal tracking allows the exploration of patterns of HE entry over time (not just at age 18 or 19 years) and this is especially important for our target group of students who may choose to come to HE later in life. By understanding these complex patterns of progression we will be better able to plan and deliver outreach programmes that make the biggest positive changes. Tracking studies through to HE entry and completion also allow research into the retention and success of students who progress.

For access participants who choose to study at the University, we continue to monitor their attainment, and progression during their studies in the same way that we monitor other target groups for attainment and progression. The outcomes of student groups who are being targeted for intervention (e.g. economically disadvantaged, BAME, Mature are also monitored closely and systematically). An evaluation of student success interventions is underway in academic schools where we are collecting data to examine the extent to which the intervention and practice that has led to positive student outcomes, this will feed into our decision-making regarding rolling out practice to other cohorts and schools. Understanding what interventions are having the biggest impact will help us to mainstream successful practice to address retention and success gaps throughout the University. Included within this evaluation plan, is the effect of financial support on student outcomes. We have mirrored the methodology endorsed through the OfS toolkit and been able to provide evidence based decisions on financial support packages. Moreover, through *Kent Civic* and apprenticeships, current students will not only inform our evaluation findings but will also be involved in gathering and shaping those findings.

All of this informs our theory of change approach across the lifecycle, and helps us to understand what works with specific groups of students. Our Access and Participation Plan Steering Group and Research and Evaluation Groups review our evaluation approach, any new evidence and make recommendations regarding the efficacy of interventions and whether to cease or roll out to future cohorts.

We have used the Office for Students self-assessment tool to reflect upon our strengths and gaps and will continue to use this tool periodically to ensure that our evaluation approach improves and is fit for purpose. Our assessment revealed two areas where we can improve our practice (Category: Emerging), Programme design and Learning from evaluation. These will be prioritised going forward. For example, we will embrace collaboration with TASO-HE to contribute to evidence nationally and include plans for external dissemination and critical review in future evaluation plans.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Across the institution a number of roles are responsible for monitoring, all feeding into the Access and Participation Plan Steering Group which convenes a minimum of four times annually to review the Plan and to monitor and evaluate progress against our strategy. The Steering Group has permanent student membership. It will be the responsibility of the Steering Group to manage implementation of an Action Plan so that progress is achieved and maintained. The Steering Group reports to the University Executive Group who will ratify recommendations where progress is not being made. The Plan and review documentation is presented to Senate annually and Senate will report to Council, who will determine the level of monitoring required for the Plan to succeed. Progress monitoring is embedded across the University: monitoring is systematic and regular and we have invested in software to harvest and interrogate internal data for equality monitoring through the lifecycle. Although a number of key staff are responsible for using data to inform progress monitoring, a range of standard reports and evidence feed into practitioner and leadership discussions, highlighting progress against milestones and any areas that require attention and this leads to summary reports to governance. Additionally, staff in academic schools are also encouraged to use data for monitoring interim progress and within our new structure seven newly

appointed Directors of Division will be responsible for monitoring progress across their Division with their heads of school. Through the development of *Kent Civic* students will become much more engaged in the systematic review of data and contribute to progress against our strategy. This will build upon and broaden the approach demonstrated by our Evaluation and Research (EAR) Ambassadors who are trained and paid to undertake research and focus groups around project and mainstreaming engagement. By systematising our internal data analysis and standardising sets of reports on progress we will maximise engagement in the monitoring process so that it is not centred on a small number of staff. At the same time, this will not stop us being responsive, the aim of our monitoring is to be agile: we need to be able to assess progress annually so that we can adapt and alter practice accordingly so that continuous improvements are being made.

Any evidence used to assess progress is underpinned by a theory of change and expertise is harnessed in two key Research and Evaluation groups (access and success) to ensure that evidence is valid and reliable.

4. Provision of information to students

The University will publish details of full costs for students and the means of support available, its financial support schemes and eligibility criteria in its annual prospectus. Supplementary information will be produced and published both online and in print. Detailed information is provided including how to calculate eligibility for all bursaries and scholarships and a web-based 'ready-reckoner' to determine the financial aid package is easily accessible with full details of the package and criterion.

The Recruitment Officers, Visit Day Coordinators, Outreach Coordinators and Development Officers have a role in the dissemination of information to the wider community and stakeholders. This information will be part of their portfolio of talks and presentations and they will deliver this information to schools, students, teachers, parents, carers and community groups. The University is committed to supporting students through the application process.

The University intends to invest up to £4,686,000 in financial support to students per annum. It is estimated that 745 new entrants will be eligible for financial support per annum.

Financial support for students entering in 2020-21 and 2021-22 will be made available via the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP). Eligible students will have an annual household income of less than £42,875 and meet POLAR4 Q1 or Q2 criteria and be state educated. In addition students who are care leavers, live in social housing, or who are in receipt of DSA or are mature (over 21 on entry) will also be eligible. KFSP will be set at £1500 per annum per year of study for entrants in 2020 and 2021. Students of the School of Pharmacy will receive the same financial support package.

All undergraduate students of the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) will receive the Kent and Medway Medical School's Financial Support Package (KMMS-FSP). Eligible students will have an annual household income of less than £42,875 and meet POLAR4 Q1 or Q2 criteria and be state educated. In addition students who are care leavers⁶, live in social housing, or who are in receipt of DSA or are mature (over 21 on entry) will also be eligible. KMMS-FSP will be set at £1500 per annum per year of study for entrants in 2020 and 2021.

Financial support for students entering in 2022-23 and beyond will be made available via the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP). Eligible students will have an annual household income of less than £30,000 and meet POLAR4 Q1 or Q2 or IDACI Q1 criteria and be state educated. In addition students who are care leavers, or who are in receipt of DSA or are mature (over 21 on entry) will also be eligible. 2022-23 KFSP will be set at £1,500 for the first year of study. Funding for years 2-5 will be at £1000 per annum. Students of the School of Pharmacy will receive the same financial support package.

All undergraduate students of the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) will receive the Kent and Medway Medical School's Financial Support Package (KMMS-FSP). Eligible students will have an annual household income of less than £30,000 and meet POLAR4 Q1 or Q2 or IDACI Q1 criteria and be state educated. In addition students who are care leavers⁷ or who are in receipt of DSA or are mature (over 21 on entry) will also be eligible. 2022-23 KMMS-FSP will be set at £1,500 for the first year of study. Funding for years 2-5 will be at £1000 per annum.

⁶ Care leavers as defined as having been in the care of a local authority for at least 13 weeks before their 16th birthday.

Information will also be made available in a timely fashion to UCAS and SLC.

The University will provide full and accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs required to complete our degree programmes. We will also publish the final Access and Participation Plan on our website.

5. Appendix

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information)

⁷ Care leavers as defined as having been in the care of a local authority for at least 13 weeks before their 16th birthday.

Access and participation plan

Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: The University of Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

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
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,385
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	Canterbury College 10001144	£6,165
First degree	West Kent and Ashford College 10007419	£6,165
Foundation degree	*	*
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		£6,935
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	*	*
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 Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

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 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
Total access activity investment (£)	£2,951,948.00	£3,041,533.00	£3,134,251.00	£3,230,212.00	£3,329,528.00
Access (pre-16)	£1,564,645.00	£1,611,059.00	£1,659,098.00	£1,708,818.00	£1,760,278.00
Access (post-16)	£805,294.00	£830,141.00	£855,856.00	£882,468.00	£910,009.00
Access (adults and the community)	£301,387.00	£310,970.00	£320,888.00	£331,154.00	£341,778.00
Access (other)	£280,622.00	£289,363.00	£298,409.00	£307,772.00	£317,463.00
Financial support (£)	£4,686,000.00	£4,490,000.00	£4,016,000.00	£3,755,500.00	£3,685,500.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£96,017.00	£97,000.00	£97,000.00	£97,000.00	£97,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£35,609,372.00	£35,440,301.00	£35,951,271.00	£36,638,404.00	£37,109,907.00
Access investment	5.1%	5.1%	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%
Financial support	13.2%	12.7%	11.2%	10.3%	9.9%
Research and evaluation	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Total investment (as %HFI)	18.5%	18.0%	16.5%	15.4%	15.1%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The University of Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Gap in entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	18.6pp	16pp	14pp	12pp	10pp	8pp	We have identified that there are structural factors, such as prior entry qualifications contributing to this gap and we expect that outreach with younger age groups will effect change in the longer term. Note our main measure of success of outreach is to significantly increase the number of students from widening participation backgrounds who are able to progress to higher education as a whole. As such our main measure of this work is not a recruitment based metric to the University alone.
To decrease the gap in UCAS conversion rates for disadvantaged students. Reduce gap in UCAS offer rate between Q1-Q5 students	PTA_2	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Gap in UCAS offer conversion for POLAR3 Quintile 1 compared to Quintile 5.	No	UCAS data	2017-18	5.7pp	4.7pp	3.7pp	2.7pp	2pp	1.5pp	We have identified that there are structural factors, such as prior entry qualifications contributing to this gap and we expect that outreach with younger age groups to have an effect in the longer term .
To decrease the gap in progression rates between outreach participants in HEAT Group 2 and HEAT group 4 in partner schools	PTA_3	Other	Gap in progression rate of outreach participants in HEAT Group 2 (4439 students/32% progression) and HEAT group 4 (5447 students/47% progression) in partner schools (52 schools).	No	HEAT Data	2017-18	15pp	14pp	13pp	12pp	11pp	10pp	We have identified structural factors, such as Level 3 qualifications and household income, which impact the progression rate of students from HEAT Group 2 (High Attainment, High Disadvantage), when compared to that of HEAT Group 4 (High Attainment, Low Disadvantage). HEAT Groups 2 and 4 are attainment peers, with differing levels of disadvantage. Our milestones reflect the delay in assessing impact when working with students from a young age.
To increase the proportion of mature entrants to University of Kent	PTA_4	Mature	Proportion of mature entrants entering the University	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	8.6%	12%	15%	18%	21%	24%	There are structural factors (e.g. national fall in mature entrants due to funding and locally the very limited availability of level 3 provision for adult learners) acting as barriers to entry. Our work with mature students, which includes offering Access to HE diplomas in order to address limited progression opportunities, and which demonstrate very strong progression to HE, are designed in line with QAA to increase progression to any insitution, not only the University.
To reduce the gap in KS4 attainment for outreach participants from underrepresented groups	PTA_5	Attainment raising	Gap in KS4 attainment (5 GCSEs at grades 4-9 including English and Maths) between Q1 outreach participants (2850 students/48% attained) and the LA average (DfE Performance Tables, 65% attained).	Yes	HEAT Data	2016-17	17pp	15pp	14pp	13pp	12pp	11pp	Our milestones reflect the challenges of working with younger year groups and the delay in impact of results when working with younger age groups.
To reduce the gap in HE progression for outreach participants from underrepresented groups	PTA_6	White economically disadvantaged males	Gap in HE progression rate (to any HEI) between white male students from a lower socio-economic background (55 students/18% progressed) and POLAR4 Q1-2 participants (2160/27% progressed)	Yes	HEAT Data	2016-17	9pp	8pp	7pp	6pp	5pp	4pp	Our milestones reflect the challenges of targetting work to males and younger year groups in co-ed schools, and the delay in impact of results. This target relates to access to any HEI.
To increase HE progression for outreach participants from underrepresented groups	PTA_7	Care-leavers	Increase HE progression rate (to any HEI) of Care Leaver outreach participants from Kent and Medway (Looked After Children)	Yes	Other data source	2015-16	8%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	Our milestones reflect the challenges of targetting, monitoring and engaging this significantly disadvantaged group and the delay in impact of results even when working consistently with this hard to reach group facing many barriers to entry. Data Source - CLPP Data Project exploring progression to any HEI
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Gap in non-continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	2.3pp	2.1pp	1.8pp	1.5pp	1pp	0.5pp	We have identified structural factors affecting this gap, and therefore entrants in POLAR4 Q1 and/or with low household income and/or non A-level qualifications will be targetted for interventions. Our milestones reflect the challenges of this work.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_2	Ethnicity	Gap in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between white and black students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	27.8pp	24pp	20pp	16pp	12pp	8pp	Through targetted work with Black entrants from low household incomes and/or non A-level qualification, we aim to reduce the gap significantly over the next five years despite the multi dimensional aspects of this gap.
To reduce the non-continuation gap for Young and Mature Students	PTS_3	Mature	Gap in continuation between Young and Mature students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	6.7pp	6pp	5pp	4pp	3.5pp	3pp	We expect a reduction in the gap in the first three years; but structural factors mean a slower reduction in later years.
To reduce the 'good degree' attainment gap for Young and Mature students	PTS_4	Mature	Gap in 'good degree' attainment (1st and 2:1) between Young and Mature students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	5.2pp	4pp	3pp	2.5pp	2pp	1.5pp	We expect a reduction in the gap in the first three years; but structural factors mean a slower reduction in later years.

