University of Kent

Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aims

Overview

The University of Kent has a long-standing commitment to widening access and making higher education (HE) available to anyone with the academic potential to succeed. We stand for ambition, and we are proud of our work to support students from all backgrounds to access, succeed in and progress from HE. We recognise the transformational power of an outstanding university experience, and the value that a diverse student body brings to our institution.

Our ambitious Access and Participation Plan (APP) addresses the risks to equality of opportunity that we have identified and prioritised. The plan builds upon the achievements from our previous APP; it focuses on areas where progress is still to be made, while maintaining areas where our performance has been strong. Our efforts and resources will be targeted to address Kent's greatest equality-of-opportunity risks; the plan recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated educational disadvantage and that the cost-of-living crisis has created even greater polarisation between the most and least disadvantaged students' progression and success within HE.

Kent's students

The University's undergraduate home student community (2022/23) currently comprises 11,790 students, studying across our two main campuses in Canterbury and Medway. Launched in 2020 and based in Canterbury, the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) is a collaboration between CCCU and the University of Kent, building on the two institutions' existing high-quality clinical teaching and research strengths.

While we attract students to the University both nationally and internationally, we recruit a significant percentage of our home undergraduate student population from London and the South-East. Our student body is ethnically diverse, with 47.2% of home undergraduate students from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority group. Our course portfolio attracts a young demographic: 90% of our 22/23 entrants were under the age of 21 when they commenced their undergraduate degree. Students join Kent with a variety of Level 3 qualifications; over 20% of our 22/23 entrants had studied a BTEC qualification pre-entry.

Access

Kent's geographical context

Situated in Kent and Medway, the University is located in a county with pockets of high socio-economic deprivation and low progression to HE. A selective education system operates in the region, in which 25–35% of young people move into selective schools at the age of 11, compared with approximately 5% of the state-funded secondary population nationally (Department for Education, 2020; Great Britain. House of Commons, 2020). In 2019, Kent was in the highest 25% of local authorities for the disadvantage attainment gap, with an average of 95% of students in selective schools achieving five standard passes at grades 9–4 in GCSE English and Mathematics, compared with just 37% of students in non-selective schools (Education Policy Institute, 2022). Disadvantaged students are significantly underrepresented in selective schools, with only 13% of

their students eligible for free school meals (FSM) (Great Britain. Department for Education 2020). Using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) as a measure for socio-economic disadvantage, out of 22,000 students across Kent and Medway local authorities, only 22% of those enrolled in a selective school were classified as being among the most deprived (Quintile 1)[1]. Non-selective schools in Kent and Medway cater for far fewer high prior attainers than the national average and have larger numbers of students with special educational needs (SEN). Children in care and children with English as a second language are also more likely to attend non-selective schools. For this reason, our outreach work in the region is mainly focused on supporting disadvantaged students in non-selective schools.

Our approach to widening access

In this specific regional context, we know that significant collaboration is required to support pre-16 attainment in the region, and progression to HE for student groups who face equality-of-opportunity risks. In line with our civic mission, we will continue to focus our access work in partnership with non-selective schools and colleges in Kent and Medway, prioritising schools in the region who perform in the bottom 40% for Key Stage 4 attainment. We will continue our long history of collaboration with other local HE providers, local authorities and third sector organisations to achieve our goals most effectively. As lead institution for our Uni Connect partnership (KaMCOP), and through established networks such as the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) and the Care Leaver Progression Partnership (CLPP), we will continue to work collaboratively to effect positive change within economically disadvantaged communities across the county and to ensure equality of opportunity for all students.

Strategic involvement as lead sponsor of the University of Kent Academy Trust (UKAT) enables us to understand the needs and challenges faced by schools and multi-academy trusts. We contribute fully to the governance and education of learners in the Trust, supporting the CPD of school staff and piloting innovative attainment activities co-developed by teaching staff, outreach practitioners, UKAT students and University of Kent Student Ambassadors.

Through alignment of our Widening Participation and Recruitment strategies, and the introduction of contextual admissions and the Kent Financial Support Package, we have seen a year-on-year increase in the percentage of IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 students to the University, and we intend to build upon this work through our access work detailed in this plan.

Collaboration with 16–19 providers

The University is committed to developing new and innovative pathways that strengthen flexibility of provision and increase complementarity between the further education (FE) and HE sectors. Alongside the strengthening of our outreach activities, we are developing mechanisms to support young people through the application and transition phase to HE. We are actively exploring new and deeper approaches to collaboration with local 16–19 providers, particularly FE colleges, to enhance curriculum opportunities and address gaps in education and skills provision across all levels of study. The University has longstanding partnerships with FE colleges in Medway and East Kent; its tradition of providing franchised and validated HE in FE programmes, including HNDs, foundation degrees, and emerging Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), benefits learners looking to continue their studies in FE and provides alternative routes into HE.

---

[1] The proportion of disadvantaged learners is significantly higher in certain areas of the county, particularly the coastal region, where schools report that between 35% and 50% of their students are eligible for free school meals. These schools also have a disproportionate number of students who meet area-based disadvantaged indicators (Great Britain. Department for Education 2020).

We are working with local education and industry partners to support the development of a more cohesive education and employment-focused skills offer for local (and national) communities and employers, and to respond to emergent skills needs by supporting and embedding Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). This work includes the expansion of support for flexible and lifelong learning through increased provision of level 4 and level 5 courses, degree apprenticeships and short courses aligned to local, regional and national employers' needs.

We offer a wide range of integrated foundation courses across our academic portfolio, which offer fully integrated pathways to undergraduate study through the provision of an introductory foundation year (Stage 0). Integrated foundation courses build the core skills required for specialist degree-level study and provide alternative routes into higher education for students who may not meet the standard requirements for entry.

Success and progression

Ensuring equality of opportunity for all students

For students who progress to the University of Kent, our mission is to provide a university experience that is inclusive, supportive and enables individuals to excel throughout their student journey; we focus particularly on students who face equality-of-opportunity risks at all stages of the student life cycle. We recognise that this requires a nuanced approach, and this plan outlines how we have used the research undertaken by our dedicated Student Success team to inform our inclusive teaching practices and the diversification of our curriculum.

We understand that the current cost-of-living crisis presents a clear risk to equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and we have worked collaboratively with our student body to provide a wide range of support. We will continue to work with Kent Union to ensure that no student goes without food, with initiatives ranging from £3 meal deals available on our two UK campuses, to the provision of maps indicating microwave and hot water points, and the Campus Pantry, which provides short-term support to students in the form of groceries. We have increased our hardship funding and introduced a no-fines policy on overdue library items. We recognise that students may need additional mental health support during a time of financial anxiety, and we signpost them to a free and independent advice service.

Kent Ambition Scholars Programme

To support us to achieve our goals, we are launching the Kent Ambition Scholars Programme from the academic year 2024-25. This programme builds upon the targeted, sustained and progressive work that we currently deliver through our Outreach programme and the Student Success work already embedded for our Kent students.

All students in receipt of the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP) will be invited to join the Kent Ambition Scholars Programme and will receive targeted support throughout their student journey. Ambition Scholars will be encouraged to develop their employability skills, and will be invited to apply to different opportunities for employment within the University, such as becoming a Student Ambassador and co-designing and supporting the delivery of our Outreach curriculum. They will have priority access to the Peer Mentoring scheme and will be invited to attend Skills for Academic Success workshops. Ambition Scholars will be prioritised to participate in the Careers & Employability Service's flagship 'Empower' programme, to support their success in the graduate workforce.

We expect over 800 students per year to become Kent Ambition Scholars; these students will either have graduated from our regional pre-entry Level 3 programme designed to support their attainment and progression to HE (launching in 24/25) or will meet our broader eligibility criteria.

Cross-sector collaboration

We understand the value of cross-sector collaboration, and we are co-founders and conveners of the Access and Participation Plan Special Interest Group within the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) network. The Group provides a space for Widening Participation leads to share findings, best practice and approaches to supporting students from underrepresented groups. Over the course of this Plan, the Group will be working collaboratively to provide peer support, professionalisation opportunities and advocacy for widening participation across the country. The University is also a founding member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) and hosts HEAT, which provides higher education providers with data and intelligence to effectively target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activities. Through the HEAT national community, we collaborate on the development of knowledge, skills, tools, resources and methodologies required for robust evaluation. The HEAT membership therefore supports our delivery of robust evaluation which will produce high quality evidence of what works and what does not work within our particular context.

Being part of the HEAT evaluation collective is more efficient than working in isolation, minimising duplication of effort and sharing evaluation resources across the sector. Through its links with national organisations such as HESA and the DfE, HEAT provides us with data outcomes which are essential for our impact research. Accessing data centrally through HEAT enables us to avoid burdening schools and colleges with requests for data. The HEAT collaboration also provides opportunities for us to share our evaluation plans with other higher education providers for feedback. This peer evaluation facilitates knowledge transfer between providers, increases transparency and rigour and helps us to improve our evaluation going forward. The HEAT collaboration therefore drives up evaluation literacy across the sector through providing access to the data, tools and systems required to build robust evidence of impact.

Summary

This ambitious plan outlines the institution-wide, holistic approach that we are taking to address the equality-of-opportunity risks identified in our analysis of our performance and sets out how we intend to share our evaluation and research to benefit the wider sector.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Through analysis of the Access and Participation data dashboard, our internal data and HEAT insights and the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), the University has identified the following indications of risk to equality of opportunity to be addressed in this plan. For a full analysis of our assessment of performance, please see Annex A. For each indication of risk identified there is an associated objective referenced, which is explained in full in the 'Objectives' section.

Access

Risk 1: There is insufficient student diversity in higher education in general, and the University of Kent in particular.

Risk 1.1: In the Kent and Medway local authorities, a significant proportion of disadvantaged students are not achieving 5 standard 9-4 passes, including English and Mathematics, at GCSE.

The latest data shows that in non-selective schools across Kent and Medway only 53% of learners achieve good passes at GCSE, and this figure drops to 37% when considering those classed as disadvantaged (DfE Performance Tables). Evidence suggests that this is due to a number of factors, including gaps in prior knowledge (at Key Stage 2) which result in students having lower than expected literacy and numeracy levels at the start of Key Stage 3. The lack of foundation knowledge at the end of primary school, and its impact on subsequent learning at secondary school, is highlighted as a concern by teachers in Kent's partner schools. Key Stage 4 attainment has been shown as critical to progression to HE (Crawford, 2014). Low attainment at Key Stage 4 (Risk 1 EORR) results in low applications to higher education, exacerbating risks 1.2 and 1.4 below. Objective 1 addresses this risk.

Risk 1.2: There are lower proportions of students from areas of low participation in higher education, using TUNDRA Quintile 1 as a proxy, applying and studying at the University of Kent.

The gap in the proportion of entrants from TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 to the University has reduced since 2018/19, and currently stands at 18.2pp. There is a 3pp gap in offer rate between POLAR Q1 and Q5 applicants (UCAS Equality Data 2021, Tundra not available as a metric), but in line with the average offer rate. Internal data suggests that this difference can be accounted for by entry qualifications and predicted grades, with POLAR Q1 applicants more likely not to have the requisite entry qualifications or grades. Evidence gathered through our own Kent Equality of Opportunity research, as well as the sector EORR, suggests that this is due to a mix of factors, including gaps in prior knowledge leading to lower KS4 attainment (see Risk 1.1 above, Risk 1 EORR), limited information and guidance resulting in students not being equipped to make informed choices (Risk 2 EORR) and perceptions of higher education (Risk 3 EORR). Feedback from students highlights the importance of understanding the impact of GCSE and Level 3 qualification options on progression to higher education, with many students not realising how their choices around Level 3 qualifications may impact their progression opportunities. Objective 1 addresses this risk.

Risk 1.3: There are lower proportions of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, using IMD Q1 as a proxy, applying to the University of Kent.

Internal data shows that for the latest academic year (2022/23), there was a very small (1pp) gap in offer rate between IMD Q1 and Q5 students. However, a significantly higher percentage of IMD Q5 students applied to Kent compared to Q1 (22% Q5 vs 15% Q1). Recruitment of IMD Q1 students remains a challenge for Kent. Within the Kent and Medway Local Authorities, only 15% of postcodes are classed as IMD Q1. London (our second biggest area for Recruitment) has a very low percentage of postcodes classed as Q1. Kent does however tend to attract a greater percentage of IMD Q2 students (35% of 22/23 entrants were from IMD Q1 or Q2). Internal data shows that a greater percentage of IMD Q1 students apply through Clearing. As with Risk 1.2, evidence shows this is largely due to a mix of factors including those mentioned above. Particularly for those applying through Clearing, limited information and guidance (Risk 2 EORR) resulting in students not obtaining the right Level 3 qualification for their chosen course seems to be having a significant impact. Objective 1 addresses this risk.

Risk 1.4: A low number of care experienced students apply to higher education in general, and the University of Kent in particular.

Numbers are small for this group of students, and so no analysis can be conducted at individual level. National evidence suggests that disrupted educational experiences result in low KS4 attainment (Risk 1 EORR). These students often lack information and guidance (Risk 2) tailored to their particular circumstances. In some cases, this may also influence their perception of higher

education (Risk 3 EORR). Care-experienced Kent students have reported similar experiences, corroborating national findings. Objective 2 addresses this risk.

Risk 1.5: The number of mature learners as a percentage of the overall student population has fluctuated over the last few years and was 8.4% for the academic year 21/22. Mature learners face various challenges when returning to education, namely not having the right qualifications to access HE (Risk 1 EORR), as well as a lack of information and guidance specific to their circumstances (Risk 2 EORR).

At Kent, we have been working to increase the number of Mature learners who apply and progress to the institution, through the use of contextual admissions, the Kent Financial Support Package, as well as specific information at Open Days and on our website. On a local level, we also support mature students through our work with Access to HE Diploma learners (see intervention strategy 2, page 14). HESA data suggests that though there has been a growth in the number of mature learners from the Kent and Medway region progressing into higher education, learners have progressed in greater numbers to institutions that provide health and NHS-related courses, which the University of Kent does not offer. There has also been growth for providers with remote learning, which is also a mode of study not available at Kent. For this reason, we are not proposing a target against this area. We will continue to monitor the percentage of mature students who enrol at Kent, and we will continue to work to support progression for these learners through our outreach provision.

Success

Risk 2: There are high levels of non-continuation for particular groups of learners, as addressed below:

Risk 2.1: There is a gap in non-continuation between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students.

The gap has persisted over the last few years, and currently stands at 3.7pp. Over the last four years, the gap averages at 2.9pp. The Coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact in continuation rates for students (Risk 9 EORR) and has affected disadvantaged students disproportionally. Given that the gap is small, and likely to have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, we are not proposing a target against this area. We will continue to monitor this risk and review our performance. Objective 3 addresses this risk.

Risk 2.2: There is a gap in non-continuation between Mature and Young students.

Although this gap has persisted over the last five years, there has been a decrease and for the latest year (academic year 20/21) the gap stands at 5.8pp. Kent performs above the sector, with the current gap at 9.4pp. Internal data, and the Kent specific EORR, suggests that there are a number of risks which contribute to this. Mature students are more likely to re-enter education with a non-A-level qualification, which may not have equipped them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge (Risk 6 EORR). Mature students are also more likely to have caring responsibilities, having to support families (Risk 10 EORR). They are also less likely to have support from parents/carers. A higher proportion of Mature students are also IMD Q1 or Q2 (see Risk 3.1 below). Objective 4 addresses this risk.

Risk 2.3: There is a gap in non-continuation between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability.

The gap between students who declare a disability (including neurodivergent students) and those with no known disability is 1.9pp for the latest academic year (20/21). When disaggregating by disability type there are significant fluctuations in the data given small numbers, but the most significant gaps are for students who declare a Mental Health condition (2.9pp for 20/21) and Sensory, Medical and Physical impairments (2.7pp for 20/21). This gap is likely to be due to a number of factors. At Kent, we have seen an increase in students experiencing Mental Health difficulties (Risk 8 EORR). It is likely that these students have also faced insufficient academic support (Risk 6 EORR), exacerbated by the difficulties of learning during the Coronavirus pandemic (Risk 9 EORR). Objective 5 addresses this risk.

Risk 3: There are high levels of non-completion for particular groups of learners

Risk 3.1: There is a gap in completion between IMD Q1 and Q5.

Students from IMD Q1 drop out at a higher rate than their more advantaged peers. The latest gap (for students who started University in 17/18) stands at 7.3pp. Internal analysis shows that students are more likely to drop out in the middle of their second year. A higher proportion of IMD Q1 students study non-A-level Qualifications (mainly BTEC or a BTEC combination at Level 3) compared to their Q5 peers. Our Kent specific EORR highlighted issues around the increase in academic pressure in Stage 2 of a degree, which strongly relates to Risk 6 of the EORR around insufficient academic support before entering HE. The ongoing impact of coronavirus (Risk 9) are very likely to have had a disproportionate effect on this cohort of students, and we are likely to see an increase in the gap over the next two years of data – for 18/19 and 19/20 entrants – as this group of students were affected by the coronavirus pandemic in their first and second year of HE study. Objective 3 addresses this risk.

Risk 3.2: There is a gap in completion between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability.

The current gap in completion between students who declare a disability (including neurodivergent students) and those with no known disability is 2.4pp. The gap has fluctuated over the last few years, likely due to small numbers. Kent performs above the sector in completion rates across the student body (for both students who declare a disability and those with no known disability). At Kent, we have seen a significant increase in the number of students who declare a disability, as well as those who are in receipt of DSA over the last couple of years. This may have initially caused capacity issues (Risk 11 EORR) as the University adapted staff structures to meet increased demand. The Kent specific EORR has highlighted the need for tailored personal support (Risk 7 EORR), and in some cases academic support (Risk 6 EORR). Objective 5 addresses this risk.

Risk 3.3: There is a gap in completion for students who were previously eligible for Free school meals (FSM) and those who were never eligible for FSM.

For the latest academic year (17/18 entrants) the gap currently stands at 6pp (an increase from 3.3pp for 16/17 entrants). Through our outreach work we target students who are eligible for FSM for activity (through collaborative partnerships with secondary schools). It has been widely reported that students from lower-income families were disproportionally affected by the coronavirus pandemic (Risk 9 EORR), with higher rates of absence from school. Students are also likely to have faced educational inequalities prior to entry to HE (Risk 6 EORR). This is likely to have significantly impacted those studying at HE as well, and current cost pressures (Risk 10 EORR) will continue to exacerbate this gap. We are currently working with UCAS to improve access to this data, and anticipate that we will have FSM data available for 2025 entrants to allow more thorough analysis of

this group. Given that only historical data is available for this group (OfS data covers previous cohorts), we are not proposing an objective in this area. We will continue to monitor this risk and review our performance.

Risk 3.4: There is a gap in completion between Mature students and their Young peers.

The gap in completion fluctuates but is persistent and currently stands at 10.6pp for the latest academic year, (17/18). There have been fluctuations in the data over the last four academic years (probably because of the small numbers). Sector-wide there has been a consistent increase in the gap over the same period. As mentioned above, at Kent mature students are more likely to enter with non-A-level qualifications which may present greater academic challenges in some subject areas (Risk 6 EORR) and are also more likely to, as a group, face financial pressures (Risk 10 EORR). A higher proportion of mature students are also IMD Q1 or Q2. Objective 4 addresses this risk.

Risk 4: Low proportion of "good degree" (1st or 2.1 degree) for particular groups of learners

Risk 4.1: There is a gap in "good degree" attainment between Black and White students.

The gap was 26.9pp for 18/19 award year and has consistently reduced for the following two academic years reaching 14.9pp for the 20/21 award year. The gap has increased for the first time in four years to 19.1pp for the latest award year, 21/22. Our Kent specific EORR highlighted areas that the University should continue to address, such as our efforts to diversify the curriculum, which will benefit Black students, and students from other minority ethnic backgrounds, . Student feedback highlighted the importance of belonging and increasing staff representation from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Sector-wide it has been reported that the changes to assessment patterns during the coronavirus pandemic benefitted students overall and helped close the attainment gaps. A similar pattern has been observed at Kent. Internal data identifies where intersections of disadvantage may be contributing to this gap. Black students are more likely to be from IMD Q1 and Q2 (see Risk 4.1 above), and they are also more likely to be studying a non-A-level qualification. For 2019 entrants, 27% of Black entrants entered with a BTEC qualification, compared to 16% of White entrants (see Risk 4.1 above). A significant proportion of our Black students are from London or East London, and therefore more likely to commute. Our internal research also shows that London students are more likely to commute for part-time jobs (in London, where pay may be higher). Cost pressures (Risk 10 EORR) associated with the cost-of-living crisis, is likely to aggravate issues for commuting students. Objective 6 addresses this risk.

Risk 4.2: There is a gap in "good degree" attainment between Asian and White students.

The gap has followed a similar pattern to the Black attainment gap (see Risk 4.2). The gap consistently reduced and reached a low of 4.6pp for 20/21 award year but it has increased to 9.4pp for 21/22 award year. As above, our Kent specific EORR highlighted areas that the University should continue to address to benefit students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Asian students. We also find that a higher proportion of Asian learners are from IMD Q1 and Q2 (see Risk 4.1 above). Like black students, the majority of Asian learners have permanent residence in London or the South East and are therefore more likely to commute. Cost pressures (Risk 10 EORR) associated with the cost-of-living crisis, is likely to aggravate issues for commuting students. Objective 6 addresses this risk.

Risk 4.3: There is a gap in "good degree" attainment between Mixed and White students.

The gap has fluctuated over the last four years, likely due to small numbers. Similarly to the pattern of the gap between White and Black and White and Asian students, we have seen an increase for the latest award year, 21/22, to 9.4pp. The increase (from 4.6pp in 20/21) is likely to be related to the Coronavirus pandemic. As outlined above, ongoing work, currently being undertaken by the University, is likely to benefit this group of students. Like Black and Asian students, the majority of learners from a Mixed ethnic background come from London and the South East, and are therefore more likely to commute. Cost pressures (Risk 10 EORR) are likely to be a factor for this group too. Objective 6 addresses this risk.

Risk 4.4: There is a gap in "good degree" attainment between IMD Q1 and Q5 students.

The gap in "good degree" attainment between IMD Q1 and Q5 students has persisted over the last five years. After a consistent reduction of the gap over the last few years, with 9.3pp for award year 20/21, there was an increase in the gap for the latest academic year (21/22) to 15.3pp. Analysis of internal data indicates that intersections of disadvantage are contributing to this gap. A higher proportion of IMD Q1 students enter Kent with non-A-level qualifications which may not have equipped them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge (Risk 6 EORR). There is also a strong correlation between IMD Q1 students and those in receipt of the Kent Financial Support Package (linked with household income). As mentioned above, findings suggest that students from lower household income were disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic, both socially and academically (Risk 9 EORR) and this will have contributed to the widening of the gap. The current cost of living crisis is also likely to significantly affect this group of students (Risk 10 EORR). This resonates with the feedback gathered from Kent students and staff through the Kent EORR. Students raised significant concerns around disruption to education, including the lack of access to technology to engage with online learning and the lack of availability of quiet places study. In addition, there have been emerging concerns around the cost of living. Objective 7 addresses this risk.

Risk 4.5: There is a gap in "good degree" attainment between students who were previously eligible for Free school meals compared with those who were not eligible for Free school meals (FSM).

This gap has widened over the last four years, and currently stands at 13.2pp. As mentioned above the University currently does not hold individual level data for this cohort of students (see Risk 3.3). It is likely that a high proportion of these students are IMD Q1 (see Risk 4.1 above). Their educational experience is likely to have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic (Risk 9 EORR). It also likely that these students will be adversely impacted by the increase in cost of living (Risk 10 EORR). We believe that these students will be captured by interventions aimed at recipients of the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP). Given that data is not available for this group, we are not proposing an objective in this area. We will continue to monitor this risk and review our performance.

Progression

Risk 5: Lower progression to further study or employment for groups of students

Risk 5.1: Lower progression to further study of employment for IMD Q1 students compared to Q5.

There has been a gap over the last two years of 3.9pp and 3.4pp respectively, for award year 19/20 (based on Graduate Outcomes survey). Internal findings suggest that this could be due to a range of factors, such as access and time to undertake extracurricular activities and lack of information and guidance (Risk 12 EORR). This was also highlighted by Transforming Access and Student Outcomes

(TAO, 2023). Our Kent EORR found that students were concerned about the job market, particularly around Kent where the perception is that there are fewer graduate jobs. Students also voiced concerns over lack of available support for study at postgraduate level (in particular for Master's degrees). Further research is required in this area to understand specific issues affecting this group of learners. Objective 8 addresses this risk.

This analysis relates to our intake of full-time, first degree learners, which account for the majority of our students. We have conducted separate analysis for part-time and apprenticeship students but this has not been included in our plan given small numbers. We continue to monitor the risks for equality of opportunity for students in part-time courses and apprenticeships across the lifecycle, and are diligent in our efforts to mitigate any emerging risks. All our interventions outlined in this plan include part-time learners. For those on apprenticeships, we work closely with employers to ensure any risks are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Objectives

Objective 1 – To mitigate Risks 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 outlined above, the University of Kent will work to increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, from students who live in areas where there is low participation to higher education using IMD Q1 and TUNDRA Q1 as proxies, by 4pp by 2027/28. The University will achieve this by working in partnership with schools and FE Colleges to address prior knowledge and attainment gaps, as well as the provision of targeted financial support, and continued monitoring of our contextual admissions policy. For details of activity, see Intervention Strategies 1 and 2, pages 10 and 14 respectively.

Objective 2 – To mitigate Risk 1.4, The University of Kent will work to increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, for students who have ever been under the care of their local authority by 38% by 2027/28.   This will be achieved through the delivery of individual and collaborative interventions with Canterbury Christ Church University and the University for the Creative Arts, For details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 3, page 18.

Objective 3 – To mitigate Risks 3.1 and 3.3, The University of Kent will increase the percentage of students who successfully complete their degree, that may be at risk of economic disadvantage, using IMD Q1 and previous eligibility for Free school meals (FSM) as a proxies. This will be achieved by improving the quality of transition from their prior learning environment into the university, provision of financial support, and targeted pastoral and academic support to address prior educational inequalities that these students may have experienced. The University is committed to reaching a 2pp gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 first degree students, starting their degree in 2027/28.   For details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 4, page 21. Completion data is calculated 4 years and 15 days after a cohort starts their degree. This means that there will be a lag in monitoring against this objective, given that we will only have data available for the first cohort covered by this plan, 2024/25 academic year entrants, in the Access and Participation Plan Dashboard to be updated in Spring 2030. As a University we will monitor this target using internal data. This is also applicable to Objective 4 and 5 below.

Objective 4 – To mitigate Risks 2.2 and 3.4, The University of Kent will increase the percentage of Mature learners who successfully complete their degree. The University is committed to reaching a 4.5pp gap in continuation between Mature and Young students for entrants in the 2027/28 academic year. We will do this by improving the quality of transition, provision of financial support and provision of targeted academic support to support learners who are returning to education. For

details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 5, page 23. There will be a delay in the monitoring for this target, as explained in Objective 3 above.

Objective 5 – To mitigate Risks 2.3 and 3.2, The University of Kent will increase the completion rate for students who declare a disability (including neurodivergent students) by providing targeted pastoral and academic support to address any barriers to education that these students may experience. The University is committed to reach a 0.5pp gap in completion rate between first degree students who declare a disability and those with no known disability for 2027/28 entrants. For details of activity, see Intervention strategy 6, page 25. There will be a delay in the monitoring for this target, as explained in Objective 3 above.

Objective 6 – To mitigate Risks 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, The University of Kent will eliminate the on-course ethnicity-based attainment gap for full-time undergraduate students between White students and all other combined ethnic groups by 2031. For details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 7, page 27.

Objective 7 – To mitigate Risks 4.1 and 4.5, The University of Kent will increase the "good degree" attainment for undergraduate students that may be at risk of economic disadvantage, using IMD Q1 and previous FSM as a proxies, through the provision of financial and academic support to address prior educational inequalities that these students may have experienced. Given the educational disadvantage and inequalities experienced by students pre-entry, the University is committed to reaching a 5pp gap in "good degree" attainment between IMD Q1 and Q5 students by 2031. For details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 8, page 30.

Objective 8 – To mitigate Risk 5.1, The University of Kent will increase the percentage of IMD Q1 students who progress into further study or graduate employment to over 75% by 2031. We will do this through the implementation of a targeted scheme to support students with their future career plans. For details of activity, see Intervention Strategy 9, page 32.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention Strategy 1: Access Pre-16 Progression (Objective 1)

The University will continue to build upon the established evidence-based approach to all stages of the student lifecycle. We will continue to deliver an outreach curriculum with school and college partners in the region, to support attainment raising and associated skills, with the objective of supporting progression to HE for student groups facing equality of opportunity risks. Strategic involvement as lead sponsor of the University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) supports Kent's staff to understand more clearly the needs and challenges faced by schools and multi-academy trusts. It also ensures that the University is able to contribute fully to the education of learners in the Trust, support the CPD of school staff and pilot innovative attainment activities co-developed by teaching staff, outreach practitioners, UKAT students and Student Ambassadors. Senior colleagues from across the University sit on the UKAT Governance committees.

As part of our Pre-16 strategy, we will be focusing our work on 10 partner schools in the region, alongside the 2 UKAT schools, to support attainment for targeted students, with a particular focus on students who meet disadvantage indicators and other groups underrepresented in HE. We will do this through a progressive programme of attainment raising activities, tailored to the needs of specific schools and cohorts, with target students and programme routes agreed in close collaboration with schools. We have designed these programmes in consultation with schools and after consideration of our own Kent Equality of Opportunity Risk Register. These students will also be offered access (with others in their schools) to a sustained progression curriculum to support their aspirations, develop their knowledge of, and familiarity with, HE, and build university self-efficacy. We will be working in close collaboration with other local HE providers in the Kent and Medway Progression Federation, aligning with the attainment raising work delivered by Uni Connect.

Intervention Strategy 1: Objectives and Targets	Principal Objective: Increase the number of applications and enrolments to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, from students who live in areas where there is low participation to higher education, using TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1 as proxies (OBJ1, PTA_2 and PTA_3 respectively). Secondary Objective: Increase reading level ratio gain for a group of 25 students at Brompton Academy (OBJ1, PTA_1), Increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, for students who have been under the care of their local authority (OBJ2, PTA_4).		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Knowledge and Skills (Risk 1), Information and Guidance (Risk 2), Perception of Higher Education (Risk 3).		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
KS3 Outreach – Years 7, 8, 9 Range of activities designed to introduce students to the university experience. This includes teacher-led materials, as well as in-school sessions supported by student ambassadors. Targeted learners will also come on a campus visit. New and existing activity. Championing Boys –Year 7 (with potential to expand to Year 7 through to Year 11) Supporting boys to develop attachment to learning and explore possible future options. Students are	Staff time for development of project; Liaison with schools and other admin costs; Resources including teaching materials; Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Academic input on delivery of project For championing Boys project – engagement of Male members of	Learners imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term); Learners broaden their understanding through positive learning experiences (short-term), Learners gain an insight academic, social, economic and personal benefits of progressing to higher education (short-term); Learners identify skills and capabilities they will need to develop to achieve future aspirations (medium-term); Increased confidence in their capacity to progress onto higher education (medium-term); Leaners increase study skills through educational projects which encourage active learning (short-term); increased interest in	IS 3

introduced to topics outside their curriculum, and how current subject knowledge can be applied to different areas and future career opportunities. This project involves the delivery of 5 two-hour sessions, and one full day campus visit. New activity.	staff (ambassadors and academics) as role models	participating in further outreach activity (medium-term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	
Literacy and Maths KS3 Support – Years 7, 8 **Reading Support –** Year 7/8 Support increased reading levels for up to 100 underperforming KS3 students per year through sustained reading support programme. Existing model enhanced and expanded. **KS3 Mathematics Mastery –** Build confidence and increase mastery of mathematics through a series of games-based interventions for underperforming KS3 students, reaching up to 120 students. New activity.	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Resources including teaching materials; Staff time for development and delivery of project; Liaison with schools for booking and data collection.	Teacher reported improvement in reading (short-term); Learners increase reading and maths scores through positive learning experiences (short-term); Learners imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term); increased attainment at KS3 (medium-term); increased attainment at KS4 (long-term).	IS 3
Explore Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) – Year 7/8/9 Build confidence in and engagement with MFL through activities in schools which promote the study of languages via interactive challenges and exploring big questions (new activity). Existing model enhanced. **Modern Foreign Language (MFL) Support –** Year 10/11 Language learning support – support students to prepare for the speaking element of their MFL GCSE. New activity.	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Academic input on delivery of project; Resources including teaching materials; Staff time for development and delivery of project; Liaison with schools for booking and data collection.	Learners link GCSE subject knowledge to university subject areas (short-term); Learners imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term); Increased uptake in MFL qualifications for GCSE (medium-term); Increased number of students at partner schools who achieve EBACC (medium-term),); increased attainment at GCSE for MFL subjects (medium-term); Increased uptake in MFL qualifications at A-level (medium-term); increased number of applications to HE (long-term).	IS 3
GCSE Science Required Practicals – Year 10/11 Students complete the GCSE required practical, tour the labs and learn more about the research linked to this curriculum content. Exam question packs also provided. (circa 100 students). New activity. **Virtual Medical Society –** Years 9-11 Open to students from Kent and Medway schools (preference given to WP students and those in non-selective schools). 14 sessions take place between October-May, where school students interact and learn from a junior doctor, medical students, and other KMMS	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Academic input on delivery of project; Expertise from external specialists where appropriate; Resources including teaching resources; Staff time for development and delivery of project; Liaison with schools for booking and data collection.	Learners increase their understanding of subject and its wider applications (short-term); Increased GCSE science attainment (medium-term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	IS 3

academics. Targeted at students interested in a health-related career.			
Future Human Campus Visit – Year 10 A visit to the University of Kent's Canterbury campus, designed to increase students' understanding of academic life at university. Students explore a research theme and participate in a lecture, a research activity and a seminar led by staff or postgraduate students. Existing.	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Academic input on development and delivery of project; Resources including teaching resources; Staff time for development and delivery of project; Liaison with schools for booking and data collection.	Learners gain an insight into study opportunities within subject areas (short-term); Increased confidence in their capacity to progress onto higher education (short-term); Learners gain increased study skills through educational projects which encourage active learning (short-term); Learners have an increased interest in participating in further outreach activity (medium-term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	IS 3
Mythbusters – Year 9/10/11 The Mythbusters project involves Kent Student Ambassadors working with school students to facilitate candid conversations about the experiences of groups of students, and their pathways to higher education. The project has been piloted with an LGBTQ+ focus. Existing. Other strands of this project will follow. New activity.	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Resources including teaching resources; Staff time for development and delivery of project; Liaison with schools for booking and data collection.	Increase confidence in learners' capacity to progress to higher education (short-term); Explore how personal circumstances, interests and characteristics influence academic and economic aspirations (short-term); Learners have an increased interest in participating in further outreach activity (medium-term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	IS 3
Summer Schools – Year 10 Our annual residential 4-day year 10 Summer School provides an opportunity for students to explore their options and experience university life. Existing. Summer School participants are encouraged to apply to our Ambition to Succeed (Level 3) programme.	Staff time for development, delivery and management of the summer school; Marketing materials; Student ambassador time; Training for student ambassadors; Hospitality; Accommodation; Resources; Funding for travel costs for participants. Academic input for development and delivery of academic content.	Learners gain an insight into academic, social, economic and personal benefits of progressing to higher education (short-term); Increase confidence in their capacity to progress onto higher education (short-term); Increased study skills through educational projects which encourage active learning (short-term); Higher KS4 attainment (medium-term); Learners have an Increased interest in participating in further outreach activity (medium-term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	IS 3
Bespoke UKAT Progression and Attainment programme of support – Year 7 – 11 Students at the University of Kent Academies Trust participate in our core programme of activities as above, with additional bespoke activities as follows: Primary level – Enrichment activities	Ambassador time and expertise; Training for student ambassadors; Academic input on development and delivery of project; Resources; Staff time for development and delivery of project;	Learners imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term); Learners increase their understanding through positive learning experiences (short-term); Learners identify skills and capacities they will need to develop and to achieve future aspirations (short-term); Increased confidence in their capacity to progress onto higher education (short-	IS 2

Year 7 – Induction events and Da Vinci Days Year 8 – Research project Year 9/10/11– Progression support and targeted academic support.	Liaison with schools for booking and data collection; UKAT In School Outreach Officer.	term); Learners increase study skills through educational projects which encourage active learning (short-term); Learners have an increased interest in participating in further outreach activity (medium-term); Increased KS4 attainment (long term); Increased progression to HE (long-term).	
Adult Short Courses – Free short courses provided for adult learners at local secondary schools. Courses are aimed at re-engaging parents, and the wider local community, with learning. Courses such as "Maths isn't scary" to support adult to feel equipped to better engage with young people and support them in their educational journey. Signposting to Access to HE courses is also provided for those considering returning to education.	Staff time to oversee and manage the programme, staff time to administer the programme and register learners, staff time to organise and teach short courses, teaching materials	Strengthen partnership and collaboration between the University and partner schools hosting the short-courses programme (short-term), Learners have an increased confidence in their ability to support young people's education (short-term), Learner's gain awareness of access to HE qualification (medium-term)	
Governance of University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) See Intervention Strategy 2 for details	See Intervention Strategy 2 for details	See Intervention Strategy 2 for details	
Total cost of activities planned	£660,000 per annum (£2,640,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

We have conducted a literature review, alongside discussions with teachers and senior leaders in our local schools. We have also taken into account feedback from our Student Ambassadors who support delivery of the programme, and feedback from the WP Student Advisory Panel (See student consultation for further information). Furthermore, over the last fifteen years we have collected participant data and tracked their outcomes through the HEAT database, and we have used this body of research to underpin our approach. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 1 section, for further information.

Evaluation

We expect to be able to conduct Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation for the activities detailed under this intervention strategy. In the short-term, we aim to work collaboratively with our partner schools to devise comparator groups for our attainment raising activities. Through the use of comparator groups, testing and qualitative data through surveys and interviews/focus groups we will ascertain the more immediate impact of our work on groups of students. Int he the medium-term, we plan to track students through HEAT to understand the impact of our attainment and progression work on KS4 attainment. In the long-run we aim to track students progression to HE through HEAT, to understand the impact of our pre-16 work on progression to Higher Education. Where appropriate and possible, we will supplement our quantitative work with qualitative surveys and interviews. We will also endeavour to gather teacher and parent feedback. Evaluation will be shared through publications on our website, and presentations at conferences where appropriate. We are currently awaiting the results of a TASO Summer School study, which will wield Type 3 evaluation findings. All our evaluation findings will be used to inform the review of our programmes. Full details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 1 section.

Intervention Strategy 2: Post-16 Progression (Objective 1)

Building upon our pre-16 strategy, we recognise that to support progression to HE we will need to continue the sustained and progressive outreach provision in collaboration with post-16 providers in the region. Our relationships

with FE and Sixth form partners, including the University of Kent Academy Trust sixth form, is pivotal, and we will endeavour to support students to better understand all progression pathways to HE, including degree apprenticeships. As previously mentioned, we are actively exploring new and deeper ways of collaboration with local 16-19 providers, particularly FE colleges, to enhance curriculum opportunities and to identify and address gaps in education and skills provision across all levels of study. Given that a high percentage of learners in our partner FE colleges are IMD Q1 or 2, this remains a strategic priority for the University.

In addition to our broader post-16 support available for all partner schools and colleges, from 2024-25 we are launching our flagship post-16 programme 'Ambition to Succeed', targeted at students who are enrolled in a Level 3 qualification in a school or FE College in Kent or Medway and who meet our eligibility criteria. By supporting students throughout the duration of their qualification and with their applications to HE, we expect students to make more informed decisions about their HE choices, and support them with HE preparedness, and transition to university. Those who progress to Kent will be invited to become a Kent Ambition Scholar, and will receive financial support throughout their degree, the opportunity to develop employability skills through our 'Empower' programme and to apply to become a Student Ambassador, and targeted support via Peer Mentoring and skills for academic success workshops.

Intervention Strategy 2: Objectives and Targets	Principal Objective: Increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, from students who live in areas where there is low participation to higher education, using TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1 as proxies (OBJ1, PTA_2 and PTA_3 respectively) Secondary Objectives: Increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, for students who have been under the care of their local authority (OBJ2, PTA_4); Increase the percentage of students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage, using IMD Q1 and previous eligibility for FSM as proxies, who successfully complete their degree (OBJ 3, PTS_2)		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Knowledge and Skills (Risk 1), Information and Guidance (Risk 2), Perception of Higher Education (Risk 3).		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Ambition to Succeed Programme – Year 12/FE Year 1 and Year 13/FE Year 2 Intensive programme of support for 65 WP students who are enrolled in a Level 3 qualification in a school or FE College in Kent or Medway. Programme starts in February of year 1 (Year 12/FE Year 1) and supports students through to year 13/FE Year 2, and potential HE application. Advice and help for parents and supporters included. Existing model but will be significantly enhanced. Students who choose to apply to study at the University of Kent will receive a contextual offer and financial support when on-programme at Kent. They will also be invited to participate in the Kent Ambition Scholars Programme, to become a Student Ambassador and participate in the Empower scheme and targeted academic and student	Staff time for developing and delivering the programme, training student ambassadors; Student ambassador time; Marketing and promotional materials, Hospitality, Financial support for travel to and from the events, Resources, Accommodation for the residential – for students and staff working on programme, Administration of the programme (including shortlisting of applications and contacting candidates)	Learners develop greater knowledge and awareness of higher education and post-Level 3 options (short-term); Learners gain an insight into how personal circumstances, interests and characteristics influence academic and employment aspirations (short-term); Learners apply to higher education (medium-term); Learners have higher continuation and completion rates while studying at the University of Kent (long-term).	IS3 IS4 IS 6

success initiatives (see Intervention strategy 9). New

Further information available on our website: Ambition to Succeed Programme

Level 3 Progression Programme – Level 3 students Series of three Interactive talks providing an overview of post-18 choices, focusing on university and student finance. Delivered in school, or FE college, the series includes an optional campus visit for students to explore university life and the campus environment. Existing, revised. Library Visit Days– Level 3 students Students visit the UoK Templeman Library with their school to undertake their own research on a subject of their choosing and are supported by ambassadors and academic/library staff. Membership of the library included. Existing.	Staff time for delivery and development, Staff time for training/briefing ambassadors, Ambassador time for support and delivery of programme, Staff time for liaison with schools to book talks and workshops, Staff time for liaison with schools for data collection (of registers), Resources: booklets, stationery. Reimbursement for ambassador travel,	Learners develop knowledge of higher education and post-level 3 options (short-term); learners are better able to anticipate challenges students may face in HE and make a successful transition to university (short/medium-term); Learners apply to higher education (medium-term); Increased engagement with university services to support their future (short/medium term).	IS 3 IS 4
Sixth Form Foundations: Skills for Success – Level 3 students Six-week programme to help students develop skills to enable them to be successful in sixth form study and beyond. Existing.	Staff time required for development and delivery, Staff time required for liaison with schools, Ambassador time, Resources including study booklets.	Learners have increased confidence and the tools to succeed in their Level 3 studies (short-term); Learners develop a clear understanding of their sense of self (short-term)	IS 3
Work-ready Interviews – Level 3 learners at FE Colleges Student ambassadors provide support to college students through mock interviews designed to increase student confidence around employment or university interviews. Mentoring offered by Kent and Medway Medical School to science students in partner FE College. New.	Staff time required for development and delivery, Staff time required for liaison with schools, Ambassador time for training and delivery and travel expenses	Learners identify personal goals and can imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term); Learners increase confidence in their ability to apply to university (short-term); Learners participate in challenging educational activities which are stimulating and motivating (short-term); Learners apply to university (medium-term)	IS 3
Access Support– Learners on an Access to HE course at an FE College Package of support tailored to the needs of learners who are studying towards a 1 year Access to HE diploma. Existing.	Staff time for development and delivery, Staff time required for liaison with colleges, Ambassador time and travel expenses.	Learners can make an informed choice about their post-18 options (short-term); Increased confidence in their ability to apply to university (short-term); Learners apply to university (medium-term)	IS 3 IS 4
Parent/Carer/Supporter Programme of Talks Series of talks aimed at helping parents and carers to support learners who	Staff time for development and delivery, Ambassador time and expenses.	Participants have increased confidence in their ability to support progression into higher education (short-term), Participants develop	IS 3

may wish to progress to higher education. New.		knowledge of higher education and post-Level 3 options (short-term), Participants learn about the support that is available at university level (short-term), Increased applications to higher education (medium-term).	
Access to HE Diploma – Adults returning to education Part-time Access to HE diploma for adults wishing to return to higher education. Courses are run in collaboration with education providers in areas of low participation in HE. Programme is supported by Classroom Assistants (current student ambassadors), and Adult Learning Mentors (specialist ambassadors, trained to mentor students). Existing.	Staff time to oversee and manage the programme, staff time to administer the programme and register learners, teaching staff to teach and assess the modules, staff time to accredit programme, staff time to organise and teach short courses, resources: teaching materials.	Strengthen partnership and collaboration between the University and partner schools hosting the Access to HE programme (short-term), Learners have an increased confidence in their ability to progress into a higher education environment (short-term), Learners gain a qualification which enables them to progress to a HE course (medium-term), Learners apply to higher education (medium-term), Learners have lower drop-out rates when studying at Kent (long-term).	IS 3 IS 4
Contextual Admissions Policy – Kent uses data and indicators to help us build a more rounded view of applicant's achievements and potential. Existing, but will be reviewed. **KMMS Contextual Admissions Policy** – KMMS uses school data to contextualise applications and ensure that learners at educational disadvantage are given an equal chance to access a medical education. See details: [KMMS Contextual Admissions](#)	Staff time for development of systems; staff training for understanding and operationalisation of policy.	Learners who are academically able but have faced barriers in their educational journey are able to access the University of Kent (short-term).	IS 3 IS 1
University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) Sixth Form Bespoke Support In addition to having access to our core Level 3 schools programme and being eligible for Ambition to Succeed, students at the UKAT Sixth Form receive a bespoke package of additional support including research skills development, targeted academic mentoring, specific support for applicants for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry and Oxbridge and progression advice for students and staff Existing, but constantly reviewed/evolving.	Staff time for development and delivery, Staff time for liaison with UKAT schools, Ambassador time and expenses, Resources: Teaching materials	Learners develop knowledge and awareness of higher education and post-Level 3 options (short-term), Learners gain an insight into how personal circumstances, interests and characteristics influence academic and employment aspirations (short-term), Learners have Increase confidence in their ability to progress into a higher education environment (short-term), Learners identify personal goals and imagine themselves as a future university student (short-term), Learners apply to higher education (medium-term)	IS 3 IS 1
Governance of University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) University of Kent staff are involved strategically and operationally. The Board of Trustees is chaired by the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance, several members of	Staff time required to attend Trustee and Governors meetings and for training to undertake role	Increased interest in and understanding of Kent's outreach work among staff at the University of Kent and UKAT (short-term); Development of strategic partnerships with schools (medium-term); improved understanding of school's curriculum and context (medium-term); improved strategic,	IS1 IS 3

university staff (academic and professional services) are Trustees and/or Governors. This strategic involvement helps Kent staff understand the needs and challenges face by schools and multi-academy trusts, which in turn benefit the outreach provision developed and delivered under this plan. Kent staff support the schools to improve their overall governance, decision-making, accountability and leadership. Existing.		leadership, communication, negotiation and financial management skills (medium-term); improved school governance (medium-term); improved pupil outcomes including attendance, behaviour and academic performance (long-term); reduced attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils (long-term).	
Total cost of activities planned	£542,000 per annum (£2,168,000 over four years)

Evidence and Rationale

We have conducted a literature review, which informed the design of this intervention strategy. We have consulted our student ambassadors, who are involved in the delivery of the programme, and have taken their feedback into account. We have also consulted with teachers and SLT from our partner schools and colleges. Furthermore, over the last fifteen years we have collected participant data and tracked their outcomes through the HEAT database, and we have used this body of research to underpin our approach. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 2 section for further information.

Evaluation

We expect to be able to conduct Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation for the activities detailed under this intervention strategy. All our learners will be tracked through the HEAT database, so we can understand the impact of our work on their progression to Higher Education. For our Ambition to Succeed Programme, we aim to build a robust comparator group to evaluate the impact of this programme. We will evaluate the impact of our sponsorship of UKAT (multi-academy trust) and both schools Brompton Academy and Chatham Grammar (UKAT Schools), through the evaluation of individual programmes and impact on results (e.g. 6th Form Academic Mentoring) as well as wider involvement through governance structures. Where appropriate and possible, we will supplement our quantitative work with qualitative surveys and interviews. We will also endeavour to gather teacher and parent feedback. Evaluation will be shared through publications on our website, and presentations at conferences where appropriate. All our evaluation findings will be used to inform the review of our programmes. Full details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 2 section.

Intervention Strategy 3: Care Experienced Students (Objective 2)

We recognise that to work most effectively to support Care Experienced students progress to HE, collaboration is vital. We are part of the Care Leaver Progression Partnership and the Kent and Medway Progression Federation, working together to support care-experienced learners, foster carers and professionals working with children in care and young care leavers to support learners to access and succeed in HE. The numbers of Children in Care across Kent and Medway has increased significantly in the last few years. In 2020/21 the DfE reported that there were 3,123 Looked after Children (LAC) placed in Kent & Medway, with 1,655 children with UASC (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) status. We recognise that the barriers faced by care-experienced students are multifaceted, and we endeavour to support the local authorities and virtual schools as appropriate.

Intervention Strategy 3: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: Increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, from students who have been under the care of their local authority (OBJ2, PTA_4), Secondary Objective: Increase the number of applications to higher education, and the University of Kent in particular, from students who live in areas where there is low participation to higher education, using TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1 as proxies (OBJ1, PTA_2 and PTA_3 respectively)
Risks to equality of opportunity	Information and Guidance (Risk 2), Perception of Higher Education (Risk 3), Insufficient Personal Support (Risk 7), Mental Health (Risk 8), Cost Pressures (Risk 10), Progression from Higher Education (Risk 12).

Activity	Inputs	Outcome Indicators	Cross intervention?
Plan my Path: Children in Care programme – working with 3-5 children in care (mixed year groups pre-16), plus one friend each to design and deliver bespoke activities each term in-school and on campus which promote HE as a post-18 option. Students selected by Designated Member of Staff (DMS) in the school who will also support the programme. New.	Staff time for development and delivery; Staff time for administration; Student ambassadors time and expenses; Resources: Teaching materials, Hospitality: Support with travel costs for participants.	Understand how GCSE study relates to higher education and future career opportunities (short-term), Learners gain an insight into how personal circumstances, interests and characteristics influence academic and employment aspirations (short-term), Increased expectation to progress to HE (medium-term), Increased progression to HE (Long-term).	IS 1 IS 2
Easter School – Non-residential Easter school for 25 children in care (years 9-12), delivered in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University and University for the Creative Arts. Existing with further development.	Staff time for development and delivery; Staff time for administration; Student ambassador time and expenses; Resources: teaching materials; Hospitality; Support with travel costs for participants.	Increase confidence to progress onto and succeed at higher education (short-term), Increase sense of belonging in a University environment (short-term), Increased knowledge and awareness of higher education options (short-term), Increased number of students who progress to Level 3 study (short and medium-term), Increased progression to HE (medium and long-term), increase number of young people who disclose they are care experience on UCAS application (medium and long-term).	IS 1 IS 2
Opening Doors: Foster Carer Programme – work in collaboration with the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) and partners, and the Medway Virtual Schools to deliver a series of 4 online workshops, working with 10 foster carers at each session to enable them to support their young people into HE. Programme to run twice a year. Existing.	Staff time for development and delivery. Staff time for administration; Student ambassador time and expenses; Software for online delivery.	Evaluate course, student finance and graduate opportunities and make informed choices that align with personal interests/career aspirations (short-term), Foster carers feel more prepared to support young people with their progression choices (medium-term), Increase number of young people taking part in outreach opportunities (medium-term), Increased progression to HE (medium-term), increase number of young people who disclose they are care experience on UCAS application (medium and long-term).	IS 1 IS 2
CPD for professionals working with Children in Care and Young Care Leavers – work in collaboration with KMPF and partners, and the Kent and Medway Virtual Schools to deliver two CPD sessions per year, working with 10-20 professionals per session to enable them to support young	Staff time for development and delivery. Staff time for administration; Student ambassador time and expenses; Software for online delivery.	Evaluate course, student finance and graduate opportunities and make informed choices that align with personal interests/career aspirations (short-term), Develop professional partnerships between professionals working with Children in Care and university staff (short-term), Increase number of young people taking part in outreach opportunities (medium-term), Increased progression to HE (medium-term), increase number of young people who disclose they are	IS 1 IS 2

people into and through HE. Existing.		care experience on UCAS application (medium/long-term).	
Bespoke Campus Visits – Level 3 students Bespoke campus visit which may include meeting support staff, a tour of accommodation facilities and a campus tour with a care-experienced student. Students learn more about financial support available. Existing.	Staff time for development and delivery. Staff time for administration; Student ambassador time and expenses; Support with travel costs for participants.	Increased progression to HE in general, and the University of Kent in particular (medium-term).	IS 1 IS 2
Ambition to Succeed Programme – Guaranteed place on our Ambition to Succeed Programme.	See Intervention Strategy 2	See Intervention Strategy 2	IS 1 IS 2
Kent Care Leavers Support Package (for UG Students) – Financial support available to all verified care leavers, as well as pre-entry support and advice and on-programme wellbeing support: see our website Support for Care Experienced Students. Full details under Provision of Information for Students section below. Existing.	Financial Investment for bursaries and other financial support, Staff time to administer financial support, Designated Member of Staff for Care Leavers Pre-Registration, 1 FTE Mental Health Adviser dedicated to Care Experienced Student Support	Embrace the challenge of higher education and make a successful transition to university (short-term), increased continuation and completion (medium-term), increased on-course attainment (long-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Empower Scheme – Undergraduate Students at the University of Kent. New.	See Intervention Strategy 9	See Intervention Strategy 9	
Membership of the Care Leaver Progression Partnership (CLPP) – continued involvement in and contribution to CLPP alongside other organisations in Kent & Medway. Existing.	Staff time for participation in CLPP, Financial contribution to CLPP, Staff time to liaise with CLPP and organise events	Senior stakeholders responsible for education across Kent and Medway (HEI Heads of Outreach, Virtual Schools, Council, etc.) will work together to provide collaborative opportunities for care experienced students (short-term); Professionals benefit from a better collaborative understanding of challenges across the county (short-term); students will benefit from collaborative programmes tailored to their specific circumstances (medium-term); Students report increased confidence in their capacity to progress onto higher education (medium-term); Increase progression to higher education (long-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Total cost of activities planned	£162,000 per annum (excluding Kent Care Leaver Support Package which is included in financial support) (£648,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

We have conducted a literature review, which informed the design of this intervention strategy. We have consulted our student ambassadors, who are involved in the delivery of the programme, and have taken their feedback into account. We have also consulted with teachers and SLT from our partner schools and colleges. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 3 section, for further information.

Evaluation

Given the very small number of participants in each intervention, we expect to be able to conduct a robust Type 1 evaluation only. In the short-term, evaluation will be qualitative and mainly through the publication of case-studies. All participants will be added to HEAT, and it is our hope that we will be able to aggregate cohorts in time. We will be exploring the use of TASO's Impact Evaluation with Small Cohorts methodology. Details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 3 section.

Intervention Strategy 4: Students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage continuation and completion (Objective 3)

We have long been committed to addressing sector-wide and institutional factors/ barriers that trigger lower rates of attainment, continuation and progression amongst students from low socioeconomic groups, disabled and neurodivergent students and students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. Activities are developed in response to our ongoing research and a growing evidence-base of what works. In previous years, we have used POLAR4 data as an indicator of socioeconomic status to track students' attainment and continuation. From 2023-24, we will incorporate IMD data and track attainment, continuation and completion for this group of students. We will continue to support our student through transition, orientation and belonging activities, including targeted skills workshops and enhanced academic advising and mentoring. Our new Kent Ambition Scholars Programme will ensure that those most in need, in particular IMD Q1 students in receipt of the Kent Financial Support Package, are supported throughout their journey at Kent. We provide additional activities to target learners not specified in the plan (existing activity), but an indication of costs has been included in the total cost to provide the total investment for this group.

Kent has a comprehensive tracking process that monitors attendance at student success activities, alongside overall attendance and attainment. This ensures that early intervention takes place, tailored to the needs of individual students belonging to APP priority groups.

Intervention Strategy 4: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: Increase the percentage of students that may be at risk of economic disadvantage, using IMD Q1 and previous eligibility for FSM as proxies, who successfully complete their degree (OBJ 3, PTS_2) Secondary Objectives: Increase the percentage of students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage, using IMD Q1 and previous eligibility for FSM as proxies, who achieve a "good degree" (OBJ 7, PTS_8)		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Insufficient academic support (Risk 6), Insufficient personal support (Risk 7), Mental Health (Risk 8); Ongoing impacts of coronavirus (Risk 9), Cost of Living (Risk 10)		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Transition Support – Prospective local Kent and Medway students are offered three opportunities to engage with the University prior to the start of their degree. Get to Know Kent (for applicants, February) and Headstart: Get Ready for Kent (for students who are Unconditional Firm, September). Collaborative project, involving several student-facing departments. Students are introduced to the range of academic and pastoral support available at Kent. All students will be able to access the programme online, with a live Q&A and support element. Existing, reviewed and enhanced.	Staff time for development and delivery of programme, Student Ambassador training, Student Ambassador time, Hospitality, Resources (printed and electronic), Unibuddy platform, Hijack software.	Students will engage with transition support (short-term); Students will have an increased awareness of study options, social and leisure facilities, and career opportunities for students (short-term); Students will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (medium-term); increased continuation rates for targeted learners (medium-term); increased completion rates for targeted learners (medium-term).	IS 5 IS 6

Join the Dots – Programme developed and delivered in collaboration with The Brilliant Club. Programme supports students who are most likely to face barriers during transition to higher education. On results day targeted students will be matched with a PhD coach from the University of Kent who will work with the student's school/college to support them throughout a six-month transition programme. New.	Recruitment of students to participate in programme; liaison with schools/FE colleges; cost of programme delivery and evaluation (Brilliant Club).	Students will report a a stronger sense of belonging in higher education (short-term); Students will report increased academic self-efficacy (short-term); Students will employ study strategies (short-term); Students will complete their degree programme (medium-term); Students will attain a "good degree" (long-term).	IS 5 IS 6
Enhanced Academic Advising and Progress Profiles – Academic Advisor support will be supplemented by targeted drop-in sessions related to academic skills. Continued development of Progress Profiles to provide live academic progress for students and their Academic Advisers, to support targeted conversations around student need. Enhanced mechanisms to signpost students to support. Existing, reviewed and enhanced.	Staff time for development of Progress Profiles (including liaison with Information Services); Academic staff time for advising; Monitoring systems; Budget for AA Networking sessions	Increase the number of widening participation students who engage with Academic Advising (short-term); Student will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (medium-term); Students will consolidate study skills and capacity for academic success (medium-term); Students will remain on programme and successfully complete their degree (medium-term).	IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Virtual Laura – a series of Tik Tok-style animations that explain key academic activities for students (e.g. feedback, presentations, Academic Advisers). Developed alongside students, these videos focus on areas of need identified by both students and Kent staff. Available to students through a variety of media and signposted via Academic Advisors, module materials where relevant, and local delivery teams. Existing and enhanced. New videos developed in line with target groups and evaluation outcomes.	Staff time for development of videos; Student time for development and testing of videos.	Students access appropriate information, advice and guidance and fully utilise course opportunities (short-term); Students will report an increase in confidence in applying personal strategies for maximising the benefits of higher education (short-term); Students become familiar with learning and teaching approaches at the University of Kent (short-term); Students are more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term).	IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP) – Financial Support offered to students who meet eligibility criteria (see provision of information to students, page 39) Students in receipt of KSFP will form part of our Ambition Scholars cohort and will be offered a package of support including participation in the Student Ambassador Scheme, Academic Skills interventions (see intervention strategy 7), and Empower (see Intervention Strategy 9)	£1,000 per annum (including Foundation year, and 1 resit year, up to a maximum of 5 years) for all students who meet the eligibility criteria (circa 860 students, based on previous entrant data); Staff to administer financial support.	Access student finance and budgeting support appropriate to circumstances (short-term); increased attendance at lectures and seminars (short-term); Students are more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term); Students are more likely to achieve a "good degree" (medium-term).	IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Financial Support for Young Independent Students, Estranged Students and Kent Foyer and Homeless Students – financial support offered to students who meet eligibility criteria (see provision of information to students, page 39). Students in receipt of this financial support will form	See Provision of information for students; Staff to administer financial support	Access student finance and budgeting support appropriate to circumstances (short-term); increased attendance at lectures and seminars (short-term); Students are more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term); Students are more likely to	IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8

part of our Ambition scholars cohort (see above).		achieve a "good degree" (medium-term).	
Kent Ambition Scholars Programme – Expect circa 800 students per year. Students will have either graduated from our flagship Ambition to Succeed Programme (see IS 2) or who meet our broader KFSP eligibility criteria (see information to students). Students will be invited onto the programme and will receive targeted support throughout their journey. This includes priority consideration for Student Ambassador Programme, Empower Scheme, Peer Mentoring and other skills to academic success workshops.	Staff time for development and delivery of the programme, resources, monitoring systems.	Increased average attainment over Stage 1 (short-term); average 80% attendance (medium-term); Students are more likely to achieve a "good degree" (medium-term); Students will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (medium-term); students will consolidate study skills and capacity for academic and graduate success (medium-term); students maximise the benefits of university life and successfully progress to graduate employment (medium-term)	IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8 IS 9
Academic skills interventions – See Intervention Strategy 8	See Intervention Strategy 8	See Intervention Strategy 8	
Academic Peer Mentoring – See Intervention Strategy 8	See Intervention Strategy 8	See Intervention Strategy 8	
Total cost of activities planned	£348,000 per annum (£1,392,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

We have conducted a literature review, as well as extensive research with Kent students, and these have informed the design of this intervention strategy. We have consulted with Student Success Interns and the WP Student Advisory Panel and paid due regard to the Kent EORR which also highlighted areas of concern for students when developing this intervention strategy. We have also consulted with members of staff across the institution. See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 4 section, for further details on the research undertaken and rationale for work being undertaken in this area.

Evaluation

We will aim to undertake Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation. We will follow the OfS suggested methodology to evaluate the financial support provided for students, particularly in light of the cost-of-living crisis. This will allow us to assess the impact in terms of continuation, completion and success for these groups of students. Where comparator groups are not possible from the outset (for example, with a transitions programme open to all students), we will endeavour to build comparator groups using non-participants for quantitative analysis, as well as a mixture of surveys, interviews and focus groups. Student Success interventions are evaluated through the Student Success Evaluation Framework and are underpinned by a Theory of Change. Evaluation will be shared through publications on our website, and presentations at conferences where appropriate. All our evaluation findings will be used to inform the review of our programmes. Full details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 4 section.

Intervention Strategy 5: Mature Learners Continuation and Completion (Objective 4)

Mature students will continue to be supported throughout their time at Kent, with activities commencing pre-enrolment to ensure we foster a sense of belonging, supporting their transition and orientation. Local activities in specific disciplines will continue to take place and will be enhance by new institution-wide activities described in the intervention strategy below. We are working closely with Kent Union to support this group of learners, who face additional barriers to accessing and succeeding within HE. We provide additional activities to target learners not specified in the plan (existing activity), but an indication of costs has been included in the total cost to provide the total investment for this group.

Intervention Strategy 5: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: The University of Kent will increase the percentage of Mature learners who successfully complete their degree by improving the quality of transition interventions, the provision of financial support and targeted academic activity to support learners who are returning to education. (OBJ 4, PTS_1, PTS_3) Secondary Objective: Increase the percentage of Mature Learners who successfully achieve a "good degree" (1st or 2:1).		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Insufficient academic support (Risk 6), Insufficient personal support (Risk 7), Cost pressures (Risk 10), Capacity issues (Risk 11).		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Transition Support - See Intervention strategy 4	See intervention strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	
Kent Financial Support Package— See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	
Pre-Welcome Week Programme – pre-university activities focused on mature returners to study including online sessions, pre-recorded videos and workshops. Programme repeated during autumn term and including workshops for new entrants and intermitting students and returners to education. Additional targeted sessions. New.	Video development time; Pre-arrival data on incoming Mature students; Support staff time for in person sessions; Systems for attendance monitoring and feedback; Consistent communications across Divisions; Analysis of attendance against other Student Success indicators	Increase awareness of study options, social and leisure facilities, and career opportunities for students (short-term); Students will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (short-term); increase mature students' continuation and completion rates (medium-term).	IS 4 IS 6
Returners to Education – Autumn term targeted sessions to introduce mature/returner students to campus, student support, academic practices, technology, and to reflect on skills. Existing and enhanced.	Support staff time for in person sessions; Consistent communications across Divisions; Systems for attendance monitoring and feedback; Earlier data on incoming Mature students.	Increase awareness of study options, social and leisure facilities, and career opportunities for students (short-term); Students will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (short-term); Increase mature students' continuation and completion rates (medium-term).	IS 4 IS 6
Kent Union Mature Student Guide – A Mature Student Society initiative to highlight key services and support available for those returning to education. The guide will include societies, groups and communities on campus that already have a mature student presence, identify hardship/funding support available for mature students, and explain Kent Union's services. The guide will be developed by students for students with support from Kent Union. New.	Kent Union officer time; Student reps time; Resources including printing; Web development.	Increase awareness of study options, social and leisure facilities, and career opportunities for students (short-term); Students will be able to identify personal goals with increased confidence in their ability to achieve them (short-term); Increase mature students' continuation and completion rates (medium-term).	IS 4 IS 6
Total cost of activities planned	£56,000 per annum (£224,000 over four years)		

Mature student numbers are low at Kent: 8.4% in 2021-22. However, the barriers to completion are complex, with many having caring responsibilities and other commitments.

> 'Life is very different (for mature students), you have more often than not a lot of responsibilities, not just your own personal responsibilities with taking care of yourself in a very different way to the way that an 18-year-old does. But often you have dependents. That could be children, it could be older parents, it could be a husband or wife or partner. So yeah, life is very, very different.' (Kent student, 2020).

Completion rates for Mature students compared to Young are 10.6% (first degree students) which is broadly in line with the national average. There have been fluctuations in the data over the last four academic years (11.9pp, 6.5pp, 13.4pp and 10.6pp from academic year 14/15 through to 17/18 respectively) due to small numbers in the cohort.

Evaluation

Given the low proportion of mature students, we may only be able to reach strong Type 1 evaluation. We are aiming for Type 2 evaluation, particularly for programmes such as the pre-welcome week and returners to education, but given small numbers this may not be possible. We will be exploring the use of TASO;s Impact Evaluation with Small Cohorts methodology. Student Success interventions are evaluated through the [Student Success Evaluation Framework](#) and are underpinned by a Theory of Change. Details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 5 section.

Intervention Strategy 6: Students who declare a disability Continuation and Completion (Objective 5)

At Kent, we have seen a significant increase in the number of students who declare a disability (including neurodivergent students), as well as those who are in receipt of DSA over the last couple of years, and we recognise that more targeted support is required to address the educational barriers experienced by these students. We have also seen an increase in students requiring Mental Health support. As illustrated in our intervention strategy, our approach is multifaceted, recognising the potentially complex needs of our disabled and neurodivergent students. All staff who teach or support learning at Kent, need to apply the [Kent Inclusive Practices](#). These are simple adjustments to learning and teaching, informed by the experience of students with inclusive learning plans (ILP). Our Student Support and Wellbeing teamwork with colleagues across the University to provide support to students with disabilities, chronic conditions and Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD.

Intervention Strategy 6: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: Increase the completion rate for students who declare a disability (including neurodivergent students) (OBJ 5, PTS_4)		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Insufficient personal support (Risk 7), Insufficient Academic Support (Risk 6), Ongoing impacts of Coronavirus (risk 9), Capacity issues (Risk 11)		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Transition Support - See Intervention strategy 4	See Intervention strategy 4	See Intervention strategy 4	

General Wellbeing support – Students are encouraged to self-refer if they need support. All students receive triage appointment on the same day, and urgent same-day appointments are also available if required. Interventions include mental health support (by specialist mental health advisors) and the creation of a temporary Inclusive Learning Plan (ILP) if appropriate, to support students with any aspect of their learning (e.g., lectures, seminars, assessments including exams). Campus security are available to attend incidents if concerns are raised about a student's wellbeing by the student themselves, Kent staff, friends or relatives. Existing	Specialist staff time (Mental Health Advisors); Administrative support; Appropriate specialist infrastructure.	Students engage with support services to foster personal and wellbeing development (short-term); Students access appropriate academic and personal support and fully utilise University services (medium-term); Students more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8
Counselling – short-term counselling is available for all students who are experiencing problems such as anxiety, depressed feelings and emotional difficulties that may or may not be connected to student life. All counsellors are fully qualified members of BACP, BABCP or UKCP. Existing	Specialist staff time (Counsellors); Administration support; Appropriate specialist infrastructure	Students engage with support services to foster personal and wellbeing development (short-term); Students access appropriate academic and personal support and fully utilise University services (medium-term); Students more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8
External partnerships and pathways – Students with ongoing mental health difficulties are supported to access specialist external mental health support. Students with mild to moderate mental health difficulties are supported to access primary care mental health support through IAPT services or local counselling services. Where students are engaged with external support, Mental Health Advisers will liaise with these services to monitor their wellbeing. Service leads liaise with local NHS, Social Care and third sector agencies, to ensure a shared understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and build effective collaboration, referral pathways and information sharing. Existing	Administration time; Cost of external providers	Students engage with support services to foster personal and wellbeing development (short-term); Students access appropriate academic and personal support and fully utilise University services (medium-term); Students more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8
Specific Learning Difficulties Support - Support for students who have Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia or ADHD. Contact made pre-registration where possible and students invited to campus before the start of term to familiarise themselves with their surroundings. Special arrangements are made for registration. Students are assigned a SpLD advisor who supports students throughout their course, an Inclusive Learning Plan (ILP) is completed to set out reasonable adjustments to courses and assessment	Cost of diagnostic testing; Specialist staff time (specialist tutors, advisors); Administrative time; Specialist infrastructure	Students engage with support services to foster personal and wellbeing development (short-term); Students access appropriate academic and personal support and fully utilise University services (medium-term); Students consolidate their academic skills and develop a personalised strategy for skills acquisition (medium-term); Students more likely to continue	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8

and students have access to assistive software on and off campus. Students with ADHD have access to specialist mentoring and study skills support. Students are supported with their application for Disabled Students' Allowance and diagnostic assessments can be arranged. See our website: Specific Learning Difficulties Support. Existing		and complete their degree (medium-term)	
Moodle Ally – Integrated assistive technology on Moodle (learning platform). Students can download documents in different formats (e.g., PDF document, mp3 file, etc.). All lectures are recorded and captions are automatically generated. The University has won an UCISA award in recognition of the work in the provision of accessible content throughout all our platforms. See blog post here: UoK UCISA Awards Existing	Cost of platform; Specialist staff time (across E-learning and Information Services) for development and integration.	Students consolidate digital literacy skills and capacity to utilise digital applications relevant to their subject area and wider field of interest (short-term); students consolidate their understanding of their subject area and utilise course materials and teaching resources effectively (medium-term); Students more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8
Support for Neurodivergent students - 'The University of Kent Autistics' group (UoKA) is a student-led group who meet regularly and run 'So You're Autistic?' which is an eight-week support programme teaching those with a diagnosis, awaiting a diagnosis, or who think they might be autistic, how to be their authentic autistic self, and to understand what being autistic means for each individual. Existing	Student time	Students receive comprehensive information about social and leisure, and extra-curricular opportunities (short-term); students access appropriate information, advice and guidance to fully utilise course and placement opportunities (short-term); students engage reflexively with support services and other students to articulate and reflect upon academic identity, belonging and personal development (medium-term); Students more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term)	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7 IS 8
Ambition Scholars Programme – See Intervention Strategy 4	Ambition Scholars Programme – See Intervention Strategy 4	Ambition Scholars Programme – See Intervention Strategy 4	
Total cost of activities planned	£487,000 per annum (£1,948,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

Mental Health support is provided by Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW), in which there are also teams of advisers supporting disabled students, students with chronic conditions and Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD. SSW works closely with wider support services within the university including Student Support Officers in the academic divisions, the University Medical Centre, Nursing Services, Chaplaincy, College and Community Life Team, Campus Security, Student Conduct and Complaints, and Kent Union advice services as well as external services.

Evaluation

Given the sensitive nature of the programmes run for disabled and neurodivergent students, evaluation is limited in this area. We expect to be able to conduct a robust Type 1 evaluation only. Our evaluation for this group of students

will mainly consist of case studies with students and a possible vignette study with professionals. We will aim to evaluate the relationship between seeking specialist support and completion of degree programme. We will publish our evaluation findings on our website

Intervention Strategy 7: Ethnicity-based attainment gaps (Objective 6)

As a University, we continue to diversify our student demographic, with 47% of UK fee paying students coming from ethnically diverse backgrounds in 2022-23.

Ethnicity-based attainment gaps have long been a focus at Kent. In addition to support and interventions for students, we are investing in research to explore the underlying causes of such disparities. This has included previous and current collaborative research with Kent Union on the experiences of our Black and ethnically diverse students (BAME Student Voices (internal - 2016) and Black Student Experience (current -2022-23)) and are currently developing an evaluation framework for academic practice (What Works at Kent) to establish the impact of our core practices on educational gains. Underpinned by institutional research, we have built a resources toolkit for sharing good practice across academic disciplines and collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Our student success Evaluation Framework has been in development since 2020, using process and impact evaluation, based on an annual cycle of planning, monitoring and reporting and a Theory of Change.

We provide additional activities to target learners not specified in the plan (existing activity), but an indication of costs has been included in the total cost to provide the total investment for this group.

Intervention Strategy 7: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: To eliminate the attainment gap between ethnic groups by 2031 (OBJ 6, PTS_6, PTS_7, PTS_8, PTS_9) Secondary Objectives: This strategy will also contribute to improving completion rates of IMD Q1 students (OBJ 3 PTS_2), reducing the attainment gap between students with A-level and those with non-A-level qualifications and reducing the attainment gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 Students (OBJ 7, PTS 9)		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Knowledge and Skills (risk 1), Insufficient academic support (Risk 6), Mental health (Risk 8)		
Activity	Inputs	Outcome Indicators	Cross intervention?
Diversity Mark – co-creation programme to diversify reading lists and library resources, in collaboration with our library Academic Liaison Service (ALS) and University students. Institution-wide award given to modules that can offer a diverse and inclusive range of resources. Existing, to expand to include other intersections, subject to research: socioeconomic status, disabilities. Existing	Empower Scheme student time (6-10 students per year); Senior Diversity Mark Officer; Research Assistants time (4 students per year), Academic input – module convenors; Awards, celebration and dissemination events budget.	Increase number of modules assessed and awarded under the Diversity Mark process (medium-term); Ethnically diverse students who study DM Modules feel represented in the curriculum (medium-term); Ethnically diverse students who study DM Modules report an increased sense of belonging (medium-term); Increased continuation and completion for ethnically diverse students who study DM Modules (medium-term); Increased attainment for ethnically diverse students studying DM Modules (long-term); ethnically diverse students experience a greater engagement in the co-production of literature materials and contribution to reading list.	IS 4 IS 5 IS 8

Inclusive curriculum and reflective teaching - Staff training in curriculum design and teaching practice to enhance the learning and teaching provided to students in Kent. The newly developed Reflective Teaching Framework (TRI -Teach, Reflect, Innovate) is a tool to promote inclusive teaching and student success. New.	Delivery budget; hospitality for student/convenor discussion sessions; transcripts); Academic lead for reflective sessions; Inclusive curriculum training by Student Success Research Associates; Annual training and knowledge exchange event for sharing practice in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of HE (CSHE); Mechanisms for tracking of participation; evaluation as part of the What Works At Kent Evaluation Framework (see Evaluation section, page 35).	Academics develop new skills to incorporate inclusive approaches into practice (medium-term); Increased perception of diverse teaching materials by ethnically diverse students (medium-term); Increased sense of belonging reported by ethnically diverse students (medium-term) Increased academic staff collaboration and co-production of teaching tools and resources (long-term).	IS 4 IS 5 IS 8
Inspirational Speakers - series to increase representation, ambition and sense of belonging for BAME and IMD students e.g. Diversity in Technology, Being BAME in STEM, Black Heroes of Mathematics. Existing.	Collaborative working with academic schools and divisions; Speaker costs; Collaboration with Careers & Employability Service; SStaRT (Student Success Resources Toolkit) for sharing practice; Consultation with Widening Participation Student Advisory Panel (WPSAP)	Increased sense of belonging reported by students (short-term); Students' increased understanding of pathways to success through achieving in HE (short-term); Increased student motivation and engagement with their subject area (medium-term).	IS 4 IS 5 IS 8
Academic Coaching for Excellence – a 1:1 coaching scheme that pairs Black stage 2 and 3 students with an academic for tailored support across the year. Developed in Kent Law School, coaches and coachees meet roughly ten times across the year to plan for assessments and review feedback. The scheme targets students who are at risk of not achieving their potential to equip them with the tools to do get a 'good' degree. Existing and expanded across academic divisions and for other target groups e.g. IMD.	Robust systems and processes for access to in-year attainment data for purposes of targeting; Academic coaches trained by external provider; Resources developed for coaches; Professional coach for ongoing support to academic coaches; SStaRT (Student Success Resources Toolkit) for sharing practice; Mechanisms for tracking of participation	Students gaining access to and utilise appropriate opportunities and provision in order to orientate themselves towards and realise personal goals (short-term); Increased student confidence and willingness to attend class and contribute Students gain consolidated study-skills and capacity for academic and graduate success (medium-term); Increased students' confidence in their academic capability to succeed and progress in HE (long term) Increased students' independent working and improved attitude to learning Improved attainment for targeted group of students (medium-term);	IS 4 IS 5 IS 8 IS 9

Ambition Scholars Programme - See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	
Total cost of activities planned	£459,000 per annum (£1,836,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

Kent is committed to improving outcomes for students through transformational research. Ongoing Student Success research identifies key trends, challenges the processes and structures within the University and informs all of our Student Success operational interventions for staff and students. See further information in Annex B, Intervention Strategy 7 section.

Awarding gaps have narrowed over recent years, most notably the Black/White awarding gap in subject areas where there has been a sustained programme of Student Success interventions and related research aimed at raising awareness and improving our understanding of the gaps to better support students. These reductions were narrowed further during the Coronavirus pandemic, in response to teaching and assessment changes, that supported student outcomes.

We are currently reviewing our assessment and feedback practice in response to our experiences during the pandemic and the OfS B conditions, with the intention of developing more high impact and authentic assessments in collaboration with Kent Union that replicate activities, scenarios and performance standards found in the world of employment.

See Annex B, Intervention Strategy 7, for further information.

Evaluation

We will conduct Type 1, 2 and 3 evaluation. Student Success interventions are evaluated through the Student Success Evaluation Framework and are underpinned by a Theory of Change. Contribution analysis will be conducted annually. Activities are coded against an intervention typology. Process and impact evaluation evidence. We will conduct pre and post attitudinal and behavioural surveys to measure and evidence the impact of interventions. Where interventions are conducted with staff members, we will measure the impact of interventions on academic practices and will make use of observations where appropriate. Details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 7 section.

Intervention Strategy 8: Students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage Attainment gaps (Objective 7)

We have identified a gap in attainment between students who live in an IMD Q1 area and those who live in an IMD Q5 area. This gap persists across all ethnic groups. IMD Q1 students are more likely to have faced financial hardship and are more likely to have entered HE with a non-A-level Level 3 qualification. We will continue to deliver targeted skills workshops and enhanced academic advising and mentoring. As part of the Kent Ambition Scholars programme, students who are in receipt of the KFSP, will be prioritised for a range of activities aimed at supporting their success at Kent. We operate an early warning system, which flags students who most need support with their attainment goals and ensures that we reach out to students early in their academic career.

The University is currently reviewing its assessment practices in light of the impact on outcomes of changes made during the pandemic and Kent Union's research into authentic assessments.

We provide additional activities to target learners not specified in the plan (existing activity), but an indication of costs has been included in the total cost to provide the total investment for this group.

Intervention Strategy 8: Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: Increase the number of IMD Q1 students who achieve a "good degree" (1st or 2:1) (OBJ 6 PTS_9) Secondary Objectives: Increase the completion rate for IMD Q1 students (OBJ 4, PTS_2) Reduce ongoing ethnicity-based attainment gaps (PTS_5, PTS_6, PTS_7, PTS_8), Increase percentage of mature students who achieve a "good degree" (1st or 2:1).		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Insufficient academic support (Risk 6), Insufficient personal support (Risk 7), Ongoing impacts of coronavirus (Risk 9), Cost of Living (Risk 10)		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Join the Dots - See Intervention Strategy 4	Join the Dots - See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4, page 21	
Enhanced Academic Advising and Progress Profiles – See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4, page 21	
Virtual Laura – See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4, page 21	
Kent Financial Support Package - See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4, page 21	
Academic skills interventions – The academic skills interventions programme has been developed as part of the of student success interventions across all academic schools and is based on the identification of student skill needs determined via the Expectations Survey, or through data analysis of students' academic performance or/and by recommendations from academic advisors. Academic skills interventions include Catch up and Consolidation sessions, Study Groups, Exam Preparation Days, Skills Hubs, Diagnostic Testing, Essay writing sessions. Existing with annual targeting in response to research.	Joint planning with Student Learning Advisory Service (SLAS). Academic time for delivery; Divisional staff time for promotion, attendance monitoring and feedback mechanisms; Data analysis to identify students most in need and determine inclusive or exclusive students targeting for academic skills interventions; Analysis of Expectations: Survey to identify potential areas of need	Students consolidate their academic skills (short-term); Students consolidate their study-skills in order to maximise the benefit of learning and teaching formats (short-term); Students consolidate their understanding of their subject area and utilise course materials and teaching resources effectively (medium-term); students are more likely to continue and complete their degree. Students gain a greater understanding of how to achieve a high academic performance to meet HE standards and own expectations (short-term). Students report a greater sense of awareness of capabilities and increase academic confidence (long-term).	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7
Academic Peer Mentoring – This is an institutional programme managed by the Student Learning Advisory Service (SLAS) partnering experienced students with newer students to support their learning on a one-to-one basis. Informed by an analysis of performance at module level for the different Academic Divisions, student 'Module Champions' will be introduced to facilitate group workshops focused on	Consistent communications across Divisions; SLAS staff time; Recruiting mentors; development of systematic mentor referral by AAs; Celebration event; Mentor training and supervision; Academic staff time to promote scheme continually;	Students engage pro-actively with changing demands of their studies and develop pro-active support-seeking behaviours to ensure their success (short-term); Students increased their engage with support and with other students to articulate and reflect upon academic identity, belonging and development (medium-term); Students benefited from consolidating their academic skills and develop a personalised strategy for skills acquisition by having	IS 4 IS 5 IS 7

modules where there is typically a high re-sit and failure rate. The APM programme will be supplemented by specific buddying schemes for Foundation Year students to support transition. Existing, reviewed and enhanced.	Inclusion of regular Peer Assisted Leaning (PAL) sessions embedded within curricula; Mechanisms for tracking of participation.	available peer mentioning on regular basis (medium-term); Students increased their confidence and feel reassured by their buddies they are going "on the right track"; Students are more likely to continue and complete their degree (medium-term); Students are more likely to achieve a "good degree" (medium-term).	
Ambition Scholars Programme – See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	See Intervention Strategy 4	
Total cost of activities planned	£216,000 per annum (£864,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

IMD Q1 are more likely to face financial hardship, and benefit from less support from their parents/carers. Students are also more likely to have no parental experience of higher education. These factors may negatively impact on their transition to and orientation in HE.

Internal data indicates that a greater proportion of Black students come from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas than their White peers. IMD Q1 students are also more likely to have entered Kent with a non-A-level Level 3 qualification.

For further information, see Annex B, Intervention Strategy 8 section.

Evaluation

We will conduct Type 1, 2 and 3 evaluation. Student Success interventions are evaluated through the Student Success Evaluation Framework and are underpinned by a Theory of Change. Contribution analysis will be conducted annually. Activities are coded against an intervention typology. Process and impact evaluation evidence. We will conduct pre and post attitudinal and behavioural surveys to measure and evidence the impact of interventions. Where interventions are conducted with staff members, we will measure the impact of interventions on academic practices and will make use of observations where appropriate. Full details of our evaluation approach for can be found in the Evaluation of the Plan section. Full details of our evaluation plan can be found in Annex B, under the Intervention Strategy 8 section.

Intervention Strategy 9 – IMD Q1 Progression (Objective 8)

Research from the Social Mobility Foundation explored inequalities experienced between those from socioeconomic backgrounds and their more privileged counterparts. Of the 5,000 respondents, 47% of privileged graduates reported using their personal connections in order to be able to secure a job. Respondents from more affluent households also reported a higher likelihood of relocating for a job opportunity (64% of lower income, compared with 76% of higher income). We understand from our internal findings and consultation with our students that there is a requirement for a targeted scheme to support undergraduate students who face equality of opportunity risks to plan their career development. Our flagship 'Empower' scheme will primarily support IMD Q1 students through a mixture of skills workshops, one-one guidance and group-based support. We are committed to further research in this area to fully understand the specific issues affecting this group of learners.

Intervention Strategy 9 : Objectives and Targets	Primary Objective: Increase the percentage of IMD Q1 students who progress into further study or graduate employment through the implementation of a targeted scheme to support students with their future career plans (OBJ 8, PTP_1) Secondary Objectives: Increase the continuation and completion rate of IMD Q1 students (OBJ3, PTS_2), Increase the "good degree" attainment for IMD Q1 students (OBJ7, PTS_9)		
Risks to equality of opportunity	Insufficient personal support (Risk 7), Ongoing impacts of coronavirus (Risk 9), Progression from higher education (Risk 12)		
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcome Indicators**	**Cross intervention?**
Empower Scheme The empower scheme will support undergraduate students to plan their career development. The scheme will offer a blend of career development and life skills opportunities, in order to make students ready for the world of work. Students will be supported to identify or vocalise their skills and to develop confidence to apply for job opportunities and postgraduate study. Students will receive one-to-one and group-based support to help reflect on the skills they are developing throughout their time at university and help them prepare for career decisions. Existing scheme enhanced and revised. The scheme will be primarily supporting students from IMD Q1 as well as those who are in receipt of the Kent Financial Support Package and/or have participated in the Ambition to Succeed scheme.	1.4 FTE Employability Adviser staff, resources, financial support for students to attend interviews and other related expenses.	Students will access information about postgraduate study and employment opportunities that align with their personal interests and career aspirations (short-term); students will identify and utilise opportunities to make informed choices that align with personal interests and career aspirations (short-term); Students will embrace the challenge and develop personal strategy for postgraduate progression (medium-term); Students will identify and report increased skills and capacities needed for postgraduate study or graduate employment (medium-term); Students will situate existing knowledge within wider fields of knowledge and apply to new contexts (medium-term).	IS 3 IS 4 IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Widening Participation Ambition Scholarship Scholarship for Kent graduates who progress directly from undergraduate to postgraduate study at Kent, having completed an undergraduate programme at Kent. Existing, revised.	£5,000 for UK students (£2,500 per year for part-time students) for all students who meet the eligibility criteria.	Widening Participation students will progress to postgraduate study at a higher rate (short-term), Widening participation students will increase their career prospects (medium-term).	IS 3 IS 4 IS 5 IS 6 IS 7 IS 8
Total cost of activities planned	£130,000 per annum (excluding cost of scholarships) (£520,000 over four years)		

Evidence and Rationale

The University has been running a scheme to support widening participation students to progress to graduate employment or further study since 2014 and has supported over 10,000 during this period. The scheme was created following feedback from students and graduates who reported a lack of understanding of the graduate jobs market, low confidence in their skills and ability, and the inability to vocalise their skills and experience in applications or at interview. The scheme has been successful, and a lot of the practice has been embedded in other careers support across the University. The placements provided by the existing scheme are embedded in university practice and provide good opportunities for WP students to engage in meaningful employment across the university to further develop their skills. Given the changes in the job market, and the increase in the cost of living over the last few years, the University is re-focussing its work in this area to provide targeted support to students who are at greater risk of underperforming in their undergraduate degree and who have lower rates of progression to further education and graduate employment.

This new scheme, rebranded Empower, will support a cohort of learners who are from IMD Q1 (which our data suggests are at higher risk of non-continuation, non-completion, lower degree attainment and lower progression outcomes), as well as students who are in receipt of our Kent Financial Support Package and Ambition to Succeed scholars. Engagement with the scheme will see students benefit from a wide package of support, including financial support for expenses related with interviews, such as travel expenses and work clothing.

Widening Participation students who wish to continue their studies at the University of Kent, will be supported through a scholarship to help meet costs of graduate study in light of increased cost of living. For further information see Annex B, Intervention Strategy 9 section.

Evaluation

We intend to evaluate this intervention to OfS Type 2 standard, using students who would meet the criteria but do not engage with the scheme as a comparator group. We examine the extent to which this intervention meets the primary objective, as well as supports the secondary objectives. We will share our findings through our website and will present at conferences where appropriate.

More detailed information can be found in Annex B, Intervention Strategy 9 section.

Whole provider approach

As demonstrated throughout this APP, the University of Kent is committed to embedding a whole provider approach to addressing risks to equality of opportunity throughout the student lifecycle. This commitment echoes Kent's existing institutional strategy, which states that to become one of the very best universities in the country for education and student experience, we will offer a transformative student experience and employability outcomes regardless of background, embedding our best practice in access and widening participation, supporting student attainment, providing mental health support and enabling employability.

As such, the APP has been written in consultation, and with commitments from, staff from across the University – from colleagues in Outreach & Widening Participation; Admissions; Student Success; Student Learning Advisory Service; Student Support & Wellbeing; Careers and Employability Service; Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity; the e-Learning team and academic colleagues across all Divisions. The strategic direction of this plan is recommended by APP Operations Group and the Widening Participation Student Advisory Panel, and has been agreed by the APP Steering Group, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning & Performance), with membership from senior leaders across the University and student representatives. The APP is approved by the University's Executive Group, Senate and Council. The formal governance structure and clear and explicit senior leadership for the APP is integral to achieving senior level engagement and allows the overarching strategic aims of the plan to be managed by the relevant committees and embedded across all areas of the University.

In developing this APP, the University has worked continuously to secure alignment with other key and emerging strategies within the institution. There is common membership of the APP Operations and Steering group and the University's main committees, ensuring synchrony across all 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. The University has given due consideration to the Equality Act 2010 and considers equality issues when developing policies throughout the life cycle of the plan. The University launched our evolving Antiracism strategy in 2021, with the objectives of dismantling barriers to racially minoritised staff and enhancing students' success and sense of belonging to Kent. Our vision is to be an antiracist institution; one that actively opposes racism, in recognition that simply promoting equal opportunities will not go far enough. This strategy, and our commitment to the Race Equality Charter (REC), places our leadership team firmly accountable for driving antiracism across our institution.

This APP will be supported by a raft of operational plans, and the delivery, performance and progress will be monitored by senior leaders within the management and the governance structure as outlined in the evaluation strategy section of this plan.

Student consultation

Engaging students and reflecting the student voice meaningfully has been a priority for Kent in the development of this plan. We have established the Widening Participation Student Advisory Panel (WPSAP) which forms part of our APP governance structure and is the student arm of the Access and Participation Plan Operations Group, reporting into the Access and Participation Plan Steering Group. The WPSAP is made up of students who come from groups which are underrepresented within higher education, and who have, themselves, experienced structural barriers regarding HE access and progression. Elected WPSAP representatives also attend the APP Operations Group, along with student representation from Kent Student Union's elected Sabbatical Officers. The

WPSAP, co-chaired by the Head of Outreach & Widening Participation and the Kent Union Vice-President for Welfare & Community, is integral in reviewing institutional strategies and processes that impact on equality of opportunity for students, providing feedback on behalf of students on areas of risk for the University, and helping to develop the University of Kent Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, which has shaped and informed this plan. The WPSAP will meet at least 4 times a year, and they will collectively monitor and challenge the progress made by the University in delivering the objectives outlined in the APP, and impact on milestones and targets. Feedback from the WPSAP was pivotal in the University reviewing our financial support for students, and in response we have expanded the support to include eligible students on foundation programmes, for those resitting a year of study and part-time students. The WPSAP was instrumental in us recognising that students are not being effectively targeted to raise awareness of the academic skills support and employability programme, and we have addressed this by the creation of the Kent Ambition Scholars Programme.

In addition to the WPSAP, the University has conducted surveys on both our Canterbury and Medway campuses, to further reflect students' priorities in this plan and to feed into the University of Kent Equality of opportunity Risk Register.

Kent Students' Union have representation through their elected Sabbatical Officers on all major committees of the University to represent students' views and to help shape the student experience. New sabbatical officers of the Students' Union are given training on the University's Widening Participation Strategy and its APP as part of their induction.

We work with our Student Ambassadors in the co-creation and development of all our targeted Outreach activities, to reflect their lived-experiences and learn from their insights. An example of this is the LGBTQ+ MythBusters project, developed by Kent Student Ambassadors with the aim of facilitating candid conversations with school students from year 9 upward and support them to feel more comfortable and confident about their sexuality and identity and their pathways to HE. Specially trained Evaluation Ambassadors work with us to support the monitoring and reporting of our Outreach provision.

Co-development with students is embedded across all of our work over the student lifecycle. In collaboration with Kent Union, the University is funding a research project, conducted by student researchers, on the Black Student Experience at Kent. This builds on the BME Student Voices research project run from 2016, which made a series of recommendations for change, directed at both the University and Kent Union, ranging from policy change to improved student support. From 2016 to 2022, a cross-disciplinary working group addressed these recommendations. Amongst the resulting actions were the development of Kent's Anti-Racism Strategy, our adoption of the Race Equality Charter, developments in inclusive curriculum and the Inspirational Speaker programme. The first Black student was also elected as Kent Union President, following a programme to improve representation.

Students are employed as Diversity Mark Officers and are a fundamental part of the Diversity Mark Programme (see IS 7 and Annex B, page Intervention Strategy 7) working directly with module convenors making recommendations for curriculum revision. Students are also involved in research, systems development and data. Student researchers have presented at national conferences and University events. Students are employed through the University's Empower Scheme, with opportunities targeted at ethnically diverse groups and those who may have faced barriers accessing HE. We plan to expand the employment opportunities available to include development work across

our academic divisions, with students working alongside Development Officers and academic staff to develop and implement the activities outlined in this plan.

Evaluation of the plan

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, and overseen by the new Evaluation lead for the Access and Participation Plan at Kent. We will outline below what we will do to develop these areas.

Strategic Context

In order to monitor and evaluate the impact of the work detailed in the Intervention Strategies, we will continue to improve and build upon our evaluation to ensure that we are on track to meet our longer-term strategic objectives within acceptable tolerance levels. Our relationship with our partner schools and FE colleges is critical to data collection and our research with outreach participants. We will also continue to collaborate with other partners and providers through a number of networks, such as TASO, NERUPI , FACE, APP Special Interest Group and NEON - sharing any evidence to benefit the wider sector. 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 with our partner universities and FE colleges in the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF, encompassing KaMCOP, our Uni Connect partnership) allows us to evaluate the impact that our combined work has on local student outcomes, through partnerships with Kent County Council and Virtual Schools (which facilitate access to data) as well as collective data sharing agreements enabling the collection of baselines. Collating student engagement data through HEAT allows us to better understand the extent of engagement across universities, and the journey that these outreach participants make longitudinally.

The University hosts the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). As a founding member of HEAT, Kent is represented on both the HEAT Steering Group and Governance. As such, we have embedded the HEAT service and system into processes underpinning evidence for the University's APP.

A number of key staff are responsible for using data to inform progress monitoring, a range of standard reports and evidence to feed into practitioner and leadership discussions, highlighting progress against milestones and any areas that require attention and this leads to summary reports for governance. A new Evaluation lead role has been created to oversee widening participation evaluation work across the University, with overarching responsibility for our evaluation strategy and developing a robust framework for the work detailed in this plan. In addition, students are involved in evaluating our work. Evaluation and Research (EAR) Ambassadors are trained and paid to undertake research and focus groups around activities for access work, and Research Assistants are employed to support research efforts throughout our success initiatives. 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 as 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. Over the next few years, we will aim to increase student engagement in our evaluation work, by ensuring that students have greater involvement with both qualitative and quantitative aspects of our evaluation work.

Any evidence used to assess progress is underpinned by a theory of change and expertise is harnessed in a new key APP Research and Evaluation group (covering access, success and progression) to ensure that evidence is robust and reliable. The APP Research and Evaluation Group brings together academic researchers, evaluators and practitioners. Evidence reports will be presented to the Widening Participation Student Advisory Panel (WPSAP) so that they can hold us accountable and are involved in the decision-making and implementation of recommendations for change. Evaluation is a standing item at the APP Operational Group, to ensure findings are shared across the institution and so that they affect change where required. These groups will feed into the Access and Participation Steering Group which has oversight of monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation and Evidence Shape our Programme Design

The internal evaluation of our own programmes, as well as national research, helps shape our work 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 are active members of the HEAT research community, collaborating to share good practice across the sector. 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 picture of how our progression curriculum strands and student success and progression work impact change and can adapt our programmes accordingly.

Similarly, we interrogate and analyse entrant data to evaluate the impact of interventions with targeted groups of new students. 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, ensuring that we can act earlier to affect any change in outcomes. 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. Students who participate in our new Ambition Scholars Programme will be key to our evaluation efforts.

Evaluation Design

Every activity included in our Intervention Strategies is underpinned by Theory of Change (TOC). There is a strong evidence base for all the activities being proposed under our intervention strategies. Each strand is mapped against aims and objectives with defined outputs and intended outcomes identified. All outcomes are mapped against the NERUPI framework. Short-term outcomes, such as changes in confidence and self-efficacy, will be monitored through attitudinal and behavioural surveys with participants based on the TASO validated questionnaire and results will allow us to inform, adapt and improve each programme for the next cohort. To strengthen our programme and evaluation design, significant efforts have been made to upskill outreach and success practitioners across the institution in evaluation, through the provision of workshops and training sessions, including sessions delivered in collaboration with Villiers Park Educational Trust for outreach. Success practitioners have received evaluation skills training, but have a centralised approach to evaluation providing institutional as well as local evidence of impact. Student Success has a dedicated resource supporting its Evaluation Framework and the What Works at Kent Programme. We have been working to ensure that evaluation is embedded in all our activities from

the outset. This work will continue over the coming years, with the aim of embedding an evaluation culture across the University.

For outreach work, evaluation is underpinned by HEAT. To strengthen our programme design, all TOC will be mapped against the HEAT evaluation tool, enabling each individual activity to be linked to the relevant TOC for evaluation purposes. We will also use the HEAT Evaluation tool to support with peer evaluation. Outcomes will also be mapped against the new Mapping Outcomes and Activities Tool (MOAT) recently released by TASO. All outreach participants are tracked through HEAT and where possible comparator groups are identified. We are working to improve our use of comparator groups, which will in turn strengthen our evaluation evidence. Given our sponsorship of the University of Kent Academies Trust (UKAT) schools and our close partnership with them at all levels, both will serve as an evaluation hub for the University. Students at Brompton Academy and Chatham Grammar will complete a baseline attitudinal questionnaire each year. The qualitative data will be analysed in conjunction with the HEAT tracking data (including monitoring and attendance at all outreach activities). This will be supplemented by attainment data (particularly KS2 data, to ensure any comparator groups are robust, using propensity score matching). Students at both schools are engaged with a comprehensive outreach curriculum (as per our intervention strategies). This is a new evaluation strategy, we will aim for strong Type 2 evaluation, and where the use of comparator groups is feasible, we will strive for Type 3. Teacher feedback, obtained both through surveys and one-to-one interviews, will also be incorporated. Where possible, we will try to capture parent/carer feedback on perceived student attitudinal changes towards their educational journey. Our close partnership with UKAT (both operationally, and through our involvement with Governance for both schools), means that there is frequent feedback which informs not only the activities that we offer to UKAT schools but also our wider outreach curriculum to partner schools. As an example of this, insights shared by teachers and leaders at the school have supported us to unpick the on-going impacts of coronavirus on different groups of students (EORR Risk 9) and how this may be influencing the outcomes observed for some groups of students both for outreach and success activity (where it supports us to understand the previous challenges faced by our student body more clearly). Evidence and evaluation of our outreach interventions will also support the schools with their own regulatory requirements, namely OFSTED.

Across our other outreach evaluation, we will aim for a Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) or Type 3 (Causality) evaluation approach where possible. 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. For activities with small cohorts, such as our interventions targeting Care Experienced students, we will be piloting the use of TASO "Evaluating with Small Cohorts" guidance (TASO 2022). For further information, see Annex B, Intervention Strategy 3.

Student Success interventions are evaluated through the Student Success Evaluation Framework. Developed two years ago, this framework has been tested with data from two academic years. Student Success apply a targeted intervention approach in line with the OfS recommendations (OfS, 2019) where interventions can be inclusive, to benefit all students but in particular those more affected by differentials outcomes such as BAME, Black, and Mature students. They can also be exclusive interventions when explicitly directed at one or more minority ethnic group. The evaluation framework includes two types of evaluation mechanisms to measure the outcomes and impact of student success interventions in reducing attainment and continuation gaps at the University of Kent. Following OfS Standards of Evidence, the framework includes a process

evaluation approach, to develop the narrative and rationale of the interventions that are going to be developed which are informed by the Student Success Theory of Change (OfS Type 1). The TOC provides a planning tool and road map (HM Treasury 2020) including targeting, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms for the delivery of student success interventions across all academic divisions. The SS TOC allows the Student Success evaluation team to track all the stages of the development and implementation of interventions to assess the impact on students' engagement and attendance, disaggregated by variables such as academic school and stage. All student success activities are aimed at reducing attainment and continuation gaps and are mapped against our research themes: entry qualifications; assessment and feedback; student support and advising; transitions and belonging; inclusive curriculum.

The TOC specifies monitoring and data collection points during the implementation process of the interventions. Data and evidence are collected to measure impact against students' engagement and attainment using mathematical testing, in line with the OfS standards of evidence Type 2 empirical evaluation (where non-participants act as the comparator group). The interventions that show changes and improvements on these two areas of academic performance, are then subject to contribution analysis in line with the OfS Type 3 causality evaluation, to determine the causality chains and plausible association between targeted students' (BAME, Black, Mature) attendance at these interventions and improvements in their overall attainment and engagement. The evaluation is undertaken every year providing longitudinal and aggregated data on interventions, which allow us to identity those which are most effective.

The Student Success team is currently developing a What Works at Kent Evaluation Framework to investigate and assess the impact of interventions involving academics and their academic practices on student outcomes and raise awareness among academic staff of attainment gaps. The framework aims to provide the Student Success team with an ongoing evaluation tool to determine the extent to which academic practices concerning the three features of teaching (assessment and feedback; inclusive curriculum; and innovative teaching practices) have an impact on the OfS B3 conditions: continuation, completion and progression. This framework will allow the University to identify and disseminate good practice and replicate effective interventions across all academic divisions. Interventions such as the Inclusive Curriculum and Reflective Practice and Diversity Mark will be evaluated through the What Works at Kent Evaluation Framework. For further information, see Annex B, Intervention Strategy 7 section.

Learning from evaluation evidence and insight
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 the 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 people 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 able to plan more effectively 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). 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. We plan to continue and strengthen this evaluation over the coming years.

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

Learning from evaluation evidence and insight is an area we want to strengthen over the next few years. As detailed in the evaluation strategies, we will strive to share our evaluation findings not only internally but with the wider sector through published materials and presenting at events. As detailed above, we are also embedding the evaluation culture across the institution to ensure that learning from our insight and evaluation becomes a core part of programme development and review.

Provision of information to students

Clear guidance on our fees for existing and prospective students, and any financial support available to students (such as bursaries and scholarships) can be found on our website, alongside eligibility criteria. This will also be published in our prospectus. Supplementary information will be produced and published both online and in print. Recruitment and Outreach teams will disseminate information to schools and colleges, students, teachers, parents and supporters, carers and community groups. Information will also be shared at Open Days.

Information will be made available in a timely fashion to UCAS and Student Finance England. The University will provide full and accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs required to complete our degree programmes.

The University intends to invest over £3 million in financial support to students per annum. It is estimated that over 800 students will receive financial support each year. From 2024/25, the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP) will be available to home undergraduate students whose household income is £30,000 or below and meets one additional eligibility criteria:

- IMD Quintile 1 or 2
- TUNDRA Quintile 1
- IDACI Quintile 1
- Mature students (over 21 on entry)
- In receipt of Disabled Students Allowance

Students who are care leavers (students who have been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday, with at least one day being since the age of 14), young independent students, estranged, student carers, homeless / foyer students do not need to meet further eligibility criteria, but will be required to provide evidence of their status via Student Finance England.

Students will receive £1,000 for each stage of their degree programme. All students paying the higher tuition fee will be eligible (including those on a foundation year, providing they are paying the higher tuition fee for that year of study) and will be supported for each stage of their studies. Students studying a full time 4-year undergraduate programme with a sandwich year or an integrated master's year will receive KFSP for the duration. Students who need to re-sit a year of their studies will be eligible for a maximum of 1 additional year of KFSP.

Students who become eligible for the KFSP at any stage of university will receive it, although it will not be backdated.

Students at the School of Pharmacy and Kent and Medway Medical School will also be eligible for the KFSP, as above.

If a student has applied to Student Finance England (SFE), has been income assessed by them, and they and their sponsor(s) (the person(s) income assessed by SFE, where relevant) have given consent to share financial details with the University, they will automatically be assessed for entitlement for KFSP.

From 24/25, part-time students will be eligible for a pro-rata KFSP. The value of the bursary will depend on the student's level of study, i.e., if a student is studying 50% of a full-time course, they will receive 50% of the bursary. Part-time students will need to apply for the KFSP.

The KFSP is paid in two instalments throughout the year, the first in December of a student's first year and the second in the following March, providing that students remain on course for the whole academic year.

In addition to the KFSP, eligible students can also be in receipt of the Kent Care Leavers Pack, Young Independent Funding Pack, Estranged Student Funding and Kent Foyer and Homeless Student Pack. Full eligibility for the above and application forms can be found on our website, but the support includes:

- Provision for travel in advance to attend University interviews, up to £200
- Guaranteed access to accommodation for the duration of their course, including the summer vacation, subject to remaining in good financial standing (all debts owed by the student to the University are fully paid or satisfactory arrangements for their payment have been made) with the University
- A one-off, £600 cash bursary towards the costs of starting life at university
- A one-off payment of £100 towards graduation costs for students who attend their graduation ceremony.

The Kent Young Adult Carer Package is delivered in a student's first year only.

The Young Adult Carer Pack includes:

- Provision for travel in advance to attend University interviews, up to £200
- A one-off, £600 cash bursary towards the costs of starting life at university

- A one-off payment of £100 towards graduation costs for students who attend their graduation ceremony.

The University will publish this APP on our website, alongside historical agreements, and any impact reports.

Annex A – Assessment of Performance

All information included below is taken from the latest Access and Participation Plan dataset (published March 2023), unless otherwise specified. Analysis looks at Full-Time, First Degree Entrants as that is the highest population at the University (over 90%).

Data Timelines:

- For access indicators, the latest academic year corresponds to 2021/22 entrants.
- For continuation indicators, the latest academic year corresponds to 2020/21 entrants.
- For completion indicators, the latest academic year corresponds to the 2017/18 entrants.
- For attainment indicators, the latest academic year corresponds to 2021/22.
- For progression indicators, the latest academic year corresponds to 2019/20 (this is based on Graduate Outcomes data, and only covers a three year period).

1. Access to Higher Education

1.1. HHI and Socioeconomic status

We have identified gaps in access for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, using TUNDRA and IMD 2019[2] as proxies.

The gap in proportion of entrants from TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 to the University has reduced since 2018/19, as can be seen by Figure 1 below; it currently stands at 18.2pp. The University has just adopted this metric (having discontinued the use of POLAR), and we are currently taking steps to address this gap, namely revising our contextual admission policy to include TUNDRA, as well as the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP). Full details of these interventions can be found in Intervention Strategies 1-4.

Target: We have identified this as a key area of focus for the University, and have set a target accordingly – see PTA_3.
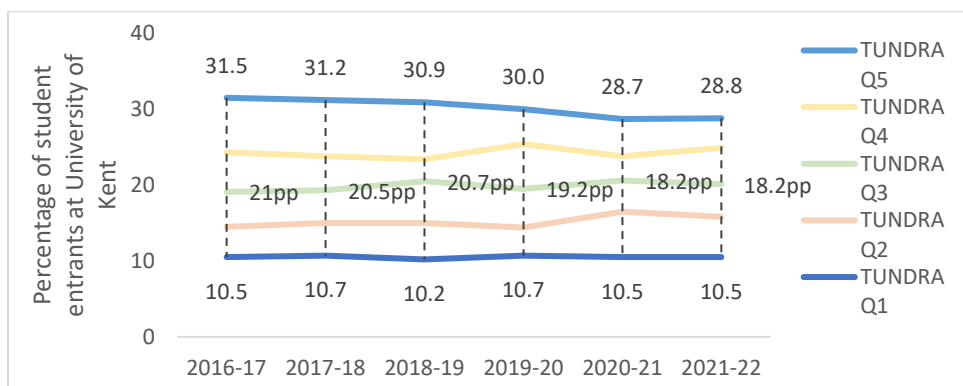
Figure 1

Like TUNDRA, IMD trend data shows that the gap in the proportion of entrants from IMD Q1 and Q5 has decreased over the last 5 years, and currently stands at 4.2pp, as can be seen in Figure 2 below. Though a gap remains between IMD Q5 and Q1, we have seen a continuous increase in the percentage of entrants from IMD Q2, resulting in a change of profile for the University, where we currently have a higher proportion of students from Q2 and Q3 than Q4 and Q5.

---

[2] Henceforth all references to "IMD" relate to the IMD 2019 metric.
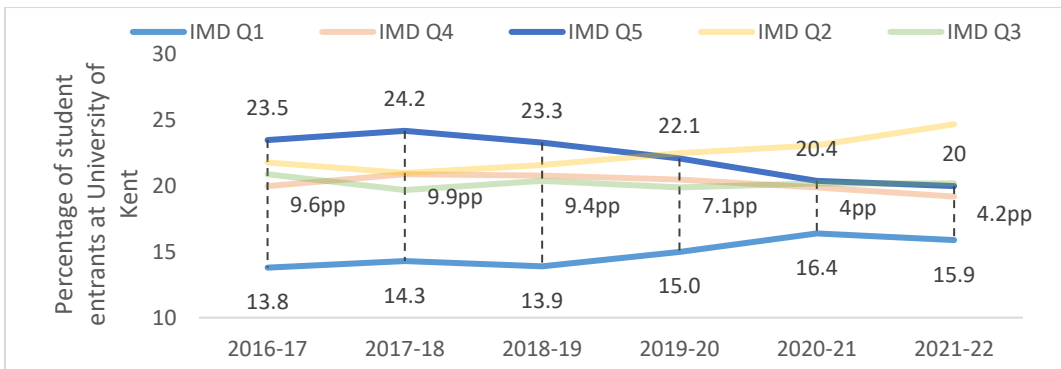
Figure 2

As a University, we have been actively seeking to diversify our student intake. We have seen a growth in the percentage of Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicity learners. Looking at the intersection of IMD and Ethnicity, we find that we have seen a slightly more accelerated increase in the number of ethnically diverse students from IMD Q1 and Q2 who progress to Kent than from Q3-Q5 (see Figure 3 below). There is a negative gap in progression between ABMO IMD Q1&Q2 and Q3-Q5, as per Figure 3 below.

The proportion of IMD Q1 and Q2 White students has remained relatively stable for the last five years, and is considerably lower than White IMD Q3-Q5. The University will look to work with white disadvantaged males to increase their progression to HE in general, and the University of Kent in particular (see Intervention Strategy 1).
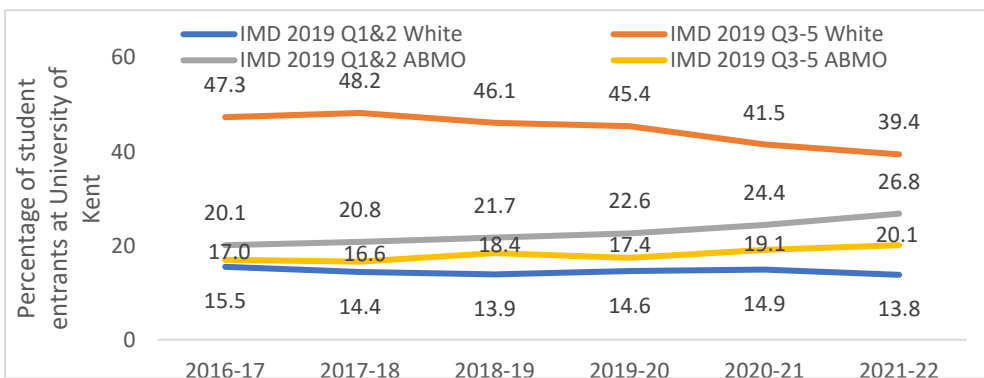
Figure 3

The University has recently adopted IMD 2019 as a metric, and we are currently taking steps to address the gap identified. The University is reviewing its contextual admissions policy, as well as the Kent Financial Support Package. Full details included as part of Intervention Strategies 1-4.

Target: We have identified the increase in progression for IMD Q1 learners to the University as a key area of focus (see Objective 1), and have set a target accordingly – see PTA_2.

As discussed in the Introduction and Strategic Aims section, as well as extensively in Annex B, low Key Stage 4 attainment plays a determinant role in progression to Higher Education. TUNDRA Q1 and IMD Q1 students in Kent and Medway are particularly at risk of lower KS4 attainment given educational inequalities in the region. The University has identified increasing Key Stage 4 attainment as a key area of focus, to support our efforts to widen access to Higher Education from students at risk of socio-economic disadvantage.

Target: We have identified this as a key area of focus for the University (see Objective 1), and have set a target accordingly – see PTA_1.

1.2.   Care Experienced Students and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

The number of looked after children in Kent and Medway remains at over 3,000. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking

Children (UASC) are counted within this figure. There was a large decrease in UASC last year, which the DfE attributed to the pandemic, but this has climbed again to 370 (mostly in Kent, which has the largest numbers of UASC in the country). The UASC cohort makes up 20.8% of the total placed looked after children in Kent and Medway, according to the latest figures (as of 31st March 2022). National data indicates that UASC are generally older – only 13% were aged under 16 years.

Care Leaver progression data published by the DfE shows that progression to HE has decreased for this group of students over the last few years. In 2022, 3% of Care Leavers progressed to HE, although this is slightly higher when looking at 19-21 year olds (3.8%). In 2017, the DfE reported an 8% progression figure for Care Leavers. Although the decrease is alarming, these figures are not directly comparable with the previous data given the very significant increase in the number of Care Leavers (including UASC) in the region over the last few years.

The University continues to be part of the Care Leaver Progression Partnership, and has increased its work with Care Experienced learners. Full details of the targeted work currently being undertaken in this area are included as part of Intervention Strategy 3.

Target: We have identified this as a key area of focus for the University (see Objective 2), and have set a target against this – see PTA_4.

1.3. Mature Learners

The number of mature learners as a percentage of our overall student population has fluctuated slightly over the last six years (8.8% in 16/17, 7.3% in 18/19, 9% in 20/21 and 8.4% in 21/22). As detailed in the Introduction and Strategic Aims section of the plan, we offer mostly full-time courses, which tend to attract younger learners. Analysis of HESA data has indicated that, locally, mature learners progress in higher numbers to HEIs which offer health-allied courses (which, apart from Medicine, are not part of our portfolio at Kent).
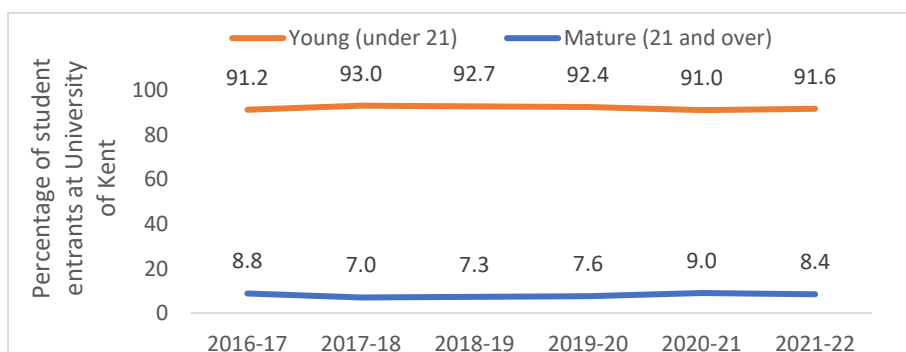
Figure 4

We continue to support mature learners to progress into Higher Education in general, and the University of Kent in particular. We work closely with partner FE Colleges around the region and offer support for their learners on Access to HE courses. The University also runs two evening Access to HE Diploma courses for those looking to progress to HE. Our contextual admissions policy is applied to learners who study an Access to HE Diploma Qualification, and Financial Support is offered through the Kent Financial Support Package. Full details of our support for mature learners in the region who may be considering returning to education are outlined in Intervention Strategy 2, and for learners once on course at Kent in Intervention Strategy 5.

We will not set a target in this area, but will continue to monitor progress against this.

1.4. Disabled Students

The percentage of students who declare a disability increased by 1.6pp between 2016-17 and 2018-19. We experienced a 0.2pp drop in the academic year 2019-20, with 17.2% of our student population declaring a disability. In 2020-21 we experienced a slight increase of 1.6pp to 18.8%. This was the highest percentage of students who declared a disability over the last 6 years; also above sector average at 17.2%. There was a slight drop of 1.6pp in

2021-22 bringing our total percentage of students who declare a disability to 17.2%, in line with previous years and the wider sector (17.5%). Whilst we acknowledge that there was a slight increase of students who declare a disability in 2020-21 followed by a slight decrease in 2021-22, Kent still performs in line with the sector.

A report released by UCAS in 2022 states that 14% of all UK applicants shared an impairment or condition in 2021[3]. This supports our view that students who declare a disability are applying to Kent and securing a place at the University of Kent. Unfortunately, there is a lack of data at provider-level for entry and acceptance rates, though internal data supports that students who declare a disability are offered places at a similar rate than those who do not declare a disability. Once at Kent, disabled students are offered pastoral and financial support as detailed in our APP. Through our support whilst on programme, we find that more students declare a disability and are assessed for DSA eligibility during their time at Kent. The figure of disabled students at Kent will therefore be higher than that for entrants.
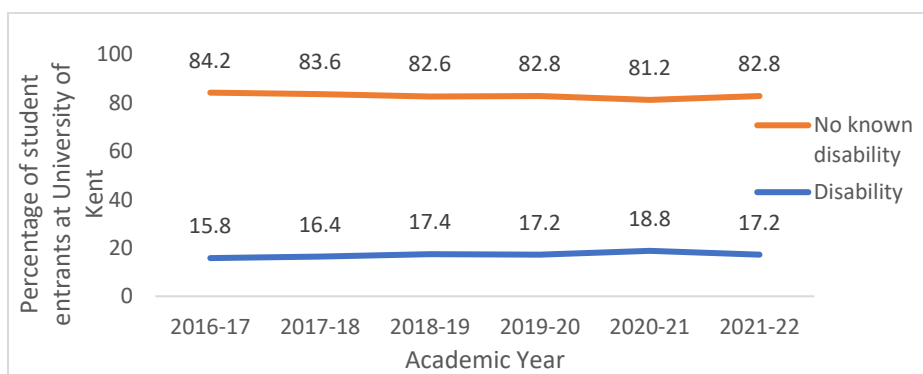
When disaggregating by disability type, there have been slight fluctuations in the data but the numbers have remained largely unchanged. For the latest academic year, 2021/22, Cognitive and Learning Difficulties and Mental Health Conditions made up the largest proportion of the disability type (with 5.6% and 5% of the student body declaring this disability type respectively). 3.3% declared Multiple Impairments, 1.7% Social and Communication Impairments and the remaining 1.5% Sensory, Medical and Physical Impairments.. We have seen a small year-on-year reduction of number of new entrants declaring Sensory, Medical and Physical Impairments (2.3% in 16/17 and 1.5% in 21/22), but we have seen a slight increase in new entrants who declare a Social and Communication Impairment (0.8% in 16/17 and 1.7% in 21/22).

1.5.   ABCS

The gap between ABCs Q5 and Q1 students at the University of Kent has fluctuated in the last four years (30.4pp in 2018/19, 32.8pp in 2019/20, 31.6pp in 2020/21 and 32.5pp in 2021/22). The sector ABC gap is 27.7 for the latest academic year. ABCs Q1 students currently account for only 5.4% of the University of Kent's full-time first degree student cohort. This is lower than the sector, where the equivalent proportion was 6.9% in 2021/22. However, the gap between Q5 and Q1 students has been steadily growing for the sector, from 24.7pp in 2016/17 to 27.7pp in 2021/22, although it currently remains below that for the University.

Our analysis suggests that this gap is being driven by our gaps in TUNDRA, IMD and IDACI (discussed above – IDACI has not been included as part of this analysis, but it has a strong correlation with IMD, and our analysis shows that the gap is persistent using IDACI). We recognise that we have a low proportion of students from areas where there is low progression to Higher Education (using TUNDRA as a proxy) and areas of greater socio-economic disadvantage (using IMD and IDACI as proxies). Furthermore, we recognise that we have a low proportion of white males from these backgrounds progressing to study at Kent. We also have a low number of care experienced students progressing to study at Kent. As discussed in the Introduction and Aims, as well in Intervention Strategies 1-3 and extensively in Annex B, we are working to address these gaps. We hope that these will, in turn, have a positive effect in closing our ABCs gaps for access.

---

[3] See, "Next Steps: What is the experience of disabled students in education?", available at: download (ucas.com) .

Target: We have identified this as a key area of focus for the University (see Objectives 1 and 2), and have set targets accordingly – PTA_1, PTA_2, PTA_3 and PTA_4.

2. Continuation, Completion and Success at University of Kent

2.1. HHI and Socioeconomic status

2.1.1. Non-continuation

The gap in non-continuation between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 has been consistently increasing since 2015/16, reaching 3.7pp in 2020/21 and resulting in a 4 year average of 2.9pp. The current gap is in line with sector average, which stands at 3.3pp for the 20/21 academic year.

The gap in non-continuation between IMD 2019 Q1 and Q5 is 2.5pp in 2020/21, which is a slight decrease from 2019/20 (3.6pp). There have been fluctuations year-on-year, but the two and four year aggregate gaps stand at 3.1 and 2.8 pp respectively. Kent has consistently performed above the sector in this area, with the sector-wide gap for the 20/21 academic year at 8.7pp.

Looking at the intersectionality of IMD and ethnicity, continuation for IMD 2019 Q1&2 White students is the lowest for all of these groups (90.2% in 2020/21), although the gap between this group IMD 2019 Q3-5 white students (2.8pp) reduced last year. The gap has fluctuated between these groups of students over the last four years, but the two and four year aggregate is 3pp and 3.1pp respectively.

Considering students who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at Key Stage 4, the gap in non-continuation has widened from 1pp in 19/20 to 3pp in 20/21. Nationally, the figures are similar, with the gap increasing from 3.6pp to 5pp. The gap had been reducing in recent years, and this increase may have been the result of the coronavirus pandemic.

As outlined in our plan, we are widening the eligibility criteria for the Kent Financial Support Package (KFSP) to include IMD Q1 and Q2 (which should, in turn, also support former FSM-eligible students) and TUNDRA Q1 students. We are also strengthening our transition programmes to ensure students feel supported as they move from level 3 study into the University.

We will continue to monitor this trend, for TUNDRA, IMD and previous eligibility for FSM, but no targets will be set against this. We will however set a target against IMD completion (see below) which will in turn help address the IMD continuation gaps directly, and TUNDRA and FSM gaps indirectly (given the overlap in these metrics).

2.1.2. Completion

The gap in completion between students from TUNDRA Q1 postcodes compared to those from TUNDRA Q5 has fluctuated over the last four years, but has reached no higher than 3.3pp (academic year 15/16). This is slightly better than the sector, which has a 4 year average of 4.1pp. At Kent, the gap was actually reversed for 2016/17 entrants (92.9% of TUNDRA Q1 students completed their studies, compared to 91.5% of Q5 students). For 17/18, the gap is negligible, with Q5 students completing at a rate 0.9pp higher than Q1.

The gap in completion is slightly higher using IMD 2019 as a proxy, as per Figure 5 below. The gap has fluctuated over the last four years, with the completion rate for IMD 2019 Q1 students not surpassing 90% over the last five years, with a four year average of 86.2% compared to 94.3% of Q5 students.
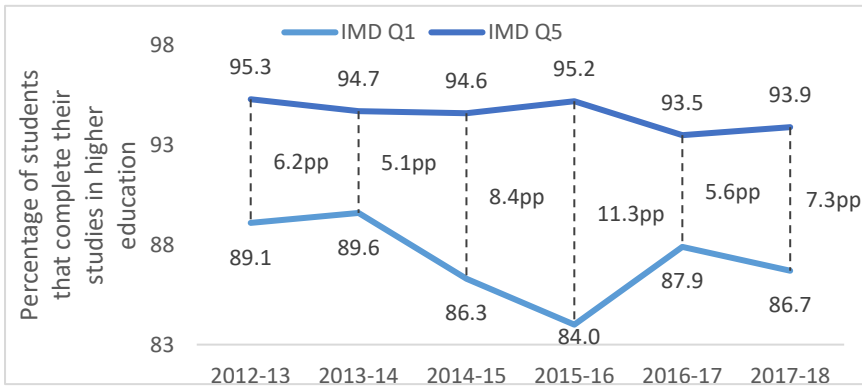
Figure 5

When disaggregating by ethnicity, the completion rate is slightly lower for White IMD Q1&Q2 than ABMO Q1&Q2, 87.5% and 89.5% respectively, but in both cases significantly below that of Q3-Q5 students. Analysis of internal data shows that students who enter with a non-A-level qualification are less likely to complete their degree in the intended period of time, and more likely to re-sit or withdraw from their programme of study. Due to the pandemic, continuation rates are lower for entrants in 18/19 and 19/20 with a higher percentage of students not completing their programme of study in the intended timeframe. This difference is however more prominent for those students from IMD Q1&Q2 compared to IMD Q3-Q5 – for 18/19 entrants the gap is currently 4%. Controlling for entry qualification, for the 18/19 academic year, there is a 15% gap in completion rate between those who entered with a BTEC (or mixed A-level and BTEC qualifications) and those who entered with A-level qualifications.

The gap in completion between those students who were eligible for FSM and those who weren't has increased for the first time in four years. It currently stands at 6pp, from 3.3pp for the previous cohort.

We expect gaps in continuation to widen over the next two reporting periods (given the time delay in the data). The next reporting period will relate to students who started their degree in 2018/19, followed by 2019/20; these two cohorts were particularly affected by the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic had a significant effect on continuation for the whole student population across the sector, but had a more significant impact for students at risk of disadvantage. Internal data suggests that this same trend is reflected within our student population.

We will continue to monitor the gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 students, as well as FSM, but will not set a target against this.

Target: The low continuation rates for IMD Q1 students is an area of focus for the University (see Objective 3), and a target has been set against this – see PTS_2. It is likely that the work undertaken in this area will support closing the gap for TUNDRA and FSM students as well, given the overlap in these metrics. The milestones in this target reflect the historical nature of the data, and the fact that it will take a few years for the effects of our renewed efforts in this area to be reflected withing completion data.

2.1.3. Attainment

The gap in 'good degree' attainment between IMD 2019 Q1 and Q5 students has decreased in the last five years (see Figure 6 below). However after a low of 9.3pp in 2020/21 the figure has risen to 15.3pp in 2021/22.
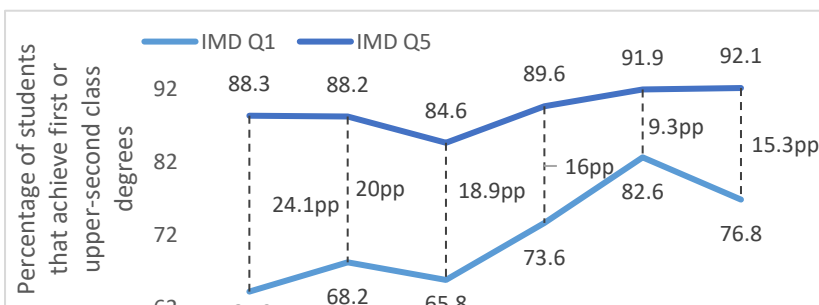
Figure 6

The decrease in IMD good degree attainment, and subsequent increase, is in line with the decrease in good degree attainment gap for ABMO and White students. A greater proportion of IMD Q1 and Q2 students are from ABMO ethnic groups, with the greatest proportion being Black students. For entrant year 18/19, 63% of all Black (Home, UG) entrants were IMD Q1&2, and 66% for entrant year 19/20. For the latest academic year, 88.5% of White IMD Q1&Q2 students achieved a good degree compared to 75% of ABMO IMD Q1&Q2 students (APP Dashboard). Internal data shows that gaps persist across all ethnic groups (comparing IMD Q1&Q2 students), but the more prominent gaps are between White and Black students.

Attainment rates for IMD 2019 Q1&2 White students are better, being only 4.1pp below that of IMD 2019 Q3-5 White students. However, although the attainment rate for IMD 2019 Q3-5 White students has increased year-on-year since 2018/19, that of each of the other groups fell in 2021/22, therefore increasing the gaps in attainment.

The gap between ABMO Q1&Q2 and Q3-Q5 is significant at -5.3pp for the latest academic year, 21/22. There have been fluctuations in the data over the four academic years and the gap has reduced year on year: -11.4pp 18/19, -6.4pp 19/20, -5.7pp 20/21, -5.3pp 21/22.

Similarly, the gap between White Q1&Q2 and Q3-Q5 has also reduced year-on-year: -8.1 pp 18/19, -8.3pp 19/20, -2.8pp 20/21, -4pp 21/22.

Target: This is a key area of focus for the University (see Objective 7), and a target has been set against this – see PTS_9. Ethnicity based targets have also been set (see below).

The gap in attainment between those who were eligible for FSM and those who were not has increased year-on-year and currently stands at 13.2pp. Although attainment rates fell for both groups in 2021/22, they fell more for students who were eligible for FSM. In the latest data, 74.4% of students who were eligible for FSM were awarded a good degree, compared to 87.6% of those who were not eligible.

As a University we currently do not hold data for students who are eligible for FSM at the point of entry. We expect to have this data through UCAS over the next few years, which will allow us to identify and support these students more effectively from the moment they start their degree at Kent. Given our lack of data in this area, we are not setting a target against this group of students. This significant attainment gap is however a key area of focus for the University and work is underway to support students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage (as detailed above). Given the overlap in metrics, our target against IMD stands also as an interim measure.

2.3.   Ethnically Diverse Students

2.3.1   Attainment

There are currently attainment gaps between White students and ethnically diverse students. These gaps have been persistent over the last six years and across all ethnic groups as illustrated by Figure 7 below. The gap has however been decreasing over the last four years. The gap between White and Black students is now 19.1pp (having dropped from 28.5pp in 16/17 award year), and between White and Asian students is 9.9pp (having dropped from 19.2pp).
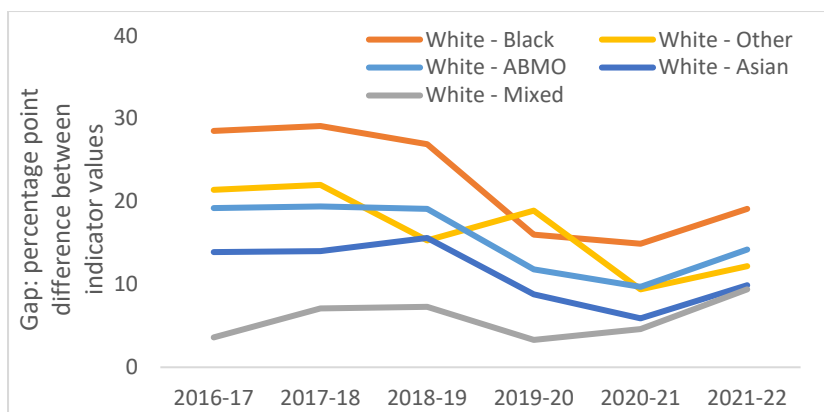
Figure 7

As discussed above, there are intersections of disadvantage which contribute to this gap. Our analysis suggest that ethnically diverse students, and in particular Black students (the biggest cohort at Kent, apart from White students), are more likely to face socio-economic disadvantage (a higher proportion of learners are from IMD Q1 and were previously eligible for Free School Meals). We also find a strong correlation between socio-economic disadvantage, and non-A-level entry qualifications. We are working to support these learners both academically and financially (primarily through the KFSP, but also through other cost of living initiatives described in our plan). Details of the initiatives being implemented can be found in Intervention Strategies 4 and 8, with broader support being discussed in the Whole Provider Approach and Provision of Information to Students section.

However, even controlling for socio-economic disadvantage and pre-entry qualifications, we find that ethnically diverse students are still less likely to be awarded a "good degree" than their White peers. We recognize there is work to be done within the institution to diversify our curriculum, support staff to continue to create an inclusive and reflective teaching environment and increase diversity within our staff and student body. Details of initiatives being undertaken in this area can be found in Intervention Strategy 7.

Target: This is a key area of focus for the University (see Objective 6), and we are committed to irradicating all ethnicity-based attainment gaps by 2031 – see PTS_5, PTS_6, PTS_7 and PTS_8 for milestones.

2.4. Mature Students

2.4.1. Non-continuation

There is a continuation gap between mature students and their young peers. Although this gap had persisted in recent years (aggregate 2 year and 4 year gap at 6.7pp and 7.7pp respectively), the latest data, for 20/21, shows a gap of 5.8pp, a decrease from 7.5pp in 2019/20. There is a gap for all mature students compared to young, but numbers are increasingly small per band and therefore analysis tends to focus on mature students as a group. Fluctuations are to be expected given the low percentage of mature students. At a sector-level, the gap has been increasing in recent years, with 2 year and 4 year aggregates of 8.9pp and 8.3pp respectively. It currently stands at 9.4pp. There are wide confidence intervals given the small numbers.

We find that a high percentage of Mature students are from IMD Q1 or Q2 neighbourhoods. Care Leaver students are also more likely to be mature. Mature students are also more likely to have entered University with a non-A-Level qualification.

Intervention Strategy 5 details activities targeted specifically at Mature Learners. However, given the intersections of disadvantage, activities across Intervention Strategies 4-8 will all support this group of learners.

Target: This is a key area of focus for Kent (see Objective 4), and a target has been set against this – see PTS_1.

2.4.2. Completion

The gap in completion fluctuates, but is persistent and currently stands at 10.6pp for the latest academic year, 17/18. There have been fluctuations in the data over the last four academic years (11.9pp, 6.5pp, 13.4pp and 10.6pp from academic year 14/15 through to 17/18 respectively). Nationally, the gap has been increasing over the same

time period (8.1pp, 8.2pp, 8.7pp and 9.7pp).

Intervention Strategy 5 details activities targeted specifically at Mature Learners. However, given the intersections of disadvantage, activities across Intervention Strategies 4-8 will all support this group of learners.

As outlined in section 2.1 above, we expect the gap in completion between Mature Learners and their Young peers to widen over the next two reporting periods (covering 18/19 and 19/20 entry years) due to the pandemic. We remain committed to supporting these learners, as detailed above, and expect the gap in continuation and completion to start reducing in coming years.

Target: This is a key area of focus for Kent (see Objective 4), and a target has been set against this – see PTS_3. The impact of the pandemic is reflected in the milestones against this target.

2.5.   Disabled Students

2.5.1.   Non-continuation

There continues to be fluctuation in the non-continuation gap between students who declare a disability and those with no known disability, as per Figure 8.
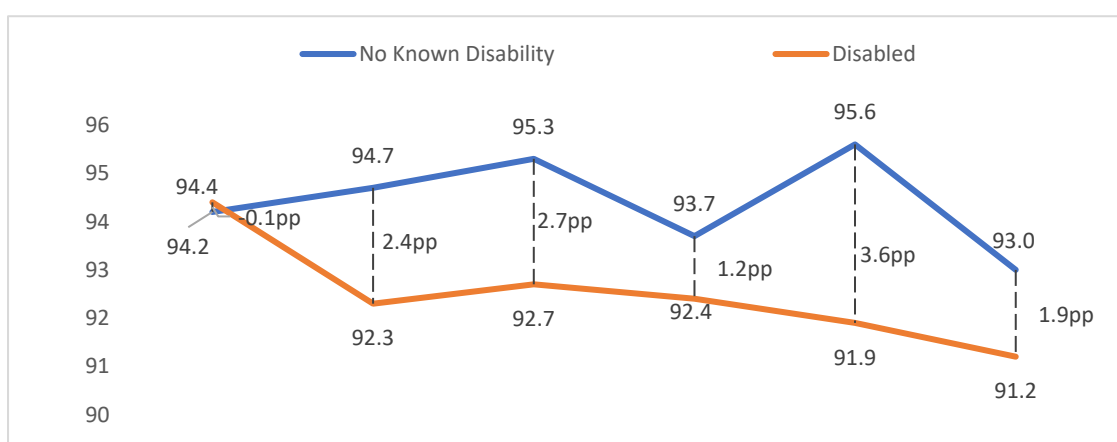
Figure 8

The gap in non-continuation between students with no known disability and those with Cognitive or Learning Difficulties has fluctuated over the last four years (-1pp, 0.7pp, 0pp and 1.1pp for 2017/18 through to 2020/21 academic years respectively). The four year average currently stands at 0.6pp. However, nationally, the gap has been positive since 2015/16, with students who declare a Cognitive or Learning difficulty continuing at a greater rate than those with no known disability. The 4 year average for the sector is currently -1.6pp.

There continue to be gaps in non-continuation between students who do not declare a disability and those who declare a Mental Health Condition (2.9pp for 2020/21). There have been significant fluctuations in the data over the last four years (4.4pp, 1.5pp, 8.8pp, 2.9pp for 17/18 through to 20/21 academic year respectively). Nationally, the gap has decreased year-on-year and currently stands at 1.9pp.

 The gap in continuation between students with no known disability and those who declare multiple impairments has fluctuated over the last four years, likely due to small numbers, but has remained small. There was a positive gap (with students with multiple impairments having better continuation rates than those with no known disability) for two of the last three academic years. For the latest academic year, 20/21 the gap was -0.2. Nationally, this figure currently stands at 0.5pp.

Similarly, there have been fluctuations in the non-continuation data comparing students who do not declare a disability and those who declare Sensory, Medical or Physical impairments. The gap for the last academic year was 2.7pp for 2020/21, but the two and four year aggregate remains small at 1.8 and 0.7 respectively. Sector-wide data

also shows fluctuations, with the current gap at 0.7pp and two and four year aggregates both at 0.9pp.

The gap between students who do not declare a disability and those with Social or Communication impairment has also fluctuated considerably over the last four years (1.3pp, 10.3pp, 4.8pp and 2.6pp for 17/18 through to 20/21 academic year respectively). Given low numbers this does not constitute a significant change, but it is an area which will require continued monitoring.

We remain committed to supporting these students through a range of specific and targeted activity, as detailed in Intervention Strategy 6.

We will continue to monitor this trend, but no targets will be set against this. We will however set a target against completion for disabled students which will in turn help address the continuation gaps.

2.5.2.   Completion

The gap in completion between students who declare a disability and those who do not is currently 2.4pp. The completion rate of students who have not declared a disability is consistently over 91% (91.9% aggregated over the last two years)but is below 90% for those that do declare a disability (89.4% aggregate over the last two years). Kent performs above the sector in completion rates for these two groups, but on par with the gap, which currently stands at 2.1pp nationally. See Figure 9 below.
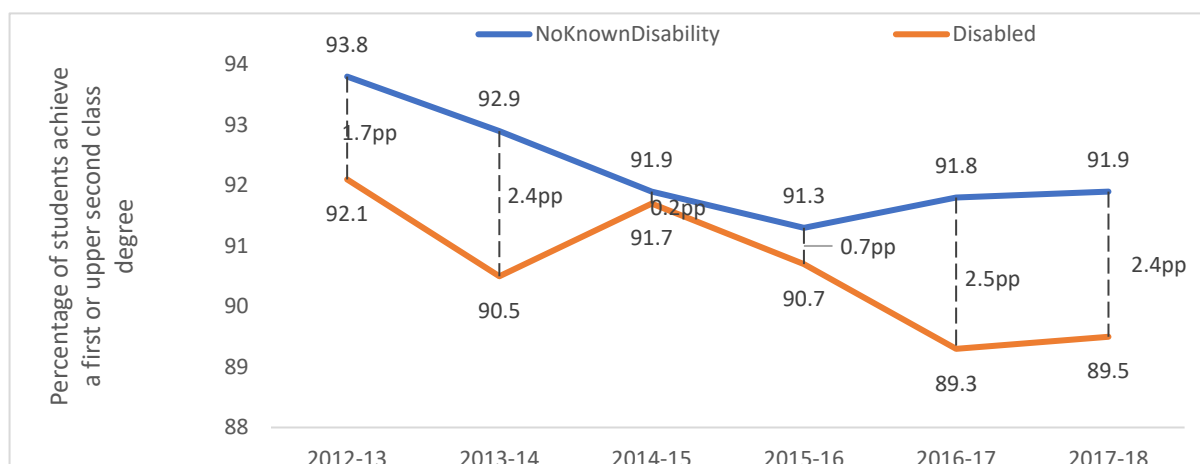
Figure 9

The gap is negative (although has reduced) between students with no known disability and those with a Cognitive or Learning disability (latest data -0.6pp) and those with a Sensory, Medical or Physical disability (-4.4pp).

However, the gap is particularly large (and persistent) between students with no known disability and those with a Social or Communication impairment, currently 11.9pp. Although the number of students in this group has been low, their completion rate has not exceeded 84% in the last three years. The national 4 year average completion rate for this group of students is 84.6%.

There has been significant fluctuation in the gap between students with no known disability and those with multiple impairments over the last four academic years (-2.7pp, -1.5pp, 5.2pp, 7.6pp for the academic years 14/15 through to 17/18 respectively). The fluctuation is in part due to the low number of students who declare a disability type of multiple impairments.

There has also been significant fluctuation in the completion gap between students with no known disability and a Mental Health condition (aggregate for last two and four years is 4.7pp and 2.7pp respectively). For the latest academic year, 17/18, this is currently 3.3pp, a decrease from 6.3pp the year before.

We remain committed to supporting these students through a range of specific and targeted activity, as detailed in

Intervention Strategy 6.

Target: This is a key area of focus for Kent (see Objective 5), and a target has been set against this – see PTS_4.

2.6.   ABCS

2.6.1.   Non-continuation and Completion

The gap in non-continuation has widened considerably since 2015/16 (4.3pp to 14.6pp in 2020/21). Nationally, the figures have remained more consistent, increasing from 11.4pp to 13.9pp. In the latest data, ABCs Q1 students at the University of Kent have a continuation rate of 81.0%, compared to 95.5% of ABCs Q5. The equivalent national figures are 80.9% and 94.8% respectively. Our widening of the gap is consistent with the increase in non-continuation for students at risk of economic disadvantage (using IMD and previous eligibility for FSM as proxies).

Although the gap in completion between ABCs Q1 and Q5 students at the University of Kent has increased for the first time in four years, we are performing slightly above the sector. It currently stands at 18.8pp, from 17.5pp for the previous cohort. The completion rate of students from ABCs Q1 was 78.1% in 2017/18, compared to 96.9% for Q5 students. Nationally, the gap in completion between ABCs Q1 and Q5 has been steadily increasing since 2013/14 and currently stands at 22.9pp. Although the completion rate for ABCs Q5 students has remained relatively consistent over the last four years (96.0% in 2014/15, 95.9% in 2015/16, 96.0% in 2016/17 and 95.7% in 2017/18), it has fallen for Q1 students over the same time period (75.7% in 2014/15, 74.5% in 2015/16, 73.9% in 2016/17 and 72.9% in 2017/18).

Our targeted work to increase continuation and completion rates for groups of students will result in a closing of the ABC gaps for both continuation and completion.

Target: Increasing the Continuation and Completion rates for groups of students at the University remains a priority. We remain committed to supporting students through a range of specific and targeted activity, as detailed in Intervention Strategies 4, 5 and 6. We have set targets PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3 and PTS_4.

3.   Progression to further study or employment

3.1.   HHI and Socioeconomic status

See Figures. 10 and 11 below. When using the TUNDRA metric, Kent has consistently performed considerably above sector average (5.7pp gap for 19/20). For the latest year 2020-21, we have seen a significant reversal and widening of the gap (currently 9.2pp). Given that this is reflective of one year of data only (with a small number of students for TUNDRA Q1), we are unsure whether this is a blip in the data or indicative of a trend. We will continue to monitor the performance of this group going forward. TUNDRA Q1 students who are at risk of economic disadvantage (low household income) will be targeted for our Empower programme (see Intervention Strategy 9).

 Although the gap persists when using IMD, Kent still performs above the sector (8.7pp gap for 19/20). There has been a slight improvement in the latest academic year, 2020-21, with the gap reducing to 2.9pp. The Empower Scheme, currently being revised and enhanced, will support this work as per Intervention Strategy 9.

Target: This is a key area of focus for Kent (see Objective 8), and a target has been set against this – see PTP_1.
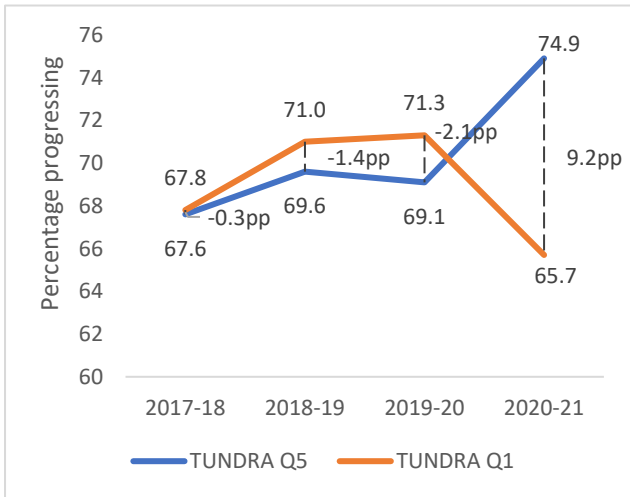
Figure 10
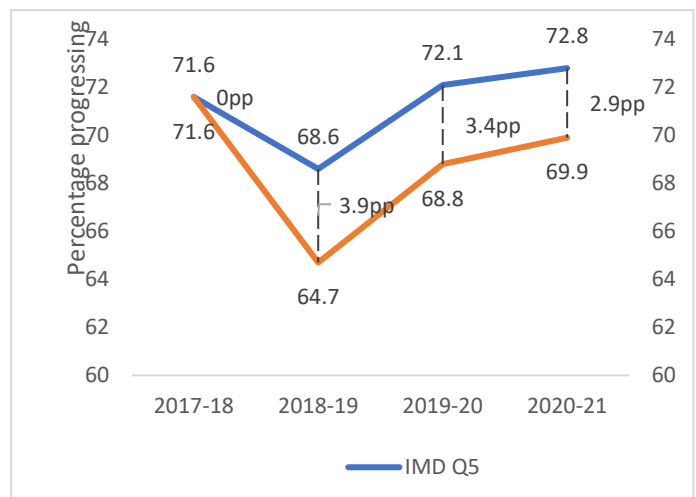
Figure 11

Annex B – Intervention Strategies

Intervention Strategy 1 – Pre-16 Progression and Attainment Support

Evidence and Rationale
The University and selected partner schools will primarily target students who meet disadvantage indicators, such as being from an area with high levels of deprivation and low progression to HE (low quintiles for IMD, IDACI or TUNDRA), in receipt of pupil premium funding (Department for Education, 2023) or service pupil premium (Department for Education, 2023) and students with no parental history of study at Higher Education. At the schools' discretion and deferring to their judgement, there may be other students that they feel fall outside these data definitions who should be included in the targeted intervention, and these will be considered.

Progression curriculum - Students will have access to a progression curriculum, which gradually builds their knowledge and understanding of Higher Education and the skills required to succeed in HE. The sustained progression curriculum aims to support their aspirations, develop their knowledge of HE, and build university self-efficacy.

Importance of aspiration and expectation raising activities - According to research by Anders (2017), raising expectations around applying to Higher Education can prove more difficult (and less effective) than maintaining positive expectations. They also note that young people from less advantaged backgrounds are less likely to experience a positive change to their expectations based on GCSE outcomes than their more advantaged peers. It is therefore imperative to work with students throughout their educational journey to maintain their positive expectations of progression. A report by BIS (2015) also supports the view that particularly for young people with no parental history of Higher Education, the impact of aspiration raising activities can be a determinate factor on their choices around progression.

Projects around metacognition support for disadvantaged students – The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) reports that there is extensive evidence to conclude that metacognition and self-regulation interventions are effective at supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. They write, "disadvantaged pupils are less likely to use metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies without being explicitly taught". Their findings indicate that the teaching of these strategies works best when taught in collaborative groups and when embedded within the curriculum. These strategies are included within several activities in the pre-16 curriculum, such as campus visits and the summer school.

Importance of campus visits – HEAT (2020) aggregate data suggests that outreach participants who attend on-campus activities are more likely to enter HE than those attending off-campus activities and that this difference is more pronounced among disadvantaged groups. Irrespective of prior KS4 attainment, those from a disadvantaged background are more likely to attend HE (a difference of 4 percentage points between those who attend a campus visit and those who do not). This relationship is however strongest for those participants who are socio-economically disadvantaged but have high KS4 attainment (10 percentage point difference between those who attend a campus visit and those who do not).

Attainment raising focused on KS3 attainment - Many studies have explored the relationship between GCSE attainment and progression to higher education (Crawford, 2014), with the evidence consistently suggesting that achieving good grades at GCSE is an important factor in determining progression. There is a large and ever-present gap in performance between pupils coming from affluent backgrounds and those from poorer families. Official figures for 2018 show that 44.5% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grades 9-4 in both GCSE English and maths compared to 71.5% of other pupils (Department for Education, 2018).

Given the gatekeeper role of GCSEs, this attainment gap has consequences for pupils' subsequent careers by reducing their chances for good jobs and higher and further education (Burgess and Thompson, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that socio-economic attainment gap in KS4 attainment can be explained by the gap in KS2 results (Chowdry et al, 2010). Discussions with schools echo this research and suggest that a student's mindset around attainment is often set early, and that intervention at KS3 could be key to addressing attainment gaps evident at KS4. Although research also shows that KS2 attainment is a strong predictor of KS4 attainment, there is also

evidence that pupil progress between key stages is not linear or easy to predict. That said, evidence suggests that, with the exception of year 7, pupils who have not met the required standard in the previous key stage are less likely to make adequate progress in their current stage. This suggest that lower attainment compounds as pupils progress through school and that an intervention targeted at mid to low KS3 attainers could be effective in increasing GCSE attainment. Overall FSM students are less likely to make adequate progress than non-FSM students (and the progress gap is wider in Maths than Reading and Writing). Evidence also suggests that disadvantage is more strongly associated with attainment for low attaining pupils.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
KS3 Literacy & Maths	Please see IS 1	Type 2 Comparator group (propensity score matching) Pre and post attitudinal and behavioural survey (treatment and comparator) Pre and post-test (treatment and comparator) Teacher feedback Delivery team feedback KS4 and longitudinal tracking through HEAT	Interim findings on Kent website by January 2025 (based on 23/24 pilot). Sharing at conferences (where relevant) Interim evaluation reports for each subject by July 2026
Championing Boys	Please see IS 1	Type 2 evaluation Comparator group (propensity score matching) Pre and post attitudinal and behavioural survey (treatment and comparator) Teacher feedback Delivery team feedback Parent/legal guardian feedback Focus groups	Interim evaluation report by September 2025 Sharing at conferences (where relevant)
Summer School Evaluation	Please see IS 1	Type 2 and Type 3 evaluation RCT undertaken in partnership with TASO for academic years 20/21 and 21/22. Awaiting final findings – interim results published. Comparator group to be identified for future years (using propensity match scoring). Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey (treatment and comparator) Delivery team feedback Focus groups Longitudinal tracking though HEAT	Internal report in collaboration with TASO completed. Awaiting final report from TASO. Summer school evaluation report to be published yearly, in the summer of the year following each summer school.
MFL Evaluation	Please see IS 1	Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation Pre and post attitudinal and behavioural survey Pre and post attainment data KS4 and longitudinal tracking through HEAT Teacher feedback Delivery team feedback	Interim evaluation report by September 2025
Sponsorship of UKAT (including bespoke attainment support and governance)	Please see IS 1 and IS 2	Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey Pre and post attainment data KS4 and longitudinal tracking through HEAT Teacher and SLT feedback	Interim evaluation report by September 2026
Pre-16 Progression Curriculum (Whole IS)	Please see IS 1	Type 2 All participants added to HEAT database for longitudinal tracking (including KS4) We intend to do process evaluation on our progression curriculum and will evaluate it as a whole to understand its impact on progression to Level 3 study, Higher Education in general, and the	We intend to disseminate findings every year (with a focus on different activities). After four years, once the first cohort has engaged with curriculum between Years 7-11, we intend to publish interim findings on our website.

		University of Kent in particular. We will start the strategy in full in 24/25 but will pilot some of the new interventions in 23/24. We intend to disseminate findings every year (with a focus on different activities).	We will share findings at conferences where appropriate.

Intervention Strategy 2 – Post-16 Progression

Evidence and Rationale

Ambition to Succeed Programme - A study by Burgess, Horton and Moores (2021) centred around 1386 learners from the Aimhigher West Midlands database who had differing levels of engagement with UniConnect activities. The study found that any type of engagement with the UniConnect multi-intervention activities was shown to improve the learners' chances of acceptance into a Higher Education institution (Burgess et al, 2021). It is positive to note that young people who attend and engage in more outreach activities can experience increased progression to Higher Education, and we want this trend to continue.

Young people from low-socioeconomic backgrounds have been historically underrepresented in Higher Education environments (Scull and Cuthill, 2010). This can be due to a variety of reasons, including a typically narrower understanding of university demands due to being first generation HE (McKillip et al, 2012), less preparedness for university due to the limitations of their school experience and consequently a reduced sense of belonging on a university campus (Covarrubias et al, 2018). This is also the case where a young person has been in care – for example, in the 2019/19 academic year only 13% of students who experienced continuous care for 12 months or more transitioned to Higher Education compared to 43% of all other pupils progressing (Office for Students, 2022). Students can often feel underprepared for their potential transition to university, due to the sometimes-limited support they receive from their environment prior to their transition to HE (Thompson et al, 2021).

The power and value of student ambassadors have been discussed widely both as role-models for students involved in outreach programmes and also informally as an element in raising aspirations and attainment (Gartland, 2015). Studies have also demonstrated that ambassadors can reduce the gap for students seeing "us" and "them" by sharing educational stories and hearing their journeys to success in education (Taylor, 2008). From our own research on the Ambition to Succeed Programme, we have noted multiple students who saw the ambassadors as people to look up to who encouraged them to continue studying hard to reach university level.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Ambition to Succeed	Please see IS 2	Type 2 evaluation Comparator group (using propensity match scoring). Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey (treatment and comparator) Delivery team feedback Focus groups Longitudinal tracking though HEAT	Interim findings published annually from January 2026 Full evaluation findings published in 2028 following HEAT's publication of HESA data Sharing at conferences (where relevant)
Access to HE Diploma	Please see IS 2	Type 2 evaluation Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey Interviews/Focus groups Internal data: application, continuation and success Longitudinal tracking though HEAT	Interim findings published from December 2025 Student case studies published on Kent website from Summer 2026
Contextual Admissions Policy	Please see IS 2	Internal data: application, acceptance, enrolment, continuation and success	Findings disseminated internally from January 2026 and shared with the OfS on request

Sponsorship of UKAT (including bespoke attainment support and governance	Please see IS 1 and IS 2	Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey Pre and post attainment data KS5 and longitudinal tracking through HEAT Teacher and SLT feedback	Interim evaluation report by September 2026
Post-16 Progression Curriculum (Whole IS)	Please see IS 2	Type 2 All participants added to HEAT database for longitudinal tracking (including KS5) We intend to do process evaluation on our progression curriculum and will evaluate it as a whole to understand its impact on progression to Higher Education in general, and the University of Kent in particular. We will start the strategy in full in 24/25 but will pilot some of the new interventions in 23/24. We intend to disseminate findings every year (with a focus on different activities).	We intend to disseminate findings every year (with a focus on different activities). After four years, once the first cohort has engaged with curriculum and had the opportunity to progress to HE, we intend to publish interim findings on our website. We will share findings at conferences where appropriate.

Intervention Strategy 3 – Care Experienced Students

Evidence and Rationale

Care Experienced students are underrepresented in Higher Education and have significantly poorer educational outcomes (Office for Students, 2022). Research findings indicate that care experienced students are less likely to progress to Higher Education (in 2018/19 only 13% of students who were looked after continuously for 12 months or more entered HE compared to 43% of all other pupils), are more likely to drop-out of their degree if they do progress, and less likely to achieve a 1st or a 2.1 qualification (Office for Students, 2022).

In Kent and Medway, Care Experienced students are more likely to attend a non-selective school, where results at KS4 are significantly lower than for students attending a selective school. Out of 33,824 pupils attending Kent grammar schools in 2015, 0.1% were children in care (CiC, n=40, Social Mobility Select Committee, 2016).

The number of Children in Care across Kent and Medway has increased in the last few years. In 2015/16, the DfE reported that 755 UAS children were placed in Kent & Medway (605 Kent, 150 Medway). Figures published in 2020/21 report 1655 children with this status (mostly Kent), a huge increase. The entire LAC cohort placed in Kent & Medway is 3123 for the same period, so the UAS cohort makes up over half of the total of placed looked after children. An age analysis of previous cohorts of LAC shows that around two thirds are aged 10+ but there is no breakdown for the UAS group.

Published statistics show that progression to Higher Education has declined over the last few years: the Kent and Medway average stood at 8% in 2016/17 but was reported at 4% in 2020/21 (Department for Education, 2022). However, there are caveats to this reporting where the DfE say that caution is needed when looking at figures for Kent as time series care data has been significantly changed in recent years due to the large number of young people categorised as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker (UAS). This very transient and unique "Looked after" population will have had an impact on any calculation of average progression rates. Thus it is not unreasonable to assume that the lower progression figure has been negatively impacted by a population inflated by this group of children who are more likely to be transient, where English is not their first language, and who are much less prepared for progression. Further, it is difficult to evidence the extent to whether this population of children are actually in the school and college system across the county despite being placed here[1].

Care Leavers don't receive support tailored to their individual circumstances – Children in Care and Young Care Leavers lack support for their specific individual circumstances. Harrison (2019) notes that "care leavers often lacked confidence to move into HE when appropriately qualified" and highlights wider research supporting the need for "a

knowledgeable and supportive adult to help the young person to navigate the process, as well as the need for high levels of resilience" (Harrison, 2020). Harrison (2019) further states that "there is consensus concerning powerful barriers to care-experienced young people participating in HE, spanning academic (due to educational disruption), practical (e.g. accommodation and finance) and personal (e.g. mental health issues associated with childhood trauma and fear of stigmatisation)." The Plan my Path programme aims to address this by providing tailored support to students; the programme is designed to work with a small number of students to ensure that it can address their individual issues and concerns.

Care experienced young people do not always see HE as an option - A number of recurring issues were identified by the longitudinal research conducted by Jackson *et al* (2005)*,* including: lack of information and guidance before attending; low expectations and little encouragement from social workers; reluctance by the local authority to provide financial assistance; difficulty in finding accommodation especially during the holidays; inability to meet educational expenses, leading to engagement in in extensive paid work; and the absence of social support at university (Jackson and Martin, 1998). According to Cotton *et al* research studies have started to identify "aspects of resilience which have enabled these students to overcome difficulties faced ('risk factors'), through having access to so-called 'protective factors' (Stein, 2006, 2008; Driscoll, 2011, 2013; Munson, 2013). Examples of protective factors include: strong self-motivation; relationship with a significant adult; stable school experiences; feeling in control; positive identity; supportive social networks; and undertaking extracurricular activities or volunteering (Stein, 2006; Munson, 2013). Feedback from Designated Members of Staff (DMS) in schools and colleges echoes this strongly – students do not see Higher Education as an option for them and this starts at an early age. Our programme focuses on young students at the request of DMS who believe that these learners need to be reached before they leave secondary school or college. To provide a network of support, our programme works with foster carers as well as Children in Care/Young Care Leaver professionals to increase their knowledge of HE and allow them to support their young people more effectively.

Care Leavers have a less linear path to HE, and a range of barriers to attainment, education retention, progression - Internal data suggests that students identified as care experienced are more likely to have studied vocational qualifications (a lower percentage have undertaken A-levels) or Access to HE courses. They are also more likely to be mature and to have faced a non-linear path to HE. This is echoed by Harrison's research (2019), where he notes: "…delayed, punctuated or episodic engagement with HE among most care-experienced students (Montserrat, Casas, Malo 2013) (…) significantly older, on average, than other students, with many returning to education after a significant gap." (Page 1996). We provide bespoke campus visits for care experienced students who may wish to see the University campus. These visits are run by a University DMS and involve a care experienced student ambassador where possible. The University DMS remains in touch with the students so that they can be an identified point of contact should the student require it. The University also runs an Access to Higher Education evening programme (see post-16 Intervention Strategy) and Care Experienced students are given special consideration for this programme.

Once students enrol at the University, they are provided with both financial and pastoral support to address recurring issues that they may face (Jackson et al, 2005). There are two Mental Health Advisors who provide support for Care Experience students on programme at Kent (all 'protective factors').

Internal data indicates that care experienced students are likely to delay coming forward and providing evidence of their care status (therefore not receiving the Care Package they are eligible for until potentially later in their degree).

The University works with care experienced students to develop the activities targeted at this group. Care experienced ambassadors share their lived experiences in order to advise carers and professionals working with young people in care. This approach is based on research findings, such insights from Critical Race Theory (CRT) on the importance of lived experience and others such as Gartland (2015) who emphasise the importance of ambassadors as role models. Gartland (2015) writes, "Working collaboratively (Beckett and Hager 2002) and supporting pupils with 'uncovering knowledge derived from experience' (Colley, Hodkinson and Malcom 2003,31) rather than being prescriptive was important to the development of positive relationships between ambassadors and pupils…"[2] Other institutions such as Virtual School Kent and Virtual School Medway, and Designated Members of Staff (DMS) across Kent and Medway schools and colleges are also involved in this work.

A study by Baker et al (2021) looks at the likelihood of care-experienced students to enter postgraduate study compared to their non-care experienced peers, using HESA data from 2016/2017. It was highlighted that, despite care-experienced students being less likely to enter Higher Education, they were 1.274 times *more likely* to continue into postgraduate study than their non-care experienced peers. This includes a greater number of these students also reporting a disability. Scholars have suggested that for some care-experienced students, they do not always have the ability to return 'home' after their undergraduate degree finishes, as HE has provided them with a safety net for accommodation and financial aid (Stevenson et al, 2020). This also speaks to research surrounding a study by Harrison, Baker and Stevenson (2022) which explores how many care-experienced students enter employment following their undergraduate degree in the 2016/2017 cohort. They found that care-experienced graduates were "slightly more likely to be unemployed and less likely to be in work (and particularly professional work) than their peers, but, conversely, more likely to be studying" (2022: 357).

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Pre-Access Care-Experienced Student Support (Plan my Path, Easter School, Opening Doors and CPD for professionals)	Please see IS 3	Type 1 evaluation Post-intervention attitudinal & behavioural survey Interviews/focus groups Longitudinal tracking through HEAT	Case studies with students and foster parents, possible vignette study with professionals to be published on the University of Kent website (and KMPF website for collaborative provision) by Spring 2026. We will share findings at the KMPF Summit (with local teachers and advisers) and at conferences where appropriate.
Undergraduate Care Leaver Support (Kent Care Leavers Support Package and Empower)	Please see IS 3	Type 1 evaluation Monitoring of internal data (uptake of support, continuation and success)	Numbers are likely to be too small to publish reports externally, but this will be disseminated internally from Spring 2026.

Intervention Strategy 4 – Students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage - continuation and completion

Evidence and Rationale

At Kent we conduct expectation surveys with students in their first year of study. The Expectations Survey is aimed at engaging with incoming students to gather information regarding their expectations, skills and perceived needs for their subject of choice. The results are used to identify and provide appropriate support and interventions. From this we have identified that:

> Students from POLAR4 (quintile 1 and quintile 2) tend to be the first person in the family to progress to HE (r.18, $p < 0.05$) and have child-care commitments (r.12, $p < 0.05$).
> They have chosen their specific degree subject because:
> - they had a personal interest in the subject offered by Kent (r.11, $p < 0.05$);
> - they believed that Kent would help them with their career path (r.12, $p < 0.05$);
> - Kent was convenient to get home (r.10, $p < 0.05$);

The need for better support with transition to Higher Education - Our internal research suggests that IMD Q1 students are more likely to have no parental experience of higher education. This may have an impact on their transition into and orientation to HE. Our transition support is designed to help students make a successful transition to HE and increase their social and academic capital. For students local to Kent, parents and supporters are invited to transition activities to ensure that students benefit from support from their wider network.

The need for financial support – IMD Q1 students are more likely to come from low household income families, and therefore to have limited access to resources such as personal IT and university accommodation than their Q5 peers.

They are less likely to have family support with the costs associated with HE study and are therefore more likely to hold a part-time job. Our Kent EORR has highlighted concerns from students around cost of living, and the impact that this has on their educational experience. Students have reported feeling the need to work longer part-time hours, for example. Our Kent Financial Support Package is designed to help students studying at university and to supplement their income so that students are less reliant on working long hours alongside their degree. Internal evaluation of the KFSP has shown a positive correlation between KFSP support and degree completion and attainment.

The importance of Academic Advisors – An evaluation pilot in 19/20 showed a positive correlation between academic advisor meeting attendance and degree completion. Following an iterative development in consultation with students, Progress Profiles are now available for the first time to students and their Academic Advisers in 2022-23. These were developed following feedback from students and provide more effective learner analytics to personalise advice and guidance throughout the student journey. Developing a note-taking facility for AA meetings will improve data collection and allow more robust evaluation going forward.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student Ambassador Programme	Please see IS 4	Type 2 evaluation Comparator group (using propensity score matching) Pre and post attitudinal & behavioural survey Interviews/Focus groups Internal data: engagement with the programme, continuation and success Longitudinal tracking though HEAT	Interim findings published annually from January 2026 Sharing at conferences (where relevant)
Enhanced Academic Advising (AA) & Progress Profiles (PP)	Please see IS 4	Type 2/ Type 3 – mathematical testing / causality Contribution analysis conducted annually Activities coded against an intervention typology Process and Impact evaluation evidence Attendance (AA), engagement (PP) and in-year attainment outcomes tracking, with focus on target groups Mapped against research theme: entry qualifications; student support and advising	Interim findings disseminated internally from 2025. Practice guides on SStaRT (Student Success Resources Toolkit) Findings published on website in January 2026.
Virtual Laura	Please see IS 4	Type 1 - narrative Process evaluation underpinned by ToC Engagement data monitoring monthly Online feedback mechanisms – You Tube comments, student surveys. Mapped against research themes: student support and advising; transitions and belonging.	Findings reported to governance groups bi-annually from Spring 2025. Findings published on website from January 2026.

Intervention Strategy 5 - Mature Learners – Continuation and Completion

Evidence and Rationale

Mature students are more likely to be from underrepresented groups than young students and are more likely to study part-time and have different expectations and motivations for studying at university (OfS). At Kent our Expectations Survey is distributed to all students entering in stage 1, with responses from specific groups of students extracted for comparison with our APP targets.

The need for better support with transition to Higher Education - Our internal research found that mature students at Kent who are also commuting are more likely to have been educated in non-selective institutions and to come from lower income households than their young, commuting peers. They faced greater difficulties studying at home but felt less isolated from other students than younger students. Mature students used the university library and the Student Learning Advisory Service more frequently but had concerns about feeling different to other students and being organised enough to attend all lectures. They also had slightly greater concerns about not being academically

prepared for university study (Internal report, 2015). Focus groups for Mature students are being conducted during the 2022-23 academic year to determine future activity development.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Pre-Welcome Week Programme	Please see IS 5	Type 2 – empirical enquiry Impact evaluation conducted annually Engagement data monitoring Online feedback mechanism Student interviews/questionnaires Mapped against research themes: transition and belonging	Interim findings disseminated internally via institutional networks. Findings and student case studies published on website from January 2026
Returners to Education	Please see IS 5	Type 2 – empirical enquiry Impact evaluation & mathematical testing against coded typology Attendance monitoring In-year attainment outcomes tracking Pre- and post-event attitudinal and behavioural surveys Mapped against research themes: student support and advising; transition and belonging	Findings disseminated internally via governance reports and staff intranet. Findings and student case studies published on website from January 2026
Kent Union Mature Student Guide	Please see IS 5	Type 1 – narrative Narrative developed from internal research Take up of Guide monitored Interviews/focus groups to assess impact Mapped against research themes: student support and advising; transition and belonging. Given the small numbers of Mature students, evaluation of the Mature Student Guide will be limited. Student Success and Kent Union will liaise with the Student Society to monitor take up of the Guide.	Internal reporting via student networks, the Mature Student Society and Kent Union. Findings and student case studies published on website from January 2026

Intervention Strategy 6 – Students who declare a disability – Continuation and Completion

Evidence and Rationale

Mental Health Advisers - Mental Health Advisers are specialist practitioners who offer mental health advice and support. They provide short term focused interventions to promote wellbeing and support students to develop coping strategies.   Where appropriate they signpost students to further information and other support providers both within the university and externally. Mental Health Advisers look at how mental health difficulties may impact on academic studies and can put reasonable adjustments in place to ensure students do not experience disadvantage due to mental health problems. The Adviser works with the student and their academic school to develop an Inclusive Learning Plan (ILP) which may include exam adjustments, use of enabling equipment or provision of class resources.

If appropriate the Adviser can also support a student to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Students may be eligible for support from a specialist Mental Health Student Mentor. Mentors meet with students on a regular one to one basis to develop strategies to manage the impact of mental health problems on academic study.

If a student suffers from more serious mental health concerns the Mental Health Adviser liaises with the student's GP and specialist mental health services in the community. Within the team there are specialist advisers who support students who have experienced sexual assault or harassment, students who are estranged from their families and students who are care leavers.

Students presenting with high levels of risk and/or where the student is not engaged in an active risk management plan, are escalated to the team manager who will discuss the student's presentation in a cause for concern meeting. This is a weekly meeting where team leads and service heads review the risk and action plans of students presenting with the highest level of concern to ensure all necessary action is taken to engage and support the student and manage risk.

Multidisciplinary team meetings - MDT meetings are held monthly to discuss students presenting with high risk and/or complexity who are accessing or requiring support from multiple services within the university. They are attended by Head of SSW, Head of Student Mental Health and Wellbeing, Head of Campus Security, Nursing Services Lead, Out of Hours Mental Health Practitioner, Primary Care Mental Health Practitioner and GP representative from UMC. MDT members review the risks presented and establish a risk management plan.

Intervention Strategy 7 – Ethnicity-based attainment gaps
Evidence and Rationale

Institutional research indicates that the staff demographic is not representative of the student population which leads to lack of sense of belonging. Kent is a historically white-dominated institution that has seen tremendous growth in the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)[3] students in the past 10 years. Over the last decade the University has experienced a vast change in the student demographic, currently 47% of home fee paying, full-time, first-degree undergraduate students are from BAME backgrounds. However, the staff demographic across the institution is still primarily white (12% identify as from an ethnic minority), as per research by Adewumi et Al (2022)[4] and All Staff Survey Report (2020) (Internal report).

Academic Excellence Scholarships (AES) Longitudinal Study - The Academic Excellence Scholarship was awarded to students who entered the University of Kent with three "A" grades at A-level, or equivalent qualification (3 Distinction* at BTEC, or 35 points IB). A longitudinal research project was run between 2019 and 2022 to critically compare the UG journey for high-potential white and BAME students, incorporating intersections of class, gender and entry qualification. Findings from this study indicate an impact of Covid on students' motivation to learn online, a direct negative impact of the cost of living on attainment, wide-ranging levels of engagement with assessment and feedback on attainment, plus an impact on peer networking, impacting belonging. Accumulation of social capital and transition into HE for this group was predominantly via university educated siblings. BTEC students' experiences of online learning were intensified as COVID exposed and exacerbated class and educational differences in effective adoption of HE learning strategies due to material differences in study space, technology, proximity to COVID (front-line services, working part-time jobs), reduction of extrinsic motivation prompts for effectiveness (teachers), travel to campus, working alongside others and access to 'work' spaces.

Findings from the study will be disseminated to internal staff networks by theme (assessment and feedback, expectations, students' understanding of becoming independent learners, student motivational learning styles, growth mindset), improving staff understanding of the needs of students from Access and Participation Plan Priority Groups. Findings will also be disseminated at external academic conferences, via journal articles and on our public-facing website. Recommendations will be implemented into practice across the institution.

Black Student Voices - Our BAME Student Voices Project (2016-17) was a student-led research project funded by the University and delivered by Kent Union. This project was carried out by student researchers and involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with students that identified as Black/BAME, to investigate and understand the complexities of the experience of BAME students at Kent. Led by a working group from Kent Union and the Student Success team, the research findings have informed change across the University, such as the implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy, election of two Black Presidents to Kent Union, implementation of the BAME Ambition Scholarship for PG study and the establishment of the BAME Staff Network. The research is being refreshed in 2022-23 in response to our changing student demographic, the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement (2020) and the launch of the University's Anti-Racism strategy (2021). This new 'Black Student Voices' research is again being delivered by Kent Union, but with a specific focus on the lived experiences of Black students to identify and remove barriers to success. Recommendations from this project will be used to inform future work in this area.

Living Black at Kent research – follow on research to the [Unite Students 'Living Black at University'](#) to provide a more holistic picture of Black students' experience and investigate if accommodation issues at the university have an impact on belongingness and the attainment gap. The research will involve a student research intern as co-investigator and a cross-disciplinary working group to ensure that findings from this research are used to effect change at the institution.

Expectations Surveys (ES) - The expectations survey is aimed at engaging with incoming students to gather information regarding their expectations, skills and perceived needs for their subject of choice. The results are used to identify and provide appropriate support and interventions. These are administered at the start of the first year of study. The ES analysis shows there is a statistically significant positive correlation between BAME students and asking for help, (.10, $p < .05$). BAME students tend to ask for help if they are struggling with coursework and assignments. Whilst there was no statistically significant difference between POLAR4 Q1 students and Q5 students on the same question, the ES also provided evidence that at Kent POLAR4 Q1&2 students are more likely to be the first person in their family to enter HE (r.18, p.,0.05) and have childcare commitments (r.12, p,0.05). The Academic Excellence Scholarships longitudinal study explored questions relating to academic support (findings from the study are due in 2023-24). Further research (e.g. through the Black Student Voices research) is ongoing to understand whether the support sought by students is available and/or adequate.

Acknowledge Repository - Showcasing best practice in race and ethnicity pedagogy and recruitment. [The Repository](#) was developed by academics and library services staff from University of Kent, in collaboration with the BSA, to inform pedagogical practice in sociology.

Activities

Diversity Mark - Our [Diversity Mark](#) project started in 2017-18 as a research-based, collaborative inquiry intended to raise academics' awareness of the importance of creating more racially inclusive and culturally sensitive curricula. This award-winning programme[5] centres the Student Voice providing an opportunity for students and staff to directly challenge whiteness and address the lack of global authorship in the curriculum. (Adewumi et al 2022). The Diversity Mark programme employs student interns (Diversity Mark Officers) to work with module convenors to assess the diversity of reading lists, capture BAME students' experiences and make suggestions for curricular revision. The collaborative approach of Diversity Mark Officers, academics and library staff supports convenors to develop more inclusive teaching resources. This experience has been transformative for the 12 student Diversity Mark Officers and 7 research interns who have participated over the past 4 years:

'This role has increased my drive to continue to do what I can, to help challenge and push diversity, and make a positive contribution to the BAME student experience'.

In 2020, Kent secured a £60,000 grant from the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO) to evaluate the impact of the pilot of Diversity Mark on degree awarding gaps in 21 first year social science modules. Full TASO report is available on their website: [TASO Ethnicity and Race Equality Gaps](#). The implementation and process evaluation led by Kent staff was vital in expanding understanding of how to create more culturally sensitive curricula, how BAME students experience their curricula and how to effectively implement and evaluate such initiatives. For example, students in focus groups repeatedly emphasised that seeing people like themselves reflected in the curriculum excited and inspired them. ([Thomas & Quinlan 2022](#))
Related collaborative research through NERUPI (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) with seven other HEIs, also focused on understanding how the culturally sensitivity of curriculum impacts on students' experience. This study found that BAME students, and particularly black students, perceive the curricula as less culturally sensitive than their white peers. Improving the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum showed that when students (both Black and White) perceive their curricula as more culturally sensitive, they also report higher interest in the subject, thereby enriching their educational experiences.

Many schools have now adopted Diversity Mark as part of their Student Success Plans, with 55 module convenors from across all academic Divisions now working actively toward Diversity Mark Awards. Diversity Mark is also becoming increasingly embedded into institutional practice and is included in Kent's PGCHE (The Inclusive University module) and Antiracism Strategy objectives, where its impact will inform our Race Equality Charter submission.

Diversity Mark was presented at the [Advance HE Conference](#) in March 2023, with further findings and insights from student interns disseminated on our Diversity Mark website.
Evidence suggests that course materials that are inclusive to a diverse student body have a positive impact, see [BAME attainment at UK Universities (2019).](#)

Inclusive Curriculum and Reflective Teaching- The reflective teaching approach is based on the research to create an awareness of teaching strategies that can be implemented to improve the delivery and learning in higher education to provide a more successful learning environment for a diverse student body. Inclusive curriculum is an approach to teaching and learning that recognizes and values diversity, and aims to ensure that all students feel welcomed, respected, and able to participate in the learning process. In higher education, an inclusive curriculum seeks to design and deliver educational programs that consider the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of students, as well as to promote equity and social justice.

Several practical strategies for decolonising the curriculum in higher education have been discussed in the literature. To diversify the curriculum means to reflect on the diversity of knowledge systems and methods of knowing (Smith, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Greer, 2009). The inclusion of materials, perspectives, and voices from traditionally underrepresented groups can contribute to this process (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Furthermore, challenging dominant narratives promotes critical thinking and reflection on dominant narratives that are perpetuated in the curriculum. Historically perpetuated assumptions, biases, and stereotypes are then questioned. To diversify the curriculum, indigenous knowledge systems must be incorporated and colonial legacies must be addressed. For example, a specific strategy for mathematics is to explore the potential of decolonising mathematics education through indigenous research methods and place-responsive education (Garcia-Olp, 2022).

Furthermore, to maintain the effectiveness of learning and teaching in higher education, continuing professional development, such as implementing reflective teaching practices, is essential (Pollard, 2014). The concept of reflective teaching, also known as self-examination teaching, is a crucial element of teacher education that enhances the professional competence of lecturers and teachers (Li, et al., 2023). The University has the obligation to provide education to all its students. Increasing access and participation in higher education is leading to an increase in the importance of inclusive education as an indicator of the quality of education (Moriña, 2017; Webster-Wright, 2013). The Reflective Teaching (RI) program will be conducted twice a term, at the beginning and the end of the term. All six divisions can participate in this program, which will assist in evaluating the impact of the sessions by school using the Reflective Teaching Framework (TRI) developed by Dr Aaron Berko and Dr Sarah Kolajo. The purpose of the reflective teaching session is to provide academics with practical examples and best practices in their area of specialization of other academics who are already diversifying their curriculum and have received positive feedback from their students. Initially, the reflective teaching session will be conducted by inviting external academics who are able to share practical best practices. It will then become a tool for academics to implement or adapt into their own teaching and modules. Monitoring will be via attendance and follow up discussions with participants over a term to determine how they are progressing.

A Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) is required by many UK universities, which means lecturers become learners themselves, learning how to teach effectively from and with Educational Developers. An inclusive module is offered by the University of Kent's Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (UELT) under the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE). According to a significant body of research, subject matter knowledge is important for effective teaching, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. The use of effective pedagogical practices is also essential for promoting student engagement and learning (Manfra, 2019). There is evidence from research that lecturers who lack effective pedagogical delivery of content can have difficulty creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment for their students (Cayo et al., 2023). Mahmudovich et al., (2022), for instance, suggested introducing interactive teaching methods and creating a supportive learning environment to improve the organisation and teaching of mathematics in higher education institutions. Additionally, lecturers/conveners who are knowledgeable in their subject matter but lack effective pedagogical skills may find it difficult to present the material in a way that is accessible and understandable to students of varying learning styles and backgrounds (i.e. BAME students).

Dissemination of Good Practice - In collaboration with The British Sociological Society, the University of Kent has pioneered the acKnowledge repository, showcasing best practice in race and ethnicity teaching and recruitment within the discipline of sociology.

- **ACE Programme** (Academic Coaching for Excellence) – in its pilot year (2019/20) 18 students took part in the Programme, with 15 gaining a 2.1 or above. In 2020-21 54 students took part, with 40 gaining a 2.1 or above. The Programme has evolved from coaching provided by an external organisation, to now trained academics as coaches to support greater numbers. Our intention will be to follow the 'training for trainers' model with other academic disciplines, creating a network of subject-specific coaches that will maximise student potential for APP Priority Groups. The Programme can be adapted for our IMD Success Objectives. Student engagement in ACE has been high as the target group is offered the programme and then apply. This helps to mitigate against low participation seen in some other extra-curricular activities.

- **Inspirational Speakers Programme** is a Student Success initiative to increase inclusion, representation and sense of belonging of BAME and IMD students by providing opportunities to meet and learn from roles models achieving through success in HE. This type of activity has been of particular importance to develop a strong academic and social engagement among students from underrepresented groups which seem to be correlated with increasing student retention and success as reported by Professor Liz Thomas (2012) in her research and evaluation of effective interventions in nurturing a sense of belonging drawing on theories of cultural capital such as Bourdieu and Passeron's (Bourdieu,P and Passeron, J.1977 Reproduction in education, society and culture. 2ⁿᵈ ed., trans. R. Nice. London: Sage Publications).

- **Inclusive curriculum and reflective teaching** is a new initiative at the University of Kent which will engage academics in activities to reflect and review their teaching practices, providing opportunities to incorporate inclusive curriculum features and enhance collaboration in the review and co-production of innovative teaching practices and assessment and feedback methods. This type of student success activities has substantial potential to reduce attainment differentials and benefit all students as suggested by R. Duhs Duh (2019) when discussing the impact of the Inclusive Curriculum Health Check project. In addition, such initiatives, as proposed by B. Adewumi and L. Mitton (2021) provide also an avenue for academic collaboration between academic and students from underrepresented groups such as BAME and Black student when diversifying the social policy curriculum.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Diversity Mark	Please see IS 7	Type 1. Theory of Change Impact evaluation Focus groups/interviews Delivery team feedback Research themes: transitions and belonging; inclusive curriculum. (we wish to enhance our evaluation approach for Diversity Mark and this intervention will be included in the What Works at Kent programme – ongoing evaluation programme to measure and evidence the impact of staff interventions and academic practices on educational gains and student outcomes).	Ongoing, public facing articles and blogs on website from Autumn 2024. Student Success Resources Toolkit (SStaRT) for internal practice sharing. Delivery at national conferences from Autumn 2024. Findings on website and via academic papers from 2024.
Inclusive Curriculum and Reflective Teaching	Please see IS 7	Type 1 - ToC and Type 3 – causality Contribution analysis to be conducted annually Activities coded against an intervention typology Process and Impact evaluation evidence What Works at Kent Evaluation Programme – ongoing evaluation programme to measure and evidence the	Initial findings via governance groups and internal networks. Academic paper in summer 2026. Findings via website in January 2026.

		impact of staff interventions and academic practices on educational gain and student outcomes. Mapped against research theme: inclusive curriculum.	Delivery at national conferences in 2026.
Inspirational Speakers	Please see IS 7	Type 1 – TOC Type 2 – Mathematical Testing Type 3 – causality Contribution analysis conducted annually Activity coded against an intervention typology Attendance data, student/staff feedback collected Mapped against research themes: entry qualifications; student support and advising; transition and belonging.	Findings disseminated internally via governance reports, internal networks and SStaRT. Findings via website from January 2025.
Academic Coaching for Excellence	Please see IS 7	Type 2 - Mathematical testing against an intervention typology. Type 3 – causality Contribution analysis to be conducted annually. Attendance data monitored. In-year attainment outcomes tracking. Pre- and post-activity attitudinal and behavioural surveys to measure impact on educational gains and student outcomes. Delivery team feedback. What Works at Kent Evaluation Programme (WWaK) – ongoing evaluation programme to measure and evidence the impact of staff interventions and academic practices on educational gain and student outcomes. Mapped against research themes: assessment and feedback; student support and advising.	Findings disseminated via internal networks and SStaRT. Findings via website from Autumn 2026, to allow two years delivery and data aggregation, given the small numbers. WWaK initial findings via website from Autumn 2026.

Intervention Strategy 8 – Students who may be at risk of economic disadvantage – Attainment Gaps

Evidence and Rationale

Link between IMD1 and Non-A-level Qualifications - IMD Q1 students are more likely to have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years and to enter HE with non-A Level qualifications. In 2022-23, a greater proportion of IMD Q1 students came to Kent with BTEC qualifications. The difference was more pronounced for students entering with A Level only qualifications:

- Q1 students with at least one BTEC = 21%
- Q5 students with at least one BTEC = 15%
- Q1 students with A level only = 13%
- Q5 students with A Level only = 24%

At Kent, we have identified that students who hold a non-A-level qualification are more likely to underperform than their peers. A high proportion of Kent entrants study a BTEC (or BTEC and A-level) as their Level 3, pre-entry qualification. To understand the experiences of these students more clearly the Kent Student Success team conducted a piece of research around BTEC qualifications in 2017 aimed at improving retention and attainment (Mitton & Hensby). Kent students talked about the BTEC as a second-best option in comparison to A levels. Following this research, it was identified that BTEC students lacked the foundation knowledge required by some undergraduate degrees. Specific interventions at modular level have led to some improvements in the number of BTEC students successfully completing their degrees. As an example, additional sessions on Recharging your Programming and Recharging your Maths in one Division led to attainment increases for all students (+6% and 11% respectively), for BAME (+7% and 10%) students, but especially for BTEC students (+9% and 25%) across these modules.

Our Kent specific EORR has also indicated that students from lower household income families (likely IMD Q1 and Q2) are more likely to undertake paid employment than their more affluent peers, which may impact on their completion and attainment.

Q1 students are also more likely to come from BAME backgrounds, creating an intersectional disadvantage (see AES findings below). Entrants at UoK for the 2022-23 academic year outline the disparity:

- BAME first degree students IMD Q1 = 24% / Q5 = 11%
- White first degree students IMD Q1 = 9% / Q5 29%

Virtual Laura – a new development in 2022-23 designed in consultation with students. Evidence shows that we have to step into young people's space to engage them, rather than asking them to step into ours[6].

Academic Skills interventions - have been a key feature of Student Success, but are developing and changing in response to our ongoing evaluation. Internal research evidences that academic skills based interventions for students who are repeating, resitting, or who under-achieve on tests have a positive chain of causality with increased grades and attendance. Recap of learning sessions and engagement with digital content also had some positive correlations. The analysis is based on 932 UK fee paying students attending academic skills interventions in 2019-20 and 3029 UK fee paying students in 2020-21.

Academic Peer Mentoring – In 2022 an internal student-led review of the APM scheme was undertaken, with a number of recommendations for the future made. The review found that 58% of students found their first year academically difficult with low levels of academic confidence. Research suggests that students often do not seek support because they feel others are more deserving (Cotton, et al 2017). The current review of Kent's APM aims to lessen the perceived 'stigma' in seeking support. The 'module support' approach encourages a greater sense of 'belonging' as it is an inclusive (rather than an exclusive) support mechanism (Bermingham, Boylan and Ryan 2022). This type of support is more holistic and could encourage attendance (if embedded) (Bermingham, Boylan and Ryan (2022). Overall, the scheme will develop students' confidence in independent learning capabilities as opposed to 'pass the assessment' support. The new approach will become a 'self-sustaining' model, where mentors have 'agency' in terms of leadership, training and facilitation skills, developing metacognition in terms of their own learning and providing them with authentic skills and experience to enhance their first post-university CV.

Inspirational Speakers (add here as the evaluation found some positive correlations with increased attendance for BAME)

Enhanced Academic Advising – Academic Advising at the University of Kent has been a key priority to support students, and the Student Success Team has developed resources and toolkits to support the role of academic advisors and raise awareness on the impact of good advising in improving students' attainment. The Enhanced Academic Advising activity provides an added mechanism and platform for widening participation students to engage with tutors and a practical mechanism of support, such as academic skills, to be embedded in academic advising sessions. The attainment dimension of Academic Advising is of particular importance as suggested by C. Holland, C. Westwood and N. Hanif (2020) when referring to previous research into academic advising which has focused on the impact upon student satisfaction and retention, but the impact upon attainment continues to be underexplored. Their research explores the extent of the relationship between advising and attainment and recognises that academic advising is a key strategy to student success that needs to be understood in a wider sense where academic support is provided alongside pastoral and employability support.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Academic skills interventions	Please see IS 8	Type 2- Mathematical testing against an intervention typology. Type 3 – causality Contribution analysis conducted annually to determine causal chains. Attendance data and in-year attainment outcomes tracking, combined with pre- and post-activity attitudinal and behavioural surveys to measure impact on educational gains and student outcomes. Delivery team feedback.	Subject-specific and institutional findings disseminated annually to internal networks and via our Resources Toolkit. Paper including previous findings during development of our Student Success Evaluation Framework to

		Student Success Evaluation Mapped against research themes: assessment and feedback; student support and advising.	be published on our website in Autumn 2023. Further findings to be published via website.
Academic Peer Mentoring	Please see IS 8	Type 2 – empirical enquiry Impact evaluation & mathematical testing against coded typology. Engagement data monitoring and in-year attainment outcomes tracking. Pre- and post-event attitudinal and behavioural surveys. Mentors/mentees post-event feedback. Module champions and buddies - termly surveys. Mapped against research themes: entry qualifications; assessment and feedback; student support and advising; transition and belonging.	Interim and annual findings via internal networks and platforms from 2025. Findings from module champions and Foundation Year buddy scheme to be published on our website from Autumn 2026.

Intervention Strategy 9 – IMD Q1 Progression

Evidence and Rationale

Spatial, or locational imbalances in Higher Education exacerbate the widening participation divide that exists in graduate outcomes (Davies and Donnelly 2023). There is a significant amount of literature looking at the geographical advantages afforded in UK education, including the provision of private education (Holloway & Kirby, 2020), the availability of cocurricular/extracurricular activities (Donnelly et al. 2019) and a larger body of work which has examined students' im/mobility for higher education (e.g. Christie, 2007; Donnelly & Evans, 2016; Donnelly & Gamsu, 2018a, 2018b; Holdsworth, 2009).

There are many barriers to accessing traditional careers and employability support and 'the opportunities offered to students to improve their employability are unevenly distributed and, therefore, scarcely available to underrepresented students; and the market-oriented concept of employability damages non-traditional students.' (Rodríguez, González-Monteagudo and Padilla-Carmona, 2021, p.134). Simply signposting job vacancies and running careers fairs, alongside a continuous focus upon 'skills', will not make an impact unless core knowledge application and exposure to experiences are addressed in a similar way to ensure student success through academic skills development for academic literacies (Lowe 2023).

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to progress to postgraduate study – Various studies have demonstrated that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds have lower rates of transition to postgraduate study than their advantaged peers. "Using geodemographic measures of socioeconomic background rather than occupational social class, research for government bodies in England (HEFCE, 2016) and Scotland (Scott, 2020) have demonstrated (…) inequalities are greater for immediate progression to master's than to Ph.D. (Wakeling, 2017). They are lowest at the point of immediate transition after a first degree and get larger if measured for delayed transitions (D'Aguiar and Harrison, 2016; HEFCE, 2016, Wakeling, 2017)". See IS 6.

This against a background of postgraduate graduates enjoying better outcomes than those with a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Research undertaken by the Department for Education shows that the median earnings of UK domiciled students graduating from a taught master's degree in an English HEI in 2013/14 were £10,000 more than their undergraduate counterpart (DfE 2018). With the absence of a fully financed postgraduate study option, students are more likely to have to rely on financial support from their family, with clear differences in the level of support available to those from more affluent backgrounds (Wakeling and Hampden-Thompson, 2013).

The Widening Participation Ambition Scholarship supports Kent undergraduate students who want to progress directly into postgraduate study at the University of Kent.

Students should participate in employability work to boost employment and further study prospects - Many students with a low household income often find themselves having to take on part-time employment alongside their studies both to support themselves and to ensure they can complete their course (Purcell and Elias, 2010). Working long-hours can negatively impact students' continuation and degree attainment. Through the Empower

scheme, students will be supported to find work opportunities on campus, in an environment which is supportive of their academic commitments and facilitates their attendance at lectures and seminars.

Research from Macaulay et al (2023) noted that all students involved in their study needed to constantly expand their economic capital during all years of their programme, and for many of these students this meant being involved in full-time employment. This has been said to create disparities within student identity, as it is not the 'typical' student route. Economically self-sufficient students need to manage their time in a variety of different ways which other more affluent students do not normally have to consider. Munro (2011) spoke of students such as these as being 'non-traditional' as they have to undertake part-time or even full-time work in order to supplement their studies, both for living costs but also to fund educational materials that their parents may not be able to help them afford.

Research by Griffiths et al (2022) has recently highlighted the importance of participation in sport both on university students' mental health and wellbeing, as well as their sense of belonging and their social capital. This is particularly true for students from underrepresented groups (here, Griffiths et al base their measure of deprivation on IMD). 20% of the students interviewed said that they had little to no time for sports due to trying to balance their studies with part-time working to supplement their living costs.

Research from the Social Mobility Foundation (Social Mobility Foundation, 2021) explored inequalities between those from socioeconomic backgrounds and their more privileged counterparts. Of the 5,000 respondents, 47% of privileged graduates reported using their personal connections to secure a job. Respondents from more affluent households also reported a higher likelihood of relocating for a job opportunity (64% of lower income, compared with 76% of higher income).

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Empower Scheme	Please see IS 9	Type 2 evaluation Comparator group (using propensity score matching) All students who engage with Careers and Employability Service to complete 'career readiness' questionnaire. Interviews/Focus groups Internal data: engagement with the scheme, continuation and success Tracking through Graduate Outcomes	Interim findings published annually from August 2026 Sharing at conferences (where relevant)

Bibliography

'Find and check the performance of schools and colleges in England', *GOV.UK Website*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

'Key stage 4 and multi-academy trust performance 2018 (revised)' (2019) *GOV.UK Website.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-4-and-multi-academy-trust-performance-2018-revised (Last Accessed: 14/04/2023).

'Pupil Premium: Overview', *GOV.UK Website*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' (2022) *GOV.UK Website*. Available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

'Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know' (2021) *GOV.UK Website*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

'TikTok & Education: How TikTok Is Transforming Education For Gen Z'. *Fanbytes Website*. Available at: https://fanbytes.co.uk/tiktok-and-education#:~:text=TikTok%20decided%20to%20make%20this%20happen.%20In%20May,professional%20experts%20to%20bring%20learning%20material%20to%20TikTok (Last Accessed: 12/04/2023).

'Widening participation in higher education' (2022) *GOV.UK Website*. Available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education#dataBlock-f54c605c-64fc-4992-687e-08d92a65bd1d-tables (Last Accessed: 11/04/2023).

Adewumi, B., Bailey, L.R., Mires-Richards, E., Quinlan, K.M., Agyeman, E., Alabi, A., Jeyasingh, M., Konadu-Mensah, C., Lavinière, W., Mighton, P., Shortridge, T., Thomas, D.S.P., and Wassamba-Wabelua, N. (2022) Cross-disciplinary, collaborative and student-led: developing a change process for diversifying reading lists. *London Review of Education,* 20(1), 1-17.

Anders, J. (2017) The influence of socioeconomic status on changes in young people's expectations of applying to university. *Oxford Review of Education*, 43(4), 381-401.

Andrewartha, L., and Harvey, A. (2017) Employability and student equity in higher education: The role of university careers services. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 26(2), 71-80.

Anthony, A., and Edgar, R. (2020) Exploring the relationship between on-campus outreach and HE entry. *HEAT*, Available at: https://heat.ac.uk/research-and-evidence/thematicreports/ (Last Accessed: 14/04/2023).

Bowes, L., Evans, J., Nathwani, T., Birkin, G., Boyd, A., Holmes, C., Thomas, L., and Jones, S. (2015) Understanding progression into higher education for disadvantaged and under-represented groups: BIS Research Paper Number 229. *Department for Business Innovation & Skills*, Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/474269/BIS-15-462-understanding-progression-into-higher-education-final.pdf (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

Burgess, A.P., Horton, M.S., and Moores, E. (2021) Optimising the impact of a multi-intervention outreach programme on progression to higher education: recommendations for future practice and research. *Heliyon*, 7(7).

Burgess, S., and Thomson, D. (2019) Making the Grade: The impact of GCSE reforms on the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. *The Sutton Trust,* Available at: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MakingtheGrade2019.pdf (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023).

Cadim-Dias and Sibieta (2022) *Inequalities in GCSE Results Across England and Wales*. Available at: https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Inequalities-in-Wales-and-England.pdf (last accessed 12.05.23)

Chowdry, H. Crawford, C., and Goodman, A. (2011) The role of attitudes and behaviours in explaining socioeconomic differences in attainment at age 16. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, 2(1), 59-76.

Cotton, D., Nash, P., and Kneale, P. (2014) The Experience of Care Leavers in UK Higher Education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 16(3), 5-21.

Covarrubias, R., Gallimore, R., and Okagaki, L. (2018) "I know that I should be here": Lessons Learned from the First-Year Performance of Borderline University Applicants. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 20(1), 92-115.

Crawford, C. (2014) The link between secondary school characteristics and university participation outcomes: CAYT Research Report. *Department for Education*, Available at: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10159877/1/RR353_-_The_link_between_secondary_school_characteristics_and_university_participation_and_outcomes_FINAL.pdf (Last Accessed: 14/04/2023).

D'Aguiar, S., and Harrison, N. (2016) Returning from earning: UK graduates returning to postgraduate study, with particular respect to STEM subjects, gender and ethnicity. *Journal of Education and Work*, 29(5), 584-613.

Department for Education (2018) Graduate Outcomes (LEO): Postgraduate Outcomes in 2015-2016. *DFE*, Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710157/Main_Text.pdf (Last Accessed: 16/05/2023).

Education Endowment Foundation (2023) 'Metacognition and self-regulation', Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation (Last Accessed: 19/04/2023)

Gartland, C. (2015) Student ambassadors: 'role-models', learning practices and identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8), 1192-1211.

Gartland, C. (2015) Student ambassadors: 'role-models', learning practices and identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8), 1192-1211. DOI: 10.1080/01425692.2014.886940.

González, J.L.M., and Wakeling, P. (2022) Exploring socioeconomic inequalities and access to elite postgraduate education amongst English graduates. *Higher Education*, 83, 673-694.

Government Events, (2022). 'The Importance of Developing Modern Foreign Languages in the Curriculum', Available at: https://www.governmentevents.co.uk/the-importance-of-developing-modern-foreign-languages-in-the-curriculum/ (Last Accessed: 17/04/2023).

Great Britain. Department for Education (2020). National Statistics: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2020. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020 (last accessed 12.05.23)

Great Britain. House of Commons Library (2020). Grammar School Statistics: Briefing Paper. Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN01398/SN01398.pdf (last accessed 12.05.23)

Green, E. (2021) 'Boosting opportunity in the workplace: an employer's guide to social mobility. *Totaljobs Website*. Available at: https://www.totaljobs.com/recruiter-advice/boosting-opportunity-in-the-workplace-an-employers-guide-to-social-mobility (Last Accessed: 16/05/2023).

Griffiths, K., More, R., and Brunton, J. (2022) Sport and physical activity habits, behaviours and barriers to participation in university students: an exploration by socio-economic group. *Sport, Education and Society,* 27(3), 332-346.

Harrison, N. (2020) Patterns of participation in higher education for care-experienced students in England: why has there not been more progress? *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(9), 1986-2000.

HM Treasury (2020) *Magenta Book: Central Government guidance on evaluation*. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf (last accessed 16.05.23)

Jackson, S., and Martin, P. (1998) 'Surviving the Care System: education and resilience'. *Journal of Adolescence*, 21, 569-583.

Kent County Council (2016) Grammar schools and social mobility: Select Committee. *Kent County* Council, Available at: https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/58680/Grammar-Schools-and-Social-Mobility-June-2016.pdf (Last Accessed: 11/04/2023).

Macaulay, L., Webber, W., and Fraunholz, B. (2023) Successful university students from low socioeconomic backgrounds' perspectives on their academic success: a capital-based approach. *Higher Education Research & Development.* DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2023.2197191.

McKillip, M.E., Godfrey, K.E., and Rawls, A. (20212) Rules of Engagement: Building a College-Going Culture in an Urban School. *Urban Education*, 48(4), 529-556.

Munro, L. (2011) 'Go boldly, dream large!': The challenges confronting non-traditional students at university. *Australian Journal of Education*, 55(2), 115-131.

Office for Students (2023) 'Financial support evaluation toolkit.' *Office for Students Website* Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/ (Last Accessed: 17/05/2023).

Purcell, K., and Elias, P. (2010) The impact of paid and unpaid work of student debt on experience of higher education. Working Paper, London: Higher Education Careers Services Unit; University of Warwick.

Scull, S., and Cuthill, M. (2010) Engaged outreach: using community engagement to facilitate access to higher education for people from low socio-economic backgrounds. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(1), 59-74.

Stevenson et al (2019) *Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds: Report for the Office for Students.* Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf (last accessed 16.05.23)

Taylor, Y. (2008) Good students, bad pupils: constructions of "aspiration", "disadvantage" and social class in undergraduate-led widening participation work. *Educational Review*, 60(2), 155-168.

Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (2022) Impact Evaluation with Small Cohorts: Methodology Guidance. *TASO*, Available at: https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/TASO_-Report_Impact-evaluation-with-small-cohorts_methodology-guidance_Secured-1.pdf (Last Accessed: 17/05/2023).

Victorian Government, (2023) 'Creating ways to reach young people with social media'. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/young-voices/case-studies-and-practice-examples/creative-ways-reach-young-people-social-media (Last Accessed: 12/04/2023).

Wakeling, P. (2009) Are Ethnic Minorities Underrepresented in UK Postgraduate Study? *Higher Education Quarterly*, 63(1), 86-111.

Wakeling, P., Hampden-Thompson, G., and Hancock, S. (2017) Is undergraduate debt an impediment to postgraduate enrolment in England? *British Educational Research Journal*, 43(6), 1149-1167.

Fees, investments and targets
2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

Summary of 2024-25 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPIX + 3%

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	EKC Group	10006570	6165
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	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	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets
2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

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.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£1,877,000	£1,914,000	£1,953,000	£1,992,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£3,306,000	£3,361,000	£3,508,000	£3,749,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£541,000	£552,000	£564,000	£575,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£1,051,000	£1,072,000	£1,093,000	£1,115,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£584,000	£596,000	£608,000	£620,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£242,000	£246,000	£252,000	£257,000
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£1,877,000**	**£1,914,000**	**£1,953,000**	**£1,992,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment (as % of HFI)*	5.8%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%
Access activity investment	*Total access investment funded from HFI (£)*	£1,877,000	£1,914,000	£1,953,000	£1,992,000
Access activity investment	*Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)*	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£2,791,000	£2,846,000	£2,993,000	£3,234,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£515,000	£515,000	£515,000	£515,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£3,306,000**	**£3,361,000**	**£3,508,000**	**£3,749,000**
Financial support investment	*Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)*	10.3%	10.3%	10.6%	11.1%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£541,000	£552,000	£564,000	£575,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%

Fees, investments and targets
2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Kent

Provider UKPRN: 10007150

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Increase the reading level ratio gain for a group of 25 students at Brompton Academy	PTA_1	Raising attainment	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)		Work with students intensively to double progress in one academic year (from 1.0 to at least 2.0). New cohort every year. Same work being done with other schools - Brompton Academy being used as evaluation proxy, given sponsorship of school and access to data. At least 100 students involved across all partner schools per year. Evaluation of this programme will look at impact across the whole cohort of learners.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Other (please include details in commentary)	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Increase the percentage of TUNDRA Q1 first degree entrants to the University of Kent	PTA_2	Access	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1	N/A		No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5
Increase the percentage of IMD Q1 first degree entrants to the University of Kent	PTA_3	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A		No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	15.9	16.9	17.9	18.9	19.9
Increase the number of care experienced entrants to the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church and University for the Creative Arts	PTA_4	Access	Care leavers	Other (please specify in description)		Partners will work together through KMPF to target Care Experienced students. Our work is aimed at increasing progression to any HEI, but given issues with capturing this data we are using progression to own HEIs as a proxy. Numbers being aggregated, and rounded to nearest multiple of 5 (students are not identifiable). Evaluation of overall programme will look at impact in progression to any HEI.	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Headcount	55	60	65	70	75
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Reduce the gap in continuation between Mature and Young students	PTS_1	Continuation	Age	Mature (over 21)	Young (under 21)	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest dataset available - 2020/21 Entrants. Milestones recognise the complexities with this target, particularly given small numbers at the University.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	5.8	5	4	3	3
Reduce the gap in completion between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students	PTS_2	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2017/18 Entrants. Milestones reflect entry year of cohort - Milestone for 2024/25 Entrants relates to first degree entrants in 2024/25 academic year. Completion data for first cohort available 2030 APP Dashboard.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	7.3	5	4	3	2

Aim	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Reduce the gap in completion between Mature and Young students	PTS_3	Completion	Age	Mature (over 21)	Young (under 21)	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2017/18 Entrants. Milestones reflect entry year of cohort - Milestone for 2024/25 Entrants relates to first degree entrants in 2024/25 academic year. Completion data for first cohort available 2030 APP Dashboard.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	10.6	7.5	6.5	5.5	4.5
Reduce the gap in completion between students who declare a disability a those with no declared disability	PTS_4	Completion	Reported disability	Other (please specify in description)	No disability reported	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2017/18 Entrants. Milestones reflect entry year of cohort - Milestone for 2024/25 Entrants relates to first degree entrants in 2024/25 academic year. Completion data for first cohort available 2030 APP Dashboard.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	2.4	2	1.5	1	0.5
Reduce the 'good degree' (1st or 2.1 degree qualification) attainment gap between Black and White students	PTS_5	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	White	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2021/22 Award Year.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	19.1	17	16	12	10
Reduce the 'good degree' (1st or 2.1 degree qualification) attainment gap between Asian and White students	PTS_6	Attainment	Ethnicity	Asian	White	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2021/22 Award Year.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	9.9	8	6	4	3
Reduce the 'good degree' (1st or 2.1 degree qualification) attainment gap between Other and White students	PTS_7	Attainment	Ethnicity	Other (please specify in description)	White	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2021/22 Award Year. Students who were classed as "ABMO Other" on the APP Dashboard	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	12.2	11	10	9	8
Reduce the 'good degree' (1st or 2.1 degree qualification) attainment gap between Mixed and White students	PTS_8	Attainment	Ethnicity	Mixed	White	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2021/22 Award Year.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	9.4	8	7	6	5
Reduce the 'good degree' (1st or 2.1 degree qualification) attainment gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students	PTS_9	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2021/22 Award Year.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	15.3	13	12	11	10
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Increase the proportion of IMD Q1 students who progress to further study or graduate employment	PTP_1	Progression	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A	First Degree Entrants. Baseline uses latest data available - 2019/20 Graduate Outcomes data (through APP Dashboard)	No	The access and participation dataset	2019-20	Percentage	68.8	69.3	69.8	70.3	71.3
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														