

University of Hull

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of performance

Local context

The University of Hull is very much a regional university, serving the local population and supporting underrepresented groups in our region. In part, this is largely due to our geographical location. To the south of the city of Hull is the Humber Estuary, which splits the local region and to the east, is the North Sea.

The local market in which the University sits has a high proportion of students from low participation areas (OfS, POLAR4). In 18/19, 39% of our student population were from the HU postcode and 47% from the Humber sub-region (University of Hull 1st December Census). Consequentially, the demographics of our student population are strongly influenced by those of the local area. The proportion of the population in Hull that achieve a level 3 qualification at age 19 is 12 percentage points lower than the national level. The broader level for the Yorkshire and Humber sub region is 3.2 percentage points lower, with notably low percentages in North East Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire (Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2018, DfE, 4 April 2019). This context is important to understand, given the high levels of students from these areas, because the local attainment levels influence the benchmark attainment levels for students entering the University. This is especially relevant for mature students, who often begin their HE studies following a non-traditional qualification entry route or having had time away from studying.

Much of our Access funded outreach activity concentrates on this area and is complemented by the concentrated work of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) consortium, for which the University of Hull is the lead institution. By investing time and resources into community projects through NCOP and continuing the relationships with local businesses and other key stakeholders, there will be broader collaboration than ever before. Additionally, working with the NCOP allows a degree of sustainability beyond the NCOP in terms of the relational work with stakeholders and the building on the efficacy of NCOP, with regards to raising aspirations to higher education.

Our assessment of performance is mostly based upon the Office for Students APP2021 Data Resources. We have chosen to focus on 'first degree' students within our Access and Participation plan as this is the closest data set to the statistical targets and milestones we have been working towards in our Access Agreements since 2012/13. These historical targets include HESA T1a – proportion of Young, full-time, first degree entrants from low participation areas, HESA T2a – proportion of mature, full-time, first degree entrants, HESA T3b – non-continuation of POLAR3, young, full-time, first degree entrants, and HESA T5 – projected outcomes for full-time, first degree entrants. By continuing to monitor the first degree cohort we are maintaining consistency across our institution, and ensuring that staff are clear on our priorities.

We have also used the following data for elements

- Office for National Statistics Population Estimates by Ethnic Group
- University of Hull HESA census data

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Our assessment of performance in this area is based upon comparison between the outcomes of students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 for each stage of the student life-cycle (proportionately).

Access

This gap has steadily reduced over the past 5 years to the point where the gap has now been reversed. In 17/18, our proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 1 students was 3 percentage points greater than our proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 5 students. In this respect, the University of Hull stands apart from the sector, with a 21.5 percentage point difference between the sector gap and the University's.

Success

Non-continuation

There has been mixed success in reducing this gap in the past 5 years. Although a reduction was achieved, the 17/18 gap at (6.1 percentage points) was just 0.1 percentage point lower than it was in 13/14. Whilst the University of Hull's gap in this regard is lower than the sector wide gap, we recognise this as an area for improvement. This is why we have identified the gap between non-continuation rates for POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and their Quintile 5 counterparts as a key focus.

Attainment

The gap between the proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 students achieving a first or upper second degree classification has increased significantly over the past 5 years. At 15.2 percentage points, our gap is now higher than the sector making this a priority area for improvement.

Progression to employment or further study

After making significant progress from 13/14 to 16/17 in reducing this gap, 17/18 saw a significant increase (to 9.6 percentage points). This requires further investigation to explore the reason(s) behind this, which is why we have identified this area as a major priority.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

To inform our assessment of performance in relation to fair access, success and progression for Asian, Black, Mixed and Other (ABMO) students, we have compared the outcomes of students from different ethnic backgrounds at each stage of the student life cycle (proportionately).

Access

The University of Hull has a lower population of ABMO students as a proportion of the whole cohort in comparison to the sector. However, the proportion of ABMO students at the university is greater than the proportion of ABMO people in England (Office for National Statistics Population Estimates by Ethnic Group). Furthermore, the University typically recruits high levels of local students and the wider demographic profile of the Kingston upon Hull region has a white population that is 4.3 percentage points higher than England as a whole.

Black students: The proportion of 18 year old Black entrants to the University has fluctuated over the last 5 years, but has decreased overall. In 2013/14 5.1% of 18 year old entrants were Black, compared to 2.8% in 2017/18. This reflects a gap against the proportion of Black 18 year olds in the UK population of 0.8 percentage points.

Asian students: The gap between the proportion of 18 year old Asian entrants to the University and the proportion of Asian 18 year olds in the UK population has decreased overall in the last 5 years to 2.9 percentage points in 17/18 following a peak the year before at 4.3 percentage points.

Mixed ethnicity students: Despite some variation over the past 5 years, the minimal gap between the proportion of 18 year old entrants of Mixed ethnicity to the University and the proportion of 18 year olds of Mixed ethnicity in the UK population in 2017/18 was the same as it was in 2013/14 at 0.1 percentage points.

Other: The proportion of 18 year old entrants to the University of Hull of Other ethnicity has increased from 0.8% in 2013/14 to 1.3% in 2017/18. This has surpassed the gap against the proportion of 18 year olds of Other ethnicity in the UK population to over-index by 0.2 percentage points.

Success

Non-continuation

In general, the University of Hull performs reasonably well in this regard, with the general continuation rate for AMBO students standing at 92.2%, which is 3.2 percentage points higher than that of the sector (89%). We see some variation in performance against the sector, however in general we either perform very close to the sector average or better, with Asian students outperforming the sector average by 2 percentage points and students of Other ethnicity performing slightly below the sector average by 0.5 percentage points.

Black students: had the highest continuation rate in 17/18 at 93.7%, which is 7.5 percentage points higher than the sector average (86.2%), and perform better than white students by 2.9 percentage points (white student continuation 90.8%). This is significantly better than the sector which indicates a 5.7 percentage point gap between white (91.9%) and black (86.2%) student continuation.

Mixed ethnicity students: had the lowest continuation rate in 17/18 at 89.5%, which is 0.1 percentage points lower than the sector average and perform 1.8 percentage points worse than white students. Our performance is slightly better than the sector which indicates a 2.3 percentage point gap between mixed ethnicity (89.6%) and white (91.9%). Whilst we recognise there is scope to reduce this gap, it is not a priority focus at this time. However, we will continue to monitor and review our performance in this area.

Attainment

A key focus for the University of Hull is to significantly narrow the gap between the proportion of ABMO students and the proportion of White students achieving a first or upper second degree classification. Whilst we have made improvements in some categories, we have identified this as a priority area based on the following patterns over the last five years:

Black students: There has been marked improvement between 13/14 (54.8%) and 17/18 (62.6%), and the University of Hull performs well against the sector (the sector average is 58.1%). However, there remains a significant gap at the institution compared to the performance of White students (10.4 percentage points in 17/18).

Asian students: whilst there has been marked improvement between 13/14 (59.6%) and 17/18 (64.5%), there remains a significant gap within the University of Hull compared to the performance of White students (8.5 percentage points in 17/18). Furthermore, the proportion of Asian students at the University of Hull attaining a first or upper second degree classification is 6 percentage points below the sector.

Mixed ethnicity students: overall there has been a decline in attainment for Mixed students at the University of Hull since 13/14 (72.5%) to 17/18 (64.8). The gap between Mixed students and their White peers at the University was 8.2 percentage points in 17/18, and the gap between students of Mixed ethnicity at the University and the sector more broadly was 12.3 percentage points.

Other: there have been high levels of fluctuation in the proportion of students of Other ethnicities attaining a first or upper second degree classification between 14/15 and 17/18, likely due to low student numbers in the category. In 17/18, the gap between Other students and White students was 12.1 percentage points.

Progression to employment or further study

Black students achieved the highest rate of progression to graduate employment or further study in 17/18 (74.7%), with White students close behind (74.5%). Students of Mixed ethnicity achieved the lowest rate of progression at 64.5% and 71.4% of Asian students progressed into graduate employment or further study.

We have specifically identified progression as a target area for mixed ethnicity students since this is currently our widest gap within BAME progression. Although there has been some fluctuation in our performance in broader BAME progression over the past 5 years, and there is work to be done to achieve equality in progression rates for our students, we have not identified the remaining ethnicities as areas of key focus because we believe greater impact can be achieved in other areas for greater numbers of students. However, whilst not an identified area in our objectives and milestones, we are fully committed to reducing the gaps through our broader work to improve progression rates for disadvantaged students such as the work being undertaken within careers and other strategies outlined in section 3 should contribute to reducing this gap.

1.3 Mature students

Access

Participation of mature students at the University remains significantly lower than young students; however, proportionately is higher than the sector (by 2.8 percentage points). Over the past five years, the University saw a small peak in the proportion of Mature students entering the University in 2014/15 at 27.2% of the student body (although this percentage does not reflect a peak in the actual number of mature students which was highest in 16/17). The proportion of Mature students dropped after 14/15 but has steadily increased for the past 3 years, rising from 25.1% in 2015/16 to 26.3% in 2017/18, this is due in part to a high percentage of mature entrants studying Nursing and Social Work programmes. Such programmes have a fixed number of placements which means that recruitment is capped at a certain level, and can be seen in our data, where in 2013/14 the proportion was 26.5%. This fluctuated by +/- 1% in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, but returned to 26.3% in 2017/18. This is significantly lower than the proportion of young students at our institution, but proportionately higher than the sector.

Success

Non-continuation

This is a success story for us with a significant decrease in the gap between non-continuation rates for mature students and their younger peers. The gap has reduced from 7.4 percentage points in 13/14 to 0.6 in 17/18, which was 6.5 percentage points lower than the sector in the same year.

Attainment

Attainment is a major issue for us in relation to mature students, whereby we have a 14.8 percentage point gap between young and mature attainment, with the sector average being a 9.5 percentage point gap. The

attainment gap between mature and young students has increased since 13/14 despite positive progress made in 15/16. This gap is now greater than the sector by 5.3 percentage points in 17/18, and hence attainment is a key focus for monitoring and intervention within mature students.

Progression to employment or further study

Our mature students have achieved increasingly better rates of progression than young students over the past five years. In 17/18, the proportion of mature students progressing to graduate employment or postgraduate study was 12 percentage points higher than young students.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

Whilst our proportion of disabled students decreased from 16/17 to 17/18 (18% to 16.4%) we have seen an overall increase between 13/14 and 17/18. The proportion of disabled students in 17/18 was 1.6 percentage points higher than the sector.

Success

Non-continuation

The gap between the non-continuation rate for disabled students in comparison to non-disabled students has fluctuated within a small range (2.5 percentage points) over the last 5 years, between -0.8 and 1.7. 17/18 showed the greatest gap in the last 5 years at 1.7 percentage points, which is greater than the sector by 0.8 percentage points for the same year. The variation across disabled students is smaller than other gaps but our data helps identify key areas of focus, which will benefit sub-groups of disabled students enabling more targeted activity within these groups of students.

Our performance in non-continuation is worse for those students with a declared social and communication disability, in that we perform worse than the sector by 10.8 percentage points although numbers are low (25 in 17/18). However, it is anticipated that work on the wider group through our ongoing commitment to reduce non-continuation gaps in disabled students will help enhance the outcomes here.

Our performance in non-continuation for students with a Cognitive and Learning disability and Multiple Impairments is worse than the sector at 1.2 and 1.4 percentage points respectively, and whilst internally there is only a 0.1 percentage point gap between cognitive and learning disability and non-disabled students, the gap between multiple impairments and non-disabled stands at 3.3 percentage points. It is expected that targeted work for the wider group of students with disabilities will have a positive effect on this group.

Attainment

The gap between the proportion of disabled students achieving a first or upper second degree classification in comparison to non-disabled students has fluctuated over the past 5 years at the University but has decreased by 3.2 percentage points from 16/17 to 17/18. However, the 17/18 gap is still 1.6 percentage points higher than the sector. The gap at the University of Hull between the proportion of disabled students and non-disabled students achieving a first or upper second degree classification was 4.2 percentage points in 17/18. Interestingly, whilst the category of Social and Communication disability has the widest gap for continuation, it performs best on attainment where it is 10.2 percentage points higher than the sector.

Attainment for disabled students in general in 17/18 was 7 percentage points lower than sector. Within these groups, specific targeted activity and monitoring will be undertaken for students with Cognitive and Learning disabilities (10.3 percentage points lower than sector), Sensory Medical and Physical disabilities (2.2 percentage points lower than the sector) and Multiple Impairments (12.8 percentage points lower than the sector).

Progression to employment or further study

The institutional gap between the proportion of disabled students progressing to graduate employment or postgraduate study in comparison to non-disabled students has fluctuated over the past 5 years but, positively, has decreased by 3.4 percentage points from 16/17 to 17/18, with the 17/18 gap being 0.9 percentage points smaller than the sector gap. In 17/18, disabled student progression was 2.1 percentage points lower than non-disabled students within the institution. Within this group of students we will monitor specifically those students with a Sensory Medical and Physical Impairment whereby progression in this group is 4.9 percentage points lower than the sector, although we acknowledge the numbers are fairly low at 75 (17/18 data).

1.5 Care leavers

Our assessment of performance for care leavers is based upon University of Hull HESA census data. As the number of care leavers are relatively small in the institution, this can pose challenges for robust statistical analysis and hence production of meaningful data. It is acknowledged however that our level of data maturity in relation to care leavers requires development. We are fully committed to undertaking this work during the 19/20 academic year in readiness for implementation of an enhanced data collection and monitoring approach for the start of the 2020/21 academic year, to ensure we are in possession of the necessary data to inform our practice and monitor our performance across the entire lifecycle for care leavers.

Access

In 2017/18, 26 care leavers registered at the University of Hull. This is an increase on 2013/14 where there were 15 care leavers, but a decrease on 2017/18 where there were 29. Across the time-period, the proportion of care leavers has remained around 1% of the intake, and follows the reduction in student numbers since 2015/6.

Success

Non-continuation

We have insufficient data to assess our performance at the non-continuation stage for care leavers.

Attainment

Since 2015/16, the percentage of care leavers achieving a first or upper second degree classification increased from 60% to 71.4% in 2017/18. The percentage of non-care Leavers who achieved this in 2017/18 was 71.7%, this is a gap of only 0.3 percentage points.

Progression to employment or further study

The progression rate for care leavers in 2017/18 was 62.5%. For non-care leavers it was 74.1%. This is a gap of 11.6 percentage points. However, the numbers are very low which means that small variances can have a disproportionate impact on percentages. The number of care leavers progressing to employment or education over the last four years has increased, however the numbers have been very small and have been subject to significant fluctuation causing our progression rates and gaps to fluctuate. Between 2014/15 and 2016/17 the numbers were very small and hence deems the data unreportable. Whilst there

was a small increase in 2016/17 numbers were again too small to report, however our numbers increased significantly in 2017/18 to 10 care leavers providing a much more meaningful data set and greater opportunity for a more robust, consistent approach to monitoring.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Owing to the maturity of our data and reporting systems, the ability to accurately reflect intersections of disadvantage is limited and hence at present, we have identified one intersection related to young disadvantaged males. As we develop our data and systems integration capability, the ability to identify other intersections and monitor performance and outcomes will be enhanced and enable us to improve our decision-making around areas of focus and relevant targeted activity. Our data insights activity as outlined in section 3.1 will provide us with the infrastructure and capability to develop and improve our approach to monitoring, and as a result our performance.

To enable us to have improved capacity and capability to identify wider groups and their intersection with other areas of disadvantage, we have commenced work on identifying existing data sources and their integration into current systems. From this, we will be able to identify gaps in our processes around the gathering of key information to allow for improved identification of particular groups of students (*providing individuals disclose*). This work will also enable more effective means of monitoring intersections of disadvantage across the student lifecycle, i.e. non-continuation, attainment and progression. During the development of our data infrastructure and insight activity, we will also carefully consider the potential implications of small cohort sizes (for example, in some sub-groups of disabled students, care leavers and those identified within section 1.7) on reporting and subsequent intervention and activity planning.

The aim is for the initial development work to be completed by the end of the 2019 calendar year to allow for pilot implementation and testing followed by an initial evaluation to be complete in readiness for the start of the 2020/21 academic year to coincide with the launch of this plan.

Young disadvantaged males

Access

Overall, the University has more female students than male with a 10.4 percentage point difference in 17/18. The proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 females is 4.9 percentage points higher than males whereas the proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 females is 3 percentage points lower than males. Whilst there is a slight gap between the proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 males and the proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 males (0.9 percentage points), there are proportionately more females from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 in comparison to Quintile 3, 4 and 5.

Success

Non-continuation

The non-continuation rate for males is higher than for females; this gap exists across both POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 (at 4.5 percentage points) and POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 (at 3.7 percentage points), but is slightly more prominent for POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2. However, we have not identified non-continuation of young disadvantaged males as a key target for the University because we feel that we can have a greater impact in areas with wider gaps and of which, some of the wider targeted initiatives and activities may also have a positive impact on this group. However, this gap will be kept in mind when addressing the broader gap between continuation rates of student from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5.

Attainment

The gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 males and POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 males is significant at 11.8 percentage points however the same gap for females is greater at 13.9 percentage points. Therefore, we have not identified disadvantaged males as a target group at the attainment stage; however, we intend to narrow the attainment gap across all genders between POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 5.

Progression to employment or further study

A greater proportion of females progress to graduate employment or postgraduate study than males. The gap has increased overall in the last five years despite some fluctuation and has risen from -1.7 percentage points in 2013/14 to 6.2 percentage points in 17/18. The gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 and POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 is significantly greater for males than for females (9 percentage points for males and 3.3 percentage points for females). The gap between the progression of POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 students is a key priority for the University at the progression stage, therefore we intend to address this gender gap through/alongside the measures we will put in place to reduce the broader gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5. We will closely monitor the impact in this group specifically, for any changes in performance as part of this work.

Other intersections of disadvantage

As we continue to integrate our information systems, the ability to identify intersections is being developed to allow us to more readily identify risk attributes in our student population – this is a particular strategic aim of our activity in relation to data and data management / analysis.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The University of Hull does not currently hold or have access to adequate data to assess our performance across the student life-cycle for the following groups:

- Carers
- People estranged from their families
- People from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Refugees
- Children from military families

We acknowledge that this is an area for development for us and commit to expanding our dataset to enable us to assess our performance in the future in line with our data insights activity. We actively encourage students to disclose such characteristics and this is key to our work on data analytics, particularly as we look to expand the readily accessible data and use it to highlight groups of students who may require additional or tailored support. As we improve our data insights capability, we will be able to improve our monitoring of outcomes across the student life-cycle for these groups of students, and thus our knowledge and understanding of their needs as outlined in section 1.6.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The University is fully committed to reducing the gaps in success and progression which exist for all disadvantaged groups, through an evidence based, insight led and data driven approach. We will utilise our evaluation strategy to ensure this by utilising our findings to inform future practise and add to our offer across the student lifecycle.

Our ambition is to gain meaningful awareness of the impact of our work through robust evaluation, not just overall, but also taking into consideration the discrete elements that make up the whole widening participation offer. On an individual activity level, this supports the assurance of value for money and enables greater strategic focus, at a time when the access and participation goals are increasingly ambitious, juxtaposed with a narrowing availability of funding due to a national decline in student numbers. We will therefore focus our interventions on activities and projects that prove to have the greatest impact in the areas identified in our strategic objectives. Our ambition is to understand both successes and areas for improvement, by evaluating projects in both areas of strength and those identified for further development.

At the University of Hull, we have identified 7 strategic aims for the period 2020/21 – 2024/25, detailed in section 2.2 and in our Targets and Investments Plan. We have chosen these aims by using our assessment of performance to identify our most significant access and participation gaps, based upon consideration of parity between groups of students at each stage of the student life-cycle (namely, access, continuation, attainment and progression). An internal review of metrics in relation to low participation neighbourhoods has been undertaken which has highlighted areas for specific focus and of which align closely with our objectives identified within this plan. Our aims reflect our ambition to significantly reduce our greatest institutional gaps (as also identified in our targets) by 2025, working towards their elimination by 2030. By working towards these strategic aims, the University of Hull can contribute to the Office for Students' national ambitions as well as improving fairness at our own institution.

2.1 Target groups

Based on our assessment of performance, we have identified a number of areas / groups to target for this period. The objectives we have set for each of these areas / groups are focused on reduction of the gap between target groups and a comparison group, for example, between students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 areas and students from POLAR4 Quintile 5 areas.

These objectives are based upon our largest gaps either in relation to sector or internal benchmarks and are articulated in section 2.2 and in our Target and Investments Plan. The target areas / groups identified for focused work are:

- Students from low participation areas (POLAR4 Quintile 1) with regard to continuation, attainment and progression
- Students of Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnicity (ABMO) with regard to attainment, and Mixed ethnicity students with regard to progression.
- Mature students with regard to attainment
- Disabled students with regard to attainment

The University is fully committed to reducing the gaps in success and progression which exist in all disadvantaged groups; however, the size of some groups makes statistical analysis more challenging in terms of producing meaningful data and insights. Whilst our targets do not reflect all groups of disadvantaged students, this does not mean that the various groups will not be monitored as part of our ongoing activity to monitor performance across all disadvantaged groups across the student lifecycle. Particular focus will be paid to all areas where a gap exists, irrespective of the size of the student cohort.

Care leavers

Our performance in relation to care leavers has seen some improvements since 2015/16 however this remains a key area of attention for the institution across the entire student lifecycle. We have committed to developing our data maturity in care leavers as outlined in section 1.5 and referenced our ongoing commitment to ensure care leavers can access dedicated support as outlined in strategic measures, cross

lifecycle. Whilst we have opted not to set a specific target for care leavers in this plan (we acknowledge one was included in the 19/20 plan), we remain fully committed to improving outcomes for care leavers and this is reflected in our commitment to the care leaver covenant we are currently working on.

We acknowledge the continued need to improve access to HE for care leavers, and to ensure they are supported through and beyond university to ensure they reach their full potential. We remain committed to increasing our care leaver population and working closely with care leavers (including those with experience of care and estranged students) as partners in their learning journey to improve access to HE, continuation, attainment and progression. We will build upon our existing work (as outlined in our strategic measures) and utilise evidence based and best practice from across the sector, for example the *Moving on up report* from NNECL.

2.2 Aims and objectives

In our Targets and Investment plan we have made a commitment to reduce our current identified gaps by 50% by 2024/25 and the remaining gap to zero to be achieved by 2030/31. These targets are commensurate with those identified within the OfS KPMs, which set out the aim to eliminate the unexplained gaps by 2025 and absolute gap by 2030 (except for POLAR). In line with the guidance provided by the OfS, we have highlighted our key areas for improvement based upon either our own internal gaps or those with the sector. Whilst we have not attributed a specific target to each gap identified, we are fully committed to reducing the gaps in our performance in relation to disadvantaged students across the lifecycle. As has been outlined, we are continuing to develop our systems over the 19/20 academic year around data collection and monitoring, and how it is subsequently utilized to identify our performance and progress. This will be used to monitor our performance against the identified gaps and will inform our areas of focus and practice in relation to improving student outcomes.

Our targets are reflective of the amount of work which is required in relation to the transformation of programmes and inclusive assessment, as we are mindful that it will take a period of time before the full impact of the changes will be observed within student outcome data, owing to the timeframes for implementation.

As we progress with our data insights activity and the capability of our Hull University Management Information Database (HUMID), it is our intention to significantly improve our insight and understanding around our unexplained and structural gaps during 19/20 and early into 2020/21 to enable us to better target our activity and inform areas requiring significant attention and / or focus. To date this has not been an area we have had the capability to do however as outlined, our overall aim is to improve our data capability and hence intelligence to better inform our practice.

Access

Our performance in Access to date has resulted in a balanced and diverse student population. Although we have not identified a specific target group as a strategic aim at the Access stage of the student life-cycle, we commit to at least maintaining the current level of activities and to focusing on understanding the reasons for our success in order to continue to perform well. Our ambition is to strengthen our outreach offer, underpinned by an expanded evaluation programme and evidence base, thus enabling us to increase our contribution to narrowing the national gaps. This illustrates our commitment to maintain our performance in areas of strength and to strive for continuous improvement to make our University accessible.

Our aim is to maintain the work we have delivered to date and forge meaningful relationships with stakeholders to strengthen and add to experiences for our young people. Our strategy will ensure the delivery of quality outreach interventions, inspiring and encouraging disadvantaged students to have a

proactive and positive approach to entering HE. We will use our evaluation of interventions to inform provision of outreach work on an ongoing basis and work closely with the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service, to ensure our offer is relevant and meaningful, sustained and progressive. Furthermore, we will use the data available to us to ensure we are positively targeting areas where we can make the most impact.

Success

Non-continuation

Our performance in non-continuation varies across the groups, with some groups and sub-set groups performing better than others. Whilst in some areas we perform close to or slightly better than sector averages, there remain gaps internally and hence these have informed the decisions around identification of target groups. Our ambition is to reduce our non-continuation rates overall and within this, reduce the gaps in non-continuation between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5, and have identified this as a key target area.

Our key aim is:

- To reduce the gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 Quintile 5 and 1 respectively) by 3.1 percentage points by 2024/25. (Reference PTS_1)

We have identified gaps in performance in some groups of disabled students, and hence we will pay particular attention and make a firm commitment to reducing the continuation gap within the three sub-groups outlined in our review of performance. Our aim is to eliminate the unexplained gaps in non-continuation across our disabled student groups (and in particular the three groups we have made specific reference to) by 2024/25 and absolute gaps by 2030/31.

Attainment

Our performance in attainment requires attention across a number of areas, however our areas of specific focus will be in relation to mature students, POLAR4 Quintile 1, ABMO in general and all disabled student groups general, with specific focus on those sub-groups outlined in our review of performance.

Therefore our aims are:

- To reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2.1s) between students of Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnicity and White students by 4.5 percentage points by 2024/25. (Reference PTS_2)
- To eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2.1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students by 2024/25. (Reference PTS_3)
- To reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2.1s) between mature students and young students by 7.8 percentage points by 2024/25. (Reference PTS_4)
- To reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2.1s) between the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 Quintile 5 and 1 respectively) by 8.2 percentage points by 2024/25. (PTS_5)

As outlined in our alignment with other strategies, the university is embarking on a range of activities and initiatives under the heading of transforming programmes. As part of this work, three academic secondment posts have been identified and of which will make a significant contribution in assisting the university achieve its targets and commitments to improving continuation and attainment. The posts each have a specific remit with one each aligning to improving retention and BAME attainment, and the remaining post focused around inclusive curriculum (and assessment) design. Whilst the work will have potential benefit across the whole student population, key focus is being paid to improving outcomes for disadvantaged students as a direct result of the work undertaken and insights generated. The intention is that where additional insights are derived in relation to disadvantaged students, these can be used to

inform activity and practice. The posts commence in August 2019 and are for a period of 12 months in the first instance.

Progression

Our performance in progression is reasonable, however based upon internal and sector data, we have identified two main areas of focus for progression, those being in relation to gaps between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 progression, and for students of Mixed ethnicity. As outlined in section 1.5, the care leaver progression gap stands at 11.6 percentage points. The current numbers of care leavers or those who have care experience are low as with some of our other disadvantaged groups. As previously highlighted within the target group section, the university is fully committed to improving outcomes for all disadvantaged groups, with all groups being monitored across the entire lifecycle of access, success and progression.

Our key aims are:

- To reduce the gap in progression (to graduate employment or further study) between the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 Quintile 5 and 1 respectively) by 4.6 percentage points by 2024/25. (Reference PTP_1)
- To reduce the gap in progression (to graduate employment or further study) between students of Mixed Ethnicity and White students by 5 percentage points by 2024/25. (Reference PTP_2)

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The University of Hull's strategic plan puts inclusivity at its heart. As an institution, our royal charter states that we exist to 'advance scholarship, knowledge and understanding by teaching and research, for the benefit of individuals and society at large,' and this continues to drive our approach. Over recent months, a programme of work has been underway to review and revise the University's vision, values and behaviours. This work has been led by the Vice-Chancellor with the aim of cementing vitally important foundations that underpin the strategic direction of the University of Hull. Following input from staff, students and external stakeholders, a new and shared vision has been agreed:

Motivated by society's challenges and inspired by the power of our global community, we are shaping a fairer, brighter and carbon neutral future.

Specifically, the points, 'fairer' and 'brighter' recognise the University's work in and commitment to progressing Access and Participation. An implementation plan is in development, which will look to embed the vision in every aspect of the University's activity and this is supported by clear underpinning goals that will be fully integrated. We envisage these goals will include explicit reference to Access and Participation.

We are committed to providing and maintaining an inclusive learning and working environment, where equality is promoted, diversity is valued and discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. In particular, we commit to embed equality and diversity across the campus, promote diverse and inclusive organisational values and culture, and enhance the diversity and inclusion experience of students and staff.

Our access and participation strategy continues to focus on delivery of sustained and meaningful engagements with students at all stages of the student life-cycle, from primary school to employment. We aim to prioritise activities that have demonstrable impact on student attitudes, behaviours and outcomes. We have created an over-arching theory of change (see Annex C), which forms the foundation of the strategic measures outlined in this plan. However, crucial to our overarching strategy is the expansion of the data and evaluation findings available to enable us to realise our ambition of being truly insight driven and data led. This is an area of key focus during 2019/20 in readiness for the implementation of this plan in 2020/21.

The University's Access, Funding and Support Office leads on the co-ordination of pre-entry higher education outreach for the University, ensuring WP initiatives flow throughout all faculties and departments. Supported by staff at all levels and through our academic areas, the University works closely with schools and colleges to highlight the benefits of HE, raise awareness of how to access HE, and provide financial and teaching support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through its access and participation funding, the University offers a range of widening participation activities, stretching from Children's University initiatives and campus experiences through to programme enrichment (both pre-entry and on-programme), impartial information, advice and guidance, and a work placements programme, specifically aimed at improving outcomes for our disadvantaged students.

Alongside our outreach activities, we continue to maintain focus on student retention, experience and achievement across the institution underpinned by our Student Retention, Success and Achievement strategy (2017-20). Our work within the widening participation agenda places additional emphasis on improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups in line with the strategy and our institutional targets for success and progression. Student Services play a significant role in the identification of students at risk and work in partnership with academic and other professional service areas, to ensure on-programme support and infrastructures for all students and in particular disadvantaged students, are effective, fit for purpose and accessible. This approach enables delivery of a holistic, campus-based approach to supporting students from both academic and pastoral perspectives. Our continued work with students identified as potentially being at risk of lower achievement or non-completion, in particular those identified within our specific target groups will enable our continued drive to reduce barriers to success and progression.

We will continue to offer students a wide range of support opportunities including financial, emotional and social support, employability and careers advice and support, in addition to our existing traditional student support offer.

Our team of Student Engagement Officers provide a range of support mechanisms for students, from the delivery of daily appointments to provide general advice and guidance on academic issues and low-level wellbeing support, through to providing a point of contact for various groups of disadvantaged students, for example care leavers, experience of care or estranged students.

The University is fully committed to raising the aspirations of and future prospects for care leavers, those with experience of care and estranged students, in addition to other disadvantaged groups as outlined in section 1.7. As an existing Standalone champion institution and member of the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL), we are fully committed to ensuring our provisions are designed and structured to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including our disadvantaged and those who are recognised as having challenges accessing HE. We have pledged our commitment to the Armed forces covenant agreement and are working on our institutional pledge to the care leaver covenant.

As our data and information systems develop, our ability to identify students at risk much sooner will be improved significantly, enabling academic areas and student services to engage with students much earlier and offer appropriate, evidence-based interventions to support their future success and achievement. This work is driven and monitored by our student experience and engagement strategy; which is delivered via area implementation plans to ensure a consistent, effective approach to improving outcomes and experiences of our students.

Alignment with other strategies

Learning, teaching and assessment

As part of our wider activity around learning teaching and assessment, our “Transforming Programmes” project commenced in 2019 with the aim of transforming our academic programmes, taking a root and branch approach aimed at improving our academic offer, and improving outcomes for all students, with a particular focus on inclusive curriculum design. This work is being led by the PVC Education and supported by an academic member of staff seconded to the project for 12 months (in the first instance). Owing to the nature and scale of the work required, the impact of the changes are unlikely to be seen for at least three years; however, it is hoped that some benefits will be seen earlier, particularly around non-continuation as a result of a more inclusive approach to assessment. It is anticipated that the changes will improve outcomes particularly in relation to attainment and it is expected that this will support our targets and objectives around reducing the attainment gaps across the WP student cohorts.

A further key aspect to learning, teaching and assessment is in relation to those students returning to study following either a period of suspended study, or returning from a year in industry / abroad. We recognise that returning to study after a period away from peers and campus can be challenging for a variety of reasons and as a result have developed a project with a specific focus on supporting such students. Led by the Student Engagement Officer team, the project is being delivered over the 19/20 academic year and includes partnership working with students to understand their needs and challenges they face. The subsequent development of resources and materials aimed at supporting return to study in addition to managing needs of the student whilst spending time away from campus will take place over this time, with a view to full launch in the 2020/21 academic year.

Engagement monitoring and attainment

We introduced Tap-in attendance monitoring during the 2017-18 academic year, and engagement analytics have been developed and piloted during 2018/19 in addition to a Cause for Concern model that identifies students who start to disengage with their studies much earlier. As illustrated in internal and sector data, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are proportionately at greater risk of underachievement and/or non-continuation; hence, an early warning system improves our ability to put support measures in place much earlier. We are working in close partnership with academic areas and students to ensure our Cause for Concern model is fit for purpose in terms of enabling more timely engagement with those students who are at risk. Work is underway on the development of the Student Dashboard Visualisation to support students in understanding their own engagement and what this means for their future success and achievement, with supporting resources and materials they can access to further enhance their future success.

Work is also underway utilising data analytics to manage risk attributes and produce visualisations that enable ‘at a glance’ identification of students at risk, in addition to providing detailed information and predictions around those who may be at risk in the future. Improved data insights and a strengthened institutional model of academic support will enable more effective and informed conversations between

students and their academic supervisors enabling greater achievement. It is envisaged that prototype dashboards will be in place during 19/20 ready for full roll out in 2020/21.

Data insights

The University has been working on developing data maturity models and infrastructure. This will enable a more consistent and robust approach to data management, analysis and visualisation utilising HUMID with a view to improving how data is used across the institution. The WP HUMID database is being constructed during the summer of 2019 following successful development of the retention database during 2018. The aim is to pilot its use in conjunction with the 19/20 access and participation plan to enable any modifications or refinements to be made prior to full implementation at the launch of this plan in 2020.

As part of the wider institutional work, a data insights project has been established and is led by a member of the senior leadership team. The project includes a student data arm focused on the production of real time data on student engagement and achievement. The current focus of the student data element of the project is the development of reports, dashboards and alert systems. This will enhance our capacity and capability in the identification of students at risk of non-continuation from both academic and pastoral perspectives. Data models have been developed and work is ongoing to develop intelligent systems to allow for earlier detection of issues both within subject / academic areas and across groups of students who have particular characteristics or contexts, which may place them at higher risk of non-continuation, including those groups of students identified within our target groups. The aim is to have a system in place that highlights areas of concern / gaps in performance and enable identification as to whether it is a specific academic area or wider institutional issue, hence yielding a more targeted, specific action.

As we develop our data maturity, our aim is to develop a more personalised, student centred approach to engaging with students and highlighting specific support and relevant opportunities based upon an individual's need, context and ideally in the future, interests. This will clearly take time to develop since this is a large piece of work and hence a phased approach will be adopted. We will work closely with students as partners to develop our approach and infrastructure through a variety of routes including engagement with both the students union and the wider student body.

Foundation Year (FY) attainment and continuation

Identified as an area requiring attention, our FY support models have been developed to include introduction of new transition tutors aimed specifically at supporting FY students and those in particular who come in with non-traditional backgrounds, and frequently come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The FY tutors will work closely with academic support tutors, programme directors and student services to ensure tailored support is provided for FY students, acknowledging that within such a diverse range of learners and backgrounds that a single approach will not meet the needs of all, and in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Equality, diversity and Inclusion

Our University is committed to ensuring that we fully embrace the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in our daily practices, activities and policies. Our University is built on a philosophy that embeds fairness and equality into all areas of our work and at every stage of the student and staff life cycle. Our commitment to equality is at the heart of our mission and values as a modern international university.

We are committed to providing and maintaining an inclusive learning and working environment, where equality is promoted, diversity is valued and discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. In particular, we commit to embed equality and diversity across the campus, promote diverse and inclusive organisational

values and culture, and to enhance the diversity and inclusion experience of staff and students. This is reflected in our recognition as a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer, which reflects our ongoing commitment to working in partnership with the government and other organisations to provide the experience for our diverse campus community. Our Equality Scheme sets out how we will put these values into practice and the actions and activities we will take to uphold equality, prevent discrimination and promote greater understanding between the people in our community.

Commitments made by our University include adoption of the Race Equality Charter, which will specifically help concentrate efforts on widening participation from BME communities, improving the experience of BME students and reducing the attainment gap between white undergraduates and other ethnic minorities. The University is working towards a 2020 Race Equality Charter application and is concentrating efforts on understanding any barriers or issues experienced by BME students and working with students in developing actions to combat those issues.

We are a Stonewall diversity champion and our partnership with Stonewall provides the campus with additional support and expertise to enable LGBT students to reach their full potential. Stonewall have delivered training for University staff to develop greater understanding of LGBT issues and a Trans Awareness workshop has been provided for student focussed staff.

University of Sanctuary

The University became a recognised University of Sanctuary in 2018, and our Sanctuary Champions Network (SCN) continues to develop ways to support forced migrants, both in terms of access to higher education and within our local community. As part of this, we offer the following financial awards each year:

- Three competitively awarded scholarships for asylum seekers and those granted Discretionary/Limited Leave to Remain following an application for asylum, comprising a full tuition fee waiver, £2,000 study grant and a tailored package of additional support
- A fee reduction for all new entrants who are seeking asylum, or have been granted Discretionary/Limited Leave to Remain following an application for asylum, reducing their fees from the International rate to the Home/EU rate.

These awards are targeted at those seeking asylum rather than students with refugee status because the latter have access to student finance, so do not face the same financial barriers to access HE, however we also offer a tailored package of non-financial support for refugee students.

Strategic measures

Cross lifecycle

(1) Increased coordination

Many staff across the University of Hull are committed to improving access, success and progression of under-represented or disadvantaged students, which has resulted in a wide variety of initiatives. This has allowed innovation to flourish. However, we recognise that activity has not always been consistent across departments. Therefore, we intend to increase coordination across the University by introducing new, and developing existing forums for collaboration across the whole institution. For example:

- Outreach Steering Group – monthly meeting of managers across the directorate, representatives from finance, data analysis, the students' union and Directors of the Strategic Development Unit and Student Services.

- Access and Participation Plan Strategy Group – governance of the design, implementation and evaluation of the APP (Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor)
- Cross Faculty Outreach meetings (monthly) - this is a new group comprised of members of staff working in outreach or related roles across the University. Its remit is to increase dialogue and collaboration to support a coordinated, cohesive approach to outreach and to ensure the WP agenda is embedded throughout the institution at an operational level.
- Retention Steering Group - chaired by the University Registrar and Secretary and includes review of funding requests to support success and progression of WP students as part of the agenda. The group works closely with the strategic development unit to identify areas of priority in terms of retention and non-continuation. This group has informed the development of a dedicated space on the HUMID database providing latest data around retention / non-continuation.
- Widening Participation Steering Group – a new cross-university group chaired by the PVC Education. The group will meet regularly to bring strands of WP work together, monitor progress against our objectives and targets, review the impact of our activities, and identify areas requiring additional attention / action. The group will also be responsible for the compilation of annual monitoring / self-assessment returns to the OfS and will lead on activities such as the review of our existing financial support model.

(2) Federation of Colleges

The University of Hull Federation of Colleges is a partnership of nine HE in FE providers, all of whom have validated HE in FE provision with our University. The Federation fulfils its strategic aims of supporting socio-economic development across the Humber Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and other regional LEPs, associated Enterprise Zones and the wider region. The Federation partners have particular expertise in vocational and work-based learning, supporting learners and employers to develop higher-level skills. Several partners colleges are engaged with the two recently DFE designated Institutes of Technology (IoT) and the University is Anchor HE for one of these. At the heart of the network is the notion of new and relevant progression opportunities, backed by a high-quality assurance framework. The Federation members will also work together to develop Higher and Degree Apprenticeships with the development of the IoT and in line with the local LEPs' Industrial Strategies.

The University of Hull's validation of HE in FE colleges will support local area social/student mobility, particularly for many mature HE students who can study part-time whilst working. Their higher-level learning supports their employers, as well as facilitating promotion and progression into new jobs. Graduates from the HE courses also provide positive role models to young people in their colleges and communities.

(3) Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

As part of the University's commitment to providing a range of HE pathways, we currently offer a number of higher and degree apprenticeships. Currently, these are primarily offered in Business and Health subjects and range from level 5 to level 7. The University is further developing our apprenticeship offer, including two level 6 programmes in Operating Department Practice and Social Work. We recognise that apprenticeship programmes can be more appealing and pragmatic for students from widening participation backgrounds and as such often attract non-traditional student cohorts. The University also offers additional study skills support for students who require it.

(4) Care leavers, experienced care and estranged students

Our work around care leavers involves partnership working with our Schools and Colleges Liaison Service to identify prospective students to ensure that they transition well into our institution. We work in

partnership with York St John and The University of York to deliver a specific Care Leaver 'Introduction to HE' event for prospective and current students, staff and local authorities to encourage entry into HE and find out more about the support available at University. We have a dedicated contact within the student engagement officer team to provide advice for care leavers and estranged students and are working closely with current students to gain insights into the barriers / challenges they experience which will inform our practice going forward.

Access

We recognise a need to expand our evidence base for our delivery at the Access stage and we have already implemented steps to ensure this going forward (for example, increasing our requirements for narrative evidence and the development of our evaluation strategy). Our commitment to expanding our evidence is a key driver, as is evident throughout our plan, most notably in section 2 (Strategic Aims and Objectives) and section 3.3 (Evaluation Strategy).

(5) The Schools and Colleges Liaison Service

Access funding enables the employment of four, full-time outreach practitioners in the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service who proactively engage young people across the country in HE outreach activities, including:

- General HE IAG, such as routes into HE, Aspirational talks on HE, Budgeting
- Summer residentials
- Campus visits and tours
- Facilitating a network of student ambassadors from the University to engage with school children

Informed by evidence from dataHE (www.datahe.uk), a company commissioned by the University of Hull to provide further insight into trends for our intake of students, a new approach to schools outreach and engagement is currently in development, and will be in place by September 2021. This includes an overhaul of the outreach resources and a review of the way in which outreach locations are chosen. A proactive approach, informed by data, will be employed to ensure that the University is concentrating its efforts on the most under-represented groups within society, more specifically POLAR4 Q1 areas and areas with greater diversity will be prioritised. An impact-driven model of evaluation will ensure the outreach undertaken is having a positive effect on social mobility.

Using evaluation more effectively, and working with a range of school partners, the outreach resources will be updated to ensure they both complement and enhance the curriculum taught in schools. This work will commence in academic year 19/20 and continue as part of our reflective practice for the duration of this plan. This will not only help to raise attainment within schools, but will also help to bridge the gap between FE and HE, making the decision to study at university less onerous.

The schools outreach team will also explore the progression and destinations of learners. Using ambassadors and alumni, a new programme focussing on work experience, student life and graduate destinations will be implemented within core feeder schools and colleges. This programme is particularly targeted at young people from POLAR4 Q1 areas, as a consequence of insight that employment is a key priority for this group, who often hold a perception that University is not an end-goal, but as a stepping stone to a graduate career.

(6) Outreach funding

Through a funding request system, we will continue to offer funding for University departments or external institutions/ organisations to deliver outreach activities or projects. This system offers scope for innovation, collaboration, creativity and flexibility.

We have reviewed our funding request system in line with the new, streamlined strategic view of allocating Access funding for outreach work in the most appropriate and impactful way. As well as identifying and funding a core programme of activity, we will open a request 'window' to allow submissions of requests for activity outside the core provision. This will be implemented by September 2021. This allows for a breadth of provision, creativity and innovation and a steer towards identified gaps in outreach provision.

Additionally, it allows us to review a wide selection of activities at once, make more informed, contextual judgements, avoid possible duplication and thus, enable us to forward plan effectively. From this, we will be able to inform all stakeholders of all activities to be funded for the coming academic year.

The governance for this system will be via a monthly meeting of a steering group made up of managers across the directorate, representatives from finance, data analysis, student union and Directors of the Strategic Development Unit and Student Services. Activity Funding Requests must include narrative evidence to support the concept of the activity as well as a clear articulation of the target cohort. This ensures activity design is informed by the intended audience and is objective led. Decisions on the allocation of funding will be made on this basis, ensuring that all activities are underpinned by evidence. We have used the OfS Standards of Evidence to inform our approach for this measure.

Access funded work includes:

- Greenpower project: The Greenpower Education Trust aims to inspire young people to excel in STEM subjects through a unique challenge; to design, build, and race an electric car. For the past two years, the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service, together with the University of Hull Engineering department and Barnardo's Young Carers and Siblings Support Service, has supported a team of local Young Carers, aged 11 – 16 to design, build, and race their own kit car within the Greenpower project. The University is also an accredited Greenpower Centre of Excellence and is able to support schools and colleges in the region participating in Greenpower.
- Step Up, Move On: the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service, in partnership with the Hull and East Riding Children's University and the Hull Virtual School for Looked After Children runs the Step Up, Move On programme. The project aims to address 3 key areas that affect Looked After Children currently – educational attainment, careers advice and guidance and access to Higher Education. The project offers a tailored, sustainable, rolling programme offering looked after children the opportunity to engage with higher education, be further supported at school and be able to explore their careers options beyond work experience given in schools.
- Scarborough Community Sports Partnership: Led by the University of Hull North Yorkshire Partnership Hub (NYPH) with delivery support provided through the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service (SCLS), the 5-year Scarborough Community Sport Partnership (SCSP) project is a partnership between the University of Hull and two Scarborough-based, grass-roots sports clubs, Desapline Martial Arts and Dexters Surf School. Its vision is to enhance the social mobility and educational attainment of young people, as a result of their affiliation to sport based outreach around martial arts and surfing, through the development of cultural, social and sporting capital.
- Young Carers Residential: The University of Hull has now organised and delivered three successful residentials for Young Carers from Yorkshire and Humberside since 2014. Since starting in 2014, the residential has gained momentum each year, gaining more applications from young carers, engaging with more schools, and developing relationships with young carers organisations

- Year 7 Challenge Days: a sustained programme working with children and young people from the Humber region to help to further their knowledge and awareness of HE. The team initially engages with students in Year 6 and maintains contact with the young people through key points of their academic development until year 13.

(7) The Principal Partner Colleges Network

The Principal Partner Colleges Network is a focused, strategic partnership with key colleges in the area to enable a sustained programme of meaningful engagement with young people in our region from under-represented backgrounds. By offering long-term commitment to the 8 colleges, we hope to facilitate greater collaboration as part of a true partnership in which the University and the colleges work together to create an informed programme of outreach activities. This programme includes student activity, staff development and targeted investment in the development of resources with the aim of raising attainment and furthering knowledge of the higher education pathways and system. The current commitment to this project extends until 2021, at this point evaluative evidence will inform the future of this work (alongside ongoing annual reviews).

(8) Financial support

We are keen to maintain the successes in access to the University and consolidate our work for success and progression to enable us to make the advancements we have identified in those areas; consequently, we intend to adjust the current offer of scholarships and bursaries to reflect the foreseen funding decreases.

The University of Hull has evaluated the impact of its Financial Support package over a number of years. This has included qualitative analysis, with surveys and focus groups, and quantitative analysis, using the OFFA/OfS evaluation toolkit. Prior to the release of the toolkit we have used our own internal model. In all cases, the qualitative evaluation found that students had an overwhelmingly positive view of the Bursaries and Scholarships offered, but the quantitative evaluation failed to show any impact on continuation rates. We have used this evidence to inform our funding decisions. This is reflected in our decision to reduce spend on Financial Support, which began in our 2017/18 Access Agreement.

Our intention is to review our approach to spend on bursaries and scholarships and their impact. Based upon our own previous findings, sector evidence and suggestions made by the OfS in relation to bursary and scholarship spend, it is likely that we will propose an adjustment to our spend on bursaries and scholarships, and to repurpose monies towards success and progression activity and infrastructure. The review will take place during the 19/20 academic year and any changes will likely come into force for the 2021/22 academic year owing to commitments already being made for 2020/21.

We will however honour our commitments to awards made to continuing students, and that any changes to our offer would only be relevant to new students. This information will be made explicit to applicants and existing students for the purposes of clarity.

The University's offer of financial support for 2020-21 is outlined below.

Students with Low Residual Household Income (RHI) and/or from Areas of Low Participation

In 2020-21 our University will offer a £1,000 award to full-time and part-time students (on a pro-rata basis) with an RHI of less than £25,000.

Full-time students entering with a minimum of 112 UCAS Tariff Points from three A Levels or equivalent who also have an RHI below £42,875 or whose home postcode is in a POLAR quintile 1 or 2 region may instead receive our Attainment Scholarship Plus, worth £1,300 in the first year of study, or our Merit Scholarship Plus, worth £2,100 in their first year of study, if they are entering with 120 UCAS Tariff Points. By offering scholarships based on both household income and academic attainment, we aim to encourage academic achievement in a sector where unconditional offers have become increasingly prevalent. While EU students are currently eligible for our University's RHI-dependant awards, future eligibility for these awards is currently uncertain for EU students, due to the UK's decision to leave the European Union. As non-repayable statutory support is available to students from low household income families from Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, these students are not eligible for the above awards.

Our University will automatically assess students for their bursary and scholarship eligibility, using information provided as part of the student finance application process. In order to do this, students and their sponsors must agree to share their information with the university.

Hull York Medical School

Hull York Medical School students, registered either at the University of Hull or the University of York, will be eligible for the same Hull York Medical School Bursary, worth £2,400 per year for students with an RHI of less than £25,000. This bursary is awarded as cash, accommodation discount, or a self-selected combination.

(9) Contextual Admissions

The University has been running a pilot on contextual admissions in the academic year 18/19, which will be evaluated. The insight from this will be used to inform the University's policy on contextual admissions in the future. In addition, the University will be implementing a Gateway Year for Medicine from September 2019.

Medicine with Gateway Year

This programme is offered to local students with a WP background. The MB BS Medicine with a Gateway Year is a six-year programme. The Gateway forms the first academic year, and on successful completion students will automatically progress to our five-year MB BS Medicine course. The entry requirements are more achievable to some students than more traditional routes into medicine and includes lower A-level and International Baccalaureate (IB) grades and the acceptance of BTEC qualification in Applied Science as an alternative to A levels/IB.

The Gateway Year focuses on facilitating the transition from school or college to university, bringing scientific knowledge up to the required standard, and enhancing study skills whilst also teaching about professionalism and the NHS.

Success

Throughout the student lifecycle, we have a range of support mechanisms, initiatives and opportunities for specific target groups in addition to our wider student community offer. Primarily delivered through Student services via the student engagement and transition team and careers, we have developed our offer as a result of learning from our own experience as well as that from the wider sector. Our key areas of activity across success include the following;

(10) Signposting to support and communications

Following a review (undertaken by staff and students) of our own approach to providing information to students regarding support which is available, we are embarking on a major piece of work to ensure consistency of communication in relation to support which is available within the university. Information regarding what can be accessed where, and how different types of support can support study for different things in different ways, be they academic or non-academic related. The work is being undertaken in partnership with students and will follow a phased approach over the 19/20 academic year, commencing with early work to ensure information is collated and in a single space in readiness for the start of the academic year. This is of specific importance to all students but in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may require more in-depth or specific support than some of their less disadvantaged peers.

We are also undertaking a further piece of work during the 19/20 academic year to improve communications to students following an external review by the Southern Universities Management Service (SUMS) in 2018. The work will be underpinned by an institutional drive to improve communications and provide clarity through the appropriate use of language, and to ensure we use plain English and avoid jargon. This is of particular significance for a number of our disadvantaged students, in particular those who are first generation scholars and who may not be familiar with academic terminology, as is also the case with mature students who may have been out of education for some time.

(11) Dedicated Taster/Welcome Events

The university has engaged with taster days / welcome events for a number of years and of which feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees highlighting how useful the events have been to support preparation for, and transition into university.

We introduced tailored events for mature students over 6 years ago and their evident value and success led to the introduction of dedicated events for students (and their parents) on the autistic spectrum in 2016, and of which continues to be delivered prior to the start of the academic year. 19/20 will see the introduction of our new dedicated Foundation Year event as part of our ongoing commitment to improving success and continuation within the foundation year student intake.

We aim to build upon our success in this area and further extension of the model will take place in 20/21 to include specific events for care leavers and estranged students, part time students, student carers (including student parents) and those with specific learning differences.

We are also exploring the possibility of holding a specific event for students with a declared mental health condition as part of our ongoing work around mental health and wellbeing, with a view to introducing such an event for the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

(12) Financial support

Worth a maximum of £1,000 per year, the Humber Grant is offered to young adult carers, care leavers, estranged students, and other under-represented groups. The grant has been in place for a number of years, being extended during 2017/18 to formally include estranged students to reflect our ongoing commitment to those students who similar to care leavers, do not have the family support during their time at university. The grant has proved very successful and provides students with additional financial support to help reduce the impact hardship can have on access and success. To date the award has comprised of cash, book/resource packages and IT packages, however for the 19/20 academic year the

package has been extended to include home packs which contain essential living items such as kitchen equipment, bedding and other essential items to help make transition into university a little less stressful.

We are reviewing our communication strategy to ensure all eligible students are able to access the funds, through increasing the opportunities for self-declaration (UCAS/E-induction/Enrolment as part of our drive to increase disclosure within our disadvantaged student population) and via a bespoke E-Guide that highlights the support services Care Leavers/Estranged students can access whilst studying at the institution. We are working closely with current students to understand their experience of support available and their needs, and ascertaining how our students can help shape support delivered in the future.

Our University continues to fund the £200 contribution required for IT equipment on behalf of students in receipt of Disabled Student's Allowance. This has been a popular addition to our support offer, with students anecdotally reporting that the financial support has made a difference in that without it, they may not have been in a position to get the equipment they need to support their learning.

Our Hardship Support Fund is a limited fund for Home/UK students, and offers support to supplement their statutory funding entitlement and to assist in unforeseen circumstances. To be eligible, students must be registered as a Home/UK student and normally have received the first instalment of their student funding entitlement. EU students who have lived in the UK for longer than 5 years and receive maintenance funding from Student Finance England are also eligible to apply.

We acknowledge that during a period of suspension from study it can be challenging for a number of reasons, with finance being one. Students who have suspended their studies can apply to the Hardship Support Fund and will be assessed over an initial period of 13 weeks, and must be engaging with Health and Wellbeing Team, or other support services as appropriate to ensure all opportunities to provide support are offered during their period of suspension. The maximum amount a student can receive in any one academic year from the Hardship support Fund is £3000 for full time students and £1500 for part-time students.

(13) First generation scholar activity

The student engagement team undertook a piece of work during 2017/18 to encourage students to declare if they are first in family to attend university. Following this initial work, the team reviewed evidence within the sector and gained insight from our own FGS students to develop a package to support eInduction and welcome which would be useful in both their transition to, and journey through university.

We reviewed and enhanced our eInduction information and specific messaging / communication to FGS for the 18/19 academic year which resulted in the development of a bespoke information and specific welcome space for FGS. The space congratulates them on their success and highlights their existing cultural capitals, such as resilience - focusing on what they bring, not what they lack. The space also contains inspirational stories from previous FGS, highlighting a message of success from individuals who they are able to see themselves within, and is key to support belonging, affiliation and engagement within the university environment. As students have declared they are invited to join the FGS network and be part of the mailing list which currently has over 300 student members.

Our aim is to increase engagement with the network and hold specific events for students to come together and share their experiences, insights and views towards co-creation of resources, activities and support to enhance outcomes for first generation scholar students.

(14) Online Induction

Online induction is available for new and returning students smoothing transition into and progression between academic years. The platform supports identification of students with additional support requirements in addition to providing an extra route for identifying disadvantaged students. The platform provides access to a variety of information to support their transition to university and highlight support which is available, including access to our SpLD screener, University Service Finder and to be (re)introduced to the key staff and teams who will have a key role in their learning journey with us. We are currently working on the creation of an applicant area to enable students to access our support services sooner, and commence conversations with staff and other students to support transition much earlier in the student journey to create a sense of belonging with the institution. The aim is to have this in place ready for the 2020/21 application cycle, with a planned launch in the early spring of 2020.

(15) Online screener for SpLD

Pre 2016, we followed a highly labour intensive, time consuming approach to the screening of students for SpLD. Timeframes and waiting lists for screening were excessive which frequently meant that students were diagnosed late in their studies and hence targeted support had limited impact on outcomes. Our specialist tutor team developed a bespoke online screener which was launched at the start of the 2016/17 academic year. Since introducing the screener we have been able to identify students most likely to have a positive diagnosis of SpLD much earlier in the lifecycle, resulting in earlier DSA application and commencement of support.

Our work has shown that students are undergoing assessment by an educational psychologist much earlier in the academic year; in 2015/16 the peak levels of educational psychology assessments were in the second trimester, 2016/17 balanced across the year, and for 2017/18 the bulk of assessments occurred within the first trimester. All students are invited to undertake the screener pre-arrival as part of our online pre-arrival induction; they can also access the screener at any point during their studies, however we encourage early engagement to provide the greatest benefits.

Work has commenced on utilisation of the screener as a model of identifying skills deficits and working with the university skills team, we are identifying pre-arrival activities to help students prepare for study before arrival. It is envisaged that this will be in place ready for the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

(16) Educational psychology (EP) assessment and SpLD support

The university has funded EP assessments for a number of years, with assessors coming on to campus regularly to undertake assessments. We have found that students welcome the opportunity to be assessed for an SpLD, particularly in the applicant stage (whereby they are subsequently reimbursed once they enrol with us), in that it enables them to start getting the necessary support arrangements in place much earlier and be ready to commence their programme of study in the knowledge support arrangements are in place.

Since the introduction of the screener we have found that this coupled with an EP assessment provides an improved student experience which is underpinned by inclusion and accessibility, and significantly improves access to contextualised, specialist support through our team of SpLD tutors. As we develop our capability and intelligence surrounding the online screener, this will further inform our approach to early access to EP assessment and subsequent preparation for study for SpLD students over the summer in readiness for the start of the academic year.

Other support measures available from the 2020/21 academic year

- Provision of a structured framework of support for all students, with specific elements targeted at our disadvantaged groups, underpinned by inclusive practice and taking into account the principles of equality, diversity and socio economic background.
- Delivery of integrated, on-programme academic support for our disadvantaged groups with specific reference to induction/transition, engagement and progression.
- In-house inclusivity assistants to deliver support for students with disabilities identified as having additional needs not funded through the Disabled Student Allowance.
- Continued support for hardship and other financial support packages available to Home and EU undergraduate students.
- Supporting and encouraging disadvantaged groups to experience new opportunities and environments through study abroad and international summer school programmes.
- Staff aligned to specific groups of disadvantaged groups at an institutional level, developing frameworks to support individual groups, monitor performance of individual groups and deliver targeted events and communications highlighting dedicated events, opportunities and support infrastructures.
- Annual competitive institutional WP Graduate internship programme targeted at disadvantaged groups which delivers a fully integrated and supported development programme.

Progression

Specific progression activity is delivered primarily through Careers, Entrepreneurship and Study Abroad (CESA), and whilst the service area provides support for all students, they also play a significant role in enhancing prospects for WP students. During 2018/19, we have restructured the operational delivery of careers, resulting in each faculty having a dedicated team to support activity. The new faculty led approach enables greater insights into subject specific activity and requirements, along with improved planning for discipline specific events and employer engagement. Two additional resources have been created to support further integration of the WP agenda across all academic areas: a WP Employability Adviser and a WP Mobility and Placement officer role. A key area of focus for CESA is to ensure current provision is aligned to all WP cohorts to support improved outcomes for progression into employment or postgraduate study. The work within CESA is underpinned by robust data collection and will form part of the work to implement a new approach to the monitoring and evaluation of activities aimed at improving success and progression for WP students.

During trimester 2 each year, CESA commence work around “What next” initiatives aimed at supporting students to consider their future careers and / or academic aspirations, providing drop ins aimed at providing information and guidance on how to take the next steps.

(17) Broadening Horizons and Raising Aspiration

The University of Hull has many local students from WP backgrounds who often look to gain experience and work locally at the end of their studies. The often-limited nature of graduate opportunities in the Humber Region and the need for mobility in the increasingly global job market means it is essential to provide opportunities for WP students to gain work or study experience overseas and to consider postgraduate study as a viable progression opportunity. By providing additional opportunities to work and study abroad, students and graduates develop important employability skills and a wider comprehension of progression routes.

The University will continue to develop its internationalisation strategy in a number of different ways, including raising the profile of work and study opportunities. Whilst also establishing new projects and partnerships, the service will also look to expand its current offer, taking into consideration specific groups

e.g. BAME and Polar 4 Q1. We are looking to initially introduce some new offerings from the start of the 2019/20 academic year with more to follow (based upon understanding where maximal impact is achieved) for the start of the 2020/21 academic year. Our current programmes include:

- Aarhus Summer School – study and cultural tour
- United Through Sport (South Africa) – Project and cultural tour
- ColorinTech Immersion (Los Angeles) – BAME specific intensive employability programme
- Hull International Opportunities Programme: partnerships in countries including India, Thailand, Kenya, Romania and Sri Lanka

(18) Access to the Professions and contact with employers

CESA recognises the challenges faced by many graduates in securing access to the professions and professional networks. This can be particularly challenging for WP students, including white working class males, disabled students, BAME groups, first in family and care leavers. CESA have begun working to shorten the distance between WP students and employers, through continuing engagement, expansion and differentiation of careers related provision and employer engagement activities. This work will continue throughout the 19/20 academic year to help identify the most effective areas of activity and hence inform future practice. This will include activities such as:

- The Hull Bridge Employer Mentoring Programme: we are extending this programme to have a greater WP focus. For example, students will be provided with early access to opportunities to secure a mentor. We are working to gain further insight into the additional needs of these groups to inform our practice going forward and ensure opportunities are provided for students throughout the year.
- Employability/Employer Events (Careers Fairs): we are working on initiatives to increase engagement of WP cohorts with events, including roll out of a new approach to engagement. This has proved highly successful in law whereby WP students had protected access to employers who attended our Law convention. We identified our top 20 achieving WP students and invited them to a private lunch with the four largest recruiters attending the event. The event included networking opportunities, CV and recruitment advice and sector knowledge. The feedback from both students and law firms was overwhelmingly positive.
- Mock Interviews with employers: offered throughout the year providing additional access to 'blue chip' recruiters, to support wider and fairer access to the professions. A bespoke programme for WP students is being developed in an attempt to improve confidence, raise aspirations and improve employability outcomes for WP students and will be piloted over the 19/20 academic year in readiness for full implementation from the 2020/21 academic year.
- Work Experience, Internships and Graduate Jobs: The importance of work experience, including relevant professional experience or volunteering, contributes hugely to success in the graduate jobs market. We know that WP students often lack the necessary social and network capital to speculatively and proactively create opportunities to gain experience. In addition, we recognise that some WP cohorts often work in casual roles in order to support themselves through their studies and are less likely to be undertaking volunteering or unpaid professional experience related to their studies. CESA will look to expand on current provision during 19/20 to ensure WP students have access to appropriate experience opportunities.
- The Hull Internship Programme: established in 2015/16 to help unemployed and under-employed graduates gain work experience in the University. Opportunities are offered for 3-4 days per week for 2-3 months. Our flexible opportunities provide WP students with more options for those who are less likely to access more traditional opportunities for a variety of reasons. During 19/20 CESA will also look to develop:

- *Insight Days*: on site at employers to provide WP students with a unique insight into the world of work and the industry in question.
- *Micro Internships*: Shorter intense internship opportunities designed for WP students to gain valuable work experience within a short time frame.
- Opportunities Platform Management (Job Teaser): The online opportunities platform provides students access to jobs, internships and placements across Europe, with the added function of advertising opportunities exclusively to Hull Students. It also promotes and facilitates our career provision – events, workshops, seminars and group guidance and houses our online resources (CV Guides etc.) and is being adapted to be more accessible and attractive to WP students.
- The WP Student Careers Ambassador Scheme: short term, paid opportunities for WP students to engage in a meaningful piece of work within CESA in addition to gaining further insight into CESA service provision, delivery and strategy.
- WP Job Shop Internship: 12-month contract for a WP student to work closely with CESA to actively source and promote local part time and casual roles, utilising Job Teaser to fellow WP students.
- WP Graduate Internship Scheme: The current scheme offers 5 unemployed WP graduates the opportunity to undertake a 12 month full time internship in a University department. Both internship programmes are closely monitored with a yearlong programme of learning and development opportunities.

3.2 Student consultation

Discussion groups and one-to-one meetings were conducted with current undergraduate students at the University of Hull during April 2019 to discuss proposed inclusions in the APP. Each discussion group was comprised of students identified as a key target group in the APP; including recipients of financial awards, BAME and POLAR4 Q1. However, many of the characteristics were overlapping and students could have been categorised as belonging to more than one disadvantaged group and as such, they were often able to comment from more than one target group's perspective.

Additionally, we carried out short incepts with pre-entry students, specifically looking at attitudes to HE and perceived barriers. We will use this information as well as the information from the discussion groups above, to inform the introduction of a core offer of outreach. For example, students consulted from POLAR4 Q1 postcodes, all identified the lack of information and support in schools that did not have a strong tradition of progression into HE as a barrier to HE. We have therefore identified that schools with a high proportion of POLAR4 Quintile 1 students are a continued priority focus for our outreach work.

The consultation also provided insight into the barriers faced by BAME students at the Access stage, specifically around concerns about moving away from home and inclusivity. We have identified work with the University's Schools and Colleges Liaison service that will concentrate on working with BAME students from our Principal Partner College Network and schools in and around London to experience campus life at the university to help alleviate these concerns. Furthermore, the president of the SU has been working with colleagues across the institution on the BAME attainment gap over the last year and has highlighted areas requiring attention and focus, thus informing our strategic measures outlined earlier.

The specific purpose of the student consultation was to provide up-to-date insight from target groups to inform the access and participation work and planning rationale. A key focus of this consultation was around financial awards -specifically to explore findings of previous research highlighted within the OfS Regulatory Advice 6 documentation, which stated that financial support has been found to be less effective as a tool for attracting students and suggested it may be more appropriate to reduce non-continuation rates and attainment. As a direct result of the student consultation, we have committed to look at our

Scholarships and Bursaries more closely as to their effectiveness as reflected in our Targets and Investment plan.

As part of our ongoing commitment to care leavers, care experienced and estranged students, we have been working closely with students throughout the 18/19 academic year to gain insights into experience and the barriers they face, and inform how support infrastructures are constructed and delivered in the future. Within this, students have also contributed to the development of an eGuide for the 19/20 academic year aimed specifically at care leavers, care experienced and estranged students and have also informed the development and implementation of our Introduction to HE day in partnership with the University of York and York St John University. Our designated lead for care leavers, care experienced and estranged students will meet regularly with students and particularly at the start of the academic year to help support transition into university and ensure they are all aware of what support available to them and how it is accessed.

We have also been working with students returning from a break in study to understand in more detail the experiences of students who suspend their studies, and who often have poorer attainment and continuation rates. There are marked differences for BAME, POLAR4 Q1 & 2 and disabled students in that students from these groups are more likely to suspend their study and potentially have repeat years of study. Our engagement with students has shown that they feel 'distanced' and 'disconnected' from the University when on suspension, often unable to access support in the way they would like. They often feel 'underprepared' to return and 'unsupported' when they do. Working closely with students who have suspended, and students who want to suspend, we have been able to shape our practices and approaches in supporting students returning to study, and in particular those from groups of students who come under our target groups.

We have worked closely with our students with SpLD to gain insight into their experience at Hull, from applicant to student, pre-diagnosis to ongoing support, including their perceptions of student and staff understanding and the stigma around SpLD. Students have clearly identified the necessity for raised awareness around the profiles and needs of differing SpLDs, and how they impact on the student journey. The Transforming Programmes project will address inclusive curriculum design, and rather than bring attention to students with SpLD, it will support all students to achieve and attain better outcomes. Current students are working in partnership with the Learning Support Team within student services to ensure that our support arrangements and practices are fit for purpose towards improving the outcomes for students with SpLD, which is an a key area of focus for us.

Our FGS network mailing list has been used to promote opportunities targeted at WP students, such as careers events and projects. Students from the list are also invited to FGS network events, where the aim has been to provide support and boost connections. Through discussion, the network has also explored the barriers which face FGS, such as a lack of accessible information and knowledge of support mechanisms. In 2018-19 a working group from the network developed a glossary of HE terms to support other students in overcoming these barriers. The group was successful in obtaining funding through the Student Staff Partnership Scheme, and the glossary will be launched for 2019-20, benefitting students through the application process, during pre-arrival and on programme.

The University's Outreach Steering Group and Retention Steering Group, include representation from the Hull Students Union (SU). Sabbatical officers from the SU are actively involved in identifying and shaping our work in this regard. The University plans to involve students more in our Access and Participation work,

holding periodic focus groups, seeking opinion on our strategic measures and attitudinal shift to aspects of HE throughout their journey at the university.

We also commit to reviewing our evaluation framework and build in consultation with students at all stages of the student life cycle. In doing so, our aim is to ascertain how best to serve pre-entry and on-programme WP students.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

A growing culture of evaluation is being established and a commitment has been made to employing a new team to design a coherent programme for Access outreach. This team is currently reviewing the previous evaluation practices and outputs from providers, consulting on the practice of wider evaluation teams within the organisation, undertaking training on key software and exploring appropriate external networks we can join to ensure we have sufficient contextual understanding, support and skills to undertake the evaluation. It is planned that the team will be involved in regular evaluation conversations from planning to disseminating findings, guiding providers, and sharing wider learnings internally and externally. The Access Evaluation Manager now sits on the Outreach Steering Group.

From a success, attainment and progression perspective, work has begun on the development of an evaluation and monitoring framework and whilst there are aspects of overlap with the work of the evaluation and monitoring activity of our access and outreach activity, the outcome and impact measures are distinctly different and hence require a different approach. The aim is to develop and pilot the framework during the 19/20 academic year with a view to full implementation at the start of the 2020/21 year. This work will be primarily led by student services who have responsibility for student records, attendance and engagement monitoring, student finance, student support and careers and of which each has a significant role to play in conjunction with academic areas in improving outcomes for WP students. As our data capabilities continue to increase, performance of WP students will be more effectively monitored, intervention points recorded and impact measured as a result. The existing Retention Steering Group will have overall responsibility for the data and its dissemination, with academic and professional services areas taking responsibility for delivery against those areas identified as performing below our identified targets. The development work on the HUMID database will provide at a glance data and interventions allowing us to monitor performance and outcomes much more closely than has previously been possible, and will be an essential component of our evaluation and monitoring of success, attainment and progression.

We plan to build in yearly exploratory student consultation to inform wider programme rationale with current and prospective students across all aspects of access, success and progression. Changes to the Activity Funding Request (AFR) form will require providers to more clearly articulate narrative evidence for their activity, state well-defined objectives and short-term goals that can then go on be mapped for monitoring purposes and carried through to focus any evaluation.

In designing our approaches to evaluation, we have been guided by the Access and Participation Standards of Evidence guidance on the types of evidence most appropriate to different programme categories. Having conducted some reviews of previous provider led evaluation reports, we decided that our strategy needs to be led by us stipulating our needs to providers, ensuring greater consistency in our questions and by taking the analysis/reporting in-house so we can impartially triangulate feedback and look at the bigger picture.

Drawing on evidence and experience of our NCOP evaluation work over the last two years, we have decided to use the Network for Evaluation and Researching University Participating Interventions (NERUPI) framework when considering both the design and evaluation of our access and participation activities. The

NERUPI framework is well established and supports institutions to assess the impact of our initiatives to inform future practice. The nature of the framework encompasses both evaluation and activity/intervention design, therefore embedding the framework supports strong cohesion between these elements (evaluation and design). The framework sets our objectives and learning outcomes for widening participation activities which can be used to underpin their design. These outcomes are grouped into different levels, which span the whole student life-cycle. This means that consideration of evaluation will be embedded from the concept and design stage of activities. This will enable ongoing reflective practice in which learning and findings from the evaluation are not lost, but are used to shape future delivery.

Activity Funding Requests are used as part of the approvals system to use access and participation funding for activities or projects aimed at improving access, success and progression for disadvantaged groups. As part of the process, a full proposal is submitted which, going forward, must demonstrate narrative to support the concept/design. This is an integral part of the AFR submission template, meaning that consideration of how evidence and evaluation findings inform the project design is fundamental to the decision process when allocating funding to activities/projects. Another essential dimension of the Activity Funding Request submission template is the clear identification of the target cohort and articulation of objectives. This ensures that there is consideration at the outset of who the activity is intended for and what it is intended to achieve.

An overview of our current work-in-progress evaluation strategy is included in the appendices.

The University of Hull is a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) membership service which assists Higher Education Institutions in England to target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activity. Being part of the HEAT service allows us to share the costs of a monitoring and evaluation system and it also 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 to inform outreach planning and assess impact.

By working collaboratively within HEAT, we can critically reflect on our approach to building an evidence-based practice. HEIs who subscribe to HEAT have developed a student data tracking system and a set of reports which allow annual tracking of outreach participants longitudinally from Key Stage 2 data through to entry to HE, postgraduate study and employment. Using these reports the University of Hull can assess the relationship between outreach programmes, disadvantage, attainment and patterns of progression into HE. The HEAT student tracking studies allow the monitoring of applicants and entrants to other HEIs and to HE in FE settings thus we are able to assess the contribution that our outreach is making to reducing the broader sector progression gaps and not just our own.

Implementation of our evaluation plan will include tracking of students using the HEAT database, whereby we will supply deliverers with a template and we will stipulate in the AFR form the role and requirements of providers in ensuring we can access the data we need for our evaluation of pre-entry interventions.

We expect to share findings in a variety of forums inclusive of the Access Funding and Support Office, Student Services Directorate, Outreach Steering Group, Retention Steering Group and wider cross-institution evaluation teams with the differing purposes of raising awareness of evaluation, feeding back on success of activities and sharing learnings.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Our access and participation plan and the progress made against our identified targets will be subject to regular review and challenge by our newly implemented WP steering group, chaired by the PVC for education. Each year the group will set clear priority actions and a plan of work based upon our performance, and will also undertake close monitoring of the access and participation plan. The steering group will report periodically to the University's Executive.

The introduction of HUMID will enhance the availability of real-time student data to inform monitoring of delivery against the APP targets. Improved data insights will enable us to more easily assess current performance and adjust practice accordingly. In the event of a worsening in performance, clear action and implementation plans will be drawn together and progress monitored by the WP steering group.

The WP steering group will monitor data within the HUMID space regularly, recognizing that some data sets are only available at key stages of the year, following stages in the academic year and student lifecycle. As we work towards increasingly integrated systems and data, it is hoped that more data will be available to inform us of progress at more regular intervals. For example, the inclusion of data related to attendance and engagement; whilst not actual achievement and continuation (such as is obtained following assessment and progression stages) data surrounding attendance and engagement can provide proxy measures providing us with an indication of student activity against expected behaviour "norms". This information will be used in conjunction with a growing evidence base produced by our evaluation programme, which will enable reflective practice. Earlier detection of potential issues for specific groups of students will provide the opportunity for earlier intervention and increased engagement with students to understand any additional challenges they are facing, either as an individual or as a result of their particular disadvantage or as a result of intersectional disadvantage.

In addition to the WP steering group, two further groups report directly into the WP steering group, namely our Outreach Group and retention steering group. The Outreach group is chaired by the Head of Access, Funding and Support, and is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of all pre-entry initiatives. The Retention Steering Group, chaired by the University Registrar and Secretary, is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of success and progression initiatives. Both groups have an operational role in terms of monitoring activity and spend as well supporting the main WP steering group in the identification of priority themes and activities.

Building our pool of data regarding delivery of our outreach activities and tracking participants' engagement through HEAT will facilitate enhanced monitoring, especially at the Access stage. Whilst we have not set targets specifically related to the Access stage of the life-cycle, we are committed to maintaining our performance in this area. Data and reports from HEAT will be a key indicator for the WP Group in monitoring this. Whilst the University of Hull receives reports on its own outreach participants from the HEAT membership service, it is also able to aggregate its data with other members. This enables the membership, as a whole, to interrogate the intersections of multiple combined outreach participant characteristics, taking into account research which suggests that characteristics often combine to increase under-representation.

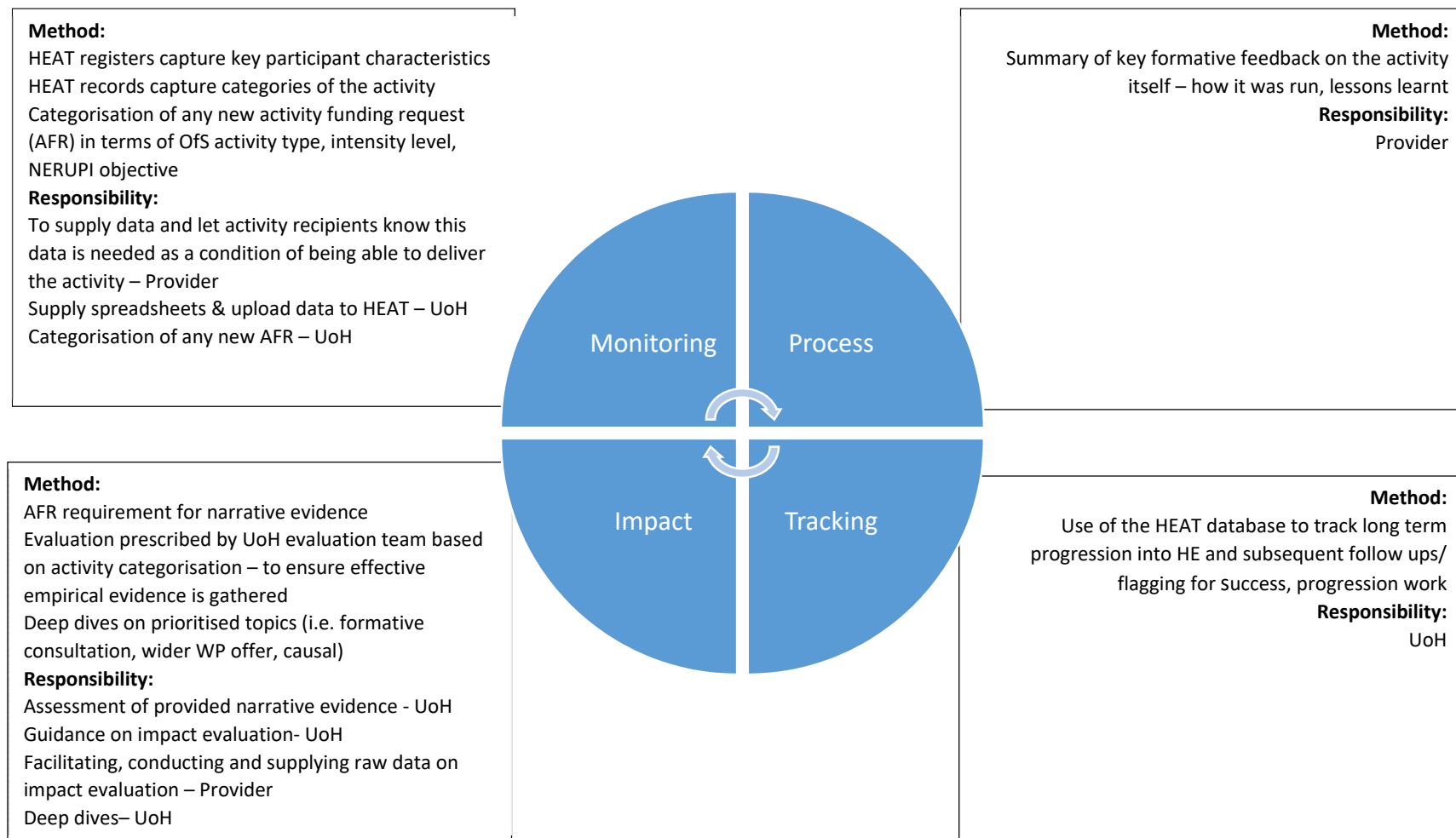
Students have been consulted as part of the development of our strategy outlined in this document. In addition to this, student union representatives form part of the groups outlined above, which steer our delivery of the APP. Furthermore, we intend to conduct student focus groups to inform alterations to practice as well as working closely with students as part of the recently introduced student-staff

partnership group on the co-creation of activities and initiatives to ensure representation across the student body.

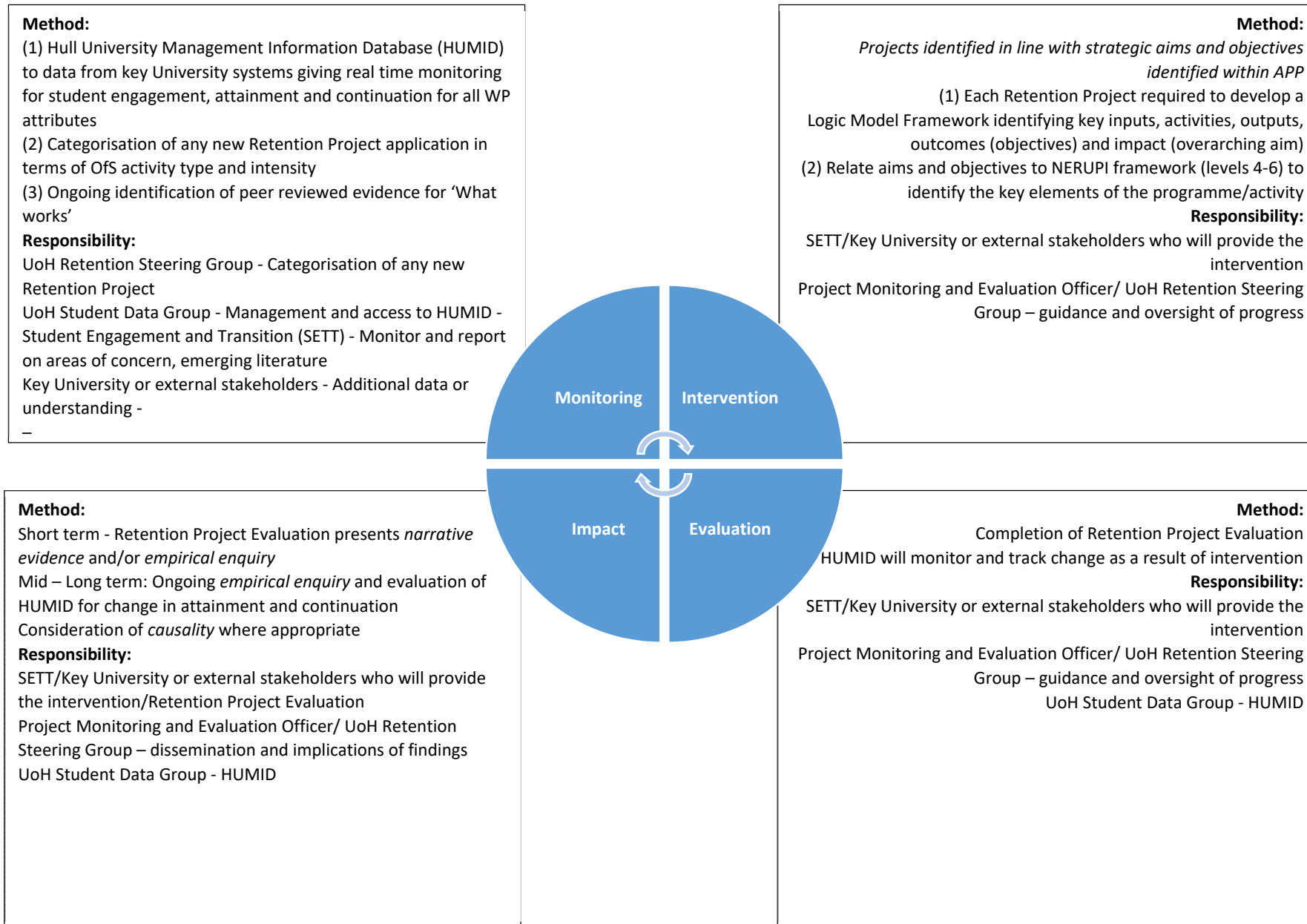
4. Provision of information to students

Our University publishes full information on its fees and the financial support offered to disadvantaged groups on our website, through our prospectus and via individual communications. This includes highlighting that fees may be subject to permitted inflationary increases, and details of the eligibility criteria and awarding processes for financial support offered by our University. Information is provided on the statutory support available to students on its website and via individual communications. Signposting is also provided around the potential impact of financial support on state benefits. Our University's Access and Participation Plan will be published on its website, alongside all previous Access Agreements.

Annex A: Access Monitoring and Evaluation



Annex B: Success and Progression Monitoring and Evaluation



Annex C: Theory of Change



Annex D: Correlation of Strategic Measures with Aims

Stage	Strategic Measure Number	Strategic Measure	Relevant Aim(s) (Reference numbers align to section 2.2 and our Targets and Investment Plan)
Cross lifecycle	1	Increased coordination	All – increasing coordination to enable a consistent approach, facilitate sharing of best practice and sharing innovative ideas, and to contribute to a better informed strategic overview of APP work across the whole institution
	2	Federation of Colleges	Support Widening Participation Access, Success and Progression in our region
	3	Higher and Degree Apprenticeships	Supports our performance at the Access stage. PTS_4 / PTS_5 / PTP_1
	4	Care leavers, experienced care and estranged students	Supports our performance at all stages for this group. This group has not been identified for a specific aim due to focus on greater gaps and small datasets to inform our assessment of performance
Access	5	The Schools and Colleges Liaison Service	Supports our performance at the Access stage.
	6	Outreach funding	Supports our performance at the Access stage.
	7	The Principal Partner Colleges Network	Supports our performance at the Access stage.
	8	Financial support	Supports our performance at the Access stage.
	9	Contextual Admissions	Supports our performance at the Access stage.
Success	10	Signposting to support and communications	PTS_1 / PTS_2/ PTS_3/ PTS_4/ PTS_5 / PTP_1 / PTP_2
	11	Dedicated Taster/Welcome Events	PTS_3 / PTS_4
	12	Financial Support	PTS_1
	13	First generation scholar activity	PTS_1 / PTS_5 / PTP_1
	14	Online induction	PTS_1
	15	Online screener for SpLD	PTS_3
	16	Educational psychology assessment	PTS_3
Progression	17	Broadening Horizons and Raising Aspiration	PTP_1 / PTP_2
	18	Access to the Professions and contact with employers	PTP_1 / PTP_2