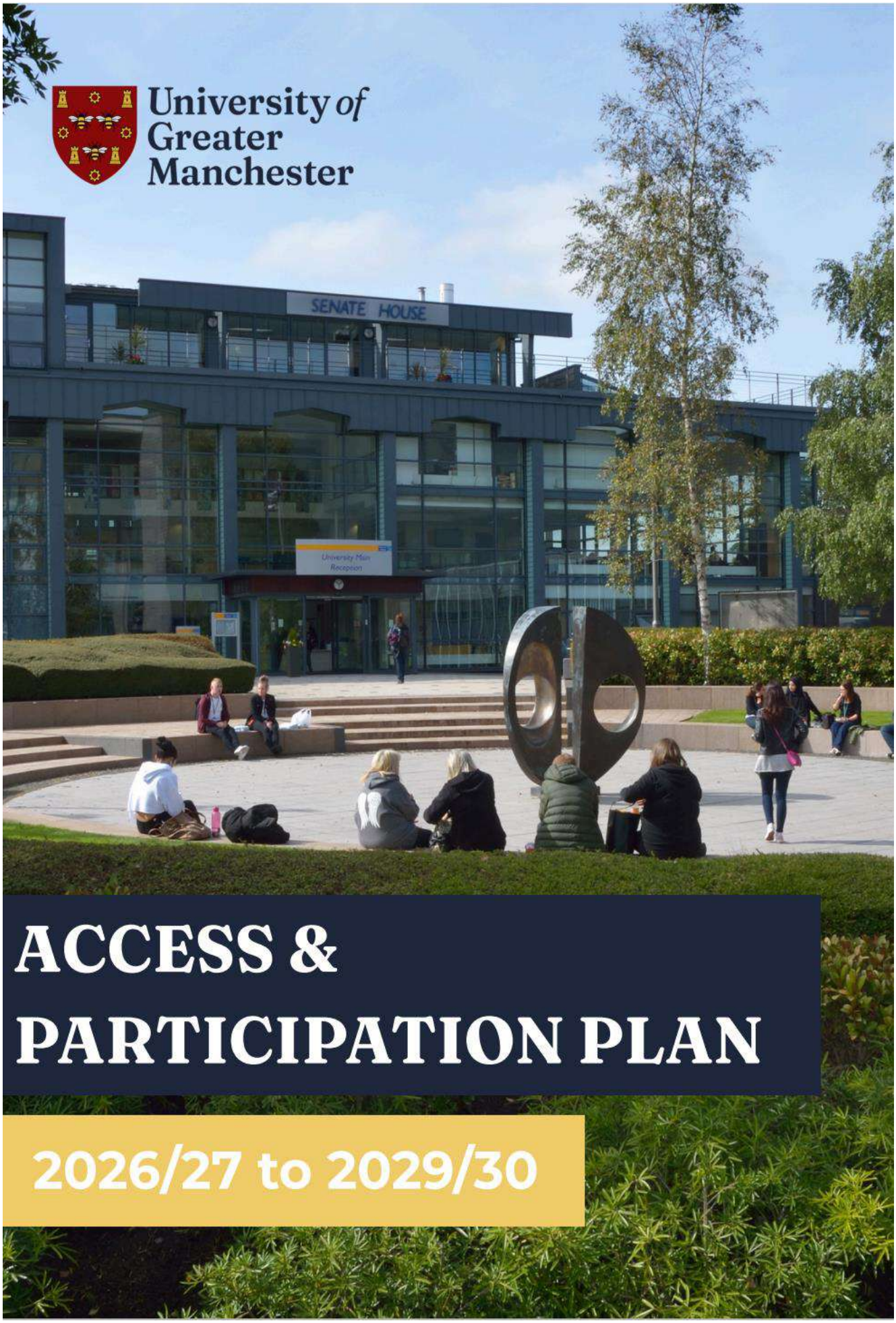


ACCESS & PARTICIPATION PLAN

2026/27 to 2029/30

University of Greater Manchester
Access and Participation Plan 2026-27 to 2029-30

Introduction and strategic aim

The University of Greater Manchester (UGM) is a medium-sized Teaching Intensive, Research Informed (TIRI) institution with a distinct emphasis on professional and vocational education. We provide Equality of Opportunity for all, especially those whose educational or family background has not easily enabled them to progress into HE. Around 95% of our students have one or more characteristics most likely to indicate risk to equality of opportunity as defined in the EORR. As the data in Annex A shows, we have particularly high proportions of Mature (peaked at 73%), Asian (18%), Black (19%) and Free School Meal (28%) students, and the intersections of student characteristics from the OfS APP Dashboard show over every intersection of characteristics, that the institution is significantly ahead (higher student proportions) of the national values. This has been a long-standing tradition, with the University's history dating back to the foundation of the Bolton Mechanics' Institute in 1825 – one of the first to be established in the UK.

Hence the mission of the University is centred on widening access and participation to higher education and enabling success, underpinned by the TIRI (teaching intensive, research informed) philosophy.

The institution conducts applied research and knowledge exchange which informs the curriculum and our pedagogy, but it is first and foremost dedicated to facilitating student success through the delivery of excellent teaching and learning, as evidenced through our TEF Gold Student Experience rating (Silver Overall).

Our next innovation will be the introduction of 'The Greater Manchester Way' (GMW), providing an immersive, flexible learning experience with shorter, more focused five-week module structure for most students, allowing them to study just one module at a time, covering module content more thoroughly and removing the pressures of end-of-semester assessment bunching. TIRI will be enhanced to become TIRIAE (teaching intensive, research informed, assessment enabled). Evidence[1] demonstrates this approach has delivered significant improvement to student performance especially to those students facing greatest risk to equality of opportunity.

There are approximately 6,800 students pa who will be covered under this Plan (both Taught by the University or Registered with Partners). The number of apprentices has grown steadily from under 200 in 2017-18 to over 1,200 students. As noted in the University's successful OfS Wave 3 Funding Competition bid to increase equality of opportunity in Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships, plans are in place for this to continue to rise, demonstrating an example of UGM's commitment to developing diverse pathways into and through Higher Education.

However, the University's contribution to widening participation extends beyond the University itself. It incorporates Bolton College as part of its University Group, a general Further Education College which is both geographically and strategically closely aligned with the University, and with similar student characteristics, having over 60% of learners from a widening participation postcode area, with no significant gap in achievement to their peers; and around 48% of learners from a

[1] Supporting the academic success of underrecognised higher education students through an immersive block model (2024) https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2424157
Plus other references contained with Annex B

BAME group (of those who declared) who have been consistently outperforming their White British peers in achievement. Alliance Learning is also part of the Group, a well-established training provider based in Bolton that delivers Apprenticeships and Commercial Training Courses to businesses throughout the North-West. The QUEST Multi Academy Trust (MAT), a Church of England Schools Trust, is a Partner Member of the University Group, and incorporates the University Collegiate School, a Baker Dearing Trust Free School for pupils aged 11-18 co-located on the University main campus, together with 4 primary schools and 2 nurseries in Wigan.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Annex A provides details on the process and analysis undertaken (including their various data sources) to identify the key risks to equality of opportunity and student groups with indications of risk. In summary:

- Analysis of the University's data split by student characteristics (using the OfS APP Dashboard[2], internal data, the OfS Associations Between Characteristics of Students (ABCS)[3] and local/regional data) identified those particular groups that were underperforming at different stages of the student lifecycle, compared to both the national level and their university comparator characteristic, and ranked according to the volume of students at the University within that particular group. Intersectional analysis was undertaken to identify if there were any sub-groups driving the performance, which proved not to be significant. The confidence interval charts shown within Annex A gave assurance that these were appropriate groups to target.
- These target areas were mapped onto those characteristics included within the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register[4] (EORR) that are most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity, and onto the particular risks associated with those characteristics in the EORR.
- The identified risks themselves were then reviewed and classified as either High or Low priority as shown in the table below. This classification was confirmed via consultation with current students at the University (through APP Student Focus Groups comprised of students from the targeted populations) and with the Students' Union, who confirmed the risks identified are particularly impacting students.

Mapping of Target Areas / Student Characteristics against EORR Risks / Ranked

		Risk at this University: Low, High											
		Access					On Course						Progr
		EORR1	EORR2	EORR3	EORR4	EORR5	EORR6	EORR7	EORR8	EORR9	EORR10	EORR11	EORR12
Target Area / Student Characteristic	**Performance**	Knowledge	IAG	Perception	Success	Choice	Ac Support	Personal	MH	Covid	Cost	Capacity	Progression
Young at Risk - Access (absolute number)	Gap Young to National = -35% UoB historically has 95% from risk char.	H	H	H	L	L							
Asian - Cont	Gap to National = -7.8 Gap to UoB White = -3.6						H	H					
Asian - Compl	Gap to National = -14.4 Gap to UoB White = -8.8						H	H					
Asian - Att	Gap to National = -17.4 Gap to UoB White = -18.8						H	H					
Black - Att	Gap to National = -14.1 Gap to UoB White = -27.2						H	H					
FSM - Cont	Gap to National = -6.9 Gap to UoB No FSM = -4.7						H	H	L	L	H	L	
FSM - Compl	Gap to National = -13.4 Gap to UoB No FSM = -12.4						H	H	L	L	H	L	
FSM - Progression	Gap to National = -8.9 Gap to UoB No FSM = -8.8												H

[2] Access and participation data dashboard - Office for Students
[3] Associations between characteristics of students - Office for Students
[4] Equality of Opportunity Risk Register - Office for Students

Hence this identified seven risks which the University will seek to address for the target student groups, namely: 1. Knowledge and Skills; 2. Information and Guidance; 3. Perception of Higher Education; 6. Insufficient academic support; 7. Insufficient personal support; 10. Cost pressures; 12. Progression from higher education.

The EORR has provided greater insight into the risks these groups may face.

Due to the nature of our students, with virtually all having one or more characteristics that are most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity, they are especially susceptible to these particular risks. Their social background may result in them initially not having the same preparation for Higher Education (1, 2, 3) and for progression to graduate-level employment (12) to those students elsewhere; they are likely to have many conflicting pressures (10) and many conflicting demands upon their time; they are likely to need enhanced levels of support (7, 8) to help them to succeed. Nevertheless, we will support our students to achieve their best possible outcome, recognising that success for each individual will relate to their own particular circumstances. Objectives have been developed (below) to address these risks, with associated targets, and three intervention strategies formulated to deliver them. The risks have informed the intervention strategies and mitigations to minimise them.

The reasons the remaining risks were counted as Low are that the University is highly inclusive, actively seeking to support students' application success (4), choice of course types (5), and providing equitable access to university resources (11) whatever their background and circumstances, with most living at home. It offers extensive mental health (8) and other support to students, including any legacy issues from the pandemic (9).

Objectives

Obj1: The University will increase the volume of students entering Higher Education with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity (as defined in the EORR) by 2029/30 (as demonstrated in PTA_1) by working through the Equality of Access Intervention Strategy to improve potential students' knowledge and skills, information and guidance to help them develop ambition and to feel more able to apply.

This objective/target is purposely expressed in absolute volume terms rather than as a percentage. As approximately 95% of our students already fall into this category, it is meaningless to change the proportion of our intake, what is needed to improve the opportunities open to such students is to increase the overall number entering Higher Education.

Obj2: The University will work with Asian students to improve their performance in achieving a good degree (and in staying on course prior to that), and with Black students in achieving a good degree by 2029/30 (as demonstrated though PTS_1-4) ensuring sufficient and where appropriate, tailored personal and academic support for Black and Asian students together with a new, more accessible approach to teaching, learning and assessment, as delivered through the GMW block teaching model.

Obj3: The University will offer sufficient academic and personal support to students previously eligible for Fee School Meals to boost their confidence, skills and experience, to help them improve course completion and progression to a graduate-level job (or equivalent) by 2030 (as

demonstrated in PTS_5-6 and PTP_1) via our various support mechanisms (including financial support when required and appropriate, to help with genuine cost pressures), through the GMW and Career Passport interventions.

Note: The interim milestones shown in Annex 3 (FIT) take account of the phasing and lead times for development of intervention strategies and the cohort start dates that will be affected by those interventions, as identified in the 'Description and Commentary' column of that spreadsheet. It is the intention that these interventions will run beyond the life of this plan and so the anticipated improvements will continue further beyond the 2029/30 targets shown, particularly for the longer-term measures such as completion and progression, whose cohorts may only experience part-effect of the plan's interventions.

Mapping of Objectives / Targets and EORR Risks against Intervention Strategies

		Access			On Course			Progr
		EORR1	EORR2	EORR3	EORR6	EORR7	EORR10	EORR12
Objectives	**Targets**	Knowledge	IAG	Perception	Ac Support	Personal	Cost	Progression
Obj1: Volume at Risk entering HE	PTA_1: Young at Risk - Access	IS1	IS1	IS1				
Obj2: Supporting BAME students to attainment	PTS_1: Asian - Cont				IS2	IS2		
	PTS_2: Asian - Compl				IS2	IS2		
	PTS_3: Asian - Att				IS2	IS2		
	PTS_4: Black - Att				IS2	IS2		
Obj3: Supporting FSM students to progression	PTS_5: FSM - Cont				IS2	IS2	IS2	
	PTS_6: FSM - Compl				IS2	IS2	IS2	
	PTP_1: FSM - Progression							IS3

The Intervention Strategies identified in the body of the table (described in the next section) are:

- IS1: Equality of Access
- IS2: Greater Manchester Way
- IS3: Career Passport

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Equality of Access

Objectives and targets

Obj1: The University will increase the volume of students entering Higher Education with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity (as defined in the EORR) by 2029/30 (as demonstrated in PTA_1) by working through the Equality of Access Intervention Strategy to improve potential students' knowledge and skills, information and guidance to help them develop ambition and to feel more able to apply.

> **Target PTA_1:** To increase the absolute number of Young student entrants (including Apprentices) with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity (as defined in the EORR) from **1,045** (2022/23) to **1,330** for 2029/30 entrants.

Risks to equality of opportunity

EORR1. Knowledge and Skills: Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

EORR2. Information and Guidance: Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their Higher Education options.

EORR3. Perception of Higher Education: Students may not feel able to apply to Higher Education, or certain types of providers within Higher Education, despite being qualified.

Related objectives and targets

As this relates to the recruitment of students with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity, which includes Asian, Black and FSM, those students will then subsequently feel the impact of the other objectives and targets included within this plan.

Related risks to equality of opportunity

As noted above, this indirectly relates to the other objectives and targets within the plan, and so to risks: 6. Insufficient academic support; 7. Insufficient personal support; 10. Cost pressures; 12. Progression from Higher Education.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Partnership with pre- and post-16 organisations (e.g., Schools; Colleges / 16-18 Providers; Boys Brigade) (Targeting of existing activity and enhanced activity)	• Partnerships between the UGM and key FE and sixth form colleges with high proportions of target students, to develop networking, staff CPD and course and portfolio development. • Y12 taster days on campus for college /16-18 Provider students with a recognisable "brand" for each subject grouping, for example, "Highways to Health Care", "Getting down to Business" & "Murder on Campus" (Law linked), providing an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a subject area and gain an understanding of what it would be like to study that subject in higher education. • Y10 and Y11 Academic taster days on campus for School students, plus 10 x campus visits on campus with up to 30 students (up to a total of 300 students per year) • Develop a local and national HE transitional programme with Boys Brigade in England and Wales for young students with at least one characteristic of EORR risk with over 1,000 'Explore & Plan' and 'Plan & Become' badges issued	Staffing and non-pay resource in Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Team attributed to Equality of Access Strategy as follows: 1,173 days per annum = £271,592 2% of Academic staff time = £665,665 1% of Professional staff time = £198,939 (Including Evaluation staff 0.2 FTE) Non-staff costs of delivering activity = £605,150	• To increase the numbers of successful applications to university from young students with at least one characteristic of EORR risk. • To provide improved support to students in planning their transition into higher education, including developing their own skills, values, interests and abilities, their academic self-efficacy, and how this relates to their career aspirations; and improved ability to make well informed decisions and confident choices about studying in HE. • To support student attainment raising whilst at schools and colleges. • To support development of the UGM academic	IS2

			portfolio in response to learner need.	
Aspire (new activity)	• School of Arts & Creative Technologies: four post-16 (Y12) Creative Arts taster days for students from under-represented backgrounds to help them understand the realities of studying a Creative Arts and Technology course as well as the admissions process. • Up to 800 students per year		• To increase the numbers of successful applications to Arts & Creative Technologies courses from students with at least one characteristic of EORR risk. • Increased subject knowledge and confidence to succeed. • Increased positive engagement with HE academic staff.	
Success4Life (existing activity)	• Programme to support Care Experienced young people learn more about Higher Education, alongside building key transferrable lifelong skills such as teamwork, communication, confidence and problem solving, recognising the smaller percentage of Care Experienced young people accessing HE (Civitas reference below)		• To increase the number of local care experienced learners progressing to HE • To increase local care experienced learners' knowledge about HE and attitude towards education. • To positively increase local care experienced learners' transferable	

			‘soft-skills’ and self-confidence.	
Applicant Day Experience (enhanced activity)	• Programme of introductory support to applicants and their families, to build the confidence of young students with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity.		Participating students: • Have good awareness of the UGM support mechanisms and feel confident in their ability to succeed at the University. • See UGM as a place for them, believing they could fit in academically and socially. • Can make well informed decisions and confident choices about studying in HE.	
Open Event Incentive Programme (new activity)	• Individuals with identified risks of progressing into HE (First in Family, in receipt of FSMs etc) will be given the opportunity of securing the equivalent of additional UCAS points for entry to UGM (8 points – i.e., equivalent of one grade) if they attend an UGM open event or applicant day and complete a short assignment (from 2026/27 Entry)		• Increased positive engagement with HE. • Increased confidence and successful application to UGM. • Increased motivation and sense of belonging.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The predicted spend for IS1 is £1741k (inclusive of evaluation) in the first year of the plan with a 4-year total of £7247k

Summary of evidence base and rationale

EVIDENCE	REFERENCES
Equality of Access Promotion of opportunities in schools and colleges can influence the choice to progress into HE. Recognition of the influence of key players in the lives of young people including their peers, parents, teachers, and other influencers. Disparity between student who are disadvantaged or from the most deprived areas, progressing into HE when compared to their peers Students from deprived backgrounds tend to identify informal information sources as more helpful than formal in decision-making. Family perceptions and parental expectations of post-school destinations are critical to shaping young people's perceptions of the risks and benefits of attending HE.	Campbell, L. A. and McKendrick, J. H. (2017) Beyond aspirations: deploying the capability approach to tackle the under-representation in higher education of young people from deprived communities. Studies in Continuing Education, 39(2), 120-137. The Sutton Trust. (2021). Universities and Social Mobility: Summary Report. Retrieved from: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Universities-and-social-mobility-final-summary.pdf Office for Students. (2022, April). Insight brief 13: Schools, attainment and the role of higher education. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd782ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief- 13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf Office for Students (2020, July) Strategic relationships with schools and raising attainment. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/strategic-relationships-with-schools/advice/ Gov.UK (2024, October) Widening participation in higher education. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education Young F. and Lilley D. (2023, Sept) Civitas – Breaking the Care Ceiling https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/breaking-the-care-ceiling/ Thiele, T., Pope, D., Singleton, A., Snape, D. and Stanistreet, D. (2017) Experience of disadvantage: The influence of identity on engagement in working class HEPI Policy Note 43, (June 2023) The disconnect between quality and inequality: An analysis of the gaps in educational outcomes achieved by free school meal- eligible students in English higher education. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-disconnect-between-quality-and-inequality.pdf

Evaluation[5][6][7][8]

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Partnership with pre- and post-16 organisations	Increased applications to HE and student preparedness to enter HE Improved student attainment at school / college UGM portfolio responsive to learner need	Type 1 – Narrative for partnerships and portfolio Type 2 – Empirical for Taster Days Pre and post attitudinal surveys with learners, teacher evaluation and use of data tracking to determine access to HE by participants.	Interim evaluation after first intake cycle under the plan, March 2028 to University Committees and Staff Conference September 2028. Dissemination at Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group and FACE Networks (or similar) during 2028-29 Final evaluation at end of plan to be published on the University website and OfS repository with case study on the Intervention Strategy to TASO during 2031
Aspire	Increased applications to Arts & Creative Technologies courses, with improved subject knowledge, confidence and engagement	Type 2 – Empirical Pre and post attitudinal surveys with learners, teacher evaluation and use of data tracking to determine access to HE by participants	
Success4Life	Increased local care experienced learners in HE Improved local care-experienced learners' transferable 'soft-skills' and self-confidence.	Type 2 – Empirical Behavioural skills pre and post, teacher activity, reflective activities for learners and use of data tracking to determine access to HE by participants.	
Applicant Day Experience	Improved knowledge about UGM, to enable confident study choices	Type 2 – Empirical Use of data tracking to determine access to HE by participants	
Open Event Incentive Programme	Increased engagement, applications to UGM, motivation and sense of belonging	Type 2 – Empirical Use of data tracking to determine access to HE by participants	

Intervention strategy 2: The Greater Manchester Way

Objectives and targets

Obj2: The University will work with Asian students to improve their performance in achieving a good degree (and in staying on course prior to that), and with Black students in achieving a good degree, by 2029/30 (as demonstrated though PTS_1-4) ensuring sufficient and where appropriate tailored personal and academic support for Black and Asian students together with a new more accessible approach to teaching, learning and assessment, as delivered through the GMW block teaching.

> **Target PTS_1:** To raise the Continuation rate of Asian students from **81.8%** (2021/22 4-year aggregate) to **85%** for 2028/29 entrants (continuing into 2029/30).

[5] Evaluation - Office for Students
[6] Standards of evidence and evaluation self-assessment tool - Office for Students
[7] Insights and evaluation library – TASO
[8] Research ethics guidance – TASO

Target PTS_2: To raise overall Completion rates of Asian students from **72.9%** (2018-19 4-year aggregate) to **80%** for 2026/27 entrants (whose completion is measured in 2029/30).

Target PTS_3: To raise the Attainment rate of good honours degrees for Asian students from **58.3%** (2022/23 4-year aggregate) to **65%** for those awarded in 2029/30.

Target PTS_4: To raise the Attainment rate of good honours degrees for Black students from **49.9%** (2022/23 4-year aggregate) to **60%** for those awarded in 2029/30.

Obj3: The University will offer sufficient academic and personal support to students previously eligible for Fee School Meals to boost their confidence, skills and experience, to help them improve course completion and progression to a graduate-level job (or equivalent) by 2030 (as demonstrated in PTS_5-6 and PTP_1) via our various support mechanisms (including financial support when required and appropriate to help with genuine cost pressures), through the GMW and Career Passport interventions.

Target PTS_5: To improve the Continuation of Students who were eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage 4 from **80.4%** (2021/22 4-year aggregate) to **85%** for 2028/29 entrants (continuing into 2029/30).

Target PTS_6: To increase the Completion Rate for students who were eligible for Free School Meals from **69.7%** (2018/19 4-year aggregate) to **75%** for 2026/27 entrants (whose completion is measured in 2029/30).

Risks to equality of opportunity

EORR6. Insufficient academic support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

EORR7. Insufficient personal support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extra-curricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

EORR10. Cost pressures: Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Related objectives and targets

Target PTP_1: To increase the FT UG Progression rate of students eligible for FSM from **57.1%** (2021/22 4-year aggregate) to **65%** for those graduating in 2028/29 (cohorts surveyed between December 2029 and September 2030).

Related risks to equality of opportunity

EORR12. Progression from Higher Education: Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their Higher Education experience.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Block Delivery (new activity)	• Approach designed to most benefit the identified target groups of Asian, Black and FSM students • Create the curriculum • Co-creation with students • Flipped classroom; immersive learning; scaffolded adapted learning tasks that contribute to formative assessment outcomes • Single module delivery • CPD for lecturers (CHERP) • Student support – personal, with enhanced support for target groups • Student support – academic, with enhanced support for target groups, including Personal Academic Tutoring and ASH • Links with other activities to prepare students, including PREPARE • New structure of learning from block delivery with smarter timetabling enabling FSM students to gain regular paid employment and reduce travel costs	Staff time for set-up and project support £20k pa Evaluation costs £32k year 1 Conference activity, CPD, student workshops, student ambassadors, promotion costs £50kpa Asian, Black & FSM target groups academic delivery time £7230k pa	• Achievement of continuation, completion and attainment targets • Student sense of belonging; engagement in the curriculum; confidence, motivation and networking; student self-evaluation • Ability to progress to graduate-level activity • Increased personal viability for FSM students to continue their studies due to reduced cost pressures	IS3
Assessment Enabled	• Formal examination replaced with formative assessment throughout the module • Feedback loops embedded within the module		• Asian and Black student attainment • Demonstration of competency and skills	IS3

(new activity)	• Authentic assessment		• Ability to progress to graduate-level activity	
Students as Partners (enhanced activity)	• Regular involvement in co-creation and providing feedback on the new approaches • Build on existing engagement framework including employing paid Student Ambassadors from FSM target group • Promotion; recruit students to be Ambassadors, representative of target groups; work with SU / Course Reps; incentivisation • Support to FSM students in budgeting and managing personal finance; providing warm spaces (library open 24/7 during term time); low-cost canteen food plus kettles / microwaves to cook their own food and supermarket food vouchers for students in hardship; promote the financial and pastoral support available to FSM students (particularly FSM from minority ethnic backgrounds as evidence suggests they may be more likely to be unaware – see OfS Insight Brief reference below)		• Belonging; engagement • Relevance of curriculum to target student groups (Asian, Black, FSM); agile curriculum development and delivery approaches • Increased personal viability for FSM students to continue their studies	
ASH (enhanced activity)	• LEAP Online (self-paced digital learning platform) • Academic Skills Workshops • One-to-one consultations	10 staff develop and delivery total 1.0 FTE per year Evaluation staff = 0.15 FTE pa	• Asian and Black students have essential academic and study skills needed to achieve a good degree	

		Student Focus Groups = £400 per year		
PREPARE (new activity)	• Online pre-enrolment support, ensuing target students are prepared academically socially and emotionally • Workshops, webinars, e-learning tutorials, peer support • Culturally relevant content, relatable to Black and Asian student groups, with contributions from students from those groups	5 staff develop and delivery total 0.65 FTE pa Evaluation staff = 0.1 FTE pa Software platform £20k set-up year 1 and ongoing £20k pa Student Focus Groups (seven per year) = £1400	• Asian and Black students achieve academic readiness and student success, and are prepared for transition to university life • Improved academic confidence and engagement, and hence staying on course	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The predicted spend for IS2 is £7463k (including evaluation) in the first year of the plan with a 4-year total of £31062k.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

EVIDENCE	REFERENCES
Block Teaching impact upon success of particular student groups	Thomas Roche, Erica Wilson, Elizabeth Goode, John W. McKenzie (2024) Supporting the academic success of underrecognised higher education students through an immersive block model https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2424157 Daniel Loton, Cameron Stein, Philip Parker, Mary Weaven (2020) Introducing block mode to first-year university students: a natural experiment on satisfaction and performance https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1843150 McCluskey, T.; Samarawickrema, G.; Smallridge, A.; Dempsey, N. (2021) Student Retention and Success in Higher Education: Institutional Change for the 21st Century - Re-designing curriculum to enhance first-year student success: A case study http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-85165021718&partnerID=MN8TOARS
Flipped Classrooms	Francis N. (20 March 2019) AdvanceHE: Flipping the Classroom – Becoming a Better Lecturer https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/flipping-the-classroom
Assessment and Attainment Gaps	Walker, R. (March 2021) Awarding gaps and assessment: a briefing paper for EAC, Cambridge Centre for Learning and Teaching https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/files/foundations_for_assessment_paper_1.pdf
Cost of Living Support	OfS Insight Brief: Studying during rises in the cost of living (17 March 2023) https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living/
Students as Partners	AdvanceHE: Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success - Student Engagement through Partnerships (2016) https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/Student%20Engagement%20Through%20Partnership%20Framework.pdf
PREPARE	Hepi. (2025) *Hiding in plain sight? A simple statistical effect may largely explain the ethnicity degree awarding gap.* [Online] Available from: Hiding in plain sight? A simple statistical effect may largely explain the ethnicity degree awarding gap - HEPI. [Accessed 10 March 2025]. Mimirinis, M., Ventouris, A., and Wright, E. (2024) Variation in Black students' conceptions of academic support. *British Educational Research Journal*, [Online] 50(1), pp. 241-259. Available from: https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1002/berj.3921 .[Accessed 11 March 2025]. Bolton, P., and Lewis, J. (2024) *Equity of access and outcomes in higher education in England*. [Online] Available from: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf .[Accessed 11 March 2025]

Academic Skills Hub	Golden, B. (2022) Enabling critical thinking development in higher education through the use of a structured planning tool. *Irish Educational studies*, [Online] Available from: https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1080/03323315.2023.2258497. [Accessed 4 March 2025]. Brennan, J. (2021) *Flexible Learning Pathways in British Higher Education: A Decentralized and Market-based System*. [Online] Available from: Flexible Learning Pathways in British Higher Education: A decentralized and market-based system. [Accessed 4 March 2025]. Cottrell, S. (2022) *Skills for Success*. 4th ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Greater Manchester Way Block Delivery, Assessment Enabled and Students as Partners	Improved outcomes for Asian, Black and FSM students (as targets)	Type 2 – Empirical Y1 to Y2 continuations rates from APP Dashboard once available, but internal data initially Y2 to Y3 re-enrolment data from internal dashboard	Longitudinal study March 2028 Interim evaluation after end of first year of plan, March 2028 to University Committees and Staff Conference September 2028. Dissemination at Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group and FACE Networks (or similar) during 2028 Final evaluation at end of plan to be published on the University website and OfS repository with case study on the Intervention Strategy to TASO during 2031 (as part of the full GMW intervention strategy evaluation). .
	Student belonging and engagement; relevance of the curriculum to target groups	Type 1 / 2 – Narrative / Empirical External evaluation and case studies	
	Demonstration of competencies and skills to prepare students for graduate-level activity and	Type 2 – Empirical Student surveys, confidence scales plus monitoring of engagement analytics, retention rates, academic performance, on-course progression	
	Increased personal viability for FSM students	Type 1 / 2 FSM continuation and survey / focus group feedback	
PREPARE	Black and Asian students achieve academic readiness and student success, are prepared for transition into university life	Type 1 – Narrative Student self-reports on confidence, academic preparedness and integration into university life	Interim evaluation after first intake of plan, March 2027 to University Committees and Staff Conference September 2028. Dissemination at Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group and FACE Networks (or similar) during 2027-28 Final evaluation at end of plan to be published on the University website and OfS repository with case study on the Intervention Strategy to TASO during 2031 (as part of the full GMW intervention strategy evaluation).
	Black and Asian students' confidence in academic skills, wellbeing, and university readiness	Type 2 – Empirical Pre- and post-intervention surveys, wellbeing and confidence scales plus monitoring of engagement analytics including participation rates in the programme by demographic, retention rates, first-year academic performance, on-course progression	
Academic Skills Hub	Students have essential academic study skills needed to achieve a good degree, as	Type 1 Narrative Focus Group and student survey feedback	Interim evaluation after end of first year of plan, December 2027 to University Committees and Staff Conference September 2028.

	measured via correlation of engagement with ASH activities to improvements in Black and Asian students' grades and overall academic performance	Type 2 Empirical ASH registration logs Badge Data Internal Academic records (average module marks, first time pass rate, etc.) of target group students APP Dashboard / Data Sets	Dissemination at Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group and FACE Networks (or similar) during 2028 Final evaluation at end of plan to be published on the University website and OfS repository with case study on the Intervention Strategy to TASO during 2031 (as part of the full GMW intervention strategy evaluation).

Intervention strategy 3: Career Passport

Objectives and targets

Obj3: The University will offer sufficient academic and personal support to students previously eligible for Free School Meals to boost their confidence, skills and experience, to help them improve course completion and progression to a graduate-level job (or equivalent) by 2030 (as demonstrated in PTS_5-6 and PTP_1) via our various support mechanisms (including financial support when required and appropriate to help with genuine cost pressures), through the GMW and Career Passport interventions.

> **Target PTP_1:** To increase the FT UG Progression rate of students eligible for FSM from **57.1%** (2021/22 4-year aggregate) to **65%** for those graduating in 2028/29 (cohorts surveyed between December 2029 and September 2030).

Risks to equality of opportunity

EORR12. Progression from Higher Education: Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their Higher Education experience.

Related objectives and targets

Target PTS_5: To improve the Continuation of Students who were eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage 4 from **80.4%** (2021/22 4-year aggregate) to **85%** for 2028/29 entrants (continuing into 2029/30).

Target PTS_6: To increase the Completion Rate for students who were eligible for Free School Meals from **69.7%** (2018/19 4-year aggregate) to **75%** for 2026/27 entrants (whose completion is measured in 2029/30).

Related risks to equality of opportunity

EORR6. Insufficient academic support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

EORR7. Insufficient personal support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

EORR10. Cost pressures: Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Create Passport Identity (new activity)	• Develop a full range of multiple and varied activities based around key employability themes, co-created with students (Students as Partners) designed to most benefit the identified target group of FSM students • Design stamps • Host on Student Hub with direct links to Moodle	Staff delivery costs - 1.2 FTE Jobs for Students Team plus 2% of FSM target group academic time Evaluation staff time 0.71**FTE** Non-staff costs – student focus groups £200/year x 4	• Programme to increase the full time, undergraduate progression rate of students eligible for Free School Meals, helping them to develop the skills needed to secure a graduate role upon graduation, as determined and identified through the Graduate Outcomes Survey results.	IS2
Promote and Deliver Passport (new activity)	• Communication plan and campaign • Career Passport workshops. Career guidance interviews, Personal skills reflection • Targeted data monitoring to ensure engagement of the FSM cohort, recognising that students most in need of support may not always be the most likely to proactively engage		• Improved motivation, confidence, knowledge and skills of FSM cohort to engage with business and industry and secure successful graduate-level job search • Increased levels of Passport stamps which equate to an increase in the engagement of	

			employability-related activities. • Increased awareness of FSM students' career-related experiences as well as systemic barriers to engagement with career planning.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The predicted spend for IS3 is £292k (inclusive of evaluation) in the first year of the plan with a 4-year total of £1220k

Summary of evidence base and rationale

EVIDENCE	REFERENCES
Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that what is most important in motivating people to autonomously choose to engage with something, are the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.	Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M., 2012. Self-determination theory. Handbook of theories of social psychology, 1(20), pp.416-436.
Studies show that 'extrinsic motivation' leads to people engaging less with the process which has resulted in minimal engagement and effort.	Di Domenico SI, Ryan RM. The Emerging Neuroscience of Intrinsic Motivation: A New Frontier in Self-Determination Research. Front Hum Neurosci. 2017 Mar 24;11:145. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2017.00145. PMID: 28392765; PMCID: PMC5364176.
The most successful projects combine multiple different interventions spanning different models, and target student engagement and belonging, addressing the evidence that the students who are most in need of support may not always be the most likely to proactively engage with projects	CRAC for the OfS: Supporting local students and graduates: An evaluation of the Office for Students Challenge Competition: 'Industrial strategy and skills: support for local students and graduates', September 2023 https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8612/supporting-local-students-and-graduates-evaluation-of-challenge-competition.pdf

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
CAREER PASSPORT Key careers and employability activities will fall under six themes applicable to all outcomes: • Job Recruitment Skills • Networking • Career Planning • Work Experience • Enrichment • Leadership	Increase progression rates of FT UG students eligible for FSM	Type 2 – Empirical Graduate Outcomes Survey data available from HEIDI+	Interim evaluation after first year of plan, December 2027 to University Committees and Staff Conference September 2028. Dissemination at Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group and FACE Networks (or similar) during 2028 Second interim evaluation at end of plan to be published on the University website and OfS repository with case study on the Intervention Strategy to TASO during 2031 (noting the significant lag of the Employment Indicator beyond the period of the plan)
	Increase FSM student engagement with careers and employability activity	Type 2 – Empirical Stamps claimed via online Career Passport Portal	
	Increase in FSM students establishing career goals whilst at university	Type 1 – Narrative; and Type 2 – Empirical Individual scores relating to career preparedness and one-to-one feedback	
	Increased levels of confidence in applying for graduate roles	Type 2 – Empirical Student Hub records denoting applications submitted, interviews attended etc. Type 1 - Narrative	

		Annual student reflection built into Career Passport	
	Increased awareness and value placed on employability interventions	Type 1 - Narrative Staff Feedback	
	Increased levels of staff understanding of where employability is supported in the curriculum	Type 1 - Narrative Staff Feedback	
	Increased levels of engagement with the Jobs for Students Team	Type 1 - Narrative Focus group feedback and student questionnaire	
	Increased levels of exposure and networking with external business/industry	Type 1 – Narrative Student reflections Type 2 – Empirical Stamps claimed via online Portal	
	Increased levels of engagement in additional opportunities outside of the curriculum	Type 1 – Narrative Student reflections Type 2 – Empirical Stamps claimed via online Portal	
	Increased engagement and achievement related to visual recognition	Type 2 – Empirical Digital stamps collection correlated with completion rates	

Whole provider approach

This Plan is predicated on a whole provider approach and is endorsed by the University's Governing Body, with delegated APP authority given to its sub-committee, the Governors' Oversight Committee. It has been developed by academic and professional support services, in conjunction with students through the APP Student Panel and more broadly with the Students Union. The University is committed at the highest levels to the ethos and implementation of the Plan. The APP Steering Group is chaired by the Assistant Vice Chancellor Regulatory Compliance, with membership that includes other executive colleagues and functional heads across the student lifecycle from pre-entry to post-graduation, including the recently launched Quality Transformation Unit.

The Plan will deliver a seismic shift in the approach to curriculum delivery and assessment through the GMW block delivery model, co-ordinated by the Quality Transformation Unit working alongside professional and academic colleagues, and with students at the heart through our Students as Partners philosophy. The GMW builds on extensive evidence that demonstrates its efficacy in supporting widening participation and success.

The three intervention strategies: Equality of Access; The GMW (including PREPARE and ASH); and Career Passport are all mutually reinforcing, with each complementing the other strategies across the student life cycle to create a joined-up approach for the target groups of students.

The Greater Manchester Way

UGM is adopting a wholly new strategy and approach to its teaching and assessment methodologies.

Branded as the 'Greater Manchester Way', it is an innovative approach to curriculum and assessment design and delivery, adapted to the needs of the target student groups, which will transform Teaching Intensive Research Informed (TIRI) to a Teaching Intensive Research Informed Assessment Enabled (TIRIAE) philosophy. The GMW will provide learning and education opportunities through the introduction of a block teaching model offered from its main campus, its satellite campuses, and in due course, in collaboration with our national and international partner education offerings. It will provide an immersive, flexible learning experience that will give students the best chance of success and help them fit studies around their other activities such as part-time employment. The shorter, more focused five-week module structure means many students will study just one module at a time, covering module content more thoroughly.

The approach generally moves away from examinations, instead focusing on contextualised formative/progressive assessment throughout the module, based on real-world applications that enables students to demonstrate competency and skills, with timely feedback loops contributing to progression and summative grades.

It will co-create with Students as Partners, thereby ensuring cohort activities/assessments are relevant and challenging, to best equip students for both academic and professional success.

This approach has been shown in Australia to demonstrate statistically significant improvements in academic success for students identified as low socio-economic status or first-in-family[9] (which

[9] Supporting the academic success of underrecognised higher education students through an immersive block model (2024) https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2424157

have high correlation with the particular target groups of this Plan). Earlier evaluations[10] [11] also confirmed substantial improvements in performance, especially for low socio-economic backgrounds or modest school results. The University has appointed a new AVC (Academic Director) from Australia to inform and oversee the change. The University is receiving mentorship to deliver the GMW by internationally respected expert in block delivery Professor Kerri-Lee Kraus who was Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor at Victoria University, Melbourne during the formative years of its introduction. She was keynote speaker at the Bicentennial International Lecture & Workshop, a whole staff University conference in March 2025, attended by both academic and professional services colleagues, to gather insights on the implementation of the GMW.

Governance Structure

The Governors' Oversight Committee, a sub-committee of the Board with delegated authority, approves the Plan and holds the University to account for its delivery.

Oversight of the APP sits with the APP Steering group, chaired by the Assistant Vice Chancellor Regulatory Compliance, with membership including senior academic and professional services colleagues, along with the Students Union. The Steering Group ensures coherence across the Plan, monitors performance and receives evaluation reports. Communications are channelled to and from the APP Student Panel to ensure that the interventions are delivering as intended, and to inform any modifications. Operationally, the Intervention Strategy Leads ensure delivery of their respective strategies and associated activities, ensuring that evaluation is built-in at the outset.

APP targets are embedded into the University's performance monitoring cycle, which includes Partners.

EDI Strategy

The University is committed to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010[12] and Public Sector Equality Duty 2012[13]. The Equal Opportunities Policy outlines the University's pursuit of equal opportunities, diversity and supportive environments for all members of its community, irrespective of protective characteristics. UGM is committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment and sexual misconduct), victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity regardless of whether they share a relevant protected characteristic or other risk to equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between all of our staff and students.

Under those obligations, it produces an annual 'Equality & Diversity' information report which covers staff, students and governors, that continues to highlight that the University has a diverse student and staff community and in general performs well against sector averages. The report is now in its ninth year of production and indicators have not significantly changed from previous reports. A summary from the report was last considered by the Board of Governors in April 2024 and Senate in June 2024. An annual gender pay gap report is also considered and a related HEPI Report[14] ranked the University 6th out of 122 HEIs examined.

[10] The VU Way: The Effect of Intensive Block Mode Teaching on Repeating Students (2020) https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/CAL/article/view/14009
[11] Introducing block mode to first-year university students: a natural experiment on satisfaction and performance (2020) https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1843150
[12] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty
[14] HEPI Report 171 'Show me the money – an exploration of the gender pay gap in higher education' 14 March 2024 https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2024/03/14/show-me-the-money-an-exploration-of-the-gender-pay-gap-in-higher-education/

As part of a review and streamlining of institutional committee structures and processes, work is underway to merge the committees/working groups covering organisational development, equality & diversity, hybrid working, staff development and modern slavery, brought under the leadership of the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Organisational Change and People). A new EDI Strategy 2024-29 has been formulated and responsibility for its delivery rests with the Executive Board, with work steered by this new People Committee in consultation with the Students' Union, Employee Forum and the recognised Trade Unions.

A mandatory training framework is in place for staff which includes Unconscious Bias and Managing Diversity training courses for managers and Equality Diversity Essentials training for all employees. All staff job descriptions include a requirement to observe the University's Equal Opportunities policy and Dignity at Work policy which is confirmed through its recruitment and selection process. In September 2024, the University launched the Aspiring Vice Chancellor Development Programme for racial groupings not represented at this level in UK HEIs, in collaboration with the Caribbean & African Health Network UK[15].

For students, the LEAP modules are available including British Values, Disability Inclusion and Wellbeing. The Dignity at Study policy and procedure promote equality of opportunity. The University supports the Students Union, which runs numerous events throughout the year, including Festival of Faith and Cultures; Diwali, Ramadan, Chinese New Year; Black History Month; Pride Month; International Women's Day; International Men's Day; World Aids Day.

The University's Life Lounge service offers pastoral support for students as well as mental health education to the wider institution. The University is committed to the Universities' Mental Health Charter[16] from Student Minds and has signed the Care Leavers Covenant[17]. Preliminary work has been undertaken relating to the Race Equality Charter[18].

The University actively supports Bolton Pride, in terms of sponsorship, having a physical presence within the Main Event and staff and students taking part in the Bolton Pride Parade.

One of the main priorities of the Greater Manchester Civic University Agreement[19], to which the University is a signatory, is reducing inequalities (the others being education and skills; jobs and growth; net zero; digital economy and creative and cultural economy). This brings together Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) with the region's five HEIs in a collaborative commitment to drive social, economic and environmental change in our city region.

Partnerships

The University works collaboratively with its off-campus partners to deliver the APP for its students. Partners were consulted through a Partner Forum on the proposed target groups, the targets, the identified risks and the intervention strategies. The University will continue to collaborate closely with Partners to share 'what works' and to monitor performance against the University's targets. GMW, the key intervention strategy, will be phased-in for Partners during the period of this Plan, once it has become established and been evaluated on-campus, and the Career Passport

[15] https://www.cahn.org.uk/
[16] https://hub.studentminds.org.uk/university-mental-health-charter/
[17] https://mycovenant.org.uk/about-the-care-leaver-covenant/
[18] https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter
[19] https://www.greatermanchesteruniversities.org/

introduced for Partners from 2027-28, again following initial evaluation. Access resources will be shared with Partners and discussed via a collaborative training day.

The curriculum and realistic assessment activities, within the Greater Manchester Way, will be informed by employers through the established Industry Advisory Boards and by PSRBs, as appropriate.

The University is an established Apprenticeship provider, and delivery through the GMW model will be shaped by employers' requirements.

Delivery partnerships include the wider University Group in creating pathways to Higher Education, targeted schools and colleges, the Boys Brigade and Uni-connect.

The University will continue to engage and share 'what works' through North West university networks, encouraging collaborative approaches and creating an evidence base that will benefit student success.

Student consultation

Students as Partners is a key enabling element of the GMW intervention strategy; building on existing channels, it will bring together the student voice in a coherent framework across the University, ensuring timely feedback and subsequent response from the University.

An APP Student Panel has been established, with representation from the target groups, FSM, Black and Asian students, alongside the Students Union. Panel members attended a briefing workshop on the APP and participated in a survey and focus groups to inform the Plan.

The Panel endorsed the risks and the intervention strategies proposed across the student lifecycle and provided valuable insights to shape the interventions and their associated activities. For instance:

- Students indicated that they wanted a more realistic impression of university life, giving them real world experiences and an insight into the opportunities and challenges of being a student. Adjustments to the Equality of Access strategy include: greater representation of existing students at outreach events; introduction of monthly weekday discovery days with opportunities to observe real classroom activity; IAG resources giving more candid information about the reality of higher-level study such as costs and budgeting, academic expectations and managing study / life balance and wellbeing.
- Students indicated that peer shared experiences would be invaluable in readiness for university study and that students had preferred learning styles, in response PREPARE will feature webinars and workshops planned and co-delivered by current students, in addition, a variety of delivery formats will be adopted.
- Students thought there should be greater awareness of academic skills support, particularly at key periods of academic study. ASH will be communicated through a multi-faceted promotional strategy, for instance digital screens, pop-ups and podcasts will incorporate in-sessional support and skills boosters.
- Some students viewed schemes like the Career Passport as a way of demonstrating their job readiness and work ethic to employers; the University will ensure that this is included in messaging.

The APP Student Panel will be key to the successful implementation of the Plan, providing invaluable reporting to the APP Steering Group. It is proposed that it will convene twice per year. Evidence from the Panel will be crucial in understanding 'what works' and informing future enhancement of the intervention strategies, the Panel will also support evaluation of the Plan.

Feedback is detailed in Appendix B and modification to our proposals were accommodated in the final plans.

Evaluation of the Plan

Evaluation has been considered at the outset in the development of the intervention strategies and the associated theories of change. Evaluation plans have been formulated for each intervention strategy by the strategy lead, who will be responsible for ensuring that evaluation is conducted, students are engaged, and findings are disseminated in line with the publication schedule. Resources have been ring-fenced for evaluation activity. The overall evaluation of the impact of the Plan will be co-ordinated by the Quality Transformation Unit. Interim and final evaluations will be reported to the APP Steering Group, University committees and the Governors' Oversight committee.

Since the previous APP submission, the University has invested significantly in its ability to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities, with two additional full-time staff (total three) dedicated to analysis and evaluation activities, increasing capacity to routinely measure the impact of objectives detailed in this Plan, and the associated activities. In addition, the Quality Transformation Unit has been established replacing the Standards and Enhancements Office, with a clear focus on co-ordinating the Greater Manchester Way and streamlining processes to provide an agile block delivery model with Students as Partners. Evaluation of the GMW resides with the Quality Transformation Unit, in addition, specialist external evaluators will be commissioned to deeply understand the impact of the GMW on the APP targeted groups of students through the medium of case studies.

Three levels of evaluation will be undertaken: strategic-level of the overall APP and its impact; the intervention strategies; and the activities contained within those intervention strategies. A schedule will be drawn up for monitoring these throughout the year with interim progress reports presented to the APP Steering Group. Annual reports will also be presented to Senate and the Governor's Oversight Committee. They will highlight which elements of the strategy are working and which are not meeting the required objectives. If progress is not being made as expected, the effectiveness of the Plan will be reviewed and changes made as required. The evaluations will incorporate type 1 narrative and type 2 empirical enquiry. The Evaluation Plans under each intervention strategy above, highlight the anticipated timing of the first interim evaluations, essentially following their first occurrence in this plan, with a final evaluation following the last year of this plan. Those Evaluation Plans also highlight the anticipated dissemination methodology.

Theories of Change[20] have been developed for each intervention strategy (or in some cases sub-strategy – PREPARE and ASH) as shown in Annex B, alongside evaluation plans constructed using the TASO evaluation plan template[21]. These consider the aims, primary and secondary

[20] https://taso.org.uk/evidence/evaluation-guidance-resources/toc/.
[21] https://taso.org.uk/libraryitem/evaluation-plan-template/

research questions, design, and short, medium and long-term evaluation aims. They also set out the key milestones showing timescales for evaluation and dissemination activities. As well as sharing these internally, it is anticipated that papers will be hosted on the University's website, submitted to the OfS repository and contribute to the TASO evidence-base.

In addition, in recognition of the significant investment and transformation involved in the GMW Intervention Strategy (incorporating Block Delivery, Assessment Enabled and Students as Partners), an external evaluator is being commissioned to conduct research into the impact of the new delivery model for the APP target groups of students; that is FSM, Asian and Black, to create a body of evidence and case studies which will be published. The evaluation will commence in 2025-26 with interim findings to inform delivery in the first year of the Plan; and will continue to 2026-27, with publication thereafter.

The University is gaining maturity in evaluation, as demonstrated by the OfS self-assessment tool[22] in preparation for this Plan. Much of the value of this tool lies in the detail in the component worksheets, but in summary, the scoring overview shows progress being made, particularly around Evaluation Implementation, and Programme Design scores well. However, the most recent assessment probably reflects a more critical understanding of requirements compared to earlier assessments, with a realistic view being taken of the extent of evaluation required and planned within the significant interventions reflected in this Plan, with the component summary scores all falling into the 'Emerging' category. All the 'Expected' elements are being addressed with many 'Commended' elements now in place. The assessment will be completed again after the first interim evaluations have taken place, by which time it is anticipated to move to the 'Good' category.

The University is a member of the Access and Participation Plan Special Interest Group, within the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE)[23] network. The Group provides a space for institutional leads for widening participation to share findings, best practice and approaches to supporting students from under-represented groups. The Group works collaboratively to provide peer support, professionalisation opportunities and advocacy for widening participation across the country, as well as dissemination of the work completed. The University is also an active member of the Northwest WP Research and Evaluation Group which shares findings and good practice in order to strengthen evaluation activity and dissemination of learning amongst its members.

The University continues to collaborate with partners through Greater Manchester Higher[24], the local Uni Connect[25] partnership. We support the work of Greater Manchester Higher to increase the number of young people from under-represented groups entering Higher Education. One of the aims of the programme is to contribute to a stronger evidence base around 'what works' in Higher Education outreach and strengthen evaluation practice across the sector.

Provision of information to students

The University is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of background, are fully informed about the equality of opportunity strategies, interventions and support available to them

[22] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/evaluation/standards-of-evidence-and-evaluation-self-assessment-tool/
[23] https://face.ac.uk/
[24] https://gmhigher.ac.uk/
[25] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/uni-connect/

through the APP. This information will be communicated through multiple channels to ensure it is accessible, clear, and timely for both prospective and current students.

Detailed information about the APP will be published on the University's website, including key intervention strategies and available financial support, with specific APP-related pages available on the website for prospective students as part of IAG resources. Similarly, information about fees, student finance and funding and cost of living guidance is available on the website, through email communications and via social media. Sessions will be delivered specifically around support and financial help available through work with schools, colleges, and community partners and this information shared during outreach events, open days, and information sessions.

Once students have applied and accepted an offer, APP-related support will continue through pre-arrival communications and through the 'PREPARE' programme. This will include information on bursaries, hardship funds, and academic or personal support. Student support teams play a vital role in signposting students to resources, interventions and funding they may be eligible for. A dedicated Student Funding Officer delivers workshops, drop-in sessions and one-to-one budgeting advice.

The APP outlines a range of evidence-based strategies and interventions designed to support students at all stages of the student lifecycle: access, success and progression. These include opportunities to take part in peer support programmes, inclusive teaching practices, targeted careers advice, and tailored wellbeing services as well as the student ambassador scheme. The effectiveness of these interventions will be monitored, with students involved in shaping improvements through feedback and co-creation activities.

Overall, the University aims to foster a culture of transparency and inclusion, ensuring that every student is aware of, and feels confident, accessing the support provided.

The University provides financial (and other) support to disadvantaged groups:

Student Support Fund

The Student Support Fund is designed to assist students who may otherwise be unable to continue their studies due to financial hardship. It is the University's primary means of providing discretionary financial assistance to eligible students.

Priority groups for support currently include care leavers, estranged students, single parents and disabled students. For these groups, an assumed income, which typically reflects the expectation that students can contribute through part-time or vacation work, savings, overdrafts, or parental support, is excluded from the financial assessment.

From the 2026-27 academic year, the University of Greater Manchester also plans to recognise students who are First in Family to attend university or who received Free School Meals as priority groups for support.

The fund is open to:

- Undergraduate students who meet the residency criteria for full UK statutory student support from Student Finance England (SFE).
- Postgraduate students who pay home tuition fees and can demonstrate they have made reasonable financial provision to cover tuition fees and living costs.

Typically, students must:

- Be ordinarily resident in England, and

- Have been ordinarily resident in the UK for 3 or 5 years (depending on individual status) prior to starting their course, for reasons other than education—unless they fall under specific exceptions, such as holding refugee status.

The fund is administered in accordance with guidance from the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA).
To be considered for an award, students must demonstrate they have applied for all other sources of financial support available to them, such as:

- Student Loans and Grants
- Benefits
- University Bursaries and Scholarships
- Part-time work, where applicable

The Fund cannot be used as an alternative to taking out a student loan for either tuition fees or maintenance. Students are expected to apply for means-tested student support; however, those above the income threshold may still apply. Where relevant, students (or their partner) should also have applied for any applicable benefits.

Types of Awards

Grants are based on an assessment of income and essential expenditure. Awards are typically made under the following categories:

- Standard Award – Up to £1,500 (2024-25) for students demonstrating a clear financial shortfall.
- Non-Standard Award – Up to £750 (2024-25) may be awarded at the discretion of the fund administrators for students without a financial shortfall but with exceptional circumstances.
- Domestic Abuse Support – Up to £1,500 (2024-25) is available for students who have disclosed experiences of domestic abuse and are receiving University support.
- DSA Contribution Support – A £200 (2024-25) award is available to assist with the cost of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) contribution.

In addition, students can apply for:

- Emergency Loans – Up to £450 (2024-25) may be provided in urgent circumstances.
- Food Vouchers – Typically up to £80 (2024-25), to assist with essential living expenses.

Students can apply in each year of study. Awards are usually limited to one per academic year. However, students who have not received the maximum available support may apply to be reassessed if their circumstances significantly change.
The fund is reviewed annually for effectiveness. The majority of recipients are in those that typically experience at least one risk to equality of opportunity identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

Care Experienced Bursary
Care-experienced students often face persistent disadvantages throughout Higher Education, affecting access, achievement, and progression into employment or further study. The University of Greater Manchester's Care Experienced Bursary provides targeted financial support to improve outcomes and retention for these students.

Eligibility Criteria
Students must have lived in care under one or more of the following arrangements:

- With foster carers under local authority care
- In residential care (e.g., children's home)
- Looked after at home under a supervision order
- In kinship care with relatives or friends, either formally (e.g., under a special guardianship order) or informally

To qualify, students must:

- Have spent at least 13 weeks in care between the ages of 14 and 18
- Be under 25 years old on the first day of their course

- Be a home (UK) student paying tuition to the University of Greater Manchester via a loan or self-funding
- Be enrolled on a full-time or part-time undergraduate course delivered on the University's main campus

Exclusions

Students are not eligible if they are:

- Sponsored by an employer or third party for tuition fees
- Paying tuition to another institution or studying externally
- Enrolled on an Apprenticeship programme
- Engaged in full-time industrial/work placement
- Participating in a study abroad year

Award Details

Eligible students will receive:

- £1,000 per academic year (paid in instalments)
- An additional £500 in their final year

This structured support is designed to assist with financial planning and encourage successful progression and completion.

Group Progression Scholarship

The Group Progression Scholarship is designed to support students who progress directly from Bolton College, University Collegiate School (UCS), or Alliance Learning to the University of Greater Manchester.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for this scholarship, students must meet the following conditions:

- Be progressing directly onto an eligible full-time undergraduate course at the University of Greater Manchester, having completed their entry qualifications at one of the above institutions in the academic year immediately preceding entry.
- Be enrolling on a course delivered on the Bolton campus. Students studying with off-campus partners are not eligible.
- Be paying full tuition fees through one or more of the following: self-funding, Student Finance, or third-party sponsorship.
- Apprenticeship courses are not eligible for this scholarship.
- Students in receipt of this award cannot apply for any additional University of Greater Manchester scholarships but would be eligible to apply for the Student Support Fund.

Award Details

Eligible students will receive:

- £500 paid in a single instalment upon successful completion of enrolment in Year 1.

The scholarship is reviewed annually for its effectiveness. The majority of recipients are those that typically experience at least one risk to equality of opportunity identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

In all analyses below, we have been mindful of our responsibilities under GDPR and the guidance from the Information Commissioners Office[26]

Contextual Size-Shape Data

A summary breakdown of student **headcount** data for 2023-24[27] shows:

	2023-24
Home UG FT / PT / apprentice 'Taught' students	6245
Other on campus students (e.g. PG, international)	4721
Sub-contracted out students at UK partners, including Home UG	2910
Validated UK students	8011
Students studying wholly overseas with partners	3525

These figures include apprentices which have grown steadily from under 200 in 2017-18 to over 1,200 students. The University has now opened its School of Medicine in state-of-the-art facilities co-located next to the Royal Bolton Hospital, with undergraduate entrants, initially just international, commencing from September 2025.

Proportional enrolments of Mature students peaked at 73.1% in 2020-21 and has reduced to 49.4% in 2022-23. Consequently, the proportion of Young students was 50.6% in 2022-23 which is still significantly below the 71.3% proportion across all English HEI providers (OfS APP Dashboard). From internal data, approximately 75% of our on-campus cohorts' home addresses are within 25km of campus, and about 80% go on to work within that same 25km radius.

Asian students form a significant population at UGM – the proportion has grown to 17.9% in 2022-23 (OfS APP Dashboard) from 2020-21 at 10% (4-year aggregate of 13.3%), which exceeds the North West profile[28] of 8.4%, highlighting the WP nature of the University in the North West region.

Similarly, the proportion of UGM Black students is high at 19.5% (OfS APP Dashboard 4-year aggregate) when compared with all other HEIs at 10.6%.

The proportion of UGM students who were eligible for Free School Meals at KS4 is high (28.1%) when compared with all other English HEIs (18.8%) as a 4-year average. We believe this figure to be lower than the reality due to the significant Mature population who are also likely to have been eligible for FSM, but official data[29] only goes 7 years.

The University was ranked 4th in the English Social Mobility Index 2024[30] which measures the social distance travelled by socio-economically disadvantaged graduates as well as the proportion of graduates so transported.

[26] https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/
[27] HESA Data Futures and AOR returns and internal data
[28] Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/
[29] Access and participation data dashboard - Office for Students
[30] https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2024/12/03/social-mobility-index-2024/

Assessment of UGM Performance

The University undertook a review of performance using the Office for Students APP Dashboard (Data as of 4 December 2024), looking at gaps, intersections of characteristics and student life-cycle to try and identify, in parallel with assessment of Equality of Opportunities Risk Register (EORR)[31], areas of concern and/or where further, more detailed analysis was necessary. The purpose being to assess where the University might allocate (limited) resources in areas where most impact could be made.

A guiding factor for prioritisation was to focus upon those areas that are likely to have biggest impact and so with the largest volume of students at risk to equality of opportunity. However, detailed analysis was undertaken to ensure specific 'pockets' of poor performance were not missed, including the intersectional tables below amongst other analyses. It was concluded that the most benefit would be achieved by focusing on the higher-level characteristics discussed below.

ACCESS

Intersection	UoB	National	Gap 2024
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	14.4%	8.7%	-5.7%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Male	18.1%	11.7%	-6.4%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Male	25.5%	18.5%	-7.0%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Female	25.5%	16.5%	-9.0%
Free School Meals	28.1%	18.8%	-9.3%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 and White	29.3%	19.5%	-9.8%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	34.0%	22.1%	-11.9%
IMD(2019) Q1-2 and White	33.7%	21.5%	-12.2%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Female	42.2%	25.2%	-17.0%

CONTINUATION

Intersection	UoB	National	Gap 2024
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	78.4%	90.9%	12.5%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Male	79.9%	88.3%	8.4%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Male	79.9%	88.3%	8.4%
Free School Meals	80.4%	87.3%	6.9%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Female	84.7%	91.0%	6.3%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 and White	84.5%	89.5%	5.0%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	83.3%	85.9%	2.6%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 White	84.4%	86.2%	1.8%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Female	86.9%	88.0%	1.1%

ATTAINMENT

Intersection	UoB	National	Gap 2024
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	53.4%	69.0%	15.6%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Male	61.1%	71.4%	10.3%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	63.2%	72.8%	9.6%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Male	67.3%	76.1%	8.8%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Female	65.9%	74.2%	8.3%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 and White	75.3%	80.9%	5.6%
Free School Meals	67.2%	72.2%	5.0%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Female	75.2%	79.9%	4.7%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 White	74.7%	78.2%	3.5%

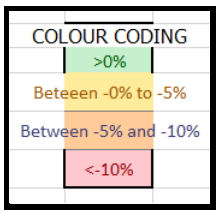
PROGRESSION

Intersection	UoB	National	Gap 2024
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Female	55.7%	68.1%	12.4%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 and White	58.1%	68.8%	10.7%
Free School Meals	57.1%	65.8%	8.7%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	62.1%	69.7%	7.6%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Male	63.5%	70.4%	6.9%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Male	62.6%	68.5%	5.9%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	65.1%	67.0%	1.9%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 White	67.8%	68.6%	0.8%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Female	69.0%	67.5%	-1.5%

COMPLETION

Intersection	UoB	National	Gap 2024
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	68.3%	97.9%	29.6%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Male	69.7%	83.9%	14.2%
Free School Meals	69.7%	83.4%	13.7%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Male	69.2%	78.6%	9.4%
POLAR4 and Sex Q1-2 Female	82.0%	89.7%	7.7%
POLAR4 and Ethnicity Q1-2 and White	79.5%	87.0%	7.5%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 Except White	76.6%	82.6%	6.0%
IMD(2019) and Ethnicity Q1-2 White	79.7%	83.7%	4.0%
IMD(2019) Q1 or 2 and Sex Female	84.0%	86.3%	2.3%

Subsequently, we created a risk "Heat Map", for Full Time Undergraduate performance, by the student groups and lifecycle stages. Colour-coded gaps show comparison to national data. It used the OfS 4-Year averages on the APP Dashboard Split Indicators (apart from Progression, where only 2-Year values were available), although annual performance was also considered.



[31] Equality of Opportunity Risk Register - Office for Students

		ACCESS			CONTINUATION			COMPLETION			ATTAINMENT			PROGRESSION		
	Split Indicator	UoB FULL TIME	All HEI FULL TIME	GAP	UoB FULL TIME	All HEI FULL TIME	GAP	UoB FULL TIME	All HEI FULL TIME	GAP	UoB FULL TIME	All HEI FULL TIME	GAP	UoB FULL TIME	All HEI FULL TIME	GAP
Mature	Age															
	Mature	63.5%	28.5%	35.0%	84.8%	82.8%	2.0%	81.5%	80.0%	1.5%	65.0%	72.5%	-7.5%	69.0%	72.2%	-3.2%
	Young	36.5%	71.5%	-35.0%	83.6%	91.8%	-8.2%	78.1%	90.0%	-11.9%	73.6%	82.5%	-8.9%	67.3%	72.5%	-5.2%
Free School Meals	Eligibility for FSM (at KS4)															
	Eligible	28.1%	18.8%	9.3%	80.4%	87.3%	-6.9%	69.7%	83.1%	-13.4%	67.2%	72.2%	-5.0%	57.1%	65.8%	-8.7%
	Not Eligible	71.9%	81.2%	-9.3%	85.1%	92.5%	-7.4%	82.1%	90.9%	-8.8%	76.2%	83.5%	-7.3%	65.7%	72.3%	-6.6%
Ethnicity	Ethnicity															
	Asian	13.3%	15.4%	-2.1%	81.8%	89.6%	-7.8%	72.9%	87.3%	-14.4%	58.3%	75.7%	-17.4%	58.7%	70.0%	-11.3%
	Black	19.5%	10.6%	8.9%	83.5%	84.8%	-1.3%	80.1%	81.1%	-1.0%	49.9%	64.0%	-14.1%	62.8%	69.4%	-6.6%
	Mixed	3.8%	5.5%	-1.7%	83.4%	88.3%	-4.9%	76.9%	85.7%	-8.8%	68.9%	80.7%	-11.8%	73.9%	73.3%	0.6%
	Other	2.7%	2.8%	-0.1%	79.5%	86.4%	-6.9%	75.9%	84.3%	-8.4%	53.5%	73.7%	-20.2%	53.5%	69.9%	-16.4%
	White	60.7%	65.8%	-5.1%	85.4%	90.2%	-4.8%	81.7%	88.7%	-7.0%	77.1%	84.2%	-7.1%	68.9%	73.5%	-4.6%
Mental Health	Disability Type															
	Cognitive or learning difficulties	5.7%	5.7%	0.0%	86.6%	91.0%	-4.4%	79.6%	88.5%	-8.9%	68.8%	79.5%	-10.7%	64.6%	73.9%	-9.3%
	Mental health condition	3.6%	4.9%	-1.3%	82.5%	86.7%	-4.2%	72.8%	82.5%	-9.7%	77.8%	81.6%	-3.8%	59.2%	68.8%	-9.6%
	Multiple Impairments	3.0%	3.3%	-0.3%	86.2%	88.7%	-2.5%	79.6%	85.0%	-5.4%	71.3%	80.5%	-9.2%	71.5%	70.9%	0.6%
	No disability reported	84.0%	82.7%	1.3%	84.3%	89.4%	-5.1%	80.2%	87.8%	-7.6%	67.9%	80.5%	-12.6%	67.9%	72.8%	-4.9%
	Sensory, medical or physical impairment	2.6%	2.3%	0.3%	82.1%	88.6%	-6.5%	79.9%	85.5%	-5.6%	70.2%	80.5%	-10.3%	73.1%	71.3%	1.8%
	Social or communication impairment	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	91.1%	87.6%	3.5%	77.6%	83.4%	-5.8%	64.3%	77.1%	-12.8%	52.8%	60.9%	-8.1%
First In Family	No Split Indicators - Data from separate report	There is a strong correlation between FSM and FIF. A student who is FSM is also likely to be FIF. BAME students are also more likely to be FIF.														

Young students with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity

As noted previously, there is a significant difference between the proportion of Young students recruited to this University and the national average. Around 95% of our students have one or more characteristics most likely to indicate risk to equality of opportunity as defined in the EORR. Therefore, it was felt an obvious and necessary target to increase the absolute volume of such students; it would be meaningless to change the proportion of our intake, what is needed to improve the opportunities open to such students is to increase the overall number entering HE.

Whilst there are some gaps between Young students compared to national data for continuation, completion and to a smaller extent for progression, the difference compared to Mature students at the University is relatively small, and attainment is better than Mature. Therefore, none of these life cycle stages were felt to warrant a target.

Free School Meals Eligible (FSM)

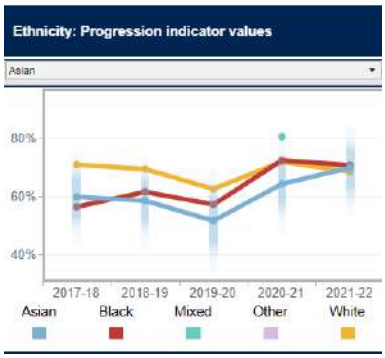
The completion performance data for FSM students shows a fairly high gap compared to both national and University Non-FSM data and so was felt should be a target area. The gap is lower for continuation, but as this represents an interim stage towards completion, it was felt worthwhile to also set this as a target. The attainment gap of FSM against national data was lower than the gap of Non-FSM to its national comparator, so was not deemed a necessary target, but a progression target was felt to be needed as it is below national and the University Non-FSM figures. Whilst the intersectional analysis shows a variety of detailed differences, as FSM students generally have a higher chance of unemployment or non-professional employment, and lower chance of professional employment, the complete FSM group is worth targeting rather than any particular sub-groups.

Asian

Targets were chosen for Asian completion (and similarly continuation) and attainment because it shows demonstrates particular under-performance against both national and University White data. Intersectional analysis using internal data and the OfS ABCS Dashboard[32] identified that 'Asian students who had been Eligible for FSM' generally have particularly poor performance, although it was felt that targets for both the complete Asian and FSM groups were appropriate rather than a

[32] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/associations-between-characteristics-of-students/

narrower group. Whilst the 4-year aggregate data for progression in the above table also shows a gap, annual data has demonstrated improvement over the last 3 years and is now comparable with other ethnicities at the University, as shown in the graph below. Therefore, this has not been selected as a target although will continue to be monitored.



Black

Black continuation and completion are not far away from University White or national. The Black attainment gap across the sector is well documented [33] [34] [35] as the above table also demonstrates, although the University Black attainment falls well short of national and the gap to University White is bigger than the national gap. Therefore, this is a necessary target. The 4-year aggregate gaps in progression are smaller and, as the above graph shows, recently Black progression has been comparable to other ethnicities. As the plan delivers improved attainment it is likely that the progression results will improve further and so this has not been set as a target.

Other Groups Considered

At first sight it appears that many of the categories within the Mental Health group are showing as a large (red) variation compared to national data for attainment. However, one of these is the 'No disability reported' category and the performance of the most of the mental health categories is actually better than the University's 'No disability reported' category. The only one that isn't is small. Therefore, after consideration, these were discounted as a target.

Similarly, the ethnicity groups of Mixed and Other were also de-prioritised as specific targets due to their relative size. Even so, they are likely to gain benefit from the planned interventions, despite them not being identified as a specific target group.

Consideration was given as to whether groups associated with Religion should be analysed. However, uncertainties and completeness of historic data gave less confidence, and it was felt that the chosen target groups should give sufficient coverage. Consideration was given to other measures of deprivation and participation (e.g. IMD, TUNDRA, POLAR4) and First-In-Family, but the correlation of these groups with FSM or Asian / Black was felt to be sufficient.

The initial analysis included Part-Time and Apprenticeships as well as Full-Time. However, we were able to quickly remove Apprenticeships (other than from the access target) and Part-Time as

[33] Walker, R. (March 2021) Awarding gaps and assessment: a briefing paper for EAC, Cambridge Centre for Learning and Teaching https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/files/foundations_for_assessment_paper_1.pdf
[34] OfS Briefing (09 November 2021) Degree attainment: Black, Asian and minority ethnic students https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-students/
[35] Berry, J. (HEA), Loke, G. (ECU) (2011) Improving the degree attainment of Black and minority ethnic students https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/ecu/improving-degree-attainment-bme_1578655185.pdf

they had relatively low populations of students when split by the characteristics; and there were generally better performance outcomes overall for both Part-Time and Apprenticeship students.

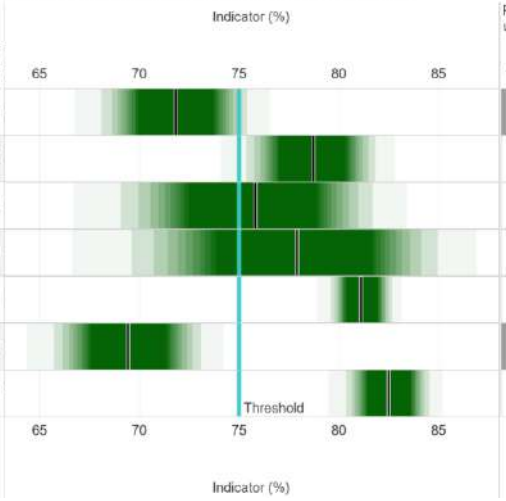
Confidence in the performance data and targets selected

Using the OfS Student Outcomes Dashboard[36], as shown below, a high degree of confidence was obtained for underperformance of both Asian and FSM Completion against both benchmark and B3 Threshold. Whilst less so for Continuation, as noted above, these have been chosen as interim target measures towards improving the Completion outcomes.

The University of Bolton (Taught or registered, Full-time, First degree students)

Completion outcomes (2015-16 to 2018-19 entrants) by subject, student and study characteristic

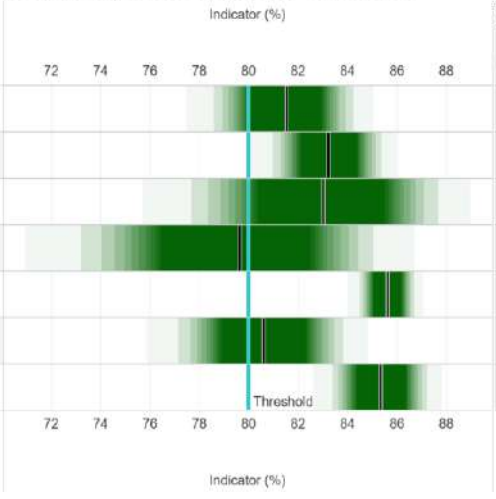
Split indicator type	Split indicator	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution: below numerical threshold	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution: above numerical threshold	Benchmark value (%)	Contribution to own benchmark (%)
Ethnicity	Asian	760	71.8	97.8%	2.2%	78.6	2.2
	Black	800	78.7	0.8%	99.2%	78.8	2.3
	Mixed	230	75.8	40.0%	60.0%	78.4	2.5
	Other	150	77.9	20.9%	79.1%	77.1	5.4
	White	3,230	81.1	0.0%	100.0%	82.3	1.3
Eligibility for free school meals	Eligible	770	69.4	100.0%	0.0%	75.5	2.0
	Not eligible	1,630	82.5	0.0%	100.0%	83.2	1.1



The University of Bolton (Taught or registered, Full-time, First degree students)

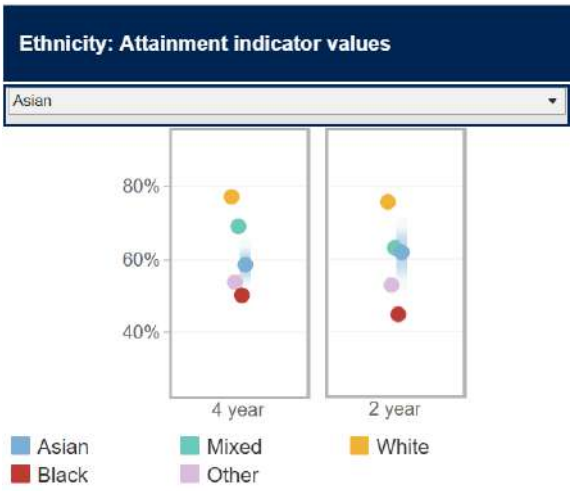
Continuation outcomes (2018-19 to 2021-22 entrants) by subject, student and study characteristic

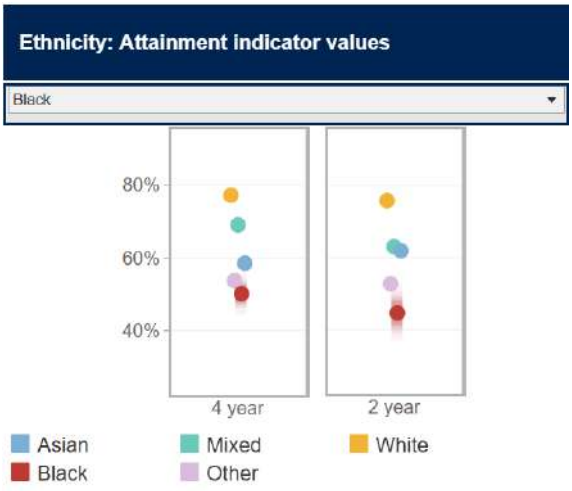
Split indicator type	Split indicator	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution: below numerical threshold	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution: above numerical threshold	Benchmark value (%)	Contribution to own benchmark (%)
Ethnicity	Asian	940	81.5	13.0%	87.0%	83.8	2.2
	Black	1,450	83.2	0.1%	99.9%	81.5	2.6
	Mixed	280	83.0	9.9%	90.1%	81.5	1.8
	Other	230	79.6	57.2%	42.8%	79.3	3.9
	White	5,050	85.6	0.0%	100.0%	85.2	1.3
Eligibility for free school meals	Eligible	700	80.6	34.9%	65.1%	82.5	1.7
	Not eligible	1,680	85.3	0.0%	100.0%	87.6	1.2



Whilst Attainment is not included in the Student Outcomes Dashboard, the APP Dashboard gives a high degree of confidence of underperformance for both Asian and Black.

[36] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/





The FSM Attainment indicator provides much less convincing evidence of underperformance, particularly on the 2-year aggregate view, and so this indicator has not been selected as a target.

FSM Progression has been selected because there is reasonable evidence of under-performance.

The University of Bolton (Taught or registered, Full-time, First degree students)

Progression outcomes (2018-19 to 2021-22 qualifiers) by subject, student and study characteristic ▼ Show proportion of negative outcomes with interi

Split indicator type	Split indicator	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution below numerical threshold	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution above numerical threshold	Benchmark value (%)	Contribution to own benchmark (%)	Survey response rate (%)
Ethnicity	Asian	270	61.2	34.8%	65.2%	61.7	18.3	51.7
	Black	380	67.5	0.1%	99.9%	68.4	20.7	57.7
	Mixed	80	78.8	0.0%	100.0%	74.0	42.6	45.3
	Other	50	56.7	68.2%	31.8%	57.1	59.1	44.3
	White	1,090	68.1	0.0%	100.0%	70.3	4.5	43.4
Eligibility for free school meals	Eligible	200	58.9	62.3%	37.7%	61.6	14.7	45.4
	Not eligible	580	66.0	0.1%	99.9%	66.2	6.3	47.2

Mapping to Risks to Equality of Opportunities

Having gained confidence that the target areas that had been selected were appropriate and well evidenced, these were then mapped onto the student characteristics shown within the EORR most likely to indicate risk to quality of opportunity. There is a clear relationship in the EORR between those characteristics and their related risks, which enabled a mapping of the University's target areas onto the EORR risks, as summarised in the chart below.

Mapping of Target Areas / Student Characteristics against EORR Risks / Ranked

		Risk at this University: Low, High											
		Access					On Course						Progr
		EORR1	EORR2	EORR3	EORR4	EORR5	EORR6	EORR7	EORR8	EORR9	EORR10	EORR11	EORR12
Target Area / Student Characteristic	**Performance**	Knowledge	IAG	Perception	Success	Choice	Ac Support	Personal	MH	Covid	Cost	Capacity	Progression
Young at Risk - Access (absolute number)	Gap Young to National = -35% UoB historically has 95% from risk char.	H	H	H	L	L							
Asian - Cont	Gap to National = -7.8 Gap to UoB White = -3.6						H	H					
Asian - Compl	Gap to National = -14.4 Gap to UoB White = -8.8						H	H					
Asian - Att	Gap to National = -17.4 Gap to UoB White = -18.8						H	H					
Black - Att	Gap to National = -14.1 Gap to UoB White = -27.2						H	H					
FSM - Cont	Gap to National = -6.9 Gap to UoB No FSM = -4.7						H	H	L	L	H	L	
FSM - Compl	Gap to National = -13.4 Gap to UoB No FSM = -12.4						H	H	L	L	H	L	
FSM - Progression	Gap to National = -8.9 Gap to UoB No FSM = -8.8												H

Consideration was then given to classifying the risks as either High or Low. The justification for the risks selected as High is given in the body of the Plan, so will not be repeated here, but led to the identification of seven risks which the University will seek to address for the target student groups via the Plan's three Intervention Strategies. The Students' Union had been involved in the APP Steering Group throughout this process, but consultation then took place with current students at the University via Focus Group, who confirmed the selected risks as appropriate.

Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan

Core references for all Intervention Strategies and Theories of Change (TOC) were:

- TASO – Insights and Evaluation Library[37]
- TASO Theories of Change resources for attainment raising[38]
- TASO Evidence Toolkit[39]
- Office for Students Insight Briefs[40]

Intervention Strategy 1 – Equality of Access

The University has identified the need to support prospective students' transition into Higher Education through a programme of practical, academic-based, wellbeing and inclusion initiatives. Through targeted pre-entry work delivered in collaboration with our schools and college partners and through the Uni Connect collaborative programme, we will improve access to high quality information, advice and guidance and enhance knowledge and skills to improve students' ability to make informed decisions about their HE choices. In reference to the EORR and alongside our assessment of performance data, we have identified that young students with at least one characteristic, most likely to indicate risk to equality of opportunity may be specifically impacted by: Risk 1 – Knowledge and Skills; Risk 2 – Information and Guidance; and Risk 3 – Perception of Higher Education.

Background and Context

The UGM has an established and strong reputation for widening access to Higher Education. As a 'Teaching Intensive, Research Informed Assessment Enabled (TIRIAE)' institution, we are committed to recruiting qualified applicants regardless of background and take pride in attracting one of the most socially inclusive and diverse student populations in the country. UGM recruits a significant proportion of its full-time students from the Greater Manchester region where 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data indicates that local authorities in Greater Manchester have become more Education, Skills and Training deprived compared to the 2015 IMD in terms of rank of average rank and score. Therefore, a key objective, and subsequent target, within this plan is to increase the number of Young students who participate in Higher Education who possess at least one characteristic from the OFS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register. This includes those from traditionally under-represented groups such as students from low-income backgrounds, first-generation students, ethnic minority students, students who have been in receipt of Free School Meals and students with disabilities.

National data shows that the Higher Education progression rate (four-year average figures) for disadvantaged pupils (i.e., those pupils eligible for Free School Meals at age 15 or at any point in the previous six years) fell for the first time in the series, from 32.5% in 2021/22 to 31.9% in 2022/23. This compares to over half (51.8%) of all other pupils in 2022/23, up slightly from 51.7%

[37] Insights and evaluation library – TASO
[38] Resources | Theories of change resources for attainment-raising initiatives – TASO
[39] Evidence toolkit: Student access, success, and progression – TASO
[40] Insight briefs - Office for Students

in 2021/22[41]. The number of young care leavers entering HE is even lower at just 14%[42]. The North West is ranked 3rd (of 9 regions) in England for the highest proportion of pupils being eligible for FSM (1st – North East, 2nd – West Midlands) and from 2015 to 2023/24 there has been a 11.3% increase in the number of pupils in the North West eligible for FSM.

The OFS data dashboard[43] highlights that Young students form a smaller proportion (50.6% in 2022-23) of the total cohort of students at UGM than the national average figure (71.3%). Our target is to increase Young student numbers with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risk to equality of opportunity from 1,045 in 2022/23 to 1,330 for 2029/30 entrants.

Further research has guided our thinking.[44][45][46][47][48][49][50]

Developing diverse pathways, flexible and relevant provision

We are committed to developing more diverse pathways into and through Higher Education through the expansion of flexible UG provision and Degree Apprenticeships. Our flexible and vocational offer means that UGM is well placed to offer different pathways into and through Higher Education in a way which meets the needs of different types of learners.

The Equality of Access strategy forms a key part of a broader strategy to ensure that UGM continues to offer a curriculum and delivery model that meets the needs of the students it serves, now and in the future. Given our widening access agenda, considerable research and planning has been undertaken in ensuring our curriculum model best meets the needs of our students. Existing student feedback highlighted that the current delivery and assessment procedures were failing to deliver the most positive outcomes for some student groups with the need identified to introduce a new curriculum delivery model with more flexibility to accommodate students' life/work demands. Subsequently, and in support of the needs of our diverse student population, the new curriculum model, "The Greater Manchester Way" will be student focused, incorporating small class sizes with block delivery of individual modules. Given that many of our students are required to balance external commitments including part-time jobs or caring responsibilities, we believe and evidence of similar models elsewhere around the world suggests that this new delivery model will better

[41] Widening participation in higher education, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK
[42] Young F. and Lilley D. (2023) Civitas – Breaking the Care Ceiling Sept 2023 https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/breaking-the-care-ceiling/
[43] Access and participation data dashboard - Office for Students
[44] Campbell, L. A. and McKendrick, J. H. (2017) Beyond aspirations: deploying the capability approach to tackle the under-representation in higher education of young people from deprived communities. Studies in Continuing Education, 39(2), 120-137
[45] The Sutton Trust. (2021). *Universities and Social Mobility: Summary Report.* Retrieved from: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Universities-and-social-mobility-final-summary.pdf
[46] Office for Students. (2022, April). *Insight brief 13: Schools, attainment and the role of higher education.* https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd782ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief- 13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf
[47] Office for Students (2020, July) Strategic relationships with schools and raising attainment : https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/strategic-relationships-with-schools/advice/
[48] Gov.UK (2024, October) Widening participation in higher education : https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education
[49] Thiele, T., Pope, D., Singleton, A., Snape, D. and Stanistreet, D. (2017) Experience of disadvantage: The influence of identity on engagement in working class
[50] HEPI Policy Note 43, (June 2023) The disconnect between quality and inequality: An analysis of the gaps in educational outcomes achieved by free school meal- eligible students in English higher education : https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-disconnect-between-quality-and-inequality.pdf

meet the needs of our students. This approach highlights our commitment to supporting the recruitment, participation and progression needs of Young students by introducing a more inclusive and flexible curriculum model best suited to their requirements.

The University has extended opportunities to enter Higher Education by our extensive development of Degree Apprenticeships, enabling those who favour this form of work-based learning to achieve higher and degree level qualifications. We believe these opportunities are likely to support those from low-income families or with caring responsibilities enabling 'earn while you learn'.

Collaboration within GM Higher

GM Higher[51] is the Uni-Connect[52] partnership for the region, bringing together the Higher Education providers to offer a targeted programme of educational outreach. Membership includes all five universities, in addition to 12 College-based providers. We have been a member since it was established in 2017 and will continue to work collaboratively with other partners to provide a comprehensive and sustained outreach programme to young people who are under-represented in Higher Education. The partnership enables us to work together in a strategic way to target the right schools and learners, remove educational barriers, and address regional and national challenges.

Through Greater Manchester Higher we are actively participating in the delivery of attainment raising activities. GM Higher have taken a methodical and strategic approach to developing interventions, consulting with schools, following external guidance on what works for attainment, and developing a framework to effectively evaluate activity.

Interventions include:

- **Maths Buddy** – Supporting the delivery of this GM Higher-developed programme designed to support Maths attainment and improve the confidence of those who are at risk of failing.
- **Greater Manchester Boys Hub** – Through staff membership we are contributing to the establishment of a boys' network for the region. Responding to established research, the GM Boys Hub will bring together practitioners and other stakeholders to agree and implement a range of strategic and tangible outputs aimed at reducing the educational inequalities faced by working class boys in our region.
- **Summer schools** – Delivery of a Year 10 Summer School to increase the sense of belonging of learners who take part, and ensure they see university as a place for them.

Through our collaboration within GM Higher we:

- Are members of the Governing Board, ensuring the development of the programme responds to the needs of schools, colleges and young people across the region, as well as regional education and skills agendas. We drive key decisions to ensure the future sustainability of the partnership through an annual review process.
- Support the recruitment of undergraduate tutors and ambassadors to support activity delivery and provide relatable peers and mentors for the young people we support.
- Host staff working on the co-ordination and delivery of the attainment raising programme.
- Provide resources and academic input for a wide range of on-campus activities, including summer schools, campus visits and a suite of subject and industry masterclasses.

[51] Greater Manchester Higher https://gmhigher.ac.uk/
[52] Uni Connect - Office for Students https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/uni-connect/

Student APP Focus Group Feedback Relating to Equality of Access

Focus group activity, in relation to this particular intervention strategy, has taken place with two separate groups, 1) a pre-18 cohort of learners (all learners with a minimum of two characteristics likely to indicate risk to equality of opportunity) and 2) a group of existing UGM students. This mix has allowed us to update our knowledge and understanding of the perceived requirements of potential students as well as allowing us to ascertain the reflective value of specific activity from existing students.

Partnerships.

It was agreed across both groups that a partnership approach with Schools and Colleges could help prospective students become familiar with university life and better understand what to expect prior to application, making the process less daunting. The partnership would allow UGM to have a clearer understanding of the progression needs of particular cohorts of learners and thus ensure all activities better meet learner requirements. By offering opportunities to engage with courses of interest, students will have a clearer sense of whether Higher Education is suitable for them.

Some existing students did not have access to such support themselves, and felt they were less prepared for study and university life as a result, so could see how future students would benefit from this joined-up intervention.

A proportion of students consulted, stated that the gradual development of knowledge and understanding of the HE route through 11-16 and then 16-18 stages of education was more appropriate than focussing the vast majority of resources and activity at Year 12/13 stage. Some students also reported feeling considerable pressure at the Year 12/13 stage, balancing course work and exam commitments with HE planning and therefore suggested a preference for receiving support over a longer timeline thus enabling the on-going, progressive development of knowledge and understanding of HE options. This feedback has been factored into our partnership planning delivery timeline.

Taster Days

In the focus group undertaken with learners from within the pre 18 age category, students reported that they felt specific subject taster days would be of considerable value. However, in a separate focus group with post18 existing students, some questioned how impactful a single day of interaction can be, especially when attending alongside a large number of other students. Some students suggested the impact of taster days is dependent on the subject. For example, courses offering more practical-based learning may closely replicate day-to-day study, whereas theory-based courses may hold less representative taster days.

From the post 18 existing student focus group, feedback suggested it would be beneficial for potential students to receive more information on what being a student at university would be like from a non-academic perspective, including the challenges and realities they may face. They felt this honest approach would help students set realistic expectations and better prepare for the transition.

This feedback has been incorporated into our planning, particularly in relation to applicant activity including incorporating access to peer-to-peer sessions, both in person and through an online platform.

Open Days and School Sessions

Some existing students who attended open days prior to applying for university felt that while they provided some insight, the experience was often too brief to offer an accurate representation of what university life is like. For example, one Psychology student noted they were unsure what questions to ask, as they had no pre-conception of what information should be provided, or what they needed to know.

Subsequently, a full review of open day activity has taken place and a new model incorporated mixing traditional open day events with a more informal ‘drop in’ style format where prospective students will be able to attend live lectures and seminars in order to provide them with an accurate insight into delivery content and style.

Both potential learners and existing students commented on the value of receiving clear information as to timetabling and module delivery.

> “Personally, I was able to use the information given by the university to make the right decision and know ahead of time how my course was going to be delivered throughout the year. For example, how many modules we were going to do in semester 1 and what the modules were about.”

> “Open days made me feel less alien to the environment and expectations of Uni”

Theory of Change – Equality of Access

1 Situation

Current data sets evidence that 36.5% of our existing student cohort are "young" students, as compared with the 71.5% sector average. Internal data sets highlight that the majority of young students enrolled progress from local or regional 16-19 providers. Using 2022 data (Lower Super Output Areas – LSOAs) it is estimated that 26% of the Bolton population live in an area that is among the 10% most deprived nationally. 21/22 Gov.UK data highlights that 33% of FSM students in Bolton progress onto higher education, compared to 50.6 of non-FSM students.

2 Aims

This co-ordinated and cohesive set of targeted activities aims to 1) Increase young students' positive engagement with higher education at key decision-making points 2) Increase knowledge of course choice 3) Increase knowledge of higher education support 4) Increase intention to attend and succeed in HE. The programme is tailored to individual need and delivered through a combination of academic staff, specialist support staff and existing students. A further overarching key aim is with regards closing the HE participation gap between those FSM students and those non-FSM students.

7 Inputs	5 Activities	6 Outputs	3 Outcomes	4 Impact
Process			Impact	
Staff time to review data and identify key targeted individuals and groups in relation to EORR Risks 1-3. Staff time to instigate and develop key working relationships with identified School/16-18 providers. Create a suite of aspirational and interactive subject events. Capacity to review data and project evaluations to feed back into future	1) Instigate, develop and embed partnership agreements with an identified group of regional Colleges and Schools 2) Specialist bespoke subject Taster events in key subject grouping areas. 3) Enhanced tailored post application activity 4) Introduction of an incentivised application offer to support identified student groupings	Activity schedule negotiated and agreed with identified partners, delivered with evaluation methodology. Improved prospective student experience Improve access to higher education and encourage increased application to and enrolment on HE programmes.	Increased positive engagement with HE. Increased knowledge on the benefits of HE. Increased knowledge of support available within HE. Increased knowledge of subject choice. Increased knowledge on the application process and HE Finance. Increased capacity to make informed decisions. Increased confidence to succeed in HE.	Increased "young" application numbers. Increased "young" enrolment numbers. Increased application to enrolment conversion rate for "young" students. Increased number of "young" under-represented groups enrolling in HE.

8 Rationale & Assumptions

Whilst University data identifies that the University has an above average number of students who come from Quintiles 1,2 and 3 reflecting a proven track record of recruiting students who are more likely to be disadvantaged, data also highlights that "young" students represent 36.5% of our total student numbers compared to an all HEI 71.5% average. Through providing high quality activities and IAG to regional 16-18 providers our aim is to raise aspirations and raise awareness of the study options and routes into the University of Greater Manchester. Prospective young students will be more knowledgeable, motivated and informed as to the options available to them, resulting in higher application, offer and enrolment numbers.

Intervention Strategy 2 – The Greater Manchester Way

Background and Context

The GMW, the University's innovative approach to curriculum and assessment design and delivery, designed to transform the Teaching Intensive Research Informed Assessment Enabled (TIRIAE) agenda. The GMW will provide learning and education opportunities through its innovative block teaching model offered from its main campus, its satellite campuses, and in due course collaboration with our national and international partner education offerings.

Findings of Office for Students and AdvanceHE research have informed the development of the GMW, highlighting the importance of adopting a holistic approach to student retention and success, focusing on early engagement, tailored support, and building a strong sense of community.[53] [54] [55]

Block Delivery

The GMW is an immersive, flexible learning experience, designed to give students the best chance of successfully completing their modules, fitting their study around busy lives juggling work, family and leisure commitments. Unlike other universities, the shorter, more focused five-week module structure allows students to study just one module at a time, meaning they can focus and learn module material more thoroughly, and achieve higher grades as they progress.

The immersive modules focus on real world applications, giving students the opportunity to engage with issues that matter to them and their community, in an interactive and connected way. Students will experience authentic, engaging tasks, work-integrated learning, and development of twenty-first century skills[56]. They will receive timely feedback throughout each module, designed to enable continuous learning, giving them a greater sense of momentum and motivation, and they will co-create their learning environment to support their learning journey, focusing on learning outcomes that will help shape their future.

In addition, the evaluation of the curriculum design will identify how the curriculum has been balanced, rigorous, coherent, integrated, focused, relevant, and appropriate to the cohort and level of study, and how the use of formative assessment and feedback in the educative process and curriculum offering lead to greater student success.

As noted by Roche et al 2024[57]: 'Immersive block models draw on cognitive load theory, which posits that cognitive processes become overloaded by engaging with multiple tasks (Mason et al.

[53] Final evaluation of programme for innovations in learning and teaching projects - Office for Students July 2020 https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/final-evaluation-of-programme-for-innovation-projects/

[54] Compendium of effective practice in higher education retention and success HEA March 2012 https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/compendium-effective-practice-higher-education-retention-and-success

[55] Access, retention, attainment and progression: a review of the literature 2016-2021 Advance HE November 2021 https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/access-retention-attainment-and-progression-review-literature-2016-2021

[56] McCluskey, T.; Samarawickrema, G.; Smallridge, A.; Dempsey, N. (2021) Student Retention and Success in Higher Education: Institutional Change for the 21st Century - Re-designing curriculum to enhance first-year student success: A case study http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-85165021718&partnerID=MN8TOARS

[57] Roche, T., Wilson, E., Goode, E., McKenzie, J.W, (2024) Supporting the academic success of underrecognised higher education students through an immersive block model https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2424157

2016[58]; Sweller 1988[59]). By reducing the number of simultaneous units and assessments in a study period, immersive block models seek to reduce students' cognitive load, thereby creating conditions more conducive to academic success (Buck & Tyrrell 2022[60]; Goode et al. 2023[61]; Richmond et al. 2015[62]; Roche et al. 2024[63]). These models could have particularly strong positive impacts on students from under-recognised backgrounds, given these students generally have complex lives that involve competing time demands (e.g., work, family and sometimes health) (Payne et al. 2023[64]; Stone et al. 2016[65]; Syme et al. 2022[66]),'

Nieuwoudt[67] goes further and asserts that this model is better for students' mental health, finding that students in this shorter delivery model, experience lower levels of psychological distress, in addition to their enhanced academic performance.

There are numerous examples from Australia where the approach has demonstrated statistically, significant improvements in academic success for students identified as low socio-economic status or first-in-family[68] (which have high correlation with the particular target groups of this Plan); significant improvement in students which experience both the traditional model of teaching and the block model[69]; substantial increases in performance especially for low socio-economic backgrounds or modest school results [70] and improvement in engagement and attendance as well as achievement[71].

Research published by LJMU[72] found students prefer to be taught in the block format and that they feel more engaged.

One of the key elements within the GMW approach will be the flipped classroom whereby students study the core material in advance of the class-session then that 'time then being used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem-solving activities facilitated by teachers'[73]. This approach has been shown to enable students to better understand the concepts as they relate to them; enable learning to be better targeted to their needs; and help to develop

[58] Mason, R., Seton, C., & Cooper, G. (2016). Applying cognitive load theory to the redesign of a conventional database systems course. Computer Science Education, 26(1), 68–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/08993408.2016.1160597
[59] Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. Cognitive Science, 12(2), 257–285. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog1202_4
[60] Buck, E., & Tyrrell, K. (2022). Block and blend: A mixed method investigation into the impact of a pilot block teaching and blended learning approach upon student outcomes and experience. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 46(8), 1078–1091. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2022.2050686
[61] Goode, E., Roche, T., Wilson, E., & McKenzie, J. W. (2023). Implications of immersive scheduling for student achievement and feedback. Studies in Higher Education, 48(7), 1123–1136. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2184472
[62] Richmond, A. S., Murphy, B. C., Curl, L. S., & Broussard, K. A. (2015). The effect of immersion scheduling on academic performance and students' ratings of instructors. Teaching of Psychology, 42(1), 26–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628314562675
[63] Roche, T., Wilson, E., & Goode, E. (2024). Immersive learning in a block teaching model: A case study of academic reform through principles, policies and practice. Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 21(2), https://doi.org/10.53761/1.21.2.12
[64] Payne, A. L., Stone, C., & Bennett, R. (2023). Conceptualising and building trust to enhance the engagement and achievement of under-served students. The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 71(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2021.2005759
[65] Stone, C., O'Shea, S., May, J., Delahunty, J., & Partington, Z. (2016). Opportunity through online learning: Experiences of first-in-family students in online open-entry higher education. Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 56(2), 146–169. https://ajal.net.au/opportunity-through-online-learning-experiences-of-first-in-family-students-in-online-open-entry-higher-education
[66] Syme, S., Roche, T., Goode, E., & Crandon, E. (2022). Transforming lives: The power of an Australian enabling education. Higher Education Research & Development, 41(7), 2426–2440. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1990222
[67] Nieuwoudt J.E. (2023) Improving the Academic Performance and Mental Health of Non-Traditional University Students Through a Shorter Delivery Model https://studentsuccessjournal.org/index.php/studentsuccess/article/view/2660
[68] Roche T., Wilson E., Goode E., McKenzie J.W. (2024) Supporting the academic success of underrecognised higher education students through an immersive block model https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2424157
[69] Klein R., Kelly K., Sinnayah P., Winchester M. (2020) The VU Way: The Effect of Intensive Block Mode Teaching on Repeating Students https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/CAL/article/view/14009
[70] Loton D., Stein C., Parker P., Weaven M. (2020) Introducing block mode to first-year university students: a natural experiment on satisfaction and performance https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1843150
[71] Kwan et al (2022) An Empirical Study of Students' Perception of and Key Factors Affecting Overall Satisfaction in an Intensive Block Mode and Flipped Classroom https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/12/8/535#B2-education-12-00535
[72] Swain, M (2016) Block teaching and the three A's: attendance, attainment and attitudes https://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/3689/
[73] AdvanceHE Starter Tools – Flipped Classroom https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/flipped-learning-0

relationships between academics and students[74]. Feedback from students has shown to be extremely positive; they become more responsible and confident learners; and are better able to relate to and apply the learning[75].

Assessment Enabled

UUK / NUS[76] recommend 'understanding the effect that existing curriculums and content (and wider teaching and learning practices including assessment and feedback) might be having on student inclusivity, including where the social and cultural capital accrued by particular groups of students might be disproportionality valued'.

Walker[77] puts this perhaps slightly more directly: 'There is considerable evidence that high-stakes summative exams disadvantage racially minoritised students'; 'Prior qualification, although a key factor in degree outcomes, does not explain the differences between ethnic groups'; and that 'Inclusive assessment does not mean lowering academic standards. As long as the learning outcomes can be achieved through equivalent means, inclusive assessment is a mechanism for safeguarding standards while maximising the possibility of success for all students. They argue that it is helpful for students 'to progress in their learning by making the most of formative feedback and how they are progressing, and it is helpful for staff as it builds a shared understanding of assessment mapped across the programme'.

These concepts are at the heart of the Assessment Enabled approach being adopted within the GMW and, as such, should help to provide equality of opportunity for the target groups of Asian and Black attainment.

Within this approach, students will undertake a series of developmental, nested assessment with formative feedback throughout the module (rather than exams at the end). In-class immediate verbal feedback will be encouraged, with peer and self-assessment used alongside more formal tutor feedback. Contextualised assessment will enable students to demonstrate competency and skills.

Student APP Focus Group Feedback on Block Delivery and Assessment Enabled

There was mixed feedback on the GMW, with one student with ADHD stating that focusing on a single module at a time could be beneficial as it reduces distractions and increases focus, but the repetitive nature may become monotonous. Some other students felt they would prefer a balance between block teaching and traditional modular teaching. Concerns were raised about forgetting material covered in earlier blocks, leading to a suggestion for refresher quizzes throughout the year.

In response to this suggestion, and to align with the formative, developmental approach to ongoing feedback throughout programmes, planning and delivery of modules will now incorporate retrieval practice learning tasks, encouraging and enabling students to interleave prior learning with new skills and competency-based activities. Institutional staff development will foster fluency in adaptive

[74] Francis N. (20 March 2019) AdvanceHE: Flipping the Classroom – Becoming a Better Lecturer https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/flipping-the-classroom
[75] Drew B. (Published 16 July 2018) AdvanceHE Conference 5 July 2018: Perceptions on the flipped classroom approach https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/hub/download/Room%20231_ST3.4b_Benjamin%20Drew_1568037605.pdf
[76] UUK / NUS: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities May 2019 https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf
[77] Walker, R. Awarding gaps and assessment: a briefing paper for EAC, Cambridge Centre for Learning and Teaching, March 2021 https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/files/foundations_for_assessment_paper_1.pdf

teaching methodologies for all, building on innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching in Higher Education[78].

Students were uncertain about how effectively this model will translate across different courses, with specific examples such as courses with teaching across three semesters and Nursing.

Some students noted block teaching would help them to retain information from module to module, as information is fresh in their minds. One student asked that block teaching continues to challenge students while they are learning. Students overall concluded that while the GMW seems beneficial, there are several elements to consider prior to roll-out:

> *"If this intervention had been in place when I started studying, it would have helped me focus better by allowing me to concentrate on one module at a time instead of juggling multiple subjects. This structured approach could have reduced stress and improved my understanding of each topic. Having assessments at the end of each module would have provided a clearer sense of progress and achievement, making it easier to retain knowledge and perform better academically."*

Students as Partners

There is substantial evidence[79] [80] [81] that involving students in the co-creation of their learning and student experience delivers substantial benefits, of which the University already has significant experience.

As AdvanceHE notes[82], flexible learning such as the approaches being adopted through the GMW 'requires a balance of power between institutions and students, and seeks to find ways in which choice can be provided that is economically viable and appropriately manageable for institutions and students alike'. Therefore, in line with this Framework, to ensure successful adoption of this flexible learning, it is planned that student learning is going to involve them in a variety of different ways, not simply as passive learners but effectively as tutors, mentors or assessors, and as co-designers of learning materials and resources. Developing such a partnership goes beyond ensuring student engagement, but delivers effective learning and teaching enhancement.

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[78] Wilson, et al, Creating the conditions for student success through curriculum reform: the impact of an active learning, immersive block model | Higher Education

[79] HEA: Students as partners in the curriculum - An overview of the programme participating institutions and case studies 7 February 2014 https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/sap-compendium_1581087934.pdf

[80] HEA: Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education July 2014 https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/engagement-through-partnership-students-partners-learning-and-teaching-higher

[81] Ramsden P. (2008) The Future of Higher Education Teaching and the Student Experience https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/3463853/he-debate-ramsden-libre.pdf?1390833236=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_future_of_higher_education_teaching.pdf&Expires=1744279566&Signature=dRbGkfTUOY6dCX-CuMatSVs5WisHdUXvoMgSeV1E9utCcoZJGR5jBPlf90mVbCIb4wtE8j~wyl52G0lxKHjEPEeW0e7F72ZZUvNyNgL1iSn9DgWdRREITOAoVop0CyqP1ZZPfOUbx7rRT8sI8uIdHZf~p~CY8X-0Gl1RUE2snqjMWlwJljCPGHglqCoZu4bTuSwbRbyjqgrF6nkeGigiMajg4xFSRQZ8g~LkO4m8k1q3oAuEw2a93rCT6-vio0nfgccxapbzNYL4mLrsBc94gyru8LcCg6QkyhLSIc7GtX2t3Thja5WhGopfWkVekwvwc1M1O9zJGw5zUJgraj0YxA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

[82] AdvanceHE: Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success - Student Engagement through Partnerships 2016

https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/Student%20Engagement%20Through%20Partnership%20Framework.pdf

This applies not only to their learning, but we will also engage students more broadly as part of the University community. We already have many measures in place to support students' wellbeing and recognise their broader needs, one example being for part-time employment, which has multiple benefits including the enhancement of future employment opportunities and at a more basic level to cope with increasing cost pressures, particularly for those groups at greatest risk such as FSM students. The Student Ambassadors programme has been highly successful and the University plans to build upon this. It is far preferable to offer paid employment to our own students as it involves them more deeply within University-life, builds belonging and association with other students, and helps to reduce external pressures upon them. We will also promote the support that is available as evidence suggests that some student groups that may particularly need and benefit from such support are less aware that it is available[83].

Academic Skills Hub (ASH)

Background and Context

ASH was established in September 2024 to support students in developing the essential academic skills needed for success at the UGM. Research suggests students, specifically those from diverse educational backgrounds, face challenges in academic writing, critical thinking, and independent study skills, which can impact their confidence and overall attainment (Golden, 2023)[84]. By addressing these challenges, ASH aims to enhance students' academic abilities, promote personal growth, and build confidence, ensuring they are better equipped with the necessary skills to excel in their studies (Cottrell, 2021)[85].

Additionally, ASH aims to provide an accessible and adaptable learning experience, aligning with best practice in student support. Higher Education institutes recognise the importance of flexible, student-centred approaches that adapt to varying levels of prior knowledge and learning styles (Brennan, 2021)[86]. In this vein, ASH integrates digital resources, structured workshops and personalised one-to-one consultations, enabling students to engage with academic skills development topics in a way that aligns with their individual needs.

ASH is a dedicated support service designed to help students develop essential skills needed for academic success. It offers a range of activities, including:

LEAP Online is a digital platform with interactive learning resources aimed at developing essential academic skills. It allows students to engage with modules at their own pace, fostering self-directed learning and helping to bridge any skill gaps that impact academic attainment.

Academic Skills Workshops cover various academic and study skills topics. These workshops offer opportunities for students to interact directly with the Academic Skills Team, ask questions, and receive immediate feedback.

83 OfS Insight Brief: Studying during rises in the cost of living (17 March 2023) https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living/

84 Golden, B. (2022) Enabling critical thinking development in higher education through the use of a structured planning tool. *Irish Educational studies*, [Online] Available from: https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1080/03323315.2023.2258497. [Accessed 4 March 2025].

85 Cottrell, S. (2022) *Skills for Success*. 4th ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic

86 Brennan, J. (2021) *Flexible Learning Pathways in British Higher Education: A Decentralized and Market-based System*. [Online] Available from: Flexible Learning Pathways in British Higher Education: A decentralized and market-based system. [Accessed 4 March 2025].

One-to-one Consultations offer personalised support tailored to individual needs. These sessions allow for in-depth discussion about specific academic challenges, enabling the Academic Skills Team to provide targeted strategies and resources. This personalised approach helps to address the diverse experiences and barriers that Black and Asian students may encounter.

By integrating these activities, the aim is to create an inclusive learning environment that recognises and addresses the specific needs of Black and Asian students. This holistic support system is intended to empower these students, reduce attainment gaps, and promote equitable academic outcomes.

Student APP Focus Group Feedback Relating to ASH

Students from non-traditional academic backgrounds, such as BTEC qualifications, stated they felt less prepared compared to their peers who have completed A-levels. This disparity can and has led to feelings of isolation, particularly when adapting to university life. This is echoed by other students, indicating a wider challenge for those with different educational backgrounds. Students' feedback supports the need for an academic support intervention for all students, particularly those within identified target groups.

Students discussed whether mental health difficulties can act as a barrier to engaging with resources like ASH, as some say they may have felt unable to utilise them during challenging times or when academic success was not a priority. Students agree that tailored support is highly valuable, with one-to-one appointments being particularly effective in addressing individual needs. One student suggested a roll-out of ASH into the classroom to deliver targeted academic support, relevant to individual subject areas. Students were made aware of subject-specific and group-directed workshops, delivered by the Academic Skills team, designed for the classroom.

As it is a recent initiative, there was a general lack of awareness of ASH. Although not having used the service themselves, one student stated their peers have used this resource and found it highly valuable. This suggests a need for improved promotion and visibility of resources like ASH and LEAP Online.

Students transitioning directly from college or lacking strong academic skills appreciate resources that build confidence and basic academic skills. They state these resources have the potential to mitigate plagiarism by adopting better academic practices.

> *"When I first started university, the intervention was already in place and it helped me immensely. Coming from sixth form, I had no idea how to reference my work. I was really worried during induction day, because I had to know how to reference my work appropriately in order to pass all my assignments. However, my tutor reassured us that we didn't have to worry about it, because the university had already set up a hub called LEAP where we could access help with Harvard referencing. Moreover, she also gave our cohort paraphrasing activity sheets to help us to not plagiarise and expand our vocabulary. By the end of year 1, I could see how useful LEAP was as I came out with excellent grades and I often used to get positive feedback on my reference list."*

In response, we are actively working to enhance both the visibility and accessibility of ASH across the student journey and are launching a multi-faceted promotional strategy. This will include new campaigns, which will run at regular intervals throughout the academic year and feature themed

workshops, daily skills tips, and pop-up stalls in high-footfall areas to actively engage students. We also intend to produce short podcasts and video content focusing on key academic skills areas. These will be made available via our webpage and promoted via social media channels to increase engagement and relatability. New initiatives, such as 'Did You Know?' will feature on digital screens across the University and offer bite-sized skills tips and information about ASH. Work is underway to refresh the branding to ensure a clearer, more recognisable presence.

Recognising that students may experience barriers to seeking support, particularly during periods of academic pressure, we will strengthen in-sessional academic support by expanding our offer to include short, embedded skills boosters and Q&A sessions within classrooms, designed to bring support directly to students in a way that is timely, relevant, and informal.

PREPARE

Background and Context

The Academic Skills Team, in collaboration with various stakeholders across the UGM, aim to develop, implement, and evaluate pre-enrolment courses for students. The objective is to ensure students are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for the transition to university life, their next level of study, and beyond. This initiative provides essential resources and guidance to help students navigate Higher Education with confidence.

Integrating these activities fosters an inclusive learning environment that supports all students, including Black and Asian students, by addressing their needs, reducing attainment gaps, and promoting equitable academic outcomes.[87][88]

Student APP Focus Group Feedback Relating to PREPARE

Students felt informative webinars presented by current students would be beneficial, as their honesty and experiences provide relatable content, particularly when discussing expenses and accommodation. They stated knowing what to expect before starting their studies would help prospective students feel less anxious and more prepared. Students asked that these interventions be promoted during Welcome and Induction at the Welcome Fair.

When presented with the concept of webinars delivered by students for students, one student asked if alternative mediums, such as blogs, to convey information to new starters could be considered. In addition to this, students felt there should be more opportunities to ask questions directly, enabling them to connect with peers and current students. From feedback, students felt that pre-enrolment courses could play a crucial role in students' transition to university by including practical content, particularly with financial and wellbeing management guides.

Students acknowledge the presence of mental health services at the University, but ask that whilst waiting for access to formal services like the Life Lounge, they have access to targeted mental

87 Mimirinis, M., Ventouris, A., and Wright, E. (2024) Variation in Black students' conceptions of academic support. British Educational Research Journal, [Online] 50(1), pp. 241-259. Available from: https://doi-org.ezproxy.bolton.ac.uk/10.1002/berj.3921 .[Accessed 11 March 2025].

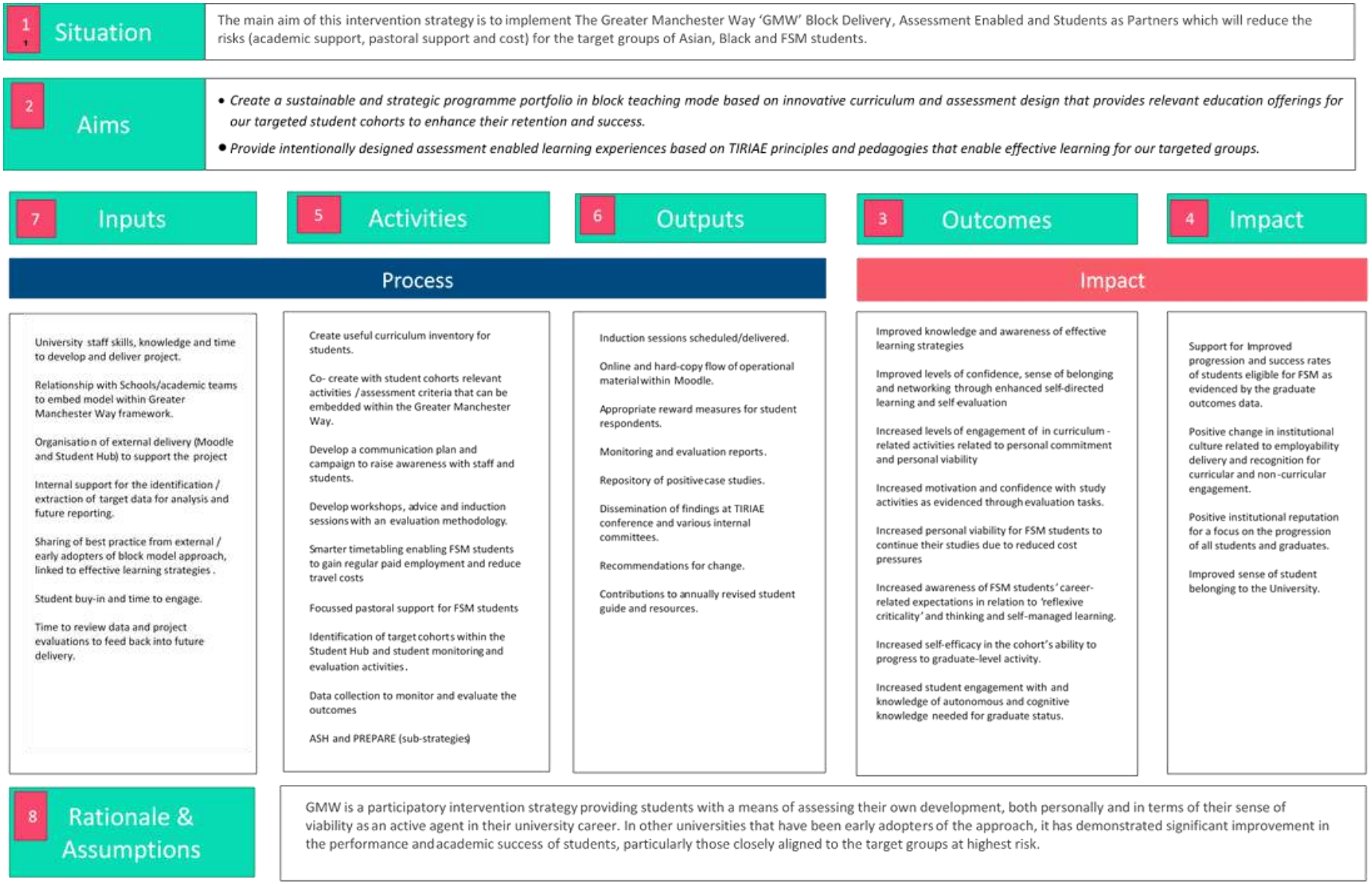
88 Bolton, P., and Lewis, J. (2024) *Equity of access and outcomes in higher education in England*. [Online] Available from: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf .[Accessed 11 March 2025]

health drop-in sessions during exam periods. Students feel this could help address academic and emotional preparedness year on year:

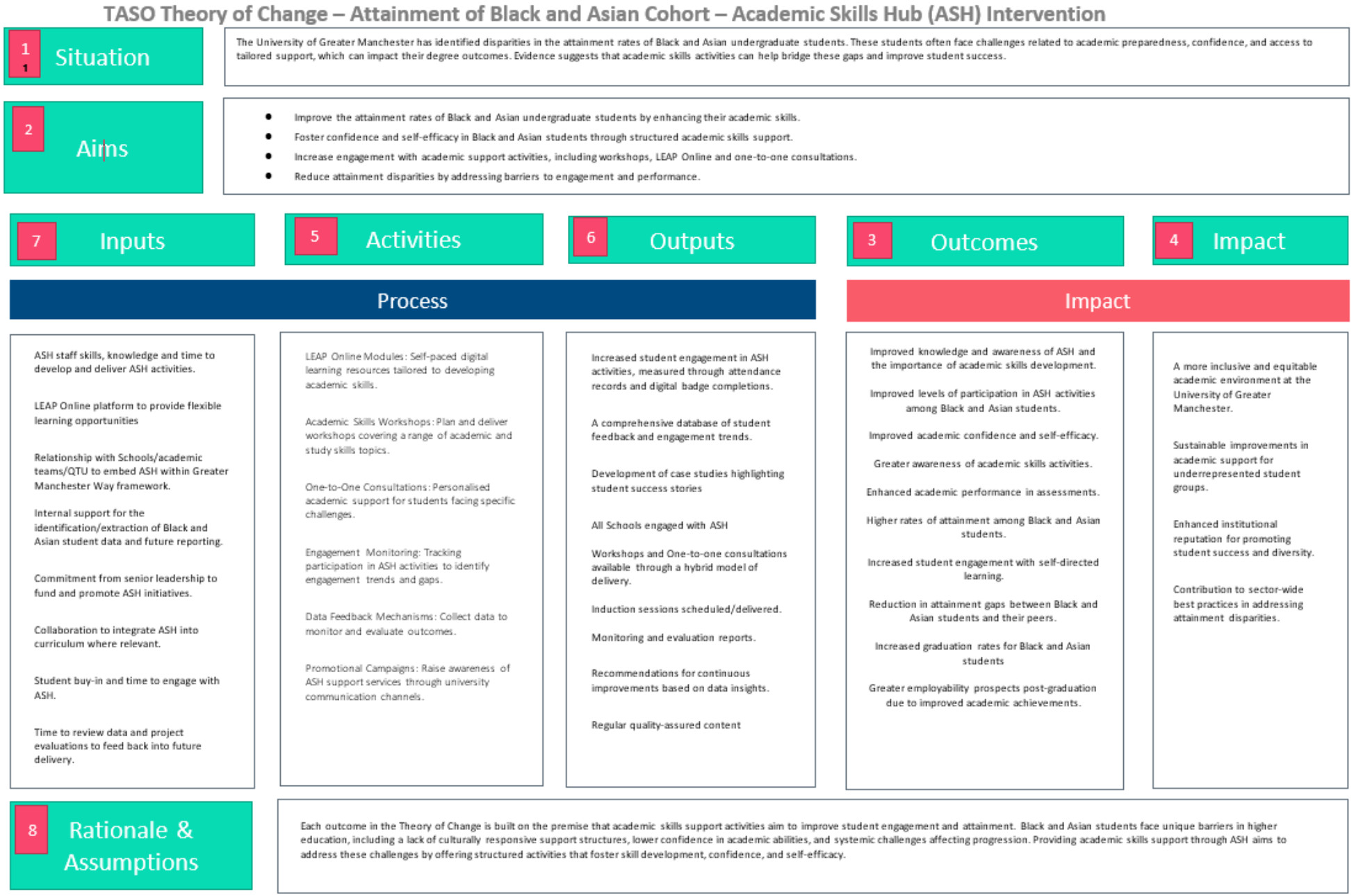
> *"I think if online pre-enrolment, webinars and resources were available for my course I would have come in more prepared and less worried. This is because I had to change my course last minute and I didn't really know what I was getting myself into, besides knowing it's a Health and Social degree. I tried to read the programme specification, but I felt like I wanted to see the perspective of a current student studying the course. For example, I noticed that other universities that I had applied to, had student videos on YouTube and (for example) day in the life of a nursing student. These type of videos can help prospective students know what they are getting themselves into and how their day would go once they start uni."*

In response, and recognising the value of peer insight, PREPARE will feature webinars and workshops planned and co-delivered by current students, offering relatable, experience-based guidance on key areas such as: student finance and Disability Support Allowance, Student Support Services and academic English language support. To enhance accessibility, alternative delivery formats—including written guides, similar to a blog post—will also be made available, catering to diverse learning styles. For PREPARE, creating a sense of belonging is vital, therefore, we hope to develop a dedicated student forum where peers can communicate and connect before their course starts. Additionally, a live Q&A session will be filmed, enabling new students to engage with staff and current students and ask questions prior to their arrival.

Theory of Change – Greater Manchester Way (GMW) (Block Delivery, Assessment Enabled and Students as Partners)

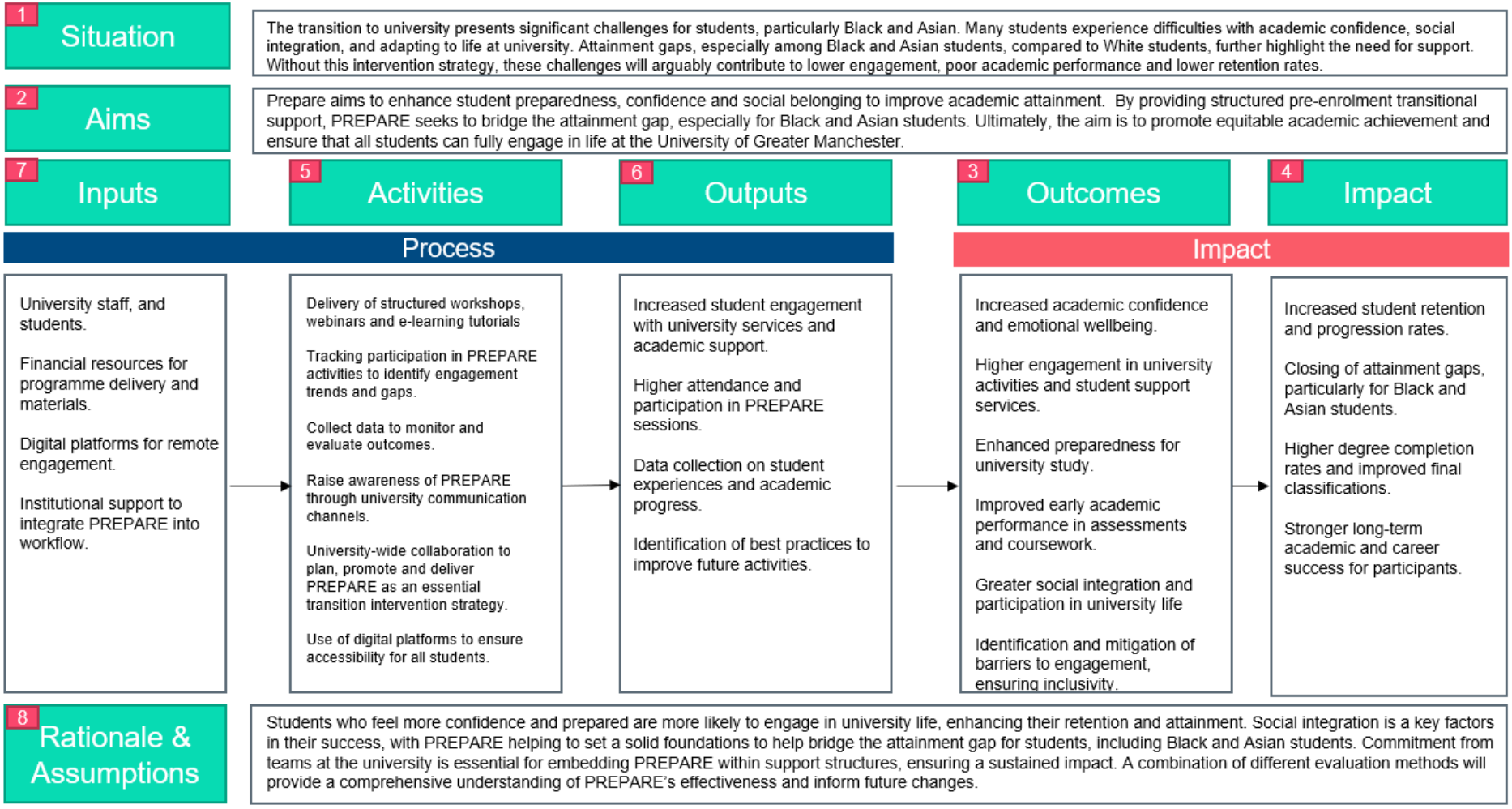


Theory of Change – Academic Skills Hub



Theory of Change – PREPARE

TASO Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education



Intervention Strategy 3 – Career Passport

Background and Context

The UGM seeks to address and increase the FT UG progression rate of students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), helping them to develop the skills needed to secure a graduate role upon graduation. Through the institutional risk assessment, gaps in progression for those eligible for FSM have been identified as a priority. It is clearly recognised that Progression rates of Asian students is an issue for UGM, however our focus on FSM (approx. 29% of all Young Students) will clearly include many Asian students at the same time.

Our aims are:

- To provide ongoing opportunities for our FSM cohort, to access career and employability interventions linked to visible recognition of achievements, through the delivery of our new Career Passport intervention.
- To support our FSM cohort to help them understand how their skills and achievements gained whilst at university, can support their personal development, brand profile and long-term job prospects.
- To increase and improve confidence levels of FSM cohort in relation to the job application process.
- To create a hybrid model that provides both unavoidable employability delivery within the curriculum as well as the ability for students to showcase differentiation in their job applications.

Overall, the internal and external evidence points to the following factors underpinning the gaps:

(i) Limited access to networks and opportunities
(ii) Social constructs such as imposter syndrome
(iii) Geographical constraints and regional job opportunities
(iv) Financial constraints which impact on social mobility.

By providing our FSM students with the opportunities and support to develop their graduate attributes and work-related experiences and to plan more effectively for their future careers, there will be a greater focus on the drive to succeed and gain a graduate-level job post-graduation. Any career concerns on entry to HE, will be addressed within the student life cycle with ongoing visual recognition.

Institutional student feedback demonstrates that students like visual recognition and certification for engagement, which are key elements of the Passport.

FSM students who access careers support will be empowered to believe in themselves and their abilities, understanding what they need to do to navigate the recruitment process, regardless of their subject discipline.

Why was the intervention developed?

The Career Passport intervention has been developed to address the changing needs of the student population and their approach to career planning, and how that correlates with the growing research around human motivation. Previously, we have used initiatives (Bolton Award) that are more formally award based, but research into self-determination theory (SDT) [89] suggests that

[89] Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M., 2012. Self-determination theory. Handbook of theories of social psychology, 1(20), pp.416-436.

what is most important in motivating people to autonomously choose to engage with something, are the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The Career Passport helps to address these needs in the following ways:

- ***Autonomy***: The 'stamp-based' structure allows students to plan, engage and complete the activities they choose, in the order they want at a time that works for them. This promotes independent choice and autonomy.
- ***Competence***: Students want to feel they have developed new skills and are competent in the ones they acquire, which supports the ethos of the GMW model. The Career Passport allows students to grow their career confidence incrementally, which should encourage them (with support) to step outside their comfort zone and seek out new skills challenges.
- ***Relatedness***: The hybrid nature of the Career Passport will ensure that there are shared curriculum experiences for our students, and internal student feedback demonstrates that shared experiences greatly improve engagement and retention.

The Career Passport model is designed to intrinsically motivate students, using visual recognition tools, as opposed to our previous initiatives, which have relied upon extrinsic motivation. Studies show that 'extrinsic motivation' leads to people engaging less with the process which has resulted in minimal engagement and effort. [90]

Student APP Focus Group Feedback Relating to Career Passport

Students had a generally positive response to the Career Passport. They all recognised the value of an employability scheme, preparing them for the transition into employment or further study. Feedback from students indicated this intervention would greatly support final year students, with second year students encouraged to take part ahead of their final year of study (with the assumption they are a three-year undergraduate). Students' feedback suggested that they appreciate the opportunity to take part in a recognised employability scheme that not only equips them with soft skills needed for the workplace, but also digital recognition that can be used across professional platforms.

Some students see schemes like the Career Passport as a way to show employers that they are job ready, with one student noting that employers have a pre-conception of Gen-Z work ethic.

Questions were raised about whether recent graduates could continue to use the Career Passport within one year of Graduation to further support students' career development.

> *"The Careers Passport would have better prepared me for my future career by providing structured opportunities to develop key employability skills. Gaining practical experience, networking opportunities, and career guidance would have boosted my confidence and readiness for the job market. It would have also helped me build a stronger CV, making me more competitive for future roles or further study."*

In response, it is noted that the Passport should be completed before students graduate, as it embraces structured employability opportunities with built in support. Based on student feedback, a detailed transcript will now be provided for all participants to provide some narrative that explains what has been gained. This can be given to future employers to demonstrate skills development and engagement. The Career Passport will be marketed extensively with clear messages about

[90] Di Domenico SI, Ryan RM. The Emerging Neuroscience of Intrinsic Motivation: A New Frontier in Self-Determination Research. Front Hum Neurosci. 2017 Mar 24;11:145. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2017.00145. PMID: 28392765; PMCID: PMC5364176.

what it is and how it can support future job search and career readiness and it will be confirmed to Graduates that they will receive careers support for up to 3 years post-graduation. We will introduce a mandatory element at the start of the Passport which will ensure that these student comments are addressed and we will continue to seek input from students as the intervention is implemented.

Theory of Change – Career Passport

TASO Theory of Change – Progression of FSM Cohort - Career Passport Intervention

1 Situation

The University of Greater Manchester seeks to address and increase the FT UG progression rate of students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), helping them to develop the skills needed to secure a graduate role upon graduation. Through the institutional risk assessment, gaps in progression for those eligible for FSM have been identified as a priority. Overall, the internal and external evidence points to the following factors underpinning the gaps (i) limited access to networks and opportunities (ii) social constructs such as imposter syndrome (iii) geographical constraints and regional job opportunities (iv) financial constraints which impacts on social mobility.

2 Aims

- To provide ongoing opportunities for our FSM cohort, to access career and employability interventions linked to visible recognition of achievements, through the delivery of our new Career Passport intervention.
- To support our FSM cohort to help them understand how their skills and achievements gained whilst at university, can support their personal development, brand profile and long-term job prospects.
- To increase and improve confidence levels of FSM cohort in relation to the job application process.
- To create a hybrid model that provides both unavoidable employability delivery within the curriculum as well as the ability for students to showcase differentiation in their job applications.

7 Inputs

JFS staff skills, knowledge and time to develop and deliver the new Career Passport model.

Relationship with Schools/academic teams/QTU to embed model within Greater Manchester Way framework.

Organisation of external delivery (Student Hub) to support the extraction of data from SITS and the development of online workflow.

Internal support for the identification/extraction of FSM data and future reporting.

Sharing of best practice from external/early adopters of block model approach, linked to employability.

Career Passport branded materials and design of digital stamps by RSM.

Student buy-in and time to engage with Passport.

Time to review data and project evaluations to feed back into future delivery.

5 Activities

Creation of Passport identity, student workflow and digital stamps.

Create Passport marketing materials.

Create relevant activities/assessment criteria that can be embedded within the Greater Manchester Way.

Develop a communication plan and campaign to raise awareness of Career Passport with staff and students.

Develop Career Passport workshops, advice and induction sessions with evaluation methodology.

Identification of FSM cohort within Student Hub.

Student monitoring and evaluation activities.

Data collection to monitor and evaluate the outcomes

6 Outputs

All Schools engaged with the Career Passport.

Career Passport hybrid model is available providing embedded and extra-curricular elements.

Induction sessions scheduled/delivered.

Online Passport workflow operational within Student Hub and linked to Moodle.

Digital Passport stamps acquired by FSM cohort.

Monitoring and evaluation reports.

Bank of positive case studies.

Dissemination of findings at TIRIAE conference and various internal committees.

Recommendations for change.

Annually revised student guide and resources.

Process

3 Outcomes

Improved knowledge and awareness of careers and employability support and the importance of skills development.

Improved levels of confidence, sense of belonging and networking skills with FSM cohort as evidenced by digital stamps, recruitment matching and job acquisition.

Increased levels of Passport stamps which equate to an increase in the engagement of employability-related activities.

Increased motivation and confidence with job search activities as evidenced through evaluation tasks.

Increased support for employability-related interventions and skills acquisition from staff as evidenced through embedded elements of the Passport.

Increased awareness of FSM students' career-related experiences as well as systemic barriers to engagement with career planning.

Increased self-efficacy in their ability to progress to graduate-level activity.

Increased student engagement with business and industry.

4 Impact

Improved progression rates of students eligible for FSM from 56% (2021/22) to 65% for those graduating in 2028/29 (cohorts surveyed between December 2029 and September 2030).

All students and graduates feel equipped to navigate the recruitment process.

Positive change in institutional culture related to employability delivery and recognition for curricular and non-curricular engagement.

Positive institutional reputation for a focus on the progression of all students and graduates.

Impact

8 Rationale & Assumptions

By providing our FSM students with the opportunities and support to develop their graduate attributes and work-related experiences and to plan more effectively for their future careers, there will be a greater focus on the drive to succeed and gain a graduate-level job post-graduation. Any career concerns on entry to HE, will be addressed within the student life cycle with ongoing visual recognition. Institutional student feedback demonstrates that students like visual recognition and certification for engagement, which are key elements of the Passport. FSM students who access careers support will be empowered to believe in themselves and their abilities, understanding what they need to do to navigate the recruitment process, regardless of their subject discipline.

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2026-27 to 2029-30

Provider name: The University of Bolton

Provider UKPRN: 10006841

Summary of 2026-27 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using CPIH

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2026-27 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9535
Foundation degree		N/A	9535
Foundation year/Year 0 (classroom based)		N/A	5760
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)		N/A	9535
HNC/HND		N/A	9535
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9535
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9535
Accelerated degree		N/A	11440
Sandwich year		N/A	1905
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1427
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2026-27

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Bolton College	10000794	9535
First degree	LCA Education Limited	10089266	9535
First degree	Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited - Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited	10093118	9535
First degree	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	9535
First degree	Shockout Arts Ltd	10041563	9535
First degree	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	9535
Foundation degree	Bolton College	10000794	9535
Foundation degree	LCA Education Limited	10089266	9535
Foundation degree	Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited - Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited	10093118	9535
Foundation degree	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	9535
Foundation degree	Shockout Arts Ltd	10041563	9535
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	9535
Foundation year/Year 0 (classroom based)	LCA Education Limited	10089266	5760
Foundation year/Year 0 (classroom based)	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	5760
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)	LCA Education Limited	10089266	9535
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)	Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited - Manchester Conservatoire of Creative and Performing Arts Limited	10093118	9535
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	9535
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)	Shockout Arts Ltd	10041563	9535
HNC/HND	Bolton College	10000794	6181
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College	10005032	8248
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	9535
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College	10005032	8248
Postgraduate ITT	Shockout Arts Ltd	10041563	9535
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	9535
Accelerated degree	Shockout Arts Ltd	10041563	11440
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2026-27 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	7145
Foundation degree		N/A	7145
Foundation year/Year 0 (classroom based)		N/A	4315
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)		N/A	7145
HNC/HND		N/A	7145
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	7145
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	7145
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year		N/A	1905
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1427
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2026-27

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Bolton College	10000794	7145
First degree	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	7145
First degree	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	7145
Foundation degree	Bolton College	10000794	7145
Foundation degree	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	7145

Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	7145
Foundation year/Year 0 (classroom based)	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	4315
Foundation year/Year 0 (non-classroom based)	RTC Education Ltd	10008455	7145
HNC/HND	Bolton College	10000794	3088
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College	10005032	4124
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	7145
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College	10005032	4124
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited	10004177	7145
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2026-27 to 2029-30

Provider name: The University of Bolton

Provider UKPRN: 10006841

Investment summary

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

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):
"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.
"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£1,731,000	£1,778,000	£1,823,000	£1,873,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£261,000	£267,000	£267,000	£267,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£90,000	£67,000	£68,000	£69,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£519,000	£533,000	£547,000	£562,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£1,039,000	£1,067,000	£1,094,000	£1,124,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£173,000	£178,000	£182,000	£187,000
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£1,731,000**	**£1,778,000**	**£1,823,000**	**£1,873,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment (as % of HFI)***	**8.9%**	**8.6%**	**8.6%**	**8.7%**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment funded from HFI (£)***	**£1,731,000**	**£1,778,000**	**£1,823,000**	**£1,873,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)***	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£11,000	£17,000	£17,000	£17,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£261,000**	**£267,000**	**£267,000**	**£267,000**
Financial support investment	***Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)***	**1.3%**	**1.3%**	**1.3%**	**1.2%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£90,000	£67,000	£68,000	£69,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2026-27 to 2029-30

Provider name: The University of Bolton

Provider UKPRN: 10006841

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone	2029-30 milestone
Increase the volume of young students entering HE with at least one characteristic most likely to indicate risks to equality of opportunity	PTA_1	Access	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)		Approximaelty 95% of our young students have one or more such characteristics and we intend to increase the volume of these students accessing HE opportunities; measured via internal intersectional analysis drawing upon UCAS and enrolment data	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Headcount	1045	1140	1190	1235	1330
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone	2029-30 milestone
Raise the continuation rate of Asian students	PTS_1	Continuation	Ethnicity	Asian	White	2029-30 milestone represents 2028-29 entrants continuing into 2029-30, as an interim target towards improved attainment. First year of plan (2026-27 entrants) coincides with 2027-28 milestone	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	81.8	82	83	84	85
Raise the completion rate of Asian students	PTS_2	Completion	Ethnicity	Asian	White	2029-30 milestone represents 2026-27 entrants whose completion is measured in 2029-30, as an interim target towards improved attainment. Earlier milestones will only have part-effect of the plan's interventions	No	The access and participation dashboard	2018-19	Percentage	72.9	73.5	75	77	80
Raise the attainment rate of Asian students	PTS_3	Attainment	Ethnicity	Asian	White	2029-30 milestone represents awards made in 2029-30, many of whom will have been entrants in 2027-28	No	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage	58.3	59.5	61	63	65
Raise the attainment rate of Black students	PTS_4	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	White	2029-30 milestone represents awards made in 2029-30, many of whom will have been entrants in 2027-28	No	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage	49.9	51	53	56	60
Raise the continuation rate of FSM students	PTS_5	Continuation	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	2029-30 milestone represents 2028-29 entrants continuing into 2029-30, as an interim target towards improved completion and progression. First year of plan (2026-27 entrants) coincides with 2027-28 milestone	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	80.4	81	82.5	84	85
Raise the completion rate of FSM students	PTS_6	Completion	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	2029-30 milestone represents 2026-27 entrants whose completion is measured in 2029-30, as an interim target towards improved progression. Earlier milestones will only have part-effect of the plan's interventions	No	The access and participation dashboard	2018-19	Percentage	69.7	70	71	72.5	75
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														

	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone	2029-30 milestone
Raise the progression rate of FSM students	PTP_1	Progression	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	2029-30 milestone represents awards made in 2028-29 (2026-27 entrants) then surveyed Dec 29 - Sept 30. Earlier milestones will only have part-effect of the plan's interventions	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	57.1	58	59	61	65
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														