

## **1. Assessment of Performance**

We have undertaken a detailed review and analysis of internal and published external data including the recently released Access and Participation Dataset and been cognisant of the Key Performance Measures set by the Office for Students to inform our ongoing and future areas of focus. This review follows on from the assessment of performance undertaken as part of the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan and the ongoing robust analysis that is undertaken throughout the year internally which feeds into institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and analysis reported through the committee structure including the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee.

Our analysis has considered Higher Education participation/household income/socioeconomic status, Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students, care experienced students, mature students and students with a disability, disaggregated where appropriate. In addition, we have looked at intersections of disadvantage, and sub-sectors within these groups and part-time students. We have also looked at interactions of gender within these groups.

### **1.1 Higher Education Participation, Household Income, or Socioeconomic status**

Analysis in this section is based on POLAR4, supplemented by household income and IMD. These metrics give similar findings, with IMD providing more detail in some areas.

#### **Access**

We place almost three times the number of POLAR4 quintile 5 applicants than POLAR4 quintile 1 applicants, and this proportion has been relatively static over the past five years. UCAS data shows that we have an offer rate gap of 10% between quintile 1 and 5 for 18 year olds, however the difference from the average offer rate for quintile 1 applicants is small, and not statistically significant, from which we can infer that we treat applicants with the same tariff points fairly, regardless of their POLAR status. We have also identified a gap of 24% between entrants from IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5. Further analysis of POLAR4 and IMD has identified a correlation between these metrics.

#### **Success**

##### *Non-continuation*

There remains a small gap (1.9%) in the continuation rate between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5, however, when compared with the cohort entering on the same qualification profile, the residual difference is minimal; this is also in line with sector analysis. The Access and Participation dataset shows the gap has narrowed over the previous three years, is not statistically significant, and is less than the sector gap of 5%. This analysis has also been conducted by IMD quintile and with students coming from households with low household income and both are consistent with a small gap of 2%.

### *Attainment*

The attainment rate of students from the lowest POLAR4 quintile has been improving over time from 75% in 2013-14 to 79% in 2017-18. The gap to quintile 5 has also been narrowing from 7% in 2014-15 to 2% in 2017-18, compared to a sector gap of 9.5%. The IMD quintile 1:5 gap has followed a similar pattern, reducing to 9% in the most recent year, from 18% four years ago compared to a sector gap currently of 18%. Neither gap is flagged as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset. Our analysis shows that these gaps are primarily related to students who enter with non-traditional qualifications.

### **Progression to employment or further study**

There was a 10% gap in the graduate progression rates from POLAR4 quintile 1 compared to quintile 5 in 2012-13. This has closed to 2% in 2016-17 compared to a 6% sector gap. The gap for Bournemouth University (BU) is not flagged as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset and is consistent with the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) dataset where there is a gap of 1.3% between quintiles 1 and 2 compared to 3, 4 and 5 for highly skilled employment or further study.

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

### **Access**

We have relatively low numbers of BAME applicants, which maps the geographical trend in that these applicants are more attracted to higher education providers in large cities, with high proportions of BAME in the local population. In addition, we do not currently offer some of the subjects which attract large numbers of Asian applicants in our portfolio, particularly medicine and pharmacy. However, the proportion of placed applicants from all ethnicities has grown over the last 5 years and we recognise that our current offer rate to BAME students, especially black students, is below the UCAS calculated average offer rate and that of white applicants. Due to the low volume of BAME applicants this measure can be volatile. We have analysed this data further internally and it can be partially explained by qualification on entry type whereby black applicants with A levels have comparable offer rates to white applicants, but those with a mix of qualifications, and in particular BTECs (a high proportion of our BAME students), have a lower offer rate. The Access and Participation dataset only highlights a statistically significant gap of 2.4% in Asian 18 year old entrants in comparison to the population, which may relate to our portfolio of degree subjects as identified above, however this has improved over the five year period and the gap remains better than the corresponding sector gaps over the same time period.

### **Success**

#### *Non-continuation*

Analysis has revealed that qualification type on entry is a dominant factor for success. At BU, 47% of students enter with a Highest Qualification on Entry which is not A/AS level, and for BAME students, the proportion is significantly higher. Whilst the Access and Participation dataset does not identify any statistically significant gap, our internal data does show an increasing gap between BAME and white students in continuation rates. The continuation rate for BAME students with A-levels is 93.0% which is comparable with the 93.3% rate for non-BAME students. However, the continuation rate for BAME students with a BTEC is 74.6%, compared with 88.2% for non-BAME students, a difference of 13.5%. When disaggregated, the Access and Participation dataset shows that in most years, Asian and mixed ethnicity students have better continuation rates than white students. Numbers of Chinese and 'other' ethnicity students are very small, but a 3-year average based on internal data shows Chinese students had 4.4 % better continuation and 'other' ethnicity students 5.2 % worse continuation than white students. However, the Access and Participation dataset evidences a growing issue for black students with the gap to the white students'

continuation rate increasing over the past four years to 2%. Whilst this overall gap is not flagged as statistically significant, our more detailed analysis by qualification on entry type allows us to identify this structural gap.

### *Attainment*

Progress has been made in the BAME attainment gap that was highlighted in the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan. However, consistent with sector data, there is still a statistically significant gap of 16% for 2017-18 in the Access and Participation dataset. Disaggregation into ethnic groups shows that whilst all BAME groups have an attainment gap, the size of the gap varies by ethnicity. Black students have the largest attainment gap: 24% in 2017-18. Asian students have a 15% gap and mixed ethnicity students a 7% gap, also in 2017-18, though neither of these gaps are statistically significant in the OfS dataset. Internal data shows the proportion of BAME students graduating with a First or Upper Second class degree in 2017-18 was 69.6%, a rise of 8% from the 2015-16 figure of 61.6%. This positive improvement results in achieving the 2018-19 target in our Access and Participation Plan which was set at 64.15%. Internal analysis of degree classification and final year award marks has revealed that there is a 3.0% average difference in the mean mark for BAME (60.9%) and non-BAME (63.9%) students over the last 3 graduating cohorts; however this leads to a much larger gap for 'good degree' (average 17% over the last 3 years) as the mean final year award marks are close to the boundary between an Upper Second and Lower Second class degree. This results in the 'good degree' measure being especially sensitive to small differences in the mean, and consequently a larger performance gap.

### **Progression to employment or further study**

The Access and Participation dataset shows a gap between white and BAME graduates when entering highly skilled employment or study and while this is not highlighted as statistically significant it is a gap that the University wants to address, hence our target in the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan. The rate has been improving over time from 2012-13 to 2015-16, showing a 5% improvement in the BAME rate at the same time as the white rate improved by 3.2%. However, the rate in 2016-17 has dropped again for BAME graduates and the gap has increased to 6.2% which is higher than the sector gap of 3.9%. We are aware though that due to the relatively low population in this indicator the rates are volatile. In addition, internal data demonstrates that the overall employment level (not just into highly skilled) is improving for BAME graduates and the gap to white graduates is narrowing. The progression rates for individual ethnic groups are even more variable due to smaller numbers and show no clear pattern, though black, Asian and Mixed ethnicity students retain a performance gap. Three year moving averages show the gap for black graduates reducing from 10.0% to 7.3% and for Asian students narrowing from 10.3% to 6.7% over the last 5 years. On this measure, the gap for mixed ethnicity graduates gap is largely unchanged at approximately 4%.

The latest Longitudinal Employment Outcomes (LEO) dataset used in TEF shows the gap between white and BAME for 'Sustained employment or further study' is 5.2%, although BAME performance is better than benchmark. For 'Above median earnings threshold or further study' the gap is 8%, though the BAME performance is again better than benchmark. Therefore, it appears important that the University particularly tackles the initial (highly skilled) employment outcomes for students post-graduation, noting that the longer-term outcomes are better than benchmark and should remain so if early employment outcomes are enhanced.

### **1.3 Mature students**

#### **Access**

The proportion of young applicants is increasing over time and the decline in mature applicants has been more notable since the changes to the HE funding for health and nursing programmes, which accounts for the majority of BU mature students.

#### **Success**

##### *Non-continuation*

The continuation rate for both young and mature students has been improving over time; this is particularly relevant for mature students where the rate has improved from 87% in 2012-13 to 91% in 2016-17. This improvement has led to a narrowing of the gap from 6% to 2%. This is consistently below the sector gap currently at 7.4%. Part time mature students are small in number and exhibit no statistically significant gaps in the Access and Participation dataset. We are aware of a fluctuating gap for continuation of these students, which we continue to monitor.

##### *Attainment*

Although not flagged as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset, there continues to be an attainment gap of 6% between young and mature students and whilst this remains below the sector gap of 10.3% the BU gap remains a concern, particularly as it has not narrowed over time despite a 3% increase in the mature attainment rate. More detailed analysis of this gap has identified that it is not related to subject of study, or qualification on entry. It derives from a small difference in average final year marks which, being close to the Upper Second Class/Lower Second Class boundary, magnifies the attainment gap. The gap relates to a relatively small number of students who are dispersed across the institution.

#### **Progression to employment or further study**

There is a gap in highly skilled employment rates between mature and young graduates, with the rate 20% higher for mature graduates in 2016-17, however this is largely down to the impact of our Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, which has a 92% professional employment rate and a high proportion of mature students entering Nursing, Physiotherapy and related professions in the NHS.

### **1.4 Students with a disability**

#### **Access**

Consistent with the sector, the proportion of entrants with a disability has increased over a 5 year period with 15.3% of entrants now declaring a disability compared to 13.8% in 2012-13. In particular entrants with a mental health disability have more than doubled in the same period. UCAS data demonstrates that offer rates for applicants with a disability are comparable with offer rates for applicants who have not declared a disability and are above the calculated average offer rate.

#### **Success**

##### *Non-continuation*

Overall, there appears to be no statistically significant gap between the continuation rates of students with a disability and those with no known disability. There are, however, differences when broken down by disability type. Internal data indicates those with specific learning difficulties (typically half of our students declaring a disability) consistently have better continuation than students without a disability, 4.95% better in 2017-18, whereas those with a mental health disability (approximately 20% of our disabled students) have a 3.9% gap and those with physical disabilities (approximately 16% of our disabled cohort) a 2.9% gap to those with no known disability.

### *Attainment*

The Access and Participation dataset illustrates an attainment gap between disabled students and those with no known disability of 6%. This improved from 2013-14 to 2015-16 but widened again in the last 2 years. The gap, whilst not marked as statistically significant, is larger than the sector gap of 2.8%. In addition, the gap between students with a mental health condition and no known disability has increased over the last three years from 4.8% in 2015-16 to 11.2% in 2017-18; this gap is not evident at sector level. Smaller gaps of approximately 4% exist for students with cognitive and learning disability and those with physical disabilities in our internal data. Part-time disabled students currently show a 5% attainment gap, although this is not marked as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset and numbers are too small for reliable analysis.

### **Progression to employment or further study**

There has not been a historic gap in progression to employment or further study between students with a disability and those with no known disability until 2016-17 where the gap is 5%. Our internal analysis based on the dataset for the financial support evaluation suggests there is no statistically significant gap in progression into employment for disabled students, and this is not highlighted as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset. Analysis by type of disability shows that those with cognitive and learning disability consistently have better progression than those with no known disability. However, gaps are evident for those with mental health disability and physical disability which, though not statistically significant, we continue to monitor. Further analysis of internal placement data suggests this gap is either removed or significantly reduced for students with a disability who undertake a placement. Part-time disabled students currently show a 15% gap for progression although this is not marked as statistically significant in the Access and Participation dataset and as numbers are small the gap fluctuates over previous years.

## **1.5 Care leavers**

The small number of care leavers makes analysis of gaps problematic and volatility is evident in trend data. Due to the low numbers, the gaps identified are not statistically significant, but they will continue to be monitored.

### **Access**

The number of care leavers has increased over the past five years but is below our targets set in the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan. The average 'attainment 8'<sup>1</sup> score for 'looked after children' in our Southern Universities Network (SUN) region is 16.8 compared to 18.8 for looked after children nationally, giving a gap of 2 points to the national score for looked after children.

### **Success**

#### *Non-continuation and Attainment*

There is a continuation gap of 8.27% which has increased over the last 3 years. The attainment gap (calculated as a 3-year average due to small numbers) for care experienced students is 20%. We will continue to monitor this gap.

### **Progression to employment or further study**

Due to small numbers in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data, it is not possible to identify progression gaps for care leavers. Though numbers are too small to generate targets specifically for this group, care experienced students do have lower continuation,

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<sup>1</sup> Individual attainment measure based on academic performance in school, where a higher score reflects better academic performance.

attainment and progression rates than other students and often fall within other target groups. Our aim is to improve rates of continuation, attainment and progression for care experienced students, reducing and eliminating gaps to other students. We will continue to monitor their progress and include care leavers in target groups for activity to address gaps across the student lifecycle.

## **1.6 Intersections of disadvantage**

Further analysis of intersections of disadvantage has been carried out and in almost all cases the main characteristic (e.g. BAME, Students with a disability, and mature students) is the primary factor linked to gaps in performance. In relation to gender, we have identified that the impact of low socioeconomic status is more pronounced for female students than male in both continuation and attainment, and while the gaps are not statistically significant, we will continue to monitor this closely. For BAME students, however, attainment gaps for quintiles 1 and 2 to their white counterparts are smaller than those from quintiles 3, 4 and 5. This is also the case for disabled students where the attainment gap is often similar to those not of low socioeconomic status.

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

Existing data has been used to identify carers, students from Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities, refugees and those with certain protected characteristics. Reliable identification of estranged students and children of military families is challenging, and we are working to improve the quality of this information. Data for our most recent entrants shows disclosure rates have improved for protected characteristics whereby in 2017-18, 10% of students refused or omitted to declare their religion and approximately 20% refused or omitted to declare their sexuality. Analysis of gaps for these groups is limited in its validity by the reliability and completeness of the data, and small numbers. In the three most recent years of data, where numbers are large enough to permit analysis, attainment by sexual orientation has shown small inconsistent gaps from -2% to +7%. No pattern of gaps is evident between students of different religions or none. For carers, refugees, some religious groups and those from Gypsy Roma and traveller communities, the numbers are too small for reliable analysis although we will continue to monitor performance.

## **2. Strategic Aims and Objectives**

Many of our objectives and targets align to the Office for Students Key Performance Measures (KPM), ensuring the University's commitment to contribute to the equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups nationally. In addition, inclusivity and equality are central to our strategic plan BU2025 where providing support and development opportunities for all students, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups, is a key action. As such, many of the Access and Participation Plan targets align to BU2025 and the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework that we have developed to measure its success.

### **2.1 Target Groups**

Through our assessment of performance we have identified the following gaps where we have set targets and intend to increase focused activity and investment:

#### ***HE participation/Socioeconomic***

- The proportion of entrants from the lowest quintile of HE participation (Low Participation Neighbourhood);
- The continuation rate of students from lowest quintile of HE participation (Low Participation Neighbourhood) compared to those from the highest.

### ***Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students***

- BAME students' rate of continuation compared to white students;
- The attainment rate of BAME students compared to white students;
- BAME graduates' progression into highly skilled employment or further study compared to white graduates.

### ***Students with a Disability***

- The attainment rate of disabled students compared to students without a known disability.

Our analysis has identified gaps for other underrepresented groups where we are committed to reducing the gaps, see section 2.2.4.

## **2.2 Aims and Objectives**

The level of ambition in our targets and milestones has been determined by our aim to eliminate the unexplained gaps within the lifetime of this plan where possible. Based on evidence of what we have previously achieved in our Access and Participation work, we have increased our targeted rate of progress where possible. Large gaps, which map the sector and have a significant structural element, may take longer than the 5 years of this plan to eliminate. Where this is the case, the timescale of our targets and milestones is set to align with or exceed OfS KPMs. Where gaps are small, even though these are largely structural, we have aimed to eliminate the entire gap. However, we are aware eliminating structural gaps is ambitious and that these gaps may be resilient and so take longer to eradicate than the lifetime of this plan. Following review in spring 2022, our aims, objectives and targets remain ambitious, relevant and focused on our most important gaps.

### ***2.2.1 Socioeconomically disadvantaged students***

We have identified a target to improve the rates of entry and reduce the gap between the most and least represented students in HE, aligned to KPM1. BU has almost three times as many POLAR4 quintile 5 entrants as it does quintile 1. Therefore, this is a long-term aim and we have targeted to reduce this ratio to 2.26 by 2024-25. This trajectory is based on having achieved 16% growth in the number of quintile1 students over the 5 years from 2013-14 to 2017-18, and aiming to increase this to 28% growth over the next 5 years, within the context of our new entrant growth from all quintiles. Increasing this rate of growth of quintile 1 students further in the following years, we expect to remove the entire gap by 2032-33. We will continue to monitor the numbers of entrants from quintile 2 should there be any adverse effect resulting from this target on quintile 1 entrants.

In addition, although only a small gap in continuation rates between the most and least represented students is evident, most of which appears structural relating to qualification on entry, we have targeted to eradicate this disparity by 2024-25 ensuring we align with KPM3.

### ***2.2.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students***

We aim to reduce the inequality at all stages of the student lifecycle for BAME students. We have targeted to eliminate the small continuation rate gap between black and white students, which is due to qualification on entry, by 2024-25. Aligning to KPM4 we have targeted to reduce the attainment rate gap between BAME and white students by 4.7% over the five years of this plan. This results from our existing target to halve the gap in the 5 years leading to 2022-23, and a further halving of the gap in the following 5 years. We plan to eliminate the entire gap by 2030-31, which is consistent with OfS objectives. The gaps for different ethnic groups are explained in section 1.2 and we have chosen to set a single BAME attainment target to address gaps for all ethnic groups. This signals a clear commitment to improving equality for all ethnic groups, however

small, whilst maintaining our focus on the larger gaps. These gaps will be monitored through disaggregated analysis by ethnic group.

We have also targeted to eliminate the gap in the progression to highly skilled employment or further study that is currently evident in the DLHE survey data, by 2024-25. As advised by the OfS, this target and baseline may need to be amended once the new Graduate Outcomes data is published in 2020.

### **2.2.3 Students with a disability**

We have identified an attainment gap of 6% between disabled students and those with no known disability and have targeted to eliminate this gap by 2024-25 aligning with KPM5. We will ensure that a focus on disability type is maintained, in particular mental health conditions and communication/social disabilities.

### **2.2.4 Commitments to reduce other gaps**

Our analysis has identified gaps for other underrepresented groups where we are committed to reducing the gaps as noted below.

#### ***Socioeconomically disadvantaged students***

As noted in section 1.1, we have identified an access gap of 24% between IMD quintile 1 and 5, which we aim to reduce. Whilst our access target is based on POLAR4 in order to align with OfS KPM1, we have identified a correlation between POLAR4 and IMD. Our strategic access measures have therefore been designed to incorporate both metrics, specifically using POLAR4 and IMD to target our schools and colleges programme of work and in our expanded contextual admissions criteria.

We have identified an attainment gap of 8.8% between IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 students which we aim to reduce. Our internal analysis indicates that there are large intersections between IMD quintile 1, BAME and students entering with non-traditional qualifications. Therefore, our strategic measures (section 3.1.2), in particular those outlined under 'Curriculum and Pedagogy' will support reducing this gap.

#### ***BAME students***

As noted in section 1.2, we have identified an access gap of 2.4% for Asian students and are committed to reducing this gap further. We are focusing on this gap as one of the primary aims of our targeted access programme as set out in our Access Measures in section 3.1.2.

#### ***Mature students***

Mature students have a 6.2% attainment gap (as noted in section 1.3) which we aim to reduce. Our analysis indicates that this relates to a small number of students spread across the institution, and our strategic measures (section 3.1.2), in particular those outlined under 'Curriculum and Pedagogy' will support reducing this gap.

### **2.2.5 Changes to 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan Targets**

Our targets are broadly consistent with those in our 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan, and our previous Access Agreements. Whilst we no longer have an access target for care leavers, having identified a gap in attainment 8 score for 'looked after children' in the Southern Universities Network region compared to looked after children nationally, we will work collaboratively with other Southern Universities Network institutions to narrow this gap. This reflects a more strategic approach to working with the small numbers of care experienced young people.



### 3. Strategic Measures

#### 3.1 Whole Provider Strategic Approach

The University's Strategic Plan BU2025 launched in 2018. 'Fusion' is at the heart of our new plan based on our unique fusion of excellent education, research and professional practice. This plan signals a clear strategic commitment to access, success and progression for all. Related outcomes include:

*A3 – The BU Learning experience is personalised, inter-Disciplinary and consistently excellent;*

*B1 – We attract and develop students and staff who thrive as lifelong learners through Fusion;*

*B3 – We have a diverse and inclusive environment that enables achievement for all.*

We take a whole institution approach where all aspects of access, success and progression are considered holistically, and are fully embedded throughout our activities, structures and processes. We aim to offer an excellent experience for all students, alongside targeted initiatives and activities to support under-represented groups and address our performance gaps.

Our management and governance arrangements for access and participation were reviewed in 2017, and we established a new governance structure for the 2017-18 academic year in the form of the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee. This has senior commitment across the institution including membership of all Faculty Executive Deans, relevant Heads of Professional Service including the Head of Student Services and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, the Students' Union at Bournemouth University (SUBU), the Deputy Chair of the Academic Standards and Education Committee and the Head of the Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence. The purpose of this committee is; 'To lead activities in relation to education access, excellence and impact; targeting the highest levels of achievement and benefits to applicants, students and the University', and it is also responsible for our Access and Participation Plan. The committee is supported by Task and Finish Groups, aligned to our Access and Participation Plan targets and commitments, which also have senior academic leadership and Students' Union engagement.

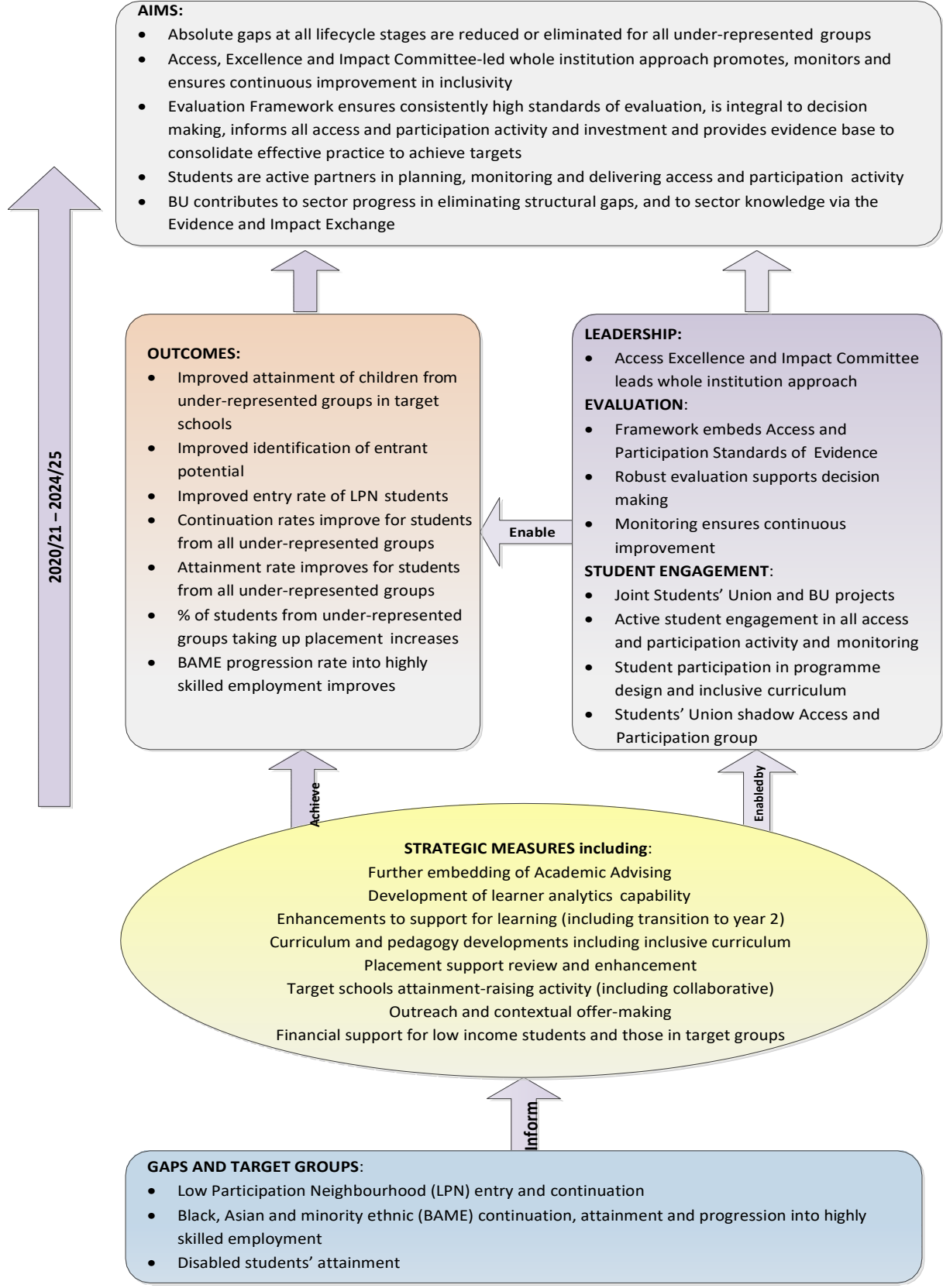
The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee has oversight of all activity related to our Access and Participation Plan and our strategic aims and targets. It also facilitates and directly supports the development of any new targeted activity in support of our aims and targets, as well as linking directly to core quality assurance and enhancement related evaluation activity such as annual monitoring. Our annual monitoring, supported by a comprehensive data dashboard, is a key part of how we evaluate and enhance our practice on an ongoing basis, and allows us to identify specific thematic areas of focus according to strategic priorities. Since 2017-18, the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee initiated a focus on under-represented groups and each year has identified a thematic focus aligned to our Access and Participation Plan targets. This ensures institution wide focus and buy-in and that enhancement and evaluation activities at programme level are directly aligned to the strategic aims and objectives in our Access and Participation Plan.

The development of our Access and Participation Plan has been led by a Working Group drawn from the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee and Operations Group, with additional members from SUBU. The University Leadership Team has also had opportunities to review and comment on the draft Plan, ahead of review by Senate and final approval by the University Board.

Our Fusion Learning approach is central to the implementation of BU2025 and has a strong focus on inclusivity and personalisation, ensuring that all students have opportunities to maximise their potential. Additionally, a priority for us over the Plan period is investment in the development of learner analytics linked to our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), with the aim of supporting all students more effectively and facilitating greater personalisation. In future we are aiming for staff and students to be able to monitor and track student progress in real-time, and identify support and development needs.

Our Theory of Change illustrates how we plan to achieve our Access and Participation aims and objectives through our strategic measures.

### Bournemouth University Access and Participation Plan Theory of Change



### **3.1.1 Alignment with other strategies**

BU2025 is an integrated strategy supported by a cross-institutional implementation plan which is reviewed regularly and updated annually. This integrated perspective means that aspects such as our approach to teaching and learning and employability are embedded in the strategy as a whole, rather than existing as separate sub-strategies. Key aspects of our teaching and learning approach are highlighted below as part of our strategic measures.

Inclusivity is key for BU and underpins BU2025. We are committed to creating and sustaining a positive and satisfying work and study environment for students, staff and visitors to BU where different values and beliefs can be freely expressed and openly discussed and we do what we can to encourage open and respectful debate around equality and diversity issues. Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect and the University is strongly committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination in any form under the Equality Act (2010). We are also focussed on advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all students, staff and visitors to BU. The University has a broad equality agenda and has various initiatives to ensure that inclusivity is embedded across the institution for staff and students and the wider community.

Our compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated duties is fully embedded as set out in our Equality and Diversity Policies. These are promoted regularly to all staff and students through a variety of channels. Equality and Diversity is built into the design of activities, as a fundamental consideration and all proposed activities, policies and changes are subject to a thorough Equality Analysis to ensure that due regard is given to our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Equality analyses are part of the formal committee approval process through the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee and Operational Group with oversight from our Equality and Diversity Committee. Consistent with this approach, an Equality Analysis was an essential requirement in the development of our Access and Participation Plan. An Equality Analysis is also completed, as part of our established procedures, for our annual monitoring return.

Our culture of inclusivity is evidenced by a number of Charter Marks which have been achieved through our commitment to equality for all and evidencing our work in each area. These provide a framework for self-assessment, by identifying good practice and areas for further work. We were awarded our second institutional Athena SWAN Bronze in May 2019 and in addition to planning further submissions for all departments we aim to make an institutional silver submission before the end of BU2025. We are a member of the RACE equality charter and our work is positioning us to submit for a Bronze Award in 2023. In addition to multiple external equality and diversity commitments and pledges, we have implemented an Accessibility Guide for staff and students and have forums for underrepresented groups, for example, LGBT, Carers and Race Equality. In addition we have implemented a Transgender Inclusion Policy, a new Sexual Harassment Policy and associated development and reporting mechanisms. These developments are part of our ongoing programme of work in line with the inclusivity agenda.

The Equality and Diversity Committee, which agrees, monitors, evaluates and reports on this work, comprises representatives from all Faculties and Professional Services and SUBU and through shared membership there is a direct link to the work of the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee. The overall programme of work takes into consideration the requirements of the Equality and Diversity charter marks and commitments as well as national priorities.

### **3.1.2 Strategic Measures**

Our strategic measures are aligned to our strategic aims and objectives and the following priority groups: students of low socioeconomic status; Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME) and Students with a disability. Through the plan period we aim to take a holistic approach to the development and implementation of integrated targeted measures across the whole of the student

lifecycle regardless of which part of the lifecycle our target is aimed at. The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee will lead this work and the development of detailed action plans to drive activity through the plan period. As part of our commitment to improving performance gaps for BAME students, the University has signed a pledge to the UUK-NUS BAME attainment gap framework identified in the joint UUK NUS 2019 report 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #Closing the Gap', as this framework strongly aligns with our existing plans and will help inform future actions.

### **Access Measures**

Our aim is to improve the rates of entry and reduce the gap between the most and least represented students in HE. This is set within our over-arching ambitions for access with investment in pre-16 and post-16 students, mature learners and the local community. We aim to achieve this by delivering a targeted and effective outreach programme focused on:

- Finding new and innovative ways to reach socio-economically disadvantaged learners as defined by POLAR4 and IMD; encouraging their progression to higher education in line with our strategic aims and objectives;
- Targeting BAME and especially Asian learners, through subject specific work with schools and colleges;
- Contributing to pre-16 attainment by delivering attainment-raising programmes;
- Continuing to work with other underrepresented groups to protect fair access to BU for all;
- Looking beyond examination results to identify academic potential and nurture talent.

We will continue to deliver a progressive programme of activities and interventions targeting learners at key transition points in their educational journey. The design of the programme is outcome-based, encourages sustained engagement and is underpinned by impact analysis. We have adopted a culture of continuous review and improvement informed by our evaluation and impact framework. The programme is dynamic and responsive to national guidance, trends and local drivers targeting young people from key stage 2 (primary) through to key stage 5 (post-16), as well as mature learners and key influencers; including parents, carers, teachers and careers advisers across Dorset and bordering areas. We continue to work closely with the local and regional community to tackle educational disadvantage in collaboration with third party providers, local authorities and other educational organisations. Target schools and colleges are identified based on socio-economic indicators (defined by POLAR4, IMD and free school meals eligibility), and other factors such as proportion of BAME students.

In addition, we adopted the principles from our BU Progression Scheme and used them to inform our current approach, working with a number of schools, colleges and academies with a high proportion of underrepresented groups to offer support in addition to our standard programme. This includes sponsorship of relevant academic and community projects, access to campus facilities and support for students.

### ***Raising Attainment in Schools, Academies and Colleges***

We currently support attainment-raising in target schools, academies and colleges through:

- Focusing on the development of academic and employability skills across a range of activities;
- Tutoring in English and Maths;
- Enhancing subject knowledge, particularly in science, technology and engineering, through a wide range of subject workshops;
- Delivering pre-16 attainment raising activities to target learners in primary schools with a high proportion of socio- economically disadvantaged learners to support Maths and English attainment at key stage 2, contributing to additional progress in both subjects (measured through pre and post standardised tests) and generating improved key stage 2 SATs results.

There is a wealth of evidence that attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils develop at the start of their education and have a continual impact on their progress as they get older<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, attainment at primary school level is a significant predictor of whether a young person will go to university<sup>3</sup>. Our literacy initiative 'Books and Stories' has been expanded into ten schools in Weymouth and Portland by working in partnership with Dorset Council in the delivery of the sessions. We intend to scale this model up in future years to reach more learners and expand the number of schools that receive the programme.

- Attainment raising work with the Southern Universities Network for looked after children is noted separately under 'Collaboration'.

### ***Partnerships with schools to raise attainment***

We work with a number of schools and academies and deliver our attainment-raising activities. To enhance our existing relationships, we will seek to work more strategically with an Academy Trust to provide a structured and progressive programme for their target learners and work more closely on attainment evaluation and impact analysis. Dependent on the engagement from the Trust and the success of the working relationship, we would consider developing more strategic relationships in future years.

### ***Diverse routes into Higher Education***

In collaboration with our partners at Wiltshire College we developed a Foundation Year Certificate programme, articulating with a range of degree programmes in life sciences with the aim of supporting access for socio- economically disadvantaged students as well as students from military families. This initiative attracted few applicants and proved unsuccessful in supporting access for the target groups of students.

In 2019-20, Foundation Year programmes were introduced with a similar, broader aim of providing a structured and supported route into our most popular programmes for students from underrepresented groups, who often have lower UCAS tariff points or lack specific subject knowledge required for Level 4 entry. Targeted expansion of these programmes is supported by early evidence that these programmes have a much more diverse profile than entry at level 4 with higher proportions of students from ethnic minorities, areas of low participation in Higher Education (POLAR4 quintile 1) and from disadvantaged areas (IMD quintiles 1 and 2).

We also have a long term partnership with Bournemouth and Poole College which facilitates progression for HND and Foundation degree students into a linked 'top up' programme at BU. We currently offer one Undergraduate Degree Apprenticeship programme for BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing. Early evidence is that the cohort on this programme is less diverse than our standard Nursing programmes. We will continue to monitor the profile of this programme and explore other areas where Degree Apprenticeship provision could contribute to our aim of supporting access for underrepresented groups.

### ***Contextual Admissions***

In support of our aim to reduce the entry rate gap between students from the most and least represented areas, we use contextual data when assessing applications. This allows decisions to be made holistically, using contextual data to identify the potential in applicants which is not always evident purely from their entry qualifications. We currently utilise the following five indicators to determine disadvantage: POLAR4; ACORN; Care leaver; Disability or Additional Support need; and Refugee. Applicants in these categories are given additional consideration which often results in a reduced 'contextual offer' up to two grades below the published entry requirements. In our efforts to identify socioeconomic disadvantage more completely, we currently use both POLAR and

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<sup>2</sup> Lessof et al (s018) Understanding KS4 attainment and progress from LSYPE2; The Sutton Trust (2008) increasing higher education participation amongst disadvantaged young people and schools in poor communities

<sup>3</sup> Crawford et al (2017) Family Background and University Success

IMD. In 2022-23 we plan to conduct an evidence-based review of our contextual offer making approach, with a view to incorporating Free School Meals eligibility and the UCAS Multiple Equality Measure where this supports our strategic aims.

In 2019 we introduced the 'Access BU' scheme which is aimed at applicants from non-traditional backgrounds and is clearly published on our website and in marketing material. The scheme includes those from low-performing schools and/or colleges; and we are looking to introduce carers and serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces and their families as part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. This scheme also allows applicants with extenuating circumstances that have clearly affected their post-16 studies or performance at GCSE and those whose socio-economic disadvantage is not captured in the data we receive with their application to be included in our contextual offer. We will continue to review our admissions policy and selection criteria annually to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy to support our strategic aims for access.

### **Success and Progression Measures (Curriculum, pedagogic and student support)**

To achieve our aims for Success and Progression we are focusing on:

- Improving the inclusivity of our curriculum with input from staff and students;
- Enhancing assessment and feedback;
- Ensuring our study skills provision supports continuation and attainment for all students;
- Supporting student wellbeing by working with the NHS and other agencies;
- Supporting the take up of placement year by removing barriers and creating flexible options;
- Providing excellent careers advice and activity to support progression into highly skilled employment for all of our graduates.

### ***Curriculum and Pedagogy***

Our curriculum design and pedagogy is predicated on achieving the Fusion of research, teaching and professional practice, and our measures here aim to support our targets on attainment and continuation. Every programme reflects the University's Vision and Values of inclusivity, excellence, creativity and responsibility. Internal policies incorporate these elements into programme and assessment design which specifies that curriculum content should foster an inclusive approach and provide opportunities for the co-creation and co-production of knowledge. Students are formally engaged in programme design with student panel members at approval and review events.

Support and training is in place to facilitate engagement of Student panel members as equal partners in curriculum design, also supporting our broader aims on inclusive curriculum. We reviewed our curriculum design principles and policy in 2019 to align with BU2025, to ensure that our strategic aims in our Access and Participation Plan are appropriately embedded into curriculum design and delivery, and to further the evolution of the Fusion Learning approach. This provides a strong focus on ensuring inclusivity for all students. In conjunction with this, our Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence leads on inclusive teaching practice more generally and specific initiatives related to this include the roll-out of Panopto lecture capture. Since 2019-20 we have developed a BU model for review of curriculum for inclusivity based on existing good practice in the sector<sup>4</sup>. This is delivered via our Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Review (AMER) process, through an Inclusivity Health Check (IHC), which was completed by all programmes in 2019-20 and 2020-21. Responding to evaluation of its impact at programme level, we have moved the IHC to department level and it has been completed by all departments in 2021-22. Also in 2021-22, the IHC has been complemented by student inclusive curriculum review, conducted in a similar way, thus far piloted for a small number of units. This

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<sup>4</sup> UCL BME Attainment Project 2019-20

work is informing action and planning, for example by identifying key priorities for staff development. We intend to continue to evaluate, develop and learn from the model to improve the inclusivity of our curriculum particularly with a view to ethnicity and targeting our gaps for BAME students.

Our focus on assessment and feedback in 2017-18 through the Centre for Excellence in Learning (now the Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence) led to a major redevelopment of our assessment principles and policies. This work directly supports embedding inclusive assessment practice, drawing on evidence from the sector<sup>5</sup> to ensure a more innovative and varied range of assessments. These changes to our assessment practice will enable all students, but especially BAME, mature and disabled students and those with non-traditional entry qualifications, to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes in a range of ways. This will gradually reduce the emphasis on formal timed examination noting that students generally perform less well in this form of assessment and that it is less relevant and current than previously with respect to many PSRB requirements and the world of work. Formative assessment is also more explicitly embedded within unit design to support all students to achieve their potential. All of these changes in our approach to assessment will support our strategic aim to reduce the attainment gap for BAME students and students with a disability, including improved preparatory support for assessment and increased student understanding of their own performance ahead of summative assessment tasks. We also evaluate how this and any proposed changes to assessment practice impact on student success for all students and, in particular, on BAME students, disabled students and those with non-traditional entry qualifications. Monitoring will include tracking progress through the student lifecycle so that the expected impact of all of the changes to our assessment practice on outcomes can be evaluated for target groups. As part of this ongoing work on assessment and feedback design our Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence collaborates with SUBU to engage students and ensure their input and feedback is captured in a number of ways. The partnership research project undertaken in 2019-20 included a range of approaches: working with student representatives to capture feedback during SUBU's 'Speak Week' campaign; a survey conducted face-to-face by SUBU's 'Go Out And Talk' student research team; and a series of focus groups led by trained student facilitators called 'Share your Experience: Shape your Studies'

### ***Student Support and Support for Learning***

Student feedback on our draft Access and Participation Plan identified support for learning and learning resources as important themes and this feedback has helped shape our priorities for development in this area. Academic Advising is a core feature of our support for student success, and all students on taught programmes are allocated an Adviser who facilitates discussions on academic progress. Academic Advising provides personalised one-to-one support for students, encourages all students to engage fully in the learning process and in so doing it promotes our unique Fusion of excellence in education, research and professional practice. Academic Advisers encourage students to meet regularly with them to help develop personalised academic plans, signpost to resources, evaluate their educational progress and provide information about educational, research and professional practice opportunities, as well as academic requirements, policies and procedures. In 2018-19 we launched our revised Academic Adviser policy and operational plan which has improved practice. As part of these changes, we have extensive training for staff undertaking the Academic Adviser role to help them better understand the impact of advising on the student experience and how to support students with a range of backgrounds, including BAME and mature students. Alongside this, we will continue to provide support and training for all academic staff to help ensure effective signposting and a personalised

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<sup>5</sup> Price et al, (2010) Feedback: all that effort, but what is the effect? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35:3, 277-289. Sing, G (2011) Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' participation in higher education: improving retention and success. A synthesis of research evidence. Available at [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Ethnicity/BME\\_synthesis](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Ethnicity/BME_synthesis)

approach where possible in response to student feedback that communication from academic staff on the support available is particularly valued.

We are reviewing our online induction and support materials to help facilitate effective transition to HE and support student wellbeing and resilience. Feedback from students on the development of our Access and Participation Plan identified transition to the second year as a key point where additional support may be required. In 2019-20 we developed the 'Achieve' project, modelled on the successful Student Retention and Achievement work at Southampton Solent University<sup>6</sup>. This provides pro-active targeted support for students at key points in the academic cycle, including transition to year two and assessment/re-assessment periods, aligned to established support models such as our faculty-based Student Engagement team. Over the plan period we will also be developing our learning analytics capability, illustrating students' academic attainment and learning and engagement behaviours. Providing students with a consolidated view of their academic activity will enable them to take greater control of their own learning and track their progress. In addition, capability will be developed to allow early identification of support needs as well as enhancing the support available from Academic Advisors. Having identified increasing demand for mathematics and English support from new students, especially those whose education has been impacted by the pandemic, and those entering with non-traditional qualifications, we are planning to expand our study skills provision of mathematics and English skills support via a central hub model in 2022-23. Student feedback on our Access and Participation Plan also identified the importance of peer support and role models, particularly for BAME students, and we are focusing on support for this both in our employability work and related projects but also more generally in curriculum, working with our Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence and the Alumni Relations team on targeted initiatives.

### ***Wellbeing Support and Support for Students with a Disability***

We recognise that wellbeing support generally, and mental health specifically, is a key issue for our students, as highlighted in the student feedback on our draft Access and Participation Plan, and this will continue to be an area of high priority. We believe that wellbeing is the responsibility of all members of the university community and our recently published Student Welfare Policy is based on this principle. Our wellbeing support measures also link directly to our strategic aims to reduce continuation gaps for students from underrepresented groups, especially disabled, BAME and students of low socioeconomic status.

Transition to university can be a particularly difficult time and in 2019-20 we introduced a new wellbeing transitions module called ME@BU to help students to prepare for their arrival and first year. Content includes financial matters and budgeting and study skills information as well as prompting students to think about how they can look after their own wellbeing. We will be reviewing the structure and content of this unit as part of our planned move to a new digital platform for student information. For 2022-23 we have reviewed our arrivals and induction activity and are introducing a new welcome fair, focusing on health and wellbeing.

We also work with eligible offer-holders (POLAR4 and IMD Quintile 1, and Care-leavers) on our 'Get Ready for University Scheme', in which students participate in virtual and face-to-face activities before enrolment, specifically designed to prepare them for higher education. This includes campus orientation, meetings with Student Support services and the Student's Union, and giving them opportunities to connect with their peers.

Our ResLifeBU programme is also particularly important ensuring that we have welfare support based in student halls as well as on campus. We continue to invest in resources to directly support

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<sup>6</sup> Student Retention and Achievement at Solent 2018 derived from the 'What Works' initiative.



staff and students and have recently appointed to the new role of Head of Student Wellbeing and have put in place Mental Health advisory roles to support students with a disability and those with long term mental health problems. One of our other key activities is to work with our external partners to ensure that support provided by BU, the NHS and other agencies is joined up and seamless. This will enable us to support our students to access the correct type and level of support for their individual needs and develop a referral pathway with help from our partners. We believe that disability support is better provided by our own staff who work in partnership with students and the programme team to ensure an integrated approach to additional learning skills development and reasonable adjustments. We will offer a range of staff development activities for our academic staff and work closely with them and our placement providers to ensure that students develop core learning skills and strategies that will support them in their life during and after university.

### ***Employability and Skills Development***

Our aim for all BU students is to offer programmes and placements that will prepare them for the world of work, to ensure there is excellent careers advice and support and to offer a range of co- and extra-curricular activities to ensure that all graduates have the relevant skills. The University has a strong commitment to employability embedded within BU2025, and the development of graduate skills through maximising the proportion of students undertaking a placement opportunity while studying on a BU programme. Internal analysis of the impact of placements on employability based on DLHE data identified that employability was positively impacted by a placement experience, either long or short, particularly for BAME students. Consequently, from 2020 all BU programmes will have a placement experience; this may be a long (sandwich year) or short placement depending on a range of factors including Professional Service & Regulatory Body requirements, the subject discipline and the programme content. Our aim is also to provide greater flexibility for students to engage in a placement experience, and therefore have a positive impact on progression and employability for all. This will directly support our strategic aim and target to reduce the gap in progression into highly skilled employment for BAME students.

Evidence has also identified barriers to accessing placement which can be present for certain groups of students including those with a disability, caring responsibilities or low income. By offering short placements, and in certain circumstances the ability for students to opt out of a placement based on their personal circumstances, we will ensure that our placement offer meets the needs of these groups with flexibility where required. We also intend to continue to offer targeted additional financial support to help students engage with placement opportunities and help those in financial hardship to access more ambitious and valuable placements.

Support for students to secure placements recognises the challenges specific to certain underrepresented groups including students with disabilities and those from a BAME background. Our employability support and activities will have a specific focus on BAME students through targeted support including the development of a wide-ranging CV covering soft skills as well as academic achievement and access to BAME role models to build confidence. We are investing in targeted project activity to help support closing our gaps in employability outcomes, particularly for BAME students. Student feedback on our Access and Participation Plan identified placement support as a key enabler, and as a result, we will be reviewing our placement support model to ensure it supports our Access and Participation Plan strategic aims and meets all students' needs, particularly those in our target groups.

### ***Collaboration***

We will continue to work together in collaboration with the Southern Universities Network (SUN) to deliver the Uni Connect Programme. This will support the development of the 'outreach hub' and work in partnership to narrow the attainment gap in the region between looked after children and

non-looked after children, having identified this as a gap in performance regionally, supporting the virtual school strategic priorities.

We are reviewing our approach to external and employer engagement as part of BU2025 and our collaboration with employers on the development of degree apprenticeship provision is helping to inform our practice and future priorities linked to our Access and Participation Plan and will also link to our planned review of placement support.

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

Student premium funding received from OfS is devolved to Faculties and invested in support for learning; for example focused on activity such as Academic Advising to address continuation and attainment gaps for target groups of students. The Disabled Student Premium, received from OfS, is used to fund the support for students with a disability as outlined above.

### **3.1.3 Financial Support**

Our financial support is designed to ensure that students are able to engage with their studies and university life, allowing them the best possible opportunity of success. Our aim for financial support is to promote continuation and attainment of low-income students. Apart from their socio-economic disadvantage, a high proportion of these students come from low participation neighbourhoods; they are often mature students and have declared a disability. This matches our strategic objective to reduce the continuation gap for students of low socioeconomic status and the attainment gap for disabled students. BU bursaries are allocated automatically, and students do not need to apply. The statistical evaluation undertaken using the OfS Toolkit continues to show no statistically significant difference in continuation rates of those in receipt of a bursary and similar students without a bursary; this is a consistent finding across different bursary models over a 6-year period. However, there is some evidence to suggest that progression of those in the lowest income bracket may well be positively impacted by our financial support. Evidence suggests that the receipt of a bursary reduces the need to engage in paid work, thus allowing more time to concentrate on studies and extracurricular activities. There is also some evidence in the evaluation of the benefits of the bursary for students' mental health by reducing anxieties relating to money.

A comprehensive review of all student financial support including bursaries and hardship was carried out in 2018-19. This, in conjunction with the OfS toolkit analysis has informed our approach whereby we will provide automatic bursaries to those in most financial need, combined with more flexible access to hardship funding, which includes targeted financial support related to placements. This approach has also been informed by feedback from students in the development of our Access and Participation Plan. Our hardship criteria will ensure that the fund continues to support general financial hardship whilst giving the flexibility for more targeted support linked to our priority groups and strategic aims. Our financial support targets students with low household income and 'care experienced' students, through two different bursaries:

- BU Maintenance Bursary (low household income): Eligible new students with household income below £16 000 automatically receive a £2400 bursary (£3200 for students studying a First degree with integrated Foundation Year) to support their learning and living costs; £800 being paid in each year of full-time study.
- BU Care Leavers Bursary (Care experienced): All eligible care leavers automatically receive a £9000 bursary (£12000 for students studying a First degree with Foundation Year) to support their learning and living costs; £3000 being paid in each year of full-time study.

Our financial support offer and demand on hardship funding will continue to be reviewed annually throughout the plan period, based on evaluation of impact conducted using the OfS toolkit to ensure that it continues to support our strategic aims. This annual review will include monitoring

the effectiveness of our communication of financial support information to students and will also ensure that we are responding to student feedback about communication of financial support information provided in the development of our Access and Participation Plan. Our plans maintain our overall level of investment in financial support at approximately 8-9% of projected Higher Fee Income, by the end of the plan period.

### **3.2 Student Consultation**

We work closely with students on our activities to improve access, success and progression, and we aim to continue to build on and enhance this partnership working throughout the plan period. This includes student representation on committees which have a remit related to the Access and Participation Plan; development of collaborative projects with SUBU linked to our strategic aims and collaborative work with SUBU on ways to engage students with the development of our Access and Participation Plan. We will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with SUBU in the development of new targeted initiatives through the plan period. The Vice-President (VP) Education of the Students' Union is a member of the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee. This committee regularly monitors progress against our Access and Participation Plan, and our targets and milestones, seeking direct comment and input from members which also provides opportunities for the Students' Union to contribute directly. The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee Task and Finish Groups support this work and have SUBU Sabbatical Officers as members. In addition, the new Student experience, Quality and Standards Committee (SQS) has been established in 2021-22 and is responsible on behalf of the University Board for maintaining oversight of student experience and the quality of that experience, providing assurance advice and making recommendations to the Board as appropriate. This includes reviewing and considering the Access and Participation plan and submissions to the OfS in relation to it.

In relation to consultation specifically on the development of our 2020-21 Access and Participation Plan, a Working Group drawn from the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee and Operations Group has led this work. SUBU colleagues including the VP Education and Head of Student Engagement have been members of the Working Group and through this membership have had opportunities to actively contribute to all aspects of the development of the Plan including detailed discussion on our aims, priorities and targets. In addition, SUBU have contributed to specific strands of focus through sub-groups of the Access and Participation Plan Working Group covering: Financial Support; Milestones and Targets, and Evaluation.

SUBU has supported and facilitated direct consultation with students on the development of the Access and Participation Plan through two mechanisms; firstly a Shadow Working Group, whose meetings mirror those of the Access and Participation Plan Working Group, was formed by SUBU with membership made up of elected officers and support staff. Through this, students have formally provided feedback to the Access and Participation Plan Working Group on its discussions and plans. SUBU intend the Shadow Group to continue throughout the life of the plan, specifically to contribute to monitoring and evaluation activities relating to targets and milestones and ideas for partner projects. Secondly, SUBU held a workshop-format 'Summit' to consult with and gain feedback and input from a representative group of students, including those from under-represented groups, on the Access and Participation Plan and strategic targets. The student feedback highlighted key themes that have helped inform the strategic measures set out in our Access and Participation Plan and will also support development of our detailed action plans and prioritisation. Feedback themes that informed our strategic measures as a direct result included: placement support; criteria for hardship funding and information on hardship and other financial support; support for learning and learning resources; support around transition to second year; signposting and support for mental health and wellbeing; student input into programme design and staff and student role models. The University has provided feedback to SUBU and students who participated in the Summit to indicate how their feedback has been incorporated into our Access

and Participation Plan, and we intend to provide annual progress updates through SUBU throughout the plan period.

In relation to formal approval of the Access and Participation Plan, students have also had opportunities to contribute, as the plan was presented and considered by the University Senate, which includes SUBU in its membership, and then finally approved by the University Board which includes the SUBU President as a member.

### **3.3 Evaluation Strategy**

#### ***Strategic context***

Our evaluation strategy aims to systematically evaluate all activity targeted on priority groups to ensure planned outcomes are achieved, to support effective decision making and inform our practice. This includes ensuring that our investment in strategic measures, including financial support is having the planned impact. Evaluation is a core enabler in our whole provider approach, as set out in our Access and Participation Theory of Change, driving continuous improvement in our overall performance. The impact of broader activity and changes, such as measures introduced in response to the pandemic, on underrepresented groups is evaluated and this informs our decision-making. We also evaluate student experience related quality monitoring data including appeals and complaints, extenuating circumstances and academic offences as this identifies and flags any disadvantage for underrepresented groups, providing insight into potential causes for performance gaps. The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee is responsible for overseeing our evaluation strategy and framework and ensuring continuous improvement over the plan period.

The introduction of a flexible common evaluation framework enhances our strategy over the plan period. This framework embeds the Access and Participation Standards of Evidence and reinforces our whole institution approach, strengthening the importance of relevant, rigorous and objective evaluation, facilitating monitoring to ensure improvement and providing robust mechanisms by which to share expertise. Through the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee we are drawing together a pool of talent from identified evaluation expertise and skill across BU. This ensures consistent, high quality support to activity leaders and clear alignment to the evaluation framework. The key elements of our planned evaluation framework were introduced in 2019-20 and are applied to all new initiatives, providing assurance of high quality evaluation aligned to the OfS Standards of Evidence. For example, modelled on the ethics approval process, completion of our Evaluation Checklist ensures that high quality evaluation of impact is built into the design of activity.

We have undertaken a self-assessment of evaluation using the 'OfS self-assessment of evaluation tool'. This identified areas of good practice including our evaluation of outreach, financial support and recent student success and progression initiatives approved by the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee. Challenges with consistency in standards of evaluation across BU, communication and dissemination of evaluation outcomes are being addressed through the introduction of our evaluation framework. The OfS self-assessment tool will be used annually to monitor our progress and ensure continuous improvement in our evaluation framework.

#### ***Programme and evaluation design***

Evaluation of outreach is based on our existing good practice, evidenced through successful attainment raising activity in local schools. This has informed our approach to evaluation of targeted access and participation initiatives. All targeted activity is evidence led, informed by best practice in the sector where this is known, and evaluated. Our assessment of performance, in conjunction with ongoing monitoring of internal datasets and evidence from evaluation is the basis for identifying new targeted activities designed to address performance gaps and target groups. Approval of any new

targeted activity is managed through the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee. All proposals are submitted on a structured template and must explicitly align with the priorities in our Access and Participation Plan; make a clear contribution to the achievement of targets to eliminate gaps; build a systematic approach to evaluation and impact into the design of the project based on the Access and Participation Standards of Evidence and demonstrate a clear approach to sustaining outcomes. Currently, evaluation of activity is proportionate to the activity being conducted and is rooted in the Office for Students Standards of Evidence and TASO evidence toolkit. Evaluation is largely conducted within BU with a measure of independence achieved by involving central and cross University staff to conduct or validate the evaluation. We intend to seek others within the sector or in networks such as Uni Connect to peer review our analysis and evaluation in return for the same contribution, strengthening our approach to independent evaluation and contributing to the broader agenda of more robust outreach evaluation.

### ***Evaluation implementation***

Evaluation activity is overseen and supported through the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee, including advice and guidance on data collection, management and analysis, with reference to agreed internal and external datasets held centrally to ensure consistency. We have developed bespoke support for ethical approval and General Data Protection Regulation compliance to help streamline processes and ensure a robust approach. Clear signposting in the evaluation framework to a pool of internal expertise, linked to the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee, will help to improve the strength of evidence, evaluation and analysis of impact. The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee reviews quarterly and annual monitoring of all targeted activities, alongside end-of-project reporting. This ensures that we can take effective action to respond in a timely way to any issues identified which could impact on the planned outcomes.

### ***Learning to shape improvements***

Our annual and end-of-project monitoring enables us to identify if our activities are having the planned impact. Through this ongoing monitoring we are able to identify effective measures and practice and this is used to inform our planning and commissioning of further targeted activities. We disseminate our learning through the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee, supported by our Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence including sharing case studies on our good practice website. We also feed good practice into our deliberative and executive processes, including through regular reporting to the Academic Standards and Education Committee, and the University Leadership Team. Our evaluation strategy enhances our ability to transition successful projects into core activity based on evaluation of impact.

We would like to improve our sharing of good practice both internally and externally and we also aspire to contribute to the body of sector research about effective practice to tackle Access and Participation gaps hosted by TASO by the end of the plan period.

### ***Evaluation of Financial Support***

As previously noted, we use the OfS Toolkit to evaluate our investment in student financial support. This evaluation informs our decisions about future financial support, and the methodology has also helped us to triangulate findings from internal analysis about other factors which affect student success, adding to our assessment of current performance. The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee will continue to review annual reporting and analysis from the toolkit evaluation as a key source of evidence alongside internal data to determine the most appropriate financial support offer through the plan period.

## **3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the Plan**

The Access, Excellence and Impact Committee is responsible for a comprehensive combination

of regular and annual monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan as a whole and its targets and milestones, linked to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) monitoring. This approach allows us to closely track our progress through this monitoring, and provide early opportunities to identify any potential for milestones and ultimately targets not to be met, and if planned actions need to be revised or if further targeted actions are required. This includes commissioning or expanding activity to remedy gaps and ensure continuous improvement.

Our new BU2025 KPI Framework is directly aligned to Access, Success and Progression activity with metrics such as offer rates, continuation, completion and employment rates. These are sufficiently granular to ensure they can be drilled down to target student groups and can be integrated to show multiple metrics for intersections of disadvantage. Enhancement activity against these metrics is therefore fully embedded across the institution. This alignment is evidence of a strategic institution-wide embedded approach and strong commitment to access and participation. The metrics are measured at department level and built into annual monitoring at programme and department level ensuring appropriate action can be identified and taken in the areas required to address any gaps. The KPI set are monitored regularly with quarterly reports to the University Leadership Team and at each meeting of the University Board. In addition, secondary data and analysis is presented to University Leadership Team sub-committees including the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee to ensure targeted action is coordinated and monitored. This is further supported by regular and annual monitoring through deliberative committees such as Academic Standards and Education Committee who annually review external and internal data on success including continuation and degree attainment, and an annual overview of the KPI set at Senate.

Students are directly engaged with this monitoring through membership of the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee, the Academic Standards and Education Committee, the newly formed Student experience, Quality and Standards Committee, the University Board and the Senate, in addition to direct reporting to the SUBU Shadow Working group (see section 3.2).

#### **4. Provision of Information to Students**

Our Access and Participation Plan is published on our website [here](#) and is also specifically referenced in our Student Agreement which is sent to all prospective students at offer stage and to all continuing students prior to the start of the academic year.

We endeavour to provide clear, accurate, comprehensive and timely information to prospective and current students on fees and financial support and any other related information as may be deemed relevant. Information on fees, financial support (including hardship) and bursary packages is provided to potential students at open days and taster days, included in our pre-arrivals information for all students and is also available on our website at [Fees and funding | Bournemouth University](#). In addition, each course information page on the website carries the tuition fee for that course with a link to further information. Information about fees, accommodation costs, scholarships and bursaries available is also published in our prospectus, at external recruitment events (e.g. UCAS Fairs and schools events) and through various other channels, e.g. email communications. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our communications to students to ensure appropriate information is easily accessible to all at the point of need.

All offer letters to students include a fees sheet, which contains information on tuition fees due according to the student's fee status, together with any other costs the student may incur related to their course. Information about scholarships and bursaries available is also highlighted to students

at offer stage. If a student is eligible to receive a BU bursary, they will receive confirmation of eligibility automatically prior to enrolment. We have a 'one stop' information and guidance service for incoming and current students. All advisors are trained to provide accurate information on the range of financial support available to students and the Student Financial Support Team is an integral part of the service. The Students' Union Advice Service also provides advice on financial matters. Regular communications are sent to prospective students to keep them informed of the latest information.

Tuition fees for each course are reviewed and set annually, by the Fees Group, a cross-university executive group, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and reporting to the University Leadership Team and the University Board. The Tuition Fees Policy is available on our webpages for current and prospective students and the communication of tuition fees, scholarships, discounts and fees policy is undertaken promptly following approval at the Fees Group. Our policy states clearly our commitment to hold a student's tuition fee at the year of entry level, so the fee applying at year 1 of a course remains with that student through to completion of their studies. This commitment is clearly communicated in advance to students on the website, at open days and in communications sent as part of the application process. We do not have academic sanctions for non-academic debt.

**Access and participation plan**  
**Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: Bournemouth University

Provider UKPRN: 10000824

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

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	2019/20 and later entry students	£830
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	Integrated masters M year MACCFIN	£9,250
Other	Integrated masters M year MDes, Meng	£6,500
Other	Integrated masters M year MLIT 2018/19 and later entry	£6,250

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Wiltshire College and University Centre 10007527	£9,250
Foundation degree	Wiltshire College and University Centre 10007527	£8,200
Foundation year/Year 0	Wiltshire College and University Centre 10007527	£6,000
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

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



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

Provider name: Bournemouth University

Provider UKPRN: 10000824

## Investment summary

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

### Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£937,776.74	£948,419.56	£959,355.06	£970,591.29	£982,136.51
Access (pre-16)	£416,215.74	£421,281.67	£426,486.92	£431,835.31	£437,330.78
Access (post-16)	£444,059.26	£449,072.36	£454,223.31	£459,515.91	£464,954.06
Access (adults and the community)	£28,501.73	£29,065.53	£29,644.83	£30,240.06	£30,851.67
Access (other)	£49,000.00	£49,000.00	£49,000.00	£49,000.00	£49,000.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£3,511,616.43	£3,049,692.39	£2,881,876.46	£2,714,060.54	£2,714,060.54
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£344,438.60	£353,347.18	£362,500.76	£371,906.05	£381,569.99

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£31,768,305.00	£31,197,895.00	£31,214,670.00	£31,470,515.00	£31,886,990.00
<b>Access investment</b>	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%
<b>Financial support</b>	11.1%	9.8%	9.2%	8.6%	8.5%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	15.1%	13.9%	13.5%	12.9%	12.8%

