

Birmingham City University

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

Birmingham City University (BCU) is a large university of 31,300 students (as of 2022-23) with a strong record of widening access to and meeting local demand for higher education. With more than 3,000 staff, its academic offer is structured across four faculties: Arts, Design and Media; Business, Law and Social Sciences; Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment; and Health, Education and Life Sciences. In 2024, BCU launched a new strategy, with a new vision and mission to “To create and share knowledge for a better and more inclusive society” as the exemplar anchor institution in Birmingham, while reaching beyond our city. Specifically for our students, our new University aims to “equip and empower tomorrow’s workforce with a personalised, collaborative education focused on innovation, inclusion and industry excellence”.

BCU is situated at the heart of the UK’s second largest city, renowned for its manufacturing strength and creative and cultural industries. It is also in the heart of a region facing the compounding challenges of high unemployment, skills shortages and limited social mobility.¹ Birmingham is the 3rd most deprived city in the UK with 90% of its wards more deprived than the national average.² Despite this, it is a city of youth and possibility. Its 2021 census data reveals that nearly 44% of the city’s inhabitants are under 30 compared to 35.7% in England. Birmingham’s population is growing, too; since 2011, it has increased by nearly 7%, during which the proportion of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic residents increased to more than 50% of the population (vs England’s average of less than 20%).

BCU aims to be the anchor university, rooted in Birmingham, and its students mirror these proportions. BCU’s access success means that Black, Asian and minority ethnic students constitute more than half of the university’s population (58%), which means they are over-represented compared to the city itself (51%).³ More than half of BCU students are the first in their families to attend university and 69% are considered ‘commuters’; 46% originate from the most deprived neighbourhoods of Birmingham (IMD Quintile 1); and 32% of young full-time entrants were eligible for Free School Meals. Additionally, over the course of the past several years, BCU has significantly grown the number of students entering with vocational qualifications; 44% of young full-time undergraduate entrants for the 2021-22 academic year entered with BTEC qualifications or similar. It is anticipated this figure will grow.

BCU’s mission is to provide excellent and transformational higher education. The university has developed an excellent track record of enabling access, particularly for students typically under-represented at sector level. The academic outcomes, student satisfaction and employability of BCU graduates is strong, evidenced through BCU remaining a top 10 University for social mobility for the last 3 years.⁴

While there are positive examples like these, we only want to improve what we are doing. BCU believes it can make greater progress against our key priorities, which include securing equality of

¹ https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2533/index_of_deprivation_2019.pdf Accessed 10th of May 2023 Accessed 26 March 2025

² [New strategy aims to put Birmingham at the heart of levelling-up | Birmingham City Council](#)

³ Birmingham Census Data (2011) Accessed 27 March 2025

⁴ [2024 English Social Mobility Index - HEPI](#)

opportunity and more importantly, equality of outcomes for our students. Against BCU previous APP (2020-21 to 2024-25), excellent progress has been made towards all access targets, 1/3 of continuation targets, 1/3 of attainment targets, and 2/3 of progression targets. BCU's focus is now focusing in on continuation, attainment and progression to push towards our ultimate aim of providing the best educational opportunities possible for all students.

To focus on areas where improvements are still needed to secure equality of opportunity and outcomes across the university, BCU has been re-evaluating its current offer in terms of academic and student support, diving deep into data to review progress thus far. This is ongoing in light of the significant change agenda presented through our new University Strategy. In 2023, BCU conducted a comprehensive assessment of performance of all students across the entire student lifecycle to identify areas where further improvements were needed. Subsequently, BCU has been reviewing core targets, intervention strategies, and evaluation of its APP, with the view that continuous improvement and monitoring of our APP activity is aligned to BCU's Strategy 2030, good practice, and student voice.⁵ This deep dive, looking across all targets, focused in on the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap (EDAG) enabling the development of a cross University initiative to focus on reducing the EDAG called Project Zero. We have also engaged with sector leading bodies such as TASO to ensure a strong evaluative approach to areas where students face the most risk, such as the EDAG.⁶ For the purpose of an APP variation submitted in Spring 2025, we also conducted a review of the assessment of performance, which confirmed that previously identified risks to equality of opportunity persist for the intersectional student groups in focus. The outcomes of these reviews of our Theories of Change, evaluation plan, student consultation, and cross University engagement with the EDAG has informed the current APP, including a variation of the plan.

In exploring the barriers that students might face in achieving successful outcomes from their higher education experience, BCU is acknowledging that university policies, practices and processes may themselves present barriers to certain students. For example, the processes and expectations of moderation boards, examination boards and external examiners are being revised to make explicit an expectation that they will monitor performance and awarding gaps, along with EDI issues. We also recognise that at times the way we use data can enable misconceptions and simplistic assumptions about students and their needs. Alongside this, curriculum content, assessment types and variations, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities including enrichment and employability activities are being reviewed in order to identify areas in which BCU's offer to students can be improved to empower its students to be best prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, such as a significantly shifting labour market driven by emerging technologies and environmental crises related to climate change. This is reflected clearly in BCU Strategy 2030, which is refocusing our University on developing our students as the Talent for Tomorrow, and ensuing that we engage more effectively with our community and local industry in designing our students' learning and experiences in higher education.

This plan crystallises the work BCU has put in motion over the past 3 years to shift our focus from primarily access to one that focuses on student success. This is reinforced through our new University Leadership, strategy, and cross institutional accountability for student success. This shift in focus and culture can be seen through our Strategy 2030, which highlights our ambitions to be the University for Birmingham and beyond, and focuses in on innovative and inclusive approaches

⁵ [Strategy 2030 | Birmingham City University](#)

⁶ [Resources | Theories of change for the ethnicity degree awarding gap \(EDAG\) – TASO](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

to teaching and learning, and emphasises the importance of ensuring our graduates can go into good graduate employment, or further study. Reflecting this new vision and mission, the university has set out Strategic KPIs that focus on persistent inequalities for our students. This is cascaded to individual performance goals across the University that ensure all staff are accountable for the equality of outcome for our students. For example, both strategic KPIs, and all academic staff, have a performance target on reducing the EDAG and improving employability outcomes for students.

Though this plan represents a refreshed focus on student success, BCU remains committed to extending access to higher education as core to its mission. We have worked for many years to establish strong partnerships across local schools and colleges, enabling access to higher education for young people across the Birmingham city region, most often from the most deprived areas. Our success in doing so is reflected by BCU's richly diverse student population and by the fact that BCU is the primary choice for many local students. We will continue our work with key local partners to maintain access avenues and support our evolving raising-attainment work with local children through programmes like IntoUniversity. We will also expand the work we do with local partners to better prepare those young people to succeed at BCU by further investing in and developing our transition programme (elements of which feature in APP intervention strategies).

Risks to equality of opportunity

In the Assessment of Performance (Annex A), BCU considered all stages of the student lifecycle, identifying indicators of risks to equality of opportunity for a range of student groups, including disparities in continuation, completion, attainment and progression rates. This included a granular analysis of performance associated with a range of student characteristics compared to associated comparator groups over a 4-year time series, and investigated the potential for intersections of characteristics to heighten risk.

The assessment has confirmed that the student characteristics associated with the most significant indicators of risk to equality of opportunity at BCU are:

1. Ethnicity;
2. Socio-economic disadvantage;
3. Prior educational attainment (i.e. qualification type);
4. Age on entry; and
5. Experience of care

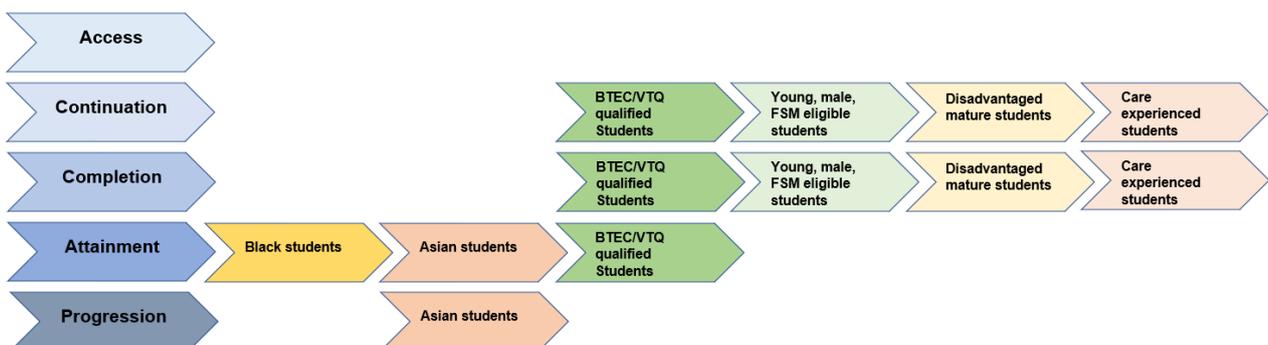
The most significant indicators of risk manifest at BCU and the student groups most affected are:

1. **Black students:** *awarding gap of 33.1% in 2021-22 graduates compared to White students.*
2. **Asian students:** *awarding gap of 23.7% in 2021-22 graduates and progression gap of 14.0% for 2019-20 leavers compared to White students.*
3. **Young (U21) students entering BCU via L3 vocational or technical qualifications** (e.g. BTECs): *continuation gap of 6.6% for 2020-21 entrants, completion gap of 11.2% for 2017-18 entrants and an awarding gap of 22.2% in 2021-22 compared to young (U21) students who enter with A-level qualifications.*

4. **Young (U21) male students eligible for free school meals prior to joining BCU:** *continuation gap 4.8% for 2020-21 entrants and completion gap of 12.2% for 2017-18 entrants compared to young (U21) female students who were not eligible for FSM.*
5. **Mature entrants between 21-25 years of age living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK;** *continuation gap of 12.7% for 2020-21 entrants and completion gap of 10.2% for 2017-18 entrants compared to young (U21) students who live in the least deprived neighbourhoods of the UK.*
6. **Young (U26) students who declare they have care experience before their 16th birthday;** *continuation gap of 6.7% for 2020-21 entrants and completion gap of 20.3% for 2017-18 entrants compared to young (U26) students who have no care experience.*

This assessment considered a multitude of intersectionalities to identify the most significant indicators of risk, taking into account the numbers of students affected and the sizes of gaps, alongside consideration of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). APP targets and objectives are focused to address risk heightened by intersectionality. For example, the intersection of sex and socio-economic disadvantage compounds risks to equality of opportunity. Further focus on the EDAG through the work of Project Zero has enabled us to look intersectionally at Black students, identifying the need to focus on their Good Honours rate.

The OfS's EORR risk matrix suggests indicators of risk associated with on-course attainment and continuation rates are underpinned by nine risks to equality of opportunity, including knowledge and skills, information and guidance, limited choice of course type and delivery mode, insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, mental health, ongoing impacts of coronavirus, cost pressures and capacity issues. Eight of these risks are also linked to completion rates. As expected, those flagged as at risk by BCU's assessment of performance align with the student groups EORR recognises as most likely to be affected, including students eligible for free school meals, socio-economically disadvantaged students, those with care experience, and students from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. A further risk - progression from higher education - is also noted as relevant to BCU's Asian students in particular. The evidence indicates the disparities in continuation, completion, attainment and progression experienced by these groups of students are likely underpinned by these risks to equality of opportunity, and with the evidence available, no other feasible explanation can currently be identified. The diagram below illustrates the student lifecycle stage at which the most at-risk student groups identified face the greatest risks to equality of opportunity:



These indications of risk can be understood as the different ways risks (as captured in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register) might appear in BCU data. The key risks identified in BCU's context are as follows:

1. **RISK 1: Knowledge and Skills:** Students accepted to BCU should be effectively supported to achieve their educational outcomes. Approaches to curriculum, pedagogy, and skill development may not have adapted to the changing student population, particularly knowledge and skills of learners coming from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. This risk contributes to indications of risk like early withdrawal rates and lower continuation rates for students, especially between Y1 and Y2 (which can be seen in the above illustration).
2. **RISK 2: Information and Guidance:** students may not have received useful, timely, or valuable information and guidance during their secondary school or college experiences to make informed choices or prepare themselves for undertaking higher education study. This risk contributes to indications of risk like lower attainment and continuation rates as above.
3. **RISK 6: Insufficient academic support:** students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome. This risk contributes to indications of risk like lower continuation rates, lower attainment rates and lower completion rates for a range of students at BCU.
4. **RISK 7: Insufficient personal support:** students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome. This risk contributes to indications of risk like lower continuation rates, lower completion rates, and lower attainment rates at BCU.
5. **RISK 8: Mental Health:** students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing. BCU recognises that mental health is key to all our students' success, but crucially to those struggling with other barriers indicated in this plan, and have committed to implementing cross-institutional initiatives that will ensure BCU has in place the core elements required for a successful Student Mind's Mental Health Charter submission.
6. **RISK 10: Cost pressures:** Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade. Given BCU's student demographic, it is recognised that many if not most students face financial pressures during their higher education study, which can contribute to lower continuation rates, lower attainment rates and lower completion rates.
7. **RISK 12: 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. This risk materialises in lower progression rates for Asian students in particular at BCU.

These are the main risks identified in BCU's context and underpinning the indications of risk detailed in this section and indicated in the intervention strategies below. Given the risks to equality of opportunity identified through this analysis, the activities set out in the intervention strategies to achieve the objectives below will focus on increasing students' levels of satisfaction and engagement with their programmes and the university itself, and consequently participation,

continuation and attainment because these are proven methods for addressing gaps like those evident at BCU (for evidence of effectiveness, see the evaluation report for OfS's Addressing Barriers to Student Success programme). The intervention strategies are provided following the section below on objectives.

A note about socio-economic disadvantage in particular: The University recruits significant numbers from households that reside in the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD quintile 1) in the country; approximately 45% of full-time undergraduate entrants. The Assessment of Performance identified that amongst all full-time undergraduate students, there exists a 4-5% gap in rates of completion for socio-economic disadvantaged students compared to students from more advantaged neighbourhoods. The assessment continued by conducting intersectional analysis to understand the impact of deprivation on different student groups to identify groups for which there are more significant outcome differentials. The identified objectives focus on intersectionalities where deprivation had a significant and material effect on widening inequalities when compared to their peers. These include, specifically, some mature age groups and young males. However, all the groups identified in the objectives, even those not specifically referencing socio-economic disadvantage (e.g., young students entering with vocational and technical qualifications), are particularly exposed to deprivation - 84% of those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods will be targeted by at least one of the objectives (often more than one as indicated in the 'cross intervention' column). In other words, the objectives as set out focus on the 6 student groups facing the greatest risk to equality of opportunity and will support the vast majority of the most deprived students in some form. To ensure our understanding of the material impacts of deprivation alongside other characteristics deepens going forward, we are committing to explore further the ABCS measure in order to revise both BCU's understanding of its students and the interventions to support them.

There is evidence that some inequalities previously identified and included in BCU's current APP have been successfully addressed and should, therefore, not feature in this APP. These include gaps between students who declare a disability and those who do not, and very small gaps in access which are not significant enough to warrant APP-specific objectives at this point. BCU will continue its ongoing access and schools-focused attainment-raising activity, especially where it supports to provide local pathways into higher education and where it is vital to achieving the objectives set out below.

For a more detailed and comprehensive assessment of performance, please see Annex A.

Objectives

Our new approach to the APP ensures proportional focus of activity, resources and leadership in relation to identified risks i.e. a greater focus on the EDAG due to the persistent, and sizeable indication of this risk. The specific risks and their indications are reflected in the objectives below.

The six indications of risk captured in the objectives headline six intervention strategies designed to improve outcomes for those students most at risk of inequality of opportunity and outcomes, evidenced by gaps in performance. These objectives are based on the rationale that gap reductions should be achieved by improving the performance of students who do not have the same successful outcomes as their peers.

As a part of the wave 1 pilot, there were several key learnings about the ways in which we engage with students, and the structures of our institution to reduce risk to equality of outcomes. A review of the Theory of Change behind our APP in October 2024 revealed opportunities to move further away from deficit narratives. Moving forward, the APP will therefore embed student and peer work with accountability resting with the staff and the institution rather than on student engagement.

Initial implementation evaluation indicates requirements for students to engage outside of timetabled learning can result in poor student engagement. Going forward, activities will therefore be embedded into the curriculum or student experience to avoid adding further expectation on students who already face barriers to engaging. Any extra-curricular activities will be co-created with students to increase engagement and buy-in.

Performance improvements should result in reductions in the gaps identified in the assessment of performance. This approach to APP objectives puts students' success at the heart of the APP, and avoids gap closure with poor outcomes, in the event that comparator group performance unexpectedly declines. It also recognises that students' achievements must be supported by university-level changes to practices and processes.

The agreed BCU objectives below are organised by the student groups identified as facing the most significant risks to equality of opportunity:

Black full-time, first-degree students:

OBJECTIVE 1: To improve degree awarding rates for Black students from 46% to above 74% to reduce awarding gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree students by 2027-28.

Asian full-time, first-degree students:

OBJECTIVE 2a: To improve degree awarding rates for Asian students from 55% to above 74% in order to reduce awarding gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree students by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 2b: To improve progression rates for Asian students from 61% to above 68% in order to reduce gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree graduates by 2027-28.

Young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications:

OBJECTIVE 3a: To improve continuation rates for young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 88% to above 91% to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) students who enter with A-Level qualifications by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 3b: To improve completion rates for young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 82% to above 86% in order to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) students who enter with A-Level qualifications by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 3c: To improve degree awarding rates for young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 52% to above 74% in order to eliminate awarding gaps between them and those entering with A-levels by 2027-28.

Young (U21) male students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM):

OBJECTIVE 4a: To improve continuation rates for young (U21) male students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) from 88% to above 91% in order to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) female students who were not eligible for FSM by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 4b: To improve completion rates for young (U21) male students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) from 81% to above 86% in order to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) female students who were not eligible for FSM by 2027-28.

Socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25):

OBJECTIVE 5a: To improve continuation rates for socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25) from 81% to above 87% to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) socio-economically advantaged students by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 5b: To improve completion rates for socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25) from 80% to above 83% in order to reduce gaps between them and young (U21) socio-economically advantaged students by 2027-28.

Young (U25) care-experienced students:⁷

OBJECTIVE 6a: To improve continuation rates for young (U26) care-experienced students from 86% to above 91% in order to eliminate the gap between them and young (<26) students with no experience of care by 2027-28

OBJECTIVE 6b: To improve completion rates for young (U26) care-experienced students from 70% to above 83% in order to reduce gaps between them and young (<26) students with no experience of care by 2027-28

These mutually reinforcing objectives headline intervention strategies, with interdependent activities per targeted student group, and impact expected to be seen across the student lifecycle.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategies are simplified versions of theories of change, which have been developed at BCU to provide a logic model for how we will achieve the objectives. The strategies below indicate what activities will be delivered, the inputs required to deliver them, the outcomes expected from them, whether the activities support other intervention strategies, and whether the activity will be delivered at university or other appropriate level such as subject, course, or student selected groups (i.e. Student societies). The strategies signal corresponding EORR risks and provide the evidence base and rationale for the activities. They also provide an overview of how each strategy will be evaluated and an approximate cost of delivery over the 4-year plan cycle, along with a Y1 estimate. In total, the intervention strategies represent an investment of approximately £10 million over the life of the plan, though exact figures are subject to further interrogation and annual budget approvals.

⁷ In this instance, BCU uses 'care experienced' to capture both self-declared care leavers and those young students declaring experiences of care prior to entering university.

The Intervention strategies below are targeted to groups of students as identified by our Assessment of Performance, to ensure that we reduce equality of opportunity for all our students. Understanding the intersectionality of our student demographic, there will be interventions that will work across different groups of students, and are therefore highlighted as cross intervention strategies. Furthermore, with a commitment to increase participation and success of all of our students, we will be embedding most of these interventions into the curriculum and classroom teaching. As such, interventions may have success with non-target groups of students.

Intervention strategy 1: Black full-time, first degree students

Objective 1: To improve degree awarding rates for Black students from 46% to above 74% to reduce awarding gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree students by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_1

Risks to equality of opportunity: on-course academic support; on-course personal support; support for mental health and cost of living pressures.

Summary of evidence base and rationale: The ethnicity awarding gap is persistent across the sector with evidence of varying interventions working across different types of provider and students. Emphasis can be seen from the literature on centring the voices of marginalised students and staff, and creating bespoke initiatives that may not be scalable, but impactful for the target group. There are, however, effective practice examples of what works to improve students' senses of satisfaction, belonging, engagement in order to improve their participation, continuation and attainment rates provided by OfS's ABSS programme evaluation which inform activities within this intervention strategy. BCU's commitment to closing awarding gaps is part of a whole provider approach, and our APP ensures this is embedded at executive, faculty, course and module level, with activities and incentives to develop staff and improve the quality of academic support they provide. The recent QAA collaborative project on inclusive assessment noted the impact of just-in-time academic support and assessment clarity on reduction in attainment gaps.⁸ Insights collected through our internal action on reducing the EDAG at BCU, highlights the importance of personalised support for learning, better guidance on life and career choices, and the need to change assessment practice for inclusivity.

We recognise our unique student demographic and the benefits of enabling flexibility in assessment, building upon IT literacy of students. Therefore, intervention activities promote aspiration, community, and inclusivity. They work in conjunction with other intervention strategy objectives, which are expected to positively influence race and ethnicity gaps as indicated by the evidence; for example, those that address risks to equality of opportunity associated with deprivation and alternative entry qualifications. BCU Student feedback indicates significant issues with assessment design, briefs, and understanding of what is expected of them in assessment (Centre for Academic Success). Assessment design has been found to be a particular issue for students from black and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, while representative peer support is shown to positively impact black student educational outcomes. The important role of these activities, in light of this evidence, is reflected in this intervention strategy.

⁸ QAA, "Collaborative Enhancement Projects - Inclusive Assessment," 2022. [Online]. Available:<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/assessment/>.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Success Survey	Survey available to all new students during induction and embedded into a renewed personal tutoring approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey platform licenses and administration • Personal and academic support to deliver signposted activities • Staff time • Student time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High engagement with tools. • Students understand their strengths and support needs. • Course leads understand the use of the survey and the interdependencies with other APP interventions. • Bespoke academic and personal support is provided to students based on survey reports. • Students are signposted to appropriate services. 	IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Changemakers	Peer designed and peer-led (SU) enrichment package to ease transition to university life, navigating the complexities of learning, assessments, engagement, access and support and more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget allocation for changemaker recruitment. • BCUSU resource to train and support Peer Navigators. • Administrative staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are directed to appropriate academic support • Students are signposted to core student services where appropriate • Higher proportion of L4 students achieving 60% or more on target courses • 90% first time submission rate for L4 students who engaged with at least 70% of peer navigation sessions by end of S2, 2025 	IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Assessment Design and Delivery	Assessment Design and Delivery comprises four elements: Integrated assessment CADMUS platform, Package of Assessment Design and Delivery Principles, Package of VTQ/BTEC Assessment Design and Delivery Principles, inclusive of staff training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to Assessment & feedback policy. • Procurement of CADMUS licenses • Anti-racism trainers, • Educational Development Service Learner Developer time • Administrative time from course and module leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher proportion of students achieving 60% or more in their marks. • 90% first time submission rate for students • Improved first time pass rates 	IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6

Black Leadership Programme	This programme is a combination of mentorship, leadership, and life training, coaching, and networking that seeks to engage with Black students' aspirations and develop their talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.1FTE EDI Business Partner • 0.05 FTE Director, EDS • Costs of external speakers/mentors/alumni • Events costs • Awards and recognition • Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attainment in Black students' average marks, continuation, and overall degree outcomes. • Increased sense of belonging as measured by pre-post survey and reflective journals (qualitative data). • Increased attainment for Black VTQ students 	IS3
Project Zero Seed corn funding	Action research funding for co-created projects on courses that are significantly contributing to the EDAG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £7000 • FTE Educational developer • 0.01FTE Business analyst • Workshops on evaluation and the EDAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved belonging of Black and South Asian students • Improved module outcomes for target students • Wider institutional autonomy on the EDAG • Research outputs on EDAG specific interventions (HEEL submissions) 	IS2, IS3
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £2,276,000 (£569,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: Individual activities in this intervention strategy will be evaluated using a range of methodologies to generate quantitative and qualitative data and demonstrate benefits, depending on the scope of activity and intended outcomes. University-wide and faculty-specific activities where possible will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 2 standards of evidence about whether they lead to intended (short and medium-term) outcomes, including the extent to which activities contribute to meeting the overall objective (impact). We will use validated or sector-standard tools and techniques for data collection where possible. We will also utilise qualitative data inputs from activities such as student focus groups run by colleagues from the Centre for Academic Success.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 2: Asian full-time, first degree students Objectives and targets

OBJECTIVE 2a: To improve degree awarding rates for Asian students from 55% to above 74% in order to reduce awarding gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree students by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 2b: To improve progression rates for Asian students from 61% to above 68% in order to reduce gaps between them and White full-time, first-degree graduates by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_2, PTP_1

Risks to equality of opportunity: on-course academic support; on-course personal support; progression from higher education; support for mental health and cost of living pressures

Evidence base and rationale: The activities and rationale for Intervention Strategy 1 apply to Objective 2a, with additional activities in IS2 focused on Objective 2b (with the exception of the Black Leadership programme). Effective employability strategies necessarily align to subject employment landscapes. At BCU, the Business courses have the most significant Asian population. Thus, alongside the breadth of employability support and guidance, targeted interventions will be required within those courses. At BCU, business and Asian students are largely commuter students with a very high level of employment whilst studying. Some Asian students living at home can find their ability to undertake placements and obtain graduate level jobs constrained by family expectations or circumstances. Females and students from disadvantaged backgrounds report a high level of disconnect between their capabilities and what matters to a potential employer.⁹ Employers are moving away from degree outcomes, personality tests and CVs to competency-based assessments, assessment centres and psychometric evaluations. Evidence suggests students who have studied during lockdown require more support in networking, professional skills and 'camera-ready' presence for interviews.¹⁰ Thus, BCU recognises different employment preparation is key to support our students. Qualitative on-course evidence reveals heightened engagement from students in relation to entrepreneurship and networking with employers. Activities in this strategy address the need for students to create opportunities for employment and further study alongside developing better preparedness for employment generally.

⁹ Understanding organizational barriers to a more inclusive workplace | McKinsey (June 2020) [How organizations can foster an inclusive workplace | McKinsey](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

¹⁰ The Times '[Graduates who studied during lockdown left struggling to find jobs](#)' 8th June 2023. Accessed 27 March 2025

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Micro-Placements	Ensure embedded micro-placement opportunities within portfolio to be achieved for courses with high percentage population of Asian students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time in Careers, Centre of Academic Success • Automated platform • Employability framework • Careers Readiness Survey • Marketing and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive change in annual Careers Readiness Survey responses • Increased uptake of placements and financial support • Improvement in student confidence after micro-placement 	IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Industry mentors	Matching students with successful industrially-active mentors with similar backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry time from mentors • Staff time, skills and expertise. • MentorNet platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive change in annual Careers Readiness Survey responses • Improvement in progression rates 	IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Embedding Employability	Embed employability opportunities within curriculum, e.g. field trips, external visits, industry guest lectures, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time, skills and expertise. • Industry time and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive change in annual Careers Readiness Survey responses • Improved understanding of the relationship between employability activities • Improved progression rates 	IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Financial scheme	Financial scheme to enable to students to take time from current employment to undertake short placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased uptake of placements and financial support 	IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £1,604,000 (£401,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: University-wide activities within this intervention strategy will be evaluated to generate Type 2 evidence to establish whether they lead to intended outcomes, as well as examine the extent to which each activity contributes towards meeting the overall objective. Faculty-specific activities in this intervention strategy allow for more focused evidence collation on student performance on specific courses. Existing datasets will be used to monitor student continuation, completion and attainment at course and module level. Regular student engagement data including VLE engagement, attendance and placement uptake will be used to interrogate the intervention strategy outcome. Strong qualitative data collation methods, including survey points, will be utilized to develop focused correlations particularly for target groups of students.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 3: Young students (U21) entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications

OBJECTIVE 3a: To improve continuation rates for young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 88% to above 91% to reduce gaps between them and young students who enter with A-Level qualifications by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 3b: To improve completion rates for young (U21) students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 82% to above 86% in order to reduce gaps between them and young students who enter with A-Level qualifications by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 3c: To improve degree awarding rates for young students entering HE with vocational or technical qualifications from 52% to above 74% in order to eliminate awarding gaps between them and those entering with A-levels by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5

Risks to equality of opportunity: knowledge and skills; information and guidance; on-course academic support; on-course personal support; support for mental health and cost of living pressures

Evidence base and rationale: Cross-sector persistent attainment gaps are reported between BTEC and A-level students across all tariff ranges, though the gap is not observed in apprenticeship courses. BCU's internal course module evaluation (CME) data evidences persistent gaps between students with different entry qualifications. Qualitative data from BCU's Education Development Service (EDS) indicates that transition from vocational to academic pedagogies is a contributory factor. Work by BCU on the OfS DRIVER research project (2019), in addition to the recent European ENTRANTS project and previous work as part of OfS's Addressing Barriers to Student Success programme, identified the need for transition support, academic support, clarity for T&L expectations and assessment. The Feeder Schools Project from Manchester Metropolitan University recognises the impact of prior learning experiences upon continuation and attainment, noting disadvantage for students with non-A-Level qualification (e.g. BTECs) and the impact of engagement with feeder schools. Assessment reviews, transition support and sessions to improve student confidence contributed to reducing gaps for students both on the basis of entry qualifications and ethnicity. BCU's activities will address lack of awareness of pre-university learning experience, engage feeder schools and colleges, review and align curriculum and assessments, and provide support for student transition. Data insights show a high proportion of these students are also students from Black, African, Caribbean, and South Asian heritage, and so we expect that work to reduce the EDAG will also strongly contribute to improving the outcomes of VTQ students.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Accelerate & Travel pass	Financial bursary of £1000 and travel pass during the first year of study for students for eligible students from low income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1000 + Travel pass per students. • Admissions staff administration time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation rates for eligible students • Improved attendance rates for eligible students 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6
Thrive Tutors	Dedicated tutors to focus on subject specific academic skills development, engaging with students on target courses with one-to-one follow up with students in APP priority groups. This activity was piloted in 2024/25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget allocation for 14 Thrive Tutors. • HR and course/module lead administration time. • Costing for changemakers (peer tutors) up to 15 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel supported by the university to fully engage with studies • Higher proportion of students achieving 60% or more in their marks. • Enhanced student academic literacy and study skills 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6
Digital Kickstart	A programme of embedded learning piloted at BCU in 2024/5 to bring the fundamentals of digital skills to the learners who need it most.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Assessment designer time (MA1). • Changemaker costs (up to 5 students). • Staff and student development on digital skills training. • Kickstart resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved first time submission rates • Improved first time pass rates • Higher proportion of students achieving 60% or more in their marks. 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6
Level 4 curriculum review	Change teaching styles and assessments to map to VTQ style learning. This will focus in on assessment questions, formats, and marks, alongside pedagogical approaches and staff development to enable collaborative redesign of level 4 teaching and learning experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.2 FTE Senior Educational Developer • 0.2 FTE Educational Developer • 0.2 FTE Senior learner developer • Academic staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved first attempt rate • Improved first attempt marks • Improved average grade for VTQ students • Improved continuation rate for VTQ 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6

I am BCU pre-induction	A 2 day programme of pre-course activities delivered on campus to engage learners in building community and learn about their upcoming student experience. New Activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events & marketing costs • FTE Senior Learner Developer • 0.3 FTE learner developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation for VTQ learners who engaged • Increased confidence 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6
Staff training	Training new and existing academic staff delivering on targeted courses to ensure they understand the needs of students from vocational/BTEC learning background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Development of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and attainment rates and associated proxy measures. 	IS1, IS2, IS4, IS6
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £4,120,000 (£1,030,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: This intervention strategy speaks to wider challenges faced across the higher education sector, placing BCU in a position to provide leading empirical evidence. Existing datasets will be used to monitor student continuation, completion and attainment at a course and module level. The Planning and Performance Department will interrogate lead data metrics to build more efficient approaches to identifying improvements without relying on end of year data, including assessment point and methods. Qualitative research methods will be central to evaluating this intervention strategy, particularly for measuring the impact of enhanced pedagogical approaches, academic staff development and training, and dedicated student support. Activity within this strategy will be evaluated to generate OfS Type 1 and 2 standards of evidence to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes and contribution to overall objectives. Existing datasets will be used to monitor student continuation, completion and attainment at course and module level and triangulated with qualitative data for demonstrating benefits of enhanced pedagogical approaches, academic staff development and training, and dedicated student support.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 4: Young (U21) Male Students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

OBJECTIVE 4a: To improve continuation rates for young (U21) male students eligible for FSM from 88% to above 91% in order to reduce gaps between them and female students who were not eligible for FSM by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 4b: To improve completion rates for young (U21) male students eligible for FSM from 81% to above 86% in order to reduce gaps between them and female students who were not eligible for FSM by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_6, PTS_7

Risks to equality of opportunity: on-course academic support; on-course personal support; support for mental health and cost of living pressures

Evidence base and rationale: The number of years a child has been eligible for free school meals has long been considered the best available marker for childhood poverty with fewer biases than other measures of deprivation.¹¹ However, recent evidence suggests this data is becoming a less efficient foundation for targeting support, with some at-risk groups excluded.¹² Meanwhile, access and progression outcomes between FSM students others has reached the highest level recorded.¹³ ONS data shows that FSM students are half as likely to secure five good GCSE grades as their non-FSM counterparts, which impacts upon progression to FE and HE.¹⁴ Although male students eligible for FSM are less likely to access HE than non-eligible females, those that do successfully enter higher education have been found to have reduced attainment compared to those females (Hillman and Robinson, 2016). Alongside gendered expectations, subject differences and approach to assessment are key reasons provided for differential attainment (HEA, 2008). Digital poverty impacts on students' flexibility of study, as many are living at home, and engagement with course resources and assessment. BCU's intervention strategy recognises that there is insufficient data on our students' circumstances and associated disadvantages. However, those students who access BCU have shown resilience in attaining strong entry tariffs. Therefore, activities will utilise optimal data sources to facilitate personalised and targeted support, as well as provision of enhanced academic support.

¹¹ Measuring Disadvantage (14 May 2021) Sutton Trust. [Measuring Disadvantage - The Sutton Trust](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

¹² Free school meals data now 'less useful for research' - EPI Accessed 27 March 2025

¹³ What's next in equality of opportunity regulation - Office for Students Accessed 27 March 2025

¹⁴ Free School Meals - Gap, Data set from Widening participation in higher education - GOV.UK (24 October 2024) Accessed 27 March 2025

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Financial support information	Bespoke and learner-centred communications related to financial support available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness of financial assistance 	No
Enrichment activities	Targeted external university-funded opportunities for students to engage in enrichment activities, e.g. international exchanges, industry placements, field trips)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and progression rates, and associated proxy measures. 	IS1, IS2, IS3, IS5, IS6
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £3,428,000 (£857,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: BCU will develop its data capability around student hardship funds and digital assistance packages to enable focused evaluation of impact of investment. Existing datasets will be used to monitor student continuation, completion and attainment at course and module level, and triangulated with qualitative data to demonstrate the benefits of on-campus and digital support packages, and review assessment modes designed to better support the target population and reduce barriers preventing equality of opportunity to be realised.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 5: Socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25)

OBJECTIVE 5a: To improve continuation rates for socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25) from 81% to above 87% to reduce gaps between them and young socio-economically advantaged students by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 5b: To improve completion rates for socio-economically disadvantaged mature students (aged 21-25) from 80% to above 82% in order to reduce gaps between them and young socio-economically advantaged students by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_8, PTS_9

Risks to equality of opportunity: knowledge and skills; information and guidance; on-course academic support; on-course personal support; support for mental health and cost of living pressures

Evidence base and rationale: Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to reduce their level of participation in HE.¹⁵ Financial concerns, cultural isolation and a lack of familiarity with HE contributes to continuation and awarding gaps. GuildHE reports that 44% of white working-class students and 37% of black students enter university with only BTEC qualifications.¹⁶ Research by Purcell et al (2007) found mature graduates have a greater propensity to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and have non-standard entry qualifications.¹⁷ It is known that activities which support transition to HEI reduce associated continuation and awarding gaps. Across the sector in 2020, there were relatively high proportions of mature entrants among black students (38%), particularly black women (41%). A higher proportion of mature students also report a disability compared to younger students and are more likely to study part-time and in subjects allied to medicine or education.¹⁸ BCU recognises the complex factors influencing mature students' ability to continue and complete their studies, further complicated by a significant proportion undertaking courses in the NHS with placements. Our intervention activities therefore embed transition at L4, provide enhanced personal and academic support, as well as align course content, modules and assessments with streamlined information for students. Over the past 4 years, BCU has provided a laptop for life to our most disadvantaged students, contributing to an increase in progression and completion rates and reduction in withdrawals.¹⁹

¹⁵ Forsyth, A & Furlong, A (2003) *Losing Out? Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Experience in Further and Higher Education* The Policy Press and JRF

¹⁶ [BTEC's set to be scrapped – Is this Levelling Up Education?](#) - ChamberUK (15 July 2022) Accessed 27 March 2025

¹⁷ [Mature learners: a synthesis of research | Advance HE](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

¹⁸ [Mature students in England - House of Commons Library](#) (24 February 2021) Accessed 27 March 2025

¹⁹ TEF 2023 provider submission evaluation, page 9.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Support information	Targeted information, advice and guidance provided to all mature students about support and funding available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Marketing materials created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased passrates, grades and continuation from first year. • Improved continuation and completion rates. 	No
I am BCU pre-induction (Mature learners)	Specialised Welcome Week/extended induction focused on transitions into higher education learning expectations, mental health and assessment supports. Community building for extended transition. New activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events & marketing costs • 0.1 FTE Senior Learner Developer • 0.3 FTE learner developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation for Mature learners who engaged • Increased confidence as measured by pre-post survey 	No
Digital Support Fund	An offer of a free laptop to target students from the beginning of their studies, and under warranty for the standard lifetime of study. Wave 1 pilot learnings indicated Mature learners benefitted and valued this offer most, though others still utilised the offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance, • Staff time, • Planning and logistics for distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved internal measure of continuation and completion rates 	IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS6
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £1,600,000 (£400,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: Pre-induction activity will have embedded measures to monitor changes in student understanding of academic expectations and awareness of support available over time. Course-specific activities in this intervention strategy allow for more focused qualitative data collation, particularly on student confidence and senses of belonging. Efficacy of assessment feedback built into modules will be analysed as part of the evaluation process in partnership with the Centre for Academic Success. Existing qualitative data sources will be used to measure attendance and VLE engagement of students and will build lead quantitative measures that inform end of year performance, such as non-submission rates and first attempt pass rates.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 6: Young (25 yrs or younger) care-experienced students

OBJECTIVE 6a: To improve continuation rates for young (U26) care-experienced students from 86% to above 91% in order to eliminate the gap between them and young students with no care experience by 2027-28.

OBJECTIVE 6b: To improve completion rates for young (U26) care-experienced students from 70% to above 83% in order to reduce gaps between them and those without experience of care by 2027-28.

Target: PTS_10, PTS_11

Risks to equality of opportunity: knowledge and skills; information and guidance; perception of higher education; application success rates; on-course academic support; on-course personal support; mental health; cost pressures; progression from higher education

Evidence base and rationale: Care experienced children tend to have poorer educational achievement in school, with disruption in their personal lives emerging as factors in low attainment.²⁰ OfS's effective practice advice for care experienced students and looked after children recognises the need for enhanced personal support throughout the student lifecycle, including the need for financial support.²¹ BCU's activities therefore include enhanced packages of financial, personal and academic support for care leavers and care experienced students in line with corporate parenting principles.²² These intervention activities will form the basis of our institutional commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant.²³

²⁰ [Consistency needed - Care experienced students and higher education](#) Office for Students *Insight 8* (April 2021) Accessed 27 March 2025

²¹ [Effective practice advice - Office for Students](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

²² [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers](#) (February 2018) publishing.service.gov.uk Accessed 27 March 2025

²³ [Education Sector Engagement - Care Leaver Covenant](#) Accessed 27 March 2025

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
Care Leaver and Care Experience Support at BCU Booklet	All care leavers and care experienced students will receive a booklet to support their transition to HE with information about the support available to them (CURRENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time, • Marketing and communication materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and progression rates, and associated proxy measures. 	No
Accommodation Guarantee	Accommodation guarantee provided—all care leavers and care-experienced students receive a guaranteed place in BCU accommodation (CURRENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time and expertise to develop prioritisation system within accommodation allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and progression rates, and associated proxy measures. 	No
Care Leavers Bursary	£1500 annual non-means-tested bursary for all years of study for all care leavers, with £2000 in final year offered (CURRENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources, • staff time to identify and allocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and progression rates, and associated proxy measures. 	No
Pastoral Care Programme	Pastoral Care programme with named contact in each service for all care leavers/care-experienced students, along with life coaching, financial literacy support, and integrated academic support in faculties (CURRENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time (academic and life coach) • Trainers for network staff on needs of care experienced students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation, completion and progression rates, and associated proxy measures. 	No
Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy over 4 year plan (Annual) : £720,000 (£180,000 per annum)				

Evaluation: Small population size (n=70) will enable focused evaluation and measurement of impact of intervention strategy. To demonstrate the benefits of listed activities, qualitative data will be collected to triangulate with quantitative data (continuation and completion rates), which will include working in partnership with support staff and faculty colleagues.

Whole provider approach

A whole provider approach is now central to how we support successful outcomes for our students, embedding access and participation activity across the university. All APP activity is overseen by our APP & Project Zero Strategic oversight Group (chaired by the Vice Chancellor), with delivery managed and monitored by our APP Operational Team (APPOT). The latter comprises executive team members and core stakeholders from across the university, including the Students' Union. They are reportable to the University Executive Team and Board of Governors. APPOT comprises faculty leaders to ensure intervention activities are delivered, monitored and evaluated across the university. APPOT reports to the Strategic oversight Group, facilitating a thorough whole provider approach with accountability for improving access and participation at module, course and faculty levels. In creating this plan, we have made equality, diversity and inclusion the focus of analysis and can confirm that we have met our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

In July 2023, a new Vice-Chancellor was appointed to BCU, who brought in a new leadership team, and with this BCU's new Strategy 2030.²⁴ With the mission to be rooted in Birmingham, but reaching beyond, a renewed focus on equality of opportunity and outcome for our students has been the impetus behind significant organisational change, refocusing on the importance of Teaching excellence, inclusive student experience, and career ready graduates. As a part of this strategic change, Academic Board commissioned the implementation of Project Zero – a cross University change initiative focused solely on reducing the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap (EDAG). This was with a view to rebalance the resources and action of the University's equality agenda to be proportional to the persistence and size of the inequality. Project Zero is led by the Director for Education Development and Head of EDI, and reports to Academic Board, University EDI committee, and the Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Quality Committee.

Project Zero has worked closely with the APP governance to ensure focus on the EDAG, which has resulted in enhanced understanding of data, evaluation of activities, and shared responsibility for addressing the gap. Project Zero commissioned cross-University Task & Finish Groups based on literature and student feedback on factors that contribute to the EDAG, but also factors that are presenting barriers to BCU students learning. This led to development of action plans across Professional Services and academic faculties to focus in on understanding the needs of our Black, African, Caribbean, and South Asian Heritage students. Early findings have been fed into this plan such as a need for enhanced personal tutoring support, foundational digital skills, better financial support, leadership and life coaching for Black students, and a need to better understand the experiences of certain groups of marginalised students. All of this has been reflected in the intervention strategies above.

BCU's ambition is to ensure that not only are all students experiencing equality of opportunity in their pursuit of higher education at BCU, but also that they receive a world-class, locally-rooted, technically-excellent and application-focused higher education experience, which enables them to thrive in the 21st century. To do that, we must address areas where we can see students are not experiencing equality of opportunity and we must develop better ways of delivering that equality; something that is now central to BCU's mission. This requires leadership from the top and across all areas of the university.

²⁴ [University appoints new Vice-Chancellor | Birmingham City University](#)

Not only does it require leadership and cross-organisational awareness of the importance of equality of opportunity, but also it requires the university to look at itself as a contributing factor to the manifestations of risks identified in this plan. In other words, the university is now looking at its policies, processes and practices to query the extent to which any of those aspects of a students' experience at BCU may themselves present barriers or exacerbate known risks to equality of opportunity. This self-examination process involves reviewing curriculum across all programmes, considering the types and varieties of assessments utilised, thinking through the pedagogical underpinnings of BCU's education offer, and examining university policies, regulations, and wider student support for improvements that could be made in light of evidence. This has informed, for example, our renewed approach to Personal Academic Tutoring that has been approved by our Student Experience committee. This model and policy was co-created with students and presents a minimum standard for coaching support, engagement monitoring, and personal/professional planning and development of the students. This has been structured through our new Workload Allocation Model with appropriate time allocated for all academic staff, and supported with a new Learner Analytics platform. This is but one example evidencing BCU's commitment to review university-wide practices, including teaching and assessment practices, to ensure we are offering the highest-quality education to our current and future students and supporting them all to succeed. We recognise that a variety of factors contribute to the student experience, and are seeking to better alleviate the financial hardship that our students face through every day support, such as a £1.1 Million annual subsidy on University catering to ensure all students can have nutritious food and drink while on any of our campuses.

Heightened appreciation for the importance of evaluation is central to our whole provider approach. During 2022, we initiated our own forensic examination of academic performance data and started to question the effectiveness of our business-as-usual activities. It became clear to us that we have not invested enough resource into testing the effectiveness of our offer, especially our support services. Investment has been recently made in a centralised evaluation team. Recently formed, this team sits within our Performance and Planning Department and will oversee the evaluation of APP activities while liaising with academic and professional services colleagues to embed evaluation principles across the university. They will also work with colleagues to produce outputs that can be disseminated across the university and the sector, contributing to a stronger evaluation community of practice. Furthermore, we are investing in evaluation as a part of our APP activity to enable participatory research, evaluative bespoke subject projects, and student research at the doctoral level to ensure thorough, longitudinal, and authentic insights into how we can reduce risks to equality of opportunity and outcome.

To ensure this Access and Participation Plan is delivered successfully, a new approach is being taken to APP governance, leadership, stakeholder engagement and delivery. This plan firstly refocuses student voice and co-creation in all activities and intervention strategies. The Students' Union now have stronger representation throughout APP governance, and are collaborating on many activities highlighted above, and the Head of EDI now sits on APP governance. Project Zero will continue to work alongside the APP to ensure better understanding of the experiences and needs of our students both while at University, and as they progress to further study or employment. The plan also embeds engagement across the University, but with areas that previously had little autonomy in co-creating solutions for inequality, such as through its seed corn funding initiative. We are also reviewing our Assessment and Feedback policy to further embed the good practice learnings from our Wave 1 Pilot, and TASO evaluation work on assessment, and more resource has been allocated to ensure this work is cascaded across all BCU courses.

University EDI targets are embedded into our EDI strategy and Strategic KPIs, which have been cascaded throughout all staff KPIs across the University.

Student consultation

Student involvement in both the development and the oversight of access and participation planning is a priority at BCU. All ongoing access and participation activities related to BCU's current APP are overseen by the APP Operational Group, on which sit BCU's Students' Union Chief Executive Officer, the SU President, and SU Co-presidents for Student Voice and Academic Experience who provide crucial insights and feedback on discussions about the planning, implementation, and impact of activities ongoing as part of BCU's current APP. They engaged in discussions about whether to volunteer for Wave 1 and were vocal in their support. There is also a student submission alongside this APP, which shows the extent to which our Students' Union have been involved in the planning and will be vital to the plan's delivery. This plan demonstrates a renewed strength of co-creation and centring of the students voice.

The wider Students' Union Officer team and student representatives have reviewed and contributed comments and suggestions to draft intervention strategies and APP narratives, supporting or challenging various details as well as the overall approach. For example, over 3,000 students contributed to Students' Union research in 2023 that helped us to develop a new approach to personal tutoring, among a number of other initiatives being driven by Project Zero. Also, we have learned new ways from our students about how to keep our commitment to ongoing centring of the student voice, which can be seen in the use of a Daily Diary as a method for learning about the authentic student experience.

Students' Union colleagues have had frequent meetings outside of the APP governance meetings to provide insights, support, and feedback on the plan. Various University leaders including the Executive Office (Vice Chancellors office), Directors, Heads of Department, and many other colleagues held several focused, dedicated meetings with them to talk through the OfS guidance to ensure comprehension and then explain how the draft plan components spoke to the guidance and set out to deliver a higher level of ambition than previous plans. During these meetings, students felt the analysis had captured the greatest risks at BCU and that the objectives aimed to deliver to the areas they were aware needed greater support. Our students are feeling a renewed sense of student centered education, and feel that the targets, activities, and approaches are in line with their own research with BCU students, as well as the Students' Union strategy. Following feedback from students, the evaluation strategy has been revised to incorporate the use of a variety of mechanisms for gathering feedback about the effectiveness of certain activities, such as the Daily Diary, which is a tool the Students' Union have been using to better understand the student experience.

To further embed students in evaluation activity, BCU will also engage Doctoral studentships focused on APP evaluation. These doctoral students will act as central researchers gathering data from students and staff, working closely with our Planning and Performance Department to deliver evaluation over the next several years.

These student representatives have also been involved in developing our APP implementation plan, which includes the implementation of the evaluation, and are going to be a part of the reviews of our Theory of Change, as a part of our ongoing monitoring of the plan. They will continue to participate in oversight groups for the new plan and to support with APP socialisation plans as

appropriate. In particular, the Vice President Equity & Inclusion and Vice President Student Voice have a vested interest in the APP as part of the portfolio of their roles, while the Vice President Academic Experience was recently elected on a manifesto that directly aligns to some of the interventions identified for the APP moving forwards.

Project Zero has also been fundamental in engaging students in how we change the University for their betterment. For the first time in BCU, Project Zero was able to engage students specifically from Black, African, Caribbean, and South Asian Heritage in specifically understanding their needs. Over the course of 2024, BCU engaged with these students through surveys, focus groups, townhalls, and forums to better understand specific elements of the student experience. This work produces several insight reports that fed into the Project Zero action plans, and Task & Finish groups also were required to co-create their action plans with students from these backgrounds. While this variation acknowledges through its activities that there is still more work to be done in understanding student experiences of the EDAG, we have engaged students more than ever before at BCU.

Finally, we are also looking for other ways to engage across the University in development of the APP and activities to address inequalities. An example of this can be seen through the 'That's Me!' project, which is an OfS research project focusing on eliminating the barriers to Postgraduate study for global majority students. The Director for Education Development has been a member of the project board for the past year, and is developing insights series and forums for UG students to better understand their options in relation to post-graduate study.

Evaluation of the plan

OfS acknowledges that evidence of 'what works' for access and participation is weak, requiring reforms to catalyse knowledge-building in this area. To this end, BCU built a comprehensive evaluation plan for the APP as one whole programme, with evaluation of set activities within intervention strategies and participation in evaluation collaborations. This includes contributing to a wider community of evaluation practitioners through engagement with regional and national evaluation networks including the University Alliance Evaluation Group, the Midlands Evaluation Group and the HEAT Post-Entry Working Group . BCU's APP evaluation comprises process and impact evaluation, including the work we do with partners, to test the scalability of our interventions.

We are actively developing institutional capabilities for evaluation, as evidenced by our work with TASO in 2024 to develop a stronger approach to using Theories of Change. We were specifically able to focus in on the Ethnicity Degree Awarding gap, and produce a sector published ToC.²⁵ This has assisted in our ability to develop ToCs for all intervention strategies (see Annex B below), and was the foundation of our evaluation plan for the APP.

The university will deploy a realist model of evaluation that is concerned with evaluating what works, for whom, under what circumstance, why and how, noting the importance of context in the generation of outcomes. It is a model of evaluation commonplace in measuring the relationship

²⁵ Mind the (ethnicity degree awarding) gap: A changed way of seeing Theory of Change development – TASO

between outcomes achieved and inputs assigned across a wide range of sectors, including public and private sectors.²⁶

To lead and manage the university-wide APP evaluation, BCU has identified dedicated, centralized resource in its Planning and Performance Department. PPD colleagues will work closely with the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), Directors, Deans, Heads of Departments, academic colleagues and those in professional services to ensure a robust programme-level evaluation is delivered, including process and impact measures. This work is vital to gathering evidence of 'what works' and how well at BCU. It is translatable into academic publications and other outputs for dissemination. Doing so will position BCU as a sector leader on evaluating APP interventions and provide opportunities to raise the profile of the work done to address risks to equality of opportunity in higher education.

Working closely alongside those PPD colleagues will be 2 new PhD students, whose substantive research activity will concern APP evaluation. These roles are a direct result of student feedback pushing for greater student engagement in evaluation activity.

Over the course of the plan, the group will be working collaboratively to provide peer support, professionalisation opportunities and advocacy for widening participation across the country. It will also provide an outlet for disseminating evaluation findings and contributing to the evaluation community of practice BCU wishes to play an instrumental role in building.

²⁶ Pawson, R and Tilley, N (1997) *Realist Evaluation* London: Sage

Activity	IS	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Changemakers	IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are directed to appropriate academic support • Students are signposted to core student services where appropriate • Higher proportion of L4 students achieving 60% in their marks on target courses • Improved submission rate for L4 students 	Type 1	Interim reporting in annual EDI report Academic publication forums (journals, conferences) AY2027/28
Assessment Design and Delivery	IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher proportion of students achieving 60% or more in their marks. • Improved first attempt submission rates. • Improved first attempt pass rates. 	Type 2	Academic publication forums AY2024/25 (update) Conference poster Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Thrive Tutors	IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher proportion of students achieving 60% or more in their marks. • Improved year-on-year progression. • Improved attainment, continuation and completion rates. 	Type 2	Academic publication forums Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Black Leadership Programme	IS1, IS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student belonging • Improved attainment, continuation and completion rates • Improvement in careers readiness scores • Improved progression rates 	Type 1	Academic publication forums Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Project Zero Seed Corn Funding	IS1, IS2, IS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved belonging of Black and South Asian students • Improved module outcomes for target students • Improved continuation for target students • Wider institutional autonomy on the EDAG • Research outputs on EDAG specific interventions (TASO library of evaluation). 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report Academic publication forums AY2027/28
Micro-Placements	IS2, IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in careers readiness scores • Pre-and-post placement surveys • Improved progression rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32

Industry mentors	IS2 , IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in careers readiness scores • Improved progression rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Employability exposure	IS2 , IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in careers readiness scores • Improved progression rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Finance Scheme (placements)	IS2 , IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of financial support among eligible target students • Increase in placement uptake among target students 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report End of Plan Report 2031/32
Success Survey	IS3 , IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High engagement with tools. • A decrease in withdrawals • Increased year on year level advancement • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Accelerate and Travel Pass	IS3 , IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved year-on-year progression • Improved on-campus attendance • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Digital Kickstart	IS3 , IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved first attempt submission rates • Improved year-on-year level advancement 	Type 2	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Level 4 VTQ Curriculum Review	IS3 , IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved first attempt pass rate • Improved first attempt pass mark • Improved continuation, completion and attainment rates 	Type 1 & 2	Academic publication forums Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32
I am BCU Pre-induction (VTQ)	IS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation for VTQ learners who engaged • Increased confidence as measured by pre-post survey • Changes in success survey output year on year. • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Staff training	IS3 , IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved attainment, continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32

Financial & support information (FSM)	IS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of financial support among eligible target students • Increased year on year level advancement 	Type 2	Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Enrichment activities	IS4 , IS1, IS2, IS3, IS5, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in careers readiness scores • Improved progression rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Financial & support information (mature)	IS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of financial support among eligible target students • Increased year on year level advancement 	Type 2	Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32
I am BCU pre-induction (mature)	IS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved continuation for Mature learners who engaged • Increased confidence as measured by pre-post survey, and success survey changes year on year. • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting AY2026/27 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Digital Support Fund	IS5 , IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased year on year level advancement • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 2	Interim reporting in EDI report 2027/28 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Care Leavers and Care Experienced Booklet	IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% uptake of financial support among verified care leavers • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Accommodation guarantee	IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of offer among eligible target students • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Care Leavers Bursary	IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of offer among eligible target students • Improved continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32
Pastoral Care Package	IS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased year on year level advancement • Improved attainment, continuation and completion rates 	Type 1	Interim reporting in EDI report 2028/29 End of Plan Report 2031/32

Provision of information to students

BCU is committed to providing prospective students with clear, accessible, and timely information relating to fees and finance, including financial support, hardship funding and scholarship opportunities.

BCU offers a range of financial support funds and bursaries. Our offers are reviewed annually using impact evaluation data to ensure we deliver relevant financial support to our students, including addressing APP objectives, while continuing to meet our overall financial commitment to student financial support per APP cycle.* Information about all the financial support we offer is available on the BCU website. Students also receive communications via email before enrolment and, once enrolled via our online learning management system, Moodle. BCU also has a dedicated Money and Childcare Advice Team. Students seeking financial support are guided through a series of eligibility questions to ensure they receive a personalised financial support offer. Additional financial support is also provided to specific student groups like care leavers and students with disabilities, with pre-entry advisers to support and inform students. Targeted information about packages of support and automatic awards are sent to students using application data, with full details on the BCU website.

In light of CMA guidance, we continue to ensure that information about the total costs associated with study are clear to students. BCU reserves the right to increase fees for academic years after a student's first year of entry, up to the maximum amount allowed by law or government policy. Information on the fees students will be charged for the duration of their course, the costs of study and other necessary information like financial support for students during their time of study are communicated through BCU's website and prospectus; direct communications with current applicants, entrants and enquirers; information provided at Open Days and Applicant Taster Days; other direct, tailored communications to local education partners or agencies; and in the student contract at offer and acceptance stages. Academic staff as well as student support staff are also expected to refer students to relevant financial support advice and resources where appropriate.

*Offer for 2025/26	Eligibility	Award
Financial Assistance Fund (all years with minimum 4 weeks remaining on course; limited to one application per academic year; award reassessment available, if required)	Fully enrolled at BCU, demonstrates a shortfall in funding, and from an identified priority group or have exceptional or emergency circumstances. Priority groups include but are not limited to: mature students, students eligible for FSM, care leavers, young carers, students with a household income of £25K or less, students from a low-income background, students with dependent children, estranged students, and UG students receiving final year loan rate.	Minimum £100 up to maximum £3,000 per award
Care Leaver's Bursary (all years)	Verified care leavers.	£1,500 in each year + £2,000 in the final year per student
Accelerate (first year of study only)	POLAR4 Q1 or POLAR4 Q2 + one other eligibility criteria from the following list: care experienced (U25), U25 and in receipt of FSM, first in family to attend HE, disability, caring responsibility, parental HE education, estranged from parents, parenting responsibilities (U25), refugee/asylum status, in or been in armed forces, parent/carer in or been in armed forces.	£1,000 in three payments over first year of study
Digital Support Fund (all years)	Household income (£25K or less) or eligible for free school meals	Laptop (one off)
Travel Pass (first year of study only)	Students from BCU partner schools or colleges	West Midlands Travel Pass (one off, up to £750).

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

- An assessment of performance of student groups has been undertaken to identify potential areas of risk within the Office for Students individualised student data resources. We focused on the indicators of those risks through gap analysis of key outcome performance metrics which include:
 - Successful continuation of study after 12.5 months post entry
 - Successful continuation of study after 24.5 months post entry
 - Successful completion of study after 48.5 months post entry
 - Classification of bachelor's degree awards, and,
 - Progression to professional/managerial employment or further study
- The assessment described below reflects those 5 measures and provides the data-driven evidence for the 6 objectives contained in the plan.

STUDENT POPULATION

- Due to the variation of recruitment to modes and levels of study beyond full-time first degree (FTFD) as shown below in Table A, the following contextual analysis and assessment of performance will primarily focus on FTFD recruitment because it forms 88% of BCU's undergraduate recruitment. Additional analysis of other populations is included where relevant.

Table A: *Birmingham City University student population headcount*

UK domiciled entrants*	2017/8	2018/9	2019/0	2020/1	2021/2
Full-time UG	6170	6130	6420	6900	6820
Bachelors	5850	5820	6130	6460	6530
Other UG	250	230	220	320	190
UG Degree with PG	80	80	70	120	100
Part-time UG	250	240	160	130	120
Bachelors	130	130	100	100	80
Other UG	120	110	60	30	30
UG Apprenticeships	130	240	320	390	470
Higher	100	190	280	280	280
Bachelors	30	40	40	100	180

* -rounded to nearest 10

STUDENT GROUPS

- In understanding and identifying the groups most at risk of not experiencing equality of opportunity, the assessment of performance has considered the following personal

characteristics alongside other area-based indicators and prior educational success that may intersect with these groups:

Personal characteristics	Household and area based Indicators	Key stage 5 outcomes
Declared a disability Mental Health Cognitive disabilities Care experienced Ethnicity Sex Gender identity Age Sexual Orientation	Free school meal status Parental Education IMD Locality TUNDRA	Vocational/Academic entry
		Intersections
		ABCS

5. The assessment was based on determining indications of risk measured through magnitude of gaps in outcomes of the 5 measures cited in paragraph 1, comparing identified disadvantaged groups to those deemed more advantaged (comparison group). The comparison groups were identified from below.
 - **Sex:** Male compared to female
 - **Age:** Mature [>20] (all and specific age groups) compared to young [under 21]
 - **Disability:** declared (all and specific disabilities) compared to those with no disability
 - **Ethnicity:** Minority ethnic backgrounds compared to White ethnic backgrounds
 - **Care Experience:** Those with care experience compared to those with none
 - **Socio-economic status:** deprived [those in IMD Q1 neighbourhoods for mature students and those eligible for FSM for young students] compared to less deprived [those in IMD Q4/5 neighbourhoods for mature students and not eligible for FSM for young students]
 - **Entry qualification:** Students who enter with vocational entry qualifications compared to those that enter with GCE A levels

6. Groups with the highest magnitude of gaps have been identified for objectives and intervention strategies within this new plan.

7. The assessment of performance of the majority mode and level shows that comparing students across disabilities, sexual orientation or parental background provides no significant indication of risk of differential outcomes. However, the data suggests potential indications of risk when examining a student's:
 - age on entry
 - sex
 - in-care experienced status
 - academic entry route into HE
 - ethnic background

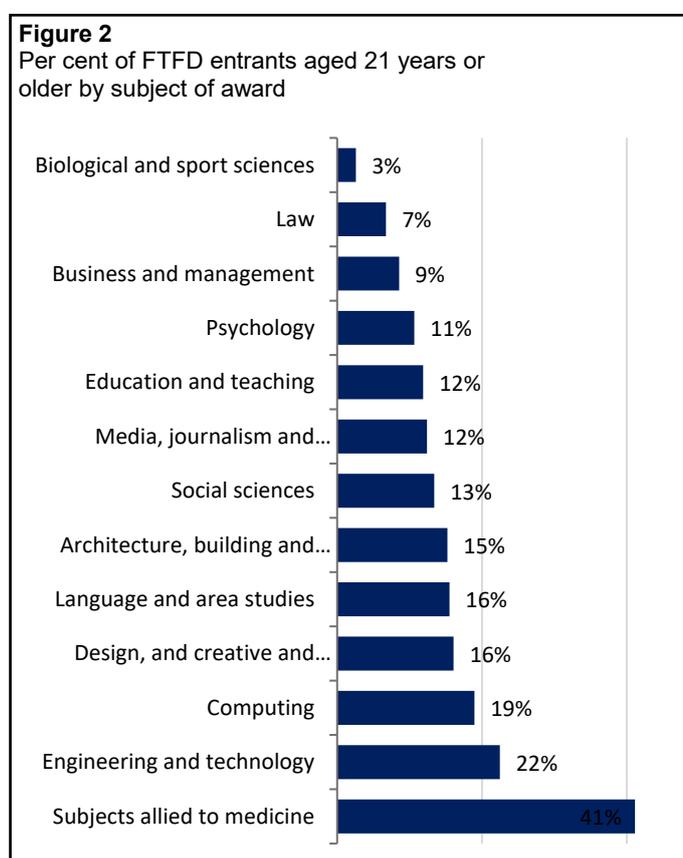
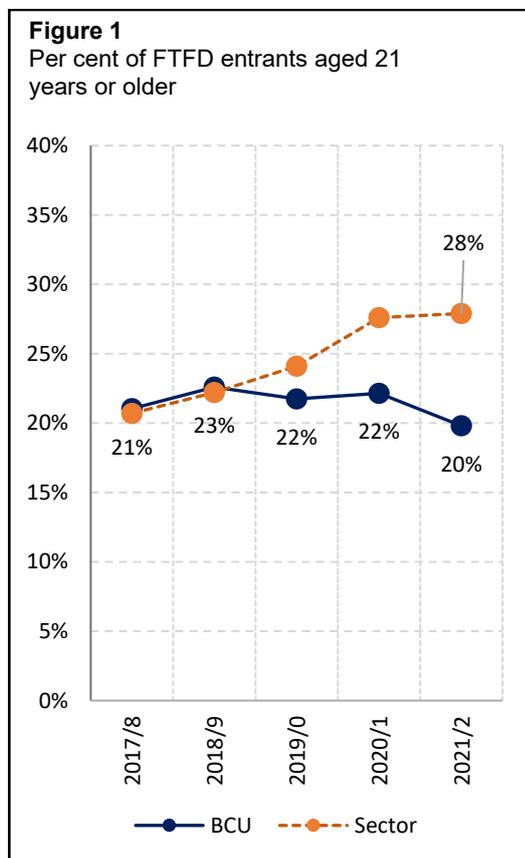
8. The indications of risk above are even more pronounced when intersecting multiple groups and so six objectives have been built around these indications of risk, but focused in on the most pronounced gaps within those groups. Presented below is a summary of the complete

assessment of performance completed. It is organised in such a way as to relate and demonstrate support for the objectives that were created at the conclusion of the assessment, in line with the most pronounced gaps identified.

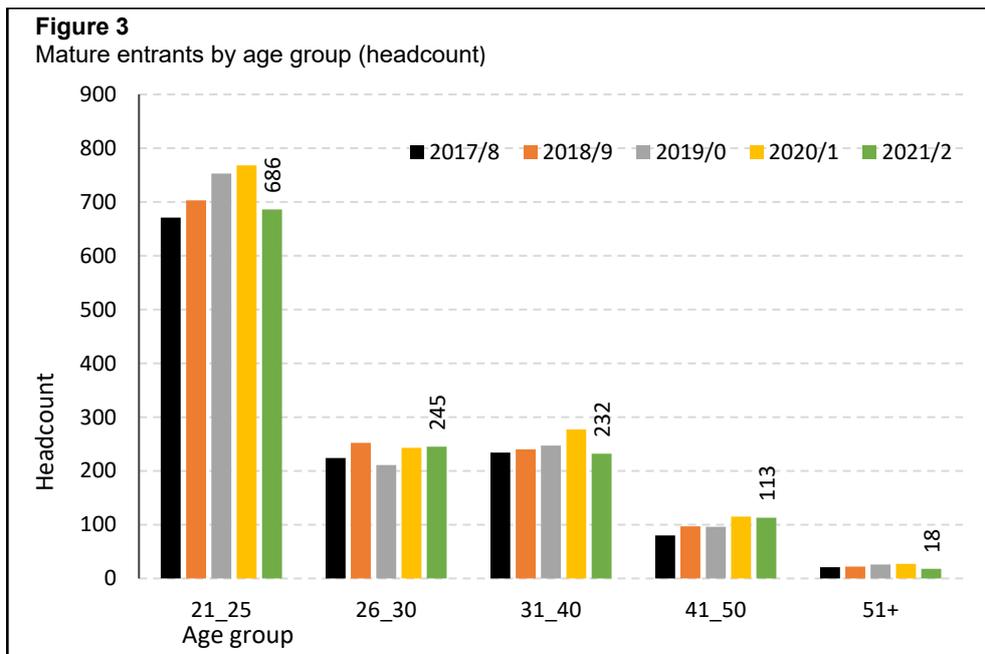
AGE ON ENTRY (MATURE²⁷ STUDENTS)

Objective: To reduce gaps in student continuation and student completion success rates between mature (21-25 yrs.), socio-economically disadvantaged students and young (U21), socio-economically advantaged students by 2030.

9. Although the University has seen a small participation decline in students from mature age groups compared with an increase across the sector (fig 1), a significant number of students continue to commence full-time first-degree study in the mature age groups (1,290 in 2021/2), specifically in courses related to subjects allied to medicine (fig 2) which account for over 50% of all mature entrants at BCU.



²⁷ Mature students are defined at undergraduate level as entrants aged 21 years or older on commencement of the academic year of entry



10. The basis for the assessment of performance was to examine, in terms of descriptive data, if age was a contributing factor to the level of successful outcomes. Guidance from the Office of Students recommends providers investigate more granular analysis within student characteristics to identify any potential indications of risk of inequalities. The data on student outcomes split by age group, suggests, that students aged 21-25 have poorer continuation and completion outcomes than more mature age groups, when compared to young students. If age wasn't a significant factor in determining outcomes, then we would not expect to see material differences between young students (who have recent experience of full-time education) and more mature entrants.
11. The data in Table B below identifies the continuation gaps at 12.5 months between young entrants and those aged 21 to 25 (mature) across the four most recent cohorts (Y1 to Y4²⁸) and provides some evidence that the continuation success for FTFD entrants is impacted by age, with a higher magnitude of difference between young students and those aged between 21-25, the second largest age group after Under-21s (fig 3). The continuation gap at sector level for this group is similar in magnitude to other OfS defined mature age groups, whereas at BCU it is higher and significantly higher for those impacted by higher deprivation levels (IMD Quintile) in their local neighbourhood (table C).

Table B: *Entrant continuation (at 12.5 months) rates by Age on Entry group*

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
Young (U21)	91.4%	89.9%	92.8%	90.6%	91.2%	91.7%
21-25 age group	88.8%	86.1%	87.8%	85.0%	86.8%	86.3%
BCU Gap	2.6%	3.8%	5.0%	5.6%	4.4%	5.4%
Sector Gap	7.7%	8.6%	8.2%	9.7%	8.6%	9.0%

²⁸ Y1 is the cohort starting furthest away in time, Y4 is the most recent.

Table C: Entrant continuation (at 12.5 months) rates by Age on Entry group intersected by deprivation level (England domiciles only)

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
Young (U21) + IMD Q4/5	92.0%	91.1%	93.3%	93.6%	92.5%	93.4%
21-25 age group + IMD Q1	86.9%	86.3%	85.5%	80.8%	84.8%	83.2%
BCU Gap	5.1%	4.8%	7.8%	12.8%	7.7%	10.2%

12. Lower retention rates for this age/socio-economic group persist and increase after their second year, with continuation at 24.5 months and completion rates (measured after 4 years) significantly lower than compared to their comparator group [U21 IMD Q4/5] (Table D).

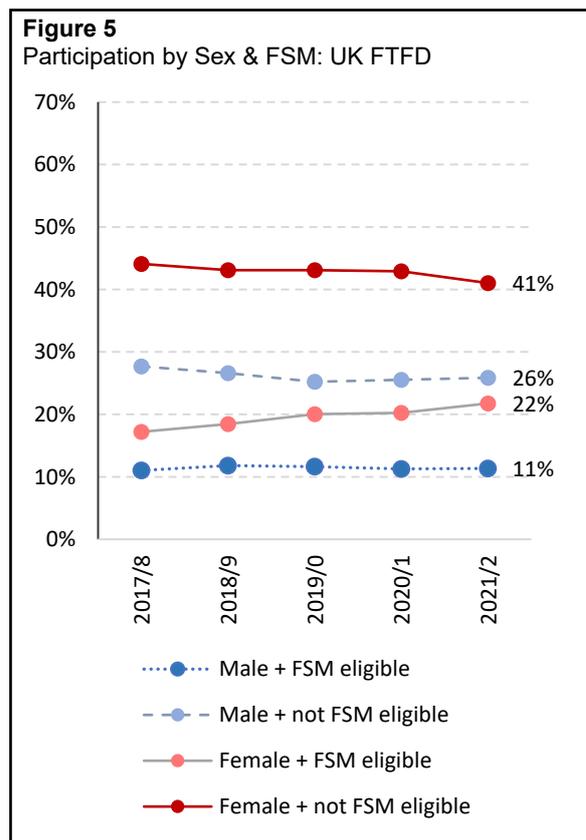
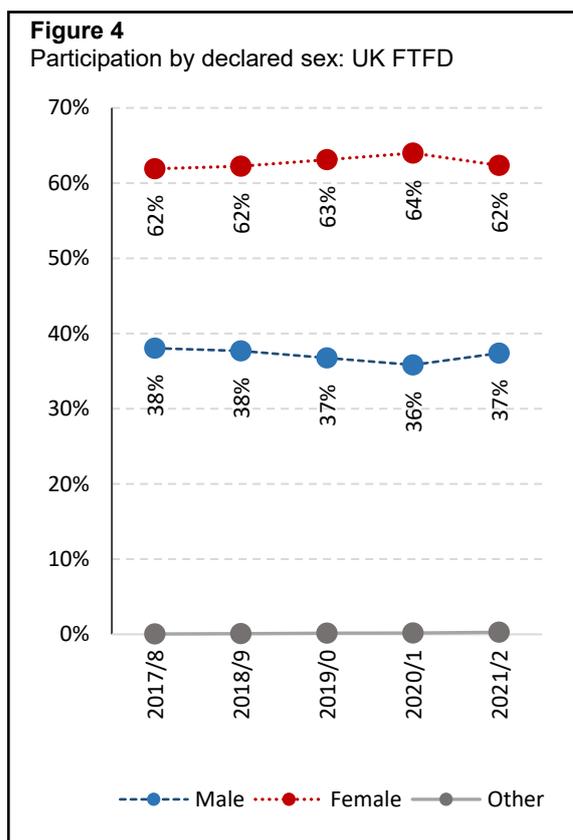
Table D: Entrant continuation (at 24.5 months) and completion outcomes by Age on Entry intersected by deprivation level (England domiciles only)

Entrant continuation rates (24.5 months)					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
Young (U21) + IMD Q4/5	89.8%	90.9%	90.3%	91.3%	90.6%	90.8%
21-25 age group + IMD Q1	79.2%	79.9%	79.0%	78.8%	79.2%	78.9%
BCU Gap	10.6%	11.0%	11.3%	12.5%	11.4%	11.9%
Entrant completion rates (48.5 months)					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
Young (U21) + IMD Q4/5	93.0%	91.2%	89.9%	90.5%	91.2%	90.2%
21-25 age group + IMD Q1	85.8%	79.7%	78.5%	80.1%	80.9%	79.3%
BCU Gap	7.2%	11.5%	11.4%	10.4%	10.3%	10.9%

SEX²⁹

Objective: To eliminate gaps in student success rates (continuation and completion) between young male students who were eligible for FSM and young female students who were not by 2030.

²⁹ Legal sex as declared by the student



13. The participation by sex shows that the majority of students that commence a FTFD programme of study at BCU declare as female (fig.4). When examining the poverty level of young students, figure 5 shows that students that had declared their sex as male and additionally were eligible for free school meals (FSM) have the lowest participation rate at only 11% of young entrants. As a comparator group, students declared female who were not eligible for FSM have the highest participation rate at 41% of young entrants.

14. Table E below shows entrant continuation rates for students by their declared sex. There exists a continuation gap between male and female students at BCU; male students are less likely to continue beyond their first year. This largely mirrors the sector.

Table E: Entrant continuation (at 12.5 months) rates by Sex

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
Female	92.7%	90.6%	93.2%	91.0%	91.9%	92.1%
Male	88.8%	87.3%	90.3%	87.6%	88.5%	89.0%
BCU Gap	3.9%	3.3%	2.9%	3.4%	3.4%	3.1%
Sector Gap	3.0%	2.8%	3.0%	3.9%	3.1%	3.4%

15. Table F shows the intersection of sex with eligibility to claim free school meals for young entrants. The lower continuation rate for male students cited above further extends when their FSM status is included. Young male students who come from households where the income level is under the threshold for eligibility for FSM have a higher magnitude of gap.

Table F Entrant continuation (at 12.5 months) rates by Sex intersected with eligibility for FSM*

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
Female + Not FSM eligible	93.5%	91.8%	93.2%	92.6%	92.8%	92.9%
Male + FSM eligible	88.7%	87.8%	88.9%	87.8%	88.3%	88.3%
BCU Gap	4.8%	4.0%	4.3%	4.8%	4.5%	4.6%

*FSM status restricted to young students only

16. Table G below shows continuation gaps continuing through following years of study and eventually contributing to lower completion rates. The data shows that intersecting with FSM status increases the indication of risk across the study duration to completion and therefore the combination of sex and FSM status should be the focus of improvement over sex or FSM status in isolation.

Table G: Entrant continuation (at 24.5 months) and completion outcomes by Sex and also intersected by eligibility for FSM*

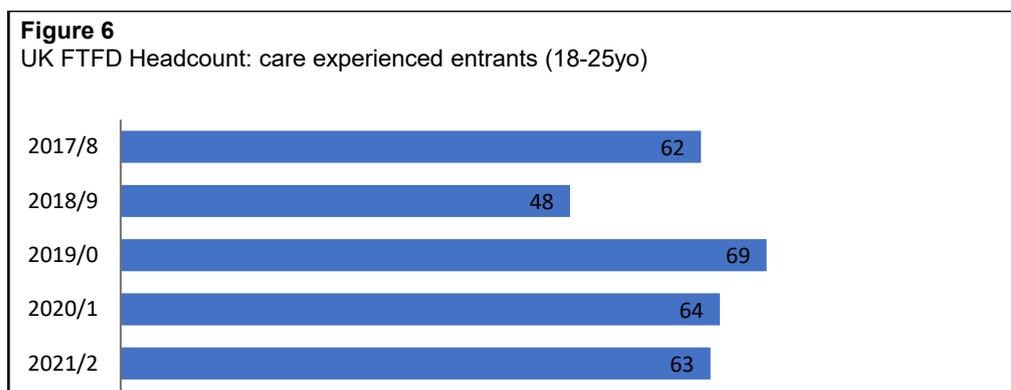
Entrant continuation rates (24.5 months)					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
Female (young)	90.0%	90.8%	90.6%	90.6%	90.5%	90.6%
Male (young)	85.2%	84.8%	84.7%	85.9%	85.2%	85.3%
BCU Gap	4.8%	6.0%	5.9%	4.7%	5.3%	5.3%
Female + Not FSM eligible	90.6%	92.2%	91.8%	91.1%	91.4%	91.5%
Male + FSM eligible	79.6%	82.8%	84.1%	80.6%	81.8%	82.3%
BCU Gap	11.0%	9.4%	7.7%	10.5%	9.6%	9.2%
Entrant completion rates (48.5 months)					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
Female (young)	91.9%	89.2%	90.4%	91.5%	90.8%	91.0%
Male (young)	89.2%	87.4%	85.8%	83.5%	86.4%	84.6%
BCU Gap	2.7%	1.8%	4.6%	8.0%	4.4%	6.4%
Female + Not FSM eligible	91.8%	90.2%	91.3%	92.8%	91.6%	92.1%
Male + FSM eligible	87.9%	83.8%	79.6%	80.6%	82.6%	80.1%
BCU Gap	3.9%	6.4%	11.7%	12.2%	9.0%	12.0%

*FSM status restricted to young students only

CARE EXPERIENCED STATUS³⁰

Objective: To eliminate continuation and completion gaps between care-experienced students aged 18-25 and those without experience of care by 2030.

17. The participation of BCU entrants aged 25 years or younger (applying through UCAS) who have voluntarily declared that they have experience of being in local authority care (i.e., with foster carers, residential care) is shown in fig.6 below.



18. Although care-experienced students are relatively low in number (approx. 1 in every 100 UK domiciled entrants), they face significant struggles in maintaining continuity of study. A disproportionate number of those students leave their studies early. Table H below identifies a gap in continuation and completion which varies significantly year-to-year due to the low numbers included, however aggregated rates across years suggest a persistent issue that this group have high continuation and completion gaps when compared to their peers.

Table H: Entrant continuation (at 12.5 months) and completion outcomes for declared care experience compared to entrants who had no care experience

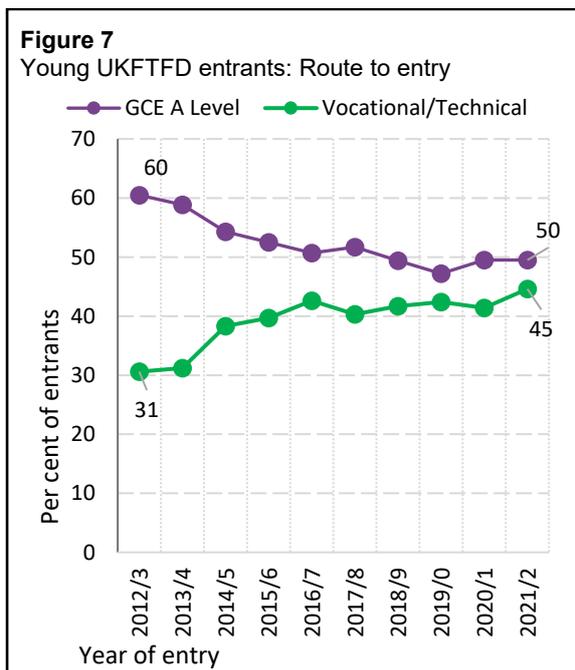
Entrant continuation after 12.5 months					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
No care experience	91.1%	89.3%	92.1%	89.9%	90.6%	91.0%
Has care experience	83.1%	85.1%	85.1%	85.7%	84.7%	85.4%
BCU Gap	8.0%	4.2%	7.0%	4.2%	5.9%	5.6%
Entrant completion rates (48.5 months)					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
No care experience	90.1%	87.9%	87.4%	87.9%	88.3%	87.7%
Has care experience	87.9%	74.1%	55.0%	70.4%	73.1%	66.2%
BCU Gap	2.2%	13.8%	32.4%	17.5%	15.2%	21.5%

³⁰ Entrants that declare they have experience of being in local authority care before their 16th birthday

VOCATIONAL ROUTE OF ENTRY

Objective: To eliminate gaps in student success rates (continuation and attainment) between young students entering HE with vocational qualifications and those entering with A-levels by 2030.

19. Level 3 vocational qualifications are an increasingly popular way for young people to gain access to university. Birmingham City University has seen a significant participation increase over the past 10 years for this route to entry (fig.7). Students entering through a vocational or technical route are more likely to originate from the local area, to be from deprived neighbourhoods, to be the first in their families to attend university, to be dealing with poverty and to be from minoritized ethnic backgrounds.



	% from IMD Quintile 1	% from Asian, Black Mixed Other	% Eligible for FSM	% first generation	% locally domiciled
VTQ	55.1	72.8	37.1	56.3	48.2
GCE A LEVEL	37.1	52.8	26.4	51.0	30.2

data for 2021/2 entry

20. Table I below shows continuation and completion rate gaps between young (U21) entrants who transitioned to HE study through a vocational/technical qualification route (e.g. BTEC) compared with young entrants who entered via a more traditional academic route (GCE A-level); data indicating young students from vocational backgrounds having a lower probability of successful outcomes than those from more traditional academic routes.

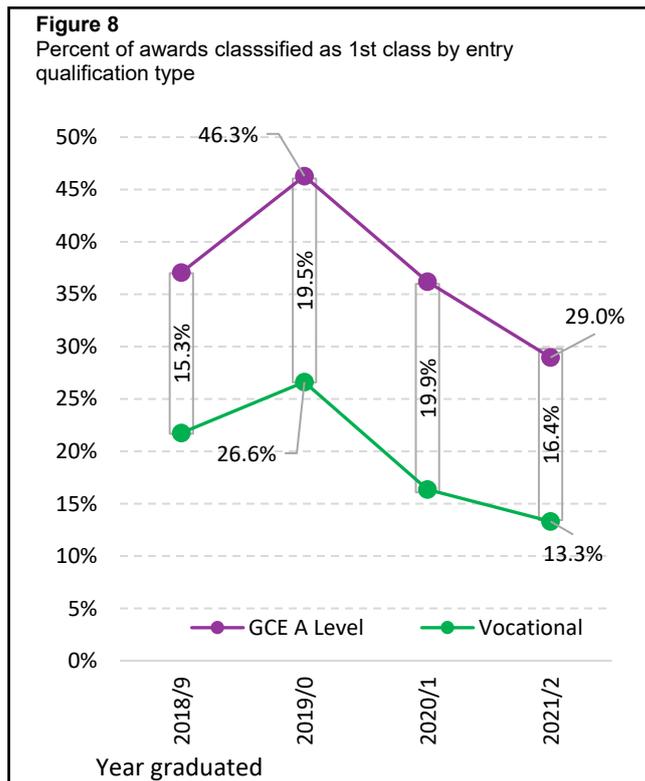
Table I: Continuation and completion rates for non-foundation year entrants who commenced study from a vocational level 3 pathway compared to the more academic entry route

Entrant continuation after 12.5 months	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
GCE Alevel + U21	94.6%	93.3%	94.7%	94.7%	94.3%	94.7%
BTEC + U21	88.0%	87.0%	91.2%	88.1%	88.6%	89.6%
BCU Gap	6.6%	6.3%	3.5%	6.6%	5.7%	5.1%
Entrant continuation rates (24.5 months)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
GCE Alevel + U21	93.0%	93.0%	92.9%	93.6%	93.1%	93.3%
BTEC + U21	83.0%	83.6%	83.9%	85.9%	84.1%	84.9%
BCU Gap	10.0%	9.4%	9.0%	7.7%	9.0%	8.4%
Entrant completion rates (48.5 months)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
GCE Alevel + U21	94.1%	92.4%	93.3%	93.8%	93.4%	93.5%
BTEC + U21	85.9%	83.2%	83.2%	82.6%	83.6%	82.9%
BCU Gap	8.2%	9.2%	10.1%	11.2%	9.8%	10.6%

21. Table J below highlights an increasing awarding gap between academic years 2018/9 (Y1) and 2021/2 (Y4) for those that entered with vocational or technical qualifications compared to those with general academic qualifications.

Table J: Awarding gap rates between Academic and vocational entry students

Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
GCE Alevel + U21	83.7%	88.1%	81.1%	74.1%	82.1%	77.7%
BTEC + U21	67.7%	71.7%	56.9%	52.0%	62.0%	54.3%
BCU Gap	16.0%	16.4%	24.2%	22.1%	20.1%	23.4%



22. The majority of the awarding gap between vocational entry students and GCE A level students can be attributed to the differences of awards made at 1st Class honours (fig.8). In other words, graduates who entered with level 3 vocational/technical qualifications were significantly less likely to graduate with a 1st classification with honours.

ETHNIC BACKGROUND³¹

Objective: To eliminate awarding gaps between Black and Asian full-time first degree students and White full-time first degree students by 2030.

23. Birmingham City University hosts strong participation in HE amongst all minority ethnic backgrounds as shown in fig.9. Sixty-two per cent of entrants onto full-time undergraduate programmes in 2021/2 originated from a minoritized ethnic background. This participation increases to **73%** when examining the ethnicity of local students (same TTWA³² as provider).

³¹ Entrants declare their ethnic background, based on a UK census coding frame

³² TTWA – Travel To Work Area

Figure 9
2021/2 FTUG Entrant profile: % participation by ethnicity

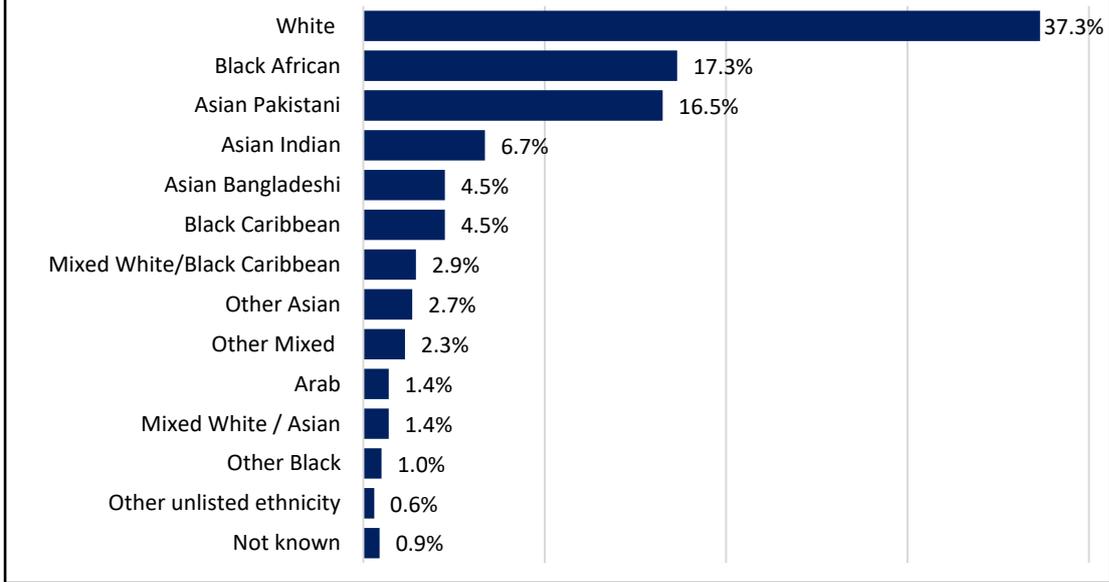


Figure 10
2021/2 FTUG entrants: % from socio-economic disadvantaged profiles

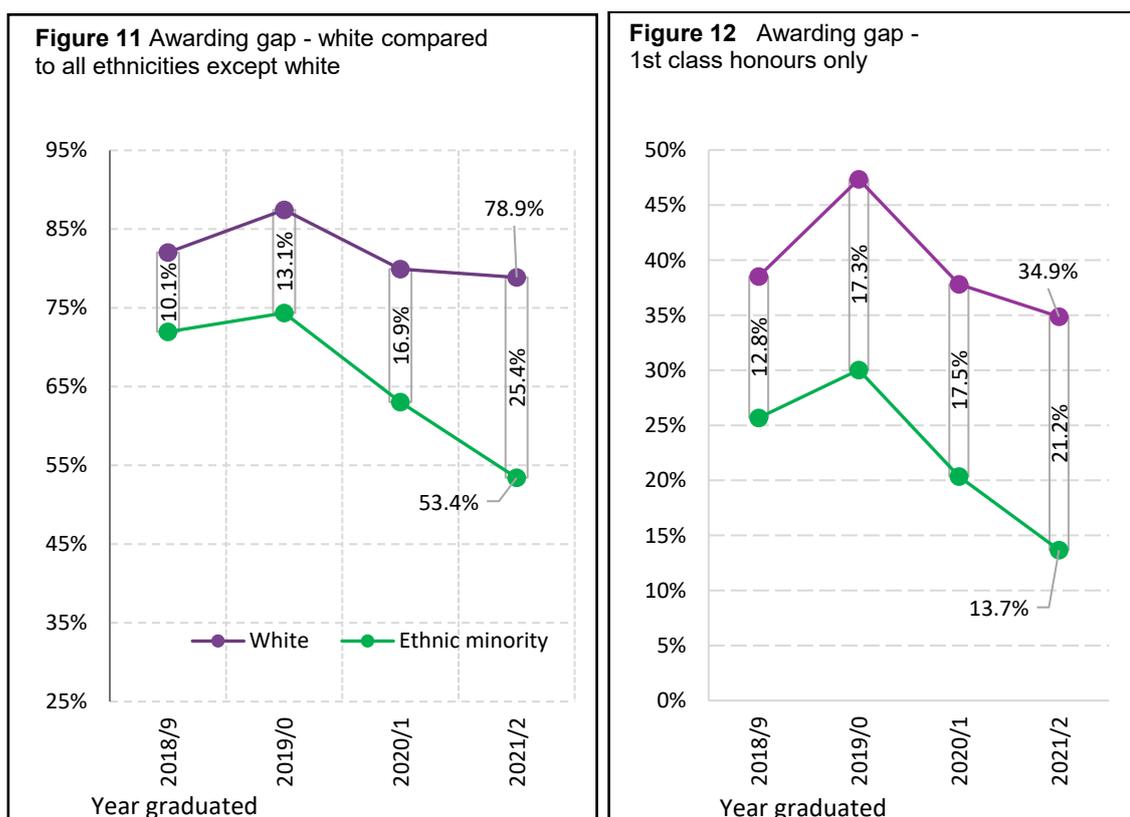
	Local	IMD Quintile 1	First Generation	Tundra Quintile 1 or 2	Eligible for FSM
White	28%	23%	47%	41%	15%
Black, Asian, Mixed & Other	48%	59%	56%	25%	42%

24. Figure 10 above displays the socio-economic factors which can affect student success in higher education, by declared ethnic background. Students who declare a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background are more likely than White entrants to be living locally in Birmingham, originate from highly deprived environments [IMD], from households with low income levels [FSM], and from households in which they would be the first in family to go to university [PARED]. However, these same students are often living in neighbourhoods where motivation to study higher education after leaving state-maintained schools is high which we see reflected in our significantly high numbers of enrolment for these students (75% from TUNDRA Q3-5 neighbourhoods).

25. Despite that motivation to study, students from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds have experienced significant disparities in awards, culminating in awarding gaps³³ when compared with white ethnic background peers over recent graduating cohorts

³³ Award gaps are based on percentage point differences for those awarded a 1st or Upper Second class award

(see Fig. 11 below). The majority of the gap is attributable to the difference in 1st Class honours awards made to both groups (Fig.12 below).



26. Table K and L below show the awarding rates and gaps between White students and all other grouping of ethnic backgrounds, including comparisons with sector average (where data is available). Sector awarding gaps have decreased up to 2020/1, in comparison BCU observed increases in gaps across all ethnic groups.

Table K: Awarding gap rates between White and all other ethnicities except White

Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
White	82.0%	87.4%	79.9%	78.9%	82.2%	79.4%
Black, Asian, Mixed or other	72.0%	74.4%	63.0%	53.4%	64.5%	58.0%
BCU Gap	10.1%	13.1%	16.9%	25.4%	17.8%	21.4%
Sector gap	14.4%	11.7%	9.7%	11.4%	11.7%	10.6%

Table L: Awarding gap rates between White and other specific ethnicity groups

Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
White	82.0%	87.4%	79.9%	78.9%	82.2%	79.4%
Black, Asian, Mixed or other	72.0%	74.4%	63.0%	53.4%	64.5%	58.0%
BCU Gap	10.1%	13.1%	16.9%	25.4%	17.8%	21.4%
Sector gap	14.4%	11.7%	9.7%	11.4%	11.7%	10.6%
Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
White	82.0%	87.4%	79.9%	78.9%	82.2%	79.4%
Black	67.3%	68.5%	58.3%	45.8%	59.5%	51.5%
BCU Gap	14.8%	18.9%	21.6%	33.1%	22.7%	28.0%
Sector gap	22.8%	19.9%	18.4%	20.0%	20.2%	19.2%
Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
White	82.0%	87.4%	79.9%	78.9%	82.2%	79.4%
Asian	72.5%	76.9%	62.7%	55.1%	66.6%	58.7%
BCU Gap	9.5%	10.6%	17.2%	23.7%	15.6%	20.7%
Sector gap	12.2%	9.2%	6.6%	8.9%	9.2%	7.9%
Awarded 1st/2:1 Degree classification					Aggregated	
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	4 Year	2 Year
White	82.0%	87.4%	79.9%	78.9%	82.2%	79.4%
Mixed or other ethnic background	78.5%	76.1%	72.6%	62.6%	72.3%	67.6%
BCU Gap	3.5%	11.3%	7.3%	16.3%	9.9%	11.8%

PROGRESSION INTO PROFESSIONAL/MANAGERIAL EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Objective: To reduce progression gaps between Asian and White full-time first-degree students by 2030.

27. Table M shows the differences in progression outcomes between White and Asian graduates who graduated from all courses excluding those in subjects allied to medicine (SAM). The ethnicity profile of SAM students is not representative of the larger University cohort and, therefore, due to high progression levels, will exhibit bias towards progression outcomes for White students. The analysis below in tables M and N examines gaps for all those excluding SAM, with SAM graduates assessed separately.

Table M: Progression rate gaps between White and Asian ethnic groups (Excluding SAM subject area)

Progression rates	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
White	70.9%	70.7%	68.5%	71.2%	70.3%	69.8%
Asian	61.7%	54.1%	56.8%	55.8%	57.2%	56.4%
BCU Gap	9.2%	16.6%	11.7%	15.4%	13.1%	13.4%

Table N: Progression rate gaps between White and Asian ethnic groups (SAM subject area only)

Progression rates	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Aggregated	
					4 Year	2 Year
White	94.8%	95.7%	95.9%	93.8%	95.1%	94.9%
Asian	86.1%	93.3%	87.6%	79.7%	86.1%	83.4%
BCU Gap	8.7%	2.4%	8.3%	14.1%	9.0%	11.5%

28. Examination of the progression gaps between White and Asian ethnic backgrounds within subjects allied to medicine and all other subjects suggest that gaps exist independent of subject area of award.

Additional assessments of performance outcomes: **Completion outcomes**

					Y1	2014/5						
					Y2	2015/6						
					Y3	2016/7						
					Y4	2017/8						
*Population based on 4 Year aggregated data					Negative values indicate that the target group outperforms the reference group							
Characteristic	Targeted group	Population*	Reference Group	Population*	GAP (Manifestation of risk)							
					4 Yr Aggregated	2 Yr Aggregated	Conf Interval	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Change Y4 - Y1
AGE	Age 21 years or older	5129	Age 20 years or younger	15621	4.0%	4.3%	3.0 to 4.9%	5.0%	2.6%	4.8%	3.6%	-1.4%
AGE	21-25 years old	2678	Age 20 years or younger	15621	5.4%	6.0%	4.1 to 6.6%	4.8%	4.8%	6.6%	5.3%	0.5%
AGE +	Age 21 years or older + Mental Health	211	Age 20 years or younger + Mental Health	296	0.7%	3.4%		-6.7%	-2.0%	5.1%	3.2%	9.9%
AGE +	Age 21 years or older + Mental Health	211	Age 20 years or younger (without MH)	14209	10.0%	6.7%		22.3%	9.5%	5.4%	7.9%	-14.4%
AGE +	Age 21 years or older + IMD Q1	2300	Age 20 years or younger + IMD Q4/5	4855	7.7%	7.7%		8.1%	7.7%	7.7%	7.6%	-0.5%
AGE +	21-25 years old + IMD Q1	1157	Age 20 years or younger + IMD Q4/5	4855	10.2%	10.9%		7.6%	11.0%	11.5%	10.2%	2.6%
ETHNICITY	Black	2872	White	10734	0.8%	1.9%	-0.4 to 1.9%	-0.5%	-0.9%	0.4%	3.3%	3.8%
ETHNICITY	Black Caribbean	913	White	10734	1.3%	1.7%		1.3%	0.6%	-2.3%	5.7%	4.4%
ETHNICITY	Black African	1833	White	10734	0.1%	1.8%		-2.8%	-1.5%	1.1%	2.5%	5.3%
ETHNICITY	Asian	5515	White	10734	-0.3%	0.2%	-1.1 to 0.6%	-0.9%	-0.7%	-0.3%	0.6%	1.5%
ETHNICITY	Asian Indian	1646	White	10734	-2.8%	-3.4%		-1.3%	-3.3%	-4.3%	-2.5%	-1.2%
ETHNICITY	Asian Pakistani	2537	White	10734	1.1%	1.5%		-0.4%	1.0%	2.0%	1.2%	1.6%
ETHNICITY	Mixed ethnicities	1135	White	10734	3.2%	3.6%	1.4 to 5.0%	3.4%	2.0%	6.5%	0.9%	-2.5%
ETHNICITY +	Black + IMD Q1	1687	White + IMD Q4/5	4746	4.3%	5.4%		2.5%	3.1%	3.4%	7.3%	4.8%
ETHNICITY +	Black + FSM	765	White + Not eligible for FSM	6236	3.7%	6.3%		-0.1%	-0.7%	6.0%	6.7%	6.8%
ETHNICITY +	Asian + IMD Q1	3353	White + IMD Q4/5	4746	3.0%	2.7%		2.0%	4.0%	1.7%	3.7%	1.7%
FSM	Eligible for FSM	3753	Not Eligible for FSM	10273	4.2%	5.1%	3.2 to 5.3%	0.9%	4.5%	5.8%	4.5%	3.6%
PARED +	No parental HE exp + Young	8268	Parental HE experience + Young	5496	3.7%	3.7%		3.2%	4.5%	4.6%	2.9%	-0.3%
DISABILITY	Declared a disability	2217	No disability declared	18533	2.3%	1.8%	1.0 to 3.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.2%	1.3%	-1.1%
DISABILITY	MH condition	507	No disability declared	18533	6.1%	3.9%	3.3 to 8.9%	13.1%	6.8%	3.1%	4.5%	-8.6%
DISABILITY	Cognitive disabilities	951	No disability declared	18533	-0.8%	-2.0%	-2.5 to 0.9%	-0.7%	1.7%	-1.7%	-2.3%	-1.6%
DISABILITY	Physical impairments	462	No disability declared	18533	2.6%	3.7%	-0.1 to 5.3%	3.9%	-2.0%	7.7%	-0.3%	-4.2%
DISABILITY +	Black + Declared a disability	231	White + no disability declared	9253	3.7%	5.7%		-6.2%	8.4%	13.0%	-0.7%	5.5%
DISABILITY +	Asian + Declared a disability	294	White + no disability declared	9253	2.2%	2.6%		2.8%	0.3%	-0.8%	5.6%	2.8%
SEX	Male	7629	Female	13117	4.4%	5.8%	3.7 to 5.2%	3.5%	2.6%	4.2%	7.3%	3.8%
SEX +	Male + FSM	1488	Female + not eligible	6445	9.0%	12.0%		3.9%	6.4%	11.7%	12.2%	8.3%
SEX +	Male + FSM + Ethnic Min.	1173	Female + not eligible + Ethnic Min.	2269	9.4%	12.5%		3.2%	7.3%	13.0%	12.0%	8.8%
SEX +	Male + FSM + Black	284	Female + FSM + Black	481	11.8%	14.9%		6.6%	7.6%	9.7%	20.0%	13.4%
SEX +	Male + FSM + Black	284	Female + not eligible + Black	506	14.0%	18.2%		8.1%	6.9%	14.7%	22.1%	14.0%
SEX +	Male + FSM + White/Black	582	Female + not eligible	6445	13.6%	17.4%		9.4%	7.8%	15.0%	19.7%	10.3%
SEX +	Male + FSM + White	298	Female + FSM + White	627	6.4%	8.3%		9.6%	0.0%	7.2%	9.5%	-0.1%
SEX +	Male + FSM + White	298	Female + not eligible + White	4140	13.5%	16.0%		11.4%	9.8%	15.4%	16.6%	5.2%

Additional assessment of performance outcomes: Attainment

						Y1	2018/9					
						Y2	2019/0					
						Y3	2020/1					
						Y4	2021/1					
Negative values indicate that the target group outperforms the reference group												
*Population based on 4 Year aggregated data												
Characteristic	Targeted group	Population*	Reference Group	Population*	GAP (Manifestation of risk)							
					4 Yr Aggregated	2 Yr Aggregated	Conf Interval	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Change Y4 - Y1
AGE	Age 21 years or older	3948	Age 20 years or younger	13152	5.1%	4.3%	3.7 to 6.4%	4.3%	7.9%	5.7%	3.3%	-1.0%
AGE	21-25 years old	2107	Age 20 years or younger	13152	4.1%	4.1%	2.4 to 5.9%	2.9%	6.2%	5.7%	2.7%	-0.2%
AGE +	Age 21 years or older + Mental Health	260	Age 20 years or younger (without MH)	11518	7.4%	-2.4%		12.7%	20.7%	2.0%	-6.6%	-19.3%
AGE +	21-25 years old + Mental Health	137	Age 20 years or younger (without MH)	11518	4.6%	-4.3%		8.4%	18.1%	6.4%	-13.4%	-21.8%
AGE +	Age 21 years or older + IMD Q1	1742	Age 20 years or younger + IMD Q4/5	3963	19.9%	21.2%		15.6%	20.8%	21.4%	20.7%	5.1%
AGE +	21-25 years old + IMD Q1	903	Age 20 years or younger + IMD Q4/5	3963	19.3%	22.6%		11.7%	19.8%	23.2%	21.9%	10.2%
ETHNICITY	Black	2289	White	8171	22.7%	27.9%	20.9 to 24.5%	14.6%	19.0%	21.5%	33.1%	18.5%
ETHNICITY	Black Caribbean	668	White	8171	18.9%	22.3%		15.2%	16.3%	19.7%	24.7%	9.5%
ETHNICITY	Black African	1529	White	8171	23.8%	29.7%		13.8%	19.4%	22.1%	35.7%	21.9%
ETHNICITY	Black African	1529	Black Caribbean	668	4.9%	7.4%		-1.4%	3.1%	2.4%	11.0%	12.4%
ETHNICITY	Asian	4703	White	8171	15.6%	20.6%	14.3 to 16.9%	9.5%	10.6%	17.2%	23.7%	14.2%
ETHNICITY	Asian Indian	1310	White	8171	9.6%	14.6%		3.9%	5.7%	13.7%	15.5%	11.6%
ETHNICITY	Asian Pakistani	2283	White	8171	18.9%	25.1%		9.8%	12.9%	19.5%	30.2%	20.4%
ETHNICITY	Asian Bangladeshi	654	White	8171	15.7%	21.2%		13.1%	5.4%	17.8%	23.8%	10.7%
ETHNICITY	Mixed ethnicities	871	White	8171	9.0%	10.7%	6.4 to 11.5%	3.3%	10.6%	4.0%	17.5%	14.2%
ETHNICITY +	Black + IMD Q1	1328	White + IMD Q4/5	3721	27.5%	32.2%		20.8%	22.8%	27.3%	35.9%	15.1%
ETHNICITY +	Black + IMD Q1	1328	Black + IMD Q4/5	189	8.4%	5.8%		10.5%	12.0%	13.0%	-2.5%	-13.0%
ETHNICITY +	Black + IMD Q1	1328	White + IMD Q1	1486	16.3%	21.7%		9.7%	10.7%	16.6%	25.7%	16.0%
ETHNICITY +	Black Caribbean + IMD Q1	334	Black + IMD Q4/5	189	6.2%	4.6%		10.4%	7.8%	15.5%	-6.5%	-16.9%
ETHNICITY +	Asian + IMD Q1	2898	Asian + IMD Q4/5	515	5.6%	8.9%		1.6%	1.6%	6.5%	10.7%	9.1%
ETHNICITY +	Asian + IMD Q1	2898	White + IMD Q4/5	3721	21.1%	26.8%		14.6%	14.3%	23.8%	29.1%	14.5%
ETHNICITY +	Asian Pakistani + IMD Q1	1731	Asian + IMD Q4/5	515	7.6%	11.6%		1.7%	2.5%	7.5%	15.1%	13.4%
ETHNICITY +	White + IMD Q1	1486	White + IMD Q4/5	3721	11.2%	10.4%		11.1%	12.1%	10.6%	10.2%	-0.9%
ETHNICITY +	White + FSM	682	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	9.3%	12.6%		7.3%	5.1%	12.5%	12.5%	5.2%
ETHNICITY +	Black + FSM	650	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	24.3%	28.1%		15.6%	23.1%	19.0%	34.9%	19.3%
ETHNICITY +	Asian + FSM	1438	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	20.5%	25.8%		13.9%	15.6%	20.2%	31.1%	17.2%
ETHNICITY +	Black & Asian + FSM	2088	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	21.7%	26.5%		14.4%	18.1%	19.8%	32.4%	18.0%
ETHNICITY +	Black + FSM	650	Black + not eligible for FSM	663	2.9%	-2.8%		7.6%	9.2%	-9.9%	2.6%	-5.0%
ETHNICITY +	Asian + FSM	1438	Asian + not eligible for FSM	2308	5.9%	5.5%		5.4%	7.1%	1.6%	9.4%	4.0%
ETHNICITY +	Black + FSM	650	White + FSM	682	14.9%	15.6%		8.4%	18.0%	6.5%	22.5%	14.1%
ETHNICITY +	Black + not eligible for FSM	663	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	21.4%	31.0%		8.0%	13.9%	28.9%	32.4%	24.4%
ETHNICITY +	Black African + FSM	470	White + FSM	682	15.9%	16.0%		11.3%	18.5%	5.3%	23.8%	12.5%
ETHNICITY +	Black African + FSM	470	White + not eligible for FSM	4942	25.2%	28.6%		18.6%	23.6%	17.8%	36.3%	17.7%
FSM	Eligible for FSM	3262	Not Eligible for FSM	8626	12.0%	13.5%	10.5 to 13.6%	9.3%	10.7%	10.4%	15.9%	6.6%
PARED +	No parental HE exp + Young	6974	Parental HE experience + Young	4888	4.8%	4.7%		4.4%	5.0%	4.1%	5.2%	0.8%

Additional assessment of performance outcomes: **Progression** (excluding SAM subject area)

				Y1	2017/8				
				Y2	2018/9				
				Y3	2019/0				
				Y4	2020/1				
<i>*Group population based on 3 Year aggregated data</i>									
Negative values indicate that the target group outperforms the reference group									
Targeted group	Population*	Reference Group	Population*	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Change Y4 - Y1	
Age 20 years or younger	5188	Age 21 years or older	818	3.5%	3.2%	1.8%	1.7%	-1.8%	
Age 20 years or younger	5188	21-25 years old	542	-0.1%	2.7%	-0.5%	-0.6%	-0.5%	
Age 20 years or younger + MH	166	Age 21 years or older + no disabilities	648	13.6%	-1.7%	-2.5%	2.5%	-11.1%	
Black	700	White	3068	6.0%	6.7%	5.1%	6.0%	0.0%	
Black Caribbean	214	White	3068	1.5%	6.9%	13.8%	1.3%	-0.2%	
Black African	445	White	3068	6.5%	8.1%	0.4%	9.2%	2.7%	
Black Caribbean	214	Black African	445	-5.0%	-1.3%	13.4%	-7.9%	-2.9%	
Asian	1825	White	3068	9.2%	16.6%	11.6%	15.4%	6.2%	
Asian Indian	602	White	3068	8.4%	15.7%	10.7%	15.6%	7.2%	
Asian Pakistani	780	White	3068	8.4%	14.8%	12.3%	16.8%	8.4%	
Asian Bangladeshi	279	White	3068	10.8%	24.0%	10.7%	18.0%	7.2%	
Mixed ethnicities	281	White	3068	0.6%	5.8%	-1.1%	3.3%	2.7%	
Black + IMD Q1	391	White + IMD Q4/5	1441	6.5%	13.6%	6.7%	14.1%	7.6%	
Black + IMD Q1	391	Black + IMD Q4/5	61	20.4%	10.3%	-10.6%	17.8%	-2.6%	
Black + IMD Q1	391	White + IMD Q1	452	8.1%	12.9%	7.8%	7.8%	-0.3%	
Asian + IMD Q1	1084	Asian + IMD Q4/5	239	-5.1%	-0.8%	3.1%	6.4%	11.5%	
Asian + IMD Q1	1084	White + IMD Q4/5	1441	10.4%	18.3%	13.0%	18.7%	8.3%	
White + FSM	280	White + not eligible for FSM	2117	-4.0%	6.7%	0.5%			
Black + FSM	216	White + not eligible for FSM	2117	12.2%	15.1%	6.9%			
Asian + FSM	561	White + not eligible for FSM	2117	12.7%	17.4%	9.6%			
Black + FSM	216	Black + not eligible for FSM	256	9.2%	14.4%	-0.5%			
Asian + FSM	561	Asian + not eligible for FSM	946	4.7%	0.6%	-4.3%			
Black + FSM	216	White + FSM	280	16.2%	8.4%	6.4%			
Black + not eligible for FSM	256	White + not eligible for FSM	2117	3.0%	0.7%	7.5%			
Eligible for FSM	1180	Not Eligible for FSM	3504	6.1%	9.3%	2.1%			
Local	2163	Not local	3843	5.6%	4.8%	0.3%			
Local + IMD Q1	1275	Not local + IMD Q1	834	5.9%	-0.7%	2.1%			
Local + Asian	1012	Not local + Asian	813	4.9%	0.2%	-3.8%			
Local + White	716	Not local + White	2352	1.9%	-2.6%	-0.1%			
Local + IMD Q4/5	272	Not local + IMD Q4/5	1555	-2.2%	-0.3%	-8.6%			

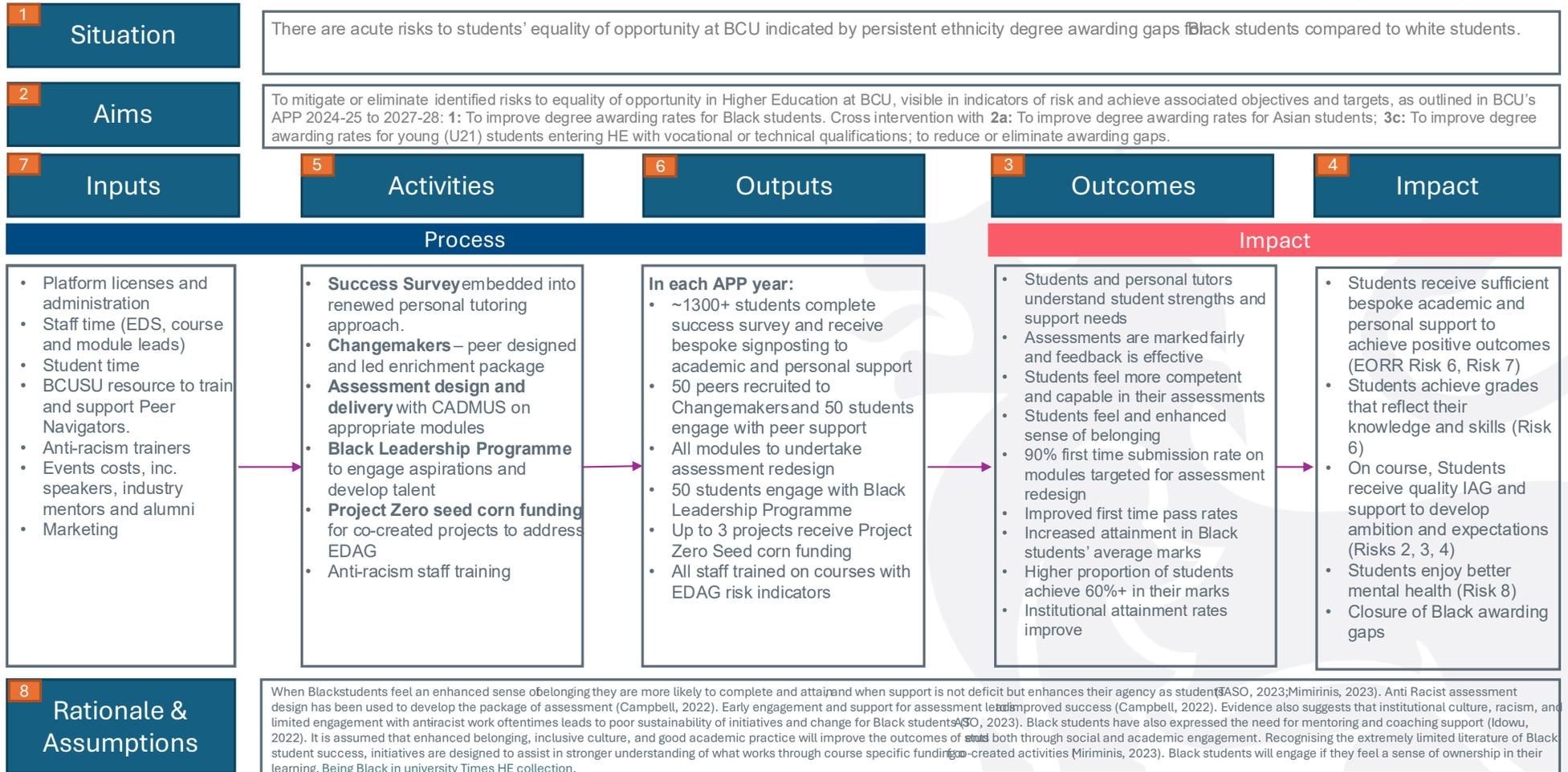
Additional assessment of performance outcomes: Progression (excluding SAM subject areas) (cont'd).

				Y1	2017/8				
				Y2	2018/9				
				Y3	2019/0				
				Y4	2020/1				
<i>*Group population based on 3 Year aggregated data</i>									
Negative values indicate that the target group outperforms the reference group									
Targeted group	Population*	Reference Group	Population*	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Change Y4 - Y1	
No parental HE exp + Young	2617	Parental HE experience + Young	1924	5.4%	10.4%	7.8%	7.0%	1.6%	
Declared a disability	767	No disability declared	5239	0.0%	-1.8%	-3.8%	0.6%	0.6%	
MH condition	228	No disability declared	5239	9.8%	5.1%	-3.7%	3.2%	-6.6%	
Cognitive disabilities	281	No disability declared	5239	4.1%	-9.3%	-5.7%	4.2%	0.1%	
Physical impairments	160	No disability declared	5239	-10.2%	9.4%	-6.7%	-8.7%	1.5%	
IMD Q1 + Declared a disability	222	IMD Q 4/5 + Declared a disability	1867	6.8%	11.8%	6.3%	4.2%	-2.6%	
Male	2357	Female	3645	-4.2%	-3.9%	0.1%	-4.1%	0.1%	
Male + Asian	805	Male + White	1125	14.5%	16.0%	10.4%	11.4%	-3.1%	
Female + Asian	1019	Female + White	1939	5.9%	17.9%	12.8%	19.1%	13.2%	
Male + FSM	453	Female + FSM	726	-8.5%	-8.2%	0.8%			
Male + FSM	453	Female + not eligible	2180	-0.4%	3.7%	2.0%			
Male + FSM + Asian	238	Female + not eligible + Asian	542	5.8%	-6.7%	-1.9%			
Male + FSM + White	83	Female + not eligible + White	1345	-16.0%	-6.6%	4.2%			
Has care experience + Young	26	Has no care experience + Young	4872	-6.1%	-2.5%	-3.0%	-34.8%	-28.7%	
LGB&O	275	Heterosexual	5384	5.9%	-9.1%	-8.4%	0.4%	-5.5%	
LGB&O + MH	36	Heterosexual + no declared disabilities	4757	17.6%	19.8%	-9.6%	10.7%	-6.9%	
IMD Quintile 1	2109	IMD Quintile 4/5	1827	6.3%	10.3%	5.8%	12.4%	6.1%	
IMD Q1 + not local	834	IMD Q 4/5 + not local	1555	2.4%	10.6%	3.3%			
IMD Q1 + Local student	1275	IMD Q 4/5 + Local student	272	10.5%	10.3%	14.0%			
ABCS Quintile 1	1909	ABCS Quintile 5	347	11.1%	14.7%	6.4%			
Level 3 Entry	67	Level 4 Entry	5940	-13.1%	13.0%	4.5%	-17.4%	-4.3%	
Level 4 Entry + VTQ Entry + Black + U21	220	Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + White + U21	1762	5.3%	4.6%	6.9%	17.9%	12.6%	
Level 4 Entry + VTQ Entry + Black + U21	220	Level 4 Entry + VTQ Entry + White + U21	712	-0.5%	2.8%	-1.2%	8.1%	8.6%	
Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + Black + U21	259	Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + White + U21	1762	11.0%	7.9%	11.8%	-3.1%	-14.1%	
Level 4 Entry + VTQ Entry + Asian + U21	668	Level 4 Entry + VTQ Entry + White + U21	712	13.0%	16.1%	8.9%	11.0%	-2.0%	
Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + Asian + U21	821	Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + White + U21	1762	6.4%	15.7%	13.9%	16.9%	10.5%	
Level 4 Entry + VTQ entry + U21	1735	Level 4 Entry + GCE A LEVELS + U21	3017	7.3%	4.6%	7.5%	10.7%	3.4%	
TUNDRA Q1 + U21		TUNDRA Q5 + U21		-1.3%	-4.1%	-3.2%	-2.3%	-1.0%	

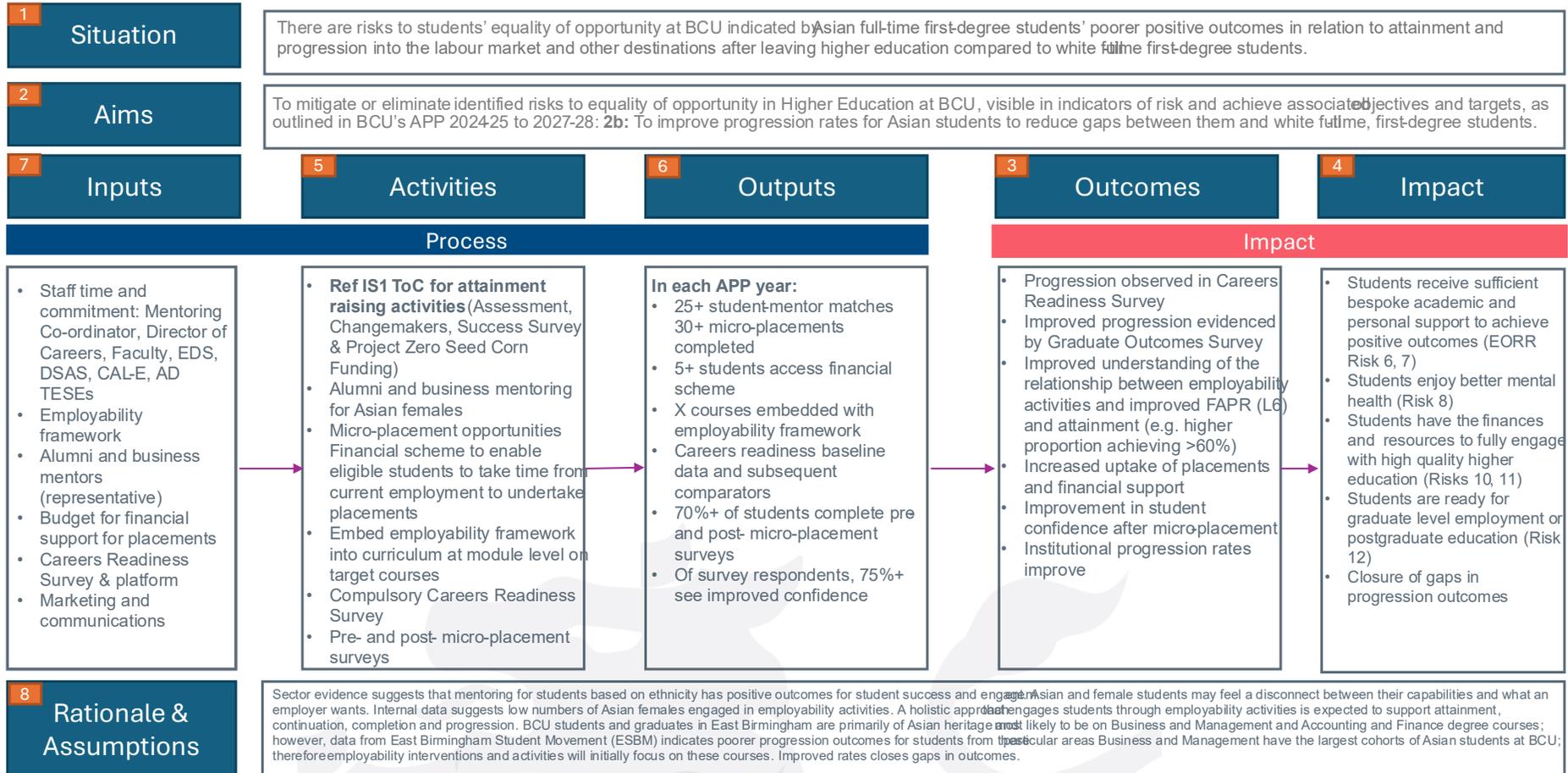
Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan



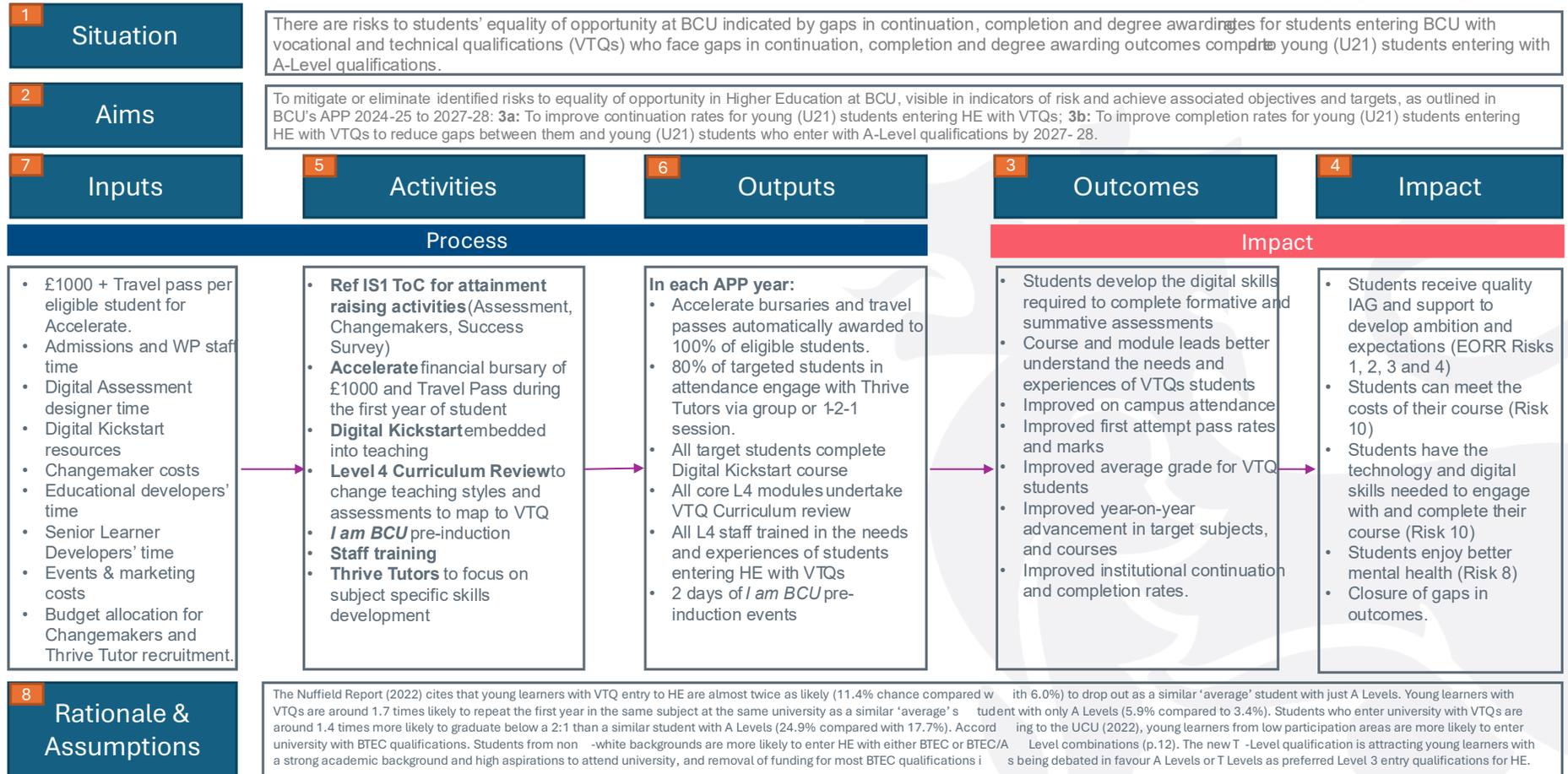
IS1 – Black Students



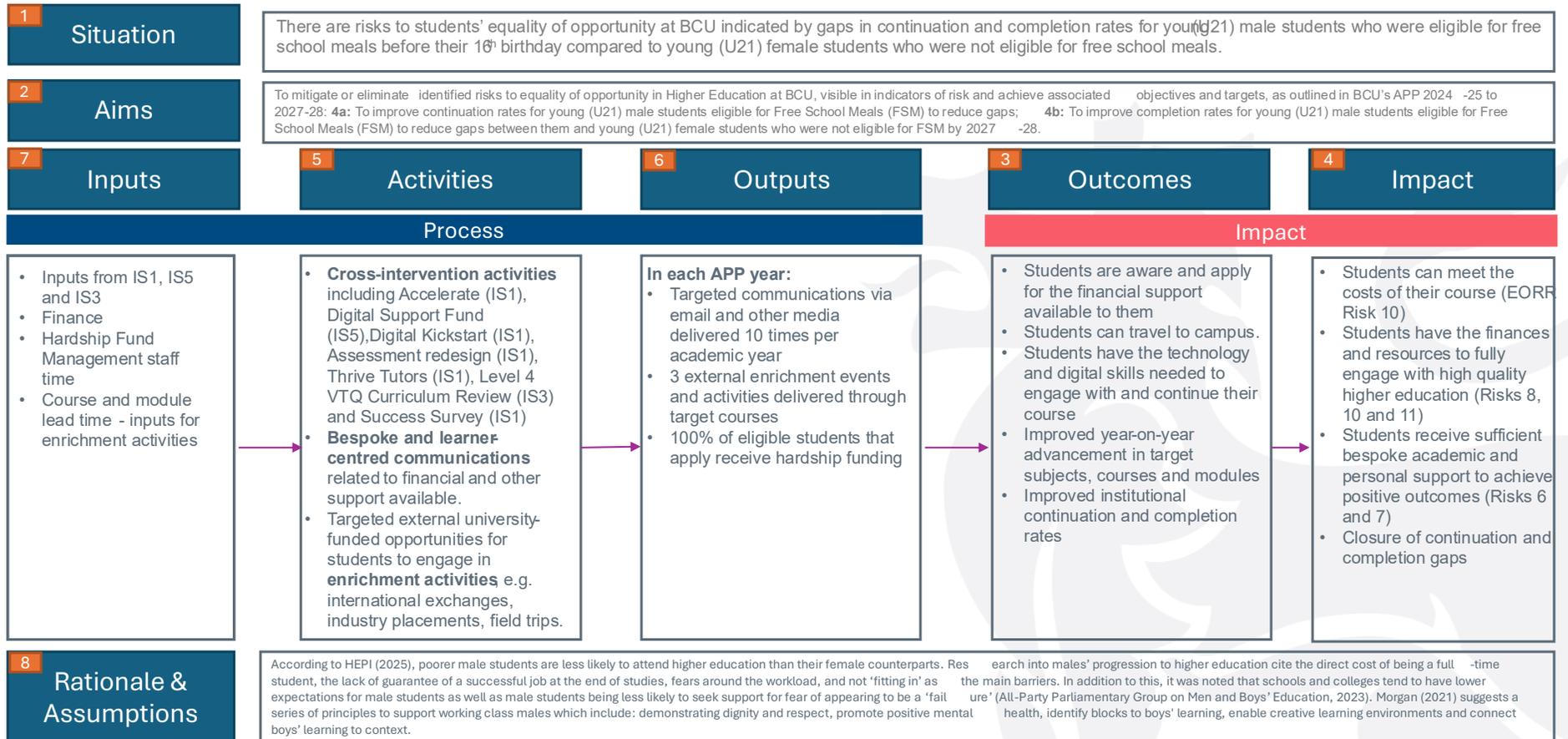
IS2 – Asian Students



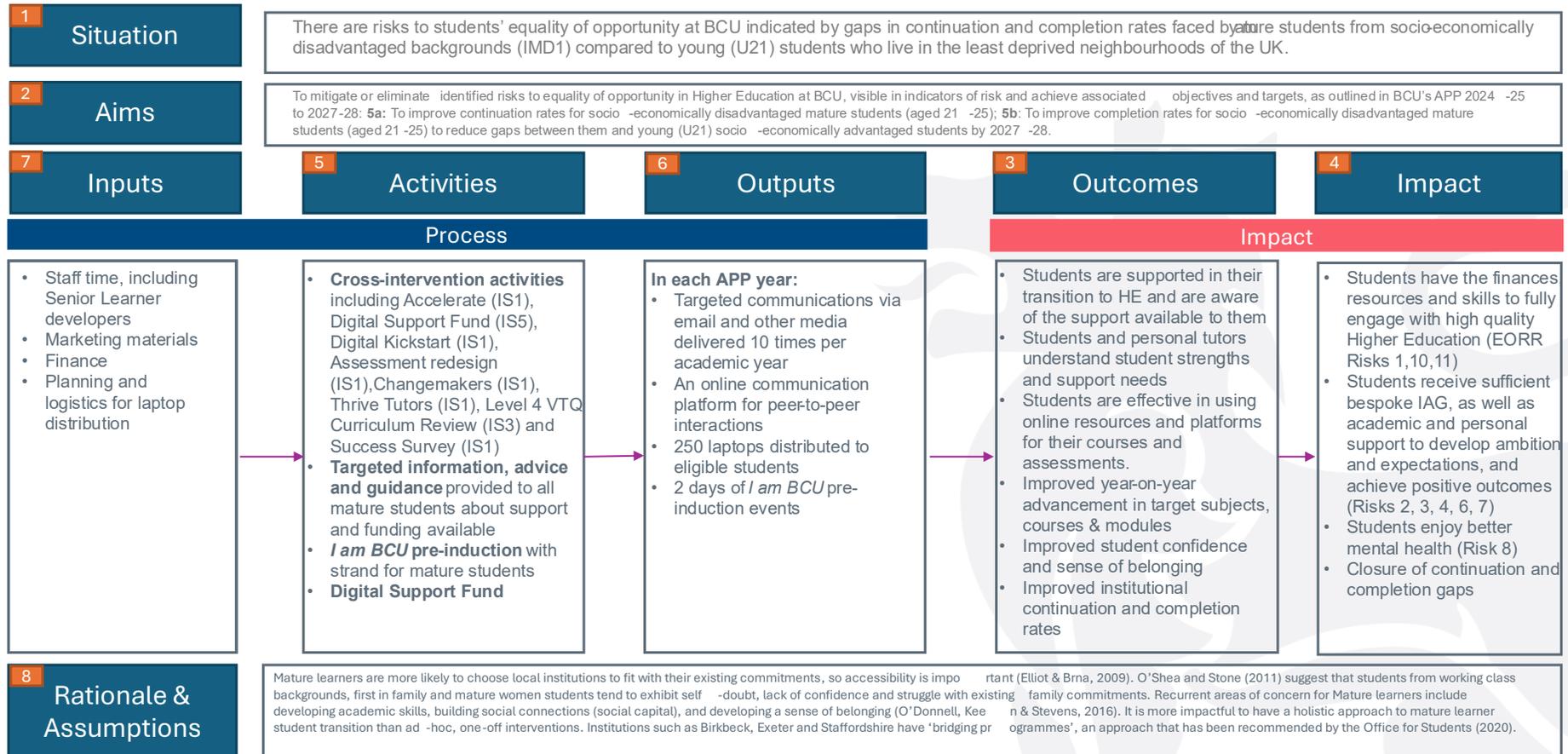
IS3 – Young (U21) Students entering HE with VTQs



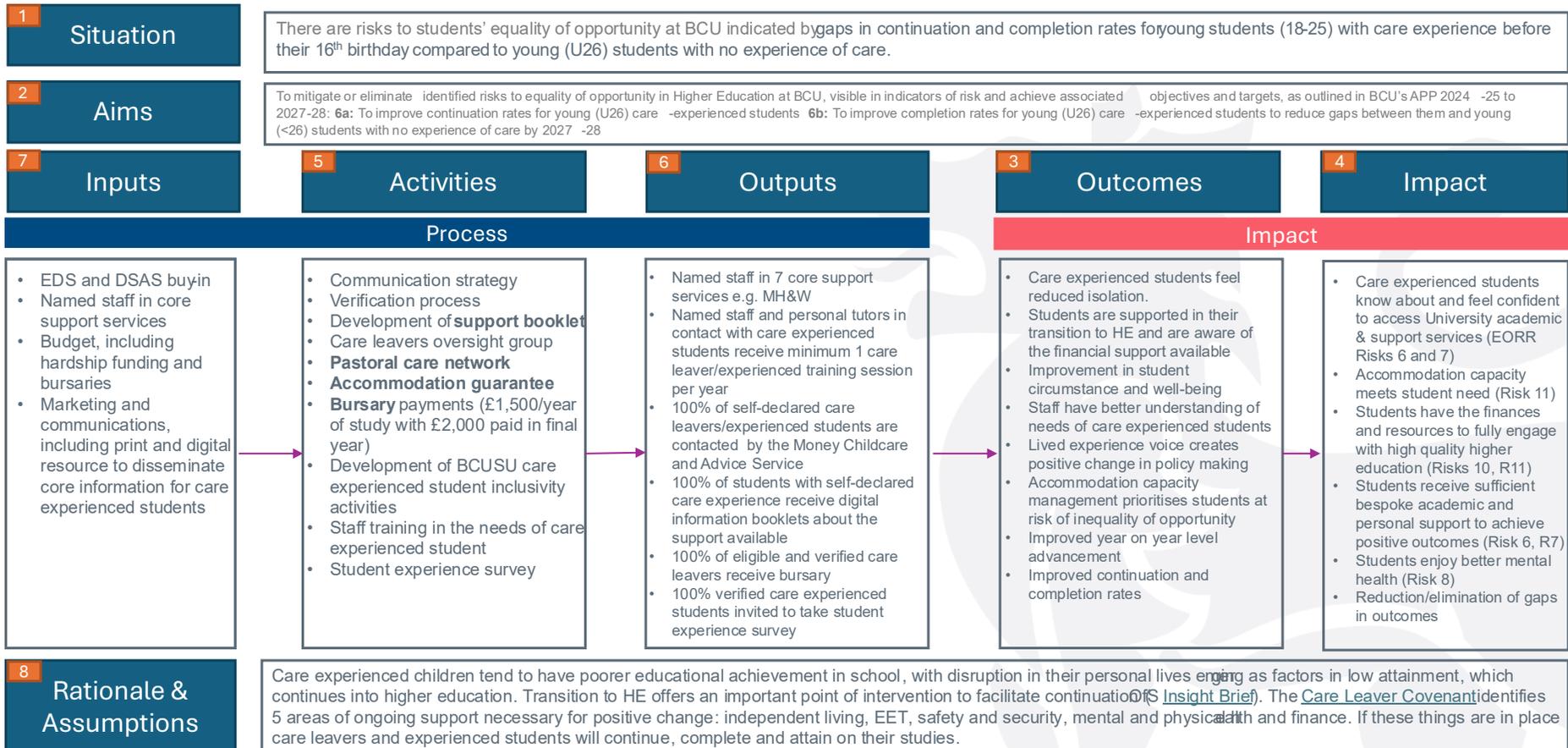
IS4 – Young (U21), male students, eligible for FSM



IS5 – Mature (21-25) students in IMD1



IS6 - Care Experienced Students (U26)



Access and participation plan | Birmingham City University
 Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) - Office for Students

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

Provider name: Birmingham City University

Provider UKPRN: 10007140

Summary of 2024-25 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 RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree	FdA Popular Music	N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND		N/A	9250
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9250
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree		N/A	11100
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	.
Other	*	N/A	.

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Foundation for Conductive Education(The)	10032093	9250
First degree	South & City College Birmingham	10005967	9250
Foundation degree	South & City College Birmingham - FdA Early Years	10005967	7500
Foundation degree	South & City College Birmingham - FdA Popular Music	10005967	9250
Foundation degree	Unknown - Aston Villa Foundation - Foundation Degree in Sports Coaching and Development	0	8650
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	.
HNC/HND	Birmingham Metropolitan College - HND Law and Practice; HND Media and Communication	10006442	9250
HNC/HND	South & City College Birmingham - HND Business and Management	10005967	7500
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	.
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	.
Accelerated degree	*	*	.
Sandwich year	*	*	.
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	.
Other	*	*	.

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

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

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	.
Foundation degree	South & City College Birmingham - FdA Early Years	10005967	6935
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	.
HNC/HND	*	*	.
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	.
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	.
Accelerated degree	*	*	.
Sandwich year	*	*	.
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	.
Other	*	*	.

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: Birmingham City University

Provider UKPRN: 10007140

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£1,256,000	£1,300,000	£1,360,000	£1,420,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£1,600,000	£1,650,000	£1,700,000	£1,750,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£420,000	£420,000	£420,000	£430,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£423,000	£440,000	£460,000	£490,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£833,000	£860,000	£900,000	£930,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£1,256,000	£1,300,000	£1,360,000	£1,420,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£1,256,000	£1,300,000	£1,360,000	£1,420,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£850,000	£900,000	£950,000	£1,000,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£750,000	£750,000	£750,000	£750,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£1,600,000	£1,650,000	£1,700,000	£1,750,000
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£420,000	£420,000	£420,000	£430,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: Birmingham City University

Provider UKPRN: 10007140

Targets

Table 4a: Access targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
	PTA 1														
	PTA 2														
	PTA 3														
	PTA 4														
	PTA 5														
	PTA 6														
	PTA 7														
	PTA 8														
	PTA 9														
	PTA 10														
	PTA 11														
	PTA 12														

Table 4b: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Increase degree awarding rates for graduates from Black ethnic backgrounds	PTS_1	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	N/A		No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	45.8	54	60	66	74
Increase degree awarding rates for graduates from Asian backgrounds	PTS_2	Attainment	Ethnicity	Asian	N/A		No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	55.2	59	65	70	74
Increase entrant completion rates for young (u21) students entering higher education with vocational or technical qualifications	PTS_3	Continuation	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged under 21 years old who entered at level 4 or higher with vocational or technical level 3 qualifications.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage	88.1	87.1	89.1	90.1	91.1
Increase entrant completion rates for young (U21) students entering higher education with vocational or technical qualifications	PTS_4	Completion	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged under 21 years old who entered at level 4 or higher with vocational or technical level 3 qualifications.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage	82.6	82.6	83.6	84.6	85.6
Increase degree awarding rates for young (U21) students entering higher education with vocational or technical qualifications	PTS_5	Attainment	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged under 21 years old who entered at level 4 or higher with vocational or technical level 3 qualifications.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	52	56	61	67	74
Increase entrant continuation rates for young (U21) male students who were eligible for free school meals	PTS_6	Continuation	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree male entrants aged under 21 years old who were eligible for free school meals	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage	87.8	87.8	88.8	89.8	90.8
Increase entrant completion rates for young (U21) male students who were eligible for free school meals	PTS_7	Completion	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree male entrants aged under 21 years old who were eligible for free school meals	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage	80.6	80.6	81.6	83.6	85.6
Increase continuation rates for mature (21-25) IMD Quintile 1 entrants.	PTS_8	Continuation	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged 21-25 on entry who were permanently domiciled in IMD quintile 1 neighbourhoods prior to entry.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage	80.9	83.9	85.4	86.4	87.4
Increase completion rates for mature (21-25) IMD Quintile 1 entrants.	PTS_9	Completion	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged 21-25 on entry who were permanently domiciled in IMD quintile 1 neighbourhoods prior to entry.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage	80.4	75.4	78.4	81.4	82.9
Increase continuation rates for care experienced entrants aged 25 or younger	PTS_10	Continuation	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged 25 years or younger with care experience	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage	85.7	86.9	87.9	89.9	90.9
Increase completion rates for care experienced entrants aged under 25 years or younger	PTS_11	Completion	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Target group: full-time first degree entrants aged 25 years or younger with care experience	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage	70.4	73	76	82	83
	PTS_12														

Table 4c: Progression targets

