

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019-20**1. Introduction**

Birmingham City University recognises that the decision to enter higher education is a life-changing one. However, for some of our prospective and current students, the decision is a harder one to make because of their personal circumstances. The UK Government, working with Higher Education Institutions, aims to minimise or remove the barriers to under-represented or disadvantaged students attending university and succeeding once there. At Birmingham City University, we aim to widen participation and support success in higher education, in particular for students who:

- Have a low household income (as measured through IDACI, especially those from quintiles 1 and 2);
- Have a disability;
- Are from an ethnic minority;
- Are from an area with comparatively low participation in higher education (Low Participation Neighbourhoods); or
- Are highlighted by the Government as being from another under-represented group, such as care-leavers.

The ways in which we do this are split into three main areas: access (raising attainment and aspiration, primarily in schools and colleges, to enable young people to believe they can enter higher education); enabling success by supporting students to compete their degree and achieve the best degree classification they can (working to ensure that all students, whatever their personal circumstances, are able to gain the maximum benefit from their time at the University); and progression (enabling our students and graduates to achieve their desired goals upon completion of their course, whether entering higher skilled employment or going on to further study).

2. Performance**2.1. Access**

Birmingham City University performs reasonably well both in absolute terms and by comparison to sector benchmarks in indicators of widening access. Examination of the most recent HESA performance indicators reveals that:

- 97.6% of our young full-time undergraduate entrants come from state schools or colleges (above a benchmark of 95.7%);
- 13.0% are from low participation neighbourhoods (just below a benchmark of 14.0%).

Our HESA data shows that our full-time undergraduate population is extremely diverse, with over a third of entrants coming from the most income deprived neighbourhoods (IDACI Q1) in England and half of all entrants from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. It is worth noting that main cycle acceptances between 2012 and 2017 from BME applicants had increased by approx. 50% compared to only a 25% increase in BME applications and for White ethnic background applicants, a 13% increase in accepted applicants compared to a 10% increase in applications. We are therefore continuing to see increased demand from applicants of all backgrounds and are matching this demand with increased acceptances in the main UCAS cycle.

Under-represented group	Source	2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)	Sector average (%)	Post 1992 HEI median
Ethnic backgrounds	HESA Entrant Population	45.1	47.4	45.1	47.1	48.7	26.6	16.7
Care Leaver (OFFA countable)	HESA Entrant Population	n/a	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	n/a	n/a
Declared a disability	HESA Entrant Population	8.8	10.0	10.3	10.0	11.8	13.5	14.3
Declaring a mental health problem	HESA Disabled Population	9.6	10.6	14.5	19.4	23.3	21.9	21.0
Declaring a specific learning difficulty	HESA Disabled Population	59.2	58.4	52.0	46.1	41.6	42.8	42.3
IMD - IDACI Quintile 1	HESA Entrant Population	27.0	28.5	30.2	32.1	33.9	n/a	n/a
Mature (21 years or older)	HESA Entrant Population	36.5	30.0	31.5	30.0	29.9	22.8	26.0

Looking at the breakdown of entrants from specific backgrounds, it becomes clearer that there are some groups who are underrepresented but others where we recruit significantly over the sector average and the median for Post-92 HEIs.

The percentage of entrants declaring a disability is below both the sector average and the median of Post-1992 HEIs, but has been growing steadily over recent years. In contrast, the proportion of students declaring a specific learning difficulty has decreased. As a result, we are providing focused support for students with specific learning difficulties to successfully make the transition into higher education – see section 3.3 for more details. We also have reason to believe that the main issue is not one of access per se, but actually of students under-reporting (potentially due to their cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds). For example, it is noticeable that the percentage of students who declare a disability increases as the educational advantage of their home neighbourhood (measured through POLAR3) increases and also as the income deprivation of their neighbourhood decreases. Trend data indicates that we have been successful in increasing the number of disabled students from POLAR3 quintile 1, as this percentage has grown far more quickly than those from other quintiles. Percentages of disabled students from all IDACI quintiles apart from quintile 5 have increased over the past five years, in spite of the changes to DSA eligibility, suggesting that we have managed to satisfactorily offset any impact that this may have had on students from low income backgrounds through the work outlined in section 3.3.

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
Polar 3 Quintile 1	% DISABLED	4.4	6.5	7.7	8.5	9.5
Polar 3 Quintile 2		5.0	6.8	7.0	6.2	7.7
Polar 3 Quintile 3		6.5	7.2	7.3	7.8	8.9
Polar 3 Quintile 4		8.7	9.6	8.4	9.9	12.2
Polar 3 Quintile 5		10.0	10.3	12.7	11.9	12.8

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
IDACI Quintile 1	% DISABLED	5.0	5.2	6.1	5.5	7.1
IDACI Quintile 2		4.3	6.6	6.7	8.6	8.0
IDACI Quintile 3		7.4	10.2	8.1	7.9	10.1
IDACI Quintile 4		7.6	8.1	10.8	10.2	14.7
IDACI Quintile 5		12.0	11.4	13.5	14.6	12.8

As a result, we are establishing an assessment centre which will (among other things) support new entrants to identify the level of support they need even if they have not previously received a diagnosis. More information can be found in section 3.3.

We have relatively small numbers of students who are care-leavers (using the OFFA-countable definition for sake of consistency). We undertake a range of outreach activities to try and support children in care and their carers – see section 3.2.1 for further information.

Turning to intersections of disadvantage in relation to access, it is noticeable that while we recruit similar proportions of young entrants from POLAR3 quintile 1 from all ethnic backgrounds except Asian students (and in the case of students from a Black ethnic background, significantly above our HESA benchmark of 14.0%), the same cannot be said for those from IDACI quintile 1 where White students are significantly underrepresented and those from a Black ethnic background are overrepresented.

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
Disadvantaged backgrounds (Young entrants)						
White ethnicity	% POLAR 3 (Quintile 1)	15.2	14.7	16.4	16.3	14.8
Black ethnicity		17.5	15.9	18.2	14.6	16.3
Asian ethnicity		7.7	7.2	8.8	9.3	8.4
Other ethnicity		14.9	20.3	17.3	17.2	16.8

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
White ethnicity	% IDACI (Quintile 1)	15.0	14.0	16.0	15.0	15.2
Black ethnicity		54.3	54.0	57.5	61.3	62.8
Asian ethnicity		36.4	39.7	43.4	45.8	48.1
Other ethnicity		37.6	37.9	40.2	42.7	44.4

Investigation of the participation of young White male students from low participation neighbourhoods shows that they have lower participation rates than their BME peers, but that the gap exists for both male and female entrants. This indicates that it is not a question of gender, but rather of ethnicity.

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
Young males % from POLAR 3 Q1&2	White	31.4	32.2	35.2	33.6	33.6
	Black	41.1	45.8	48.1	42.5	48.1
	Asian	36.4	39.6	42.5	46.2	50.3
	Other	33.8	40.9	36.6	41.3	47.6

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
Young females % from POLAR 3 Q1&2	White	36.0	33.7	37.0	37.8	36.7
	Black	49.4	40.2	45.0	46.5	50.0
	Asian	39.4	41.7	43.2	49.3	46.6
	Other	44.2	54.4	43.8	47.2	48.7

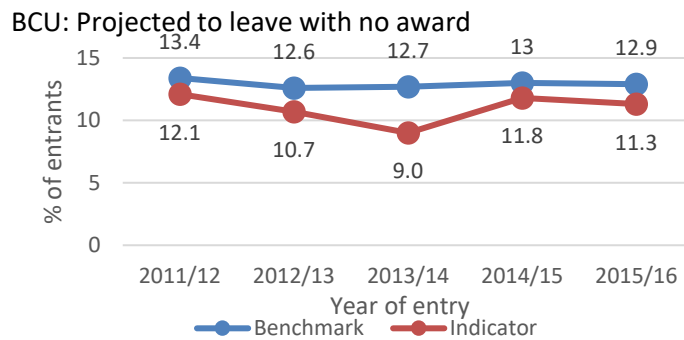
More investigation is underway to determine why Asian students from POLAR3 quintile 1 and White students from IDACI quintile 1 are so significantly underrepresented - given the highly localised region from which we recruit, it is possible that our regional demographics are heavily influencing our recruitment pool and we are therefore undertaking a research project to map our

local student characteristics against ONS data for the region. Once this is complete, we will map our outreach activity against any areas with significant proportions of underrepresented potential students, to ensure we are effectively reaching them.

It is interesting to note that the proportion of entrants aged 21 and over is significantly higher for those coming from educationally disadvantaged neighbourhoods (POLAR3 quintile 1) than other neighbourhoods, indicating that the decision to focus our outreach work on young students from these neighbourhoods is justifiable.

		2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)
Polar 3 Quintile 1	% MATURE	43.8	36.1	40.2	35.1	36.8
Polar 3 Quintile 2		38.9	32.0	33.0	30.5	29.9
Polar 3 Quintile 3		36.9	30.3	30.6	31.3	29.1
Polar 3 Quintile 4		33.3	26.2	26.5	27.6	29.1
Polar 3 Quintile 5		29.4	25.3	26.3	23.9	25.2

In summary, we have an extremely diverse student population and therefore intend to maintain our previous approach of focusing primarily on student success and progression. The main exceptions to this are care-leavers, students with a disability (particularly those with a specific learning difficulty), and those from low participation neighbourhoods. This is therefore where the majority of our outreach work is targeted.



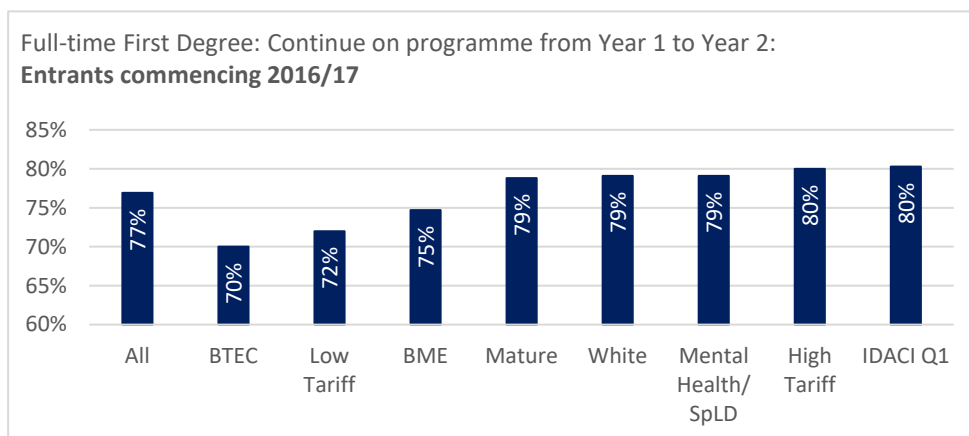
2.2. Success

We acknowledge that our non-continuation rates following year of entry are less positive than they should be, given our non-continuation rate following year of entry (full-time first degree entrants) of 9.9% (slightly lower, but not significantly, than a benchmark of 9.3%). However, the percentage of entrants who are projected to leave with no award remains consistently better than our benchmark.

We believe that there are a number of reasons for our less than positive continuation rates which are affecting all students, including a change of academic regulations on 2015/16. A range of activity is underway to improve our non-continuation rates, including: a fundamental review of our regulations to ensure that we maintain our academic standards without disadvantaging our students; increasing our portfolio of foundation year zero provision to better support students with the potential, but not the academic qualifications, to succeed and; creating a stronger learning community through our Graduate + programme. For full details of these, and other initiatives, see section 3.3.

Focusing on continuation of students at the University (and not those who transfer elsewhere in the sector), it is noticeable that there are some groups of students who are more likely to leave the institution – particularly those from IDACI and POLAR 3 quintile 1, students from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, those with mental health problems and mature students.

		Continuation into Year after entry				
		2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Student profile	Young	91.5	91.5	91.4	88.3	86.3
	Mature	91.2	87.8	88.5	86.4	85.8
	BME	90.3	90.4	91.0	86.6	84.7
	White	92.2	90.8	90.5	88.9	87.5
	POLAR 3 Q1	89.3	88.8	89.9	86.9	84.0
	POLAR 3 Q5	91.2	92.2	91.9	91.0	90.0
	IDACI Q1	91.4	91.0	90.0	85.1	83.5
	IDACI Q5	92.9	92.3	92.1	91.0	89.6
	Mental Health	92.3	92.0	89.6	89.0	85.7



It is worth noting, however, that our TEF3 metrics indicate that there is no significant difference for any of these groups from our expected benchmark, which is equivalent or lower than our performance in every case.

Continuation year after entry	ALL	AGE		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Gender	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
BCU	92.1	93.3	89.5	92.6	93.7	91.8	92.4	90.6	92.2	91.1	92.7
Benchmark	91.4	92.5	89.0	92.0	93.0	91.6	91.1	90.6	91.5	89.4	92.5
Sig Diff											

It is interesting to note that a different pattern is seen when continuation from Year 1 to Year 2 is interrogated. This indicates that (with the exception of BME students), student demographics are not the main indicator of clean progression: this is instead most affected by pre-entry qualifications.

In relation to equity in attainment, it is clear that students from BME backgrounds are less likely to achieve a good honours degree than their white peers (although this gap is closing), and that there is a significant difference between young students from the most and least income deprived backgrounds.

UK First Degree Qualifiers					
% gaining 1st or 2:1 award	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7
White	75%	78%	75%	77%	80%
BME	53%	58%	59%	61%	68%
Disabled	67%	71%	66%	70%	74%
Non-Disabled	66%	69%	68%	69%	74%
Mental Health	77%	69%	74%	73%	75%
Young POLAR 3 Q1	66%	72%	69%	70%	74%
Young POLAR 3 Q5	69%	74%	70%	72%	79%
Young IDACI Q1	62%	64%	62%	62%	70%
Young IDACI Q5	77%	74%	76%	79%	82%
Male	66%	71%	70%	70%	75%
Female	66%	69%	67%	69%	73%
Young White male Disadvantaged	77%	86%	74%	74%	83%
Young BME male Disadvantaged	63%	59%	52%	72%	71%
Mature	61%	66%	66%	66%	70%
Young	68%	71%	69%	71%	75%

A range of work is underway to address these specific areas of underperformance, such as:

- An institutional working group focusing on equity in attainment (see section 2.4), in addition to the establishment in each faculty of a group to investigate student attainment and narrow any gaps in different groups.
- Support for students from income-deprived backgrounds through the Student Incentives Scheme (introduced in 2017/18 - see section 3.3 for further detail) and provision of greater clarity over the hidden costs of higher education.
- Mature students are supported through the high degree of flexibility between full-time and part-time study, and the use of block teaching in part-time study to ensure that they are not required to be in university more than two days per week. This has been a key focus of our curriculum review (see section 3.3).
- Heavy investment in support for students' mental health and wellbeing – for example, we have just appointed a full-time community psychiatric nurse on secondment from our local NHS Trust, who will have a ring-fenced annual budget of £300,000 to allocate according to a clear evidence base (which will be developed once the individual takes up post in September 2018). Other relevant initiatives, such as our new assessment centre, can be found in section 3.3.
- The introduction of foundation year zeros and changes of teaching methodologies as part of our curriculum review (see section 3.3), which are expected to provide additional support for students entering with low tariffs or having studied BTECs. In addition, the current Faculty-led pilot of in-year resits has been shown to be particularly beneficial for students who have previously studied BTECs.

2.3. Progression

TEF3 data (three-year average) indicates that our institutional progression performance does not differ significantly from our benchmark expectations, when considering either any form of employment and further study, or focusing on higher skilled employment and further study, apart from for BME and male students. It is encouraging that we have seen a 5 percentage point increase (to 97.4%) in overall employment/further study outcomes and a 6 percentage point improvement (to 76.8%) in higher skilled employment outcomes in the 2018 DLHE – the second successive year of improvement following a period of static performance, indicating that our increased focus and investment in this area is being successful.

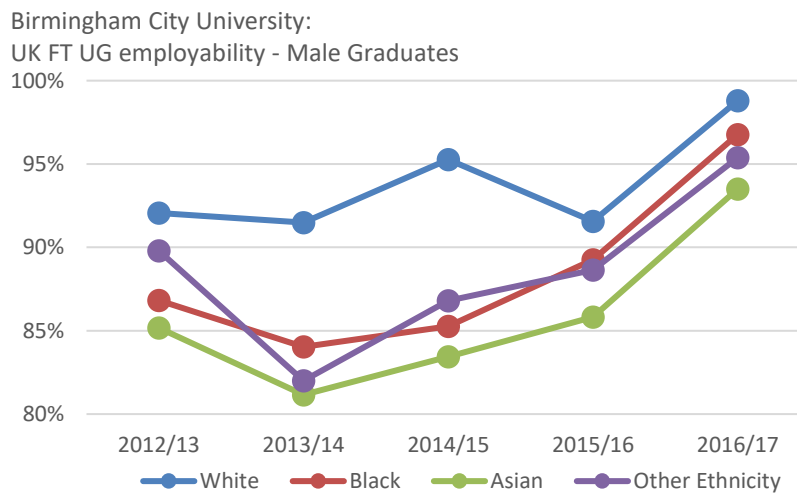
Employment or further study	ALL	AGE		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Gender	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
BCU	92.1	91.6	93.3	89.9	94.3	95.4	87.7	90.3	92.4	88.1	94.3
Benchmark	93.1	92.7	94.0	92.1	93.0	95.4	90.1	92.1	93.3	90.5	94.5
Sig Diff							-ve			-ve	

Higher skilled employment or	ALL	AGE		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Gender	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
BCU	70.0	64.4	83.0	62.5	65.4	74.9	63.1	71.8	69.7	66.0	72.0
Benchmark	70.4	66	80.5	64	67.2	74	65.4	70.8	70.3	69	71.1
Sig Diff							-ve			-ve	

It is noticeable that some groups are not as successful as others at obtaining higher skilled employment or further study opportunities, especially Asian and male students. It is encouraging that whilst we historically experienced a large performance gap between students from the most and least income deprived backgrounds, this gap has now closed significantly.

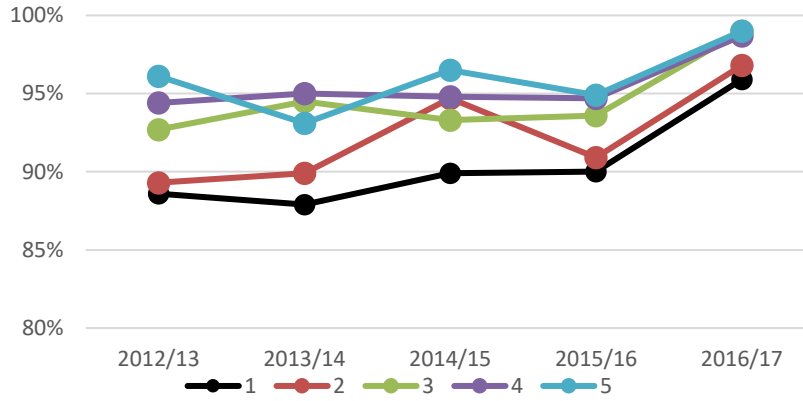
	Year graduated				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
All	69.2%	69.0%	70.7%	71.0%	76.9%
White	75.1%	74.6%	76.5%	76.7%	80.9%
Black	69.4%	67.2%	70.2%	73.3%	78.3%
Asian	57.2%	57.8%	61.0%	61.9%	70.3%
Other	69.1%	70.6%	63.8%	74.1%	75.1%
Male	68.1%	65.6%	69.0%	68.2%	75.1%
Female	71.0%	72.0%	72.3%	74.3%	79.3%
POLAR 3 Q1	72.2%	68.9%	73.5%	76.4%	79.3%
POLAR 3 Q5	73.3%	71.9%	72.7%	72.4%	76.8%
IDACI Q1	67.2%	67.2%	67.3%	69.2%	77.2%
IDACI Q5	77.0%	70.0%	79.4%	77.0%	81.3%

The performance gap for Asian students also holds for entry into all types of employment and further study, although the gap between male students of different ethnicities has narrowed over recent years – White male graduates still outperform those from Asian backgrounds, the gap has narrowed from 7% to 5%.



Mirroring the case for higher skilled employment, the gap between students from different areas of income deprivation entering into any form of employment or further study has also narrowed considerably over the past five years, from 6% to 3%.

Birmingham City University:
UK FT UG employability -
By IDACI Quintile



It is interesting to note that, while BME and male students are less likely than their peers to enter into employment or further study, they are now substantially more likely to progress directly into postgraduate study at Birmingham City University. In 2012/13, BME students were 0.4 percentage points more likely to enter into PG study than White students, and male students 0.5 percentage points than female students - they are now 3.5 percentage points and 1.7 percentage points more likely respectively. The same pattern can also be observed for students from low participation neighbourhoods, who were previously 2 percentage points less likely to undertake PG study and are now 3 percentage points more likely.

Profile Group	Year graduated				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
All	8.1%	9.5%	8.5%	10.9%	12.3%
White	8.1%	9.3%	6.1%	8.6%	10.8%
BME	8.5%	9.8%	11.8%	13.5%	14.3%
POLAR 3 Q1	7.2%	8.7%	9.7%	13.0%	14.1%
POLAR 3 Q5	9.2%	11.5%	7.4%	7.7%	11.1%
Male	8.5%	9.3%	8.2%	12.6%	13.5%
Female	8.0%	9.7%	8.7%	10.1%	11.8%

Details of initiatives which have contributed to these improvements, and which will therefore continue to be developed in future years, can be found in section 3.4.

2.4. Summary of performance review

Our evaluation of the University's performance in relation to access and student success is that we have a demonstrable record of achievement in relation to widening access, but still have progress to make in ensuring equity in attainment and outcomes once these students have entered the University. This links in closely to our approach to equality and diversity: we are currently in the process of recruiting a Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), who will lead on the development and implementation of an EDI strategy and work in partnership with other areas of the University to monitor developments which foster student attraction, retention, attainment and satisfaction. An Equity in Attainment working group (EinA) has also been established, which began by proposing a series of actions that should be taken to improve the attainment and experience of our BME students. Planned work areas included creating visible institutional and senior commitment to the inclusion agenda, investigating and addressing attainment gaps, and developing staff capacity to act inclusively. The new Vice-Chancellor has been very active in the first sphere and has placed the work of the group high on his agenda. The new EDI lead will develop this area and also work with HR to address the third area. The EinA working group is now focussing closely on the second area: identifying where BAME students are performing less well than their white counterparts, and introducing evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes. The group have now identified key modules in each Faculty, and at each level of study, and have started working with module leads. Themes have already emerged that show underlying causes that often overlap with but are not

directly related to ethnicity. For example, maths-heavy modules are problematic, and many BME students come with BTEC qualifications which do not prepare them well. We will run a series of development projects to introduce new teaching and support in the 2018/19 academic year, with evaluation in place to establish impact.

As in previous years, the focus of our access and participation plan expenditure will remain upon the provision of tailored investment to support retention and success in achieving an award along with maintaining the increased level of expenditure on outreach activities. We therefore intend to continue to commit approximately 15% of additional fee income (10% for postgraduate ITT students), for countable expenditure on additional access and student success measures. This will include continuation of existing regional collaborative activity that is delivered through Aimhigher West Midlands, University outreach activity, continuation of existing activities that have had a positive impact on increasing and supporting student retention, progression and achievement, as well as new activities to meet the same goals. Given the University's strong performance in enabling students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds to access higher education, all additional funding and activity will be focused on ensuring a similarly strong performance in student success rates. We also intend to continue expenditure on promoting access and support for disabled students, whether or not in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance. Expenditure on access and student success will increase from 2018-19 to reflect the changes to the Student Opportunity Allocation and removal of NHS funding for healthcare courses.

3. Expenditure and Activity

3.1. In order to meet our commitments to underrepresented students, we fund a wide range of new and ongoing initiatives, some of which are detailed below. We are also planning on introducing a targeted investment fund of £400,000 per annum, which will allow staff (and students) from across the institution to propose projects that they believe will have an impact on this important issue. It is too early to provide details of the type of project that will be run through this fund, but they will have to meet strict eligibility criteria and be targeted on student success and participation.

3.2. Access

3.2.1. Outreach

Birmingham City University has always been committed to delivering and participating in outreach activities. As outlined in section 3, we recruit high proportions of students from low income families and state schools, and undertake a range of activity to ensure that this continues to be the case.

Many of the advice and guidance activities undertaken by the University's outreach team, including its generic ones, automatically capture disadvantaged learners. Our main catchment areas include a high proportion of learners from a widening participation background. Research from Aimhigher West Midlands shows that 66% of the schools and colleges in the Birmingham and Solihull area fall into the higher category of institutions within a particular widening participation classification in comparison with 29% nationally. This ranking considers the proportion of targeted learners in those institutions who fall within a widening participation classification using a range of indicators, such as eligibility for free schools meals, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), and no parental engagement in HE. The majority of the University's feeder institutions are classed under this ranking by Aimhigher as 'High Priority'. In 2016/17, the University's outreach team worked with 167 priority schools and colleges, delivering 550 activities to 47,610 beneficiaries, broken down as follows.

16-18	24468
Primary	1160
KS 3	8171
KS4	8398
Adult	2204
Parents	1910
Teachers / Advisers	1299
Total	47,610

It has been agreed that the continued sponsorship of the City Road Primary Academy through the BCU Academies Trust is not in the best interest of either the school or the University, and the

Academy has therefore been supported to find a new sponsor who will be taking over from August 2018. This does not mean, however, that the University is reducing its commitment to driving achievement in schools, and we are therefore developing a new partnership with IntoUniversity. Funds have been committed to this partnership (circa £125,000 per annum), which will target the engagement of young, white males in particular. The partnership will be run from a base in the East of Birmingham, and will be community focused aimed at young people and their families who are at risk of non-participation with HE. Student Mentors from BCU will be used in IntoUniversity's projects. IntoUniversity will be running sessions with Year 5 pupils through to Year 13, with a primary focus strand and a secondary focus strand. As part of these sessions pupils will visit the University and engage with student mentors to support their career aspirations. We will also support other schemes run by IntoUniversity including residential visits, career-themed weeks during the holidays, and after school support with homework, coursework and revision.

Other activities aimed at raising the attainment of school age children include the Junior Conservatoire and a Saturday Arts School. Both of these expose talented young people from all backgrounds to high quality facilities, experiences and tuition, with the Junior Conservatoire offering tuition and performance opportunities for children between the ages of 3 and 18.

We also undertake a range of activity with pupils in care, including working with both Children in Care Birmingham and Wolverhampton Children in Care, for example to support delivery of their virtual school programme and offering annual sessions for Year 7 and 8 pupils to introduce them to university life. In addition, we run a workshop to enable carers to support their young person through the UCAS application process.

A range of further interventions currently take place to raise attainment in schools, including residential summer schools for year 10 pupils, a mentoring programme and an annual teacher and advisor conference, and it is intended to continue to develop this work in the ways which evaluation proves most impactful. It is planned to grow activity in this area, and two projects are currently in development: delivery of a primary teachers' conference linked to the Birmingham Maths Hub (involving workshops and sessions on how to teach Maths effectively at primary school), and a pilot primary literacy programme involving students working on a 1:1 basis with pupils to improve their reading. All interventions are monitored through participant evaluation forms. Some of these activities aim to improve knowledge for the staff member. Associated benefits should flow from the primary maths activity in terms of improved pupil attainment. For the summer schools, evaluation of changed perception of attendees is considered.

3.2.2. *Collaborative working between institutions*

Our commitment to collaborative outreach and evaluation has been demonstrated through our investment in and contribution to the Aimhigher West Midlands partnership since 2011. The University is a founding member of the institutionally funded Aimhigher West Midlands partnership with the University of Birmingham, Aston University, University College Birmingham and the University of Worcester, working with young people facing multiple dimensions of disadvantage. This provides a progressive and integrated programme of support and advice including the UniFest Summer School programme and regional Mentoring Scheme, to widen participation in HE at sector level. The partnership acts as a single point of contact to help schools make the most of the support available. The partnership aims to engage 1,000 young people per year in its intensive outreach and attainment building activity. Jointly-funding the Aimhigher Data Service (see section 5) enables us to track participants, whose GCSE outcomes and rates of entry to HE exceed those of their disadvantaged peers.

The University is also a member of Aimhigher Plus, one of the largest of 29 consortia delivering the National Collaborative Outreach Programme. We have designed a new, innovative programme of activity to address the lower than expected progression to higher education of young people in Year Groups 9 to 13 living in 25 identified gap wards. Our activity has been designed to complement our institutional and APP funded Aimhigher activity.

Birmingham City University will jointly fund Aimhigher with a contribution of £35,000 in 2018/19 and will be intimately involved in its governance and management. The outreach activities delivered

through the partnership will complement our own extensive programme of widening access and fair access measures outlined elsewhere in this Plan.

3.3. Student Success

The University continues to undertake a wide range of activity to support student success. This involves, among other activities:

- An evolving approach to work on induction, transition and first year experience that is informed by previous participation in the HEA's national 'What Works' Student Retention and Success initiative. In 2017, this saw the University host the European First Year Experience Conference which provided an opportunity for staff to further engage in refreshing approaches and learn from practices from 18 countries from across the world.
- Continued development of the Level Up online pre-transition initiative, delivered from the point of student confirmation of place into their first few months at university. This continues to be adopted by schools and programmes across the University and sees incremental changes each year as the initiative develops.
- Appointment of Graduate Student Success Advisors (GSSA) in all Faculties. These roles, initially piloted in one Faculty from 2013, are undertaken on a full-time basis by recent graduates and serve to provide a wide range of informal support and bridging between students and staff. The role and numbers of graduates appointed has been rising with some Schools now recruiting their own. This is a real area of success with the Arts, Design and Media Faculty appointing 9 GSSAs in the present year as their impact on student retention became clear.
- The Graduate+ initiative, which seeks to align student personal development, employability and belonging. Through initial participation in activities such as Welcome Week, students make connections with staff and students (personal tutors, Library induction) across the university that receive recognition through the framework. Once students become connected, Graduate+ starts to explore their sense of purpose and how we can help them engage with the resources to achieve that. In the first two years of operation over 9000 students registered for this extra-curricular award. Early evaluative data suggests that a significantly higher proportion of BME students and students with a disability access the programme than might be expected given the institutional demographic.
- The next phase of Graduate+ is to engage with Birmingham's local communities. Over 70% of our students are commuters and live across Birmingham. Through engagement with organisations and activities in their local environments we plan to better support those students and show the relevance of their university experience to those communities.
- An integrated approach to Welcome Week delivering stronger induction to the wider University and alignment with Graduate+ initiative;
- Successful initiatives in Student Mentoring (39 student engagement projects funded in 2017-18) are being embedded across the institution. There is a specific focus on this call for projects on how we address all barriers to learning. This has seen student led projects on issues around being a commuter student, disability, and issues around BME attainment at university and beyond graduation.
- Joint work with Birmingham City University Students' Union (BCUSU) seeking fuller roles for students in all aspects of curriculum design and delivery including through the Student Academic Partners programme, where students and staff work together to identify and resolve student experience issues;

The University was successful in being awarded by HEFCE call (circular 04/2015) to pilot and evaluate measures of learning gain. This partnership project is being led by Birmingham City University with partners at Coventry, Liverpool John Moores and Staffordshire. This work includes measures around student improvement in knowledge, skills, work readiness and personal development. It will be aligned to measures offered through the UK Engagement Survey. Additionally, the University has been successful in attracting HEFCE Catalyst B funding as part of a regional university/FE colleges partnership (DRIVER). This initiative looks at a West Midlands approach to the BME attainment issue and how universities and colleges might learn from each other and share data to address BME attainment gap issues.

The University has increased its support for students to cope with the 'hidden costs' of Higher Education, by providing pre-entry information on the types of additional costs that students may

encounter. This activity complements activity that is being undertaken by the Students' Union. A Student Incentives Scheme, aimed at providing targeted support towards course materials and other costs which may be a barrier to study, is being introduced (subject to successful procurement) in 2017/18, and this will be continued into 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Students' Union will be a fundamental part of decisions about which costs are the greatest barrier to access and progression, and what should be included as part of the scheme.

The University has well-established Disability and Mental Health/Counselling teams, who offer tailored support ranging from 1:1 sessions to a Life Skills Summer School for entrants with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Furthermore, it has provided funding for the Students' Union to employ a Mental Health Awareness Coordinator to raise awareness of the internal and external services available for students. The services offered are regularly evaluated, and have been expanded over recent years where they have been successful. Demand for Counselling services continues to increase, with 1,369 referrals in 2016/17 and a current caseload of 2,024 students (including, but not exclusively, many students with mental health disabilities). The team deliver support using various models: from the traditional 1:1 and group sessions covering issues from anxiety management, relationships, and mindfulness, through to sessions delivered by external agencies (such as Forward Thinking Birmingham) in relation to CBT. The University has invested in the digital mental wellbeing resource, Big White Wall, which is now available free to all students and staff, including students at our partner institutions.

We are also establishing an assessment centre (which will run a pilot in 2018/19 and move into full operation in 2019/20). The activity of this centre will adapt throughout the year to support access, success and progression of disabled students at the most appropriate time. For example, all new entrants to the University will be asked to complete screening tests for both specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia) and any mental health problems. Anyone whose results indicate that further investigation may be beneficial will be eligible for further diagnostic tests, but will also receive additional support (for example, for assessments or maths/literacy tuition) and will be offered extra employability and careers guidance such as working with an advisor to identify potential careers according to their strengths.

It is evident that students with a Specific Learning Difficulty (whether formally diagnosed or not) may find the transition to higher education challenging. Students with indicators of dyslexia who wish to undertake a diagnostic assessment at the University can now do so free of charge. This year we provided study skills sessions during the September 2017 induction period and during a re-engagement week in January 2018, as well as launching a Student Academic Partnership project which has trained students to coach fellow students in study skills. The University has also invested in assistive software to be available on campus to all students, regardless of any declared SpLD and is piloting the Brain in Hand digital support facility with students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and severe anxiety.

As well as these overarching initiatives, our Faculties have been leading their own projects to facilitate and enable student success. In academic year 2017-18, the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment (CEBE) is running a pilot project called Facilitating Student Success, which aims to reduce barriers to success for students from a diverse range of backgrounds. This project offers peer-led 'twilight' sessions designed to offer additional support in a more informal setting to students struggling with their work, or simply wanting to talk to more senior students who have successfully navigated the transition into higher education. The Faculty of CEBE are additionally supporting students through a pilot of in year resits, allowing them to re-sit first semester exams in the second. Those running the pilot believe that this timing of re-sits aids the retention of knowledge, as it is nearer to the original teaching and is especially beneficial for students from BTEC backgrounds who are used to revising their work for resubmission.

The High Achievers Recognition Scheme (HARS) in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences (HELS) was piloted in 2015-16 and launched in 2016-17 to provide co-curricular development opportunities for high achieving students. The aim of the Scheme is to advance and take pride in students' professional and academic aspirations, capabilities and attainment. The HARS Team features academics, a Student Steering Group, Professional Services, Student Affairs and graduate interns as well as external partners (including the Scheme's own alumni). Students

eligible to join HARS are identified at the end of Year 1 based on academic performance and 'distance travelled' metrics. Following an invitation to one of the bi-annual HARS Launch events those eligible can then apply for a place. HARS students complete an on-line profiling questionnaire which informs a follow-up interview with a Careers coach to establish which aspects of the Scheme they are most interested in from across the four available tracks of advanced academic skills; leadership development; community engagement; and international mobility. Funding for the Scheme is provided through the Faculty's existing Student Learning Experience budget. By the end of 2016-17, 225 students had registered with the Scheme out of a total of 537 eligible, based on the metrics used. This second year of operation saw the first full cohort with both second and final year students engaging with the HARS offer. By the end of January 2018 HARS reached a probable steady-state with around 800 students per annum deemed eligible, subject to successful application, out of a Faculty population of 10,000. The first HARS graduates were conferred in summer 2017 and the Team already have these Alumni supporting ongoing HARS work in the Faculty even as they embark on their own professional careers .

Additionally in the Faculty of HELS, there is a SEDA accredited Advanced Personal Tuition Forum (APTF) which provides personal tutors in HELS with up-to-date knowledge of the services and support in the University that they can draw down in order to support their students. Personal tuition can be transformational, enhancing the quality of students' experiences and boosting outcomes. It improves individuals' capacity to plan and take responsibility for their learning and to understand how they learn. The APTF is designed to improve student success and retention rates through enhanced training for personal tuition and the use of a bespoke dispositions and behaviours questionnaire for students piloted in HELS during 2016-17. The questionnaire provides students with valuable insights into behaviours that are associated with academic success (e.g. resilience and mindfulness) and others that are associated with academic underperformance or failure (e.g. procrastination). The APTF introduces personal tutors to knowledge and understanding drawn from research and the literature on self-efficacy and factors that can undermine student success. In addition the Forum provides participants with opportunities to hone and reflect upon key skills development as personal tutors through the introduction of tool kits and structured evaluations of professional practice.

HELs has been trialling a bespoke dispositions and behaviours questionnaire for students (designed in partnership with colleagues in the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences (BLSS)) piloted during 2016-17 alongside its Advanced Personal Tuition Forum for staff. The questionnaire provides students with valuable insights into behaviours that are associated with academic success and others that are associated with academic underperformance or failure. We plan to use the questionnaire and the Forum to increase the efficacy of personal tuition in HELS and BLSS as part of a joint, cross-Faculty initiative. The preliminary work already completed has shown that the personality and behavioural constructs used in this initiative predict higher performance, increased well-being and mental health of students, as well as higher NSS scores and an enhanced student experience. We have also learned that BAME students are not underperforming (as indicated by the metrics outlined in section 3) when they score highly in the constructs featured in this research (e.g. resiliency, mindfulness and self-compassion). In addition, we have run randomized control trials to investigate whether utilizing interventions to enhance those personality and behavioural constructs would enhance student performance, well-being, and the student experience. Our findings to date have been positive, and we are currently exploring commuter student experience and the relationship to our constructs. The possibility of securing additional funding is being investigated, to enable a two-year development cycle at the end of which a student mindfulness 'app' and associated staff training packages would be self-sustaining and available for use and adoption across the University as a whole.

The Faculties also take different approaches to embedding sustained contact with employers throughout the student lifecycle (due primarily to the diverse employment markets targeted by graduates from each Faculty). For example, in 2015/16 a new high-level vision statement was created by the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment (CEBE), stating that *"By 2020, we will transform CEBE graduate employment through our globally recognised research, innovative practice and outstanding educational experiences"*. In turn, this vision informed the design of the Faculty's Curriculum Philosophy, now developed into an underpinning strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment. It positions the curriculum as an opportunity to embed fundamental employment skills by the use of a practice-facing, experiential approach to learning, in particular by emphasising the

creation of artefacts in a project-driven learning environment. The following specific projects are generating great experiences and demonstrating good practice for wider adoption in the future:

- The cross-programme Innovation Fest is now in its 5th year, with each occurrence a significant expansion on the experience of the year before. In 2018, some 400 students from the School of Computing and Digital Technology worked together in collaborative teams to design and implement solutions to real-world problems; the ideas they have created are then displayed as part of a major exhibition at the end of May, in which representatives from major employer partners form the judging panel selecting the best designs with the most potential for future development. Final year students also participate and mentor their more junior colleagues.
- The Faculty has a number of other initiatives designed to embed employer partners into key curriculum activities, including:
 - Industry-mentored projects: final year Computing students have co-developed their major project with a 'problem sponsor' drawn from industry, providing direct input into shaping their outcomes, and offering employers an extended look at some of our graduating students.
 - Module Industrial Mentors: Our Digital Media students are able to access advice and guidance from industry mentors attached to specific modules; often alumni of the courses themselves, this offers the chance to create a direct channel of communication into key industry figures, and enable students to develop confidence and contacts in their chosen field.
 - Student Competitions: for example, students in Built Environment programmes develop a live project during Welcome Week, and pitch their ideas direct to an industrial representative before their formal taught programme has even started.
 - An Industrial Advisory Board meets regularly in each school, to discuss areas of common interest in the development of faculty programmes, the alignment of graduates to industry needs, areas for future collaboration, etc.

The School of Nursing takes a different approach, for example through its Nursing Partnership Employability Group, which has the following objectives:

- To understand, review and act upon recruitment and selection information in partnership with the stakeholders. To ensure that students are well prepared for the job application and interview process.
- To ensure understanding of workforce needs through strong partnerships with key stakeholders, including employers, students, alumni, careers and academic staff.
- To develop an understanding of the transitional journey into qualified practice of our students from stakeholder perspectives. To develop strategies to enable a smooth transition.

This group meets three times a year, and involves academic staff and representatives from all local and wider regional NHS trust partners (who are the main employers of graduates from the School).

Finally, the University has recently completed a review of all of its undergraduate courses, with new and revised courses being introduced from September 2017 and rolled out incrementally until 2020/21 (by which time all undergraduates should be studying on a revised programme). The underpinning academic strategy means that courses will be more flexible and more accessible for all students (including disabled, mature and part-time learners). As with many other cross-institutional initiatives, the precise manner of implementation has been left to the discretion of individual areas, rather than centrally directed – however, all programme review proposals had to explicitly identify how they would achieve greater flexibility and inclusiveness. One example of this is BA (Hons) English. This programme has a number of specific pathways but there is now the opportunity for students to transfer to the broad BA (Hons) English course which offers more flexibility in the choice of optional modules. The review also includes the introduction of a number of foundation year zero courses, to ensure that students who have the potential to succeed but who may not have the necessary academic qualifications have the opportunity to enter higher education with more targeted support. The University also intends to expand its range of higher apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning in order to facilitate access for all students, including those who are known to be less likely to enter more traditional forms of higher education, such as those from white socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is currently too early to identify the impact of this programme review, as the first year has yet to be finished. However, progress made in terms of changes to student cohort demographics, retention and clean progression from Year 1 to Year 2 will be monitored at programme and School level through the annual programme healthchecks (outlined in section 4), with specific focus being given to changes in key success metrics for the groups

identified in section 2 as being in need of additional support.

3.4. Progression

In order to continue supporting the successful transition of our students out of the University and into graduate employment or further study, we will develop existing approaches through ensuring that:

- Graduate+ offers a personalised approach to student development at the university. Integration with key areas in the Centre for Academic Success (which delivers academic writing and numeracy support) means that students get recognition for their addressing their own developmental needs. Graduate+ also enable students to be aware of the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are taking place across the University as we encourage them to consider how they might best design their own futures;
- We work in partnership with BCUSU to develop a full range of extracurricular activities aimed at enhancing employability and building community through Graduate+;
- Expansion of the University's student jobs scheme, OpportUNIty, to exploit fully the range of employment opportunities on campus and the benefits of such employment for students;
- All students are enabled to undertake a work-related experience in each year of study, in part through creation of new opportunities through Graduate+. This has been instrumental in driving increased take-up of a voluntary credit rated additional year long professional placement or study abroad opportunity – in 2017/18, 218 students were supported to transfer from a three-year to a four-year programme in order to facilitate this, while only 18 made the opposite transfer.
- The Careers Team approach is embedded in Faculties to support employability enhancements that are delivered through the curriculum and is aligned with Graduate+ work. This has been expanded to incorporate placement and work experience support and entrepreneurship activity under the rebranded as the Careers+ umbrella
- The Careers+ model has further embedded careers/employability support with the establishment of dedicated Employability Unit within each University faculty as part of a “hub and spoke” model providing full range of holistic careers and employment support including access to careers Information, Advice and Guidance, placement/work experience opportunities, training and career development support, job search and job application provision. This includes regular 'speed networking' events – where students are able to attend a number of mini-interviews with employers of all types - a model which has been developed over the past five years and has proved to be an excellent vehicle to meaningfully engage employers with students, particularly students who have barriers to the labour market. Speed Networking is being used by BCU as its delivery model under the HEFCE Catalyst project “Levelling the Playing Field” in partnership with Aston University, City University of London and University of Ulster, where its transferability is being trialled by partners with an emphasis on engaging widening participation groups with placement and work experience opportunities.
- Employment Adviser posts are embedded within each Faculty Unit, dedicated to supporting students to achieve graduate-level employment or further study focussing on final year students and those in first year of graduation
- Careers+ also provide targeted student-employer mentoring programmes to improve access to the professions including a dedicated employer mentoring scheme for BAME students in partnership with the National Mentoring Consortium
- A HEFCE Catalyst project – Levelling the Playing Field, running until 2019, is a partnership project with Aston, City University of London and Ulster University to use the power of placements to reduce the gap in differential graduate employment outcomes particularly for BAME students/graduates
- Entrepreneurship support is available for all students and for three years after graduation with entrepreneurs/new start-ups able access to ESF funding via the BSEEN programme.

We are also investing heavily in supporting students to transition into postgraduate study, as we are aware that we have a significantly lower proportion of our students entering further study than our comparator institutions, and that there are some groups (such as BME and male students – see section 2.3) who are less likely to find employment but more likely to undertake further study. We have recently established a scholarship fund to supplement the PGT loans scheme, which is available to all BCU graduates with a 1st or 2:1 degree, and are anticipating that this will result in a 100% increase of students making the transition into further study over the next five years.

3.5. Financial Support

As in previous years, the University will continue to support students suffering hardship to at least the level previously funded by the Access to Learning Fund (ALF). Moreover, the University may choose to augment this sum and provide additional funding, dependent upon the specific nature of the applications received for hardship funding. The University continues to receive demand for hardship support from its students and the figure indicated is incremental to this ALF figure, and may rise as required to meet those needs. In recent years, we have had to commit funding far in excess of the amount committed to in our Access Agreements (and expect to exceed the amount in this Access and Participation Plan).

In order to calculate hardship support for students, BCU uses the NASMA-set Composite Living Cost figure to set thresholds which accounts for an element of inflation and means that hardship funds provided reflect accurately the cost of living.

In 2016/17, the majority of recipients were full-time, home undergraduate students, with a high representation of final year students – indicating that resources are predominantly being used to support those nearing the end of their course.

Level of study of students receiving funding

	UG						PG			Total		
	1	2	3	4	5	S	total	1	2	3	total	
# students	93	128	232	2	2	9	466	29	6	2	37	503
£000 awards	97.8	135.6	307.7	1.9	0.9	12.8	556.7	33.6	8.1	2.3	44.2	600.9

The outcomes for students in receipt of hardship funding were marginally more positive than those for the general population, with 93.7% achieving a positive outcome.

Retention and progression rates of students receiving funding

	Complete / Proceed	Exit / Withdraw with award	Fail / withdraw / cannot proceed	Not known
# students	399	15	12	26
£000 awards	466.7	16.4	11.8	37.6

In terms of breakdown between different student demographics:

- students with a disability were overrepresented (21% of recipients, compared to an overall institutional population of 10%)
- female students were also overrepresented (71% of recipients)

4. Monitoring and evaluation

Consideration of equality and diversity is embedded into the University's day-to-day activity and is currently monitored by the Student Experience, Learning and Teaching committee, which maintains an overview of the University's performance with regard to improving student success. However, the new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) is currently undertaking a review of academic governance, and intends to introduce a new Access and Participation Committee which will have overall accountability for overseeing the implementation of this plan and driving improvements in access, success and progression for students from all backgrounds. This committee will report into Academic Board, and will have both Students' Union and independent student members. One of the first tasks of this committee will be to review the role of students in formulating, implementing and monitoring this Access and Participation Plan, as we recognise the need for greater student involvement in this area.

The University has processes in place to routinely monitor a range of indicators at specified, planned times during the year using sophisticated techniques which identify any statistically significant variation in performance related to the protected characteristics, student profile and background. Data relating to student participation, retention and progression are routinely reported to the University's Academic Board, and progress against the milestones set out in this Plan will continue to

be monitored by Academic Board, through regular reports from the Access and Participation Committee.

We continue to adopt a focused approach, concentrating the resources available on activities with evidence of success, whilst also seeking to analyse any issues associated with relationships which we perceive should be operating more effectively. The use of programme-level dashboard indicators is becoming increasingly embedded within the University, and we are continuing to review our approach to module-level evaluation and monitoring by developing 'self-service' dashboards to complement the sector-level ones being produced by HEFCE. These dashboards contain information regarding the demographics of each programme cohort and their performance against set metrics (e.g. progression from Year 1 to Year 2), contain flags to indicate where a certain section of the population may require additional/altered support, and links to sources of support. They are not only used by individual programme tutors, but also to inform 'programme annual healthcheck' reviews undertaken by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), where the performance of individual schools and programmes is investigated. Our planning and performance review process then uses aggregate versions of the same dashboard, thereby ensuring integration and alignment of action planning, target setting and monitoring, budgeting and investment decisions with the University's Strategic Plan.

Individual activities are evaluated using a range of methodologies, depending on the scope of activity and intended outcomes. For example, the Graduate + programme (as a large-scale, cross-institutional initiative) uses primarily participant feedback sheets to evaluate the impact of individual activities, but also produces:

- Regular student engagement data, examining programmes and schools which show lower levels of engagement than might be expected, and can also be used to interrogate the engagement specific groups of students. The most recent analysis has shown, for example, that BME and disabled students are proportionally over-represented in Graduate+ activities;
- An annual report, which provides: quantitative evidence regarding student participation and completion rates; uptake by different demographic groups; stakeholder feedback; details of where other organisations have approached us to learn from our good practice; and plans and targets for future years.

As would be expected, the findings of our evaluations affects how we run future activities. For example, our Outreach team run masterclass sessions, which are short subject tasters designed either to introduce pre-16 students to a subject or to help post-16 students confirm whether this is the right subject of choice for them to study at University. Participants are asked to complete pre- and post-event evaluations where they are asked the same questions, with the main purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the session gave the students a positive insight into a subject and to see whether the session assisted in raising their aspirations and motivated them in their current studies. After one particular Sociology masterclass, a group of students fed back to say that after the session they now knew that their chosen subject of Sociology was not for them. We saw this as a positive exercise as it had assisted the students in making an informed decision and had stopped them for applying for the wrong course at university. We used this information to reconsider the format for our masterclasses and we have now changed these activities to 'subject explore' days. For example, a student will now come to the University for an "Exploring Social Science Day" where they will experience a mini session in all the different areas in social sciences. This then enables to student to fully understand all of the relevant study options that are available in that particular area.

We acknowledge that the evaluation of individual activities and initiatives will only identify general trends (both for overall improvements and the impact on specific groups of students), rather than enable us to establish which initiatives are fundamentally causing such improvements. As a result, we intend to undertake a substantial review of all newly launched initiatives three – five years after their launch (i.e., around 2023/24). This will give us enough data to use more sophisticated techniques (such as a statistical multivariate analysis) to identify which initiatives are having the most significant impact and should therefore be invested in further, and which could be discontinued to allow for funding to be reinvested in other activity.

Through Aimhigher West Midlands we jointly fund one of three data services approved by HEFCE to

oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the NCOP. This also supports our ongoing work to track the attainment and entry to higher education of participants in institutionally-funded Aimhigher programmes. We are currently reviewing Aimhigher-related targets and milestones to incorporate the introduction of Attainment 8.

5. Student communications

5.1. Student Voice

The University is continuing with a number of initiatives that are aimed at enhancement of communication with students. The Students' Union President is a member of the Board of Governors, Academic Board and other senior management committees, whilst the Students' Union Chief Executive is a member of the University's Professional Services Group. The Students' Union have also been involved with the formulation of this Access and Participation Plan.

BCUSU is delivering a Student Representation System designed to facilitate conversations between students and University staff. The system currently has over 700 students undertaking the role of Student Academic Leaders. The Student Voice Committee is a joint committee between the university and BCUSU that focuses on delivery of the outcomes of the Student Representation System. A system of Feedback Forums has been established to enhance the work of Boards of Studies, with Student Academic Leaders and School Representatives playing an active role.

Students' Union executive officers and the Union's Head of Engagement continue to work closely with the University's Education Development Service to optimise the student role in academic development.

5.2. Communication/information to prospective and current students

Clear, accessible and timely information on fees, loans, bursaries and scholarships is provided to applicants and students in a variety of ways:

- Outreach staff, student mentors, student ambassadors and the course enquiry team provide information on fees and loans as part of their outreach activity;
- Specialist staff give talks and provide information on fees and financial support to prospective students, applicants and their families at Open Days and Applicant Visit Days;
- The University is committed to providing such timely information to UCAS and SLC as they reasonably require to populate their applicant facing web services;
- The University's website provides comprehensive information about course fees, and loans available to students, as well as the Student Incentives Scheme. Guidance on additional course costs is provided together with an indication of accommodation costs. Visitors to the website can download a 'Money Matters' leaflet produced by Student Affairs which also acts as a gateway to other, more detailed information or can access the University's bespoke Student Calculator;
- Our undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses contain information on finance and links to further, more detailed information. They are available either in a printed version or as a downloadable PDF from our website;
- The University's Student Affairs department employs specialist Student Finance Advisers and Student Affairs Advisers to provide information, advice and guidance on a wide range of money matters. This includes information about the funding available, support with applications for hardship assistance and help with budgeting and debt management. Students can access this support in person via regular drop-in sessions or by appointment; by phone or email; or via various online channels including a comprehensive intranet site and an e-guidance service. A wide range of printed materials supports this work, together with an online funding portal which enables students to search for appropriate additional funding from external trusts and charities;
- The work of Student Affairs is complemented by the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers information, advice and representation on a wide range of issues including money. Its trained, experienced advisers are available by telephone, email or by appointment.
- The University has been a corporate member of the Plain English Campaign since 2015, demonstrating its commitment to clearer communication to students and prospective students. Training in how to write in plain English is available to relevant staff, and student-facing information (including, but not limited to, policies and procedures, information related to courses and assessments, and guides to our services) is being reviewed in line with plain English principles.

This plan will be published on our external website (as previous Access Agreements have been). We are also investigating other methods of making the Plan more accessible to students, including the possibility of a student project to develop explanatory cartoon strips.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

We reserve the right to raise fees in line with inflation (RPI-X) to the maximum fee cap permitted for all full-time undergraduate and ITT programmes for 2019/20 entry.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£9,250
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		£9,250
CertHE / DipHE		£9,250
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		£11,100
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First Degree	10032093 - Foundation for Conductive Education	£9,250
Foundation Degree	10005967 - South and City College Birmingham	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	10002696 - Gloucestershire College	£9,250
HNC / HND	10006442 - Birmingham Metropolitan College	£9,250
First degree	10062669 - Birmingham City International College	£9,250
Foundation year / Year 0	10062669 - Birmingham City International College	£9,250
CertHE / DipHE		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First Degree		£6,935
Foundation Degree		£6,935
Foundation Degree	10005967 - South and City College Birmingham -	£6,935
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£6,935
HNC / HND	10006442 - Birmingham Metropolitan College -	£6,935
CertHE / DipHE		£6,935
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		£6,935

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Student success	Multiple	HESA T5 - Projected neither award or transfer (full-time, first degree entrants)	Full-time first degree entrants projected for neither award or transfer	No	2014-15	10.7%	9.7%	9.4%	9.1%	8.8%	Baseline year 2014-15 relates to data published in 2014-15, i.e. starters in 2012-13	
T16a_02	Progression	Multiple	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	Full-time first degree entrants projected to achieve a degree	No	2014-15	79.1%	81%	81.5%	82%	82.5%	Baseline year 2014-15 relates to data published in 2014-15, i.e. starters in 2012-13	
T16a_03	Access	Disabled	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Full-time all undergraduate entrants declaring a disability, as captured through HESA Student Record	No	2014-15	1651	1950	2025	2100	2200	Targeting approximately 4% annual increase on the previous year's figure. Baseline year 2014-15 relates to starters in that academic year.	
T16a_04	Success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Improvement in progression from Year 1 to Year 2 for students entering with pre-entry BTEC qualifications	No	2016-17	70%	72%	74%	76%	78%	Baseline year relates to the year students commence their course	
T16a_05	Success	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Improvement in retention following year of entry for students from black or minority ethnic backgrounds	No	2015-16	84.7%	86%	87%	88%	89%	Baseline year 2015-16 relates to data published in 2015-16, i.e. starters in 2013-14.	
T16a_06	Success	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Reduction in BME good honours attainment gap - percentage point difference between BME and white students	No	2016-17	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	Baseline year relates to the first degree qualifiers in that academic year.	
T16a_07	Progression	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increase in rates of transition from UG to PGT study for BME students	No	2016-17	14.3%	16%	18%	20%	22%	Baseline year relates to the first degree qualifiers in that academic year.	

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds engaged in intensive activity with collaborative partnership using a basket of indicators	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	500	1000	1000	1000	1000		Aimhigher West Midlands is a partnership of 5 HEIs working to provide a programme of HE progression support to disadvantaged KS3, KS4 and KS5 learners in at least 30 regional schools. Baseline year remains 2010/11.
T16b_02	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Proportion of engaged young people from disadvantaged backgrounds attaining 5 x GCSE A* to C inc. English and Maths (or Attainment 8 equivalent) is greater than local average for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, using a basket of indicators	Yes	2013-14	FSM 60.2% (regional baseline 36.2%)	25% above baseline	25% above baseline	25% above baseline	25% above baseline		This medium-term impact target applies to the cohort of young people aged 11-16 engaging in the Aimhigher programme. Baseline year for this milestone will be reported against the relevant benchmarking data for the academic year in which they complete Key Stage 4.
T16b_03	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in intensive activity target group entering HE and retained for 6 months is greater than local average for YP from disadvantaged backgrounds, using a basket of indicators	Yes	2013-14	FSM 31.6% (regional baseline 22%). POLAR3 Q1 40.0% (regional baseline 12.4%)	10% above baseline	10% above baseline	10% above baseline	10% above baseline		Baseline year changed to 2013/14. NS-SEC measure removed. Due to UCAS policy on access to learner level data, tracking now based on HESA data, reporting % entering any form of HE and retained for 6 months.