



## University of Nottingham

### Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

#### 1. Assessment of performance

The following assessment of performance demonstrates the University of Nottingham's achievements and challenges in delivering equality of opportunity at all stages of the student lifecycle: access, success and progression. We have primarily used the new Office for Students (OfS) publicly available data dashboard<sup>1</sup> to undertake our assessment and have used supplementary data to add context. As an institution, we are aware that our past and current student analytic capabilities are not as developed as we would like and throughout this Access and Participation Plan (APP) we describe our ambitions and commitment to increasing our capacity and capabilities in this area.

We are a large university, with nearly 35,000 students studying at our UK campuses in 2018-19. The University's APP applies to between 21,500 and 22,200 qualifying (home and EU undergraduates as well as initial teacher training (ITT)) students per year. As a high-tariff institution, we have challenges in terms of equality of access for all students, measured by the number of underrepresented students entering the University, but the University has made good progress over the last five years. Our internal data shows we have increased the number of underrepresented students from 1608 in 2014-15 to 2319 in 2018-19, an increase of over 40% and the number of low-income students from 1359 to 1760, an increase of 30%. Our application data suggests that underrepresented students follow the general pattern for offer and acceptance rates for the institution as a whole, implying our admissions processes are consistently fair. Our home and EU undergraduate intake has grown by nearly 25% from 5,129 in 2014 to 6,408 in 2018. This has made our percentage gains in access even harder to achieve. Our analysis, across the APP, has focussed on full-time students, as part-time data for the institution is not of a viable size to be analysed.

The success lifecycle stage is informed by non-continuation rates as well as degree attainment information. Non-continuation rates are measured by those students not continuing from year one to year two and in general, the University has low non-continuation rates. Attainment success is measured by those students obtaining a 'good honours degree' of a 2:1 or above and work has already begun to address gaps that we had already identified.

The final student lifecycle stage of progression has been measured on the number of students progressing into highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level. Following substantial investment in our Careers and Employability Service (CES), we have seen large and sustained success with our progression rates for all student groups, another outcome of which we are proud.

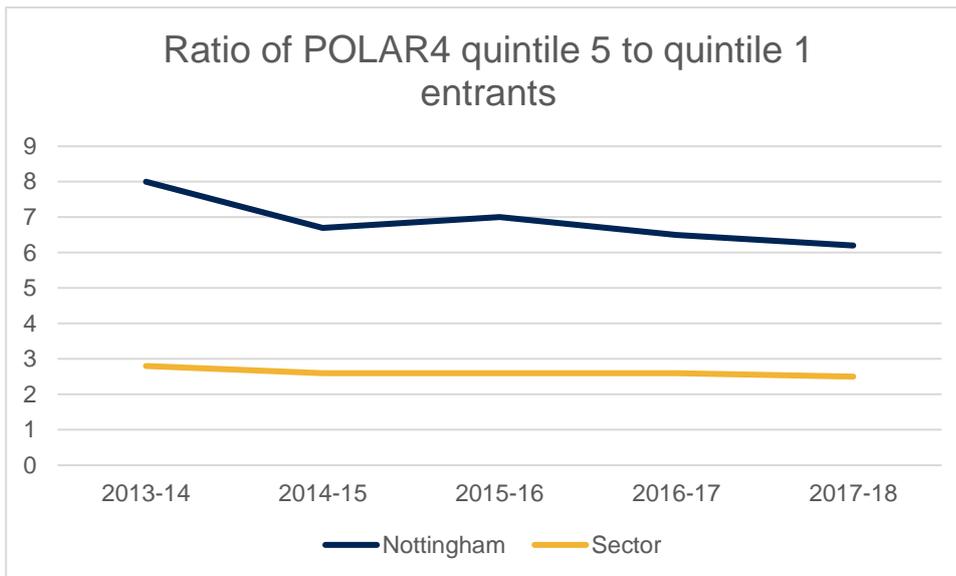
#### 1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

##### Access

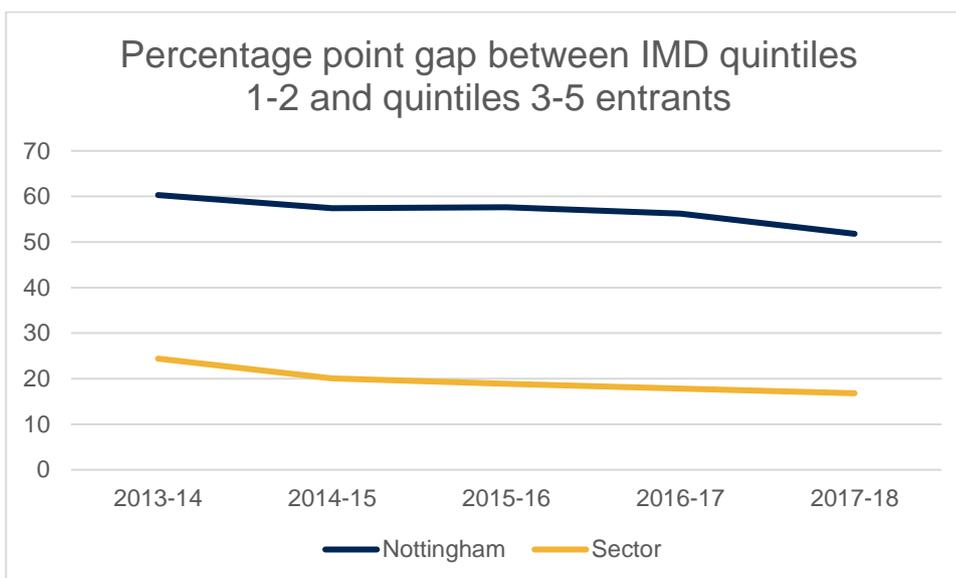
1.1.1 It is clear from the OfS dataset and dashboard that the University of Nottingham has statistically significant gaps in access between 18-year olds entering the University and the general 18-year-old population, using both the IMD and POLAR4 measures. The University is over-represented in IMD quintiles 4-5 and POLAR4 quintile 5 and underrepresented in IMD quintiles 1-2 as well as POLAR4 quintiles 1-3 when compared to the population and to the sector. However, progress has been made in narrowing the gaps over the last five years with our numbers of POLAR4 quintile 1 students having increased from 310 to 410. In 2013-14, the gap between the proportion of POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students was 8:1. This had fallen to 6.2:1 by 2017-18, but it is still higher than the sector average as well as the average for higher-tariff institutions. Despite the University making greater progress than the sector over the past five years, we will identify a target for this group to ensure our continuous improvement and contribution to the sector wide goal.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>



1.1.2 The IMD quintiles follow a similar pattern to the POLAR4 quintiles, with the Nottingham percentage point gap between IMD quintiles 1-2 and 3-5 at a current level of 51.8 percentage points compared to the sector average of 16.8. Whilst the University has been making good progress in closing this gap over the last five years, by increasing the number of IMD quintile 1-2 students from 1105 to 1490, it is still significant so we will identify a target for this group.



## Success

### Non-continuation

1.1.3 The IMD data demonstrates that the gaps between the quintile continuation rates have been gradually closing, with the percentage point gap between quintile 5 and quintile 1 decreasing from 6 to 3 percentage points over the past five years, whereas the sector average has risen from 6.3 to 7.9 percentage points. The data for POLAR4 quintile 5 and 1 students at the University demonstrates there is a smaller gap in continuation rates at Nottingham compared to the sector. However, over the past five years of available data the University's gap has increased from 1.4 to 2.8 percentage points as the continuation rates for quintile 1 have fallen at a faster rate than those in quintile 5. This gap is not statistically significant and we are below the sector average, so we will monitor this group rather than set a target.

### Attainment

1.1.4 In relation to good degree attainment, the dashboard data demonstrates that Nottingham has a lower percentage point gap for POLAR4 quintile 5 students compared to quintile 1 students than the sector and this is on a downward trajectory. None of the POLAR4 data are statistically significant. However, much of the IMD analysis is statistically significant for each year, including the percentage point gap between IMD quintile

5 compared with 1; quintiles 3-5 compared with 1-2; and quintile 1 compared with all other quintiles. The University is below the sector average for these gaps but we will continue to monitor progress to ensure further continuous improvement.

### Progression to employment or further study

1.1.5 POLAR4 quintiles 1-2 show a sharp improvement in the quality of progression outcomes between 2014-15 and 2016-17; an increase of 5.5 percentage points. There is also an improvement for quintiles 3-5 over the same period but only by 4 percentage points.

1.1.6 Using internal data, the level of engagement with the CES by students from quintiles 1-2 compared to quintiles 3-5 are broadly similar at 71% and 73% respectively over the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 cohorts. As with progression outcomes, there is an upward trend in usage of the CES over these three years with both groups having engagement levels of 75% for the 2016-17 leavers.

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

### Access

1.2.1 The OfS dashboard provides data disaggregated by the ethnicities of black, Asian, mixed, other and white. Over the past five years, the proportion of 18 year-old black, mixed ethnicity and Asian students entering the University of Nottingham has increased and all proportions are above the population proportion, with the positive gap in black, mixed ethnicity and Asian students being statistically significant across all years. The proportion of other ethnicity students has also risen and is now above the population proportion. The only ethnicity consistently below the population proportion is white students and their proportion is continuing to reduce, with the change in the access gap being statistically significant over the past five years. The proportions at Nottingham are broadly in line with all English higher education providers.

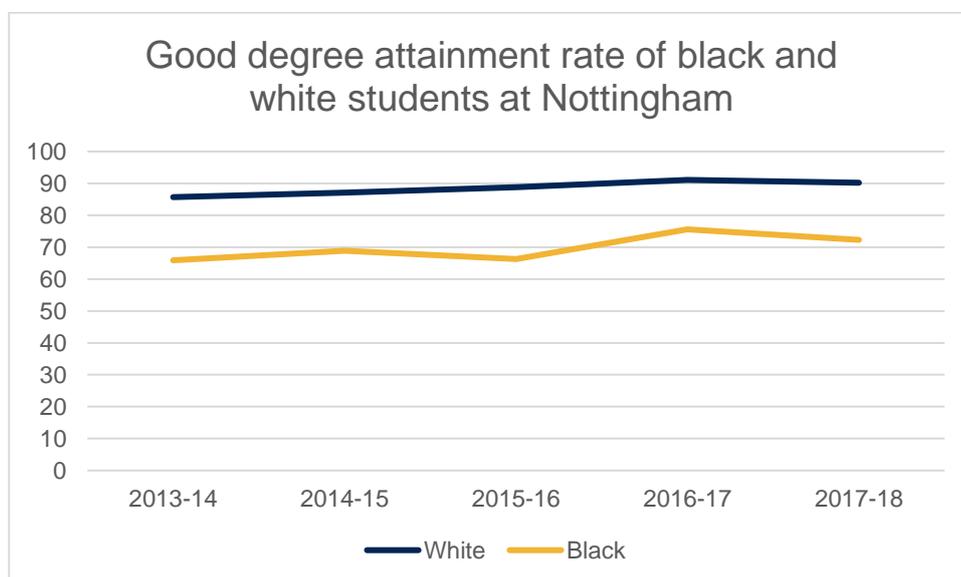
### Success

#### Non-continuation

1.2.2 There are no statistically significant continuation gaps related to ethnicity at the University. The percentage point gap comparing white with black students for all undergraduates has fallen from 5 percentage points to zero in the last five years of available data, compared to the sector average that has increased from 4.6 to 6.3 percentage points. The gap has also fallen from 1.7 to 0.1 for white students compared to all other ethnicities, whereas the gap in the sector has risen from 1.9 to 3.2 percentage points. The gap for black students compared with all other ethnicities has also fallen at the University.

### Attainment

1.2.3 The University has a lower percentage point gap between black and white student outcomes compared to the sector and this rate has decreased from 20 to 18 percentage points over the last five years of available data, with the sector's current gap at 23.1 percentage points. However, there is still a clear absolute gap between the good degree outcomes for black and white students, which alongside 'white compared with all other ethnicities' and 'black compared with all other ethnicities' is statistically significant across each of the last five years. We will address this lack of progress towards closing the gap with a target.



## Progression to employment or further study

1.2.4 The University of Nottingham notes that for the most recent DLHE dataset (for 2016-17 leavers), graduates with a non-white ethnic background had a higher rate of entering highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level six months after completing their qualification. Whilst the unemployment rate amongst white graduates was lower than for non-white graduates, the quality of employment outcomes (based on the Standard Occupation Classification) reported by non-white graduates was higher by 2 percentage points.

1.2.5 Engagement with the CES by the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 graduating cohorts shows very low difference (around 1 percentage point) between white and non-white students.

## 1.3 Mature students

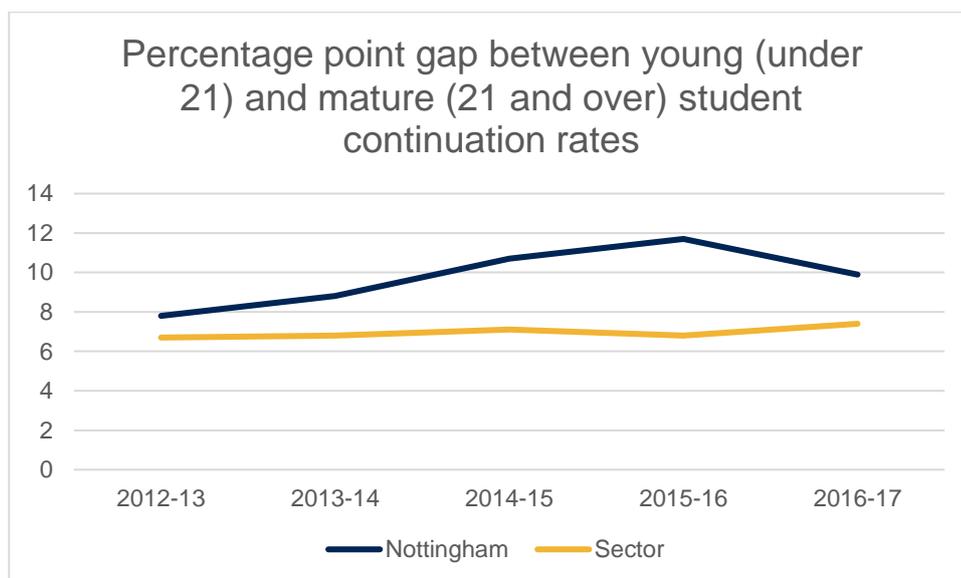
### Access

1.3.1 The proportion of mature students (defined as 21 years old and over) has stayed relatively stable at around 10% of the undergraduate entrants at Nottingham over the last five years. As our overall population has increased, our absolute number of mature students has risen from 530 in 2013-14 to 600 in 2017-18. The proportion increases to around 15% when you look at the subset of undergraduate with postgraduate components. We are, however, below the sector average of 28%, which has been very gradually rising over the same period. The majority of our mature students are clustered in vocational subjects including nursing, midwifery and social work. The undergraduate part-time provision at the University is not truly flexible with modules taught across the week rather than concentrated over fewer days. This type of part-time provision is not always suited to mature learners with external commitments.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

1.3.2 The percentage point gap in continuation rates between young and mature (21 and over) has been significant over the last five years of available data for all undergraduates. The gap had been on an upward trajectory although it has decreased in 2016-17, the last year of available data. The University gap now stands at 10 percentage points for mature versus young students and the sector average stands at 7.4 percentage points. The gap is much larger (17 percentage points) for undergraduate with postgraduate component students and smaller (6 percentage points) for first-degree students, although both subsets have fluctuations. As the gap is significant for the whole undergraduate population of mature learners a target will be set to address this.



### Attainment

1.3.3 The percentage point gap for young compared with mature students (21 and over) for good degree attainment rates has fluctuated over time but is on a downward trajectory. The 2017-18 gap of 9 percentage points is now below the sector average of 10.3 percentage points. The sector average is on a very gradual upwards trajectory. Three years of the Nottingham gap data are statistically significant but the latest year of available data is not, due to the continued improvement in the metric.

## Progression to employment or further study

1.3.4 Students aged 21 and above at the commencement of their qualification at the University of Nottingham have very impressive progression statistics – for the three most recent DLHE surveys over 90% of mature students have gone on to highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level. This compares with a figure of 83.1% for those aged below 21 at the commencement of their qualification. The dashboard shows these results as statistically significant.

## 1.4 Disabled students

### Access

1.4.1 The OfS data dashboard demonstrates that over the past five years the proportion of disabled students entering the University has been on a gradual increase, with the absolute numbers rising from 590 in 2013-14 to 840 in 2017-18. With the proportion of students in 2017-18 declaring a disability at 13.3% - this is comparable to the sector average of 14.6%. The largest group of disabled students identify with cognitive or learning differences, although these numbers proportionally have been in slight decline. The proportion of students with a mental health condition has risen from 1.5% to 4.3% and is now the second largest sub group of disability. The patterns are in line with the sector. In 2018, an external consultant undertook a review of disabled student support at Nottingham, which noted that over the past five years there has been a 47% increase in the number of disabled students. In addition, during the same period the number of students declaring a mental health disability at the University has risen by more than 150%.

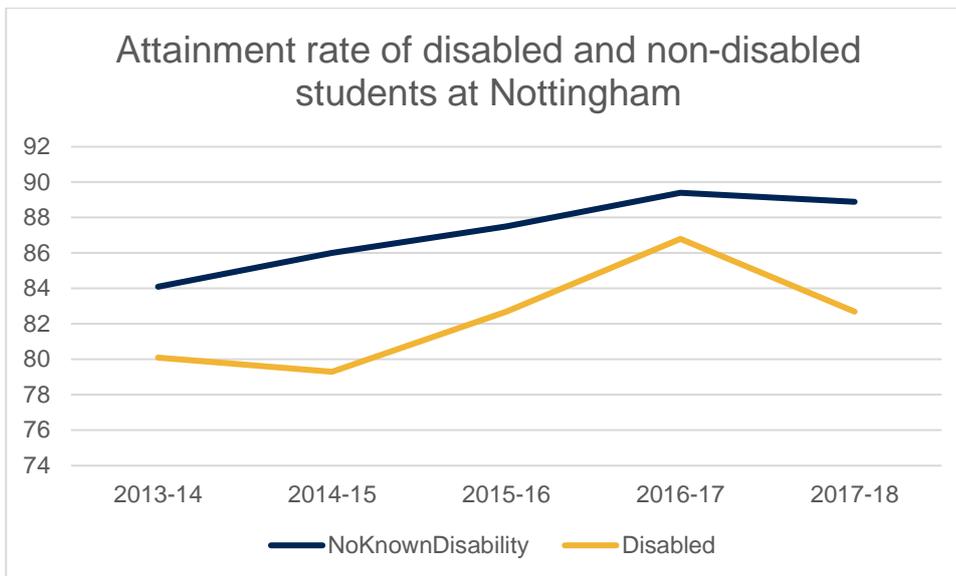
### Success

#### Non-continuation

1.4.2 The continuation rate for disabled students at Nottingham is currently 93%, which is above the sector average of 89.4% although both rates have been falling. The University is also above the sector averages for continuation rates for all of the disability subgroups. The continuation percentage point gap for disabled compared with non-disabled students at Nottingham has been on a gradual upward trajectory over the past five years of available data, rising from 1 to 3 percentage points, whereas the sector average has fallen from 1.5 to 1 percentage point. However, the figures at Nottingham are not statistically significant at any point for all undergraduates or any subset so may have occurred by chance alone. The group of disabled students with the largest gap is mental health conditions versus no known disability, where the gap was 10 percentage points but has now fallen to 3 percentage points, which is less than the sector average of 3.5 and again this is not statistically significant. As we are currently above the sector continuation rates, the University will continue to monitor these figures rather than set a target.

#### Attainment

1.4.3 The attainment rates for good degree outcomes of non-disabled versus disabled students at Nottingham have increased over the last 5 years with the exception of the final year of data, when attainment for both groups fell, although attainment for disabled students fell to a much greater extent, resulting in a statistically significant gap. Nottingham also has a larger percentage point gap compared to the sector, which grew in the final year of available data, so the University will be setting a target for this group of students. Analysing the breakdown of disabled students by the subgroups provided on the dashboard, showed that all but one subgroup of disabled students followed this pattern including an attainment drop in 2017-18. Students with a sensory, medical or physical impairment decreased their gap compared to non-disabled students and now outperform them. However, the number of students within this subgroup is small and the results are not statistically significant. We have also examined internal data to compare performance over time at a course level for disabled versus non-disabled students. This has shown that some courses, including Law have seen their gap increase in recent years, whereas others, including Mathematics have seen a decrease. Although disciplinary differences in outcomes are likely to be a reflection of cohort size we will examine our data further to see whether we can share good practice across the University.



### Progression to employment or further study

1.4.4 The difference in the quality of outcomes between graduates who have declared a disability and those that have not is currently less than 2 percentage points and is broadly the same for 2016-17 leavers as for 2012-13 leavers. Graduates from the University of Nottingham who have declared a disability have seen a significant improvement in their access to highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level over the last three DLHE surveys. Progression rates have increased from 69% in 2014-15 to over 80% in 2016-17.

1.4.5 Engagement with the CES by the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 graduating cohorts shows very low difference (around 1 percentage point) between students who did declare a disability and those who did not.

## 1.5 Care leavers

### Access

1.5.1 We have used internal data for the assessment of performance of care leavers as the OfS dashboard does not contain institutional or sector level information for this group of students. As the table below shows, the University's intake of care leavers is small each year. According to the Department for Education (DfE) in 2018 there were 64 looked after children per 10,000 in the population (0.64%), which has been gradually increasing since 2016.<sup>2</sup> The care leavers' entrant rate at the University has fluctuated with a large increase in the last year of available data. This increase coincides with increased levels of support in terms of outreach and transition activity for this target group. We will internally monitor these rates to ensure sustained improvement.

Care Leaver Entrant Numbers					
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Care leaver entrant numbers	19	13	15	12	23
Care leaver percentage of all UK UG students	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%

### Success

#### Non-continuation

1.5.2 Our internal records did not centrally record care leaver status before 2013-14, so we only have continuation data from 2014-15 onwards. Our records show that care leavers' continuation rates from year 1 to year 2 are comparable, if not better than our general UK undergraduate student rates. We have been unable to find comparable sector data.

Care Leaver Continuation Rates				
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Care leaver	100.0%	92.3%	100.0%	100.0%
Not care leaver	93.2%	93.9%	92.5%	93.0%

<sup>2</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/757922/Children\\_looked\\_after\\_in\\_England\\_2018\\_Text\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757922/Children_looked_after_in_England_2018_Text_revised.pdf)

## Attainment

1.5.3 As our internal records did not record care leaver status before 2013-14 we only have degree outcome data for care leavers from 2015-16 onwards. The attainment rates of our care leaver students are lower than the general undergraduate population. However, as the cohort of students is so small there are huge percentage fluctuations. Again, we will internally monitor these rates and will introduce interventions where necessary but a target will not be set due to the small number of students involved.

<b>Good Degrees (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 as % of all classified degrees)</b>			
	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
Care leaver	55.6%	85.7%	62.5%
Not care leaver	88.0%	89.4%	88.3%

### Progression to employment or further study

1.5.4 There are only 15 care leavers with known destinations data over the last three DLHE surveys. Their overall destination performance is almost in line with the whole student population, whilst their usage of the CES is significantly higher.

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>All Students</b>	<b>Care Leavers</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Positive Outcomes	95.8%	93.3%	-2.5%
Graduate Prospects	83.9%	80.0%	-3.9%
Engagement with CES	69.1%	86.6%	+17.5%

## 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

1.6.1 The BAME access data above demonstrated that the University has a lower proportion of white students compared to the population and that this number was reducing over time. Looking at the intersectionality of ethnicity and POLAR4 data at the access lifecycle stage, the proportion of white/POLAR4 quintile 3-5 students is reducing at a greater rate than the sector, although it started at a higher point, and has fallen nearly 8 percentage points since 2013-14. The white/POLAR4 quintile 1-2 students have remained relatively steady, although they are below the sector average. When looking at gender and POLAR4 intersectionality the percentage of females and males in quintiles 3-5 has reduced over time and the percentage of females and males in quintiles 1-2 has increased, with the percentage of female students increasing at a faster rate than males. The percentage of quintiles 1-2 students is slightly below the sector averages.

1.6.2 Using the data dashboard, the intersection of IMD data with ethnicity at the access stage shows that the University is below the sector averages for white/IMD quintiles 1-2 as well as all ethnicities except white/IMD quintiles 1-2. The proportion of all ethnicities except white/IMD quintiles 1-2 has been increasing and is currently 12.4% (compared to 20.7% for the sector) whilst the proportion of white/IMD quintiles 1-2 students is on a very slight downward trajectory, currently at 11.5% (compared to 20.8% in the sector). We are also below the sector averages when comparing the intersectionality of IMD and gender, although our male/IMD quintile 1-2 student proportions are nearly equal to our female proportion, but both are below the sector. These intersections will be internally monitored to ensure the access target that we set using IMD quintiles has a positive impact on these intersections.

1.6.3 At the attainment lifecycle stage, there is a significant relationship between ethnicity and POLAR4 quintiles, as well as IMD quintiles at the University. The percentage point gap between white POLAR4 quintiles 3-5 students and other ethnicities is statistically significant and has been for all five years of recorded data on the dashboard. However, the percentage point gap at Nottingham has reduced from 12 percentage points in 2013-14 to 10 in 2017-18 and it is smaller than the sector gap. It. This pattern is repeated for the IMD quintiles and white students compared with all other ethnicities.

1.6.4 As the dashboard shows, female students outperformed their male counterparts in terms of attainment. There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and deprivation and POLAR4. For POLAR4 quintiles 3-5 male compared with female in attainment the gap in 2017-18 was around -5.6 percentage points compared to a sector average of -5.2. Male and female students in IMD quintiles 3-5 show the same pattern. However, the University has smaller gaps in POLAR4 quintile 1-2 (as well as IMD quintiles 1-2) attainment between male and female students compared to the sector, although the IMD statistics have fluctuated. We will internally monitor these intersections to improve male outcomes.

1.6.5 In 2017 analysis of internal and HESA data was carried out to examine the impact of various factors on BAME attainment. The analysis provided little or no evidence that studying on courses with few other BAME students, the type of living accommodation, or the nature of the subject being studied, had a significant impact on the size of the BAME gap. It did suggest that being a mature BAME student might be a factor but

as mature BAME students form less than 1% of the total numbers in the dataset and 4% of BAME students this cannot be a significant factor in the overall gap.

1.6.6 Qualitative research in 2017 explored the experience of BAME students through a sample informally weighted by faculty, ethnic origin, year of study and POLAR quintile. The BAME student experience varied according to a number of factors – notably previous educational background, the frequency and depth of relationships with staff (and the learning community more generally), the campus on which the student was living, and the ways in which academic content was encountered.

1.6.7 Current research and monitoring activity, now focused upon academic disciplines, is exploring correlations between ethnicity and performance at the level of assessment element and the impact of curriculum design, structures and processes; for example, the impact of automated seminar group allocation and the preponderance of 'white content'.

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

1.7.1 To date the University has supported underrepresented groups of students, including young carers and refugees, at the access stage of the student lifecycle with outreach activities and transition support. We have not routinely tracked these students through the success and progression lifecycle stages, so further analysis is not currently possible.

1.7.2 According to Student Finance England data from 2014-15 on the Stand Alone Charity's website<sup>3</sup> we have 59 estranged students at the University. We have not collected this data at an institutional level, so we cannot assess our current performance. We are investigating the possibility of adding estrangement (based on SFE definitions) to the eligibility criteria for our Nottingham Potential bursary (see paragraph 3.1.25 for more information). This will then allow the institution to identify and monitor students and track their progress.

1.7.3. The University has actively worked with young carer support groups since 2013 following academic research led by colleagues within the institution and the subsequent links with the Carers Trust. This work has focussed on access and transition to higher education and resulted in caring responsibilities being included within our contextual admissions policy. Data on current University students has not been routinely or uniformly collected making any data assessment impossible. We will actively use the UCAS application data when carer questions are added to the form. We will use this data to track students through their lifecycle at the University.

1.7.4 Our central student records list eight refugees currently studying at the institution. Some students who entered as refugees have now had their visa status updated. Since 2016-17, we have offered a scholarship for refugee students studying at the University with home fee status. The numbers are extremely small, with two refugee entrants claiming the scholarship in 16-17, six in 17-18 and one in 18-19. We have not tracked these students to date, so assessment of their performance is not possible.

1.7.5 For the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 graduating cohorts, female students outperformed their male counterparts in terms of accessing employment or further study and entering highly skilled employment or further study at a higher-level six months after completing their qualification. The difference for both statistics between female and male graduates is 2.4 percentage points for accessing work or study and 1 percentage point for entering highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level. Male students have a slightly higher (71% as opposed to 68%) level of engagement with CES for the last three DLHE cohorts. The level of engagement for both groups is increasing though with 2016-17 leavers seeing 74% of male and 71% of female students working with CES.

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

### 2.1 Target groups

2.1.1 Through the assessment of performance, the University has identified key target groups. We have used the OfS dashboard and institutional dataset to identify statistically significant gaps and we have compared ourselves to the sector or population where possible. We have been mindful of the OfS's KPMs and have aligned our targets with these where appropriate, to ensure we are contributing to national agendas. Ultimately, the University would prefer to target underrepresented students using a metric based on the individual, Free School Meal eligibility for example. Until this metric, or similar, is available at the point of application and for outreach activities, we will continue to use the best proxies available to us, whilst understanding their limitations.

2.1.2 We have removed some targets from our previous APP and have reformulated others to address gaps ensuring that all are now outcomes rather than output focussed. We have removed our target relating to the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk/champion-institutions/17-east-midlands>

intake of low-income students, including the subset of postgraduate ITT students. We will continue to monitor these students as they provide a good historical measure of our impact in widening access. However, as household income data is not available at the point of application (or prior for outreach activities), we will remove this target and focus our access gap activity on POLAR4 and IMD measures.

2.1.3 Under guidance from the OfS, we have also removed any previous targets focussing on maintaining rates rather than continuous improvement; this includes our mature and BAME entrant figures as well as our bursary uptake rates. We will of course continue to monitor these areas and assign a target in the future if performance gaps emerge. We have also removed several other internal operational targets including access targets for our summer school participants and intake ratios from our partner schools. These operational targets will continue to feed into our strategic targets (as the student groups align) but will not be listed separately.

2.1.4 As described above, the University has a larger ratio gap for POLAR4 quintile 5 students compared to quintile 1 students for high-tariff institutions. The University has made good progress over the past five years, but our ratio is still large and there are statistically significant gaps compared to the population. Therefore, we will use the low-participation neighbourhood (LPN) characteristic (measured by POLAR4) to target students in the access stage of the student lifecycle.

2.1.5 As the dashboard shows, we also have significant gaps in access for IMD quintiles 1-2 students compared with quintiles 3-5. Again, the University has made progress over the last five years, but we are still above the sector average and have significant gaps when compared to the population. Therefore, we will use the socio-economic characteristic (measured by IMD) to target students in the access stage of the student lifecycle. We are also targeting underrepresented students more generally into research-intensive universities with a collaborative target with Realising Opportunities.

2.1.6 We will also focus on mature students at the success lifecycle stage with a target related to non-continuation gaps comparing mature (21 and over) student and young (under 21) student continuation rates. This is a reformulation of maintenance targets from our previous APP, where we used HESA performance tables to measure our rates.

2.1.7 We highlighted BAME student attainment rates for action following analysis for the institutional TEF. A target for this group will be set in relation to the attainment gap between white and black students in the success stage of the lifecycle. Whilst this is not a new area of focus for the University, it has not had an identified target to date.

2.1.8 The University will also put in place a target to cover the gap between disabled and non-disabled student attainment rates. Again, whilst the institution has internally focused attention towards the success of disabled students, we have not previously stated a target for degree outcomes.

2.1.9 The University's definition of widening participation (WP) (see 3.1.3) now includes a group with the working title of 'disrupted education' students, which sits alongside the established care leavers group. The University is refreshing and increasing its support for care leavers and we are in the process of signing up to the Care Leavers Covenant. We have also been successful in joining the NNECL pilot project to develop a new quality mark for care-experienced people, filling the void left by the expiration of the Buttle Mark. We will use the learnings from this piece of work to support the wider disrupted education group (across all stages of the life cycle) which includes young carers, children of military families and refugees amongst others. The University is also a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant. Due to the very small numbers in these cohorts, institutional targets will not be set but internal monitoring will be undertaken.

2.1.10 The University does not currently feel it appropriate to set a target for the progression lifecycle stage as we already have high performance in this area at Nottingham and the way in which progression has previously been measured across institutions (via the DLHE survey) no longer happens. We await the first batch of Graduate Outcomes survey data so we can begin to understand the difference a 15-month census date has on progression data compared to 6-months, under the previous regime, and will then review the situation to ensure no gaps emerge.

2.1.11 CES has started to look at links between the number of interactions by students and graduates and related progression outcomes. Early analysis indicates that higher levels of engagement with CES correlates with better employability outcomes. More work is required in this area, but we will analyse the information, examining the underrepresented groups and the interactions between them.

## **2.2 Aims and objectives**

2.2.1. Following the definition of our target groups and lifecycle stages, we have designed the following six targets to address absolute gaps at the University of Nottingham. We have devised all the institutional targets using the publicly available OfS data dashboard and we will monitor and measure progress using the dashboard. Further details, including milestones and the year of baseline data is contained within our Targets and Investment Plan.

2.2.2 Alongside the Targets and Investment Plan there are further milestones relating to interventions, research and evaluation contained in Appendix, 5.1. This table provides measurable and timed objectives, as well as demonstrating our commitment and ambition to meeting our targets.

## 2.3 Access: Targets 1, 2 and 3

Aim: to reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from underrepresented groups.

2.3.1 Target group: Low participation neighbourhood (18- and 19-year olds)

- To reduce the ratio gap in entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students from a baseline figure of 6.2:1 to 4.3:1 by 2024-25.

2.3.2 According to the OfS, the average ratio for high-tariff institutions is currently 5:1 and they have set an ambitious target of reducing that ratio to 3:1 by 2024-25. Based on current modelling this would require the University to admit 320 more quintile 1 students and reduce the number of quintile 5 students by the same number. Whilst the University of Nottingham is supportive of the OfS's aim to reduce the gap and eliminate the gap completely by 2038-39, a recent Russell Group research paper highlighted that there are currently not enough quintile 1 students with the required prior attainment available to meet the target, even with contextual admissions policies in place. As schools, charities, employers and the government, alongside universities, would have to undertake a substantially increased coordinated effort to raise the attainment of these target students on a much larger scale, which will take time to devise and implement, we are setting a more realistic target, based on our current rates of improvement.

2.3.4 Target group: Socio-economic

- To reduce the percentage point difference in access rates between IMD quintile 1-2 and quintile 3-5 students from a baseline of 51.8 percentage points to 34.8 percentage points in 2024-25.

2.3.5 From 2013-14 to 2017-18 our percentage point gap has fallen from 60.3 to 51.8, a decrease of 8.5 percentage points. Over the next five years, we plan to double that decrease, so that the gap decreases by 17 percentage points to 34.8 percentage points in 2024-25. Ultimately, we would like the gap eliminated by 2038-39 alongside the POLAR4 gap. We will create new outreach initiatives and admissions systems to meet this target, so we are presuming that progress will be weighted towards the end of the APP lifespan.

2.3.6 Target group: Multiple

- To increase the proportion of Realising Opportunities (RO) students who are tracked into HE who will access a research-intensive university (RIU) within two years of becoming 'HE ready' and completing their Post-16 studies from baseline of 42% to 54% by 2024-25.

2.3.7 The University is working towards membership of Realising Opportunities in 2020-21. By joining the collaborative partnership, the University will contribute to the collaborative goal of increasing the proportion of RO students accessing a research-intensive university. RO students are from groups underrepresented in higher education and the partnership uses a robust targeting criteria. The target is ambitious and requires continuous improvement, which will be supported by evaluation. The HEAT tracker service will be used to monitor progress.

## 2.4 Success - continuation: Target 4

Aim: to reduce the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups.

2.4.1 Target group: Mature

- To reduce the percentage point difference in non-continuation rates between young (under 21) and mature (21 and over) students from a baseline of 10 percentage points to 5 percentage points by 2024-25.

2.4.2 We are planning to reduce our non-continuation gaps for mature students compared to young students by half by 2024-25. Again, as new projects and activities will need to be designed and piloted to build on support already in place, progress towards this target may be slow initially. There are many structural factors, including entry qualifications, family commitments and financial pressures that will make the eradication of the absolute gap for this target group of students very challenging. By 2029-30, we are planning to have halved our gap again, with the intention of eliminating the gap by 2034-35.

## 2.5 Success - degree outcomes: Targets 5 and 6

Aim: to reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups.

2.5.1 Target group: Ethnicity

- To reduce the percentage point difference in good degree attainment (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1) between white and black students from a baseline of 18 percentage points to 9 percentage points by 2024-25.

2.5.2 The University has set an ambitious target of reducing the attainment gap between black and white students by half over the course of the next five years. Progress will again be weighted towards the latter years of the APP to allow the activities to embed and make an impact. We are also committed to eliminating the absolute gap by 2030-31 in line with the OfS's KPM.

2.5.3 Target group: Disabled

- To reduce the percentage point difference in good degree attainment (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1) between disabled and non-disabled students from a baseline of 6 percentage points to 3 percentage points by 2024-25.

2.5.4 Our last target is to reduce, again by half, our attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students by 2024-25. There are many structural factors, as with mature students that will make the elimination of the gap very challenging. We will need to design and embed many projects. By 2029-30, we are planning to have halved our gap again, with the intention of eliminating the gap by 2034-35.

### 3. Strategic measures

#### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

##### Overview

3.1.1 The University of Nottingham is committed to the OfS's goal of ensuring equality of opportunity for all students. As an institution, we are aware that some of our current processes and systems, especially concerning student analytics, are not as developed or insightful as we require them to be in order to ensure equality of opportunity. We are currently embedding a new student record system and are recruiting staff to develop our capability in this area. Many of our current interventions and activities sit centrally and by providing greater and more robust student analytic data to faculties and schools, we can provide more localised support to targeted students.

3.1.2 In early 2018, the University formed the Widening Participation Review Group, to review the institutions' current systems and processes across all stages of the student lifecycle. The Group found a lack of connection between the lifecycle stages and processes were not fully embedded. In the last year, the Review Group produced a Green Paper for University Senate and presented, with students, to University Executive Board and Council (the University's governing body). To date the Group has implemented a University-wide definition of WP (3.1.3), which will be used from outreach and admissions through to careers and employability to ensure underrepresented groups are being supported. The Group has also reviewed the University's financial bursary support package (detailed in 3.1.24) and has mapped activities designed to support the success and progression of target students. This mapping will inform the new APP Steering Group (detailed in 3.1.11) as to where there are gaps in provision that need to be addressed.

3.1.3 The University defines the following groups of students as underrepresented in higher education:

- students from areas of low higher education participation
- students with low household income and/or low socioeconomic status
- students of particular ethnicities
- mature students
- disabled students
- care leavers
- students with 'disrupted education' (carers, people estranged from their families, people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, refugees, people with specific learning difficulties and mental health problems, children of military families).

3.1.4 The University is committed to embedding widening participation into all appropriate activities. A very recent example is our successful bid to the OfS's Challenge Competition to provide graduate internships for WP students in the local creative industries. Led by our Nottingham Lakeside Arts, this provides graduate level opportunities in an area that does not historically attract WP students and aims to retain graduate talent in the region.

3.1.5 The University has developed an overarching Theory of Change, shown on the next page. The Steering Group (detailed in 3.1.11) will use this to inform the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the APP. We do not expect that the long-term goal of the Theory of Change to be achieved during the lifespan of this APP.

## University of Nottingham Access and Participation Plan - Theory of Change



**Long Term Goal**

A universal design for education that meets the needs of all students and ensures equality of opportunity.

**Outcomes**

Students have the support to remain on their course until completion

Students can achieve the best degree outcome possible

Students can progress to further study or highly skilled employment

**Assumptions**

Staff are pro-active and engaged

Students are active and engaged

Students access available support

Students want to succeed

Students have the required resources

**Activities**

Pro-active student analytics are designed to monitor student progress and alert staff to issues

Curriculum design is inclusive and appropriate assessment methods are utilised

Accessible employability skills and opportunities are built into student life

**Pre-Conditions**

Specialist staff and services available on campus

Staff are given the appropriate training and resources

Students are involved in design, creation and evaluation of activities

**Inputs**

The University offers a flexible, transparent and fair admissions policy to ensure students with potential are given the opportunity to enrol.

The University collaborates with schools and partners to raise aspirations and support attainment-raising activities to increase the pool of applicants to high-tariff institutions.

The University provides outreach activities to promote higher education to the widest audience possible.

**Fundamentals**

Assessment of performance to identify access gaps and target groups

Outreach activities researched and designed for target students to directly address gaps

Partners are targeted and engaged to build collaboration and capacity

## Alignment with other strategies

3.1.6 The University Global Strategy 2020 is drawing to a close and we are currently in the process of developing a new University Strategy for beyond 2020, which will be published by the end of 2019. This will provide a strategic overview and direction for the University across all of its campuses. The strategy will be built on extensive consultation with the entire University community, including staff, students, alumni and stakeholders, with input at all levels of governance and ratification through the University Executive Board (UEB) and Council. The significance the University attaches to access and participation is illustrated by the fact that one of a very small number of strategic objectives ruled in at the start of the strategy consultation is continuing to make progress in relation to widening participation.

3.1.7 We expect a range of strategic delivery plans to support the implementation of the University's overarching strategy, including ones for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); Teaching and Learning; and Civic responsibilities amongst others.

3.1.8 The development of the EDI Strategic Delivery Plan is underway with publication expected over the summer of 2019. This will set the vision for equality, diversity and inclusion for both staff and students at the University and identify priority areas of focus over the next three years. The strategic delivery plan will draw together and link to several areas of work already underway across the University, including the APP, the work on degree awarding gaps and the student experience, and the focus will be to champion and communicate this work. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for EDI leads this area of work, with the ultimate aim of embedding the agreed principles and ways of working across the entire University. The delivery plan will have an agreed set of key performance indicators and will report progress through the University's EDI Committee to UEB.

3.1.9 The University's Teaching Enhancement activity encompasses a number of initiatives to ensure positive outcomes for all students, particularly focusing on student engagement; high quality teaching, assessment and feedback; embedding mental health and well-being in the curriculum; professional competencies; placements; and internships. This programme of work includes highlighting and supporting action to address differential outcomes between student groups at all stages of the student lifecycle.

3.1.10 The University's Civic and Regional Committee is leading work on deepening the University's impact on Nottingham city and the surrounding region. The Universities for Nottingham initiative with Nottingham Trent University is working on a new approach to harness a combined civic impact. This is based on working collaboratively with each other and partners across the region to support the future of economic growth in Nottingham, and the life chances of its citizens. The city of Nottingham and surrounding region includes areas with some of the lowest educational attainment and lowest participation in higher education in England. The University operates an extensive programme of outreach and support to local schools and colleges, aimed at raising aspiration and attainment through our widening participation activity, included in the inputs section of our Theory of Change.

3.1.11 These broader strategic delivery plans will support the implementation of the APP, with clear links and dependencies identified. An APP Steering Group will govern the implementation of the plan, using a project management approach to ensure progress is measured and reported against agreed milestones, budget, risks and outcomes. Sections of the APP will have oversight through University governance structures, including the Reputation and Recruitment Committee (for access and recruitment targets) and the Education and Student Experience Committee (for the study and employability aspects), both of which are overseen by UEB. The APP Steering Group will work alongside the existing Teaching and Learning Committee, which also reports to the Education and Student Experience Committee regarding student outcomes and success as well as the EDI Committee. Regular reports and presentations will be provided to University Council.

3.1.12 Alongside the new University strategy for the period beyond 2020, the University is developing a new performance framework to ensure all strategic measurements and targets are aligned to the new strategy. A senior level working group has been established to develop this framework on behalf of the Planning and Resources Committee, reporting to UEB. The performance framework will provide a clear statement of the University's overall ambitions in measurable terms (based on the new University strategy), a set of measures and targets at University level for each of those ambitions and a mechanism to set targets at lower levels. Cumulatively these will achieve the University targets, agreed monitoring, and review arrangements.

### Strategic measures - access

3.1.13 We have designed the new strategic measures listed below to impact on the access stage of the student lifecycle and the associated targets. To meet our access targets, the number of applications from underrepresented students needs to increase or our conversion statistics need to be higher. We will work in collaboration with schools and other providers to help raise the attainment of prospective underrepresented students to increase the number of applicants eligible for high-tariff institutions like Nottingham, as currently there are not enough eligible students nationally. These measures fall into the fundamental and input

sections on our Theory of Change and form part of the building blocks for the APP. Please see the table in 5.1 for timeframes and milestones for our ambitions. We have focussed on new activities and have not discussed many of our existing ongoing activities below, which are maintaining our current progress.

3.1.14 The University of Nottingham is an active member of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Collaborative Outreach Project (DANCOP), part of the NCOP initiative. We are co-chair of the steering group, have representation on the governing board and we also host a delivery hub. DANCOP has recently submitted operational plans for Phase 2 and has begun strategic discussions regarding the formation of the legacy Hub. These plans are designed to increase the number of target students entering higher education. Due to the limited lifespan of the project, as a partnership we have not devised a collaborative outcome focussed target, as it would not cover the lifespan of this APP.

3.1.15 The University is the host partner for Advancing Access, a national collaboration of 24 selective universities funded through partner subscriptions. Advancing Access is currently undertaking a randomised control trial (RCT) in partnership with the Behavioural Insights Team, which is designed to test the effectiveness of an intervention to engage more teachers with the programme using nudge techniques and school performance data, with the aim of attracting more underrepresented students to high-tariff institutions.

3.1.16 The University has an effective relationship with Nottingham Trent University, especially focusing on access to higher education. We continue to collaborate on joint activities such as our Students in Classrooms projects, Exploring University Together programme and Pathways to Law (with the Sutton Trust). This work feeds into the new high-level strategic initiative 'Universities for Nottingham'.

3.1.17 The University of Nottingham co-sponsors three **Into**University centres and has just agreed a contract extension for a further five years until 2024. Each centre is a higher education presence in the local community, which provides a range of programmes working over the long-term with young people aged 7-18. Since the partnership began in 2011, 12,050 students have received support through the three centres. **Into**University centres are based in areas of disadvantage and students are carefully targeted to ensure they are from groups underrepresented in higher education. Data collected by **Into**University suggests that the programme is effective at supporting students to gain a university place. In 2018, 70% of **Into**University school leavers progressed to university. This compares favourably with these students' background chances of going to university, which are calculated as 40% using POLAR4 data – an uplift of 30 percentage points. This collaboration directly feeds into the fundamental and input sections of our Theory of Change by increasing the number of eligible underrepresented students entering the University.

3.1.18 The University has actively pursued membership of Realising Opportunities for 2019-20. To date it has not been possible to align our contextual admissions policies closely enough with the collaborative partnership within the timeframes required but we are planning that these will be aligned for 2020-21 and that we can join the national programme to contribute towards addressing the gap in access for underrepresented students. As such, the University of Nottingham will also include the collaborative Realising Opportunities target within our APP, with milestones starting from 2021-22 rather than 2020-21.

3.1.19 Whilst the University has targeted its most intensive outreach activities at students from POLAR3 and POLAR4 quintiles 1-2, the same targeting has not been present within our admissions processes. From 2020 entry, we will automatically flag UK home fee-paying students living in POLAR4 quintile 1 postcodes within our admissions system, alongside IMD quintiles. We will then assess these students under our contextual admissions policy, which we are reviewing and updating for 2020 entry. Currently our contextual admissions policy offers a one-grade reduction for WP 'flagged' students in some cases. We have reviewed this policy and a proposal to offer a one-grade reduction more consistently will be ratified at a meeting of our Reputation and Recruitment Committee in June. We have designed this change to our admissions process to have a direct impact on the number of POLAR4 quintile 1 and IMD quintile 1-2 students accepting places at the University, with the intention of reducing the gap in our access targets. We will monitor the impact and review the policy as required.

3.1.20 The University's first level 7 Higher Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) began in September 2018 and the first level 6 HDA is due to start in September 2019 with others coming online from 2020. The University views HDAs as an important part of its overall WP strategy. For example, discussions are ongoing with employers in relation to courses and specifically the targeting of students employed via this route to ensure that they assist with the attraction and recruitment of target and underrepresented groups, aligning with our strategies for the access stage of the student lifecycle.

3.1.21 A new collaboration between the University of Nottingham and University of Lincoln has established the Lincoln Medical School, which will open in Lincoln in September 2019. A key remit of the new school is to focus on widening access to Medicine particularly across Lincolnshire. The new school will offer 80 places on a five-year medicine programme and 15 places on a six-year foundation programme. The foundation programme is specifically designed for students from widening participation backgrounds. The School has a designated clinical academic lead for WP whose remit is to establish widening access pathways to Medicine,

which also includes financial support and work experience opportunities. As well as medicine foundation courses, we offer foundation years/Year 0s in veterinary medicine, science, engineering and physical sciences as well as arts and humanities, which facilitate entry into some of our most selective courses, with entry requirements lower than those required for direct entry. The Foundation Year Committee coordinates the activity across the University, within the context of widening participation, with oversight of the impact of new and current foundation year programmes on student recruitment, progression and attainment.

3.1.22 Following developments from the WP Review Group, the widening participation and outreach teams at the University will be reorganised to align with the institution’s new definition of WP and to support the targets within the APP. Current outreach activities under our Nottingham Potential programme will also be aligned with the new definition and gaps in provision will be addressed (see 5.1 for details). The widening participation and outreach teams will continue to offer activities from primary schools all the way through to mature learners. The activities will support attainment, raise aspirations and motivation to work hard, develop meta-cognitive skills, support planning for progression and assist students in making informed choices.

3.1.23 The University allocates a substantial amount of higher fee income to financial support for students. This is designed to attract students from underrepresented backgrounds and to support their retention and ability to succeed when they are here, falling into the inputs and pre-conditions sections of our Theory of Change. From our internal annual bursary recipient survey, we know that around 80% of recipients who were aware of the bursary provision at the application stage were influenced to choose Nottingham because of the financial support available. However only around half of recipients knew of the bursaries at the point of application. The rationale for maintaining bursaries is to continue to attract underrepresented groups to Nottingham, as they are an effective attraction tool when students are aware of them. We will continue to investigate ways to improve our advertising of the provision to ensure more prospective students are informed. Anecdotally from our internal survey, we are aware that students who receive the bursary do not have to work as many part-time hours, so can engage more fully with university life. However using the OfS toolkit to analyse the impact of our financial support package on successful degree outcomes for students, we have been unable to prove a positive impact on successful degree outcomes following receipt of a bursary. Therefore, we have taken the decision to continue to offer core bursaries, for attraction purposes, but decrease the amount of funding allocated. The WP Review Group undertook analysis and modelling of various bursary options and their ‘flat model’ option was accepted. Savings made will be reinvested via our APP Steering Group into student support activities designed to improve our student access, success and progression rates. We will also use some savings to increase our hardship fund, so that a greater number of students in financial need can access support.

3.1.24 Core bursaries at the University of Nottingham for 2020 entry

<b>Income bands</b>	<b>Annual core bursary award level</b>
£0 - £35,000	£1,000

All UK undergraduate students paying fees and with an assessed household income within the threshold are eligible for a core bursary – there are no other qualifying criteria. Eligible students receive core bursaries for each year of study, throughout their undergraduate degree. We offer Graduate Entry Medicine (in their first year of study only), PGCE and Graduate Entry Nursing students the same bursary arrangements as other undergraduates. We will annually review the bursary award levels and they may be subject to change.

3.1.25 The University will continue to provide Nottingham Potential guaranteed bursaries to attract target students to Nottingham. For 2020 entry the award rate is £1,000 per year of study but the award level will be reviewed annually and may be subject to change. These are additional guaranteed bursaries for students from particular backgrounds or with particular circumstances and have the aim of ensuring that financial support is targeted towards those who need it most, aligning with the outcomes section of our Theory of Change. We particularly target the underrepresented groups of care leavers, mature students (entering with an access or vocational qualification), part-time students, refugees and young carers and are currently considering expansion to other groups. We have designed criteria for bursaries so that most prospective students know their likely entitlements at an early stage in the application process.

#### Strategic measures - success

3.1.26 The next set of strategic measures are concerned with the continuation and degree outcome targets in the success stage of the student lifecycle. These measures fall in the activities and pre-conditions sections of our Theory of Change. As described above the University has a clear commitment to increase its student analytic capacity and capabilities, which will enable a far deeper understanding of our student population and gaps. We will use this increased knowledge to create projects and activities to influence and eliminate the gaps, which can be closely monitored and evaluated. Further information is contained in 5.1.

3.1.27 When our new student records system is fully functional and linked to Tableau, we will be able to monitor student success and progression in real time and at a granular level. New posts within our student

analytics team will be able to provide data to relevant colleagues in student services, welfare support, academic tutors and pastoral support teams to ensure that students are accessing all the support possible. We will design and utilise specific interventions where the monitoring data shows no improvements. We will also undertake further analysis of our data to understand intersectionality.

3.1.28 The Kickstart programme at Nottingham has been running for several years and has been successful in the induction and transition of mature students joining the University. In recent years, we have built on the programme and offered peer mentoring as well as ongoing central support sessions to support retention of this group. This provision will continue but will be supplemented and enhanced by proactive monitoring of the students and ensuring that necessary staff, including academic tutors, are provided with information and advice so that they can support and signpost students as necessary. Again, data will be analysed and interventions designed if a demonstrable need arises from the analysis.

3.1.29 The University's long-term goal in our Theory of Change is to have a universal design for education that meets the needs of all students and ensures equality of opportunity. Current research in the field of dyslexia supports the claim that the universal design approach will accommodate some of the needs of Specific Learning Differences students. However, individualised support is also required to encompass the variety of learning styles. The University's strategy aimed at closing the disability attainment gap will incorporate some institution-wide initiatives and small-scale programmes to encompass the variety of student need (see 5.1 for our ambition in this area). Initially, the strategy will focus on Specific Learning Differences students as these students represent a large proportion of the disabled students at the University and interventions aimed at this population are beneficial for a wider audience. Some activities already planned or underway are offering alternative modes of assessment to all students, which research indicates will positively impact disabled students' outcomes. These include enabling assistive technology use in formal examinations; developing a suite of 'Learning Well' sessions for students with Specific Learning Differences; and an ADHD sharing strategies group. In addition, a Summer School for Autistic Spectrum Disorder students that ran in 2018 to aid transition will expand in 2020 to invite all incoming students who have declared an Autistic Spectrum Disorder to the University.

3.1.30 The review of disabled student support undertaken in April 2018 by an external consultant made several recommendations for staff training that have an indirect impact on the attainment of disabled students. Alongside the EDI task action plan, a piece of work around deepening the understanding of the questions raised in the review is planned for later this year as well as a staff conference in March 2020; 'From disability labels to Inclusion: an HE approach to teaching and learning practice', which will be used as a catalyst for other training events.

3.1.31 In 2017-18 the University re-introduced Disability Action Plans, which are overseen by the Disability Liaison Officers' Network, academic members of staff, and the Accessibility Team to recognise good practice and set targets to improve practice in key areas ranging from teaching materials to the physical environment. The review of disabled student support notes that the Disability Action Plan process has the potential to embed an inclusive approach across the university. The Disability Action Plan is now embedded within the institution's internal quality assurance and review process (Educational Enhancement and Assurance Review – see 5.1) and all academic Schools will be expected to develop an action plan from 2019 onwards. There will be funding associated with the Disability Action Plans to facilitate initiatives.

3.1.32 Strategic measures in relation to the unexplained attainment gap between black and white students at the University are being led by our Education Excellence team. These measures relate to many interconnected agendas including EDI, the Race Equality Charter Mark, APP and TEF. Their activities seek to address issues surrounding lack of inclusivity in the curriculum (e.g. predominance of white authors and white-heritage examples); unconscious bias of teachers; bias in assessment design and practice; and lack of integration in the classroom. Our commitment to interventions and evaluation is demonstrated in 5.1.

3.1.33 The Education Excellence team will introduce tools and provide support to tackle these issues, but the work will not produce quick results. We expect to see most movement in the data towards the end of the APP period as new students benefit from a more inclusive curriculum. In the first two years (2020-21; 2021-2022), our main activity will be to implement robust processes (e.g. regular provision of relevant data to schools and requirement of schools to update their action plans and consider attainment gap data at examination boards), and to develop a suite of interventions that we can support (e.g. reverse mentoring for staff, curriculum and assessment review, peer observation, staff training, access to BAME alumni mentors). Each school will choose from the range of suggested interventions, or implement their own suggestions, based upon their interpretation of their data. All schools will be required to conduct qualitative research to understand if the lived experience of their students is changing. The timeframes and milestones are provided in 5.1. Until we have new students experiencing our changed processes, we will not see much impact upon the statistics. It is also the case that other key areas of activity, such as staff recruitment, retention and progression, will take time to yield positive results that will impact upon the student experience of the curriculum.

## 3.2 Student consultation

3.2.1 Aligning with the pre-conditions (students are involved in design, creation and evaluation of activities) and assumptions (students are active and engaged) sections of our Theory of Change, the University has recently established a Widening Participation Advisory Panel. The panel consists of twenty current undergraduate and postgraduate students representing all five faculties as well as a Student Union representative. There was an open recruitment call and campaign across all UK campuses, which has ensured that the main OfS defined underrepresented groups of students, have representation on the Panel. We have also held several focus groups with underrepresented students (care leavers, disabled and mature) to supplement the panel and to allow students who could not commit long term to raise APP areas of focus.

3.2.2 The panel will divide into sub-groups as well as dedicated task and finish groups to align with requirements of the APP. The first of these task and finish groups has been created to assist with the data analysis for the assessment of performance section, with students interrogating the dashboard as well as the institutional downloads to direct strategic aims. We have planned future groups for the hardship fund expansion and bursary review, where students will be integral in designing the future criteria. The advisory panel have also expressed an interest in working to develop our support for care-experienced students; they will be involved in supporting the NNECL pilot project (detailed in 2.1.9).

3.2.3 After completing the assessment of performance section with the assistance of the WP Panel, further working drafts of the APP document were shared with the students at various intervals during May. Unfortunately the timings coincided with the Easter holidays, which may have reduced the students' abilities to engage with the process. No challenge was received to the content of the document, although some stylistic suggestions were received regarding the formatting and these were implemented.

3.2.4 As described above the University is establishing an APP Project Steering Group to ensure continuous improvement against the strategy, aims, objectives and targets. Members of the student panel will be co-opted on to the steering group to represent the student voice in all stages (planning, monitoring, evaluation and delivery) of the APP going forward.

3.2.5 There are also pre-existing and ongoing co-creation projects at the University, including our Race Equality Charter Group with student ambassador members. These student ambassadors have been central to the design and dissemination of the student survey currently being undertaken.

3.2.6 In relation to delivery of access and participation work, the Students' Union (SU) and Student Volunteer Centre have a long history of independently volunteering in local schools and running their own projects with target groups including refugees and BAME groups. Building on continuing links with SU Officers and SU societies, widening participation staff are able to work with a greater number of student groups, for example Pro-Bono (Law); WAMS (Widening Access to Medical School); STEM Outreach and ChemSoc. All student groups are offered training in classroom management and safeguarding. Widening participation staff work closely with the SU Mature Students' Officer to build on the support of the centrally led Kickstart induction programme through, for example, the Officer organising supplementary mature-friendly social activities.

## 3.3 Evaluation strategy

3.3.1 The University of Nottingham is committed to ensuring that our activities provide the greatest possible impact for our students. The purpose of evaluating the initiatives that support the APP is to help develop and improve services, support strategic planning and ensure that activities undertaken help to reduce the identified gaps. We recognise that high quality evaluation is vital to ensure that decisions are based on reliable and robust evidence.

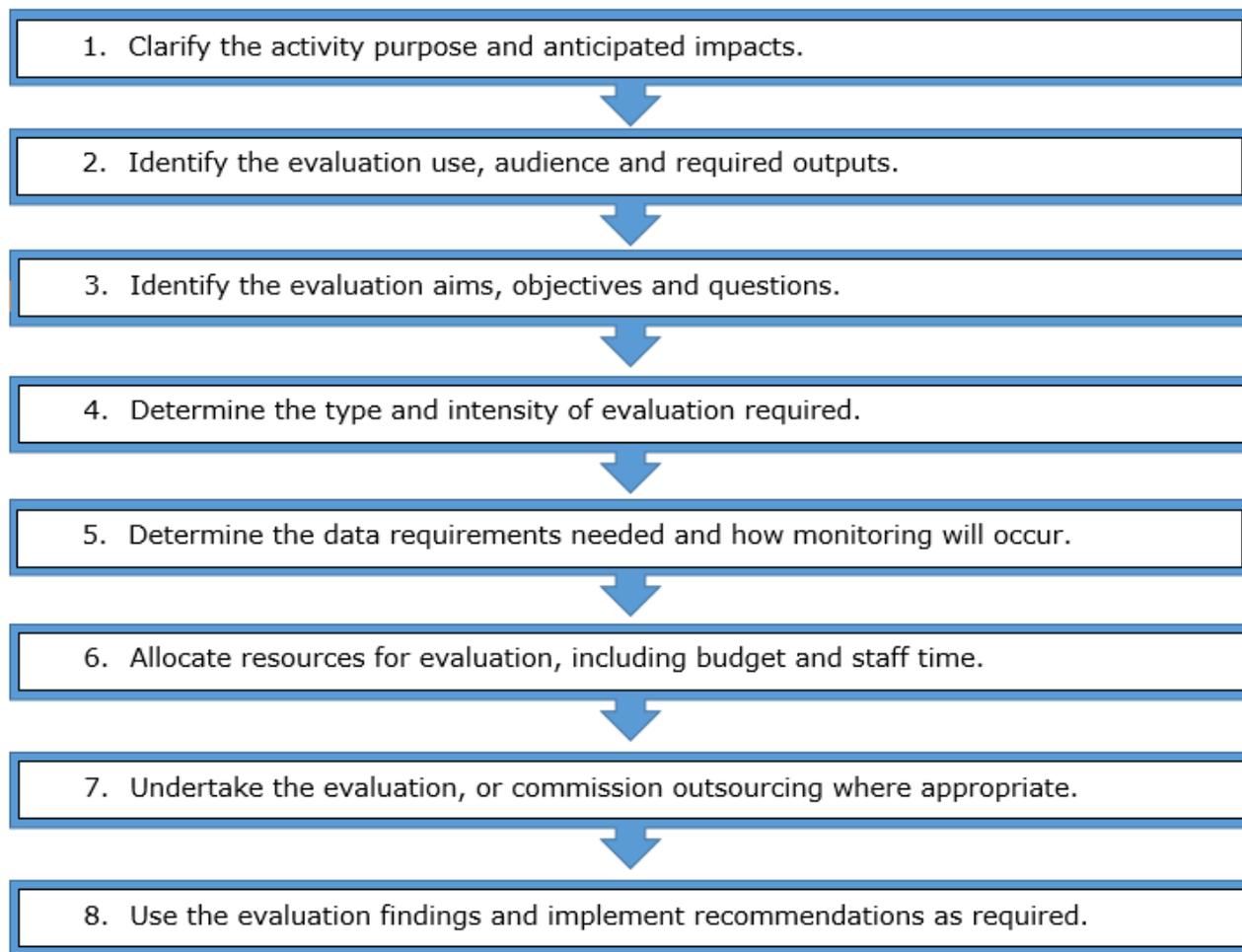
### Strategic context

3.3.2 The OfS's evaluation self-assessment informs this section and provides a clear road map for enhancing practice in line with OfS's expectations. We have undertaken the self-assessment and it will be used as a benchmark to ensure continuous improvement occurs in evaluation.

3.3.3 The University of Nottingham has some good practice in evaluation and often this is embedded in the culture of access and participation work. There are several excellent evaluation initiatives, including that of our aspiration raising work with primary school aged children. However, a lack of dedicated resource and specialist skills in evaluation has meant that improvements are required to enhance strategic oversight, standardise practice and develop capacity for evaluation. New posts focussing on data and evaluation have been created to help deliver these improvements.

3.3.4 We have developed the approach below to plan and undertake evaluations. Due to the size and structure of the institution and its gaps, there is a need to employ multiple initiatives to help close gaps. Initiatives are likely to be targeted where gaps are the largest or the most prevalent over time. As such, evaluation needs to reflect this context.

## Our approach to planning and undertaking evaluations



## Programme design

3.3.5 Evaluation has been specified and is embedded in the design of interventions, particularly where initiatives are new. Each of the initiatives is aimed at reducing the gaps identified and has a clear set of objectives and deliverables, informed by both existing institutional evidence and published research. These initiatives will be piloted and rigorously evaluated. Where successful, initiatives will continue and may be rolled out across the institution. Where evidence suggests that initiatives are not working to close the gaps, or they have unintended negative consequences, they will be stopped or altered in favour of those that are likely to have greater beneficial impacts.

3.3.6 The OfS's self-assessment tool highlighted that further work is required to develop outcome and impact measures in the APP and widening participation work in general. Key priorities are to:

- Move beyond feedback and satisfaction measures and opinions of participants to specify outcomes
- Develop/utilise a standardised framework of outcome measures
- Benchmark impacts against results and evidence elsewhere, not just previous experience

## Evaluation design

3.3.7 Formal evaluation plans exist for our programmes and are aligned to the standards expected by the OfS. Evaluation activities are appropriate and proportionate to the interventions to which they relate. The key questions that all evaluations will aim to answer are:

- To what extent does the activity or initiative contribute towards the APP goals / targets?
- To what extent was the expected outcome achieved? Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- What improvements or deteriorations are observed in the relevant gap identified in the APP due to this intervention?

Process and outcomes-specific questions will also be asked related to each initiative. These will vary depending upon the purpose of the evaluation, as detailed above.

3.3.8 The University is familiar with the OfS's evaluation types and has used them to plot potential developments in practice. All evaluations will aim to be robust and to build an evidence base including multiple perspectives. The evaluation methodology chosen will vary depending upon the evaluation questions, outcomes wanted and type of initiative (i.e. policy change or student facing activity). Generally, evaluations will be mixed method, include a triangulation of stakeholder perspectives, focus on a Theory of Change and aim to be empirical or causal. Where possible, evaluations will also include a comparator group and have a participatory approach to work with service users. We will also look to maximise the use of data sources, such as institutional data, East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership (EMWPREP) and publicly available data to enhance the rigour of evaluations.

### Evaluation implementation

3.3.9 The University's review of its contextual admissions policy provides an example of a new initiative and its evaluation approach. The contextual admissions review is driven by the national target to reduce the gap in participation between the most and least represented groups from a ratio of 5:1 to a ratio of 3:1 by 2024-25. As part of this initiative, students from POLAR4 quintile 1 will receive a one-grade reduction in their offer across the majority of courses. The evaluation questions for this initiative are:

- To what extent does the activity/initiative help to reduce the gap between POLAR4 quintile 1 and 5?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- Is it possible to attribute an improvement in the gap between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 to this intervention?
- Does a standardised policy improve clarity for prospective students and recruitment staff? Does the policy provide efficiency improvements for admissions staff?

To determine whether this policy change impacts upon the target, the following data analysis will be undertaken:

- Trend analysis between the ratios of POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 over time
- The trend analysis above will be undertaken at university, faculty and school/department level to determine differences. Other indicators of widening participation will also be included in this analysis to determine whether unintended population changes occur
- The gap between POLAR4 quintile 2 (which is also underrepresented at the institution) and POLAR4 quintile 5 will be used as a comparator group and act as a proxy for the gap between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 to determine whether an improvement would have occurred without this policy change
- Semi-structured interviews or focus groups with relevant stakeholders will yield findings as to the wider anticipated outcomes of the policy change.

3.3.10 To support the evaluation of our widening access work, the University is a member of EMWPREP, which tracks the educational trajectories of students who participate in access programmes. This enables assessment of long-term programme impacts, to determine whether participants enrol within other higher education providers.

3.3.11 The University uses external evaluators to deliver independent, robust and sector leading evaluations. These will continue and dedicated financial resource has been identified to support this.

### Learning to shape improvements

3.3.12 A newly created Evaluation and Monitoring sub-group will support the APP Steering Group (detailed in 3.1.11). The Evaluation and Monitoring sub-group membership will include data analysis and evaluation specialists; academic and professional staff; and students from the advisory panel. Representation will be provided from across the institution. This group will report to the APP Steering Group. This group will provide operational and strategic support to the APP by:

- Overseeing evaluation and monitoring activities
- Commissioning evaluation projects
- Ensuring that data analysis is undertaken robustly
- Further developing the evaluation strategy and strategic direction of evaluation within the plan
- Ensuring that relevant processes and procedures are adhered to (i.e. research ethics approval and data sharing agreements are in place)
- Recommending the roll out or cessation of initiatives in order to support underrepresented groups
- Providing a point of contact for queries about access and participation initiatives and their impacts.

3.3.13 The University has accessed collaborative networks to encourage information sharing concerning evaluation. The recent joining of the National Education Opportunities Network will mean that the institution can access and share information as part of the 'Establishing Evidence and Measuring Impact working

group'. Attendance at the 'Addressing Differential Outcomes for BME Learners' and the 'Mature Learners' working groups will also help to ensure that the university remains well-informed of sector developments.

3.3.14 Evaluation reports triangulate findings from a range of sources, detail associated limitations and are used to inform systematic reviews of activities.

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

3.4.1 As discussed above, the new APP Project Steering Group is being formed to govern the implementation of the plan. This will consist of senior staff across the institution who will become operational owners of the objectives and targets described above. Directors of EDI from schools or faculties, alongside teaching and learning colleagues and support services staff will also be represented. 3.1.11 highlights the governance structure for the Steering Group, including the reporting lines to University Council and 3.2.4 and 3.3.12 describes how students will be used for monitoring.

3.4.2 As mentioned in the whole provider strategic approach section, the University is aware that more robust student analytics data production and monitoring is required across the institution. New members of staff are currently being appointed to increase capacity in this area and they will be represented on the APP Project Steering Group to ensure that targets are being monitored. The University has also invested in Tableau Server, which is being utilised to interrogate, display and transmit data across the institution to aid monitoring and evaluation.

3.4.3 The Accessibility Team will initially aim to work with pilot schools to offer interventions to Specific Learning Differences students. The Accessibility Team will gather qualitative feedback from the students attending the interventions, such that they can be made available to other academic schools. Tableau will be used to monitor the impact of the activities.

3.4.4 As well as monitoring internal data on attainment rates and gaps for black and white students via student analytics, the University and the Education Excellence team will also set and monitor internal targets for activities designed to contribute towards elimination of the gap. These will include the proportion of BAME teaching staff recruited and recognised either through promotion or teaching award; the proportion of the curriculum reviewed for inclusivity; the number of staff completing basic and advanced unconscious bias training; the number of schools conducting qualitative research into BAME student experience; the movement in TEF metrics at subject level; and the number of leaders with a reverse mentor.

3.4.5 The APP Steering Group and the data sub-group will closely monitor the APP targets and internal targets using internal data and analysis, alongside the OfS's data dashboard. Mitigating actions will be taken to ensure that progress is continually improving. If progress is not being made at the rate expected then the Steering Group will task the operational owners of the targets to implement further interventions and thoroughly evaluate current provision to ensure continued progress.

## **4. Provision of information to students**

4.1 The University provides information on fees, costs and financial support from both the Government and the University to prospective and current students. This information is provided through our printed prospectuses and other materials, website and social media, outreach activity, face-to-face meetings at recruitment fairs, open days and interviews, and through responding to individual letters, e-mails and telephone calls. Financial Support staff within Student Services provide pre-admission financial advice. All staff involved in responding to enquiries receive additional training in financial support. The approved APP will be published on our website.

4.2 The University provides estimates of any additional course-specific costs (e.g. specialist clothing and equipment or field trips). The University's website supports bursary provision through the following functions:

- alerting users across all stages of the application process to both the guaranteed bursaries and additional financial support
- interfacing with HEBSS and the University's student application system to:
  - allow applicants to find out whether they are eligible for a core bursary and track the progress of their applications for additional financial support
  - explain to successful applicants how to activate bursary payments once registered
  - trigger payment of awards following provision of bank details by students
- providing guidance and assistance in the transition to University
- signposting prospective and current students to support services.

4.3 We provide timely information about our financial support to UCAS and SLC and we are explicit in our wording that course fees and financial support may change for each year of study.

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1 Table showing planned intervention, research and evaluation milestones

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Access - planned interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New team structure embedded and focus moved to APP targets.</li> <li>- New contextual admissions policy entrants.</li> <li>- Joining Realising Opportunities network to increase number of target student enrolments.</li> <li>- Existing programmes reformatted to impact target students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot enhanced 2-grade contextual admissions policy entrants.</li> <li>- New Pathways to Medicine programme to increase number of target students.</li> <li>- Pilot programmes for target students – aligned with APP targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced 2-grade contextual admissions policy expansion.</li> <li>- Embed and expand programmes for target students if proving impactful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing review and update of programmes and activities to ensure maximum effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing review and update of programmes and activities to ensure maximum effectiveness.</li> </ul>
Access - planned evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programmes rigorously evaluated to ensure impact and changes made where required.</li> <li>- New contextual admissions policy evaluated and changes made where required.</li> <li>- New bursary provision evaluated and changes made where required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot enhanced contextual admissions policy evaluated and changes made where required.</li> <li>- Evaluate pilot programmes for target students and amend where necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full enhanced contextual admissions policy evaluated and changes made where required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New contextual admissions policy student outcomes evaluated and changes made where required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced contextual admissions policy student outcomes evaluated and changes made where required.</li> </ul>
Success – planned interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate and pilot extra exam access arrangements for all disabled students, including increasing the standard amount of extra time to 33% and the use of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand extra exam access agreements if appropriate.</li> <li>- Expand the study skills interventions if appropriate.</li> <li>- Central staff to support academic colleagues in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five EEAR school reviews.</li> <li>- Adoption of ‘All in!’ inclusive curriculum model, subject to evidence of impact from evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five EEAR school reviews. 1st full cycle completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five EEAR school reviews. Start of 2nd cycle of review.</li> </ul>

	<p>assistive technology as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot an expansion of the central study skills interventions into schools.</li> <li>- Additional staff training for educators regarding inclusion and accessibility.</li> <li>- Use periodic school review mechanism (EEAR, including disability action plans) to scrutinise data with relation to attainment gaps. Four schools will be reviewed in 2020-21.</li> <li>- Provision of more detailed attainment gap data via Tableau Server, and development of prototype reports for schools.</li> <li>- All in! Regularising ethnic presence in the curriculum to establish model for designing inclusive curricula.</li> <li>- Expansion of the ReMEDI in Higher Education Project (Reverse Mentoring for Equality Diversity and Inclusion) subject to evaluation.</li> <li>- Develop new support team (15 staff) with remit to design services that are inclusive and accessible.</li> </ul>	<p>schools and faculties to design specific support interventions for identified cohorts of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four EEAR school reviews.</li> <li>- Year 2 of 'All in!' project; model applied to other schools in pilot phase.</li> </ul>			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce robust requirements for programme revision and new course approval that requires schools to consider attainment gaps and inclusivity.</li> </ul>				
Success – planned evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify groups of specific disabled students within schools to target interventions.</li> <li>- Evaluate the extra exam access arrangements and scale up if impactful.</li> <li>- Evaluate the study skills interventions and scale up if impactful.</li> <li>- Disabled student focus groups to measure impact of interventions.</li> <li>- Annual evaluation of EEAR methodology through feedback from panel/school – this will include evaluation of the value of the new and more detailed reports being provided in Tableau Server; ongoing evaluation of action plans every 6 months</li> <li>- Attainment Data in Tableau: annual monitoring of school use of this data to ensure impact.</li> <li>- Participate in evaluation of Advance HE collaborative project:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research projects into inclusive curriculum design with disabled students, focussing on courses undergoing revalidation.</li> <li>- Annual evaluation of EEAR methodology – this will include monitoring and review of targets – and revising of methodology as appropriate.</li> <li>- Evaluation of interventions arising from the Advance HE project; introduce new and revised interventions as a result.</li> <li>- BAME UG attainment gap in STEM: evaluation will be ongoing as actions evolve in response to data and feedback. For example, an initiative in one school to change its diet of assessment, following data analysis, will be evaluated to see if the changes have impacted upon student outcomes at module level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research projects into alternative assessment arrangements with disabled students.</li> <li>- Annual evaluation of EEAR methodology – this will include monitoring and review of targets – and revising of methodology as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual evaluation of EEAR methodology – this will include monitoring and review of targets – and revising of methodology as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual evaluation of EEAR methodology – this will include monitoring and review of targets – and revising of methodology as appropriate.</li> <li>- By 2024/25, every existing programme should have been reviewed with the new methodology.</li> </ul>

	<p>Towards Embedding EDI in the Curriculum (led by Advance HE) and, as a result, develop further activities/models to support the embedding of EDI in the curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ReMEDI reverse mentoring scheme: evaluate scheme and impact. Set local participation targets as required.</li> <li>- Evaluation of STEM initiative will involve looking for evidence for more equal % rates of 1st/2:1 degree attainment for white and BAME students.</li> <li>- Review services and support offered by the support teams to ensure that they are meeting needs identified via data analysis and student outcomes data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing evaluation as new processes applied to more programmes.</li> <li>- Set out roadmap to ensure that every UoN programme is reviewed by 2024/25 and that schools have the necessary support to make changes as required following review.</li> <li>- Creation of a research hub to facilitate sharing of research studies between schools and professional service departments.</li> </ul>			
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## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

## Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Provider name: University of Nottingham, The

Provider UKPRN: 10007154

## Investment summary

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

### Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£2,972,027.00	£2,781,818.00	£2,812,055.00	£2,871,776.00	£2,933,022.00
Access (pre-16)	£906,737.00	£850,219.00	£843,244.00	£864,827.00	£886,983.00
Access (post-16)	£1,470,707.00	£1,330,968.00	£1,361,962.00	£1,393,707.00	£1,426,222.00
Access (adults and the community)	£485,716.00	£488,858.00	£492,090.00	£495,415.00	£498,837.00
Access (other)	£108,867.00	£111,773.00	£114,759.00	£117,827.00	£120,980.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£10,538,600.00	£9,065,371.00	£7,932,970.00	£7,601,444.00	£7,603,694.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£142,140.00	£145,474.00	£148,890.00	£152,389.00	£155,973.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£65,904,935.00	£66,753,310.00	£67,546,155.00	£67,564,665.00	£67,564,665.00
<b>Access investment</b>	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%	4.3%
<b>Financial support</b>	16.0%	13.6%	11.7%	11.3%	11.3%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	20.3%	17.9%	16.1%	15.7%	15.8%

