Academy of Contemporary Music

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

1. About ACM

ACM is an independent, specialist higher education provider, with campuses in London, Guildford, and Birmingham. We deliver degrees, diplomas and postgraduate provision across creative industries programmes in music performance, sound engineering, games development, and business. We currently deliver HE provision to approximately 730 students on undergraduate and Masters degree programmes.

ACM champions interdisciplinary collaboration between students on industry linked projects throughout their programme. Students are taught by an academic team, many of whom are also practising professionals who support students through their academic journey and into career pathways. The ACM group owns and operates Metropolis Studios in London which is the largest recording facility in Europe. Our students experience Metropolis Studios as a professional learning environment, where they are exposed to state-of-the-art equipment and recording software, and work with award-winning music industry professionals.

ACM has recently introduced a new degree and masters framework entitled Creative Industries Futures which is based on inclusive educational philosophy that encourages students from all backgrounds to undertake programmes of study that will enable them to expand and develop their personal and professional skills, whilst developing their career opportunities in the creative industries. Our students can use this innovative, flexible programme framework to mix and match their interests, improve their skills, and develop new ones. We want to ensure our students are prepared for the industry by providing opportunities for them to immerse themselves in professional practice which increases their level of employability. Our graduates continue into employment with companies like Universal, Warner Music, BMG, Air Studios, or our own Metropolis.

1.1 Mission and Aim

Our mission is to bridge the gap between non-formal and formal education, providing multiple routes of entry and the widest angle of participation for all kinds of learners from all backgrounds. We are focused on creating a multicultural, inclusive community which supports creativity, development and exchange of knowledge, and equips students with professionally relevant skills and experience. We champion teaching and learning within and across the communities of practice, where learning by doing and inclusivity are at the core of student experience.

At ACM we believe in equality of opportunities for all students. In the last 4 years we have been improving and embedding access and participation across our practice More than 75% of ACM students fall into one of the Office for Students (OfS) target groups and thus our aim is to ensure that we have a continued focus on provision of relevant support, information and guidance to ensure good outcomes for these groups. In this plan we focus on two specific groups of students that our assessment of performance has highlighted to be at risk of not experiencing equality of opportunities. These are students from Black, Asian, and other Ethnic Minorities backgrounds, and students from socio-economically deprived areas. The Plan details our strategies for supporting and improving outcomes for these groups, through key activities and continuation of a whole institution approach to access and participation.

2. Risks to equality of opportunity

Following an assessment of our performance over six years (2016-17 to 2021-22), primarily using the Office for Students Access and Participation Dataset, and other relevant data (such as HESA, UCAS and internal data, education sector and industry research), we have identified three main indicators of risks to equality of opportunity, for priority under this Plan. These have been considered with regard to the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and our context at ACM.

In determining which risk areas to focus on in this Plan, we consider our size as a small provider, and our specialism in the music and creative industries as key contextual factors. As a smaller provider, the data we have drawn upon is small cohort data which means that analysis of data and statistical significance is limited. This also limits our ability to make valid assessments and interpretations, particularly in exploring disaggregated data and intersections of characteristics. We have explored and provided assessment where we considered it meaningful.

In respect of our specialist provision, we also note the systemic challenges that are present in arts education and in the creative industries we link with, which impact and pose risk to equality of opportunity. Downstream, in the education pipeline, we note the continued de-prioritisation and under-valuing of creative arts in secondary curricula, which limits access to and engagement with the subject area and has subsequent negative influence on education and career choices in our specialist area. While the National Plan for Music Education 2023 is a step to potentially address some of the historic de-prioritisation of the music curriculum and creative arts subjects, this will require engagement and resourcing decisions from senior school leaders. Upstream, in industry, we experience risks to equality of opportunity arising from the under-representation of female and Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. These risks present particular challenges for our target groups, which we have discussed further and addressed through the activities in our intervention strategies.

Finally, the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic should also be noted. This impact will continue to flow through the system for the years to come, over the lifetime of this Plan. Potential risks to equality of opportunity in access to higher education, success through higher education, and progression into good graduate outcomes, which have been highlighted to disproportionately affect under-represented and disadvantaged students, have not yet been fully realised or understood. ACM will remain vigilant of this context over the life of this Plan, considering and closely monitoring our data to ensure that any further gaps in performance are identified and addressed; and, that our general support for students is effective and responsive to emerging needs. Understanding the experiences of students coming through higher education at ACM will be enabled through our commitment to evaluation and research, as detailed in our Evaluation Strategy.

Other areas for improvement that were identified as part of our assessment of performance can be found in Annex A, with explanations regarding why these areas have not been selected for prioritisation under this Plan.

Of priority under this Plan, the indications of risk we have identified and the corresponding potential risks to equality of opportunity, are as follows:

2.1 Risk One, Access: Learners from the most deprived socio-economic background (Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 - IMDQ1) are less likely to enrol at ACM.

There is a risk that ACM is not appealing to, or supporting and facilitating access for, the most deprived learners in our recruitment catchment areas. Despite our local areas (Guildford, Birmingham, and London) having relatively higher proportions of population in IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, we have identified a gap in enrolment of learners from IMDQ1 compared to our intake of learners from IMDQ5 (least deprived). There is a consistent gap in participation across data from 2016-17 to 2021-22, with a 4-year average gap (2018-19 to 2021-22) of 13.2 percentage points. While the trend is towards closing this gap over this time, the latest data and 4-year average remains a concern; particularly when average sector data for 2021-22 shows a positive gap in participation for IMDQ1 learners, at -3.2 percentage points (i.e., across the sector, IMDQ1 learners participate at higher rates than IMDQ5).

We have therefore prioritised developing and improving our strategic outreach activities and work with schools, music hubs, and communities to attract more interest and applicants from this group, and further to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and attainment for successful admission. We will focus our efforts on supporting schools with attainment raising, providing target students with a range of knowledge, experience, and information and guidance. This also responds to OfS's expectations that providers support attainment raising, through effective school partnerships.

2.2 Risk Two, Attainment: Learners from the most deprived socio-economic background (Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 - IMDQ1) and learners from Black backgrounds are less likely to achieve a First or 2:1 Degree outcome at ACM.

There is a risk that IMDQ1 and Black students are not experiencing equality of opportunity to enable them to achieve a First or 2:1 Degree outcome at a comparable rate to their peers at ACM. Our performance assessment has revealed a widening gap between attainment outcomes for IMDQ1 students, when compared with students from IMDQ5 backgrounds, resulting in a 17.3 percentage point gap (aggregate) over the last 2 years (2020-21 to 2021-22) compared to a smaller gap in the aggregate results over the last 4 years, at 7.9 percentage points (2018-19 to 2021-22). For Black students, the gap in attainment outcomes (compared to white peers) is also larger over the last 2-year aggregate, at 19.3 percentage points (compared to 17.7 percentage points over the 4-year aggregate).

Drawing on the EORR and linking to Risks 6 (insufficient personalised academic support) and 7 (insufficient personalised non-academic support), we consider that this may be because of insufficient access to, availability of, and/or effective utility of personalised academic and non-academic support. We also consider EORR Risk 8 (environments supporting good mental health); Risk 9 (impact of Coronavirus) and Risk 11 (capacity issues), in respect of access to equipment and resources, to be relevant to this indicator. Particularly for target students from IMDQ1 backgrounds, cost pressures and the cost-of-living crisis may also be an influencing factor, particularly in instances where students are having to prioritise work over study (reflecting EORR, Risk 10).

We have therefore considered appropriate strategies to address these gaps, corresponding with the identified potential risk areas highlighted by the EORR and making use of embedded-in-curriculum and extra-curricular / co-curricular mechanisms, as highlighted as effective in the sector evidence and best practices. We have therefore prioritised development and continued improvement of inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices; effective personal tutoring; supplementary, flexible co- and embedded-in-curricula skills and knowledge development and credentialing; improved utilisation of data and monitoring through improved analytics; and financial support packages.

3. Objectives

The indications of risk prioritised under this Plan are addressed through the objectives are as follows:

Lifecycle stage	Reference (Tables 5b and 5d, Annex C)	Objective and key intervention mechanisms	Intervention Strategy
Access	PTS1	Increase access for students from the most deprived areas (IMDQ1) backgrounds. We will work in partnership with schools, music hubs and local communities, as part of a community of practice to deliver a holistic project which focuses on improving creative, academic, and professional skills and knowledge, as well as supporting aspirations prior to entering HE. As a provider committed to a learning-by-doing approach, we will support attainment raising through relevant skills acquisition, embedding aspects of studying for a degree, as well as activities typical for a creative industry environment.	IS1 IS2 (Activity b)
Success	PTS1	Reduce attainment gaps for learners from the most deprived socio-economic backgrounds and Black students. To ensure that students feel supported and equipped to achieve their potential at ACM, and to achieve good degree outcomes at comparable rates to their peers. We will focus on provision of effective and personalised support and experiences, through curriculum inclusivity practices and personal tutoring. We will also provide opportunities to build skills and knowledge through supplementary mechanisms and credentialing, as well as ensuring financial support is available. At the institution level, enhanced analytics will enable us to proactively identify and reach out to target students who may be at risk, rather than relying on self-selection for support.	IS2, IS3, IS4 (With link through from IS1)
	PTS2	Objectives and Strategies as per the above in PTS1 apply, but with specific focus on decolonising curriculum practices, addressing unconscious bias and ensuring sense of belonging amongst the target group.	IS2, IS3 (With link to IS4 where this target group intersects with deprivation (IMDQ1)

4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Strategies that we will put in place to meet our objectives and targets are as follows. Dissemination of findings of evaluation across all our Intervention Strategies will be as follows:

Summary of publication plan	
Format of findings	**When findings will be shared**
We will produce an annual summary progress and review report, which will: 1. Provide insights on the effectiveness and progress of relevant activities in this Strategy based on the achievement of intended outcomes. 2. Capture learning and insights that inform practice improvements and any appropriate changes and developments. Highlights and themes from this report will be shared online, for example through our website / SEER website.	Progress 'highlights' will be shared annually
We will produce an 'Evaluation To Date' or an 'End of Project' Report (whichever is relevant) capturing all evaluation and findings, disseminated online via our website and the SEER website, and via channels mentioned below where appropriate.	4 years on from Plan commencement (Autumn/Winter 2028) and/or at the conclusion of projects For Intervention Strategy 4, this will be every 2 years, from 2026-27.
We will also contribute at conferences and through workshop and events hosted by networks such as SEER and Independent Higher Education (IHE).	At minimum every 2 years, starting from 2025-26
We will contribute to other calls for evidence, such as through TASO	As they arise, at minimum every 2 years.

4.1 Intervention strategy 1: Intensive targeted outreach and partnerships with schools, colleges and other organisations

Objective: To improve access for students from the most deprived areas (IMDQ1) backgrounds, bringing the percentage of entrants from IMDQ1 areas towards a cohort size that is more representative of the population (19% in 2027-28).

Targets: PTS_1: Increase the proportion of entrants from IMD Quintile 1 backgrounds, from a baseline of 12.7% (2021-22), to 19% in 2027-28.

There is a secondary link to target PTS_1, whereby the intended outcomes of this Strategy relating to increased levels of attainment, skills development, and preparation for HE may have a subsequent positive impact on degree attainment for this target group (IMDQ1).

Risks to equality of opportunity

The potential risks to equality of opportunity in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) that are relevant to this indicator are Risk 1 (opportunities to develop knowledge and skills required for higher education (HE)); Risk 2 (opportunities to receive the information and guidance to inform ambitions and expectations, and make informed choices about HE); and, Risk 3 (perceptions of HE, where students may not feel able to apply to HE). There is also reference to Risk 5 (opportunity to access a variety of course types), where this Strategy is linked to Intervention Strategy 3, which includes activity on provision of online courses and digital credentials (available at pre- and post-enrolment). This activity aims to support access to, and facilitate preparation for, our programmes (also linked to our objectives and targets in the Attainment area for IMDQ1 students).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
(a) School, College and Third-Party Partnerships Development and maintenance of effective and targeted school, college relationships (c.6) and music and community relationships to facilitate Activity (b), below. For example, activities are delivered in collaboration with local music hubs in Guildford, Birmingham, and London. Activity will focus on schools /colleges with the highest number of students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1).	-Staff time - Student ambassadors - Marketing and event Promotion - Travel costs	**Intermediate outcomes** • Effective (targeted, positive, structural, sustainable) relationships and partnerships. • Identification of mutual goals and expectations. **Outcomes** • Collaboration to design and agree the details, content and delivery processes of Activity (b), below. • Identification and uptake of opportunities to further develop and improve collaborative practice to achieve the objectives. • Deepening understanding and insights of the challenges, barriers and what works for target groups, to improve practice.	
(b) 'Tuning In' Outreach Programme This activity is multi-faceted and focuses on three key areas of work:	-Staff time - Student ambassadors	**Intermediate outcomes** • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes.	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
1. Supporting attainment raising in schools and colleges. 2. Provision of Career Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) including creative arts HE pathways and finance, and creative industry career options and benefits. 3. Experiences and engagement with industry; development and application of practical industry skills. These areas will be covered in a series of practical and informative workshops and activities, which include song writing; recording in a professional studio; understanding and experiencing working in the music industry; what it is like to study for a degree at ACM; and information and guidance about HE / HE application processes. Workshops focus on building knowledge and skills; developing and supporting cognitive and metacognitive skills; confidence and belonging (in HE); and motivation and engagement in education and future pathways. Final activities are to be designed and agreed in collaboration with schools and colleges. Participants can use creative content they produce to support application for their degree and/or include it in their personal creative portfolios. We aim to reach c.60-100 students (KS4) per annum. *Tuning In* will collaborate with and employ ACM students as facilitators and role models in the ongoing	- Marketing and event Promotion - Travel costs	• Improved confidence and preparation for HE selection process. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Improved sense of belonging in HE / pathways to HE. • Increased knowledge and awareness of HE. • Increased knowledge and awareness of job opportunities in the creative industries. • Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process. • Increased knowledge of financial support, loans. • Participants intending to follow a creative arts pathway into HE. **Outcomes** • Improved creative skills, e.g., writing/ recording/ producing music. • Completion of project and integration to student's personal creative portfolio. • Applications to HE. • Offers from HE providers. • Enrolments in HE.	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
delivery and evaluation of the programme.			
(c) Access to pre-enrolment skills development and preparation courses. This Activity is linked to Intervention Strategy 3 Activity (b), which is the development of a Digital Learning and Accreditation Platform. Students in our partner schools/ colleges and on the Tuning In programme will be able to access the courses offered, to upskill and build their portfolio support HE admission.	See IS3	See IS3	IS3 (Activity B),

Total cost of activities per year:			
2024-25	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**
£62,411	£63,659	£64,933	£66,231

Evidence base and rationale:

We have conducted a literature review, which includes specific references to the range of materials OfS has identified in its guidance, plus a range of other research and best practice references. Empirical research of the impact of active engagement with music (as well as creative subjects more broadly) on school-and pre-university level students (14-19 year olds) has revealed positive effects on the students' language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, motor-coordination, spatial orientation, concentration, confidence, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and mental health (e.g., Hallam, 2010; Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010). Most of those positive effects have been reported specifically for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (Youth Music, 2011). Yet, opportunities for young people to study creative subjects, including music, at school have been diminishing over the past decade, primarily due to policy and funding changes in compulsory education (Broadhead, 2022).

Lack of opportunities to engage with and learn about / in creative subjects, including music, is a highly likely contributing factor to the persistent outcomes gap between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers (EPI, 2020). We recognise that disadvantaged students tend to have lower attainment outcomes than their peers (DfE, 2017; OFFA, 2018; EPI, 2020), which affects their progression to HE as well as future outcomes and prospects (OfS, 2022). The evidence also suggests that disadvantaged students are more likely to consider HE later (UCAS, 2021), which can limit their choices. Therefore, interventions should start early and we have targeted activity at KS4.

Evidence suggests that linking current academic studies with an individual's future ambitions can increase student motivation and engagement with academic work, as it is seen as personally relevant

(EEF, 2016; Midgley et al., 2000). Our focus on subject-specific activities (creative skill development, careers in the creative industries) draws on evidence that students are more likely to think about and choose a degree subject area earlier in their educational journey (UCAS, 2021), which opens up conversations about the possibilities of HE at earlier stages (e.g., KS4). We want to use this to help develop a sense of belonging, which encourages persistence with studies (Hausmann et al., 2007) and is linked to higher academic achievement (Walton & Cohen, 2007). We also draw on the evidence that teaching young people academic skills such as metacognition, and self-regulation can improve their attainment outcomes by encouraging them to self-reflect on how they learn best (Hattie, Biggs, Purdie 1996; Mannion & Mercer, 2016; EEF, 2021). Our literature review also highlights that providing careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) about HE can help them make more informed decisions (TASO, 2023) and provide them with guidance that may not otherwise have been available to them (Thomas and Quinn, 2007). This is even more the case for specialist subjects such as creative arts (PEC, 2020) Within this, we seek to personalise support where possible (UCAS, 2021). See Annex B for further information.

Evaluation

We intend to evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards of evidence to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes. As well as evaluating each individual activity, we will explore how each activity contributes towards achieving the desired outcomes and, where appropriate, the overall objective. We will start the strategy in the 2024-25 academic year, and we intend to disseminate relevant interim findings every year.

In 2023-24, as part of the preparation for the launch of these activities, we will also explore and consider the appropriateness of a comparison group(s), which may provide opportunity to work towards Type 3 evidence. We will be guided by TASO small n methodologies as well as drawing on collaborative opportunities and expertise in evaluation methods provided by our membership to Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service. Such work will include the development of enhanced Theory of Change (ToC) models, and other associated information such as hypotheses and evidence mapping, to enable any considered appropriate small n evaluation. We are also interested in surfacing the attributes of activities and how they are delivered that effect outcomes, through process evaluation and ToC. Beyond this note, we have not made specific commitment to this as feasibility of these approaches needs to be considered in collaboration with our partners.

Activity	**Outcomes**	**Method(s) of evaluation** Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).
(a) School, College and Third-Party Partnerships	**Intermediate outcomes** • Effective (targeted, positive, structural, sustainable) relationships and partnerships. • Identification of mutual goals and expectations. **Outcomes**	**Process Evaluation** • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils at partner schools and colleges with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: the number of schools /colleges and third parties in a relationship. (T1) **Impact Evaluation** • Surveys and focus groups or interviews with partners to:

	• Collaboration to design and agree the details, content, and delivery processes of Activity (b), below. • Identification and uptake of opportunities to further develop and improve collaborative practice to achieve the objectives. • Deepening understanding and insights of the challenges, barriers and what works for target groups, to improve practice.	○ Understand the effectiveness of the relationship and whether agreed goals / expectations were met. (T1, T2) ○ Identify further opportunities. (T2) ○ Draw out deeper understanding about challenges and what works. (T1, T2) Surveys include a baseline survey and thereafter surveys each academic year to measure changes and development of the partnerships. Comparative analysis of data over the surveys will determine how the activity has met the intended outcomes over time. (T2) Development of 1-2 school/college partner case studies and/or focus groups/ interviews (T1, T2). Every 2 years from 2025-26.
(b) 'Tuning In' Outreach Programme	**Intermediate outcomes** • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved confidence and preparation for HE selection process. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence. • Improved sense of belonging in HE / pathways to HE. • Increased knowledge and awareness of HE. • Increased knowledge and awareness of job opportunities in the creative industries. • Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process. • Increased knowledge of financial support, loans. • Participants intending following a creative arts pathway into HE.	**Process Evaluation** • Data analysis: Number and % of pupils attending Tuning In with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: the number of programmes delivered. (T1) • Annual end-of-year Teacher/Staff Survey exploring whether content was appropriately aligned to (a) School curriculum LOs; (b) Relevant Gatsby Benchmarks. (T1) • Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder experience and perceptions (students and staff). (T2) **Impact Evaluation** • Baseline and annual student survey exploring interim outcomes and perceptions of *Improved creative skills* outcome. (T2) • Annual end-of-year Teacher/Staff Survey exploring perceptions of achievement of interim outcomes for students. (T2) • 2-3 student focus groups per annum from 2025-26, to explore key themes from surveys. (T2) • Assessment of end project and suitability for inclusion in personal creative portfolio. • *TBC depending on availability of tracking mechanism: Data Analysis*

	Outcomes • Improved creative skills, e.g., writing/ recording/ producing music. • Completion of project and integration to student's personal creative portfolio. • Applications to HE. • Offers from HE providers. • Enrolments in HE.	*on Applications, Offers, Accepts and Enrolments in HE.*

4.2 Intervention strategy 2: Holistic, personalised, and proactive support

Objectives:

To progress towards closing the degree awarding gaps between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, to 12 percentage points by 2027-28.

To halve the degree awarding gaps between Black students and their white peers, from 19.3 percentage points (2020-21 to 2021-22) to 9.5 percentage points (2026-27 to 2027-28).

Targets:

PTS_1: Reduce the gap in the achievement of good Degree outcomes (First and 2:1 awards) between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, from 17.3 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 12 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2026-27 to 2027-28).

PTS_2: Reduce the gap in the achievement of good Degree outcomes (First and 2:1 awards) between Black students and their white peers, from 19.3 percentage points (aggregate 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 9.5 percentage points (2026-2027 to 2027-28).

Risks to equality of opportunity

The potential risks to equality of opportunity in the EORR that are relevant to this indicator are Risk 6 (insufficient personalised academic support) and 7 (insufficient personalised non-academic support). We consider that indicators of risk in this area may arise from insufficient access to, availability of, and/or effective utility of personalised academic and non-academic support. This view has been informed by our students in consultations, and by the low current engagement levels with tutorials. We also consider EORR Risk 8 (environments supporting good mental health); Risk 9 (impact of Coronavirus) and Risk 11 (capacity issues), in respect of access to equipment and resources, to be relevant to this indicator. This Strategy also supports OfS's broader priority regarding providers' responsibilities and demonstrated commitment to supporting good mental health amongst their students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
(a) Personal Tutoring (PT) Scheme	-Staff time	**Intermediate outcomes**	IS4,

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
Development and improvement of ACM's personal tutoring model, which aims to provide students with tailored on-course academic and personal support. While individual PT is personalised, this Activity broadly comprises: ***For students (Tutees)*** • A range of academic skills and assessment advice and guidance; skills assessment; pathway specific and industry related advice; supporting access and use of online resources; module and specialism choice advice; and referrals to student support services. • Targeted and priority/ enhanced support for target IMDQ1 and Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. ***For Tutors*** • Training on a range of support and inclusivity areas. • Data driven insights (part of enhanced analytics, see Activity (b) below). • Signposting map of support/ links to professional support team • Peer support network.	- Staff training	• Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • Increased knowledge and understanding of creative industry, labour market, professional standards, and competencies. • Number of 1st attempt assessment submissions • Improved module / assessment grades. • (Tutors) Improved knowledge and confidence in range of support for students • (Tutors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. **Outcomes** • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • (Tutors) Improved confidence and career development.	
(b) Student Engagement Monitoring & Interventions Continued development and improvement of Student Engagement Monitoring at ACM, including identification of students at risk of not progressing, and implementation of early interventions. This Activity considers particular development	- Staff time	**Intermediate outcomes** • Early identification of students at risk of discontinuing, not completing or not achieving a good Degree outcome. Identification of target groups at risk. • Proactive monitoring of and support provided to	IS3

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
that would support improved outcomes for our target groups (IMDQ1 and Black, Asian and minority ethnic students), informed by specific issues identified for these groups (as noted in the Objectives, above). This Activity includes: • Enhanced academic monitoring via use of analytics relating to VLE engagement; lecture/ tutorial attendance; assessment submissions and outstanding Module records. • Identification of students 'at risk' and associated actions: o Individual Learner Agreements o Escalated monitoring processes (Stages 1-3 risk)		identified at risk (target) students. **Outcomes** • Improved number of 1st attempt assessment submissions. • Improved module / assessment grades. • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • Improved utility of analytics to inform understanding of patterns of behaviour and effects on learner outcomes.	

Total cost of activities per year:			
2024-25	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**
£391,415	£483,185	£550,831	£627,947

Note: Activities in this Intervention Strategy support all underrepresented students in their attainment and continuation outcomes. As a small provider with limited resources, our approach is an integrated one and will support the maintenance of outcomes across our student body; 78% of whom fall into one of more target groups. However, emphasis is on support and monitoring of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, and students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) as our specific target groups. Of note, we have identified that target groups submit assignments at first attempt at lower rates than their peers and have lower levels of engagement.

Evidence base and rationale:

We have conducted a literature review, which includes specific references to the range of materials OfS has identified in its guidance, plus a range of other research and best practice references. We note that levels of preparation for higher education can vary significantly between students. Disadvantaged students, and those who are not supported by family or friends with prior HE experience, are generally less prepared about the criteria for success and educational processes (the 'hidden curriculum', Sambell and McDowell, 1998). Students who are supported to 'know the ropes' (Whitty et al, 2015) are likely to do better than those who do not (Bathmaker et al, 2013). Our programme of support through personal tutoring is designed to help students without this prior knowledge successfully negotiate the higher education study process.

Evidence also suggests that differences exist between A-levels and Year 1 at university in terms of student experience, practices, and understanding of how to write academically (Sally Baker, 2018). Differences are especially typical of 'locating, evaluating, synthesising and adapting to new forms of knowledge', and can affect retention and attainment. For target students, these issues are likely compounded by lower levels of preparation detailed above. Evidence highlights embedded models of teaching academic skills such as writing, where students, subject specialists, and academic skills specialist (e.g., learning / academic support staff) collaborate (Richard Bailey, 2018). Within these models, the value of paying particular attention to supporting target students is reinforced (Ibid.).

Disadvantaged students currently have less positive employment outcomes than more advantaged peers (OfS 2021). Students will vary in the extent to which they bring and can valorise employability capital. Inclusion of sessions relating to career development and industry knowledge support aims to focuses on building students' social and professional capital (Badoer et al., 2020). For further information, see Annex B.

Evaluation

We intend to evaluate Activity (a) Personal Tutoring Scheme within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards of evidence to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes. We will run a small staff review based evaluation that considers the effectiveness of, and desired improvements to, Activity (b) Student Engagement Monitoring System. We do not propose to evaluate the Strategy overall at this stage. We will start the strategy in the 2024-25 academic year, and we intend to disseminate relevant interim findings every year.

By 2026-27, we will have also explored and considered the appropriateness of a comparison group(s), which may provide opportunity to work towards Type 3 evidence for Activity (a). We will be guided by TASO small n methodologies as well as drawing on collaborative opportunities and expertise in evaluation methods provided by our membership to Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service. Such work may include the development of enhanced Theory of Change (ToC) models, and other associated information such as hypotheses and evidence mapping, to enable any considered appropriate small n evaluation. We are also interested in surfacing the attributes of activities and *how* they are delivered, that effect outcomes, through process evaluation and ToC. Beyond this note, we have not made specific commitment to this as feasibility of these approaches need to be considered in collaboration with internal colleagues and our partners.

Activity	**Outcomes**	**Method(s) of evaluation** Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).
(a) Personal Tutoring (PT) Scheme	**Intermediate outcomes** • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • Increased knowledge and understanding of creative industry, labour market, professional standards and competencies. • Number of 1st attempt assessment submissions	**Process Evaluation** • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils engaging with PT and % with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: Number of sessions run (T1) • Data analysis: Analysis of referrals vs self-sign, by student characteristics (T1) • Some post-PT polls gathering student experience /perceptions (T2). • Annual end-of-year Staff Survey exploring whether content was

	• Improved module / assessment grades. • (Tutors) Improved knowledge and confidence in range of support for students. • (Tutors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and strategies for effective support. **Outcomes** • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • (Tutors) Improved confidence and career development.	appropriate and effective, and to explore challenges. (T1) **Impact Evaluation** • Baseline and annual student survey exploring perceptions and confidence in respect of academic skills, industry knowledge and links, and personal support/ experience at ACM. (T2) • 2-3 student focus groups at minimum every two years from 2024-25, to explore key themes from polls and surveys. (T2) • Annual end-of-year Staff Survey exploring confidence in providing student support and career development outcomes. (T2) • Data Analysis: continuation and completion rates by target groups. (T2) • Data Analysis: module attainment and attainment (degree outcome) by target students. (T2) • *If possible:* Comparative analysis of outcomes (continuation, completion, attainment) between students who have engaged with (extra-curricular) academic support and those who have not. (T2→T3)
(b) Student Engagement Monitoring & Interventions	**Intermediate outcomes** • Early identification of students at risk of discontinuing, not completing or not achieving a good Degree outcome. Identification of target groups at risk. • Proactive monitoring of and support provided to identified at risk (target) students. **Outcomes** • Improved number of 1st attempt assessment submissions. • Improved module / assessment grades. • Improved continuation rates for target students.	We will run a small staff review evaluation that considers the effectiveness and value of, and desired improvements to, the Student Engagement Monitoring and Interventions system. This is likely to include a Staff Survey and Action Learning. (T1, T2).

	• Improved completion and attainment rates for target students. • Improved utility of analytics to inform understanding of patterns of behaviour and effects on learner outcomes.	

4.3 Intervention strategy 3: Inclusive and flexible curriculum, with complementary skills development and accreditation

Objectives

To progress towards closing the degree awarding gaps between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, to 12 percentage points by 2027-28.

To halve the degree awarding gaps between Black students and their white peers, from 19.3 percentage points (2020-21 to 2021-22) to 9.5 percentage points (2026-27 to 2027-28).

Targets:

PTS_1: Reduce the gap in the achievement of good Degree outcomes (First and 2:1 awards) between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, from 17.3 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 12 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2026-27 to 2027-28).

PTS_2: Reduce the gap in the achievement of good Degree outcomes (First and 2:1 awards) between Black students and their white peers, from 19.3 percentage points (aggregate 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 9.5 percentage points (aggregate 2026-27 to 2027-28).

There is a secondary link to target PTA_1, whereby the Digital Accreditation activity under this Strategy is offered to target pre-HE learners, to support their skills, knowledge, and preparedness for HE, and to accumulate credits to support successful entry to HE.

Risks to equality of opportunity

The potential risks to equality of opportunity in the EORR that are relevant to this indicator are Risk 6 (insufficient personalised academic support) and 7 (insufficient personalised non-academic support). We consider that indicators of risk in this area may arise from insufficient access to, availability of, and/or effective utility of personalised academic support. This view has been informed by our students in consultations, and by the low current engagement levels with tutorials. We also consider EORR Risk 8 (environments supporting good mental health); Risk 9 (impact of Coronavirus) and Risk 11 (capacity issues), in respect of access to equipment and resources, to be relevant to this indicator. This Strategy also supports OfS's broader priority regarding providers' responsibilities and demonstrated commitment to supporting good mental health amongst their students.
Activity (b) in this Strategy also responds to the OfS's key priority regarding expanding and promoting diverse and flexible pathways and provision.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
(a) Inclusive Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Developing process and tools for ACM to review and assess level of inclusion, diversity and equality in programmes and modules, and to assess and address any potential risks to the above. This Activity includes: • Focus on curriculum areas where equality, diversity and inclusivity can be embedded, e.g., cultural perspectives. • Staff training, e.g., Equality, Diversity, Inclusion in. a Workplace, Classroom Deafferentation, Unconscious Bias, Risk Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. **Reasonable adjustments.** • Student choice in assessments. • Valuing, incorporating, and recognising individual differences; reflecting student diversity in the curriculum. • Ensuring students can fully participate to achieve their full potential. • Embedding employability. • Embedding wellbeing by linking artistic expression and creativity with emotionality, communication and mental health and wellbeing. • Increasing staff knowledge of their cohorts and the measures that may need to be considered and implemented to ensure students with certain characteristics are supported (linked to IS2).	-Staff time -Staff training	**Intermediate Outcomes** • Inclusivity impact assessments completed for curriculum areas. • Improved student motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved student self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • (Tutors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and in-curricula strategies for effective support. **Outcomes** • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.	
(b) Digital Learning & Credentialing Platform The aim of this Activity is to develop more flexible study opportunities and enhanced opportunities for skills development, through a platform to deliver short courses and award micro credentials.	- Digital platform set up - Annual Subscription fee - Staff time	**Intermediate Outcomes** • Accreditation awarded to students for completion of courses (transcript). • Students build digital portfolio/ credentials profile.	IS1and IS2,

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention

Students will be able to build a 'digital wallet' and a transcript of skills they develop while on a degree course. Digital certification allows participants to study in their own time, improve subject specialist and employability skills, and gain poof of developing new skills/ competency. These attributes are particularly relevant to our target groups, and support attainment (as well as continuation and progression) outcomes.
 	
Students are required to complete the courses specific to their core modules and encouraged to do additional courses to complement or develop their skill set. Students will be able to access over 150 short courses, including finance, business, interpersonal skills, communication, digital literacy, specialist music performance & production areas, employability skills (e.g., conflict resolution, project management).
 	
While under this Plan, the focus is on supporting attainment outcomes for our target groups, more broadly this Activity provides a whole-lifecycle approach to supporting outcomes:
 	
• Linked *Access* and to Strategy 1 in this Plan, accreditation can also be used for admission to HE, as part of RPL and alternative entry requirements. It enhances preparedness for HE studies.
• Linked to *Success,* Students' credentials can count towards their degree outcomes, meaning students can accrue credits in a non-linear and non-traditional way. It provides students with a greater flexibility in terms of the subject areas they can access; when and how they access them; and aligns with lifelong learning agenda, allowing students to modularise and curate their studies and skills
		• Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes.
		• Improved motivation and engagement in learning.
		• Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging.
		• Increased knowledge and capacity relating to career and employability skills.
		• Students use of credentials as part of:
		  ○ Admission to HE (portfolio/ RPL)
		  ○ Degree attainment
		  ○ Career development/ employment entry.
		
		Outcomes
		
		• Improved enrolment rates for target students.
		• Improved continuation rates for target students.
		• Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.
		• Improved progression outcomes for target students.	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
development and access finances, in their own timeframe, instead of that imposed by an institution. • Linked to *Progression* and ongoing support for alumni, as we move towards micro-credentials and lifelong learning, we can continue to offer alumni skills development.			

Total cost of activities per year:			
2024-25	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**
£438,952	£447,731	£456,686	£465,820

Evidence base and rationale

We have conducted a literature review, which includes specific references to the range of materials OfS has identified in its guidance, plus a range of other research and best practice references. We note the various research and practice highlighted in the literature that promotes inclusive curriculum design, e.g., the Inclusive Course Design Tool by Smith et al. (2021); Advance HE (Morgan & Houghton, 2011) as a tool to support the reduction of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students' and cross-disadvantaged student groups attainment gaps. The Black, Asian and minority ethnic attainment gap has been at the forefront of research linking inclusivity and attainment and strategic efforts to moving away from a student to an institutional deficit approach in considering the reasons for and ways to tackle inequalities of attainment (Ross et al., 2018).

The Advance HE subject toolkits for inclusive curriculum design, e.g., the 'Dance, Drama, and Music' toolkit (2011) highlight matching curricula to students, embedding employability, and addressing issues of well-being at the forefront of recommendations for making university curricula in these creative subjects more inclusive. A feature of such approaches, pedagogies, and models aimed at raising inclusion is belonging, which appears a major determinant of retention and attainment, particularly for disadvantaged and non-traditional student groups (Pedler et al., 2022; Ahn & Horward, 2023). We have included these attributes in our Strategy.

Although a relatively new form of learning provision, micro-credentials fit into the national learning agenda for UK HE (DfE, White Paper, 2021) for creating a flexible skills system based on a modular (online or blended) provision that enables building up learning over time as part of a lifetime learning guarantee. Agility of the learning provision, accessibility to non-traditional learners – including due to much lower cost compared to a formal degree, and the focus on skills are among the foremost benefits of micro-credentials (Loon, 2021). We are drawing on this context and the associated benefits to develop our Digital Learning and Credentialing Platform, with benefits flowing to current, prospective and graduate students, and particularly target groups under this Plan.

Micro-credentials tend to associate with positive impacts on learning such as constructive learning environment with more frequent feedback, enjoyable learning experience, high level of peer support (Thi Ngoc Ha et al., 2023). The Open University micro-credential courses, for example, have been shown empirically to impact learners – even those who do not complete the course – in terms of knowledge and skills development, changed thinking about the subject, and increased confidence to change career or pursue further study (Chandler & Perryman, 2023; Orman et al., 2023). Further information can be found in Annex B.

Evaluation

We intend to evaluate Activities within this intervention strategy to generate OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards of evidence to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes. We do not propose to evaluate the Strategy overall at this stage. We will start the strategy in the 2024-25 academic year, and we intend to disseminate relevant interim findings every year.

Activity	**Outcomes**	**Method(s) of evaluation** Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).
(a) Inclusive Curriculum, Teaching, Learning & Assessment	**Intermediate Outcomes** • Inclusivity impact assessments completed for curriculum areas. • Improved student motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved student self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging. • (Tutors) Improved understanding of student experiences and challenges affecting student outcomes; and in-curricula strategies for effective support. **Outcomes** • Improved continuation rates for target students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.	**Process Evaluation** • Output analysis: Number of Inclusivity impact assessments (T1). **Impact Evaluation** • Enhanced module evaluation questionnaires (termly) exploring student experiences and feedback. (T2) • Data Analysis: continuation rates for target students. • Data Analysis: completion and attainment rates for target students.
(b) Digital Learning & Credentialing Platform	**Intermediate Outcomes** • Accreditation awarded to students for completion of courses (transcript). • Students build digital portfolio/ credentials profile. • Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes. • Improved motivation and engagement in learning. • Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities, confidence and belonging.	**Process Evaluation** • Data Analysis: Number and % of students undertaking courses and % with target characteristics (T1). • Output analysis: Number of courses run (T1). • Some post-course polls gathering student experience /perceptions. (T2). **Impact Evaluation** • Student survey exploring experiences with courses in respect of developing competencies, academic and professional skills. (T2)

	• Increased knowledge and capacity relating to career and employability skills.
	• Students use of credentials as part of:
	  ○ Admission to HE (portfolio/ RPL)
	  ○ Degree attainment.
	  ○ Career development/ employment entry.
	Outcomes
	• Improved continuation rates for target students.
	• Improved completion and attainment rates for target students.
	• Improved progression outcomes for target students.
		• Data Analysis: course completion / accreditation rates by target groups.
		• Data Analysis: Course credential contribution to Degree attainment, by target groups.
		• Case studies on Digital Portfolios.
		• Data Analysis: enrolment rates for target students who have undertaken a course through the platform.
		• Data Analysis: continuation rates for target students.
		• Data Analysis: completion and attainment rates for target students.
		• Data Analysis: progression outcomes for target students.

4.4 Intervention strategy 4: Provision of Financial Support

Objectives

To progress towards closing the degree awarding gaps between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, to 12 percentage points by 2027-28.

Targets:

PTS_1: Reduce the gap in the achievement of good Degree outcomes (First and 2:1 awards) between students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMDQ1) and their IMDQ5 (least deprived) peers, from 17.3 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 12 percentage points (2-year aggregate, 2026-27 to 2027-28).

There is a secondary link to target PTS_2, where characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage and Black, Asian and minority ethnic background intersect.

Risks to equality of opportunity

For target students from IMDQ1 backgrounds, cost pressures and the cost-of-living crisis may be an influencing factor on outcomes, particularly in instances where students are having to prioritise work over study. This reflects EORR Risk 10, cost pressures. In respect of ACM's Equipment Bursary this also addresses EORR Risk 11, capacity issues, which highlights the potential for equality of opportunity to be negatively affected by unequal access to resources related to higher education, such as accommodation and equipment.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
(a) Bursaries Provision of targeted bursaries to eligible students, including: • Access & Participation Bursary (£1,000) • Equipment Bursary (£250) Awards are made automatically to reduce barriers to access. See section 8 for further information on awards and eligibility criteria.	**-** Bursaries	**Intermediate outcomes** • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to financial security. • Student's financial needs are supported. • Students able to participate in various academic and social facets of university life (positively impacting sense of belonging). • Job/ income pressure is decreased. **Outcomes** • Increased continuation and completion rates for target students. • Increased attainment rates for target students.	Link to IS2, ensuring a range of personalised and proactive support to improve continuation/ attainment outcomes.

Total cost of activities per year:			
2024-25	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**
£229,500	£278,500	£312,000	£349,500

Evidence base and rationale:

We have conducted a literature review, which includes specific references to the range of materials OfS has identified in its guidance, plus a range of other research and best practice references. Financial support has been shown to be an effective mechanism for supporting students' continuation, progression, and attainment (Nursaw 2015; TASO 2023). Receiving a bursary can reduce a student's chance of discontinuing (Harrison and McCaig 2017). In the same way, Halliday-Wynes & Nguyen (2014) suggest that disadvantaged students often experience financial stress as they seek additional financial aid from family or friends. Again, our package of support is designed to mitigate or reduce this stress.

Harrison et al. (2018) point to a range of other positive impacts that students derive from the receipt of financial support. These include capacity building around the ability to focus on their studies, have a social life and build a social network, and in terms of developing self-esteem. Further information can be found in Annex B.

Evaluation

We intend to evaluate this intervention strategy every two years to generate OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards of evidence to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes. We will start the strategy in the 2024-25 academic year, and we intend to disseminate relevant findings every two years.

More detailed information on how we will be evaluating each activity can be found below in Table 1.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation

		Standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3).
(a) Bursaries	**Intermediate outcomes** • Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to financial security. • Student's financial needs are supported. • Students able to participate in various academic and social facets of university life (positively impacting sense of belonging). • Job/ income pressure is decreased. **Outcomes** • Increased continuation and completion rates for target students. • Increased attainment rates for target students.	**Process Evaluation** • Data Analysis: Number and % of pupils receiving bursaries (T1), analysed by student characteristics. • Output Analysis: Total spend on bursaries, including by student characteristics. (T1) • Poll gathering bursary holder's experience and perceptions (students and staff) of the process / allocation. (T2) **Impact Evaluation** • As per relevant parts of the OfS *Evaluating the Impact of Financial Support* toolkit, every two years from 2024-25. Incorporating the ACM Equipment Bursary.

5. Whole provider approach

The Equality Act 2010 and our Equality and Diversity Policy are fundamental to all operational aspects of ACM. As a HE provider we make it our goal to ensure students and applicants from all backgrounds have equal access to our degree pathways, student support services and our facilities. We also make sure we train our staff on all aspects of equality, diversity, and inclusion, to ensure our students feel safe and respected. Additionally, our support staff receive regular training to assist students with sensitive mental health conditions, learning differences and disabilities.

ACM offers a variety of degree pathways delivered in accelerated and traditional 3-year mode, which means that students can choose between 2- and 3-year long degree pathways. For those groups of students who have gaps in knowledge or don't feel they have a level of academic skills required to study with us, we have a Foundation Year designed to bring them up to speed. After a year they transition onto an accelerated degree pathway of their choice as part of a single three-year programme. This supports OfS's priority regarding expanding diverse and flexible pathways and provision, alongside our Digital Learning and Credentialing Platform (Intervention Strategy 3).

ACM's admissions team provides information and guidance to all applicants and makes sure that there are reasonable adjustments for those students who need them for their auditions, and that all such information is noted on our internal database to provide disabled students with support throughout their journey at ACM. This is also designed to minimise the need for multiple disclosure of conditions, which can be detrimental to one's morale, emotional health or sense of belonging. The auditions can be conducted in person or online to make them more accessible. For those applicants who did not do well in their auditions and consequently did not meet the requirements, ACM offers a second attempt audition which provides applicants with a few months to better prepare and practise their skills. We understand that auditioning can be nerve-wracking and that some applicants may

experience high levels of anxiety which can impact on their performance. That is why we offer them an opportunity to learn from experience, improve their skills and try again.

Our new Creative Industry Futures Programme offers students opportunities to study variety of creative pathways and develop their entrepreneurial skills alongside their academic skills. On the interdisciplinary programme students from across the creative industry collaborate on one interdisciplinary degree and Masters framework, where they can customise their studies to either become a generalist practitioner within the creative industries or a highly specialist practitioner, through a personalised pick and mix approach. There are 15 specialist skills units, that students take on their programmes. The skills units allow students to have a broad understanding across various creative industries subjects, or become a deep specialist in one, through to becoming and executive producer able to pull together a team of specialists within the creative industries. On top of their specialism students can choose one of the following options: Entrepreneurship and Composition, Entrepreneurship and Performance, Entrepreneurship and Production, Entrepreneurship and Songwriting. Our programme delivery includes face to face and online study mode, having flexible approach to learning which aligns with the guidance on this subject form the Department for Education and the Lifelong Learner entitlement. Flexible study mode allows to dip in and out if the degree framework across their lifetime, with entry and exit points at the end of each block. This approach through our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) allows for online study or evening study to work around student external commitments. ACM is continually developing its VLE resources to make its programmes even more accessible and engaging online. The content is regularly discussed by the Curriculum Committee to ensure that our curriculum is evolving with the industry and that it is relevant to our students. We also ensure that our assessment policies, procedures, and processes are fair and meet the needs of all our students. This is systematically consulted with our Assessment Team who supports assessments' design and feedback procedure to make sure students receive constructive guidance on how to develop their skills. We also design and develop our staff training to include more consideration for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and widening participation elements of teaching and learning. This is to allow for development of student relevant content and to enhance module creation code of practice.

We also make sure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in everyday operations of our student services. ACM's Disability Team is responsible for assessing our students, helping them apply for DSA, and referring them to specialist tutors and services which support them with their studies following a successful DSA application. The team is also regularly monitoring students who are receiving this support and keeping in touch with them to remove any potential obstacles in communication.

Our Disability Team collaborates with our Safeguarding and Wellbeing Services to provide comprehensive support. At ACM, we prioritise the mental and emotional health of our students through our wellbeing provision. Working closely with local authorities and the ACM wellbeing services, our Safeguarding provision fulfils our legal responsibility by assisting students in crisis and ensuring they receive the necessary internal or external support. The Safeguarding Team regularly shares a newsletter to update our staff on important information, dates, and events related to safeguarding, emphasising the importance of student safety and wellbeing.

Our Wellbeing Team offers specialised services to address students' mental health problems. Our experienced team triages students and determines their need for additional support, such as counselling, mentoring, or coaching. We provide a confidential setting where students can express their concerns. Additionally, we organise wellbeing awareness weeks and other events, giving students the opportunity to participate and even plan and host their own events.

Additionally, ACM offers financial support to students who find themselves in financial hardship. Students can apply for one of our bursaries or loans, which help them with costs of living or equipment they need for their studies. The financial services are also distributing all government funding to

eligible students after previously analysing students' data to ensure fair allocation of hardship funds. See also Interventions Strategy 4, above.

6. Student consultation

As a part of preparation for this Plan, ACM conducted two activities aimed at understating students' experience in higher education and their experience in relation to risk areas on the Equality of Opportunities Risk Register (EORR).

The first activity was a focus group with Students Voice representatives from different degree pathways at ACM, and the second one was a student survey sent out to all students. In both cases questions asked were directly reflecting risks highlighted in the EORR.

Based on students' responses we have identified Risk 6, 7 on the Equality of Opportunities Risk Register to be the area where we should focus most of our efforts. Additionally, ACM's Head of Diversity Access and Participation (HDAP) is a member of the Student Voice Committee and is responsible for providing an update on Access and Participation as a standing Item. The HDAP also regularly attends Student Council meetings to talk about Access and Participation and projects related to it. During those meetings HDAP also provided updates and information about the new Access and Participation Plan, as well as the potential student version of the plan. It should be noted here that students did not express an interest in submitting their own plan.

As a result, a relationship between the HDAP and students has been established and will be continued to ensure that students are involved in the planning of APP projects and activities, monitoring of the plan, and can regularly feedback on any aspects of Access and Participation Work.

Moreover, ACM has recently developed a Student President role to represent student voice and experience within the organisation and actively engage in ACM's widening participation planning and strategy including attending meetings, collating the student voice in relation to equality and diversity and inclusion, and supporting access and participation events and initiatives.

7. Evaluation of the plan

Working in partnership with the Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service, we will be engaged in an ongoing evaluation of our intervention strategies and will continuously respond to the evaluation findings to improve and develop our practices.

7.1 Strategic context for evaluation

Evaluation and research are part of our 'whole institution' approach to access and participation. Our academic, professional and leadership teams contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Targets, Intervention Strategies and Activities in this Plan through supporting and inputting on the range of evaluation measures. Our data team have skills in ensuring data capture is appropriate for the required monitoring and evaluation outputs, including designing new reports and processes to capture, collate and extract data for various evaluation and research questions. We also draw on the skills of staff responsible for the delivery of the Activities in this Plan, and our student representatives, to effectively incorporate evaluation.

In our assessment of our current context for evaluation, using the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool, we are 'emerging' across all areas. We have some foundations in place, but need to develop our practices, including embedding evaluation into activity design and delivery and ensuring feedback

cycles into improving practice. Therefore, as we are continuing to build our cross-institution capacities for effective evaluation and the application of findings to improve practice, staff and student representatives will be supported with relevant training in Theory of Change and evaluation methods, provided through our SEER membership.

Students are important in this work, and we will work in partnership with students on the design and implementation of evaluation and research, particularly where this pertains to current students.

SEER provides us with the evaluation and research expertise we need to deliver our commitments in these areas. We will actively participate in this network, which provides us with opportunities to be part of collaborative research and evaluation projects as well as learning and sharing practice with other members and external stakeholders. SEER host an annual Symposium and regular workshops, roundtables and 'learning lunches' throughout the year, as well as providing us with opportunities to showcase our practice and insights. We will also engage with TASO and other relevant organisations in calls for evidence, conferences and events, and training.

7.2 Activity design

As detailed in the Strategic Measures section of this Plan, evaluation has been established at the start. We have built effective evaluation practice into our Strategies by establishing a range of evaluation attached to the individual activities that contribute towards the overall objective of each Strategy. We can therefore build up an understanding of which activities are 'working' and which are not. We have taken a Theory of Change approach to the development of our Intervention Strategies, identifying clear intended outcomes (intermediate and end) and a supporting evidence base that has informed our activity development and challenged assumptions. With the help of SEER, we will continue to review, develop and strengthen our Theories of Change (ToC), adding to our evidence base as our evaluation findings emerge and developing enhanced activity-level ToCs where required.

7.3 Evaluation design

We have collaborated with SEER and drawn from OfS and TASO toolkits and guidance on effective evaluation approaches. We have considered how the outcomes of activities can be evaluated credibly, particularly as our context as a small and specialist provider means that we are likely to be dealing with small cohorts. Employing mixed method approaches is particularly important, as we will need to rely on qualitative data to support our understanding, or fill gaps, in quantitative data. We will triangulate findings where possible and seek to deepen our insights through qualitative methods. Given the developmental stage of our evaluation practice, the majority of our evaluations are type 1 (narrative), and type 2 (empirical enquiry) of the OfS 'Standards of Evidence'. We have however noted that we will explore and consider where we type 3 evaluation could be implemented in future.

Our evaluation approach has also considered the context and scale of the activities and, as we have proposed working with strategic partners (schools, colleges, community groups, specialist service providers) in our Intervention Strategies, we wish to note that some flexibility and development may be required as our collaborations take shape, allowing for input and advice from partners.

We have also considered our creative arts context and, where appropriate, will trial more creative evaluation instruments (as methods in surveying, focus groups and interviews). This may help to mitigate the issue of survey fatigue, which is a significant issue for effective evaluation and is compounded in small cohorts where the same students are more likely to be subjects of multiple evaluation and research projects. We will continue to be cognisant of this in collection of feedback

and have aligned our evaluation and measures across our activities to enable us to minimise the number of collection points, where possible and appropriate.

Our evaluation approach, data collection and analysis have been formulated on the intended outcomes and objectives of our activities. Where appropriate and possible, we will consider and employ validated scales to our evaluation practices. We have also considered evaluation that spans (a) process and (b) impact, to provide comprehensive understanding of how our activities are working. We will explore, with SEER, further research projects in relation to our activities and our ambition to better understand the experiences and challenges of target students and issues of equality of opportunity. For example, consultation with students as part of the development of this Plan supports the identification of risks relating to insufficient to personalised academic and non-academic support; however, we consider that there is further research, supported by our learning analytics activity, that would add insight to this area.

7.4 Implementing our evaluation plan

We will collaborate internally across our team and with our strategic partners to deliver our evaluation plan. We will be guided by our school, college and community partners, and our students in respect of effective implementation of the plan. Our evaluation process will comply with ACM policies and complies with all legal requirements relating to data protection, following ethical, safeguarding, legal and risk considerations.

As noted above, we have become members of the Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) service, with whom we will work in partnership to deliver our evaluation plan. A Data Sharing Agreement has also been established. SEER provides us with opportunities to collaborate on various evaluation and research items, including for example the evaluation of the impact of financial support, using the OfS toolkit.

The design of our evaluation has also been heavily informed by intended and projected standardised outcomes being adopted by SEER across its membership base, which not only increases efficiencies but provides opportunities to increase the sample size and evaluation, helping to mitigate the issue of small datasets. SEER incorporate and draw on TASO guidance on best practices for evaluations with small cohorts (small n). Further, such collaborations may provide us access to tools that would otherwise be unaffordable. For example, in respect of our access activity, we have noted the possibility of implementing tracking, which will be explored via SEER. As a practice network, we are also able to participate in peer review of practice and evaluation, and share practice and findings.

As a smaller provider we are also well placed to respond with agility to interim findings and emerging data. We are able to be responsive in flexing our activity accordingly to help to keep us on track to achieve our objectives and targets, and continuously improve our practice.

7.5 Learning from and disseminating findings

We are committed to sharing our learning and findings internally, with our partners, within our close networks and with the broader sector, to develop stronger and an increased volume of evidence about what works and what can be improved. We are pleased to help to grow the evidence base for equality

of opportunity in higher education and we will submit evaluation outputs to OfS's repository of evidence as appropriate.

In Section 4 we have set out our publishing plan, which includes publishing findings on interim and longer-term outcomes through a range of channels. In developing the format of our communications, we will consider creative and visual methods, and different audiences / purposes. We will ensure that our findings are open access.

Our SEER membership provides us with access to academic experts in evaluation, including in the access and participation space and broader teaching and learning arena. These staff are involved in design, delivery and analysis.

ACM is also a member of Independent Higher Education (IHE), HEON - a Uni Connect programme at Surrey University, Advanced HE, and board of the music hub in Surrey, through which we can share and present findings. It is anticipated that we will actively contribute to conferences, network events and publications. Where appropriate we will draw on existing networks to collaborate and engage with similar organisations. We also look forward to sharing our findings and our thinking with other small specialist institutions and SEER members and collaborating on the development of effective practice for this particular part of the sector.

Internally, developing a community of practice (staff and students) regarding access and participation will help to facilitate improvements to sharing of findings from evaluation, and subsequent improvements to practise. Shared practice across the institution allows for review and feedback on evaluation findings and reports, and discussion regarding the improvements that could be made. More broadly, evaluation findings related to access and participation work will inform other agendas and practice, such as programme review and revalidation, communications and recruitment strategies and community engagement. We will publish the findings of our evaluation activities on our website as well as on our VLE.

Further details about how we will evaluate our intervention strategies is included in Section 4.

7.6 Governance arrangements

The Head of Diversity Access and Participation (HDAP) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Plan, for monitoring underrepresented groups in our student population, ensuring commitments are delivered, and embedding access and participation across ACM. As part of the monitoring and reporting process we have an Access and Participation Committee, reporting to the Academic Board. Membership of the Committee includes heads of each of the departmental areas at ACM, along with specific relevant practitioners from across services and members of the executive team, a representative from SEER, and two student representatives. This meeting with a broad range of members, across the hierarchy of responsibilities underlines ACM's whole provider approach to access and participation. The HDAP receives updates and recommendations from all members in relation to underrepresented groups based on operational knowledge and data they work with. Some of the members are also directly responsible for projects included in this Plan. The group will oversee the implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan, advise on research, and make reports and recommendations to the Academic Board, including highlighting risk and making any necessary changes to the Access & Participation Plan. If the group finds that progress towards objectives set out in the Plan is not being achieved or is going backwards, it may recommend to the Academic Board to increase investment levels. To further ensure visibility and

effectiveness of the access and participation agenda, HDAP attends Higher Education Leadership Team meetings, Academic Boards, Student Voice Committee Meeting and Student Council Meetings. HDAP also attends other leadership and strategy related meetings when necessary or recommended by one of the other team leaders.

8. Provision of Information to Students

All information on fees and financial support available to prospective and current students can be found on our website. The website is updated every year, but also when maximum fees change, or when ACM offers new forms of financial support or awards.

We also provide information regularly for prospective students, applicants and offer holders through online and in-person events, email, SMS, and telephone.

The information provided sets out individual tuition fee liability and what payment options and methods are available for self-funding students. It also includes information about securing government funding and about the student loan application process.

Additionally, ACM provides information about financial support, which includes eligibility criteria and application process. Bursaries offered under this Plan are as follows:

- **Widening Participation Bursary:** £1,000 one-off payment awarded to eligible students in their first year of study.
  Eligibility criteria:
  - New entrants from September 2023 on our undergraduate degree programmes
  - Household income of £25,000 or less (as evidenced through SLC application).
  - Paid in instalments of £250 in Term 1, £250 in Term 2, and £500 in Term 3 (subject to students' household income not increasing above the threshold of £25,000 during that time).

- **Student Equipment Bursary.** £250 awarded as a one-off payment at the end of Term 1.
  Eligibility criteria:
  - New entrants from September 2023 on our undergraduate degree programmes
  - Household income between £25,000 and £40,000, PLUS:
  - In an underrepresented group:
    - Care-leavers
    - Mature students (21 years or older at point of enrolment)
    - Disabled students

    As evidenced through SLC and UCAS applications.

  - **Not** in receipt of a Widening Participation Student Bursary.

  The bursary fund is managed by the SLC. This is a one -off payment.
  More details can be found here.

Bursaries Application Process

No application is required for widening participation bursaries and equipment bursaries. We will contact eligible students once we have received confirmation from the Student Loans Company as to eligibility. All bursaries will be subject to Terms and Conditions which will be published on our website. Students will only be considered for one bursary.

Annex A: Assessment of performance

Background Context

An initial step to preparing this Plan is a performance assessment based on latest data. We are using the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard for this initial analysis, although findings may point to areas where further data and analyses are required to understand our performance and context.

In the second stage of this assessment Head of Diversity Access and Participation (HDAP) consulted with heads of departments and their staff members. Two main areas of the consultations where findings from the data analysis stage, and the EORR. The findings from the data analysis allowed us to see where our gaps are, and the EORR provided some context for the parts of a student journey and areas where ACM should focus its attention and efforts. With this information we were able to consult with departments responsible for delivering support, advice, and guidance at different stages of the student lifecycle, and make informed decision about the design of our Intervention Strategy.

This paper presents our analysis and highlights areas of concern and consideration for ACM in respect of access and participation.

1. Initial Performance Assessment (Data Analysis)

We have conducted an initial performance assessment based on the latest OfS APP data release (March 2023) which covers to the 2021-22 monitoring year. This gives us some insights into ACM's likely gap areas and targets to address and may point to further areas we wish to investigate.

The following analysis presents the areas for concern for ACM at each stage of the lifecycle:

- Access – enrolment
- Continuation – continuing students measured at 1year and 15 days post initial enrolment
- Attainment – achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome
- Progression – progression into highly skilled employment or further post-graduate study

Summary

Summary Analysis – Traffic Light Report

Note: Gap metrics are percentage points (pp); non-gap metrics are percentage of the population (%)

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
ACCESS	TUNDRA GAP Q5-Q1 pp	16	12.7	12	6.5	24.8	16.4	21.8	15.4	-8.4
	ABCS GAP Q5-Q1 pp	14.1	8.5	3.4	6.3	20.1	9.7	15.8	9.2	-10.4
	IMD GAP Q1-Q5 pp	27.1	27.6	15.2	18	8.3	14	10.2	13.2	5.6
	Disabled %	18.1	19.7	21.8	20.3	24	37	28.3	24.8	13
	AMBO %	16.6	17.3	18.5	21.1	31.5	29.1	30.7	25.2	-2.4
	Mature %	13.9	15.2	22	18.7	35.8	27.5	33.1	27	-8.4
	Free School Meals (FSM) %	13.7	11.7	17.4	11	17.6	23.3	19.7	17	5.7
	Gender GAP M-F pp	36.0	43.6	49.0	40.6	33.2	41.6	36.0	40.6	8.4
CONTIN-UATION										
	TUNDRA GAP Q5-Q1 pp	-1.9	3.9	-9.2	11.4	-4.3	-12.7	-9.3	-3.1	-8.4
	ABCS GAP Q5-Q1 pp	16.1	-5.5	10.4	11.7		3.4	9	8.5	
	IMD GAP Q5-Q1 pp	20.9	1.4	9.7	1.9	4.6	1.0	2.6	3.9	-3.6
	Disabled-Non Dis GAP pp	11.6	6.1	5.6	-1.2	3.1	5.0	4.3	3.0	1.9
	AMBO-White GAP pp	8.6	1.7	9.5	7.9	-6.0	-0.3	-2.2	2.0	5.7
	Mature-Young GAP pp	9.6	3.4	5.6	1.2	5.7	4.3	4.2	3.4	-1.4
	FSM-Non-FSM GAP pp	10.4	3.8	17.7	3.1	19.3	5.1	9.9	9.5	-14.2
	Gender F-M GAP pp	-0.9	0.6	-11.9	-1.4	-5.1	5.0	1.4	-1.8	10.1
ATTAIN-MENT	TUNDRA GAP Q5-Q1 pp	3.5		0.2		-13.9		-5.7	-3.5	
	ABCS GAP Q5-Q1 pp	No data available								
	IMD GAP Q5-Q1 pp			3.1				17.3	7.9	
	Disabled-Non Dis GAP pp	10.4	-3.3	70.5	-4.7	-2.6	-12.5	-5.5	-3.8	9.9
	AMBO-White GAP pp	6.5	6.6	4.1	4.3	1.4	16.0	8.1	6.6	14.6
	Mature-Young GAP pp	3.2	8.1	9.6	2.7	-7.3	-13.3	-9.1	-1.5	6.0

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
	FSM-Non-FSM GAP pp							6.3	-3.1	
	Gender F-M GAP pp	3.9	10.2	9.2	2.3	5.8	20.8	10.0	7.6	15.0
PROG-RESSION										
	TUNDRA GAP Q5-Q1 pp							15.3		
	ABCS GAP Q5-Q1 pp							15.9		
	IMD GAP Q5-Q1 pp	No data available								
	Disabled-Non Dis GAP pp		-8.6	12.7	-5.3			4.0		
	AMBO-White GAP pp							4.9		
	Mature-Young GAP pp			-17.1				-19.5		
	FSM-Non-FSM GAP pp	No data available								
	Gender M-F GAP pp		17.2	-0.4	15.7			6.2		

Performance Gaps (Indicators of Risk) and Further Insights

The performance gaps (highlighted in red in the table above) point to where risks to equality of opportunity may manifest. For each of these performance gap areas, the table below highlights which risks these indicators link to (based on the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, EORR). It also highlights additional data we could explore to better understand our context and the findings.

Performance gap	EORR Risk	Data / Evidence we looked at
Access gaps for TUNDRA and IMD (Q5 - Q1)	Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills Risk 2: Information and guidance Risk 4: Application success rates	• Analysis of application-offer-accept ratios • Analysis of internal data • Review of targeting for outreach activity • Evaluation from outreach activity with objectives relating to increasing knowledge, skills, IAG • Evaluation of the ACM induction • Student Survey
Continuation gap for Disabled learners (Disabled - Non-Disabled) And for students eligible for FSM	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support Risk 7: Insufficient personal support Risk 8: Mental Health	• Review of disabled student DSA provision of support • Review of Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing provision of support • Review of Admissions information and guidance and other applicant support. • Evaluation of ACM induction

(Non-FSM – FSM)	Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus Risk 10: Cost pressures Risk 11: Capacity issues	• Review of course/module evaluation and feedback form students • Evaluation of the impact of financial support (incl. uptake of hardship funds) • Review of academic support • Review of personal support • Student Survey
Attainment gap for IMD (Q5 - Q1) global majority (white – AMBO)	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support Risk 7: Insufficient personal support Risk 8: Mental Health Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus Risk 10: Cost pressures Risk 11: Capacity issues	• Review of Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing provision of support • Review of Admissions information and guidance and other applicant support. • Evaluation of ACM induction • Review of course/module evaluation and feedback form students • Evaluation of the impact of financial support (incl. uptake of hardship funds) • Review of academic support • Review of personal support • Student Survey
Progression gap for TUNDRA (Q5 - Q1) ABCS (Q5 - Q1) Disabled learners (Disabled - Non-Disabled) Global majority (white – AMBO)	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support Risk 7: Insufficient personal support Risk 8: Mental Health Risk 9: Ongoing impact of Coronavirus Risk 10: Cost pressures Risk 11: Capacity issues Risk 12: Progression from HE	• GO report findings (graduate reflections) • NSS outcomes / analysis of other course /module evaluation and feedback • Evaluation of the impact of financial support (incl. uptake of hardship funds) • Review of academic support • Review of personal support • Student Survey

2. Analysis

The following presents the disaggregated analysis of the data, by stage and target group. This data was used to inform ongoing considerations, along with the full excel datasheet which contains numbers as well as % analyses, allowing for deeper understanding of the impact of small cohort sizes. In accordance with the regulatory guidance, we included disaggregated data only for the underrepresented groups of students included in our objectives and targets. Therefore, the data represents the whole student journey for IMD and BAME groups only, from access through continuation and attainment to progression.

Priority Areas for the Access and Participation Plan

Priority areas have been determined on the performance assessment, where we consider the largest improvements need to be made, in the context of ACM. These are areas where data is also more robust, which means that more reliable determinations regarding targets could e made. We have considered the areas of strategies importance to ACM, where we feel able to make a difference and contribution to equality of opportunity nationally.

Where we have not prioritised an area that has been highlighted in our performance assessment as requiring improvement, these decisions have been taken based on:

- Datasets being small and therefore data over the last 6 years being volatile, which meant that trends and assessment was less valid; and,
- Considerations of resource and where our focus needs to be on the primary areas of concern.

We will continue to closely monitor our data each year, and determine appropriate action should we discover areas which should become of priority under this Plan.

Analysis – Access

ACM Results
Target group: IMD
Target type: Gap in enrolments IMD Q1 v. Q5
ACM Results

Values		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT	IMDQ1	9.1	7.2	14.5	10.9	15.2	12.7	14.4	13.7	-2.5
	IMDQ2	12.8	14.5	15	17.8	17.6	20	18.4	17.3	2.4
	IMDQ3	18.2	19.4	20.1	19.6	20.5	21.6	20.8	20.4	1.1
	IMDQ4	23.8	24.1	20.7	22.8	23.2	19	21.9	21.7	-4.2
	IMDQ5	36.2	34.8	29.7	28.9	23.5	26.7	24.5	26.9	3.1
GAP Q5 – Q1 (percentage points)		**27.1**	**27.6**	**15.2**	**18**	**8.3**	**14**	**10.2**	**13.2**	**5.6**

GAP Q5-Q1										
SECTOR DATA						**-2.0**	**-3.2**			

Target group: Ethnicity
Target type: Proportion of enrolments by OfS ethnic groups
ACM Results

Values		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT	Asian	2.1	2.1	3.2	2.9	4.9	4.2	4.6	3.9	-0.7
	Black	7.4	6.4	6.8	9.9	14.3	13.3	13.9	11	-1
	Mixed	6.3	7.6	7.7	7.7	9.1	8.4	8.9	8.3	-0.7
	Other	0.8	1.2	0.9		3.3	3.2	3.3	2	-0.1
		83.4	82.7	81.5	78.9	68.5	70.9	69.3	74.8	2.4

	White									
	All ABMO	**16.6**	**17.3**	**18.5**	**21.1**	**31.5**	**29.1**	**30.7**	**25.2**	**-2.4**

% AMBO			
SECTOR DATA	**33.2**	**34.8**	

Continuation

Target group: IMD

Target type: Gap in continuation IMD Q1 v. Q5

ACM Results

Values		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT CONTINUATION	IMDQ1	66.7	83.6	77.4	80.5	80.5	79.2	79.6	79.6	-1.3
	IMDQ2	79.7	85	79	68.3	84.8	89.3	87.6	81.1	4.4
	IMDQ3	79.8	85.1	84.1	83.5	83.8	86.5	85.5	84.7	2.7
	IMDQ4	86.1	89.2	85.4	80.7	79.1	87.5	84.5	83.8	8.4
	IMDQ5	87.6	85	87.1	82.4	85	80.1	82.2	83.5	-4.9
GAP Q5 – Q1 (percentage points)		**20.9**	**1.4**	**9.7**	**1.9**	**4.6**	**1.0**	**2.6**	**3.9**	**-3.6**

GAP Q5-Q1		
SECTOR DATA	**6.9**	**9.1**

Target group: Ethnicity

Target type: Gap in continuation White – AMBO

ACM Results

Values		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT CONT.	Asian						83.3	87.8	83.8	
	Black	75.9	83	85.2	73	91.9	82.8	85.5	83	-9.1
	Mixed	73.1	89.7	74.2	74.4	79.3	86	83.7	79.4	6.7
	Other								80.6	
	White	85.5	86.3	85.9	81.7	82.6	84.7	83.8	83.7	2.1
	All AMBO	76.9	84.6	76.4	73.8	88.6	85	86	81.7	-3.6
GAP (percentage points)	White - AMBO	**8.6**	**1.7**	**9.5**	**7.9**	**-6.0**	**-0.3**	**-2.2**	**2.0**	**5.7**

GAP White - AMBO		
SECTOR	**1.9**	**3.1**

Attainment

Target group: IMD
Target type: Gap in attainment IMD Q1 v. Q5
ACM Results

Values		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT ATTAINMENT	IMDQ1			73.1				62.2	71.8	
	IMDQ2	52.6	60.9	61.1		82	78.6	80.8	75.7	-3.4
	IMDQ3	69.1	68.5	82.2	87.8	77.8	73.5	76.4	80.5	-4.2
	IMDQ4	73.3	75	70	89.3	76	77.8	76.5	77.6	1.8
	IMDQ5	80.2	76.7	76.1	84.3	81.7	73	79.5	79.7	-8.7
GAP Q5 – Q1 (percentage points)				**3.1**				**17.3**	**7.9**	

GAP Q5-Q1										
SECTOR						**15.4**	**17.8**			

Target group: Ethnicity
Target type: Gap in attainment White – AMBO
ACM Results

Values		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	AGG LAST 2YRS	AGG LAST 4YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT ATTAINMENT	Asian								80	
	Black					65.2		59	61.5	
	Mixed							75.8	77.3	
	White	74.1	73.3	74.3	86.7	78.8	77	78.3	79.2	-1.8
	All AMBO	67.6	66.7	70.2	82.4	77.4	61	70.2	72.6	-16.4
GAP (percentage points)	White - AMBO	**6.5**	**6.6**	**4.1**	**4.3**	**1.4**	**16.0**	**8.1**	**6.6**	**14.6**

GAP White - AMBO										
SECTOR						**9.3**	**11.0**			
GAP (percentage points)	No FSM – FSM							**6.3**	**-3.1**	

GAP Non-FSM - FSM										
ACM DATA	Data not available									
SECTOR						**10.2**	**12.3**			

Progression

Target group: IMD
Target type: Gap in progression IMD Q1 v. Q5

ACM Results

Values		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	AGG LAST 2YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT PROGRESSION	IMDQ2				67.9	
	IMDQ3		70.9		66.1	
	IMDQ4	80.8	63.3	71.9	66.9	8.6
	IMDQ5	64	64.2	72.3	67.8	8.1
GAP Q5 – Q1 (percentage points)	Data not available					

GAP Q5-Q1			
SECTOR DATA	**9.7**	**10.6**	

Target group: Ethnicity

Target type: Gap in progression White – AMBO

ACM Results

Values		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	AGG LAST 2YRS	CHANGE YR5 TO YR6
PERCENT PROGRESSION	ABMO				62.3	
	White	70.1	65.7	69.1	67.2	3.5
GAP (percentage points)	White – AMBO				**4.9**	

GAP White - AMBO		
SECTOR DATA	**3.3**	**3.4**

Annex B: Evidence base and rationale for intervention strategies (further detail)

Intervention Strategy 1: Intensive targeted outreach and partnerships with schools, colleges and other organisations

Raising attainment through CEIAG and outreach programmes

Empirical research of the impact of active engagement with music (as well as creative subjects more broadly) on school-and pre-university level students (14-19 y.o.) has revealed positive effects on the students' language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, motor-coordination, spatial orientation, concentration, confidence, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and mental health (e.g., Hallam, 2010; Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010)[1,2].

Most of those positive effects have been reported specifically for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, including people who were categorised or deemed at risk of being categorised as NEET, including learners who are, e.g., economically disadvantaged, copying with a disability (learning disability, sensory impairment) or mental ill-health, at risk of exclusion from school, care-experienced, refugees, travellers, etc. (Youth Music, 2011)[3].

Yet, opportunities for young people to study creative subjects, including music, at school have been diminishing over the past decade, primarily due to policy and funding changes in compulsory education (Broadhead, 2022)[4]. As a result, the number of hours in school curricula dedicated to these subjects have dropped by 23%, the number of students taking A levels in the subjects has decreased (although the 2022 uptake figures appear to buck the trend), and the university subsidy for teaching the subjects has dropped by 50% (UKADIA, The Head Trust & Guild HE, 2021)[5].

Lack of opportunities to engage with and learn about / in creative subjects, including music, is a highly likely contributing factor to the persistent outcomes gap between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers (EPI, 2020)[6].

Disadvantaged students tend to have lower attainment outcomes, e.g.,

- Only one third of them get GCSE grades required to progress onto HE (OFFA 2018)[7].

[1] Hallam, S. 2010. The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. International Journal of Music Education, 28 (3), 269-289. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761410370658
[2] Hampshire, K. R. & M., Matthijsse. 2010. Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach. Social Science and Medicine, 71, 708-716. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.05.015
[3] Youth Music. 2011. Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Music Making. https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/2286/download?token=3lRui5TM
[4] Broadhead, S. 2022. Access and Widening Participation in Arts Higher Education. Practice and Research. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97450-3
[5] UKADIA, The Head Trust, Guild HE. 2021. Trends in Creative Arts Qualifications. https://ukadia.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/HEAD-Trust-Arts-Quals-report-FINAL.pdf
[6] Education Policy Institute. 2020. Education in England: Annual Report 2020. https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/education-in-england-annual-report-2020/
[7] OFFA, 2018. Office for Fair Access annual report and accounts 2017-18. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728202/2017-18_OFFA_annual_report_2307FINAL.PDF

- Pupils with eligibility for free school meals (FSM) are on average 22 months behind more advantaged peers (EPI 2020)[6] and less likely to achieve A*-C in English and Maths (43%) compared to advantaged pupils (71%) (DfE 2017)[8],
- White, young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds (as indicated by their access to free school meals), young men, and disabled young people are less likely to continue participating in education post-16 y.o., and while for example Black African and female pupils tend to have on average some of the highest aspirations for staying in education among all pre-16 y.o. pupil groups, they tend to also have the highest gap (c.15%) between aspirations and continuing education post-16 y.o. Disabled pupils in particular are reported to experience high levels of discouragement and disappointment in relating to continuing in education. (Hutchinson et al., 2011)[9]

Such lower outcomes can limit future outcomes and prospects:

- Lower attainment rates for disadvantaged students are a key barrier to progression to HE. Conversely, when disadvantaged students achieve the same attainment levels as advantaged peers, they are almost equally likely to progress (OFFA 2018; Crawford 2014)[7,10].
- Achievement at KS4 is key predictor of HE participation (OfS 2022)[11].
- Students (white and ethnic minority ones alike) with fewer GSCEs are less likely to pursue HE (Connor et al., 2004)[12].
- Disadvantaged students are also likely to consider higher education later, which may limit their choices, especially of more selective subjects and higher tariff providers (UCAS, 2021)[13].
- Some minority students (particularly, Black Caribbean and Pakistani students) possess on average lower entry qualifications; fewer of them take the A-level route and instead come to HE from FE or with vocational qualifications (which appear to correlate with higher risk of drop-out) (Connor et al., 2004)[11].

Specifically in the context of creative subjects education, students who experience some form of disadvantage (economic, or based on race, ethnicity, disability, or age) appear to be significantly less likely than their peers of more advantageous background (POLAR and IMD quintiles 4 and 5) to have access to such education at school and to hold more than one, or any, relevant A-level, BTEC, or practical qualification (Connor et al., 2004)[11].

CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) and outreach programmes incorporating CEIAG are established interventions for engaging prospective university students with specific academic subjects to

[8] DfE. 2017. Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Study of Quality of Early Years Provision in England (Revised).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761606/29523_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2017-18_041218.pdf

[9] Hutchinson, J., H. Rolfe, N. Moore, S. Bysshe & K. Bentley. 2011. All things being equal? Equality and diversity in careers education, information advice and guidance. Equality and Human Rights Commission.
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-71-all_things-being-equal-equality-and-diversity-in-careers-education-information-and-advice.pdf

[10] Crawford, C. 2014. Socio-economic differences in university outcomes in the UK: drop-out, degree completion and degree class. London: IFS. Available at: https://ifs.org.uk/publications/socio-economic-differences-university-outcomes-uk-drop-out-degree-completion-and

[11] Office for Students. 2022. English higher education 2022. The Office for Students annual review.

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/aee2dd8d-1ee8-4383-84cc-1fc483684d0f/ofs-annual-review-2022.pdf

[12] Connor, H., C., Tyers, T., Modood & J., Hillage. 2004. Why the Difference? A closer look at higher education minority ethnic students and graduates. Research Report RR552, Department for Education and Skills.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR552.pdf

[13] UCAS. 2021. WHERE NEXT? WHAT INFLUENCES THE CHOICES LEAVERS MAKE?
https://www.ucas.com/file/435551/download?token=VUdIDVFh

enhance confidence in the chances of success in, knowledge of 'how to', and likelihood of applying to study in HE.

CEIAGs have been shown to have generally a small positive effect on attitudes, aspirations, and HE progression (TASO 2023)[14] and to boost enrolment into HE of prospective students from families with no previous graduate experience (Frauke et al., 2018)[15].

Linking future careers to education and (the need for) attainment to succeed at applying to university – which is the main purpose of CEIAGs and outreach programmes to engage students in subjects like music – facilitates:

- Increase in learner motivation and application to studies (EEF, 2016)[16],
- Enhancement of motivation to apply to university, and confidence in getting in (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010)[17],
- Development of metacognitive, self-regulation, problem-solving, creativity, and other employability relevant skills (Kingston University, Future Skills Report, 2022)[18],
- Development of forms of social capital that are implicit in the admissions and selection processes (Hayton et al 2015)[19].

The recent pandemic and restrictions on in-person education led to and demonstrated the effectiveness of online and blended approaches to outreach activities aimed at disadvantaged students and their parents and carers (Ofs, 2020)[20].

For the students specifically, examples include: the university student advocate led AccessHE programme in London; the GROWS blended learning careers booklet by the University of Gloucestershire that enables exploration of post-16 pathways and qualifications, identification of skills gaps and associated goals setting; the LiNCHigher Uni Connect online video platform for engaging prospective students with specific learning difficulties. For the students' parents and guardians, an example is the Make Happen Uni Connect initiative in Essex for parents and carers of pupils between 7 and 13 y.o.

Outreach programmes involving engaging pupils in music activity, e.g., creating music or playing an instrument, have worked particularly well when the creative activity was made / negotiated to be 'culturally meaningful and relevant', in part to minimise negative outcomes for the participants such as an alienation from their existing social networks (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010)[2].

[14] TASO. 2023. Evidence Toolkit. https://taso.org.uk/evidence/toolkit/

[15] Frauke P., C. Spiess, C. Katharina & V. Zambre. 2018. Informing Students about College: An Efficient Way to Decrease the Socio-Economic Gap in Enrollment: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment. DIW Berlin Discussion Paper No. 1770, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3287800 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3287800

[16] EEF. 2016. Careers education: International literature review. https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidance/Careers_review.pdf?v=1684350662

[17] Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 2010. Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour? https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poorer-children%E2%80%99s-educational-attainment-how-important-are-attitudes-and-behaviour

[18] Kingston University London. 2022. Future Skills: League Table. https://www.kingston.ac.uk/documents/user-upload/kingston-university-d2606ad3a3d-future-skills-report-2022-final.pdf

[19] Hayton, A., Haste, P., and Jones, A. (2015) 'Promoting diversity in creative art education: The case of Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London'. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36 (8), 1258–76. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.899891

[20] OfS. 2020. Supporting disadvantaged students through higher education outreach. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/624ae140-b26a-405c-8717-501ffce38d2e/coronavirus-briefing-note-outreach.pdf

Intervention Strategy 2: Holistic, personalised and proactive support

Personal Tutoring

Personal tutoring defines as providing students with academic and personal support throughout their time in Higher Education (Yale, 2019)[21].

It has been linked to an increase in students' sense of belonging and satisfaction through connectedness (Palmer et al., 2009)[22] – of particular importance to first year undergraduates, during their transition to higher education (Thomas, 2006; Reinheimer & McKenzie, 2014)[23,24].

Belonging, in turn, appears dependent upon student integration (or 'faculty validation') academically and socially, and itself is a major determinant of retention (and/or 'persistence'), impacting the most students from disadvantaged, at-risk groups on socio-economic, age, or ethnicity basis (Pedler et al., 2022; Ahn & Horward, 2023)[25,26].

This is especially relevant given persistent findings that as many as 40% or more of students have thought about dropping out, often due to personal circumstances, or lack of self-efficacy, or prior to an assessment or after failing an assessment (McCary et al., 2011)[27].

Unsurprisingly, most UK universities run a personal tutoring system (Grant, 2006)[28] that aims to provide 'proximity of staff to students, teaching methods centred on the idea of learning as a partnership, and students receiving personal attention from staff' (Attwood, 2009)[29].

Tutoring systems, when functioning effectively ultimately benefit student success in terms of grades, attendance, and engagement through academic and wellbeing support (Stuart et al., 2019)[30].

Yet, variation within the system in basic precepts of such systems, e.g., how often tutors meet with tutees, how meetings are initiated, what if any records of meetings are kept, how meetings run, i.e., whether individually or in groups, and what meetings are for, appears rife, which poses dangers to the

[21] Yale, A. T. 2020. Quality matters: an in-depth exploration of the student–personal tutor relationship in higher education from the student perspective, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 44:6, 739-752. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1596235
[22] Palmer, M., P. O'Kane & M. Owens. 2009. Betwixt spaces: student accounts of turning point experiences in the first-year transition, Studies in Higher Education, 34:1, 37-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802601929
[23] Thomas, L. 2006. "Widening Participation and the Increased Need for Personal Tutoring." In Personal Tutoring in Higher Education, edited by Liz Thomas and Paula Hixenbaugh, 21–31. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
[24] Reinheimer, D. & K. McKenzie. 2011. The Impact of Tutoring on the Academic Success of Undeclared Students, Journal of College Reading and Learning, 41:2, 22-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2011.10850340
[25] Pedler, M. L., R. Willis & J. E. Nieuwoudt. 2022. A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 46:3, 397-408. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1955844
[26] Ahn, M. Y. & H. Davis. 2023. Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach. Teaching in Higher Education, 28(1), 136-149. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1778664
[27] McCary, J., S. Pankhurts, H. Valentine & A. Berry. 2011. A comparative evaluation of the roles of student adviser and personal tutor in relation to undergraduate student retention. Final report - Anglia Ruskin University. Advance HE. https://documents.advance-he.ac.uk/download/file/document/3999?_ga=2.218349017.1759162373.1687938256-1083746230.1676498658
[28] Grant, A. 2006. "Personal Tutoring: A System in Crisis." In Personal Tutoring in Higher Education, edited by Liz Thomas and Paula Hixenbaugh, 11–20. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
[29] Attwood, R. 2009. "The Personal Touch." Times Higher Education, May 7. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/the-personal-touch/406424.article
[30] Stuart, K., K. Willocks & R. Browning. 2021. Questioning personal tutoring in higher education: an activity theoretical action research study, Educational Action Research, 29:1, 79-98. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1626753

student experience of tutoring (QAA, 2014)[31]. So much so that experiencing poor personal tutoring can be deemed worse than having had no personal tutor at all (Yale, 2017)[32].

Student expectations and perceptions of personal tutoring do not always match, but the gap – e.g., regarding the frequency and regularity of meetings with the personal tutor - appears to have been closing (Calabrese et al., 2022)[33].

Effective models of personal tutoring appear to incorporate data analytics in a student-facing – providing students (as well as their personal tutors) with a dynamic snapshot of the student's engagement with services such as the Library, their attendance of timetabled teaching, etc. – or a tutor-facing – providing tutee-related data on e.g., engagement, attendance, and achievement (Lowes, 2020; Banks, 2022)[34,35].

The data can be used to identify at-risk students and take timely action, which has been shown to significantly improve retention (Coley et al., 2015)[36].

A Solen University case study (Banks, 2022)[37] gives an idea of the data-driven proactive approach to support, comprising a programme of both general and personalised actions, that can be given to students identified as being at-risk (notably, the 'at-risk' definition in that example of a personal tutoring system was expanded to include 'at transition point', such as progressing to the next year):

'Activities include phone calls, individual meetings, seminars, workshops and emails providing information and advice.'

'Support is also offered to students in their final year in the form of 'Student Achievement Tutorial' where their individual student record is discussed together with their desired degree outcome and an action plan for the final months of study is agreed.'

The case study notes that contacting students based on the data tracking is a matter of norm and part of the standardised student and academic support mechanisms put in place by the institution.

That personal tutoring model is reported in the Banks (2022) case study to have resulted in:

- 11% increase in attainment and progression rates for students with refers/defers who received support compared to those who did not,
- •9% increase in attainment and progression rates for students returning from suspension of studies,
- 14% reduction in the withdrawal rates of repeat level students,
- 3% increase in students achieving a first-class degree,

[31] The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2014. "What Students Think of Their Higher Education Analysis of Student Submissions to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 2012-13." http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/What-Students-Think-of-Their-Higher-Education.pdf

[32] Yale, A. T. 2019. The personal tutor–student relationship: student expectations and experiences of personal tutoring in higher education, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 43:4. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1377164

[33] Calabrese, G., D-L. M. Leadbitter, N. Trindade, A. Jeyabalan, D. Dolton & A. ElShaer. 2022. Personal Tutoring Scheme: Expectations, Perceptions and Factors Affecting Students' Engagement. Frontiers in Education, Vol. 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.727410

[34] Lowes, R. 2022. Knowing You: Personal Tutoring, Learning Analytics and the Johari Window. Frontiers in Education. Sec. Leadership in Education, Volume 5. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00101

[35] Banks, A. 2022. A data-focused approach to personalising central support programmes and complementing personal tutoring. In: The Higher Education Personal Tutor's and Advisor's Companion: Translating Theory into Practice to Improve Student Success, Edited by Dave Lochtie, Andrew Stork and Ben W Walker, 1st ed., Critical Publishing, pp. 16-21. https://pure.solent.ac.uk/files/32431629/Banks_Case_Study_V4.pdf

[36] Coley C., T. Coley, K. Lynch-Holmes. 2015. Retention and student success: implementing strategies that make a difference. White Paper Series, Ellican. https://www.ellucian.com/assets/en/white-paper/whitepaper-retention-and-student-success.pdf

[37] Banks, A. 2022. A data-focused approach to personalising central support programmes and complementing personal tutoring. In: The Higher Education Personal Tutor's and Advisor's Companion: Translating Theory into Practice to Improve Student Success, Edited by Dave Lochtie, Andrew Stork and Ben W Walker, 1st ed., Critical Publishing, pp. 16-21. https://pure.solent.ac.uk/files/32431629/Banks_Case_Study_V4.pdf

- 100% student satisfaction with the personal tutoring programme,
- 12% increase in the average recorded student attendance, a

While the study does not claim causality, it points to a longitudinal trend across 2018-2020 of year-on-year increase of retention for the student groups targeted by the programme, as well as a trend of an improving continuation rate that has meant Solent University has performed better than its benchmark on student continuation.

Student Engagement Monitoring & Interventions (Learning Analytics)

The UK Higher Education Commission declared in a 2016 report ('From Bricks to Clicks')[38] that learning analytics have "enormous potential to improve the student experience at university".

Predictive models that aim to estimate and identify levels of risk and at-risk students based on the data collected through learning analytics have been validated empirically, and related interventions carried out with students have been effective at e.g., increasing retention (Sclater, 2016; Loon, 2021)[39,40].

Learning analytics can be effective not only at improving retention, e.g., by combining them with targeted personal tutoring – as discussed under 'Personal Tutoring' above - but also at:

- quality enhancing and assuring teaching (and generating evidence of that towards e.g., the TEF),
- taking evidence-informed action to improve the engagement and success of target student groups – e.g., global majority students, and students from lower participation (POLAR/IMD) areas – prior to assessment, and
- enabling adaptive learning – i.e., personalising guided independent learning at a scale, whereby students are directed to and presented with learning resources based on their past interactions and success rates at the learning tasks contained within the resources.

Crucially, learning analytics can provide students with more control over their own learning through data on progress and what they need to do to meet relevant learning outcomes and the students' own educational goals. That includes the provision of information students can use to make decisions about what elective modules to enrol in, depending on their preferred pathway through a degree course, or what skills and aptitudes they need to develop, depending on their career aspirations.

Learning analytics are also well received by students who consider them a positive experience and using them – a motivator for learning.

The TASO evidence toolkit on learning analytics (TASO, 2023)[41] describes them as a four-step process that includes data generation (usually, on a VLE platform), tracking (on the platform, by specified indicators), analysis (on or off the platform, resulting in pattern generation and actionable information), and action (a prediction, an intervention, or a personalisation).

The toolkit corroborates previously proposed impact, and indeed finds causal evidence for it, of the use of analytics on e.g.,

[38] The Higher Education Commission. 2016. Report: From Bricks to Clicks - The Potential of Data and Analytics in Higher Education. https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/media/1128/download
[39] Sclater, N. 2016. Learning Analytics in Higher Education. Jisc. https://www.jisc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/learning-analytics-in-he-v2_0.pdf
[40] Loon, M. 2021. Flexible learning: a literature review 2016 – 2021. Advance HE. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/flexible-learning-literature-review-2016-2021
[41] TASO. 2023. Evidence & Evaluation: Evidence toolkit: Learning analytics (post-entry). https://taso.org.uk/intervention/learning-analytics-post-entry/

- accurate prediction of dropouts that enabled the deployment of personalised pedagogic interventions (Cambruzzi et al., 2015)[42],
- student attainment related to praising students flagged for high engagement with online learning resources by their tutors (Krumm et al., 2014)[43],
- attainment and engagement, based on tracker visualisation of individual student performance compared to previous successful students and student cohorts (Davis et al., 2016)[44],
- attendance, completion, success, and participation, based on a peer-recommender tool that matched students to peers based on academic performance and interests (Labarthe et al., 2016)[45],
- performance in quizzes and mastery tasks, but not the overall performance in exams or student behaviour related to engagement with learning online, based on the provision of a weekly dashboard and personalised email on students' study progress and chances of success in an online Java programming course (Hellings & Haelermans, 2020)[46].

Further examples of the utility of analytics include:

- At Purdue University, identifying problems as early as the second week into a semester; data analysis on use of the VLE, for example, has helped identify it as a factor for student success given that students ending up with a D (equivalent to a 3rd) or a F (equivalent to a Fail) are found to use the VLE 40% less on average compared to students who achieve C (2.2) or higher.
- At the University of Maryland, Baltimore, students who used an analytics tool to compare their VLE activity to their peers' were 1.92 times likelier to achieve a grade C or higher compared to the students who did not use that tool.
- The Purdue University 'Signals' traffic-lights alert system (Arnold, 2010)[47] combines VLE, assessment, attendance, and personal (student intersectional categorisation) data to produce an indicator of how at-risk a student might be. The system generates a signal – the indicator – based on these data to both the student and their tutor(s). Data on the student performance (grades) and behaviour (interaction with the VLE and seeking support) after deployment of signals reveal that where 'Signals' was used in the university more students achieved grade C or above overall in their years of study (Pistilli & Arnold, 2010)[48]. A similar use of learning analytics at Nottingham Trent University has produced similar outcomes for attainment, and nearly a third of Year 1 undergraduates who used the traffic lights dashboard stated they changed behaviour based on the signal they received. Behavioural change ranged from engagement in more independent learning to practically competing to achieve the highest engagement score.

[42] Cambruzzi, W. L., S. J. Rigo & J. L. Barbosa. 2015. Dropout prediction and reduction in distance education courses with the learning analytics multitrail approach. J. UCS, 21(1), 23-47. http://www.jucs.org/jucs_21_1/dropout_prediction_and_reduction/jucs_21_01_0023_0047_cambruzzi.pdf

[43] Krumm, A. E., R. J. Waddington, S. D. Teasley & S. Lonn. 2014. A learning management system-based early warning system for academic advising in undergraduate engineering. In Learning analytics (pp. 103-119). Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3305-7_6

[44] Davis, D., G. Chen, I. Jivet, C. Hauff & G. J. Houben. 2016. Encouraging Metacognition & Self-Regulation in MOOCs through Increased Learner Feedback. In LAL@ LAK (pp. 17-22). http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1596/paper3.pdf

[45] Labarthe, H., F. Bouchet, R. Bachelet & K. Yacef. 2016. Does a Peer Recommender Foster Students' Engagement in MOOCs?. International Educational Data Mining Society. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592665.pdf

[46] Hellings, J., & C. Haelermans. 2020. The effect of providing learning analytics on student behaviour and performance in programming: a randomised controlled experiment. Higher Education, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00560-z

[47] Arnold, K. 2010. Signals: Applying Academic Analytics. Educause Review. https://er.educause.edu/articles/2010/3/signals-applying-academic-analytics

[48] Pistilli, M. D. & K. E. Arnold. 2010. Purdue Signals: Mining Real-Time Academic Data to Enhance Student Success. About Campus, 15(3), 22–24. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20025

Examples of using learning analytics in higher music education specifically (In: Reizábal & Gómez, 2022)[49] range from using analytics in ways like those described above to ascertain self-regulated learning of students on a blended learning music teacher education course (Montgomery et al., 2019)[50] to applications aimed at facilitating adaptive learning.

E.g.,

- the Objective Ear tool (Burrows & Kumar, 2018)[51] helps students evaluate recordings of their instrumental performances in terms of tempo, pitch, rhythm, flex-rhythm, ornaments, and errors.
- The Musix learning analytics tool (Guillot et al., 2015)[52] enables students to learn by themselves, at their own pace, and to track their own progress.

Learning analytics provides a tool that can operationalise the tracking of student engagement and progress in outreach activities and at university, help identify at-risk learners and personalise support interventions aimed at increasing attainment and retention, trace and evaluate performance as part of awarding of digital badges for achievement, and even assist with co-creation with students in the context of curriculum decolonisation.

Intervention Strategy 3: Inclusive and flexible curriculum, with complementary skills development and accreditation

Inclusivity and curriculum decolonisation

Curriculum inclusivity encompasses all teaching, learning, and assessment dimensions; simply put, it is anticipating and taking into account all students' entitlement to access and participate in a course (Morgan & Houghton, 2011)[53].

Curricular effectiveness hence should, and does, correlate with what teachers do, so much so that their choice of teaching methods can substantially affect student outcomes (Schneider & Preckel, 2017)[54]. Inclusivity does extend however beyond the curriculum, to incorporate institutional policy, resources and funding, staff development, and leadership (Schuelka, 2018)[55].

Examples of curriculum design frameworks developed for and widely used to implement, evaluate, and enhance curricular inclusivity and equality of opportunity include, e.g., the inclusive pedagogy and

[49] Reizábal, M. L. de. & M. B. Gómez. 2022. Learning analytics and higher music education: Perspectives and challenges. Arts Educa 34, Enero 2023, pp. 219-229. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/8941623.pdf
[50] Montgomery, A.P., A. Mousavi, M. Carbonaro, D. V. Hayward & W. Dunn. 2019. Using learning analytics to explore self-regulated learning in flipped blended learning music teacher education. Br J Educ Technol, 50: 114-127. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12590
[51] Burrows, J. & V. Kumar. 2018. The Objective Ear: Assessing the Progress of a Music Task. In: , et al. Challenges and Solutions in Smart Learning. Lecture Notes in Educational Technology. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8743-1_15
[52] Guillot, C., R. Guillot, V. Kumar & Kinshuk. 2015. Enhancing Music Prowess through Analytics. In M. Chang, & F. Al-Shamali (Eds.), 2015 Proceedings of Science and Technology Innovations (pp. 93–104). Faculty of Science and Technology, Athabasca University, Canada.
[53] Morgan, H. & A-M., Houghton. 2011. Inclusive curriculum design in higher education. Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas. Advance HE. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-curriculum-design-higher-education
[54] Schneider, M., & Preckel, F. (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. Psychological bulletin, 143(6), 565. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000098
[55] Schuelka, M. 2018. Implementing inclusive education. Helpdesk Report. K4D. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6eb77340f0b647b214c599/374_Implementing_Inclusive_Education.pdf

the universal design for learning models (Sanger, 2020)[56], the inclusive curriculum framework (McDuff et al., 2020)[57] as well as the connected curriculum model (Fung, 2017)[58].

Curriculum design instruments borrowing from such models, and often aimed at increasing curricula inclusivity for particular student groups, e.g., global majority students, have followed, e.g., the Inclusive Course Design Tool by Smith et al. (2021)[59] that seeks ultimately to reduce the BAME attainment gap, or the UCL's BAME inclusive curriculum toolkit (2020)[60], or the cross-disadvantaged student groups and cross-subjects inclusivity guidance on inclusive curriculum design by Advance HE (Morgan & Houghton, 2011)[21].

Context, specifically of the academic subject, is important for understanding and effecting inclusion (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2022)[61]. The Advance HE subject toolkits for inclusive curriculum design, e.g., the 'Dance, Drama, and Music' toolkit (2011)[62] reflect just that, with themes of matching curricula to students, embedding employability, and addressing issues of well-being at the forefront of recommendations for making university curricula in these creative subjects more inclusive.

Inclusivity appears to intersect with, and influence strongly student retention – the continuation of study - and persistence – the students' attitudes and behaviours to attainment (Arshad-Snyder, 2017; Hall et al, 2021)[63,64], but also attainment. The BME attainment gap - "the great unspoken shame of higher education" – has been at the forefront of research linking inclusivity and attainment and strategic efforts to moving away from a student to an institutional deficit approach in considering the reasons for and ways to tackle inequalities of attainment (Ross et al., 2018)[65].

Much of the research and evidence in this area has relied on Vincent Tinto's institutional departure model (1988)[66], with its claim that retention depends primarily on the level of student integration (or 'faculty validation', as per Arshad-Snyder, 2017)[29] and socialisation into academia.

In that context, effective interventions at fostering academic integration, and hence increasing retention, included, on the teachers' side, explicit demonstration of interest in students' success and learning, giving encouragement, and acting as a mentor (Arshad-Snyder, 2017)[29]. Setting up peer-learning and learning communities have also proved effective, and they also showed potential for

[56] Sanger, C.S. 2020. Inclusive Pedagogy and Universal Design Approaches for Diverse Learning Environments. In: Sanger, C., Gleason, N. (eds) Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1628-3_2
[57] McDuff, N., A. Hughes, J. Tatam, E. Morrow & F. Ross. 2020. Improving equality of opportunity in higher education through the adoption of an Inclusive Curriculum Framework. Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, Volume 22, Number 2, July 2020, pp. 83-121(39). https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.22.2.83
[58] Fung, D. 2017. A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education. UCL Press. http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1558776/1/A-Connected-Curriculum-for-Higher-Education.pdf
[59] Smith, S., R. Pickford, R. Sellers & J. Priestley. 2021. Developing the Inclusive Course Design Tool: a tool to support staff reflection on their inclusive practice. Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching. ISSN 2044-0073 DOI: https://doi.org/10.21100/compass.v14i1.1115
[60] UCL. 2020. Creating an inclusive curriculum for BAME students. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2020/apr/creating-inclusive-curriculum-bame-students
[61] Stentiford, L. & G. Koutsouris. 2022. Critically considering the 'inclusive curriculum' in higher education, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 43:8, 1250-1272. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2022.2122937
[62] Advance HE. 2011. Inclusive curriculum design in higher education: DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC. Advance HE. https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/media/content-assets/academic-development/documents/dance_drama_and_music.pdf
[63] Arshad-Snyder, S. 2017. The Role of Faculty Validation in Influencing Online Students' Intent to Persist. Dissertation/thesis. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC. search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED576756&site=ehost-live
[64] Hall, M. M., R.E. Worsham, & G. Reavis. 2021. 'The Effects of Offering Proactive Student-Success Coaching on Community College Students' Academic Performance and Persistence', Community College Review, 49 (2): 202-237. http://doi.org/10.1177/0091552120982030
[65] Ross, F. M., J. C. Tatam, A. L. Hughes, O. P. Beacock & N. Mcduff. 2018. "The great unspoken shame of UK Higher Education": addressing inequalities of attainment. African Journal of Business Ethics, 12(1), ISSN (print) 1817-7417. http://dx.doi.org/10.15249/12-1-172
[66] Tinto, Vincent. "Stages of Student Departure: Reflections on the Longitudinal Character of Student Leaving." The Journal of Higher Education, vol. 59, no. 4, 1988, pp. 438–55. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/1981920

narrowing the retention and other equity gaps for minority and disadvantaged students (e.g., Johnson et al., 2020)[67].

Similarly, pedagogic approaches like active learning, including problem-based learning and experiential learning (Safari et al., 2020; Martinez-Rodrigo et al., 2017; Song et al., 2017)[68,69,70] and research-based learning (Ing et al., 2021)[71], technology-enabled teaching models like blended learning (Yen at al., 2018; Grønlien et al., 2021)[72,73], and learning support initiatives like annotated learning resources, visual fact-sheets for tutorials, and video annotations of research papers (Dracup et al., 2016)[74], have demonstrable impact on retention and attainment, particularly of minority and disadvantaged students (Austen et al., 2021)[75].

A unifying and underlying feature of all of these approaches, pedagogies, and models aimed at raising inclusion is belonging, which is determined by students' academic and social integration, and which appears a major determinant of retention and attainment, particularly for disadvantaged and non-traditional student groups (Pedler et al., 2022; Ahn & Horward, 2023)[76,77].

Decolonising curricula is the most recent addition to higher education's pursuit for inclusivity and belonging as part of the student experience.

It advocates the interrogation of curricula through critical pedagogy, e.g., Critical Race Theory, to identify issues, gaps, and solutions to the negative impact of exclusionist epistemology, exclusion from knowledge creation, and denial of role models to black and other minoritized students, which ultimately leads to negative outcomes in terms of the students' sense of belonging, intrinsic motivation to study, retention, and attainment (Ferguson, et al. 2019; Arday et al., 2021)[78,79].

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As with the broader inclusivity pedagogic and policy agenda, curriculum decolonisation has generated plethora of implementation models and frameworks that seek to provide blueprints for the interrogation, and guidelines for the solution seeking (Ahmed-Landeryou, 2023; SOAS, 2018)[80,81].

Examination of the impact of curriculum decolonisation on student outcomes, from sense of belonging to retention and attainment, is in its infancy.

Campbell et al. (2022)[82] reported positive qualitative impact on the sense of belonging and enjoyment of learning by global majority students of the implementation a racially inclusive curricular toolkit on a sociology course at the University of Leicester. The toolkit instigated curricular changes to reading lists, terminology, and teaching that helped making quantitative sociology more relevant to all students and aided reflection for race specialists.

However, the study did not detect direct or quantitatively significant causal effect on the racial attainment gap.

That finding has been replicated for a similar intervention at the University of Kent (TESO, 2022)[83] that involved changing reading lists based on global majority students' work on the lists through auditing, negotiating through focus groups, and collaborating with the Library to identify potential further resources. In the study, global majority students had a small positive, but not statistically significant, uplift in attainment of approximately 2% post-intervention, but that compared to a 3.5% uplift for white students.

Nevertheless, such research consistently finds that minoritized students do generally report greater enjoyment of and engagement with their course.

Digital (micro-) credentials for developing a portfolio of skills

Digital- or micro-credentials, as they are more commonly known (other names include 'digital badge', 'online certificate', 'nano-degree', 'micro-masters', 'short course', etc.), refer generally to short forms of learning experience that can earn transferrable and stackable academic credit, but does not equate to a formal qualification (Brown et al., 2021)[84].

The QAA (2022)[85] defined micro-credentials for the UK HE context as:

- Representing shorter and narrower engagement with a subject,
- Additional, alternative, or a component of a formal qualification
- Credit bearing against nationally recognised qualification frameworks, e.g., the FHEQ and FQHEIS,
- Carrying a range of credits (from as little as 1 to up to 100 at UG level, and up to 55 at PG level)
- Offered at any level of study, and
- Subject to standard QA mechanisms.

[80] Ahmed-Landeryou, M. 2023. Developing an evidence-Informed decolonising curriculum wheel – A reflective piece. Equity in Education & Society, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461231154014
[81] SOAS. 2018. Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit for Programme and Module Convenors. https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/learning-teaching/toolkit-for-programme-and-module-convenors/
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[85] QAA. 2022. Characteristics Statement: Micro-credentials. https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/new-characteristics-statement-for-micro-credentials-now-available

Although a relatively new form of learning provision, micro-credentials fit into the national learning agenda for UK HE (DfE, White Paper, 2021)[86] for creating a flexible skills system based on a modular (online or blended) provision that enables building up learning over time as part of a lifetime learning guarantee.

Agility of the learning provision, accessibility to non-traditional learners – including due to much lower cost compared to a formal degree, and the focus on skills are among the foremost benefits of micro-credentials (Loon, 2021)[87]. They are likely to be most appealing to graduates and mature learners in work who pursue quick upskilling. The financial appeal of micro-credentials would depend however on available funding and what they are intended for. While employers appear well disposed towards the competency- and skills-based learning evidenced through micro-credentials (Miller & de St Jorre, 2022)[88] and tend to value experience over a degree, proportionately few would cover the cost of higher education as professional development for their staff (Lifelong Education Commission, 2022)[89].

Also, stacking micro-credentials towards a formal degree would currently come out more expensive than taking the degree course (QAA, 2022)[53].
Micro-credentials tend to associate with positive impacts on learning such as constructive learning environment with more frequent feedback, enjoyable learning experience, high level of peer support (Thi Ngoc Ha et al., 2023)[90].

The Open University micro-credential courses, for example, have been shown empirically to impact learners – even those who do not complete the course – in terms of knowledge and skills development, changed thinking about the subject, and increased confidence to change career or pursue further study (Chandler & Perryman, 2023; Orman et al., 2023)[91,92].

Particular features of micro-credentials that make them suited for integration into formal degree courses, including in creative subjects, music in particular, include:

- that assessment usually takes the form of a portfolio – in micro-credentials oriented towards upskilling and re-skilling, or a work-based project that reflects their industry focused nature (QAA, 2022)[53],
- the certification through a digital badge of the completion of a short learning experience that evidences, in a much more detailed way that grades can, achievement, e.g., skills acquisition,
- the in-course practice (trialled in MOOCs) of badging engagement with and achievement of tasks associated with knowledge and skills acquisition; This has been shown to increase learner participation in tasks associated with rewards (a badge) and can be used to promote completion of specific tasks to achieve specified learning goals (Ortega-Arranz et al., 2019)[93], and
- the amenity of badges to integrate into a VLE, to submit to verification, e.g., through blockchain technology, of the information about acquisition they contain, and to a micro-credential process leading to the badge award that requires students to reflect on their learning and to produce authentic artefacts that can be added into a professional portfolio (Lim et al., 2018)[94].

[86] DfE. 2021. Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf
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[94] Lim, C. L., P. K. Nair, M. J. Keppell, N. Hassan & E. Ayub. 2018. "Developing a Framework for the University-Wide Implementation of Micro-Credentials and Digital Badges: A Case Study From a Malaysian Private University," 2018 IEEE 4th International Conference on Computer and Communications (ICCC), Chengdu, China, pp. 1715-1719. https://doi.org/10.1109/CompComm.2018.8780706

An example of using digital badges to recognise student achievement of specified graduate attributes comes from Deakin University in Australia where Deakin Hallmark badges were awarded to students upon successful demonstration of achievement of the hallmark in the context of project-based experiential learning (Miller et al., 2020)[95].

The hallmarks (=intended learning outcomes) had been co-designed with industry partners to be meaningful in the workplace and hence represent acquisition of authentic employability skills.

The badges evidencing the record of achievement could be shared through social media and platforms like Linkedin, and contained information not only about the specific skill, but also the industry partner(s) involved in the development of the assessment task for the skill, the assessment criteria and standards, the assessors' identities, and the work itself for which the student was awarded the badge.

Intervention Strategy 4: Financial Support

The impact of financial support on decisions to progress onto HE is generally seen as small (Nursaw 2015; TASO 2023). It tends to be seen more as mechanism for supporting students' continuation and progression (Nursaw 2015; TASO 2023)[96, 22].

Given the evidence that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to discontinue their studies than their wealthier peers (Vignoles and Powdthavee, 2009)[97], we have designed our financial support package so it identifies and targets specifically students with the greatest need, who would most benefit from the support.

Appropriate support allocation can help disadvantaged students continue in their studies at the same rate of their more advantaged peers, mitigating some forms of disadvantage (OfS, 2020)[98].

In terms of what support, the means-based kind, especially when it matches financially students' unmet needs, is reported in the literature to consistently improve completion rates of disadvantaged students (Herbaut and Geven, 2019)[99]. Murphy and Wyness (2014)[100] and Harrison and Waller (2017)[101] claim that bursaries have that effect on the continuation of disadvantaged students.

Moores and Burges (2023) stress that if continuation is the goal, then scholarships should be means-based only, i.e., given to those who most need the financial support, rather than on the basis of academic merit. They point out also that students eligible for means-based support sometimes do not receive it because their household income has not been officially assessed (meaning they miss out also on a maintenance grant) and/or because they find it very difficult to navigate the loans/bursary system. Consequently, such students are likelier to drop out.

[95] Miller, K. K., T. J. de St Jorre, J. M. West & E. D. Johnson. 2020. The potential of digital credentials to engage students with capabilities of importance to scholars and citizens. Active Learning in Higher Education, 21(1), 11–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417742021
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[97] Vignoles, A. & Powdthavee, N. 2009, The Socioeconomic Gap in University Dropouts. The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, 9, issue 1, p. 1-36. https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-1682.2051
[98] OfS. 2020. Understanding the impact of the financial support evaluation toolkit: Analysis and findings. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/474c9580-e99a-4d24-a490-3474e85ae199/financial-support-evaluation-report-2016-17-2017-18.pdf
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[101] Harrison, N. & R. Waller. 2017. Success and Impact in Widening Participation Policy: What Works and How Do We Know? Higher Education Policy 30(2):141-160. DOI:10.1057/s41307-016-0020-x

Such apparently not uncommon instances highlight the 'need for a consistent method to identify those groups of students who are most vulnerable to being under-represented in HE before provision of financial support can be effective' (Kaye, 2020)[102].

Halliday-Wynes & Nguyen (2014)[103] suggest that disadvantaged students often experience financial stress as they seek additional financial aid from family or friends. Our package of support is designed to mitigate or reduce this stress.

Harrison et al. (2018)[104] point to a range of positive impacts that students derive from the receipt of financial support, including capacity building around the ability to focus on their studies, having a social life and building a social network, and developing self-esteem.

Elsewhere, studies have suggested that financial support can reduce a student's need to take on termtime part time work (Hordósy et al., 2018)[105].

Financial support can also have positive affective impacts, increasing a recipient student's sense of belonging to/in their university (Thomas, 2012)[106] or even of 'mattering' to the institution (Clark and Hordósy 2019)[107].

However, it is important to remember that financial support on its own does not remove non-financial barriers to participation and success in higher education, and that other types of support for target groups of students would also be required (Kaye, 2020)[40]. Our set of Strategies takes note of that.

[102] Kaye, N. 2021. Evaluating the role of bursaries in widening participation in higher education: a review of the literature and evidence, Educational Review, 73:6. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1787954
[103] Halliday-Wynes, S. & N. Nguyen. 2014. Does financial stress impact on young people in tertiary study? Research Report 68, LongitudinalL Surveys of Australian Youth. https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0031/16789/impact-of-financial-stress-2732.pdf
[104] Harrison , N., S. Davies, R. Harris & R. Waller. 2018. Access, participation and capabilities: theorising the contribution of university bursaries to students' wellbeing, flourishing and success. Cambridge Journal of Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2017.1401586
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Office for Students

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

Provider name: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

Summary of 2024-25 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for 2024-25 new entrants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Office for Students

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

Provider name: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£62,000	£64,000	£65,000	£66,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£230,000	£279,000	£312,000	£350,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£50,000	£51,000	£52,000	£53,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£12,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£62,000**	**£64,000**	**£65,000**	**£66,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment (as % of HFI)***	**1.5%**	**1.2%**	**1.1%**	**1.0%**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment funded from HFI (£)***	**£62,000**	**£64,000**	**£65,000**	**£66,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)***	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£230,000	£279,000	£312,000	£350,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£230,000**	**£279,000**	**£312,000**	**£350,000**
Financial support investment	***Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)***	**5.4%**	**5.4%**	**5.4%**	**5.4%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%

Office for Students

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

Provider name: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative ?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
To increase the proportion of students from IMD Q1 areas at ACM.	PTA_1	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A	In 2021-22 at ACM, there are 12.7% students from IMD Q1 areas, compared to 26.7% student's from IMD Q5 areas. Other quintiles (Q2,Q3,Q4) are also better represented than IMD Q1. Over the lifetime of this Plan, we want to increase the proportion of IMD Q1 enrolments to 19%.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	12.7%	14%	15%	17%	19%
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative ?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
To reduce the attainment gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students.	PTS_1	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the attainment (achievement of a First or 2:1 Degree outcome) gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students, from 17.3 percentage points (aggregate 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 12 percentage points (aggregate 2026-27 to 2027-28).	No	The access and participation dataset	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	17.3	16.5	15.5	14	12
To reduce the attainment gap between Black students and their white peers.	PTS_2	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	White	To reduce the attainment (achievement of a First or 2:1 Degree outcome) gap between Black students and their white peers, from 19.3 percentage points (aggregate 2020-21 to 2021-22) to 9.5 percentage points (aggregate 2026-27 to 2027-28).	No	The access and participation dataset	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	19.3	17.3	15	12.5	9.5
	PTS_3														
	PTS_4														
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative ?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
	PTP_1														
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														