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**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Submitted August 2019

Introduction

York St John University has a proud history of widening access and participation in higher education. It was founded as a Teacher Training College in 1841 by the Church of England “as the most powerful means of remedying the existing defects in the education both of the poor and middle classes of society”. Widening access and participation continues to be a central tenet of the institution’s culture, demonstrated through our mission, values, Strategic Plan to 2026, performance metrics and our whole institution approach to equality, diversity and social mobility.

This new Access and Participation Plan to 2025 details our latest commitment to widening access and participation. The plan has been formulated by a working group comprising the institution’s leaders, practitioners, analysts and student representatives. It is grounded in a thorough analysis of the Office for Students’ new Access and Participation dataset, which enabled the group to understand our strengths and weaknesses in the national context. The University has developed ‘theory of change’ models for the first time and has used these to align our activities, objectives, intended outcomes and long-term impacts. Fundamentally, the theories of change we have developed will shape our evaluation work so that we know what works and where to invest our resources.

Our working group will continue to meet to review progress, learn from evaluation and plan ahead, so that we achieve the aspirations set out in this plan.

1. Assessment of performance

Presented here is a visual summary of our assessment of our performance on Access and Participation against that of the sector. Section 1 provides a summary of the evidence used to conduct the assessment, and our separate appendix provides more detail of the analysis we undertook on the OfS Access and Participation Data (OfS APD) that was released in March 2019. To review our performance, we continually monitor the latest research literature and policy environment to ensure our knowledge is relevant and up to date.

Underrepresented groups	Access	Continuation	Attainment	Progression
POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 students				
IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 students				
BAME students				
Mature students				
Disabled students				
Care Leavers				

Intersectional groups

POLAR4 and BAME				
POLAR4 and White				
POLAR4 and Male				
POLAR4 and Female				
IMD and BAME				
IMD and White				
IMD and Male				
IMD and Female				

The bold boxes show those groups and the stage of the lifecycle we will be targeting (see section 2).

1.1 Students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2

1.1. A Access

Our overall intake has grown in recent years from 1,785 entrants in 2013-14 to 2,145 entrants in 2017-18. Similarly, our proportion of POLAR4 Q1-2 students has increased over this period, from 37.5% in 2013-14 (N=585) to 39.9% in 2017-18 (N=770). As a result, our POLAR4 quintile distribution is now very close to our ambition for equality:

% of entrants	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
POLAR4 Q1	14.9	17.1	16.5	17.0	18.2
POLAR4 Q2	22.6	19.9	20.8	20.8	21.7
POLAR4 Q3	19.6	20.4	19.5	20.9	19.0
POLAR4 Q4	21.6	20.8	23.7	22.0	20.6
POLAR4 Q5	21.3	21.8	19.4	19.4	20.6
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	6.4	4.7	2.9	2.4	2.4
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.43 : 1	1.27 : 1	1.18 : 1	1.14 : 1	1.13 : 1

This is an area of significant progress towards an equal distribution of POLAR4 quintiles. 


1.1. B Success

We have a mixed picture in terms of POLAR4 student success:

1.1. Bi Continuation

Continuation rates at the University are higher than sector levels. For POLAR4 Q1 students relative to Q5 students, gaps in continuation rates have been volatile. Our continuation rate for this group has decreased in 2016-17, which is worrying. Unless this trend is corrected, continuation rates for this group will become a problem.


Continuation rate	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
POLAR4 Q1	91.0	90.1	94.0	91.4	89.2
POLAR4 Q2	93.6	92.0	92.2	91.3	89.8
POLAR4 Q3	93.9	92.1	92.4	91.5	91.9
POLAR4 Q4	93.8	93.8	94.5	92.1	93.5
POLAR4 Q5	96.0	94.6	93.5	90.3	94.8
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	5.0	4.5	-0.5	-1.1	5.6
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.05 : 1	1.05 : 1	0.99 : 1	0.99 : 1	1.06 : 1

This is an area we will monitor closely to ensure the gap in 2016-17 does not persist. The volatility in the data has led us to conclude that this is not one of our top priority areas at present. 

1.1. Bii Attainment

The attainment gap between our POLAR4 Q1 and POLAR4 Q5 students has increased substantially from 1.6pp to 10.3pp between 2013-14 and 2017-18.

% 1 st / 2:1s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
POLAR4 Q1	68.8	67.9	60.0	60.5	63.9
POLAR4 Q2	67.2	66.7	62.7	72.0	69.9
POLAR4 Q3	70.7	65.0	70.2	70.2	70.5
POLAR4 Q4	72.8	73.4	58.8	68.5	69.8
POLAR4 Q5	70.4	72.8	66.9	72.0	74.2
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	1.6	4.9	6.9	11.5	10.3
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.02 : 1	1.07 : 1	1.12 : 1	1.19 : 1	1.16 : 1

This is clearly a concern and thus where we are establishing a target and measures to eliminate this gap. 

1.1. C Progression to employment or further study

Our POLAR4 Q1 student progression rates have improved substantially: 54.1% in 2012-13 to 69.5% in 2016-17. Our POLAR4 Q1-2 student progression rates are (i) increasing; (ii) typically above the sector average; and (iii) like the progression rates for our POLAR4 Q3-5 students. The progression gap for POLAR4 Q1 vs Q5 students has reduced from 11.2 percentage points in 2012-13 to just 1.5 percentage points in 2016-17.

% positive outcomes	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
POLAR4 Q1	54.1	54.1	55.0	47.7	69.5
POLAR4 Q2	54.3	65.4	56.3	49.1	72.4
POLAR4 Q3	61.6	64.5	54.0	53.1	71.6
POLAR4 Q4	60.8	66.5	62.3	49.8	70.9
POLAR4 Q5	65.3	59.1	59.8	54.4	71.0
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	11.2	5.0	4.8	6.7	1.5
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.21 : 1	1.09 : 1	1.09 : 1	1.14 : 1	1.02 : 1

This is an area of significant improvement. 

1.2 Students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2

1.2. A Access

Our overall intake has grown in recent years from 1,785 entrants in 2013-14 to 2,145 entrants in 2017-18. During this period, our proportion of IMD Q1-2 students has improved slightly from 29.3% to 31% (+1.7 percentage points). This is a rise in absolute terms from 515 (in 2013) to 655 entrants (in 2017). Unlike the POLAR4 measure, our access on IMD is not distributed across the quintiles as evenly as we would like.

% of entrants	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
IMD Q1	13.3	13.0	13.8	13.8	14.7
IMD Q2	15.9	15.6	13.9	15.0	16.2
IMD Q3	20.0	20.4	20.6	21.7	19.7
IMD Q4	26.5	24.9	23.1	25.9	24.1
IMD Q5	24.2	26.1	28.6	23.7	25.2
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	10.9	13.1	14.8	9.9	10.5
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.82 : 1	2.01 : 1	2.07 : 1	1.72 : 1	1.71 : 1

This is a major access problem that we must address. 


1.2. B Success

We have a mixed picture in terms of IMD Q1-2 student success:

1.2. Bi Continuation

Our gap in continuation rates between IMD Q1 and Q5 students closed between 2012-13 and 2015-16 but then opened again in 2016-17. The 2016-17 data shows a gap that is larger than it has ever been, which might be cohort specific. We will monitor this measure very carefully in coming years to ensure this gap is not maintained. Given the clarity of gaps in other areas and the need to focus, continuation rates for IMD students are not currently one of our major priorities.

Continuation rate	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
IMD Q1	92.2	90.2	91.9	91.7	89.4
IMD Q2	94.3	91.1	91.7	89.9	89.6
IMD Q3	92.2	92.0	91.4	90.9	91.8
IMD Q4	93.7	92.7	95.5	90.1	91.4
IMD Q5	94.7	92.7	93.9	91.3	95.9
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	2.5	2.5	2.0	-0.4	6.5
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.03 : 1	1.03 : 1	1.02 : 1	1.00 : 1	1.07 : 1

This is an area that improved to 2015-16 but worsened in 2016-17. 

1.2. Bii Attainment

Whilst our attainment gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 students has halved between 2013-14 and 2017-18, the presence of a gap is consistent. Therefore, we will be establishing a target to eliminate this gap during the lifespan of this plan.

% 1 st / 2:1s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
IMD Q1	59.0	66.2	55.0	60.2	65.8
IMD Q2	66.5	64.5	58.9	70.7	65.4
IMD Q3	71.7	70.6	63.8	66.3	69.9
IMD Q4	72.3	70.4	69.4	67.3	72.9
IMD Q5	71.2	71.6	66.4	74.7	72.0
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	12.2	5.4	11.4	14.5	6.2
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.21 : 1	1.08 : 1	1.21 : 1	1.24 : 1	1.09 : 1

This is clearly an area of concern and we are proposing targets to eliminate this gap by 2025.



1.2. C Progression to employment or further study

The progression outcomes for our IMD Q1 students improved significantly between 2015-16 and 2016-17, from 51.2% to 71.2%. The gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 progression rates has fallen from 15.9 to 3.3 percentage points over the period of the table shown below:

% positive outcomes	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
IMD Q1	52.1	56.3	51.2	49.6	71.2
IMD Q2	53.7	61.0	56.2	54.3	76.6
IMD Q3	59.6	63.4	59.9	51.9	67.3
IMD Q4	66.2	67.0	61.8	53.8	72.6
IMD Q5	68.0	65.4	61.9	53.0	74.5
PP GAP Q5 vs Q1	15.9	9.1	10.7	3.4	3.3
Ratio of Q5 vs Q1	1.31 : 1	1.16 : 1	1.21 : 1	1.07 : 1	1.05 : 1

An area of improvement but needs more years of repeated performance to confirm as a strength.



1.3 BAME students

1.3. A Access

Our overall intake has grown in recent years from 1,785 entrants in 2013-14 to 2,145 entrants in 2017-18. During this period, our proportion of Asian, Mixed, Black and Other students (BAME) has improved slightly from 5.1% to 6.1% (+1.0 percentage point). This is a rise in absolute terms from 90 (in 2013) to 130 entrants (in 2017). Our figures are clearly significantly below the sector average: 31.1% in 2017 for BAME entrants. Furthermore, the sector has improved at a faster rate than the University, moving from 26.2% in 2013 to 31.1% in 2017 (+4.9 percentage points).

We have a key performance measure in the University's Strategy 2026 to increase the recruitment of BAME students and staff from their historical levels (4-5% of both the student and staff population) to 10% by 2025. The 2011 Census shows that the BAME population is 11.2% in the Yorkshire and the Humber region; 4.7% in the North East; 9.8% in the North West; 9.2% in the East; and 10.8% in the East Midlands. Taken together, 9.1% of the population in these five regions is from a BAME background. 92% of our students come from one of these areas. Therefore, we believe our 10% strategic target is appropriate and achievable.

The 18-year-old BAME population in the OfS dataset is 16%. Achieving 10% BAME students and staff by 2025 is stretching given our historic performance in this area. In the longer-term (from 2025 onwards), we would aim to increase our ethnic diversity to 13% by 2030 providing we can demonstrate that our current stretching target is met.

Our number of BAME students is so small that further analysis of individual minority ethnic groups is not robust (Asian and Black cohorts were 40 and 25 respectively in 2017-18). We have seen an increasing number of Asian applicants (265 in 2016; 345 in 2018) but have a persistently low acceptance rate (just 10% in 2018). Whilst offer rates have increased across all BAME groups (from 63% in 2016 to 83% in 2018), acceptances from BAME applicants have remained relatively static (95 accepts in 2016 and 2018). We have experienced a small year-on-year increase in the numbers of Black students starting at York St John (10 in 2016; 20 in 2018).

% of entrants	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Asian, Mixed, Black, Other	5.1	3.8	4.9	5.7	6.1
White	94.9	96.2	95.1	94.3	93.9
Asian (A)	2.2	1.2	1.8	2.1	1.9
Black (B)	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.2
Mixed (M)	1.7	1.4	1.7	2.6	2.8
Other (O)	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
PP GAP White to BAME	89.8	92.4	90.2	88.6	87.8
Ratio of White to BAME	18.6 : 1	25.3 : 1	19.4 : 1	16.5 : 1	15.4 : 1

This is a major access problem that we must address though we recognise that it is not possible to match the sector average position given our regional student recruitment profile. 

1.3. B Success

Whilst we recognise an issue with BAME student access, we have considerable strengths when it comes to BAME student success:

1.3. Bi Continuation

Continuation rates for BAME students at the University are consistently high – well above the sector BAME student continuation rate. We have also eliminated the small gap that existed historically between the continuation rates of our BAME and White students. Our BAME student continuation rate has risen from 91.5% in 2012-13 of the OfS APD to 96.3% in 2016-17. Conversely, the sector equivalent figures have decreased from 90% in 2012-13 to 88.1% in 2016-17. Furthermore, our latest BAME student continuation rate (96.3%) is now better than the continuation rate for our White students (91.7%). Our continuation gap between BAME and White students has reduced from 2.4 percentage points in 2014-15 to no gap (-4.6pp) in 2016-17. There are no significant gaps for disaggregated BAME groups, though cohort sizes are very small and thus the data is volatile.


Continuation rate	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Asian, Mixed, Black, Other	91.5	90.0	90.8	90.5	96.3
White	93.7	92.1	93.2	90.8	91.7
Asian (A)	88.9	92.5	95.0	85.2	97.6
Black (B)	83.3	88.9	82.4	93.3	
Mixed (M)	100.0	86.7	91.7	92.3	94.0
Other (O)					
PP GAP White to BAME	2.2	2.1	2.4	0.3	-4.6
Ratio of White to BAME	1.02 : 1	1.02 : 1	1.03 : 1	1.00 : 1	0.95 : 1

This is now an area of strength. 

1.3. Bii Attainment

Attainment rates for our BAME students have been relatively poor until 2017-18, when they reached 69.6%. We have almost closed the historically large attainment gap between our BAME and White students, which was 10 percentage points in 2013-14 and is just 0.8 percentage points in 2017-18.

% 1 st / 2:1s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Asian, Mixed, Black, Other	60.0	56.9	55.2	40.4	69.6
White	70.0	69.8	64.6	69.9	70.4
Asian (A)	70.0	50.0	63.0	31.8	78.6
Black (B)					
Mixed (M)	57.1	72.7	59.1	61.5	78.9
Other (O)					
PP GAP White to BAME	10.0	12.9	9.4	29.5	0.8
Ratio of White to BAME	1.17 : 1	1.23 : 1	1.17 : 1	1.73 : 1	1.01 : 1

This is an area where our data improved substantially in 2017-18 but needs further years of progress for us to be able to describe it as a consistent strength. 

1.3. C Progression to employment or further study

Whilst progression rates for our BAME students improved significantly between 2015-16 and 2016-17, they are still significantly below the sector average and our White student progression rates. In 2016-17, our BAME progression rate was 64.1%, which compares poorly to the sector average of 70.1% and our White student progression rate of 72.6%. Whilst our BAME cohort sizes are small, we have typically had a significant gap (currently 8.5 percentage points) between the progression rates of our BAME and White students.

% positive outcomes	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Asian, Mixed, Black, Other	43.5	60.8	64.0	55.3	64.1
White	62.8	64.1	59.8	52.6	72.6
Asian (A)		57.1	43.8	65.0	58.8
Black (B)					
Mixed (M)		57.9	72.7	47.4	
Other (O)					
PP GAP White to BAME	19.3	3.3	-4.2	-2.7	8.5
Ratio of White to BAME	1.44 : 1	1.05 : 1	0.93 : 1	0.95 : 1	1.1 : 1

This is a progression problem that we must address. 

1.4 Mature students

1.4. A Access

Our overall intake has grown in recent years from 1,785 entrants in 2013-14 to 2,145 entrants in 2017-18. However, our proportion of mature students has fallen over this period, from 12.5% in 2013-14 to 9.7% in 2017-18. The gap between mature students and young students is 80.6 percentage points and has grown in recent years. Whilst we do not expect to close the mature access gap entirely, we are targeting an increase from 9.7% to 14% by 2025. After that, providing the sector fee arrangements do not counteract our mature access efforts and that our trajectory is positive, we would aspire to 18% mature intake from 2030 onwards.

% of entrants	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Young (Under 21)	87.5	85.3	83.8	89.4	90.3
Mature (21 and over)	12.5	14.7	16.2	10.6	9.7
PP GAP Young to Mature	75.0	70.6	67.6	78.8	80.6
Ratio of Young to Mature	7 : 1	5.8 : 1	5.2 : 1	8.4 : 1	9.3 : 1

This is a major access problem that we must address. 

1.4. B Success

Whilst we recognise an issue with mature student access, we have considerable strengths when it comes to mature student success:

1.4. Bi Continuation

Continuation rates for mature students at the University are consistently very high – well above the sector mature student continuation rate. We have also eliminated the small gap that existed

historically between the continuation rates of our mature and young students. Our mature student continuation rate has risen from 91.9% in 2012-13 to 92.4% in 2016-17. Conversely, the sector equivalent figures have decreased from 86.2% in 2012-13 to 84.8% in 2016-17. Furthermore, our latest mature student continuation rate (92.4%) is now slightly better than the continuation rate for our young students (91.9%).

Continuation rate	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Young (Under 21)	93.9	92.7	93.3	91.4	91.9
Mature (21 and over)	91.9	87.4	91.4	87.8	92.4
PP GAP Young to Mature	2.0	5.3	1.9	3.6	-0.5
Ratio of Young to Mature	1.02 : 1	1.06 : 1	1.02 : 1	1.04 : 1	0.99 : 1

This is now an area of strength. ✓

1.4. Bii Attainment

Attainment rates for our mature students have improved at a similar rate to the sector – both have increased from around 66% in 2013-14 to 70% in 2017-18. We have eliminated the historic attainment gap between our mature students and young students, which was 4.5 percentage points in 2013-14.

% 1 st / 2:1s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Young (Under 21)	70.2	69.3	63.8	69.1	70.0
Mature (21 and over)	65.7	68.5	67.5	67.3	70.4
PP GAP Young to Mature	4.5	0.8	-3.7	1.8	-0.4
Ratio of Young to Mature	1.07 : 1	1.01 : 1	0.95 : 1	1.03 : 1	0.99 : 1

This is something we have improved, eliminating an historic attainment gap. ✓

1.4. C Progression to employment or further study

Our mature student progression rates are typically high and have improved: 72.9% in 2012-13 to 78.4% in 2016-17 of the OfS APD. The sector average for mature student progression in 2016-17 was 75.7%. Our young student progression in 2016-17 was 71.2%. In short, our mature student progression rates are (i) increasing; (ii) typically above the sector average; and (iii) better than the progression rates for our young students.

% positive outcomes	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Young (Under 21)	59.7	62.6	57.7	51.1	71.2
Mature (21 and over)	72.9	72.5	74.0	65.0	78.4
PP GAP Young to Mature	-13.2	-9.9	-16.3	-13.9	-7.2
Ratio of Young to Mature	0.82 : 1	0.86 : 1	0.78 : 1	0.79 : 1	0.91 : 1

This is consistently an area of significant strength. ✓

1.5 Disabled students

1.5. A Access

Our overall intake has grown in recent years from 1,785 entrants in 2013-14 to 2,145 entrants in 2017-18. Similarly, our proportion of disabled students has increased over this period, from 12.8% in 2013-14 (N=230) to 17.9% in 2017-18 (N=385). This is a faster rate of growth than that seen in the sector, which has gone from 11.8% to 14.6% over the same period. We have been particularly successful at providing access routes to higher education for students with mental health issues. Our proportion of entrants with mental health issues has increased from 2% in 2013-14 to 5.9% in 2017-18, significantly above the sector average of 3.5% in 2017-18.

% of entrants	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Disabled	12.8	14.7	16.8	17.9	17.9
No known disability	87.2	85.3	83.2	82.1	82.1
PP GAP No Dis to Dis	74.4	70.6	66.4	64.2	64.2
Ratio of No Dis to Dis	6.81 : 1	5.8 : 1	4.95 : 1	4.59 : 1	4.59 : 1

This is consistently an area of significant strength. 

1.5. B Success

1.5. Bi Continuation

Continuation rates for disabled students at the University are typically high – above the sector disabled student continuation rate. We currently have no gap between the continuation rates of our disabled and non-disabled students. Our disabled student continuation rate has fluctuated slightly (+/- 2.5 pp) around an average of 92% between 2012-13 and 2016-17. Conversely, the sector equivalent figures have decreased very steadily, but consistently, from 90% in 2012-13 to 89.4% in 2016-17.

Furthermore, our latest disabled student continuation rate (92%) is now the same as the continuation rate for our non-disabled students.

Continuation rate	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Disabled	94.2	89.5	94.9	89.4	92.0
No known disability	93.5	92.4	92.7	91.1	92.0
PP GAP No Dis to Dis	-0.7	2.9	-2.2	1.7	0.0
Ratio of No Dis to Dis	0.99 : 1	1.03 : 1	0.98 : 1	1.02 : 1	1.00 : 1

This is a strength. 

1.5. Bii Attainment

Attainment rates for our disabled students are practically the same in 2017-18 (65%) as they were in 2013-14 (65.2%). Our gap between our disabled and non-disabled students on this measure has increased from 5.3pp to 6.2pp over this period.

% 1 st / 2:1s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Disabled	65.2	66.5	57.8	64.3	65.0
No known disability	70.5	69.6	65.3	69.7	71.2
PP GAP No Dis to Dis	5.3	3.1	7.5	5.4	6.2
Ratio of No Dis to Dis	1.08 : 1	1.05 : 1	1.13 : 1	1.08 : 1	1.1 : 1

This is an area of concern. 

1.5. C Progression to employment or further study

Whilst progression rates for our disabled students improved significantly between 2015-16 and 2016-17, they are still slightly below the sector average and our non-disabled student progression rates. In 2016-17, our disabled progression rate was 69.2%, which compares to the sector average of 71.5% and our non-disabled student progression rate of 72.9%. Whilst we have closed the progression gap between disabled and non-disabled students from 9.4pp in 2012-13 to 3.7pp in 2016-17, we need to continue to improve disabled student progression rates.

% positive outcomes	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Disabled	54.1	64.6	60.0	51.7	69.2
No known disability	63.5	63.8	59.9	52.9	72.9
PP GAP No Dis to Dis	9.4	-0.8	-0.1	1.2	3.7
Ratio of No Dis to Dis	1.17 : 1	0.99 : 1	1.00 : 1	1.02 : 1	1.05 : 1

The University will monitor this closely to ensure that the gap does not become a consistent issue.



1.6 Care Leavers

Our Care Leaver cohort – defined as those who have evidenced being in care within three years of starting their studies with us – is consistently very small. Drawing firm conclusions about the continuation, attainment and progression outcomes of this group is therefore very difficult. Here is a table of our Care Leaver data:

Completion Status	Starting year						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Current, completed studies	5	5	5	5	5	5	10
Non-completer		5	
Total	5	10	5	10	10	5	10

(Some data has been suppressed to prevent individuals being identifiable)

Our Care Leaver intake has therefore remained relatively consistent at between 5-10 students each year. Discounting current students, the completion and attainment rates for this group of students are well below the University average despite the significant support we have on offer.

We will improve and develop our approach to collecting and analysing Care Leaver data during the 2019-20 academic year.

Our approach to supporting Care Leavers

We have a designated member of staff for all care leaver students. Any applicant who ticks the 'in care' box on the UCAS form is contacted about the support available. From this initial contact we identify those who are 'care experienced' and those who are 'care leavers' and thus qualify for additional support. The designated member of staff liaises with Local Authority Leaving Care teams on an ongoing basis to offer joined-up support to individual students. Care leavers who do engage with support are offered help and advice with the transition to higher education, and ongoing mentoring and pastoral support on a 1:1 basis, which is tailored to their point on the student journey. We aim to engage them with as many opportunities as possible and, where necessary, connect them with other pastoral and academic services across the University. A focus is put on progression and encouraging students to take up opportunities that will enable them to successfully navigate their exit from the University, and on to graduate employment or postgraduate study. This is an area in which we wish to continue to develop our work.

Care leaver students are also given £500 each year to spend on the cost of studying and for memberships of Students' Union sports and societies. They are all offered year-round accommodation, and this is tailored to their individual needs. Where they are not able to secure private sector accommodation in their second and third years, they will be offered University-owned or managed housing as an alternative. We recognise that students face practical challenges around moving between accommodation sites and will be setting up an additional fund to support them with these moves.

Care leavers often manage complex personal situations and enduring mental health difficulties alongside their studies. As such, for this group we recognise success in a broader sense than for students who do not have to manage these additional challenges. We recognise the success of persisting in their application and arriving at university. We recognise the success of progression through and beyond first year, of completing their degree and a having stable managed exit from university. Where students are not able to continue with their studies we try and ensure they depart in a supported way with a clear plan. Typically, we find students' engagement with the support offered critical to their success.

We offer a bursary to all eligible students, designed to encourage them to take up opportunities that will enhance their employability, such as volunteering in the UK or abroad, taking an internship, pursuing

relevant CPD qualifications or undertaking the Study Abroad programme. In their final year the bursary is dedicated to smoothing their exit and allowing them to find their feet with less financial pressure. Students are encouraged to take up budgeting support to help them manage their finances in preparation for the future.

Whilst we will continue to encourage increased access, retention and attainment of our Care Leaver students, our experts who work with Care Leavers daily believe that we should focus on the transition out of University into further study or work. Unlike other students, the finalisation of studies for Care Leavers often comes with additional concerns related to accommodation. Thus, we will be focusing on ensuring all Care Leavers have a clear transition plan and support.

We will also be conducting more systematic analyses of Care Leaver access, retention and attainment levels, which is more difficult than it is for underrepresented groups due to the size, definition and lack of robust national data for this group. We will report on this enhanced data at future APP monitoring points.

1.7 Intersections of disadvantage

1.7. A POLAR4 and Ethnicity

This cohort is very small and thus the main issue relates to access. Our proportion of POLAR4 Q1-2 BAME students is 2.6% compared with 7% nationally (2017-18, OfS APD). Continuation rates are high. Attainment is lower.

	Access (2017-18)	Continuation (2016-17)	Attainment (2017-18)	Progression (2016-17)
POLAR4 Q1+2 BAME	2.6 (N=50)	95.0 (N=40)	63.2 (N=20)	N/A
POLAR4 Q3-5 BAME	3.0 (N=60)	98.2 (N=55)	77.8 (N=20)	N/A

N in the table above shows the number of students in the cohort in that academic year

1.7. B POLAR4 and Gender

13.3% of our entrants (2017-18, OfS APD) were male and from POLAR4 Q1-2 areas. This compares favourably with the sector average of 12%. Continuation rates have fluctuated slightly around the sector average of 89%. Attainment is a concern, having decreased from 65.3% in 2013-14 to 61.9% in 2017-18; the sector equivalent figures have risen from 69.1% to 73.5% over the same period.

	Access (2017-18)	Continuation (2016-17)	Attainment (2017-18)	Progression (2016-17)
POLAR4 Q1+2 Male	13.3	87.6	61.9	N/A
POLAR4 Q3-5 Male	19.2	90.1	62.9	65.7

1.7. C IMD and Ethnicity

This cohort is very small and thus the main issue relates to access. Our proportion of IMD Q1-2 BAME students is 3.3% compared with 20.7% nationally (2017-18, OfS APD). Continuation rates are high. Attainment is lower. Progression rates fluctuate significantly due to the small cohort size (10-15 students).

	Access (2017-18)	Continuation (2017-18)	Attainment (2017-18)	Progression (2016-17)
IMD Q1+2 BAME	3.3 (N=70)	95.0 (N=60)	63.6 (N=20)	70.8 (N=25)
IMD Q3-5 BAME	2.8 (N=60)	97.7 (N=45)	75 (N=25)	57.1 (N=15)
PP GAP IMD Q1+2 and BAME to IMD Q3-5 BAME	-0.5	2.7	11.4	-13.7

N in the table above shows the number of students in the cohort in that academic year

1.7. D IMD and Gender

10.8% of our entrants (2017-18, OfS APD, N=225) were male and from IMD Q1-2 areas. This is lower than the sector average of 17.7%. Continuation rates have fluctuated slightly around 89% (+/-3pp) and tend to be 4pp above the sector average for this group. Attainment is a concern at 59.6% (2017-18).

	Access (2017-18)	Continuation (2016-17)	Attainment (2017-18)	Progression (2016-17)
IMD Q1+2 Male	10.8	88.0	59.6	N/A
IMD Q3-5 Male	22.9	88.8	67.3	66.5

The Office for Students Access & Participation dataset has facilitated greater analysis of the outcomes of these intersectional groups of students. We are committed to carefully monitoring these intersections to ensure that gaps are closed.

1.7 Other underrepresented groups

Military service children entering higher education

Military service children are a third less likely to enter higher education than their peers, despite evidence of high academic attainment amongst this group.

We are at the forefront of the sector in working to improve the access of military service children into higher education. There is a high intensity of military establishments in the York and North Yorkshire region – Catterick Garrison is the largest British Army Garrison in the world. We have a long-established recognition of the way the military lifestyle – high mobility, separation and frequent parental deployment – impacts on the education of many children from armed forces families.

We have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and work in partnership with our National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) colleagues on this agenda, who are leaders in their sector on this.

York St John University leads on the North East and Yorkshire Hub for the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance. We deliver specific interventions for military service children to increase their knowledge of higher education and enable them to plan their future. We also have developed and contributed to local and national research on the progression rates and challenges of military service children. We have fostered a collaborative approach across local universities and other agencies to ensure this underrepresented group is a focus within our region.

This is a nationally recognised area of strength for the University that we plan to maintain and develop in coming years.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

We developed our theory of change thinking in relation to the specific target groups we identified in our assessment of performance.

The theory of change modelling enabled us to categorise into 'strategic measures' all of our activities and to align them to our intended outcomes and our evaluation framework. This mapping then facilitated discussions on the measurable objectives detailed in section 2.2.

2.1 Target groups

Our assessment of performance suggests the following eight groups and lifecycle stages for targeting:

ACCESS (i) IMD Quintiles 1 and 2; (ii) BAME students; (iii) Mature students.

ATTAINMENT (iv) POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2; (v) IMD Quintiles 1 and 2; (vi) Disabled students.

PROGRESSION (vii) BAME students; and (viii) Care Leavers.

The intersectional group issues identified by our assessment of performance would all be covered by this focus.

Whilst the next section details our strategic measures and measurable objectives for these target groups, the table below clarifies our longer-term strategic intentions for our target groups:

Target group	Current baseline	2024-25 Target	2029-30 Goal
Access of BAME students	6.1%	10.0%	13.0%
Access of mature students	9.7%	14.0%	18.0%
Access of IMD Q1 students (shown as a ratio of Q5 to Q1 students)	1.71 : 1	1.22 : 1	1 : 1
Attainment of POLAR4 Q1 students (shown as the percentage point gap between Q5 and Q1 students)	10.3	0	0
Attainment of IMD Q1 students (shown as the percentage point gap between Q5 and Q1 students)	6.2	0	0
Attainment of disabled students	6.2	0	0
Progression of BAME students	8.5	0	0
Progression of Care Leavers	Fuller data and analysis and ensuring that all Care Leavers have transition plans in place.		

2.2 Aims and objectives

Target group	Strategic Measures	Measurable objectives	Timescale to eradicate gaps																		
<p>Access for IMD Q1 students</p>	<p>See our Theory of Change for Access in the Appendix. Our Strategic Measures to enhance access are broadly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use our <i>Opportunity and Excellence</i> Contextual Admissions model and mature entrant scheme. Design academic programmes at appropriate levels and in relevant subjects to encourage access to HE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve our IMD Q5 to Q1 ratio by 2024-25, taking our IMD Q1 intake percentage from 14.7% to 18% by 2025. Our long-term goal would be to have a 1:1 ratio by 2030. 	<p>Ratio of YSJ IMD Q5 to Q1 entrants:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (Ratio IMD Q1 : Q5)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.71 : 1</td> <td>1.50 : 1</td> <td>1.42 : 1</td> <td>1.35 : 1</td> <td>1.29 : 1</td> <td>1.22 : 1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (Ratio IMD Q1 : Q5)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	1.71 : 1	1.50 : 1	1.42 : 1	1.35 : 1	1.29 : 1	1.22 : 1
Baseline	Targets (Ratio IMD Q1 : Q5)																				
17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
1.71 : 1	1.50 : 1	1.42 : 1	1.35 : 1	1.29 : 1	1.22 : 1																
<p>Access for Asian, Mixed, Black and Other (BAME) ethnic students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver sustained engagements with target groups and in specific geographic locations. Build effective partnerships with organisations working with our target groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase our BAME intake percentage from 6.1% to 10% by 2024-25. Longer-term, we would aspire to 13% by 2030. 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (% BAME intake)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6.1%</td> <td>6.4%</td> <td>7.0%</td> <td>8.0%</td> <td>9.0%</td> <td>10.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (% BAME intake)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	6.1%	6.4%	7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	10.0%
Baseline	Targets (% BAME intake)																				
17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
6.1%	6.4%	7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	10.0%																
<p>Access for Mature students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop staff awareness and skills to engage with target groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase our mature intake percentage from 9.7% to 14% by 2024-25. We would aspire to 18% by 2030. 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (% mature intake)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9.7%</td> <td>11.0%</td> <td>11.5%</td> <td>12.0%</td> <td>13.0%</td> <td>14.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (% mature intake)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	9.7%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%	13.0%	14.0%
Baseline	Targets (% mature intake)																				
17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
9.7%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%	13.0%	14.0%																
<p>Attainment of POLAR4 Q1 students vs POLAR4 Q5 students</p>	<p>See our Theory of Change for Attainment in the Appendix. Our Strategic Measures to enhance access are broadly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver an integrated curriculum to enable positive outcomes for all. Support students individually throughout HE and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate this gap by 2024-25. 	<p>Gap between YSJ POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 student attainment:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (percentage point gap)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10.3</td> <td>6.0</td> <td>4.5</td> <td>3.0</td> <td>1.5</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (percentage point gap)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	10.3	6.0	4.5	3.0	1.5	0
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17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
10.3	6.0	4.5	3.0	1.5	0																

Target group	Strategic Measures	Measurable objectives	Timescale to eradicate gaps																		
Attainment of IMD Q1 students vs IMD Q5 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply students' learning to real world problems and the attributes needed to succeed. Develop, support and recognise staff and partner expertise. Support, recognise and record students' academic and wider achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate this gap by 2024-25. 	Gap between YSJ IMD Q1 and Q5 student attainment: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (percentage point gap)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6.2</td> <td>4.0</td> <td>3.0</td> <td>2.0</td> <td>1.0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (percentage point gap)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	6.2	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0
Baseline		Targets (percentage point gap)																			
17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
6.2	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0																
Attainment of Disabled students vs non-disabled students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate this gap by 2024-25. 	Gap between YSJ disabled and non-disabled student attainment: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (percentage point gap)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6.2</td> <td>4.0</td> <td>3.0</td> <td>2.0</td> <td>1.0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (percentage point gap)					17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	6.2	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0	
Baseline	Targets (percentage point gap)																				
17-18	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
6.2	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0																
Progression of BAME students	See our Theory of Change for Progression in the Appendix. Our Strategic Measures to enhance access are broadly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan individual learning journeys to focus our activities. Provide opportunities for students to engage with employers. Facilitate learning in the workplace and through extra-curricular opportunities. Support the creation of graduate businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate this gap by 2024-25. 	Gap between YSJ BAME and White student progression: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Baseline</th> <th colspan="5">Targets (percentage point gap)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>16-17</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> <th>22-23</th> <th>23-24</th> <th>24-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8.5</td> <td>4.7</td> <td>3.4</td> <td>2.1</td> <td>0.8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline	Targets (percentage point gap)					16-17	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	8.5	4.7	3.4	2.1	0.8	0
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16-17	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25																
8.5	4.7	3.4	2.1	0.8	0																
Progression of Care Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all Care Leavers have progression plans in place by 2020-21. 																				

3. Strategic measures

York St John University has an institutional Strategy to 2026 (summary is visualised below). Clearly embedded within our Strategy (shown by green elements) is a commitment to widen access and participation and enable positive outcomes for all our students. It is clear from the language in our Mission, Values and Strategic Aims that we have a commitment to ‘eliminate inequalities in higher education’. The profile of our student population (see separate Appendix) demonstrates that social justice is at the heart of who we are and what we do.

York St John University Strategy 2026 Framework

Mission	Driven by our commitment to fairness, we focus our expertise, talents and creativity to advance knowledge, promote understanding and create educational opportunities for the benefit of all.				
Vision	We will share the transformative power of university education to inspire the brilliance in every human.				
Values	Being intellectually generous, curious and rigorous.	Promoting fairness and challenging prejudice.	Inspiring each other to succeed.		
Strategic Priorities	Inspiring Learning	Impactful Research	Clear about Career		
Game Changers	London	STEM	Mental Health Hospital	Creative Centre	
Strategic Aims	Outstanding for learning and research that enables our graduates to succeed and that raises our academic profile.	At the forefront of eliminating inequalities in higher education, reflected in our students' outcomes.	A partner of choice.	An anchor institution in York and be at the leading edge of the intellectual, economic and social evolution of our region.	Known for a culture of excellence, demonstrated through our governance, management and people.
Enabling Strategies	Financial People & Culture Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Alumni Estates Marketing & Communications Fundraising Partnership Residences Digital Value for Money Internationalisation Access & Participation Size & Shape Environmental				
Measuring Success	26 Key Measures of Success Benchmarking Group				

The goal for our *Access & Participation Strategy* is to “achieve a ‘whole institution’ approach to widening access and participation”.

The goal for our *Equality, Diversity & Human Rights* strategy is to “create an environment where our people can participate and flourish, where equality, humanity and social justice are valued and promoted within and beyond York St John University”.

Furthermore, this Access & Participation plan is linked to two of our Lead Strategies: *Inspiring Learning* and *Clear about Career*.

The goal for our *Inspiring Learning* strategy is to “enable our students to graduate as learners and leaders: in their communities, in their work, and in the world”.

The goal for our *Clear about Career* strategy is to “enable our students to reach their full potential and establish York St John University as a leading institution for student and graduate employability”.

Our Access & Participation and Equality, Diversity & Human Rights strategies are aligned in several ways. Key measures of success in our Access & Participation strategy relate to increasing the access from underrepresented groups (to 60% of students being in one or more of the five key underrepresented groups – see separate appendix); and ensuring equality of outcomes for these groups as measured through TEF split-metrics and the OfS dataset.

Similarly, our Equality, Diversity & Human Rights strategy has key success measures related to student and staff diversity, equality of student outcomes and staff equality (on pay, training, and satisfaction). So, both strategies seek to diversify and increase access for underrepresented groups and also ensure that student outcomes are equal.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

We have developed three theory of change models as part of the development of this Access and Participation Plan (see Appendix and the overarching diagram below).

Our three theories of change are founded on and aligned to the NERUPI Evaluation framework <http://www.nerupi.co.uk/>, which is already embedded within the University’s approach to Access and has now been extended across the whole student lifecycle. This places students at the heart of our theories of change, recognising how our strategic measures will directly benefit our prospective and current students. By using the same framework across all three we demonstrate the interconnection between access, success and progression and convey our commitment to embed positive outcomes for all.

A critical underpinning aspect of our theories of change is community and place, influencing where we target, who we work with as partners, how we foster a sense of belonging and community amongst staff and students, and facilitating students’ contribution to the local economy.

Our long-term impacts align to the University’s mission and vision. The diagram is cyclical to demonstrate how our review of impact will continually drive the development of our strategic measures.

Access: there are five strategic measures, placing engagement with target groups and locations at the centre. They include innovative approaches, highlighted as best practice by the OfS, and the diversification of our portfolio to enable a greater diversity of student to benefit from higher education. To achieve this, we work collaboratively with partners and staff to promote fair access and opportunity for all.

Our innovative contextual admissions scheme is one of the most radical and advanced in the country and is a key element of our drive to enhance the equality of our admissions. We know that contextual admissions is a useful way to reduce inequalities in admissions. The OfS and [Fair Education Alliance](#) reports and research have evidenced this in recent years. Our contextual admissions scheme – *Opportunity and Excellence* – is multifactorial, assessing both academic potential and barriers to access. The factors that we currently look at are:

- Whether an applicant is classed as a mature student (21 and over)
- Where the applicant lives in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
- Whether the applicant will be the first one in their family to attend university

- Whether the applicant declares a disability on their UCAS form
- Whether the applicant shows us that they have spent time in the care system
- The performance of the applicant's school or college

Through this additional assessment, we assign points that may reduce the offer requirements, or in exceptional cases make it an unconditional offer. Full details are on our website so that we are as transparent as possible about how we make our offers. The scheme came into existence in 2018-19 and we are actively monitoring its impact at reducing inequalities in access. We will monitor and report on the impact of the scheme throughout all future APP monitoring opportunities.

Attainment: our five strategic measures aim to achieve equality in attainment for all and thus have integrated flexible, inclusive and collaborative approaches into the design and delivery of the curricula. At the heart of our strategy is a notion of students' wider success in addition to academic achievement to facilitate progression. This requires a commitment to investing in people (staff, partners and students) and recognising their capacity to make a difference to the success of all.

Progression: our four strategic measures focus on students as individuals and the development of their personal aspirations within and beyond higher education. We aim to develop students' social capital by enhancing their transferable skills and broadening the networks with which they are connected. Partnerships with employers and community organisations are a key aspect of our strategy and fundamental to realising progression for all.

Continuation: whilst we have chosen not to specifically target continuation in this plan, this remains a strategic priority for the University. We monitor student continuation rates through our 'strategic dashboard' that is regularly reviewed at Executive Board level. In 2019-20 we are rolling out our Learning Analytics platform across the whole University, having experienced excellent continuation gains in our pilot area. We will monitor staff take-up and use of the system to identify students at risk of non-continuation.

Financial support

The aim of the York St John Aspire bursary scheme is to support students with the costs associated with transitioning into and studying at University and is targeted at our widening participation categories or those students holding a contextual admission offer. It plays a key role in reducing early cost barriers to access and supports student engagement and success.

Previous evaluations of the scheme using the OfS evaluation model (which we will continue to use through to 2025) have shown positive impacts on student retention. Whilst we are confident of the scheme's targeting, we will be evaluating the scheme in 2019-20 to understand its impacts more fully. The findings from that evaluation will inform the evolution of the scheme as we move forward. Further details on the way the bursary is targeted to help those most in need is provided in the 'Provision of information to students section'.

Theory of Change OVERARCHING

MISSION

Driven by our commitment to fairness, we focus our expertise, talents and creativity to advance knowledge, promote understanding and create educational opportunities for the benefit of all.

VISION

We will share the transformative power of university education to inspire the brilliance in every human.

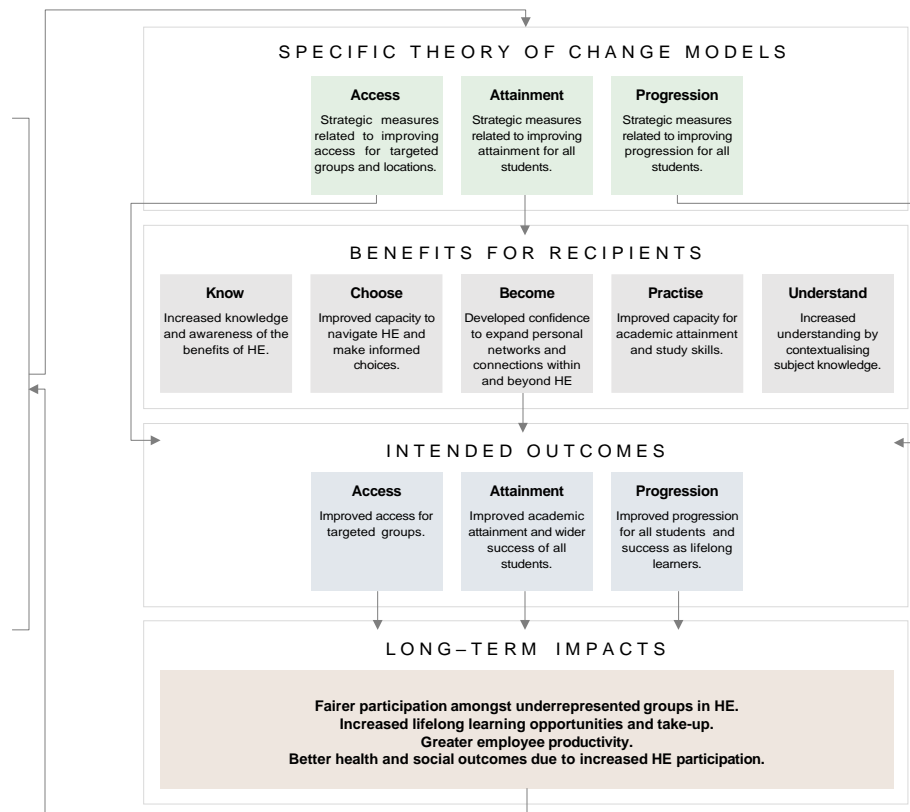
VALUES

Being intellectually generous, curious and rigorous.

Promoting fairness and challenging prejudice.

Inspiring each other to succeed.

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UNIVERSITY



The detailed theory of change models for Access, Attainment and Progression in the Appendix set out the main strategic measures we will use to deliver our aims and objectives.

We have strong partnerships with other higher education providers, sector agencies and other organisations to deliver our intended outcomes and long-term impacts. As examples, we host the NCOP partnership for North Yorkshire, work closely with the Universities of York and Hull on our Green Apples and North Yorkshire Coast HE Collaboration projects, lead the Converge project with local mental health partners, and work in partnership with local prisons to deliver on our social justice agenda. These projects attract additional funding that aligns well with our commitment to access and participation.

Academic underpinning of our Theories of Change models

Our **Access Theory of Change Model** has five strategic measure themes. The first, Fair Admissions, covers key areas of our admission practices related to our contextual admissions scheme and, for instance, our mature student admission policy. The Director of Fair Access and Participation stated in July 2018 that “an ambitious approach to contextual admissions must be central to our strategy if we are going to make progress on access.” There is a wealth of research evidence that suggests heavy correlations between background factors like socioeconomic status, age, disability, etc. and prior educational attainment (Gorard et al (2007)). Our radical and innovative Fair Admissions strategic measures are our response to this evidence-based challenge.

This fair admissions work is supported by a range of school-based activities. York St John University operates ten stands of widening participation activity, aimed at specific underrepresented groups. This includes a wide range of activities, including school-based work, campus visit and summer schools, which are aimed at encouraging attainment, raising aspirations around HE attendance and building the confidence and skills that will be required for a smooth transition to HE. This work is a mixture of stand-alone activities and collaborations with other educational providers and third sector groups.

Our post-offer and pre-entry information is intended to give students the specific information that they will need, in advance of them starting their courses. This includes information for specific groups of applicants, including student finance information, information around specific support services that are offered and also information about our new bursary scheme. All applicants are given contact details for our support services in order to help with specific advice around accommodation, student finance and disability and are welcome to contact these support teams before they start.

The University has worked hard on establishing comprehensive transition and induction activities, with some activities such as our Early Start scheme for Neuro Diverse students giving support to specific groups, over and above the activities which are aimed at all students.

The second strategic measure theme relates to developing our academic portfolio to widen access to higher education. Several studies have shown (for instance, Banks et al (1992)) that part of the cause of lack of HE participation relates to a lack of appropriate provision. We are working on more flexible study options and new provision, e.g. degree apprenticeships, with a view to widening access.

Since 2018, the University has been offering degree apprenticeships. We are now offering courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level across five discreet subject areas and have nearly 500 students registered for the 2021/2022 academic year, split between our York and London sites. The introduction of these courses has allowed the University to offer a different route into HE for students who may otherwise not have considered further study as an option.

Our statistics for the latest academic year have shown that the degree apprentices have helped us in diversifying our student population. Degree apprentices are overwhelmingly mature students (84%) and 12% of our students in 2021/2 are from BAME populations.

The third strategic measure of our Access Theory of Change model relates to outreach to encourage HE participation. We recognise that, historically, the sector has been poor at researching and understanding the impact of its interventions within schools and communities (Gorard et al (2007)). Our thorough use of the NERUPI framework and HEAT tracking enables us to monitor the effectiveness of our interventions and understand how they have impacted on HE enrolments.

Our partnership with schools is also showcased through the Uni Connect Statement of Intent 2022-2023, below.

Uni Connect and York St John University have a well-established strategic partnership to deliver outreach to discrete groups of young people in York and North Yorkshire. In 2022- 2023 Uni Connect will continue to provide funding and evaluation expertise for work with Gypsy Roma Travellers, Military Service Children and Care Experienced Young People.

Uni Connect and York St John University will work together to establish evidence-based collaborative approaches to Attainment Raising for Key Stage 3 & 4. The approach to establishing this work in 2022 – 2023 will include:

- Uni Connect will conduct and share research that will develop knowledge and understanding of the current context for and best practices to support raising attainment in York and North Yorkshire schools. Uni Connect will offer additional funding for further research and evaluation in collaboration with York St John University and other partners.
- Uni Connect Outreach and Partnerships Managers will develop strategic relationships with key stakeholders within York St John University including academic departments and the access and outreach team in order to broker opportunities that might include the development of CPD and outreach projects.
- Uni Connect will pilot attainment raising activity to build up a local evidence base. In particular, they will work with third party providers such as Brilliant Club and MyTutor. This evidence base will contribute to the development of an evaluation framework for attainment raising activity within any collaborative approaches that are developed.

Uni Connect will continue to provide sustained and progressive outreach delivery to target Uni Connect students to help them make informed decisions about their future. They will also liaise with York St John University to broker additional opportunities for students such as participation in university activities and events.

The final two areas of our Access Theory of Change model are linked to partnership working and developing the expertise of our staff. It seems to us common sense that we would seek to join up our work with other agencies and to develop the skills and expertise of our staff to facilitate widening access.

Our **Attainment Theory of Change Model** has five strategic measures. The first relates to integrated curriculum design. For York St John University, inclusive learning, teaching and assessment is fundamental. Our approach is underpinned by Universal Design for Learning (c.f. CAST, 2011), as a driver to promote flexibility in learning, assessment and learning resources to promote success for all students. Connected to integrated curriculum design is a recognition of the importance of personalising the learning journey. York St John is leading the sector on personal tutoring (see Grey and Osbourne, 2018; Calcagno et al, 2017); currently 96% of our academic staff work as personal tutors. With this embedded within our provision, we have selected to use tutoring as the mechanism by which to adopt learning analytics, to enhance student retention and success. Our third measure aspires to ensure students' learning is applied; providing practical, experiential and real-life learning opportunities, delivered with community partners, and assessed in authentic ways (building on seminal work by Dewey, 1991/1938 and Kolb, 1984).

This theory of change model also includes strategic measures related to investing in our staff to ensure that

inclusive curriculum design, personalised learning and support, and applied learning are all implemented effectively (aligned to the UKPSF, 2011). The final measure of our approach to Attainment focuses on ensuring all students participate in and record their wider achievements to build their confidence and improve their post-study progression prospects. We provide a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) for every student and recognise the value of higher education as a means of developing students' social capital (May and Jones, 2018).

Our **Progression Theory of Change Model** has four strategic themes. Engaging with employers is a key strategic measure in this model, building on evidence of uneven recruitment outcomes nationally – see for instance Connor et al (2004) and the Social Mobility Commissions reports.

Furthermore, our personal planning approach to transitioning out of YSJ into further study or work will be focussed on those students most at risk of not achieving a positive post-study outcome. This focus is based on the contextual factors of each student, e.g., socioeconomic background.

3.2 Student engagement

Students have been a full member of our Access & Participation Plan working group. As such their views have had an equal weight in the shaping of this plan. Moving forward, students will be full members of our evaluation process, including specific feedback and focus groups with targeted underrepresented groups to ensure we have qualitative data to use alongside our quantitative evidence.

Students are represented on our APP group by our Students' Union sabbatical team, who work closely with student representatives embedded across all our Schools and programmes. This ensures that we continue to develop a student-focused approach to achieving enhanced access, success and participation for all. The sabbatical officers are at the pinnacle of a very full student representative system that covers educational,

wellbeing and inclusion matters. They represent and feedback to students from all our underrepresented groups.

Students' involvement has been critical to the development of this plan. In particular, the discussions in our Access & Participation Plan working group around the future re-focusing of our bursaries were very productive. Our student representatives agreed with the proposal to move some of the funding the University spends on bursaries that are not APP countable to enhance the bursaries for underrepresented groups and bolster our evaluation capacity. As we fully work-up this proposal, the sabbaticals and the wider student body will be actively engaged in this policy change to ensure it is supported by them.

Section 3.4 explains how our Access and Participation Group will continue to meet to ensure students are engaged in shaping and delivering the monitoring and evaluation of our work.









3.3 Evaluation strategy

Our evaluation strategy is grounded in the NERUPI Framework in order to effectively capture and demonstrate the impact of our activities. The Appendix shows our detailed Theory of Change models for Access, Attainment and Progression.







All our access, attainment and progression activities will be mapped to this framework, thus detailing how each of our detailed interventions makes an impact on the recipients and our intended outcomes. Furthermore, each mapped activity will be costed and aligned to our theory of change. We will be triangulating a range of different evidence sources to evaluate the impact of our strategic measures and associated activities.

Our Evaluation Framework (see colour key on next page):

	Know	Choose	Become	Practise	Understand	
Access	<p>Monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the:</p> <p>Impact of contextual admissions scheme. [A] I C L</p> <p>Access and impact of academic portfolio developments. [A] I C L R</p> <p>HEAT tracking of individuals' take-up, satisfaction and impact of sustained engagement with target groups and locations. [O] C L V</p> <p>Effectiveness of partnership arrangements. [A] R r</p> <p>Take-up, satisfaction and effectiveness of staff development to widen access for all. [O] I C L R</p>					Annual analysis of OfS Access and Participation dataset to ensure all outcome targets are being achieved
Attainment	<p>Monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the:</p> <p>Learning analytics engagement data. [O] I C L V R r</p> <p>Take-up and effectiveness of Academic Tutoring. [O] I C L</p> <p>End of semester evaluations across all programmes. [O] C L R</p> <p>Academic achievement across the target groups of students. [O] C L</p> <p>Take-up, satisfaction and effectiveness of students' extracurricular opportunities. [O] I C L R r</p> <p>Take-up, satisfaction and effectiveness of the development of staff and partners. [A] I C L R r</p> <p>Targeted financial bursaries. [A] I C L R r</p>					

Progression	<p>Monitoring, analysis and evaluation of:</p> <p>Take-up and effectiveness of individual progression plans. [O] </p> <p>Take-up and effectiveness of employer engagement opportunities. [O] </p> <p></p> <p>Take-up and effectiveness of learning in the workplace opportunities within and outside of the curriculum. [O] </p> <p>Business creation initiatives. [A] </p> <p>Graduate capabilities. [A] </p> <p>Graduate outcomes. [A] </p> <p>Targeted financial bursaries. [A] </p>	
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[A] = Annual monitoring, analysis and evaluation [O] = Ongoing monitoring, analysis and evaluation

Data key	Demonstrating	Indicative data sources
 Impact	The transformative effect of HE on students' outcomes and life chances	Student experience data; Alumni data; Achievement data; Impact case studies; Students' reflective summative assessments.
 Comparative	Performance relative to others or over time	Pre- and post-intervention surveys; Learning analytics (cohort, school and institutional); Evaluation surveys; Achievement data; Participation data; Ranking data.
 Longitudinal	Improvements or growth over time	Mid-module evaluations; End of semester surveys; Experience surveys; Learning analytics; Graduate Employability Risk Matrix [GERM]; Diagnostic needs analysis; Achievement data; Participation data; Ranking data; Student complaints data.
 Validated	Performance against external national benchmarks	National Student Survey (NSS); UK Engagement Survey (UKES); JISC Digital Capabilities Survey; Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO); Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE).
 Return on investment	Investments have been worthwhile	Student outcomes data; Student experience data; Stakeholder perception data; Impact data; Benefits analysis.
 Reputational	The high value of our products and services	Public and employer investment; National awards; Kitemarks; Alumni data; Stakeholder perception data.

We will be re-allocating funding currently allocated to generic University bursaries to enhance our research and evaluation capacity. We have recognised the need for greater investment in the area and will be targeting this funding more appropriately from 2020 onwards.

We expect to invest £1.398m on Access and £1.072m on bursaries and hardship spending. These are key areas of investment that will be evaluated regularly.

We forecast an additional spend of £2.126m on Success and £1.391m on Progression activities. The OfS Access and Participation dataset will be analysed each year to provide an objective assessment of our wider progress towards meeting the 2025 targets we have set.

Our evaluation strategy has a two-pronged approach. Firstly, we are aspiring to embed evaluation into routine practice as a joint responsibility across the whole university. We are using TEF as a driver for systematic change, aligned to our quality assurance and monitoring processes. YSJ is in the process of undergoing an extensive TEF pilot involving 180 staff and students across 19 subject groups and 1 provider group. This has required a widespread analysis of student metric and performance data to identify and report on any splits that deviate from benchmark. Alongside the creation of a sample submission, groups have been required to create an action and impact log, identifying how they planned to ensure positive outcomes for all. This process has created locally owned and tailored plans, which have been incorporated into the Annual Monitoring Reports. In addition, we have invested in a learning analytics system, as a further measure of student engagement and offering the means by which to more effectively monitor at risk students. We have set ambitious performance targets to monitor staff use of this system to inform student continuation interventions and academic tutoring.

Secondly, we have staff dedicated to evaluation, working centrally. These staff are located within our Strategy and Planning, Learning and Teaching and Student Employment and Outcomes teams, and work collaboratively to analyse and monitor performance across the whole institution.

Evaluation mechanisms: our committee structures enable the sharing of evaluation findings to influence programme design and practice. Our committees shape the responses and associated actions to our evaluation work and also set the future evaluative agenda. Our Access & Participation working group will coordinate the evaluation framework and the dissemination of findings to one of the following committees / panels (students are represented on all of these):

- (i) Academic Board – for overall academic leadership that involves all Heads of School;
- (ii) Learning & Teaching Committee – oversight of quality enhancement, involving all L&T School leads (for example, regular continuation analysis and reporting);
- (iii) Quality & Standards Committee – overseeing quality assurance (for example, coordinating our Annual Monitoring Reporting framework and resulting action and impact plans);
- (iv) Board of Examiners for Progress and Award – overseeing assessment, progression and award consistency (for example, attainment differentials amongst underrepresented groups);
- (v) School Quality Panels – coordinating School-level quality assurance and enhancement matters; and
- (vi) Validation and re-validation panels – ensuring new and redesigned programmes are informed by our evaluative evidence and have systematic approaches to monitoring positive outcomes for all.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The Governing Body at York St John University receives regular updates on our Access and Participation and Equality and Diversity performance. We will continue to ensure that the Governing Body receives and discusses the annual report on our progress towards the 2025 targets.

Our Access and Participation working group will meet every quarter to review our progress and identify key actions to ensure we remain on track to meet our targets. Student representatives are a key part of this group. The group will assess performance at each meeting and will report to the University's Executive Board on any areas of excellent / poor performance that needs to be addressed. Academic Board will also receive annual reports on progress. Executive Board will commission further research, activities and/or investment if progress is not in line with expectations.

The group is chaired by our University Secretary, who is a member of the University's Executive Board. The University Secretary provides regular reports to Executive Board on the work of the group and highlights areas of strong/weak performance.

More broadly, progress and under-performance will be shared across the University community through its committees (Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board) and through bi-annual articles for all staff on our staff intranet.

In terms of next steps, we are currently ensuring that all our activities are aligned to the theories of change we have developed and that our evaluation mechanisms and capacity are put in place.

We are committed to at least maintain performance in all areas where we have chosen not to specify a target at this stage.

4. Provision of information to students

We provide prospective students and their families with clear information about fees and finance packages, and there is an individualised approach to admissions handling to ensure appropriate information is provided. Information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date, including that which is located on the University's website. For example, this includes illustrations of the net costs of studying undergraduate programmes at the University, accounting for estimates in the cost of living and the total financial support that will be available.

This information is also developed into printed materials and information packs around student finance and support. A brief summary is included in the undergraduate prospectus with signposting back to the website and direct contacts for further information. The brochure and pack will be used in our liaison activities with a focus on underrepresented groups. The detail available on the website and in the Student Finance Support pack will also be used as the basis for advice and guidance through talks, seminars and workshops targeted at parents, key target WP groups, prospective students, advice and guidance professionals, school staff and others who may have a key influence on student decision-making, not only in areas of student recruitment but also in new areas of activity.

Advice and support are not confined to prospective students. Additional information for new students is provided as an embedded feature of the schedule of Welcome Semester, both prior to and after arrival.

Additional support for current students is clearly signposted, and Student Services staff work closely with the Students' Union to provide welfare guidance and support.

Eligibility for the Aspire Bursary Scheme

From 2020, eligibility for the bursary requires students to meet the following criteria:

- full and part time home and international students enrolled on the first (extending to students enrolled on second year in 2021 and third year in 2022) or foundation year of an undergraduate honours degree.

and either:

- fall into one of the following widening participation categories: care leaver, POLAR4 Q1 and Q2, minority ethnicity

or

- have received a contextual admission offer which is based on our points-based offer system:

Where entrant lives - IMD	1 point for the second lowest Quintile and 2 points for the lowest
Age of entrant (over 21 years old)	1 point
First in family to study at university	1 point
Disability	1 point
Time in care	3 points
School or college performance data	1 point for the second lowest Quintile and 2 points for the lowest.

Students who meet the criteria are given £500 per year of study. Student eligibility for the bursary is reviewed annually.

The following students are not eligible for the bursary scheme: postgraduate, students on top up degrees, students on foundation degrees or international foundation programmes, PGCE students, students studying at partner organisations, students on degree apprenticeship routes, exchange students.

The Scheme in Practice

All students holding the Aspire bursary will be able to spend their funds on their choice of categories, for example: books related to their studies, stationery and office materials, art supplies, electronic devices, programme specific clothing/uniforms, homeware (kitchen utensils and appliances) and SU clubs and societies memberships. The diverse nature of our student body and their needs in relation to their studies is recognised by the University, therefore we have sought to offer a wide range of categories to meet these needs. Students can also spend their funds in catering outlets on the York St John campus.

In addition, students meeting bursary criteria will also be eligible for the University's free print credit scheme.

Categories and other elements of the scheme are reviewed on a regular basis through the Aspire Bursary Steering Committee which consists of representatives from the University and the Student Union. Student feedback on the scheme is sought on an annual basis and this feedback forms an essential part of our review process.

Theory of Change ACCESS

MISSION

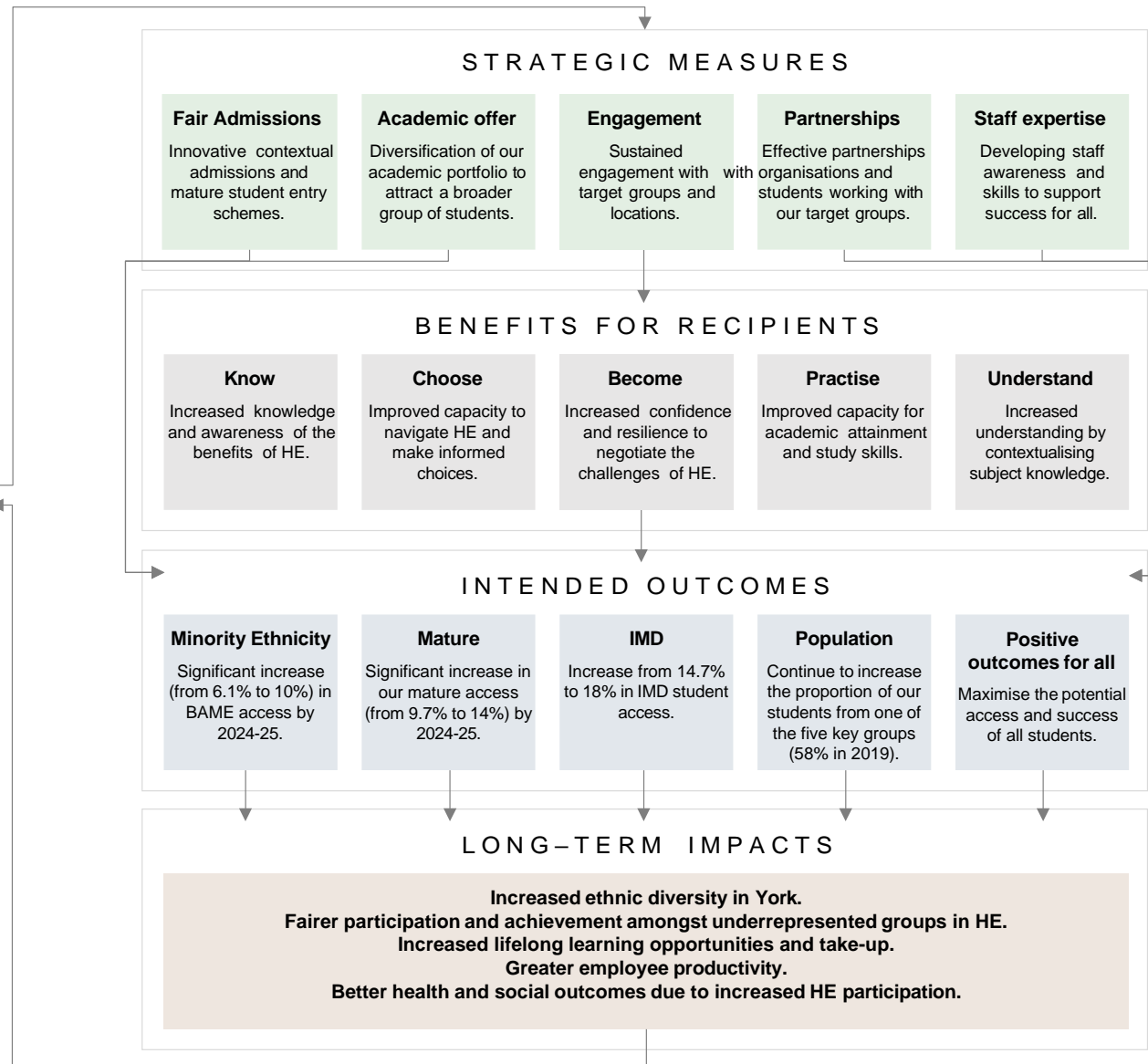
Driven by our commitment to fairness, we focus our expertise, talents and creativity to advance knowledge, promote understanding and create educational opportunities for the benefit of all.

VISION

We will share the transformative power of university education to inspire the brilliance in every human.

VALUES

- Being intellectually generous, curious and rigorous.
- Promoting fairness and challenging prejudice.
- Inspiring each other to succeed.



Theory of Change ATTAINMENT

MISSION

Driven by our commitment to fairness, we focus our expertise, talents and creativity to advance knowledge, promote understanding and create educational opportunities for the benefit of all.

VISION

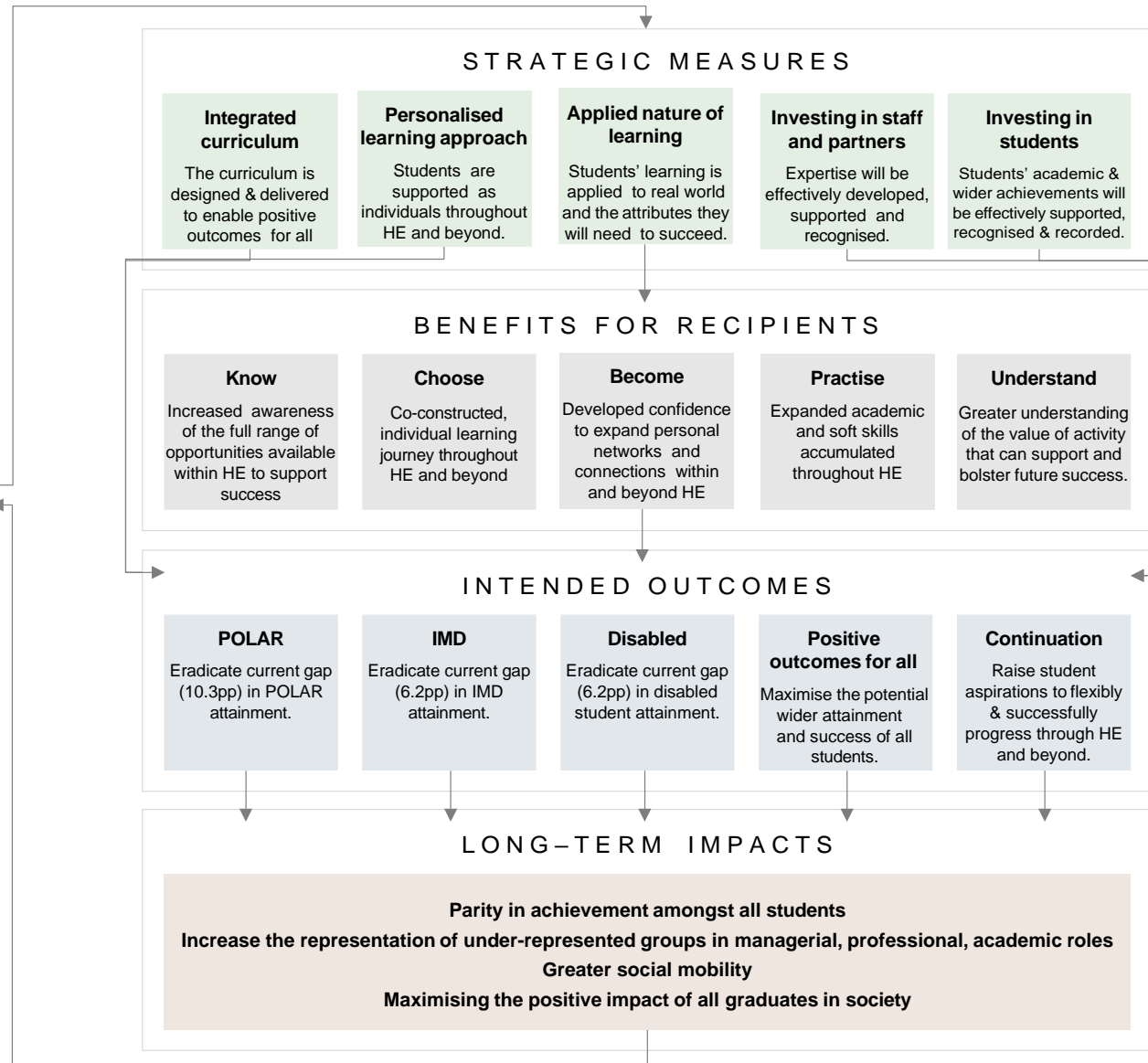
We will share the transformative power of university education to inspire the brilliance in every human.

VALUES

Being intellectually generous, curious and rigorous.

Promoting fairness and challenging prejudice.

Inspiring each other to succeed.



Theory of Change PROGRESSION

MISSION

Driven by our commitment to fairness, we focus our expertise, talents and creativity to advance knowledge, promote understanding and create educational opportunities for the benefit of all.

VISION

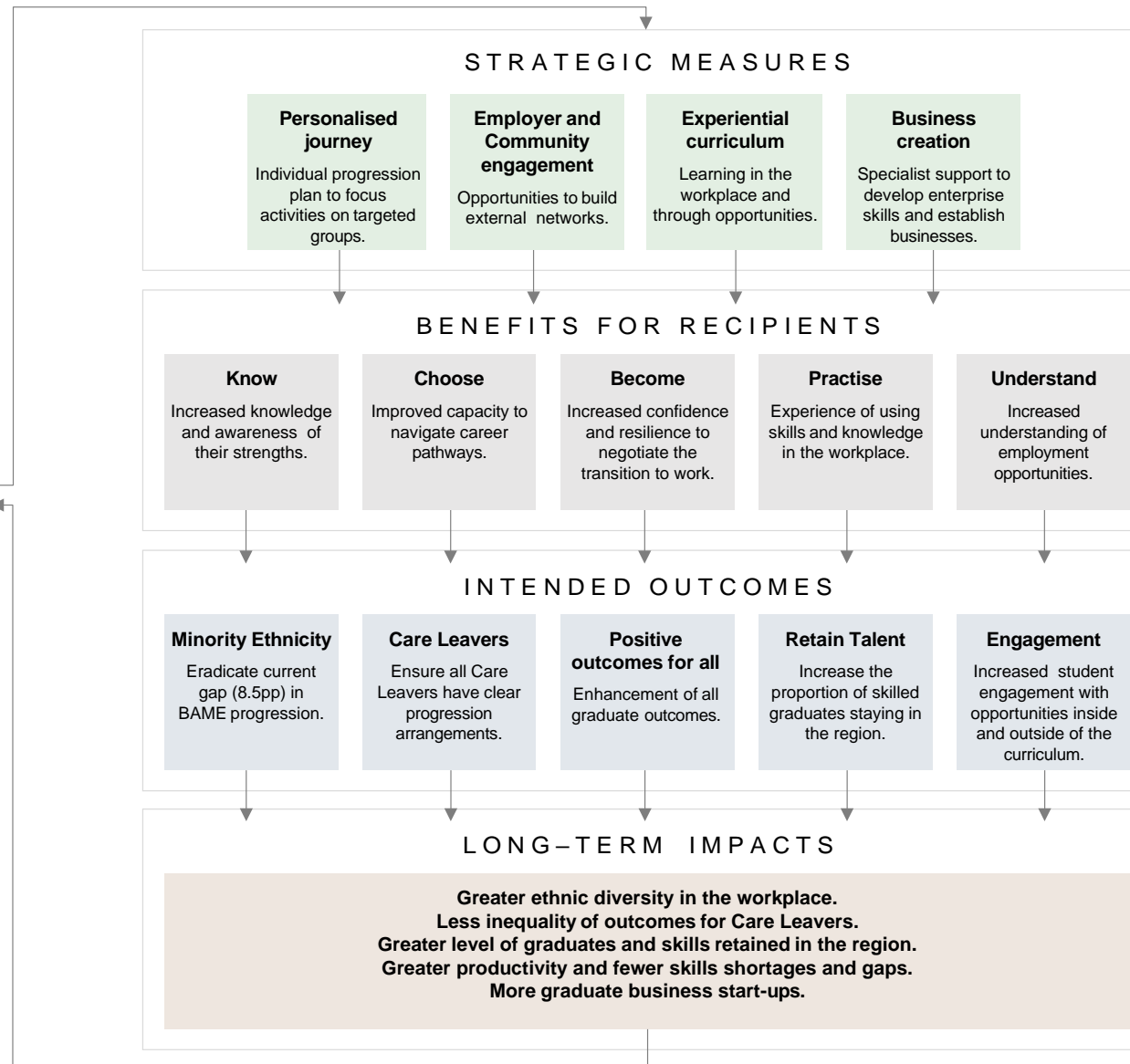
We will share the transformative power of university education to inspire the brilliance in every human.

VALUES

Being intellectually generous, curious and rigorous.

Promoting fairness and challenging prejudice.

Inspiring each other to succeed.



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Appendix 1 Our analysis of the OfS Access and Participation Dataset (OfS APD) We have analysed the OfS Access and Participation dataset and have derived the following areas where we have a performance gap that is relatively consistent, sufficiently large, and is based on a sufficiently robust cohort size.

Summary Analysis of OfS Access and Participation Data

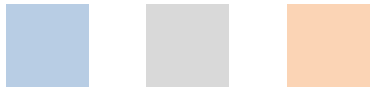
Office for Students data release, March 2019

Key:

YSJU is increasing on this indicator YSJU is remaining the same on this YSJU is decreasing on this indicator



YSJU is higher than sector for this YSJU is similar to the sector on this YSJU is lower than the sector on this



Examples:

YSJU is increasing on this indicator and is also above the sector for it too YSJU is decreasing on this indicator and is also below the sector for it too YSJU is increasing on this indicator but is still below the sector on it YSJU is not changing much and remains below the sector on this YSJU is not changing much and is similar to the sector on this



Purple font shows the OfS Key Performance Measures (KPM)

Assessment:

YSJU is moving in positive direction YSJU position is not changing YSJU is moving in a negative direction



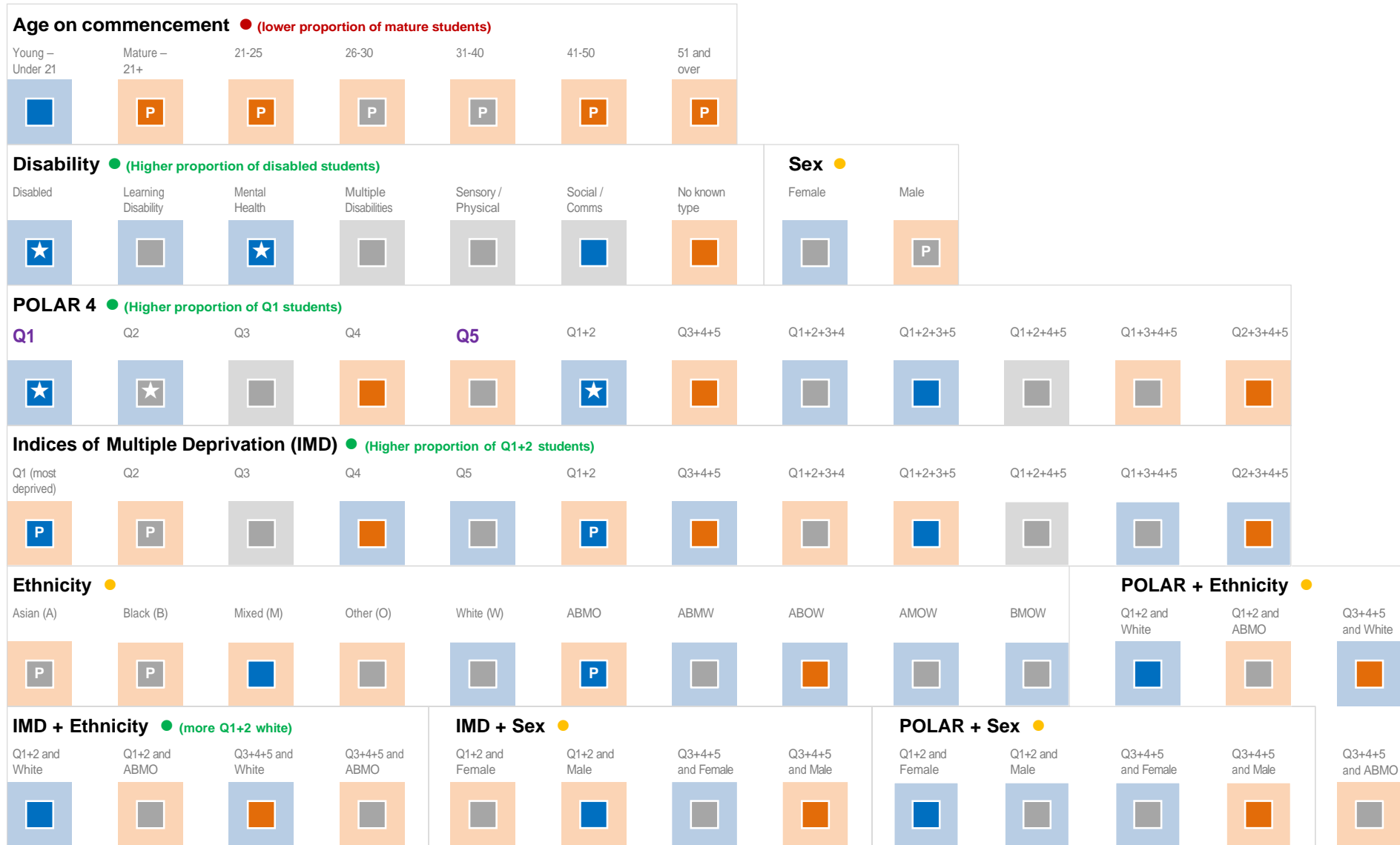
Star performance



Problem to address

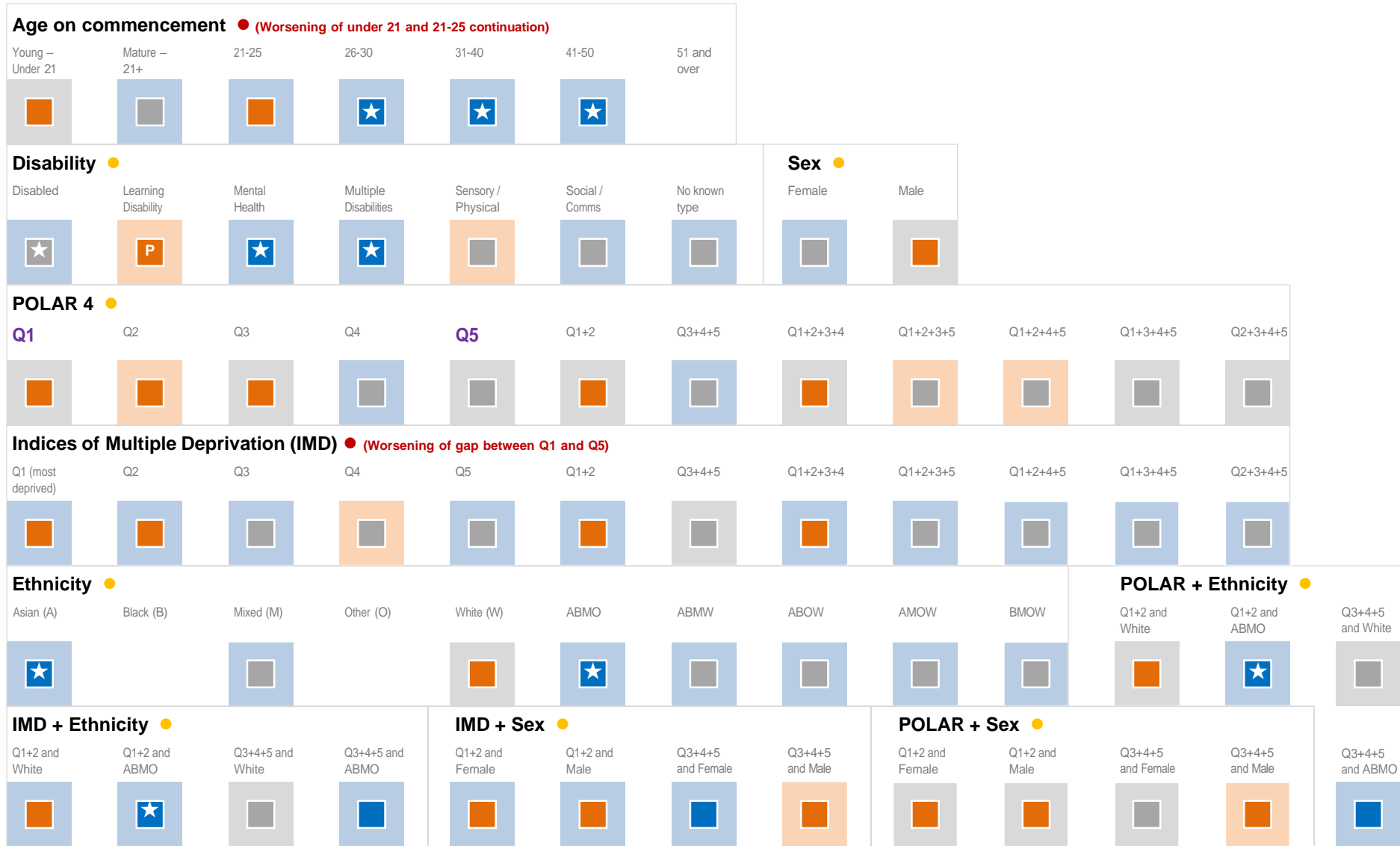
Performance on Access

Office for Students data release, March 2019. Visual relates to full-time undergraduates.



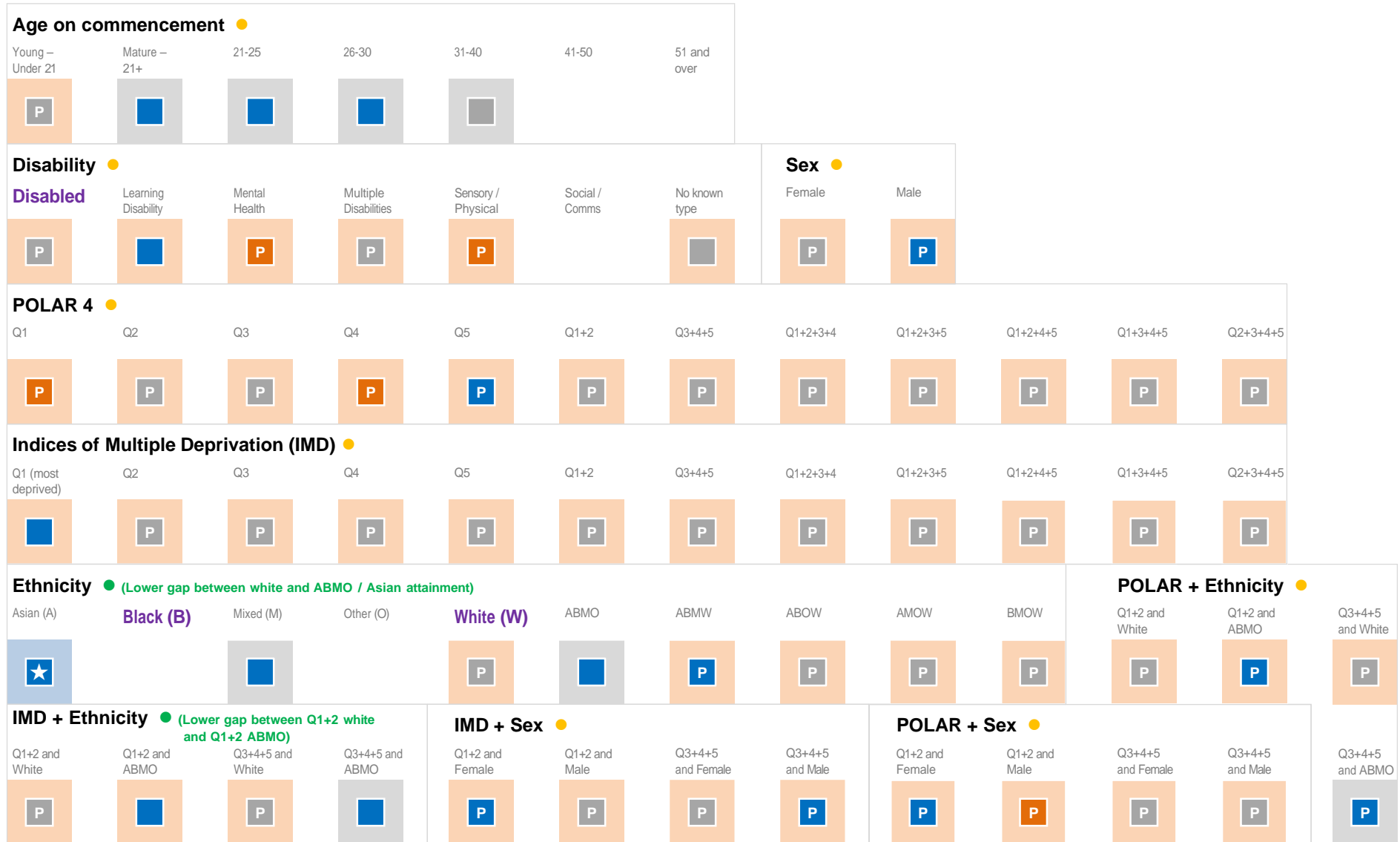
Performance on Continuation

Office for Students data release, March 2019. Visual relates to full-time undergraduates.



Performance on Attainment

Office for Students data release, March 2019. Visual relates to full-time undergraduates.



Performance on Progression

Office for Students data release, March 2019. Visual relates to full-time undergraduates.

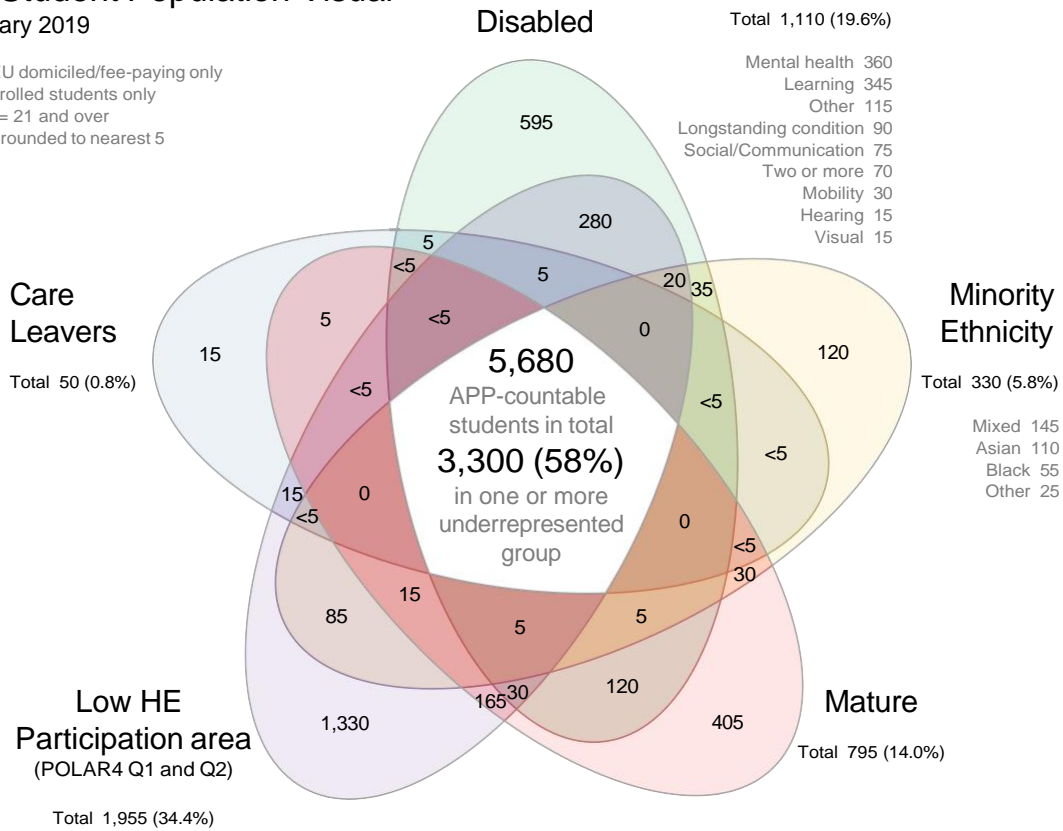


Appendix University analysis of intersectionality

WP Student Population Visual

February 2019

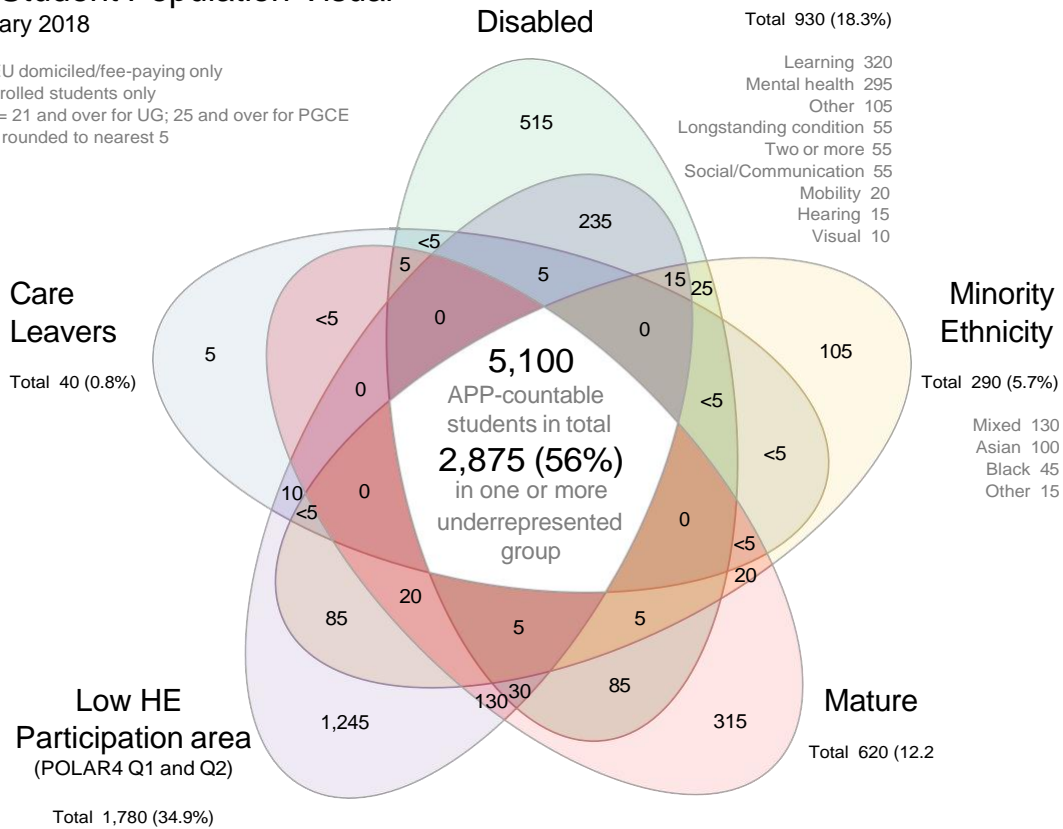
Home/EU domiciled/fee-paying only
Fully enrolled students only
Mature = 21 and over
Figures rounded to nearest 5



WP Student Population Visual

February 2018

Home/EU domiciled/fee-paying only
Fully enrolled students only
Mature = 21 and over for UG; 25 and over for PGCE
Figures rounded to nearest 5



Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£3,500
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: York St John University

Provider UKPRN: 10007713

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£1,397,897.00	£1,457,055.00	£1,491,163.00	£1,521,923.00	£1,548,987.00
Access (pre-16)	£545,180.00	£568,251.00	£581,554.00	£593,550.00	£604,105.00
Access (post-16)	£754,864.00	£786,810.00	£805,228.00	£821,838.00	£836,453.00
Access (adults and the community)	£97,853.00	£101,994.00	£104,381.00	£106,535.00	£108,429.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£1,072,250.00	£1,063,350.00	£1,072,250.00	£1,081,150.00	£1,098,950.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£275,000.00	£275,000.00	£275,000.00	£275,000.00	£275,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£16,011,150.00	£15,856,900.00	£16,011,150.00	£16,165,400.00	£16,473,900.00
Access investment	6.9%	7.3%	7.4%	7.6%	7.6%
Financial support	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%
Research and evaluation	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%
Total investment (as %HFI)	15.3%	15.7%	15.9%	15.9%	15.9%

