

University of Reading

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

The University of Reading is a campus-based, research-intensive institution that offers undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) provision across a full breadth of science, humanities, arts and social science disciplines. We are an international provider, with campuses in Malaysia and South Africa and a number of transnational education partnerships (most notably in China). At our UK campuses, 18,390 students were enrolled on degree programmes in 2021-22, of whom two-thirds were undergraduates. 95% of our undergraduates are studying full-time (compared to a national average of 82%), and 86% are studying for a first degree (compared to 70% across the sector). As these figures might imply, our undergraduate body is young (93% aged under 21 on entry, compared to 77% nationally), but they are not typically from our local community (6% had a local address prior to entry, against a national figure of 23%).

This context underpins our educational mission and shapes our three institutional priorities for teaching and learning. The first of these, ‘to be a genuinely caring and inclusive community of learning’, is driven by our need to provide a safe and stimulating educational environment for a diverse student body that consists mostly of young adults living away from home for the first time. The second, ‘to provide an excellent learning experience’, reflects our ambition to stretch students intellectually and to engage them in ideas and debate that are informed by our current research. The third, ‘to ensure that learning is impactful’, signals our commitment to ensuring that all students benefit from their learning in a way that advances their future careers and equips them to contribute positively to their professional and social communities.¹ These priorities draw from the University’s wider strategic plan (see pp. 25-26), but also broadly align with the themes of continuation, attainment and progression.

Ensuring that all sections of our student community benefit from these strategic priorities is central to our educational mission. This is articulated in our vision for inclusive practice in teaching and learning, which sets out our aspiration ‘to be an environment that respects and supports the needs of individual learners from all backgrounds and in doing so enriches the wider collective student experience.’²

At Reading, we have made progress in addressing inequalities over the last five years, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds now more widely represented in our community. This plan extends the scale of our ambition as we look ahead. It highlights continuing under-representation / under-performance of students from economically deprived backgrounds regarding access and progression. In terms of continuation/ completion, it also points to persistent attainment gaps based on ethnicity (See Annex A). It outlines five intervention strategies, each with specific targets and methods of evaluation, which we believe constitute an ambitious and credible plan to address these manifest risks to equality of opportunity.

¹ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/about/teaching-and-learning>

² <https://sitesd.reading.ac.uk/inclusive-teaching-and-learning/>

Risks to equality of opportunity

Access

Risk 1: Knowledge and skills

Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, who should be capable of accessing the University of Reading, have fewer opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to meet entry requirements. We are a medium tariff institution, and as such have a minimum level of attainment required (typically above C at A Level or equivalent and in some subjects, a Grade B (6) or C (4) at GCSE depending on the specific course) for students to access our courses. Internal evidence shows that students in Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintile 1 (Q1) and Black students are not achieving success in Key Stage (KS) 4 or KS5 qualifications needed to successfully apply to our courses. KS4 outcomes are a good predictor of Level 3 attainment and can act as a barrier to progression to Level 3 / KS5.

We recognise that the students we work with in our local area will not necessarily be considering Reading as a Higher Education (HE) destination in the future. Nationally, research shows that students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) perform less well than their peers at KS3 and KS4, limiting opportunities to progress and succeed in KS5 qualifications required for entry to Higher Education. As such, we have included pupils in receipt of FSM as part of our targeting for this work.

Risk 2: Information and guidance and Risk 3: Perception of Higher Education

There are significantly fewer students within the University of Reading population from lower socio-economic backgrounds than the population generally or within the HE sector as a whole. Evidence suggested this is a function of prior attainment, a lack of information and guidance, and perception of Reading as a suitable destination. Of particular concern is the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 in students accessing the University of Reading in comparison to the now positive gap within the HE sector. Application rates suggest that students from IMD Q1 are less likely to apply to Reading than their more advantaged peers, and that although following the point of application, they are not disadvantaged in terms of offer-making where equally qualified, when made an offer, they are still proportionately less likely to enrol on our courses than students in IMD Q2-5 (by several percentage points).

Risk 4: Application success rates (not addressed in intervention strategy)

Internal data suggest that students from particular demographics (including those identified nationally as likely to be at risk) are not disadvantaged at Reading in terms of offer-making to students who are otherwise qualified. We make aspirational offers to ensure as many students as possible are given the opportunity to access our courses and to address the uncertainties around predicted grades. For our more competitive and highly selective courses, such as those with limited numbers due to placement availability (e.g. Pharmacy) or with additional interview or skills requirements (e.g. BA Accounting and Business), our offer (and enrolment) rates are equal, or in some cases greater for students in those groups identified nationally to be at risk (e.g. Black students). Where we do see lower offer rates for some groups more generally (e.g. IMD Q1 students, Black students), this is a consequence of those students disproportionately applying without the required qualifications and is considered therefore as an Attainment (1) and Information and Guidance Risk (2) for these students).

Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode (not addressed in intervention strategy)

Although some groups of students nationally are identified at risk, the University offers Foundation level programmes for those who have not achieved the required grades to progress to Part 1 courses or who do not have the required subject profile within their results. The four-year aggregate for students in Part 0 in receipt of FSM is 22.1%, 14.8% for students in IMD Q1, and 13.2% for students over 21 years of age. This is markedly higher than the proportions of students from the same demographic groups on our Part 1 entry courses, offering an alternative route for students not able to enter Part 1 study directly. We have also expanded the range of courses (26 at the time of writing) now available with a Foundation Year route, now constituting approximately 50% of our subject areas.

Success

Risk 6: Insufficient academic support

While the University of Reading offers a comprehensive suite of academic support mechanisms such as the Study Advice programme, Academic Tutoring System and Peer Assisted Learning, we recognise that on-course gaps (see Annex A for further details) suggest differential experiences of academic support. Further evidence that academic support may be insufficient for minority ethnic students is detailed by the University of Reading's Race Equality Review.³

Risk 7: Insufficient personal support

Feedback collected from students across various initiatives has suggested a risk of insufficient personal support affecting underrepresented groups. This has been defined both in terms of a deficit of targeted navigational information provided by the University and being less likely to access support from parents, guardians or siblings who have experienced higher education. Minority ethnic students at the University of Reading are particularly vulnerable to a diminished sense of belonging, which may impact on-course outcomes. Demands on time caused by personal circumstances are observed to be a significant factor for mature students.

Risk 8: Mental health

A growing number of students are declaring mental health conditions and seeking support from welfare services. Our student consultation highlighted poor mental health as a significant factor perceived to effect on-course continuation and attainment. Health inequalities are known to exacerbate the risk for minority ethnic groups. We understand that mental health is also interlinked with other risks, particularly cost pressures.

Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus (not addressed in intervention strategy)

Disruptions to education and prolonged distance learning may be affecting outcomes for underrepresented groups. Performance data appears to show a general improvement in overall attainment and continuation rates during the pandemic, and a return to pre-

³ <https://static.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/race-equality-review-report-2021.pdf>

pandemic trends following a resumption of typical in-person practices. The University of Reading is monitoring sector and internal data to better understand the long-term impact of the pandemic on its students' outcomes. The advisory group of underrepresented students who reviewed the APP (see 'student consultation' section) ranked the impact of the coronavirus pandemic as a relatively minor risk.

Risk 10: Cost pressures

Students are telling us that financial uncertainty, obligations to work part-time and rises in the cost of living are impacting their ability to study and obtain good grades. Term-time working, financial anxiety and the need to support dependents create particular risk for underrepresented students (particularly students with caring or family responsibilities) and students from lower socioeconomic groups (defined internally through IMD Q1 and/or Q2 membership and Free School Meal eligibility).

Risk 11: Capacity issues (not addressed in intervention strategy)

The overall student population at Reading (UG and PG) has remained broadly stable over the last five years. We are the only major university in the immediate vicinity. This means that the extreme pressures on student accommodation witnessed in some university cities have not been as evident in Reading. However, we do have plans to grow student numbers over the next five years – which have been carefully factored into our strategic planning. Our detailed ten-year strategies for the campus estate and digital infrastructure reflect the need to expand teaching facilities and learning resources in line with growth projections. We are also working closely with our accommodation provider to plan for increased student numbers.

Progression

Risk 12: Progression from Higher Education

Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not progress to Positive Destinations at the same rate as those from more affluent backgrounds. Whilst our data here compares favourably with the sector average, our institutional priority 'to ensure that learning is impactful' points toward an ambitious objective for graduate outcomes. This is an institution-wide issue affecting all academic schools. Evidence suggests this is a function of prior attainment gaps, gaps in prior knowledge, limited take-up of careers support, and systemic barriers from organisations whose recruitment and promotion processes disadvantage these groups.

Objectives and targets

IS no.	Objective	Target(s)
IS1	Through targeted attainment-raising initiatives with partner schools, to support the removal of attainment-gaps at KS4 for students eligible for Free School Meals, those in IMD Q1, and those of Black ethnicity, such that by 2034 students from these groups progress equally into KS5 as their peers.	By 2028, to improve the percentage of KS4 target students who see increases of 10pp or more in metacognition, confidence and resilience skills, as a result of our interventions, from 49% to 60%.
IS2	Achieve a socio-economic mix within our student population that reflects the demographic of the year 12 and 13 population within our catchment regions (South East England, London and the South West) by 2030. ⁴	Reduce the gap between entrants in IMD Q1 and Q5 from 27.7pp to 10pp by 2028.
IS3	Ensure that underrepresented students remain on course and complete their studies with equivalent success rates to the wider student population by 2030.	Achieve parity ⁵ in rates of continuation between Black and white undergraduate cohorts by 2030, from a baseline gap of 8.4pp. Achieve parity in rates of continuation between young and mature cohorts by 2030, from a baseline gap of 7.9pp.
IS4	Eliminate degree outcome gaps that correlate with ethnicity and socio-economic disadvantage by 2030.	By 2030, achieve parity in undergraduate degree attainment between white and Black undergraduate cohorts (from a 28.3pp gap) and ABMO and white undergraduate cohorts (from a 13.9pp gap). By 2028, achieve parity in undergraduate degree attainment between IMD2019 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 cohorts (from a 10pp

⁴ The current profile of the year 12 & 13 population in these regions shows IMD Q1 to be 13%, and IMD Q5 to be 23%. This may change by in the coming years, which is why we set a target date of 2030 – even though our target for 2028 is to reduce the gap to 10 percentage points.

⁵ Parity is defined as 3% variance around 0%, allowing for natural fluctuations in the data.

		gap) and between Free School Meal eligible and Free School Meal ineligible cohorts (from a 3.7pp gap).
IS5	To eliminate the gap between IMD Q1 & 2 and IMD Q3, 4 & 5 with respect to positive destinations as shown in Graduate Outcomes data by the end of the period of the Plan.	Achieve parity in progression between IMDQ1&2 compared with IMDQ3,4&5, from a gap of 5.4pp

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

More detailed information on the evidence and rationales for the following intervention strategies can be found in Annex B, 'Intervention strategy evidence base and rationale'.

Intervention strategy 1: objectives and targets

	Objective	Target(s)
IS1	Through targeted attainment-raising initiatives with partner schools, to support the removal of attainment-gaps at KS4 for students eligible for Free School Meals, those in IMD Q1, and those of Black ethnicity, such that by 2034 students from these groups progress equally into KS5 as their peers.	By 2028, to improve the percentage of KS4 target students who see increases of 10pp or more in metacognition, confidence and resilience skills, as a result of our interventions, from 49% to 60%.

Students who are Care Experienced, Young Carers or from Gypsy-Roma Traveller families will also be given priority onto the programme(s) if they do not also meet other target demographics.

In addition - as a core partner within the Study Higher Uniconnect, we contribute to the strategic development, delivery and evaluation of collaborative attainment-raising work, aligning our own institutional activity to avoid duplication. As part of our wider commitment to raising attainment as a Study Higher Uniconnect partner, we have agreed to fund and deliver Academic Exploration Days to include activity delivery, venue and equipment hire, catering and resources.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1. Knowledge and Skills – students are not equipped to progress to KS5 qualifications to enable entry to HE and University of Reading courses; Risk 2. Information and Guidance – students are not able to make informed choices about appropriate KS4 and 5 qualifications to achieve their longer term educational and career goals.

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
1	Year 10 targeted intensive programme of activity with partner schools (includes subject activity, HE visits and mentoring from University of Reading students) with 120 students per year – revised activity	<p>1.0 FTE to run the programme a year</p> <p>Operational costs (mentors, travel, catering) £60,000 a year</p> <p>0.2 FTE (spread across 5 regional officers) to engage schools outside Berkshire.</p>	<p>Self-reported improvements in metacognition (independent learning), confidence and resilience</p> <p>Students able to develop own educational ‘roadmap’</p> <p>Long term - student progression to HE</p>		<p>Type 2</p> <p>Pre- and post- questionnaire</p> <p>Students will also be tracked in HEAT to measure subsequent progression to HE (up to eight years after intervention before this data will be available)</p>	<p>University Website</p> <p>External publication by December 2025, and annually thereafter</p>
2	Year 9 and 11 Tutoring with CoachBright (200 students - 100 per year group) – new activity	<p>CoachBright partner costs – £66,000 a year</p> <p>Operational costs for visits to campus (ambassadors, travel, lunches, resources) £15,000 a year</p>	<p>Self-reported improvements in metacognition (independent learning), confidence and resilience.</p> <p>Teacher observed improvements in subject knowledge and confidence</p>		<p>Type 2</p> <p>Pre- and post- questionnaire</p> <p>Teacher feedback on subject attainment</p> <p>School provision of GCSE data (where possible, benchmarked against non-</p>	<p>University Website</p> <p>External publication by December 2025, and annually thereafter</p>

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
		Staff role 0.4 FTE of Attainment Raising Officer annually	Improve student attainment at GCSE. Long term – student progression to HE		participants with similar characteristics) Students will also be tracked in HEAT to measure subsequent progression to HE (up to eight years after intervention before this data will be available).	
3	Study skills sessions – 10 target schools – recent activity	Staff role 0.5 FTE Attainment Raising Officer (further proportion of same role supporting CoachBright above) annually Operational budget – £20,000 a year	Self-reported improvements in metacognition (independent learning). Teacher observed / reported improvements in subject attainment.		Type 1 and 2 Pre- and post- questionnaire on metacognition (independent learning). Teacher feedback on subject attainment	University Website External publication by December 2025, and biannually thereafter
4	Teacher focused CPD – training and bursaries to enable further self-	Staff role 0.1 FTE of Attainment Raising Officer (remainder of role above) annually	Reach – teachers taking part Teacher feedback as to impact		Type 1 Feedback from participant teachers as to impact on own practise, confidence	University Website External publication

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
	development and peer-to-peer sharing of innovative teaching methods – revised activity	Funding for bursaries for teacher led projects – £5,000 a year Other operational budget – £5,000 a year			and perceived ability, including data on participation Metrics on use of educational online ‘hub’ for sharing of best practise	by December 2025, and biannually thereafter

Total financial input of the first year of APP: ~£292,000, including staff FTE costs.

Evidence base and rationale:

Evidence suggests that these students have less Social and Academic capital (awareness of HE), Habitus (Familiarity with HE and ‘fitting in’), Skills capital (problem-solving/decision-making/planning/communication) and Intellectual capital (academic skills – raising attainment and subject/HE knowledge) essential for progression to HE. Students in IMD Q1 and Black students are not achieving at KS3 and 4 to enable progression and success in KS5 qualifications needed to access HE, and specifically courses at the University of Reading.

KS4 outcomes are a good predictor of Level 3 attainment and can act as a barrier to progression to Level 3 / KS5. Evidence shows that students in receipt of FSM perform less well than their peers at KS4.

Activities are designed to address key skills of metacognition (independent learning), resilience and confidence, which are linked to attainment. Our Year 10 scholars programme also supports the social and academic, habitus and skills capital for these students.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy primarily to OfS Type 2 standards, though some evaluation will be Type 1 initially (see table above). The results of the evaluations will be published externally on our website, starting in 2025 (see table for each

publication plan), and will be shared at relevant conferences and with networks such as NERUPI. Our aim is also to evaluate the intervention strategy as a whole by the end of 2028, to ascertain whether the objectives have been met.

Intervention strategy 2: objectives and targets

	Objective	Target(s)
IS2	Achieve a socio-economic mix within our student population that reflects the demographic of the year 12 and 13 population within our catchment regions (South East England, London and the South West) by 2030.	Reduce the gap between entrants in IMD Q1 and Q5 from 27.7pp to 10pp by 2028.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1 – Knowledge and skills; Risk 2 – Information and Guidance; Risk 3 – Perception of HE

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
5	Intensive targeted Year 12 programme of information, advice and guidance (IAG), subject activity, e-mentoring and summer school (Year 12 Scholars) with ~ 400 students – existing programme with	1.0 FTE staff annually 0.3 FTE staff support annually £80,000 annual operational costs – prorated for target group within intervention	Increase in students' university expectations and knowledge Conversion from programme to application subset enrol at Reading Progression from application to enrolment in HE	IS 4- supporting subject skills required for HE success	Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaire, including alignment to Theory of Change. Applications from participants to Reading as	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences External publication by December 2025, and annually thereafter

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
	some adjustments to targeting and structure – revised activity				measured by internal data	
6	Hybrid in-person / virtual IAG and subject masterclass programme with summer school for Year 12 students ('Preparing for University' mini Scholars programme in partnership with the Brilliant Club - 50 students), piloted in 2022 - recent activity	Part FTEs of regional staff (0.4 FTE overall) annually Brilliant club partnership costs Annual Operational budget £20k	Increase in student's university expectations and knowledge Conversion from programme to application subset enrol at Reading) Progression from application to enrolment in HE	IS 4-supporting subject skills required for HE success	Application success benchmarked against non-participants from similar demographics using data from HEAT Progression to HE through HEAT tracking	
7	Targeted work with schools and colleges in IMD Q1 and with high proportions of students eligible for FSM (pre- and post-application)	1.5 FTE annually (30% each of 5 regionally targeted staff roles)	Increase in students' university expectations and knowledge Improvements in conversion from target schools to Reading applications	Pre-entry travel bursaries extend to IMD Q1.	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Internal data on applications and enrolments from	University website Internal report by October 2025, external publication by December 2026,

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
	across target UK regions, 80 schools) Commenced in 2020 but limited opportunities due to Covid-19, targeting reviewed for 2023/4 onwards in line with objective – revised activity	£13,000 annual operational budget	Improvements in progression from application to enrolment at Reading		schools and colleges and target demographics	and annually thereafter
8	FE college targeted work – 10 FE colleges Commenced in 2020/21 but limited engagement due to Covid-19 – recent activity	0.25 FTE annually of dedicated role £2,500 annual operational budget	Increase in students' university expectations and knowledge Improvements in conversion from target colleges to Reading applications Improvements in progression from application to enrolment at Reading			
9	Access Reading (targeted applicant support programme) (100 + students)	0.8 FTE of programme delivery role 0.1 FTE of support role	Positive feedback about value of programme Improvements in conversion to Firm Choice and subsequent enrol at Reading	IS4 supporting subject skills required for HE success	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Qualitative feedback	University website Internal reports from November 2024, external publication by

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
	Piloted in 2022 – new activity	£20,000 operational budget			Pre- and post-questionnaires aligned to Theory of Change Will also explore application success rates benchmarked against non-participants from similar demographics	December 2026, then biannually thereafter

Total financial input of the first year of APP: ~£349,000, including staff FTE costs.

Evidence base and rationale:

Although the sector shows a positive IMD Q1-Q5 gap, at the University of Reading there is a significant gap of over 20 percentage points. Internal data indicates that this gap results from both a disproportionately lower number of applications from students in IMD Q1 as compared to other quintiles, and in some subject areas a reduced conversion rate from offer to enrol in comparison to their peers.

The activity proposed will target students within these cohorts, and is built on activity, including multiple interventions made up of information, subject masterclasses and summer schools, reported in literature to support progression to HE⁶ and shown within our data gathered from HEAT to impact on progression to HE.⁷

⁶ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844021016212>

⁷ Note: our intensive Year 12 activity has historically also included POLAR Q1 and Q2 as target groups, along with some ethnic minority groups and students in receipt of FSM. This will remain in place to support progress already made in these areas – see Annex B for further information.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy primarily to OfS Type 2 standards, though some evaluation will be Type 1 initially (see table above). The results of the evaluations will be published externally on our website, starting in 2025 (see table for each publication plan), and will be shared at relevant conferences and with networks such as NERUPI. Our aim is to also evaluate the intervention strategy as a whole by the end of 2028, to ascertain whether the objectives have been met.

Intervention strategy 3 – Objectives and targets

	Objective	Target(s)
IS3	Ensure that underrepresented students remain on course and complete their studies with equivalent success rates to the wider student population by 2030.	Achieve parity in rates of continuation between Black and white undergraduate cohorts by 2030, from a baseline gap of 8.4pp. Achieve parity in rates of continuation between young and mature cohorts by 2030, from a baseline gap of 7.9pp.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Black and mature students are considered at risk of insufficient academic and personal support. The risk of poor mental health is considered to affect continuation rates.

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
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10	Standardising progression rules through our internal change programme, the Portfolio Review project, with programme changes will commence 2024/25 academic year – new activity.	Significant/complex staff FTE investment across the university.	Increase student experience and satisfaction	4	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Year-on-year tracking of NSS scores from students on 'marking and assessment' and course organisation	University website Internal report on the process and implementation by September 2026 External briefing by September 2028
11	Calling campaigns to review and establish understanding of why students are not staying on course – new activity	Trained Black and mature students to deliver two calling campaigns in 2023/24. 0.1 FTE ~ £2,000	Increase institution's own understanding of student attrition from target groups	4	Type 1 Interview, short survey and usage data	University website Internal report by September 2025 External briefing by September 2026, then annual reviews and updates

12	Report & Support harassment and discrimination reporting platform roll out in 2023/24 – new activity	~£27,000 annual license fee Staff time for cross-University operations group.	Enhance process by which students can disclose problematic behaviours, enabling greater freedom from microaggressions and discrimination Increase in the proportion of non-anonymous reporting over time as an indication of growing trust in the system	4	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Usage data, NSS survey, student focus groups – new NSS survey item related to wellbeing as baseline and monitoring of rating over the next four years	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences /external communities of practice A blog by September 2026 on interim progress Longer-term evaluation to show trends by 2028 (external), starting with internal reports and data analysis
13	Revised residential welfare and discipline support team, informed by recommendations for Black student inclusion produced by current students – new activity.	Accommodation Inclusivity Advisors ~ £2,000 5 x 0.75 FTE 1 x 1.0 FTE ~£20,000 annual running cost	More inclusive environments and student communities, focusing on Black inclusion Increase in students reported sense of belonging and the quality of student support.	4	Type 1 Focus group with staff and students Annual survey by partner organisation	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences /external communities of practice Internal report on the process and implementation (lessons learnt etc) by September 2026 External report by September 2027, then

						annual reviews and updates
14	School-based intervention design (see also row 18) Peer Assisted Learning to target specific continuation gaps – revised activity to be trialled in School of Pharmacy (pilot) 2023/24	0.2 FTE ~£4,000 annual running cost.	Improved continuation rates for target populations in selected schools Increase in students' reported sense of belonging Increase in students' reported academic confidence Increase in students' reported study strategy skills	4	Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaire on intermediate outcomes Aspiration to measure academic performance differences	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences /external communities of practice Internal report by December 2025 External report by December 2026, then annual updates
15	Enhanced transition package to facilitate community building: -Informative social events -Representative peer support - 'Guides to the University of Reading' created by underrepresented groups. New activity	0.5 FTE and 0.1 FTE at different grades ~£5,500 annual delivery cost.	Increase in students' reported sense of belonging Increase in students' reported confidence in navigating university Increase in students' reported critical engagement with information	4	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaire on intermediate outcomes Student feedback and reflections.	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences /external communities of practice Internal report by September 2025, external by September 2026, and then biannual reviews and updates (2028)

Total financial input of the first year of APP: ~£393,000 including staff FTE costs.

Evidence base and rationale:

Comprehensive analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and review of existing and recent literature and initiatives has informed this approach. See Annex B for rationale of the decentralised and cross-intervention approach to continuation and awarding gaps.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy using a mixture of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standard of evidence (see table above). The results of the evaluations will be published externally on our website, starting in 2026 (see table for each publication plan), and will be shared at relevant conferences and external communities of practice. Our aim is to also evaluate the intervention strategy as a whole by the end of 2028, to ascertain whether the objectives have been met.

Intervention strategy 4 – Objectives and targets

IS no.	Objective	Target(s)
IS4	Eliminate degree outcome gaps that correlate with ethnicity and socio-economic disadvantage by 2030.	<p>By 2030, achieve parity in undergraduate degree attainment between white and Black undergraduate cohorts (from a 28.3pp gap) and ABMO and white undergraduate cohorts (from a 13.9pp gap).</p> <p>By 2028, achieve parity in undergraduate degree attainment between IMD2019 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 cohorts (from a 10pp gap) and between Free School Meal eligible and Free School Meal ineligible cohorts (from a 3.7pp gap).</p>

Risks to equality of opportunity

ABMO students (Black students, in particular), and students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds are at risk of not receiving sufficient academic or personal support.

These awarding gaps are interlinked with the possible risks of insufficient prior advice and guidance and cost pressures.

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
16	Appointment of Awarding Gap Representatives to Awarding Gap Steering Group to support academic school-level strategic planning. Recent activity.	0.2FTE Staff time for cross-institution co-production groups ~£500 annual running cost.	Increased number of awarding gap interventions recorded through internal auditing documents (School Awarding Gap Audits, School Teaching and Enhancement Action Plans).	3	Type 1 Internal data, focus group and document review.	University website Internal report and monitoring, on the process and implementation by September 2025. An external briefing by September 2026, then annual reviews and updates
17	Academic school-based intervention design Two academic school/subject gaps targeted per year (see also row 15) Example intervention from first year of model (2023/24): inclusive culture building	2 x 0.2 FTE at different grade levels Academic staff time Student Inclusion Consultants, annual cost ~£10,000 per year. ~£10,000 running costs	Reduction in awarding gaps for target groups through a variety of interim measures such as increase in students' reported sense of belonging (See page 7 of annex B for further detail on developing an evidence base)	3	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaire on intermediate outcomes Student and staff feedback and reflections.	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences /external communities of practice. Internal report by September 2025, external report by September 2026 and repeat cycle
18	Decolonising the curriculum (DtC) staff toolkits (guidance resources).	Staff time from various colleagues (c. 0.2 FTE in total) ~£5K annually	Increase in staff confidence, knowledge and awareness of DtC; greater degree of decolonising practice		Type 1 Monitoring and analysis of academic school and annual	University website Shared at internal and external communities of practice

	Recent activity. 2023/24	~£1,000 development costs.	taking place across schools and departments.		teaching and learning strategies Staff survey	Internal report by December 2025 External report by December 2026
19	Revised financial support packages. New activity.	Eligibility criteria for Reading bursary to include IMD or POLAR4 Q1&2, as well as HHI – to align more closely with APP objectives. (See annexes for more detail on bursary allocations).	Relieve the financial burden disproportionately impacting IMD2019 Q1 and FSM students Potentially reduce the amount of term-time working. Indicated by decreased financial concerns & improved academic outcomes.	3	Type 1 and 2 OfS Financial Toolkit for degree outcomes for statistical analysis, alongside questionnaires and focus groups with financial aid recipients on financial concerns	University website External report by December 2025, and annually thereafter
20	Financial education and training through partnership with Blackbullion	~£20,000 annual license fee	Increase in student confidence on money management	3	Type 1 Student questionnaire, with partner organisation	University website External report by December 2025, and annually thereafter

Total financial input of the first year of APP: ~£82,000, including staff FTE costs.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy using a mixture of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standard of evidence (see table above). The results of the evaluations will be published externally on our website, starting in 2025 (see table for each publication plan), and will be shared at relevant conferences. Our aim is to also evaluate the intervention strategy as a whole by the end of 2028, to ascertain whether the objectives have been met.

Intervention strategy 5 – Objectives and targets

	Objective	Target(s)
IS5	To eliminate the gap between IMD Q1 & 2 and IMD Q3, 4 & 5 with respect to positive destinations as shown in Graduate Outcomes data by the end of the period of the Plan.	Achieve parity in progression between IMDQ1&2 compared with IMDQ3,4&5, from a gap of 5.4pp

Where we have progression gaps in other areas of WP, such as ethnicity, it is the intersection with markers of social deprivation that are the constant factor.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 12 – that IMD Q1 & 2 students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
21	Work with local organisations to create paid internship opportunities for University of Reading UG students – Reading Internship Scheme (RIS). These internships will both be part-time during term, and full-time during the summer holiday. Some will be fully or partially remote. Payment, and flexibility of delivery will maximise accessibility for IMD	1 FTE to run the programme Funding to pay half of the wages of the interns, plus funding for joining bursaries for students with a WP marker, ~£150,000 per year. A budget to cover miscellaneous	Students have secured a RIS internship Increase in students' work experience Increase in student's self-confidence		Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaires Track progress compared to benchmark Internal Careers annual survey	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences, external communities of practice. External publication by December 2025,

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
	Q1 & 2 students – refreshed activity	administration and communication costs of £3,000 a year. A widening participation budget of £10,000 a year	Increase in student's professional network.		and Graduate Outcomes data	and annually thereafter
22	Mentoring programme (Thrive) to help second and final year University of Reading UG students build their social capital – existing Activity	2.1 FTEs to run the programme ~£11,000 per year for the online administration system ~£3,500 per year for on costs e.g. communications	Students have formed a Thrive partnership Increase in students' self-confidence. Increase in students' professional network		Type 2 Pre- and post-questionnaires Track progress compared to benchmark Internal Careers annual survey and Graduate Outcomes data	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences and external communities of practice External publication by December 2025, and annually thereafter

#	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Evaluation methods	Summary of publication plan
23	Facilitate communities of finalist students (in person, through an online course and via social media) to create positive action – refreshed activity	1 FTE to run the programme £10,000 a year for on costs e.g. communications, student ambassadors £1,000 a year for external careers consultant cover	Increase in students' self-confidence Increase in students' understanding of how to achieve their goals	-	Type 1, aspiring to Type 2 Student focus groups Pre- and post-questionnaires Track progress compared to benchmark Internal Careers annual survey and Graduate Outcomes data	University website Shared at relevant sector conferences and external communities of practice External publication by December 2025, and annually thereafter

Total financial input of the first year of APP: ~£188,500 excluding staff FTE costs.

Evidence base and rationale:

From evaluation carried out in 2021 and 2022, we have seen that participation in both mentoring and the Reading Internship Scheme positively correlates with students securing positive destinations.

Rationale for communities of finalists:

- IMD Q1 & 2 are likely to be:
 - time-poor, so we need to deliver careers support in ways that fit into their lives and appear relevant;
 - less likely to seek guidance (e.g. careers appointments or workshops) but more willing to seek support from peers;
 - less aware of their options and how to proceed than other students, so will benefit from mixing with the widest possible range of peers.

More details are available in Annex B.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy primarily to OfS Type 2 standards, though some evaluation will necessarily be Type 1 (see table above). The results of the evaluations will be published externally on our website, starting in 2025, and will be shared at relevant conferences. Our aim is to also evaluate the intervention strategy as a whole by the end of 2028, to ascertain whether the objectives have been met.

Whole provider approach

Our University Strategic Plan 2020-26 is built around four core principles: community, excellence, sustainability and being an engaged university. The first of these principles explicitly recognises the diversity of our university community, and confirms that ‘respect for, and inclusion of, this diversity is not negotiable.’ Supporting staff and students from communities that have faced structural disadvantage or discrimination is central to our educational mission. This is reflected in our strategic priorities for education, and in our vision for inclusive practice in teaching and learning referred to on page one.

This means that our work relating to access and participation does not serve as an add-on to the University’s core areas of activity – but is deeply embedded within a wider matrix of initiatives and activities that are co-ordinated at executive level. Each of the protected groups identified in the 2010 Equality Act is represented by a named ‘champion’ on the University Executive Board (UEB), providing a direct link between the lived experience of staff and students from diverse backgrounds and university leadership. UEB champions provide a direct point of contact for our various staff networks, special interest groups and student representatives including our student Inclusion Consultants.⁸ This approach has led to extensive critical reflection on the way our systems and policies are experienced by different groups. Notable recent examples include our Race Equality Review (2021)⁹ and Disability and Neurodiversity Review (2022).¹⁰ This commitment to identifying and rectifying deeply entrenched inequalities is reflected in our achievement of the Race Equality Charter Mark (bronze award), Athena Swan (silver), a rating of ‘progressive’ for digital accessibility maturity by User Vision, and our ongoing work with Student Minds towards the University Mental Health Charter (awaiting outcome). These achievements do not indicate that we have eradicated inequalities, but they demonstrate our commitment to doing so, and our openness to being challenged on progress toward this ambition by external bodies.

Taking forward the various actions and recommendations associated with these reviews are a range of dedicated groups including the LGBT+ Action Plan Group and separate Implementation Teams for Disability and Neurodiversity, Race Equality and Athena Swan. Where relevant, the activities outlined in the above Intervention Strategies aligns with work being co-ordinated through these groups (e.g. regarding awarding gaps). In addition to these groups are a number of formal interest groups for colleagues to explore information and guidance related to equity, diversity and inclusion.¹¹

At an institutional level, we are actively pursuing a set of ten diversity and inclusion targets for 2026. The D&I targets for awarding gaps have been aligned with the APP targets to ensure consistency. However, the D&I targets do encompass a wider range of students than those specifically targeted in the APP. This includes, for example, work to further LGBTQ+ inclusion and allyship.

⁸ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/Diversity-and-Inclusion/inclusion-consultants>

⁹ <https://static.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/race-equality-review-report-2021.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/diversity/-/media/project/functions/diversity/documents/disability-and-neurodiversity-review-2022.pdf?la=en&hash=85374FF32ABE1BB43413B8D128EFAD72>

¹¹ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/diversity/annual-reports>

We are committed to providing fair access to estranged students and those who have spent time in local authority care through a range of information, guidance and practical support, available from pre-application through to graduation and beyond. This includes priority access to our intensive outreach programmes, dedicated advisors to help during the application process and when on course, extended accommodation contracts and financial support.¹²

Our Access and Participation Committee (APC) oversees the intervention strategies, and associated activities and targets, outlined in this plan. The PVC (Education and Student Experience) chairs this committee, and it reports to the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience. The APC's oversight of this activity is facilitated by two sub-committees – one focused specifically on awarding gaps and the other on evaluation. Further information about the work of relevant teams within the University in alleviating inequalities (e.g. student wellbeing and student success), as well as our mechanisms for engaging with the lived experience of disadvantaged groups, are set out found in Annex B.

As indicated above, however, our efforts to address inequalities extend well beyond the activities outlined in the intervention strategies. An institution-wide review of our tutoring system has resulted in a more clearly defined remit for academic tutors, alongside a major investment in a central student welfare team, who are able to offer more dedicated support for students encountering mental health difficulties. The current restructuring of our team of wardens will further professionalise the system of pastoral support in place for students. Our sports provision is in the process of being reenvisioned in the context of an emerging strategy for sport and active wellbeing that is inclusive of all students.

In terms of academic provision specifically, the University is currently undertaking a wholesale programme of portfolio review, involving a strategic redesign of all taught degree programmes as we move to a new teaching structure based on semesters (rather than terms) for the academic year 2024/25. Key institution-wide principles underpin this project to ensure that inclusive practices are designed into our programme structures. These include:

- a compulsory curriculum for semester 1 of year 1 for all undergraduate degree programmes, designed to simplify the transition to university study for students, removing uncertainty about module selection, and allowing clear and unambiguous information (e.g. about timetables, learning outcomes and assessments) to be made available to students at the point of enrolment;
- an even spacing of the assessment load between semester 1 and semester 2, removing the risk of bunching of assessment deadlines towards the end of the academic year, when wellbeing and financial pressures on students are often most acute;
- a strict limit on the number of assessments per module, thereby reducing the risk of over-assessment and the unnecessary pressure that this creates for students.

Colleagues from our Student Success and Student Wellbeing teams have been closely involved in the leadership of the Portfolio Review project, ensuring that inclusive practice is

designed into our programme structures, progression rules and assessment policies and practices.

Student consultation

Reading Students' Union (Reading SU) has been an active co-creator of Access and Participation Plans since 2012/13. Two Reading SU sabbatical officers (Education Officer; Inclusion & Communities Officer) and the Student Voice & Representation Manager were members of the working group that authored this submission. They had sight of all relevant data and strategic documents and their views informed the setting of the objectives, targets and intervention strategies set out in this plan. Reading SU has also provided a separate student submission (Annex D).

Reading SU and the University worked in collaboration to implement a paid student advisory group to consult with us on the content of this APP. We assembled a diverse group of twenty students who self-identify as members of underrepresented groups. They participated in a mixture of in-person and online consultation workshops whose themes are summarised below.

Table 1 – APP student consultation overview

Workshop theme	Consultation topics
An introduction to Access and Participation	Indicators of risk Risks to equality of opportunity
Access strategy	Access risks Draft intervention strategy 2024-2028 Year 12 Scholars scheme Access Reading scheme
Success strategy	On-course risks Draft intervention strategy 2024-28 Financial assistance models
Progression strategy	Progression risks Draft intervention strategy 2024-28 Reading Internship Scheme Thrive Mentoring The Finalist Programme
Evaluation strategy	Inclusive and accessible evaluation Publishing evaluations

The students were supported to review and interpret performance data and strategic documents. As well as providing operational feedback on specific access activities, they helped shape the overall strategy behind the APP in a supportive and collaborative environment. Participants also shared inclusivity and learning preferences to inform the delivery of the consultations.

We asked students to rate the extent to which they felt impacted by individual risks. The results reflect the significance of financial hardship, an absence of family support regarding navigating university life and the risk of poor mental health to student experience at the time of writing.

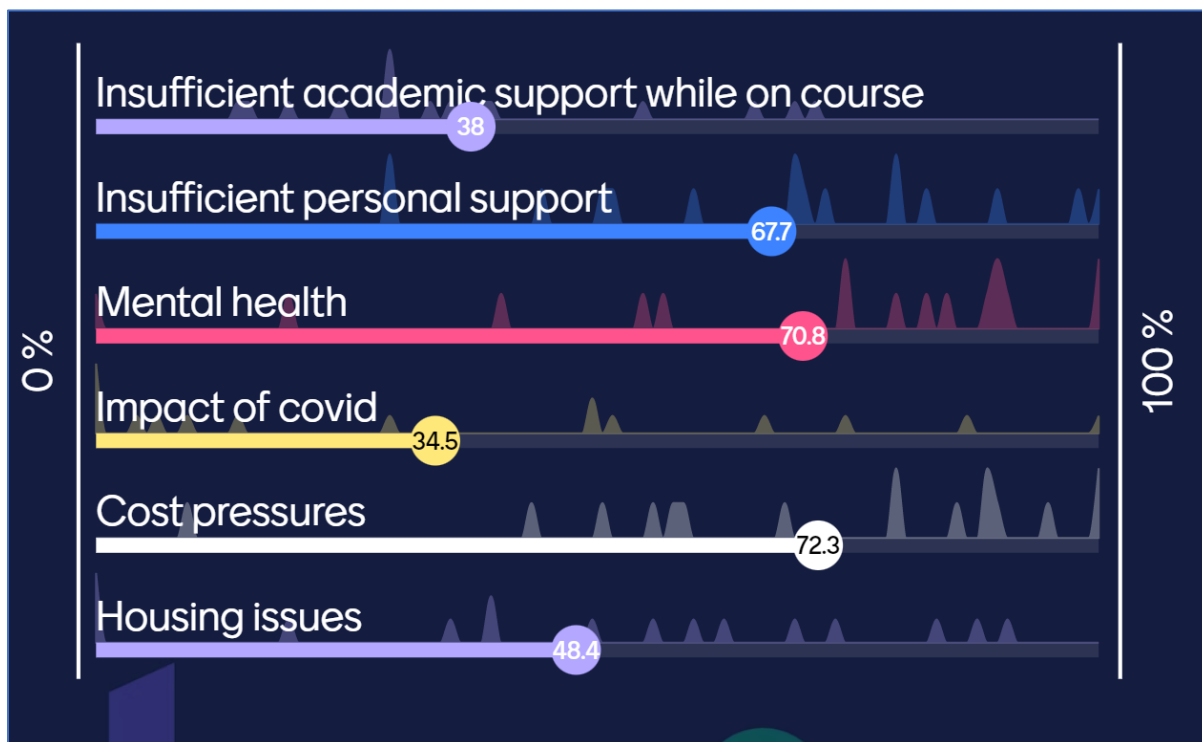


Figure 2 – Aggregate rating of ‘the extent to which underrepresented groups are impacted by specific risks to equality of opportunity’.

Table 2 - Summary of key feedback themes raised by the APP student advisory group

Workshop	Key feedback themes
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility needs for students in financial hardship Authentic experiences of university for prospective students Praise for activity-based targeting and eligibility criteria
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost pressures and prevalence of term-time working Difficulty navigating university with insufficient family support Importance of culturally competent welfare and support services
Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise for breadth and quality of careers support Accessibility needs for students in financial hardship Importance of representative experts and mentors
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference for focus groups as safe spaces to share authentic views Utilising students with lived experience in evaluation delivery Closing the feedback loop with ‘student-friendly’ evaluation reports

Representative student voice and student oversight of Access and Participation delivery, monitoring and evaluation is, we feel, an area of strength. Membership of the Access and Participation Committee (APC), which plans the overall APP strategy, includes the Reading SU Inclusion & Communities sabbatical officer to monitor and challenge the progress of activities. APCE receives evaluations of access activities, where student representatives can review access spending, scrutinise impact and raise concerns.

Student voice is embedded throughout the University of Reading's governance structure through representation on committees, boards, interest groups and communities of practice that contribute to the development and delivery of access activities. In any access and participation-related project, we actively seek representative student voice, and students sit on appropriate project and steering groups. We also use feedback surveys and paid focus groups.

In 2021, the University launched its Inclusion Consultants programme, calling specifically for students from underrepresented groups to consult across the University on the inclusivity of its practices. This diverse group of representatives was heavily involved in the APP consultation process.

Various other institution-wide student partnership initiatives are aimed at amplifying the student voice and engaging students as partners to design activities that directly or indirectly address risks to equality of opportunity. These include Student Ambassadors, the Student Panel, Student Partners, Programme Design Partners and the PLaNT (Partnerships in Learning and Teaching) Awards. Many schools also have their own informal initiatives. Many of the activities outlined in our intervention strategies relating to access, success and progression are delivered by or with student workers employed through the Campus Jobs scheme.

In 2021, the University launched its Inclusion Consultants programme, calling specifically for students from underrepresented groups to consult across the University on the inclusivity of its practices. This diverse group of representatives was heavily involved in the APP consultation process.

Evaluation of the plan

Our overarching approach to evaluation aligns with our Theory of Change models, devised to address key objectives with short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. Activities within our intervention strategies are evidence-based (see also Annex B) and conceived with clear indicators of success, providing a foundation on what and when to measure and evaluate to evidence impact.

Informed by our University's Evaluation and Impact Framework for T&L as well as TASO's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, the evaluation of the Plan will be overseen by an evaluation subgroup of the Access and Participation Committee (APC), comprising the Director of Research & Evaluation, Research & Evaluation Manager, Intervention Strategy Leads, selected APC members (including student representatives) and relevant experts from across the University to strengthen cross-disciplinary collaborations. The evaluation subgroup supports, receives and approves the evaluation plans of activities underpinning our intervention strategies. The subgroup meets termly to review and assess the evaluation progress of intervention strategies against the intended outcomes, overall

objectives, and its related targets, to share and discuss good practices and challenges. The subgroup will promote a continuous dialogue between the planning and delivery of evaluations, supporting the next iteration of access and participation activities as we reflect and refine our Theory of Change models accordingly.

Our overarching approach to evaluation aligns with our Theory of Change models, devised to address key objectives with short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. Activities within our intervention strategies are evidence-based (see also Annex B) and conceived with clear indicators of success, providing a foundation on what and when to measure and evaluate to evidence impact. We use the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool to guide our strategic approach to evaluation and will be used to review and reflect our new intervention strategies, informed by the OfS Standards of Evidence document. For greater transparency, we will trial the pre-registration of evaluation plans, setting out the methodologies and data required to evidence impact. We will explore platforms such as the Open Science Framework website and take guidance from the OfS on the depositing of evaluation plans and reports.

Internally, a suite of evaluation resources will be created for activity leads, alongside support and feedback from the evaluation subgroup on their evaluation plans and deliveries. Tailored evaluation training is currently under development, with flipped learning to draw on existing sector-wide resources as the foundation for collaborative capacity building on evaluation skills and knowledge. We strive for a cultural change on who can conduct evaluations and empower more colleagues to further understand and appreciate the merits of evaluation. To enable this, we have ringfenced a proportion of time for key activity leads to engage with evaluation.

An evaluation cycle will be adopted where different activities and outcomes are prioritised each year, with practitioner-led evaluations supplemented by an independent 'deep dive' evaluation, especially at the intervention strategy level. Evaluation outcomes, once quality assured and peer-reviewed by the subgroup, will be published on the University's access and participation student-facing website, with an aspiration that selected evaluations will be submitted to external platforms, contributing to the latest research evidence. Furthermore, the Student Outcomes Coordinator will produce summary blogs and videos of these evaluations, with students as the intended audience, to promote greater student input and engagement.

We will work closely with evaluation groups and organisations across the sector to ensure we learn and contribute to best practices and approaches to evaluation (e.g. Advance HE, NERUPI, TASO), including our cross-university Uniconnect partnership (Study Higher) to support and strengthen access and outreach evaluations. We are a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) Service, which provides higher education providers with data and intelligence to effectively target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activities. Through the HEAT national community, we collaborate on the development of knowledge, skills, tools, resources and methodologies required for robust evaluation. The HEAT membership therefore supports our delivery of robust evaluation that will produce high quality evidence of what works and does not work within our context. We aim to build longitudinal evaluation evidence and contribute to the sector's evidence base, regardless of the actual outcomes of the evaluation. We anticipate publishing evaluation reports across the activities within our intervention strategies at different points according to their respective timelines (see evaluation timetable within each intervention strategy and Annex E), with a high-level review and monitoring of evaluation progress and outputs every Spring to reflect on the previous academic year.

Provision of information to students

The University of Reading provides appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance to prospective applicants, prospective students, teachers and parents, as well as to key organisations such as the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), HESA for the Unistats data return and the Student Loans Company (SLC).

We will provide information on fees, loans, fee waivers, financial support, and pre-entry bursaries, along with eligibility criteria using mechanisms such as websites, prospectuses, applicant and student portals, mailing lists, and will also work hard to build professional relationships with teachers to ensure that they are able to readily provide local students with relevant information.

Our APP will be published in an accessible format on the University of Reading website. We also publish annual Diversity & Inclusion reports.¹³

¹³ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/diversity/annual-reports>

Annex A: Assessment of performance

Negative percentage point differences mean the gap favours the underrepresented group.

* Progression data is limited to a 2-year aggregate gap

** Grouped Q1&2 – Q3,4&5 comparison is not recommended for Access rates. Q1-Q5 comparisons offer more clarity.

***Data not available

****Insufficient student totals for statistical analysis.

The University of Reading gap higher than national average

Group	Metric	Access	Continuation	Completion	Attainment	Progression*
		The University of Reading 4-year aggregate gap* (All registered English higher education providers 4-year aggregate gap)				
Those living in areas of low higher education participation	TUNDRA Q1&2 – Q3,4&5	**	0.2pp (2.2pp)	-0.3pp (3.1pp)	-1.9pp (3.5pp)	0.2pp (3.9pp)
	TUNDRA Q1 – Q5	24.1pp (30.4pp)	-0.8pp (3.4pp)	-0.6pp (4.9pp)	-1.7pp (5.8pp)	-1.8pp (6.4pp)
	POLAR4 Q1&2 – Q3,4&5	**	0.6pp (2.6pp)	0.1pp (3.8pp)	0.7pp (5.2pp)	1.5pp (4.8pp)
	POLAR Q1 – Q5	31pp (18.1pp)	1.2pp (4.7pp)	-1.0pp (6.8pp)	1.1pp (9.5pp)	-1.7pp (8.4pp)
Those from lower household income or lower socioeconomic status groups	IMD2019 Q1&2 – Q3,4&5	**	4.1pp (5.3pp)	3.6pp (7.0pp)	9.1pp (11.3pp)	4.5pp (6.7pp)
	IMD2019 Q1 – Q5	25.1pp (-1.6pp)	4.7pp (7.9pp)	5.9pp (10.4pp)	10.5pp (6.9pp)	1.5pp (10.1p)
	Free School Meals	74.8pp (61pp)	4.2pp (5.0pp)	3.7pp (7.7pp)	5.5pp (11.6pp)	5.2pp (6.5pp)
	Students in receipt of the Reading Bursary	48.2pp (***)	2.7pp (***)	2.1pp (***)	1.9pp (***)	4.7pp (***)
Those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (ABMO) groups	Asian	47.9pp (51.7pp)	1.6pp (0.6pp)	0.8pp (1.4pp)	9.7pp (8.6pp)	1.8pp (4.4pp)
	Black	59.7pp (56.3pp)	5.9pp (5.4pp)	4.4pp (7.5pp)	16.9pp (20.2pp)	-2.5pp (4.3pp)
	Mixed		1.8pp	2.0pp	6.1pp	4.1pp

		60.2pp (61.4pp)	(1.7pp)	(3.1pp)	(3.8pp)	(0.3pp)
	Other	63.2pp (64.1pp)	3.2pp (3.4pp)	1.4pp (4.4pp)	9.8pp (11.1pp)	3.1pp (3.9pp)
	Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities (GRT)	****				
Mature students	21 and over	83.6pp (44.6%)	8.1pp (8.6pp)	8.4pp (9.7pp)	6.9pp (10.2pp)	-6.3pp (-1.4pp)
Those with disability status	Declared disability	62.4pp (66.6pp)	1.5pp (0.8pp)	3.7pp (2.2pp)	-1.1pp (1.0pp)	0.5pp (1.9pp)
Those facing multiple disadvantages	Associations Between Characteristics (ABCs) Q1-5	36.9pp (26.4pp)	10.8pp (13.8pp)	18.5pp (23.2pp)	***	6.8pp (21.3pp)
Care leavers		****				
People estranged from their families		****				
Refugees		****				
Children of military families (CMF)		****				

The assessment of performance looks at full-time, first-degree students, using the Office for Students (OfS) dataset for the analysis, which reveals the following headlines:

- Access gaps are greater than those seen across the sector for POLAR4, IMD and FSM (though FSM figures are not out of line with regional rates). The largest gap with comparison to the sector average is for IMD Q1 students, who are still significantly under-represented within our student body, though this (along with other groups), has improved over the last 4 years.
- There are on-course continuation gaps particularly affecting minority ethnic students and mature students. Internal analysis reveals large continuation gaps for Black students from part 1 to 2.
- There are persistent awarding gaps for socioeconomic markers, students from minority ethnic groups and mature students. The University of Reading mirrors the national picture in that the largest awarding gaps are between white and Black students.

- The University of Reading has a strong track record of producing positive progression outcomes for most underrepresented groups, however, there is a persistent progression gap for students from socio-economic disadvantaged groups.

The assessment below provides a more detailed analysis, examining each category of underrepresented group by lifecycle stage, taking statistical uncertainty into account. Our course portfolio provides very few part-time options for undergraduate students. This data does not allow for reliable statistical analysis of performance to small numbers.

1.1 Higher education participation, those from lower household income or lower socioeconomic status groups

Access

Table 1: Access rates of entrants from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds

While the gaps are higher than the sector average, entrance rates for Q1 groups are trending favourably across POLAR4, TUNDRA and IMD2019. This pattern has occurred amid an overall increase in the student population between 2017/18 (2,688) and 2021/22 (3,149). The progress reflects the ambition set out in the previous Access and Participation plan to close the gap between entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds by targeting the POLAR4 Q1-Q5 gap and for which we exceeded our targets. The increases for Q1 groups are mirrored by decreases in the Q5 percentiles, however, in each case, Q5 reductions have exceeded Q1 gains. When looking at intersectional characteristics, white students

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	5-year change
POLAR4Q5	39.6%	39.6%	39.3%	37.4%	36.7%	-2.9%
POLAR4Q1	6.5%	6.6%	6.8%	6.9%	8.3%	+1.8%
TUNDRAQ5	33.6%	34%	33.5%	31.8%	31.8%	-1.8%
TUNDRAQ1	7.6%	7.8%	8.9%	9%	8.7%	+1.1%
IMD2019Q5	35.2%	34.1%	32.8%	31.7%	30.9%	-4.3%
IMD2019Q1	5.5%	6.8%	7.2%	6.8%	8.2%	+2.7%
Eligible for Free School Meals	11.5%	11%	14.1%	13%	12.6%	+1.1%

from IMD Q1 are significantly under-represented, making up less than 4% of the overall white population at Reading. Entry rates for students eligible for free school meals has also shown similar progress in the five-year period though there has been a recent dip since 2019/20 - also reflected in the sector data. Benchmarked against the Southeast and London (our largest catchment area), in 2021/22 the proportion of students in Year 13

eligible for free school meals was 12.5% (data sourced from Gov.UK website), suggesting students from this group are not disadvantaged in accessing the University of Reading.

Access rates for males from disadvantaged backgrounds have increased across all measurements of participation and disadvantage (POLAR4 Q1, IMD2019 Q1, TUNDRA Q1, eligibility for free school meals).

Access rates for ABMO¹⁴ ethnicity students in all measurements of participation and socioeconomic disadvantage have increased across five years. The proportion of white students across these metrics has declined over five years.

Success: continuation and completion

The data shows no significant gaps in continuation or completion for low participation, as measured by POLAR4 or TUNDRA. The very small gaps that do appear for POLAR4 Q1 (or Q1&2 grouped) and TUNDRA Q1 (or Q1&2 grouped) contain high degrees of statistical uncertainty suggesting these gaps may be below zero.

While lower than the national average, there are persistent continuation and completion gaps for students from lower socioeconomic status groups, such as those eligible for free school meals or from IMDQ1, or IMDQ1&2. These gaps have fluctuated over five years but averaged 4.4pp.

Combining IMDQ1&2 status with other metrics associated with disadvantage in higher education reveals lower continuation and completion rates for students at these intersections. Continuation and completion gaps are higher for male students than female students within the IMDQ1&2 group. The ABMO ethnicity group within IMDQ1&2 are also less likely to continue or complete courses than white IMDQ1&2 students, particularly Black students. Continuation and completion rates for disabled students from IMDQ1&2 are lower than the no declared disability group. The lowest overall continuation and completion rates within the IMDQ1&2 group occur at the intersection between socioeconomic disadvantage and age. In 2020/21, 75% of IMDQ1&2 mature students continued their course, as compared to 95% of young students from quintiles 3,4&5.

Success: degree 'outcomes

Measurements of low participation suggest relatively positive outcomes for these groups. The TUNDRA Q1-Q5 average gap favours Q1 across four years and the POLAR4 Q1-Q5 average gap is close to zero. This is in contrast with the years preceding 2017/18 in which POLAR4 awarding gaps consistently increased. The POLAR4 group were the subject of previous targets and intervention. It is important to continue monitor these groups to ensure that these gaps do not worsen across the next phase of activity.

The socio-economic awarding gap as measured by IMD2019 has increased in the most recent year (9.7pp in 2021/22) and averaged 9.1pp across four years. This average is slightly below that of the sector. The awarding gap for free school meal eligible students is smaller (5.5pp across four years) but persistent.

¹⁴ ABMO refers to the 'aggregated measurement of minority ethnic students which contains Asian', 'Black', 'Mixed' and 'Other' groups.

Intersections of characteristics reveal that multiple layers of disadvantage further reduce the likelihood of good attainment. Gender analysis shows awarding gaps are generally wider for male students within IMDQ1&2 (four-year aggregate gap between male IMDQ1&2 and female IMDQ1&2 of 3.3pp). The number of mature IMDQ1&2 students, disabled IMDQ1&2 students and individual ethnicity IMDQ1&2 students at the final degree qualifier level is prohibitively small and produces wide ranging uncertainty when observed as an intersectional characteristic, however we recognise the potential for exacerbated challenges facing these groups. The ABMO ethnicity grouping combined with IMDQ1&2 shows reduced attainment for the ABMO group across both Q1&2 and Q3,4&5 suggesting that ethnicity is a significantly influential factor affecting attainment.

Awarding gaps closed significantly during years associated with changes to policies and forms of study arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

The University of Reading has a strong track record of providing careers support which results in positive progression outcomes for underrepresented groups. Four-year average aggregated gaps for measures of low participation, POLAR4 and TUNDRA, are well below the sector average showing gaps close to zero or relatively small for Q1 groups.

Students from lower socioeconomic status groups face the largest progression gaps using both IMD2019 Q1-Q5 (5.2pp 4-year average gap) and Free School Meals (5.2pp 4-year average gap) metrics. These gaps are both below the national average. The IMD2019Q1&2 - Q3,4&5 gap has increased over the three most recently recorded years (2.9pp in 2017/18; 5.4pp in 2019/20).

Looking at intersections, ethnicity, sex, disability nor age appear to add a significant bearing to IMD2019 or Free School Meal markers, suggesting socioeconomic disadvantage on its own should be the focus of activity within the intervention strategy for progression.

Time lags in progression data can make policy decisions more difficult. As our Access rates show an increasing proportion of IMDQ1 students enrolling at the University of Reading, our intervention strategy for supporting these students (IS5) will be of increasing importance.

1.2 Black, Asian, and minority ethnic students

Access

The University of Reading's record of recruiting increasing numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students to its programmes has continued. Across the last five years the proportion of white students has decreased by 11.8 percentage points, to a proportion of 62.5%, lower than the sector average. This figure is disproportionate to the general population. As described previously, entry rates measured by low participation and socio-economic disadvantage have increased for 'ABMO' ethnicities and decreased for white students.

Access rates for all non-white ethnic groups have increased across five years, however the largest five-year increase is in the proportion of Asian students (13.1% in 2017/18, rising to 19.6% in 2020/21). This is also significantly (positive) gap when compared to the national population of Asian students within Higher Education (10.3%). Access for Black students is slightly below the national average when looking at the total population, but for 18-year-olds access rates at the University of Reading are slightly higher than the sector average (with the gap between white and black 18yos reducing from 61% in 2018/19 to 55% in 21/20, and from 64.1% to 55.4% across all entrants).

Success: continuation and completion

Aggregate continuation gaps for most ethnic groupings within the ABMO category are slightly higher than the national average. By contrast, aggregate completion gaps across four years for minority ethnic students are persistent but lower than the national average.

The highest rates of non-continuation and non-completion across years appear for Black students (the four-year aggregate continuation gap for Black students is 5.9pp). Continuation and completion gaps for Black students have fluctuated but consistently remained among the lowest compared to other ethnic groups. Analysis of internal data reveals that continuation gaps across all ethnic groups are most prevalent between foundation courses and year one, and between first and second year. It also reveals that continuation gaps vary considerably across the differing contexts of schools and departments, in terms of their progression routes and student demographics.

Success: degree outcomes

The University of Reading ethnicity degree awarding gap has been a longstanding focus of activity but the ABMO-white ethnicity awarding gap persists and has increased in the most recent year (13.9pp in 2021/22 and a 10.4pp four-year aggregated gap). This positions the ethnicity awarding gap as the biggest headline performance gap at the University of Reading. The Asian-white and Mixed-white aggregate awarding gaps are slightly higher than the national average. The overall ABMO-white gap is largely driven by Black final degree qualifiers, for whom the aggregate gap is slightly smaller than the national average, but nonetheless increased significantly in 2021/22 to 28.3pp. This mirrors the sector level performance in which outcomes for Blacks students are typically the lowest. There are known barriers to Black and ABMO attainment identified in sector-level research and internally at the University of Reading. We have developed a strong foundation of quantitative and qualitative evidence to support activity aimed at reducing the Black-white awarding gap.

Intersectional analysis reveals ethnicity to be the most indicative characteristic in relation to reduced outcomes. Attainment is virtually equivalent for ABMO students with and without disability status, free school meal status or POLAR4 Q1&2 ranking. Attainment is lower for ABMO students in IMD2019 Q1&2 than IMD2019 Q3,4&5 by a four-year average of 7pp. Gender analysis reveals an 11pp awarding gap between ABMO males and ABMO females. The comparison group is small, resulting in high degrees of uncertainty, however the data suggests a possible worsening of the gap when combining mature characteristic with the ABMO identifier.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

Progression rates for minority ethnic groups are a strong area for the University of Reading. The four-year aggregated average gap for 'mixed' ethnicity students is above the national average but the total number of students is very small, resulting in fluctuations in the data and a high degree of uncertainty. A reverse gap and a small gap of 0.5pp was observed for ABMO students in two of the previous three recorded years. Black students report lower outcomes while on course but are showing a reverse gap for progression.

1.3 Mature students

Access

The access gap between mature and young students significantly exceeds that of the national average due to the nature of our programme offering. However, the proportion of mature students entering the University of Reading has increased across five years and remains relatively stable.

Mature students are recruited in variable proportions across the institution. In 2021/22, 43.3% of students who enrolled to the Institute of Education were mature.

Success: continuation and completion

There are persistent continuation and completion gaps for mature students which are slightly below the national average. The continuation gap remained consistent across five years with little variation around an average gap of 8.1pp. These gaps are understood to be caused by burdens on students' time relating to more extensive personal commitments than the average student. This poses a risk of insufficient academic support. While the number of mature students studying at the University of Reading is very small it is important to recognise this group within our intervention strategy for reducing continuation gaps to ensure that our actions benefit older students as well as younger ones.

Success: degree outcomes

Four-year aggregate gaps show awarding gaps for mature students that are roughly consistent with the national average (8.1pp). The barriers to continuation and completion described previously are considered to also impact mature students at the degree attainment level and mature students will be considered as part of work to reduce awarding gaps.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

Progression rates for mature students are a very strong area for the University of Reading. The four-year average gap for this group was reversed in favour of mature students by 6.3pp.

1.4 Students with a declared disability

Access

The proportion of students with a declared disability has increased by 2.9% across five years. Within this overall group, the proportion of students declaring mental health conditions has nearly doubled (2% in 2017/18 rising to 3.9% in 2021/22), with most of this increase taking place across the last two years. The largest proportion of students within the declared disability category has been 'multiple or other impairments' for the last five years.

Success: continuation and completion

Persistent continuation and completion gaps have been identified for disabled students (a 1.5pp four-year aggregated continuation gap and 3.7pp aggregated completion gap). Disaggregating the cohort of students with a declared disability reveals uneven performance across the different types of disability in which students with a mental health condition have continued in among the lowest rates across four years (3.2pp four-year aggregated continuation gap).

Success: degree outcomes

Disabled students have been observed to consistently achieve positive outcomes at the University of Reading. The four-year aggregate awarding gap for disabled students is reversed (meaning, students with a declared disability are outperforming their peers at final degree level, overall). This 'reverse gap' has held across the three most recent of the previous five years. All individual recorded disability types show stronger four-year averages than the 'no disability reported' comparison group, with the exception of 'social or communication impairments', a small population for whom the gaps show significant levels of statistical uncertainty. This gap will be monitored to ensure disabled students continue to receive adequate support resulting in strong outcomes.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

Progression rates for disabled students are subject to large fluctuations. The four-year average progression gap for this group was 0.5pp with a large degree of uncertainty above and below zero.

1.4 Underrepresented communities with small student totals (GRT, care leavers, estranged, refugees, children of military families)

The total number of care leavers, students estranged from their parents, students from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) communities, refugee or asylum-seeking students and children of military families represent a small fraction of the student population, which prohibits reliable statistical analysis for these groups. However, we recognise the likelihood of risks to equality of opportunity for these groups.

The University of Reading offer tailored support for care experienced students including a £1,000 care leaver bursary¹⁵. The University of Reading became a 'University of

¹⁵ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/support/care-experienced>

Sanctuary' in June 2023 due to its extensive range of support for sanctuary seekers, including scholarships.¹⁶

¹⁶ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/news/2023/University-News/Community/University-of-Sanctuary-award-for-Reading>

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

Access

Increasing access to Higher Education (HE) is a complex and multifaceted issue. Meta-analysis of academic research, access data, and direct consultation with disadvantaged/underrepresented students reveals a number of key factors that underpin access to HE:

- Social and Academic capital (awareness of HE)
- Habitus (Familiarity with HE and 'fitting in')
- Skills capital (problem-solving/decision-making/planning/communication)
- Intellectual capital (academic skills – raising attainment, and subject/HE knowledge)

(Adapted from the NERUPI Framework)

Academic research, project case studies¹⁷ (e.g., The Access Project), and real-world data (HEAT/HESA) show that intensive, longitudinal interventions have the greatest impact on increasing access (both in terms of level 5 impact data – HEAT figures, and in terms of Level 3 & 4 intermediate outcomes – learning and behaviour change)¹⁸.

There are also a number of specific activities which, as part of wider interventions, display particular significant impacts and outcomes. For example:

- Attainment raising activity with middle attainers
- Specifically, academic tuition/mentoring
- Activities developing social and cultural capital and, more generally, broadening horizons
- Longitudinal, progressive IAG that is targeted and age/key stage relevant

It is important that this not only focuses on KS5 attainment, as prior performance and experiences in school have a measurable impact further down the pipeline¹⁹. Gorard et al found²⁰ Poor achievement in secondary school accounted for the majority of variation in attendance at high status institutions, although low attainment could be linked to the perception of barriers to HE progression and subsequent lack of engagement, indicating that the causal process is complex.²¹ Harris (Citation2010) demonstrated that less-advantaged pupils were less likely to choose to study subjects required by the most selective universities in the phase prior to entering HE and were less likely to perform well in these subjects.

¹⁷ https://www.theaccessproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/15300-The-Access-Project-Impact-Report_10.pdf

¹⁸ <https://taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/relationship-outreach-attainment-progression.pdf>

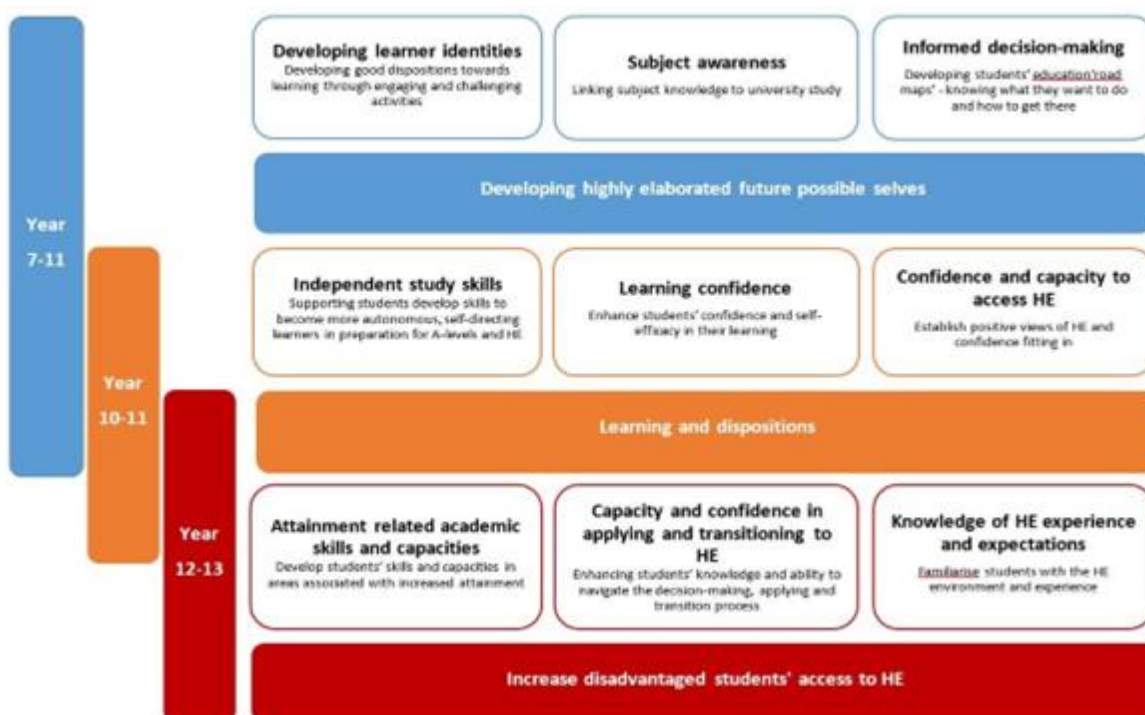
¹⁹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1404558>

²⁰ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02660830.1999.11661400>

²¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1404558>

The best predictor of success in HE for traditional entry remains prior attainment, based on Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment at offer stage, and KS5 at acceptance stage (DfE [Citation2013](#); Gill and Benton [Citation2015](#))

Taking all the above into account, our two detailed access-related interventions target learners at Key Stage 3/ 4 (IS1) and KS5 (IS2) to provide a cohesive longitudinal framework of activity, supporting both skills related to attainment to enable access to HE, and also the Information Guidance and Perceptions required by young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure this attainment is matched by information and support to enable a successful progression into, and throughout Higher Education to their chosen careers.



Rationale for target groups within Access Strategies IS 1 and IS2

Within the University of Reading, students from IMD Q1 are significantly under-represented both against their peers in other quintiles and in comparison, to the HE sector. They apply in disproportionately lower numbers than students in other quintiles, are more likely to apply to Reading without the required pre-attainment (e.g., subject profile or GCSE requirement) and are less likely to choose or enrol at the University of Reading when in receipt of an offer. As such, these are a target group across both our access-related interventions. A number of our specific activities within these (e.g., Access Reading, Preparing for University and our Year 12 Scholars programmes in IS2) are also designed to support skills required to succeed once in HE.

Students eligible for receipt of free school meals are proportionately represented within the University of Reading population when compared to data regarding the numbers in our catchment region in the year groups ready for university entry. (In 2020/21 the proportion of students in Year 13 eligible for free school meals was 11.7% (data sourced from

Gov.UK website), against our entrant figures the following year of 12.6%. We did however, in line with the sector, see a recent dip in the proportion of students eligible for FSM in our entrants in 21/22, and data shows (source gov.uk website) that that progression to KS5 necessary to enable students to access HE is significantly lower for students in receipt of FSM than for those not, nationally and within our main recruitment regions of the South East and London. As such, they are a priority group within our attainment focussed intervention - IS1.

When looking at ethnicity, Reading performs above the sector average for all non-white ethnicities in terms of 18 yo entrants. However, we are slightly below the sector average in terms of black students entering the University of Reading when taken across all age groups, as shown on the Access Data dashboard, and internal data suggests that, alongside students from IMD Q1, black students are more likely to apply without the required pre-attainment than students of other ethnicities. It is also true that black students are more likely to have taken non-A level qualifications and are at risk nationally in regard to having the Knowledge and Skills and access to Information and Guidance. We have therefore included black students as a key target audience for IS1, relating to attainment, and although do not have a target in relation to Black students for IS2, in line with feedback from our student consultation, will include Black students as part of our eligibility criteria on our Yr 12 Scholars and Preparing for University programmes particularly mapped to subject areas where we see particular challenges in pre-entry attainment, and for on course progression and attainment.

POLAR / TUNDRA – over the duration of the previous plan, students in POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 were a priority group and the University of Reading had targets in relation to these. We have made progress in this area, exceeding the targets set in our previous plan, though we are still below the sector average for both POLAR and TUNDRA measures. As such, previous work and targeting of effort in these areas will continue as part of our wider access work, alongside the increased support for students in other groups identified in our intervention strategies. To date, we have relied most heavily on POLAR as a postcode measure but intend to bring in TUNDRA measures where we have the data to support future targeting of this wider provision.

Other underrepresented groups (e.g., care experienced children, asylum seekers, those with disabilities) are also groups we have historically prioritised, particularly on intensive activities. We already have in place a comprehensive offering for Care Experienced students <https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/support/care-experienced> and will continue to offer this support and ensure access on our intensive programmes to students from this and other smaller but at risk demographic groups.

Internal Evidence base for IS1:

The University of Reading already has a number of attainment–raising activities, and sessions embedded in other programmes supporting wider access aspirations. Against this backdrop we are planning a more cohesive suite of attainment –raising activity that is robustly evaluated and co-designed where possible with partner schools.

- Our Year 10 Scholars programme has a ToC and evaluation measures already in place - in 2021/22 we saw an increase in a number of key competencies and study skills that we taught on the programme to support with students' studies and academic attainment. e.g., a significant increase (+50%) in students' knowledge of

“what a good research question is”, and a 23% rise in knowledge of “what plagiarism is” which are two of the key study skills sessions we cover on the programme. This programme overall also supports our longer term target in ensuring a more diverse and representative student body as well as a pipeline through to our Year 12 Scholars Programme.

- Coachbright tutoring commenced in the 22/23 cycle, early data has shown that after 10 sessions with **one** of our target schools, from pre-programme measures to post-programme measures, there was a 30.4% increase in pupil confidence - From pre-programme measures to post-programme measures, there was a 19.6% increase in pupil resilience - From pre-programme measures to post-programme measures, there was a 16.7% increase in pupil independence (metacognition).
- Attainment raising measures for study skills and revision sessions –limited internal data to date, interventions are largely based on literature.
- Teacher CPD – Our previous provision for teaching staff was focussed on NQT teachers – however, the term NQT has been replaced by the term Early Career Teacher and during this two-year period Early Career Teachers engage with a programme of professional development designed to help them develop their practice, knowledge and working habits. Feedback has been that during this two-year period the professional development requirements on ECTs are such that they have little remaining capacity to engage in further development and as they are engaging in this robust programme of CPD there is much less value/perceived benefit to engaging with the University of Reading NQT award. As such, the programme is being redeveloped to enable independent uptake by teachers at any stage of their career, focussing on teachers at all levels, including middle and senior leaders to be attractive to all. The largest benefit of this being the potential for a greater impact on whole-school culture and not just in the individual classrooms of NQTs, and with the use of Educator hubs, to share this best practise across schools.

Internal Evidence base for IS2:

For some of our more intensive established activity we have several years of data in form of both self-reported perceptions and HEAT tracked information. Some of our newer activity is in the early stages of data collection and impact but will be monitored and adapted throughout the lifetime of the plan as required.

- Year 12 scholars – currently engages 500 participants annually, all of which have at least one target group indicator. In line with our new proposed target for access, we have adjusted the eligibility and targeting criteria to better aid support for students in IMD Q1 on this programme.
 - The young people historically targeted by the scheme are statistically least likely to progress to higher education. While it has not been possible to create a bespoke benchmark to measure the programme success in terms of HE progression due to the variety of criteria applied, an average of 81% progression over the years is significantly greater than the progression seen nationally for any of the individual target groups to date.
 - Progression to The University of Reading has remained at 5-7% over the last 10 years regardless of cohort size. Our intention is to focus on changes to increase the overall progression to The University of Reading and HE generally rather than growing the cohort size.

- Participants speak positively about their experiences and find the programme useful. Those who complete the programme self-report higher levels of confidence and readiness to enter HE and are more likely to see themselves as a university student in the future.
- Preparing for University – in the pilot year with a cohort of 50, 12 progressed to the University of Reading and reported higher level of confidence and readiness to enter HE. We continue to refine and engage with the Brilliant Club on the programme and will subsequently track students on course.
- Access Reading – engaged 28 students in the pilot year- all of whom successfully enrolled at Reading. Using feedback from student Inclusion consultants to further develop the programmes, for 2022 we have 120 applicants from intensive programmes (Reading Scholars / Prep for Uni) and wider applicants from IMD Q1 signed up.
- Focussed work with target schools and colleges. Since the addition of further resource to work with disadvantaged students in FE colleges and target schools, we have seen an increase in applications to Reading from students within these. From 2020/21 to 2022/23 – a 14% increase for FE colleges and a 16% increase across target schools. We are aware that not all of the applications have come directly from students in IMD Q1 but continue to work with schools with high proportions of these students within their cohorts to enable this.

Other activity aligned to objectives but outside the specific Intervention Strategies

KS3 and KS4 subject and IAG activity

Within our broader KS3 and KS4 provision, we have a range of subject (over 90) and IAG sessions adapted for each age group. These are made available to partner and other local schools either as standalone activities, or as part of an ongoing programme of engagement. More recently, we have been working to develop Year 7-9 longitudinal activity with a number of partner schools, with 5 local schools currently working with us in this sustained fashion. This activity is designed to raise awareness of the range of subjects and options available at HE, engage students in their learning, and provide information and guidance to support decision making so students can achieve their education or career goals, linking to Risk 1,2 and 3. Where schools are able to identify smaller groups of learner to engage in these activities, we are working to ensure these are students in receipt of FSM or from low socio-economic groups, but typically we are engaging whole class groups. As such the activity feeds into but is not included within our attainment intervention strategy.

Health-related subject sessions for KS3, 4 and 5

As part of a wider outreach project, launched with Health Education England and the Local Education Partnership in 2018, we have a comprehensive suite of health-related outreach for schools with high proportions of disadvantaged students in the local Berkshire area. This involves three main strands of activity – curriculum linked sessions to support learning in health and science-related subjects, careers awareness, and sessions covering aspects on own personal health – e.g., teen pregnancy, nutrition etc. It also includes a work experience week for Yr 10 and 12 students in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Hospital, supporting skills development and subject awareness and providing valuable

hands-on experience for students who may otherwise not have the social capital to facilitate this.

The curriculum linked sessions have been developed with schools to deliver key parts of a variety of curricula, including GCSE Biology / Science, BTEC in Health and Social care and the T level in Healthcare. This activity is aligned to both our attainment and access targets in terms of overall objectives and our prioritisation criteria for schools, and mitigates Risks 1 and 2. The overall aims however are much broader than those specifically within our Intervention strategies.

KS5 Subject activity

We offer subject tasters across our course portfolio, both on campus and virtually as webinars or other interactive digital sessions. These are designed to address Risk 2 and Risk 3, giving participants information about subject areas, and requirements and providing an opportunity to experience the subject in an HE setting. In some cases, we also have taster days directly linked to the application process for a course e.g., Art Portfolio workshops, Accounting and Finance interview skills prep. For all sessions, although not targeted exclusively at under-represented groups, we give priority to students from target backgrounds, and cover travel costs for students attending on campus events.

Students in Schools Volunteering Scheme

Our volunteering programme provides in classroom support for pupils in local primary and secondary schools. The support is dependent on the requirements of the school, but typically is aligned to core skill of reading or maths, and increasingly we have seen support requested for pupils with English as an additional language, including refugees and asylum seekers. Driven by the schools needs year on year and their ability to host a volunteer, this is not directly part of our attainment raising intervention strategy, but for those particularly vulnerable groups it is a valuable piece of support and often a critical intervention to enabling their engagement in school life.

Success

On-course gaps are 'wicked' problems with a degree of inherent complexity that makes causal factors difficult to define and solve. Despite this, the University is committed to intervening based on a growing and instructive evidence base. This evidence base comprises a range of external and internal sources of quantitative and qualitative data²², and continues to grow as awarding gaps are investigated on an ongoing basis. For example, the University is currently developing its ability to analyse the impact of commuter status on awarding gaps. This is a solution-focused approach that balances the limitations of the evidence with the imperative to act. The activities outlined in this APP and their associated evaluation plans are a further means to strategically allocate our resources. This is particularly the case for activity 17 (local, school-level intervention design) which, over time, will help us identify underlying causes by testing assumptions

²² Including but not limited to: academic publications, regular quantitative analysis of institution, school, department, and modular awarding gaps, in-depth quantitative analysis based on historical data, qualitative data from focus group, workshops and surveys, the Race Equality Review, feedback from university staff, consultations with student Inclusion Consultants, feedback from Reading Students' Union sabbatical officers and networks and partnership activities on schemes such as the Student Partners and the Access and Participation Student Advisory Group.

and factors theorised to cause awarding gaps. The causal framework on which we base our understanding of awarding gaps is Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015).²³

The intervention strategies for continuation and awarding gaps are considered of a piece and are covered together in this evidence base. Research shows that awarding gaps widen at each progressive stage of education.²⁴ Supporting students early in their higher education experience to continue and complete their undergraduate degrees is considered the foundation for good outcomes at final degree outcome stage. Implementation of the intervention strategy will be overseen by the Outcomes team located within Student Services.

Continuation rates have historically been an area of strength for the University of Reading. Continuation gaps have increased in recent years and are pronounced for Black students. A relatively large awarding gap is persistent for mature students. Continuation gaps are largest from year one to year two (see annex A). This is particularly the case for Black students. While continuation gaps have been identified for students with a declared disability, which will continue to be monitored, they are relatively small across four years. Our evidence on the causes and trends behind attrition rates for underrepresented groups will be improved during the first year of this APP, to develop a basis for further action (see IS activity 11). Changes to assessment policy and student experience brought about by the pandemic are thought to have caused fluctuations in continuation rates but a reliable evidence base for this assertion is yet to be developed.

The core tenet of our approach to reducing continuation and awarding gaps is to provide bespoke solutions that recognise the differing experiences and needs of students. This approach is endorsed by Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO).²⁵ Disaggregating top-level demographic and performance data reveals an uneven distribution of target students and on-course gaps which vary in size, between subjects.²⁶ Concentrating our efforts on those schools with the most target students and the highest on-course gaps is the most effective allocation of resources, allows us to tailor interventions (or combinations of interventions) to specific barriers, and will theoretically have the greatest proportional impact on the targets for on-course gaps.

The Awarding Gap Steering Group (activity 16) and targeted co-production of interventions in priority schools (activity 17) are examples of this de-centralised approach in practice. The Awarding Gap Steering Group is a formal committee comprised of Awarding Gap Representatives (appointees from academic schools with responsibility for tackling awarding gaps locally), colleagues with lived experience of barriers faced by underrepresented students, and student representatives. The purpose of the group is to inform, empower and enable schools so they may disseminate information and intervene

²³ <https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/publications/causes-of-differences-in-student-outcomes-hefce>

²⁴ https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Annual_Reports/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018.pdf

²⁵ <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/more-tailored-approaches-are-needed-to-tackle-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap/>; <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Approaches-to-addressing-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf>

²⁶ The four-year average The University of Reading ethnicity awarding gap ranged from 0.8pp to 28.8pp between academic schools. In 2021/22, 58.4% of all ABMO students belonged to four of fifteen schools. This suggests a need for contextual solutions and targeted working in priority subjects. See Annex A for full data analysis.

at the school level. Activity 17 builds on this by providing additional resource and support to those schools with the greatest proportion of target students and/or the largest on-course gaps. In the first year of this Access and Participation Plan the two schools identified for participation in this collaborative model are the School of Pharmacy and the School of Law (see IS activities 14 and 17) and. Bespoke interventions will be co-designed by the respective Awarding Gap Representatives, the Outcomes team, and current underrepresented students (Student Outcomes Coordinator; Inclusion Consultants) and academic colleagues. An area of strength for the University of Reading is involving underrepresented students as partners and co-designers in awarding gap activity to prevent top-down solutions that do not meet relevant needs. Mechanisms to achieve this are detailed further in the 'Student Consultation' section of this APP.

Our de-centralised approach is complemented by institution-level change aimed at addressing structural and systemic barriers considered to negatively impact attainment outcomes for underrepresented groups. The university's stance on embedding inclusive practice in teaching and learning is activated at a number of levels. The Portfolio Review Pathway (PRP) (activity 10) is a large-scale, strategic project of university-wide portfolio restructuring, coming into effect from 2024/5. It has been designed and delivered with inclusivity and improvements to student experience in mind and is expected to reduce continuation gaps through embedding predictable and balanced assessment loads, enhanced formative assessment and feedback opportunities, diversified assessment types and simplified progression rules. Further, teaching staff have been encouraged to co-design teaching, learning and assessment on their courses with students. Fifty-eight students worked in partnership on PRP activities in academic departments, which include Biological Sciences, Meteorology, Art, Architecture, Institute of Education, Languages & Cultures, Chemistry and Clinical Language Sciences. The Portfolio Review Pathway is undergirded by the Curriculum Framework, which is student-centred and inclusive by design and provides a toolkit and resources for ensuring inclusivity. In January 2023, a teaching and learning web resource for staff was also launched; it brings together a wide range of the University of Reading-hosted inclusivity and accessibility resources.²⁷ In May 2023, a university-wide communications campaign called 'Look Again' was launched to improve the accessibility of digital resources inclusive of teaching and learning materials.²⁸

One component of our inclusive curriculum design is the Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit resource designed to enable the process of diversifying and decolonising our curricula (activity 18).²⁹ This resource was produced by a working group with diverse membership across our learning community with input from student Inclusion Consultants and RSU sabbatical officers. Evidence of the impact of curriculum reform on ethnicity awarding gaps is limited³⁰ but we know this form of representation is desired by our students and we seek to contribute to sector understanding by initially reporting on staff capability to implement this type of curriculum reform and aspiring to reporting on the impact of the activity itself, in the longer term.

²⁷ <https://sitesd.reading.ac.uk/inclusive-teaching-and-learning/>

²⁸ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/digital-accessibility/resources>

²⁹ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/diversity/-/media/project/functions/diversity/documents/resources-to-decolonise-curriculum.pdf?la=en&hash=ECBACCB2F702F549243CAFDABC64F0A3>

³⁰ <https://taso.org.uk/news-item/new-research-partnership-impact-of-he-curriculum-reform-on-race-equality>

Tailored and effective academic support is essential for addressing both continuation and awarding gaps. On-course gaps for ABMO students, mature students and IMDQ1/FSM eligible students are suggestive of a risk of insufficient academic support for these groups. The significant and widespread curriculum reform detailed above is supported by a foundation of accessible support. Our strong commitment to providing robust academic support is underpinned by the Academic Tutor System based on proactive relationship building and structured academic conversations with students. Tutors are supported by the AT toolkit, training, and guidance materials. Crucially, tutors can now draw on a suite of attendance, engagement, and attainment management tools to tailor support to students at risk of discontinuation. Disengagement prompts contact with students as part of this process. The Student Progress Dashboard provides students and tutors with visual presentations of assessment results and provides a contextual basis for impactful tutorship.

Students are encouraged to complete our online course, Study Smart, before they enrol. Engagement is high, with around 60% of incoming students enrolling. Underrepresented students participate in comparable numbers. For example, 2021/22 students with a declared disability had an enrolment rate of 61.1% and those from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 had an enrolment rate of 59.1%. In our Welcome survey in 2021, 67% of respondents said the course was moderately to extremely helpful. Blackboard Ally provides students with accessible formats to view teaching materials.

Our work to support transitions into Higher Education for underrepresented groups is undergoing piloted enhancements. In addition to pre-arrival measures such as the STaR mentoring scheme, online courses, Study Smart, disability assessments and an Early Start Programme students on the autistic spectrum, we aim to provide tailored navigational information to underrepresented groups through the medium of Welcome Week social events. These events are well-attended and provide an opportunity for students to receive appropriate signposting and guidance. We will support students to integrate more fully through the introduction 'Guides to the University of Reading' for specific groups (such as first-generation students, commuter students, Black students and mature students) which are written by current students from similar backgrounds or in similar circumstances. These guides are expected to enable support-seeking behaviour and the overcoming of challenges typical to underrepresented groups. For mature students, we will pilot a new component of peer support as a targeted offshoot of the STaR mentoring scheme (see activity 19 for full details of this transition package).

We recognise the impact that personal and welfare issues can have on retention and awards and the emphasis placed on welfare support by the student consultation group. There has been an increase in the number of students seeking access to welfare support and declaring mental health conditions at the University of Reading. The Student Wellbeing Service includes four distinct teams, Welfare (one to one support), Counselling & Wellbeing (mental health support), the Disability Advisory Service (support for disabled students) and LifeTools programme (building wellbeing skills among students). LifeTools now employs 'Student Success Champions', who provide a student perspective to make the content relevant to students and increase its reach through peer-to-peer promotion; we recruit representative students to this role. The university has recently prepared a submission to Student Minds' Mental Health Charter. A set of recommendations for inclusive practice in mental health support will arise from this process and new related

activities may be detailed in future variations of the APP. The introduction of a 24-hour assistance helpline to enable support for students who cannot or do not wish to seek face-to-face help is being explored and may be detailed further in a subsequent variation of the APP.

IS3 features two activities that represent welfare support linked specifically to ABMO student experience and wellbeing. Recent student voice schemes designed to platform Black and minority ethnic students to raise issues - 'Accommodation Inclusivity Advisors' and 'Inclusion Consultants' - highlighted justifiable reservations that minority ethnic students may hold with regards to seeking support from university services. Report & Support (activity 12) is a digital platform which enables and encourages members of the learning community to report incidents of harassment and discrimination and includes an anonymous reporting option, which is favoured by current ABMO students. Tackling the culture of nondisclosure at the University of Reading will enable us to create safer campus environments in which ABMO students can better access a sense of personal safety and belonging. It is expected to enhance our awareness of problematic incidents by increasing the number of reports received, enabling the effective planning and resourcing of support services and interventions. Current Black students through the Accommodation Inclusivity Advisor scheme also availed the University of Reading of recommendations for enhancing Black student inclusion in accommodation (such as increased visibility of representative hall wardens) based on community issues which may be linked to continuation, such as a lack of belonging. Many of these recommendations will be delivered by the revised Residential Welfare, Discipline and Support Team (activity 13). IMDQ1 and FSM eligible students may be especially vulnerable to financial stress which we aim to ease through financial assistance (activity 19) and money management training (activity 20).

Finance is typically a major concern for students but is especially so amid rises in the cost of living. It is frequently a factor in decisions around whether to leave university. Additional demands on students' time caused by term-time working and the impact of financial anxiety are understood to negatively impact degree attainment. The university currently deploys over three million pounds in financial support to students. Activity 19 refers to adjustments to our financial assistance model with the objective of enabling more funding for on-course support to help alleviate specific cost pressures for our target groups. Types of hidden cost pressures include those associated with course-related placements, study visits / fieldwork, purchase of specialist clothing or equipment, or specialist printing costs. We are in the process of determining whether this can be administered as a single scheme, or if we will need to develop them as separate support packages.

Evaluation of our financial support (using the Financial Support Toolkit) provides strong evidence of the positive impact that financial assistance has on retention and success.

Through partnership with Blackbullion our applicants and students receive financial awareness training to support them with financial management skills (activity 20).

From 2024/25 onwards the following financial support will be provided:

The Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS): The Reading Bursary consists of £1,100 for every year that the student remains eligible and is non-repayable support. A new UK domiciled student starting in 2024/25 will need to meet both of the following criteria:

- Be registered on a full-time undergraduate programme with an assessed household income of up to £27,000 that is confirmed by their Student Finance Authority in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland entering in 2024/25 for year 1 of study, and;
- Have a home address recorded on their RISIS student record that falls within an area of low participation of young people progressing into higher education (defined as POLAR4 or TUNDRA quintile 1 or 2) or be considered to be from an area of general disadvantage according to the governments Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2.

Care Experienced, Foyer students and Estranged students Bursary: Eligible students receive a cash bursary of £1,000 for each year of study. To be eligible for this bursary, a student will need to be domiciled in the UK, be registered on a full-time undergraduate programme, be under the age of 25 on the 1st August before commencing their studies at the University and meet one of the following criteria:

- Have come to the University from Foyer accommodation for homeless young people, or;
- Has experienced an irrevocable breakdown in their relationship with either of their biological parents for a significant period of time of 12 months or more, or;
- Has spent time in the care of their local authority/had experience of the care system.

Pre-entry Travel Bursary: Outreach schemes are supplemented by a maximum award of £300 to cover the travel cost of underrepresented students attending Access events. This bursary is available to UK domiciled undergraduate applicants who have been invited to an offer holder's Visit Day or Interview by the academic department to which they have applied and who live within an area of low participation of young people progressing into higher education (defined as POLAR4 or TUNDRA quintile 1 or 2) or be considered to be from an area of general disadvantage according to the governments Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2 or have Care Leaver status.

Pre-application Bursary: Covers the cost of travelling to on-campus events of up to £500 for disabled applicants. This bursary is available to disabled applicants requiring a visit to the University prior to accepting an offer to ensure their support needs can be fully met.

Work and Study Placement bursary: Covers expenses such as travel, accommodation and/or childcare. This bursary is for UK domiciled undergraduate students from households with assessed annual incomes of less than £45k who may apply to receive a bursary of between £200 and £1,000 dependant on the cost of undertaking the placement.

Part 2 and Part 3 MPharm students who are undertaking mandatory placements throughout the academic year will automatically receive an award based on the following criteria:

- Assessed household income of less than £25,000: £300
- Assessed household income of between £25,000 - £45,000: £200

Digital Support Funds: There are limited grants of £400 per student, designed to provide financial support towards internet connectivity, specialist software as well as IT related study equipment costs.

To apply for the Digital Support Fund, a student must:

- Be a first year or a returning student on any undergraduate course; and
- Be a permanent resident of the UK; and
- Live in an area with low participation in Higher Education (defined as Polar4 or TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2) or considered to be from an area of general disadvantage according to the governments Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2; and
- Be assessed by your Student Finance Authority as eligible for financial support and have an assessed household taxable income of below £27,000.

Student Support Funds: Awards can be made up to £3,000 for students in financial hardship.

Diagnostic Testing: The University provides financial support towards the costs of diagnostic tests for students in receipt of the Reading bursary and from households with assessed household incomes of less than £27k who have been recommended by the Disability Advisory Service for Dyslexia or Asperger's diagnostic testing to confirm disability.

Sanctuary Scholarships: Four bursary payments of £5,000 each year of study for new applicants to undergraduate courses with refugee, humanitarian protection status, or have a right to remain in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Ukraine Sponsorship (Homes for Ukraine) scheme.

Commuter Travel Bursary: £250 contribution towards the cost of public transportation from a £40,000 total provision. To be eligible to apply for the Commuter Travel Bursary a student will need to:

- Be a Living at Home Student³¹ who commutes from their permanent home address to the University to study.
- Be studying for a full-time undergraduate degree at one of our Whiteknights and/or London Road campuses.
- Be enrolled and attending in the current academic year for which you're applying for funding.
- Be using public transport. We also support cycling and will support an application for purchasing a bicycle and safety equipment.

And a student must meet at least one of the following access and participation criteria:

- Be a mature student (i.e. aged 21+ when you started your current undergraduate course)
- Have a permanent address in an area with low participation in Higher Education (defined as Polar4 or TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2) or considered to be from an area of general disadvantage according to the governments Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2
- Be a Reading Bursary recipient
- Be a student with a declared disability

³¹ Living at Home student is defined as a student who is living at home whilst studying and is therefore not living in university accommodation or a student house/accommodation.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, the University of Reading has begun providing living essentials to students free of cost, such as food and hygiene products.

Progression

Looking at the available data at the time of writing, the three years of Graduate Outcomes data related to Progression are showing positive results for all widening participation groups except those related to socio-economic background, and these are often magnified when looking at intersections with other WP markers. This we see as an indication of risk against EORR 12.

We have a Theory of Change built on the premise that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are resource-poor (especially time and money), less knowledge of the options available to them and have less social capital to give them advice and opportunities. We therefore believe that helping them to build skills and knowledge in the curriculum, social capital via a mentoring programme, experience work via an internship, and have a positive, support community of peers, will lead to progression success.

In order to implement this theory of change and build on our successes in the other groups, we have redesigned the University's approach to progression. This led to the Employability, Careers and Work-based Learning Policy, which was launched in Autumn 2022. The purpose of the approach is to ensure that the development of employability skills, engagement in career thinking, and involvement in learning that links to the world of work, are embedded in every programme. Embedding in this way means that time and resource-poor students are able to progress their approaches to their future without needing to devote extra-curricular time to engagement with traditional careers activities. We believe that this will be particularly useful for those students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who are more likely to be working part-time, commuting and undertaking caring duties. We also believe that some students from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not secure placements due to the cost of attending selection events, so we welcome the amending of the Reading Bursary scheme to allow greater finance support for these activities.

We do still believe in extra-curricular programmes as well and have seen positive correlations between participation in two of the existing parts of the Access and Participation Plan - the Reading Internship Scheme and Thrive mentoring - and success in progression. We have made further improvements to the programmes though, for example, introducing name blind applications, and joining payments for widening participation students, in the Internship Scheme, to ensure that as many barriers to engagement are reduced as possible.

We have identified that the third branch of the APP – the Finalist Programme - needs adjusting to meet the diverse needs of our students, especially those from lower socio-economic groups, and a number of changes are being made from academic year 2023/24 to change the focus to the formation of supportive student communities, in person, via an online course and on social media, so that students can gain backing from each other, as well as the careers team, when they need it, 24/7. This is an innovative approach, so we aim to broaden the sector's understanding of what interventions work, via the monitoring and evaluation of these activities.

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

Provider name: The University of Reading

Provider UKPRN: 10007802

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	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	Early Years	N/A	7000
Postgraduate ITT	School Direct Non-Salaried PGCE	N/A	9250
Postgraduate ITT	School Direct Non-Salaried Qualified Teacher Status	N/A	7710
Postgraduate ITT	University-led PGCE	N/A	9250
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year		N/A	1385
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
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	Activate Learning	10004927	9250
Foundation degree	Basingstoke College of Technology	10000560	9250
Foundation degree	Newbury College	10004596	9250
Foundation degree	The Windsor Forest Colleges Group	10002107	9250
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	6935
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	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Reading

Provider UKPRN: 10007802

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 OIS 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	£2,589,000	£2,682,000	£2,759,000	£2,834,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£3,630,000	£3,905,000	£4,080,000	£4,230,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£364,000	£379,000	£395,000	£408,000

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 (£)	£743,000	£773,000	£798,000	£819,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£1,727,000	£1,785,000	£1,835,000	£1,886,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£119,000	£124,000	£126,000	£129,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£2,589,000	£2,682,000	£2,759,000	£2,834,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	7.4%	7.1%	6.9%	6.8%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	<i>£2,469,000</i>	<i>£2,562,000</i>	<i>£2,639,000</i>	<i>£2,714,000</i>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	<i>£120,000</i>	<i>£120,000</i>	<i>£120,000</i>	<i>£120,000</i>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£3,241,000	£3,680,000	£4,019,000	£4,166,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£335,000	£167,000	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£54,000	£58,000	£61,000	£64,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£3,630,000	£3,905,000	£4,080,000	£4,230,000
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	10.3%	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£364,000	£379,000	£395,000	£408,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

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

Provider name: The University of Reading

Provider UKPRN: 10007802

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 attainment of students in KS4 to support progression to KS5 and Higher Education	PTA_1	Raising attainment	Other	Other (please specify in description)		The intervention strategy is targeted at students from multiple demographic groups: FSM, IMD Q1 and of black ethnicity. Measured using sector standard questions, covering metacognition (independence), confidence and resilience. Targets set as the percentage of participants who display an overall 10% increase or more in skills relating to metacognition, confidence and resilience. Baseline data taken from Yr 10 scholars only as new activity overall.	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage	49%	50%	55%	55%	60%
To reduce the gap in the proportion of entrants to the University of Reading between IMD Q1 and Q5 to a level that matches the demographic mix of the year 12&13 population in our main recruitment regions.	PTA_2	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the current gap (of over 20pp) between entrants in IMD Q1 and Q5 to 10pp over the lifetime of the plan.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	22.7	19.7	17.0	13.5	10.0
	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
Parity (defined as 3% variance around 0) in rates of continuation between Black and white undergraduate cohorts, by 2030.	PTS_1	Continuation	Ethnicity	Black	White	Institution level continuation gaps have historically appeared to be relatively small but nuanced analysis reveals large continuation gaps from part 1 to part 2 that disproportionately impact Black students. 'Parity' in this case and for all remaining targets is intended to reflect the variable and fluctuating nature of on-course gaps. Variation around 0pp to within -3 or +3pp is to be expected once a gap has been closed.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	8.4	8	7	6	5
Parity (defined as variance of +/- 3% around 0) in rates of continuation between young and mature cohorts by 2030.	PTS_2	Continuation	Age	Mature (over 21)	Young (under 21)	There are longstanding continuation gaps for mature students that are considered linked to demands outside of study that are not as typical for younger students (such as family and career commitments).	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	7.9	8	7	6	5

