

Lancaster University

Access and participation plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Lancaster University is an internationally highly-ranked leader in the provision of inspiring teaching and research. Located in the North West of England, the University places great emphasis on a strong student experience and employability and gives students access to academics who are experts in their field.

Lancaster University is rich in diversity, with over 100 different nationalities represented on the campus. In addition, Lancaster's community extends far beyond the campus with research, teaching and student exchange partnerships with leading universities and institutions in 24 countries around the world.

As detailed in our University [strategic plan](#), we believe in the importance of pursuing excellence in all we do. As well as celebrating diversity, we remain committed to equality of opportunity and treatment of our staff and student community. This includes ensuring we have a diverse student body which is reflective of the world around us. Our 2020 - 25 Access and Participation Plan sets our performance to date and articulates our strategic aims and measures to ensure we support both current and future generations of students to access, succeed and prosper from higher education.

1. Assessment of performance

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access: The percentage of 18 year old UK students recruited by Lancaster who are from POLAR4 quintile 1 neighbourhoods has improved from 7.5% in 2014-15 to 8.2% in 2017-18, but is below the percentage admitted by the sector overall (11.5% in 2017-18) and the 18.1 % 2017-18 percentage in the relevant national population (A&P dataset). Although Lancaster's performance on this measure has been consistently stronger than that of many other research-led institutions of a similar type and size, we recognise the need to increase the percentage of these students in our intake to support the ambition of the Office for Students (OfS) target to reduce the gap in participation at higher tariff institutions between quintile 1 and quintile 5 from a ratio of 5:1 to 3:1 by 2024-25. The total number of students from the least represented areas who achieve level 3 qualifications will be a potential limiting factor¹ but the University (building on its work using contextual data for admission to Medicine) will be expanding its use of contextual offers alongside other measures (see section 3.1.2) to take account of the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils.

Success: Non-continuation: The gap in the continuation rates between students from POLAR4 quintile 5 neighbourhoods and those from quintile 1 neighbourhoods has been consistently better than is the case for the sector gap, and in 2017-18 there was no difference in the continuation rates for these groups at Lancaster (A&P dataset). However, there are differences for BTEC students, which are known to be associated with poorer completion rates (see the section below on Intersectionality). Providing more targeted support for these students has been a high priority and this will continue into 2020 and beyond (see section 3.1.2).

Success: Attainment: Although the gap in attainment at Lancaster between quintile 1 and 5 has been consistently lower than for the sector overall, it has widened over the past 5 years from -1ppt in 2014-15 to 8.0ppt in 2017-18, albeit in the context of a wide confidence interval of -8ppt to +24ppt (A&P dataset). As

¹ Government figures show that in 2018 only 46.6% of pupils in state-funded schools from the most deprived areas achieved Level 3 by the age of 19 compared with 70.5% of those from the least deprived areas and that in 2017/18 only 27% of disadvantaged state funded pupils took A levels compared with 56% of non-disadvantaged pupils

with continuation, an important factor is the increase in students entering with BTEC qualifications and it is hoped that the new targeted support, which is in place, will result in a reduced attainment gap as the cohorts benefiting from this support progress to their final year (reflecting the improvement that has already taken place with the 1st to 2nd year continuation gap).

Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study: The A&P dataset shows that for most of the period covered there has not been a statistically significant gap at Lancaster between the percentage of POLAR 4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students progressing to highly skilled employment or further education (0 ppt for 2012-13, -2 ppt for 2013-14, -1 ppt for 2014-15 and 2 ppt for 2015-16). However, there was a 5ppt gap for the 2016-17 graduating cohort (Year 5), and future performance will be monitored to establish whether this results from a random year-on-year fluctuation (noting the large confidence interval for this measure). In this context, it should be noted that it is unclear whether the results of the new HESA administered Graduate Outcomes Survey will be provided in a form that allows this type of detailed analysis to be undertaken.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students

Access: The percentage of Lancaster's UK intake who are BAME is lower than is the case for the sector overall (16.2% for Lancaster in 2017-18 versus 31.1% for the sector – A&P dataset) but it is higher than the 10% of the 18/19 year old population who are BAME in the North West (Office for National Statistics). More detailed breakdowns of the A&P dataset show this pattern is similar when looking at Black and Asian students separately (i.e. the ethnic breakdown of the University's UK intake mirrors that of the 18/19 year old population in the North West). In this context it should be noted that the University has been successful in increasing the proportion of its UK intake that is Asian from 5.0% in 2013/14 to 7.6% in 2017-18 (A&P dataset), so that this is now in line with the 7.7% of the North West's 18-19 population who are Asian (Office for National Statistics).

While we have not set an access target for BAME students in this A&P plan (instead we are focusing our efforts on reducing the attainment gap), we are committed to increasing the number of UK students at Lancaster who are BAME. The University has dedicated additional institutional resource to recruitment outside of the North West, and in particular, areas of the UK with high proportions of BAME students. In addition, our 'Role Models' project works with BAME communities around the UK to increase participation in HE from BAME students.

Success: Non-continuation: The A&P data set shows that the overall continuation of UK BAME students at Lancaster is very similar to that of White UK students, allowing for inevitable year-on-year fluctuations because of the smaller student populations involved. In 2016-17 the continuation gaps were: all BAME - 2ppt; Asian Students – 0ppt; Black students – 0ppt. Although there are higher non-continuation rates for two other sub-categories within the overall BAME heading (6.1ppt for 'Mixed' and 4.9ppt for 'Other'), these are only small populations made up of students from a wide range of disparate backgrounds and the confidence intervals for determining the statistical significance for these gaps is very large (A&P dataset).

Success: Attainment: The overall UK BAME attainment gap at Lancaster has been consistently similar to that for the sector overall for the period 2013-14 to 2017-18 (11.0 ppt for Lancaster versus 14.8 ppt for the sector in 2013-14; 12ppt for Lancaster versus 13.2ppt for the sector in 2017-18 – A&P dataset). Breaking these figures down shows an attainment gap in 2017-18 of 13ppt between White/Asian UK students 26ppt between Black/White UK students, 13 ppt between Other Ethnicity/White UK students and -3 ppt for Mixed/White UK (although these must be viewed in the context of small populations and large confidence intervals: for example confidence intervals of -5ppt to 31ppt for White/Asian and -2ppt to 54ppt for White/Black). The gaps in attainment can only be partially attributed to factors such as entry tariff and qualification type. The reasons for this will be explored in the University Attainment Working Group (see section 3.1.1.) and via our Student Juries and student-led action research (see section 3.2) and Student Advisory Board (see section 3.4).

Lancaster has set a target for reducing the attainment gap for all BAME students because (a) we would not want to exclude the attainment of Asian students (for whom there is currently an attainment gap of 13 ppt) from the measurement of progress as their inclusion is reflective of the population mix in the Lancashire area, and (b) the large confidence interval for the black/white attainment gap at Lancaster (-2 ppt to +54 ppt in Year 5) would make it very difficult to measure progress against a target set at this level of disaggregation in a meaningful way. However, it is recognised that achieving the OfS target of eliminating the 'unexplained gap' in degree outcomes between White and Black students by 2024-25 will require a collective effort from all HE institutions, even if performance at institutional level can be difficult to assess. Actions to address this attainment gap will be detailed in an attainment action plan which will be created by the Attainment Working Group (who will meet for the first time in summer 2019) with input from our Student Juries and Student Advisory Board. We are aware that actions to address the attainment gap must not just focus on a 'student-deficit' model but address cultural and institutional wide changes in all areas of our teaching and learning.

Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study: In contrast with attainment, the available data do not provide any firm indication that there is a significant gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further education between UK BAME graduates and other UK graduates. The overall BAME progression gap for Lancaster has been negative (i.e. BAME students perform better) for two out of the four years when there has been sufficient data for the results to be shown (-1ppt in 2013/14 and -4ppt in 2014/15 – A&P dataset). The figures are more volatile when we examine Black and Asian students separately and in 2016-17 there was a progression gap of 10 ppt between Black and White students (A&P dataset). However, given there was a confidence interval of -25 ppt to 40 ppt in this year and in the previous two years there was a negative 5 ppt gap, this by itself cannot be treated as a reliable indicator. Our Diversity Careers Day (see section 3.1.2) is just one of the activities we have implemented to ensure the successful progression of all of our students. We will continue to monitor the data and take the appropriate action to address any gaps as they become apparent. While we await the detail of the new Graduate Outcomes Survey, we will continue to ensure we consider the impact on and potential to support all our students when developing any activity aimed to support progression.

1.3 Mature students

Access: The proportion of Lancaster's UG intake who are 21 or older on entry is much lower than that for the sector overall - 3.8% at Lancaster in 2017-18 versus 27.8% for the sector – and has declined from 5.4% in 2013-14. Achieving a significant increase in mature student recruitment would be a difficult challenge for Lancaster. There is no natural local catchment area for mature students and the impact of changes in student funding (which mean that mature students only have limited access to funds to cover the cost of living whilst studying), Lancaster's semi-rural location, the small number of part-time courses available at Lancaster and the high proportion of the student population who live in on-campus accommodation, do not make the University an attractive option for many mature students. However, Lancaster will continue to support the progression of this group of students, through collaborative activity with other universities and partnerships such as the Cumbrian National Collaborative Outreach Programme and our associated colleges Blackpool & the Fylde College and Blackburn College.

Success: Non-continuation: The latest gap in continuation rates between mature and non-mature students studying at Lancaster is worse than that of the sector (10ppt for Lancaster versus 7.4ppt for the sector in 2016-17 – A&P dataset), but the small numbers involved and large confidence intervals mean there is a significant amount of volatility in the data (previous percentage point gaps vary between 16 ppts in 2012-13, 7 ppts in 2013-14, 13 ppts in 2014-15 and 8 ppts in 2015-16).

However, the University is keen to provide support for mature students who do study at Lancaster. Activity and support for this group will be explored with current mature students via focus groups and student-led action research (see section 3.2) and we have set ourselves a stretching and ambitious target to improve our performance in this area.

Success: Attainment: Allowing for the small numbers involved and large confidence intervals, there does not appear to be any significant gap in attainment between mature and non-mature students at Lancaster (-8ppt for Lancaster versus 10.3ppt for the sector in 2017-18 – A&P dataset).

Progression to highly-skilled employment or further study: The evidence suggests that mature students at Lancaster are more likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further study than non-mature students, reflecting the position for the sector (Lancaster's gap in 2016-17 was -6ppt versus -3.4ppt for the sector – A&P dataset).

1.4 Disabled students

Access: Although Lancaster had been recruiting a slightly smaller percentage of students with a declared disability than the sector in the period 2013-14 to 2015-16, the percentages in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 entry cohorts were closely in line with the sector (14.5% for Lancaster versus 14% for the sector in 2017-18 – A&P dataset).

Success: Non-continuation: Even allowing for the relatively small population size and the large confidence intervals, the non-continuation rates for students with a declared disability do appear to be consistently higher than is the case for other students (a 4 ppt gap in 2015-16, a 5 ppt gap in 2016-17 and a 3 ppt gap in 2017-18 – A&P dataset).

A more detailed breakdown by disability using Lancaster's own internal data (consolidated over five years because of small population sizes) suggests that students with declared mental health issues are less likely to continue from 1st to 2nd year when compared with students with other declared disabilities or those without a declared disability (9.1% for students with mental health issues vs 7.5% or lower for other categories of student).

Examples of the targeted support given to disabled students is set out section 3.1.2

Success: Attainment: Up to the 2016-17 graduating cohort, the attainment gap between students with and without a declared disability was close to that for the sector as a whole (2ppt in 2015-16, 4ppt in 2016-17). Although for the 2017-18 graduating cohort there was -2ppt negative gap at Lancaster (A&P dataset), the large confidence intervals (-13ppt) means that this could be due to random variation rather than representing a long-term trend. The University will continue to closely monitor the performance of future graduating cohorts.

A more detailed breakdown by disability type using Lancaster's own internal data, again consolidated over five years, suggests that there is a particular issue with the attainment of students with declared mental health issues (51% 1sts/2:1s for students with mental health issues versus 69% for students with no known disability).

In this context it should also be noted that the percentage of students at Lancaster with a declared mental health issue has increased from 2.8% for the 2013-14 entry cohort to 6.9% for the 2017-18 entry cohort, broadly in line with the national increase from 1.3% to 4.2% for UK undergraduates over the same period (HESA).

As with the attainment gap for BAME students, Lancaster recognises that achieving the national OfS target for reducing the attainment gap for students with a declared disability will require a collective effort from all institutions.

Progression to employment or further study: In some years there has been a small gap at Lancaster between the percentage of students with and without a declared disability progressing to highly skilled employment or further study but this has not been statistically significantly different from the gap for the whole sector (in 2012-13 the Lancaster gap was -1 ppt versus 2.1 ppt for the sector and in 2016-17 the Lancaster gap was 2ppt versus 1.8ppt for the sector– A&P dataset).

Lancaster has a very strong record of positive employment/further study outcomes for all students and a high priority is given to providing targeted careers support for students with all types of disability (see section 3.1.2).

Because of very uneven response rates from students with a declared disability, disaggregating the data from the DLHE survey by declared disability type is problematic, even if the data are consolidated over several years and so we do not consider that this approach gives reliable results.²

1.5 Care leavers

Given the small number of undergraduate students recruited in this category (around 20 in total over the last three years), it is not possible to make reliable statistical comparisons with other student groups. However, Lancaster collects data about these students, closely monitors their continuation, attainment and progression to employment and further study and respond appropriately, almost on a case-by-case basis, if any issues of concern arise.

It is recognised that this group need targeted support and the work being carried out in this area is detailed in section 3 of this plan.

1.6 Other student groups

National data indicates that there are equality gaps for other student groups, including estranged students, students with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller ethnic backgrounds and children from military families. For example, there are around 9,000 estranged young people studying at UK universities who are dropping out of University at a rate three times higher than the average student³ and research studies have highlighted the challenges faced by children from military families⁴ (and Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils⁵).

Lancaster collects data on its own students about the first two groups and is able to monitor performance, but the numbers are too small for meaningful statistical comparisons and analysis (in 2018-19 only 5 students out of the Lancaster's total UK undergraduate population had a declared ethnic background of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller). The University is investigating collecting data on whether students are from military families, but it is likely that the numbers in this category will also be small. However, because the national research and data shows that students in these categories can experience equality gaps, this is reflected in Lancaster's eligibility criteria for some WP activities. There are also activities specifically targeted at estranged students and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities (see section 3.1.2).

1.7 Intersections of disadvantage

Lancaster has identified the following factors which are relevant to an understanding of both WP recruitment and subsequent student performance.

² For example, the consolidated data over the past five years shows a higher proportion of graduates who had a declared mental health issue whilst studying progressing to highly-skilled employment or further study than any other category of student.

³ [Stand Alone](#), 2019

⁴ The Education of Children from Military Families: Identity and Agency, Educational, futures, Vol ((2), 2018

⁵ The underrepresentation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in higher education, Kings College London, 2017

BTEC and other non-standard qualifications

Students entering with a BTEC or a non-standard qualification, such as an Access Programme, are more likely to be from a WP group. For 2017-18 entry, 44% of these students had one or more WP characteristics⁶ compared with a figure of 27% for all students. 18% of LPN students and 16% of BAME students were admitted on the basis of a BTEC qualification compared with an overall figure of 9% for all students.

We have also identified that there is a significant difference in entry tariff for LPN and BAME students. In 2018, the average UCAS entry tariff for BAME students was 146 points compared to 151 points for non-BAME students. For LPN students the average UCAS entry tariff was 141 points compared to 152 points for students not from a low participation neighbourhood.

There is a well-established correlation between BTECs and/or lower UCAS tariff scores and subsequent student performance (for continuation, attainment and progression), so at least some of the performance gap seen between students with and without these WP characteristics can be described as 'explained' rather than 'unexplained'. The above suggests that targeted study skills support for students entering with BTEC (or other non-standard qualifications), or those with slightly weaker A level grades, is likely to be an effective means of addressing the continuation, attainment and progression gaps. Building on our current work, this will be a key feature of our Lancaster Student Access and Success Programme.

Household income

The other clear intersection of disadvantage is with household income. For the 2018-19 cohort, 46% of Lancaster's UK BAME students had a household income of less than £30k compared with 25% for all other UK students. Similarly, 44% of UK students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods had a household income of less than £30k compared with 27% for all other UK students. We believe that targeted financial support through scholarships and bursaries is an effective means of helping students with lower household incomes as they are more likely to experience financial pressures during the course of their studies.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

Lancaster is committed to supporting the OfS to achieve their national targets to reduce gaps in access, success and progression for certain groups and to ensuring we achieve equality of opportunity for our students where gaps in access, retention, attainment or progression have been identified. Lancaster's overarching strategic aim is to be a richly *diverse and fully inclusive learning environment. A place where all our students and staff are supported to succeed in all they do and reach their potential.* For our students this includes ensuring equality of opportunity across all aspects of their student lifecycle, regardless of background.

To achieve this, Lancaster is specifically committed to:

- Supporting the recruitment, retention and attainment of students from low participation neighbourhoods, and specifically reducing the gaps between students from POLAR 4 quintile 1 and 5;
- Reducing the attainment gap between BAME and White students; and
- Maintaining our performance where no gap has been identified for BAME students and those with a declared disability.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Following the guidance from the OfS, we have moved away from an output targets approach relating to activity for the lifespan of this A&P plan and we will discontinue our previous targets (with the expectation of

⁶ The WP characteristics used in this analysis were BAME, LPN, Parental Education, Household income, and Age.

our targets around raising attainment through access activities) as outlined in our 2019-20 access and participation plan. Following the implementation of our evaluation framework (see section 3.3) we may revisit this decision and reintroduce appropriate and evidence led output targets in a future year and will consult with OfS on the inclusion of any additional targets.

Based on the current assessment of our performance we have set the following stretching and ambitious outcomes focused targets for the lifespan of this A&P plan. While the targets and objectives below are for the lifespan of this A&P plan, our accompanying Targets and Investment Plan provides annual milestones for each target showing our intended yearly progress towards achieving these. Our Monitoring and Evaluation Group (see section 3.4) will closely monitor our performance against these annual milestones and will make recommendations to the WP Committee on steps to be taken if they believe the University is not making the yearly progress needed to achieve our targets by 2024-25.

- To **reduce** the gap in participation between **POLAR 4 quintile 5 and quintile 1** from a ratio of **4.1:1 to 3.0:1** by 2024-25.;
- To **reduce the gap** in the percentage of students from **POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5** neighbourhoods achieving 1st/2:1 class degree from **8 to 4 percentage points** by 2024-25;
- To **reduce the gap** in the percentage of **BAME and White students** achieving 1sts/2:1s from **12 to 6 percentage points** by 2024-25;
- To **reduce the gap** in the percentage of **mature and non-mature students** continuing from 1st to 2nd year study from 10 percentage points to 5 percentage points by 2024-25;
- To **increase the proportion** of UK undergraduate students who are **declared care experienced or estranged** at Lancaster from **0.6% to 1.2%** by 2024-25⁷ and;
- To **increase the Progress 8⁸** score of students undertaking Lancaster access activities⁹ to **+0.8 percentage points** by 2024-25¹⁰.

We know that to make real change in many of these areas and to reduce the gap between different groups, a longer lead in time is needed. For some targets to be achieved and gaps to be reduced there is need for a greater structural shift in society that cannot be achieved overnight. While the targets above outline the progress we are aiming to make in these areas in the lifetime of this A&P plan, Lancaster has set itself an ambitious challenge to reduce significant gaps between all our cohorts by 2030-31 in order to support the OfS to achieve its targets of reducing gaps by 2038-39. In addition, we have set the following objectives for the duration of this A&P plan:

⁷ Lancaster is equally committed to improving access for both Care Leavers and Estranged Students and as such will monitor our performance against both groups individually as well as a combined target. We are exploring the best way to do this and will have a system in place to pilot during 2019-20 ready for the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

⁸ While our work on raising attainment is focused on both pre and post 16, we will measure performance using progress 8 for the life of this A&P plan as it provides a robust data source and comparison cohort (we will track the performance of students on our programme against their regional and national peers). As we establish our work with the Lancaster University School of Maths we will look to set a raising attainment target for post 16 in time for the next A&P plan in 2025-26.

⁹ Activities include Lancaster Plus, Inspire and the Lancaster Access Programme. As we develop our programme of activity with the Lancaster Maths School and the Central Lancaster Maths Hub, these activities will also be included in this target. We will also track attainment and Progress 8 performance on other activities if it becomes appropriate.

¹⁰ In 2018-19 we laid down our current work on the East Lancashire Scholars Programme due to evidence of a lack of impact and instead have replaced this with a number of new programmes for September 2019 onwards such as the Lancaster Access Programme and Realising Opportunities which Lancaster will officially join in August 2019. Raising attainment will be at the heart of these projects, however we recognise that it takes time to establish and embed new projects. As such we have held our annual milestones as steady for the first two years of this plan and reduced the rate of progress from our previous A&P plan while we embed, evaluate and monitor these new programmes.

- To **remain as close as possible to a zero gap** between the percentage of **students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5** neighbourhoods progressing from their first to second year of study by 2024-25 and;
- To **remain as close as possible to a zero gap** between the percentage of **students with and without a disability** achieving 1st/2:1 class degree by 2024-25.

Due to recent changes to the collection and publishing of data in this area from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey to the Graduate Outcomes survey, we feel it would be premature to set targets around progression at this stage. We will, of course, continue to monitor our performance in this area and set targets as required once the new data has been made available. Note that Lancaster has a strong record in supporting all students to progress onto graduate level employment or further study and we offer a diverse programme of careers support and activities to aid this progression. For many of our students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds there is no significant gap in performance compared to the rest of the student body in relation to progression. While we wait to set targets in this area we will aim to maintain our current performance in this area for all groups and continue to deliver a wider range of activities to support the progression of our students (details of which can be found in section 3.1.2)

In addition, we are committed to supporting the following collaborative targets:

Realising Opportunities: By working in collaboration, Realising Opportunities (RO) will contribute to national improvements in closing the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers between the most and least under-represented groups. Specifically we will seek to increase the percentage of RO students who will access a research intensive university within two years of becoming 'HE ready' and completing their Post-16 studies from 42% (baseline data from 2015-16) to 54% by 2024-25.

Cumbrian National Collaborative Outreach Programme (Hello Future): We will work in partnership with Hello Future, and other partners, to increase the number of Cumbrian-based students from three specific backgrounds progressing to higher education. These are care-experienced students, disabled students and older learners living in low participation neighbourhoods.

Other Collaborative targets: Over the next year we will continue to work with other partners, such as the Lancashire National Collaborative Outreach Programme (Future U) and North West HEI's to establish both collaborative programmes of activity and, where appropriate, collaborative targets. Any additional collaborative targets will be shared with the OfS and added to future access and participation plans.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

3.1.1 Overview

At Lancaster, we believe in the importance of creating a culture of inclusivity and are proud of our long tradition of being a university that is open and accessible to all, regardless of background. As part of our whole provider strategic approach to WP, we believe that social mobility is not achieved once a student has made it into HE. Indeed, inequality in opportunities for students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups continues across all stages of the student lifecycle and beyond. As part of our overarching approach, in 2018-19 Lancaster introduced a lifecycle approach to WP and social mobility, and we continue to embed this into all aspects of the University. To support our lifecycle approach we have established a theory of change model which will ensure WP, equality of opportunity and breaking down barriers for under-represented, or disadvantaged, students is central to all that we do and remains a key part of the University's wider strategy.

Figure 1 (see appendix) demonstrates our theory of change model for our whole provider approach to WP. In summary, our model is based around our long term goal that '*Lancaster is a diverse and inclusive learning environment where all students and staff can succeed in all they do*'. This is underpinned by continuing to embed WP into the University strategic plan and in particular four key strategic areas under which sit a series of activities, policies and processes. These four strategic areas are: Education; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; People; and Engagement. Achievement of our long term goal via these four strategic areas is further underpinned by our WP work undertaken vis-a-vis our Lancaster Student Access and Success (SAS) programme. Lancaster SAS demonstrates a whole provider, lifecycle, approach to WP, tracking our work with students from pre-entry school and college engagement through to graduation success, employability support and beyond. Lancaster SAS ensures that at whatever stage of the lifecycle we are engaging with a student. We consider where they have come from, what they need now and what the next step in their journey is.

Our theory of change model also demonstrates a feedback loop approach to analysis, strategy development, activity delivery and evaluation. A review of our data and performance, as well as previous evaluations will influence the setting of our aims and objectives. This in turn influences our consultation and planning to ensure we can achieve our aims. We will then determine our activity and processes. The feedback loop will be continuous. To be successful, embedding a change culture into the University must be driven visibly and actively by the head of the institution and its governing body, stated unequivocally in the strategy of the institution and supported by robust policies. We are working to guarantee that our commitment to WP can be evidenced in all of these areas and our theory of change model will support our work to ensure that a whole provider strategic approach is embedded in all areas, thereby enabling the University to achieve its WP targets and objectives.

Our new evaluation framework (see section 3.3) will test and evaluate all aspects of our theory of change model and activities and the model will be reviewed each year as part of our self-assessment. In this way our model will evolve and grow through the use of quantifiable data and evidence and ensure that we remain on track to reach our long term goal, targets and objectives.

Alignment with other strategies: In this section, we describe in greater detail how the four strategic areas align with our WP aims and objectives and our whole provider approach.

Education Strategy: Our current [Education strategy](#) is built around three key strategic areas with a series of supporting actions and aims for each:

- *Teaching:* establishing Lancaster University as one of the highest quality and innovative teaching institutions in the UK;
- *Students/Graduates:* preparing our graduates to lead responsible, intellectually curious, productive and fulfilling lives within a complex and inclusive global society; and
- *Maximising Distinctiveness:* maximising the benefits of our distinctiveness.

Throughout each of these areas is the principle of inclusive practice and learning to ensure the curriculum and university experience is open to all. Our [Institute for Curriculum Enhancement](#) (ICE) has been established to act as a focus for curriculum and educational enhancement, and places the scholarship of learning and teaching at its heart, so harnessing the expertise and insights of colleagues within and beyond Lancaster to inform educational change and enhancement. ICE will also explore issues around intersectionality within our curriculum and the learning gain (both academic and cultural) experienced by staff and students from working and learning in a diverse environment.

This will be a long term objective which will initially focus on developing an inclusive curriculum. To start this process we hosted a 'Facing In, Facing Out' event on 2nd July looking at Inclusive practice. This event will be followed up in late July/early August 2019 with a series of workshops looking at an inclusive curriculum for Lancaster. In addition, our Inclusive Learning Network, made up of academics and professional services staff from across the University meets once a month. This is an open network designed to bring colleagues from across the University together to provide an opportunity to share inclusive good practice covering all aspects of the student life cycle.

As part of the Education Strategy, we have established an Employability Strategic Framework and Operational Plan, details of which can be found in section 3.1.2. The University is also setting up three working groups and actions plans looking at access, retention and attainment. Each working group will be chaired by a member of senior management and include a representative for WP to ensure that consideration of barriers and concerns for WP students are addressed within the wider context of the group. The retention working group has been running for over 12 months and provides regular reports to Senate on progress made and areas for development. The attainment working group has been given a remit from Senate to specifically look at the BAME attainment gap at Lancaster. The first meeting of this group will take place in the summer of 2019 and will pick up and progress earlier work done by Education Committee on degree outcome differences. It will also review the focus group work undertaken with BAME students in 2018-19 in which we explored their perceived barriers to access and success in HE. The access working group will begin to meet from October 2019. As with the retention working group, the attainment and access groups will provide regular updates to Senate.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: We have recently undertaken a 'health check' of our current [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) strategic vision](#) and identified a number of key priorities for the future development of the EDI agenda at Lancaster. Included within this are: Embedding EDI in all strategies; Refreshing the oversight and governance of EDI at all levels of the University; and Engagement with the EDI agenda by all staff and students as part of everyday practice. WP is an integral part of our EDI values and principles, and as such the embedding of WP into University practices and procedures is already a core component of our EDI work.

People Strategy: We know that our success is dependent on the talented, creative and committed people who work here. By attracting, developing and retaining the best staff we are able to offer all our students the best teachers and support networks. An inclusive and diverse staff profile enables our students to see Lancaster as a place that reflects the global society in which we live, and we understand the importance in particular for under-represented students to see role models in the staff they engage with. As part of our commitment to development, staff undertake training on EDI. We are also developing an online module on WP and social mobility for staff, to help support their understanding of who our students are and the different barriers to learning they may face.

Engagement Strategy: While our new Engagement Strategy is still under development, WP will play a key role in it. Our Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement is taking the lead on this work, and evidence of our commitment to Engagement can already be found in Lancaster signing up to the [Civic University Agreement](#) and involvement in the [Knowledge Exchange Framework](#). The University is the second largest employer in our local area and we understand the importance of our civic responsibilities to engage with, and support, our local community - a community which encompasses a diverse range of social backgrounds, from city, coastal and rural communities. Through our role as a civic university we can provide additional support for under-represented, or disadvantaged, students and the communities in which they are based.

3.1.2 Strategic measures

In order to achieve our aims and objectives detailed in section 2, we have described below some of the measures and activity we will undertake. Throughout all of our activities we have considered how they relate to our theory of change model. The information below provides examples of planned, or current, activity rather than an exhaustive list. Some of our activities to be delivered during the duration of this A&P plan are still in development and subject to further consultation with our students and other key stakeholders (see section for 3.2 on student consultation for further information). As part of our evaluation theory of change model (see section 3.3) we are building an evidence log on the impact of all activities. This will be completed by the spring of 2020, to enable the WP Committee to make an informed and evidence led decision on which projects to invest in from the academic year 2020-21 onwards. As part of this process we will also look at national evidence and research such as the work undertaken and collated by the [Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes](#) (TASO) and the [Scottish Framework for Fair Access](#). Information on all WP activities currently delivered can be found [here](#).

Inclusion: Lancaster's Education Strategy aims to transform lives and core to this aim is increasing the flexibility and range of provision, enabling greater diversity in student learning opportunities, including through different modes of study and variety in pedagogic approaches. Inclusion is one of four cross-cutting themes within the Strategy and we have a full-time post (Deputy Disability and Inclusion Manager) to support an embedded approach to the promotion of inclusive practice. For example, inclusivity considerations have been embedded within operationalising our Assessment and Feedback Principles and in our Course Design, Development and Approvals procedures. We have also established an Inclusive Learning Network with representation from seven Professional Services and Academic Departments, as well as existing equality and diversity networks, to discuss and share good practice about curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment.

Lancaster Student Access and Success Programme: In support of our long-term goals (see section 2 of this A&P plan), we have introduced the Lancaster Student Access and Success (SAS) Programme. This provides a lifecycle approach to WP at Lancaster tracking students from pre-entry engagement through to graduation and employment. The Lancaster SAS Programme will provide a framework within which all WP activity, across all stages of the lifecycle, will eventually sit. The programme enables us to brand our WP activity.

The Access part of our programme brings together all our school engagement activity under one banner to make it easier for students to identify opportunities for them to engage with the University. At the core of the programme is a compact scheme which allows students to increase their:

- knowledge of the benefits of HE and the opportunities available at Lancaster University;
- confidence to make informed decisions about higher education i.e. subjects/courses, student finance, UCAS application process and writing a personal statement;
- confidence to adopt the core life skills needed to live independently i.e. budgeting, cooking, personal resilience, leadership and self-management;
- awareness of the higher-level study skills required to be successful at university and to put these into practise; and
- awareness of how subject knowledge can be applied to a 'real world' context (where appropriate).

All activity in the Lancaster Access Programme is designed to support students to raise their attainment at all stages of their educational journey (this measured via Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores, GCSE results and A level or equivalent qualification results). Raising attainment is a core function of all our activity and does so by working with students to help them gain and develop key skills that will enhance their academic performance, coupled with access to subject specific information and IAG around pathways and access to

HE. We believe that by focusing on raising attainment as a core purpose of the activity we will be able to support more students from key target groups to progress onto HE and as such support OfS in their target to increase the number of under-represented students studying at higher tariff institutions as well as achieving our own targets in this area. In addition, by supporting student to raise their attainment pre-entry to HE and by providing they skills and tools mentioned above we will help to achieve OfS and Lancaster targets in relation to retention, attainment and progress of students once in HE studying by ensuring they are better prepared for the transition and start more secure in their own abilities succeed in HE.

In 2018-19, Lancaster piloted the use of contextual admissions for those applying to study [Medicine and Surgery](#). This includes an offer two grades lower than the published offer for students who met two or more WP characteristics. We know, that applied correctly, contextual admissions can provide fairer access and a mechanism to identify the potential in students that may not be evidenced through grades alone. Lancaster Access will identify and nurture this potential, and WP students successfully complete the programme may be eligible for an adjusted admissions offer.

At the core of the targeted and holistic Lancaster Success Programme will be a capabilities approach where students are encouraged to develop the skills they need in order to maximise the benefits arising from the array of opportunities available to them, and enjoy a high quality student experience. The LSP will support the retention, attainment and progression of those students involved in the programme thereby contributing to our targets around these three areas. This will be achieved by enhancing the capability of students to think critically and creatively, solve problems, make informed decisions, cope with and manage new situations and communicate effectively. The programme will provide a mechanism and support system that aims to develop these skills throughout the student lifecycle by providing all students on the programme with a personal Success Coach. The Success Coaches will act as a first point of contact for students, helping them to develop a personalised action plans for the duration of their studies, and provide effective signing posting to the range of enrichment opportunities available for students at Lancaster in order to improve their experience and support them in the areas they must need it.

Transition support for WP students: We know that the transition to university is a major event in all students' lives and for some this can be particularly challenging. Our Transitions team offer additional support to those groups who we know can find this transition particularly difficult. In particular, they support the transition of students who are first in family, students on the autistic spectrum, those with mental health issues and students with learning difficulties or problems communicating. Through a series of activities, such as pre-registration residentials (Smart Start), peer mentoring and well-being walks and social activities, the team provide an environment in which students can explore barriers, concerns and fears and develop relationships with peers from similar backgrounds. Through these activities staff build a strong rapport with students, often acting as first point of contact for a range of queries and questions throughout the student's entire time at Lancaster. These activities will contribute to our progress in achieving our institutional and national OfS targets in this area and to date have allowed us to make good progress in the retention of our students on the autistic spectrum in particular by providing personalised and tailored support. For example, each year, over 98% of students who attend the Smart Start residential complete their first year of study and progress into year two of their studies.

Graduate Attributes and Values: As part of our work on the Education Strategy, we developed a series of graduate attributes and values that we believe all Lancaster students should develop through core and extra curricula opportunities during their time with us in order to support their retention, attainment and progression. These are based around four key areas:

- **Academic Excellence:** Lancaster graduates are highly skilled and knowledgeable subject-specialists
- **Global Citizenship:** Lancaster graduates are inclusive, collegiate, socially responsible, and engaged global citizens
- **Self-awareness:** Lancaster graduates are self-aware, open to development and change
- **Professional Excellence:** Lancaster graduates are fully prepared for graduate employment opportunities, professional in outlook and approach

We believe that our graduate attributes and values are of particular importance for our WP students, helping them to see both their own value and how they can succeed in the future. We are currently mapping all subject and engagement activities to these attributes and values to enable students to understand how they can develop and gain each one. All of our funded WP activities with current students, are asked to demonstrate how they will also support students to acquire these attributes and values.

Employability: We understand that studying at Lancaster is about more than just a qualification, so we support our students to leave with the skills and confidence needed to achieve the future they want. Our Employability Strategic Framework and Operational Plan ensures that employability and opportunity for development are embedded into all aspects of a students' time at Lancaster to aid their future progression. Our framework is based around four key strands: curriculum development; co-curricular activities; employer and alumni engagement; and supporting student employability planning. In order to embed employability throughout the University, we have appointed Academic Employability Champions in all faculties, who work with each department to develop departmental specific employability action plans to aid students' progression. These are designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities relevant to their subject area. In addition, employability is a requirement in the approval process for all new curricula development. The Lancaster Award provides our students with a reward for taking part in extra-curricular activities outside their academic studies. Developed in partnership with employers, the award rewards students for making the most of their time at Lancaster, and enhances their future job prospects by encouraging students to acquire new skills valued by employers.

However, we are aware that some students may benefit from additional support. Consequently, our Student Opportunities and Skills Developer (Widening Participation) provides employability advice and guidance for our WP students, alongside running a number of activities specifically developed to support our WP students gain experience, confidence and skills seen as key by employers. These activities are part of our GROW Your Future project. GROW Your Future brings together activities specifically designed for WP students, making it easier for students to identify the opportunities open to them and to allow others at the University to better signpost students to these activities. The four key elements of the programme include: GROW your Career Plan (making decisions); GROW your Career Confidence (confidently navigating the graduate recruitment process); GROW your Professional Network (making connections); GROW Yourself and Become More Employable (developing key skills employers are looking for). In addition, this role provides a voice for WP students, ensuring that any potential additional barriers are considered when developing policies or activities in this area. To address the gap in progression to graduate employment or higher level study between our students, we appointed a Disabilities Specialist Careers and Employability Advisor in November 2018 to offer additional support, advice and information to our students with a disability. Initial engagement and feedback from students has been positive and an evaluation review will take place in July 2019.

While the main aims of our Employability Strategic Framework and Operational Plan and GROW Your Future project are around the progression of our students into employment or additional study, we do believe it makes an important contribution to other Lancaster targets around attainment and retention. By supporting

students to plan and prepare for their future we can address other concerns and barriers which may impact on their retention and studies. In October 2018, as part of our work for Black History Month, we ran our first Diversity Careers Day. The day provided students with the chance to hear from speakers from six different backgrounds, (LGBTQ+, BAME, women, social mobility, mental health and disability). Speakers shared their journey into employment, their experiences of the work place and lessons learnt/words of wisdom for students starting on their own employment journeys. In addition, they shared details on work they have done to promote diversity in the recruitment process of their own organisations, and gave frank accounts of their experience in their organisation as a member of an under-represented group. We are currently exploring how we can replicate and expand on this activity in the future.

Digital Lancaster: Technology has the power to transform the university experience of all our students and can be used to significantly enhance the experience of our students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds. Through our Digital Lancaster strategy we are committed to embracing digital technology in all our activities, enabling us to provide world-class digital learning environments for our students, and highly efficient and effective digital ways of working for our staff. [Ask L.U.](#), run in collaboration with Amazon Web Services acts as a digital friend and companion for students, allowing them to ask almost any question about their university experience, from student life, and welfare, to academic studies and more. Early indications are that Ask L.U. is particularly valuable to those [disabled students](#) who struggle with accessing printed documents or current web pages and written digital content.

Collaboration and alignment with other work and funding sources

We understand the value of strong, sustainable and collaborative working. We strive to work in partnership where we can to ensure best value and enhanced opportunities and experiences for the people we work with. We know that both internal and external collaborative working can provide successful and meaningful opportunities for both current and prospective students. Lancaster has a long history of working in partnership with other HE partners (both in the UK and globally), education providers and third sector organisations to support current and prospective students to raise both their aspirations and their attainment.

UUK and NUS BAME framework: The recent report from the [Universities UK and NUS](#) into the BAME attainment gap calls on universities to commit to tackling the issue and signing up to their five steps framework¹¹. Lancaster has committed to this framework and will work with both our Students' Union and colleagues around the sector to tackle this national issue. We believe that our involvement in the framework will support our efforts to reduce Lancaster's gap in attainment between White and BAME students by providing a network in which we can learn from and work with us to develop national approaches to the problem and help us to evaluate current practices at Lancaster and establish forms of best practice.

University Academy 92 (UA92): Lancaster has founded, together with industry partners, a new higher education initiative in Manchester opening in 2019 – University Academy 92 (UA92) - <https://www.ua92.ac.uk/home>. As well as continuing to support UA92 in the development of their portfolio and strategy, Lancaster will work in close partnership with UA92 on the delivery of activity to WP students and in the sharing of best practice. Both partners bring different experiences and opportunities and by working together we can reach a wider range of students and provide them with an enhanced programme of activities to support their attainment in their current studies and their progression to H.E. We believe that by working together to share best practice and by offering shared staff development opportunities we can learn from each other to the benefit of all our students. In particular we believe that our work with UA92 will support OfS's efforts to increase the percentage of students recruited from POLAR4 quintile 1

¹¹ 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students attainment at UK universities: #closing the gap', Universities UK and NUS, May 2019

neighbourhoods to HE and subsequently to reduce the gap in attainment between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students. In addition, by learning from UA92's new approach to curriculum and enrichment development, we believe there are lessons that can be brought back to Lancaster to support our retention of students and help us to improve our efforts in reducing the gap in retention in particular between our POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students.

Lancaster University School of Maths, in association with Cardinal Newman College: The Department for Education have recently approved the pre-opening stage for a new Maths school led by the University and Cardinal Newman College in Preston. The School of Maths will deliver outstanding achievement and focus on widening participation, by building on existing successful work to target disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. Lancaster will provide support to both staff and students within the School of Maths including bespoke residentials, study skills workshops, EPQ support, networking events with Lancaster academics, PhD students and alumni, business and industry partners, CPD for staff and input into curriculum development. In addition, we will work with Cardinal Newman College and the School of Maths to deliver outreach activities to WP students in Lancashire as part of the new Central Lancashire Maths Hub. The hub will identify and nurture those students with an aptitude for maths and support them to develop this and progress onto further study in Maths or a maths-related subject. A key role of the school and the activity delivered by the hub will be to raise student attainment at each stage of their educational journey. As we currently in the pre-opening of the school we will look to set a raising attainment target for post 16 in time for the next A&P plan in 2025-26. In addition, we believe that our work with the School of Maths will not only support the OfS in its ambitions to increase the number of under-represented students studying at higher tariff institutions but to also increase the number of students from POLAR4 quintile 1 studying at Lancaster by working with this group from an early age and providing them with additional opportunities to engage with Lancaster academics and students to better understand the options available to them and providing them with the key skills need to succeed in HE.

Realising Opportunities: Lancaster is part of Realising Opportunities (RO), a collaboration of research-intensive universities working with shared objectives to support the OfS in eliminating the national gap in entry rates at higher-tariff providers between the most and least under-represented groups. RO also contributes to our own strategic aim to improve access to Lancaster from LPN, BAME and disabled students. The programme is underpinned by robust evaluation, undertaken by independent evaluators, with a theory of change model using narrative, empirical research and causality evaluation types to evidence impact.

National Collaborative Outreach Programme: Lancaster is a member of the both the Lancashire and Cumbria National Collaborative Outreach Programmes (NCOP), Future U and Hello Future. As a member of both NCOPs, we work collaboratively with other local HE providers in order to support widening access for under-represented groups across our regions. We will continue to work closely with both NCOP partnerships to deliver existing collaborative outreach activity through both NCOP Outreach Hubs, as well as sharing details of institutional outreach activity to support all regional schools and colleges to access a wide range of HE outreach. Working through the hubs provides opportunities for collaboration with a broader range of partners, such as the county council, local enterprise partnership, employers and third sector organisations to enhance the impact and reach of outreach activity. Collaboration through these partnerships will support activity that aims to close the gaps in access for specific groups under-represented in higher education, linking to national but also regional priorities. Specific aims will be developed for this work, using evidence (e.g. regional outreach mapping) alongside county-wide data on HE progression. For Cumbria, collaborative activity will prioritise care-experienced students, disabled students and older learners living in low participation neighbourhoods. For Lancashire, collaborative activity will prioritise students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2, care-experienced students and disabled students. As a group, we will continue to analyse

and review the needs of the students within our local region and where gaps or needs are identified, we will work collaboratively with others to address this as appropriate.

Associated Colleges and North West HE providers: We have had a long relationship of collaborative working with our two local associated colleges, Blackpool & the Fylde College and Blackburn College. This has been an important relationship over the years in supporting local students from a WP background to progress into higher education. We will continue to work closely with both colleges to support their current FE and HE students as well as those in the local community to access additional learning support, advice and guidance and enrichment opportunities. This work will play a key role in our efforts to support more students from low participation neighbourhoods, students from BAME backgrounds (in particular South-East Asian) and mature students to progress onto HE. Lancaster has worked in partnership with HEI' and FECs across Lancashire and Cumbria for many years to share best practice, deliver activity to prospective students and under-represented groups and to support the CPD of staff. We will continue to work with local partners on regional activity across Lancashire and Cumbria whilst also exploring opportunities for greater collaborative working with HEIs and FECs across the North West. For example, we are working with UA92 on joint delivery of outreach activity and staff CPD alongside ongoing work Lancaster is undertaking to support the establishment of this new venture. We are also in conversations with the University of Liverpool to explore options for joint working and sharing of best practice to the benefit of students and staff.

The Service Children's Progression Alliance (SCiP): The SCiP Alliance works nationally to improve the outcomes of young people from military families. The Lancashire and North West hub is led by the University of Central Lancashire and will work to build a collaborative programme that engages young people from military families with HE outreach activity. Through the Lancashire and North West SCiP Alliance Hubs, we will work collaboratively with other HEIs across the region to engage young people from military families. In addition to our work with the SCiP we are currently finalising plans to sign the Armed Forces Covenant (this will be completed by 31st August 2019). The covenant will outline the support we will offer to both those currently serving in the Armed Forces or the Reserves as well as children for military families to aid their progression into HE such as residentials, key skills and academic workshops, revision boot camps and IAG events for parents and carers. We believe our work with the SCiP and the Armed Forces Covenant will support the raising of attainment of these students and their subsequent progression into HE.

Teacher University Research Network: Our Teacher University Research Network (TURN) brings together teachers in schools and colleges with academic and professional services staff at the University to offer training and development opportunities. TURN has recently begun work with [The PTI](#) to bring subject staff together with academics to further school and college staff knowledge and understanding in their subject area. This approach provides school and college staff with the skills and confidence to find a solution to their classroom problems via research and reignite their own passion for teaching and learning in order to inspire generations of young people. Research suggests that investment in enhancing teachers' skills is one way to achieve gains in pupil achievement (Sutton Trust 2011). The evidence increasingly points to the importance of 'teacher quality' in shaping outcomes. The Social Mobility Commission report (2016: viii), drawing on this research, observes that: *'For poor children, the difference between a good and poor teacher is equivalent to one year of learning. But schools in poorer areas are more likely to have more unqualified teachers, less likely to have teachers with an academic degree in a relevant subject and they have higher turnover.'* The report suggests the value of improving both teachers' capacity regarding subject specific knowledge and their skills in delivering careers advice in terms of helping to close the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged young people.

Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre: The Chaplaincy Centre is an independent charity located in the centre of campus, welcoming students from all faiths. The University has recently appointed a multi-faith Spiritual Care Co-ordinator to provide additional support to students via the Chaplaincy Centre. The post is managed by our Student Based Services team and is integrated into other student centred provision.

Lancashire County Council: As well as financial and pastoral support for care-experienced students studying at Lancaster, we are working in partnership with Lancashire County Council (LCC) and local HEIs to deliver a programme of support for care-experienced individuals so they are able to make informed decisions about higher education and overcome barriers to progression in Lancashire. Following effective consultation with LCC's Young Apprentices (a scheme run by the County Council to employ care-experienced young people to undertake work experience and feedback on their experience as a service user), provision has been developed into three distinct strands: information, advice and guidance for care-experienced young people aged 18 and above; a project aimed at young people in Years 9-11 to introduce higher education at an early stage in the student journey; and CPD opportunities for foster carers and social workers.

In addition to our work with LCC and other HEIs we are currently finalising plans to sign the Care Leavers Covenant and to take the Stand Alone Pledge. We will have completed the process for the covenant and the pledge by October ready to be announced as part of National Care Leavers Week 'Reach for the Sky' which takes place from the 24th to the 31st October 2019. By signing both the pledge and the covenant we are making a public commitment to supporting both care experienced and estranged students throughout all areas of the University. As both the covenant and pledge is a public declaration of an institutions openness to and commitment to care experienced and estranged students, we believe that our commitment to the covenant and pledge, along with our work with LCC, will encourage current Lancaster students from these backgrounds to come forward to seek support and help if needed at an early point in the process. In addition, we hope that prospective students will identify with Lancaster as an institution who will support them to achieve their goals by offering the additional support and understanding that may be required for students from these backgrounds. Our aim is to ensure all students, regardless of background, can achieve their goals and are supported on every part of that journey.

MAKE: Run in collaboration with the Creative Learning team at [The Dukes](#), the MAKE programme uses the creative arts to engage with WP students, hard to reach communities and those groups under-represented in HE. For example, Our Voice works with the local Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community to engage girls in education and support their journey to university. The project has included a support group for parents and young people from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Community to produce a documentary / educational film highlighting the challenges girls face in remaining within education. Supported by the Lancashire County Council Ethnic Minority / GRT Achievement Service and Lancaster and Morecambe College, the programme continues to deliver a peer led educational theatre programme in schools and traveller sites in Lancaster, Morecambe, Wyre and East Lancashire. Workshops focus on key issues surrounding barriers to education, equality and diversity. The peer led model provides a mechanism for raising awareness for progression routes into education, providing continued visits to the College and University and allowing the girls to achieve nationally recognised accredited qualifications through the delivery of the Arts Awards. The girls have also produced a workshop for practitioners on things to consider when working with the GRT community. The project has gone from strength to strength over the years and has seen a number of the girls return to education, including progression to HE study at institutions around the UK.

Financial support

We believe that targeted financial support through scholarships and bursaries is an effective means of helping students with lower household incomes as they are more likely to experience financial pressures during their studies. Research has shown that students who benefit most from direct financial aid in terms of

their progression and attainment are those from low-income families with higher prior attainment¹². We therefore believe that our bursaries and scholarships will support the retention, attainment and ultimate progression of our students from lower household incomes. Our work with CFE Research on the impact of financial support using the OfS's model for evaluation (further detail in section 3.3) will be used to test this theory. If the outcomes of our evaluation suggests that our theory of change is incorrect, or that a change to our financial support should be introduced, the University will work with the Students' Union to facilitate and we will liaise with OfS on when this should be introduced within the lifetime of this A&P plan.

For 2020-21 onwards, the complete bursary and scholarship scheme for WP students will comprise:

- A Lancaster Bursary of £1,000 per annum for all UK students from households in the ≤£30,000 income bracket.
- An annual scholarship of £1,000 for all UK students admitted with at least AAA at A level or equivalent from non-A level qualifications and at least five A's/grade 7 at GCSE.
- A scholarship of £2,000 for the first year of study to any UK students admitted with at least A*A*A at A level or equivalent from non-A level qualifications and at least five A's/grade 7 at GCSE.

In addition to the support detailed above the University provides additional support for care- experienced and including estranged students:

- A £2,000 bursary per annum for all care leavers and estranged students
- A shopping voucher worth £50
- A laundry card preloaded with £20
- £20 print credit
- A graduation bursary to support costs associated with graduation such as gown hire and photography
- A graduation bursary of £500 (paid in the June of a student's final year) to support students with additional costs faced when first leaving university such as travel to interviews and deposits for accommodation

3.2 Student consultation

Student voice has been an important aspect of Lancaster's WP work for many years, and our strategy and approach outlined in this document has evolved as a result of engaging with our students. As well as having student representation via the Students' Union on our Widening Participation Advisory Group, we have undertaken focus groups with different groups of students, both current and prospective, to ensure we understand the concerns, needs and barriers for those students over time. In addition, our Students' Union and its elected officers (both full and part-time) recorded a series of vlogs from current students to capture their experiences and stories of HE.

Feedback from our Students' Union and the wider student body has demonstrated broad support for our proposed whole provider strategy, theory of change model and activities. In particular, there has been wide support for our commitment to: addressing the BAME attainment gap and joining the UUK/NUS BAME Framework; supporting care experienced and estranged students; and our work to further include a range of student voices in WP strategy and activity development at Lancaster. As a result of feedback gathered from the Students' Union and students during the course of our consultation we have agreed to change the timings of payments of scholarships and bursaries and expanded the provision of support for care experienced and estranged students. The introduction of our student juries is the result of student suggestions on how we can better engage them in future. Both the Lancaster

¹² *Higher Education bursaries: distribution and impact (report for participating universities)*, Gill Wyness (UCL Institute of Education and Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics)

Access and Success Programme and the GROW Your Future Programme are influenced by feedback from students on the need to make activities clearer and more accessible. Activities in both programmes were designed following comments from students in our focus groups around the support they would like to have receive at different stages of the student lifecycle.

In light of this new A&P plan, we have reviewed our current practices around student engagement and capturing the student voice in our work and have begun work to embed the following additions to our current work with students. As well as using these functions to gather comment and feedback from students, we will use them as a means of sharing back to students changes we have made as a result of their involvement.

WP Committee and Student Advisory Boards: We will be laying down our current Widening Participation Advisory Group (section 3.4 for detail) and replacing this with a WP Committee. This committee will continue to have representation from the Students' Union in the form of an elected student officer and a full-time member of staff (to provide support to the elected officer and continuity across the years). In addition, we are creating a Student Advisory Board to inform, advise and guide the WP Committee on all aspects of the University's WP strategy and operational plans. This board will be made up of representatives from each of our four faculties and will include a diverse representation of those with protected EDI characteristics. The board will receive ongoing support and training opportunities to further their development and understanding in this area and will be a crucial part of all WP developments at Lancaster, including future A&P plans, annual impact reports and evaluation self-assessments.

Student Juries: We will hold a termly Student Jury as a forum to engage with students and capture their opinions and insights into the University's WP strategy, as well as the activities proposed to tackle barriers and gaps in performance. Themed around a different question for each jury, students will be provided with a series of materials and resources prior to the event which will support them to take part in discussion and debate during the event. A series of recommendations on the agreed topic being debated will be fed back to the WP Committee and Student Advisory Board (see section 3.4) for further consideration. The first Student Jury will focus on access from LPNs and the second will consider the BAME attainment gap.

Focus Groups: We will continue to run annual focus groups with the following groups of students to understand their needs, concerns and barriers regarding accessing HE, success whilst at Lancaster and opportunities to succeed once they leave:

- Students from LPNs
- White males from LPNs
- Disabled students (including those with mental health or learning difficulties)
- Students who identify as LGBTQ+
- Students who are care-experienced or estranged from their families
- BAME students
- Mature students
- Students who entered Lancaster with a BTEC, Access or other alternative qualification.

These groups will also be asked to comment on plans and ideas for future activity development. In addition, working with the University's Educational Research department and the Students' Union, students will receive training in and be supported to undertake action research with the purpose of informing strategy and activity in future years. Topics and purpose of each action research project will be led by the students and feedback will be presented to the WP Committee.

Prospective Students: As part of our ongoing work around student consultation, we also believe it is important to capture the views, thoughts and opinions of prospective students. As such, in partnership with the Students' Union, we will host an annual Student Advocacy Day. Working with schools, colleges and external organisations such as Youth Parliament and The Challenge we will bring students together for a day of discussion around advocacy and change and as part of this will work with students to shape Lancaster's future WP strategy and gain their insights into activities and projects.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

We know that a strong evaluation strategy that has a clear framework and design is key to ensuring we are conducting robust and meaningful evaluation that is proportional to different types of A&P activity and context. Evaluation is at the forefront of our work to ensure we can make an impact with those groups we are trying to reach, and that strategic and financial decisions are evidence led. After undertaking a self-assessment of our approach to evaluation (using the OfS's evaluation self-assessment tool) we scored 80 out of a total of 96. We are aware that while there are strengths to the work we do, there are of course areas for improvement. In particular, ensuring consistent practice across all projects is a primary driver for further developing our approach and supporting our findings with evidence backed by data. Developing a theory of change/logic chain will ensure that projects are guided by clear aims and objectives that are aligned with the universities overarching strategy for access and participation activity and which can be clearly evaluated on their impact and outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation activities will be underpinned by theory and evidence as identified in the theory of change.

Programme design, evaluation design and implementation

Having previously worked with [Researching Equity, Access and Participation](#) (REAP) based within Educational Research at the University, we have now appointed [CFE Research](#) as our lead consultant and evaluators. For the past 10 months we have worked with CFE Research on the development of a bespoke evaluation framework that aligns specifically with Lancaster's A&P plan aims and objectives. This framework identifies key measures for assessing impact using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, CFE Research are supporting the University to review our current evaluation resources and have worked with us to develop a series of new resources for projects to use alongside our new framework. This includes: a bank of evaluation questions for different stages of the lifecycle, allowing the University to make comparisons across projects; templates for data sharing; and training materials on evaluation.

Three key projects have been identified for a detailed review in 2018-19, one from each stage of the student lifecycle. These are Summer Schools (access) due to the high costs associated with running this type of activity; Maths support aimed to aid retention and attainment (student success) due to the time intensive nature of this activity; and a review of the current programme of activities offered by Careers for WP students to ensure these are still impactful and fit for service (progression). This detailed review has provided the basis for the development of the evaluation framework and an opportunity to develop new evaluation materials as part of the evaluation pilot phase. These materials will ensure we are able to quantify our findings and assumptions with statistical data alongside more qualitative, opinion-based narratives. A joint workshop has been scheduled for 26th June 2019 to present the evaluation framework and new quantitative and qualitative evaluation materials. This pilot phase with the three projects mentioned above will allow us to identify and address any concerns or issues before implementing the framework across all projects in the 2019-20 academic year. The model will then be rolled out to all projects from 1st August 2019, within-depth training for all projects delivered in autumn 2019. This will introduce project leads to the model, framework and resources, and demonstrate how this can be applied to their own activities.

We have long believed in the positive impact financial support can have on student's retention, attainment and progression. To understand the impact of different types of financial support, CFE Research have begun a longitudinal review of our financial support offer and its impact on students using the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit. This review looks at both statistical and qualitative data and evidence and began in February 2019 with an open survey of UG students receiving a variety of financial support from the University. Initial findings from the survey showed that awareness of financial support from Lancaster varied, with 71% of students being aware of the Lancaster Bursary but only 50% of our scholarships when applying. There is work to do to review the dissemination of information to prospective students to ensure more people are aware of the support available. The survey also showed that 50% of students stated that the amount they received was in line with their expectations and a third of students stated they received more than they expected. 40% of those surveyed stated that the financial support available was important in their decision making process about which university to go to whereas another 40% stated that this information made no difference to their decision making process. However, two thirds attached more importance to financial support when it came to supporting their retention. This is an area we wish to explore further in the second stage of the evaluation. A follow-up survey is planned for the academic year 2019-20.

A report will be created at each stage of the process, outlining findings to-date and next steps. The report from the first stage of this work has been shared with our Widening Participation Advisory Group and our new Monitoring and Evaluation Group will be reviewing these findings at their first meeting of the autumn term. Following this initial assessment, we will be conducting focus groups and one to one interviews with students receiving support. We will also be tracking: their progress from their current year of study to the completion of their degree; their final attainment outcomes and their progression into further study or employment once they have completed their undergraduate degree at Lancaster. To provide a statistical comparison, we will compare the progress and outcomes of students receiving differing levels of financial support to see if the amount received also makes an impact on retention, attainment and progression.

Learning to shape improvements

As a research-intensive university we believe in the power and impact of learning and sharing to inform and improve practice. As well as looking for opportunities to contribute to the OfS's Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes, we will be running our own evidence and impact exchange for staff at the University and partners in the local area. This will include a revamp of our current WP forums to provide an opportunity for those in attendance to share best practice and provide peer reviews of each other's work. The forums will also be opened up to students, in particular those members of the Student Advisory Board (see section 3.2). Forums will take place once a term and also provide a space for staff and students to input into strategy design and explore opportunities for collaborative working with those groups identified as key priorities by both the OfS and the University. The first of our new style forums will take place on Wednesday 30th October 2019. In addition we will host sharing practice and sector insight seminars into different aspects of WP as part of the University's [Institute of Curriculum Enhancement](#) which will formally launch on 2nd July 2019. We will host our first event on WP in the summer term of the 2019-20 academic year.

All projects are required to submit an evaluation report each year showcasing their evaluation finding and learning from the past year of their project. In the past these reports have been reviewed by the University's Widening Participation Advisory Group and projects have been required to show how they have changed their activity based on their evaluation findings to receive future funding. Moving forward, these reports will be reviewed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Group and Student Adviosry Board who will provide a report to the WP Committee. Reports will be made available internally to all staff and to the Students' Union. Reports and full evaluation findings will be shared with CFE Research who will also report back to the WP Committee on key areas they should be aware of. Mid-year meetings are held with all projects to review

progress and findings to date so that appropriate in-year changes to projects can be made to ensure that we are learning from our work and making improvements at all stages of the process. Our Staff WP Moodle platform provides a depository for evaluation and training materials and resources. In addition the site is used to support action learning between projects This provides projects with the facility to engage with others involved in WP activity, to share findings from work they are doing, to ask questions of others working with similar groups and to look how they can continue to reflect on and make improvements to the work they are doing.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Widening participation at Lancaster is currently overseen by the Widening Participation Advisory Group (WPAG) chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. However, following changes in staffing at Lancaster and the new timeframe for the A&P plan, we will be laying down the current format of WPAG and replacing this with the following structure. This new structure should be in place for the start of the 2019-20 academic year.

WP Committee: Chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development), this group will have overall responsibility for WP at Lancaster and will provide an annual report to Senate and Council on progress to date against targets, changes to the strategy and progress made in embedding WP across the University using our WP theory of change model to measure success. The WP Committee will also be responsible for allocating funding for WP activity at Lancaster and monitoring progress of these activities, along with the University's overall progress in relation to our A&P plan targets. The WP Committee enters a signed service level agreement with all projects that receive the funding and retains the right to make changes to projects or the use of funding by projects if it becomes evident that our progress against targets is worsening and/or projects are not achieving their stated aims and objectives. The committee will receive regular updates from the Monitoring and Evaluation Group on our performance to-date in achieving our targets and will take urgent action to address any drops in rate of progress which may result in Lancaster not achieving its targets in time or a worsening in performance in all areas, not just those with a current target. If the committee do discover a drop in performance, they will establish an in-year action plan to address this and will set up an A&P review panel to monitor progress at bi-monthly intervals. This will be in addition to the annual OfS self-assessment evaluation. The WP Committee will be made up of representatives from senior management, admissions, student based services, academic departments and the Students' Union.

Student Advisory Board: Our Student Advisory Board (SAB), made up of representatives from each of our four faculties will include a diverse representation of those with protected EDI characteristics. The SAB will comment on and advise the WP Committee on the University's WP strategy and related operational plans. Members of SAB will undertake training around WP, social mobility and national trends, and the OfS data dashboard allowing them to comment on and shape future strategy developments, A&P plans, impact reports, evaluation frameworks and activity plans. The SAB will be jointly chaired by the WP Committee Secretary and the Students' Union representative to the WP Committee.

Monitoring and Evaluation Group: The Monitoring and Evaluation group will provide expert and detailed review and analysis of our progress against targets for the WP Committee to help them make informed decisions. As well as tracking performance against targets, the group will look for trends in the data, explore areas for development and undertake continued comparison and analysis of our performance to help shape future targets and priorities for WP. Progress against targets as well as our performance for all groups, across all stages of the lifecycle will be reviewed at each meeting and reports provided to the WP committee as required to ensure we can make timely changes to our plans, processes and activities to achieve our targets and objectives by 2024-25. This group will be responsible for completing the annual self-assessment

evaluation and if required action plans outlining the changes we will be making. These plans will be presented to the WP Committee who will in turn update Senate and Council.

We are aware that the use of data to properly identify those students most in need of support and intervention both pre and post entry can be one of the biggest challenges the sector faces. As such this group will also be responsible for identifying ways in which Lancaster can use data in a smarter and evidence-led fashion, across the student lifecycle to identify and track student engagements and outcomes. The group will also work closely with CFE Research to support the work being undertaken to evaluate WP at Lancaster, act as champions for this work and bring together experts from across the University in statistical analysis, education and social mobility. The group will actively engage with Lancaster's new Social Inequalities Research Centre, who will be represented on the group.

Senate and Council: As governing bodies of the University, an annual report will be presented to Senate and Council on the University's progress to date in achieving its targets and objectives and the outcomes of the annual self-assessment evaluation and if applicable action plans. Where the Monitoring and Evaluation Group find major cause for concern in the University's efforts to meet its targets, additional reports may be made to Senate and Council bringing this to their attention, providing an update on proposed changes to address this and where required seek advice on action to be taken. Council members were consulted on the creation of this A&P plan at their May 2019 away day and approved the University's strategic aims and objectives.

4. Provision of information to students

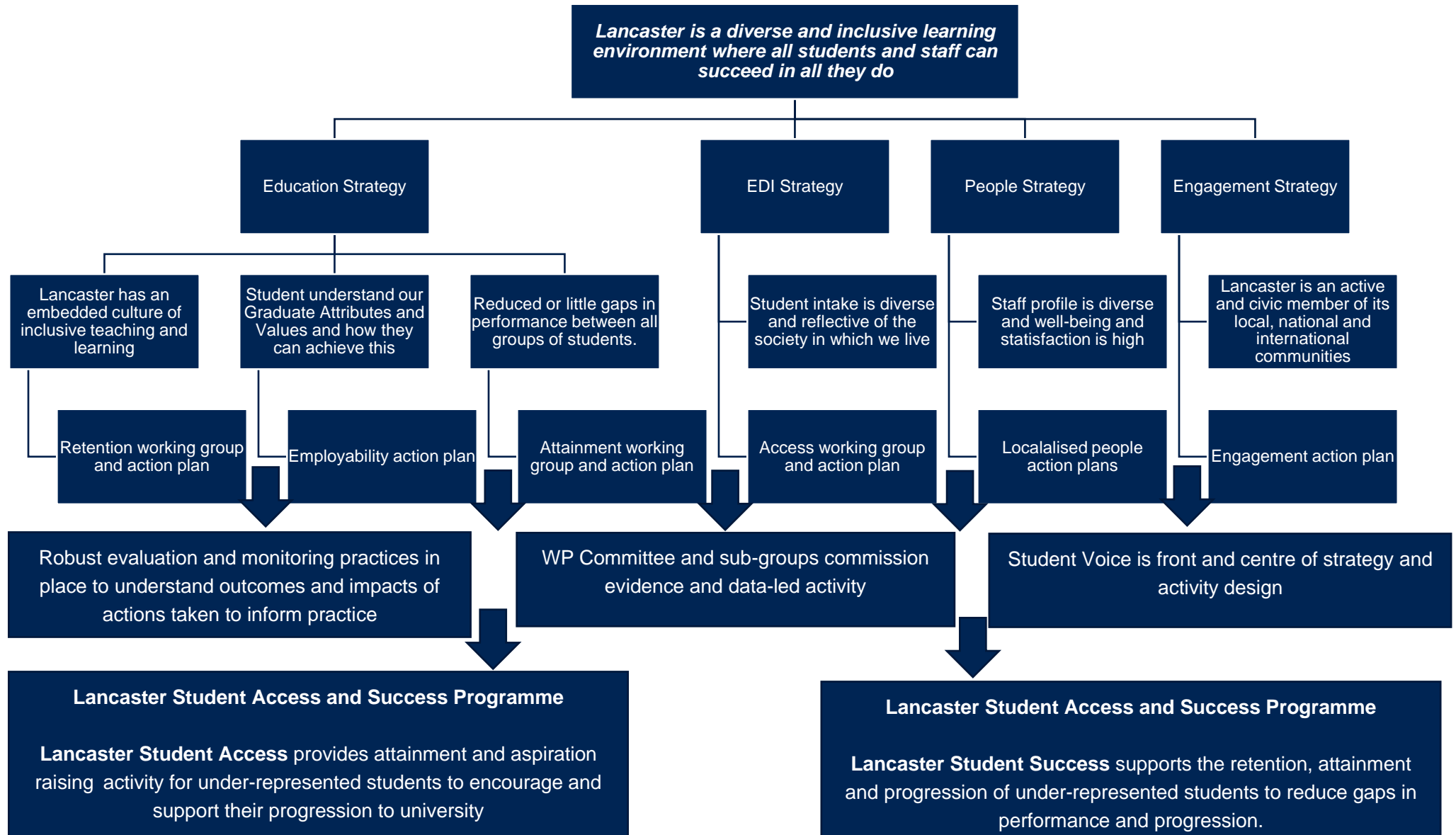
Information on the financial support available to students along with details on fees can be found on our website. This is contained both within the Study pages which are aimed at prospective students and the student funding pages within our student support information for current students. In addition, our admissions team direct prospective students to the relevant webpages when writing to them about their application and our recruitment team provide talks at open days and in schools and colleges across the UK on student funding in general and the support available at Lancaster. Following the initial findings of our longitudinal evaluation into our student funding support, we will be reviewing our methods of presentation of information to ensure more prospective students are aware of the support available.

5. Investment

Details of our forecasted spend for the life of this A&P plan can be found in our accompanying resource plan.

Appendix – Theory of Change Model

Figure



Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,625
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The University of Lancaster

Provider UKPRN: 10007768

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£1,695,000.00	£1,738,560.00	£1,783,210.00	£1,821,510.00	£1,821,510.00
Access (pre-16)	£508,500.00	£521,568.00	£534,963.00	£546,453.00	£546,453.00
Access (post-16)	£1,017,000.00	£1,043,136.00	£1,069,926.00	£1,092,906.00	£1,092,906.00
Access (adults and the community)	£169,500.00	£173,856.00	£178,321.00	£182,151.00	£182,151.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£3,157,015.52	£3,183,555.01	£3,238,384.06	£3,238,384.06	£3,238,384.06
Research and evaluation (£)	£47,500.00	£47,500.00	£47,500.00	£47,500.00	£47,500.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£26,953,195.00	£28,161,355.00	£28,778,990.00	£29,379,665.00	£29,379,665.00
Access investment	6.3%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%
Financial support	11.7%	11.3%	11.3%	11.0%	11.0%
Research and evaluation	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Total investment (as %HFI)	18.2%	17.6%	17.6%	17.4%	17.4%

