

Liverpool Hope University

Access and Participation Plan

2020-2025

1. Assessment of performance

Liverpool Hope is committed to being a collegium and provides a nurturing environment to stimulate and foster the scholarly advancement of its students. It does not seek marked growth in its undergraduate numbers¹ and as such, its mission is reflected in its size, being the smallest of the 11 universities in the North West region and within Liverpool. In 2017/18 the University had 5200 students of which 3900 were studying for first degrees.²

The University takes seriously its responsibilities around access and participation and working towards the Office for Students' strategic aims; regardless of background, each student has a rewarding and successful experience of higher education which transforms them into graduates prepared for making a difference for good in the world, with fulfilling careers.

At the University we monitor, evaluate and understand our data in relation to a range of performance indicators. Our performance in relation to underrepresented groups of students is evaluated using a range of external and internal parameters and the outcomes reported through Equality and Diversity Steering Committee to our University Council; Learning and Teaching Committee also receives the Access and Participation Plan and reports on its implementation which is then reported to University Senate.

For this Access and Participation Plan we have assessed our performance across the student life cycle (access, success and progression) in terms of participation, deprivation, ethnicity, disability, gender and care leavers. We note that in relation to sex only binary data, male/female, is available for analysis. The Plan focuses on identifying the gaps in performance and how these have changed over time. The analysis has largely used the data provided by the Office for Students, unless otherwise stated. Across some of the metrics the numbers are too small to undertake any meaningful analysis, including for the most part, socio-economic data. In other cases, where numbers are small, internal data has been aggregated to ensure individuals can not be identified.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

For access and success, the data has been analysed using participation and deprivation measures. Analysis of socio-economic status has only been possible for progression, as the small numbers for access and success make any analysis meaningless.

Access

Areas of multiple deprivation (IMD)

The University performs well when recruiting students from areas of highest multiple deprivation (IMD quintile 1), averaging around 30% over the past five years. This is above the national picture which shows 22% of 18 year olds are from IMD quintile 1. Recruitment of students from the lowest areas of deprivation (IMD quintile 5) has averaged 16% over the same period.

Prior to 2017-18 the University had fewer students from IMD quintile 2 compared to the proportion across the 18 year old population, but by 2017/18 this gap had closed and shows the University now recruits 20% of its students from IMD quintile 2.

Areas of low participation (POLAR4)

The University is successful in attracting students from Low Participation Areas (POLAR 4). Over the past 5 years the proportion of 18 year olds from the lowest participation areas (quintile 1) averages 21%, compared to the 18 year old national population which averages 18%. At Hope, the average proportional gap between quintile 1 and 5 is -2%, compared to the 18 year old national population which is 19%.

The analysis shows the University is meeting the objectives of the Office for Students Key Performance Measure 1 - Eliminating the gap between the most and least represented areas (KPM1).

Success - Continuation

Areas of multiple deprivation (IMD)

Continuation is an issue for students from areas of higher multiple deprivation (IMD Q1-Q2), where their average continuation rate from year 1 to year 2 is 88%, whilst students from areas of lower deprivation (IMD Q3-Q5) have a higher rate of 92%. This resulted in a gap of 5pp (percentage points) in 2016-17 and averages 4pp over the 5 year period. When disaggregating the quintiles, students from quintile 1 (Q1) have lower rates of continuation (85% in

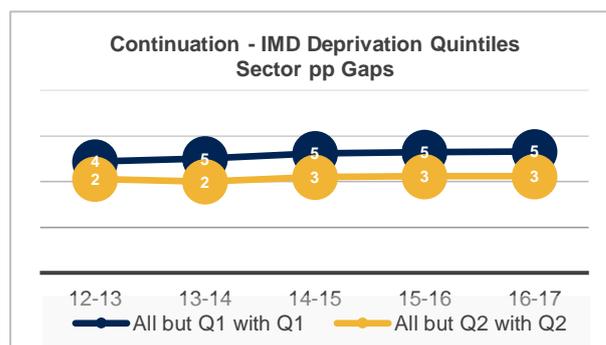
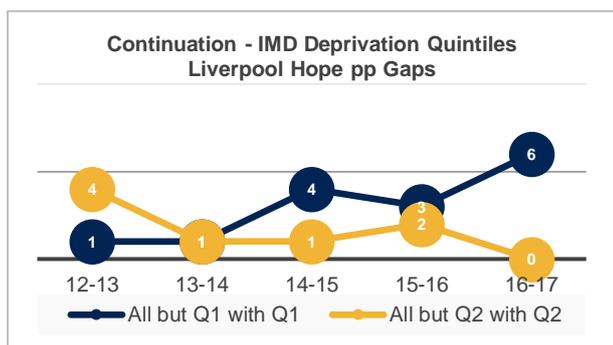
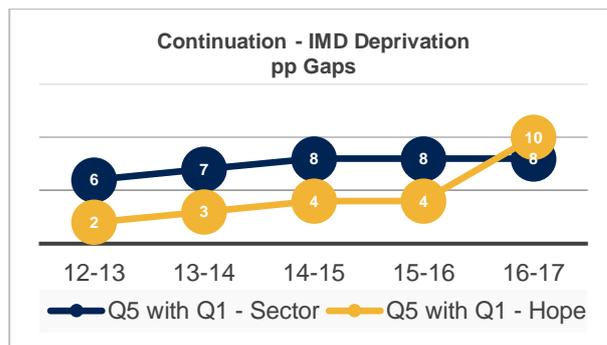
¹ Liverpool Hope University Corporate Plan, 2016-2020

² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-study>

2016-17 resulting in a 6pp gap) than those from quintile 2 (Q2) where the rate was 89% in 2016-17, which closed the gap between students from other quintiles.

Over the 4 year period, when looking at the gaps between Q1/Q2 and others (Q3-Q5), the University performed better than the sector. However the most recent data in 2016-17, shows the gap is increasing and is now the same as the sector. This is also the case when comparing the gap between Q1 and Q5, which has risen above that of the sector in 2016/17 to 10pp, whilst the sector has remained at 8pp for the last two years. However this is not shown to be statistically significant.

When the University compares itself to 5 similar universities, within the 'Benchmark Group'³, it is one of two institutions where the gap in Q1 students, compared to others, has grown during the last year.

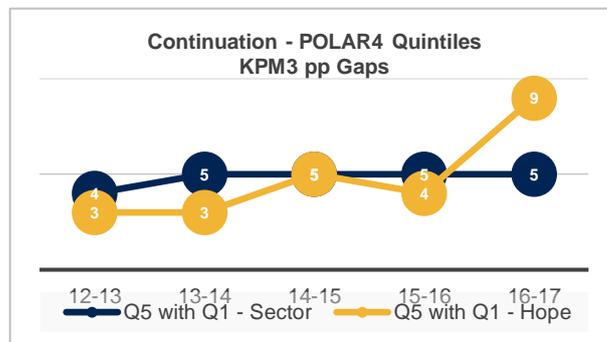


Areas of low participation (POLAR4)

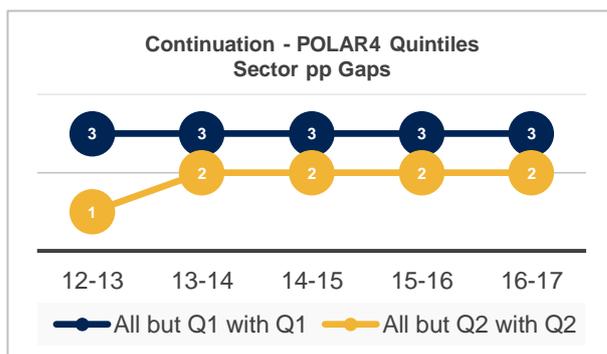
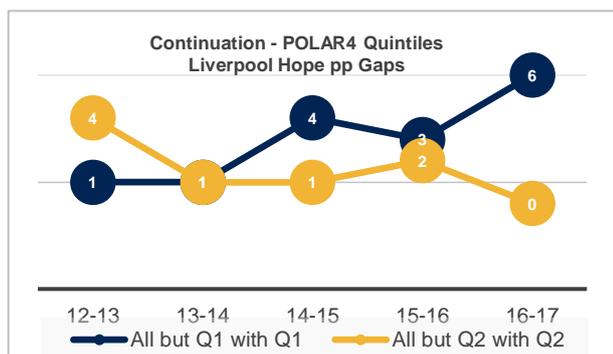
Similarly with areas of multiple deprivation, the University has an issue with continuation across POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 2 compared to quintiles 3 to 5. Disaggregating the data shows the concern is with Q1 and particularly in the gap between students from Q1 and Q5. Over the 4 year period from 2012-13 to 2015-16 the gap remained fairly constant with an average of 3.75 pp, which is better than the sector. However in 2016-17 the gap at Hope increased to 9pp, above that of the sector. The average rate of continuation over the 5 year period, for Q1 students is 87% which compares to 92% for students from the highest areas of participation (Q5).

Analysis of internal data also shows that students from low income backgrounds (<£25,000) who also come from areas of low participation, have some of the lowest continuation rates.

When the University compares itself to the 'Benchmark Group', it is one of two institutions where the gap in continuation for Q1 students, compared to others, has grown during the last year.



This issue is identified by the Office for Students Key Performance Measure 3 -which aims to reduce the unexplained gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups (KPM3).



³ Five similar universities in the Benchmark Group are the Cathedral Group Universities (<https://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/>) of Bishop Grosseteste University, University of

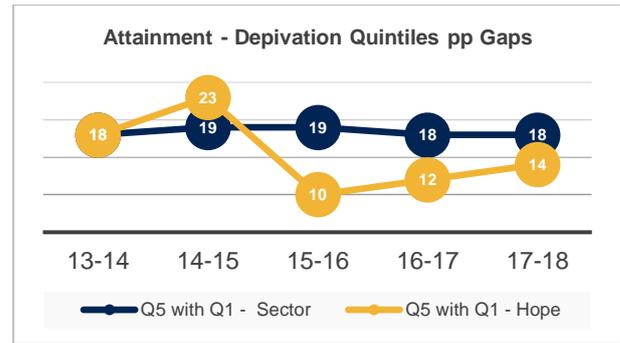
Chester, University of Winchester, York St John University along with Edge Hill University (which sits outside of the Cathedral Group)

Success - Attainment

Areas of multiple deprivation (IMD)

The rate of good degrees for students from IMD Q1 averages at 59%, whilst students from other quintiles attain an average of 70% good degrees. Although there is a clear gap in attainment between those in IMD Q1 compared to Q5, the gap has reduced since 2014-15 when it was 23pp to 14pp in 2017-18. The University must establish a positive trajectory in reducing this gap. Although it is not statistically significant, the University should be mindful of the changing gap for Q2 students, where the rate of good

degrees has fluctuated from 63% in 2013-14 to 65% in 2017-18.



Areas of low participation (POLAR4)

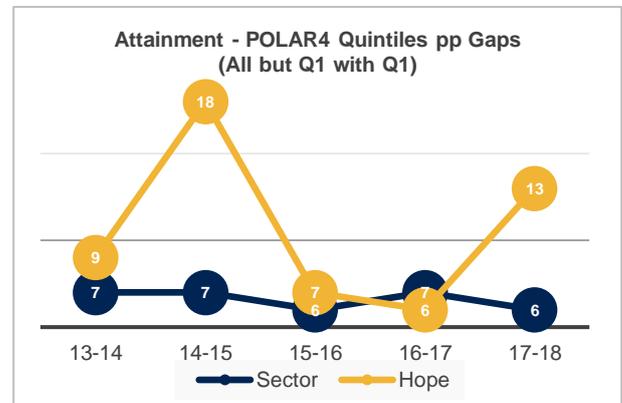
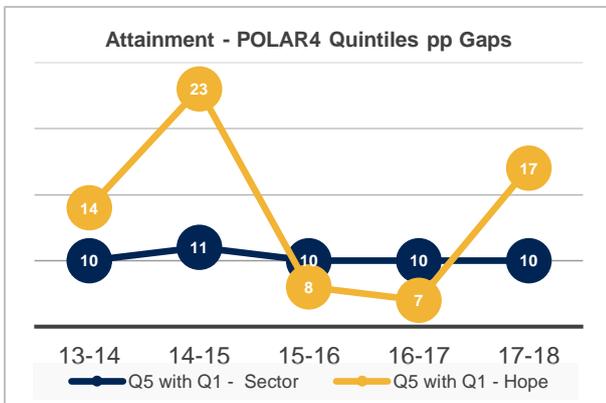
Comparing POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students, for attainment, shows a similar pattern to IMD Q1 and Q5 students, where from 2014/15 to 2016/17 the gap reduced from 23pp to 7pp. However, by 2017/18 it had risen again to 17pp; 7pp above the sector.

The attainment rates followed a positive trajectory between 2014-15 and 2016-17, but dipped in 2017-18 by 3% to show 59% of Q1 students obtaining good degrees. The average rate of good degrees for POLAR4 Q1 students, over the 5 year period, is 57%, compared to the sector which is 71%. When comparing the University to the 'Benchmark Group', Hope is the only institution not to have reduced this gap over the last year.

The attainment gap for POLAR4 Q2 students, compared to others, has fluctuated over the 5 year period, but the gap has closed by 6pp, to show 69% of students achieving a good degree by 2017-18.

Generally, compared to the sector, the University has lower rates of good degrees, across all quintiles. However the percentages have improved over the past 5 years from 64% to 68% in 2017-18. Amongst students from higher participation areas (quintiles 3 to 5) the average rate for good degrees is 69%, whilst the sector is 79%. The average 5 year gap between areas of low and high participation (Q1 and Q2 compared to Q3, Q4 and Q5) is 10pp, whilst for the sector it is 5.5pp.

Although not statistically significant, this gap is a reflection, not only of the lower attainment of low participation groups, but it is also inflated by higher proportions of low participation students at the University compared to the sector.



Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

Areas of multiple deprivation (IMD)

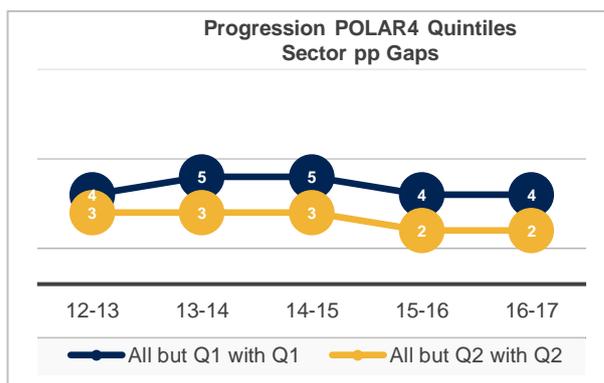
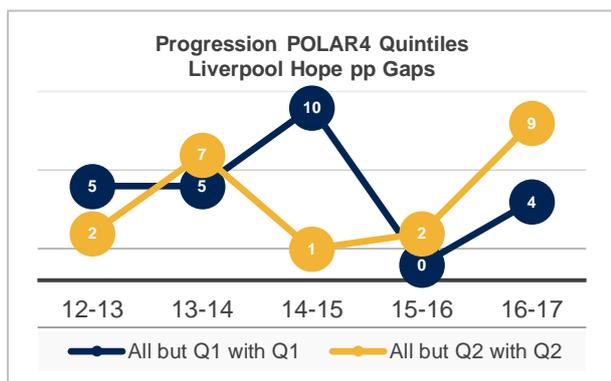
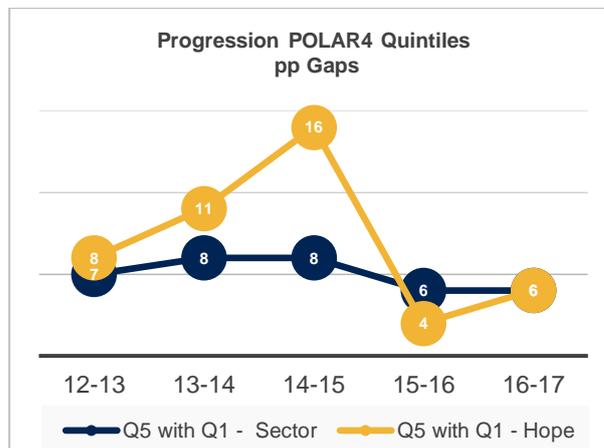
The University performs well in progression to highly skilled employment or further study, having reduced the gap between the most deprived areas (Q1 and Q2) and the least deprived (Q3, Q4 and Q5) by 4pp over the past 5 years, so that by 2016-17 progression for students from Q1 and Q2 reached 77%, compared to students from other quintiles where progression was 82%. Although the sector has improved over the period, the gaps have not reduced at the same rate. The difference between those from Q1 and Q5 also follows this trend, with the gap being 2pp by 2017/18 compared to the sector which was 7pp.

Although the progression rate for Q2 students grew rapidly between 2013-14 and 2015-16, the rate dipped in the last year to 73%, although this is not statistically significant, the University has remained above the sector since 2014-15. The University should remain vigilant of the increased gap in the latest year for Q2 students.

Areas of low participation (POLAR4)

Between 2013-14 and 2015-16, POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 rates of progression to highly skilled employment or further study increased steadily, to reach 77%, but dropped slightly in 2016-17 to 74%. The combined gap for Q1 and Q2 students, when compared to others has risen to 9pp in the latest year. When disaggregating the quintiles the gap for Q2 has increased by 7pp across 5 years and during the latest year the rate fell to 72%. Although the gap for Q1 has narrowed over the 5 year period, it has increased over the past year with a drop in the rate to 76%. When comparing Q1 and Q5, the gap has been falling since 2014/15 when it was 16pp but has risen slightly in the latest year from 4pp to 6pp, matching that of the sector.

This has also been the case for 2 other universities within the 'Benchmark Group'.



Socio- Economic Class (NS-SEC)

When considering progression by socio-economic class (NS-SEC) the rates of highly skilled employment or further study have, on the whole, improved over the past 5 years, with only students from backgrounds of semi routine occupations (NS-SEC 6), having a small decline in employment in the final year (internal University data).

Liverpool Hope Graduate-level Employment or Graduate-level Further Study by Socio Economic Class (%)

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Higher managerial and professional occupations	57%	77%	78%	86%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	56%	85%	79%	80%
Intermediate occupations	50%	84%	83%	86%
Small employers and own account workers	N	89%	N	N
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	60%	83%	87%	88%
Semi-routine occupations	52%	72%	83%	79%
Routine occupations	56%	69%	81%	82%
Never worked and long-term unemployed	N	75%	N	83%
Not classified	N	74%	77%	N

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students

Access

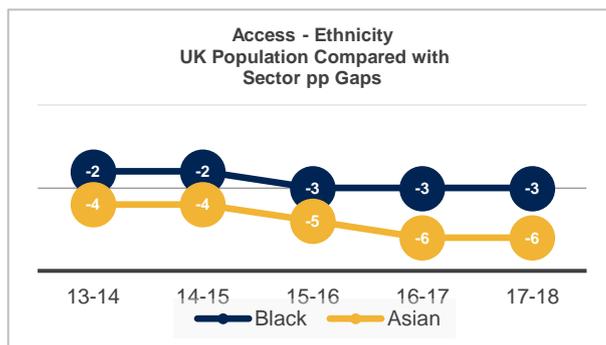
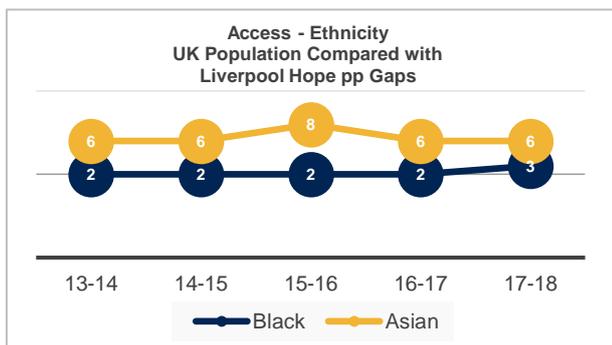
The University has a gap in its proportion of Black and Asian students compared to the proportions across the 18 year old population. The gap is wider for Asian students although it has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 years. Over the five year period, the proportion of Black students averages 1.4% of the student body, whilst the proportion of Asian students is around 1.8%, this compares to the proportions of 3.6% Black and 8.2% Asians in the national 18 year old population.

Whilst the University actively seeks to encourage applications from across the country, we are aware that our most successful recruitment is across Merseyside and in Northern Ireland. From 2013/14, on average, 51% of entrants came from these two areas alone. The number has been increasing steadily since 2014/15 and the latest data shows the proportion now stands at 53%^{4/5}. The student population at Hope therefore reflects the smaller proportions of Black and Asian minorities in these areas compared to the regional and national pictures. At the last census, across the Liverpool region, the population of Asian minorities was 2.1% whilst the population of Black minorities was 1%. When looking at the rest of the North West the Asian population was 6.2% and Black 1.4%. This compares to the rest of England and Wales where the Asian population was 7.5% and Black population was 3.3% (Liverpool City

⁴ HESA (HEIDI data)

⁵ TEF Year 3 Domicile Maps

Council – ONS 2011 Census Data)⁶. Whilst in Northern Ireland, the Asian population was 1.1% and Black minorities made up 0.2% of the population (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2011 Census Data)⁷. The University is within a three mile radius of the Princes Park Council ward where 51.2% of the population were noted as BAME in the 2011 Census and yet only 1.7% of our student population is recruited from this area. This is an area of focus for us as detailed in the collaboration section of this Plan.



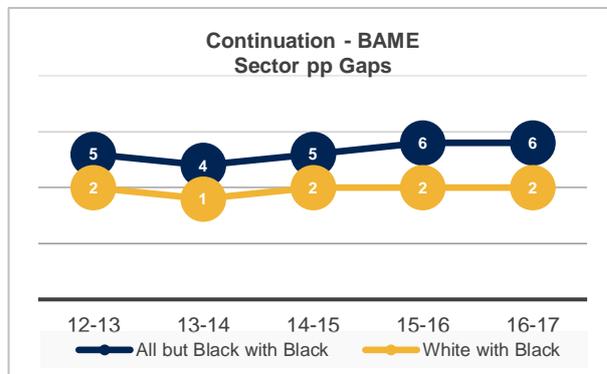
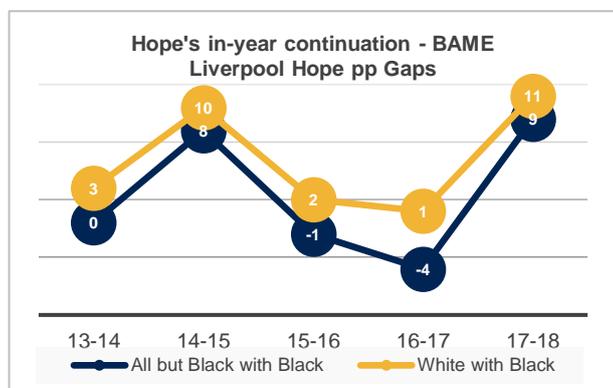
There is little difference in the proportions of students from a mixed ethnic background when compared to the proportions across the 18 year old national population. At Hope, over the 5 year period the proportion averages 3.1% over the 5 years, whilst for the population this is 3.2%.

For students from other backgrounds, the numbers have been too small to publish, until 2017/18 when the data shows there is no difference in the proportion of students from other backgrounds to that of the 18 year old population.

Success - Continuation

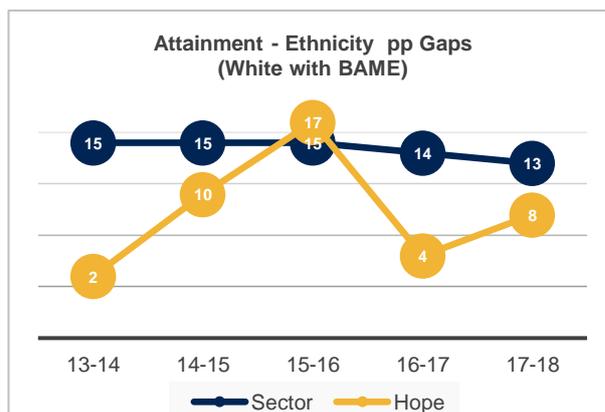
Across the University, students from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds continue from first year to second year at similar rates to White students (89% and 90% respectively). In 2012-13 the gap for BAME students compared to White was 3pp, however this had reduced to zero by 2016-17. Over the past 5 years the University's average gap was 1.2pp, which is less than the sector at 2.4pp.

When looking at the different ethnicity groups, the numbers are too small to publish on the OfS dashboard. However internal data shows the gap in continuation for Black students has been reducing since 2014-15, although it appears to have increased in the latest year to 9pp when compared to non-black students, with the gap being greatest (11pp) specifically with White students.



Success - Attainment

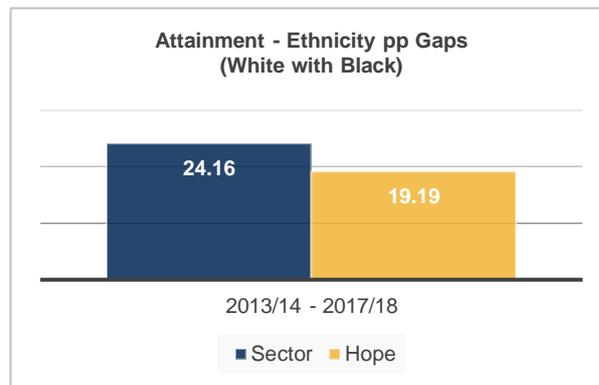
The attainment of good degrees for BAME students fluctuated over the 5 year period. It showed a decline in the early years but by 2015-16 it began to increase, and it is now at the same level (62%) as 5 years previously. The percentage point gap between BAME and non BAME students has followed a similar pattern and for the latest year is shown to be 8pp, also with a 5 year average of 8pp. This is 5pp smaller than the sector in 2017-18 and less than the 5 year average of 14pp.



⁶ <https://liverpool.gov.uk/council/key-statistics-and-data/>

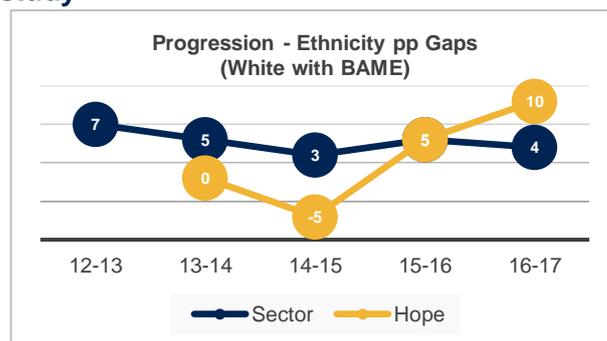
⁷ www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/2011-census-results-detailed-characteristics-statistics-bulletin-28-june-2013.pdf

Looking further into the data, it is difficult to assess attainment by ethnicity as the numbers are too small to publish. Using internal analysis of data for Black students with good degrees and comparing to the sector, it can be seen that there is an attainment gap, which improved in 2015-16 and 2016-17 but has diverged again in 2017-18. Although this is reflected in the *OfS Key Performance Measure 4 - To eliminate the unexplained gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white students and black students by 2024-25 (KPM4)*; caution needs to be given to this data as the numbers of Black students at Liverpool Hope University are extremely small. Looking at the gaps over a 5 year period, the University performs slightly better than the sector with an average gap of 19.19 pp compared to the sector with 24.16 pp.



Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

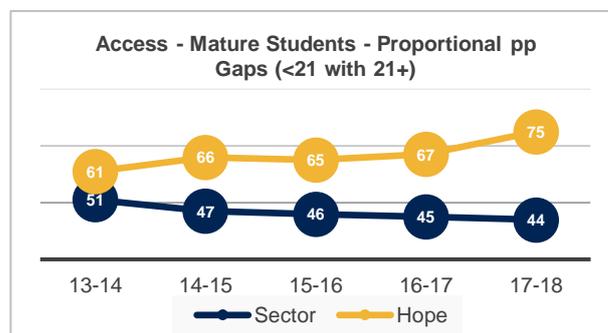
Highly skilled employment or further study rates for BAME students have increased since 2013-14 when they were 50% and by 2016-17 they have matched the sector rate of 70%. However, the gap between BAME and non BAME students has increased since 2014-15 from -5pp to 10pp, which is now considerably above the sector gap at 4pp. Within the 'Benchmark Group' of universities, and the three with available data, only two institutions have reduced the employment gap over the last year.



1.3 Mature students

Access

The University's proportion of mature students, over the past 5 years, averages around 16% compared to the sector which is 27%. The proportion of mature students has been slowly declining since 2013-14 and currently stands at 12.5%, whilst the proportion of younger students has been increasing. Proportionally the University has a gap of 75pp between young and mature students in its undergraduate population. The sector proportional gap is 44pp in 2017/18, with 28% being mature. The University has one of the lowest proportions of mature students across the 'Benchmark Group'.



Success - Continuation

Although the rate of continuation for mature and young students has fluctuated over the past 5 years, it has followed a similar pattern for both. Mature students have continued at an average rate of 87% compared to young students who have been continuing at a rate of 91%. The gap in continuation has reduced gradually over the years to 2pp in 2016-17, which is a reduction of 4pp over the period. Due to small numbers in each age band it is not possible to see if one group is more influential in contributing to the gap than another. When comparing the differences between young and mature across the sector, the University has made better progress in reducing the continuation gap where nationally mature students continue at a rate of 86%.

Success - Attainment

For 4 years up to 2016-17 mature students performed better, gaining more good degrees, than younger students. However in the last year their attainment rate dropped from 69% good degrees to 64%, whilst for younger students the rate of good degrees increased from 66% to 70%. This poorer performance of mature students in 2017-18 has led to an 11pp gap over the 5 year period. Although this data is not statistically significant, the University must be mindful of this result, to ensure that it does not become a developing trend. When comparing the University to the sector, the gap between attainment of young and mature students has consistently remained lower at Hope.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

The gap between young and mature students progressing into highly skilled employment or further study has been removed over the 5 year period and from 2015-16 mature students have been entering highly skilled employment or

further study at a higher rate (85%) than younger students (77%). Since 2014-15 the progression rates for both younger and mature students have been above those of the sector.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

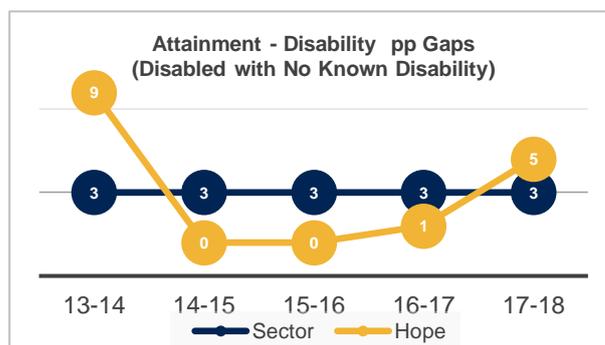
For the past 5 years the proportion of disabled students at the University has averaged 16%, whilst across the sector it is 13%. When looking at the types of disability, the proportion of students with mental health conditions has increased from 2.9% in 2013-14 to 5.4% by 2017-18. The sector has also seen this increase, but at a slower rate, with 3.5% of students having mental health conditions in 2017-18.

Success - Continuation

Continuation rates from year 1 to year 2 for disabled students have consistently remained the same, or better, than those for students without a disability, being on average 93% and 90% respectively. This compares to the sector where the continuation rates for disabled and non-disabled students, although similar, are lower than Hope at around 90%. When looking at the continuation rates by types of disability, where data is available, students with cognitive and learning disabilities, mental health conditions and sensory, medical and physical impairments all continue at a better rate than students with no disabilities.

Success – Attainment

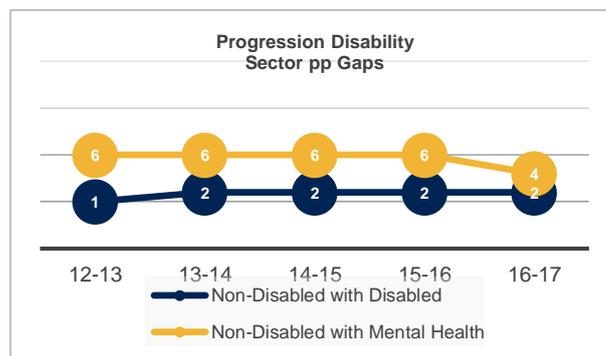
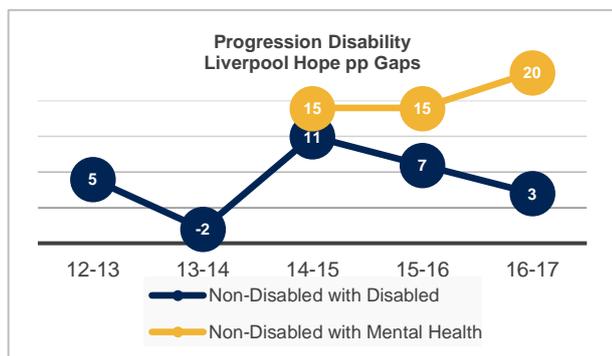
From 2014-15 the rate of good degrees for students with disabilities increased to 66%, where, for the following 4 years it remained, averaging 65%; similar to students without disabilities. However from 2016-17 the gap for attainment of good degrees began to increase when in 2017-18 it rose to 5pp, as good degrees for disabled students dropped to 65% whilst non-disabled students reached 70%. For the 5 year period, across the sector, the gap in attainment has remained fairly constant.



This is identified in the OfS Key Performance Measure 5 - To eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students by 2024-25 (KPM 5).

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

Progression rates have been increasing rapidly over the 5 year period for both disabled and non-disabled students to the extent that by 2016-17, 78% of disabled and 82% of non-disabled were in highly skilled employment or further study, which has gradually closed the gap between the groups to 3pp. However, compared to the sector, the University has a larger difference, which appears to be affected by the rates for students with mental health conditions, where the gap in 2014-15 was 15pp, but had risen to 20pp by 2016-17 when it was 60%, whilst for the sector it was 69%.



1.5 Care leavers

The number of students at the University who declare they are care leavers is a minimal percentage of the total student body, being on average 1% over the past 3 years. The number whose situation is unknown has been a concern and as a result the methods of data collection have been improved to ensure that going forwards we have a more thorough understanding of students who are care leavers. From 2019/20, at registration, students of all age ranges are now required to complete a mandatory question relating to care leaver status. By 2025 there will be a completed set of information about care leavers, which will aid further analysis and comparisons with the sector.

The picture in relation to national data on Care Leavers in HE, is limited. However, a study by Harrison (2017) 'Moving On Up' found that 12% of care leavers had entered higher education by the age of 23 and that care leavers

were more likely to leave HE or fail to achieve a good degree. Over time, as the national picture becomes clearer, and the University has a complete set of data covering a 6 year period, it will be easier to provide a more thorough assessment of what a representative population of care leavers, and their success and progression, should be like for Hope.

Until then, the numbers of students included in the current data set for access, success and progression are a reflection of the small numbers of students who have been identified as care leavers. This makes any meaningful evaluation difficult.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Access

Intersections of Areas of Multiple Deprivation, Low Participation and Ethnicity

When looking at the intersections of multiple deprivation against ethnicity and POLAR 4 against ethnicity for access, the proportions of BAME students from all IMD quintiles and all POLAR4 quintiles are much lower than non BAME students across all IMD and POLAR4 quintiles. This reflects the observations from the BAME data above, where access for Black and Asian students has been identified as an issue.

Intersections of Areas of Multiple Deprivation, Low Participation and Gender

The proportion of females to males across the University has remained around 3:1 for a number of years. This is a reflection of the University's long history where its roots were founded teacher training provision, which has predominately attracted more females. When looking at the intersections of gender with deprivation and low participation, there are higher proportions of females, compared to males across all IMD and POLAR 4 quintiles.

Success - Continuation

Intersection of Deprivation and Ethnicity

The University has an issue with continuation for BAME students from IMD Q1 and Q2 when compared with White students from Q3, 4 and 5. Although the gap has fluctuated over 5 years, it is slowly narrowing, being 5pp in the latest year, which is similar to the sector at 6pp. When looking at the continuation rates for BAME students from IMD Q1 and Q2, the average rate is 87%, whilst for White students from Q1 and Q2 it is slightly higher at 89%. However, the average rate for White students from quintiles 3, 4 and 5 is 92%. Unfortunately, due to small numbers, the data is not available on the OfS dashboard for BAME students from quintiles 3, 4 and 5.

Intersection of Low Participation and Ethnicity

The data highlights issues for continuation with BAME students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2, when in 2016-17 the rate was 85%, compared to White students when it was 87%. This is also the case when comparing quintiles 3, 4 and 5 for both White (90%) and BAME (85%) students. However, a lot of the data is unavailable on the OfS dashboard or too small to make meaningful comparisons, it is clear from earlier analysis that continuation is an issue for both students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 and BAME students.

Intersections of Deprivation, Low Participation and Gender

When comparing areas of multiple deprivation against gender, females have higher rates of continuation compared to males across all IMD quintiles, with the gap becoming wider with the latest set of data.

Similarly with low participation, females have higher rates of continuation than males across all POLAR quintiles.

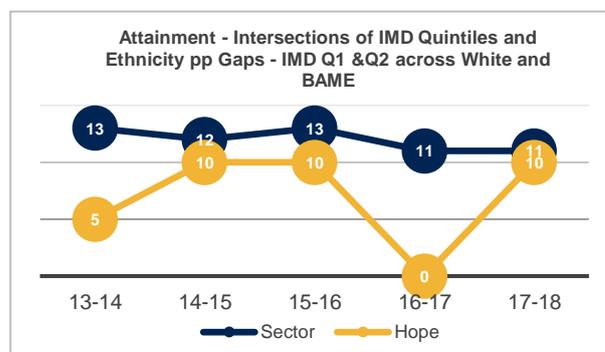
Success - Attainment

Intersection of Deprivation and Ethnicity

When looking at areas of multiple deprivation (IMD Q1 and Q2) and comparing White with BAME students, there is an average attainment gap of 7pp. The gap did close in 2016-17 but has increased to 10pp in the last year, with the attainment rate for BAME students being 55% compared to White students at 64%. This compares to the sector where the average attainment gap is 12pp.

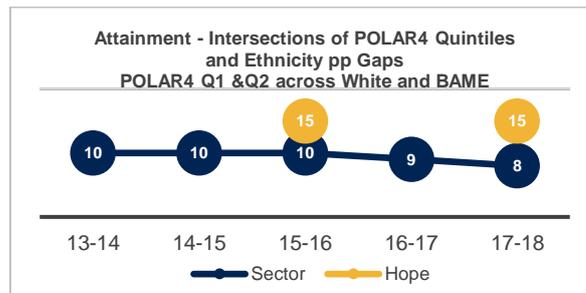
When comparing IMD Q3, 4 and 5 and white students with BAME for attainment, the gap increases to an average of 17pp over 5 years, with a rise to 20pp in the last year with White students having an attainment

rate of 74%. Across the sector the gap averages 20 pp over the same period.



Intersection of Low Participation and Ethnicity

Looking at the intersection of POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 for White and BAME students, the available data shows a similar pattern to the IMD data, where across the 2 years of available data, there is a 15pp gap, when 50% of BAME students achieved good degrees in 2017-18. This is below the national picture where the average gap over 5 years is 9.4pp.



Intersection of Deprivation and Gender

Across the sector there is an issue with males from IMD Q3, 4 and 5 having higher attainment rates than females from Q1 and Q2. At Hope this appeared to be a concern in 2015-16, when the gap was 9pp, however since then the gap has closed with females performing better than males, achieving 66% good degrees in 2017-18 compared to 63% for males. The University must be mindful that the gap has risen slightly to -2pp in the last year.

Intersection of Participation and Gender

The latest data for POLAR 4 and gender shows that there is no gap between attainment of males and females across the different quintiles, however the University should be aware of the increasing gap in 2017-18 between males from POLAR4 Q3, 4 and 5 and females.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

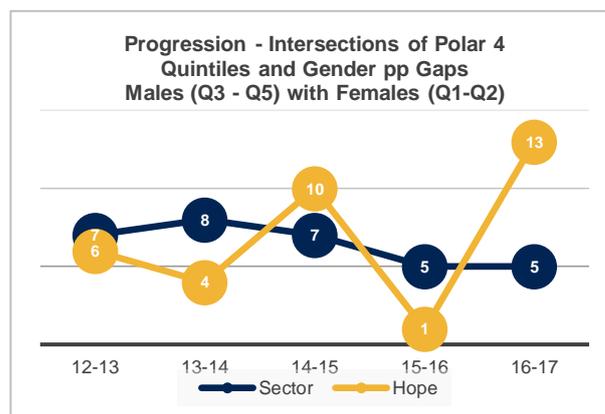
Intersections of Deprivation, Low Participation and Ethnicity

Due to the small numbers of BAME students, intersecting the data with IMD and POLAR 4 quintiles, makes an analysis meaningless.

Intersections of Deprivation, Low Participation and Gender

For progression into highly skilled employment or further study for females from IMD Q1 and Q2, when compared to males from Q3, 4 and 5, the data shows that in 2014-15 the gap was 10 pp but it has started to close and is now 4 pp which is below the sector at 5pp.

The situation is different with progression into highly skilled employment or further study for females from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2. In 2016-17, 72% of females progressed into employment or further study compared to males from Q1 and Q2 where the rate was 78%. For males from Q3, Q4 and Q5 the rate rose to 85%, whilst for females it was 82%. This has resulted in a gap of 13 pp for females from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 compared to males from Q3-Q5, which is 8 pp above the sector.



1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The University has minimal numbers of students who are defined as refugees or travellers. Furthermore we have not previously asked for information about students who are from military families or who have caring responsibilities. We recognise this concern and will be collecting information from students at registration from 2019-20 onwards.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The University is ambitious in its aim to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to access higher education, succeed and be successful both during and after their studies are complete.

2.1 Target groups

Data analysis highlights the need to target gaps in access and participation in the following areas:

Higher Education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

- Success: Continuation in areas of multiple deprivation and low participation
 - IMD Q1 continuation (including intersection with BAME students)
 - POLAR 4 Q1 continuation (including intersection with BAME students))
- Success: Attainment in areas of low participation
 - IMD Q1 attainment
 - POLAR 4 Q1 attainment
- Progression to highly skilled employment or further study in areas of low participation

- POLAR 4 Q1 and Q2 progression to highly skilled employment or further study

BAME Students:

- Access: for Black and Asian students
- Success: Continuation for Black students
- Success: Attainment for BAME students (including intersection with IMD and POLAR Q1)
- Progression to highly skilled employment or further study for BAME students

Mature Students:

- Access to Higher Education

Disabled students:

- Success: Attainment
- Progression into employment for students with mental health conditions

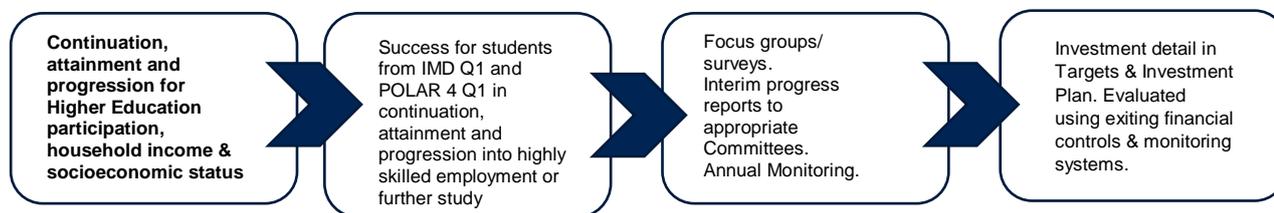
Intersections of Disadvantage – Gender low participation:

- Progression into employment for females from areas of low participation

2.2 Aims and objectives

Strategic Aim 1: To make significant improvements in the success of students from areas of low participation (POLAR 4 Q1) and high deprivation (IMD Q1) in relation to continuation, attainment and progression into highly skilled employment or further study

Summary Logic Chain



Measurable Objectives:

Between 2020 and 2025 the University will carry out targeted activities to achieve the following measurable objectives:

- Continuation following year of entry for students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods to increase so that the gap with other students closes.
- Continuation of BAME students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods will be the same or better than students from other quintiles.
- The number of good degrees achieved by students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods will be equal to or better than students from other quintiles.
- The gap in progression into highly skilled employment or further study between students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods and other quintiles to close.

Measurable Target:

The gap between students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods and other quintiles in relation to continuation will reduce across each year of the Plan, and will be equal to or less than other quintiles by the fifth year of the Plan.

Ref PTS_1 – Percentage difference in continuation rates between IMD Q1 and Q5 students to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

Ref PTS_2 – Percentage difference in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

The gap between students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods in relation to attainment will continue to reduce across each year of the Plan, and will be equal to or less than other quintiles by the fifth year of the Plan.

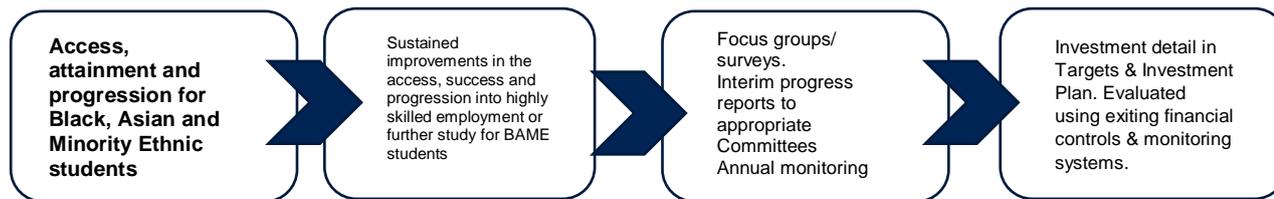
Ref PTS_3 – Percentage difference in attainment rates between IMD Q1 and Q5 students to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

Ref PTS_4 – Percentage difference in attainment rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

The gap between students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods in relation to progression into highly skilled employment or further study will continue to reduce across each year of the Plan, and will be equal to or less than other quintiles by the fifth year of the Plan.

Ref PTP_1 - Percentage difference in progression rates for students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

Strategic Aim 2: To make significant and sustained improvements in the participation, success and progression into highly skilled employment or further study of BAME students



Measurable Objectives:

Between 2020 and 2025 the University will carry out targeted activities to achieve the following measurable objectives:

- i. The participation of students from BAME backgrounds, and in particular Black and Asian students, will improve. The recruitment of Black and Asian students will be proportionally comparable to the 18 year old national population.
- ii. Continuation for Black students, will improve and the gap between Black and White students will narrow and close.
- iii. Attainment for Black students, including those from areas of high deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods, will improve and the gap between those from other ethnicities and backgrounds will narrow and close.
- iv. Students from BAME minorities will progress to highly skilled employment or further study at the same rate as non BAME students.

Measurable Targets:

The recruitment of Black and Asian students will be proportionally comparable to the national 18 year old Black and Asian population at the end of the five year Plan.

Ref PTA_1 - The proportion of Black students will increase and be equal to the proportion of the UK 18 year old Black population by 2024-25

Ref PTA_2- The proportion of Asian students will increase and be equal to the proportion of the UK 18 year old Asian population by 2024-25

Continuation for Black students will improve across each year of the Plan and will be equal to or better than continuation of White students by 2025.

Ref PTS_7 - Percentage difference in continuation rates for Black and White students to reduce to 0pp by 2024-25

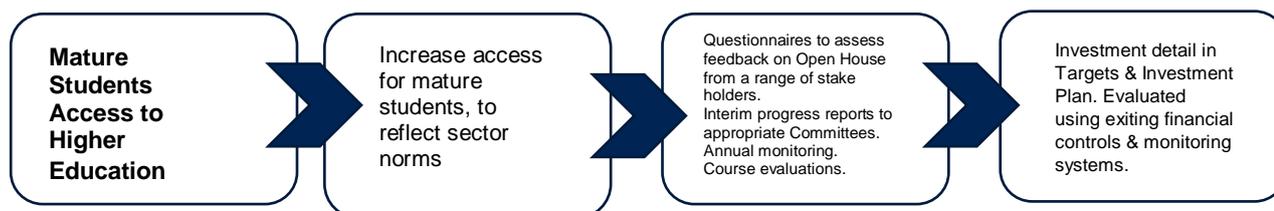
Attainment for BAME students, including those from areas of high deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods, will improve across each year of the Plan and will be equal to or better than attainment for other students by 2025 and the gap between those from other ethnicities and backgrounds will narrow and close.

Ref PTS_5 - Percentage difference in attainment rates for BAME students to reduce to 0pp by 2024-25

Students from BAME minorities will progress to highly skilled employment or further study at the same rate as non BAME students.

Ref PTP_2 Percentage difference in progression into highly skilled employment or further study rates for BAME students to reduce to 0pp by 2024-25

Strategic Aim 3: To increase access for mature students to reflect sector norms.



Measurable Objectives:

An increased proportion of students registered at the University will be in the mature age group.

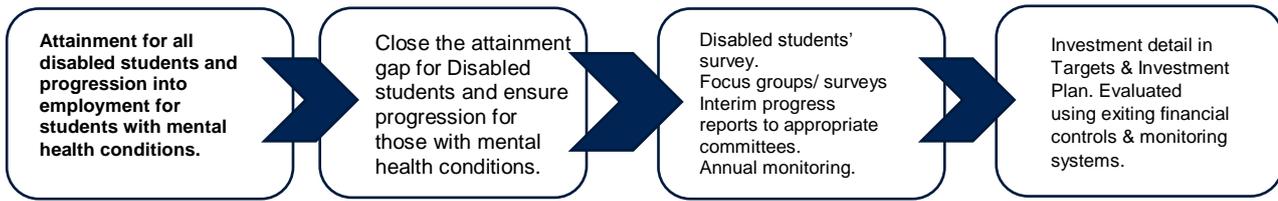
Measurable Targets:

To increase access for mature students to reflect sector norms.

Ref: PTA_3 - The proportion of mature students will increase to sector norms by 2024-25

An increase in opportunities for part time study on UG courses; increased use of blended learning in UG courses.

Strategic Aim 4: To close the attainment gap for Disabled students and ensure progression into highly skilled employment or further study for those with mental health conditions.



Measurable Objectives:

Over the course of the Plan, between 2020 and 2025, the University will close the gap in attainment for disabled students.

Progression into highly skilled employment or further study for students with mental health conditions with increase across each year of the Plan, with the note that disabled students themselves urge caution in this aspect of our ambitions.

Measurable Targets:

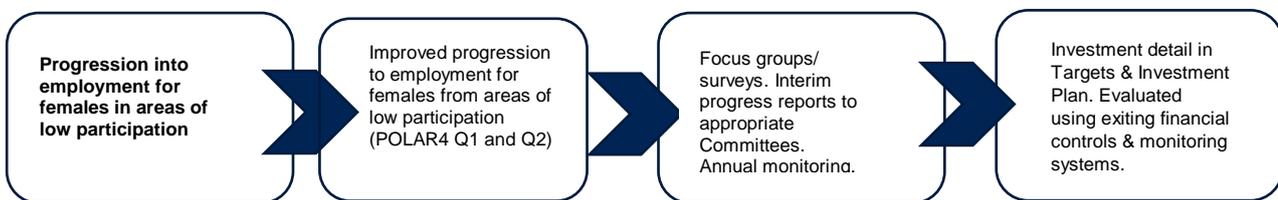
The gap in good degrees for disabled students will improve across each year of the Plan with the gap closing by the end of the five year period.

Ref: PTS_6 - Percentage difference in attainment rates for Disabled students to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

The highly skilled employment or further study gap for students with mental health disorders will narrow in comparison to students with no disability.

Ref: PTP_3 Percentage difference in progression rates for students with mental health conditions to reduce to 0 pp by 2024-25

Strategic Aim 5: To improve progression into highly skilled employment or further study for females in areas of low participation



Measurable Objectives

Females from areas of low participation (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2) will show stronger progression, such that the number of women, from these areas, entering highly skilled employment or further study will be equal to or better than males from areas of higher participation.

Measurable Targets:

The gap in progression into highly skilled employment or further study for female students from areas of low participation will close in each year of the Plan;

Female students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 areas will be equally likely to be in highly skilled employment or further study as males from POLAR Q3-Q5.

Ref PTP_4 Increase progression rates for females from areas of low participation (Q1 and Q2) to be comparable to males from areas of higher participation (Q3-Q5) 2024-25

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The University has strategic measures in place to ensure that we are working towards inclusivity across the Institution at all stages of the student lifecycle. The Liverpool Hope University Learning and Teaching Strategy is founded on ten core principles; whilst principle 9 is explicitly related to our Equality and Diversity agenda 'Learning opportunities developed with recognition of diversity within the student body', it is important to note that all ten of the principles are founded in the drive towards full inclusivity. The Liverpool Hope Equality Objectives (revised objectives due for publication in 2019) include explicit reference to the Strategic Ambitions of this Plan. Also relevant is the Student Engagement and Retention Plan, the Policy statement on Inclusive Language and the Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability.

A. The Curriculum, Pedagogic and Student Support

i. Raising Staff Knowledge and Awareness Strategic Aims 1-5

Equality and the value of Diversity are core to the Mission and Values of this institution. Liverpool Hope is committed to undertaking staff development in a number of areas relevant to this Plan. Staff receive development in the use of Language for Inclusivity, and Equality and Diversity training (93% of staff have undertaken this training). In addition, The University Learning and Teaching days are used to brief academic staff in relation to the Access and Participation Plan, target groups are highlighted and innovative pedagogies discussed. The University has toolkits available to help staff to facilitate the development of inclusive curricula and to ensure that assessment briefs are written for inclusivity. Senior managers in the Student Support and Wellbeing area of the University have undertaken staff development in inclusion.

Our data indicates a need to focus on enhancing outcomes for students from areas of higher multiple deprivation and low participation neighbourhoods using our Student Engagement Strategy. Our well-developed Retention and Engagement Strategy ensures that all students are known as individuals on an academic and pastoral level; tutors are able to identify students from the Tutor Hub which includes information about risk factors that may be barriers to student success.

Equality and Diversity is a key agenda item in University life, from Annual Review of individual subject provision through to University level Committees. The University Equality Objectives that run in parallel with the Access and Participation Plan timeframe will explicitly reference the gaps identified in the Plan.

ii. A Focus on Empowerment and Aspiration Strategic Aims 1-5

For some students continuation is negatively impacted by a lack of confidence in themselves as learners in higher education or a lack of support. In the briefing paper 'Inclusive teaching and support of university students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds' Devlin and McKay (2011) note that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can lack confidence and support, and have lower aspirations and levels of preparedness. To address the issues reported in the literature for all target groups, the University has developed a peer-mentoring scheme. The scheme provides extra support across a range of aspects including confidence building, and integration into University life. A new initiative is being launched in 2019 'mind your mate' which is aimed at tackling the issue of loneliness in the student population through raised awareness of the issue amongst the whole student body. An Inspirational Leaders Speaker Series will continue, with a clear ambition of providing progression goals and long term career planning for students in the target groups. The University Women's group produces a dedicated program to support women's careers and development, including activities and inspirational lectures throughout the year. This scheme will be promoted to the student community in order to motivate and mentor. The University is currently developing its website to showcase motivational case studies from our recently graduated mature students.

iii. Availability of Funding for Students in the Identified Groups Strategic Aims 1 and 3

For some students continuation results from financial pressures; Simister outlined the need to offer financial support to students from less advantaged backgrounds in his paper in 'The Higher Education Quarterly' (2011). The Learning Support Fund is particularly targeted to students from the groups identified in the Access and Participation Plan; with the aim of supporting to ensure that discontinuation of studies is avoided.

In 2019/20 the University is introducing 10 'Access to Higher Education' scholarships of £3,000 per annum, aimed at supporting students who face barriers in entering higher education. The recipients of these scholarships will need to meet one of our widening participation criteria including mature students, care leavers, disabled students, BAME or from an area of high deprivation (IMD Q1) or an area of low participation (POLAR4 Q1). The successful students will be selected by the University Student Finance Committee, based on an application process in which the student provides a personal statement to explain the challenges they face in entering higher education. Students are also able to apply to the Student Support Fund for hardship funding in each year of their study. They need to demonstrate financial hardship through completion of a form and provision of evidence in relation to their financial position. Funding is then provided as a fixed % (currently 75%) of the shortfall. One off funding is also provided to deal with

unforeseen emergency situations and short term loans are available to support students who have delays in receiving their SLC funding.

Additionally, Liverpool Hope operates a Hope Works scheme which ensures that students can work on campus, at a rate above the minimum wage. The University will ensure that students from target groups are aware of the scheme and will also support those who apply for employment on campus.

iv. Flexible Approaches to Course Availability and Inclusive Curricula Strategic Aims 1-3

Low and Cooke (2003) reported that 'In general, older students tend to make better choices and be more focused than younger students, but are more likely to be adversely affected by domestic commitments'. The 'Never too Late to Learn' publication published in 2012 by the NUS and Millions+ clearly identified 'paucity of information' as one of the key factors adversely affecting both the decision to come to University and as a reason for non-persistence amongst the mature student cohort. Mature students welcome early timetable information and course materials; they value opportunities for social interaction organised through the Student Union. All students at Hope, as part of our inclusive practice, are supported with early information about course details; publication of the academic timetable and course handbooks takes place at an early stage and before the commencement of the academic year. The structure of the timetable has recently been reviewed to ensure a meaningful learning experience. In addition, the University has a 'Progressing to University' program delivered at a number of FE Colleges; which includes detailed support for application, including financial advice, and attainment-raising strategies such as study skills workshops. The University will continue to offer specific Open House opportunities to mature students to enable them to visit the campus outside of traditional Open Days.

Mindful of the work reported by Butcher in 2017 (OFFA funded research), the University is taking every opportunity to offer part time study on UG courses so that the 'flexible learning options' recommended by Butcher are available to those who have commitments to family or employment. Indeed, although the University currently delivers its provision in a number of partner FE Colleges across the North West, including at St Mary's College in Blackburn with Darwen (where a majority of the population were not defined as White in the last census), the Network provision will be extended to include courses with Foundation years to enhance opportunities in line with the 'Never too late to Learn' philosophy.

In response to the Government's 2017 paper 'Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence' Liverpool Hope has developed an inclusive approach to course design; students, employers and academics collaboratively design new courses. The University has a Community of Practice focused on 'Inclusive Practice', which is an active forum for staff to disseminate good practice and formulate solutions to issues. This will be effective in addressing our other Strategic Aims.

v. Academic Writing Skills Workshops for students whose first language, or common language at home, is not English Strategic Aims 1 and 3

In 2017 a paper focussing on the English Language barriers to success for non-English speakers in South African Universities noted that 'poor English language competence is hindering the academic performance of a significant number of undergraduate students for whom the language is not their mother tongue. However with early interventions aimed at using writing to promote critical thinking, significant improvements in grades for second-language students is possible' (Dukha and colleagues). The University has therefore developed Academic Writing Skills Workshops, with specialist mentors supporting confidence in writing, essay planning, and understanding assessment and feedback for students who are not native English speakers. Priority is given to first year students.

vi. A One-Stop approach to Student Support Strategic Aims 1-5

The Liverpool Hope Gateway offers a rapidly accessible network available to students who are most in need of support services. The Gateway is a state of the art building within which student services are centralised and focused. Student Development and Well-being is the central hub in the Gateway Building providing help and assistance to a wide range of students, with particular emphasis on those from vulnerable groups. Service provision comprises of a number of specialist teams each with a clear focus including supporting student mental well-being, enabling access and support for those with a disability, and facilitating the general health and well-being of the student population at Hope.

The University has developed a Student Retention and Engagement working party; this group meets each week to discuss operational strategic issues in relation to the continuation of our students. The group evaluate data returns, and will include a particular focus on the groups identified in the Plan. The group is empowered to intervene locally in specific academic areas where support for student continuation may be required. This is a proactive mechanism to ensure the success of our target groups through both data monitoring and operational conversations about individual students. For example, aware of the HEPI briefing paper 'Homeward Bound: Defining, understanding and aiding 'commuter students'' by Maguire and Morris the group is currently developing a project that will aim to support the successful progression of our Commuter students, particularly amongst those target groups identified in the Plan.

B. Employability Strategic Aims 1-2, 4-5

The University Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability ensures that all academic subjects are regularly mapped for employability outcomes and a Careers & Employability Management Program continues to embed, within
Updated 04Nov19

the academic curriculum, information in relation to previous graduate destinations. Furthermore the Careers & Employability Service is promoted to all students; there is a clear commitment to avoiding discrimination against sub-groups of students – particularly those from non-traditional social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, international students and students with restricted geography.

i. Enhancing preparation for the Workplace Strategic Aims 1-2, 4-5

The University is mindful of gaps in progression into highly skilled employment or further study identified across all target groups. In order to address this we have recently refreshed our undergraduate courses to include the opportunity for a placement year or extended placement in every course. Placement officers are available to support this opportunity and have particular understanding of the barriers to progression into highly skilled employment or further study that are contributing to the gaps identified in our data analysis. In addition the University has introduced a wide range of Integrated Undergraduate Masters awards. The final year of these awards is focused on application of academic knowledge; this initiative is directly aimed at workplace readiness. Whilst it can be argued that these interventions are not targeted to the groups identified in the Plan it is very likely that the effects will be differentially beneficial in the target groups currently least successful in entering employment.

It is Hope's intention to use local employers and relevant Alumni from the University as mentors for students from low participation backgrounds, BAME, disabled and female students to specifically promote employment opportunities in the Liverpool and Merseyside areas and to share their experiences. The Hope Mentoring Programme will be piloted, targeting students with the above characteristics, in academic year 2019/2020. Female students are actively encouraged to access the Women's Network talk programme at Liverpool Hope, where inspirational women from the local community and employer network are invited to speak about their own life and career experiences and to share what they've learned in the process. Although this programme is open and accessible to all students, female students are specifically targeted in the promotion and marketing of events. Finally, there is a deliberate involvement of a large percentage of female and BAME students in programmes such as the Insight to Business Awards in the LHU Business School and there is female and BAME specific literature and content available in the Employability Hub.

National data from AGCAS highlights that students with a disability or learning difficulty are less likely to be in full time employment than non-disabled graduates and are more likely to be unemployed. It is interesting that McKinney and Swartz (2019) reported in the International Journal of Human Resource Management that barriers to employment for people with disabilities are created by the need for 'advertisements, application forms, interview venues and interview questions' to be 'more accessible and appropriate'. If indeed some of the barriers to employment for our students lie in the external arena then our approach in relation to support for integration into employment is indeed appropriate. Improved access to Careers resources has resulted from the recent physical relocation of the Employability Hub onto the ground floor which better facilitates disabled students' access to the service. If a student declares a disability or learning support need, extra time, in the form of a double careers appointment slot, will be offered and made available so that Careers Advisers have more time to support job applications and / or job searches during careers interviews. All Liverpool Hope Careers & Employability materials are produced in an accessible format. This increased physical accessibility is now supported by the University's virtual 'My Career Centre' which has designated materials that help disabled students apply for employment and also give guidance on interviews and workplace adjustments. In addition, the Careers & Employability Team work closely with Change 100, an organisation which brings together employers and disabled students/graduates resulting in paid work placement opportunities. Students with a disability are encouraged to make use of the Liverpool Hope Placement Service to gain work experience linked to their subject areas. Disabled Graduates are also actively encouraged to apply for a place on the Hope Disability Internship Scheme which provides three month internships within the University. Through a close working relationship with the Disabled Students' Society at Hope, the Careers & Employability Service have the opportunity to share information about relevant schemes available to confidence build in relation to entering the workplace.

The Careers & Employability Team work in partnership with Learning Support Advisers and a Mental Health Adviser to offer support for students who have mental health issues, these individualised interventions ensure that students have an employment plan that will be appropriate for them. Future plans for interventions to address gaps in progression into highly skilled employment or further study for students with mental health issues include enhanced promotion of the service by emailing each student who has disclosed a mental health difficulty; targeted specific work experience and placement opportunities with local organisations; the offer of an extended progression interview with a Careers and or Employment Adviser to build confidence and enhance progression into highly skilled employment or further study and the negotiation of specific on-site employer support or necessary interventions to enable students with a mental health condition to feel confident and secure in the workplace whilst on placement / work experience to develop their work readiness. The team have also developed a 'Women in Leadership Program' aimed at breaking the glass ceiling and supporting women into key leadership roles in the future.

The Careers & Employability team hold the Access and Participation Plan Strategic Aims at the centre of their activities and each advisor has a performance target related to these Aims.

C. Collaboration/ Alignment with Other Work and Funding Sources

i. Working Collaboratively With External Agencies Strategic Aims 1-2, 3-5

To achieve our strategic aims, and influence the local and national arena, the University will continue to work collaboratively with others. Liverpool Hope is part of the Shaping Futures (NCOP), a collaboration of HE providers based within/around Liverpool City Region that is supported by the OfS to aid HE progression by providing impartial HE information, advice and guidance to local learners from target underrepresented groups. The Programs and activities are designed to align to the Gatsby benchmarks. In doing this, Shaping Futures also contributes to our own strategic aim to improve access to Liverpool Hope University from across Liverpool City Region. The programme has its own evaluation plan, which uses the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation and uses longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries via the HEAT software system. As part of this, a theory of change model is utilised. Based on our long-term aim to increase progression to HE, intermediate and short term outcomes have been identified and measured to ensure that the programme is impactful. In the short term, a baseline aspirational survey with be completed by a sample of beneficiaries. This will be repeated annually to assess attitudinal and informational changes, whilst teacher and student focus groups will be used to gauge broader impact (e.g. on informing HE choices) as an intermediate term goal. The Shaping Futures (NCOP) consortium will also develop a Higher Education Outreach Hub for Liverpool City Region. Wherever possible, the activities of the Outreach Hub will be designed to complement partner APPs and will be a forum for collaborative working/best practice sharing on issues such as disabled students, young people from military families and Care Leavers.

In order to further improve access to HE through improved attainment for pupils, the University has developed partnerships with eleven primary schools involved in a project entitled 'Hope Challenge'; the University's target in this area is to increase the number of partner schools by at least one per year over the next five years. The University will continue to support and develop a range of activities with its partner Schools and Colleges. Currently we provide a range of Key Stage 4 and 5 focused Information Advice and Guidance sessions, both on and off campus, designed to raise aspiration or attainment. The recruitment team work closely with Sefton EBP, coordinating on-site visits for students who may not have considered university previously. Many of these students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and will have no prior experience of the university habitus; events are supported by student ambassadors who act as mentors, relaying their own student journey and offering help and advice. Student Ambassadors are carefully selected to include representatives from low participation groups so that the Ambassadors can act as role models that are relatable mentors to school/ college children. An Activity Guide details all of the talks/ workshops and subject conferences we offer. These talks include sessions on revision skills as this is a priority for widening access and engaging students in further study. Transport incentives have been offered to priority schools from low socio-economic areas to ensure that their students are able to experience a visit day or subject conference irrespective of their background.

Recruitment activities are designed to complement National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) initiatives and support under-represented groups that do not fall within NCOP criteria. In the course of the next five years the University will continue to support and host collaborative events through the Merseyside arm of the NCOP, including the Children's University designed to raise aspirations by providing a glimpse of University life to primary school children. Liverpool Hope University will provide these opportunities not only at a sub-regional level but nationally with institutions that resonate with our distinctive ecumenical mission and foundation. This will involve collaboration with Diocesan Boards of Education and national bodies representing Church schools.

Recruitment activities focussed on targeted work with local schools in areas with high proportions of BAME students are already well established. The University works in partnership with Kings Leadership which is the only secondary school in the Princes Park ward (high BAME community in this area of Liverpool); in addition, we are currently mapping the top ten subjects that BAME students apply for with the specific aim of making studying these subjects at University more attractive. We are currently working on a collaborative bid to the NCOP, with other local HE providers, to investigate decision making in the BAME community.

The University aims to work with the local charity 'Sheila Kay Fund'. Sheila Kay funding supports research aimed at providing a more equal society. During the first year of this Access and Participation Plan the University will attempt to achieve a project grant in order to develop individual projects at Liverpool Hope that will make a specific difference to identified gaps in access, success and progression amongst the groups identified in the Plan.

The University has been an active supporter of the Higher Education Liaison Officers' Association (HELOA), the professional body which supports initiatives and training for UK outreach and access staff in higher education. We see this as a useful body for cross-sector ideas and sharing of good practice in outreach and raising aspiration and we will continue our work with this association.

ii. Working with Students and the Students Union Strategic Aims 1-5

Liverpool Hope Students' Union (LHSU) plays a vital role in facilitating clubs and societies who provide a platform for students from underrepresented groups. These societies are a vital support network for students who may face similar difficulties and they provide a vehicle for increasing the visibility of issues and fighting for positive change. LHSU's Afro-Caribbean Society and Disability Studies Society are examples of these groups and we believe that they should be incentivised to play an active role in both LHSU and University life, for example, with their presence at Open Days. In addition, LHSU has Part Time Officers, current students who are elected to represent others from a specific demographic; to listen to their needs, ideas and concerns and to bring them to LHSU to inform discussions with the University and to campaign to affect change, facilitated by a campaign budget that LHSU provides. The

LHSU currently have an elected BME officer, a Disabled Students Officer, a Women's Officer, a Mature/Part Time Students Officer, and an LGBT+ Officer.

3.2 Student consultation

The draft Access and Participation Plan was made available to students, along with a 'Summary of the Data'; the summary was written in simplified public facing language to ensure meaningful engagement with the more technical elements of the Plan. Student consultation on the Access and Participation Plan took place at two levels. Firstly, with the student body; the University Student Sounding Board has expressed their support for the contents of the Plan. The Sounding Board includes a cross section of students from a range of backgrounds, subjects and levels of study. The Sounding Board members made some suggestions including the extension of the peer mentoring scheme beyond transitional skills into mental health support. Secondly, the Liverpool Hope Students' Union have seen the document and have given the opportunity for part-time liberation officers, including: Disability; Mature/Part time and BME officers, to comment on the content. The Sabbatical Officer team were happy with the process and with being involved in discussions about the new Plan. Through the involvement of the Student Union, whose Vice President (Welfare) is a member of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, the student body will remain fully involved in the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the Plan. It is important to note that students were provided with a simplified briefing paper, particularly in respect of the data sections of the Plan, to ensure that they had received appropriate training before feeding back on the Plan.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

a) Strategic context

Support and Institutional Culture: Liverpool Hope has a long standing commitment to ensuring widening participation and activities detailed in the Access and Participation Plan are embedded in the life of the University, from Senior Management team led by the Vice Chancellor, through to the academic and administrative staff. We do not have a specialist Widening Participation unit; instead we are all committed to projects and programs in a devolved approach; a good example of our community approach includes our personal tutoring scheme which involves every academic member of staff. However, a small group of staff 'The Access and Participation Plan Implementation Group' is a team of senior academic, support staff and sabbatical officers from across the University who work together in a focussed group to support the preparation of Impact Evaluation Reports. The group are tasked with ensuring that the University's programs, detailed in the Plan, are operationalised; the group will also be involved in ensuring that planned activities are monitored and evaluated and that an annual Impact Evaluation Report is prepared. The Equality and Diversity Steering Committee, which has strategic overview of the development of the Plan, the activities detailed in the Plan and their effectiveness, will begin to receive monitoring reports from each of the planned activities on a termly basis from the Implementation Group, and will receive the annual Impact Evaluation Report. As an Institution, we will use the Action Plan as a working framework through which to evaluate our activities in a consistent and whole University approach. The Steering Committee includes a Sabbatical officer and in the past has invited other representatives from the student body including the Chair of the Disability Studies Society.

Skills: The self-evaluation tool highlighted areas for development in terms of reflective practice; our score identified us as a provider with 'emerging' skills in relation to our evaluation skills. In particular we need to focus on having conversations on a regular basis; this is particularly challenging in a culture of devolved widening participation activities. However, the University has taken the decision to ensure continuous improvements, as a whole, to reflective practice including the use of University biannual Learning and Teaching days which are used to foster such reflection on the success of our activities in relation to target groups. The University deployment of financial resources includes financial representatives who support the departments in the management and monitoring of their budgets and in the analysis of expenditure.

The University considers itself to have a strong skills base in relation to academic staff engaging in local research in relation to widening participation and success of its students. The devolved model lends itself well to meaningful evaluation of activities.

b) Program design

The University has clear objectives detailed in its Access and Participation Action Plan, which serve to underpin what the University wishes to achieve between 2020 and 2025 and beyond. The Action Plan is shared with all academic staff during Learning and Teaching Days; the Implementation Group is able to set out guidance and support in relation to evaluating and monitoring the planned activities as we work towards our objectives. Evaluation is defined within the Action Plan, and is therefore a key part of each planned activity.

c) Evaluation design

The University uses the Kirkpatrick Model of Evaluation as its guiding principle. Each of our projects is evaluated at the four levels proposed by the model; we evaluate whether participants have reacted positively to the intervention, whether they have understood and benefited from it and if, overall the intervention has enabled us to achieve our measurable targets and objectives.

d) Learning to shape improvements

The University is aware of the Evidence and Impact Exchange and going forward is excited by the opportunity to share good practice. However, as a small institution our sharing remains in the 'emerging' phase of development and this is an area where we need to focus during the early years of implementation of the Plan.

Evaluation Impact Reports produced by the Implementation Group have a clear path through Equality and Diversity Steering Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee, through to both University Council and Senate. Through discussion of 'what has worked well' and 'what has not worked', the evaluations are used to influence University Strategy and are clearly reflected in our Equality Objectives.

The University Equality and Diversity Steering Committee is made up of a group of staff and student representatives from across the breadth of the University. Both academic and non-academic staff are included alongside representatives from trade unions. The Steering Committee is diverse in its makeup and has the option to invite to its membership those from underrepresented groups. The Steering Committee has a watching brief on government legislation in relation to equality and good practice in the HE and the wider public sector on equality and diversity issues; and recommend to Senior Management Team and Council actions required to ensure compliance with legislation. In addition, the group commission comparative and time series analyses of student data on equality and diversity. On the basis of analysis and monitoring of this data, the group make recommendations for areas requiring further review, in-depth analysis, or action. The Steering Committee meets quarterly; at each meeting a series of papers are considered including data analyses, new or amended policies of relevance to equality and diversity and items of good practice identified within Faculties or working areas of the University.

The Steering Committee will therefore play a leading role in monitoring the delivery of the Plan by monitoring data and receiving regular activity reports from each of the University Faculties. In addition, the Committee will share and disseminate good practice in relation to initiatives and developments. This Committee will ensure continuous improvement in relation to our Access and Participation ambitions as detailed in this Plan.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Committee reports to University Council; additionally, Equality and Diversity reports are made to the University Learning and Teaching Committee giving a clear line of reporting of the Plan to University Senate. University Senate and Council are therefore fully engaged with the implementation of the Access and Participation Plan. Senate and Council are informed of initiatives to promote and embed equality across all areas of the University and are advised of actions that are required to ensure equality of opportunity, and to promote diversity. Furthermore, both of these governing bodies are briefed annually on the progress towards achieving the ambitions stated in the Access and Participation Plan and of any areas where further action is required. It is important to note that the University's Equality and Diversity objectives, which are set for a five year period, and formally reviewed annually by staff and students, are directly linked to the Access and Participation ambitions ensuring alignment of these ambitions with the University Equality and Diversity objectives. Specifically, the Steering Committee will focus on actions related to groups with protected characteristics identified in our ambitions. The Steering Committee will be mindful of the requirement to carry out Equality Impact Analysis on all University policies, procedures and functions to ensure that activities and support measures are systematically and thoroughly assessed. In particular, new or existing policy or procedure is evaluated for its likely impact on a group of people. This is directly relevant to the Access and Participation Plan because of the possible implications of the planned activities on those with protected characteristics.

The University has a flourishing Community of Practice (CoP) approach to development of its students' experience. This ensures that there is an evolving University conversation on themes directly impacting the success and progression of students in the groups identified within the Plan. For example, during 2018/9 the Student Experience Community of Practice focussed on how the University can promote students' mental health and well-being through learning and teaching. The aims were to start a conversation on how we as an academic community can develop a range of strategies that work to promote positive mental health and well-being within the context of learning and teaching. Drawing on the New Economic Foundation's Five Ways to Wellbeing - 'Connect', 'Give', 'Be Active', 'Take Notice' and 'Keep Learning', the CoP has focused on initiating conversations to identify how tutors may develop and enhance practice in ways that promote positive mental health and well-being for students. Ongoing discussions are exploring ways in which the University can support the mental health and wellbeing of new students starting at Hope in September. Transitioning to HE can be a challenging and stressful time for young people: leaving home, meeting new friends and starting a new course uncertain of just what is expected all have the potential for affecting a student's mental wellbeing. Along with colleagues from Student Development and Wellbeing, the CoP is considering how the Personal Tutor role might be strengthened through the provision of mental health awareness training, and how the transition process could be eased by embedding important aspects of mental health and wellbeing awareness within tutorials at the start of the academic year.

In addition, an Inclusive Practice CoP, led by the Liverpool Hope Students' Union Vice President (Education) was created in November 2018. Open to all Hope students and staff, this student-focused CoP has been looking at existing practice within the University to establish how it can be shared and developed to foster a strong, inclusive learning environment with a view to creating a set of University guidelines for Inclusive Practice in Disability. The CoP has generated a series of recommendations and guiding principles which have been presented to the University Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration and implementation. This gives a clear example of the collegial manner in which we approach inclusion in relation to access and participation.

e) Financial Evaluation

The core finance system of the University is Agresso. This is an on-line system that provides financial data in real time at a granular level and therefore facilitates cost control and monitoring. Specific projects under the Access and Participation Plan will be given their own project codes to ensure that costs are carefully controlled and monitored in line with the allocated budget for the activity. The majority of costs for the Access and Participation Plan are embedded within the day to day operations of the University. The coding system will be reviewed to identify if there are ways to separately identify elements of expenditure to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of expenditure.

Financial evaluation is currently carried out using a variety of methods including statistical analysis and student surveys to ensure that funds are being targeted as effectively as possible and that the funding is delivering the outputs intended.

Going forward (2019/20 onwards) the existing methods of financial evaluation will be amended and strengthened to utilise some of the tools provided within the financial support toolkit as follows.

- a) Statistical tool – the tool provided within the toolkit is not suitable for the University as we are only a small institution and there are less than 300 students impacted each year. However, building on the approach outlined within the tool, the University intends to undertake its own statistical evaluation in a more formal manner than previously. This will involve analysis of data provided by the Data Team on student recipients of financial support over several years and monitoring their performance in relation to continuation, attainment and progression compared to the overall student body performance.
- b) Survey tool. For several years, the University has been issuing a survey to all successful recipients of hardship funding which covers many of the areas within the survey tool provided by the toolkit. Going forward, the intention is now to use the toolkit survey as it is more detailed.
- c) Interview tool. The University can see the benefit of using the interview tool and it is not something we have done in the past. We will look to implement this to provide further financial evaluation data and supplement other sources of data.
- d) Ad hoc data analysis. Over and above the items above, we have found in the past that there will be a need for ad hoc data requests and analysis if we suspect there may be a specific need in relation to a group of students. For example we undertook a piece of work in 2018/19 in relation to Northern Ireland students as our data had identified these students were more likely to be in hardship due to their lower level of grant. These one off data exercises will continue as needed to inform our policy and practice going forward.

Combination of all the data above provides sufficient data to make a robust financial evaluation of the funding provided through the Student Support fund and the Access to Higher Education Scholarships. The data provided above will be provided to the Student Support Fund Panel which meets on a termly basis. This body sets the criteria for the funding and through evaluation of the data ensures that the money is reaching the target groups. The Minutes of this meeting and the core reports are provided to the Student Finance Committee chaired by the PVC Student Life and Learning for further review, discussion and action.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the Plan

The University has chosen to evaluate the success of the Action and Participation Plan using a logic model to assess the key activities, outputs and impacts of the actions it is undertaking. The Equality and Diversity Steering Committee will use the model to monitor performance and evaluate the success of each of the activities detailed in the 2020-25 Plan to ensure continuous improvement, making timely interventions if necessary. Where continuous improvement fails to be established the Steering Committee will make recommendations to the Access and Participation Plan Implementation Group requesting a rapid and thorough evaluation of the failed strategy. Based on the outcomes the Steering Committee will ensure that appropriate alternative approaches are taken on the ground to resolve the barriers to implementation identified in the evaluation and to ensure that progress against the targets restarts.

Consistent with its Mission, Liverpool Hope strives to be a University where the individual and individuality matter. We hold students, staff and visitors in high regard and we seek to foster a working and learning environment that recognises and respects difference. Hope is committed to developing a framework that ensures that equality and diversity are mainstreamed into the full range of its activities. This Access and Participation Plan therefore provides the framework for the implementation and co-ordination of a set of ambitions that will impact positively on those with protected characteristics. In developing the Access and Participation Plan the University has paid due regard to the Equality Act 2010 which offers protection across a number of 'protected characteristics'. These are race, gender/sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

4. Provision of information to students

Liverpool Hope University will publish its full Access and Participation Plan and fee levels on its institutional website and will provide details of its financial support package to UCAS and the Student Loans Company in order for applicants to make informed judgements.

All applicants will be issued with information on the fee levels for each year of their course and the methods of financial support available from the Student Loan Company in the form of tuition fee loans and maintenance grants for both full time and part time modes of study. Potential students are also provided with information on fees and funding through Finance presentations at Open Days and Applicant days and flyers. These attempt to explain fees and funding in a straight forward way and also provide opportunities for potential students to ask questions in advance of registering for the course. The University also provides links to the Government website where additional support and advice is available for students. The University will continue to include a statement on its fee documentation and website to say that it reserves the right to increase the fee for future years of study in line with any inflationary or other increase authorised by the Secretary of State.

The Student Finance team is open every week day in term time between 9am and 5pm with students able to drop in with financial queries or book to see an advisor if the query is more detailed. The University will also assist students in their dealings with the Student Loan Company if necessary.

The University has a Student Support Fund available to support students in financial hardship. The details are on the University website, but the University recognises that it has an on-going duty to raise awareness of the Fund and to ensure that the funding reaches the students that it needs to. The University is committed to ensuring that all students are aware that help is available if they need it. As a result the promotion of the Fund is done through a number of routes including the Student Finance team helpdesk, the Student Union, the Student Wellbeing team, Personal and course tutors. All University staff that provide support to students are aware of the Student Support Fund and know how to signpost students towards the Fund if they have financial issues. The University will also send emails to certain groups of students that are potentially at risk to ensure they are fully aware of the fund.

All undergraduate students are eligible to apply to the Student Support Fund, with the only criteria being the ability to demonstrate financial hardship. A detailed application form is completed by the student giving details of their weekly income and expenditure. This has to be supported by documentation including bank statements, rent invoices etc. An assessment is then undertaken by the Student Finance team who make allowances for living expenses etc. in order to identify the size of the funding gap faced by the student.

The value of the award paid to the student is a fixed % of the funding gap (at least 75%). In this way students with the greatest need receive a larger financial award than others, rather than everyone receiving a set amount. The process ensures that funds are directed to students whose financial issues are as a result of their personal circumstances and not simply due to poor financial management. The Student Support Fund also provides emergency payments in response to unplanned events – for example the need to travel home in an emergency. The students have to apply for the funding each year as their circumstances can change.

In 2019 the University is introducing 10 Access to Higher Education Scholarships at a value of £3,000 for three years, aimed at supporting students facing barriers to entry to higher education in 2020/21. The recipients of these scholarships will need to meet one of our widening participation criteria including mature students, care leavers, disabled students, BAME or from an area of high deprivation (IMD Q1) or an area of low participation (POLAR4 Q1). Entry will be open to all students and the application process will involve submission of a personal statement. These new scholarships will form part of the financial evaluation and monitoring as outlined in the financial evaluation section of the plan.

Students will be made aware of the scholarships using a number of different methods. Examples include entry onto the scholarship pages of the University website, inclusion of the scholarships into material used by the Outreach team and recruitment staff bringing the scholarship to the attention of students they feel may meet the criteria (for example applications from disabled or mature students).

The Student Union at Hope are involved in the activities of the University in widening participation, retention and student success, and the University welcomes their involvement in the activities and in the evaluation of the successful implementation of our Action Plan.

Access, student success and progression measures: Action and Evaluation Plan for 2020-2025

Aim	Programmes	Method of Evaluation	Success measures 2020-2025	Outcome 2020-2025
1.	To make significant improvements in the success of students from areas of low participation (POLAR 4 Q1) and high deprivation (IMD Q1) in relation to continuation, attainment and progression into highly skilled employment or further study			
a.	Peer-mentoring scheme which is targeted towards students from low participation and areas of high deprivation.	Focus group to be set up and to meet monthly to collect student feedback for each activity.	Success in continuation to be consistent between all under-represented groups. Assessment of performance as per targets PTS_1 and PTS_2 in the Targets and Investment Plan.	To ensure continuation is comparable for students from areas of multiple deprivation and low participation (Q1) (KPM 3) to those from other areas (Q5). (Ref PTS_1 and PTS_2)
b.	Continuation of an Inspirational Leaders Invited Speaker Series focusing on under-represented groups.	Interim report of progress on relevant data and student feedback to each meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee and to Equality and Diversity Committee.	Success in degree outcomes to be consistent between all under-represented groups.	Enhance continuation and attainment for students from IMD Q1 and POLAR 4 Q1, including BAME students. (Ref PTS_3 and PTS_4)
c.	The Learning Support Fund Targeting students from the groups identified in the Access and Participation Plan.	Questionnaire based survey for all relevant students on an annual basis. Annual monitoring of relevant data to assess improvement in student success and progression.	Assessment of performance as per targets PTS_3 and PTS_4 in the Targets and Investment Plan. Progression to highly skilled employment or further study to be consistent between all under-represented groups. Assessment of performance as per target PTP_1 in the Targets and Investment Plan. Positive feedback from students through focus group, Staff Student Liaison and monitoring feedback of Learning Support Fund applicants.	To reduce gaps in progression for students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5. (Ref PTP_1)
2.	To make significant and sustained improvements in the participation, success and progression into highly skilled employment or further study of BAME students			
a.	Focus recruitment in Schools/ Colleges with high number of BAME students, particularly in the local Princes Park ward in Liverpool.	Focus group to be set up and to meet monthly to collect student feedback for each activity. Interim report of progress on relevant data and student feedback to each meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee and to Equality and Diversity Committee.	Proportion of Black and Asian students will be equal to the UK 18 year old Black and Asian population. Assessment of performance as per targets PTA1 and PTA2 in the Targets and Investment Plan. The continuation gap between Black and White students will be reduced to 0%.	To increase participation for Black and Asian students. (Ref PTA_1 and PTA_2) To increase continuation for Black students. (Ref PTS_7)
b.	Expand Academic Writing Skills Workshops for students whose first, or common language at home, is not English in order to offer additional support in key aspects of confidence building, essay planning and understanding assessment and feedback.	Questionnaire based survey for all relevant students on an annual basis. Annual monitoring of relevant data to assess improvement in student success and progression.	Assessment of performance as per target PTS_7 in the Targets and Investment Plan. The attainment gap in good degree outcomes for BAME students to be reduced to 0%.	To increase attainment for BAME students, including the intersection with IMD and POLAR Q1. (Ref PTS_4 and PTS_5)
c.	Apply for funding of case study based projects from e.g. Sheila Kay Fund.		Assessment of performance as per target PTS_5 in the Targets and Investment Plan. Progression to full time highly skilled employment/further study to equal non BAME students. Assessment of performance as per target PTP_2 in the Targets and Investment Plan.	To enhance progression into highly skilled employment or further study. (Ref PTP_2)

3.	To increase access for mature students to match sector proportions and closing the gap with younger age students.			
a.	Deliver a 'Progressing to University' program to Colleges with Access students or other mature students. To provide detailed support for application, including financial advice, including attainment-raising strategies such as study skills workshops.	Short term/ immediately after activity: Questionnaires to assess student feedback for each activity. Review attendance data for Open House. More widely, annual monitoring of data to assess improvement in access for students age 21+.	Assessment of performance as per target PTA_3 in the Targets and Investment Plan. Feedback from mature students applying to the University through questionnaires to applicants.	Access for mature students will improve to match the sector proportions, reducing the gap with younger students. (Ref PTA_3)
b.	Offer specific Open House opportunities to mature students to enable mature students to visit the campus outside of traditional Open Days and ensure the web page case studies include a focus for mature students.	Interim report of progress on relevant data and student feedback to each meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee and to Equality and Diversity Committee.		
c.	Increase opportunities for part time study on UG programmes since '92% of part-time students are mature' (The Power of Part-time UUK).	Specific course evaluation to be introduced for online delivery.		
d.	Continue to expand trial online delivery as part of Postgraduate awards to provide more flexible learning options for mature students who are combining study with career or family commitments.			
4.	To close the attainment gap for Disabled students and ensure progression into highly skilled employment or further study for those with mental health conditions.			
a.	Deliver Academic Writing Skills Workshops for students with disabilities to offer additional support in key aspects of confidence building, essay planning and understanding assessment and feedback.	Extend the regular Disabled students survey to include questions about assessment, careers and employability so that we can better evaluate the success of these interventions. The results of this survey are reported to University Committees as appropriate.	The attainment gap in good degree outcomes for Disabled students to be reduced to 0% Assessment of performance as per target PTS_6 the Targets and Investment Plan.	Success in attainment will increase for disabled students. (Ref PTS_6) Progression into full time employment will be the same for students with mental health conditions and non-disabled students. (Ref PTP_3)
b.	Continue promotion of Change 100 with increased input from the Learning Support Team.	Interim report of progress on relevant data and student feedback to each meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee and to Equality and Diversity Committee.	Unemployment rates of disabled students will decrease.	
c.	To ensure accessibility of careers materials to all students.		Progression into highly skilled employment or further study will be the same for students with mental health conditions and non-disabled students.	
d.	Inspirational Leaders lecture series to provide increased access to careers and employability services for students with declared and undeclared disability. Internal and external invited speakers will provide inspiration for students in terms of career goals.	More widely, annual monitoring of data to assess improvement in disabled student's attainment and progression into highly skilled employment or further study.	Assessment of performance as per target PTP_3 in the Targets and Investment Plan.	
e.	Extend the Disability Internship Scheme to allow disabled students to carry out work placements in bespoke roles establishing confidence in the workplace.			
5.	To close the gap in progression into highly skilled employment or further study for females in areas of low participation.			
a	To expand the University Women's group to include students and therefore give a forum that focuses on women's careers and development.	Focus groups/ surveys of female students. Interim report of progress to each meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee and to Equality and Diversity Committee.	Progression into highly skilled employment or further study will increase for females from areas of low participation.	To increase progression into highly skilled employment or further study for female students from areas of low participation (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2) (Ref PTP_4)
b	Develop a 'Women in Leadership' training course aimed at smashing the glass ceiling.	More widely, annual monitoring of data to assess improvement female progression into highly skilled employment or further study. Annual monitoring will take place.	Assessment of performance as per target PTP_4 in the Targets and Investment Plan.	

