# University of Bolton

# Access and participation plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

## 1. Assessment of performance

This APP demonstrates that the University is highly successful in attracting one of the most socially inclusive student populations of any HEI in the country. However, this is a critical factor for the context of this Plan, as these student groups have differential outcomes that, across the sector, are known and are typically being targeted for improvement i.e. Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Disabled students, and Mature students. Additionally, over 70% are commuter students who travel from their home either locally or further afield. Their economic and cultural characteristics can lead to very specific constraints on progression, performance and employment options. Bolton and the surrounding areas within the Greater Manchester City Region have not enjoyed even limited growth in employment opportunities or economic growth experienced in other parts of the country. Many of our graduates are, for a variety of personal and family reasons, unable to relocate in search of employment.

There have been steady improvements in both overall non-continuation and attainment but are still notably below the sector average for both of these measures. The percentage of University of Bolton (UoB) full-time first-degree 2016/17 entrants no longer in HE in 2017/18 was 15.7% against a benchmark of 11.7% (latest HESA PI). This represents a 1.4 percentage point improvement from 2015/16. Our student attainment figures have improved steadily over the last 4 years, but we are still behind the sector average in 2017/18 with 60.8% of our students achieving good honours degrees compared to a sector average of 76.3%. The percentage of 2016/17 graduates in work or further study as measured by the DLHE survey saw a 3.2 percentage point drop (82.3% against a benchmark of 92.6%), although part-time progression has improved to 94.0%, close to our benchmark of 94.9%.

The University recognises that there are some substantial absolute gaps in performance, which we are seeking to address. We are seeking to enhance the statistical analysis and evaluation skills within our Professional Services team through the recruitment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and, in the meantime have commissioned an academic research project with our School of Education and Psychology to gain further insight into the structural and unexplained gaps. This project is currently underway and will be completed in early 2020 prior to the start of the plan. We will then enter this APP period with a better understanding of these gaps and should we need to adjust any of our narrative or targets as a result we will contact OfS to do so.

The University has made strategic commitment to improve these various aspects through this APP and other institutional strategies with which it is aligned, and has made substantive progress over the past two years in implementing key initiatives designed to improve retention, satisfaction and employment. We have considered the impact on our performance of numbers at our franchise partners and will work with them to ensure they are contributing to achieving our targets in relevant areas.

### 1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status
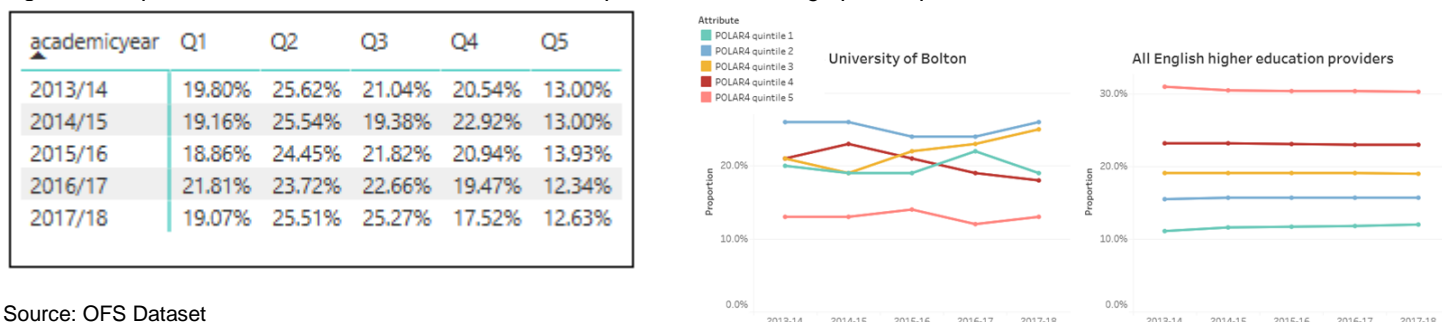
Access – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Recent HESA Performance Indicators show that our student population continues to be one of the most socially inclusive of any higher education institution in the country and we consistently exceed our access and participation benchmark indicators in regard to those from low participation, low household income or socioeconomic backgrounds.

*National KPM 1 – reducing the gap in participation between the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 quintiles 5 and 1 respectively)*

The proportion of students at the University from P4Q1 is 19%. This figure is 6 percentage points higher than our proportion of students in P4Q5 (13%) thus representing a negative gap. The proportion in Q1 is significantly higher than the national position (12%). Our proportion of full-time students in Quintiles 1 & 2 of Polar4 (P41&2) is 45% (17/18) compared with the national position of 27.7%. Analysis over the past 5 years demonstrates that our position remains strong.

In terms of IMD, the proportion of students in Q1 is 47.4% compared to 8.5% in Q5 representing a negative gap of 38.9 percentage points. In terms of sector comparisons, IMDQ1&2 is 68.2% compared with the national position of 41.6%.

*Figure 1. Proportion of full-time students in each Polar4 quintile at UoB and graph compared to national.*

| academicyear | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013/14 | 19.80% | 25.62% | 21.04% | 20.54% | 13.00% |
| 2014/15 | 19.16% | 25.54% | 19.38% | 22.92% | 13.00% |
| 2015/16 | 18.86% | 24.45% | 21.82% | 20.94% | 13.93% |
| 2016/17 | 21.81% | 23.72% | 22.66% | 19.47% | 12.34% |
| 2017/18 | 19.07% | 25.51% | 25.27% | 17.52% | 12.63% |



Source: OFS Dataset

*Figure 2. Graph of students in each IMD quintile at UoB compared with national.*
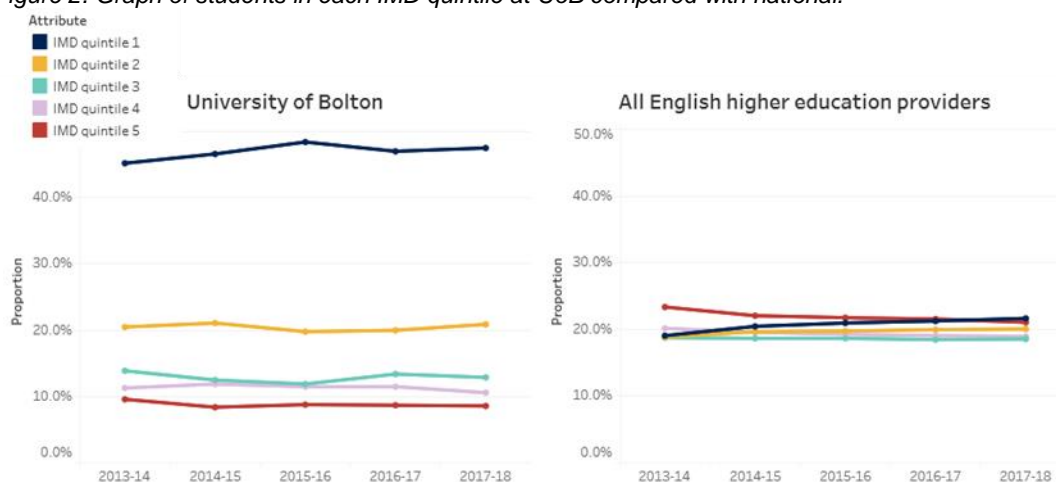


Source: OFS Dataset

We have identified a gap of 19 percentage points between P4Q1 (9%) and P4Q5 (28%) for part-time students. This gap is less than five students and is based on a total population of just 21 students in 2017/18. Very small changes in the number of part-time students causes large fluctuations in the percentage point participation gaps for part-time students. We are, therefore, not setting a target for this group, however, we will continue to monitor our performance for part-time students against this measure.

### Success – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

#### Non-continuation

In the two most recent years of data the University has recorded a negative gap in continuation of P4Q1 students compared to P4Q5 (15/16 = -2pp, 16/17= -1pp). We do however, acknowledge that the gap has varied over the past five years of data and shows a gap of 10pp in 14/15. We will therefore monitor this closely to ensure that this gap does not appear again in future years.

Overall, continuation[1] rates for full-time UG students for P4Q1-5 is significantly lower than the national comparison data but the gap is getting narrower. This is of strategic importance to us as an institution. Continuation for students in P4Q1 improved from 77% in 2014/15 to 83% in 2017/18, narrowing the gap between UoB and the national average from 12.4% to 6.2%. Continuation for students in P4Q2 has also improved over the past 3 years from 79% in 2014/15 to 84% in 2017/18, narrowing the gap between us and the national average from 12% to 6.9%.In 2017/18 continuation was lowest amongst students in P4Q5 (82%) against a national average of 94.2%. In fact, continuation rates for UoB students in P4Q5 have regressed since 2014/15 from 87% to 82% in 2017/18.

*Figure 3. National KPM 2 – reducing the gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 quintiles 5 and 1 respectively)*
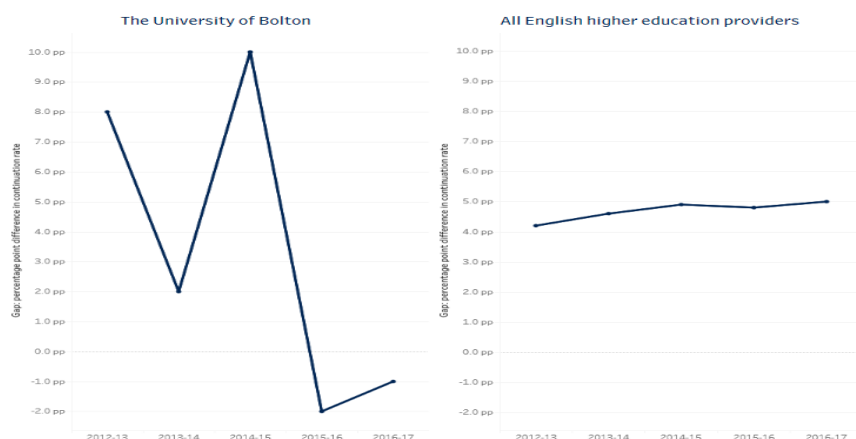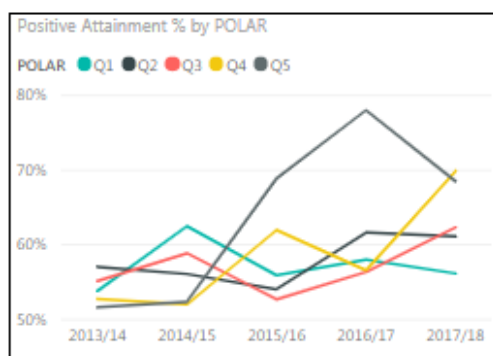


Source: OFS Dataset

In terms of IMD measures, the gap between IMDQ1 and Q5 has reduced to 2pp in 16/17. Both Q2 and Q3 have also improved in recent years. Given that in previous years there has been a more substantial gap we will monitor this closely to ensure that this gap does not widen again.

While there is a gap of 10pp between IMDQ1 and Q5 for part-time students, the data is less meaningful as the numbers of students in Q5 has fallen each year from 130 in 11/12 to 30 in 15/16. This fall has resulted in a dramatic fall in non-continuation in the last two years. We will monitor this gap closely.

### Attainment

The attainment gap between P4Q1 and Q5 has increased steadily between 2014/15 and 2016/17as attainment of Q5 has improved and while the gap reduced in 2017/18 to 12pp this remains of concern to us and we will therefore set a new target to continue to close this gap.
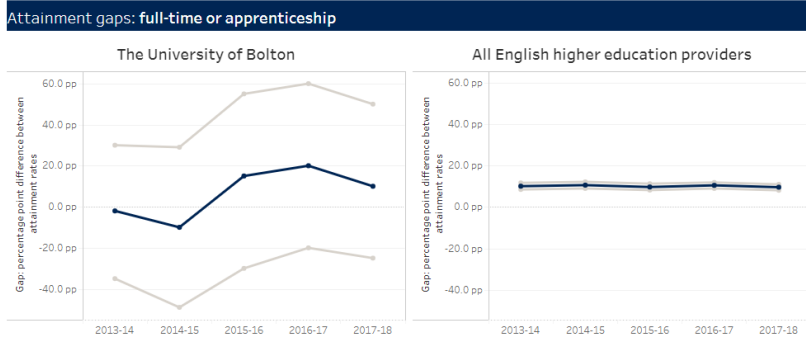
*Figure 4. Attainment by POLAR4*



Source: OFS Dataset

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[1] Subsequent references in this plan are to Continuation rather than Non-continuation, for consistency with targets in Improvement Plan

*Figure 5. Attainment Quantile 5 compared with quantile 1 percentage point difference for full-time students*



Source: OFS Dataset

The gap in attainment between IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 at 25pp was statistically significant for 2017/18 (but not consistently so year on year), with 53.5% of IMDQ1 attaining a good degree compared to 78.5% of IMDQ5. That gap is wider than the national gap of 18 percentage points, but has varied substantially year on year and was less than 6% for 2014/15. We are setting a new target to address this.

*Figure 6. Attainment rates of UoB UG students by IMD quintile for full-time students*
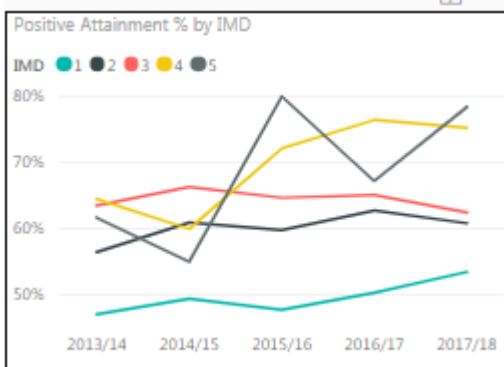


Source: OFS Dataset

### Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OFS Dataset

In terms of graduate level employment, progression for full-time UG students for P4Q1-5 is significantly lower than the national comparison data, in fact there has been a drop in the most recent data against all quintiles demonstrating the need to work with the University cohort as a whole.

The gap between P4Q1 and Q5 is currently at 5pp. This figure has fluctuated from negative gaps over the past five years, There is, however very little gap at the University between P4Q1&2 and P4Q3-5. P4Q1&2 progression stands at 53% compared nationally with 69.9%, and for P4Q3-5, progression is at 54% compared nationally with 73.1%.

When looking at all employment from the DLHE data, we note that the gap between P4 Q1 (77.4%) and Q5 (79.5%) is very small at just 2.1 percentage points.

Our part-time data presents more positive results and in relation to P4Q1, progression stands at 65% compared to a national figure of 64.2%.

There is a gap between IMD1 (60%) and IMD 5 (65%) of 5pp for full-time students, however, the gap between IMDQ1&2 and IMDQ3-5 at the University is very small. In relation to IMD data we are closer to national comparisons at 61% graduate employment for IMDQ1&2 compared to the national position of 69.9%. We will monitor performance for this measure.

There has been a lot of fluctuation across IMD Q1 to Q5 for part-time students since 2012/13. From 2013/14 to 2015/16 there appeared to be a trend showing a decrease in progression outcomes for IMDQ1, falling from 79.5% to 70.8%. Despite the latest year showing an improvement, as there is an increasing gap over a five year period the University will set a new target.

*Figure 7. Progression by IMD Quantile for part-time students*
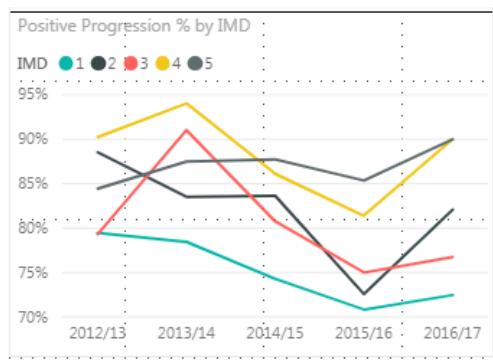


Source: OFS Dataset

## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

### Access – data analysis from the OFS Dataset

The proportion of full-time BAME students in 17/18 was 38.8% representing a rise from 36.3% in 13/14. This compares with the national position of 31.1%. For part-time students this is 19% compared nationally to 14.6%. This pattern has been consistent over the past 5 years. The proportion of Black students is similarly higher than the national position 17.5% compared to 13.7%. Our proportion of full-time Asian students is currently 13.3% compared nationally to 13.7% and we have seen a dip in these numbers over the 5 year period to 17/18. This, however, is higher than the resident England population of Asians (7.5%) and in the Bolton area (9.6%). Our proportion of part-time Asian students is strong at 12% compared to 5.4% nationally.

*Figure 8. Proportion of UG students at UoB by ethnicity*

| academicyear | Asian | Black | Mixed | Other | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013/14 | 14.42% | 15.13% | 3.85% | 2.87% | 63.73% |
| 2014/15 | 15.07% | 16.15% | 5.02% | 2.39% | 61.36% |
| 2015/16 | 16.57% | 16.95% | 4.31% | 2.32% | 59.86% |
| 2016/17 | 14.52% | 16.78% | 4.26% | 2.21% | 62.24% |
| 2017/18 | 13.27% | 17.53% | 4.92% | 3.11% | 61.17% |

Source: OFS Dataset

### Success – data analysis from the OFS Dataset

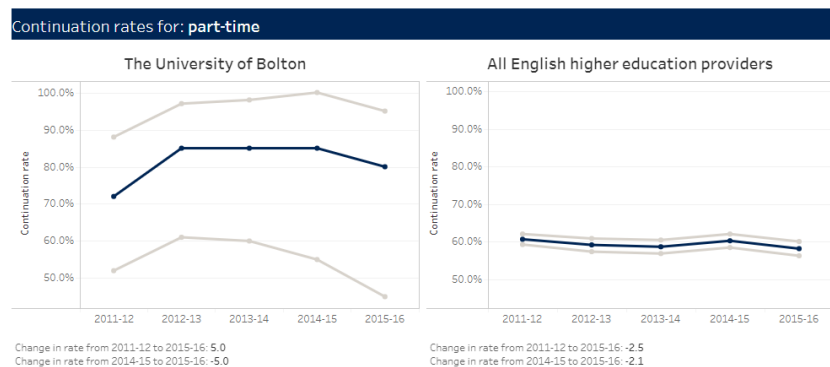#### Non-continuation

With the exception of 14/15, there has been a consistent gap in BAME non-continuation for full time students. While not statistically significant, the gap for 16/17 is 7pp.

While continuation figures for Black students has remained steady, with 83% of our Black students continuing their studies in 2016/17 compared to 85% nationally, there is a gap between Black and White

students of 4pp. The gap between Asian and White students is wider at 8pp. In 2016/17 79% of our Asian students continued their studies compared to 90.3% nationally. The gap between Mixed and White is 9pp. We are therefore setting new targets to address these gaps. While there is a gap between Other and White of 10pp, the numbers are very small for Other (40 students) so we will not set a target but monitor performance closely.

The continuation rate for part-time BAME students at the University in 2015/16, was 80%, well above the sector average at 58.1%. However, this still represents a gap of 5pp between BAME and white part-time students. This gap has increased over the past four years of data and we will monitor this to ensure that it is reduced.

*Figure 9. Continuation rate of part-time BAME students*



Source: OFS Dataset

An analysis of the OfS datasets reveals that there was a 7.7% point gap in continuation rates between part time white students and part time Asian students in 2015/16. This has increased from a negative gap of 14.3% in 2013/14. The University recognises that the number of part-time Asian students is low (23 of 30 Asian students in 2015/16 continuing) so it will monitor this data and should the gap between part-time Asian and White students increase in relation to continuation then a target may be set in the future.

In order to better understand any structural and unexplained patterns in the continuation rates of our students the University has commissioned research specialists in our Psychology department to analyse the last three years' of continuation data in greater statistical detail, and build a statistical model of student continuation. This analysis is designed to recognise the confounding of variables including gender, subject, age, ethnicity, mode of study, Disability, POLAR4 and IMD classification as predictor variables.

The project will apply linear regression and cluster analysis techniques to deliver probability expectations of continuation based upon these characteristics. This should help to inform structural and unexplained gaps. Initial results should be available in the autumn 2019, with the report subsequently available by the end of the first Semester 2019. We will then commission a second phase to be carried out during the Autumn of 2019, reflecting on the initial outputs and evaluating the approach taken, and reporting back in early 2020 on attainment. We will then enter this APP period with a better understanding of these gaps.

### Attainment

We have a much more significant issue regarding the attainment of our BAME students, with significant gaps in attainment for both Black and Asian student groups and our analysis of the data shows that this gap is widening for Black students. There are statistically significant gaps in 2017/18 for Black students compared with White students (30pp) and Black students compared with all other ethnicities (26pp). In 2017/18 38% of our Black students graduated with good honours compared to 58.9% nationally and compared to 68% of

our white students. This represents a statistically significant equality gap of 30 percentage points. This gap is growing in contrast to a marginal decline nationally. We will set a target to deal with this gap.

There is also a statistically significant gap between attainment for White students and all ethnicities except White (21pp). The underlying principal groups impacting on this gap are Black and Asian which we are already setting specific targets to address and this will therefore impact on this measure.

*Figure 10. Proportions of students at UoB getting a good degree by ethnicity*

| academicyear | Asian | Black | Mixed | Other | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013/14 | 42.24 % | 37.50 % | 44.44 % | 50.00 % | 60.77 % |
| 2014/15 | 43.24 % | 34.74 % | 45.45 % | 33.33 % | 64.01 % |
| 2015/16 | 45.92 % | 41.67 % | 57.69 % | 35.71 % | 68.14 % |
| 2016/17 | 41.49 % | 39.00 % | 72.00 % | 61.54 % | 68.48 % |
| 2017/18 | 50.42 % | 38.46 % | 70.97 % | 50.00 % | 68.23 % |

Source: OFS Dataset

*Figure 11. National KPM 3 – reducing the gap in degree outcomes (1ˢᵗ and 2:1s) between white students and black students*
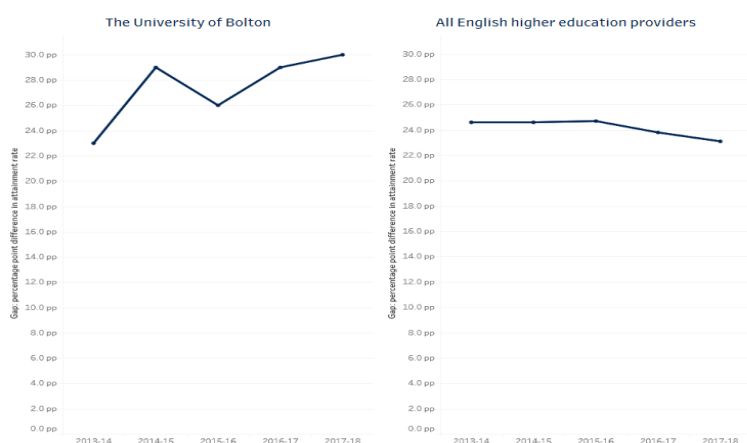


Source: OFS Dataset

In 2017/18, 50% of our Asian students graduated with good honours compared to 71.9% nationally, representing a gap of 21.9%. Our attainment gap has remained steady but still falls significantly below the national average. The gap between White and Asian students, while not statistically significant in 2017/18 is substantial at 18 percentage points.

*Figure 12. Gap between White and Asian UoB Student Attainment*
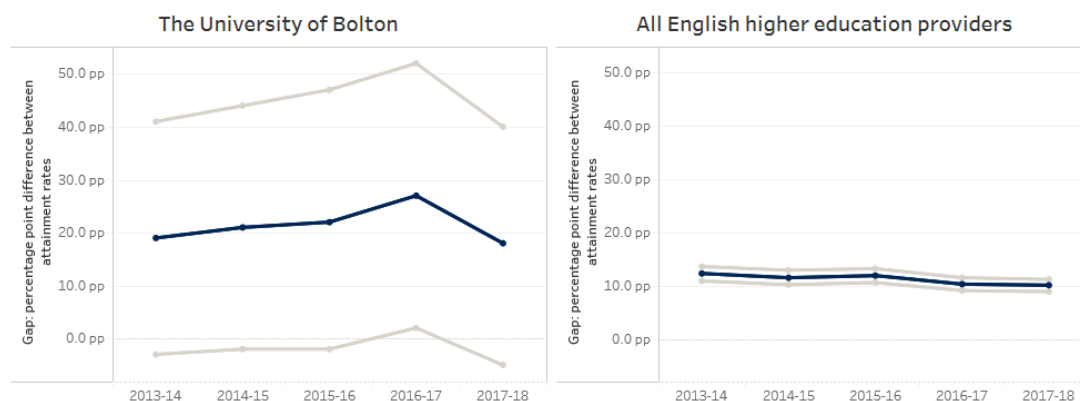
The attainment rate for part time BAME students in 2017/18 was 45%. This is above the sector average and on an upward trajectory; however there is still a gap of 25pp between BAME and white part-time students. The data is too small to disaggregate between specific ethnicities so we will monitor this performance closely.

*Figure 13. Attainment rate for part time BAME students*
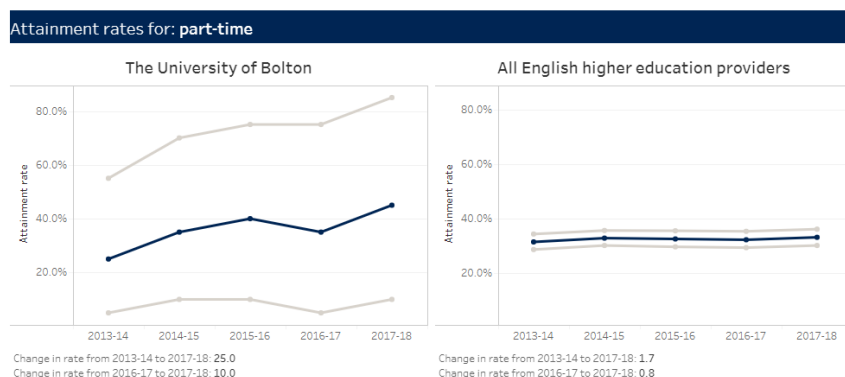


Please see page 6 for information relating to the proposed statistical analysis of attainment data.

### Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OFS Dataset

*Graduate Level Employment*

There is a statistically significant gap of 16 percentage points between Asian and White full-time students at the University (48% compared with 64%) in terms of graduate level employment.

The gap is smaller between Black full-time at 4pp and the overall graduate level employment rate is 60%, much closer to the national data at 69.3% and white students at the University of 64%. We will monitor this gap.

*Figure 14. Gap in graduate level employment of full-time Asian compared to White UoB students.*
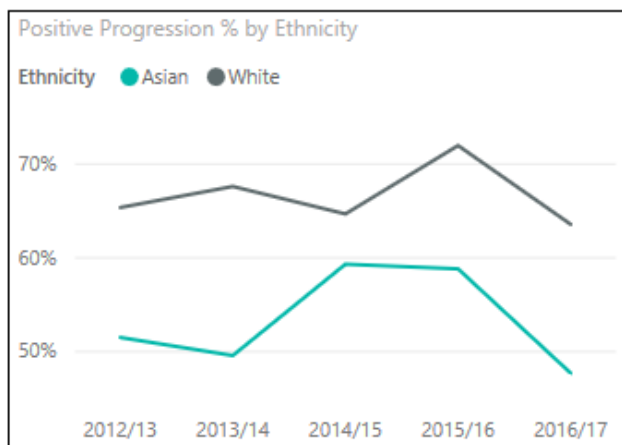


| academicyear | Asian | Black | Mixed | Other | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012/13 | 51.52 % | 58.70 % | 61.11 % | 100.00 % | 65.36 % |
| 2013/14 | 49.59 % | 68.42 % | 66.67 % | 66.67 % | 67.60 % |
| 2014/15 | 59.32 % | 63.03 % | 54.84 % | 53.85 % | 64.68 % |
| 2015/16 | 58.82 % | 69.49 % | 61.76 % | 33.33 % | 71.96 % |
| 2016/17 | 47.71 % | 60.00 % | 59.09 % | 63.64 % | 63.57 % |

Source: OFS Dataset

For part-time Asian students compared to White students then we need to look at unrounded unpublished data for 16/17, which shows that 11 out of 18 part-time Asian students went into graduate level employment (61% compared to 83% - 22pp gap). Given the low numbers, we are not setting a target for this but will monitor closely.

Similarly, there is a gap of 22pp between part-time Black and part-time White students going into graduate level employment but this gap reflects just 8 out of 13 part-time Black students. We will monitor these numbers and the outcomes for these students during the course of this APP.

*Figure 15. Progression by ethnicity for part-time students*:
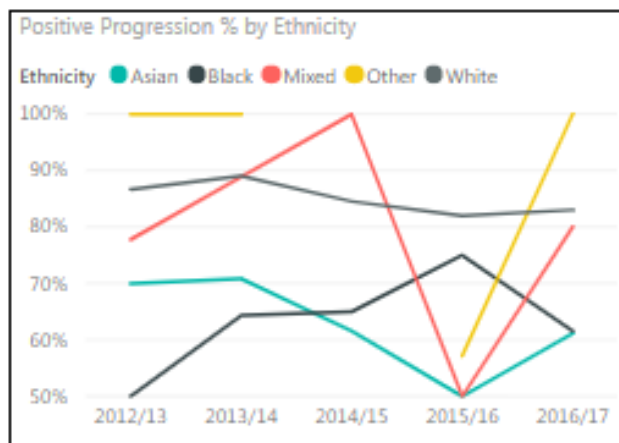


Source: OFS Dataset

*All Employment*

In terms of students in all employment, there is also a gap for Asian students. This shows a 14 percentage point gap between Asian (73.8%) and White (87.8%) students.

There is a gap of around 8.5 percentage points in terms of levels of all employment for Black (79.3%) students compared with White (87.8%) students.

## 1.3 Mature students

### Access– data analysis from the OfS Dataset

The proportion of full-time mature students at the University has grown to 54.5% in 17/18 compared to 27.8% nationally. 92% of our part-time students are mature compared to 87.4% nationally.

### Success – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

#### Non-continuation

For full time students there is a small negative gap of 1pp in continuation between mature students and young students. In 2016/17, our continuation rate for full-time mature students was slightly better than the national average at 85.2% compared to 84.8%.  Our continuation rates for mature learners have improved continually since 2014/15.

There is a gap of 11.9pp between young and mature continuation for mature students. This variation is not shown on the standard APP dataset as the numbers of PT young for 2015/16 are below the publication threshold.  The table below shows the data using the unrounded OfS dataset:

*Figure 16:Continuation of Part-time undergraduates*

| Age | Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2011/12** | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | **2015/16** |
| **Young** | 79.5 | 74.5 | 75.9 | 75 | 93.9 |
| **Mature** | 78.5 | 81.7 | 84.4 | 82.8 | 82 |
| **Gap** | 1 | -7.2 | -8.5 | -7.8 | 11.9 |

The denominator for the PT young 2015/16 which drives the figure of 93.9% that yields the 11.9% gap is so small that the data is below the publication threshold, and hence is not a meaningful gap.

Overall the proportion of mature students continuing is 82% and significantly above the sector average of 61.8%.

*Figure 17. Continuation rates for part-time mature students*
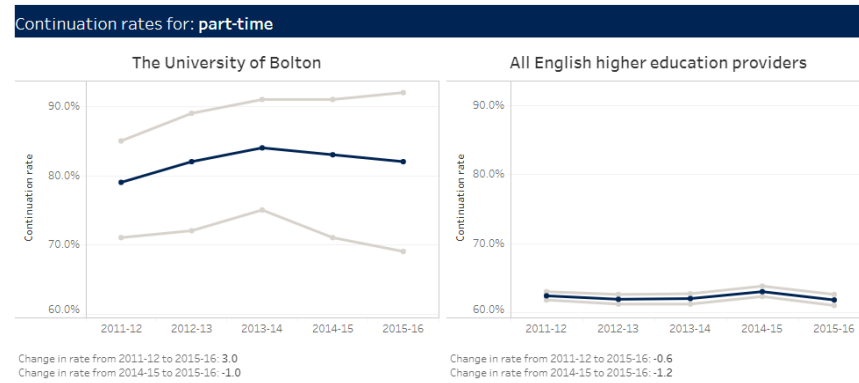


Source: OFS Dataset

### Attainment

At the University of Bolton there is a gap in attainment between full-time young and mature students of 5pp, however, this is not statistically significant and is less than the national gap of more than 10 percentage points. We will look at a further year of data and if it demonstrate a widening of the gap for mature student attainment we will set a target and update our plan accordingly.

*Figure 18. Attainment by age for full-time students*
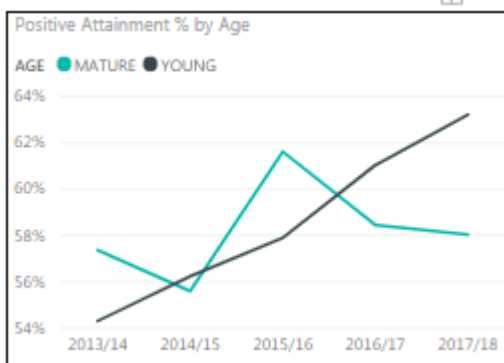


Source: OFS Dataset

Part-time mature student attainment is above the sector average at 66% in 2017/18.

*Figure 19. Attainment rates for part-time mature students*
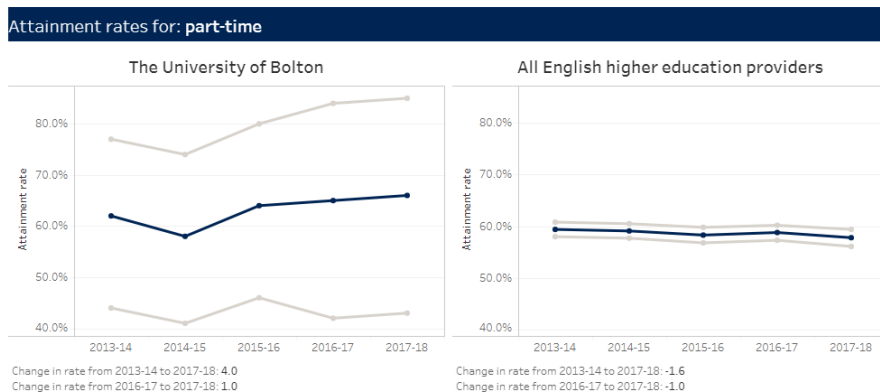


Source: OFS Dataset

### Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Our full-time UG mature students outperform our young students over the past 5 years. In 2017/18, 65.9% of mature students are in graduate level employment compared with 53.2% of our young students representing a negative gap of 12.7ppThis however is under the national position of 75.7%. Similarly the levels of graduates in all employment from DLHE data is higher for our mature students (85.4%) when compared to our younger students (79.4%)

If we consider those undertaking part-time study, then both young and mature students fare much better. Progression for part-time mature students it is 82% (75.8% nationally) representing a negative gap of 10pp.

## 1.4 Disabled students

### Access – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

The proportion of full-time disabled students at the University is 17.3% in 17/18 compared to 14.6% nationally. This is the highest proportion of disabled students over the past 8 years of data. Just 6% of our part-time students report a disability compared to 14.8% nationally.

We have looked at the proportions of students by Disability Type and noted that we have a higher proportion than national of students declaring disabilities in almost all categories:
- 4.7% a Mental Health condition (compared to 3.5% nationally);
- 3.1% of students with Sensory, Medical or Physical impairment (not reported nationally on APP dashboard);
- 6% with cognitive or learning disabilities (compared with 5.5% nationally);
- 1.4% with social or communication impairment (compared with 0.8% nationally).

### Success - data analysis from the OfS Dataset

#### Non-continuation

There is no gap in continuation between our disabled and non-disabled students. Our proportion of disabled students continuing has remained static at around 84% in line with the national picture.

An analysis of our internal data reveals that the continuation rate for disabled students, both full and part-time, differs when disaggregating the data. When the data is disaggregated by disability type the numbers

are small e.g. 2016/17 15 of 20 full-time students with Social and Communication difficulties continued their studies. The small numbers fluctuate year on year. As a result of small cohorts when disaggregating data the university is not setting specific targets but will monitor this going forward.

Internal data analysis reveals that there was an increase in the continuation rate for part-time disabled students in 2015/16 of around 20% but the very small numbers (15 of 18 part-time disabled students continued in 2015/16) of these students should be noted. Part-time disabled student continuation at the University has been slightly above the sector average over the last three years.

*Figure 20. Continuation rates for part-time disabled students*
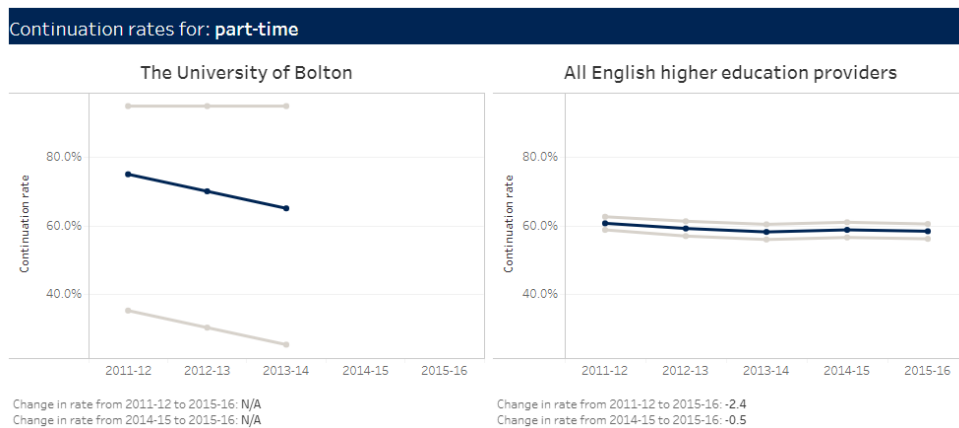


Source: OFS Dataset

### Attainment

The gap between disabled student attainment at UoB compared with non-disabled is 1pp in 17/18. This gap has emerged following three years of a negative gap but remains better than the national average (1% compared to 2.8% in 2017/18). The University is aware of this emerging gap and will monitor it closely throughout the lifetime of this Access and Participation Plan. We will look at a further year of disaggregated data and if the gap continues to grow we will set a target and update our plan accordingly.

*Figure 21. Attainment by disability for full-time students*
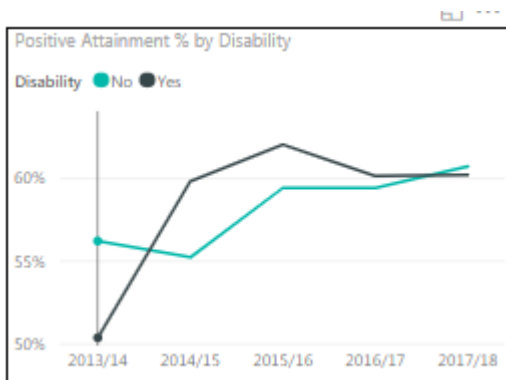


Source: OFS Dataset

Part-time disabled student numbers are low and, consequently, there are no OfS publishable results for attainment. Whilst the attainment rate for part time students with sensory medical and physical impairments as well as cognitive learning difficulties has decreased, the numbers are so small that in some years there is no publishable data available.

*Figure 22. National KPM 4 – reducing the gap in degree outcomes (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students*
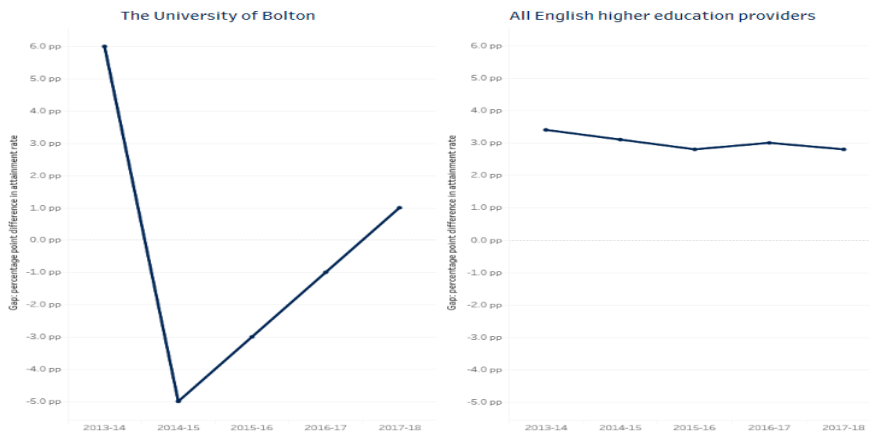


Source: OFS Dataset

## Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

There is no gap in progression between those with a disability and those without at the University. The proportion of full-time UG students with a declared disability who progress to graduate level employment and/or further study is lower than the national figure of 71.5%, and currently stands at 60%.

If we look at the DLHE data for graduates in all employment there is a small non-significant gap of 5.5 pp for disabled students (78.6%) compared to those without a disability (84.1%).

Full-time progression shows a reduction in percentage for students with Mental Health and Social Communication disabilities.  Whilst mental health sees the most significant dip and is down 39.6pp to 31.8% in the most recent year, the total population is just 22 students.

*Figure 23. Progression by disability type for full-time students*
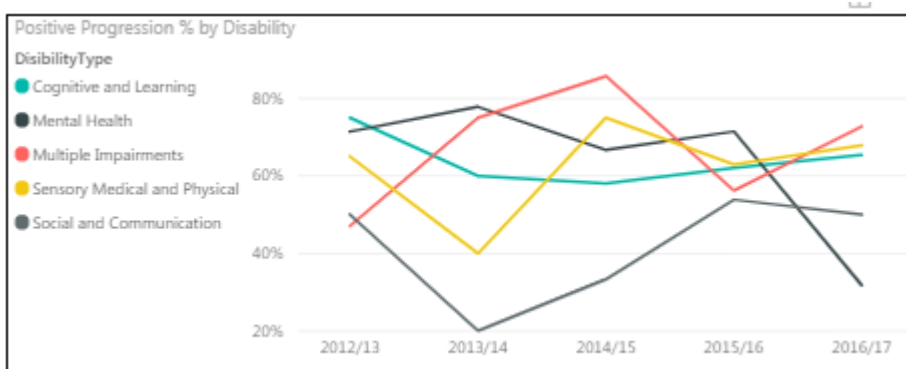


Source: OFS Dataset

Positive destination figures for our part-time cohort of those with a declared disability (84.21%) are much stronger and are outperforming students with no declared disability (79.90%) by just under 5pp (as of 2016/17).  This compares above the national rate of 66.7% for part-time students.

Part-time progression is again affected by small numbers, which has resulted in greater variation year on year.  The largest population of all disability types in 2016/17 for part time students is Sensory Medical and Physical with just 8 students.

*Figure 24. Progression by disability type for part-time students*
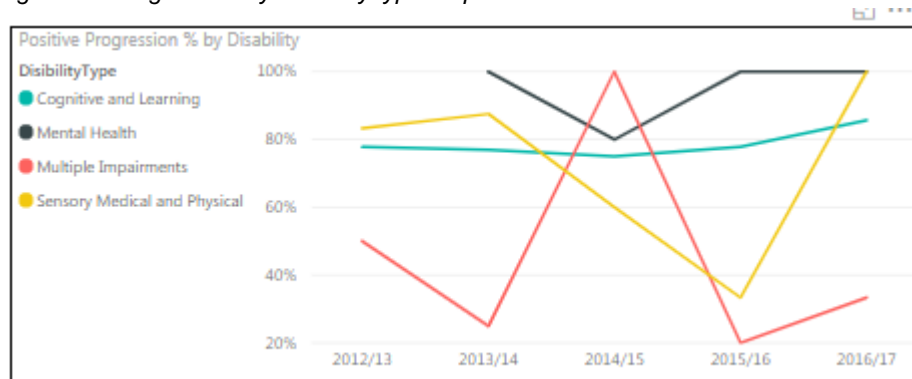


Source: OFS Dataset

As a result of the small cohorts, we are not setting specific targets for the disaggregated disabilities but the University will address improvements within its strategic measures, and will ensure that progression across the different disability types is reported and monitored through data sets and targeted interventions.

## 1.5 Care leavers

### Access – data analysis from UoB data

The number of care leavers at the University is very small and it has not been possible to ascertain a national figure for comparison. Nevertheless, we are aware that the absolute number of care leavers in 2017/18 has dipped to a low of just 8 students compared with a high in 2016/17 of 27 students.  We will therefore commit to increase the proportion of care leavers at the University during the course of this APP but are not setting a target given the very small numbers and proportions involved.

We are committed to working with our local councils to understand the number of care leavers in the system and the proportion of those going into higher education so that we can benchmark ourselves more effectively in the future and potentially set new targets.

### Success and Progression – data analysis from UoB data

Given that our current number of care leavers is very low we have not been able to conduct a meaningful analysis of the success and progression of these students. When the numbers increase we will ensure that we are evaluating any gaps in performance against the wider student population for these measures.

## 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

### Access – data analysis from UoB data

The gap for **intersection of deprivation quintile and ethnicity** is just 0.9% (full-time UG) between IMDQ1&2 white (34.5%) and IMDQ1&2 non-white (33.6%). Both are higher than those students in IMDQ3-5 and white (26.1%) and non-white (5.8%) and ahead of the national position of around 21%. Similarly, **the intersection between POLAR4 and ethnicity** outperform the national position.

We have a gap between male and female participation overall (highlighted below).  The **intersection of deprivation quintile and sex** also shows a gap between those in P4Q1&2 and male (26.95) and female (41.3%). Again, participation from these intersections is higher than the national average for both male (17.7%) and female (23.9%). The gap for **the intersection between POLAR4 and sex,** the gap is much

smaller, with just 2 percentage points between P4Q1&2 males (21%) and females (23%). Again, these are much higher than the national position for P4Q1&2 males (12%) and females (15.7%).

We have identified a falling proportion of male full-time undergraduates at the University. Although this falling proportion (39.4% in 17/18 compared nationally to 44.1%) is as a direct result of a rapidly growing Adult Nursing course which started in 2014/15, our overall numbers of male students has fallen to 730 in 17/18 from 780 in 13/14.

*Figure 25. Proportion of UoB full-time UG Entrants by Gender*
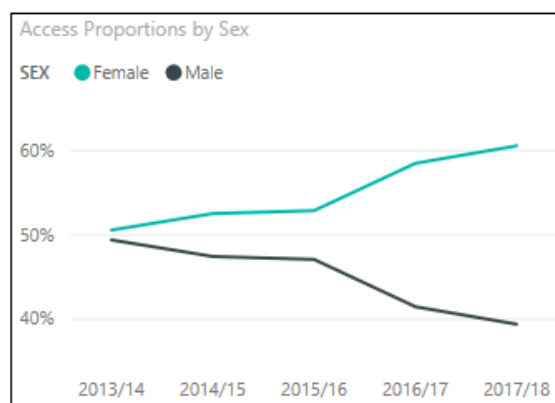


Source: OFS Dataset

Reported in our E&D Report 2016-17, in the overall Bolton population, women very slightly outnumbered men in 2015-16, making up 50.4% of the total population (all ages), which is a slight decrease from 2001 (51.3%) as male life expectancy has been increasing over the past decade to become more in line with females. From the ONS Subnational population projections for England: 2016-based, looking more specifically just at age 18, it is projected that in 2020 in Bolton there will be 1683 males (52.1%) and 1549 females (47.9%). By 2024 these figures will increase to 1957 males (53.3%) and 1716 females (46.7%). While there is clear evidence of underrepresentation at UoB of males compared to the population generally, more detailed analysis shows that there is a gap of 14 percentage points between male mature students (46%) and female mature students (60%) at the University.

Our proportion of mature students is significantly higher than the national average for both male and female and these proportions have not deteriorated over the past 5 years. Given this we are not setting a target around this particular measure.

We have also noted a gap between white males in Polar4 Q1&2 (42.6%) compared to white females in Q1&2 (57.4%) This proportion has also been falling due to the Nursing courses mentioned above. Given that the proportion of male students from Q1&2 is still much higher than the national figures we are not setting a target around this particular measure.

### Success – data analysis from UoB data

### Non-continuation

The continuation rate for **male students from P4Q1&2** improved by 3 percentage points from 77% in 2014/15 to 80% in 2016/17 (national 88.7%). The rates between male and female students from P4Q1&2 differed by 7 percentage points in 2017/18. However, this gap is not specific just to P4Q1&2 and again suggests we should focus on male students overall (albeit including those from low participation backgrounds) as discussed in section 1.7.

Continuation rates amongst our **female students from P4Q1&2** have improved by 8 percentage points from 79% in 2014/15 to 87% in 2016/17, with the gap to national reduced to 4.3% in 2016/17.

Continuation rates for **BAME students from P4Q1&2** at UoB have fluctuated although we have concluded that the key driver for continuation is BAME rather than the intersections with POLAR.

We have identified a problem with continuation rates of male students at the University. Having carried out further analysis of the intersection of males with other underrepresented groups we conclude that the driver for this issue is gender and not the intersections with gender as there are gaps across most areas as shown below:

*Figure 26. Continuation by gender*

| Intersection | Male | Female | Gap |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mature | 75.2% | 87.4% | 12.2pp |
| White | 81.4% | 86.7% | 5.3pp |
| Asian | 54.9% | 84.8% | 29.9pp |
| Black | 68.9% | 86.9% | 18pp |
| With disability | 75.9% | 85.3% | 9.9pp |
| IMD1 | 69.8% | 85.5% | 15.7pp |
| IMD2 | 71.8% | 85.2% | 13.4pp |

Source: Continuing or qualified as % of population inferred from OfS APP Dataset

### Attainment

Nationally, the number of **BAME students from P4Q1&2** gaining a good honours degree has increased by 4.4 percentage points between 2015/16 and 2017/18 from 65.7% to 70.1%. At UoB, this number has decreased from 50% in 2015/16 to 45% in 2017/18. A discussed above, we will target BAME student attainment generally, including but not just from P4Q1&2.

Nationally, attainment rates for **female students from P4Q1&2** has improved steadily from 75.4% in 2015/16 to 78.3% in 2017/18.Similarly, the number of female students from P4Q1&2 graduating with a good honours degree has increased by 12 percentage points in three years from 54% in 2015/16 to 66% in 2017/18, narrowing the gap to national by 9.1 percentage points from 21.4% to 12.3% in 2017/18.

### Progression – data analysis from UoB data

The group most notably below the University and sector average for graduate-level employment are those from Asian backgrounds, but full-time young male students across all ethnicities also require attention.

Both mature, Asian, full-time UG students (48%) and young, Asian, part-time UG students (47%) require further support to improve their progression to highly skilled employment and further study. Whilst Black, mature, full-time and part-time students are faring much better, Black, young, full-time UG students have fallen from 61% in 2015/16 to 43% in 2016/17.

*Figures 27. Intersectional effect of ethnicity and age on rates of attaining positive progression for full time students:*

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asian, young female | 58% | 75% | 55% |
| Asian, young male | 57% | 50% | 38% |
| Black, young female | 80% | 54% | 46% |
| Black, young male | 58% | 70% | 38% |
| White, young female | 54% | 60% | 47% |
| White, young male | 60% | 73% | 63% |

Source: OFS Dataset

The table above shows variation across the three-year period. The only group where males are outperforming their female counterparts is with young White students. If we cross check this data further with P4, then White, young, female P4Q1&2 UG students have a progression rate of 47% against their male counterparts at 56%. The overall level of employment of our graduates is of strategic importance to the University.

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Success – data analysis from UoB data

There is a statistically significant gap of 9 percentage points in the continuation rates of males (79%) compared with females (88.6%) at the University. This is wider than the national gap of 2.8 percentage points.

*Figure 28. Male and female student continuation at UoB.*
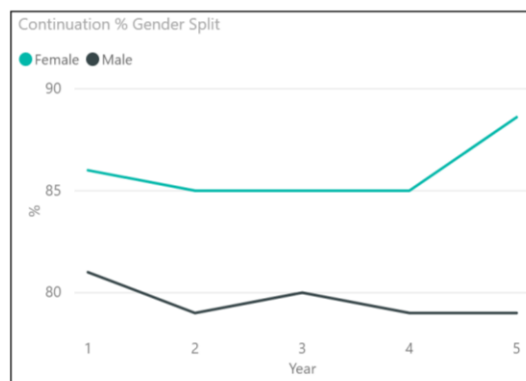


Source: OFS Dataset

# 2. Strategic aims and objectives

## 2.1 Target groups

Access

Although we are meeting our benchmarks and objectives in most areas of our access performance, we will commit to monitoring this performance to ensure that participation levels for each of the under-represented groups remains strong and in line with our recent performance.

As a socially-inclusive institution all of our recruitment and outreach activity is targeted at under-represented groups and this is reflected in the proportion of students that fall into one or more of the five core under-represented groups (98.6%). The institution's strategic approach to access and participation is very much embedded within all of our activity; however, we will make adjustments and develop additional strategic measures should our performance change during the course of this plan. Given this commitment, we will continue to invest in initiatives and interventions to target these groups.

In line with this commitment, we have adjusted our reported investment in access activity. This now includes investment in outreach activity which can be directly attributed to one or more of the five underrepresented groups. Given that such a large proportion of our students (98.6%) fall into one or more of these groups, it could be argued that all of our marketing and recruitment spend is directed at access students, however, for the purposes of reporting investment we have not included this wider spend.

In terms of participation, we are setting internal targets to address a decline in the absolute numbers of male students attending the institution. From our analysis of the data, we conclude that the driver for this is gender rather than the intersections with any underrepresented groups and we are therefore not setting any targets as part of this APP. We are also committing to improving the number of care leavers joining the university during the life of this plan.

### Success

We have outlined in this plan our ongoing strategic focus on improving the continuation rates of all undergraduate students at the university. We have noted a particular problem with continuation rates for male students as a whole, the driver for this is gender rather than the intersections of male with other underrepresented groups.

We have identified gaps in continuation amongst BAME students and are setting targets to reduce these gaps for Black, Asian and Mixed students.

In terms of attainment, we will put strategic focus on improving the attainment levels of BAME students (with specific focus on Black and Asian students) to reduce the gap in attainment compared with white students.

Additionally we will set new targets to reduce the attainment gap between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 and IMD Q1 and IMD Q5.

### Progression

It is a strategic priority for the institution to improve employment and graduate level employment for all students at the University. Our analysis has shown that there are gaps in a number of areas (Polar4, Disability and Ethnicity) in terms of the number of graduates going into all employment, which we intend to monitor.

We have identified a particular problem with graduate employment levels amongst our full-time Asian students and these will also be of particular focus.

Furthermore, due to an increasing gap over time we will aim to reduce the gap between IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 part-time students.

## 2.2 Aims and objectives

### Access

1. The University aims to maintain its strong performance in terms of participation from all underrepresented groups. We will continue to invest in outreach activities and specific interventions for these students in order to do this.

2. The University will commit to sign the Care Leavers Covenant and to closer working relationship with Bolton Council and Bolton College in order to increase the number of care leavers entering the University.

### Success

The University is committed to equality of outcomes for our students and it setting ambitious targets to either completely remove the gaps or significantly reduce them within this five-year plan. We recognise that there are continuation and attainment gaps for our BAME students and attainment gaps for our students from low participation and low socio economic backgrounds.

We are carrying out further analysis of continuation and attainment via our psychology department during 2019/20 and will commit to review these targets before the start of this plan in September 2020 based on new data and evidence.

*Continuation*

3. To remove the gap between Black and White full-time undergraduate students continuing their studies from 4pp in 2017/18 to 0pp in 2024/25.

4. To remove the gap between Asian and White full-time undergraduate students continuing their studies from 8pp in 2017/18 to 0pp in 2024/25.

5. To reduce the gap between Mixed ethnicity and White full-time undergraduate students continuing their studies from 9pp in 2017/18 to 2pp in 2024/25 and will aim to close the gap entirely within 10 years.

*Attainment*

6. To reduce the gap between Black and White full-time undergraduate students achieving a good degree (1$^{st}$ or 2:1) by 15 percentage points from 30% in 2017/18 to 15% in 2024/25. We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 year period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer to close the gap completely to attainment levels for white students (currently at 68%) and will aim to do so within 10 years.

7. To reduce the gap between Asian and White full-time undergraduate students achieving a good degree (1$^{st}$ or 2:1)  by 15 percentage points from 18% in 2017/18 to 3% in 2024/25. We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 year period however acknowledge that is likely to take slightly longer to close the gap completely to attainment levels for white students (currently at 68%) and will aim to do so within 10 years..

8. To reduce the gap between P4Q1 and P4Q5 full-time undergraduate students achieving a good degree (1$^{st}$ or 2:1)  by 5 percentage points from 10% in 2017/18 to 5% in 2024/25. We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 year period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer to close the gap completely of attainment levels between these groups and will aim to do so within 10 years..

9. To reduce the gap between IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 full-time undergraduate students achieving a good degree (1$^{st}$ or 2:1)  by 10 percentage points from 25% in 2017/18 to 15% in 2024/25. We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 year period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer to close the gap completely of attainment levels between these groups and will aim to do so within 10 years..

## Progression

Achieving positive employment outcomes for all our students in the University's number one priority in the coming years. We have identified that some of our students are more likely than others to be in graduate level employment following graduation and we will work to significantly reduce these gaps in outcomes during the course of this plan.

1. To reduce the gap between IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 part-time undergraduate students going into graduate level employment/further study from 17.5 percentage points in 16/17 to 7.5 percentage points in 2024/25.

2. To reduce the gap between Asian and White full-time undergraduate students going into graduate level employment/further study from 16 percentage points in 16/17 to 6 percentage points in 2024/25.

# 3. Strategic measures

## 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Our diversity is one of our distinctive features and we are stronger and add greater value as a result. We take seriously our responsibilities to understand the needs of our students and tailor our learning opportunities to help them succeed, despite any structural, economic and cultural constraints. We have developed a Theory of Change to enable the University to close or narrow gaps in access and outcomes of underrepresented groups by 2024/25 (see diagram on page 22).

In working to achieve this overarching goal we intend to deliver on three core outcomes:

- Maintain rates of **participation** at the University of Bolton of underrepresented groups and improve **participation** for **Care Leavers**
- Ensure that every student at the University of Bolton has the same opportunities to **succeed**
- Reduce or eliminate **progression** gaps between underrepresented groups in **Graduate Employment.**

We will employ an evidence informed approach to designing our strategic measures, which will include but not be limited to:

- Statistical Analysis Project
- Self-assessment Evaluation
- Evaluation of interventions and new initiatives
- Office for Students A-Z Best Practice
- Specific External Research e.g. UUK/NUS BME Report.

Taking a whole provider approach our strategic measures are detailed within this document referencing appropriate evidence where possible not withstanding that we intend to carry out further analysis in the run up to 2020 and during the course of the plan. Our overarching strategy is to focus on developing new 'Platinum' programmes that attract well-qualified applicants, regardless of background, and deliver higher than average outcomes, including student retention and professional employment. The Platinum Strategy, now underway for three years, seeks to fundamentally transform the institution into a "Teaching Intensive, Research Informed (TIRI) University". As part of this bold agenda, the University has been reshaping its core academic provision with the creation of a strong "Course based student eco-system", where each programme recruits and sustains a large enough critical mass of learners of high quality to provide cohort cohesion and team spirit amongst students. These student groups create strong learning communities and enhance the overall student experience, supported by sufficiently varied high quality academic staff teams in the respective disciplines, whose research directly informs the teaching and student learning experience.

A suite of actions is being implemented as enablers to complement and underpin the development of our Platinum programmes in order to achieve tangible further improvements in student continuation and attainment outcomes:

- Commitment to Invest and Resource the strategic measures and evaluation
- Communications Plan and Raising Awareness of equality gaps amongst the academic and professional support community in pursuance of our goal
- Expanding our Data Analysis Capabilities and Expertise and development of an Evaluation Framework
- Commitment to adopting and sharing Best Practice
- Enhancing our Staff Development and Training programme.

In order to monitor our performance and adapt and adjust our strategic measures in a timely manner we are putting in place monitoring and evaluation protocols designed incorporating the wider university community. As detailed elsewhere in this plan these include the following:

- Evaluation Framework
- Appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- Steering Group
- Student Consultation
- Board of Governors Oversight

The University has committed to invest in the necessary resources to deliver its targets, including new staffing appointments such as substantial strengthening of our "Employment Team"; and the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer leading improvements to outcomes including retention.

In addition, Baroness Newlove joins the University of Bolton as Pro Vice Chancellor (Access and Widening Participation). She is a Working Peer, previously working at ministerial level. As a high profile motivational speaker, presenter and Women's Champion, she acts as role model, demonstrating through her own experience that someone from a working class background can become a successful Peer of the Realm. She will undertake regional outreach and play a leading role in University Open Days, aiming to inspire students from diverse backgrounds to achieve their aspirations. She not only believes that victims of crime need to be supported, but also that those who can be seen as victims of their own family circumstances or background should receive the support from the educational system to help realise their full potential. She retains her connections in the national political arena, whilst also increasing the profile of the University including through external visits and TV/Radio appearances.

Our radical new approach to our institutional philosophy (TIRI) and our course portfolio strategy (Platinum Courses) since 2015-16 is already demonstrating tangible dividends in student continuation and completion, confirming the appropriateness of our bold approach.

# The University of Bolton Access and Participation Theory of Change

**GOAL:**
Close or Narrow gaps in Access and Outcomes for Underrepresented Groups at the University of Bolton by 2024/25

## Outcomes:

- Maintain rates of **participation** at the University of Bolton of underrepresented groups and improve **participation** for **Care Leavers**
- Ensure that every student at the University of Bolton has the same opportunities to **succeed**
- Reduce or eliminate **progression** gaps between underrepresented groups in **Graduate Employment**

## Evidence:

| Statistical Analysis Project | Self-assessment Evaluation | Evaluation of interventions and new initiatives | Office for Students A-Z Best Practice | Specific External Research e.g. UUK/NUS BME Report |

## Strategic Measures:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Access** | Strategic Lead for Outreach – Appointment of Baroness Newlove | Partnership Work with Local Authorities – Care Leavers | Mission HE Project / Maths Club / Boys Brigade / Chess | Platinum Agenda: 1) Strong Demand 2) Employer Links 3) Student Satisfaction 4) Outcomes | Mentoring e.g. PASS and Peer Mentors / Engagement e.g. Student Employment Interns |
| **Success** | LEAP and Diagnostics/Early Intervention | Revision of our Teaching Assessment Strategy | Student Support Investment in Mental Health and Wellbeing | | Assessing our Equality and Diversity Priorities |
| **Progression** | GAME – Graduate Attributes Matrix for Employability | Internships and Placements | Investment in Employer Engagement Consultants | | |

## Strategic Enablers:

| Commitment to Invest and Resource | Communication and Raising Awareness | Data Analysis Capabilities and Expertise | Commitment to Best Practice | Staff Development and Training |

## Evaluation and Monitoring:

| Evaluation Framework | Evaluation Officer | Steering Group | Student Consultation | Board of Governors Oversight |

Adapt and Adjust

Adapt and Adjust

**Collaborative work not specifically included in measures below**

Children from Military Families & Ex Service Personnel

We are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant which is a public pledge demonstrating our support for the Armed Forces community to ensure they do not face disadvantage in taking HE opportunities. We offer financial support to ex-service personnel who have completed a minimum of three years in the armed services. This bursary is worth £500 per year for the normal duration of the course.

Through the Lancashire and North West SCiP (Service Children's Progression) alliance hubs, we will work collaboratively with other HEIs across the region to engage young people from military families.
*National Network of Collaborative Outreach: NCOP- GM Higher*

We are committed to working collaboratively with other HEIs, third sector organisations and employers in the region through the Greater Manchester Higher partnership to raise awareness of, and encourage progression to, the full range of HE opportunities.  We aim through our collaborative work to:

- Raise the HE participation rate for learners from P4Q1&2 in Greater Manchester
- Increase the proportion of Care Leavers from the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities who progress to HE

The partnership does not currently have the regional data to enable us to set appropriate targets in these areas but we will commit to developing and delivering these targets during the period of this plan.

**Alignment with other strategies**

This Plan strongly aligns with the Improvement Plan separately submitted to the OfS, which focuses on launching these specific new interventions to student continuation, completion, employment and further study with strategic investments, while revitalising the current successful approaches being implemented through TIRI. The aim is to achieve a quantum transformative change in our engagement with these issues and improve the outcomes. We will continue to invest significantly in the academic staff, learning infrastructure and student support personnel in focussed subject areas.

At the time of writing, we are in the process of refreshing our Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This is being developed alongside our APP, with the same team members working on both plans, hence ensuring consistency. We also have an Employability, Enterprise and Apprenticeship Strategy and again the staff responsible for this strategy have been intrinsic in formulating this APP.

Similarly, we are about to launch a new suite of Equality & Diversity Priorities. A representative from the Steering Group that oversees development of this Plan has attended the E&D Committee, summarised the findings identified above in the assessment of performance, and has agreed the measures to be put in place through this Plan which will be reflected in the new Institutional E&D Priorities.

We have completed the integration of Bolton College (Further Education College) within the University Group which, amongst much else, will allow us to manage and improve the pathways to higher education for thousands of learners in the region in a structural fashion (articulating pre-degree provision and enhancing preparedness to study at HE level). This targeted amalgamation directly supports the delivery of the regional Skills Strategy while enabling the University to access a wide range of employment sectors and jobs/employers in the region, directly supporting the aims of this Plan and its continuous improvement.

The University Group continues to grow and as we form strategic alliances relevant to this APP. The University sponsors the Bolton UTC. In a strategic alliance with local apprenticeship provider Alliance Learning we are encouraging local people from all underrepresented groups into further and higher education, particularly those who might not normally take up further study. The Anderton Outdoor Activities Centre has recently joined the Group, providing team and confidence building programmes for Bolton College and University students to support transition into HE, continuation and engagement

## Strategic measures

### Access

### Commitment to improve the participation rate of Care Leavers

Although we have good relationships with the councils in Rochdale and Oldham in relation to looked after children, there is currently very little shared understanding and collaboration in the Bolton and Bury area. As a result the number of care leavers at the University is very low.

We will sign the Care Leavers Covenant and will enhance current initiatives and interventions for care leavers with the aim of increasing the number of care leavers at the University by 2024/25. We are already an active partner in the 'Looked After Children Forum' which is a collaborative project with the other GM Universities to support progression into higher education.

We currently run a project for year 9 and 10 students in Rochdale and Oldham called 'Success 4 Life'. This is a 9-week aspiration and confidence-raising programme to support the acquisition of transferable skills amongst looked after children. This is part of a wider GM Higher project (non-NCOP funded).

We will continue to offer our Care Leaver Bursary, which is worth £1,000 per year for the normal duration of the course and will continue our involvement in the Greater Manchester Care Leaver Awards. From 2020 this award will be expanded and offered to part-time students on a pro-rata basis as long as they are studying for a full undergraduate award. This bursary will be available to full and part-time, home-funded, students who have been in care for a minimum of 12 months within the last five years.

In order to achieve our objective we will commit to improving our data and understanding of care leavers by the end of 2020-21 in the local area by working with Bolton and Bury Councils and Bolton College. From 2020, we will bring the 'Success 4 Life' project to the local area (Bolton, Bury) and will deliver training to foster carers and social workers on HE progression. Additionally we will provide funding for looked after children to attend open and visit days at the University or College.

The success of this measure is dependent on our ability to engage Bolton and Bury Councils in the same way that we are already successfully collaborating with Rochdale and Oldham Councils.

As recommended via consultation with students, we will explore further opportunities to work with local community groups, such as Lads and Girls, which could give opportunity to raise the ambitions of Care Leavers. Current students within our Community Development & Youth Work programme may be able to foster and develop such links.

**Internal target to increase the number of male students at the University**

We are committed to helping male students in the locality and region to raise their aspirations towards higher education, to help them understand the career roles that are relevant to their interests and skills, to see that University is affordable and provide options for them to go to University. We will do this through a variety of initiatives including:

- Working with Boys Brigade in England and Wales through a unique partnership to develop an HE transition programme
- Our Maths Club initiative working with state schools to raise attainment at GSCE level
- a flagship 'Mission HE' project aimed at raising confidence and increasing awareness of HE pathways amongst white working class males.
- Chess in Schools project
- Enhancing relationships with Bolton Wanderers Football Club and Academy, Bolton College and Bolton UTC, Princes Trust, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, Duke of Edinburgh and the Scouts.

Success

**Measures to Address Continuation and Attainment of BAME, P4Q1 and IMDQ1 Students**

Our Early Intervention & Transitional Support Model is designed to provide an inclusive learning environment and to support student transition. Given the diversity of our student profile, an inclusive, whole of institution approach to student success is essential and our Early Intervention (EI) model is designed specifically to help us achieve our aim of improving continuation and attainment rates 2024/25.

Nevertheless, whilst the Early Intervention approach is designed to improve the continuation rates of all of our students, it also enables us to specifically address the support needs of our most vulnerable student groups and where we have identified gaps in continuation and/or attainment, such as BAME, Polar4 and IMD as identified in our strategic aims and objectives shown in section 2. Our diagnostics approach enables us not only to identify these students but also examine the intersectionality of their characteristics. Consequently, we have detailed information about which students are more likely to face significant barriers to learning and participation in our HE environment. This is cross-referenced with sector-wide best practice to assure consistency of approach. We can not only identify students from BAME backgrounds, mature students, part time students and those from deprived areas (using IMD) but we can assess their preparedness for learning by reviewing their profile and responses to the LEAP questionnaire. This allows us, via academic tutoring, to provide tailored support to improve their prospect of continuation through the development of key "actionable insights" which are based on evidence from interventions that have high impact. At the same time, tutors are being trained to better understand how to raise student attainment and aspiration, through involving them in analysis of our continuation and attainment gaps, focussing specifically on vulnerable student characteristics and implementing actionable insights. We also use this information to match students with an appropriate tutor who is equipped to support their learning journey. Tutors are therefore better equipped to have a structured learning conversation with students who are most likely to face significant barriers to continuation.

We have a ten-point action plan, specifically designed to enhance student engagement and student learning development. Six of these action points relate directly to interventions/enhancements specifically designed to improve rates of continuation and attainment for our student groups:

(1) Bolton Student Lifecycle Journey Mapping
(2) Early Intervention & Transitional Support – Bolton "LEAP Ahead" Diagnostics (formerly Skills Checks) and Enhanced (Senior) Academic Tutoring

(3)  LEAP (The Learning Excellence Achievement Pathway)

(4)  The Student Welcome & Induction Framework

(5)  Student communications enhancement

(6)  Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

These have all been designed using evidence from sector-wide best practice.  In particular, the design blueprint for these interventions is based on the two national "What Works" projects (Thomas, 2012 and 2017) and on the work of Kift & Nelson (2005, 2015).  These interventions all include benchmarking measures to assess student transition and success and are based on the six principles of transition pedagogy where inclusive design and evaluation features heavily in the configuration of systems to bring about student-centred pedagogical change.  Our approach is based heavily on an early assessment of student needs (the Bolton "LEAP Ahead" Diagnostics) which assess students' cognitive profiles and learning development needs, and assist us in assigning academic tutors to enhance progression and providing all students with an action plan.  This approach helps us to improve continuation and attainment rates for all our students, regardless of their background or previous experience, whilst simultaneously identifying those who might struggle more, relative to their peer group.  In the four years since the implementation of the Early Intervention approach, student continuation rates have improved.  Nevertheless, in order to achieve the continuation and attainment targets that we have set for our institution several enhancements are being made to the EI model.  These enhancements are being driven by the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-2024) which sets out our vision to continue to champion a diverse and inclusive, whole-of-institution learning culture.  We will build on existing approaches (including supporting wellbeing and mental health) and provide high quality training, support and resources for all Academic Tutors to enable them to better understand our continuation and attainment gaps (both institutionally and nationally) and devote greater attention to supporting vulnerable student groups.  The data provided to tutors, via the Diagnostics exercise, enables them to identify vulnerable student groups, both on the individual level and in cohorts, and decisions are made about how best to support these diverse learner groups.  We have introduced a new automated system to email detailed action plans to all new students after they have completed the LEAP Ahead student diagnostics exercise and have seen a much higher uptake in student engagement and learning development activities because of this change, which we anticipate will improve student continuation and attainment as a result.

As further example of the evidence base for LEAP, The LEAP Framework has been the topic of a number of academic publications, such as the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education Issue 14 April 2019. The article identifies that the approach was informed by various external frameworks which promote learner independence and developmental activity including the Citizen Scholar framework (Arvanitakis and Hornsby 2016; drew upon the categories in the SCONUL seven pillars of information literacy (revised 2011) as well as the Higher Education Academy Flexible Learning Framework (HEA 2015). In April 2018, four members of the working group that developed the LEAP framework received the national LILAC Digital Literacy Award, which recognises innovative and high impact digital resource developed by a UK-based individual or group. The external judges commented:

> 'This is well thought-through and the front end is visually appealing. It has a strong underpinning framework that enables students to develop their skills in a scaffolded way, with clear links to the curriculum and to employability. There is evidence of positive student engagement with the resource through badges gained and survey feedback.'

Since that time, many more badges have been acquired by students, which is evidence of their continued engagement in the LEAP modules. It has been aligned with the LEAP Ahead diagnostic as part of our formal Early Intervention approach, with students working towards their action plans.  Discussing it in terms

of Kirkpatrick, we're well-established with assessing a student's reaction to LEAP, both online and face to face modules, and a large scale evaluation was conducted as part of the Customer Service Excellence review. Our student questionnaire assessed the impact of the modules on students' learning, with the qualitative comments indicating several examples of how they had changed their behaviour, or reflected on/consolidated their approach to learning as a result. This also applies to staff using the platform as part of their academic practice. We are certainly seeing impacts on the organisational performance as a result of LEAP – although these take time to appear – and it is difficult to prove actual causation – our retention and student outcomes are improving. As of September 2019 we have 64 badges available across 49 LEAP Online sections. In the last academic year (1st September 2018-31st August 2019) 10,020 badges were awarded compared to 4,370 for the previous academic year. 2,572 badges have been awarded between 1st September to 26th September 2019.

As recommended by our students through consultation, we will explore opportunities to engage students in a broader range of activities, including multidisciplinary projects and cross-year activities (and to make use of high-standard University facilities incl. National Centre for Motorsports Engineering); more interactive activities; and the possibility of developing networking events with students across the University, within standard contact time and potentially recognised via LEAP badges. We seek to improve communication and promotion of activities likely to promote a sense of belonging (including social and sporting activities) and to maintain consistency of attendance requirement periods at the University between semesters 1 & 2 (to help in combining home-life/ work and study commitments). We continue to work closely with our SU on a range of initiatives such as 'Don't drop out drop in'. We will foster stronger relationships with our alumni, enabling them to support all stages of the student lifecycle.

We will continue to support those students in need, in order to seek to enhance continuation, by maintaining a Hardship / Student Opportunity fund, which is strongly supported by our Students' Union. The University of Bolton continues to use guidance supplied by the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) for the administration of the fund. NASMA are recognised as the leading authority on all matters relating to student advice and funding.

The University of Bolton Hardship Fund is designed to support student who experience an unexpected financial problem/crisis. The fund offers both monetary and non-monetary support. Monetary support includes Emergency Loans to those students experiencing delays in securing funding from Student Finance England (SFE), standard award grants for those students with a shortfall of income, nonstandard discretionary grants for those students who may have a surplus income but can demonstrate without funds their continued studies are at risk, food vouchers and travel vouchers. Non-monetary support includes budgeting advice, referral to specialist services i.e. in relation to Debt Management, Benefits and Gambling.

**Measures to address the Continuation of Students in need of Mental Health Support**

The University of Bolton has a large proportion of Disabled Students (17.3% in 2017/18 compared to a 14.6% nationally) with the second highest disability declared to the University after Cognitive or Learning Disabilities being Mental Health (4.7% at the University of Bolton compared to 3.5% nationally). There is a growing demand across the University for students to access Mental Health support including Mental Health Advisors, Counsellors, CBT Services and Wellbeing Advisors. The students accessing these services are some of the most vulnerable students enrolled at the University of Bolton. It is expected that expansion of support services will facilitate better continuation and progression for those with a declared disability or those who encounter a mental health issue during their studies, through timely intervention and support.

The Team of Wellbeing and Mental Health practitioners has recently expanded following a significant investment to address the support requirements of students. In addition to working with students with additional needs/disabilities and those who are requiring further pastoral support the Wellbeing Services will be working closely with Careers Service staff. This collaborative work will include the provision of training to assist with the attainment and progression of disabled learners. The Wellbeing Team will also be working closely with Careers to establish new initiatives designed for students and external stakeholders such as employers to improve progression and opportunities for students with disabilities in obtaining graduate level employment.

## Measures to address the Attainment of Black and Asian Students

We have set ambitious targets to improve attainment for both Black and Asian student groups by 2024/25 but recognise that, in order to make progress, a 10-year ambition to close this attainment gap is more realistic.

We are in the process of appointing a new Director of Student Life and Satisfaction, following the previous Director's decision to move to another position for personal reasons. This has provided an opportunity to review the Job Description, which now contains a main responsibility to: 'Champion equality, diversity and wellbeing initiatives and act as the Deputy Chair of the Organisational Development Equality & Diversity Committee'. As such, a key focus of the role will be to develop specific interventions for these groups (including informing curriculum development) to ensure their improved outcomes, drawing learning and targeting future activity based on the evaluation of previous successes. They will work closely with the new Monitoring & Evaluation Officer to deliver the activities to inform Strategic Measures identified below in section 3.3.

We continue to distil sector-wide best practice, and will consider and look to implement the recommendations made in the recent NUS/UUK BAME attainment report (2019). We will again make enhancements to the LEAP Ahead Diagnostics to provide a greater focus on BAME learner groups, especially identifying vulnerability and "risk" in terms of attainment. Our Academic and Enhanced Academic Tutor provision will target both of these groups and we will train a group of Tutors from across the institution to become BAME success champions. These will be specifically trained to understand the attainment gap for BAME learners at UoB and be charged with narrowing this gap by working with other tutors in their specific programme areas. Their work will be overseen by the Academic Tutoring Working Group (to be established in 2019). Specific targets will be set for individual BAME students' attainment after the LEAP Ahead Diagnostics exercise. In addition to providing enhanced student support for BAME learners, we will also introduce two new BAME peer-learning interventions. Firstly, we will recruit and train a number of BAME student ambassadors, working alongside the Students' Union, who will be tasked with running initiatives to target support for BAME learners. Some institutions have achieved considerable success with their BAME Advocate scheme and we will look to model our scheme on sector-wide best practice. Secondly, we will utilise our BAME Ambassadors to provide peer learning and peer mentoring support for BAME learners. We are considering the features of a new mobile system called Aula, which has had significant success in engaging disparate groups of learners.

## Measures to address the Attainment of P4Q1 and IMDQ1 students

The University will include POLAR4 and IMD Data in to the PULSE tool. PULSE is an existing tool developed by University of Bolton that provides access to a variety of student data to academics in order to identify the students most at need of an intervention to enhance their chances of success. It has been in

operation for around 7 years. Its development was overseen by a working group and after its initial introduction, feedback was gained from staff.

It uses a number of factors that are combined to calculate a resilience score for each student that changes daily as the student progresses within the University:

- Predictive Factors (i.e. potentially known before enrolment): BAME, Disability, Care Leaver, Age (Young/Mature)
- Diagnostic Factors (i.e. results of diagnostic tests taken in the first 2-3 weeks of the programme): Academic Writing Score, Wellbeing Score
- Reactive Factors (i.e. collected during the student journey): Attendance rate, Assessment Results

This score is presented to academic staff in the PULSE tool and colour coded accordingly. PULSE lists the students by cohort and a system of flags are presented to identify students against the various risk factors. This, together with LEAP Ahead Diagnostics, then enables the academic tutors to personalise their support to offer tailored interventions to the specific needs of the particular student.

We are planning to extend the scope of this existing tool in order to provide greater visibility of certain additional student characteristics within its dataset. Including POLAR4 and IMD Data in the PULSE tool will allow academics to consider these factors when producing bespoke Diagnostic Action Plans for all students in 2019/20. To better understand POLAR4 and IMD quintile groups and the impact on attainment these have the university will monitor the data for one year to inform best practice going forward.

## Progression

Our ambitious five year Employability, Enterprise and Apprenticeship strategy seeks to establish an institutional approach and requires Academic and Professional Support Services to work in partnership to encompasses the development of a Platinum course portfolio, integrated employer collaborations, and enterprise and knowledge transfer operations to achieve a step change in engagement within these facets. This aims to create a stronger and more aligned framework in which the career development and progression into highly skilled labour is an integral part, with KPIs focused on providing work placement opportunities, developing graduate skills, and improving our Enterprise offer.

As recommended by our students through consultation, we will also seek to provide greater promotion of opportunities to progress to postgraduate study at the University, including the existing PG Alumni Loyalty Discount.

**Measures to address the progression of BAME and IMDQ1 Students**

As with our measures to improve continuation and attainment, whilst our approach is designed to improve the progression rates of all of our students, it also enables us to specifically address the support needs of our most vulnerable student groups and where we have identified gaps, such as BAME and IMDQ1 as identified in our strategic aims and objectives. In particular:

- *Employability*: We are introducing several new, key roles including a Director of Jobs for Students, a Graduate Careers Adviser, and several Employer Liaison and Placement Support positions. We will undertake timely analysis of progression metrics, increased career planning support and guidance and increased volume and variety of placements, internships and work opportunities. We have also seen a rapid increase in the recruitment to Degree Apprenticeship programmes, and as this continues to grow, positive progression outcomes will follow. The Careers and Employability

Team is working closely with the Disability Service to address raising aspirations, to provide more personalised placements and work experience opportunities and to deliver more focused workshops which take into account a range of disabilities such as Mental Health. These sessions will consider the impact this can have on seeking and applying for work, and break down some of the myths on declaration.

- *Curriculum*: Our Graduate Attributes Matrix for Employability (GAME) cites ten key attributes that we expect all students to achieve. GAME is now embedded in the core curriculum design and delivery across all undergraduate programmes and more work is being undertaken to build assessments around these attributes. It has initiated a process of long-term curriculum enhancement and the 'language' of the graduate attributes, embedded into learning, teaching and assessment, creates clarity for students and staff. The GAME Matrix presents consistent criteria to ensure that our graduates are prepared and have the skills that will help them to gain graduate-level employment/further study. Further work will be undertaken over the next three years to measure the impact of GAME, as described below. We are also utilising the expertise of subject-specific Industry Advisory Boards, who are helping to shape the curriculum, contribute to formal assessment processes and provide further work-based learning opportunities for our students.

- *Student Support*: Our focus will be on building confidence in skills development and job preparation, providing more opportunities for work-based learning, helping students to comprehend and navigate the graduate labour market and helping to raise aspiration. We will also focus on self-employment and the development of entrepreneurial skills, working closely with external organisations to increase exposure to business planning and support. From 2021, we will also seek to increase the career readiness amongst second year students as captured in the career registration data, ensuring that 55% are within the 'planning' phase and have clear career goals, working to 90% by 2024/25.

- *Collaboration*: A new initiative and collaboration with an external Recruitment Agency provider, will enable a consistent approach, focussing on job matching and job clinics, online material and webinars and small group interventions. This will free-up the Careers Advisers to provide more curriculum support and subject specific guidance. As a direct result of student input into the APP, we will also explore whether there is potential for opportunities to assist students to help find well-matched volunteering opportunities (or paid experience) or opportunities to acquire additional wrap around qualifications such as First Aid at Work which students may value.

In 2017, the University embarked on writing a new strategy that became the Employability, Enterprise and Apprenticeship Strategy 2017 – 2022. This new strategy sought to embed graduate attributes within the entire curriculum, and develop a universal framework that would have traction with staff, students and employers. A new Curriculum Working Group was formed which set out to establish a new Curriculum Philosophy and a new Graduate Attributes Matrix for Employability (GAME). Extensive research was carried out across the sector, involving desk research including a complete review of what other HEIs were doing in relation to graduate attributes and skills; we surveyed staff and students; and we consulted employers through mechanisms such as our Industry Advisory Board Network. We recorded every possible term used in relation to skills then narrowed down to a short list. We also reviewed all the different models and visualisations of graduate skills. This short list was then sent out to staff in an email, and they were asked to rank the skills in order of importance to them and their subject area. We then narrowed it down and decided on our final 10 within the curriculum group. The final stage was to agree on the definitions to be used. The Curriculum Group developed GAME based on this consultation, and subsequently rolled out training across all academic areas and also designed resources such as a 'Supporting the Curriculum Guide'.

We have entered into a partnership with Gradcore, an external consultancy, with extensive experience across the HE sector who will be helping us to undertake a 'curriculum health check' which will seek to audit employability provision across our curriculum, and one of their focus areas will be GAME. They will

be undertaking both desk research and onsite visits to speak to staff and students, with the overall aim of providing a clear set of recommendations for change and improvement.

## Measures to address the progression of full and part-time Asian students

- *Utilise early diagnostic and career registration data*: Early employability diagnostics with all first year students, coupled with our career registration data, should provide a rich picture of needed interventions. A dashboard has been developed for career registration that allows monitoring of all BAME groups, across all year groups and subject areas. A report will be produced to monitor and target Asian cohorts at the start of each academic year, and a plan of activity will be implemented based on the results. We will also seek to encourage additional Asian students to register onto extra-curricular activities such as the Bolton Award, a programme designed to improve the employability skills of participants, by undertaking a targeted communication campaign, utilising our online Student Hub system and workgroup facility.

- *Case Studies*: We will develop a number of BAME positive case studies of experiences of graduates/Alumni at different stages of their career to highlight what is possible and to provide further inspiration. We will utilize our Alumni from BAME backgrounds as role models through mentoring activity. We will work with 10 new members of the Alumni per year to provide positive case studies, 1-1 support, mentoring and work-related sessions, to raise aspirations of BAME cohorts with a particular focus on Asian students, thus building aspiration, and increasing the number of Asian students progressing to graduate-level employment.

- *BAME Mentoring*: We will explore the possibility of developing a career-mentoring scheme for BAME students that seeks to increase their exposure to experienced mentors who can help them search and apply for graduate positions by developing their knowledge, confidence and ability to apply for suitable roles. As part of the mentoring programme, and to improve social mobility and access to the professions, we will also design and incorporate a series of workshops about achieving employment in the professions such as Law, Teaching, Nursing and Accountancy. These will be delivered with the help of our Alumni and employer contacts.

## Measures to address the progression of part-time IMDQ1 students

Given the additional resource and strategic focus on employability, we feel that the decreasing trend for IMD Q1 (Part-Time) can be addressed through further interventions and monitoring through our annual plans and data sets, and this will be evidenced through our strategic measures.

Our new annual plan for Graduate Employment and Employability seeks to commission a new internal data set, which will provide a 'low-medium-high' risk rating for those students at risk of under-employment. This data will allow us to target our interventions and fast track support for those who fall within our under-represented groups. This data will factor in IMD and POLAR quintiles, and will be reviewed by our new Director of Jobs for Students on a monthly basis.

The University has access to a range of data but in relation to progression, we are planning to enhance our interpretation of that data, in order to influence and target our service delivery. The University has been working to improve our positive outcomes metric across all full-time cohorts, but as the APP data has highlighted, there are certain groups of students who need more targeted support, one of them being PT IMDQ1.

In order to address this, the Director of Jobs for Students and the Head of Careers and Employability have been working with colleagues from Student Data Management to develop an internal reporting tool specifically for progression which will assign a 'risk rating' to students based on a number of factors. Each

factor will be given a score which will produce a weighting. These scores will illustrate which students need careers and employability interventions. We are currently working on the risk factors and scoring system that we will adopt. Using this data set, we will then be able to highlight easily and quickly, part-time IMDQ1 students, for example, to market Careers and Employability services, target our support and interventions, and report back on any progress made.

This data set will draw on a range of other data sources such as ethnicity, disability, POLAR, IMD, early diagnostics and career registration and therefore can be used to improve metrics for all target under-represented groups. This data will then be used to inform academic employability plans.

## 3.2 Student consultation

Student voice and feedback is a key aspect of our plans including their development, implementation, progress review, refinement, continual improvement and completion. Student Course Representatives, School Representatives, Senate Student Focus Groups and the Students' Union will play a critical role in achieving the planned outcomes. Students are members of the formal governance and management structures put in place to oversee the formulation and monitoring of the plan (see 3.4).

Several focus groups have been held to test students' views and gather their ideas. They strongly endorsed existing proposals, plus made other suggestions which have been incorporated into this APP as highlighted in four paragraphs in preceding sections. Whilst it had not been possible to artificially engineer participation of students from a range of backgrounds, given the University's student population, the groups quite naturally comprised male / female; young / mature; a cross section of ethnic backgrounds and different socioeconomic status; different academic years and academic programmes (including access provision); home / non-UK students. Whilst care leavers themselves have not been engaged (given the low UoB numbers), a student from the University's Community Development & Youth Work programme took part and provided great insight. It is planned to hold similar events in the future, to test the appropriateness of the ongoing implementation. Several participants have offered future help, including as alumni.

## 3.3 Evaluation strategy

The University of Bolton engaged in the evaluation self-assessment exercise to ascertain how effectively current evaluation plans and methodologies generated high quality evidence of the impact of activities. At a strategic level, although evaluation forms part of the day-to-day activity of staff through regular team meeting items, inductions, training opportunities and robust data collection procedures, there remain opportunities for improvement. The Access and Participation Steering Group has recommended the development of the existing Evaluation and Impact Framework to support a whole-institutional approach to evaluation of student interventions, and the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to provide further expertise in this area and support the implementation of an enhanced framework. Evaluation is firmly embedded in the design of all student intervention programmes, which are undertaken with a clear rationale, include clearly defined goals, outcome measures and targeting criteria, and are informed by research at an activity and evaluation level. Evaluative plans for all programmes are formulated with reference to the complexity of the activities undertaken, in line with OfS guidance. Best practice approaches to both programme and evaluation design will be formalised through the introduction of an improved Evaluation and Impact Framework, which will also provide clarity around the intended audiences of evaluation and how it should be utilised within the institution.

### Strategic Context

We will implement a whole-institution approach to evaluation through the development of our Evaluation and Impact Framework (EIF) for 2019-20, informed by completion of the Self-Assessment Tool, providing a

robust model for monitoring and assessment, to measure the impact of all student interventions. We have recognised a need for additional expertise and plan to appoint a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer before the period of this APP.

The EIF will outline: core questions; standardised input, output and outcome measures and common data sources, alongside consistent methods for the collection, analysis and reporting of widening participation activity. It will be embedded in the design and delivery of all intervention programmes; with training for operational staff, further piloting to assess project feasibility and periodic review of student interventions.

As a member of the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), widening participation staff access conferences and working groups to share and learn from best practice and explore national policy. They support academic staff with the application of the principles of fair access across teaching and learning.

### Programme Design

All student interventions will follow our Evaluation and Impact Framework. Each activity must:
- Be underpinned by clear objectives and targets, aligned to the university's strategic aims;
- Provide a rationale for what work will be undertaken and how this will support objectives;
- Be linked to examples of current best practice and academic research;
- Identify the intended outcomes and impact of the activity and outline appropriate inputs, outputs, outcomes and data sources to be used.

The EIF will take a longitudinal approach, following the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation, to analyse the outcomes of all student interventions and allowing us to demonstrate the lasting impact of this work. This approach will include initial follow-up questionnaires, focus groups, outcome reporting and case studies, allowing staff to monitor initial reactions alongside lasting impact.

### Evaluation Design

Our updated EIF will identify activity to evaluate, as our current model does, alongside the appropriate types and quantities of data to be collected for each planned intervention. Current student access, success, progression programmes follow logical frameworks linking rationales, intended outcomes and impact. Interventions are informed by previous and current academic literature and internal evaluation data. Our success and progression programmes have drawn upon control data from students from similar demographics in previous academic year groups in order to assess impact on retention and attainment.

### Evaluation Implementation

Our EIF will outline evaluation schedules and exploit existing GDPR compliant procedures for collection, analysis and storage of evaluative data through the programme lifecycle and beyond. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer appointment will build on our specialist knowledge in this area. Our current evaluation activity relies upon a variety of qualitative and quantitative internal data sources and we are continuing to work collaboratively with local educational partners to share relevant data to enhance this activity.

### Learning to Shape Improvements

We are committed to using any evaluative activity undertaken as an opportunity to for continuous improvement of our practice and to maximise positive outcomes for all learners. Evaluation reporting guidelines will be outlined in our EIF and include plans for the internal dissemination of research findings through impact reporting across the institution and beyond, in the first instance for use by working and

steering groups to allow for responsive change. Continually examining our performance in this way will allow us to focus on the evidence-based impact of our programmes, in keeping with our commitment to being 'research informed', and work proactively towards our access and participation targets.

### Evaluating Financial Support

The university last used the OFFA/OfS Financial Support Toolkit in 2017 to survey all Undergraduate recipients of Bursaries and Scholarships excluding those students that had only applied to the Hardship Fund. The survey was conducted online and the university received 117 responses over a three-week period. Over 60% stated that receiving a bursary or scholarship influenced their decision to study at the University of Bolton; 84.7% agreed that receiving a bursary or scholarship was important in relation to them being able to afford to continue with their studies; 60.7% said they would sacrifice buying books, study materials and from attending field trips if it was not for the bursary or scholarship and 47.9% said they would be unable to afford their living costs without a bursary or scholarship.

The toolkit has never been used in relation to the University Hardship Fund. For 2019/20 the University will be using an online survey based on the OfS Financial Support Toolkit questionnaire to survey all applicants to the University Hardship Fund. This will include those applicants who do not receive monetary support.

The survey will be sent within two weeks of communicating the outcome of an application to the student. Uptake of the survey will be monitored month by month and an evaluation of the data will commence when the fund closes in the summer of 2020. The results of which should be available during the summer of 2020 and will be used to identify what if any changes are required to the financial support that is offered for 2020/21 and beyond. The University will also invite applicants to the fund who are in their first year or second year of study to join a focus group to assist with the development of the fund for 2020/21.

The main purpose of the fund is to support those students who are experiencing an unexpected financial crisis with the view to retaining students who may be considering leaving higher education due to financial constraints/problems. The fund gives priority to some categories of underrepresented students i.e. those with a disability and mature learners.

### Informing Strategic Measures

As part of our developing evaluation framework, the university will evaluate the success and impact of each of its strategic measures and associated initiatives or activities. This evaluation will deliver evidence of pre and post intervention changes in behaviour, contribution towards achieving our targets and on the perceived success amongst students and other stakeholders. We will use a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques to undertake and deliver on our evaluation commitments. The newly appointed Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will, as part of the evaluation framework, deliver individual project reports at relevant intervals during the course of the project and an overarching evaluation progress report to the Steering Group each time it meets.

It will be the responsibility of the Steering Group and sub-groups to consider and take action against the findings of these reports and to adjust and adapt our strategic measures accordingly in a timely manner with a view to continuous improvement. The Chair of the Steering Group will provide regular reports to Senate and to the Board of Governors to provide assurance that our Theory of Change is on target, highlighting any areas of risk or underperformance alongside areas of best practice. It will be the responsibility of the relevant

officers on the Steering Group to implement the group's recommendations and actions and to disseminate these to project leaders and the wider university community.

The Monitoring & Evaluation Officer will be key to progressing the evaluation strategy. They will be responsible for leading on the implementation of the University's Evaluation and Impact Framework. The aim is to seek to recruit to this post before the end 2019.

Progress and performance data will be formally reviewed by the Steering Group, which will meet at least once per term. It has been proposed that future meetings will be aligned with Senate, so that reports can be provided in to Senate from the Steering Group.

2019-20 is transition year and a variety of approaches will be trialled to see what works, so that they can be in place for when the Access & Participation Plan commences for 2020 onwards. Progress will be reviewed and evaluated, the results of the evaluation will then feed into future activities, based upon that learning. The Monitoring & Evaluation Officer will be expected to source a variety of quantitative internal and external data, undertake analysis of that data, making use of mathematical modelling, complex statistical analysis (such as linear regression and cluster analysis) and visualisation techniques to create accessible and easily interpreted results that are robust and credible. They will also be expected to undertake qualitative research using both primary and secondary sources, employing a range of qualitative research techniques, such as facilitating focus groups and running surveys, including organising and managing the support of student researchers or other volunteers when required.

Once the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer is in post, one of their first tasks will be to convene a small working group (including members of the University's Quality team amongst other) to review and develop the Evaluation and Impact Framework, early in 2020. This will also adopt and tailor a version of the Kirkpatrick model to ensure consistency of language with University operations. We do of course already evaluate what we do including programme design, using an organic process of trialling revised approaches and determining whether they work, whilst also embedding the best features, working in a consultative way and bringing the users with us, and creating anticipation and demand for the revised approaches prior to launch. This has occurred over several years with respect to the lifecycle of a programme. Specifically, using the Kirkpatrick framework:

Reaction: Measuring perceptions of the educational experience

As part of the University's Student Engagement Framework, students have the opportunity to feed back on their experience via a range of mechanisms. These include surveys at Module (Module Questionnaires), Programme Level (UKES, NSS, PTES, PRES) and University Level (Customer Service Excellence Survey). Students are also able to express their views as formal members of course, School and University level committees and as part of the University's Students' Union, which produces an annual quality report.

In terms of contributing to programme design, students are consulted on new programme developments as a requirement of the University's programme approval process.

Learning: Measurement/assessment of learning outcomes

Developing relevant and valid learning outcomes for a new programme is a key element of the University's programme approval process. The need to develop a cohesive and relevant assessment strategy to measure the learning outcomes is discussed at the beginning of the process in a programme design meeting organised by the Standards and Enhancement Office. As well as drawing on external reference points including QAA Characteristics and Benchmarks Statements and National Qualification Frameworks, development teams are guided by internal documentation such as the University's Curriculum Design

Guide. Following feedback from an external academic specialist, internal advisors, employers and students, the assessment strategy is finalised and scrutinised by an Approvals Panel.

Behaviour:  Application of learning to practice

When designing a programme, learning outcomes are developed which test practical and transferable skills, and allow students to demonstrate how their knowledge and understanding can be applied to practice. Assessment methods employed within University programmes include research projects, work-based projects, skills portfolios and role pays (e.g. law mutes and mock interviews). Approvals Panels assess the range, validity, fairness and inclusivity of assessments (amongst other factors).

Results: The measurement of graduate outcomes

The University has a five-year Employability, Enterprise and Apprenticeships Strategy (EEA 2017-22) which aims to improve the employability and overall success of its students through the setting and achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs include embedding distinctive Graduate Attributes within its programmes and ensuring that all students have access to work-related learning. As such when designing new programmes, development teams are required to make explicit work-related learning opportunities and how the University's set of Graduate Attributes are developed and assessed at each level of the programme.

## 3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The University has established an Oversight Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Board chaired by an independent member of the governing body, to oversee the effective implementation of the University's Improvement Plan. The Student Union President is also included within this Committee as are three of the University senior management team.  It receives regular reports on the incremental progress in delivering the plan, provides the governing body with regular reports, and ensures the University is putting in place and maintaining adequate levels of resource. The decision has been taken to incorporate the APP within the same governance structure (given the plans' alignment), and so the Oversight Committee has been involved during the formulation of the APP, giving detailed scrutiny prior to its formal approval by the Board, and will continue to monitor its progress.

In addition, an APP Steering Group has also been established, incorporating the managers directly responsible for delivery of the core elements of the APP together with representatives from the Students' Union. This group was initially tasked with formulation of the APP, although will now continue to meet to monitor its ongoing delivery, put further interventions in place if needed, and provide reports to Senate. Members include:

- Assistant Vice Chancellor of Transformations (Chair of the Group)
- Assistant Vice Chancellor - Planning and Student Experience
- Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
- Director of Student Life - Outcomes for Students
- Associate Director - Corporate Intelligence and Data Integrity
- Director of Jobs for Students
- Head of Careers and Employability
- Deputy Student Services Manager
- Executive Dean of Faculty and Member of Board of Governors
- SU President, plus one UG and one PG student
- Student Recruitment Manager
- Head of Finance
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

The group will meet three times per year or more frequently if required. The group will monitor progress against all targets set and if data demonstrates progress is worsening or not happening in accordance with the targets set appropriate action will be taken by the Group.

# 4. Provision of information to students

We aim to provide full information to students, parents, advisers and employers about the costs involved in undertaking their course and the financial support available from the Government or from the UoB. Details of the level of tuition fees, other living costs, and support will be available:
- on the University's website;
- from student advisers located in the Student Centre and the Student Union Advice Unit;
- at Open Days, HE Fairs and during visits to schools and colleges;
- Employer liaison groups
- On social media at relevant points during the recruitment cycle
- UCAS and Student Loans Company

We continue to review this information in light of CMA guidance and have launched a new course information database and new website to ensure compliance. We are committed to continuing 'No Hidden Extras Guarantee' which states that, subject to some exceptions, undergraduate students will not have to pay for any additional costs or fees which are mandatory for the completion of their course.

Before this APP comes into effect, we will have developed a section on our website to provide information on the range of activities and initiatives outlined within this plan and the MyBolton mobile app focused on belonging, including for our target groups such as BAME backgrounds. We will continue to develop our 24/7 offer through our online 'Student Hub' portal, including jobs, placements, employability events and a self-service appointment booking system, more tailored communications to under-represented groups and 'workgroups' facilitating targeted campaigns and access to 1-1 support.

### Financial Support for students from underrepresented groups

Care Leavers Award – please see page 24
Military ex-service personnel award - please see page 23

Hardship Fund/Opportunity Fund:

General conditions for all applicants applying to the Hardship Fund:

- Residency – Students must fulfil the residency criteria for receiving the UK statutory student support package
- Sources of Other Funding – Students must have applied for all other assistance to which they are entitled/ may be eligible for before an award from the fund is considered. This can include Student Loans, Benefits, Bursaries and Scholarships, Interest Free Student Overdrafts, Part-time work, money from family etc.
- Attendance and Effort - To get a payment, students must be enrolled on a course, and actively attending, with an attendance of 75% or higher, unless they are on placement or intercalating, in which case special conditions may apply. Student Services staff will interview all students who apply and have an attendance of less than 75% to discuss the cause of the low attendance and if this is linked with the need for financial support.

Levels of Financial Support Available from the Hardship Fund:

Emergency Loans – Emergency Loans are available to any new home or EU student who can demonstrate that they have insufficient funds to afford essential costs such as food and travel to and from the University

whilst they are awaiting Student Finance England to assess their eligibility for core funding. Emergency Loans are capped at £320 for 2019/20.

Food Vouchers/Travel Vouchers – Food Vouchers are available to any student who can demonstrate that they have insufficient funds to purchase food. Food vouchers are issued throughout the academic year and are awarded by the Deputy Student Services Manager on the recommendation of either the Student Funding Advisor, Mental Health Advisor or University Counselling Service. Food vouchers are normally issued up to the value of £50 per applicant.

Hardship Support Grants - Students with children or caring responsibilities, students with a disability or final year students are considered a priority for financial support payments from the fund are subject to a robust income and expenditure assessment. Students who have a financial shortfall can receive up to £1000 per academic year. Students without a shortfall of income and when an assessment demonstrates a surplus can be considered for a non-standard award capped at £300.

# 5. Appendix

5.1     Targets and Investment Plan
5.2     Fee Information
5.3     Self-Assessment Tool
5.4     Letter of Support from Students' Union

# Access and participation plan
# Fee information 2020-21

**Provider name: The University of Bolton**

**Provider UKPRN: 10006841**

## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

The fees shown below are the maximum that will apply to new entrants to programmes in 2020-21 and their fees will be maintained at the same level (without inflationary uplift) as those particular students continue into the later years of that same programme.

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

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

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

| Sub-contractual full-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|
| First degree | Backstage Academy (training) Ltd 10036456 | £9,250 |
| First degree | RTC Education Ltd 10008455 | £8,100 |
| First degree | Salford City College 10005032 | £9,250 |
| First degree | Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563 | £9,250 |
| First degree | The Growth Company Limited 10004177 | £6,165 |
| Foundation degree | Backstage Academy (training) Ltd 10036456 | £9,250 |
| Foundation degree | Salford City College 10005032 | £9,250 |
| Foundation degree | Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563 | £9,250 |
| Foundation degree | The Growth Company Limited 10004177 | £6,165 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563 | £9,250 |
| HNC/HND | Bolton College 10000794 | £6,165 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | Aquinas College 10000330 | £8,500 |
| Postgraduate ITT | Bolton College 10000794 | £7,500 |
| Postgraduate ITT | Salford City College 10005032 | £8,000 |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

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

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|
| First degree | | £6,000 |
| Foundation degree | | £6,000 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | £6,000 |
| HNC/HND | | £6,000 |
| CertHE/DipHE | | £6,000 |
| Postgraduate ITT | | £4,500 |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

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

| Sub-contractual part-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|
| First degree | RTC Education Ltd 10008455 | £4,050 |
| First degree | The Growth Company Limited 10004177 | £5,200 |
| Foundation degree | Alliance Learning 10000238 | £6,000 |
| Foundation degree | Salford City College 10005032 | £6,000 |
| Foundation degree | The Growth Company Limited 10004177 | £5,500 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | Bolton College 10000794 | £3,082 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | Bolton College 10000794 | £3,300 |
| Postgraduate ITT | Salford City College 10005032 | £4,000 |
| Postgraduate ITT | The Growth Company Limited 10004177 | £3,300 |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

# Targets and investment plan
# 2020-21 to 2024-25

**Provider name: The University of Bolton**

**Provider UKPRN: 10006841**

## Investment summary

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

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

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

**Table 4a - Investment summary (£)**

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Academic year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| **Total access activity investment (£)** | £322,161.00 | £319,945.00 | £310,219.00 | £307,301.00 | £307,274.00 |
| Access (pre-16) | £58,128.00 | £55,912.00 | £52,025.00 | £50,874.00 | £50,847.00 |
| Access (post-16) | £264,033.00 | £264,033.00 | £258,194.00 | £256,427.00 | £256,427.00 |
| Access (adults and the community) | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Access (other) | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| **Financial support (£)** | £173,171.00 | £186,975.00 | £196,835.00 | £209,653.00 | £223,950.00 |
| **Research and evaluation (£)** | £65,586.00 | £65,586.00 | £65,586.00 | £65,586.00 | £65,586.00 |

**Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)**

| Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI) | Academic year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| **Higher fee income (£HFI)** | £14,272,834.00 | £14,820,966.00 | £15,639,775.00 | £15,870,714.00 | £16,082,703.00 |
| **Access investment** | 2.3% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| **Financial support** | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.4% |
| **Research and evaluation** | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% |
| **Total investment (as %HFI)** | 3.9% | 3.9% | 3.7% | 3.7% | 3.7% |

# Targets and investment plan
# 2020-21 to 2024-25

**Provider name: The University of Bolton**

**Provider UKPRN: 10006841**

## Targets

### Table 2a - Access

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description (500 characters maximum) | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | Yearly milestones | | | | | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | |
| | PTA_1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Table 2b - Success

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | Yearly milestones | | | | | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | |
| To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG students from P4Q1 and P4Q5 | PTS_1 | Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) | To reduce the gap between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 FT UG students by half by 2024/25 | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 10% | 9% | 8% | 7% | 6% | 5% | We are setting an ambitous target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer than 5 years to close this gap. |
| To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG students from IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 | PTS_2 | Socio-economic | To reduce the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 FT UG students by 10pp by 2024/25 | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 25% | 24% | 23% | 21% | 18% | 15% | We are setting an ambitous target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer than 5 years to close this gap. |
| To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG Black students and White students | PTS_3 | Ethnicity | To reduce the gap of 30 percentage points between FT UG Black students and white students getting a good degree (1st and 2:1) | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 30% | 27% | 24% | 21% | 18% | 15% | We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer than 5 years to close the gap. |
| To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG Asian students and White students | PTS_4 | Ethnicity | To reduce the gap of 18 percentage points between FT UG Asian students and white students getting a good degree (1st and 2:1) | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 18% | 15% | 12% | 9% | 6% | 3% | We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take at least another year to completely close the gap. |
| To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Black students and White students | PTS_5 | Ethnicity | To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Black students and White students from 4 percentage points to 0 percentage points | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 4% | 3% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 0% | We are setting a target to completely remove this gap by 2024/25. |
| To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Asian students and White students | PTS_6 | Ethnicity | To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Asian students and White students from 8 percentage points to 0 percentage points | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 8% | 7% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 0% | We are setting a target to completely remove this gap by 2024/25. |
| To reduce the gap in continuation between FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White students | PTS_7 | Ethnicity | To reduce the gap in continuation between FT UG Mixed Ethnicity students and White students from 9 percentage points to 0 percentage points | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 9% | 8% | 6% | 4% | 3% | 2% | We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take at least another year to completely close the gap. |
| | PTS_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Table 2c - Progression

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | Yearly milestones | | | | | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | |
| To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between PT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students by 10 percentage points | PTP_1 | Socio-economic | To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between PT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students by 10 percentage points by 2024/25 | Yes | The access and participation dataset | 2016-17 | 17.5% | 16.5% | 15.5% | 13.5% | 10.5% | 7.5% | We are setting an ambitious target over a 5 yr period however acknowledge that is likely to take longer to completely close the gap. |
| | PTP_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG Asian and White students by 10 percentage points | PTP_3 | Ethnicity | To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG Asian and White students by 10 percentage points by 2024/25 | Yes | The access and participation dataset | 2016-17 | 16% | 15% | 14% | 12% | 9% | 6% | We are aiming to bring the absolute percentage for Asian students in line with the current pecentage for white students of 63.6% acknowledging that the wider work we are doing across the University will likely improve rates for white students by 2024/25 and therefore a gap will remain. |
| | PTP_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |