

Access and Participation Plan: 2020-2025

UKPRN: 10005404

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University Centre
Reaseheath



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INTRODUCTION

University Centre Reaseheath (UCR), a part of Reaseheath College, provides Higher Education (HE) programmes which are validated and awarded by the University of Chester and Harper Adams University across levels 3 to 6. With around 850 full-time equivalent students, UCR is dedicated to its long-standing commitment to value diversity and promote equality. As a specialist provider of land-based education, this commitment is central to our mission and reflected in our Corporate Values¹. Students are recruited from a wide range of socio-economic, academic and personal backgrounds, and the Further Education (FE) and HE curriculum at Reaseheath has been carefully constructed to provide seamless progression routes through levels 1 to level 6 in most subject areas.

As a smaller provider of HE, UCR places a strong emphasis on personalised academic support and pastoral care. With small teaching groups, staff and students form strong associations with each other and develop a firm affiliation with the institution. We have plans to grow and diversify the undergraduate population and we will ensure that the community 'feel' and ethos of the University Centre is sustained and that the current standards of care and support are maintained.

In 2019, the Reaseheath was nominated for the AoC/TES Award for Mental Health and Wellbeing, recognising the innovative approaches taken to strengthen student resilience and provide support to those facing difficulties. Our approach encapsulates the entire student lifecycle and seeks to support all students to access and succeed in their HE studies.

In 2012, UCR was successful in receiving directly funded student numbers from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and has since been gradually transitioning students to be registered at UCR. Historically, student numbers were franchised through our University partners (The University of Chester and Harper Adams University) and whilst students were registered with the HE Institution (HEI), UCR made a firm commitment to enhancing access, participation and attainment across the entirety of our provision. UCR has always undertaken responsibility for promoting its provision and in actively recruiting students to our HE programmes, either internally from our FE provision, or from other FE/Sixth-Form institutions.

In 2016, Reaseheath College formed a strategic alliance with the University of Chester and entered a teach-out period with programmes validated by Harper Adams University. This alliance also recognised the maturity of HE provision at Reaseheath and implemented steps to move from a franchised to a validated partnership model. From September 2018 onwards, all new enrolments have been registered directly with UCR (including new enrolments to level 6 honours top-up degrees). By September 2020, less than 5 students (who are expected to continue on a part-time basis in year four of four) will not be registered by UCR. The only exception to this approach is our BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour and Welfare (ABW) programme which has run for several years in collaboration with the University of Chester. Students enter the programme through either the foundation year or directly at level 4 at UCR, and then study subsequent years of their honours degree at the University of Chester.

Due to our mixed approach to the registration of students historically, the OfS data dashboard presented small numbers of students for analysis, and in most cases offered little information to inform our assessment of performance. Furthermore, our current state of transition which leads to the direct registration of almost all HE students by the start of this plan required us to consider our entire student cohort historically (i.e. all taught students) to establish trends and performance gaps which accurately reflect the makeup of our future cohorts. As the ABW programme identified above is the only programme which will continue to operate a franchised model, registrations to this programme have been excluded from the internal data which informs our assessment of performance within this plan. Table 1 illustrates the historic trend of direct registrations to UCR and franchised registrations to either Harper Adams University or The University of Chester.

¹ <https://ucraseheath.ac.uk/about/mission-vision-and-values/>

Ac Yr	Registration	Full-time	Part-time
13/14	UCR - Direct	275	106
	Franchised	225	42
14/15	UCR - Direct	223	126
	Franchised	319	8
15/16	UCR - Direct	231	127
	Franchised	411	30
16/17	UCR - Direct	234	114
	Franchised	436	42
17/18	UCR - Direct	248	100
	Franchised	474	34
18/19	UCR - Direct	538	119
	Franchised	248	20

Table 1 –UCR registered and franchised student numbers (headcount) by study mode

The OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard presents only registered students, and as new registrations have been directly funded from 2018/19 onwards, UCR, following advice from the OfS took steps to undertake the assessment of performance on taught student data (excluding the ABW programme). Consequently, UCR initiated a project to create a dashboard using the OfS technical specification to enable the historic analysis of our entire student population. As the data was internal, the rounding methodology (i.e. to the nearest 10) was not applied as this skewed the figures significantly where small numbers of students were involved. To protect the anonymity of students, any population of less than 5 are identified as not reportable or 'N' in the data tables in the appendices. Furthermore, given the makeup of UCR's programmes which includes a combination of full honours degrees, foundation degrees and honours top-up degrees, the 'Attainment: Good Honours' data incorporates the award of a distinction or merit classification at foundation degree level, in addition to first class and upper-second class honours degree classifications.

UCR has invested significantly in its data capabilities following long-standing recognition of the challenges faced by a small provider of HE in reporting detailed student characteristics. The quality of data and our approach to reporting has significantly improved and was verified by a HEFCE data audit in 2018. Further work is underway to encourage the disclosure of characteristics at enrolment (e.g. disability and care leavers). It should be noted that the small-scale of our offer can be restrictive in generating statistically meaningful data for analysis. In many cases, a small change in performance within a category can produce a relatively high percentage effect. Where performance gaps are shown, these are the differences between the two population rates/indicators for that given cohort and life cycle stage wherever possible.

As we exit our transitional phase, almost all students will be returned as directly funded and registered at UCR. This coincides with the start of this plan, and we will gradually make greater use of the OfS published data to monitor and evaluate our performance.

1. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

As described in the Introduction above, all aspects of our Assessment of Performance have been carried out using internally derived data, other than Progression for which TEF Year 4 (TEF4) data has been utilised. The data used to inform this report has been submitted to the Office for Students as an annex. The gaps identified refer to the combination of full-time and part-time modes of study and do not separate these out due to the predominance of full-time students within our population.

TEF4 data (based on DHLE data for the academic years 2014-15 to 2016-17) has been used for analysis of progression within this assessment of performance. UCR has not historically captured data on progression and has relied on DLHE data provided through iGraduate. Unfortunately, this data was deleted by iGraduate in May 2019 before UCR had the opportunity to access the raw files. The progression tab on the OfS data dashboard currently provides insufficient information for Reaseheath College to identify any statistically significant gaps, therefore the only progression data

available for analysis is that contained within the TEF workbooks. We recognise that there are limitations associated with the TEF datasets:

- the data is comprised of a 3-year aggregates
- the workbooks provide slightly different metrics:
 - the only comparison for the POLAR 4 indicator presents Q1&2 against Q3&5
 - the TEF data considers highly skilled employment or further study rather than highly skilled employment of further study at a higher level
 - comprises data relating to taught students rather than registered

The position is further exacerbated by the move from the DLHE to Graduate Outcomes Survey, and a gap in reporting as a result of the changed methodology. By January 2021, we expect to have two datasets from the Graduate Outcomes Survey (cohort D in each instance). At this point, we will re-assess progression performance across all underrepresented groups, including IMD students, and may at that time apply to revise our plan to include additional aims, objectives, targets and strategic measures as appropriate.

1.1 HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND DEPRIVATION

1.1.1 ACCESS

The gap between the most and least represented young student groups (POLAR4 quintiles 5 and 1) is illustrated in Figure 1. The gap widened between 2013/14 and 2015/16 to an absolute gap of 9.9 percentage points (a difference of 25 student registrations). In the subsequent years, this gap narrowed significantly to just 2.3 percentage points in 2016/17 (a difference of 18 student registrations) and 3.3 percentage points in 2017/18 (a difference of 11 student registrations).

The absolute gap in recruitment from the most and least deprived areas of England (Indices of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 5) is illustrated in Figure 2. The gap has steadily reduced over the five-year period, from a gap of 9.6 percentage points in 2013/14, to 0.8 percentage points in 2017/18.

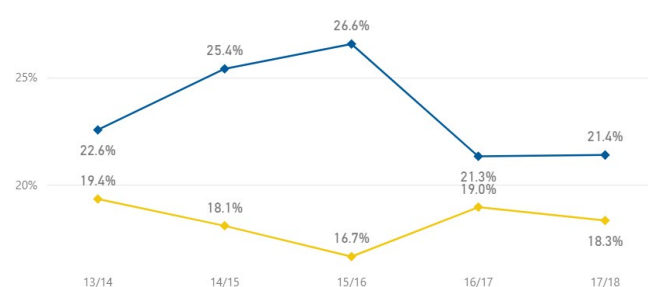


Figure 1 – Proportion of the most (blue line – POLAR4 quintile 5) and least (yellow line – POLAR4 quintile 1) students accessing Higher Education programmes at University Centre Reaseheath (relevant to OfS KPM 1)

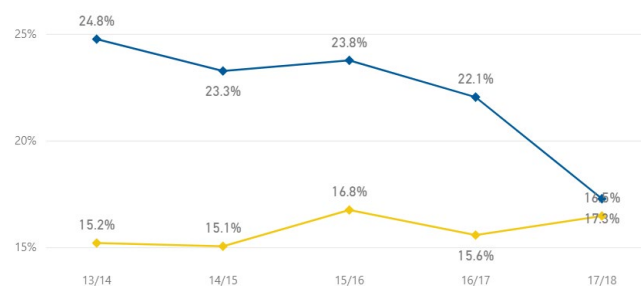


Figure 2 – Proportion of students recruited to HE programmes at University Centre Reaseheath from the least deprived (blue line – IMD quintile 5) and most deprived (yellow line – IMD quintile 1) areas of England

Reaseheath College offers a broad range of opportunities at both further and higher levels of education. Our outreach activity incorporates work with a wide range of schools and sixth-form colleges in the local and regional area to support students in their transition into our FE, HE and apprenticeship programmes. Our work in this area is particularly difficult to disaggregate between the scope of provision we offer. Engagement with students at primary or high school levels can support entry to our FE provision, and a range of activities are undertaken with students at the start of their level 3 studies to inform and assist their transition into HE at UCR or elsewhere. As an institution, we offer a free transport service which brings over 1,400 students each day across 24 routes to our specialist land-based campus. This service enables students to access our specialist, technical FE provision and gain the academic credentials to progress into HE. Most students who progress internally onto HE programmes then stay within our halls of residence on campus, and therefore a relatively small proportion utilise the free transport service. The transport service therefore primarily

supports our FE students but is a key element of our approach to widening HE participation. Our current approach is successfully recruiting students from areas of low HE participation and deprived geographies.

The OfS Access and Participation Dashboard highlights a more significant gap between students in quintiles 1 and 5 for both IMD and POLAR 4 indicators (in 2017-18: 7.1 percentage point gap for IMD and 6.9 percentage point gap for POLAR 4). In both instances, there is significant variation from one year to the next owing to the small sample considered within the OfS dataset (i.e. registered students only). Furthermore, the confidence intervals are consistently wide and therefore demonstrate a low level of statistical significance. The gaps identified within this dataset are therefore disregarded for the purpose of this plan.

1.1.2 SUCCESS - CONTINUATION

Historically, students from POLAR 4 quintile 1 have sustained higher rates of continuation than those from quintile 5 (Figure 3). The same pattern is repeated when considering IMD quintile 1 and 5 students, with negative gaps across the first four years (Figure 4). That said, continuation rates for POLAR4 quintile 1 students have declined, whilst quintile 5 continuation has improved. For IMD, both quintile 1 and 5 continuation rates demonstrate an overall declining trend between 2013/14 and 2016/17. In 2017/18, continuation rates for quintile 5 students for both IMD and POLAR 4 were higher than the quintile 1 equivalents, presenting a gap of 3.6pp (POLAR 4) and 8.6pp (IMD). The data indicates that our institutional strategies to improve continuation rates have had a more marked effect on quintile 5 students, particularly against the POLAR 4 measure, and whilst a gap is only present in one of the five years for both IMD and POLAR 4, the declining trend for quintile 1 students in both measures is of concern, as is the shift identified in 2017/18, which is considered, at the time of writing to represent an anomaly. As this gap has only just emerged in 2017/18, we will establish targets against the POLAR 4 measure and closely monitor the performance of students against the IMD measure.

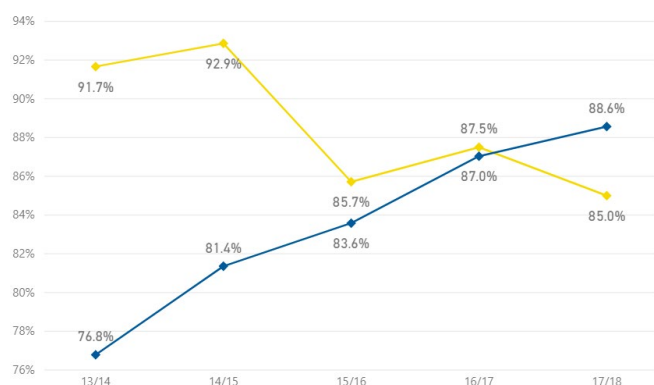


Figure 3 - Continuation rates of POLAR 4 Quintile 1 (yellow line) and POLAR 4 Quintile 5 students (blue line) (relevant to OfS KPM 3)

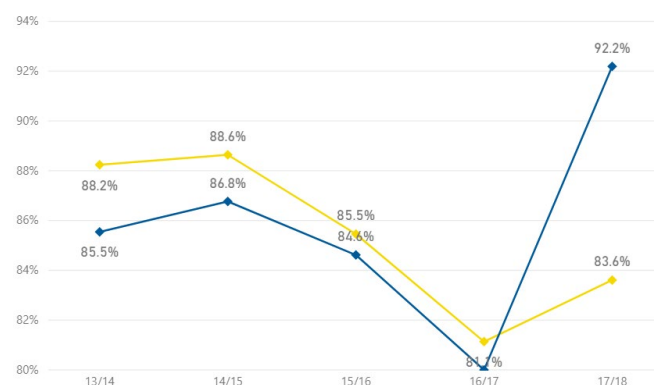


Figure 4 - Continuation rates of IMD Quintile 1 (yellow line) and IMD Quintile 5 students (blue line)



Target Group P2: Students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 - Continuation



Monitoring Group M1: Students originating from IMD quintile 1 - Continuation

1.1.3 SUCCESS - ATTAINMENT

Attainment rates vary across the five-year period for both POLAR 4 and IMD measures (Figure 5 and Figure 6), potentially attributable to relatively small student numbers within these demographics having a more profound effect on the percentage value. Across both measures, students from quintile 1 perform less favourably than their quintile 5 counterparts. However, across the five years, both gaps have narrowed from 36.7pp in 2013/14 to 17.3pp in 2017/18 for POLAR 4, and from 33.2pp in 2013/14 to 18.6pp in 2017/18 for IMD.

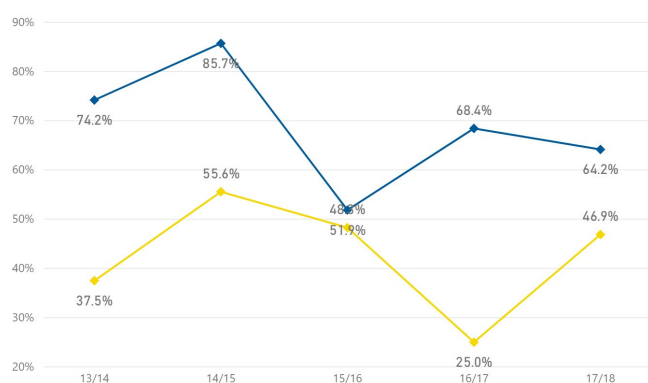


Figure 5: Proportion of most (blue line – POLAR4 quintile 5) and least represented (yellow line – POLAR4 quintile 1) groups of students achieving first/upper second-class honours or Distinction/Merit awards at University Centre Reaseheath

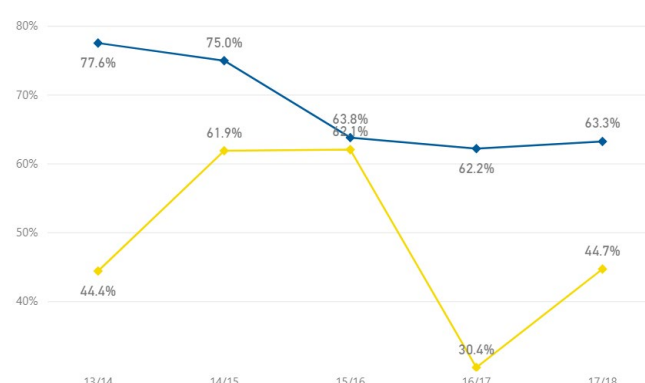


Figure 6 - Proportion of students originating from the least deprived (blue line – IMD quintile 5) and most deprived (yellow line – IMD quintile 1) areas of England achieving first/upper second-class honours or Distinction/Merit awards at University Centre Reaseheath



Target Group P2: Students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 - Attainment



Target Group P3: Students originating from IMD quintile 1 - Attainment

1.1.4 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Overall 'highly skilled employment or further study' rates have been increasing, regardless of quintile. 94.9% of full-time students have progressed into employment or further study six months after graduating, evidencing a 3.5% increase over the last three academic years and 0.1% above the sector benchmark². However, students from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN, POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 2) have consistently performed worse than those from the other quintile groups (POLAR 4 quintiles 3 to 5) which correlates with the findings from HEFCE (2017)³. The gap which is evident between those students from LPN and other quintile groups in progressing into highly skilled employment or further study is currently at 12.9 percentage points. Within the first year of this plan we expect to have received two full datasets from the graduate outcomes survey (cohort D in both instances) and will be able to undertake a more granular analysis of progression, including the consideration of the IMD indicator. During 2020-21, we will undertake a full assessment of performance utilising this new measure, and consider the need to establish new aims, objectives, targets and strategic measures as a variation to this plan.



Target Group P1: Students originating from POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 2 - Progression

² TEF Y4_10005404_Reaseheath College Metrics Workbook 2019

³ [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180322112445tf/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2017/201720/HEFCE2017_20.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2017/201720/HEFCE2017_20.pdf)

1.2 BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) STUDENTS

1.2.1 ACCESS

The proportion of students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds enrolled on HE programmes at UCR is currently at 3.3% which is more reflective of the local demographic (minority ethnic groups represent 5.3% of the population of Cheshire West and Chester⁴, and 3% of the Cheshire East population⁵) than the sector-wide student population (24%)⁶ or the population of England and Wales (14%)⁷.

In 2017/18 we recruited 26.4% of our student population from the local region. As a small provider of HE, it is this local area that our outreach activities are focused within.

Whilst nationally, the population is more ethnically diverse, we have restricted capacity to engage in outreach activities across a broader geographic profile. The gap in Access between BAME and White students has narrowed by 2.8 percentage points over 5 years, with the number of BAME students doubling over that period, however this continues to represent small numbers within our student population.

The specialist technical and professional land-based subjects UCR offer reflect a second contributory factor for limited BAME student recruitment. It is recognised that nationally, BAME students are most likely to study subjects such as medicine, dentistry, law and business/administrative studies⁷. Conversely, subjects in the areas of veterinary science and agriculture have the lowest proportions of BAME students nationally⁸. Within the working population, just 1% of employees are from a minority ethnic background in the agriculture and fisheries sector⁹. There is also a volume of research which indicates that family and cultural factors have a significant influence on career choice in minority ethnic groups^{10, 11}. Some authors suggest that deeply held religious and cultural beliefs and traditions around animals may mean that young people from many BAME cultures may be actively discouraged from pursuing careers which center around animals^{12, 13}.

Most other HEI specialist land-based providers report a similar demographic profile, with low levels of BAME recruitment. For example, the Royal Agricultural University, and Harper Adams University both report a proportion of white students at or above 90%. These institutions also possess a far broader HE curriculum offer than UCR and can deploy resources on a national scale due to the size of their offer.

We consider these to be structural factors which strongly determine and limit the diversity of our student intake. At this stage, we are unable to set specific targets to strengthen BAME recruitment to our institution, as we believe that a land-based education sector-wide approach is required to identify the barriers which exist for BAME students

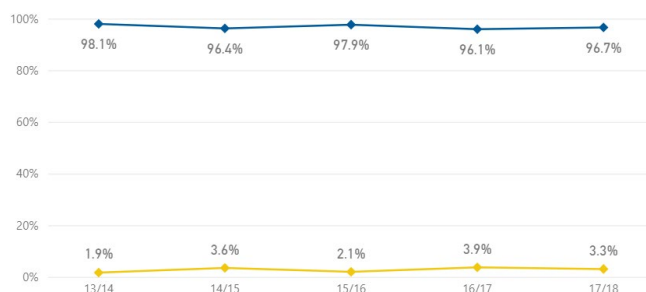


Figure 7: Proportion of White (blue line) and Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnicity students (yellow line) entering Higher Education at University Centre Reaseheath

⁴ inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/GetFile?fileUrl=/keystatistics

⁵ <https://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/>

⁶ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he>

⁷ <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest#by-ethnicity>

⁸ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Documents/patterns-and-trends-in-uk-higher-education-2018.pdf>

⁹ https://race.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/rfo_sector_factsheet_set_vfinal_new_2.pdf

¹⁰ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ962814.pdf>

¹¹ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.569.6330&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹² https://animalstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.co.uk/&httpsredir=1&article=1002&context=acwp_sata

¹³ <https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/perceptions-of-animals-across-cultures-mans-best-friend-or-dirty-beast/>

entering land-based HE, before developing collaborative strategies to address these issues on a national scale. We are not however complacent, and as such, this requirement is established as an objective within our plan. Institutionally, we will continue to monitor BAME recruitment and will establish targets and interventions in 2022/23, following our collaboration and consultation with other land-based institutions.



Monitoring Group M2: BAME students - Access

1.2.2 SUCCESS: CONTINUATION

Continuation data illustrates proportionally large gaps between BAME and White students over the last five academic years. The small numbers of BAME students does mean that continuation data for this group is influenced disproportionately. However, over the last 3 years, there is a clear tendency for lower continuation rates for BAME students. The data would suggest that progress in closing this gap has been erratic, but is clearly influenced by small reportable numbers demonstrating a large percentage effect. This cohort is identified as a target group within this plan.

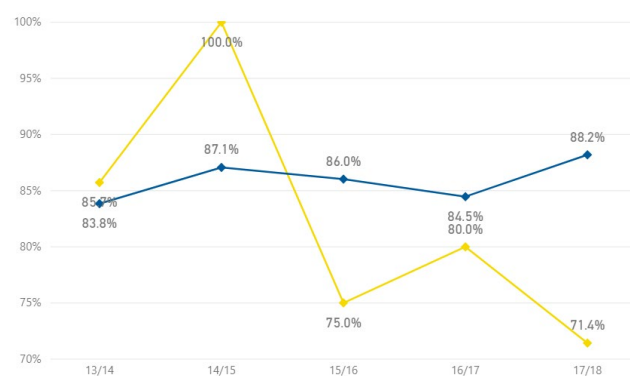


Figure 8: Proportion of White (blue line) and BAME/Other (yellow line) students continuing studies in Higher Education at UCR



Target Group B1: BAME students - Continuation

1.2.3 SUCCESS: ATTAINMENT

Small numbers of completing BAME students mean that attainment is not reportable in 2 of the 5 years considered. In 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2016/17 (the reportable years), BAME attainment was strong and significantly exceeded the profile of White students at UCR.

1.2.4 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Due to the small number of BAME students, data is only reportable from academic year 2016/17, and as such, care needs to be taken with respect to analysing progression rates because of the low numbers within this demographic. In 2017/18, there was a larger proportion of BAME students in highly skilled employment or further study (60%) than White students (53.1%) 6 months after graduating. These results contrast with the national findings from the Graduate Labour Market Statistics over the last few years¹⁴.

1.2.5 DISAGGREGATION OF BAME

Because of the small numbers of BAME students recruited by UCR, disaggregation of ethnicity largely resulted in non-reportable data, and in all cases prevented any meaningful trend analysis. Our objectives, targets and strategic measures are therefore focused solely on the broad BAME category. Proportionately, our population of students with 'mixed' ethnicity is comparable to the national population (1.4% at UCR in 2017/18 against 2.0% in England and Wales – 2011 census), however all other disaggregated groups are underrepresented within our student population.

¹⁴ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-labour-market-statistics-2017

Throughout the operation of this plan, we will maintain an active awareness of barriers for disaggregated BAME groups across all stages of the lifecycle.

1.3 MATURE STUDENTS

1.3.1 ACCESS

Whilst there is some fluctuation from year-to-year, recruitment of mature students to programmes at UCR remains relatively consistent at around one third of entrants, which is similar to national proportions (36% for the HE sector¹⁵). The drop in mature recruitment in 2017/18 was most predominantly aligned to a reduction in part-time recruitment, with mature students dropping from 54 entrants in 2016/17 to 36 in 2017/18. This decline is recognised nationally and is, in part, associated with structural issues surrounding tuition fees and student finance¹⁶. The drop is further exacerbated by an increase in young full-time recruitment in 2017/18, with overall full-time entrants rising from 336 (2016/17) to 442 (2017/18). Full-time mature recruitment increased in headcount during this period from 109 to 112. This represents a lower proportion of the overall full-time student population and is therefore illustrated as a decline in Figure 9. Except for 2017/18, the overall trend in mature recruitment is positive.

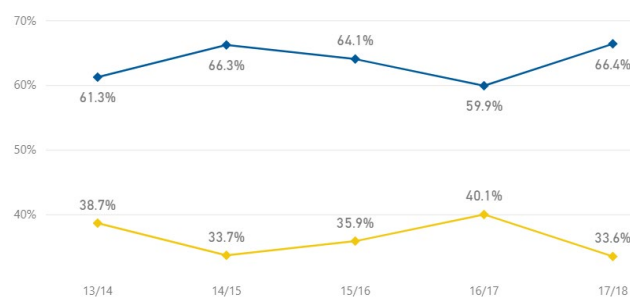


Figure 9: Proportion of Young (blue line – under 21) and Mature (yellow line – 21 and over) students entering Higher Education at UCR.

1.3.2 SUCCESS: CONTINUATION

It is recognised that mature students are more likely to leave their course of study after their first year¹⁷, and this is reflected in our continuation rates at UCR. Overall, continuation rates have improved over the last 5 years from 83.9% in 2013/14 to 87.6% in 2017/18. Over the five-year period, continuation rates for young students have improved marginally by 1.5pp, whilst mature student continuation rates have improved by 7.1pp, representing a gap of only 0.2pp in 2017/18. 2016/17 would appear to be an anomalous year, with the gap widening to 5.4 percentage points. Overall, this data suggests that the work which has been undertaken to reduce first year attrition rates over the last 5 years has impacted all students positively, but perhaps had a more marked effect on mature students.

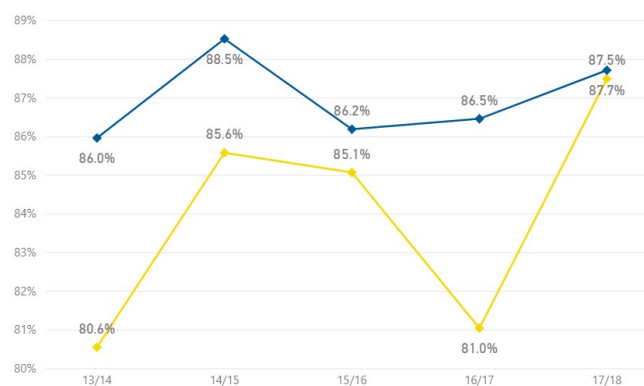


Figure 10: Proportion of Young (blue line – under 21) and Mature (yellow line – 21 and over) students continuing their studies in Higher Education at University Centre Reaseheath.

We will continue to monitor the continuation of mature students throughout the duration of this plan to ensure that this success is sustained, and we will consider the establishment of targets and interventions if necessary.



Monitoring Group M3: Mature students - Continuation

¹⁵ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he>

¹⁶ <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/The-Lost-Part-Timers-Final.pdf>

¹⁷ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE.2014/Content/Pubs/2017/201720/HEFCE2017_20.pdf

1.3.3 SUCCESS: ATTAINMENT

HEFCE (2018) identified a 12% difference between young and mature students gaining a good honours degree for 2016-17 graduates nationally¹⁸. Conversely, UCR demonstrates the opposite trend and has witnessed a negative gap between mature and young students over the last five years, with mature students consistently outperforming their younger peers.

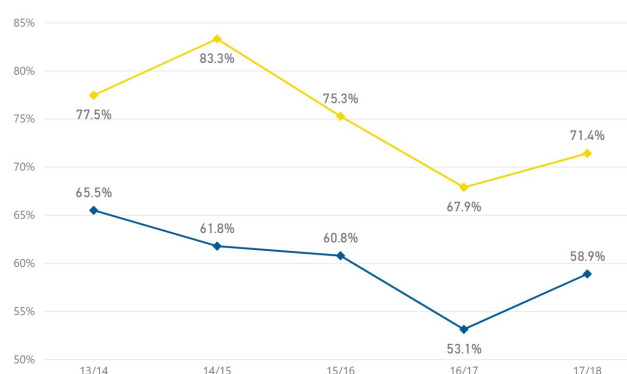


Figure 11: Proportion of Young (blue line – under 21) and Mature (yellow line – 21 and over) students achieving First/Upper-Second class honours or foundation degree distinction/merit awards at UCR.

1.3.4 PROGRESSION INTO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Data from our TEF year 2 and TEF year 3 workbooks indicates that the proportion of our mature students progressing into highly skilled employment or further study 6 months after graduating has historically been higher than their young counterparts (by an average of -4.56 percentage points). This trend reflects the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2016) findings that younger age groups (the younger ages of 21-30 at the point of graduating) had lower highly skilled employment rates than other age categories¹⁹. However, data from our TEF year four workbook suggests that this changed to a positive gap of 5.3 percentage points, with more of our young graduates gaining highly skilled employment or further study in the most recent set of data. We will continue to monitor this position in order to ascertain whether a trend is emerging which requires intervention and will set appropriate targets within the timescale of this plan if appropriate. In particular, we will analyse the first two years of data from the graduate outcome survey to make this assessment of our performance in the 2021-22 academic year.

Monitoring Group M3: Mature students - Progression

1.4 DISABLED STUDENTS

1.4.1 ACCESS

UCR shows a relatively stable trend in recruiting a high proportion of undergraduate entrants with a declared learning difficulty or disability, averaging around 23.5% of those recruited each year with some minor variation in numbers from one year to the next. The proportion of disabled students studying at UCR in 2017/18 was double the sector average (24.4% vs. 12%).

¹⁸ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2018/201805>

¹⁹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518654/bis-16-232-graduate-labour-market-statistics-2015.pdf

1.4.2 SUCCESS: CONTINUATION

Over the five-year period, continuation rates for students declaring a learning difficulty or disability at UCR have improved by 5.6 percentage points, whilst the performance gap against students with no known disability has reduced from 4.5 percentage points in 2013/14 to 2.0 percentage points in 2017/18. There is a notable reduction in continuation in 2016/17 which we believe is attributable to the changes in DSA funding which resulted in the removal of band 1 and 2 funding. UCR recognised the need to make appropriate and reasonable adjustment for such students and responded with strategies which recovered and improved continuation rates for this demographic in 2017/18. 2016/17 is therefore considered an anomalous year, and an improving trend and narrowing gap is recognised. Our work with this target group will aim to continue this improving trajectory.

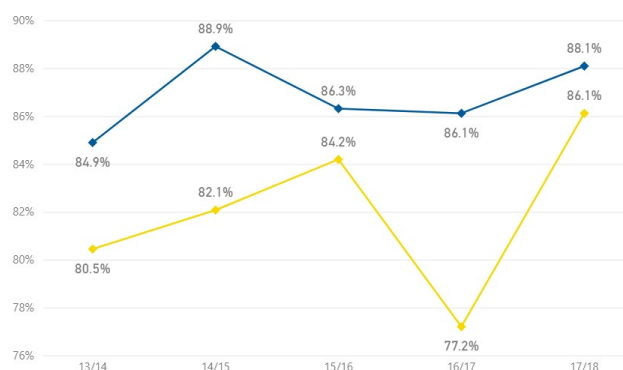


Figure 12: Proportion of no declared disability (blue line) and declared learning difficulty/ or disability (yellow line) students continuing studies in Higher Education at UCR



Target Group D1: Disabled students - Continuation

1.4.3 SUCCESS: ATTAINMENT

Students with a declared disability generally achieve lower rates of good honours or foundation degree classifications at UCR than those with no known disability. The gap has been gradually reducing over the five-year period, except in 2016/17 where disabled student attainment was particularly low (again, potentially attributable to changes in DSA funding). This is considered an anomaly which corrected in 2017/18, resulting in a marginal gap of 1.5 percentage points (Figure 13). Despite the narrowing gap, the attainment rates for disabled students have declined over the five-year period, and as such we consider the attainment of this group as a key aspect of our plan.

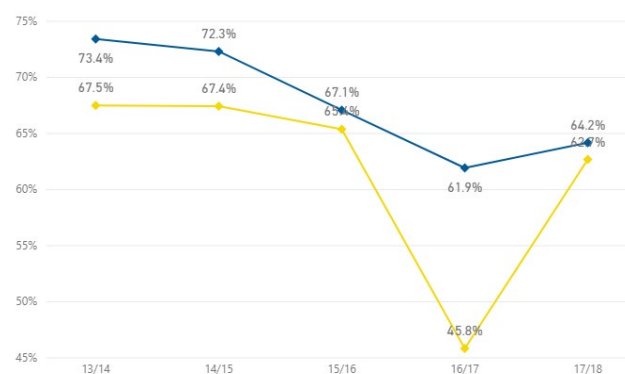


Figure 13: Proportion of students with no known disability (blue line) and disabled students (yellow line) achieving First/Upper Second-Class honours or Distinction/Merit awards at UCR (relevant to OfS KPM 5)



Target Group D1: Disabled students - Attainment

1.4.4 DISAGGREGATED DISABILITY GAPS

Disaggregated success data for classifications of disability reflect similar trends to those noted in sections 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 with notable gaps across most classifications of disability. The improvement in continuation demonstrated in 2017/18, was largely attributable to improved rates for those with 'Cognitive or Learning Difficulties' or 'Mental Health Conditions', which are both recognised as negative gaps for that year. This indicates that our more recent strategies to embed inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and enhanced support for student wellbeing have had a positive impact for these demographics.

Further work is however required to support students with mental health conditions in attaining higher degree classifications. Data for this demographic is only available for 2017/18 and represents a low proportion of students achieving higher classifications (38.5%).

Continuation rates for students with 'Other or Multiple Impairments' remain an area for continued focus, with a 9.0 percentage point gap evident in the most recent two years. It is pleasing to note that the attainment gap for such students has improved significantly over the five-year period from 14.6 percentage points in 2013/14 to -7.7 percentage points in 2017/18.



Monitoring Group M4: Disabled students with 'Cognitive or Learning Difficulties', 'Mental Health Conditions' or 'Other/Multiple Impairments' – Continuation and Attainment

1.4.5 PROGRESSION INTO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Students with a declared learning difficulty/disability progressing into employment or study 6 months after graduating (93.6%) perform marginally worse than those with no known disability (94.6%) and this has been consistent over the last five years. This is consistent with the Graduate Labour Market Statistics over the last few years (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2016, Department for Education 2017, and Department for Education 2018). Conversely, however, our most recent TEF metrics show that those graduates with a declared learning difficulty/disability gaining highly skilled employment or further study (56.9%) have consistently performed better than those students with no known disability (52.2%), although both of these figures are lower than the sector benchmarks by an average of 6.7%²⁰. The OfS data dashboard provides no reportable data relating to progression for this demographic, however the data files obtained from the OfS identify lower rates of progression for disabled students in years 2 and 5. The numbers associated with this measure are however very low (reported as 5 students declaring a disability/learning difficulty with positive progression in both instances). Due to the lack of statistical significance and the number of students being below the reportable threshold, the gap associated with this measure has been disregarded for the purposes of this plan.

1.5 CARE LEAVERS

The number of care-leavers recruited to HE programmes at UCR is currently below the reportable threshold, therefore no meaningful statistical analysis can be undertaken. However, the number of looked-after children recruited to FE programmes at Reaseheath is steadily increasing. In 2017/18, 53 looked-after children were studying on FE programmes at varying levels from pre-entry to Level 3, five of whom are in their final year of level 3 study and therefore potentially eligible for HE progression. The College employs a coordinator with specific responsibility for supporting looked-after children during their further education programme. Working as part of the Student Wellbeing Team, this individual also guides students in their HE study choices and their transition from looked-after to care-leaver status, working closely with the UCR faculty. This approach to seamless internal progression for looked-after children will continue to be our primary focus in supporting the increasing numbers of such students in progressing to HE study.

Data published in the "Moving on up" report²¹ indicates that care leavers who do progress on to Higher Education are more likely to withdraw from their studies than otherwise similar students, but that those who do complete their course have comparable levels of attainment. In order to work towards closing the continuation gap for care leavers we will appoint a bespoke personal academic tutor (PAT) with specific responsibility for these students, providing them with mentoring, advocacy and support from the point of application through to graduation. The literature indicates that the most critical barriers to access and continuation for care leavers are a poorly managed transition, feelings of social isolation and financial worries. The PAT will provide first-line support in these areas and signpost the students

²⁰ https://apps.officeforstudents.org.uk/tefoutcomes2019/docs/metrics/Metrics_10005404.xlsx

²¹ <http://www.nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits>

to specialist support where appropriate. In alignment with our previous Access and Participation Plan, from September of 2018, UCR is routinely collecting data on students previously in care at the point of enrolment, whereas historically this information was only captured for those who progressed internally from Reaseheath FE provision. This will enable us to more accurately understand the numbers of care-experienced students enrolling with us, and to analyse and evaluate access and continuation data for this group from 2019-20, attainment data from 2020-21 and progression data from 2022-23. Once this group reaches the reportable threshold we may apply for a variation in the plan to include appropriate targets, in particular with respect to access through measures designed to remove barriers for both current FE students and external applicants.



Monitoring Group M5: Care leavers at all lifecycle stages

1.6 INTERSECTIONS OF DISADVANTAGE

Through our assessment of performance, gaps across all intersections have been considered, and the following analysis identifies areas of note. In all instances, intersectional analysis of BAME students was not possible due to small numbers of students within the BAME demographic.

1.6.1 ACCESS

Gender and POLAR 4/IMD

In considering intersections within lower participation neighbourhoods (LPN - POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2), there are clear gaps in recruitment of male students. For fair and equitable access to be demonstrated, we would expect 40% of male students to come from POLAR4 quintile 1 & 2, and whilst our female demographic is appropriately representative (40.0% in 2016/17 and 39.9% in 2017/18), the proportion of male LPN students is far lower at around 34.9% for 2016/17 and 34.8% for 2017/18. We currently recruit 34.8% of our male students from these areas. This situation is largely reflected in the IMD/gender intersection, with a far lower proportion of males recruited from IMD quintiles 1 and 2.

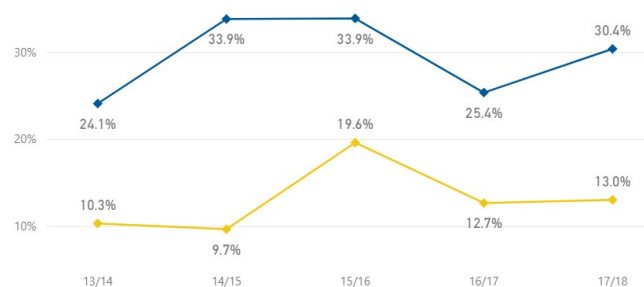


Figure 14 - Proportion of Male POLAR 4 quintile 1 (yellow line) and Male POLAR 4 quintile 5 (blue line) students recruited to Higher Education at UCR

The gender balance within the student population at UCR does, however, present a challenge in this area, with 75.8% of the student population being female in 2017/18. Nationally, courses in subjects such as animal science and equine science predominantly attract female students, and this is where UCR operates the largest proportion of our HE provision. Our employer sponsored HE programmes in Food and Dairy Technology recruit higher proportions of male students, representing a significant percentage of our overall male student body. These students are employed full-time to undertake a degree programme to further enhance their technical and academic capability and enable career progression. As an entirely mature student group, they are often established and are more likely to live in more affluent areas and are selected by their employer to align studies to their job role and plans for future progression. This programme therefore plays a key part in presenting a somewhat skewed representation of this measure and involves structural factors which are largely beyond our influence.



Target Group P4: Male students originating from POLAR4 quintile 1 - Access

Disability and POLAR 4/IMD

Whilst numbers within this intersection are relatively low, there is a clear gap associated with the number of disabled students recruited from POLAR 4 quintile 1 in comparison to quintile 5 (12.0% vs 30.7% in 2017/18, a gap of 18.7 percentage points). A gap is also present when considering disabled students from IMD quintiles 1 and 5; however this has reduced to 1.6 percentage points in 2017/18.

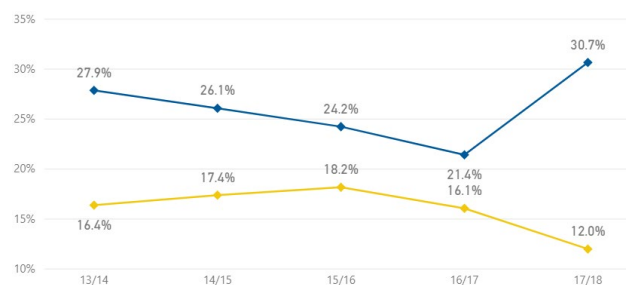


Figure 15 - Proportion of POLAR 4 quintile 1 disabled (yellow line) and POLAR 4 quintile 5 disabled students recruited to Higher Education at UCR



Monitoring Group M6: Disabled students originating from POLAR4 quintile 1 or IMD quintile 1 - Access

1.6.2 SUCCESS: CONTINUATION

Gender and POLAR 4/IMD

The comparison of POLAR 4 quintile 1 and 5 for female student continuation identifies an emerging gap across the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years, reaching 7.4 percentage points. This position is somewhat mirrored in the comparison of female students from IMD quintiles 1 and 5, and in both instances follows a trend of negative gaps in the preceding years. We recognise this variance in performance; however, our approach to enhancing POLAR 4/IMD quintile 1 continuation will naturally improve female continuation, as females represent around 75% of our student cohort. This gap will therefore not form a specific target group within this plan.

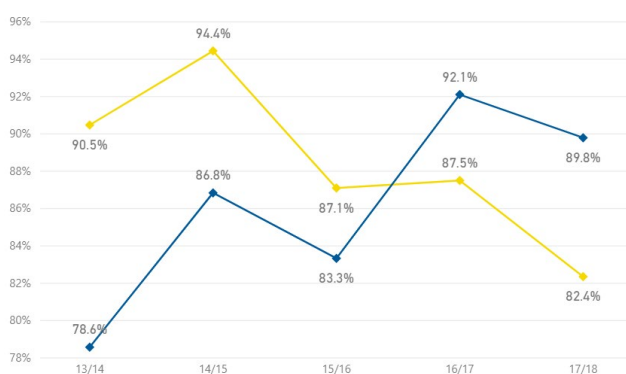


Figure 16 - Proportion of POLAR 4 quintile 1 female (yellow line) and POLAR 4 quintile 5 female students continuing studies at UCR

Age and IMD

The intersection of these variables again presents a gap in continuation between mature students originating from IMD quintiles 1 and 5 which widens over the five-year period from 5.4 percentage points in 2013/14 to 13.8 percentage points in 2017/18. That said, the numbers of students within this demographic are low and the continuation of 3 additional mature IMD quintile 1 students would, for example, eliminate the gap.

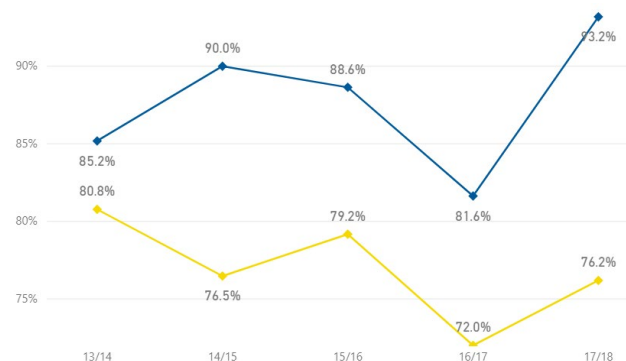


Figure 17 - Proportion of Mature IMD quintile 1 (yellow line) and Mature IMD quintile 5 (blue line) students continuing studies at UCR



Target Group I1: Mature students originating from IMD quintile 1 - Continuation

Disability and POLAR 4/IMD

Intersection of the disabled student population with POLAR 4 reveals a gap of 9.2 percentage points in continuation rates between quintiles 1 and 5. This is similar for disabled students in IMD quintiles 1 and 5, with a gap of 2.4 percentage points in 2017/18. In both instances the gap is present for the last three reportable years but has narrowed over that time. In the preceding analysis, POLAR 4 quintile 1 and disabled students have identified gaps, therefore it is not necessarily surprising that gaps originate from this intersection, and as such, this group will not be considered as a target group specifically.

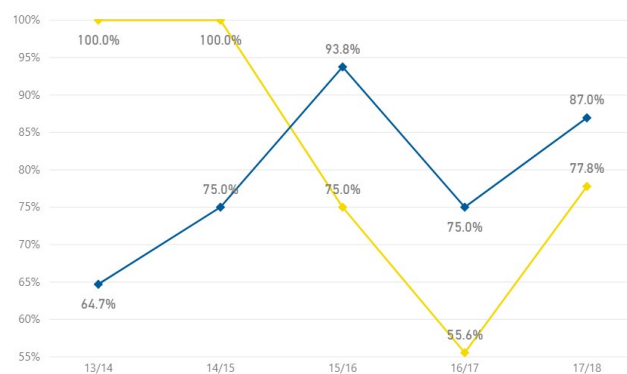


Figure 18 - Proportion of disabled POLAR 4 quintile 1 (yellow line) and disabled POLAR 4 quintile 5 students continuing studies at UCR

Disability and Age

A persistent gap is evident across all years between mature disabled and mature students with no known disability, with mature disabled students being far more likely to not continue in their studies. Whilst there is some variance in the first two academic years, 2015/16 through to 2017/18 maintains a consistent gap of around 9 to 10 percentage points. Our strategic measures will aim to improve the continuation rates of all disabled students, and we expect that our approach will positively impact mature students. We will therefore continue to monitor mature disabled student continuation as we progress with the implementation of our plan.

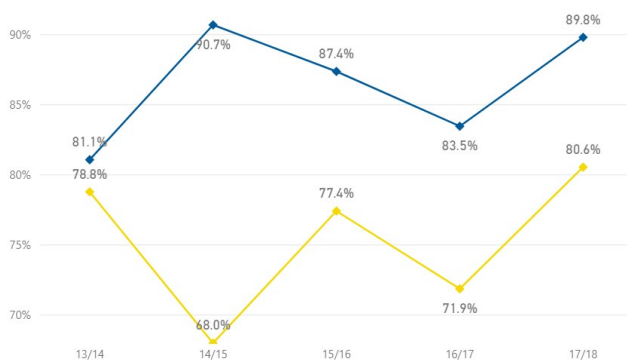


Figure 19 - proportion of mature students with no known disability (blue line) and mature disabled students (yellow line) continuing studies at UCR



Monitoring Group M7: Mature disabled students - Continuation

Disability and Gender

Over the five-year period, the continuation rates of males declaring learning difficulties or disabilities has improved from 73.3% in 2013/14 to 80.0% in 2017/18. Disabled male students are however consistently less likely to continue their studies than males with no known disability. In contrast, disabled female students generally have a comparable, if not improved, likelihood of continuation. The small numbers of students within this demographic introduces a notable variance within the percentage figures, which each disabled male student accounting for 4 percentage points in 2017/18. The continuation of 3 additional disabled male students in 2017/18 would have almost eliminated the gap. As disabled students are

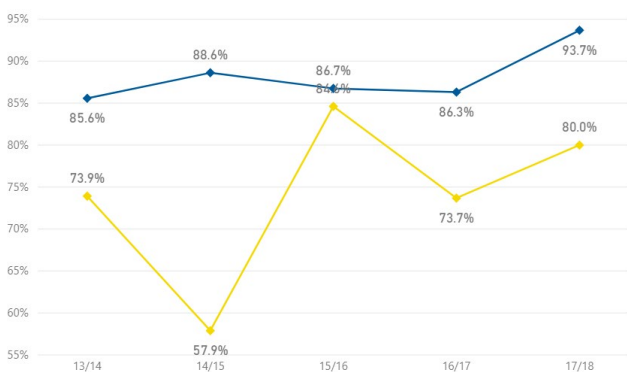


Figure 20 - proportion of disabled male students (yellow line) and male students with no known disability (blue line) continuing studies at UCR

identified as a target group, we expect our measures to positively impact male disabled students, and with small numbers of students involved, we will closely monitor this group.



Monitoring Group M8: Male disabled students - Continuation

1.6.3 SUCCESS: ATTAINMENT

Gender and POLAR 4/IMD

POLAR 4 quintile 1 male student attainment is not reportable across all years therefore preventing any analysis of a gap. For female students, the comparison of attainment between those originating from POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 5 demonstrates a notable gap across 4 of the 5 years, with a reduction over the five-year period from 32.3 percentage points in 2013/14 to 16.7 percentage points in 2017/18. As Female students make up around 75% of the UCR student population, and with non-reportable figures in male attainment from POLAR 4 quintile 1, we will closely monitor students in this category as we progress with institutional approaches to supporting students originating from deprived geographies or areas of low HE participation.

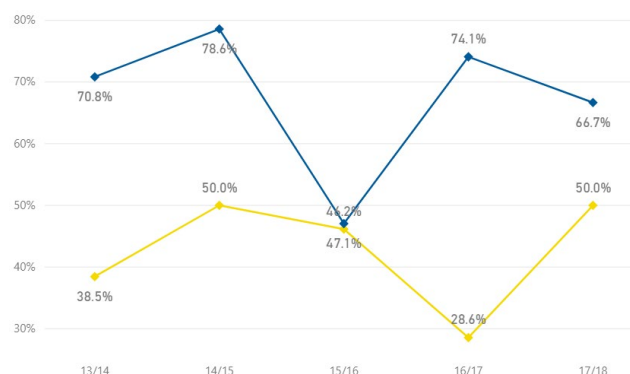


Figure 21 - Proportion of Female POLAR 4 quintile 1 (yellow line) and Female POLAR 4 quintile 5 students (blue line) achieving a good honours or foundation degree classification from UCR



Monitoring Group M9: Female students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 - Attainment

Age and IMD

Attainment gaps for both young and mature students are present, therefore this has been disregarded as a specific target group.

Disability and Age

Whilst mature students generally achieve better than their younger peers at UCR, there is a notable disparity in the achievement rates of mature disabled students in comparison to mature students with no known disability. There is a consistent gap across all five years, which has widened from 9.9 percentage points in 2013/14 to 17.0 percentage points in 2017/18.

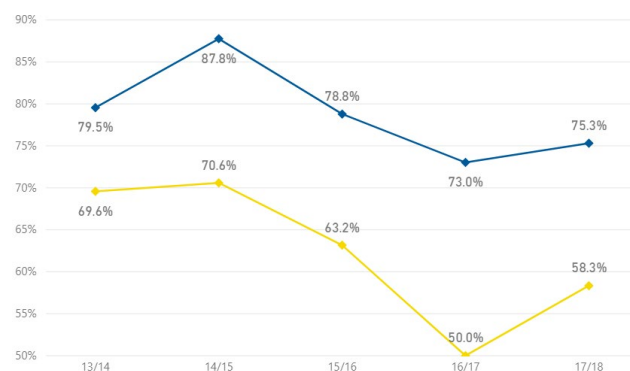


Figure 22 - Proportion of mature disabled students (yellow line) and mature students with no known disability (blue line) attaining a good honours/FD classification



Monitoring Group M7: Mature disabled students – Attainment

Disability and Gender

The attainment of male disabled students was historically poorer than males with no known disability. This position reversed in 2016/17 and has demonstrated a negative gap in the last two academic years. The inverse is true for female disabled students, with gaps emerging in the last two academic years following three years of strong performance. With females representing around 75% of our student cohort, and disabled students already identified as a target group, we will continue to monitor the performance of male and female disabled students throughout the duration of this plan in relation to attainment rates.



Monitoring Group M10: Disabled students by gender – Attainment

1.7 OTHER GROUPS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1.7.1 DISABLED STUDENTS AND DSA FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A more detailed breakdown of the disabled student population into those in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and those who are not is illustrated in Figure 23 and identifies a further gap in non-continuation rates. This would suggest that our approaches to make appropriate reasonable adjustments to support these students have not been successful in securing comparable rates of continuation.

Disabled students in receipt of DSA funding at UCR are generally more likely to continue their studies beyond the first year (Figure 24). This is represented by marginal gaps in three of the five years, and gap of -6.6% in 2017/18. At the start of the 2018/19 academic year, UCR introduced a Diagnostic Assessment Bursary (DAB) which provided £200 of the £300 total cost of an educational psychologist assessment for students who required an assessment. It is hoped that this will make the DSA process more accessible to students who declare a learning difficulty or disability and in doing so reduce the number of students not receiving the support which is proven to make a positive impact on their continuation and attainment.

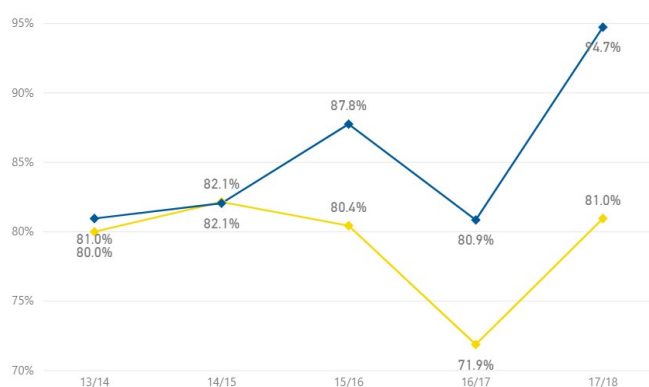


Figure 23: Proportion of disabled students in receipt of DSA funding (blue line) and proportion of disabled students not in receipt of DSA funding (yellow line) continuing their studies in Higher Education at UCR

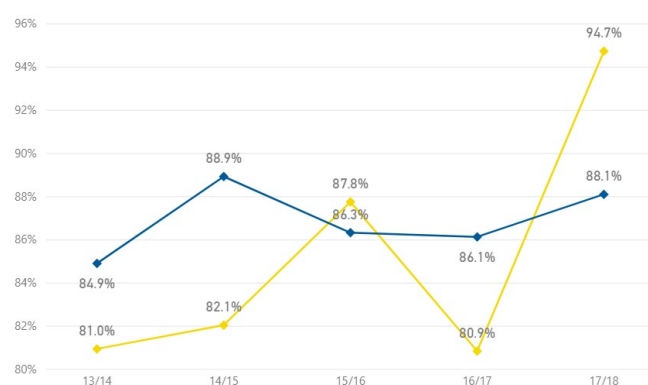


Figure 24: Proportion of students with no known disability (blue line) and proportion of disabled students in receipt of DSA funding (yellow line) continuing their studies in Higher Education at UCR



Monitoring Group M11: Disabled students not in receipt of DSA – Continuation

1.8 STRUCTURAL FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

From our assessment of performance, two areas arose which are significantly influenced by structural factors. Firstly, the subject nature of provision at UCR, combined with the local demographic (amongst which our outreach activity is focused), results in low levels of BAME recruitment. Whilst UCR will endeavour to work closely with national bodies such as Landex to address this issue at a sector level, in the absence of specific and targeted intervention from the land-based industries, we believe that UCR has a limited agency to influence change. To address this, we will work collaboratively with other providers to set specific targets and establish institutional and/or collaborative strategic measures in 2022-23.

Secondly, the proportion of male students recruited to our provision is strongly influenced by the subjects we offer. The predominant focus of our curriculum falls within the discipline of Animal Sciences which tends to attract a greater proportion of female students. This structural factor therefore influences the number of male students recruited overall resulting in a ratio of 3:1. The breakdown of the male entrant population into POLAR4 quintiles, does, however, identify a disparity in representation, which is addressed within our objectives and targets.

2. STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 TARGET GROUPS

Following the OfS guidance, we have undertaken a detailed analysis of our data to consider the performance of the defined under-represented groups at UCR. In doing so, we have established the following target groups as the priority for our strategic measures.

Students from Low- Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR 4)

- **Target Group P1:** Students originating from POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 2 – progression
- **Target Group P2:** Students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 – continuation and attainment
- **Target Group P3:** Students originating from IMD quintile 1 - attainment
- **Target Group P4:** Males originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 – access (partly structural)

Students originating from deprived areas (IMD)

- **Target group I1:** Mature students originating from IMD quintile 1 – continuation

Disabled students

- **Target Group D1:** All disabled students – continuation and attainment

BAME students

- **Target Group B1:** BAME students - continuation

2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 AIMS

UCR's long term strategic aim is to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to access and succeed in higher education. We strive to ensure that every student can reach their potential and gain meaningful, relevant, highly skilled, graduate-level employment or progress with their studies into post-graduate programmes. Through our unwavering focus on fair access and participation, we aim to:

1. Encourage and support individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures to enable them to enter higher education and fulfil their potential;
2. Be an inclusive institution, striving to support a diverse student body to aspire, achieve and progress;
3. Build and develop a fully integrated and collaborative approach to preparing students for future graduate level employment and progression.

2.2.2 OBJECTIVES

In setting objectives, we have undertaken a thorough and honest evaluation of our performance, utilising the capabilities we have developed in data collection and reporting, and we have critically reflected on the activities we have historically undertaken to identify and support students. As our student population migrates across to our directly funded provision, we look forward to making greater use of the OfS dashboard in future years. As a small, specialist provider with limited human and financial resources, we have developed our objectives, targets and strategic measures in such a way as to positively impact as many disadvantaged students as possible, as outlined in the OfS Regulatory Advice 6, paragraph 46.

Through the delivery of our plan UCR will:

1. Increase the proportion of male students from lower-participation neighbourhoods to ensure, at a minimum, equal and fair representation (i.e. at least 40% of male entrants originating from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2) by 2024-25
[Target group: P4] [Target: PTA_1]
2. Eliminate the percentage difference in continuation and attainment between students who have a disability, and those who do not by 2023-24
[Target Group: D1] [Target: PTS_1] [Target: PTS_2]
3. Eliminate the percentage differences in continuation between students originating from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5 by 2024-25
[Target Group: P2] [Target: PTS_5]
4. Eliminate the percentage differences in attainment between students originating from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5, and students originating from IMD quintiles 1 and 5, by 2030-31
[Target Groups: P2 and P3] [Targets: PTS_3 and PTS_7]
5. Eliminate the percentage difference in progression to highly skilled employment or further study between students from the lowest areas of HE participation and those from the greatest areas of HE participation (i.e. POLAR 4 quintiles 1&2 against quintiles 3,4&5) by 2030-31
[Target Group: P1] [Target: PTP_1]
6. To eliminate the continuation gap between BAME students and white students by 2024-25
[Target Group: B1] [Target: PTS_4]

7. To eliminate the continuation gap between mature students from the most deprived and least deprived areas by 2024-25
[Target Group: I1] [Target: PTS_6]
8. To work in collaboration with other providers to identify the barriers which exist for BAME students entering land-based Higher Education to enable targets and strategic measures to be established as a variation to this plan in 2022/23
[Monitoring Group: M2]

3. STRATEGIC MEASURES

3.1 WHOLE-PROVIDER STRATEGIC APPROACH

3.1.1 OVERVIEW

UCR works across all areas of the student life cycle to ensure that students from all backgrounds with the ability and desire to undertake higher education are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education into meaningful, sustained graduate employment. As an institution offering both FE and HE, our outreach activity is deep rooted in our local communities, supporting pupils of all ages in developing their awareness of land-based education and employment opportunities. Pupils are primarily targeted to enrol on FE programmes, and our HE activity focuses specifically on promoting opportunities for progression to our HE programmes of study both internally and further afield. The diversity of programmes offered by Reaseheath covers a broad educational spectrum, from pre-entry FE programmes through to the Honours degrees offered by UCR.

The organisational culture of Reaseheath College is founded in our PRIDE (People, Responsibility, Integrity, Diversity, Excellence) values. These are displayed in every room in the college and are embedded within our lesson observation and annual appraisal criteria. This holistic approach ensures that every member of academic, support and management staff lives and works in such a way as to create a supportive and inclusive culture which encourages and enables each individual, whether student or staff, to fulfil their potential.

Management oversight of this work is exercised at local level by Curriculum Area Managers and Heads of Departments. The leadership team within the Faculty of Higher Education work across the organisation and in close partnership with the UCR Student Association to drive our access and participation agenda. All major reports and findings are fed into the committee structure and directly to the Executive Management Team and the Governing Body of the institution, which includes the Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education who assumes overarching responsibility for Higher Education. The Governing Body is fully committed to our ambitious approach and maintained effective oversight of the returns that were made annually to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). Our governing body will maintain oversight of progress as we implement our plan through the HE sub-committee of the College Governing Body. In order to effectively implement and monitor the impact of the strategic measures, we will convene an Access and Participation Steering Group who will report to the HE Quality & Curriculum Development Committee. The membership of this steering group will include staff from all relevant areas of the organisation, providing a platform for challenging assumptions, monitoring progress and evaluating impact. Membership will incorporate academic staff, senior management, student services, careers, library and administrative staff to collectively drive our implementation.

We will work collaboratively with the University of Chester as our strategic and validating partner, to identify and consider common challenges and share best practice. Furthermore, through our involvement with the Higher Horizons+ project (National Collaborative Outreach Programme) we will seek opportunities to work with other local providers to address common challenges.

We recognise the increasing challenge faced by the sector in supporting students with issues of mental health and will continue to strengthen our approach which was recognised in 2017/18 through a nomination for the Association of

Colleges Beacon Award for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our dedicated team provide fast-track access to Counselling services (with no waiting list) and a wide range of proactive strategies to develop student resilience and wellbeing.

We are committed to further developing our approach to inclusive learning, teaching and assessment as recognised within the aims of our HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (see 3.1.2). Our approach seeks to ensure that our student learning experience removes barriers, enables participation, respects diversity, and caters for a range of learning preferences and needs. This will be achieved through consideration of all aspects of the student experience and lifecycle, incorporating the consideration of pedagogy, curricula, assessment and support, recognising disability as a normal part of diversity, and embracing the Social Model of Disability ([DSSLG, 2017](#)).

[Mountford-Zimdars et al. \(2015\)](#) state that “given the multi-faceted and individualistic nature of the factors underpinning differential outcomes, whole-institution approaches which combine a diversity of different ‘bottom-up’ interventions are likely to have more impact”. This approach is further supported by the What Works? project, whose recommendations are based on their findings that ‘universal’ interventions, though provided to all, can have the effect of particularly benefitting disadvantaged students, and are more effective than those targeted at specific groups ([Thomas, 2012](#)). These principles, coupled with our status as a small and specialist provider, have guided us in the development of strategic measures which can be universally applied, but tailored to meet the needs of individual students. This tailoring will be driven by each student’s Personal Academic Tutor (PAT).

Over the last 2 years, the focus of UCR was the improvement of core data quality. This was considered a pre-requisite to moving into more sophisticated data modelling to facilitate the analysis of student characteristics across the lifecycle. While we have made huge strides in our data collection and reporting capabilities, we recognise that in order to accurately evaluate the impact of the measures outlined in this plan, there is a need to further develop this capability across the whole of our business.

3.1.2 ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

The overall position is that UCR is on a strongly upward trajectory to realise its ambitions for providing a rich and stimulating learning environment for students in which they thrive, succeed and progress. In the last academic year, our Equality & Diversity committee has driven an internal audit across staff and student groups and established a PRIDE festival celebrating diversity. Identifying ourselves as a specialist provider and following consultation with the student body, we recognise that some of the interventions we aim to offer to target group students would be of benefit to the whole student body. As such, we would look to offer these to all HE students where appropriate, whilst monitoring our target groups to ensure that identified gaps are reduced and eventually eliminated. Our approach will be contextualised for each student through their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), who will be aware of their personal background and circumstances and will target support accordingly. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy, which adheres to the Equality Act 2010, ensures that all persons involved with UCR are treated with respect, courtesy, integrity and equality of opportunity, and this is embedded in our College values.



We are dedicated in our mission to widen participation and ensure that every student is given the support to succeed in their Higher Education studies. Our approach will encapsulate the entire student life-cycle to secure fair access, participation, successful completion and progression to employment or further study.

Aim 4: To embed inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices in curriculum design and delivery to maximise accessibility and enhance the learning experience and environment for all students

Our lecturers and course managers will promote academic development and achievement by ensuring that each individual student is known, valued and that their personal needs are recognised and supported to secure effective transition into, through and beyond their studies at UCR. Our inclusive approach will provide all students with the opportunity to succeed and develop personally, academically and professionally to the highest level, regardless of prior qualifications, social background or differences such as age, gender, ethnicity or disability. We will, where appropriate, employ flexible approaches which harness the capabilities of e-learning and learning technologies to provide a rich, adaptable and responsive student experience.

Aim 5: To support students in exploring and advancing their personal growth and resilience through the provision of personalised support, guidance and intervention

Students commence their Higher Education studies at UCR with varying levels of prior attainment, readiness and personal circumstances. Our individualised and supportive approach will recognise the distinctive needs of each student and will support them to develop their independence and resilience by providing a holistic network of support which is firmly embedded in teaching and learning.

Aim 6: To facilitate career-aligned learning, embedding vocationally relevant opportunities which maximise graduate employability and capability.

Our approach to curriculum design and delivery will be driven by our expanding partnerships with local, national and international employers and partners. We are committed to developing embedded, meaningful work placement opportunities which realise the integration of academic theory and vocational practice to establish work-ready graduates who are equipped to gain sustainable, highly-skilled employment.

Figure 25 - Extract detailing the strategic aims underpinning the 'Access and Advancement' theme of the UCR HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2019-2021

Our HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2019-2021 specifies 'Access and Advancement' as one of its three core themes, with three underpinning strategic aims (Figure 25). The strategic aims demonstrate our commitment to monitoring and supporting each individual student through an inclusive approach. In particular, Aim 4 of this strategy states that "our inclusive approach will provide all students with the opportunity to succeed and develop personally, academically and professionally to the highest level, regardless of prior qualifications, social background, or differences such as age, gender, ethnicity or disability". Our access and participation strategy is embedded further within Aim 5 which states that "our individualised and supportive approach will recognise the distinctive needs of each student and will support them to develop their independence and resilience by providing a holistic network of support which is firmly embedded in teaching and learning". Many of the aims within our strategy are closely aligned to the strategic measures outlined within this plan. For reference, a summary of the HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is detailed in Table 2.

Core theme: Innovation and Inspiration	<p>Aim 1: To work in partnership with students and employers to co-create a high quality, innovative curriculum which develops academic knowledge and skills and embeds real-world, technical and professional education.</p> <p>Aim 2: To challenge, inspire and engage students to actively participate in and shape their learning</p> <p>Aim 3: To further enhance our self-critical, cohesive academic community by embedding scholarship informed teaching and learning practices in curriculum design, delivery and evaluation</p>
Core theme: Access and advancement	<p>Aim 4: To embed inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices in curriculum design and delivery to maximise accessibility and enhance the learning experience and environment for all students</p> <p>Aim 5: To support students in exploring and advancing their growth and resilience through the provision of personalised support, guidance and intervention.</p> <p>Aim 6: To facilitate career-aligned learning, embedding vocationally relevant opportunities which maximise graduate employability and capability.</p>
Core theme: Standards and Success	<p>Aim 7: To embed inspirational approaches to teaching, learning and assessment which nurture student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creativity • self-discipline • critical enquiry and discovery • solution-orientated thinking • critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation. <p>Aim 8: To facilitate the development of graduate attributes alongside subject knowledge by providing a diverse and engaging range of innovative assessment opportunities.</p> <p>Aim 9: To engage in an effective dialogue with students about their progress through the provision of high-quality, regular and timely feedback which is clear, concise, and advances student learning.</p>

Table 2 - UCR HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy core themes and strategic aims

Our Higher Education Student Admissions Policy states that “UCR is committed to delivering an admission policy and practice that promotes fair admission and delivering a system that admits those with outstanding achievement and potential regardless of their background”²². When considering applications, we take account of all aspects of the application, not just the academic profile. We are currently monitoring published information pertaining to contextualised admissions and may formally implement this in the future.

The physical environment is designed to recognise that many of our students come from backgrounds where there is little, or no experience of higher education and where effective learning spaces and environments may not be readily accessible. The needs of all our students are firmly embedded within our estates and IT strategies to ensure consideration is given not only to formal learning spaces, but also the power of informal and social learning space in enabling effective learning. We have also invested significantly in on-campus residences²³ as our evidence shows that giving students the opportunity to live on campus maximises their chances of retention.

²² <https://ucraseheath.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/C14-HE-Student-Admissions-Policy-002.pdf>

²³ Increased almost 2-fold over the last 10 years from under 600 bed-spaces to a 1000

3.1.3 STRATEGIC MEASURES

STRATEGIC MEASURE 1

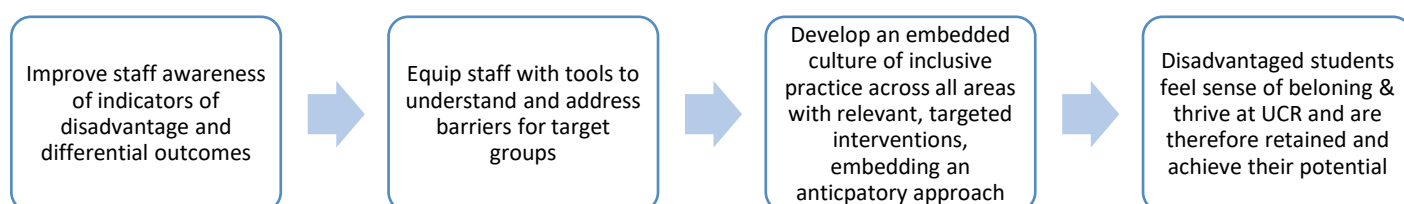
Strategic Measure	Strengthen the culture of inclusive practice through increased levels of staff awareness and training surrounding differential outcomes and implementation of interventions for disadvantaged groups
APP Aim(s)	1, 2
APP Objective(s)	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
APP Target(s)	PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3, PTS_5, PTS_4, PTS_6, PTS_7
Target Groups	B1, D1, P2, P3 and I1
Monitoring Groups	M1, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11
Lifecycle stages	Continuation and attainment
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy UCR Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

We will increase staff awareness of the indicators of disadvantage and drive an institution-wide shift towards more inclusive practice. We will equip staff with a greater understanding of intervention and support strategies for disadvantaged groups, enabling these to be more widely implemented. Our approach will seek to embrace the Social Model of Disability ([DSSLG, 2017](#)) and will focus on embedding an anticipatory approach to reasonable adjustment and proactive strategic approaches to reasonable adjustment within our curriculum design and planning.

The importance of involving academics in the implementation of intervention activities is discussed in [Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015](#). They state that it is widely recognised that it is the academic staff and those directly involved in supporting students who can have the greatest impact on the student experience. Psycho-social factors, such as tutor attitudes & expectations and student confidence & sense of belonging have a huge impact on student's self-belief and ability to achieve ([Berry and Locke, 2011](#); [Stevenson, 2012](#)).

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Disadvantaged students feel welcome, comfortable and confident at UCR
- Staff have enhanced awareness of the potential for unconscious bias and tools to mitigate this
- Shift towards more inclusive LTA practice
- Improved continuation & success metrics for disadvantaged students.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the reporting of outcomes for disadvantaged groups within the annual quality improvement cycle. Provide regular, targeted CPD for staff within the annual CPD rota Collect staff feedback relating to their awareness of and confidence in addressing the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups. Include Inclusive Practice as an indicator within lesson observations and PDR objectives and link to performance-based rewards Collect student feedback relating to their perception of inclusive practice within UCR Monitor student outcomes - continuation 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise staff self-assessment and observation / PDR outcomes to plan an ongoing CPD programme Review the effectiveness of enhanced quality improvement cycle Utilise student feedback and work in partnership with students to develop impactful interventions. Monitor student outcomes – continuation & achievement 	Narrative Empirical
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise student feedback and work in partnership with students to evaluate success of interventions and adapt where necessary. Monitor student outcomes – continuation & achievement 	Narrative Empirical
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise student feedback and work in partnership with students to evaluate success of interventions and adapt where necessary. Monitor student outcomes – continuation, achievement and progression 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise student feedback and work in partnership with students to evaluate success of interventions and adapt where necessary. Monitor student outcomes – continuation, achievement and progression 	Narrative Empirical

STRATEGIC MEASURE 2

Strategic Measure	Identify designated PATs within course management teams who specialise in supporting disadvantaged students
APP Aim(s)	2, 3
APP Objective(s)	2, 5, 6, 7
APP Target(s)	PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3, PTS_5, PTP_1, PTS_4, PTS_6, PTS_7
Target Groups	P1, P2, P3, P4, I1, D1 and B1
Monitoring Groups	M1, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11
Lifecycle stages	Continuation, attainment and progression
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy UCR Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Experienced PATs within each course team will identify and closely monitor students from disadvantaged groups in order to signpost them to appropriate resources and support, and to promote a sense of partnership working.

Students benefit from having a designated ‘interlocuter’ ([Cousin & Cureton, 2012](#)) who sees them as an individual rather than a member of a particular group. In the What Works? report ([Thomas, 2012](#)) evidence is presented that developing a connection with an individual member of academic staff results in students feeling more ‘connected’ and improves continuation and attainment.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Development of strong PAT:student relationships.
- Improved links between designated PAT and support services

- Increased levels of confidence and sense of belonging in students
- Improved continuation, success and progression metrics for disadvantaged students.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with staff & students re: designated PATs • Additional training for designated PATs – to include training specific to supporting care leavers, BAME students and those from disadvantaged or low participation areas • Adjustment of workload model to allow additional remission • Evaluation of additional human / financial resources required. • Collection of pre-intervention data (student engagement with PATs, Graduate Toolkit resources, support services. Student outcomes – continuation, attainment, progression) • Jan 2021: Re-evaluate progression data having obtained two cohort D datasets from the graduate outcomes survey to re-establish the baseline and consider setting aims, objectives, targets and strategic measures against any notable progression gaps across all demographics/intersections as a variation to this plan. 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation for L4 students. • Gather post- implementation data (Student engagement with PATs, Graduate Toolkit, Support services) • Gather pre-implementation data (Student outcomes – continuation, attainment for FD students) 	Narrative Empirical
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation for L4 & 5 students. • Gather post- implementation data (Student engagement with PATs, Graduate Toolkit, Support services. Student outcomes – continuation, attainment for FD students) 	Narrative Empirical
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation for L4, 5 & 6 students. • Gather post- implementation data (Student engagement with PATs, Graduate Toolkit, Support services. Student outcomes – continuation, attainment, progression for FD students) 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation for L4, 5 & 6 students. • Gather post- implementation data (Student engagement with PATs, Graduate Toolkit, Support services. Student outcomes – continuation, attainment, progression) 	Narrative Empirical

STRATEGIC MEASURE 3

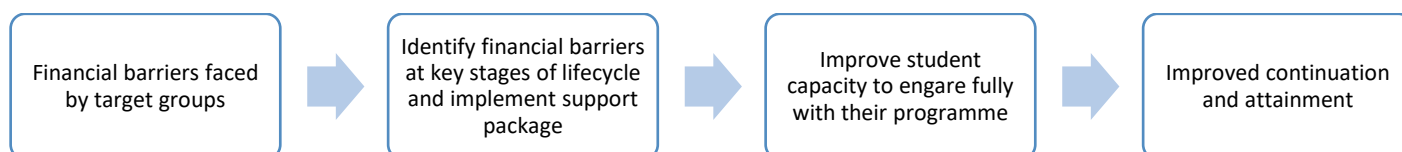
Strategic Measure	Review current bursary offer with a view to re-aligning towards target groups.
APP Aim(s)	1, 2
APP Objective(s)	2, 3, 6, 7
APP Target(s)	PTS_1, PTS_2, PTS_3, PTS_5, PTS_4, PTS_6, PTS_7
Target Groups	D1, I1, P2, P3, P4 and B1
Monitoring Groups	M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11
Lifecycle stages	Access and Continuation
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Policy C14: HE Student Admissions Policy

There is a strong evidence base for the value of institutional financial support ([McCaig et al., 2016](#); [Harrison et al.](#)) in enhancing access, participation and attainment of disadvantaged groups. Additional financial resource at key points in the student lifecycle can alleviate financial hardship and remove barriers to access, continuation and success.

UCR currently has a bursary offer which is outlined in Appendix A, however, the impact on student outcomes has not been adequately evaluated. Recent internal survey work with bursary recipients indicates that the receipt of financial support enabled students to participate more fully in their studies through being able to buy key texts or take on less hours of paid employment. The volume of internal data collected is however too small to make any firm judgements on the effectiveness of our offer. The current UCR bursary offer does fully align to our newly identified target groups and may not be distributed at the key times within the student lifecycle when financial pressures are a particular barrier. It should be noted that the initial evaluation of our current approach will take place in advance of the start of the recruitment cycle for 2022/23 to ensure our continued compliance with CMA guidance. Furthermore, historic bursary commitments will be maintained for students who enrol prior to 2022/23 for the duration of their course.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Greater institutional understanding of financial barriers encountered at each stage of the student lifecycle
- Development of financial and/or resource support packages which help to remove access barriers for disadvantaged groups.
- Financial support during the student lifecycle will positively impact continuation and attainment.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise OfS Financial Toolkit survey & Interview tools to identify financial barriers & evaluate current bursary offering. Develop evidence informed proposal for new bursary offer. Agree new offer in line with timeline for publication of 2022/23 prospectus. Develop robust systems for tracking & reporting on students in receipt of bursaries. Submit a variation to our access and participation plan to the Office for Students to reflect the new evidence-based approach to financial support. 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before September 2021, incorporate the newly devised bursary offer into all promotional and advertising materials. Refreshed bursary offer to be introduced for new students in September 2022. Commitments to continuing students maintained as per the existing offer. 	Narrative
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new bursary package, L4 students. Utilise OfS Financial Toolkit Survey & Interview Tools to gather pre-activity data (<i>tools are designed to be used with students who received bursaries in the previous year so we will have 2 yrs of pre-intervention data</i>). 	Narrative
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yr 2 of implementation, L4 & 5 students. Utilise OfS Toolkit to gather first year of post-implementation data. Evaluate impact on Continuation. 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yr 3 of implementation, L4, 5 & 6 students. Utilise OfS toolkit to gather second year of post-implementation data. Assess whether there is now enough data to use the OfS Statistical Tool (requires 800 students for data extrapolation). Evaluate impact on student outcomes – continuation for all students, attainment for FD students. 	Empirical Empirical

STRATEGIC MEASURE 4

Strategic Measure	Investigate the potential for development of new curriculum offers attractive to underrepresented groups.
APP Aim(s)	1, 2, 3
APP Objective(s)	1, 5
APP Target(s)	PTA_1, PTP_1
Target Groups	P4
Monitoring Groups	M2
Lifecycle stages	Access
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Policy C14: HE Student Admissions Policy

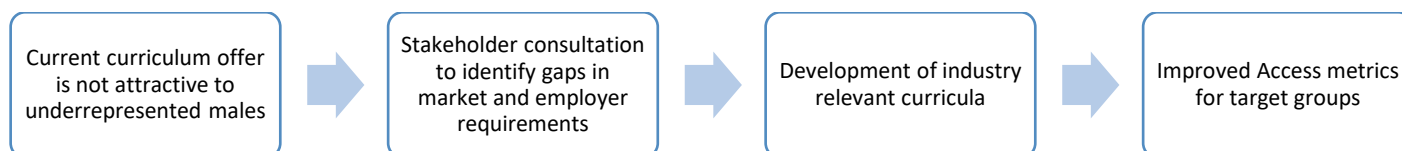
According to [HESA \(2018\)](#), male students overwhelmingly choose to study business, engineering & technology, computer science, mathematics, manufacturing and construction subjects. The majority of these areas lie outside of our current HE provision at UCR, but some (business, engineering & construction) are areas where Reaseheath currently successfully operates FE provision. Our holistic approach encompasses the provision of appropriate

progression routes throughout all aspects of our offer, therefore curriculum development of these areas is naturally a strategic priority, but also one which we believe will positively impact male recruitment and in doing so widen participation amongst underrepresented groups (POLAR 4 quintile 1).

There seems to be little consideration in the literature of non-traditional HE models (eg Higher Nationals, Apprenticeships, Distance & Blended programmes) which may offer alternative ways for disadvantaged groups to attain HE qualifications. Broadening our curriculum offer (subjects and types of qualification) may help to offer access opportunities for groups who have historically not chosen to study at UCR.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Identification of potential areas for curriculum development
- Market research conducted to identify whether there is a viable market for new programmes in these subject areas
- New curriculum developed in areas where viable market is identified.
- Explore published literature to ascertain whether alternative models of HE would appeal to specific target groups.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct stakeholder consultations (industry & FE students) investigating the demand for HE level programmes in our proposed areas. • Carry out market research to ascertain current provision within our geographical recruitment areas and identify any gaps. • Take forward proposals for new curriculum through the UCR internal scrutiny process. 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit final proposals for consideration through the scrutiny and approvals process of our awarding HEI. • Post development approval, begin to develop curriculum in consultation with stakeholders. • Submit for validation. 	Narrative
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in targeted marketing activity for new curriculum. 	Narrative
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrol first student cohorts onto new curriculum. • Evaluate access data. 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second year of enrolments – evaluate access data. • Monitor continuation and attainment data. 	Empirical

STRATEGIC MEASURE 5

Strategic Measure	Review & strengthen widening participation activity directed at groups who are under-represented in our Higher Education student population.
APP Aim(s)	1
APP Objective(s)	1
APP Target(s)	PTA_1
Target Groups	P4
Monitoring Groups	M2, M5
Lifecycle stages	Access
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Policy C14: HE Student Admissions Policy

We will undertake an analysis of how the college outreach activity is planned, implemented and evaluated with respect to Higher Education, and explore the potential for collaborative approaches to address specific structural issues (e.g. BAME access in the land-based sector).

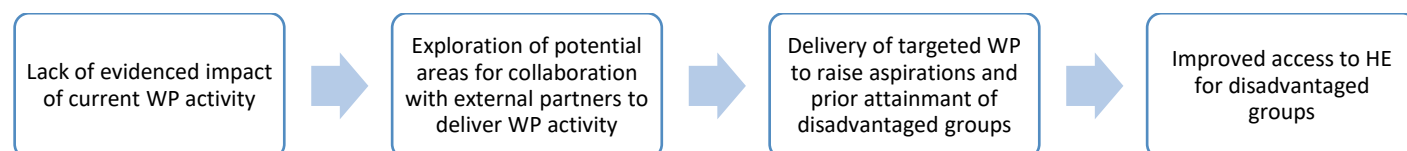
[Moore et al 2013](#) state that sustained and consistent frameworks of outreach activity need to start early and engage with target groups of young people at various stages of their school career in order to be effective.

As a mixed economy organisation with a relatively small HE provision, UCR does not possess the resources to engage in significant HE specific external, schools based WP activity, however the wider college does undertake WP activity in schools locally. At present this is not sufficiently evaluated for impact in relation to HE access and participation. However we do have the potential for deeper engagement with under-represented groups within our FE student population, particularly care leavers and students from LPN's.

As outlined in our Assessment of Performance, there are several structural barriers to access for some of our under-represented groups, specifically males from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2, IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, and BAME students. Addressing these will require a collaborative approach.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Development of a framework for collecting data on effectiveness of current WP activity
- Exploration of the potential for collaborative WP activity across HE providers
- Identification, implementation and evaluation of low-cost outreach activities
- Potential for improved access metrics for disadvantaged groups.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with external organisations (eg University of Chester, Landex, Higher Horizons+ NCOP) to explore potential for joint WP activity in areas where there are structural gaps (e.g BAME). Develop a framework which allows disaggregation of HE & FE WP activity to enable evaluation of impact on target groups within Reaseheath College. Collect intelligence from looked-after FE students and those from BAME and POLAR4 / IMD quintiles 1& 2 to inform the development of internal progression pathways. Work with Reaseheath FE academic staff and support services to develop proposals for strengthening impact of internal WP activity on care leavers, BAME students, and those from POLAR4 / IMD quintiles 1& 2 to encourage progression on to HE programmes at UCR. 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of proposals for joint WP activity. Objectives, targets and implementation timeline to be developed in consultation with partners. Collect & monitor access data to evaluate impact of internal Reaseheath WP activity / progression pathways. 	Narrative
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to collect and evaluate data on impact of internal WP activity – access and continuation. Implement strategies for strengthening impact of internal WP activity and collect initial data through participant surveys. 	Narrative Empirical
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to collect and evaluate data on impact of internal WP activity – access, continuation and attainment. Implement strategies for strengthening impact of internal WP activity and collect data through participant surveys. Monitor access data (if WP interventions have been directed at L3 students). 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to collect and evaluate data on impact of internal WP activity. Implement strategies for strengthening impact of internal WP activity and collect data through participant surveys. Monitor access data (if WP interventions have been directed at L3 students). 	Narrative Empirical

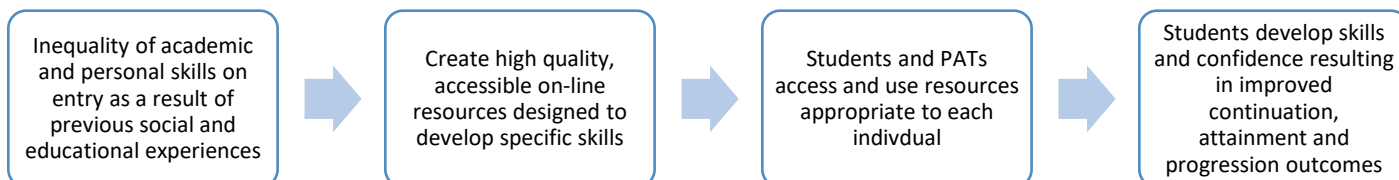
STRATEGIC MEASURE 6

Strategic Measure	Development of an on-line Graduate Toolkit to support the development of graduate skills and characteristics
APP Aim(s)	2, 3
APP Objective(s)	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
APP Target(s)	PTS_3, PTS_5, PTP_1, PTS_4, PTS_6, PTS_7
Target Groups	P1, P2, P3, I1, D1 and B1
Monitoring Groups	M1, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11
Lifecycle stages	Continuation, success and progression
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy UCR Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

This initiative will allow students to access support materials as and when they require them, and tailor their learning to their individual needs. It will also be used as a targeted referral resource by Personal Academic Tutors. Various studies have highlighted that differences in academic literacy ([Donohue & Erling, 2012](#)) and ‘conceptions of learning’ ([Richardson, 2008](#)) arise as a result of experiences in secondary education and family culture amongst some underrepresented groups. These impact on students’ HE experiences and identities. Provision of online resources designed to address these differences, which can be tailored to take account of individual differences in experience, will help to level the playing field for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Students access specific resources to support their own learning, relevant to their personal needs and ambitions
- PATs signpost students towards resources as they monitor individual progress
- Students develop a broader graduate skillset which enhances their resilience, mindset and employability.
- Improved continuation and success metrics for disadvantaged students.



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out of resources to new level 4 students. • Through VLE access tracking, monitor student engagement with on-line resources. • Gather student and PAT feedback on the effectiveness of Graduate Toolkit in developing graduate skills. • Monitor student outcomes - continuation. • Re-establish baseline performance for target group P1 to align to the Graduate Outcomes survey results and consider revising target based on two years of data. 	Narrative Empirical
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources developed to encompass support for level 5 students. • Continue to develop and refine on-line resources based on student feedback. • Monitor student outcomes – continuation & attainment. 	Narrative Empirical
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources developed to encompass support for level 6 students. • Continue to develop & refine on-line resources. • Monitor student outcomes –continuation, attainment. 	Narrative Empirical
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic review of the complete graduate toolkit conducted in partnership with students. • Continue to develop & refine on-line resources. • Monitor student outcomes –continuation, attainment & progression. 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop & refine on-line resources. • Monitor student outcomes –continuation, attainment & progression. 	Narrative Empirical

STRATEGIC MEASURE 7

Strategic Measure	Review and enhance our model of support for disabled students.
APP Aim(s)	2
APP Objective(s)	2
APP Target(s)	PTS_1, PTS_2
Target Groups	D1
Monitoring Groups	M4, M6, M7, M8, M10, M11
Lifecycle stages	Continuation, success and progression
Strategy/policy links	Policy G5: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy UCR Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

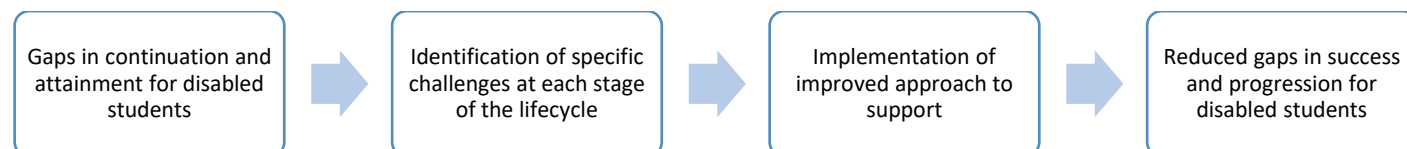
The proportion of students accessing higher education at UCR who declare a disability is double the national average. We have a very strong culture of support for disabled students which is recognised and appreciated by those who access it (evidenced by internal student satisfaction surveys). However, we recognise that this segment of our student population has now grown to a critical mass which requires a full re-evaluation of our institutional approach to supporting these students.

Our future approach will embrace the social model of disability which emphasises that disability is caused by the way society is organised rather restrict life choices for disabled people. We will consider our design and delivery of pedagogy, curricula and assessment practices as well as wider student/support service interactions and aim to recognise disability as a normal part of diversity and a matter of pride ([French and Swain, 2000, cited in DSSLG](#)).

We recognise that our initial response to the changes in DSA funding was insufficient and that disabled students required better levels of support to enable their continuation and higher attainment. This measure aims to firmly establish a truly inclusive learning environment for all students, whilst making individualised reasonable adjustments for disabled students, regardless of their entitlement to DSA funding, as part of our institutional commitment to equality.

From this approach, we anticipate:

- Our current approach to supporting disabled students will be reviewed, refined and enhanced
- Accessibility audits will inform our institutional approach to embedding inclusive teaching, learning and assessment
- More detailed tracking of specific disability groups to inform our interventions and support
- Enhanced success and progression for disabled students



Ac Yr	Planned activity	Evidence
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a full analysis of targeted support for disabled students throughout the entire student lifecycle, encompassing pre-entry, on-entry, on-programme and post-attainment support. Undertake student-led accessibility audit of physical environment, academic arrangements and support services. 	Narrative
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 'quiet' enrolment opportunity for students with mental health issues and other disabilities Implement early-start opportunities to enable disabled students to gain early access to student accommodation, support services and facilities (pre-entry package) Develop more granular identification and tracking of individual disabilities (ie those that fall into the "other / multiple impairments" category) Explore the potential for increasing our in-house HE disability support team to respond to any further growth in students declaring a disability Collect data to evaluate interventions and inform/refine our approach. 	Narrative Empirical
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with students develop interventions which will remove barriers to accessibility at all stages of the student lifecycle. Begin to evaluate student outcomes data with respect to each disability or impairment for those who fall into the 'multiple / other' category to identify the impairments having the greatest negative impact Repeat the accessibility audit to evaluate any initial impact of activities / interventions on student perception of barriers. Collect data to evaluate interventions and inform/refine our approach. 	Narrative Empirical
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future activity will be informed by activity evaluation and student feedback Collect data to evaluate interventions and inform/refine our approach. 	Narrative Empirical
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future activity will be informed by activity evaluation and student feedback Collect data to evaluate interventions and inform/refine our approach. 	Narrative Empirical

3.2 STUDENT CONSULTATION

The Reaseheath Student Association (SA) is part of the Access and Participation Plan work stream and has been a key partner in the creation of this plan. The SA is a partner in our work across the student lifecycle, and leads its own initiatives, in consultation with the institution, which complement the institution's ambition and strategy. Examples of how the UCR works with its students in the widening participation area are given below:

- The SA contribute to Open Days, to ensure prospective students are fully aware of the range of support and opportunities offered; providing independent and impartial guidance on the student experience at UCR;
- Dedicated SA representation exists for students who are from mature, disabled, distance learner and BAME backgrounds, to ensure their voices are heard at the highest level of SA work, thus enabling the student officers to reflect these views and needs accurately to senior managers;
- The SA work in student support focuses on a blend of proactive and reactive advice for students experiencing issues with their learning experience. This independent and confidential service is a critical part of the wider package of support available to students at UCR;
- The 15 student-led societies run by the SA provide members with a defining aspect of their social identity at UCR, offering belonging and community to students, with membership numbers at a record level in 2018/19. These social communities informally help students build and acquire social capital for their future.

UCR has consulted with students from a range of backgrounds as part of the creation of this Access and Participation Plan. At focus groups, students were given the opportunity to express their views about the content of the plan before our HE Committee (Governing Board) consideration. The students were highly supportive of student consultation and agreed with UCR's assessment of current performance, its ambition and the proposed objectives and targets. They

were particularly concerned about the challenges faced by disabled students and those from low-income backgrounds and agreed with UCR's plans to better support these particular groups. The students were concerned that there was little in the way of award recognition (other than their degree) which showcases personal development within a vocational context (such as work placement). This re-confirmed UCR's commitment to embed the UCR Graduate Toolkit within the curriculum offer. Another key area praised by the focus groups was student wellbeing provision which reflects UCR's pledge to further enhance our support for student mental health and wellbeing.

Student representatives sit on the HE Committee, HE Academic Board, and the Quality and Curriculum Development Committee which are involved in considering and approving UCR's Access Agreement historically, and the Access & Participation Plan in the future. Students also maintain representation on our Equality and Diversity Committee and the College Governing Body. We will ensure that students are appropriately represented within the newly formed steering group referred to in 3.1.3 Strategic Measures. UCR operates, through the SA, a comprehensive student representation system at course, department, and college level to foster dialogue and ensure student engagement and consultation.

3.3 EVALUATION STRATEGY

Our consideration of the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool identified our approaches as 'emerging' across all categories. The development of this plan and our approach to specifying strategic measures, timescales and monitoring/reporting mechanisms within the organisation provides the platform for developing more effective mechanisms of evaluation.

Our overarching approach to evaluation will be based around an outcome mapping methodology associated with the 'theory of change' to enable all stakeholders involved in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of activity to establish clear objectives, measures, data sources, outcomes and anticipated impact. This approach will provide greater transparency and visibility of our evaluation process and align to the OfS standards of evidence to demonstrate, more effectively, the relationship between our activities and their contribution to addressing performance gaps. Within the duration of this plan, our ambition is to further strengthen our approach to data collection and evaluation against a range of activities within our strategic measures to demonstrate a higher standard of evidence to inform our future approach. The evidence gathered through our approach to evaluation will be considered on a regular basis by the APP Steering Group, and will inform recommendations to continue, adapt or stop activities. The timescale associated with each strategic measure provides an indication of our ambition to progress from an informed narrative/rationale to the collection of empirical data.

Evaluation will be monitored and driven by our newly devised APP steering group. Planned discussions will take place to influence, develop and advise on appropriate approaches for activities targeting improvement, reducing gaps in performances between student characteristics and student's success throughout their lifecycle at UCR. Reports will be collated into a template which structures our monitoring and evaluation. This will allow for an institutional overview of areas of success and areas for future development to ensure spend is carefully monitored and based on evidence of impact. Evaluation is an iterative process and teams involved in the APP activity will meet regularly to discuss the progress of activities and share good practice to influence practice within the organisation. Updates, progress reviews and financial commitments will be reported on termly (three times a year) to assess progress is being made towards targets. The Access and Participation Steering Group will inform institutional decision making on our initiatives through our hierarchical committee structure, and ensure effective operational oversight of each initiative, incorporating data collection and evaluation. Prior to consideration by the steering group, each project will be required to obtain ethical approval from our institutional Ethics Committee to ensure that our approach does not negatively impact individual students or groups, and that data collection methodologies are robust.

Monitoring and evaluation reports, including progress against targets and milestones, are received by UCR's HE Academic Board, which reports to the HE Committee of the College Governing Body, to oversee and influence practice within the organisation. Overall responsibility for the delivery of the agreement resides with the Senior

Management Team, overseen by the Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education as an Executive lead. Our approach to evaluation and monitoring is outlined in Appendix B: UCR APP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Our current approach is predicated on a strong narrative rationale to substantiate the approach taken, and we are keen to establish more robust ways to evidence the impact of our interventions during the timescale of this plan. We will strive to capture relevant and meaningful quantitative and qualitative data in the execution of our strategic measures and use these to inform our strategy and refine our approach.

Furthermore, we will invite students from target groups to provide case studies of, for example:

- resilience during transition from FE to HE
- engaging with a placement that acted as a springboard onto other opportunities
- successful use of bursaries
- engaging in additional activities such as study trips
- carving a path in terms of employment opportunities linked to degree study.

The case studies will be used to capture the personal impact of our initiatives and in doing so further inform our strategy and raise awareness amongst our staff and student populations of the barriers faced by students with disadvantaged characteristics.

The data sets underpinning our awarding HEI's Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation (CME) of academic programmes include, from 2017-18, data on under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Academic faculties and departments are now required to monitor and comment in their continuous review processes on the entry profile of new entrants and the retention and success data of different groups. The full reports are scrutinised annually by our Quality and Curriculum Development Committee (QCDC) and then ratified by our University partner Boards of Study. Taking a whole-institutional approach to reviewing differences in outcomes for different groups of students will allow academic staff, and the institution, to better understand the experiences of these groups and to inform development of their enhancement plans for teaching, assessment and support.

The Higher Education Support Team (HEST) now records and monitors its activities through our student records system and the impact of these activities on student outcomes, particularly students from LPN and disabled students, will be measured and evaluated. Our support for the success of students with a declared disability will also be monitored and evaluated through participant feedback to assess the effectiveness and influence of interventions on individuals' behaviour and outcomes.

The long-term impact of the incentive on students' employment and/or further study rates will be measured and evaluated through analysis of the Graduate Outcomes Survey. Due to the migration of students from franchised to directly funded student numbers, we expect the reports from these surveys to be somewhat limited in the early years of the plan but will provide a vital source of intelligence as we reach the end of the five-year period.

UCR will also continue to provide financial support in the form of bursary schemes. Evaluation of the impact of these schemes, both on recruitment of disadvantaged groups and on student success, will be strengthened. We will utilise the OfS survey and interview tools and statistical tool if sufficient numbers are obtained (although multiple years of intake would need to be considered to meet the 800 threshold). This use of the OfS Toolkit and student data which, over time, will highlight the most effective interventions and show where UCR needs to implement further interventions to work towards closing the gaps in student continuation and success for under-represented and targeted groups.

3.4 MONITORING PROGRESS AGAINST THE DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

UCR, under new leadership, has recently embarked on a systematic review of its whole undergraduate portfolio, placing the student experience at the heart of the institution's mission. Evidence to support this plan can be drawn from the establishment of two new committees: 'Quality and Curriculum Development' and 'Learning, Teaching and Scholarship', both reporting to HE Academic Board as the senior deliberative committee within UCR. Evidence of our

commitment to the student experience is indicated by our continuous investment in our learning resources and facilities to ensure a high-quality learning experience.

We will establish an Access and Participation Steering Group, reporting to the HE Quality and Curriculum Development Committee with a dedicated remit to:

- Monitor the progress made in the implementation of our plan
- Assess the validity and suitability of proposed interventions
- Drive our evaluation strategy to establish the impact of our strategic measures
- Closely monitor access, success and progression data associated with our target groups throughout the year
- Provide a forum to share and disseminate best practice and evidence of 'what works' to further inform our approach and refine our interventions

Access and Participation will be added as a standing agenda item for HE Academic Board, facilitating reports from the QCDC and the steering group to aid transparency and ensure institutional oversight. Regular reports will also be presented to the HE Committee of the College Governing Body. Terms of reference and membership of the steering group will be defined in the summer of 2019 to enable the group to commence in the 2019/20 academic year. Membership will aim to be representative of both curriculum and support staff and will incorporate representation from the student body. Our approach to monitoring and evaluating the strategic measures specified within this plan is outlined in Appendix B: UCR APP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The steering group will actively monitor performance across all data indicators and splits considered in the preparation of this plan on an ongoing basis, with a commitment to maintaining areas of good practice and closing identified gaps for target groups. The group will also maintain a focus on the following monitoring groups which have been identified in the assessment of performance.



Monitoring Groups

- **M1:** Students originating from IMD quintile 1 (Continuation)
- **M2:** BAME students (Access)
- **M3:** Mature students (Continuation and Progression)
- **M4:** Disabled students with the following disabilities (Continuation and Attainment):
 - Cognitive or learning difficulties
 - Mental health conditions
 - Other/multiple impairments
- **M5:** Care Leavers (All Lifecycle Stages)
- **M6:** Disabled Students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 or IMD quintile 1 (Access)
- **M7:** Mature disabled students (Continuation and Attainment)
- **M8:** Male disabled students (Continuation)
- **M9:** Female students originating from POLAR 4 quintile 1 (Attainment)
- **M10:** Disabled students by gender - both male and female intersections (Attainment)
- **M11:** Disabled students not in receipt of DSA (Continuation)

The steering group will seek to ensure that the strategic measures identified within this plan are positively impacting the monitoring groups identified above as well as the core target groups. Where the direction of travel is not as expected, the group will adapt interventions where appropriate and consider the need to submit a variation to the Access and Participation Plan to incorporate objectives and/or targets aligned to these groups.

4. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

UCR provides clear information to students about its fees, scholarships and other student support on its website and through targeted communications. Prospective students are provided with information regarding fees, scholarships and bursaries which are applicable for the duration of their course. Any changes which occur as a result of the work undertaken within this plan will only apply to new students, and existing students will maintain the financial arrangements available at the point of application/enrolment. UCR has in place market-leading Customer Relationship Management processes, and is able to send direct, targeted information to the many thousands of potential students who have already enquired about undergraduate study with us.

UCR will provide detailed guidance for enquirers and applicants once this agreement is approved by the OfS and the institution will also make clear each student's financial entitlement and support package (in so far as they can be known) in communications with applicants at the point an offer of a place is made.

UCR will provide timely and accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) so they are able to populate their databases in good time to inform applications. This plan will be published in the Policies section of the UCR website following OfS approval (<https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/about/policies/>).

APPENDIX A: CURRENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFER

We currently allocate around £182,000 per academic year to financial support for UCR students on directly funded programmes. The levels of financial support available to individual students and the eligibility criteria are outlined below. These will be maintained until such a time as our impact review has been completed and a new evidence informed bursary offer has been designed and implemented as described in Strategic Measure 3. The total amount of financial support available will be increased during the life of the plan as outlined in our investment plan.

The Deal at Reaseheath

The Deal is targeted specifically at students who report a household income of less than £25,000 per annum, and provides those students with £100 of resources as they commence their study programme (i.e. in year 1 only). Resources currently include the provision of a core text book, a memory stick and print credit.

The Reaseheath Bursary

This bursary is available to students in all years of study who report a household income of less than £25,000 per annum and requires a minimum attendance rate of 90% or above at taught sessions. For eligible students, a total of £900 per year of study is available, paid in two equal installments in February and June, throughout their studies.

Aspire bursary

Our Aspire bursary is targeted at students progressing from FE programmes at Reaseheath, payable as a total of £1,000 in the first year of study, split across two equal payments in January and June for students who maintain attendance of 90% or above in taught sessions.

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund is available as a one-off payment to students who are able to demonstrate financial hardship. The fund has supported a wide range of students who would have been at risk of withdrawal without the financial support provided, and is considered to be a key component of our continuation strategy. Applications are considered throughout all years of study on a case-by-case basis against internally published criteria against which students must demonstrate financial hardship.

Financial Support for Disabled Students

The Diagnostic Assistance Bursary (DAB) was introduced in 2018/19 to support students in covering the costs associated with educational psychologist assessment, prior to their application for the Disabled Students Allowance. The bursary provides a contribution of £200 towards the £300 cost of assessment.

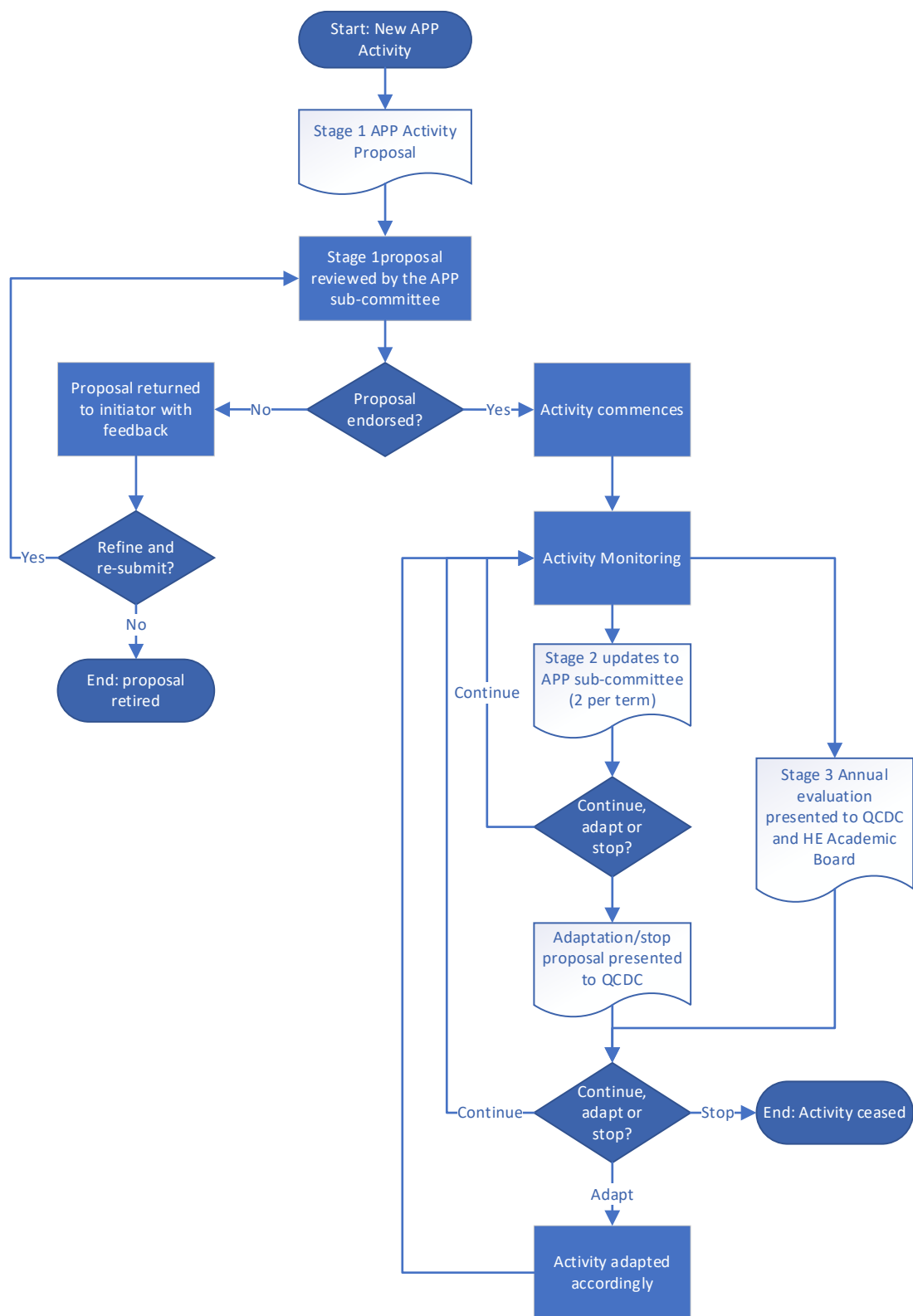
Study Tour Support Fund

Many of the programmes offered by UCR provide students with the opportunity to undertake experiential learning as part of their programme which may be facilitated through a study tour. Recent study tours have visited places such as Costa Rica and South Africa, providing students with exposure to unique habitats and life-changing experiences. We recognise that students from low-income backgrounds may struggle to generate the funds required to take advantage of these experiences, which develop their confidence, competence and enhance their employability prospects. We therefore provide a bursary based on a percentage of the study tour cost which is available to students who declare a household income of less than £25,000.

APPENDIX B: UCR APP MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Stage 1: Evaluation of Proposal (Narrative)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which group is being targeted? Which stage of the student lifecycle is being targeted (Access, continuation, attainment, progression)? Does the proposed activity align with APP strategic aims? Is there robust evidence to support proposal (internal or external)? What resources are required; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Physical Financial What is the anticipated impact / outcome? Are there any potential unintended consequences (e.g. negative effects on non-target groups) and if so what mitigations are in place to minimise these? What data will be collected? How will data be collected & analysed? How will impact be demonstrated (e.g. comparative data)? What is the timeline for implementation & assessment of outcomes / impact? Has there been any stakeholder consultation? 	<p>To be evaluated by APP subcommittee of QCDC. If proposal is endorsed, it will be progressed to QCDC for go/no-go decision.</p> <p>If proposal is rejected it will be returned to initiator with feedback and a decision taken to either refine, reconsider, or withdraw the proposal.</p>
Stage 2: Monitoring & evaluation of implementation (Narrative, Empirical)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has robust pre-implementation data been collected? What is the level of stakeholder engagement? Is the financial / resource requirement in line with the proposal? Is the activity in line with the projected timeline? Have any problems been encountered in implementation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If so, how have they been overcome? Has robust post-implementation data been collected? Has analysis of the pre & post data been carried out? 	<p>Monitored by APP subcommittee & reported to QCDC termly for continue / adapt / stop decision</p>
Stage 3: Evaluation of outcome / impact (Empirical, Causality)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What changes are evidenced by the data? What conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of the activity? Have the results been shared with a wider audience and if now, how will they be shared? 	<p>Compiled by APP subcommittee and reported to QCDC and HE Academic Board annually for oversight.</p>

APP Monitoring and Evaluation Activity Flowchart



Access and participation plan

Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: Reaseheath College

Provider UKPRN: 10005404

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	BSc Top Up (External)	£9,250
First degree	BSc	£9,250
First degree	BSc Top Up (Internal)	£7,860
Foundation degree		£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	Foundation Year	£8,250
HNC/HND		£7,860
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,625
Foundation degree		£4,625
Foundation degree	Countryside Resource Management	£3,570
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Reaseheath College

Provider UKPRN: 10005404

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 (£)	£140,000.00	£149,800.00	£166,278.00	£171,266.34	£176,404.33
Access (pre-16)	£70,000.00	£74,900.00	£83,139.00	£85,633.17	£88,202.17
Access (post-16)	£50,000.00	£53,500.00	£59,385.00	£61,166.55	£63,001.55
Access (adults and the community)	£20,000.00	£21,400.00	£23,754.00	£24,466.62	£25,200.62
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£182,000.00	£195,300.00	£217,630.00	£223,993.00	£229,392.30
Research and evaluation (£)	£40,000.00	£42,000.00	£44,000.00	£46,000.00	£48,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£1,983,900.00	£2,115,900.00	£2,327,150.00	£2,398,475.00	£2,468,300.00
Access investment	3.5%	3.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Financial support	9.2%	9.2%	9.4%	9.3%	9.3%
Research and evaluation	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%
Total investment (as %HFI)	13.7%	13.8%	13.9%	13.9%	13.9%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Reaseheath College

Provider UKPRN: 10005404

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	
To increase the proportion of young male students entering from low participation neighbourhoods	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Proportion of young (18/19 year old) males recruited to UCR provision from low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2)	No	Other data source	2017-18	34.8%	34.8%	34.8%	34.8%	37.4%	40.0%	34.7% (25 - 17/18) of the male student population (108 - 17/18) at UCR originate from low-participation neighbourhoods. To address this issue, we must diversify our curriculum to provide a more broad range of provision. A steady-state for the first three years is therefore proposed to enable curriculum developments and robust marketing to impact on LPN male recruitment. Our ambition is to recruit at least 40% of our male cohort from LPN's by 2024/25.
	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 eliminate the continuation gap between disabled and non-disabled students	PTS_1	Disabled	Percentage difference in continuation rates between students with a disability and students without a disability	No	Other data source	2017-18	2.0pp	1.5pp	1.0pp	0.5pp	0.0pp	0.0pp	The number of disabled students commencing courses at UCR has increased over the 5 year period (87 in 2013-14 to 101 in 2017-18) and we expect this trend to continue (currently 23.5% of the UCR entrant cohort). Strategies will focus on further establishing a more inclusive environment for learning, teaching and assessment and embracing the social model of disability, with close observation of relevant monitoring groups associated with disability.
To eliminate the attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students	PTS_2	Disabled	Percentage difference in degree attainment (Hons 1st and 2:1 or Distinction/Merit at FD) between students with a disability and students without a disability	No	Other data source	2017-18	1.5pp	1.5pp	1.0pp	0.5pp	0.0pp	0.0pp	Recognising that our strategies for enhancing disabled student attainment will not be immediately operational, our milestones reflect a steady state in the first year, with marginal reductions in the gap over the subsequent years and the aim of eliminating the gap by 2023-24.
To reduce the attainment gap between students from the lowest and highest areas of HE participation	PTS_3	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Percentage difference in degree attainment (Hons 1st and 2:1 or Distinction/Merit at FD) between students originating from POLAR4 quintile 1 and POLAR 4 quintile 5.	No	Other data source	2017-18	17.3pp	15.6pp	13.9pp	12.2pp	10.5pp	8.8pp	Our ambition is to eliminate this gap by 2030-31 and our milestones reflect a progressive reduction in the gap over this timeframe, utilising 2017/18 for the baseline.
To eliminate the continuation gap between BAME students and white students	PTS_4	Ethnicity	Percentage difference in continuation between BAME students and white students.	No	Other data source	2017-18	16.8pp	16.8pp	12.6pp	8.4pp	4.2pp	0.0pp	Recognising that our strategies for enhancing continuation for this group will not be immediately implemented, our approach reflects a steady state in the first year, with subsequent reductions leading to an eliminated gap by 2024-25.
To eliminate the continuation gap between students from the lowest and highest areas of HE participation	PTS_5	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Percentage difference in continuation between students originating from POLAR4 quintile 1 and POLAR4 quintile 5.	No	Other data source	2017-18	3.6pp	3.6pp	2.9pp	2.0pp	1.0pp	0.0pp	Recognising that our strategies for enhancing continuation for this group will not be immediately implemented, our approach reflects a steady state in the first year, with subsequent reductions leading to an eliminated gap by 2024-25.
To eliminate the continuation gap between mature students from the most deprived and least deprived areas	PTS_6	Multiple	Percentage difference in continuation between mature students from IMD quintile 1 and mature students from IMD quintile 5	No	Other data source	2017-18	13.8pp	11.0pp	8.2pp	5.4pp	2.6pp	0.0pp	Our milestones plot a steady trajectory towards eliminating this performance gap by 2024-25.
To reduce the attainment gap between students from the lowest and highest areas deprivation	PTS_7	Socio-economic	Percentage difference in attainment (Hons 1st and 2:1 or Distinction/Merit at FD) between students originating from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5	No	Other data source	2017-18	18.6pp	16.8pp	15.0pp	13.2pp	11.4pp	9.6pp	Our ambition is to eliminate this gap by 2030-31 and our milestones reflect a progressive reduction in the gap over this timeframe, utilising 2017/18 for the baseline.
	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	

[illegible]