

Access and Participation Plan 2020/21-2024/25

Edge Hill University has been a champion of widening participation since its establishment in 1885 as the country's first women's non-denominational teacher training college. We have always attracted and supported a diverse student body with over 70% of our students having one or more under-represented characteristic. The theme of Opportunity for All is central to the University's Mission and, where possible, we mainstream our support, making it an integral element of our core business. We take a strategic, whole institutional approach across the entire student journey and as we strive to deliver an outstanding, holistic student experience. Continuing our commitment to access, in 2019, we will welcome students to our new Medical School, designed to provide opportunities to those traditionally under-represented in Medicine.

The following commentary provides an analysis of our performance to date, recognising where we are achieving and providing a critical appraisal of where we still have work to do. We also recognise the sector-wide challenges and this Plan seeks to demonstrate our commitment to addressing them. We believe we have an infrastructure, properly prioritised and resourced, that can deliver real change using evidence-based measures, evaluating whether they are working and establishing a co-creation model with students to work collaboratively across our institution.

1. Assessment of Performance

1.1 Higher education participation, household income or socio-economic status

Access

We have an excellent record in supporting students into higher education, particularly young, white, full time first-degree entrants, from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs). HESA statistics¹ show that we have:

- Achieved a consistent percentage of around 98-99% of young, full time first-degree entrants coming to us from State Schools or Colleges over the past 5 years.
- Achieved a consistent percentage of around 20-21% of young, full time first-degree entrants coming from LPNs over the past 5 years.

As the OfS dataset identifies, over 40% of our students come from POLAR 1 and 2 quintiles². We have a higher percentage of POLAR 1 Quintile students (18.8%) entering our institution than we have of POLAR 5 Quintile students (17.3%). This is significantly different to the sector average and demonstrates that, in this regard, we have a balanced demographic. These figures have remained constant over the past 5 years and reflect the long-term relationships we have built up with schools and colleges including through initiatives such as the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), as well as through our own individual partnerships.

Success – Non-Continuation

The OfS datasets identify a differential, of which we were aware from our own analysis, and which has remained largely static over the past 5 years: that we have a continuation rate for POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 of 90% compared to POLAR Quintile 5 of 93%; there is a similar pattern with the IMD data³.

Our internal analysis has considered greater intersectionality to better understand this gap. This analysis shows that the figures for non-continuation are starker when the student is also a young, white male from a low socio-economic background⁴ with a 78% continuation rate. There is also a drop for both genders when the intersectional analysis considers the combination of LPN and BTEC entry qualifications where continuation drops to 82%.

¹ HESA UK Performance Indicators 2017/18

² POLAR4 is the latest measure of participation in higher education: it measures the proportion of young people entering HE, aged 18 or 19 between the years 2009-10 and 2014-15. Quintile 1 (Q1) indicates the lowest participating areas; quintile 5 (Q5) indicates the highest participation

³ The IMD, funded by Government, are England's main research tool for the identification of deprived neighbourhoods.

⁴ Polar Quintile 1, Under 21 at entry, IMD, White, Male.

The BTEC/A level gap for both continuation and attainment is a sector-wide challenge and, although we have already been working to address this gap, there are further examples of good practice which we will consider adopting, for example the HEFCE funded Transforming Transitions project at Exeter University which identified key areas that students struggle with⁵. This is a key area for our APP Working Group and we have established a smaller, operational group of academic, professional services staff and students to look at this issue in-depth, to identify barriers and potential solutions to help us better support our students to stay on course.

New Practices

In 2018 we introduced a new team of staff, the Transitions Team, to support our students to stay on course and succeed. The 'Thinking of Leaving' Service is a proactive service, which encourages students who are experiencing problems to access centralised support from staff who can assist with their choices and access to more specialist support such as money advice or mental health services. In the first 6 months of this academic year the team have met with 127 students, 90 of whom remain registered. This is an improvement on last year, when the service was first launched part way through the year when 45% of the students the team saw remained registered. We believe that when we can speak to students earlier in their decision-making, we can provide better support for them to stay on course.

Success – Attainment

We have seen an improvement over the past 5 years in the attainment levels (percentage of 1st and 2:1 'good' degrees) of our students from the lower quintiles of LPN and IMD. We do however still have a 6% gap in attainment between POLAR Quintile 1 (71%) and Quintile 5 (77%). The gaps increase further when we look inter-sectionally;

- There is a gap of 10% between IMD, female, Q1&Q2 (72%) and IMD, female, Q3-Q5 (82%).
- Our male IMD students (all quintiles) are only achieving 67% of good degrees.
- Entry level qualifications have a significant impact on attainment with an average of 58.1% of BTEC students attaining a good degree in 2018 compared to 83% of A level students.
- The gap for BTEC students is greater when the student is also from a LPN and IMD postcode and is male: attainment drops to 45.3% for this group of students.

This internal analysis demonstrates that we have work to do with students with BTEC qualifications. We will be focussing on those from the lower quintiles of LPN/IMD and have established a strand of work specifically looking at the barriers young, white males from these areas face.

Progression to employment or further study

The improvements that we have seen in progression for our students over the past 5 years into graduate level employment or further study has been impressive and demonstrates the additional resources and strategic planning committed to this area. For POLAR Quintile 1 we have seen an increase from 53.3% in 2013/14 to 70% in the most recent DLHE survey. For our POLAR Quintile 5 students we have seen an increase from 57.8% to 77% over the same period. Whilst we are achieving better than sector averages, we do have a gap between our lower POLAR Quintiles and a similar, although smaller percentage difference, showing in our IMD quintiles for male students, with 68% progression for males from IMD Quintile 1 or 2. This performance reflects similar findings in attainment and there is likely to be a correlation between achieving a good degree and getting a graduate level job or going onto further study. Whether the graduate employment gap is one of attainment which could correct itself or a question of social mobility is moot. We are aware that often students from LPN/IMD backgrounds find it more difficult to move location and so are more likely to remain in places where it can be more challenging to find graduate level jobs. We are also aware that gender and subject mix has a significant impact on our data and we will drill down to analyse whether the gaps exist at course level to ensure we effectively direct our resources in addressing this gap.

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http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/education/research/transformingtransitions/Lecturer_Report_Exec_Summary.pdf

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)

The entire BAME student population at Edge Hill is 1,386⁶, our BAME students identify as;

- 686 Asian or Asian British – 42 Bangladeshi, 351 Indian, 211 Pakistani, 82 Other.
- 328 Black or Black British – 252 African, 59 Caribbean, 17 Other
- 57 Chinese students
- 267 mixed race – 67 White & Asian, 42 White & Black African, 84 White and Black Caribbean, 73 Other.
- Other Ethnicity – 48

719 of these students are on OfS countable courses.

Edge Hill is located in Ormskirk, a market town surrounded by rural and commuter settlements, with a very small BAME population. As a University we have traditionally focussed on widening access in the areas where we felt best placed to support under-represented groups, being mindful that we are in a region of providers where access to HE for students from BAME backgrounds is very strong with other providers being better located geographically. Considering our regional context, we have historically focussed our efforts on attracting those from low socio-economic backgrounds and less privileged POLAR/IMD areas.

We recognise however, the need to further diversify our University notwithstanding our strength in programmes, such as teaching, that have historically been less attractive to BAME applicants. The lack of diversity in our student population is reflected in the limited diversity in our workforce. With a local BAME population of just 3.8% we are also thinking creatively about how we can increasingly diversify our workforce.

Access

As referenced above, our performance to date in providing access to BAME students is a great deal lower than sector comparators: 2.4% of our students are black compared to a sector average of 10.5% and we have 2.7% of Asian students compared to a 13.7% sector average. Although our position is reflective of the local population, from where we attract most of our students, development in this area is a target in our Plan and we are recruiting new staff to enable us to support this target. We have also created a cross-institutional BAME working group, including students, to look across the entire student journey from application to graduation to better understand what the experience feels like for the different subsections of BAME students.

The recent UCAS End of Cycle 2018 report provided detailed analysis to universities in relation to our offer rates to applicants, broken down by ethnicity, as below. The following table identifies applications made by 18-year olds to Edge Hill and an average offer rate⁷. Whilst the numbers are small, for example 140 applications from black 18-year-old students, the offer rate does identify a differential. We know that the majority of our BAME applicants apply for courses that have much lower offer rates, for example nursing, where the average offer rate for all applicants is approximately 30%. We also know anecdotally that applications to some courses such as nursing are 'back up' applications due to the challenges of our geographical location and that of our placement providers and that a greater number of BAME students do not attend their offered interviews. Our new BAME post holder will be undertaking in-depth analysis of this area to ensure we are identifying where we can intervene to make a difference and whether we do have any internal institutional issues which need to be addressed.

⁶ 2017/2018 SPPU, EHU.

⁷ The average offer rate does not attempt to control for any other factors that may play a part in the decision to make an offer, such as the subject of the qualifications studied, their relevance to a course, or the grade in each subject; higher numbers of A levels being studied; the exact profile of grades predicted; personal statements; teacher references; interviews; or any other criteria (such as work experience or portfolios) that may be part of the admissions decision.

Statistic	Ethnic group	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Average offer rate	Asian	66.3%	65.6%	66.9%	70.2%	71.5%	74.3%
	Black	70.7%	67.9%	70.9%	62.4%	73.8%	71.6%
	Mixed	76.2%	75.7%	76.2%	79.2%	79.1%	80.2%
	White	71.2%	72.1%	73.6%	76.7%	79.2%	79.9%
	Other	79.2%	67.7%	77.9%	79.5%	78.5%	83.7%
Percentage point difference between offer rate and average offer rate	Asian	-9.3	-5.8	-8.1	-9.4	-9.2	-14.0
	Black	-16.0	-14.1	-9.8	-11.0	-16.8	-18.3
	Mixed	-1.6	-3.9	-4.7	-0.5	-6.1	-7.1
	White	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1
	Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Success - Non-continuation

The 2017/18 OfS dataset demonstrates that ethnicity has little effect on non-continuation and, setting aside a couple of outlier figures, over the past 5 years this has remained consistent. Notably, BAME students perform particularly well from a continuation perspective when they come from IMD 3-5 and our BAME figures do not demonstrate any gaps which need attention. As above, there is a gap in relation to students in the lower quintiles for IMD, but this is not exacerbated by ethnicity.

Our own internal analysis of BAME students, considered by different ethnicities (Asian with Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Mixed, Other Asian; Black with options for Caribbean, African, Mixed, Other Black; Chinese, Other Ethnicity) did not show any gap in relation to non-continuation. This was true when we also considered inter-sectional analysis across a range of other WP characteristics. Whilst the numbers are small, it is reassuring that BAME students do not appear to be any more likely to leave the University.

Success – Attainment

The gap between attainment for black students compared to white students is 21.3% with 55% of black students attaining a good degree compared with 76.3% of white students. The numbers are small with only 63 black students graduating in 2018.

The gap between attainment for Asian students compared to white students is 7.2%, with 69% of Asian students attaining a good degree compared with 76.2% of white students. This is a significant reduction on the 28.7% gap in 2013/14 but once again shows that we have more to do.

We recognise that the national picture is similar to our own figures and that a great deal of research is already underway to assist universities in working more successfully in this area, for example the OfS' 'Overcoming the Challenges of Ethnicity Targeting' published in February 2019 and the publication of best practice and research being undertaken by the UUK and the NUS, due for publication in early May 2019. As an example of our work in this area, we recently instructed Elevation Networks, a youth employment charity, dedicated to creating diverse career opportunities for BAME students, to work with our current students to research barriers that they may be experiencing on course and into employment; the early feedback is helping us to better understand our own context.

It is clear from the OfS Datasets and our own analysis that BAME students from lower IMD quintiles are more at risk of attaining a lower grade than those from the higher IMD quintiles. This reinforces our earlier finding around students from LPN/IMD groups needing more support generally in relation to attainment

Although sample sizes are small, we are utilising the data in the TEF subject level metrics to help us consider where NSS scores are clearly showing differences between our BAME and white students' satisfaction. An example, Nursing and Midwifery TEF Subject Level Metrics, is detailed below;

	Age		POLAR		National IMD		Ethnicity					Disabled		Sex	
	Young	Mature	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	White	BME	Black	Asian	Other	Yes	No	Male	Female
Full-time headcount: 1,565 (92%)															
The teaching on my course	+	++		+	++	++	++					++	++		++
Assessment and feedback	++	++	++	++	++	++	++					++	++		++
Student voice	++	++		+	+	++	++			N		+	++		++
Academic support	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	+				++	++		++
Learning resources										N					
Continuation								+							
Highly skilled employment or higher study	--		-	-	-		-						-		-
Sustained employment or further study															
Above median earnings threshold or higher study	--	--	--	-	--	--	--					-	--		--

Progression to employment or further study

Given the BAME attainment gap identified above, it is interesting to note that there is no ethnicity gap when we consider our DLHE data. Over the past 3 years there has been a consistent picture, with our most recent data showing 76.1% progression for white students, 75% for Asian students and 80% for mixed race students. Data from our black graduates was insufficient to provide any statistical analysis but shows a similarly aligned average in previous years. Whilst the figure overall is very encouraging there are small pockets of difference in some of our courses, which are statistically too small to analyse but which need further investigation.

The work we have commissioned from Elevation Networks is crucial in giving us a better understanding of the general barriers and challenges that our BAME students experience accessing employment; student feedback to undertaking this research has so far been positive

1.3 Mature Students

Access

The OfS dataset shows that we currently have 23.4% of students entering our institution who are 21 and over in comparison with 25.5% 5 years ago. The mature student market has been declining over the past 5 years with the most significant factor for us being the removal of the NHS bursary and the effect that this has had on mature demand for our nursing programme. Whilst the figures are now stabilising this year, we saw a 45% reduction (1,831 fewer applications) from June 2016 to June 2018. During the same period, UCAS saw a 40% decline nationally in the number of mature students applying for nursing.

We do however continue to perform well when looking at the 17/18 HESA data for mature, full time undergraduate entrants from LPNs with 18.4% against a sector average of 14.8%⁸. Thus, whilst we are recruiting a slightly lower number of mature students, we are recruiting a higher percentage from the most underrepresented areas of the UK. We have continued to encourage mature students to access Edge Hill with fully funded access courses (Fastrack) running over the summer and last year introduced a new cohort of Spring Fastrack students for pre-entry nursing courses.

Success: Non-continuation

The past 5 years has seen a significant improvement in continuation of our mature students from 85.3% continuation in 2013/14 to 91.5% in 2017/18 and we now have parity between both the mature and under 21 age group (91.6%). Retention remains a high priority for us and our approaches to this have had a particularly positive impact on mature students over this period.

⁸ HESA UK Performance Indicators 2017/18

Success - Attainment

There is no gap in our students' attainment based on age.

Progression to employment or further study

Our mature students perform significantly better in the DLHE data than younger students with 87% mature students achieving a graduate level job or further study compared with 72.3% of our students who enter HE at under 21. This is likely to be reflective of the courses that mature students opt for, in particular the large nursing cohort where access to professional employment is relatively easy.

1.4 Disabled Students

Access

Whilst our HESA data⁹ for DSA funded students is just below sector average at 6.8% (EHU) vs 7.2% (Sector Average), we recruit around the sector average of students who disclose a disability at 14.6%¹⁰. Students declaring a disability at our University have increased over the past 5 years from 10.7% in 2013/14 to 14.5% in 2017/18; an increase mirrored across the sector, particularly driven by the growth in young people identifying mental health conditions. Looking forward, demand on our disability services and the support we need to have in place is likely to continue to rise and we are cognisant of emerging trends in this area.

Success: Non-continuation

We are showing a small gap in our continuation rates between declared disabled students at 90% continuation, and students with no known disability at 92%. We have achieved some significant improvements in the past 5 years, in particular with students with multiple impairments, and with students with mental health conditions, which reported 77.8% continuation in 2015/16 and which has improved to 87.5% in 2017/18. This is no small part due to two areas of investment: firstly, a large investment in the Wellbeing Team, which was first created in 2015 and which developed the previous counselling only service into a broader wellbeing support facility with a number of new staff; secondly the restructuring and investment in our Inclusion Team which supports students with complex disabilities, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

New Practices

In August 2018 we created a new Transitions & Networking Event for our disabled applicants who have complex needs (for example Autism Spectrum Disorder) and who were due to start their course in September 2018. We know that these students can struggle to settle into University life and are at a high risk of dropping out during their first year. In total we identified 43 students who we felt, based on our experience, would need a significant amount of additional transitional support due to the complexity of their conditions. The students and their parents/supporters were invited to attend the day where there were talks, tours, visits of accommodation for those who were planning to live on campus and face to face time with staff who would be supporting the students during their time at University. The feedback was incredibly positive;

"Really informative, friendly and helpful. Answered all of our questions and no problem was impossible to solve. Very informative talks and power points and the tour of the campus and halls was extremely helpful and reassuring.... didn't feel embarrassed to ask any small question."

It is too early to say whether this project has impacted on retention or attainment, but initial evaluation was positive, and these students are being tracked to gather more quantitative data.

We have identified differences between those students who have declared a disability and are in receipt of DSA compared to those not in receipt of DSA. This data (below) shows that we have a significant gap and that students who do not receive a DSA are twice as likely not to be retained. As we already offer specialist-mentoring support to our students, regardless of whether they receive funding, this is a significant concern. We have significantly enhanced the support that students who present with mental health conditions receive; sometimes this support is about helping students to proactively withdraw or interrupt their studies so that they can receive more intensive NHS care. Given this, the figures may not be a negative representation but rather one which demonstrates we are supporting students to make decisions that are right for them. We will undertake individual case analysis of these statistics to identify any gaps in our provision that would support a student to stay on course where appropriate, whilst also reviewing national research into this issue.

⁹ HESA UK Performance Indicators 2017/18

¹⁰ OfS Dataset, published March 2019.

Retention of Students for 2017/18¹¹

Retention	In receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance		Not in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance	
	Student Count	%	Student Count	%
Retained	414	90.39%	455	82.28%
Not Retained	44	9.61%	98	17.72%
Grand Total	458	100.00%	553	100.00%

New Practices

In 2017 we implemented a new set of Fitness to Study Procedures and began a series of meetings with academics to enable them to understand how to refer students and support them by using the process. Fitness to Study is an important tool to support students with predominantly mental health issues to stay on course. The meetings can be challenging but it is crucial that students are part of the process, which reflects on what they need to do to stay on track and gets a commitment from all parties to comply with an action plan. Sometimes these meetings result in a decision being made with the student that they need to take a break from their studies whilst they access NHS specialist services. Whilst this might result in an increase in non-continuation, it is our view that the student's best interests must drive our decision-making and that for some students interrupting or withdrawing will be the right decision at that point in their lives.

Attainment

The attainment data shows a much more positive story, with no attainment gap between disabled students and non-disabled students. Our analysis of the OfS dataset by disability type however does show that we still have work to do, in particular with students with multiple impairments. We believe that we have made excellent progress in this area and continue to offer high quality services to support disabled students with in-house, qualified staff providing both funded and unfunded support.

We have also analysed attainment between disabled students who are in receipt of DSA and those who are not; the figures do not show any significant difference.

Degree Classification	In receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance		Not in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance		No Declared Disability		Total Student Count	Total %
	Student Count	%	Student Count	%	Student Count	%		
First Class Honours	63	26.81%	60	33.70%	804	31.17%	927	30.99%
Upper Second-Class Honours	105	46.81%	71	40.33%	1120	43.37%	1296	43.46%
Lower Second Class Honours	40	17.87%	35	20.44%	523	20.26%	598	20.08%
Third Class Honours/Pass	20	8.51%	10	5.52%	134	5.20%	164	5.47%
Grand Total	228	100.00%	176	100.00%	2581	100.00%	2985	100.00%

Progression to employment or further study

73% of students declaring a disability access graduate level jobs or further advanced study. This is a positive position and one which has been on an upward trajectory over the past 5 years; we are aware however that this still represents a small 3.4% gap with our non-disabled students at 76.4%, and the need to undertake more dedicated work in this area. Students who have a cognitive and learning disability and those with multiple impairments face the greatest labour market challenges and we will be doing further work to understand how we can reduce the barriers these students face in securing graduate level employment.

¹¹ SPPU Data Unit, EHU, March 2019

1.5 Care Leavers

Access

Over the past 5 years we have outperformed our own Access Agreement targets in respect of access for Care Leavers and we have established proactive and long-term relationships with local authority and support organisations to actively recruit and support care leavers. We now have 79 Care Leaver/care experienced students studying with us, all of whom can access their own tailored support and named contact, along with a specific financial support package¹². In May 2019 we were recognised for our work in this area cited as a best practice case study in the Centre for Social Justice's '12x24' publication.¹³

The national picture however, as detailed in the 'Support for Care Leavers' (Government's Briefing Paper March 2019)¹⁴ shows that the numbers of care leavers entering HE is falling with only 6.1% in 2016/17 compared to 6.7% in 2015/16¹⁵. This contrasts with around 51% of the total school pupil population progressing into higher education in 2016/17.¹⁶ We believe we have a significant role to play in increasing access to HE for Care Leavers and we will continue to develop our support pre-entry to help more Care Leavers and care experienced students into University. In April 2019 we were accepted as part of the new NNECL National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) Accreditation Scheme¹⁷ pilot.

Success: Non-continuation

Our datasets are too small for this group of students to provide any statistically significant analysis however it is still helpful to review our figures albeit that the percentages can vary significantly due to the group size. Despite the small numbers, in the past 3 years we have had continuation rates of 93% in 2015/16, 98% in 2016/17 and 90% in 2017/18 for our Care Leavers. These are very encouraging given the additional boundaries that Care Leavers can encounter in succeeding in HE and, we believe, are a result of the personalised support we offer. We continue to provide dedicated support and are alert to evidence around non-continuation articulated in national reports such as NNECL's Moving on Up Report¹⁸ and we are currently undertaking our own research with our students.

New Practices

A cross departmental project has been established, working with academic staff from Social Sciences, our WP Research and Evaluation Officer and our Transitions Team conducting research with care leaver and care experienced students. The research seeks to understand whether we are providing a conducive environment that encourages students with care leaver backgrounds to apply to HE and what their experience has been of Edge Hill and higher education. The findings from the research due in January 2020 will be used to help inform the delivery of activities and initiatives to support this student group.

Success - Attainment

Whilst our datasets for this group of students are too small to make them statistically significant it is still helpful to review our figures in this area. Over the past two years our Care Leavers have achieved 70% good degrees in 2016/17 and 80% good degrees in 2017/2018. This is incredibly encouraging and reflects the average of good degrees awarded for our University more broadly.

Progression to employment or further study

Our DLHE data shows progression to highly skilled/further education for our Care Leavers at 70% vs 77.4% for non-care leavers. Whilst the sample is too small to use as a target, it does give us an indication of the

¹² Financial support package uses the definition that the student was looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. All other support available to all students who have care experience.

¹³ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/12by24-Publication.pdf>
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8429/CBP-8429.pdf>

¹⁵ DFE Looked After Children Statistics, Table F1

¹⁶ DFE Destinations of Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils.

¹⁷ <http://www.nnecl.org/news/call-for-support-to-help-nnecl-d>

¹⁸ <http://www.nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits>

progression from University and is a positive statistic, reflecting the bespoke approach we take with Care Leavers within our Careers service.

1.6 Intersections

All the analysis above has been reviewed using intersectionality and where gaps were identified they have been reported. These statistics provide us with some important indicators of where to focus to identify what we can do to better support students to succeed and to interweave our research into our strategic measures. **Over the past 18 months we have also been looking at other student groups where we believe barriers exist.**

1.7 Estranged Students

National research¹⁹ undertaken last year by Unite and Stand Alone demonstrated that estranged students are more likely to encounter financial, accommodation and wellbeing difficulties and we are keen to develop ways to support this group. However, there is very little data available as we are unable to access the Student Loan Company's list of names of students who receive their funding as 'estranged' due to data protection restrictions. We understand there are about 80 students within our institution who are funded as independent, due to being estranged from their families. Whilst we are unable to undertake any direct research or statistical analysis with them, we believe that the majority are also 'care experienced' and have therefore included that group of students in our Care Leaver research to help us better understand their needs at our institution. UCAS are due to amend their enrolment forms to capture this data at which point we will work with this group directly. In the meantime, we offer support to students (such as accommodation over holiday periods) and a named contact for estranged students.

1.8 Young Adult Carers

National research shows that "adult carers often struggle in higher education because of their caring responsibilities"²⁰ and are twice as likely to drop out. Whilst this is a group that is difficult to track on course due to the lack of data, we are undertaking pre-entry work with organisations such as Barnardo's, the Regional Young Carers Group and The Empower Academy to help us develop access to our support for these students, pre-arrival so that we can help identify them once on course.

1.9 LGBTQ+

There is a wealth of national research²¹ that articulates the personal barriers students from LGBTQ+ groups may face at University. For Transgender students their journey to transition often starts at University and dealing with these changes requires a great deal of emotional and practical support. Statistical analysis of LGBTQ+ is limited and therefore it is difficult to provide quantitative evidence that it impacts on a range of measures. We are working within our Student Services team and with the Students' Union to provide improved access to support and to ensure that our systems, such as changing name processes, are made as simple and stress free as possible. We are also working closely with the Students' Union to promote inclusivity and to celebrate events such as Pride and University Mental Health Day to support LGBTQ+ students, who are known to be at a higher risk of mental health conditions²².

1.10 Commuter Students

The recently published HEPI Report, 'Homeward Bound – Defining, Understanding & Aiding Commuter Students' highlights the increased risks of retention. In particular, the report notes that "...commuter students are more likely to: work part-time; have family or carer responsibilities; be the first generation in their family to attend higher education; be from a lower socio-economic group; have a low income; be mature; and have

¹⁹ <http://standalone.org.uk/reports>

²⁰ <https://carers.org/news-item/research-shows-young-adult-carers-struggling-cope-higher-education>

²¹ <https://www.nus.org.uk/global/lgbt-research.pdf>

²² <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/lgbtq.html>

a BAME background”²³. As an institution we have invested funding in this area and we are funding Professor Liz Thomas, supported by our Research and Evaluation Officer, to undertake an 18-month project researching best practice examples which will culminate in a national conference on the topic.

2. Strategic Aims, Objectives and Targets

Our overarching aim for 2025 is to contribute to a fair and transparent sector where all those with potential have parity of access to HE and receive the right support to succeed and fulfil their potential.

Over the lifetime of this Plan we will focus on evidence-based, decision making, where we question, analyse, monitor and evaluate the gaps and effectively allocate our resources to address them. Students are at the heart of our plans, and we will work closely with them to understand the barriers they face and get their input into designing effective ways to overcome them.

The following aims and objectives map onto the student lifecycle and identify measurable objectives that reflect the gaps in the assessment of our performance.

Aim 1: Excellence in Outreach

We will continue to broaden our access targets with a focus on BAME applicants as well as developing our outreach programme so that it continues to put sustainable partnerships at its heart.

Our objectives are:

- a. Improve our understanding of the gap in entry rates for BAME students and develop programmes of activity to address them. Increasing BAME student population from 7% to 10% by 2024/25.
- b. Sustain our POLAR quintile population, maintaining parity between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5.
- c. Maintain the percentage of young full time first-degree entrants coming from State Schools/Colleges.
- d. Sustain our successful access and performance trends from other underrepresented groups such as Care Leavers and Disabled Students.
- e. Continue to adopt a collaborative approach to outreach activity, working with partner institutions to close participation gaps, increasing our NCOP partnerships to 2 from 3.
- f. Continue to invest in our Raising Attainment work achieving quantifiable and measurable improvements in attendance and attainment with our new partner schools.

Aim 2: Supporting Success

We will deliver a comprehensive programme of support for all students to support success in HE, with a focus on allocating additional resources to support our current gaps in continuation and attainment²⁴.

Our objectives are:

- a. Reduce the gap in non-continuation rates by 66% between POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and POLAR 4 Quintile 5 students by 2024/25. Our focus will be on the intersectional gaps identified with LPN's and between:
 - i. Young white British males from low socio-economic backgrounds.
 - ii. BTEC entrants and A Level entrants.
- b. Reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups;
 - iii. Between Black students and White students by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
 - iv. Between Asian students and White students by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.

²³ https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-‘commuter-students’-Report-11429_11_18Web-1.pdf

²⁴ We recognise the challenge in separating out the unexplained and the structural gaps. However, it is our view, based on our data, that a significant contributor to the gaps in non-continuation and attainment are due to our students with the largest gaps entering higher education with a BTEC qualification (structural) and we have therefore based our targets at 50% by the end of this plan and 100% by the end of the decade.

- v. Reduce the gap between IMD Q1 and Q2 female and Q3, 4 & 5 female by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- vi. Reduce the gap between IMD Q1 and Q2 male and Q3, 4 & 5 female by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- c. Undertake internal research with Disabled students (and external research of what works) with mental health and multiple impairments to understand what additional support we can put in place to better support their continuation.

Aim 3: Going Above and Beyond for our Graduates

We are committed to supporting the progression of our students into graduate jobs or further study and will seek to develop new opportunities, both bespoke and embedded, to support our students' future.

Our objectives are:

- a. Reduce the gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- b. Reduce the gap between disabled and non-disabled students, with a focus on the disabled groups identified as having the largest gaps (Cognitive and Learning & Multiple Impairments) by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- c. Undertake more granular analysis of the sub-sections of BAME students to gain a greater understanding of any intersectional gaps that exist around gender and at course/departmental/faculty level and work to reduce those gaps.
- d. Maintain our work that supports a very wide range of WP students, continuing to perform better than sector average and eliminating statistically significant gaps in our performance.

Aim 4: Operating Holistically

We will operate using a whole institutional approach across the entire student journey, joining up our work in pre-entry through to post graduation and embedding support into mainstream activities across the University, wherever possible.

Our objectives are:

- a. Develop new structures and processes to engage and embed student partnerships into the implementation of our 5-year Access and Participation Plan by 2020.
- b. Embed the strategic measures of the Plan into our other strategic and operational documents across the University by 2020.
- c. Review the way we embed APP into our departmental Annual Monitoring processes and within our Committee and Governance structures by 2020 and implement improvements identified.

3. TARGETS

- Increase the percentage of BAME students from the current 7.1% to 10.1% by 2024/25.
- Reduce the gap in continuation rates between POLAR Quintile 1 students and POLAR Quintile 5 students by 66% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- Reduce the attainment gap between Black students and White students by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- Reduce the attainment gap between IMD Q1 and Q2 female and Q3, 4 & 5 female by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.
- Reduce the gap in progression between POLAR Quintiles 1 and POLAR Quintile 5 by 50% by 2024/25 and 100% by 2030/31.

4. STRATEGIC MEASURES

4.1 Overview

There has been a significant shift in how we are approaching the work around Success and Progression over the past 18 months. With the support of Governors and Directorate and the introduction of new staff dedicated to supporting students in Success and Progression roles and a WP Evaluation and Research Officer, there are now more resources committed to the work that is required to tackle the gaps that we have identified.

Cross-departmental working groups have been established, academic staff are engaged with the issues and supporting research is being commissioned. Supporting students to engage with these challenges is crucial to help us understand the barriers they face and the interventions they believe would enable them to thrive in our institution and beyond. We believe that the APP is best achieved through a whole University approach where academic and professional services staff, the Students' Union and students themselves are engaged and work together.

This 5-year plan will be driven by our cross-university APP Working Group reporting into the Academic Board structure and to the Board of Governors. The APP activities will be driven by evidence and the impact of the APP activities will be evaluated using the tools articulated in our Evaluation Strategy. We will ensure that each underrepresented group has a Logic Model that will fully articulate all aspects of evidence-based inputs, qualitative and quantitative outputs and short, medium and long-term outcomes.

An example of the effectiveness of the approach can be seen in the work we do with Care Leavers where we now have a single lead right across the student lifecycle, working with staff in Outreach through to our Employability Team. For BAME students and applicants we are recruiting a new member of staff who will sit in the Outreach team but will also lead on Success and Progression with working group members identified in each area from across the institution, meeting monthly.

Whilst much of our work is in its earlier stages, the potential for this much improved way of working is evident and we are excited by the opportunities to genuinely impact on the gaps identified and improve our current and future students' experience.

We are using both Theory of Change and Logic Models to help us design our approach to underrepresented groups. Our higher-level Theory of Change (ToC) models are being developed through workshops across the institution, including students and we are using ToC principles to guide our thinking around the WP issues we are trying to mitigate, to define our long-term goals and then map backwards to identify the necessary preconditions required to produce the desired change (see Appendix C & D). Our Logic Models then build on the ToC to develop programmes of support for each underrepresented group. This approach (described in more depth in our Evaluation Strategy) ensures we are embedding evaluation in measuring the success of our research-informed interventions and the impact they are having on our aims and objectives.

We will also ensure that our Plan is not operating in isolation from other institutional strategies. Strategic measures have been created to link into our other strategic plans to ensure they are holistic and that we have shared ownership of them across the institution. We are currently drafting a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy to further promote a positive and inclusive culture where staff and students feel 'engaged, recognised, valued and encouraged, where they experience fairness and equity and see that their views count'. Our current plan is that this work will be completed by January 2020. We have also been working on a new Student Employability Strategy 2019-2024 and the objectives are reflected in our Strategic Measures. Other significant strategies, such as our Learning and Teaching Strategy 2016-2020, are currently under review and we will ensure that we effectively embed this Plan.

Collaboration with external partners has long been central to our way of working, dating back to our regional lead role for Aim Higher and the Lifelong Learning Network, as well as host for the national Action on Access project. Already a member of two NCOPs (Lancashire and Merseyside), we are currently seeking to extend

our reach via the Cumbria NCOP. We work closely to deliver existing collaborative activity through both NCOP Outreach Hubs, as well as sharing details of institutional outreach activity to support all regional schools and colleges to access a wide range of HE opportunities. Working through the Hubs provides opportunities for collaboration with a broader range of partners such as the County Council, Local Enterprise Partnership, employers and third sector organisations to enhance the impact and reach. The work links to national as well as regional priorities and the specific aims will be further developed using evidence (for example Regional outreach mapping) alongside county-wide data on HE progression.

The commitment to this way of working and the contents of this Plan is driven from the highest levels of our institution. Our Governors monitor our effectiveness in reducing these gaps and the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellors have oversight of the detailed plans through our executive and deliberative structures to ensure that we are closely monitoring and evaluating the delivery of this Plan.

4.2 Measures

We are now working on ToC and Logic Models for our key areas of work with underrepresented groups. We will be working on these models over the coming months and are confident that our approach will interweave into the design, implementation, delivery and review of all our outreach and activity. The Evaluation Strategy clearly articulates our way of working.

Given where we are in the process, we have carefully considered the Strategic Measures that, based on what we currently know, will deliver the commitments we have made in this Plan. Where the Strategic Measure is applicable to a single Aim/Objective we have identified it. We have also provided some examples of what implementation might look like in practice. However, these Strategic Measures are 'live' and will be informed by our work over the next few months to ensure that the actions that sit under them can demonstrably achieve the desired outcomes, thus delivering the Aims and Objectives we have specified.

4.2.1. Infrastructure

Ensuring we have a whole provider approach, embedded across the institution is crucial if we are to achieve success. Some of our measures are specific, such as provision of data, which can be used to improve student engagement, belonging, retention and success and is particularly well evidenced as being effective.²⁵

Other measures, such as ensuring that we continue to prioritise a leadership culture that drives forward this plan, are also well recognised as a crucial requirement.²⁶

Strategic Measures to enable us to deliver across the institution include:

- Clearly articulating the specific and interrelated roles of Academic and Support Departments and other central services in delivering this strategy and mapping out the interrelationships between the APP Aims, Objectives and Strategic Measures and our other strategies, (with all Aims evidenced by 'What Works')
- Embedding and expanding the new University-wide group, chaired by a Senior Manager, with responsibility for the development, monitoring and oversight of this strategy, reporting to the Student Experience Sub-Committee. (All Aims)
- Providing appropriate and timely information to University Committees and the Board to ensure they can monitor progress and challenge performance. (All Aims)
- Enshrining a leadership culture that prioritises, values and supports change to deliver the Aims and Objectives. (All Aims as evidenced by 'What Works')
- Embedding the targets and objectives contained within this plan into institutional Annual Monitoring processes to ensure oversight and delivery is visible across all the academic staff. (Aim 2, All objectives)
- Embedding Equality Impact Assessments into our decision-making structures. (All Aims)
- Reviewing all aspects of estates provision, such as accommodation, catering, events and activities to ensure we are accessible and inclusive for all members of our community. (Aim 1a and Aim 2 a,b,c)

²⁵ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/supporting-student-success-strategies-institutional-change> - What Works 2

²⁶ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/supporting-student-success-strategies-institutional-change> What Works 2

- Rolling out our new data tool Tableau across all relevant academic and support departments and actively promoting the ways in which the tool can be used to monitor live data, to better identify emerging issues earlier and support underrepresented groups. (Aim 2, Success as evidenced by ‘What Works’)

4.2.2 Curriculum, pedagogic and academic student support

All of our measures are designed to focus on the objectives we have identified in Supporting Success under Aim 2. The link between teaching and continuation and attainment are well evidenced. For example, curriculum design has been shown to be influential in the BAME attainment agenda²⁷. Other measures seek to improve staff knowledge of how to support students with mental health conditions.²⁸ Measures include:

- Developing new mechanisms to engage more under-represented students in the design of curricula and their own learning experience.^{29 30}(Aim 2a,b,c)
- Supporting further academic staff in understanding the specific barriers for underrepresented groups by introducing training and information banks³¹ (All Aims)
- Reviewing our approach to constructing the academic timetables to consider whether adjustments could be made to better support underrepresented students, in particular those commuting³². (Aims 1 & 2)
- Improving the knowledge and skills of our academic staff in directly supporting students with wellbeing and mental health conditions and disabilities³³³⁴ (Aim 2).

What does ‘Improving knowledge and skills’ look like in Practice? – in April 2019 we appointed a new Academic Support and Training Officer whose role is to develop and deliver new training and support materials to academic colleagues. The programme entitled ‘Supporting Staff to Support Students’ encompasses a very broad range of topics that will be rolled out over the next 2 years, starting with mental health and disability and moving on to helping academics better understand different underrepresented groups, what barriers they may face and how to support them in areas such as Personal Tutoring.

4.2.3 Research and Evaluation

Our Research and Evaluation strategic measures and our Evaluation Strategy underpins our entire Plan, all of its Aims and Objectives and is based on the recommended OfS approach. Measures include:

- Full implementation of our Evaluation Strategy, working towards achieving the ‘Commended’ items on the Evaluation Self-Assessment Checklist.
- Adoption of a mixed methods approach that combines and triangulates qualitative and quantitative, and primary and secondary data, as appropriate, to ensure we have the knowledge required for robust and context specific evaluation.

What does ‘Evaluation’ look like in Practice? – our Evaluation Strategy contains an example of the Logic Model approach that will underpin our research- informed way of working with evaluation embedded within activity design. Our Evaluation Strategy explains the process and Appendix F contains a worked example.

- Ensuring our Widening Participation Research and Evaluation methodologies and outputs are shared with the sector through engagement with national and regional events, and the Evidence and Impact Exchange.
- Ensuring we take a whole data approach to available information, for example the correlation and additional information we can garner by looking at TEF (including NSS), OfS, HESA, UCAS and internal data using Tableau to help us drill down into the sources of our gaps.
- Working closely with academic research colleagues across the University to identify research opportunities and research already being undertaken to support this Plan, its aims and objectives.

²⁷ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/retention/bme-attainment-gap#section-5>

²⁸ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/stepchange/Pages/case-for-action.aspx>

²⁹ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/student-engagement-through-partnership-new.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medialibrary/sites/sraa/documents/Mature%20Students%20Research%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/disabled-students/>

³² https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-‘commuter-students’-Report-11429_11_18Web.pdf

³³ <http://www.unite-group.co.uk/sites/default/files/2017-05/student-resilience.pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/stepchange/Pages/case-for-action.aspx>

- Further increasing our student consultation mechanisms beyond the Students' Union to gain greater input into our planning, monitoring and evaluation and ensuring we put students at the heart of what we do.
- Using internal funding strategically to support fellowship activities and pedagogic research into underrepresented groups.

4.2.4 Employability

The Strategic Measures around Progression (Aim 3) focus on the baseline work that we need to do to better understand the gaps we have identified. The following are supporting Aim 3.

- Where we have gaps, undertaking analysis and research to identify employability skill and professional attribute improvements with the underrepresented groups
- Targeting work-related opportunities to underrepresented groups and identifying and promoting additional support available to these groups (for example Disabled Students³⁵)

What does 'Targeting Work Related Opportunities' look like in Practice? - The Study China Programme is a 3-week trip offering students a unique opportunity to experience Chinese life, culture, language and business. It is managed by The University of Manchester and partly funded by the UK Government Department for Education and takes place in August each year. This academic year we offered targeted support to students from underrepresented groups to make applications.

"University is all about experiencing new things, stepping out of your comfort zone and going for it. This is what I did. I put my anxiety in the back of my mind and went for it." (WP Student)

- Ensuring all students from all backgrounds have equality of opportunity in developing their employability skills and have the confidence, resilience and aspirations to move onto the next stage after graduation.³⁶
- Continuing to develop collaborative partnerships with employers, working closely with them to support skills development on course, placement opportunities and future employment prospects.

What does a 'Collaborative Partnership' look like in Practice? – We have been working closely with a local firm of solicitors, Fletchers, for over 5 years. Based in nearby Southport, the firm works with us to provide work experience and employment opportunities with former graduates working in IT, Marketing and Legal roles. The firm supports us with delivering our curriculum with talks from their staff and inputting into curriculum development through our Law Employer Advisory Panel. The firm also helped us set up the Court of Law Mooting Room on campus to help our students learn and train to be future solicitors and barristers.

- Maintaining an effective Alumni network that supports underrepresented students with targeted support and networking opportunities.³⁷

4.2.5 Student Engagement & Experience

- Continuing to increase mechanisms and channels to listen to our students³⁸ (All Aims)

What does 'increasing our listening' look like in Practice? – In 2018 our e-Journal Project obtained in-depth feedback from over 100 new students on their student experience, requesting up to 500 words per week for 10 weeks on a wide range of topics from academic to social experiences. These responses were summarised into a report with 4 pages of recommendations, which are being implemented across the institution.

- Providing high quality student guidance and support, including pre-arrival events, for underrepresented students to enable them to manage their transition to University³⁹. (Aim 1 & 2a,c)

³⁵ <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/supporting-disabled-students-transitions-higher-education-employment/>

³⁶ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/Routes-to-high-level-skills.aspx>

³⁷ <https://www.redbrickresearch.com/2015/10/29/the-importance-of-the-alumni-network/>

³⁸ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/ethnicity/>

³⁹ https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/gees_10_transitions_resource_tateandhopkins.pdf

- Investing in student peer-to-peer support to nurture a supportive and vibrant environment for our underrepresented groups where learning is fun and fulfilling⁴⁰ (Aim 2 a,b,c)
- Working with the Students' Union to review how events might be better tailored to support underrepresented groups to engage and increase their sense of belonging.⁴¹(Aim 2a,b,c)

4.2.6 Financial Support

Our Financial Support is directed at our Success and Progression Aims and Objectives. Our Student Support Fund (Hardship Fund) is used to support students to stay on course where their financial circumstances demonstrate they otherwise cannot afford to continue. Our Student Opportunity Fund is used to enhance a students' CV and increase their confidence and skills to continue into graduate level employment. Programmes are specifically targeted at students from under-represented groups. We also offer a Care Leaver Bursary, which is well evidenced as being an important financial safety net.

- Committing financial support to developing opportunities for students to succeed, ensuring support for those who are struggling but also assisting students to grow their aspirations to progress into graduate level jobs. We will assess the impact of this financial support and ensure it is fulfilling its objectives.⁴²

What does our 'Student Opportunity Fund' look like in Practice? – In June 2019, 15 Edge Hill students will be funded through our Student Opportunity Fund to spend 2 weeks in Yellowstone National Park working with students from Indiana State University and Mont Clare University in the US. The project will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, working with the Park Management Team on their challenges in situ. Our staff have targeted groups of underrepresented students to support them with direct 1:1 help with the application and to promote this as an opportunity that they should access. Our International Office, has recently awarded 9 of the 15 places to students from under-represented groups, the majority of whom had taken advantage of 1:1 support with their applications. We will be evaluating their progress to see if the programme has the intended impact on their confidence, aspirations, skills and longer-term graduate outcomes.

- Providing access to the Student Support Fund (Hardship Fund) to enable students to stay on course when.⁴³

***What does our Student Support Fund (Hardship Fund) look like in Practice?** –
"I just wanted to thank everyone at the money advice team who helped me through my application and after the award. I think the work that each and every one of you do is great and I really appreciate the assistance given to me.... I was really embarrassed and stressed with my situation and I was not judged or dismissed. Everyone I spoke to on the team listened and guided me through the right path. I cannot thank you enough or tell you how relieved I feel"
(2nd Year WP student in financial hardship)

4.2.7 Outreach

Unlike other areas of Access and Participation, the evidence for the effectiveness of Outreach work is well researched and reported at a national level. Despite this, with the introduction of our new WP Research and Evaluation Officer, we will be casting a critical eye over what we do and whether there are better ways to achieve and improve our outcomes. BAME is a new area of work for additional outreach focus so we will embed a robust approach from the start.

- Maintaining successful access from underrepresented groups and improving evaluation methodologies to enable a clearer understanding of the most impactful elements of activity.

⁴⁰ https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/aston_what_works_final_report_1.pdf (Peer Mentoring Works !)

⁴¹ https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what_works_final_report.pdf (Building Student Engagement and Belonging)

⁴² Financial Support referred to here is our Hardship Fund (Student Support Fund) at £500,000 and our Student Opportunity Fund (part of our Success and Progression expenditure) as well as our Care Leavers Bursary.

⁴³ Evaluated and evidenced using internal research with applicants and qualitative research to demonstrate impact (in 2017/18 Continuation rates for students in receipt of the Hardship Fund were 98%)

- Developing a greater understanding of the reasons behind any identified gaps in entry rates from particular groups and developing dedicated programmes of activity to address them.

***What does our work around 'BAME' look like in Practice?**– A whole institutional approach to developing our BAME offer will consider not only the make-up of our students but also the accessibility of our institution and diversity of our workforce. We are appointing a new member of staff to focus on BAME outreach, a BAME Teaching Fellow to focus on student experience and this year (2019) we have established a new cross-departmental BAME working group to review the student experience, working with students (who will form part of the group) to help us understand the experience from pre-entry to progression.*

- Continuing to adopt a collaborative approach to outreach activity, working with partner institutions to close participation gaps. (Aim 1e)
- Work in collaboration through the Shaping Futures (NCOP) outreach hub to enable the provision of impartial information, advice and guidance to an additional 10 Liverpool City Region Schools in POLAR 4 (Aim 1f)
- Developing and delivering clear and measurable outcomes (short, medium and long term) with our Raising Attainment project partners, identifying evidence-based interventions to improve attainment at primary and secondary levels. (Aim 1g)

5. Student Consultation

In December 2017 we created a new APP Working Group to further enhance the development of a whole provider approach whilst also working closely with the Students' Union to explore areas of disparity and to better understand gaps and co-create evidence-based interventions. This group has been meeting every 6-8 weeks during this period and has developed a very strong working relationship with the Students' Union and its student officers who engage and contribute to the work of the group.

During the past 18 months we have been assessing our performance and working directly with students to review the barriers to help us with our Plan; the information contained in this Plan has been developed taking these students' views into account.

For our BAME students, prior to drafting the plan we commissioned Elevation Networks to undertake focus groups and 1:1 interviews with our students to understand their challenges around attainment and progression. Since the plan has been drafted we have held 3 further focus groups internally with our students to discuss this Plan and get their feedback on the issues that are identified. As the Strategic Measures in this plan are still in design, the focus groups have been able to work on aspects of the BAME Logic Model to inform the development of how we create the delivery mechanisms and understand the barriers. We now have students fully involved in our BAME working group which includes our access, success and progression staff and is chaired by our BAME Teaching Fellow who is leading a whole institutional approach, reporting into the APP Working Group.

We have been working directly with students around the challenges of continuation since the introduction of our new retention team in 2017. The team work directly in a 1:1 capacity and have been working with students, in particular those from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, to help us develop new ways of identifying their reasons for leaving and how we might better support them to stay on course or if leaving/transferring University, then how to ensure students are supported to do that. For example, this team has been working directly with students in Sports & Physical Activity, specifically, young white British males from low socio-economic backgrounds, to get qualitative data on the barriers they face to staying on course.

We have a dedicated contact for our Care Leavers and each Care Leaver meets regularly with the staff member; we use those meetings to help us to feed into the plan in terms of their support needs. Whilst sample sizes determine that we cannot have data that is statistically significant, we do have data and where there are gaps we have been working with these students over the past 12 months to input into the Plan. In addition,

two of our academics have undertaken in-depth interviews and research with these students to give us a robust evidence base on which to implement practical changes.

2018 also saw the introduction of a new Student Experience Team; this has been particularly helpful as they have consulted over 1500 students on their academic barriers to study and this data and feedback has given us some useful insights into the academic challenges for BTEC and A-Level students. We will be developing this further through smaller focus groups within departments where our data tells us we have the biggest gaps and will be running those groups in 2019/20.

This Plan sets out our baseline of our gaps, these are factual. The influence our students exercise is in helping us understand the challenges and how we can develop our Logic Models and implement the actions going forward. We have already identified the BAME students who are coming onto our group and have held Focus Groups to get further input. The intention is that this model of targeted groups and in-depth partnership will roll out fully for all of our groups during September 2019 – March 2020. The students who are in each group, including as part of our evaluation work, will together be known as our Student APP Panel. This new Panel will be fully formed by the end of 2019/20 academic year and will be part of a student partnership that we believe will reap impactful benefits for our students and future students.

The APP Working Group consists of both student officers and Students' Union staff and the Group led on drafting and developing this Plan. The Plan went back to the Working Group in March, April and in May at the final stage of drafting before being submitted to the OfS and the SU were active members in gathering feedback to bring to the group. Feedback from the student officers led to the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ section of the Plan and the agreement on how to develop a student partnership, namely a Student APP Panel.

The Students' Union and their officers are a separate body whose role is to bring the student voice to bear on our Plan; the Students' Union input has carried significant weight. As well as being part of the drafting team they are also very active members of our broader University Committees and have contributed at all levels to information provided to the Sub-Committees and at Board for discussion and approval.

APP Student Statement – Edge Hill Students' Union

OfS guidance is clear that engagement with students on Access and Participation Plans is important and should be meaningful rather than tokenistic.

Edge Hill Students' Union has had access to APP development at a strategic level and has had input on the content of the plan. An example of this is the inclusion of strategies around LGBT+ students; the SU highlighted that while this group is difficult to monitor and measure for HEIs, research is clear that they face barriers to participation. The SU is also confident that the priorities of the institution reflect a serious approach to addressing disparities in attainment and participation for black students and students from low-income backgrounds.

Students in a wider sense have had more limited opportunities to express their views about the content of the plan; although some consultation has taken place, this has not necessarily been as meaningful as possible. Nevertheless, we have assurance from the strategies included that students from a range of backgrounds will be involved in implementation and evaluation of the plan. (Luke Myers, Vice President, Academic Liaison, Edge Hill Students' Union, April 2019)

6. Evaluation Strategy

We have undertaken an assessment of our current evaluation approaches, utilising the Evaluation Self-Assessment Toolkit, which has helped us to develop our Evaluation Strategy. Our full Evaluation Self-Assessment can be found in Appendix A, and a narrative summary is provided in Appendix B. The full reference list of national reports and academic literature referred to within our Evaluation Strategy is in Appendix C. Below we detail how we are developing our evaluation work.

6.1 The Strategic Context for Evaluation - Support, Culture and Skills

At Edge Hill University the evaluation of our WP work is supported by our institutional culture. This is well demonstrated through the appointment of a dedicated WP Research and Evaluation Officer in October 2018. This new role brings the appropriate mixed method data collection and analysis skills to enhance the evaluation of all our WP work. As well as conducting evaluation and research, the post holder is advising on sector best practice in WP research and evaluation methods and providing data collection tools and training to improve the quality and consistency in the data we gather. All of the above will be included within a new University wide WP Research and Evaluation Strategy and Framework to ensure mechanisms are in place to have 1) research informed WP activities, 2) a systematic approach to proportionate and context specific data collection methods for evaluation purposes and, 3) rigorously analysed data with findings reported effectively to ensure evaluation leads to continuous improvement.

Our WP evaluation and research skill base will be further enhanced through improved working relationships with academic staff across the University whose research interests align with WP. Our Research and Evaluation Officer has begun developing these relationships through the creation of a network of academic researchers at the University interested in WP student groups. This network will ensure relevant knowledge is fed into our APP, it will also ensure that academics are fully aware of the evaluation and research element of our APP work. Internally, our Research and Evaluation Officer will continue to meet with all relevant WP teams to assist with their research and evaluation on a regular basis and will be available for advice and guidance including to the APP Working Group and associated operational groups. They will also provide updates regarding ongoing internal evaluations and research, feedback from WP evaluation events, and best practice from academic literature and national reports. Within these existing APP groups, we will develop a strategic cross institutional approach to oversee the evaluation of all our WP evaluation work involving students, academics, and practitioners as members.

To further support a culture of honest reflection on our WP activities, the wider Research and Evaluation Strategy and Framework will pilot new initiatives. This will enable APP delivery staff to assess whether an activity is having the desired effect prior to it being rolled out more extensively. To support piloting, and other periodic reviews, an evaluation report template will be produced to ensure reflexivity is conducted in a consistent way, and to ensure piloting and/or reflection is embedded within the planning cycle of an activity from its inception.

This ensures that we carefully consider and respond to interim evaluations rapidly, so we can achieve our APP targets. Additionally, 'wrap up workshops' will be developed, so that at the end of a cycle of activity there is an opportunity to talk through the data collected, how it has been analysed, and how it could be improved. Recommendations will be discussed in these workshops and findings from this process will always be fed back into our wider APP meetings.

Evaluation methods and timeframes will be agreed for each area of activity and will then form part of the termly reports provided to our Committee structure which will detail the targets, what activities have been evaluated, the outcomes of that evaluation and what changes are being introduced as a result. This termly report will continue for the duration of the lifecycle of this Plan.

6.2 Evaluation and Evidence Underpinning Programme Design- Rationale, Indicators and Measures

We recognise that good programme design has evaluation established at the start, and that building effective evaluation into our APP work will be achieved when our objectives are comprehensively defined at the beginning of an activity and are informed by high quality evidence. Due to this, Logic Modelling is beginning to be adopted as our universal approach to WP activity and evaluation planning. Logic Models are a systematic and visual way of agreeing and understanding how a programme/activity is going to be run, by whom, the evidence underpinning this approach, what the anticipated changes or result will be, and how this will be evaluated. Logic Models are an established planning and evaluation tool that are recommended in official evaluation guidance (HM Treasury, 2011). We have found a useful way to approach our Logic Models is to adopt 'Theory of Change' (ToC) principles to guide our thinking around the WP issue we're trying to mitigate in a workshop format. ToC helps us to define our long-term goals and then map backwards to identify what the necessary preconditions are to produce the desired change.

We have begun this process and have found the following ToC workshop format to work; we begin by considering; *'what is our ultimate outcome?'* This helps us focus on the fundamental goal of the activity. We then ask *'how will we know when we've succeeded'* this encourages us to think about how the University will be and what students and other relevant stakeholders will know and feel and how they will behave once we've achieved this goal. Next, we move on to focus on potential barriers and ask, *'what the underlying causes of this issue are'*- this helps us to funnel our ideas down to the final question; *'what could solutions to this issue look like?'* We have found this approach extremely useful at encouraging us to think about the bigger picture rather than immediately focusing upon the activities we can develop and deliver- this will enable us to be far more strategic in our approach. Please see Appendix D for a worked example of this ToC workshop method in action during our latest BAME Working Group meeting, and Appendix E for a more developed draft ToC for our Care Leaver Student Support. The next stage of this process will be working with students in the same way so that we co-create our approaches and ensure student voice is embedded within our actions. We will utilise both the staff and student ToC workshop results to produce our Logic Model for the activity.

Our Logic Models will fully articulate 1) each activity's aim(s) and objective(s), 2) the staff inputs, 3) who the activity is targeting, 4) the research that underpins the activity, 4) the data that will be collected to enable evaluation and the research methodologies, 5) the intended short/medium/long term impacts/outcomes and 6) the statistical outcomes (see Appendix F for a draft worked example of this for our Care Leaver students). Each Logic Model will be accompanied by a short report explaining the research underpinning the activity and more detailed information regarding the evaluation methodologies so that the entire process is transparent. To enable APP delivery staff to access up to date research to underpin their activities, we have 'working documents' for each WP sub group of students. These documents contain a summary of key findings from recent and relevant academic journal articles, national reports and statistics, internal reports and statistics, and other universities' practices for these student groups- all presented in a clear and coherent way. This vital resource enables practitioners to ensure their activities are underpinned by research and best practice. Although the concepts within our Logic Models have previously been considered when planning activities, Logic Modelling is enabling us to have a more strategic, consistent, and transparent approach. It ensures that our objectives and success measures are measurable through both qualitative and qualitative proxies, and that our activities are based upon reputable research literature and/or evaluation evidence. When research or evidence does not exist, or if we are unsure of what will work for our students, we will conduct internal research with our students. We will explore what the situation currently is and gather student views on possible solutions prior to activities being developed. This will ensure that our time and resources are deployed in the most strategic way.

All our access, success and progression activities will go through the above process. We will ensure that existing evaluations are reviewed and that amendments to current practices are made so that our approach is consistent, and any evidence gaps are filled. Our approach will align with that advocated by Harrison and Waller (2017, p85) who argue that 'if practitioners expect to cause change then they need to have a clear articulation of the mechanisms by which they expect this to occur at the individual level'. Our approach focuses upon impact evaluation but the ToC and Logic Model approach, also enables us to reflect on process.

6.3 WP Evaluation Design- Standards of Evidence, Realist Mixed Methods Approach

The Standards of Evidence (OFS, 2019a, Crawford et al, 2017) will be applied across all APP activity. We will ensure our evaluation approach and methods of data collection and analysis are appropriate to the types of questions we are asking: we will use Methods Lab Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation to help guide these decisions (Peersman et al, 2015). The Standards of Evidence Type 1 (narrative evaluation) will be the minimum evaluation expectation required; our Logic Modelling approach that builds in a coherent explanation of what we're doing and why from the very beginning of an activity's implementation will embed this way of thinking within all our work. Type 2 (empirical enquiry) will be widely adopted across the majority of our WP activities; this will always include pre and post evaluation methods, and when applicable, will use both quantitative and qualitative data.

We strive for our evaluation approach to align with Pawson's (2006, 2013) idea of 'realist evaluation' that recognises the messiness of the social world, asking 'What works? In which circumstances? For whom?' To obtain the information required to answer these questions we must collect a variety of data and will often be adopting a mixed methods approach. When appropriate, we will combine and triangulate qualitative and quantitative, and primary and secondary data to ensure we have the knowledge required for robust and context specific evaluation. It has been acknowledged by Thiele et al (2018) that although mixed methods are necessary to develop a more robust base in WP intervention evaluation and research, their use is not common practice.

We recognise that in WP research and evaluation, our research questions are often complex and only by adopting a mixed methods approach will we be able to answer certain questions. We will use 'quantitative methods to search for interesting patterns and trends, and qualitative methods to aid in the understanding of those trends' (Madge et al, 1997, p93). The results from one method will be used to enhance, elaborate or justify another method (Hanson and Pratt, 2003). In practice, we will largely be adopting an explanatory sequential mixed methods design that will involve collecting new/analysing existing quantitative data to use as broad contextual and baseline information, followed by gathering complimentary qualitative data to explore perceptions and experiences of the activity in greater depth. When applicable, we will work with a variety of stakeholders to collect this data (e.g. pre-entry and on-course students, alumni, teachers and parents). Creswell (2015, p24) notes that in order to adopt this approach, researchers need 'not only a sophisticated knowledge of research but also a skill set that will enable one to conduct this form of enquiry'. As described earlier, we have the evaluation and research skills in place to embed this methodology across our work. Additionally, we have access to software that will support this:

- Tableau- visualises existing internal quantitative data.
- Online Surveys- targeted survey distribution and basic analysis of results.
- HEAT- tracking of students who have taken part in outreach activities in schools and colleges, through to their achievement in.
- SPSS- descriptive multivariate analysis of complex data sets and further examination of data exported from Tableau and Online Surveys.
- NVIVO- systematic analysis of qualitative data using inductive and deductive thematic coding methods. Furthermore, NVIVO allows for the sharing/collaboration of analysis between colleagues.

We will utilise the mixed methods data we collect to unpack the intersectional differences between our students. By focusing attention upon the many identities that intersect with an individual, we are more able to explore the differences and inequalities between and within student groups, enabling us to more effectively target our support. We recognise that certain WP groups of students are small at EHU, and we will adapt our evaluation methodologies to reflect this. Additionally, we will endeavour to ensure proportionality of the type of evaluation against the APP spend. We will ensure that the impact of activity in which we are investing heavily are evaluated particularly rigorously. This is already demonstrated through our use of the 'Sheffield Model' for financial evaluation of our High Achievers Scholarship. Similar mixed method Type 3 (causality) evaluations will be embedded across other high cost APP activity when appropriate. To do so we will use comparison groups that are real, at present we do not foresee us undertaking any randomised control trials. If appropriate, external evaluations of high cost activity may be considered.

6.4 Evaluation Implementation – Data Collection, Resources, and Managing Risk

In order to conduct effective evaluation that can measure outcomes and impacts, access to good quality data is fundamental. We already use internal quantitative data to track and analyse student's access, continuation, attainment and completion by socio-demographic characteristics. Existing qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods used by WP delivery staff will be evaluated to be consistent with our new approaches. Additional quantitative data will be collected as required using survey methods distributed using Online Surveys; we will combine survey results with the student record to obtain relevant student data for intersectional analysis of the results. Appropriate qualitative methods will be utilised to unpick students' stories and provide students with the opportunity to voice their opinions, attitudes, feelings and ideas on our

APP work. Much of this takes place already, however through our new WP Evaluation Strategy and Framework our work will be more consistent, robust and strategic. A key aim of this strategy and framework will be to ensure practitioners are clear on each method's intention, so that we question what data we require, and what method will best help us achieve this.

We will use the OfS commissioned report (Stevenson et al, 2019) to guide how we effectively target students from BAME backgrounds ethically. All our data collection will continue to abide by Data Protection Legislation, we will upkeep our safeguarding responsibilities and will always be ethical in our approaches by being transparent about what data we are collecting, why, and how it will be used. Our WP Evaluation and Research Strategy and Framework will include further guidance on this to ensure we have a consistent approach that always abides with EHU's (2016) 'Ethical Guidance for Undertaking Research with Edge Hill University Students'. This will include the production of a standardised privacy statement, information sheet and consent form for practitioners to use with participants. We will also further develop our data sharing agreements for when we work with other stakeholders. Risk analyses will be conducted as appropriate. All the above will be planned our part of our Logic Modelling approach.

As described earlier, we have the resources available to collect and analyse the data needed for effective evaluation. However, we acknowledge that we need to develop our ability to allow for measuring individual student level data changes and tracking the outcomes of our participants over time. This does already occur for some of our evaluations (for example our evaluation of financial support), however further work is required, and this will be developed as part of our WP Evaluation and Research Strategy and Framework. We will also be reflecting upon our logistical approaches around data entry and how to organise and store our data in the most useful and practical way, whilst also remaining GDPR compliant.

6.5 Learning from Evidence and Research to Shape Improvements- Interpreting, Using and Sharing results

We are aware of the limitations inherent in evaluation research and will therefore be cautious of the conclusions we claim from our data; Appendix F states several limitations we will work towards mitigating. We will analyse our findings in a clear and transparent way so that all parties are aware of the data analysis techniques used for quantitative data, and coding methodologies for qualitative data. We will aim for the analysis process to be collaborative, with numerous staff involved in the activity when possible. By interrogating the evidence together, we strive for interpretations of our data to be objective and accurate. For certain activities (where the data collected does not allow for individuals to be identifiable) we will involve students in the examination of our data. Reporting of APP evaluations will be consistent as they will follow a report template developed as part of our WP Research and Evaluation Strategy and Framework.

When reporting on evaluations and forming conclusions we will always refer to the activities' Logic Model aims, and objectives set at the beginning of the activity. Our findings and conclusions will be used to alter the activity as required and to reflect upon if it is worth repeating. We will compare our findings with other internal findings, but also against existing literature that informed the activity to explore how our findings compare as part of an ongoing cycle of review and revision. Evaluation findings will be shared in report and/or presentation format as appropriate to all APP delivery staff at our APP working group meetings, so we can learn about what works, for who, and in what context. When necessary, findings will be shared further with specific faculties, departments, course leaders, or other stakeholders in an appropriate format.

As well as sharing our evaluation findings internally, we will continue to engage with the NEON Establishing Evidence and Measuring Impact working group, and the Society for Research in Higher Education (SHRE) both of which we are already members. Additionally, our WP Research and Evaluation Officer has established a North West WP Research and Evaluation Group- this group will provide North West universities with a local forum to come together and share their WP research and evaluation ideas, best practice and questions in an informal and supportive environment. The group's first meeting is taking place at EHU in July this year. We also commit to use and contribute to the evidence and impact exchange throughout the delivery of our APP.

6.6 The Evaluation of Financial Support

The methodologies within the Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit (OfS, 2019b) will be utilised as appropriate for our APP targeted financial support packages. An evaluation of our High Achievers Scholarship has already been undertaken using this toolkit and we have used the findings to direct our investment plans in this APP. In the future, we will ensure that all our evaluations of financial support are in line with the Standards of Evidence (OFS, 2019a) and the Toolkit (OFS, 2019b) - when we are investing a significant amount of money in financial support ensuring a strong evidence base of the impact of this will be collected. The toolkit methodologies align with our mixed methods approach to evaluation by triangulating the results from statistical, survey and interview research tools. By taking this approach we will be able to make decisions led by a range of evidence that examines both student outcomes (such as continuation, degree attainment, graduate outcomes), and student experiences of how financial support affects their outcomes. Over time, we will conduct a review of our all our APP financial support. Due to support packages being so unique to each institution, internal evidence will be primarily used to inform our financial support investment decisions, however this will be complimented by a review of relevant academic publications and other secondary sources of knowledge on this topic. This will ensure that moving forward our financial support is tightly targeted to the specific student groups that will benefit from it the most.

7. Monitoring Progress against delivery of the Plan

Our Governors have always been engaged with the development, delivery and monitoring our previous Access Agreements and will continue to have oversight of this new Access and Participation 5 Year Plan, recognising it's more strategic and longer-term vision and targets. This Plan has been approved by Governors at their Board Meeting in May 2019. In future the Board will receive annual reports to allow them to monitor progress and challenge us if we are not delivering, to ensure that we keep on track to achieve the targets set out in this Plan. Any targets identified as falling behind will be accompanied by a set of actions that are proposed to the Board in order to get the target on track.

Ultimately it is for the Board to decide what action they will take if they do not believe that the set of proposed actions are going to deliver the identified improvements required. Termly reports on progress are also delivered through the Committee structure and there are link Governors on each of these Committees so there is oversight of operational matters at termly as well as at annual points.

Operational delivery will sit with the APP Working Group which is cross-departmental and its sub-groups that have been created to focus on individual underrepresented groups. Oversight of this operational delivery will sit within the University's formal deliberative structure of the Student Experience Sub-Committee which in turn reports into the Learning and Teaching Committee and then Academic Board. The Students' Union are involved in all of these working groups, Committees and Boards. We will also create a new APP Student Panel which will reflect all of the sub-groups and areas of work that we are targeting. For example, students supporting evaluation and research methodologies as well as students from all of our underrepresented groups forming part of our implementation planning.

Our Pro Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) has taken a pro-active lead in developing this new Plan, meeting regularly with the Chair of the APP Working Group to discuss progress and input into the drafting and will take a similar pro-active role in its monitoring.

The embedding of the targets into the Faculty's Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR's) will give clear oversight of the work and monitoring of progress for academic staff within the departments and will also ensure we align these objectives with our NSS, TEF and other internal strategic measures that already sit within the AMR's.

8. Provision of Information to Students

We communicate with current and prospective students through a range of channels and media to ensure key messages are communicated and understood. In 2018 the University invested significantly in a new Student

Experience Team to better co-ordinate communication with students and to support communication pre-entry as well as undertaking a programme of student insights, developing new ways of garnering student's opinions and being more proactive in explaining how students' feedback influences change (You Said, We Did Model).

To ensure that prospective students from all backgrounds are confident and well informed about the costs of Higher Education and the financial support available, for example the Student Support Fund and Care Leaver Bursary we provide a range of resources and support. For example, our 'Tuition Fee and Finance' and 'Getting Started' booklets, our trained student 'Money Buddies' and specialist Money Advisors and our range of talks on Open and Applicant Visit Days ensures that students and their supporters can access a comprehensive range of information.

Information is specifically provided to students via our website, factsheets and talks to promote the two funds that are included in this Plan to students.

The first fund is the Student Support Fund (Hardship Fund) and information for our students as well as the detailed Application Form can be found here; <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/student-services/student-support-fund/>. We also publish and distribute Factsheets and the fund is regularly promoted on social media and via events and money advice talks throughout the year.

All UK undergraduate and postgraduate students are eligible to apply to the Student Support Fund. Overseas and EU students can apply, but support may be limited and only offered in exceptional circumstances. Students must have applied and been fully assessed for their student funding before applying to the Student Support Fund.

Full time students, whose household income (including that of any partner/spouse) when compared to expected reasonable expenditure shows a deficit between these figures, may be eligible for an award. A percentage of the deficit up to a maximum of £3,000 per year of study may be awarded to the student. Students facing an unforeseeable financial emergency (such as an unexpected house move, essential household repairs or other emergency situations) or a student at risk of leaving their course may also receive a contribution towards these costs to a maximum of £3000 per year of study.

In determining the level of awards to students, the following groups of full-time undergraduate students will receive priority:

- Students with children (especially single parents).
- Disabled students (especially where the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are unable to meet particular costs and the institution has no legal responsibility to do so).
- Care leavers and care experienced.
- Estranged students.
- Students from Foyers or students who are homeless.
- Carers.
- Students receiving the final year loan rate who are in financial difficulty (including those who are unable to work because of academic pressure).
- Students over 25 with existing financial commitments, including priority debts.

Part time students studying at least 25% or more of a full-time course, whose household income is lower than £28,783 may receive a contribution towards course-related costs such as childcare, essential travel into university, and, for lone parents, limited support with internet and mobile phone costs.

Our second fund is our Care Leaver Bursary. This is promoted both prior to students arriving through appropriate networks, more broadly on our website (<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/student-services/care-leavers/>) and directly through emails to students who we are informed by the SLC are in receipt of their loans as Care Leavers. We provide detailed information via these emails and in our Factsheets.

To be eligible for the Bursary students must meet the following criteria:

- Be under the age of 25 on the first day of the first year of the course, unless entering as a direct entrant to year 2/level 5 or year 3/level 6 of an undergraduate course. The student must still be under the age of 25 on that date;
- Have been in Local Authority care for a minimum of 13 weeks since the age of 14;
- Must be classed as a Home/EU student for fee paying purposes;
- Registered on course with the University leading to the award of:
 - i) Undergraduate Degree
 - ii) PGCE
 - iii) Masters
- Part time students must study a minimum of 60 credits per year;
- The student must provide evidence of being in care; this would normally be provided by a student's designated Local Authority.

The Bursary is also payable to Foyer or other Supported Housing Organisations for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. They must meet the same criteria as above but rather than provide evidence of being in care they must;

- be able to provide evidence of being in supported housing, this would normally be provided by the Foyer or the Supported Housing Association the student has belonged to.

Eligible Care Leavers, Foyer or other Supported Housing Organisation young people will receive an annual bursary of £1000 (new and continuing full time students) or £500 (new and continuing part time students).

We are committed to providing timely, accurate and meaningful information that adheres to the Plain English principles to our students and ensuring applicants can make informed decisions about where to study and what our institution has to offer.

**Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: Edge Hill University

Provider UKPRN: 10007823

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

Fee levels will be set by the University at competitive rates and subject to the maximum fee levels as set out in regulations; where permissible, our intention would be to increase fees each year using the RPI-X.

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£6,165
Foundation degree	Nursing Associate	£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	Entry to medicine	£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree		£6,165
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: Edge Hill University

Provider UKPRN: 10007823

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 figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£1,335,600.00	£1,348,956.00	£1,362,446.00	£1,376,070.00	£1,389,831.00
Access (pre-16)	£257,950.00	£260,530.00	£263,135.00	£265,766.00	£268,424.00
Access (post-16)	£807,650.00	£815,726.00	£823,884.00	£832,123.00	£840,444.00
Access (adults and the community)	£270,000.00	£272,700.00	£275,427.00	£278,181.00	£280,963.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£530,000.00	£536,500.00	£543,000.00	£549,000.00	£555,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£239,177.00	£241,568.00	£243,985.00	£246,424.00	£248,888.00

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)	£30,290,685.00	£30,441,720.00	£30,814,090.00	£31,126,310.00	£31,623,320.00
Access investment	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Financial support	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Research and evaluation	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Total investment (as %HFI)	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	4.9%

