



## **University of Lincoln 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan**

### **Background**

The University of Lincoln's approach to fair access, success and progression for students from all backgrounds is driven by its mission and values:

- The University of Lincoln is a university of high quality, rooted in traditional values, but addressing contemporary agendas through excellence in teaching and research and a focus on the experience of all students.
- The University is committed to providing access to higher education for all students who have the desire and potential to succeed and in reducing or removing the barriers to student success, through the provision of both financial and individual support, enabling each student to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential.
- We serve a diverse and geographically isolated county, where progression rates from school to HE are very low and where recruitment to graduate level employment is a challenge. In this context our approach is to explore local solutions in research and teaching to issues that have national and international reach. This includes working closely with regional and multinational partners, such as Siemens, and developing degree pathways that build wide skill sets for all of our students.
- The University has been very successful in the past in recruiting and retaining students from underrepresented groups, as evidenced in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) published performance indicators and it is the intention of the University to sustain that performance.
- The University takes a whole-institution approach to access and student success with academic and professional services being engaged together in creating and supporting a diverse and successful student community.
- Quantative and qualitative sources of data used to inform the University's decision making and development of this plan and associated activities include TEF metrics, NSS data, DLHE outcomes, HESA performance indicators, internal performance indicators, sector and internal benchmarking, OFFA toolkit for analysing bursaries, research into specific student groups.
- The University has developed a range of distance learning programmes, in partnership with employers and professional bodies, which facilitate access to higher education on a part time basis for mature students. These students are able to use their experience at work as an integral element in their learning and success.
- The University has developed a Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE) entry route for students who do not meet the conditions of their original offer but who are considered, nonetheless, to have the potential to be successful on their chosen programme of study. Many of these students come to the University from a non-traditional background. Students initially enrol on the Cert HE and study alongside the first year

degree students with the provision of additional study skills support to enable them to address any deficit in skills or subject understanding. At the end of the Cert HE programme, where students have shown academic development and commitment to their studies, they then progress into second year of the degree programme.

- The University also offers Science and Arts programmes with a foundation year. These programmes are similar in their aim to Cert HE programmes in that they support students, often from non-traditional backgrounds, to access specialist HE subject areas, including STEM subjects.
- The University remains committed to providing a level of direct financial support to students who come from lower income backgrounds while they are studying; at the time when financial pressures can be the most burdensome for students and their families.
- The University works closely with the University of Lincoln Students' Union in all aspects of its activities, particularly in relation to student engagement and success. The University consults extensively with the Students' Union both formally through University Committees and through informal discussion and dialogue.

### **Assessment of Current Performance**

Close attention to data on individuals, groups of students, particularly from underrepresented groups, and our student body as a whole is core to how we function. The effective use of these data to support students from all backgrounds and inform our academic and resource planning contribute to a high level of benchmarked attainment for all students. A focus on employability and on the provision of career support helps our students to thrive beyond University in a time, and within a region, of employment and economic challenge.

The University is committed to ensuring that decisions and actions are evidence based at both a strategic, programme and individual student level. Information is provided through the Planning and Business Intelligence team to support strategic debate and decisions at Committee and Board level and at programme and individual student level. This analysis includes a review of overall performance at Institutional level and at subject level; of participation rates, success measures and progression rates analysed in relation to individual student characteristics.

To support this whole institution approach, information is made available throughout the whole student lifecycle to programme teams, enabling them to both assess current performance and take a retrospective view of performance in reviewing admissions criteria, teaching and assessment methods, student success and progression.

At an individual student level, students are mentored through a Personal Tutoring system throughout their academic career. Every new student is allocated a personal tutor with whom they meet to discuss academic development, pastoral support, careers guidance and extra-curricular opportunities. To support early intervention with students, personal tutors have access to a Dashboard which aggregates key student data including a student's marks, attendance rates, Library visits and VLE usage.

The table below shows the undergraduate student population in the University for an average of three years from 2012/13 to 2014/15. This is our starting point for an assessment of our current performance.

		Lincoln Total		Sector Total	Lincoln Difference to Sector
		Headcount	%	%	
Age	Under 21	8,180	74%	72%	2%
	21 to 30	1,590	14%	18%	-4%
	Over 30	1,225	11%	10%	1%
Ethnicity	White	9,425	86%	67%	19%
	Black	325	3%	8%	-5%
	Asian	745	7%	15%	-8%
	Other	360	3%	5%	-2%
	Unknown	140	1%	5%	-4%
Sex	Male	5,080	46%	44%	2%
	Female	5,915	54%	56%	-2%
	Other	0	0%	0%	0%
Disability	Yes	1,415	13%	11%	2%
	No	9,580	87%	89%	-2%
POLAR	1	1,310	17%	10%	7%
	2	1,620	21%	15%	6%
	3	1,650	21%	20%	1%
	4	1,740	22%	23%	-1%
	5	1,440	19%	32%	-13%

This data indicates that the University has been and continues to be successful in recruiting students from lower income households, socio economic status, areas of low higher education participation and students with disabilities. In this context, the University is seeking to reach out to young white men from less advantaged backgrounds to support the national emphasis on this underrepresented group and mature students whose engagement with higher education had reduced nationally over the last 6 years.

The University's analysis of its recruitment of Care Leavers indicates that the offer rate for this group is lower than the general offer rate for the institution (59.1% compared 78.6%). Further analysis has identified that 20% of the applicants who have spent time in local authority care apply to one of the University's Nursing programmes compared to 6% of applicants who are not from this group. This explains much of the differential offer rate which is highlighted when the analysis only focuses on one aspect of the applicant. 27% of Care Leavers enter the University with high tariff points compared to 46% of other applicants. This programme has fixed recruitment numbers due to the University's contract for a set number of places with the NHS and therefore there is no opportunity to increase places although the course is oversubscribed. For this reason this is the most selective programme offered by the University.

When looking at student success the University has looked at a range of measures including multivariate analyses on good honours. This analysis grouped age, ethnicity, gender and POLAR quintile and compared the good honours outcomes over a three year period. This

identified that young, BME students both male and female from all POLAR quintiles have a below average good honours rate. The University's assessment identified that the attainment gap is different for students from different BME ethnic backgrounds. The sector attainment gap for black students, when compared to their white counterparts, in 2016/17 was -23.8% compared to -24.9% at the University. Similarly the sector attainment gap for Asian students in 2016/17 was -9.2% compared to -16.0% at the University. The University has seen an 11.5% increase in the attainment gap for Asian students between 2015/16 and 2016/17. This analysis has resulted in the University placing significant effort to address this gap as detailed on pages 15 and 16 of this plan. We recognise that the Asian attainment gap in 2016/17 – 16.0% - was much higher than in previous years and could be classified as an outlier year – to illustrate this, the average attainment for Asian students between 2014/15 and 2016/17 was -8.4%.

A table that shows the individual years within this three year trend follows:

**Attainment Gap to White Student Group**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Black and Minority Ethnic	-13.0%	-10.8%	-15.2%	-12.9%
Asian	-5.0%	-4.5%	-16.0%	-8.4%
Black	-21.8%	-25.4%	-24.9%	-24.2%
Other (including mixed)	-12.7%	-3.2%	-4.4%	-6.4%
White	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

To add context to the statistics, in 2016/17, 3.1% of the Home/EU undergraduate student population was black and 3.3% was Asian.

The University's assessment of student success included looking at attainment for students who had identified themselves as Care Leavers (approximately 1.5% of the total Home/EU undergraduate student population). This assessment demonstrates that this group of students do not achieve as well as those who do not identify themselves as Care Leavers in relation to their average module marks. Although the University saw some improvement in this gap between 15/16 and 16/17 it has increased slightly in 17/18 to -4.2% from -3.5%. Progression rates for Care Leavers are however comparable to the rest of the student population (84.1% compared to 84.3%).

Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 the University of Lincoln had a non-continuation rate of 4.6%. This placed Lincoln 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 125 institutions. Our analysis has determined that for the majority of student characteristics there is not a significant difference from the University or sector average; however, non continuation rates for students who have declared a disability were higher than students who did not declare a disability (+2.1%). This was also the case for BME students compared to white students (+2.0%)

Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the University of Lincoln had a graduate employability or further study rate of 69.3%. This placed Lincoln 61<sup>st</sup> out of 123 institutions. Our analysis has determined that for the majority of student characteristics there is not a significant difference from the University or sector average; however, students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 were less likely to gain graduate employment or enter further study than those from POLAR quintiles 3 – 5 (-4.3%).

## **Ambition and Strategy**

### ***Ambitions***

The University's strategic plan (2016 – 2021) is closely aligned to the Office for Students primary regulatory objectives and its priorities across each stage of the student lifecycle as detailed below:

#### **Access**

- To increase the entry rates of students from underrepresented groups to higher education, in particular reducing the participation gaps for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and at higher tariff providers, where they are widest.
- To reverse the decline in higher education participation by mature students from underrepresented groups.

#### **Success**

- To improve the non-continuation rates of students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, and to reduce the gaps between these groups and other students.
- To reduce the attainment gaps between students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, and those from other groups.

#### **Progression**

- To improve the rates of progression of students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities, into graduate-level employment or further study, and to reduce the gaps between these groups and other students.

The Office for Students (OfS) expectation is that providers will develop increasingly sustained and in-depth relationships with schools from early years, with communities, employers and with other agencies. The following sections of the University's strategic plan are particularly relevant in this context:

- Students are at the heart of everything we do. We will thoroughly understand their ambitions, and create a personalised learning experience that addresses the changing patterns of work and social life in the 21st Century. We will support our students to be confident, articulate, and innovative in their approach, ready to face their futures positively and successfully.
- We will use data to create success and to ensure that we are able to respond to initiatives in a swift and well informed fashion.
- We will be pro-active in experimentation in our approaches to learning and learning practices, which will include ensuring that we are rigorous in our evaluation and focused on continuous improvement sharing best practice across the institution.
- We will seek to create an environment within our University community where different cultures and perspectives are able to explore, debate and challenge to develop better understandings between the members of the University and wider community in an increasingly dangerous world. We will encourage and support our students to think and develop in new ways. We will do this within a clear framework for teaching that is transparent, coherent and progressive, and where students understand clearly the different stages of their development and can experiment and explore different ideas.

- We will continue to remain committed to the principles of widening participation and fair access, and will ensure that those who have the ambition and talent have access to higher education.

*Our measures of success over the five years will be:*

- Achieving high levels of student satisfaction in all student related surveys
- Strong student engagement in all the University's curriculum development and review and student-related activities
- Ensuring excellent outcomes through TEF processes
- Ensuring that our staff are highly qualified in teaching, and research and as professional practitioners
- Ensuring that all staff meet the University's expectations for teaching
- Increasing the number of placement and work experience opportunities
- Exceeding all HEFCE benchmarks relating to widening participation
- Increasing the diversity of our student population
- Ensuring high levels of completion benchmarked against the sector

*Learning from the Past to Build on the Future*

A degree is no longer enough to secure our graduates the careers they aspire to, employers are looking for candidates who stand out from the crowd and have developed a rounded set of skills, abilities and ambitions. We established the Lincoln Award in 2010 as an achievement framework to enhance and recognise extra-curricular activity linked to an extensive package of employability development support. Eighty students registered in the first year of operation and this has now risen to more than 1,600. We will further grow the levels of engagement, working increasing with students earlier in their studies, and develop greater targeted varieties of the Award to address their aspirations (e.g. International, Postgraduate Research and Graduate Internship) alongside bespoke schemes operated to address the needs of key industrial partners.

We will support our students to learn from and experience different cultural contexts to ensure they are able to succeed in a global work environment. We see increasingly the importance of professional practice and the need to develop opportunities for both students and staff to engage with industry through work placements, work experience and graduate training schemes. By doing this we will ensure that our programme offerings are aligned with future careers and the needs of employers.

The University will, over the next five years, develop deep partnerships with like-minded institutions, including schools and education partnerships, universities, local government, health providers and employers across the world to enhance our global reputation and increase our offerings. We will work with partners to develop opportunities for mobility among both students and staff at all levels.

**Target Groups**

The University's strategic focus continues to be on all students from underrepresented groups and we will continue to invest in this work at all stages of the student lifecycle.

In assessing its current performance the University has identified the following priority areas:

Access – the University recognises that its number of mature learners has declined in line with the sector trend for this group. The University is working on a range of initiatives to engage mature learners with a number of opportunities for full and part time study. The University will continue its work in schools and communities to encourage young, white men from disadvantaged backgrounds to engage with higher education. Additionally one of the

University's key performance indicators relates to increasing the proportion of BME students in its Home/EU undergraduate student population.

Success – the University recognises that its young BME students do not achieve the same degree outcomes in relation to good honours. As part of its multi-variant analysis the University has identified that degree outcomes are further influenced for this group of students by the type of qualifications they hold on entry to University. Young BME students who enter the University with a BTEC qualification do not achieve the same degree outcomes in relation to good honours as young BME students entering the University with A levels. The University is working on a range of initiatives to ensure that its BME students are able to realise their full potential.

Progression/Outcomes - the University recognises that its students who have declared a disability are less likely to go into graduate employment or go onto further study than students who have not declared a disability. The University is working on a range of initiatives to support its students with declared disabilities to realise their ambitions. The University has identified that students who enter with BTEC qualifications are less likely to go into graduate employment or go onto further study than students who enter the University with A levels. This difference is most significant for young White and BME male students. The University has a range of initiatives to support these students realise their full potential.

In addition to its ongoing work and plans to support students from the priority areas identified above the University has also identified interventions to support groups of students where there is specific evidence that barriers exist that may prevent equality of opportunity. These groups are carers, people estranged from their families and people with specific learning difficulties and mental health problems.

### ***Collaborative Working***

The University is committed to collaborative working with schools, colleges and the third sector. Details of the schools sponsored by the University are included in the Access, Student Success and Progression Measures section of this document. The University currently collaborates with LiNC Higher (Lincolnshire NCOP) and the Lincolnshire and Rutland EBP. In addition the University is in partnership with Bishop Grosseteste University to run the Lincolnshire Children's University.

The University is collaborating with Further Education (FE) providers and councils across Lincolnshire to improve access to and progression through education across the county. It has entered into a long-term strategic relationship with North Lindsey College (NLC) through which the University validates NLC Higher Education (HE) programmes and, more importantly, is developing engineering degree apprenticeships for engineering and advanced manufacturing businesses in Lincolnshire. The University is also working with NLC and North Lincolnshire Council to create a North Lincolnshire University Campus (NLUC) in Scunthorpe centred on a jointly delivered Technology, Business & Innovation Skills Hub (TISH) offering vertically integrated education pathways from Level 4 to Level 7. The University is also working with North East Lincolnshire Council and the Grimsby Institute and in the south with South Kesteven Council and Grantham College to develop similar capabilities within their town centres. The University has brought together a consortium – comprising all the FE colleges in Greater Lincolnshire (North Lindsey College, Grimsby Institute, Bishop Burton College, Lincoln College, Boston College, Grantham College, New College Stamford), Lincoln UTC, the University's National Centre for Food Manufacturing (Holbeach), a number of large locally engaged companies (e.g. Siemens and Bakkavor) and the University itself – around a shared vision for a Lincolnshire Institute of Technology (LIT) in response to the Government's Institute of Technology initiative. The University submitted the Stage 1 bid at the end of February and is awaiting the result. The LIT will reduce the travel to learn time for 90% of the Lincolnshire

population to less than a 30-minute drive and significantly increase access to broader range of subjects at FE and HE through the proposed LIT digital education network.

A new medical school based at the University of Lincoln is to be established in a collaboration between the University and the University of Nottingham. The University will be collaborating with the School of Medicine and Lincolnshire Hospital Trust Talent Academy to work with underrepresented groups within Lincolnshire to facilitate access to medical education.

### **Evaluation**

The University's clear and explicit commitment to access and participation was illustrated in its strategic approach to evaluation with the creation of two posts; Research Fellow (RF) and Research Assistant (RA) in 2017. These academic staff are based in the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute (LHERI) a professional services unit which fosters and supports existing and new higher education research at the University.

The Access Agreement Evaluation Project (AAEP) Board was set up in November 2017 to provide direction and guidance for the evaluation. The Board takes responsibility for the strategic direction and management of the AAEP including the Evaluation Management Plan. As part of the University's whole provider approach, Board membership includes a range of staff from different services, units and Schools across the University. Students, represented by an Officer from the Student' Union, are key members of this Board. The Chair and other Board members feed back into the Education and Student Life Committee to ensure that participation is embedded at all levels of the University and engages senior management. The AAEP Evaluation Management Plan is a live document that will develop and evolve throughout the lifecycle of the evaluation. The AAEP focuses on one key area for evaluation with a number of strands per academic year drawing on a theory of change framework. The AAEP is both formative (how we can do things better) and summative (how well these things work).

In 2017/18 the AAEP Board agreed that the initial focus was *Understanding the impact of financial support (bursaries/scholarships) on access, support and success* using the OFFA toolkit. The toolkit consists of a statistical, a survey and an interview tool. The AAEP uses all three tools to ensure the University's financial support is informed by robust evidence.

*The statistical tool* - The AAEP have analysed bespoke datasets provided by HESA as well as institutional bursary and household income data and are currently analysing the latest release from HESA - the longitudinal data set: 2012/13 and the continuation data set: 2015/16 which were provided in April 2018.

*The survey tool* - A survey of all students who received financial support from the University of Lincoln in 2016/17 was conducted. Drawing on the questions provided in the toolkit it was developed and hosted in Qualtrics; an online survey tool. An email and follow-up reminder email was sent to all those who might be eligible to complete it and following cleaning of the data there were 464 completed surveys, representing a 10.4% response rate.

*The interview tool* - The interview questions have been incorporated within a focus group schedule with approximately six groups of students, five of whom received bursaries and one with students who did not. The focus groups will be completed by May 2018 when the data will be analysed. In addition, the AAEP focuses on the impact of financial support on students with disabilities and on care experienced students and have undertaken a focus group with students with an impairment, health condition or learning difference. They are scheduled to undertake a number of life grid interviews with students in receipt of the Blackburn Bursary (bursary for care leavers) in May and June 2018.

In addition, the Evaluation Management Plan includes plans to evaluate the 'Access Covenant' in relation to applicants and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, disabled, part time and mature students "*with a particular emphasis on students from rural, coastal and dispersed*



*communities in South Lincolnshire*". The Access Covenant cuts across the three main strands of focus: Access, Support and Success with a number of initiatives delivered by a range of services at the University including Careers and Employability Services, Student Wellbeing Service and the Library.

### **Equality and Diversity**

In developing the provisions of this Access and Participation Plan the University has given due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its Equality and Diversity Strategy. The strategy states:

- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy outlines the University's approach to Equality and Diversity and the ongoing work to embed these commitment principles and values at the heart of all that we do as a community. Our community represents all staff, students, external partners, visitors and the wider community.
- The strategy aims to demonstrate the next stage of the University's equality journey in its pursuit to continue to go beyond the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- The University of Lincoln believes in equality of opportunity and respect for all. We value the strength that diversity brings and recognise that our ambitions will only be realised by our diverse and inclusive community embracing collaborative working, valuing individual differences with continued dedication, being future focussed, creative and talented.

The University's equality objectives as set out in its Equality and Diversity Strategy align closely with the strategic ambitions set out in this plan:

- To raise awareness by increasing understanding and engagement with equality, diversity and inclusion across the University's community through development opportunities, communication and collaborative opportunities.
- To promote an inclusive learning and working environment, underpinned by an equalities ethos upholding the dignity and respect of all.
- To further develop and embed the collection of qualitative and quantitative equality data across all protected characteristics to monitor improvement, inform action plans and report progress.
- To monitor and improve academic and employment outcomes of students with protected characteristics where data suggests that they may not be reaching their full potential

These objectives support the target groups identified in this plan whilst at the same time underlining the commitment of the University to support equality of opportunity for all.

The University is committed to achieving Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter awards. Examples of the work undertaken by the University to achieve these include the Race Equality Charter survey which included staff and students. The survey included questions in themed blocks which for students explored course progression, further study and employment. Further information on the University's work in this area can be found at <http://raceequalitycharter.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/>

When designing the activities and support measures set out in this Plan the University has taken into consideration their impact on students with protected characteristics. In this the University recognises that this support may also facilitate access to higher education for some students whose protected characteristics are over-represented within lower socio-economic groups.

In addition to the evaluation and monitoring activities described above the University's Teaching Excellence and Graduate Success Committee has a role in the monitoring and

evaluation of the measures contained in this plan and their impact on students from protected equality groups. Data in relation to recruitment and retention is linked to data on student feedback through both the NSS and internal surveys to provide both qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

### ***Student Consultation and Involvement***

The University works closely with the University of Lincoln Students' Union in all aspects of its activities, particularly in relation to student engagement and success. The University consults extensively with the Students' Union both formally through University Committees and through informal discussion and dialogue. Students are active members of the University's Education and Student Life Committee and are involved in programme design from inception through to ongoing annual evaluation and monitoring.

The University has a strong culture of student engagement and is renowned for student engagement innovation within the HE sector. The University of Lincoln was the first to introduce a specific, institution-wide Student Engagement Strategy placing the Student as Producer philosophy at its core. This approach, whereby students are not merely the recipients of 'received wisdom' but are rather the creators and co-creators of new knowledge, has been embedded as an underlining principle within our teaching and learning. Student engagement at the University includes a vast array of practices and projects that academics and professional service staff support and lead on locally within schools and departments. This work all contributes to the key aim of ensuring our students are valued as members of the academic community. A key element of student engagement activity at the University of Lincoln is the Student Engagement Champion Network. All Schools and service departments have a Student Engagement Champion, who works closely with student representatives and colleagues in their School/Department. Their role is to promote, encourage, enable and support student participation in their school.

The University has agreed its 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan with the Students' Union following detailed consultation with the elected officers. In conjunction with the Students' Union the University has identified a number of initiatives to be run by the SU and supported by the University which are focussed on the priorities outlined by the Office for Students. These initiatives include supporting the Students' Union's foodbank; social sport which aims to create an inclusive community whereby students are able to develop and grow in confidence. Social sport has been a key resource for students to be able to lead active lifestyles without the barriers of cost often associated with competitive sport at the university. Additionally, the Union runs a series of academic opportunities in direct partnership with the University, these include schemes such as the student conference fund where students are assisted with the direct costs of attendance at academic events outside of the University.

As described above a member of the Students' Union is part of the AAEP Board which provides direction and guidance for evaluation of activities. Evaluation is also undertaken at activity level involving those students directly involved for example the Advice Service ask for feedback from all students who access the service to evaluate the level of service they have received, as well as how useful they have found it and how the service helped them with their situation. The Student Funding Team ask for informal feedback on specific funding initiatives which they undertake such as travel grants and this is received on an ad hoc basis. As part of the application to attend the Wellbeing Orientation Week (WOW) Summer School, prospective students are asked their expectations of WOW, their expectations of University life, along with any coping strategies they currently use to aid them with any difficulties they have due to their diagnosed condition. Questionnaires are then completed by all attendees on their final day to ask if it had been beneficial, what sessions they have enjoyed most and least, if they feel less anxious about starting University, what the Student Wellbeing Team

could have done differently and if they would recommend WOW to another student. Student Wellbeing also run evaluation of all workshops which take place to support students and as a result have developed specific workshops for students such as Nursing Associates, Postgraduate students.

### **Access, Student Success and Progression Measures**

The following section of this plan provides an overview of the activities and support the University will undertake in 2019/20 to achieve its goals in relation to access, success and progression.

In highlighting the support measures outlined below, it should be noted that where activities specifically mentioned in previous Access Agreements (up to and including 2018/19) are not listed, that does not mean that these have been discontinued but that in drafting this Access and Participation Plan, we have given a greater emphasis, as suggested by the OFS, to those measures most specifically linked to our priorities for focus and improvement.

#### **Access**

The University takes a whole institution approach to access, participation and success, there is no dedicated “Widening Participation Team”, it is the responsibility of all academic and professional services staff to ensure that we deliver on the pledge made in our Strategic Plan, 2016 to 2021 that “We will continue to remain committed to the principles of widening participation and fair access, and will ensure that those who have the ambition and talent have access to higher education.”

In terms of Access, the University is committed to a diverse range of measures some of which are described in this section and many of which build on arrangements already in place, to facilitate access to higher education, particularly for those from underrepresented groups. The University places particular emphasis on its success in recruiting and supporting students with disabilities and students from neighbourhoods with a low rate of participation in Higher Education. In 2017/18 37% of new entrants were from Greater Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire.

In 2019/20 the University will continue to provide financial support to students, with the intention of reducing the concerns of applicants and their families, from low income backgrounds, about the costs of higher education.

All new entrants to the University in 2019/20, in total an estimated 30% of new students, who come from households with an income of less than £25,000 will receive a cash bursary of £500 per level for the first three levels of study. New entrants at Foundation Level will receive a cash bursary of £500 for an additional level of study. This ensures that the University is able to provide this support, which our students are passionate advocates for, to Foundation level students who are often from non-traditional backgrounds.

For those students who come from households with an annual income of between £25,000 and £40,000 (approximately 14.7% of the University of Lincoln Home/EU full-time undergraduate student population), the University will again provide a bursary of £500 per level for the first three levels of study. New entrants at Foundation Level will receive a cash bursary of £500 for an additional level of study.

These bursary payments, at all levels, will be linked to students maintaining satisfactory levels of attendance and engagement. The University of Lincoln Students’ Union have supported the linkage of bursary payments to engagement and attendance, in line with research which shows that these factors are strongly linked to retention and success.

As noted previously, the University has undertaken evaluation of our bursary scheme, using both the OFFA developed evaluation tool and direct feedback from students. Both forms of evaluation lead us to conclude that our bursary support is not only subjectively valuable and strongly supported by our students and the Students' Union but also objectively valuable and contributes to the access, retention and success of our students.

The University continues to work with and support Lincolnshire Children's University. In 2019/20 there will be no charge for schools to be part of the Children's University so that we can be more engaged with schools who have limited budgets. Plans are in place to include more inclusive activities either on the University campus or within schools so that the children are not expected to be part of an external activity with associated costs and thus we can encourage further participation.

The University will continue to work as very close partners in the local NCOP, in conjunction with LiNC Higher. In conjunction with LiNC Higher and the Lincolnshire and Rutland Education Business Partnership the University will attend Construction Week events, which encourage students from younger years to look at construction as a future career option, what is involved in the industry and the connection to Higher Education.

The University of Lincoln sponsors a Multi-Academy Trust (the Lincolnshire Educational Trust) in and around Holbeach, an area of South Lincolnshire with significant social and economic disadvantage and very low rates of participation in HE. The Trust plans to expand the number of schools within the Trust in 2018/19. The Trust expects to welcome Holbeach Bank primary school into the Trust on 1 June 2018, whereupon it will become Holbeach Bank Academy (HBA). To assist the smooth integration of HBA and ensure optimum outcomes for pupils, a single Local Governing Committee, chaired by the current chair of Holbeach Primary Academy (HPA)'s Local Governing Committee, will oversee both schools. In addition, advanced discussions are underway with stakeholders to determine the feasibility of the Peele Community College, Long Sutton, joining the Trust during the 2018/19 academic year. All the Trust's schools are rated as Ofsted good or outstanding. All are over-subscribed and are the schools of choice for local parents. The Trust puts learners at the heart of all it does, and focuses on every child and young person being enabled to achieve their maximum potential. The Trust Board monitors the performance of each academy every quarter. University Academy Holbeach ranks above average in Progress 8 and was the second highest-ranked school in Lincolnshire for progress at A-level.

The University's sponsorship has proved to be very successful in raising the aspirations of students and increasing progression to HE from University Academy Holbeach. The University provides specialist teaching and learning facilities to University Academy Holbeach through its National Centre for Food Manufacturing/Holbeach campus, and works jointly with University Academy Holbeach on apprenticeship provision. The University is expanding academic links with its Trust schools, for example through the provision of workshops in artificial intelligence/robotics for pupils at Holbeach Primary Academy during 2018.

#### University of Nottingham WP team collaboration

The University will be working closely with the University of Nottingham - School of Medicine and Lincolnshire Hospital Trust Talent Academy to work with underrepresented groups within Lincolnshire.

#### Fast Forward week

Each year we deliver a week's taster session to students from schools without sixth forms and aged Year 10/11. These are aimed at students who have ability but are potentially first generation to Higher Education. These students are from areas of low higher education participation, low household income and/or low socioeconomic status.

### Boost that Grade

This initiative takes place in March each year and involves working to boost Maths GCSE grades. It is targeted at students who are working to a 4 but have the potential to achieve a 5 for example, by revision sessions. The University is planning to expand this into Science and English for 2019/20.

### Care Leavers

The University recognises that people who have spent time in local authority care face significant barriers to accessing higher education. To address many of the concerns of this group of potential students information is targeted by the team during School visits to promote information about how study at higher education level is funded, the financial support available to students once they are at university and the availability of accommodation for this group of students during holiday periods.

### Collaborative Outreach

The University recognises the value that can be obtained through joint working with local and regional partners, in relation to outreach and student support activities. The University is a member of the Lincolnshire National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The collaboration delivers widening participation activities to all pupils who may benefit from accessing higher education in Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, Rutland and those in institutions on our county borders with Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The LinHigher programme principally targets 14-18 year olds who live in our coastal and rural communities, as these geographic areas experience particularly low levels of participation and were highlighted as 'cold spots' in HEFCEs research published in the autumn of 2014.

Activities include general information, advice and guidance sessions within schools and colleges such as 'Why go to university?' and 'Fees & Funding'. In addition, activities take place along the coast and within town and village centres offering an interactive Higher Education experience in a non-school environment, which reaches out to teenagers and parents who would traditionally never consider progression into Higher Education

### School of Chemistry Employability Initiatives

The School of Chemistry has a number of initiatives as part of its MChem/BSc Chemistry programmes to support student's progression into employment. We have an integrated placement programme on our MChem programme and 50% of our current students are on placement with major pharmaceutical and chemical companies. We have also increased our placement provision with international partners and currently have two students who will take up research full year placements at Harvard Medical School. We have increased our summer intern provision and we have a number of students now taking up Erasmus opportunities in research institutes abroad. We also have a number of paid summer internship opportunities with LTSA (Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Alliance) for students interested in teaching, especially in the areas of chemistry, physics and maths.

### College of Science Entry Requirements

The School of Engineering removed the requirement for Physics Advanced (A) level with the primary aim of increasing our intake of females. A much larger proportion of female students take only Maths A 'level compared to both Physics and Maths. We reviewed the achievement and progression of students with both Physics and Maths A' levels, and those with Maths and Chemistry (our previous requirements asked for a Physical Science, but most entered with

Physics). We found that students without Physics achieved just as well with appropriate support. This initiative increased our female intake from 1-2% to around 10%.

The School of Pharmacy decided to stop interviewing for selection to the MPharm programme as this had the potential to disadvantage students from less advantaged backgrounds. In doing this we considered that in medical education recruitment there is evidence that while school type (grammar and independent) are good predictors of performance at interview, they are not good predictors of performance in the actual course. Interviews in particular have been shown to be poor predictors of exam performance. In parallel with this, we looked at the evidence base for pro-social values development and found that we were probably disadvantaging students by attempting to predict future performance based on interviews conducted when they were in a dip in their late-adolescent, early adulthood development.

The School of Pharmacy have deliberately maintained the academic entry requirements for the MPharm programme. The reason for this was that students from diverse and less advantaged backgrounds could be delayed in their academic development and we would hence automatically be excluding students with potential. However, as the provision of this opportunity might mean that some students would struggle in their studies, a specific Transition Support Tutor / Lecturer role was created to ensure that students with less strong academic backgrounds at the time of admission had every opportunity to progress in the programme. This approach is supported in the evidence base, e.g. in the report on Student retention, support and widening participation in the North East of England where a common theme emerged on the importance of, "specialisation and increasing specificity in student support".

#### Wellbeing Orientation Week (WOW)

Since 2014 there has been a significant growth in the number of students accessing the Student Wellbeing Centre who have been diagnosed with mental health conditions and/or autistic spectrum disorders. Many of these students face a complexity of issues which range from anxieties about starting university to making effective social connections and networks. This can lead to a student feeling overwhelmed and may ultimately contribute to their level of success in engaging effectively within a Higher Education environment. In order to improve the retention, progression and attainment levels of this group of students, a free Summer School for students holding offers with the University has been established with the aim of enabling students to make the transition to the Higher Education environment through experiencing a taste of University life before enrolling. Feedback from participants indicates that the experience offers a significant and positive impact for students with mental health conditions and/or autistic spectrum disorders in terms of their retention and progression levels in their chosen programme of study.

The University's evaluation of WOW students has identified that students who have attended this programme have higher rates of attendance on their course and better rates of progression compared to the University average and to all students with disabilities. Based on the evidence of the success of this programme the University will extend this to target Care Leavers. It is anticipated that the benefits will also be realised for these groups of students and have a direct impact on retention and success.

#### **Success**

The University is committed to providing a broad range of measures, some of which are described in this section and many of which build on arrangements already in place, to support the success of all our students. The University places a responsibility on all of its staff to ensure that students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, enjoy an individual and

personalised experience before and during their programme of study and are supported to achieve their personal goals and objectives.

In its Strategic Plan, 2016 to 2021 the University states that “We will continue to develop our reputation for student engagement in all the University’s activities. Our staff and students will be ambitious, resilient and flexible. We will seek to create an environment within our University community where different cultures and perspectives are able to explore, debate and challenge to develop better understandings between the members of the University and the wider community in an increasingly dangerous world. We will encourage and support our students to think and develop in new ways. We will do this within a clear framework for teaching that is transparent, coherent and progressive, and where students understand clearly the different stages of their development and can experiment and explore different ideas. By creating a truly global experience for our students we will ensure that our community is culturally diverse and that our curriculum draws on relevant global material. We will utilise digital technology to create new learning platforms and environments so that we bring together people from across the world enabling the sharing and dissemination of knowledge. We will continue to remain committed to the principles of widening participation and fair access, and will ensure that those who have the ambition and talent have access to higher education.”

In 2019/20 the University will:

Set aside funding to support students with disabilities to access specialist equipment and personal support. The University has an approach to assessment and support for students with disabilities, which includes both individual learning support strategies and the development of an inclusive learning environment, embedded across the institution. As an example of this approach, in 2018 the University agreed that it was a key priority to move rapidly to enhance the availability of lecture capture in all teaching environments, with a recognition that whilst this move would be of benefit to all students, it would have a particularly beneficial impact for students with disabilities, students who are carers and students whose first language is not English.

#### Supporting Students who are Carers

In implementing a strategy to support students who are carers, the University is working closely with Carers First. The student, Student Services and Carers First collaboratively develop a “Caring Support Plan” which facilitates students who are carers in accessing support from both the University and external agencies without having to keep explaining and evidencing their caring responsibilities. Support can range from approval of extensions and extenuation to help with travel support costs if having to return home urgently to provide care unexpectedly or the provision of professional carers to relieve the burden on the student.

#### Supporting Students who are Care Leavers

In response to the attainment gap highlighted by the University’s assessment a number of actions are in place. The University offers a bursary for each year of study for students who have been in the care of a local authority within 5 years of starting their programme. This financial support is linked to more personalised support offered to all students who identify themselves as care leavers. Recognising that some care leavers do not have a permanent place of residence that they can return to outside term time the University offers students in these circumstances the opportunity to remain in residence throughout the year and at a reduced rate over the summer period.

### Support for Students with Financial Difficulties

The University will provide hardship funding to support students who are facing financial difficulties and enable the University to provide targeted support for disadvantaged students who are at risk of discontinuing their studies due to financial difficulties. Our evaluation of this support indicates that it has a positive impact on student retention and success. Whilst we seek to retain flexibility within this funding to enable students to access support which can be focussed on their own, specific, needs we also target elements of this funding on specific groups of students who we know may be disadvantaged financially. As examples, we have specific funding to support students who are estranged from their families, we provide support with travel costs for students who live at home and where travel to study in Lincoln from Lincolnshire can be prohibitively expensive and we have a travel grant to enable students to take advantage of course related opportunities, such as study abroad, or conference attendance, that would not be possible otherwise. In addition, the University also offers bursaries to all students who join the University from a background of having been living in local authority care at some time during the preceding 5 years.

### Improving Outcomes for students with Non-traditional Educational Backgrounds

The University is engaging with the UUK and NUS project on BME attainment and will be learning lessons directly from this project as well as undertaking the following measures drawing on good practice in the sector where it can be found.

In 2018, the University initiated a project focussed on improving outcomes for students who join the University with non traditional educational backgrounds. Whilst this project is exploring issues for all students from non traditional backgrounds, it will assist to reduce the attainment gap of BME students. This is a three year project and work will be continuing in 2019/20, with a focus on transition and induction, access to support and assessment strategies. The measurable objectives are to:

- Conduct and intervention to explore the BTEC educational experiences across the Secondary to tertiary transition and how this translates to our year one curricula
- Design, implement and evaluate an evidence-based intervention to address identified issues of assessment differences
- Design, implement and evaluate an evidence-based intervention to address identified issues within induction activities to support transition into our teaching, learning and assessment environment
- Develop and educational resource for programme teams that strengthens their awareness of cohort background, diversity and prior educational curriculum and pedagogic experiences.

Whilst our project work as noted above may lead to changes in emphasis, University recognises that some students, particularly mature students, or those from a disadvantaged background, may enrol whilst lacking in some study skills which they need to enable them to be both successful on their course and to gain employment following graduation. To meet this need for skills support, with a particular emphasis on mathematical and statistical development needs as well as academic English and report writing; students will be offered online support, workshops and one to one sessions. As part of our evaluation strategy we will review the impact of our skills development work on the retention and success of students. The University is developing an institutional Assessment Framework, to support student development through all levels of the curriculum. Using available data, the University can identify how to best support its students from the point of programme design, with particular consideration for BME and protected characteristic student communities.



Using knowledge available from institutional data programmes will be designed to ensure a balanced range of assessment methods, types, and volume, across modules and, where appropriate, to move away from a reliance on essays and formal examinations. The University's aim is to ensure students are suitably prepared, and supported, for the tasks that they will encounter in their future working lives, and in doing so will reinvigorate the use of more varied assessment methods such as project reports, blogs, podcasts, business plans, data analysis, lab reports and team working.

The University's Business School is piloting an inclusive curriculum project the aim of which is to ensure that the School provides an inclusive educational experience in which no student is either directly or indirectly disadvantaged and entitlement to access and participate in learning is anticipated, acknowledged and taken into account from inception to delivery. The key objective of the project is to ensure that all Business School programmes, curriculum (content and structure) and associated teaching practices and learning opportunities are accessible, reflect and draw upon the diversity which exists amongst both academic and student communities. This project is focused on reducing the attainment gap for BME students. It has been developed following extensive research into sector best practice drawing particularly on the work undertaken by Nona McDuff at Kingston University. Evidence from Kingston University and other institutions who have adopted an inclusive curriculum approach demonstrate its success in closing the attainment gap for BME students. The University of Lincoln intends to use this evidence based sector best practice and adjust it to meet the particular needs of our students. The successful outcomes of this project will be rolled out across the University following the evaluation of the pilot.

#### Peer Mentoring

The University is developing peer mentoring across all Schools to enhance the transition of new students into higher education and to provide experience of mentoring and guidance for senior students. In line with the outcomes of the "What Works" Project Phase 1, where peer mentoring projects were shown to have a beneficial impact on student retention, satisfaction and success, the University will provide models of best practice for Schools to use and adapt. These models will include a requirement for Schools to, as far as possible, link mentors and mentees with similar backgrounds based on evidence of the value of role models in the student experience literature, such that new BME students will be linked to a BME mentor and students who have chosen to declare a disability will be linked to a mentor with personal experience of disability.

#### Reporting to Facilitate Support for Disadvantaged Students

The University is extending its dashboard for Personal Tutors and Wellbeing staff to include indicators that a student is a member of a protected characteristic community. To facilitate this development students will be asked at enrolment if they wish to self-identify with a range of groups including carers, estranged students, military families etc. This will enable staff to tailor support more specifically to the individual needs of the student.

The University is developing its existing monitoring at programme level to have a focus on the availability of live information and to extend the specific groups by which data can be analysed and explored. This will enable programme teams to take an in year rather than a retrospective view of student retention and success and implement interventions during the academic year.

#### Learning Development and Digital Literacy

In addition to specific skills development, the University also recognises the significance for students of learning development and digital literacy. Learning development in Lincoln is a cross functional activity with projects that are focused on embedding learning development

within academic disciplines and those which are peer led. In 2019/20, the University will continue to invest in progressing these initiatives to support the success of students both in completing their undergraduate programmes and moving into employment or further study.

The University is acutely aware of the very significant increase in the needs of students with mental health difficulties in Higher Education. Over the last 6 years, the University has seen an increase from 177 in 2013/14 to 2327 in 2017/18 (920%) in the number of students seeking support with mental health issues from the Student Wellbeing Service (SWS). As a percentage of students disclosing a disability to the University, mental health was 20% in 2013/14 and was over 50% in 2017/18. The University has invested and will continue to invest in specialist services to support students facing mental health distress and the staff across the University who are working with these students as they continue to study.

#### Pre arrival support

All students who declare a disability, specific learning difference or mental health on their application form are contacted prior to arrival by the Student Wellbeing Team to offer advice and support on starting at University and how to prepare for study and living away from home including advice on appropriate accommodation arrangements. Teams are present at all open days and taster days to give one to one support to applicants and parents on challenges which may arise and the support available. A Learning Support Plan is developed specifically based on the student's needs and will outline strategies and guidance for dealing with the academic demands of Higher Education. In addition a parent/guardian guide is produced which is available in a number of formats including on the website in the form of Q&As.

#### Arrival and Welcome Week

During the crucial period between when students arrive and begin their studies, the Student Wellbeing Team provide a range of activities and advice for new students enrolling at the University. This includes specific workshops on homesickness, dealing with anxiety and building resilience. A life@lincoln support provides students with information and advice for the duration of Welcome Week focussing on specific themes such as Respect, personal safety, keeping active and personal wellbeing. This involves support services from across the institution such as the Library, Digital Student Life, Advice Service and Careers.

#### Mental Health Advice and Counselling

The University has a team of mental health advisors and counsellors who work directly with students and support and advise staff who are teaching and supporting students.

The Student Wellbeing Team offer specific guidance and advice to students with mental health concerns through a range of support available. This includes:

- Time focussed therapeutic counselling
- One to one appointments with a Mental Health Advisor
- One to one advice through drop-ins/appointments/triage etc
- Workshops for students on a range of subjects e.g. anxiety
- Individually arranged presentations on mental health support and advice for cohorts across the Colleges.
- Development of promotional material and campaigns to deliver around the campus e.g. Wellbeing Wednesdays, #NoMore, self- injury/self-harm, anti-bullying and harassment, Time to Change.
- Information stands around the campus during the first few weeks of term and intermittently throughout the year

- Promotion of healthy behaviours in relation to wellbeing via face to face contact as well as channelling social media campaigns.
- Development and promotion of 'Self Care' tools for students to recognise signs of distress including digital apps and online psychological therapies, telephone/online appointments, after hours' services, helplines and peer-to-peer support.

The team includes a Wellbeing Advisor whose specific role is to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This Advisor works with colleagues from the Library and Careers to create specific support in terms of careers advice, extending current provision of study skills and Maths and Statistics help (MASH) support and offering more support material for students to access to help them to develop their skills.

### External Partnerships

The University has extensive partnership networks providing on and off site support for students, including early intervention services, addiction treatment, gender identity support and disordered eating support. In relation to supporting students with mental health issues the Student Wellbeing Team has a well-established network of partners within the NHS and beyond and has set up referral pathways to raise the profile of the service in the context of mental health and crisis care in Lincolnshire. As a result, the team has direct links with a wide range of external agencies including, but not limited to; NHS Crisis Team; Mental Health Liaison Team (A&E based); IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies); Lincolnshire Police; Addaction; Trust House; Steps to Change; CASY Counselling; University of Lincoln Health Service.

This enables the Student Wellbeing Team to refer students to the most appropriate source of specialist support externally and to be able to follow up directly with the student to ensure that any appropriate support is put in place with regard to their academic study. This is underpinned by University representation on a number of Lincolnshire wide groups such as the Strategic board for Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, to which the University signed up to in 2016 and is the only educational institution in Lincolnshire to have representation. The University also has representation on the following groups and boards regionally: Suicide Prevention Strategy Group; Lincolnshire Safeguarding Strategic and Operational Boards; Lincolnshire Sexual Violence Abuse and Delivery Group

### Concern For Welfare Process/Crisis Intervention

In a response to the number of referrals for students in crisis, the University has instigated a Concern For Welfare process whereby members of staff or students can refer a student about whom they have significant and urgent concerns to the Student Wellbeing Service. This referral triggers an urgent response, including making direct, if possible face to face, contact with the student by a member of the team. In 2017/8 (to the end of April) the team responded to 192 Concern For Welfare referrals.

To support this process personal tutors, teaching staff and professional services staff can all access training with regard to 'Supporting Students in Distress' which outlines how to signpost students with mental health concerns to the appropriate services within the University. 'The Lincoln Welcome' is also a vehicle for informing new members of staff about support services and outlines mental health support which is available.

### Support for Mature and Part Time Students

The University is developing its programmes, in conjunction with local and national partners, to better attract and support mature, disabled and part time learners whose access to higher education, since the introduction of higher fees, has significantly declined. The University

recognises that the needs of mature, disabled and part time learners, particularly for those students who wish to focus on learning for career development, is not well met through the delivery of on campus full time programmes, some of which can also be studied on a part time basis. The University has therefore developed a suite of programmes, offered primarily through degree apprenticeships (business, nursing and food technology) that attract and support students who would not previously have been able to access higher education. In developing these programmes, the University has broadened its admissions criteria and in so doing, identified that many of the students being recruited lacked confidence in their academic and personal skills. To meet the needs of these students the University has developed induction programmes designed to support students to enter HE study, particularly focussed on those students who have not been in an educational environment for a long time. In addition, tutorial support and skills development extends to the workplace for many of these students. As an example, for the Nursing Associates programme, where all of the students are mature learners, peripatetic tutors have been recruited who visit students on a weekly basis to provide academic and personal support to students. This style of individual coaching and support in the workplace is delivered across Lincolnshire where students are working in rural, coastal and dispersed communities.

### Targeted Support

Teams are working across the University with a focus on supporting students from underrepresented groups, the following bullet points are included to offer a flavour of the diverse elements of work being undertaken:

- To enable the University to reach out to a wider range of students, to cover a broad range of topics, frequently, at the right times in the academic year and at times of the day that meet the needs of all students, including those students who would not feel comfortable in a one to one environment; Student Services has developed a portfolio of Workshops which students can access directly or to which they can be referred by staff from across the University. Workshop topics include; Homesickness, Managing Anxiety, Assert Yourself, Dealing with Challenging Emotions, Procrastination, Exam de-stress, Get Organised and Presentation Skills – including Stage Fright and Walking Back to Happiness. Students provide feedback from the Workshops they attend which enables the team to adjust future sessions and develop new sessions where a need is identified.
- All schools utilise our in-house Student Attendance Management and Monitoring system, linked to our Academic Tutor dashboards which display up to the minute information about student attendance, engagement and achievement, which enables personal tutors to identify “at risk” students and to initiate a personalised response, which might be a text message or an e mail, arrange a meeting or refer the student as a concern for welfare through student services
- Making learning support plans for students with disabilities more available to relevant staff in schools to ensure the specific learning needs of students are highlighted
- Ensuring that students whose entry route and personal characteristics indicate that they may be at risk of early withdrawal or not achieving to their potential are allocated to the most experienced personal tutors who will consistently support their transition at each level of their academic studies, not just in the first year.
- Specialist loan equipment for students with disabilities is available through the Library to ensure that students are not disadvantaged. This is in addition to the availability of Sensus Access software which allows students to request an accessible format of a

document or collection and our study skills e book platform with accessibility features and download to a device function.

- Peer mentoring to welcome new students into a culture of engagement with the academic community.

## **Progression**

### Lincolnshire Context

This University commissioned research into the data around the 2015/16 graduating cohort from the University of Lincoln, and the labour market context in which they graduate. The University of Lincoln is sited in a part of England characterised by unusually weak and low-paid labour markets. Indeed, Lincolnshire currently has the lowest average salary of any local authority in the country that contains a university. Labour markets that are crucial to the institution also have some of the lowest salaries in the UK. ASHE data shows that the median gross annual salary in the UK last year was £23,474. The equivalent figure for Lincolnshire was £21,069 and for Norfolk £20,074. No district in either county has a median salary above the national average. The ten lowest paid districts or local authorities in the UK last year were; Blackpool; Great Yarmouth; Craven; North Devon; Thanet; North East Lincolnshire; Lincoln; Waveney; Mansfield and Middlesbrough. In addition, Bolsover, Boston and Breckland also had median salaries below £19,000 last year. This means that as of 2016, Lincoln is the lowest paid district in the country that contains a university at £18,357 median annual gross salary. Several of the lowest paid areas of the country – North East Lincolnshire; Lincoln; Mansfield; Bolsover; Boston and Breckland - are relatively close to the University and so might be considered likely sources of students and hence employment locations. Salaries in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire are well above the national average but the regions are more distant.

### Careers and Employability Team

Differentiated careers support is a critical driving force for the Careers & Employability team. Supporting our students to achieve their full potential and raising their aspirations through greater appreciation and understanding of student characteristics and their distinct circumstances is critical to achieving our objectives. We firmly believe that we cannot effectively achieve this through 'blanket employability', and therefore, our approach is to work in collaboration with critical internal partners such as Student Service, Wellbeing, Planning and Business Intelligence teams to inform our understanding of our students and their barriers to progression, whether real or perceived.

Over the last two years we have developed two careers education programmes which were introduced specifically to offer a greater level of support and development for our students from underrepresented groups. Mindful of the high proportion of students from these groups at Lincoln and their lack of exposure to employers and in particular larger corporate graduate recruiters, we took the decision to introduce our 'Breaking Barriers' and 'Hire Me' programmes.

### Breaking Barriers

'Breaking Barriers' was introduced as a programme designed to support students who face real or perceived barriers to progression. It focuses over a series of workshops, on critical challenges that our students face from financial barriers, to resilience and confidence, and geographical/ mobility challenges. This programme was developed in collaboration with colleagues from other departments and our students. The success and resonance with our

students has resulted in our offering some of the workshops as stand-alone opportunities e.g. through collaboration and feedback with our Wellbeing team, we have offered more resilience workshops to respond to the increased prevalence of mental health challenges identified as a consequence of final year student anxiety related to transition, and/ or 'failure' in graduate recruitment processes.

### Hire Me

Our 'Hire Me' programme was designed to support building student aspirations further. Cognisant that our students from areas of low higher education participation would have had limited exposure to employers and specifically larger corporate entities and their recruitment practices, we introduced this careers education programme to take a staged approach to inspiring our students and increasing their chances of success and resilience through the application process. This was developed again in partnership with students and employers, who were able to offer an insight into our students' performance in their recruitment processes.

### Targeted Programmes

Whilst these programmes are of value across our whole student body, we are keen to further develop these over the 2019/20 academic year, and as such, working in partnership with our Planning and Business Intelligence team, we are seeking to focus these programmes in targeted disciplines where we know there to be a large proportion of students from less advantaged backgrounds specifically BME students and students with disabilities and care leavers. In this way, we are sensitive to the challenges of student integration which can be generated through targeted approaches to students of distinct characteristics or backgrounds; but offering something which is of real value in raising aspirations and success to these students.

Through the University's Covenant Fund, a new post has been created in the Careers and Employability Team to further support, develop and embed our targeted activities both centrally and within the subject disciplines. This role is specifically tasked to understand the student demographic, their distinct characteristics and indeed, the volume and location of such students across our institution and to develop our central careers education programmes within the disciplines.

### Employer Engagement

In addition, it is envisaged that over the 2019/20 academic year, this role will spend approximately 50% of their time engaging with employers. This will fundamentally have a dual focus:

1. Local and rural communities: The role will have an objective to engage with employers in the local community surrounding the University, which is fundamentally rural and remote. Many of our students are recruited locally and therefore, the focus is to support the local economy whilst enhancing the skills profile of remote rural locations.
2. National Employers: The role will be tasked to work with national employers and organisations to develop initiatives which support social mobility and the aspirations of our less advantaged students. This will involve targeting national recruiters to develop specific initiatives. An example of this is a proposed partnership with Santander, which will involve a structured programme of career development and support in collaboration with the University, with the potential opportunity for students to undertake a placement in London or Europe.

2019/20 will also see the introduction of a new bursary scheme which will be developed to support our WP students in accessing opportunities. This will be a scheme which will not only benefit our students, but those employers who are located in remote locations, who may therefore struggle to attract graduate talent into their organisations. The process and governance of the scheme will be developed with and informed by employers and students alike.

#### Strategic Labour Market Engagement

In light of the challenging climate identified by the University commissioned report, the University's Careers & Employability team have developed an employer engagement strategy which focuses on engaging and generating opportunities in the locality, working in partnership with employers to challenge and enhance the earning potential of graduates locally. Offering a bursary schemes to support and bolster student and graduate earning potential and accessibility to the remote localities in the region will greatly support this objective however, working in partnership with the local district authorities to support 'place marketing' and attraction strategy agenda's will ensure that students recognise these opportunities as viable graduate destination within the context of variable local economies. Furthermore, the team's expertise and knowledge of the segmented labour markets also ensures that we are targeting more affluent markets in which our less advantaged students could access opportunities which will encourage and engender increased aspirations and social mobility amongst our students – targeting sector specific, and growth regions, in recognition of the limitations of the local labour market to support some of our specific subject disciplines in accordance with student aspirations; therefore offering our students the best possible means of fulfilling their potential.

#### Career Planning

We appreciate that students from less advantaged backgrounds nationally are less engaged in their career planning than some of their peers. Our challenge is to engage them in their career planning early. As such we are developing distinct marketing campaigns which will resonate with and engage these students more comprehensively. This will be done in consultation with our students, and will take an approach of building awareness of the challenges in the graduate labour market, and the necessity to plan.

We are also mindful that not all students will have the confidence, or inclination to engage in face to face activities. As such we are investing in our digital platforms. These are available for all of our students to benefit, but we are specifically exploring in 2019/20, the development of an online platform which will seek to develop and enhance our engagement, with targeted and tailored content – building in the themes and statistical analysis that we receive through national and internal split metrics – e.g. LEO data and the salary differentiations by student characteristics.

2019/20 will see us track student engagement by distinct characteristics in order to assess the impact of all of our WP initiatives. This will again be done through close collaboration with colleagues in our Planning department, and through integration with our own C&E student record system.

In addition to the centrally led support for students described above, teams are working across the University with a focus on supporting students from underrepresented groups, the following bullet points are included to offer a flavour of the diverse elements of work being undertaken:

- Enhancing placement and work experience opportunities, locally, nationally and internationally, both as assessed elements of academic programmes and on a short

term basis. For example, the Lincoln Law School engages with the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship scheme offered by Freshfields Solicitors and on the MChem programme, 50% of students have placements with major pharmaceutical and chemical companies.

- Paid summer internship opportunities with Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Alliance for students interested in teaching.
- The National Centre for Food Manufacturing, based in Holbeach, a low participation rural community in South Lincolnshire, supports the Tasty Careers in food and drink initiative.
- The development of degree apprenticeship programmes, noted previously, working closely with employers across the County, is focused on supporting non traditional students to move into graduate employment in a variety of sectors.

In 2019/20 the University, in partnership with the University of Nottingham, will be welcoming our first cohort of medical students to the Lincoln campus. We are committed to ensuring that this programme welcomes students from groups currently underrepresented in medical education and working with the local health community to enable them to take up employment in Lincoln and Lincolnshire when they graduate.

### **Financial Support**

The University is committed to providing direct financial support in the form of bursaries to specific groups of students. These bursary payments, at all levels, will be linked to students maintaining satisfactory levels of attendance and engagement. The University of Lincoln Students' Union have supported the linkage of bursary payments to engagement and attendance, in line with research which shows that these factors are strongly linked to retention and success.

The University's commitment is based on its evaluation which will continue to be undertaken on an annual basis. Analysis of bespoke datasets provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) as well as institutional bursary and household income data reveals that for the earlier longitudinal data sets, bursaries seemed to contribute significantly to whether students were likely to complete their degree. From 2012 to 2015 bursaries did not significantly influence continuation into second year and the bursary group had statistically similar outcomes to the comparison group. This may be because bursaries have been successful at levelling the playing field with relatively advantaged students. This, according to the OFFA toolkit, essentially means that bursaries work for students at the University of Lincoln.

A survey of all students who received financial support from the University of Lincoln in 2016/17 revealed that students felt overwhelmingly positive about receiving financial support from the university and bursaries were either 'extremely important' (46%) or 'very important' (29%) to their ability to financially continue their studies. The survey data is particularly useful in relation to both summative (how well bursaries work) and formative (how we can make the bursary process better) aspects of the financial support evaluation.

### **Investment**

In 2019/20 the University of Lincoln will invest £5,474,552 to support its activities identified in this Access and Participation Plan. This equates to 15.1% of higher fee income. This investment is divided between the following areas:

Access - £438,600

Success - £1,508,320



Progression - £582,868

### Financial Support

2019/20 entrants from households with an income below £40,000 will receive a cash bursary of £500 per level for the first three levels of study. New entrants at Foundation Level will receive a cash bursary of £500 for an additional level of study. The bursary will be paid in three equal instalments in November, February and May subject to satisfactory attendance.

The University also offers bursaries of £1500 per year to all students who join it from a background of having been living in local authority care at some time during the preceding 5 years. The bursary will be paid in two instalments. The first instalment of £500 is paid upon approval of application following enrolment. The second instalment of £1,000 is paid upon successful completion of that year of study.

### Additional Investment

In addition to the investment noted above the University will spend £3,100,000 in 2019/20 to support its access and participation work. This investment includes funding for the University's work with mature students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds by developing and providing alternative provision such as degree apprenticeships in areas identified in the heat maps as cold spots which typically attracts different student groups as identified above. Support aimed at improving success for these groups includes additional tutoring and personal support.

Through its campus at Holbeach the University works in collaboration with employers to ensure there is higher education provision available for mature and part time students in a rural and dispersed community which would otherwise have poor access to higher education. This campus is particularly important as it provides qualifications which are directly relevant to the job opportunities available in this area. The above investment funds this provision.

### **Provision of Information to Students**

The University will ensure that all relevant information about fees and financial support for each year of a student's study is communicated fully, clearly and in an easily accessible format. The University will use its website and printed communications to the full to carry fee and support information. Personal consultations for applicants and family members, particularly for those with complex circumstances, will also be available at Open Days and through the Covenant support.

The University will aim to provide a high level of information, tested with current students and applicants, about fee levels in 2019/20, throughout the application cycle in 2018/19, to ensure that as many applicants, family members, teachers, friends, relatives and influential advisors, including the local media, are aware of the levels of support available and how to seek further advice, where that would be helpful.

The University will provide timely information on fees and support packages to UCAS and the SLC, as they reasonably require, enabling them to update their applicant facing web services.

The University will publish its 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan and previous Access Agreements on its website.

\* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The University will set its Home/EU full-time first degree tuition fee level for all new entrants to programmes in 2019/20 at the currently maximum prescribed fee of £9,250. The University intends to increase the level of tuition fees for the second and subsequent years in line with the maximum amount permitted by the Government for all students.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		£9,250
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		£0
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise 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		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		£6,935
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		£6,935
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

**Table 8a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	State school	<b>HESA T1a</b> - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)		No	2013-14	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	
T16a_02	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>HESA T1a</b> - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)		No	2013-14	16.8%	17%	17.1%	17.2%	17.4%	17.6%	
T16a_03	Access	Mature	<b>HESA T2a</b> - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)		No	2013-14	18.8%	19%	19.1%	19.2%	19.4%	19.6%	
T16a_04	Student success	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>HESA T3b</b> - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)		No	2011-12	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.0%	7.0%	
T16a_08	Access	Attainment raising	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	Number of pupils achieving Grade C or better in English & maths GCSEs at University Academy Holbeach	No	2015-16	56%	57%	57.5%	58%	58.5%	59%	

T16a_09	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	HESA PI Table E1a - Employment indicator: UK domiciled leavers obtaining first degrees from full-time courses 2015/16	No	2015-16	94.8%	94.9%	94.9%	95%	95%	95%	
T16a_10	Success	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	The University has identified that it has a more significant attainment gap than the sector for its BME students. The target relates to reducing the gap between the percentage of BME students achieving good honours compared to non BME students. The University aspires to be in line with the top 25% of institutions in relation to this target.	No	2016-17	-15.2%	-14.1%	-12.1%	-11.1%	-9.1%	-7.1%	
T16a_11	Progression	Disabled	<b>Other statistic</b> - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	The University has identified that it has a gap between students who have declared a disability and those who have not in relation to students going on to graduate employability or further study. This target relates to reducing the percentage difference between these two groups. Whilst the University is ahead of the sector in this area it still aims to reduce the gap.	No	2015-16	-1.9%	-1.7%	-1.5%	-1.3%	-1.1%	-0.9%	
T16a_12	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	The University has identified that it has a gap between students from Polar 1-2 areas and those from Polar 3-5 areas in relation to students going on to graduate employability or further study. This target relates to reducing the percentage difference between these two groups. The University aspires to exceed the sector for this target but has initially set a target to bring it in line with the sector. This is a stretching target in the light of economic and graduate employment opportunities in the region.	No	2015-16	-4.3%	-4.1%	-3.8%	-3.5%	-3.0%	-2.3%	

