University of Lincoln

Access & Participation Plan 20/21

24/25

UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Access and Participation Plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Introduction

The University of Lincoln is a dynamic and expanding university, situated in the cathedral city of Lincoln in the large rural county of Lincolnshire. The University has a strong civic mission; having been established by the will of the local community including the city and county councils and local businesses to increase higher education participation in the region. We are very conscious of our role in contributing not only to the education of our students, many of whom are first in their family to attend a university, but also to the economy, social fabric and cultural offer of our region. We are strongly connected to regional employers and work together with Industry, Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) partners to deliver highly skilled graduates capable of filling local and national skills gaps. The University of Lincoln's approach to fair access, success and progression for students from all backgrounds is driven by our mission and values:

ᘒ The University is committed to providing access to higher education for all students who have the desire and potential to succeed and in removing the barriers to student success, through the provision of both individual and financial support, enabling each student to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential.

ᘒ 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.

ᘒ The University takes a whole-institution approach to access and participation with academic and professional services working closely together to create and support a diverse and successful student community. We have an established community of practice model which embeds our holistic approach to access and participation in all our activities. Central to this model is our work with our students and the Students' Union (SU) both formally through University Committees and through informal discussion and dialogue.

In developing this Access and Participation Plan (APP), we have taken the opportunity to renew our inclusive approach to access, participation and success through the establishment of the Access and Participation Oversight Group (jointly with the SU) and shared targets with local FE and HE partners. of Performance

For this plan we have considered all relevant aspects of our performance, including data from internal and external sources[1]. To summarise our analysis, we have created a RAG rated matrix which includes statistical significance as well as absolute gaps in relation to access, continuation, attainment and progression and this is detailed in Appendix Three. We have also provided an intersectionality RAG rated matrix in Appendix Four.
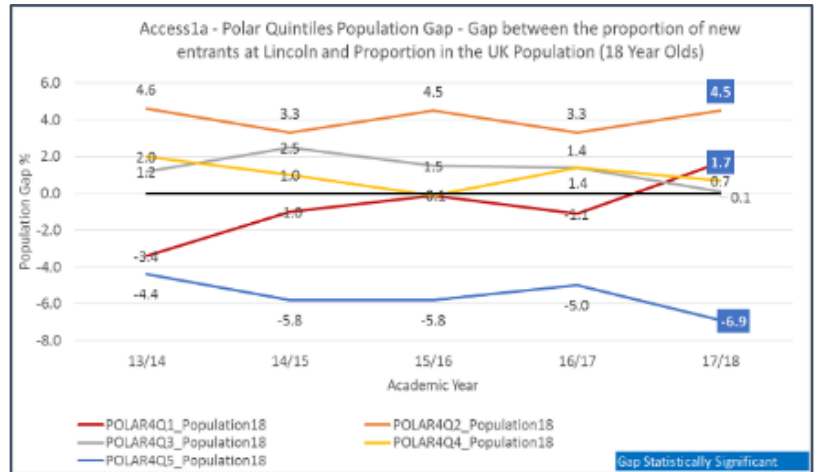
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[1] Within the text of this section, unless stated otherwise, all figures included are from the OfS APP dataset.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status
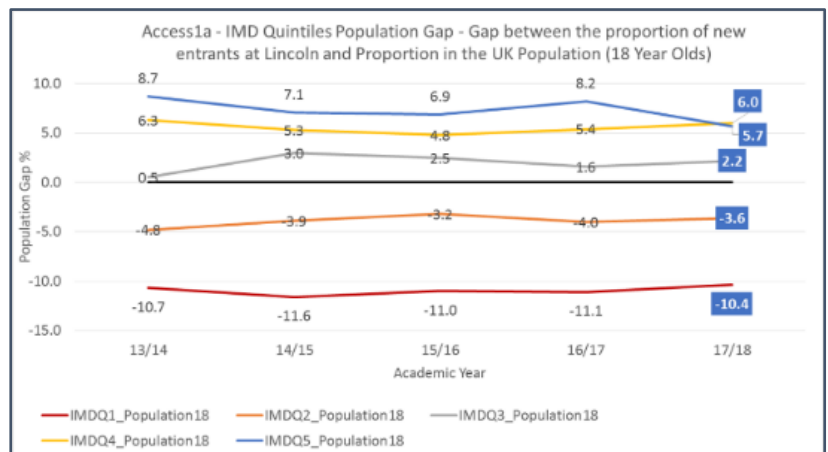
1.1.1 Access

In 2017-18 19.8% of our 18-year-old new entrants came from the Polar 1 Quintile 1 above the UK population rate of 18.1% and the sector average of 11.5%.

This reflects a five-year increasing trajectory and the positive contribution we play in widening participation both regionally from where we recruit 74% of our fulltime undergraduate students and to the sector as a whole.

Access1a - Polar Quintiles Population Gap - Gap between the proportion of new entrants at Lincoln and Proportion in the UK Population (18 Year Olds)
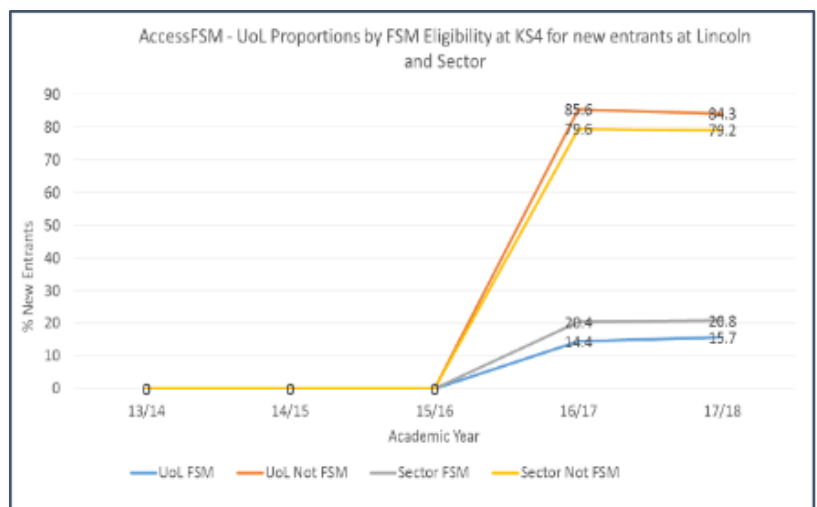
We are aware, however, that we have a 10.4% lower proportion of 18-year-old new entrants from IMD 1 quintile group (most deprived) compared to the UK average, which is statistically significant.

From our intersectional analysis we also know that we have a lower proportion of BAME new entrants in IMD quintiles 1-2 at Lincoln compared to the sector (4.7% v 20.7%).

Access1a - IMD Quintiles Population Gap - Gap between the proportion of new entrants at Lincoln and Proportion in the UK Population (18 Year Olds)
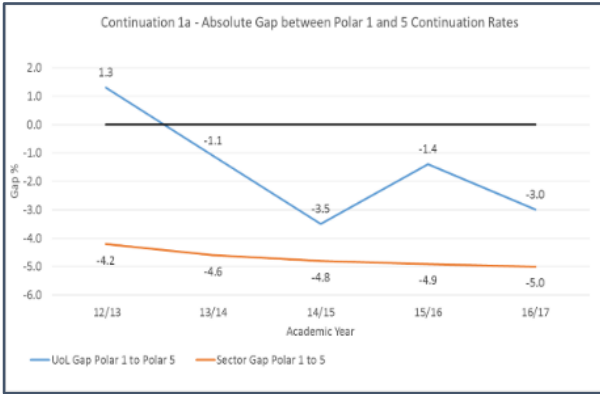
We have also considered free school meals (FSM) eligibility at key stage 4 to further confirm our position in relation to the deprivation indicators.

In 2017-18, 15.7% of our new entrants were eligible for FSM at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and whilst lower than the sector average of 20.8% this was 1.3% higher than the previous year whilst the sector had only seen a 0.4% growth.

AccessFSM - UoL Proportions by FSM Eligibility at KS4 for new entrants at Lincoln and Sector

1.1.2 Continuation

Continuation 1a - Absolute Gap between Polar 1 and 5 Continuation Rates

In 2016-17 we had a continuation rate of 93.4% for students from a Polar 1 background compared to a rate of 96.4% from a Polar 5 background (compared to the sector level at 89.2% and 94.2% respectively).

The gap between the continuation rates of -3.0% is lower than the sector gap of -5.0%.

Over a five-year period, whilst the gap fluctuates, it has grown from a +1.3% gap to a -3% gap.

The continuation rate performance for Polar is mirrored for IMD: where the gap is -3.2% and over five-year period has slightly grown from a -2.5% to -3.2% gap.

With regard to FSM eligibility in 2016-17 the gap between the continuation rates of students who were and were not eligible for FSM at KS4 was -2.4% - a smaller gap than seen in the previous year.

Continuation 1b - Absolute Gap between IMD 1 and 5 Continuation Rates
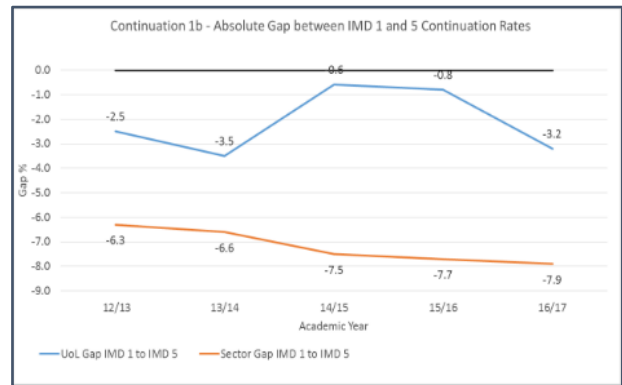
1.1.3 Attainment

In 2017-18, our attainment rate gap of students from Polar 5 and 1 backgrounds was -8.1% (smaller than the sector of gap of -9.5%).

Considering IMD, the gap between the attainment rates of students from IMD 5 and 1 backgrounds was 13.1%. Whilst the gap between polar quintiles has decreased the gap between IMD quintiles has increased yet still remains below that seen at sector level.

Further intersectional analysis shows that Lincoln has a lower degree attainment rate for BAME students from quintiles 1-2 (60.3% +4.2% since 2013-14) and males from quintiles 1-2 (65.4% +7.4% since 2013-14).

Attainment 1a - Absolute Gap between Polar 1 and 5 Degree Attainment Rates

Attainment 1b - Absolute Gap between IMD 1 and 5 Degree Attainment Rates
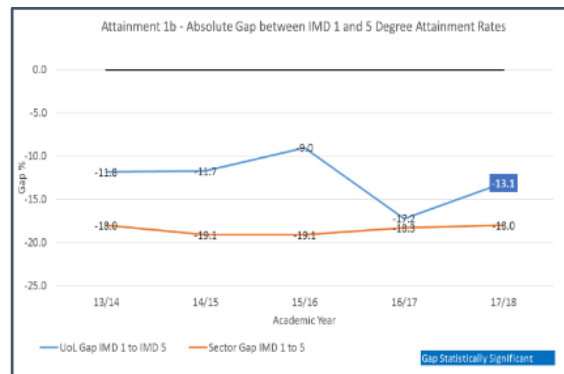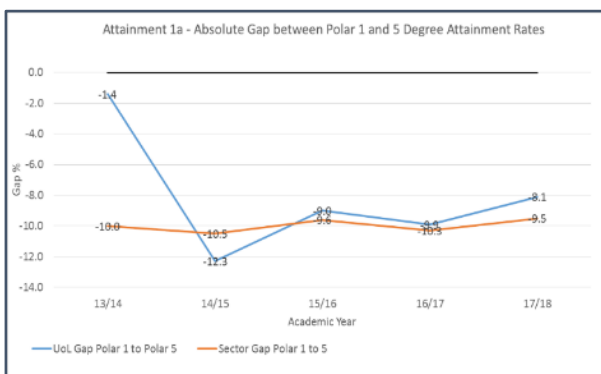
1.1.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study
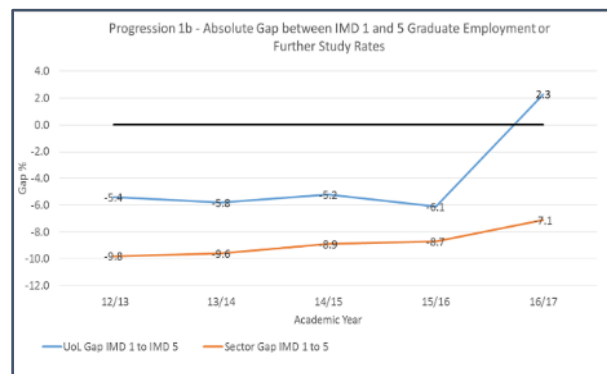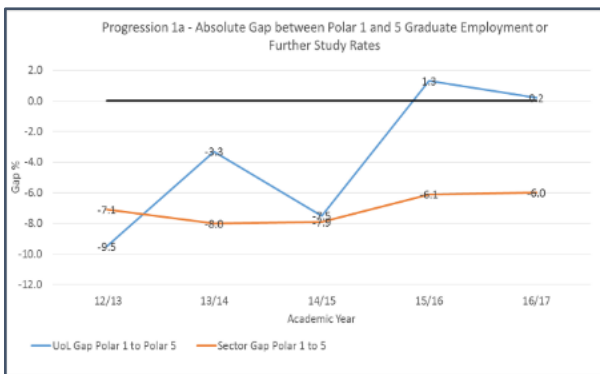
In 2016-17 the gap between the highly skilled employment or further study rates of students from Polar 5 and 1 backgrounds was 0.2%. This gap has reduced by 9.7% since 2012-13. Local data analysis shows Polar 1 graduates also have had a higher standard employment or further study rate in the last two years (Polar 1 97.0% and Polar 5 94.3%). In 2016-17 the gap between the graduate employment or further study rates of students from IMD 5 and 1 backgrounds was 2.3%. The gap has decreased and improved in the favour of IMD 1 graduates over a five-year period.

> With regard to higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status, we recognise that as an institution we are strong with regard to low participation which reflects the focus and mission of our University strategy but we are strongly aware that we need to have a specific focus on deprivation going forward; this has been reflected in our target setting and refocussing of activities particularly in relation to access which are discussed later in this plan.

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students

1.2.1 Access
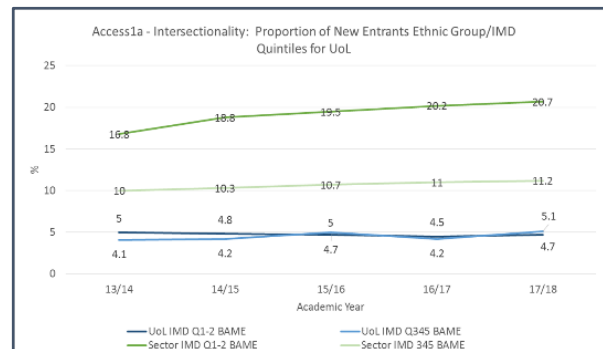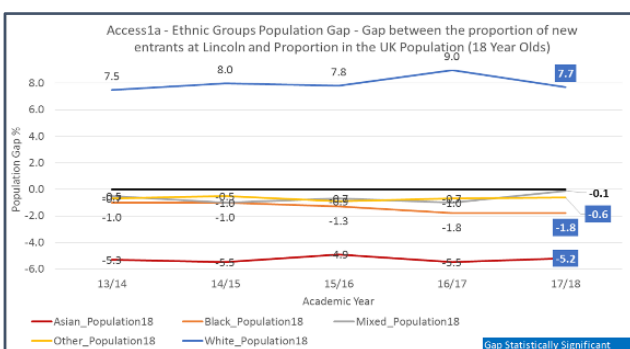
In 2017-18, Lincoln had a 5.2% lower proportion of 18-yearold new entrants from the Asian population compared to the UK population. Black and Other groups were 1.8% and 0.6% lower respectively which are all statistically significant. These gaps have remained relatively static over a five-year period.
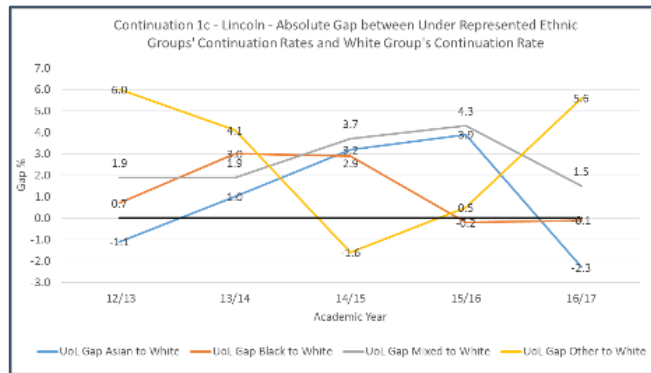
Despite this gap for the Asian group, they are Lincoln's joint highest percentage of new entrants from a minority ethnic group at 3% of all 18 year new old entrants. We have carried out intersectional analysis which shows that there is a similar proportion of BAME new entrants at Lincoln from both IMD quintile 1-2 and 3-5 groups (4.7% and 5.1%).

1.2.2 Continuation

In 2016/17 there was a negligible negative gap for continuation rates for BAME students (-0.3%).

When the group is disaggregated, we know that the only group with a notable negative gap to our white students' continuation rate is the Asian group (-2.3%). We also know that this is not an ongoing trend and for three out of the last five years there has been higher continuation rates for Asian students.

Our analysis shows that minority ethnic groups regularly have higher continuation rates than the white group at Lincoln which is not the case at sector level.

Continuation 1c - Lincoln - Absolute Gap between Under Represented Ethnic Groups' Continuation Rates and White Group's Continuation Rate

1.2.3 Attainment

In 2017-18 there was a -11.8% negative gap for attainment rates for BAME students vs white students.

This gap has been consistent across the most recent five-year period.

When the group is disaggregated, we know that all groups have a negative gap, but to differing extents: Mixed -4.9%, Asian -6.2% and Black -26.2%.

The Black group was the only group to see a reduction in degree attainment over the five-year period.

Attainment 1c - Lincoln - Absolute Gap between Under Represented Ethnic Groups' Attainment Rates and White Group's Attainment Rate
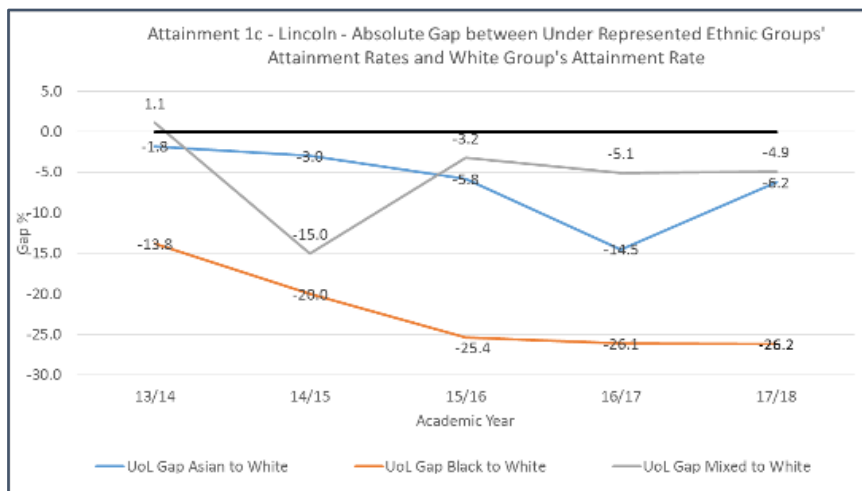
Having carried out additional intersectional analysis incorporating IMD quintiles, we are aware that Lincoln has a lower attainment rate for BAME students from IMD 1-2 quintiles (60.3%) compared to all other ethnic/IMD groupings.

We are aware there is a sector Key Performance Measure to eliminate both unexplained and structural degree attainment gaps between black and white students by 2030-31 and we are working towards achieving this which is discussed later in this plan.

1.2.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study
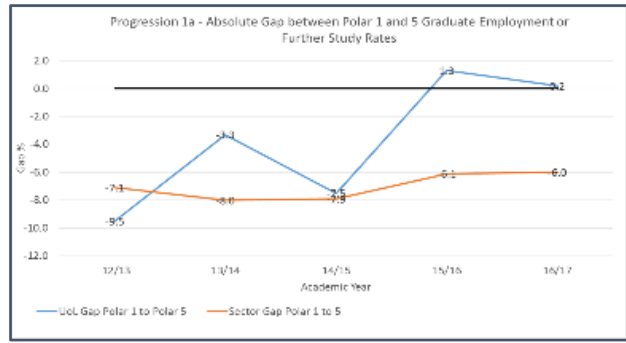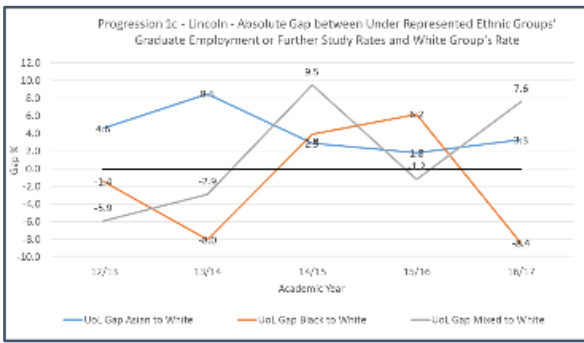
In 2016-17, at Lincoln, there was a zero gap for highly skilled employment or further study rates for BAME students and white students the result of an improving trend. When we disaggregate the data, we can see that one ethnic group, the black group, had a negative gap at -8.4% less than the white graduate employment or further study rate.

> With regard to BAME students, we acknowledge that we have challenges particularly in relation to access and attainment and further analysis has shown some very specific challenges within particular ethnic groups which we are committed to resolving. As a result, we have set targets relating to the access and attainment lifecycle stages and these will be discussed later in the plan.

1.3 Mature Students

1.3.1 Access

Group	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	% Change
Young White Female	36.6%	37.3%	29.9%	38.2%	40.3%	3.7%
Young White Male	27.2%	28.2%	31.2%	31.3%	31.5%	4.3%
Mature White Female	13.1%	11.9%	9.6%	10.7%	9.3%	-3.8%
Mature White Male	14.6%	13.3%	10.8%	10.5%	9.0%	-5.6%
Young Bme Female	3.4%	3.5%	3.8%	3.7%	4.1%	0.7%
Young Bme Male	3.0%	3.2%	2.6%	3.6%	4.0%	1.0%
Mature Bme Male	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	-0.2%
Mature Bme Femal	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	-0.2%
Grand Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**0.0%**

In 2017-18 the gap between the percentages of all new entrants who were mature or young was -73.8%.

The five-year trend at Lincoln and in the sector shows a slight narrowing of the gap. Local intersectional analysis shows that there is a similar rate of white, mature, new entrants of both genders (c.9% in 2018-19) and a much smaller rate of BAME, mature, new entrants of both genders (c.1%).

1.3.2 Continuation

In 2016-17 the gap between the continuation rates of students who were mature or young was -4.3% lower than the sector at -7.4%.

1.3.3 Attainment

The gap between the attainment rates of students in 2017-18 who were mature or young was -9.5% slightly lower than the sector at -10.2%.

### 1.3.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study

In 2016-17 the gap between highly skilled employment or further study rates of students who were mature or young was 6.5% with mature students having a higher rate. Considering local data analysis, we are aware that there is a smaller gap of 1.6% between mature and young graduates for the standard employment or further study rate.

> We have not set any specific APP targets for mature students, but we continue to closely monitor the effectiveness of our work in increasing access and outcomes for this group.

1.4 Disabled Students

We have taken the approach of separating and analysing the disabled group in its disaggregated groupings so as to ensure we fully understand any access, success or progression gaps.

1.4.1 Access
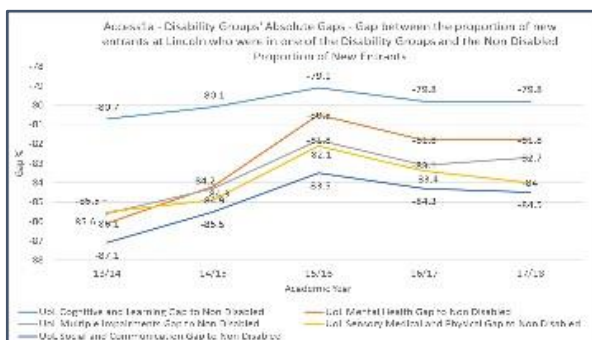
In 2017-18 14.7% of new entrants at Lincoln had a declared disability. Lincoln showed a 71% gap in terms of disabled to non-disabled new entrants.

There has been a reduction of the gap by 4% over the last five years. Analysis of the data shows that the disability group with the highest gap was Social and Communication (-84.5%).

1.4.2 Continuation
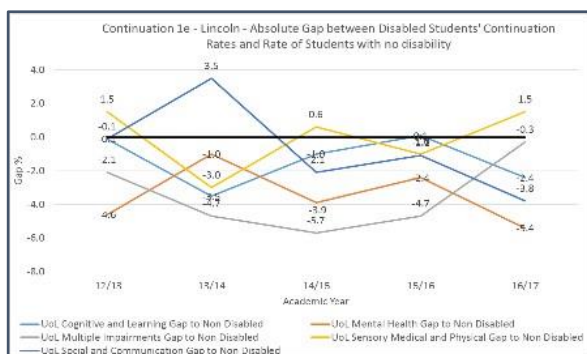
In 2016-17 there was a -2.4% gap for non-continuation rates for disabled students (larger than the -0.9% sector gap). All of the disaggregated disabled groups had lower continuation, the only exception to this was the sensory medical and physical group.

The three groups with the largest gaps were Mental Health (-5.4%), Social and Communication (-3.8%) and Cognitive and Learning (-2.4%).

1.4.3 Attainment

Attainment 1e - Lincoln - Absolute Gap between Disabled Students' Attainment Rates and Rate of Students with no disability

In 2017-18 there was a -4.2% negative gap for attainment rates for disabled students compared to non-disabled students.

Considering the disaggregated analysis, the largest gap was for sensory and medical disability students (-9.9%) closely followed by social and communication students (-9.2%)

We have carried out some additional intersectional analysis using local data for an aggregated three-year period to 2017-18 for disabled students split by gender and IMD Group: male disabled students have a low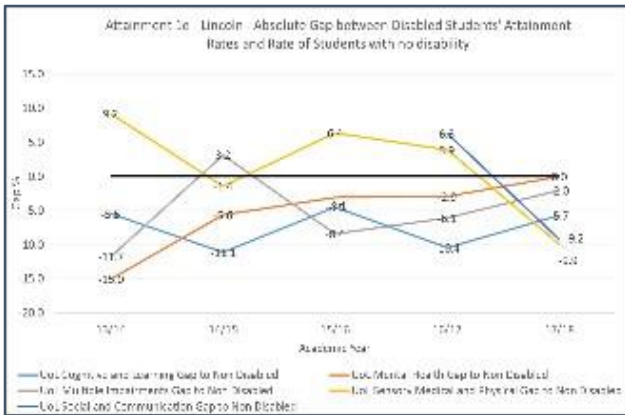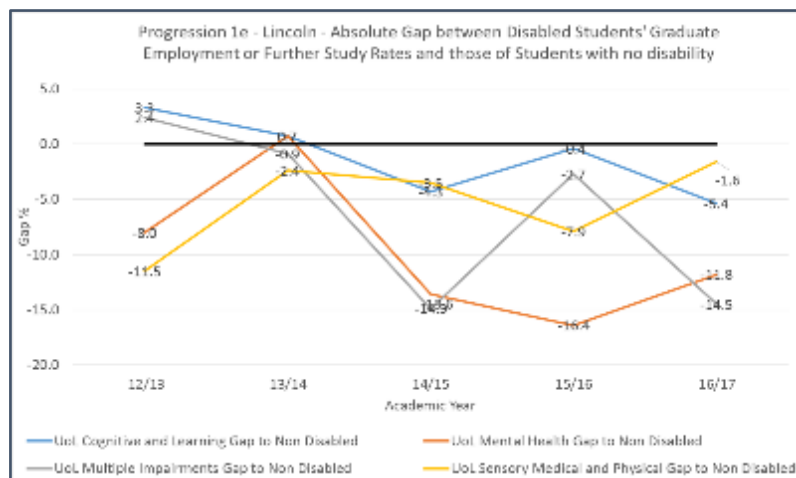er rate compared with female disabled students (69.3% v 76.6%) and, in particular, male disabled students from IMD 1-2 backgrounds have the lowest rate (65.7%).

1.4.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study

In 2016-17 there was a -7.3% negative gap for highly skilled employment or further study rates for disabled students v nondisabled students.

The trend has worsened over a five-year period. With regard to the disaggregated analysis, the largest gap was for students with multiple impairments (-14.5%) followed by students with a mental health condition (-11.8%).

Progression 1e - Lincoln - Absolute Gap between Disabled Students' Graduate Employment or Further Study Rates and those of Students with no disability

We have carried out further intersectional analysis using local data for an aggregated three-year period to 2017-18 split by gender and IMD Group: male disabled students have a lower rate, in particular male disabled students from IMD 1-2 backgrounds (66.9%) compared to female disabled students from IMD 1-2 backgrounds (76.5%).

Considering local data analysis, we are aware that there is a reducing gap between disabled and non-disabled graduates in respect of standard employment or further study rates. In 2016-17 the gap was zero. When disaggregated, the multiple impairment group was the only group with a gap greater than one percent (-1.5%).

We can see from our analysis that there are some areas in relation to disability where we need to have a renewed focus particularly in terms of some of the disaggregated disability groups. As we continue to

strive to make the University of Lincoln an institution that offers equality of opportunity for disabled students, we have set targets relating to the attainment and the graduate employment lifecycle stages and these will be discussed later in the plan.

1.5 Gender

1.5.1 Access
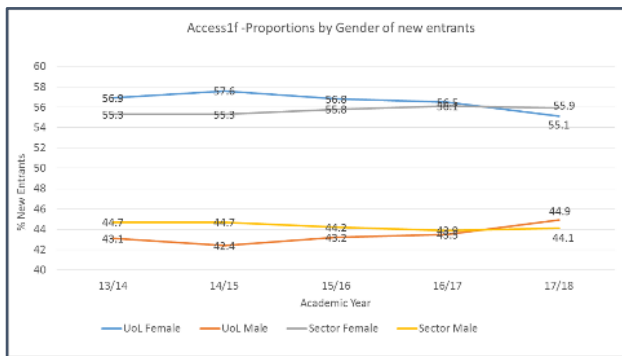
In 2017-18 the gap between the percentages of all new entrants who were female and male was 10.2% in favour of women.

The gap has reduced at Lincoln in the last three years.

1.5.2 Continuation
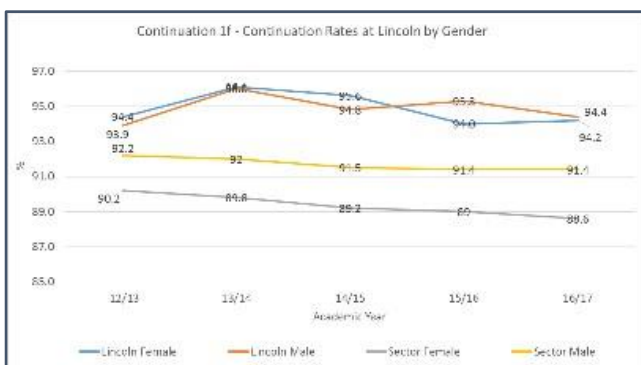
In 2016-17, the gap at Lincoln between the continuation rates of students of each gender was 0.2%. (Lower than the sector gap of 2.8%).

This is set in the context of Lincoln's high continuation rates of 94.4% for male students and 94.2% for females (both higher than the comparable sector rates of 91.4% and 88.6% respectively).

1.5.3 Attainment
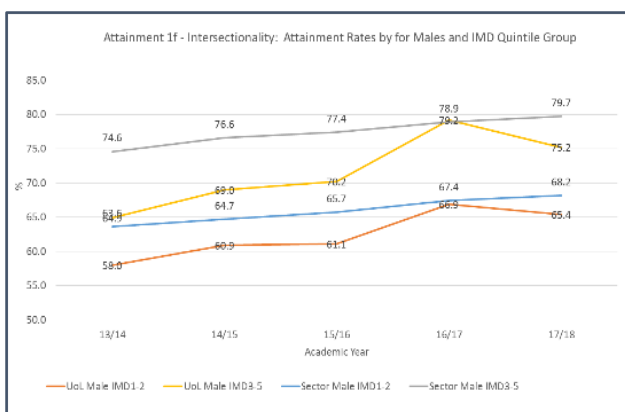
In 2017-18 the gap between male and female attainment rates was 9.7% in favour of females which is a larger gap than the sector and of statistical significance.

Further intersectional analysis shows that for our male students, those from IMD1-2 backgrounds have the lowest attainment rates (65.4%) compared to those males from IMD 3-5 backgrounds (75.2%).

1.5.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study

Progression 1f - Graduate Employment or Further Study Rates at by Gender
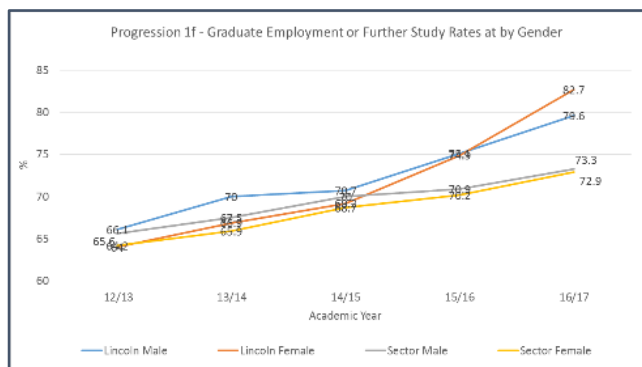
In 2016-17 3.1% more female students went onto highly skilled employment or further study. The gap has increased due to an increase in female graduate employment or further study rates, in particular.

Considering local data analysis, we are aware that there is a 3.9% gap (2016-17) for graduates in respect of standard employment or further study rates.

The University has a mixed picture when it comes to gender differentials as has been outlined above. We recognise that the intersectional IMD 1 -2 male and BAME male groups have the lowest attainment rates. We have attainment targets for these areas and therefore will address male attainment through these targets.

1.6 Care Leavers

We have considered background data and other available information regarding care leavers in Lincolnshire. As at 31st March 2017, there were 693 looked after children in Lincolnshire - a 10.5% annual rise. Despite this increase, Lincolnshire has a relatively small looked after children population - in 2017, 48/10,000 children under 18 were classed as looked after children.

This rate is lower than the East Midlands (55/10,000 and England 62/10,000) (Lincolnshire Observatory JSNA, 2017). In the year ending 31 March 2017, 4% of all care leavers aged 19-21 from Lincolnshire were in Higher Education. This rate was 6% for England as a whole and 4% for the East Midlands (DoE, 2017).

1.6.1 Access

We have undertaken local data analysis to consider our care leaver University population. For the three academic years up to, and including, 2018/19, 270 new entrants (undergraduate, full time, home) identified as a care leaver – this is 2.1% of all new entrants over the three-year period.

1.6.2 Continuation

Between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the care leaver group had a continuation rate of 97.0% compared to the non-care leaver group rate of 93.7% - a 3.3% positive gap.

1.6.3 Attainment

Between 2015/16 and 2017/18 the care leaver attainment rate was 75.0% this was 2% lower than the non-care leaver rate.

1.6.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study

For the three years to 2016-17 the care leaver graduate employment or further study rate is 70.0% 6.6% lower than the non-care leaver rate. With regard to standard employment or further study, the gap is 0.1%.

We have set a specific target relating to reducing the graduate employment or further study gap for care leavers – this will be discussed later in this Plan. We are also committed to continuing to ensure that this group are supported to achieve their full potential whilst at Lincoln across a range of outcomes. Our local NCOP partnership has a specific project focussed on increasing care leaver access to HE with which we are actively involved.

1.7 Intersections of Disadvantage

We have combined ethnicity, gender and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data across a range of data sources to consider intersections of disadvantage at the different points in the student lifecycle. Details of this can be seen in Appendix Four.

1.7.1 Access

Our analysis around access for intersections of disadvantage considers the last three years of new undergraduate entrants (2016-17 to 18-19) split by ethnicity/gender/IMD quintile groups. When considering the proportion of all new entrants from each of the groups, there is a wide range of variation – from 35.1% of all new entrants who were white, females from IMD3-5 backgrounds to 2.2% who were BME females from IMD1-2 backgrounds. Our analysis highlights that there is less representation from IMD1-2 backgrounds across all ethnicity/gender groups compared to IMD3-5 and that the majority of new entrants are white.

We have also considered University of Lincoln's performance in the most recent UCAS multiple equality measure (MEM) access to higher education reporting covering the 2013-17 application cycles. At Lincoln in 2017, we had a ratio of 1.1 compared to a sector ratio of 3.8. This shows that whilst these groups that are least likely to enter higher education may apply in fewer numbers at Lincoln, those that do are placed at Lincoln in almost equal numbers to those most likely to enter higher education – a sign of equal access when considering UCAS' particular set of multiple equality dimensions.

1.7.2 Continuation

We have analysed the last three available years of continuation rate data for home undergraduate students by ethnicity/gender/IMD quintile groups. The range of continuation rates varies from 95.4% for BAME females from IMD3-5 backgrounds to 91.8% from BAME males from IMD1-2 backgrounds.

1.7.3 Attainment

Our intersectional attainment analysis shows a wide variation of attainment rates over the last three years (2015-16 to 17-18 for home undergraduates). White females from IMD3-5 backgrounds have the highest degree attainment rate at 82.8% with the lowest rate being for BAME males from IMD12 backgrounds at 54.2%. It is clear from the analysis that BAME students have the lowest attainment rates (with the exception of BAME females IMD3-5) and students from IMD1-2 backgrounds tend to also have lower attainment rates.

1.7.4 Progression to Employment or Further Study

We have considered the last three years' worth of DLHE data for the ethnicity/gender/IMD quintile groups. There is a varied range of graduate employment or further study rates, from 83.5% for BAME males from IMD3-5 backgrounds to 72.0% for white males from IMD1-2 backgrounds.

1.8 Other Groups who Experience Barriers in Higher Education

1.8.1 Students Entering with BTEC Qualifications

In 2018-19, University of Lincoln had around 11% of the home, undergraduate, student body entering the University with BTEC qualifications only. Considering the last three years' worth of degree attainment data we know that these BTEC students had a degree attainment rate that was 25.0% less than their peers who entered the University with A-Level qualifications only.

1.8.2 Students from Military Families

Ministry of Defence information shows that there are currently 2,500 secondary school students in Lincolnshire from military families. The University is implementing means of identifying these students within its own student body from September 2019 which will enable us to monitor and better support these students.

1.8.3 Commuter Students

We are aware from degree attainment analysis, that those students who commute to University of Lincoln have a lower degree attainment rate (-5.9%) than non-commuter students.

1.8.4 Considering of Attendance and Attainment

We have also carried out analysis that shows those students that have low attendance rates tend to achieve less well than their peers that have higher attendance rates. At a summary level, the last three years' worth of degree attainment data shows that the average first class honours graduate had a 78.6% attendance rate in their final year of study; the rate for both lower second- and third-class honours graduates was less than 60%.

> The intersectional analysis confirms for the University the specific challenges that we have and this is a complex multi -layered challenge. Many of these groups are already known about at Lincoln and receive intervention through either individual (e.g. personal tutorial and attendance monitoring) or targeted means. We take the approach that many interventions have wider benefits across a range of student groups and therefore positively impact the entire student body. The following Strategic Aims and Objectives section is informed by the key groups identified in this Assessment of Performance section.

2. Strategic Aims and Objectives

2.1 Target Groups

From our Assessment of Performance, of which Appendix Three provides an overview, we have identified several target groups across the student lifecycle stages:

- ∞ Socio-economic: students from the lower IMD quintiles feature in the access and attainment stages as warranting specific targets. We note that lower IMD quintile students also feature in intersectional analysis for other lifecycle stages/groups.

- Ethnicity: BAME students feature across the access and attainment stages (with a focus on black students for attainment) and we have set targets for the BAME group. Lower IMD quintile students feature in the intersectionality for these groups.

- Disabled: students with disabilities feature across the attainment and progression to graduate employment stages – particularly disabled males from lower IMD quintile backgrounds. We have set targets accordingly.

- Care Leavers: Care Leavers and their progression to graduate employment or further study warrant a target.

We have worked with our NCOP group to ensure that all of the Access targets set out below are collaborative across all institutions.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

For each of the groups identified above the following aims and objectives have been set in our accompanying Targets and Investment Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 document:

Socio-economic

PTA_1 (Access): The aim of this target is to reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from the most deprived backgrounds. Lincoln aspires to be more representative and give greater access to applicants from deprived backgrounds. To achieve this, we will reduce the gap between new entrants from the IMD 1-2 and IMD 4-5 quintiles.

> **TARGET:** Our target is to meet the current sector average gap between IMD 1-2 and IMD 4-5 quintiles – this stands at 15.1%, over the period of the Access and Participation Plan.

PTS_1 (Success): The aim of this target is to reduce the attainment gap for students from the most deprived backgrounds. To achieve this, we will reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between IMD quintile 5 and quintile 1 students. Lincoln aspires to eliminate the degree attainment gap for students from the most and least deprived backgrounds.

> **TARGET:** Taking a lead from the OfS KPM4 success measure, by 2030 -31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between IMD1 and IMD5 students. Our target setting follows this trajectory. By 2024 -25, we aim to have a reduced gap of 7.1%.

Ethnicity

PTA_2 (Access): The aim of this target is to reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from BAME Backgrounds. To achieve this, we will increase the percentage of new entrants from BAME Backgrounds. Lincoln aspires to be more representative and give greater access to applicants from BAME backgrounds.

> **TARGET:** Our target is to meet the combined East Midlands, East of England and Yorkshire and Humber rate of 14.3% for 18- and 19-year-olds from BAME backgrounds (ONS Population 2017 Estimates) over a ten -year period. We believe this is still a stretching target for our institution. By 2024 -25, we aim to have 11.3% of new 18 -year -old entrants from BAME backgrounds.

PTS_2 (Success): The aim of this target is to reduce the attainment gap for students from BAME backgrounds, with a focus on black students. We will do this by reducing the percentage difference in

degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between White and all BAME students. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this gap within 5 years, stretching ourselves to exceed the OfS timeline.

> **TARGET:** Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2024 -25 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between BAME and White students.

Disabled

PTS_3 (Success): The aim of this target is to reduce the attainment rate gap for disabled students. We will do this by reducing the percentage difference in degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between non-disabled and disabled students. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this attainment gap.

> **TARGET:** Taking our lead from the OfS KPM5 Success measure, by 2024 -25 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non -disabled students.

PTP_1 (Progression): The aim of this target is to reduce the progression to graduate employment or further study gap for disabled students. We will do this by reducing the percentage difference in graduate employment or further study rates between non-disabled and disabled students. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this progression gap.

> **TARGET:** Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2030 -31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap. Our target setting follows this trajectory. By 2024 -25, we aim to have educed the gap to 4.0%.

Care Leavers

PTP_2 (Progression): The aim of this target is to reduce the percentage difference in graduate employment or further study rates between non care leavers and care leavers. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this progression gap.

> **TARGET:** Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2030 -31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap. Our target setting follows this trajectory. By 2024 -25, we aim to have reduced the gap to 3.7%.

2.3 Historic Targets

The University committed to a number of targets through OFFA Access Agreements and its previous Access and Participation plan (2019-20). The University will continue to monitor its progress against these targets internally for the life of this plan but believes that the measures set out above are of the highest level of priority and therefore form the targets for this plan. Other than mature students the underrepresented groups previously targeted are all included in the targets set out above.

The University's assessment of its performance has identified that it needs to continue to focus on mature students at all stages of the lifecycle and it will monitor their progress in each stage internally.

3. Strategic Measures

3.1 Whole Provider Strategic Approach

3.1.1 Overview

The University takes a holistic approach to access and participation. Academic and professional services are co-engaged in creating and supporting a community which celebrates its diversity. Access and participation is embedded in all our work. We regularly monitor and review our progress across a range of indicators, and this has enabled us to develop specific projects engendering a virtuous circle of learning and performance improvement.

The access and participation programmes relevant to the three stages of the student lifecycle are described in the following sections. The values from these programmes have informed our core principles. As a University:

- We will take a reflective community of practice approach.

- We recognise that we may not always be right first time - evaluation will always inform our approach and will be applied uniformly across the institution to drive change.

- Evaluation will be based on quantitative and qualitative data. Numerical data will be our guide, but the lived experience is crucial to enhancing understanding and informing future practice.

- We will review "What works? " as well as why it works and what we can do differently if an activity does not work.

- Students are involved and engaged in all aspects of this work as key partners in the process in line with our strong philosophy of student engagement at Lincoln.

- We recognise that it is our systems and behaviours which need to change not our students.

- We empathise, not sympathise; we act positively and inclusively.

- We aim to always be responsive and flexible; we work with a sense of urgency but recognise that effective change must be based on evidence informed practice, supported by the community, and this takes time to achieve and to be effectively embedded.

Our approach builds on a successful platform of work which is embedded deeply in the fundamental values of the institution outlined in our strategic plan and specifically our Teaching and Learning strategy.

We are proud of our track record in this area but we recognise that we have much to learn and improve on. The University's planned strategic measures are based on a range of evidence.

There are several strands to the development of our evidence base. These are:

1. A Literature review of widening participation literature on what works; particularly learning from the work of Thomas[2], Stuart[3], Boliver and Gorard[4], drawing on resources from Advance HE including work in other nations in the UK, and Centres for widening participation and education equity in other Universities, such as, for example and not exclusively, Durham, Kings and Edge Hill. The learning from the literature review was undertaken by colleagues in the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute

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[2] Thomas, L, Hill. M, O'Mahony. J, Yorke. M (2017) Supporting Student Success: strategies for institutional change. Higher Education Academy

[3] Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, J., Solomon, L., & May, S. (2011). The impact of engagement with extracurricular activities on the student experience and graduate outcomes for widening participation populations. Active Learning in Higher Education, 12(3), 203–215.

[4] Boliver. V, Gorard. S et al (2017) Where next for widening participation and fair access? HEPI

(LHERI), our dedicated HE practice research unit, and the lessons apply to all areas of the life cycle and all areas of disadvantage.

2. Commissioned research on specific regional issues particularly the work of Ball from Prospects. This research was commissioned specifically for Lincoln as there was limited understanding of the issues of regional employment and disadvantage relating specifically to the outcomes measures.

3. Evaluation of specific programmes of activity through LHERI particularly on the NCOP and from our School of Education on our academy schools specifically enhancing our understanding of our access measures.

4. Engaging with other institutions that have had some success with similar Access and Participation challenges through the inclusive curriculum project and the BTEC projects specifically supporting our participation and success measures.

Working with LHERI (Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute) and the School of Education the University will continue to evaluate and review best practice through the lifetime of the APP.

Existing activities continue to be delivered alongside a systematic approach to initiating new projects, informed by our 'Theory of Change' model the Lincoln Impact Evaluation Framework (LIEF). This ensures we take robust approaches grounded in methodological rigour. LIEF provides a step by step approach to ensuring we measure outcomes and impact. Training and support in using the model is led by the 'Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute', further facilitating the sharing of best practice both internally through our Community of Practice, and externally through access and participation events and networks such as NEON. This underpins an academically robust and consistent approach which will ensure appropriate learning and implementation of our programmes of activity.

The University of Lincoln is committed to understanding and promoting inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity within higher education and wider society. The aim is to inspire the sustainable development of an inclusive culture and ensure that no one is left behind. At Lincoln this has led to the creation of the Eleanor Glanville Centre, whose vision, goals and strategy embody the University's approach to access, participation and inclusion.

The Centre is home to an interdisciplinary research community. It aims to establish a level playing field for all members of society, encouraging students to become thought-leaders in diversity and inclusivity. It is part of our evidence informed practice approach and its research takes an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach, exploring issues/connections between gender, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic class, and disability.

3.1.2 Alignment with Other Strategies

The University's Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2021 has 'teaching excellence' as one of its five core principles. This aspect of the Strategic Plan forms the basis of the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy, which has informed the Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP) described in section 3.1.3.2. It also informs many of the activities which underpin the programmes set out in section 3.1.3.3.

The key areas of alignment from the University's strategy are:

- ໖ Students are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to create a personalised learning experience that addresses their needs as well as the changing patterns of work and social life in the 21st Century. We support our students to be confident, articulate, and innovative in their approach, ready to face their futures positively and successfully.

- ໖ The University aims to be a thought-leader in higher education - a dynamic transformational institution that is 'looking to the future' and seeking to address the challenges and opportunities presented by our changing world.

- ໖ We see university life as a full experience where students and staff work together to enhance our community.

- We aim to provide a unique supportive environment for growth and development of our whole community and to be at the leading edge of creativity and innovation in teaching practice.

- We have a strong demand-led portfolio and are working towards an inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of employers and a global society.

- We are pro-active in experimentation in our approaches to Teaching and Learning practices, ensuring that we are rigorous in our evaluation and focused on evidence-based continuous improvement - sharing best practice across the institution.

- We encourage our students to think and develop in new ways. We do this within a framework for teaching that is transparent, coherent and supportive. Our students are taught to understand the different stages of their development and can experiment and explore different ideas.

- We will be dynamic and responsive, utilising digital technologies to create new flexible learning platforms and environments to bring together people from across the world, enabling the sharing and dissemination of knowledge.

Our APP also aligns with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy. This strategy sets out the next stage of our equality journey - articulating our intention to continue to go beyond the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The University fully believes in equality of opportunity and in respect for all. We value the strength that diversity brings and recognise that our ambitions will only be realised by having a diverse and inclusive community which values individual differences.

Specific areas of alignment include the raising of awareness by increasing understanding and engagement with equality, diversity and inclusion across our communities; promoting an inclusive learning and working environment, underpinned by an equalities ethos, upholding the dignity and respect of all; and further developing and embedding the collection of qualitative and quantitative equality data across all protected characteristics to monitor improvement and inform action plans.

These objectives specifically support the underrepresented groups identified in our plan, whilst at the same time underlining the commitment of the University to support equality of opportunity for all. Our aim is that this is articulated within all of our communications, evident in our actions, and implicit in our thinking. Access and Participation and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity are fundamentally conjoined and at the heart of the values of the University of Lincoln community. This is further demonstrated by an institutional commitment to achieving Athena Swan and the Race Equality

Charter (REC) awards. The University's work towards REC is directly linked to the Lincoln Equality of Attainment Programme, with shared outcomes and objectives.

Within our Colleges, our Directors of Education ensure that these values are translated into the educational experience. Our governance and policies provide guidance and an underpinning framework for this approach. It supports our approach to social mobility and can be seen in many of our initiatives.

The University has undertaken an impact assessment of this plan for people with protected characteristics, particularly when designing the activities and support measures set out. We recognise that there is an intersectionality between some protected characteristics and socioeconomic background in that some protected characteristics are over-represented within lower socio-economic groups.

3.1.3 Strategic Measures

Access

The University's commitment to widening participation is set out as one of the key objectives within its strategic plan. The University's specific aims are to raise awareness of the opportunities available in Higher Education; to develop skills for university readiness; and to ensure that those who have the ambition and talent have access to higher education.

Raising Awareness of the Opportunities Available in Higher Education

The University's activities in this area have been developed with a range of local and national partners. Specific partnerships targeting particular groups will be built on e.g. working with the National Trust to

reach young audiences with low social mobility and demonstrate their potential for careers in science, and working with the City of Lincoln Council to raise aspirations of children in care. The University's Aspire Higher programme has, as its objective, to increase engagement with children from IMD 1 and 2 backgrounds. This programme works with children from primary school age through to supporting the transition to university.

As set out in the targets in this plan the University aims to increase the proportion of BAME students within its community. It is unlikely that this can be achieved through current outreach work with the local and regional community given the relative lack of diversity in the local population. Different approaches are being taken to achieve this goal. These include the establishment of an outreach base in London to work with local communities and encouraging existing BAME students to be trained to become Outreach Ambassadors for the University – this primarily involves students working within their own school and community.

Developing Skills for University Readiness

The University is committed to supporting successful transition to and within higher education. We recognise that transition is a key period for students and can be particularly challenging for those from underrepresented groups.

The University is currently undertaking a project which supports students with the challenges associated with the transition to university study and life. One of the key areas of work for the project has been the creation of open access online learning resources aimed at those intending to study at university in the coming year.

The evidence base for this project has several strands including a review of transition literature on what works; particularly learning from the work of Briggs[5], Byrne[6], Washer[7] and Wingate[8]; drawing on resources from Advance HE (O'Donnell[9]); engaging with other institutions that have had some success with similar transition programmes for example and not exclusively, the University to Leeds "Access to Leeds" programme and evaluation of specific programmes of internal activity,

The University has recently been successful in its bid for funding for the 'Transitional Mental Health Support' project under the OfS Challenge Fund Competition. The project aims to deliver a step change in supporting students coming to higher education. It utilises a multi-disciplinary approach, using face-to-face and digital delivery. Whilst the focus is on the transition period, the project also addresses issues of early intervention and provides an integrated approach to support.

Through the work of a city-wide, cross-disciplinary team and through a number of external partnerships, the project will develop a set of digital tools. These are designed to encourage and enable students to develop their emotional resilience and self-sufficiency through per-to-peer content, mentoring, and interaction.

Ensuring those with Ambition and Talent have Access to Higher Education

The University is reviewing its offer making process to ensure that students with the potential receive an appropriately targeted offer. This review will include evaluation of the 'Developing Skills for University Readiness' project - a pre-arrival and first year module which aims to help with the transition

[5] Briggs, A. R., Clark, J., & Hall, I. (2012). Building bridges: understanding student transition to university. Quality in Higher Education, 18(1), 3-21.

[6] Byrne, M., & Flood, B. (2005). A study of accounting students' motives, expectations and preparedness for higher education. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 29(2), 111-124.

[7] Washer, P. (2007). Revisiting key skills: A practical framework for higher education. Quality in Higher education, 13(1), 57-67.

[8] Wingate, U. (2007). A framework for transition: supporting 'learning to learn' in higher education. Higher Education Quarterly, 61(3), 391-405.

[9] O'Donnell, V. L., Kean, M., & Stevens, G. (2016). Student transition in higher education. Higher Education Academy.

to university and provide support during the first year to improve student performance and retention. If this intervention proves successful, the module will be integrated within our offer making process.

Diversifying our Programmes to provide additional pathways into Higher Education

Through our existing programmes, we have continued to reduce and remove barriers, challenge perceptions, and provide continual support to students. A range of apprenticeships programmes is currently delivered at level 5, 6 and 7 from the School of Health and Social Care, Lincoln International Business School and Lincoln Academy of Teaching and Learning at the main campus in Lincoln (10 standards). National provision at levels 2 through to 6, dedicated to the food and drink sector is based at the Holbeach Campus, referred to as the National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM) (15 standards).

Apprenticeship provision continues to grow at higher levels across the sector and we recognise the opportunities this brings for vocational students either as new entrants to a sector or as career apprentices with Maths and English support for those who require functional skills qualifications. We will increase the diversity of our programme offer, ensuring we meet local and regional skill requirements and opening access to Higher Education through a variety of pathways and entry points.

We will review our current apprenticeship provision and working with employers, consider developing additional programmes or Higher Technical Qualifications. Our focus will be Health and Social care and the food and drink industry.

We will pilot more workforce-ready professional programmes with short and targeted "bootcamps" focused on improving student employability in specific disciplines.

We will pilot/introduce further credit-bearing micro-credentials that can act as building blocks towards obtaining university HE certificates, foundation degree or degree.

We will work with our University of Lincoln Academy Trust to support the development and implementation of T Levels. Work placements are often challenging for schools to source, and we are establishing ways of supporting this, building on relationships with employers.

Collaboration

The University plays an active part in the local National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) LiNCHigher project, with members on the steering committee and governance board. Through this partnership we will build on the evaluation from LiNCHigher's Progression Framework and the baseline survey to be able to focus and target interventions on what young people, parents and schools are telling us will have the greatest impact.

Targeting our activities allows us to tailor our provision to meet the unique challenges faced by our communities within our coastal, urban and rural areas, some of which are particularly disadvantaged and with low participation rates at FE and HE. Our schools and communities require us to have an integrated approach to delivery, rather than a differentiated model. With the creation of the NCOP hub, many more partners such as the Careers Enterprise Company, the Local Authority, employers and our voluntary sector, support us in accessing our hardest to reach communities.

In addition to its collaborative activities with the NCOP the University is involved in a number of collaborations aimed at underrepresented groups specifically to improve access to and progression through education across Lincolnshire. It has entered into a long-term strategic relationship with North Lindsey College through which the University validates their Higher Education programmes and is developing engineering degree apprenticeships for engineering and advanced manufacturing businesses in Lincolnshire. The University is working with the College and North Lincolnshire Council to create the 'University Campus North Lincolnshire' in Scunthorpe centred on a jointly delivered Technology, Business & Innovation Skills Hub. It will offer integrated education pathways from Level 4 to Level 7.

The University has brought together a consortium of all the FE colleges in Greater Lincolnshire, a number of large locally engaged companies and the University itself – around a shared vision for a 'Lincolnshire Institute of Technology' in response to the Government's Institute of Technology initiative. The institute will significantly increase access to a broader range of subjects at further and higher education level through the proposed institute's digital education network.

A new Lincoln Medical School, based at the University of Lincoln, has been established in collaboration with the University of Nottingham. The universities are collaborating with Lincolnshire Hospital Trust Talent Academy to work with underrepresented groups within Lincolnshire to facilitate access to medical education.

School Sponsorship

The University of Lincoln sponsors a Multi-Academy 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 has recently expanded to enhance the educational and life chances of children and young people in the area. To ensure optimum outcomes for pupils, the Trust Board oversees all schools. 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. Performance is monitored every quarter by the Trust Board. University Academy Holbeach is consistently ranked among the best-performing non-selective secondary modern schools in Lincolnshire for progress at A-level. The University's sponsorship has proved to be successful in raising the aspirations of students and increasing progression to higher education from the Academy.

The University provides specialist teaching and learning facilities to the Academy through its National Centre for Food Manufacturing at its Holbeach campus. We work jointly with the Academy on apprenticeship provision. The University is expanding academic links with its Trust schools including a school which supports students with autism spectrum conditions, for example, through a close relationship with the University's Autism Research Centre.

Focussing on Pre-16 Attainment

The University recognises, as recently highlighted by the Office for Students, the important contribution that Universities can make through longitudinal work with partner Schools and Colleges, to raise attainment before the age of 16.

We will expand our mentoring programmes to focus on raising attainment Pre-16. A previous mentoring scheme which paired disadvantaged 15–16-year-olds with University of Lincoln undergraduate science students, involving weekly mentoring over 23 weeks, significantly increased students' GCSE science grades. The mentors received training and support and the sessions were steered by teachers who provided suggestions for curriculum-based content support. This was recently scaled-up; the ASCENTS121 project, led by the University of Lincoln, was supported by the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool, UCL's Institute of Education and the University of York. The project supported 845 pupils from 46 schools over a two-year period. Whilst evaluating the impact upon academic achievement was prevented by the COVID-19 pandemic, nine out of ten students felt the scheme would improve their GCSE science grades. This project provides us with an effective template for developing similar schemes with local Schools

We will work with schools across and beyond Lincolnshire, including our LiNCHigher target schools and our University of Lincoln Academy Trust (UOLAT) schools, to upskill and support existing teachers, provide targeted academic support to learners, tackle non-academic barriers to learning and support curriculum development. Teaching of the national curriculum will be prioritized.

We will invest in planning, delivering, and evaluating small pilot activities which will help us to refine our future objectives around raising Pre-16 attainment.

3.1.3.2 Success

Introduction

Previous APPs outlined numerous programmes of activity around supporting students to achieve their potential whilst studying with us. We are using the new requirements within the APP as a catalyst to develop a more strategic approach to our success activities, with a focus on differential attainment. When assessing the success of our previous activities we have had a focus on retention and we are pleased that our figures for this area show little differentiation between different student groups. Whilst we will continue to monitor this closely, we recognise that we need to step up our activity in the area of

attainment and, with this in mind, we recently initiated a broad strategic programme: Lincoln Equality of Attainment Projects (LEAP).

LEAP project members form part of our reflective community of practice that considers the impact of our access and participation activities across the whole student lifecycle and for all underrepresented groups. By bringing these activities together with a focus on our APP targets we feel we will deliver a step-change in attainment and ensure all students have an equal opportunity to reach their potential.

Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP)

The programme team is made up of students, academics and professional service staff from across the University. Senior leadership is provided by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Development and Engagement).

The group reports into the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Governors because of its direct impact on students and the work of the project is closely aligned with the institution's key performance indicators.

The overarching aims and objectives of LEAP are:

To create a sense of belonging for all staff and students in our community – so that everyone feels part of the Lincoln family.

To investigate the causes of our attainment gaps and work to close these gaps as quickly as possible.

To ensure inclusive and collaborative practice in teaching becomes the norm.

To develop a range of resources and toolkits for academics to help students achieve equality of attainment at school, programme and module level.

To embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion questions within our programme validation processes.

To share best practice in embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the curriculum, teaching and university environment, and enable what are sometimes difficult conversations.

To ensure our community has positive and diverse role models embedded throughout.

To empower all staff and students to speak out if they see non inclusive practice or discriminatory behaviour, creating channels of communication to enable this.

LEAP will make extensive use of data to ensure that activities are evidence informed. Quantitative data describing achievement and outcomes will be regularly assessed alongside qualitative data from specific projects and activities within the LIEF evaluation framework.

This approach will ensure the programme team can make strategic decisions about "what works" in order to continually improve our outcomes.

Outcomes from other institutions working on similar initiatives will also be regularly reviewed by the team in order to generate new areas of activity. The programme has been mapped to the UUK/NUS differential attainment Steps to Success project.

Student Lifecycle

The project activities will be based around the different phases of the student lifecycle and the team will ensure that best practice is shared.

We have projects already in progress or being planned for implementation that will have an impact on all stages of the student lifecycle.

Examples of our projects include peer mentoring, pre arrival Summer schools, online and on campus induction activities for at risk groups, such as those students with mental health difficulties, an inclusive curriculum and assessment framework and individual targeted support.
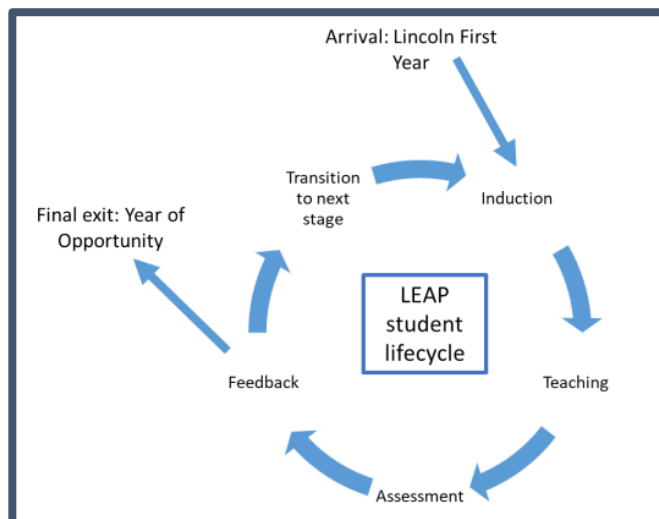
Much of this work is carried out in a collaborative approach with our Students' Union.

We believe this joint approach is essential for us to succeed and is at the heart of creating a home for our students. The SU runs a series of academic opportunities in direct partnership with the University, these include schemes aimed at improving employability and degree outcomes, and student champions who support outreach.

Building on the student lifecycle phases approach we will develop a new approach to student reinduction at each transition point, additionally we will actively support students through the cost-of-living crisis.

Financial Support

Evaluation has highlighted that previous bursaries given have more impact in relation to success, particularly retention, rather than Access and are therefore included within the Success section of this plan.

The University is committed to continuing to provide direct financial support in the form of bursaries to all students with a household income of less than £45,875 for all levels of undergraduate study. These bursary payments are linked to students maintaining satisfactory levels of attendance and engagement. This is in line with research which shows that these factors are strongly linked to retention and success. Evaluation will continue to be undertaken on an annual basis. The University recognises that this is in the early stages in this area and it may therefore need to redistribute some of this funding to other access and participation initiatives should further evaluation suggest that the bursaries are no longer effective.

We will work closely with our Students' Union to develop effective approaches to support students through the cost-of-living crisis, including a review of our levels of financial support and pre- enrolment financial information, budgeting advice and reviewing the cost of living on campus

Make More Effective use of Technology and Data

We will increase our use of technology and data analytics to provide focussed support where it is needed the most.

We will develop, embed and evaluate new forms of assistive technologies for assessment ensuring we provide inclusive approaches that consider personalised Student Support Plans, and reasonable adjustment requirements.

We will expand pilots of an earlier and more targeted approach to supporting individual students using student data available through our Personal Tutor Dashboards. Initial evaluation of this approach demonstrated the impact of a Student Success Team who can use the data and work closely with Personal Tutors to intervene early with specific support where it is most required. Student feedback to the evaluation team was very positive, with students feeling cared for and supported. We will recruit a

small Student Success Team to lead on this work, and 22/23 will be a further pilot year, as we embed our new Student Management system establishing how best to develop this approach. Within this project we will also strengthen our attendance monitoring, recognising the importance of accurate and timely data.

3.1.3.3 Progression

Introduction

Supporting student progression is an institutional priority which transcends curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular provision, aligning subject disciplines with our central Careers and Employability Service. There is targeted resource and initiatives with investment across the institution. Initiatives include the establishment of the role of 'Careers & Employability Advisor (Access and Participation)', to build capacity and grow our partnerships with employers and other stakeholders. The University uses a range of professional networks and groups to inform its practice in addition to learning from national and international research; utilising platforms such as the Higher Education Careers Service Unit's (HECSU) 'Luminate' research portal and commissioning external research.

As an approach to addressing the gap in progression the University is working to the following aims:

– to raise aspirations and student confidence

– to encourage students to be self-motivated and grow their own social and cultural capital

– to increase awareness of international opportunities and the benefits of working nationally and globally; and

– to drive interdisciplinary progression for further study through increasing awareness of broader opportunities both within and beyond the discipline.

Differentiated Support

The University has identified in its Assessment of Performance that there is a gap in progression to graduate employment and further study for BAME and disabled students. To address these gaps the University is extending its differentiated provision, informed by national and localised data, aiming to ensure that the service resonates more effectively with all groups within the student population by offering services with an individualised differentiated approach. It seeks to raise aspirations and engender new thinking as well as enabling students to be exposed to more opportunities. This includes a programme which seeks to break real or perceived barriers to progression. There is a range of national and international research which has informed the evolution of our service in this regard particularly learning from the work of Gee[10].

Responsive Provision

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[10] Gee, R. 2015. Alternative visions of employability: the role of critical pedagogy. National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), the School Guidance Handbook.
Gee, R. 2016. Considerations of 'Lifelong Learning' via the lens of Widening Participation Policy, the life course and social divisions. [Handout notes]. Nottingham Trent University. Gee, R. 2017. Contemplating 'career' across disciplines: reflexive explorations of 'career'. In: Barnard, A. (ed) (2017) Developing Professional Practice in Health and Social Care. London: Routledge

The University is introducing a diagnostic and insight tool 'Get Set'. This data set will enable us to develop responsive provision according to students' evolving needs and circumstances. This embeds support, guidance, and tailored action planning that assists progression in terms of graduate employment and/or further study.

This begins at pre-arrival stage and has been designed to provide academic and professional support teams with a clear picture of an individual's skills, abilities and experiences. Data generated will become an essential tool that enables personalised career support packages.

This work is integrated across departments to provide students with cross-institution support across the academic, welfare and transition elements of their student life.

Placement Provision and Experiential Learning

The University's commitment to its strategic aim to provide placement opportunities for all students is demonstrated through its investment of resources. These are targeted to ensure that our Colleges can embed placements within individual programmes with the aim of providing more opportunities for more students irrespective of their circumstances.

This is exemplified by the newly established 'Work Experience Opportunities Hub' within the College of Social Science. This is a pilot, which, if successful will be implemented as a model across the institution.

The ambition of the Hub is to facilitate opportunities so that all students have access to meaningful work experience whilst undertaking programmes of study within the College. The Hub has been developed based on a review of what works; particularly learning from the work of Yorke and Knight[11] and drawing on resources from Advance HE (Norton)[12] and ASET[13].

Some of the student facing provision is located centrally which ensures clarity of message and connectivity of students seeking placement support from the Colleges, with the broader employability offer and support services.

Connecting to the local Industrial Strategy

The University has recently been successful in its bid for funding under the OfS Challenge Fund Competition. It has received funding for a project which aims to embed High Level/Professional skills in the Greater Lincolnshire LEP (GLLEP) region through a unique partnership between the universities, employers and local authorities within the area. It aims to offer GLLEP students a unique opportunity to work in multi-disciplinary teams and pitch their solutions to medium to large businesses across the region.

Targeting students from subject disciplines, which we know struggle to find suitable graduate level employment in the locality, the project will challenge their perceptions of opportunity locally, facilitate greater mobility across the region and support diversification of transition; at the same time as challenging employer perceptions as to the value of student/graduate talent from a diverse pool of subject specialisms and backgrounds.

This aspect of our strategy is informed by a range of local economic development reports. The team utilise district authority economic development plans and strategies to inform reports and therefore target industries and opportunities across the region. In addition, the team utilise the GLLEP economic development plan to inform our own provision, as well as independently commissioned from Ball[14].

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[11] Yorke, M. and Knight, P. (2006) Embedding employability into the curriculum. (Learning and employability series 1). York: Higher Education Academy.
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3.2 Student Consultation

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. 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. Students are engaged not merely as the recipients of 'received wisdom', but are rather the creators and co-creators of new knowledge. A key element of student engagement activity is the 'Student Engagement Champion Network' which works closely with student representatives. Their role is to promote, encourage, enable, and support student participation.

The University has agreed its '2020/21 Access and Participation Plan' with the Students' Union following detailed consultation with the elected officers. The University has consulted on the plan with the wider student population. A member of the Students' Union is part of the 'Access and Participation Oversight Group' (APOG). This group provides direction and guidance for access and participation programmes and evaluation.

The 'Student Consultation Group' is a sub-group of APOG and its members are from the wider student community. Evaluation is undertaken at activity level and involves those students directly engaged. Student involvement in the monitoring of the APP targets and evaluation of activities is described in sections 3.3 and 3.4 below.

3.3 Evaluation Strategy

The University's strategy has been shaped by the completion of the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment tool, which was completed by the APP Evaluation Team and the Head of Student Administration and reviewed by the Access and Participation Oversight Group (APOG). Feedback is incorporated into this strategy as described below.

Strategic Context

The University's whole institution approach to access and participation is demonstrated by programme and evaluation activities which are linked through project governance structures. To enable strategic overview of evaluation of access and participation programmes APOG was established in 2019. Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Development and Engagement, this succeeded the Access and Participation Plan Evaluation Project (APPEP) Board established in November 2017. APOG and previously APPEP has responsibility for the strategic direction and management of evaluation and report to the Senior Leadership Team.

A Research Fellow, Research Assistant and Administrator were appointed to deliver evaluation in September 2017. This team have established a Community of Practice for staff working on access and participation initiatives at the University to support collaboration, reflection and the sharing of best practice. Findings and recommendations from evaluation will be shared and discussed internally with senior leaders through APOG and its associated working groups, and with the Community of Practice at grassroots level to maximise the evaluation impact and ensure the evaluation findings are integrated into practice with a view to ensuring continuous improvements are realised and inequalities eliminated across the student lifecycle.

Programme Design

Programme design, choice of outcome measures and areas of evaluation focus are underpinned by and informed by the existing evidence – primarily institutional data from HESA, HEIDI Plus and KPIs are utilised to track institutional performance.

As the evaluation team began their work in 2017, evaluation was not built in at the design stage but was retrospective. However, the evaluation team will roll out the Lincoln Impact Evaluation Framework (LIEF) across the university which can be used to help staff involved in designing and facilitating programmes to move beyond feedback and satisfaction measures to determine outcomes and impacts in accordance with the OfS 'Standards of Evidence'.

Evaluation Design

Our evaluation takes a "positive action" approach, addressing the identified strategic measures, seeking to understand and improve the experiences of diverse student groups, and with the core evaluation activity focused on the most resource intensive programmes. Based on the results of the evaluation self-assessment, work carried out by the evaluation team since 2017 meets the expected standard; however, there are a range of programmes to be evaluated in the future.

Where evaluation is carried out, the intended audience and requirements are explicitly articulated in the Evaluation Management Plan which specifies resources, roles and responsibilities.

Programmes in this plan are underpinned by an explicit and shared understanding of what works in each context and incorporate a Theory of Change and logic model through utilisation of the LIEF.

We will continue to use the praxis-based NERUPI Framework (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) and use it to inform the design, evaluation, and reporting of all our Pre-16 attainment initiatives.

Financial Support

The evaluation team undertook evaluation of institutional financial support in 2017/18: '*Understanding the impact of financial support (bursaries/scholarships)*', using the OFFA prescribed toolkit.

Data analysis was complemented by an online survey of all undergraduate students in receipt of bursaries and scholarships in 2016/17 and focus groups with specific groups of students to better understand the role of bursaries and scholarships in relation to access, support and success.

The analysis of available data for the University as part of this project reveals that the scholarship/bursary group has equivalent outcomes to the comparator group – there is no significant difference – which suggests that financial support "*closes the gap*" (McCaig et al., 2016, p.3) between scholarship/bursary recipients and their peers. In future, the evaluation team plan to undertake on an annual basis, the statistical analysis using the new data extract available from HESA.

Evaluation Implementation

All students have the opportunity to take part in evaluation activities, and participants from diverse backgrounds are proactively recruited. We recognise that some students face barriers to taking part in evaluation activities, so to ensure that the voices of seldom heard student groups are incorporated, we incentivise participation to support their involvement.

With reference to the OfS 'Standards of Evidence', our evaluations draw on data from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources and this mixed methods approach is used to draw out the perspectives and experiences of different stakeholder groups including students and practitioners.

For example, the evaluation of our activities, particularly those directly run by members of the Community of Practice, have been designed with a longitudinal component using a realist evaluation framework. The work of the evaluation team is subject to scrutiny and each evaluation project requires the approval of the institutional online ethics system (LEAS). Similarly, risk assessments are undertaken as part of the ethical approval process.

Learning to Shape Improvements

Findings from evaluations were shared through APPEP and the Education and Student Life Committee. Evaluation results are translated into recommendations which are implemented by the relevant areas of the University. Going forward these will be disseminated through APOG and through the Community of Practice.

The evaluation team proactively contribute to relevant conferences and publications. They attend the NEON Establishing Evidence and Measuring Impact Working group, which includes staff from the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership (EMWPREP) who provide

access and outreach data to the University. They also attend the NEON and FACE (Forum for Access into Continuing Education) conferences and the NERUPI network events.

3.4 Monitoring Progress against Delivery of the Plan

The University's Board of Governors is engaged with the monitoring of performance and the provisions of this plan through regular papers and verbal reports from members of the University to update them on Access and Participation activities and their outcomes as well as on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. A reporting schedule to the Board of Governors from the Access and Participation Oversight Group will be put in place to support monitoring progress against delivery of the plan.

Students are engaged with the monitoring of performance and the provisions of this plan in a variety of ways. Students from diverse backgrounds are members of the University's Student Consultation Group.

The Students' Union is represented on the Board of Governors; the Access and Participation Oversight Group; and all relevant University committees. These groups monitor our student engagement and the University's implementation of and performance against the plan.

The Access and Participation Oversight Group meet on a quarterly basis and have specific responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the University's progress against its plan. The group is Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Development and Engagement. Its membership includes the

Deputy Vice Chancellor for External Relations; the Director of Planning; the College Directors of Education; Head of Equality, Engagement and Development; and the Evaluation Team. Progress against this plan will be monitored by regular reports to the group. These will include progress against targets and outcomes of evaluation.

In addition, at the individual level, all academic staff have access to a range of performance dashboards where live data is linked to the targets in our Access and Participation Plan. If progress against the plan is worsening this group will have responsibility for agreeing improvement actions to address any issues or challenges. Equally they will be responsible for implementing shared learning from any unexpected positive outcomes.

The progress report and action plan will be escalated through the committee structure of the University up to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Governors.

4. 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 financial support information. The financial support information will clearly state the eligibility criteria and where applicable the reliance on applicants/students agreeing to share their financial information and that of their sponsors.

Personal consultations for applicants and family members, particularly for those with complex circumstances, will also be available at Open Days and through tailored support.

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. Continuing students will receive the financial support as advertised to them when they applied and as set out in the relevant Access and Participation Plan or Access Agreement.

Terms and Conditions for all bursaries and scholarships are available to students as part of their annual enrolment.

The University has a variety of financial support available to students. Some support can be applied for and some is awarded automatically based on eligibility criteria.

The estimated total amount of Financial Support available is £3,555,510, this is broken down as follows:

- £476,510 Hardship funding – the amount varies according to need. Funding should be applied for. Eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The hardship fund provides emergency cash, short term loans, travel grants for commuting students and summer accommodation grants for independent students.
- £21,000 Course Related Travel Grant – the amount varies according to need. Funding should be applied for. Eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- £15,000 Blackburn Bursary - £1,500 per student. Funding should be applied for. Eligible students are those who have received local authority care within the five years prior to the start of their course.
- £3,000 Foyer Bursary - £1,000 per student. Funding should be applied for. Eligible students are those who have come directly from living in a Foyer or other supported housing, where they have lived between the ages of 16 to 18.
- £240,000 Non-Medical Help – the amount varies according to need. Funding should be applied for. Eligible students are those with a disclosed disability which is supported by evidence.
- £2,800,000 (estimated) University of Lincoln Bursary - £500 per student per level of study. Funding is awarded automatically based information provided to Student Finance England. Eligible students are those with a household income of less than £45,875.

The University will publish its current and previous Access and Participation Plans and previous Access Agreements on its website.

5. Appendices

The following appendices form part of the University's Access & Participation plan. Those denoted* are included here for ease of reference.

1. Targets and Investment Summary*
2. Fee summary (2023/24 – most up to date hosted by OfS)
3. APP Summary of Analysis
4. APP Intersectionality Summary
5. Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool
6. Students' Union Submission*
7. Lincoln Impact Evaluation Framework (LIEF)

Office for Students

| **Targets and investment plan** | Provider name: University of Lincoln |
| **2020-21 to 2024-25** | Provider UKPRN: 10007151 |

Investment summary

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£1,036,778.00	£1,057,514.00	£1,078,664.00	£1,100,237.00	£1,122,242.00
Access (pre-16)	£427,412.00	£435,973.00	£444,706.00	£453,612.00	£462,698.00
Access (post-16)	£459,284.00	£468,466.00	£477,831.00	£487,384.00	£497,128.00
Access (adults and the community)	£150,082.00	£153,075.00	£156,127.00	£159,241.00	£162,416.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£3,180,242.00	£3,203,474.00	£3,270,534.00	£3,297,837.00	£3,320,110.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£151,448.00	£154,477.00	£157,566.00	£160,717.00	£163,932.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (%HFI)	£36,763,945.00	£37,211,270.00	£38,207,725.00	£1,100,237.00	£1,122,242.00
Access investment	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Financial support	8.5%	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%
Research and evaluation	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Total investment (as %HFI)	10%	10%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Targets

Table 2a – Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from the most deprived backgrounds	PTA_1	Socio-economic	Reduce the gap between IMD1&2 and IMD4&5 new entrants Lincoln aspires to be more representative and give greater access to applicants from deprived backgrounds.	Yes	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	22.2%	21.2%	20.0%	18.5%	16.9%	15.1%	OfS Access and Participation dataset show Lincoln's access gap for IMD1&2 new entrants to IMD4&5 new entrants is -22.2%. The gap seen at sector level is -15.1%. Lincoln aspires to be more representative and give greater access to applicants from deprived backgrounds. Our target is therefore to meet the current sector gap of 15.1% between IMD1&2 and IMD4&5 new entrants over period of the Access and Participation Plan
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from BAME Backgrounds	PTA_2	Ethnicity	Increase the percentage of new entrants from BAME Backgrounds Lincoln aspires to be more representative and give greater access to applicants from BAME backgrounds. We do, however, recognise that our University is to some extent a reflection of a locality - the 2011 census showed that only 2.4% of the population in Lincolnshire was non-white; 3.4% of 18 and 19 year olds.	Yes	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	8.3%	8.5%	8.9%	9.5%	10.3%	11.3%	OfS APP dataset shows Lincoln's BAME new entrant rate gaps to the UK population are statistically significant (-5.2% Asian, -1.8% black, -0.6% other). Our proportion of new 18 yr old entrants from BAME backgrounds is 8.3% (UK 16.1%, Sector 27.3%). Our target is to meet the combined EMids, East of England and Yorks and Humber 14.3% rate of 18 year olds from BAME backgrounds (ONS Population 2017 Estimates), over a longer ten year period. We believe this is still a stretching target.

Table 2b – Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the attainment gap for students from the most deprived backgrounds	PTS_1	Socio-economic	Reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between IMD quintile 5 and quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	13.1%	12.3%	11.3%	10.1%	8.7%	7.1%	OfS APP dataset show Lincoln's attainment gap for IMD1 students compared to IMD5 students is -13.1%. This is statistically significant. The sector gap is -16.0%. Lincoln aspires to eliminate the degree attainment gap for students from the most and least deprived backgrounds. Taking a lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2030/31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between IMD1 and IMD5 students. Our target setting follows this trajectory.

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the attainment gap for students from BAME backgrounds	PTS_2	Ethnicity	Reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between White and BAME students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	11.8%	11%	9.5%	7%	4%	0%	OfS APP dataset shows Lincoln's attainment gap for BAME students compared to White students is -11.8%. This was previously statistically significant in 2016/17. The sector gap is -13.2%. Lincoln aspires to eliminate the degree attainment gap for students from the BAME backgrounds. Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2024/25 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between BAME and White students. Our target setting follows this trajectory.
To reduce the attainment gap for disabled students	PTS_3	Disabled	Reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment rates (1st and 2:1) between Non Disabled and Disabled students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	4.2%	3.8%	3%	2.2%	1.2%	0%	OfS Access and Participation dataset shows Lincoln's attainment gap for non-disabled students compared to disabled students is 4.2%. This is not statistically significant. The sector gap is 2.8%. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this degree attainment gap. Taking our lead from the OfS KPM5 Success measure, by 2024/25 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non disabled students. Our target setting follows this trajectory.

Table 2c – Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the progression to graduate employment or further study gap for Disabled Students	PTP_1	Disabled	Reduce the percentage difference in graduate employment or further study rates between non disabled and disabled students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	7.3%	6.8%	6.2%	5.5%	4.8%	4%	OfS APP dataset shows that although Lincoln's Graduate Employment or Further Study rates are higher than the sector for disabled and non disabled students, the gap is wider. The gap between non disabled and disabled students is -7.3%. The sector gap is -1.8%. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this progression gap. Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2030/31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap. Our target setting follows this trajectory.
To reduce the progression to graduate employment or further study gap for Care Leavers	PTP_2	Care-leavers	Reduce the percentage difference in graduate employment or further study rates between non care leavers and care leavers	No	Other data source	2016-17	6.6%	6.1%	5.6%	4.9%	4.3%	3.7%	For the three years to 2016-17 the care leaver graduate employment or further study rate is 70.0% (23 students) - 6.6% lower than the non-care leaver rate. Lincoln aspires to eliminate this progression gap. Taking our lead from the OfS KPM4 Success measure, by 2030/31 Lincoln aims to eliminate the absolute gap. Our target setting follows this trajectory.

Access and Participation Plan
Students' Union Statement

The University of Lincoln has worked in close partnership with the Students' Union to consult and engage students during the development of the access and participation plan. A number of initiatives have taken place to provide students with sufficient opportunities to feed into the plan. These include:

Academic Representative Forum

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Liz Mossop and the Vice President Education co-delivered a session in an Academic Representative Forum during the 2018/19 academic year, to introduce the Access and Participation Plan and gather student feedback on how we currently and will help students from underrepresented groups to access university or college; have a good experience when they are there and get a good degree; and progress onto further study or graduate employment

Over 120 academic representatives from across the University provided feedback on these areas.

Senior Representative Group

Following the Academic Representative Group, further feedback was gathered from the Senior Rep Group around these areas but considering these at a School level.

Committees

The Vice President Education was a key stakeholder on the University Committee (APOG) which approved the final version of the Access and Participation Plan. All Student Leaders of the Students' Union were also part of a thematic discussion which took place in advance of this at the prior Education and Student Life Committee.

A final summary version of the Access and Participation plan has been circulated to students for their feedback.

The Students' Union will be working with the University to facilitate Advisory Groups going forward, which serve to provide students from underrepresented groups the opportunity to advise the University on the success of the Access and Participation plan and anything that could be done to better support their success at University.

The Students' Union also delivers a number of initiatives to ensure students from underrepresented groups are given the opportunity to contribute and participate in wider student engagement, including focus groups, campaigns officers who deliver campaigns across the year to raise awareness, such as Black History month, and equality checks on all opportunities.

The Students' Union believes that the University's ambition with the Access and Participation Plan is sufficient. It does however believe that the University and the Students' Union together should place significant focus on the areas of attainment gaps, inclusivity of opportunities including curriculum and recruitment diversity.