ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

2025/26–2028/29

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and Strategic Aim 1
2. Risks to Equality of Opportunity 2
    Access to Higher Education 2
    Achieving Success at Lincoln 3
    Progression from Lincoln 4
3. Objectives 4
4. Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes 5
    Intervention strategy 1: Objectives and Targets 5
    Intervention strategy 2: Objectives and Targets 11
    Intervention strategy 3: Objectives and Targets 14
    Intervention strategy 4: Objectives and Targets 17
    Intervention strategy 5: Objectives and Targets 25
5. Whole Provider Approach 33
6. Student Consultation 35
7. Evaluation of the Plan 36
8. Provision of Information to Students 38

Annex A 39
    Overview 39
    Lifecycle stage – Access 39
    Lifecycle stage – Continuation 45
    Lifecycle stage – Completion 46
    Lifecycle stage – Attainment 46
    Lifecycle stage – Progression 48

Annex B 50
    Student Consultation / Analysis of Risk to Equality of Opportunity 50
    Access to HE 56
    Success in HE 64
    Progression from HE 75

Annex C 80

University of Lincoln

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

1. Introduction and Strategic Aim

The University of Lincoln (UoL) is a vibrant community of staff and students, each bringing new knowledge, skills, and approaches to our university life. The success and wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything we do, where students join a close-knit community founded on mutual respect and where we work together to provide a stimulating and supportive environment.

Created by our community, businesses, city and county councils, we are as much the University for Lincoln, as the University of Lincoln. Situated in the cathedral city of Lincoln, the University is at the heart of its local community as well as the large rural and coastal county it serves[1]. Early and working years life stages are particular challenges, with high levels of deprivation in many places in Greater Lincolnshire, most significantly in coastal and some industrial areas.

With a core focus on addressing low levels of progression from School/College to higher education (HE)[2] and in turn the challenge of recruitment to graduate level employment[3], the University maintains this strong civic mission and we are committed to educating our students, as well as contributing to the economy, culture, and social fabric of Lincolnshire, as reflected within our Strategic Plan (2022-27) – Transforming Lives & Communities.

Our strategy is guided by excellence in teaching, learning and the student experience; responsiveness to the needs of our communities and organisations; and partnerships with local and national sectors to address skill and knowledge gaps. We see students as partners[4], empowering them to be creative graduates with inclusive mindsets, have a strong sense of personal and social responsibility, and the ability to thrive in an ever-changing world, regardless of background.

We welcome thousands of new members to our community each year and want everyone, irrespective of who they are and where they are from, to be part of our university, supported to grow and develop while feeling safe to be challenged in their learning and achieve their best outcome. As a single community of learning, the diversity of our students' identities and experiences are reinforced by our *One Community* values of equality, understanding, listening, kindness and acceptance to ensure that respectful and inclusive behaviours are central to enhancing our student experience.

The University is one of only two universities in Lincolnshire[5], serving a diverse and geographically isolated county. Our students engage in their learning across three campuses: two small rural commuter satellite campuses (Riseholme and Holbeach), and the main central residential Lincoln Brayford campus. In the 2023/24 academic year, our student body includes 11,300 full-time home UG students and 1,400 part-time home UG students, studying across 150 programmes under a two College Structure.

---

[1] See Annex A – Risk 1

[2] OfS Young Participation by Area – See Annex A TUNDRA MSOA Map

[3] The latest Graduate Outcomes Survey data (for the 20/21 survey released in 2023) shows that the percentage of graduates in work that were in highly skilled roles (SOC 1-3) was 64.9% compared to a sector average rate of 72.9% (a 3.7% improvement on the previous year). Lincoln's graduates in the main go to work in the surrounding regions (East Midlands, East of England, Yorkshire and Humber) and we note that there can be a challenge in accessing the amount of highly skilled roles compared with other areas of the country.
The percentage of graduates in some form of employment or study in the latest year was 90.5% compared to the sector equivalent rate of 89.7%.

[4] https://lalt.lincoln.ac.uk/student-as-producer/

[5] Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) operating from a single-site campus in Lincoln was originally established as an Anglican teaching training college for women in 1862, gaining taught degree awarding powers and full university status in 2012. Currently educating over 2,000 students in a wide range of subjects across an expanding BA and BSc undergraduate portfolio, including traditional PGCE primary and secondary teaching training routes, work-based Foundation Degrees, Master's courses and Doctoral study.

Beyond our on-campus provision, our University of Lincoln Academy Trust is raising ambition in South Lincolnshire, overseeing two secondary and five primary schools. Our education provision specifically addresses regional demographic issues such as Lincolnshire's rural, deprived and aging population through healthcare programmes developed and delivered in partnerships with local NHS trusts. We also address the needs of local SMEs through our business provision, enterprise work and apprenticeships supporting the local economy. We are a key partner in the Lincolnshire Institute of Technology (LIoT), working with other institutions across the county to raise STEM aspirations.

Since 2017, we have maintained a partnership with Lincoln's UniConnect Partner, LiNCHigher, in collaboration with Bishop Grosseteste University. This has facilitated the delivery of an ongoing outreach programme across our region and has supported and informed some of the activities now presented under the Access strand in our Intervention Strategy (IS1) below. Further detail about our work with LiNCHigher is set out in Annex B.

We are proud of our partnerships with our students, Students' Union (SU), professional bodies, employers and placement providers, and the people of Lincolnshire whose futures we seek to be part of.

2. Risks to Equality of Opportunity

For the purposes of this Access and Participation Plan, we are using the OfS' definition of a 'risk to equality of opportunity' and 'indication of risk':

- A risk to equality of opportunity occurs when the actions or indications of an individual, organisation or system may reduce another individual's choices about the nature and direction of their life.
- An indication of risk refers to the way in which a risk might impact a student group in a manner that is visible in data.

Based on our assessment of performance (detailed in Annex A) and our student consultation and supporting evidence base (detailed in Annex B), the following indications of risks to equality of opportunity have been identified and considered in the context of the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and used to inform our access and participation objectives.

We note the sector-wide risk identified by the OfS, the EORR and Student Minds Mental Health Charter framework in relation to increased student mental health barriers and challenges (both disclosed and undisclosed) that may affect a student's opportunity to succeed in and progress from university. Data captured by the University's Student Wellbeing Centre continues to confirm an upward trajectory of student declarations of mental health conditions on their UCAS applications, as well as experiencing mental health challenges during their time at university (see Annex B). In this context we recognise that mental health (Risk 8) is endemic across our student community (regardless of student characteristics or representation) and therefore is considered to be implicit within all the targeted and holistic interventions set out within our plan, to strive for equality of opportunity for our student community.

Access to Higher Education

Indication of risk (1): There is a lower representation of new entrants from IMD Q1 backgrounds (most deprived) compared with IMD Q5 backgrounds (least deprived).

Across the sector there are now more new entrants from IMD Q1 entering HE compared with Q5, and despite meeting the targets set in our 21/22 to 24/25 plan, our data indicates that we continue to have a gap in representation from this group, compared with IMD Q5.

While a majority of our students surveyed did not directly recognise the barriers to access presented to them as applicable or relevant, those that did placed greater emphasis on the ongoing impact of COVID (Risk 9) and lack of help or support from others (Risks 6 & 7), before knowledge and skills (Risk 1), information and guidance (Risk 2), and support to make an informed choice or perceptions of HE (Risk 3).

As a group identified as least likely to progress into HE (Annex A) this student group confirmed less knowledge about what to expect from going to university, needing more support with the application process and understanding of student finance.

Indication of risk (2): There is lower representation of male new entrants than female new entrants.

OfS Access & Participation data confirms that this is a sector-wide imbalance. We have identified that this gap has been increasing for Lincoln and warrants further enquiry and intervention.

Our own analysis mapped against EORR risks suggests that this occurs post-16 (with feeder Schools/FE Colleges indicating a similar gender imbalance) and this can be associated with perceptions of HE (Risk 3) when students are making their post-16 plans, information and guidance to support their ambitions (Risk 2), and as an impact of this risk, low attainment at Key Stage 4 linking to limiting choice at Key Stage 5.

Achieving Success at Lincoln

Indication of risk (3): ABMO students are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree.

Informed by the EORR, evidence from our students surveyed across all under-represented groups cited cost of living pressures (Risk 10) as a leading challenge in relation to achieving success in their studies and supporting progression beyond graduation.

For ABMO students, their sense of belonging (making friends within and outside their programme) as an impact of Risk 7 (insufficient personal support) was secondary to cost pressures, followed equally by gaps in their knowledge and skills acquired at school/college (Risk 1), and ongoing impacts of COVID (Risk 9) impacting their learning at university (detailed in Annex B).

We also know from this evaluation that while students are seeking support interventions (in particular from their Personal Tutors) which indicates some level of engaging help to address challenges they may be facing, ABMO students are not necessarily accessing multiple facets of that support, which we need to address across those targeted activities in this plan.

Reducing the gap in attainment rates for students from ABMO backgrounds is therefore an ongoing target, set in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. Latest and four-year data confirms that an attainment gap remains between this student group and their White counterparts, with the largest gap being within our black student group.

Indication of risk (4): Disabled students are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree.

For this aggregated group, we know from our evaluation that respondents are highly engaged with available support, with a majority indicating engagement with their personal tutor and Student Wellbeing Services, and over half indicating they are accessing two or more support mechanisms.

Sense of belonging is a key aspect of student success, and while this is reflected by those students engaging with an SU Social or Academic Society – which can counter the negative impact of Risks 6 & 7 (insufficient academic and personal support) – nearly a quarter of respondents still confirm that they are not engaging with any support for the challenges that they may be facing.

This student group similarly reflects on cost-of-living pressure (Risk 10) having an impact on their success trajectory, alongside gaps in knowledge/skills from school (Risk 1) that is impacting their current learning at university (detailed in Annex B).

Reducing the gap in attainment rates for disabled students is an ongoing target, set in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. Disaggregated data confirms that the sub-groups with the largest gap are the cognitive and learning student group and social and communication student group.

Indication of risk (5): Students from the most deprived backgrounds are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree.

Our evaluation of IMD1 students confirms that their biggest challenge once at university is cost of living pressures (Risk 10) – as also reflected by disabled and ABMO students (detailed in Annex B). This is followed by gaps in their knowledge and skills acquired prior to university which impacts on their subsequent learning (Risk 1).

While support accessed to help with these challenges reflects engagement with student facing services (Student Services/Wellbeing) as well as seeking support from Personal Tutors and joining SU Social/Academic Societies (both countering negative impact of Risks 6 & 7), this is offset by nearly half of respondents indicating that they are not accessing any support mechanisms, and the same proportion confirming that they are only accessing one or two.

Given that we already know that this student group has less knowledge regarding what to expect from going to university (Risk 2) and understanding of student finance, there is clear need to address this where we see differences in the attainment of these students from their peers.

Reducing the gap in attainment rates for students from the most deprived backgrounds is a target set in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan and as an ongoing risk, remains within this next plan.

Progression from Lincoln

Indication of risk (6): Disabled students are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further higher-level study on completion of their UG degree.

Our consultation for this student group indicates three key factors impacting progression associated with lack of finance to relocate for employment opportunities, lack of finance to study further and lack of confidence to apply for roles aligned with their qualifications. These align with EORR Risk 12 (progression from higher education) and to some extent Risk 10 (cost pressures). Impacts of Risk 6 & 7 are also reflected in evaluation scores for lack of opportunity to participate in activities (during their studies) to support progression and lack of guidance (Risk 2) to inform their options as a lesser consideration (as detailed in Annex B).

Reducing the gap in progression rates between disabled students and their non-disabled counterparts is an ongoing target, set in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. Latest data indicates only a small variance in this student group compared to their non-disabled counterparts and while meeting the target set in our current plan, the year-on-year gap at Lincoln has grown, and therefore remains as a risk and core focus for this plan.

As an institution, understanding and responding to the risks to equality of opportunity to access higher education locally, regionally, and nationally are core to our strategy. Our work to support underrepresented groups in accessing and being successful in higher education starts with dedicated outreach activities in schools and colleges to ensure we have the opportunity to engage with students from all walks of life. This work is designed to implement processes and underpins policies which level the playing field for students to secure their place at university. For those who choose to come to Lincoln, that commitment continues throughout their studies, with access to dedicated and specialist services and support to facilitate success and progression into employment or further study.

3. Objectives

Our aims and objectives over the life of this plan are below, and targets these are set out in Section 4.

1. Aligned with our Transforming Lives and Communities strategic plan, and Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement strategy, we will increase the representation within our student community of students participating in HE from the most deprived backgrounds to remove their barriers to access.
2. In seeking to address the increasing imbalance between male and female new entrants at Lincoln, we will build on work with our feeder schools focused on addressing socio-economic disparities and perceptions of higher education in order to specifically support and increase access for male new entrants.
3. Ensure Asian, black, mixed and other (ABMO) students successfully progress through their studies in line with their white counterparts. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap to white students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable ABMO students to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.
4. Enable students who disclose a disability to progress through their studies in line with their non-disabled counterparts. We continue to aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in degree attainment rates. Central to this objective will be disaggregation of groupings to ensure full understanding of student needs to inform intervention development and delivery.
5. Ensure students from the most deprived backgrounds successfully progress through their studies in line with their counterparts from less deprived backgrounds. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap for these students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable students from the most deprived backgrounds to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.
6. Enable students who disclose a disability to progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study in line with their non-disabled counterparts, continuing the work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. We aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in progression between our disabled and non-disabled students, taking an individualised approach to focusing on the development and delivery of differentiated support enabling disabled students to successfully progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study.

4. Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Objectives and Targets

Objective: Aligned with our Transforming Lives and Communities strategic plan, and Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement strategy, we will increase the representation within our student community of students participating in HE from the most deprived backgrounds to remove their barriers to access.

Targets & Trajectory Plan: To increase the percentage of IMD1 new entrants at Lincoln from the current 15.8% (AY21/22) to 20% over the four-year plan.

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
17.0%	17.8%	18.8%	20.0%

Risks to Equality of Opportunity: Indicated by our data, there is a lower representation of new entrants from IMD Q1 (most deprived) compared with IMD Q5 (least deprived). This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills
- Risk 2: Information and Guidance
- Risk 3: Perception of Higher Education
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	Inputs (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS1.1	*(Enhanced activity)* Contextual Offers	The University has reviewed the criteria for its standard contextual offers and will extend these in line with the APP target for access for IMD1 applicants. This will extend the contextual offer scheme to all applicants from Greater Lincolnshire and will be in place from AY25/26 entry as part of Lincoln's commitment to wider participation. Adopting multi-characteristic criteria will support applicants from a Lincolnshire local authority area and would see an increase in contextual offers from c.42% of our applications to c.71%.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £101,622 (life of plan)	– Target applicants as part of our commitment to widening participation. – Students that had FSM status as well as IMD1-2 criteria (within Greater Lincolnshire) will directly benefit from this supported access to HE. – Raise aspiration to join HE by reducing entry barriers for those who are anxious or lack confidence.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS1.2, IS1.5, IS1.8, IS1.9			**Publication Plan:** Internal dashboards.	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) Quantitative analysis of applicant characteristics through annual Planning and review cycles.			Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation).	
IS1.2	*(Existing activity)* Bursaries & Financial Assistance Funds	We offer a range of scholarships and bursaries for eligible undergraduate students going to university for the first time, including merit-based and subject specific. These are either allocated directly to students through information disclosed to SFE or are available for students to apply for.	**Allocated Funds:** £6,691,811 (life of plan)	

		Awarded automatically through SFE, the **University of Lincoln Scholarship** is for UK students whose household income is less than £25,000/year.	All students meeting the eligibility criteria will receive the scholarship.	– Increasing access for and representation of students from the most deprived backgrounds.
		Intersectionally, the **Foyer/Supported Housing Bursary** is for students who come directly from living in a Foyer or other supported housing between the ages of 16 to 18.	**Allocated Funds:** £12,000 (life of plan)	– Increasing access for and representation of students from the most deprived backgrounds.
		Intersectionally, the **Blackburn Bursary** aims to provide extra support for students coming to the University who have previously received local authority care and are defined as 'care leavers', as determined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.	**Allocated Funds:** £120,000 (life of plan)	– Increasing access for and representation of students from the most deprived backgrounds.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS3 and IS4 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit.			**Publication Plan:** University's Annual Accounts published externally. Financial Reporting to be disseminated internally. Medium/long-term Financial Support Impact Evaluation hosted on UoL external Research Repository.	
IS1.3	*(New activity)* Project Independence – Medical School	**Schools Engagement** – targeting Y10 to Y13 to engage those students wishing to apply for Medicine, with a particular focus on students from underrepresented groups. Information provided includes the difference between grades/gateway years and accessibility to medicine. Support will shift focus dependant on year group (commencing at Y10) to tailor student base knowledge that will inform their journey to applying for medicine. Culminating in Y13, students attending a one-day event will experience a tour of the University's medical school facilities and a talk on alternatives to medicine (UCAS Choice 6). First delivery will be in Nov-24, and the programme will be regularly reviewed as the Medical School progresses towards the first independent intake in September 2026 (UoL Medical School provision is aligned with Nottingham University until independence is established for AY26/27).	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £112,788 (life of plan)	– Increasing engagement in medicine for students from areas of high deprivation (particularly those from Greater Lincolnshire). – Build student understanding and insight into medicine, including grade requirements, MMIs, work experience, foundation year, and the admissions journey. – Opportunity to promote all healthcare courses offered so that students can make informed choices.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Post-engagement evaluations, data analysis of demographics of students coming into medicine from AY26/27 and intention for HEAT analysis.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Short/medium/long-term external publication and dissemination decisions will be taken as the Medical School develops its independence from AY26/27.	

		Medical School Admissions – The new independent Medical School will focus its admissions process on ensuring wide and diverse access. This will be based around personal attributes (e.g. communication, empathy, professionalism) rather than relying only on academic performance.	Costs are included in the figure shown above.	– Increasing admissions from students from a wider range of backgrounds. – Improving equity for students who may have experienced disruption to their academic studies.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Narrative outcome from student experiences (of Admissions process) and PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle over the first five years to review student experience.			**Publication Plan:** Annual returns to the General Medical Council as the regulator of undergraduate medical programmes. Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Short/medium/long-term external publication and dissemination decisions will be taken as the Medical School develops its independence from AY26/27.	
IS1.4	*(Existing activity)* Boost That Grade	Delivered annually, this activity focuses on three core curriculum subjects in secondary education, providing teachers with the most up to date techniques and thinking in partnership with AQA. This shared knowledge supports student attainment to pass at grade 4 and above, enabling them to progress proficiently to the next stage of education post 16-18. Information and training is provided to current teachers, those who are currently completing their teaching qualification, or any senior leaders wanting to upskill their staff team. Specific details are set out under each subject provision below.	**Direct Input:** Delivery by external specialist provider.	See below.
		Boost That Grade English – Sept-23 (first delivery) Exemplar responses from the summer exams are used to consider ways in which students attain a grade 5. Delegates are provided with practical classroom approaches to help with their confidence, knowledge, and expertise to improve their students' ability. First delivery to 38 teachers from 14 different Schools and one FE College.	Sessions delivered by AQA specialists, as part of their National CPD programmes.	Short-term: – Teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies to improve grades increases. – Teachers' confidence in ability to improve student grades is improved. – Teachers have forum to share experiences and gain support from other teachers. Medium-term: – Teachers deliver the improved strategies to learners. – Teachers incorporate new strategies into revision sessions. – Teachers share the strategies with
		Boost That Grade Maths – Nov-23 (first delivery) This session strengthens teacher confidence in supporting students preparing for exams by focussing on 4 or 5 key skill areas to maximise success and achievement. Delegates receive targeted activities to take back to the classroom, are signposted to key resources, and develop useful approaches to exam technique and timings. First delivery to 13 teachers from 5 different Schools and 3 FE Colleges.		

		Boost That Grade Science – Mar-24 (first delivery) This session aims to strengthen teacher confidence in supporting students preparing for exams. It focuses on key skills to enhance teaching practices, maximise student achievement, and covers a range of topics designed to support teachers in optimising student learning outcomes. This offers a unique perspective to teachers along with practical strategies to elevate teaching approaches. First delivery to 12 teachers from 9 different Schools.		others at their school. Long-term: – Students understand and can apply the new strategies/techniques. – Grades improve.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS1.6 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Pre- and post-session evaluation of attendees (*existing*) and impact evaluation undertaken with teachers (*new*).			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation).	
IS1.5	*(Existing activity)* Annual Access Conference	This conference targets students studying Access to higher education programmes at FE Colleges in the Greater Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire area (who are aged 19+). Issues such as how to apply, student funding information (with external guidance from SLC with University Finance input), and specific course information are covered. Taster sessions are also delivered for healthcare (jointly with the NHS), psychology, criminology, law and forensic science programmes. Careers & Employability and Student Wellbeing colleagues are also available to answer queries. November 2023 – 91 student/staff attendees from 6 FE Colleges. This conference is free of charge to remove any barriers to student engagement.	**Allocated Funds:** £3000 (life of plan)	For students who attend this event, this supports: – Breaking down barriers about HE. – Informing students about finance available to those from underrepresented groups. – The chance to discuss personal circumstances and ways of accessing HE.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Post-engagement evaluations, *(new from AY24/25)* Student data captured (at UoL enrolment) to identify direct corelation between event engagement and student progression into HE (and the subject area of their programme of study) and intention for HEAT analysis.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Short/medium-term: Outcomes to be shared with/disseminated to Schools / FE Colleges to inform future engagement.	
IS1.6	*(Existing activity)* Prepare for the Future (KS4)	Prepare for the Future enables schools to bring their KS4 pupils to experience a day on campus to understand and see what is available when studying at university. The day includes a bespoke session to investigate the wide range of courses on offer that they will not have encountered through their curriculum at school.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £43,544 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £12,000 (life of plan)	– Pupils gain an insight into what HE and studying at university may mean for them. – Perceived barriers to what university offers are removed and students gain the confidence to consider their options post-16.

		23/24 delivery saw 3500+ students booked to attend across all dates with 30 different schools coming onto campus.		
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) (From *24/25*) Introduction of attendance impact evaluation (without personal student data capture) and work with participant Schools to survey and evaluate sample groups.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Short/medium-term: Outcomes to be shared with/disseminated to Schools / FE Colleges to inform future engagement. Medium/long-term: Disseminate evaluation/practice through Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA)	
IS1.7	*(Existing activity)* Lincolnshire Children's University	Our Lincolnshire Children's University scheme (run locally by UoL and Bishop Grosseteste University) aims to ensure that primary school children can develop a real love for learning. As part of the national charity, the Children's University Trust, this unique initiative aims to raise children's aspirations and provide a variety of exciting learning opportunities that they may not otherwise experience. Working in partnership with primary schools, delivery of this scheme engages with KS2 pupils encouraging and celebrating their participation in extra-curricular activities in and outside of school. As of AY23/24, 12 primary schools engage with this initiative, with plans to increase this engagement further in 24/25.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £3,800 (life of plan) Quarterly meetings with the Children's University Steering Group **Allocated Funds:** Subscription fee £7,200 (life of plan) Graduation Ceremony £1,000 (life of plan)	– Pupils have fun, enjoy new learning experiences, and stay motivated to learn in various ways. – Engagement creates a level playing field for accessing learning experiences and opportunities. – Participants grow in confidence and self-belief and are empowered to make positive choices about their future. – Participants are more likely to pursue higher education in their lifetime, and have knowledge about the opportunities that attending HE will bring.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Contributing to national evaluation and impact undertaken by The Children's University Trust.			**Publication Plan:** Annually into The Children's' University Trust	
IS1.8	*(New activity)* Parents Evening YR11	Introduced in 2024, this is an evening aimed at myth busting for parents of students who have less experience of HE. Parents and students receive information and guidance about HE relating to cost; debt for graduates, and support for students with mental health difficulties or neurodiversity. Schools across Lincolnshire and wider regions are invited, targeting those with low representation of students progressing to HE. First delivery of this in Feb-24 recorded 55 attendees.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £7,124 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £2,000 (life of plan)	– Barriers to HE such as student funding/ finance are addressed. – Students are more likely to engage in further access/engagement opportunities. – Students have better understanding of the support they can expect at university.

<table>
<tr><td>IS1.9</td><td>(New activity)
Parents Evening YR12</td><td>Building on the YR11 event, this event will provide further information and guidance about HE to parents and their children in YR12.
Schools across Lincolnshire and wider regions are invited, targeting those with low representation of students progressing to HE.
Those attending will hear directly from the various teams and the Students' Union about how to overcome barriers to progression, extra-curricular opportunities for students, and the breadth of support that is provided at university.
The session is also intended to provide a better understanding about the application and finance processes involved in securing a place at university.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing costs £9,124 (life of plan)

Allocated Funds:
£4,000 (life of plan)</td><td>– Parents and students receive high quality information and guidance about university, and the routes into HE.
– Parents and students are aware of the application process.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: 2.1

Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) Post-delivery online evaluation.</td><td colspan="2">Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation).</td></tr>
<tr><td>IS1.10</td><td>(Existing activity)
Be Inspired Programme</td><td>Designed to offer potential students more than just a taster session. This activity provides students with the opportunity to experience a selection of degree programmes, helping to familiarise them with new subjects or programmes they may not have previously considered or been aware of.
These practical, on-campus sessions, provide students with direct access to academic experts. This provides an immersive and inspiring experience to foster aspiration and success.
In academic year 23/24, the Be Inspired Programme facilitated engagement with 70 different Schools/Colleges (bringing over 2,100 students onto campus) across 36+ days.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing costs £64,047 (life of plan)</td><td>– Increased awareness of HE opportunities.
– Greater knowledge and understanding of the programmes which may align with student's areas of interest.
– Gives a more authentic experience of HE as students from around the UK mix with each other.
– Staff from schools/colleges get the opportunity to gain more informed and up to date guidance on HE, which can be relayed to their students.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: 2.1

Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) Post-engagement student attendance survey/evaluation.
(New from AY24/25) Student data captured (at UoL enrolment) to identify direct correlation between event engagement and student progression into HE (and the subject area of their programme of study).
(Pilot) HEAT tracking (specific programmes) to share data with UoL academic schools.
Track target Schools (WP backgrounds) for engagement/attendance and seek to remove barriers to joining the programme.</td><td colspan="2">Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation).
Short/medium-term: Outcomes to be shared with/disseminated to Schools / FE Colleges to inform future engagement.
Medium/long-term: Disseminate evaluation/practice through Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA).
UoL 2026 (bi-annual) Teachers Conference (June) in context of presentations around access interventions and activities (attended by Schools/FE Colleges nationally).</td></tr>
</table>

IS1.11	*(Existing activity)* Pathfinders Access Programme	A three-year, continuous contact programme for bright and enthusiastic pupils (eligible for free school meals) from Y9-11 within the East Midlands – particularly Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. Launched in AY22/23 as a partnership programme led by the University of Oxford, teacher-nominated pupils have the opportunity to attend lectures and workshops at both universities, culminating in an overnight residential at Oxford in the final year of the programme. Focuses on less familiar subjects (Law, Medicine, Business, Politics and Engineering) alongside well-known aspects of the school curriculum, and alternative programme options aligned with grade achievement. Additional information for parents and teachers about student finance, university admissions, and skills development is also provided.	Funded directly by University of Oxford	– Under-represented pupils with an aptitude for learning (from target areas) have early and increased awareness of HE opportunities. – Participants grow in confidence and self-belief to be empowered to make positive choices about their future. – Greater knowledge and understanding of student finance and admissions processes reduces risks to equality of opportunity.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS1.3, IS1.10 and IS2.1			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Short/medium-term: Outcomes to be shared with/disseminated to Schools / FE Colleges to inform future engagement.	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) Post-engagement student attendance survey/evaluation. *(New from AY24/25)* Student data captured (at UoL enrolment) to identify direct correlation between event engagement and student progression into HE (and the subject area of their programme of study).				

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£7,189,072** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the detailed evidence base and supporting rationale as set out in Annex B. This includes a combination of internal evaluation and potential/applicant student consultation, examples of sector practice, and research aligned with the overarching objective to address the underrepresentation of those students least likely to enter HE. Some of these activities are specifically targeted (contextual offers, financial assistance and access conference) to the identified student group, however we acknowledge that other activities will benefit a wider cohort of students with the ambition to enter HE.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations, where appropriate, will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact. As part of our wider evaluation strategy, greater focus will be placed on utilising HEAT tracking to improve the availability of data for development and delivery of our access interventions, informing their robust evaluation and impact reporting.

Intervention strategy 2: Objectives and Targets

Objective: In seeking to address the increasing imbalance between male and female new entrants at Lincoln, we will build on work with our feeder schools focused on addressing socio-economic disparities and perceptions of HE in order to specifically support and increase access for male new entrants.	**Risks to Equality of Opportunity:** At Lincoln, there is lower representation of male new entrants than female new entrants. This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity: – Risk 2: Information and Guidance – Risk 3: Perceptions of Higher Education
Targets & Trajectory Plan: To increase the percentage of male new entrants at Lincoln from the current 39.7% (AY21/22) to 43% by 2028/29.	

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	
41.0%	41.5%	42.0%	43.0%	

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	Inputs (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS2.1	*(New activity)* Addressing gender imbalance at Programme level	We will utilise student data to identify where we have ongoing gender imbalance in our programmes and where there is validated evidence to inform that this does not align with sector subject representation. This understanding will be used to inform the development of tailored campaigns to address this disparity, and in turn develop interventions across our early outreach and engagement provision, including focused Academic School engagement in existing interventions (e.g. Be Inspired Days) and other on-campus potential new entrant interactions.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £157,944 (life of plan)	– Ensure that male students at KS5 have awareness of the variety of HE programmes and opportunities available. – Greater knowledge and understanding of the programmes which may align with their areas of interest.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.2 and IS2.3			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). UoL 2026 (bi-annual) Teachers Conference (June) in context of presentations around access interventions and activities (attended by Schools/FE Colleges nationally).	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) *(From 25/26)* Student data captured (at UoL enrolment) to identify direct correlation between event engagement and student progression into HE (and the subject area of their programme of study). Quantitative analysis of student characteristics through annual Planning and review cycles.				
IS2.2	*(New activity)* Inclusive Imagery	As part of a wider review of our public imagery and key student messaging, we recognise that in many instances, this focuses on an attempt to remove the stereotype of programmes which may not have traditionally attracted female applicants. In doing so, this creates an unintended negative perception of those programmes for male students who aspire to that learning. This intervention will ensure that during 24/25 we move to a deliberate position where there is a 50/50 representation of both male and female students across our web and media platforms, and that this does not stereotype gender within specific programmes.	**Direct Input:** This review will be undertaken in 24/25 in preparation for 25/26 and therefore direct costs are expected to occur in 24/25. Evaluation costs will be included in the costs for 2.1.	– Enabling males to see themselves represented at university, particularly in some of our programmes with a very significant gender imbalance e.g. Psychology, Nursing and Medicine.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation).	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) Analysis of male/female representation within our applications and resulting new entrants (from 25/26).				

IS2.3	*(New activity)* Lincoln City Football Club – Sports / Study partnership	Partnership established in AY23/24 with the University, Students' Union and Lincoln City Football Club, running the University's (BUCS) first football team. Intended to engage those male students with a talent for football to consider entering HE and combining this with a supported opportunity alongside their studies (trialling for the team once enrolled). Initially this partnership has attracted enrolled students that did not yet play for the University football team, and from AY24/25, new entrants will have been targeted with this opportunity. As a new intervention, early impact is yet to be assessed post KS5 results in summer 2024. *From AY24/25, this opportunity will also be offered to female students.*	**Direct Input:** LCFC staff expertise, including coaches, physios, analysis team. **Allocated Funds:** £96,000 (life of plan)	– Support male student recruitment with a link to a professional EFL club (from 24/25, this will include Women's football). – Provide opportunities for work placement and internships. – Support LCFC in their development of players. – Provide student-athletes with a potential pathway into professional football.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS2.1 and 2.2 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) *(From 25/26)* Student data captured (at UoL enrolment) to identify direct correlation between intervention engagement and student progression into HE.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU representation). Longer-term opportunity to disseminate impact of intervention through school access/engagement mechanisms.	
IS2.4	*(Existing activity)* Pathfinders Access Programme	*For full details (including method(s) of evaluation and publication plan) please see IS1.11 above.* For Lincoln's part in this programme, we would like to address representation of male new entrants through this Access Programme as well as those with FSM status – particularly in relation to IS2.1.	*See IS1.11*	– Ensure that male students at KS5 have awareness of the variety of HE programmes and opportunities available. – Greater knowledge and understanding of the programmes which may align with their areas of interest.

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£253,944** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the evidence base and supporting rationale as set out in Annex B, aligned with the overarching objective to address the increasing imbalance between male and female new entrants at Lincoln. Introducing new activities to engage this identified student group is intended to be a starting point from which evaluation and student feedback will be used to consider and develop other mechanisms we can work with our feeder schools on. As reflected in our assessment of performance, this aligns with addressing those wider socio-economic disparities and perceptions of higher education that exist across our main recruitment regions, in order to specifically inform and enable greater access for male new entrants.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact.

Intervention strategy 3: Objectives and Targets

Objective: To ensure Asian, black, mixed and other (ABMO) students successfully progress through their studies in line with their white peers. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap to white students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable ABMO students to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.

Targets & Trajectory Plan: Halve the baseline gap in degree attainment between our ABMO and white students to 6% by the end of this plan – from a baseline differential position of 12.4% (AY21/22).

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
9.0%	8.5%	7.5%	6.0%

Risks to Equality of Opportunity: Highlighted by our assessment of performance, ABMO students are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree. This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
- Risk 8: Mental Health
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of Coronavirus
- Risk 10: Cost pressures

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	Inputs (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS3.1	*(Enhanced activity)* Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP) Higher	LEAP Higher builds on LEAP (launched in 2018/19) which examined and mitigated the differential student outcomes observed among minority ethnic groups – providing advice, resources and support. LEAP was designed to facilitate research-informed and evidence-based changes to teaching, learning and assessment practices, and to address the targets set out in the 20/21 to 24/25 APP. In line with the University's holistic approach to EDI, LEAP Higher takes an intersectional approach to student success. This enables oversight of attainment from an inclusion perspective, while continuing to address the differential learning outcomes as identified in Annex A. LEAP Higher focuses on barriers and enablers to student inclusion across disciplines. The approach is evidence-based, drawing on literature and data, nationally and institutionally, as well as further internal research to explore the lived experience of student inclusion at Lincoln. The latter is beginning with a pilot study of Pharmacy, the School with our highest proportion of ABMO students and a significant attainment gap.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £168,836 (life of plan)	– Provide validated measures to assess key concepts that are central to student inclusion (sense of belonging, student attainment, positive mental health). – Enable student and staff engagement with the toolkit and design interventions to nurture student inclusion and support their attainment.

Cross Intervention Strategy: IS3.2, IS3.3, IS3.5, IS4 and Mental Health Charter (MHC)

Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) Data collection through the toolkit used to identify barriers and enablers to student inclusion at a local level.
Empirical (Type 2) Local data shared centrally to establish a baseline for institutional monitoring and further evaluation of specific interventions from using the tool.
Analysis of central data will further inform focused interventions for dissemination across the institution.

Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).

Medium/long-term – Evaluation data to be shared via externally facing UoL blog.

			Medium/long-term – Evaluation findings to be published in relevant peer reviewed publications.	
IS3.2	*(New activity)* LEAP Higher Toolkit	Data from LEAP Higher will be used to develop the LEAP Higher Toolkit – a measurement and evaluation toolkit that will enable Schools to better identify barriers and enablers to student inclusion and provide validated measures to assess these. EGI will promote staff and student engagement with the toolkit, which will be used as a springboard for co-developing new interventions that will be evaluated in a consistent and robust way.	Included within IS3.1	– Short term – academic schools engage with the toolkit. – Medium term – increased sense of belonging and wellbeing/mental health among minoritised groups including ABMO and disabled students. – Long term – increased student inclusion and reduced attainment gaps.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS3.5 and IS4 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** As per IS3.1			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). LEAP Higher toolkit will be published on externally facing University website. Medium/long-term – Evaluation data to be shared via externally facing UoL blog. Medium/long-term – Evaluation findings to be published in relevant peer reviewed publications.	
IS3.3	*(Enhanced activity)* Lincoln Education Toolkit for Student Success (LETSS)	The LETSS Toolkit was launched in 2021 as a result of our LEAP work, to provide a resource of activities and advice for staff to facilitate the application and promotion of EDI in their teaching and educational practice. LETSS also aims to raise staff awareness of ABMO issues in HE in order to help address attainment gaps and differential outcomes. As part of our ongoing APP activity, LETSS is being refreshed with additional evidence-based resources. The refresh is being informed by our LEAP Higher work, as well as EGI's externally funded research, such as the Disability Inclusion Framework, LiNCHigher work examining the inclusive student pipeline, and work for professional associations examining students' experiences related to EDI in specific disciplines.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £168,836 (life of plan)	– Short-term – academic Schools engage with the toolkit. – Medium-term – increased sense of belonging and wellbeing/mental health among minoritised groups including ABMO and disabled students. – Long-term – increased student inclusion and reduced attainment gaps.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS3.5 and IS4 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) evaluation based on interviews or focus groups with staff using the toolkit to better understand its usefulness & areas for improvement, informing understanding of how LETSS may/may not be contributing to changes in sense of belonging and attainment gaps. Analysis of central data to examine whether medium and long-term outcomes are being achieved.			**Publication Plan:** Refreshed LETSS to be published externally on UoL website. Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).	

			Medium/long-term – Evaluation data to be shared externally (UoL blog). Medium/long-term – Evaluation findings to be published in relevant peer reviewed publications.	
IS3.4	*(Existing activity)* Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET)	SSET's focus is supporting students who are at risk of not completing their programme due to poor attendance. Monitored through Learning Analytics (LA), the SSET is able to identify all students who are at risk of non-completion. The aim of the SSET is threefold: – To identify and support students who are at risk of non-completion of their programme or failure to achieve their full potential. – To encourage students to engage with attendance monitoring. – To reduce university-led withdrawals and support better student outcomes (including improved employment prospects). *Introduced in 2023 as a holistic intervention, this will also directly have an impact on ABMO students.*	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £65,085 (life of plan)	– Improved student engagement and sense of belonging on their programme. – Students receive academic / wellbeing / mental health support in a timely fashion. – More students complete their course. – More students reach their full potential. – Better support for students who choose to withdraw from the course.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS4.9 and Mental Health Charter			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU / Student representation). Student attendance data and learning analytics hosted internally on dashboards. As a member of AMOSSHE (Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education) ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) (*From AY24/25*) Direct interviews with service users Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard (Learning Analytics). SSET team have service KPI's used to monitor the effectiveness of their interventions on attendance/engagement, retention, progression.				
IS3.5	*(Existing activity)* School Student Success Lead (SSL)	SSLs act as champions for embedding an inclusive teaching and learning culture within their School. This requires raising awareness and influencing change in order to establish a norm where barriers to participation and success are removed for all students. Through their SSL, Schools develop, monitor and report on plans of activities which address the barriers to success experienced by their students, ensuring that these activities are tailored to their needs. The design and delivery of interventions takes account of intersectional student needs, based on data hosted on central dashboards. Dissemination and sharing of best practice through the SSL network further informs the adoption and implementation of tried and tested strategies. This includes school-led EDI focused activity and examples of student-led groups (at College and School level). In the context of this plan, this includes activities from both LEAP Higher and LETSS, targeting ABMO students, as well as interventions which are intended to support and improve success for all students.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £18,980 (life of plan)	– Increased student engagement with and success from participation in teaching and learning opportunities, influencing overall attainment. – Increased student access to and engagement with specialist services to support learning outcomes and overall student attainment. – Improved student sense of belonging.

Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly	**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Ongoing – Best practice and case studies will be disseminated through UoL Teaching & Learning website (external) and Widening Participation Community of Practice (internal).
Method(s) of Evaluation: Across the respective activities being developed/delivered within Academic School this will include both narrative (Type 1) and empirical (Type 2).	

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£421,738** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the detailed evidence base and supporting rational as set out in Annex B. This includes a combination of internal evaluation, examples of sector practice and research aligned with the overarching objective to ensure ABMO students successfully progress through their studies in line with their white counterparts. Aligned with core work of our EGI (including Race Equality Charter and EDI practices), LEAP and LETSS interventions are directly informed by that activity being specifically targeted to the identified student group. The scope of SSET and SSLs will be further informed by developing theories of change and evaluation practices to ensure that, whether delivery is targeted or non-targeted, the interventions in place will enable us to provide impactful support to all our students at all lifecycle stages.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact.

Intervention strategy 4: Objectives and Targets

Objective: To enable students who disclose a disability to progress through their studies in line with their non-disabled counterparts. We continue to aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in degree attainment rates. Central to this objective will be disaggregation of groupings to ensure full understanding of student needs to inform intervention development and delivery.

Targets & Trajectory Plan: To reduce the gap in degree attainment rates between our disabled and non-disabled students to 1% by the final year of the plan – from a baseline differential position of 5.0% (four-year average).

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
3.5%	3.0%	2.0%	1.0%

Risks to Equality of Opportunity: Our data has shown that disabled students are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree. This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
- Risk 8: Mental Health
- Risk 10: Cost pressures

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	Inputs (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS4.1	*(Existing activity)* Libraries & Learning Skills	Libraries and Learning Skills provide dedicated support for students with specific learning differences – connecting with PASS plans (IS4.7) to provide specific support and guidance.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £176,570 (life of plan)	– Students passing their assignments and/or receiving a higher mark for their work, which in turn should reduce the gap in attainment rates.

		Writing Development (WD) offers specialist support and teaching to all students, on all courses and levels across a range of academic writing skills. They do this by: – 1-2-1 appointments help students with dyslexia and ADHD understand, plan, and structure their assignments. – Workshops include practical tips for dyslexic students on how to succeed in their studies and allow a hands-on and collaborative discussion regarding the theme. – Teaching in the curriculum supports embedding a successful intervention for the relevant theme, as well as reach students who might not seek this support individually.		
IS4.2	*(Existing activity)* Libraries & Learning Skills	**Maths & Stats (MASH)** offer support and teaching to all students on a range of maths and statistic skills. They do this by: – 1-2-1 appointments – examples include helping students with individual support to help them build their understanding of statistics and confidently apply that knowledge. – Teaching in the curriculum supports embedding a successful intervention for the relevant theme, as well as reach students who might not seek this support individually.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £133,688 (life of plan)	– Students improve their maths and stats skills, which in turn should mean that they receive a higher mark in assignments, reducing the gap in attainment rates.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS4.7 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** For both IS4.1 and IS4.2 Narrative (Type 1) a questionnaire is sent out after each intervention so that services and the support offered can be improved.			**Publication Plan:** For both IS4.1 and IS4.2 Annual monitoring and evaluation reports/case studies to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Annually: Dissemination into internal Teaching & Learning Showcase symposium. Writing Development external dissemination through ALDinHE (Association for Learning Development in HE) Network and Conference (short-term comparative 24/25 to 26/27 study) and paper presentation opportunities (subject to acceptance) to annual RAISE conference. Short/medium/long-term – MASH publish/present externally through SIGMA (Network for Excellence in Mathematics & Stats Support).	
IS4.3	*(Existing activity)* Libraries & Learning Skills	**Library Wellbeing – Anxiety** The Library Wellbeing team are responsible for ensuring disabled students and anxious or neurodiverse students feel comfortable and confident in accessing library resources to perform better.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £75,809 (life of plan)	– Students feel comfortable and confident using the library, leading to them knowing how to access and use resources for successful study.
Cross Intervention Strategy: Mental Health Charter				

Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) Statistics are collected which are used in departmental reports.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports/case studies to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Annual impact report University of Lincoln Libraries & Learning Skills **'**Grains of Knowledge' Blog. Present at the Customer Services Group UK Conference in November 2026 (network supporting library customer service professionals).	
IS4.4	*(Existing activity)* Libraries & Learning Skills	**Library Wellbeing – Accessibility** Student PASS Plans are used to inform support for individual needs and available resources such as RNIB Bookshare or SensusAccess. Students with an accessibility disability receive information on accessible materials, training opportunities for assistive software, and other targeted support and services.	**Direct Input:** Staffing costs £75,809 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £10,000 (life of plan)	– Students feel comfortable and confident using the library, leading to them knowing how to access resources for successful study
Cross Intervention Strategy: Mental Health Charter **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) We collect usage stats from RNIB Bookshare and SensusAccess so we can see the impact and who is downloading resources.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports/case studies to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Present at Mercian Library Collaboration conference (September 2025). Short/medium-term – submit impact paper to SCONUL (professional association for academic & research libraires in the UK and Ireland). Annual impact report University of Lincoln Libraries & Learning Skills 'Grains of Knowledge' Blog.	
IS4.5	*(Existing activity)* Libraries & Learning Skills	**Peer to Peer Student Assistants** Writing Development (WD) and Maths and Stats (MASH) have student assistants who offer peer to peer support. Student assistants deliver support through evening and weekend appointments, ensuring a range of appointment availability to suit all students (particularly for those disabled students who have identified a preference to attend when the library is quieter).	**Allocated Funds:** £5,000 per year.	– Evening and weekend appointments are utilised, and they have a positive impact on students.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) A questionnaire is sent out after each intervention so that services and the support offered can be improved.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports/case studies to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).	

			External dissemination through ALDinHE (Association for Learning Development in HE) Network and Conference (subject to proposal acceptance aiming for 2026). Annual impact report University of Lincoln Libraries & Learning Skills 'Grains of Knowledge' Blog.	
IS4.6	*(Existing activity)* Student Wellbeing – Prospective Student Work	All students who disclose a disability via UCAS that falls under the Equality Act are contacted by Student Wellbeing in advance of their transition to university to discuss the support that they may need. This enables early support in relation to transfers of any care or accommodation needs they have, as well as establishing PASS Plans, and arranging Disabled Students Allowance support to ensure that their transition to HE is a smooth as possible.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £272,271 (life of plan)	– Students declaring a disability are better prepared for their transition into university. – Social care adjustments and occupational health needs can be put in place as required. – Students experience a more positive transition of support in relation to their mental health needs.
Cross Intervention Strategy: Mental Health Charter **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) (*New from AY24/25*) Tracking students through dashboards to inform analysis of early outcomes.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.	
IS4.7	*(Existing activity)* Student Wellbeing – PASS Plans	The University's Wellbeing Centre provides Personalised Academic Study Support (PASS) plans which request specific types of support that should be offered to meet the needs of individual students. The PASS is a document for the student, their academic School and Library & Learning Skills, setting out the recommended academic support for specific areas, due to how the student's condition affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities and impacts their ability to fully engage with academic studies. To help staff fully support students, a range of guides are hosted online which include supporting students with visual impairments, hearing impairments, mental health concerns, ADHD, Autism, learning differences, and medical needs.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £140,873 (life of plan)	– Improved student engagement with their teaching & learning and supports achieving success in their studies. – Provides individualised learning support for students who are impacted by a disability. – Provides details within each PASS to academic schools around external partnership support or engagement with clinical teams.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS4.3, IS4.4 and Mental Health Charter **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) (*NEW from 25/26*) using internal data to measure attainment of students with/without PASS.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.	

<table>
<tr><td>IS4.8</td><td>(Existing activity)
Student Wellbeing – Wellbeing Orientation Week (WOW)</td><td>Established in recognition of the complexity of issues that many of our students face about transitioning to study at university (including anxieties around social interaction, independent living, how to study and getting around campus) all of which, at times, can lead to students feeling overwhelmed and, on occasion, choosing to leave university.
In place since 2015 – WOW summer school enables prospective students who have declared Autism/ASD or a mental health condition to ease anxieties that they may have about their transition into university life.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing Costs
£728,647 (life of plan)

Allocated Funds:
£96,000 (life of plan)</td><td>– Students benefit from an experience of what campus life is like to reduce anxiety before enrolment.
– Welcome and icebreaker sessions, campus tour and familiarity with facilities and social activities support positive transition to HE.
– Students are supported to build early social / friendship connections.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Demand for places has grown since 2015 and as of AY23/24 120 places were offered to prospective students. Across a free 3-day 2-night stay, students engage in a programme of workshops, teaching sessions and social events to give them a greater understanding of what to expect when they arrive. This is supported by Student Wellbeing staff and Student Ambassadors.
WOW attendees are monitored once enrolled to track their engagement in their studies. This confirms a higher engagement in their programme as a result (WOW 2022 attendees 72.68%, UoL average 65.82%, UoL disability average 61.27%).</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: Mental Health Charter</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).
As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.
Membership of Student Minds Mental Health Charter Programme facilitating a community of institutions and members group to share best practice.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) Students complete a questionnaire on their final day – reflecting on how confident they feel about managing change and their anxiety about starting university.
Student and staff feedback informs ongoing reflection and change to ensure that each delivery of WOW continues to reflect what works, and what would benefit from improvement or change.
WOW students are tracked once enrolled to monitor their engagement.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>IS4.9</td><td>(Existing activity)
Open Access – Student Wellbeing Service (SWC)</td><td>A central service for student mental health and wellbeing – facilitating access to the curriculum for those students with disclosed disabilities, including mental health, as well as prioritising the wellbeing of all students.

While growing numbers of students declare a disability via UCAS or upon enrolment, a significant number of students don’t recognise their mental health barriers and challenges as a disability – many of whom do not request a PASS plan. This is particularly relevant to the disaggregated groups of disability we see in our data.

Open access to Student Wellbeing enables the service to support the wider student community navigate their wellbeing and mental health under the governance of the University’s Student Mental Health Policy.

Service information structured around themes is hosted on a fully inclusive/accessible website, signposted to students and staff (particularly those with responsibility for personal tutoring) to assist students (and those supporting them) on how/where to access a service.

Additionally, the SWC have developed a growing number of external partnerships and secured funding for specialist posts within the Wellbeing team. Pathways have been agreed to enable direct referral by the team to other service providers in the NHS and community which are essential to supporting the mental wellbeing of the whole student community.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing Costs
£1,738,685 (life of plan)</td><td>– Students are supported with holistic services aligned with their individual mental health needs which enables improved engagement in their academic studies.
– Students who have not specifically declared a mental health condition are more likely to move through the continuation, completion and attainment stages of the student lifecycle.
– Students build resilience and understanding of their individual mental health which will support them beyond university.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: IS4.10 and Mental Health Charter</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).

As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.

Short/medium/long-term – contributions relating to practice and impact through a number of network communication channels including National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP), Universities Mental Health Advisory Network (UMHAN), National Network of Care leavers (NNECL) and Student Minds Mental Health Charter Programme.

Available opportunities for membership/representation on national taskforce/forums relating to Student Wellbeing practice & policy – previously contributed as member of Taskforce for National Review of Student Suicides and currently leading on Honour-based Violence Group through Office of Police Crime Commissioners.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type1)
(New) Dashboards providing ongoing reporting on service users.</td></tr>
</table>

IS4.10	*(Existing activity)* Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET)	*For full SSET details (including method(s) of evaluation and publication plan) please see IS3.4 above.* Introduced in 2023 as a holistic intervention, help and support from the Team will also directly have an impact on disabled students.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £65,085 (life of plan)	*For full details please see IS3.4*
IS4.11	*(Existing activity)* School Student Success Lead	*For full SSLs details (including method(s) of evaluation and publication plan) please see IS3.5 above.* In the context of this objective, this will include activities which are specifically targeted to those students declaring a disability, however, there will also be delivery of non-targeted interventions which are intended to support and improve success for all students.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £18,980 (life of plan)	– Increased student engagement with and success from participation in teaching and learning opportunities, and overall attainment. – Increased student access to and engagement with specialist services to support learning outcomes and overall student attainment. – Improving accessibility of teaching and learning materials. – Improved student sense of belonging.
IS4.12	*(Existing activity)* Blackboard Ally	Blackboard Ally is an integrated service within the University's VLE. Ally automatically measures the accessibility of PDF, Word, PowerPoint or webpages on Blackboard (against international standards for web accessibility). Ally also offers tools to support academic colleagues to enhance the accessibility of their resources and tools for students to download files in alternative forms (audio, braille, etc) to assist their learning.		– Inclusive online learning resources support a variety of additional student needs, improving access to and engagement with learning.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Ally scores are measured & reported annually (end of academic year). Reporting also provides areas where the university is weakest which is then used for targeted support.			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. The Ally score is measured as a KPI for Digital Services and reported annually.	
IS4.13	*(Enhanced activity)* LEAP Higher	As described in IS3.1 Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP) is being enhanced as LEAP Higher. This involves extending current work focused previously on ABMO students to have a more holistic focus looking at improving student success and reducing the gaps in attainment rates across cohorts, including for disabled students. *For further details see IS3.1 and IS3.2 above.*	Staffing Costs £168,836 (life of plan)	*For full details see IS3.1 + IS3.2*
IS4.14	*(New activity)* FeedbackFirst	To address the stress and anxiety experienced by many students when transitioning to HE the School of Psychology are undertaking a trial of un-grading for Level 4 study across all UG programmes in AY23/24.	**Direct Input:** None – review and changes to assessment strategies forms part of	– Enables a smoother transition to first year of university. – Shapes student approach to good learning behaviours.

		The emphasis of this intervention is for students to receive feedback (written and/or verbal) on their work that will let them know how well they have addressed the assessment criteria, how they have met the learning outcomes and where they need to focus to improve their work. Discussion of assessment feedback will also form the basis for individual tutorials in Semester A and B of Level 4. Semester A of Level 5 will involve assessment seminars to ensure students are equally clear around grading criteria mapped to assessment outcomes. Subject to evaluation and impact of this pilot, plans will be developed to map onto other UG programmes.	annual programme management	– Students become less risk-adverse resulting in lower stress levels and impacting mental health. – Students take greater control of their learning process and become more reflective about feedback. – Students focus on learning over performance. – Students are more motivated. – Increased sense of belonging aligned with collaborative learning and supportive study culture.
Cross Intervention Strategy: Potential to inform LEAP Higher IS3.1			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Short-term: Decentering Grades in Year 1: A trial of Ungrading at Programme Level 2024 Journal of Learning Development in HE Short-term: Poster Presentation submitted for Society for Research in HE (SHRE) Annual Conference (Dec-24) Medium/long-term: external publications as evaluation of project data continues and UoL external website content.	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) Post-pilot evaluation due to start September 2024 Data collection in-year (academic engagement, academic/general wellbeing, perceived academic competence, student autonomy and meaningful learning) and end of year (academic performance and attendance). Focus groups and individual interviews.				

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£3,625,254** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the detailed evidence base and supporting rational as set out in Annex B. This includes a combination of internal evaluation and student consultation, examples of sector practice and research aligned with the overarching objective to support students who disclose a disability to progress through their studies in line with their non-disabled counterparts.

Aligned with our whole provider approach and ethos to support student success and attainment, some of these interventions are specifically targeted (Library anxiety and accessibility, prospective Student Wellbeing engagement, PASS, WOW, Blackboard Ally and LEAP Higher) to the identified student group, while delivery of the Writing Skills and MASH, SSET and Student Success Lead non-targeted interventions will enable us to provide impactful support to all our students as they move through the student lifecycle stages of continuation, completion and attainment.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact.

Intervention strategy 5: Objectives and Targets

Objective: To ensure students from the most deprived backgrounds successfully progress through their studies in line with their counterparts from less deprived backgrounds. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap for these students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable students from the most deprived backgrounds to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.

Targets & Trajectory Plan: To reduce the gap in degree attainment between our IMD1 and IMD5 students to 10% by the final year of the plan – from a baseline differential position of 15.0% (AY21/22).

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
12	11.5	11	10

Risks to Equality of Opportunity: Our data has shown that students from an IMD Q1 (most deprived) background are less likely to be awarded a first class or upper second-class degree than those from an IMD Q5 (least deprived) background. This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills
- Risk 2: Information and Guidance
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
- Risk 8: Mental Health
- Risk 10: Cost pressures

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	**Inputs** (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS5.1	*(Enhanced Activity)* Financial Assistance Funding Campaign	Recognising that take-up of our Financial Assistance Funds is under capacity this intervention will deliver targeted awareness raising campaigns to IMD1 students. An annual communications plan will ensure messaging is time sensitive and recognises the different financial challenges throughout the academic year. An end of year campaign will additionally raise awareness of the financial support available over the summer period.	**Allocated Funds:** £258,804 (life of plan)	– Increase in the number of IMD1 students accessing funding which will positively affect their academic performance. – Reduction in the number of IMD1 students recording low attendance, or who leave the University for financial reasons. – Students may worry less about finances (which impacts mental health) and can focus more on their studies and overall wellbeing.

Cross Intervention Strategy: IS1.2 and IS5.4

Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit

Publication Plan: University's Annual Accounts published externally.

Financial Reporting to be disseminated internally for discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).

Short/medium/long-term impact disseminated through a number of network communication channels including Institute of Money Advisers (IMA) and National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA).

Medium/long-term Financial Support Impact Evaluation on UoL external Research Repository.

<table>
<tr><td>IS5.2</td><td>(Enhanced Activity)
Connected Support
Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET)</td><td>For full SSET details (including method(s) of evaluation and publication plan) please see IS3.4 above.
Using the information provided by the EPM (see IS5.4) and working with Personal Tutors and School Senior Tutors, SSET will provide early targeted interventions for IMD1 students.
This enhanced personalised help and targeted support from the Team will have an impact on the success and engagement profile for IMD1 students.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing Costs
£89,635 (life of plan)</td><td>– For full details please see IS3.4
– Contact established by SSET with this student group will address lack of confidence to seek advice and support – breaking down barriers to accessing and initiating early call for help.
– Service supports students develop self-efficacy and knowledge of key services which will aid them across the student lifecycle.
– Students engage with academic / wellbeing / mental health support in a timely fashion.
– College Senior Tutors ensure evidence based and consistent support is provided at a School level by Personal Tutors.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: IS5.5 and Mental Health Charter
Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) (From AY24/25) Direct interviews with service users
Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard (Learning Analytics).
SSET team have service KPI’s used to monitor the effectiveness of their interventions on attendance/engagement, retention, progression.</td><td colspan="2">Publication Plan: Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU / Student representation).
Student attendance data and learning analytics hosted internally on dashboards.
As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>IS5.3</td><td>(Enhanced Activity)
Targeted Libraries & Learning Skills Support</td><td>This will deliver targeted awareness raising campaigns to IMD1 students.
An annual communications plan will ensure messaging is time sensitive and recognises the different academic challenges throughout the academic year.</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing Costs
£197,350 (life of plan)</td><td>– For full details please see IS4.1 and IS4.2
– Regular contact with this student group acts as a pre-emptive opportunity to engage with information and guidance which will aid them across the student lifecycle.
– Students develop self-efficacy and build knowledge of available academic support.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly
Method(s) of Evaluation: Narrative (Type 1) a questionnaire is sent out after each intervention so that services and the support offered can be improved.</td><td colspan="2">Publication Plan: See full details in IS4.1 and IS4.2 above for both internal and external publication and impact dissemination into sector learning development and support networks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>IS5.4</td><td>(Existing Activity)</td><td>The University’s Engagement Priority Marker (EPM) dashboard brings together a range of engagement data to provide academic and professional service staff the information they need to quickly identify</td><td>Direct Input:
Staffing Costs
£68,327 (life of plan)</td><td>– Improved communication and engagement between Personal Tutors, students and support services.</td></tr>
</table>

	Targeted Engagement Priority Marker	students who are not engaging and enable early interventions to be put in place. IMD1 students will be prioritised in the early intervention process and supported to re-engage with their studies as quickly as possible.		– Increased attendance and engagement (Library & VLE) by IMD1 students – Greater awareness of complexity of student life and issues impacting the performance and engagement of target student group.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS5.2 and IS5.5 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard (Learning Analytics) Empirical (Type 2) Evaluation (from AY25/26)			**Publication Plan:** Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). 2020 Evaluation of EPM Dashboard Pilot hosted externally and longer-term will be repeated. Medium/long-term additional external opportunities will also be sought through related sector networks (including AMOSSHE).	
IS5.5	(Existing Activity) Open Access – Wellbeing Support	A central service for student mental health and wellbeing – open access to Student Wellbeing enables the service to support the wider student community navigate their wellbeing and mental health under the governance of the University's Student Mental Health Policy. Recognising the link between the pressures of cost of living and mental health and the impact this has on attainment, the University's Wellbeing service offers a range of interventions to support students maintain their wellbeing and mental health, as well as online support campaigns 'Getting Organised' and 'Exams' which complement wider attainment assistance mechanisms across this intervention strategy. IS4.9 gives further detail of the holistic support offered by the Wellbeing service.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £323,812 (life of plan)	– Students are supported to build resilience in managing their workload and assessments to reduce anxiety and improve attainment. – Students are supported with holistic services aligned with their individual mental health needs which enables improved engagement in their academic studies. – Focus is not solely on students' academic needs to ensure social and emotional well-being.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS5.2 and Mental Health Charter **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type1) (*New*) Dashboards providing ongoing reporting on service users.			**Publication Plan:** For full context see IS4.9 above Annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). As a member of AMOSSHE ongoing dissemination opportunities include open network communications and annual conference presentation. Short/medium/long-term contributions relating to practice and impact through a number of network communication channels including Universities Mental Health Advisory Network (UMHAN) and Student Minds Mental Health Charter Programme.	

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£937,929** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the detailed evidence base and supporting rational as set out in Annex B. This includes a combination of internal evaluation and student consultation, examples of sector practice and research aligned with the overarching objective to support students from the most deprived backgrounds successfully progress through their studies in line with their counterparts from less deprived backgrounds.

While our financial assistance funding is specifically intended to support the identified student group, the SSET, EPM, Library & Learning Skills and Personal Tutoring interventions correlate with our whole provider approach and ethos to support student success and attainment for all students. However, in the context of this student group it is the timing, frequency and mechanisms through which interventions will be targeted in order to raise awareness of and access to engage with this support from the earliest opportunity. This provides impactful support to these students as they move through the student lifecycle stages of continuation, completion and attainment.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact.

Intervention strategy 6: Objectives and Targets

Objective: To enable students who disclose a disability to progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study in line with their non-disabled counterparts, continuing the work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. We aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in progression between our disabled and non-disabled students, taking an individualised approach to focusing on the development and delivery of differentiated support enabling disabled students to successfully progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study.

Targets & Trajectory Plan: To reduce the gap in graduate employment or further study rates between our disabled and non-disabled students to 2.0% (in line with the sector average) – from a baseline differential position of 5.1% (AY20/21).

25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
4.0%	3.5%	2.9%	2.0%

Risks to Equality of Opportunity: We have determined that disabled students are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further higher-level study on completion of their UG degree. This intervention aims to address this by mitigating the following risks to equality of opportunity:

- Risk 2: Information and Guidance
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
- Risk 8: Mental Health
- Risk 10: Cost pressures
- Risk 12: Progression from Higher Education

	Name of Activity	Description of Activity	Inputs (Financial & human resources for delivery)	Outcomes
IS6.1	*(Enhanced activity)* Unlocking Potential	Delivered through a mix of face-to-face and online sessions, activities focus on topics including career confidence, application stress and resilience, and how, when**,** and why to talk to an employer about a disability.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £40,199 (life of plan)	– Students develop strategies for navigating barriers to the workplace. – Students can access person centred advice via group and 1:1 career coaching. – Engagement with support contributes to reduced stress and anxiety, improving student confidence, wellbeing and mental

				– health in relation to progression from university.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS6.2, IS6.4 and IS6.5 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) Student feedback surveys and Focus Groups (*to be implemented*)			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Case studies published externally. Short/medium-term: as a member of AGCAS Disability Task Group ongoing and regular dissemination includes open network communications, sharing best practice and engaging in challenges experienced across the sector. Medium/long-term AGCAS conference presentation of year 2 findings. Long-term publication of progress in Phoenix (AGCAS Journal)	
IS6.2	Targeted mentoring and support	*(New)* Introduce a targeted professional mentoring scheme influenced by an industry advisory board of employers and alumni. The scheme will provide disability training for mentors and will prioritise disabled student applications.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £69,235 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £48,000 (life of plan)	– Students' social capital and professional network will grow by having regular touchpoints with students and alumni. – Students' social capital and professional network will grow by making industry connections at careers fairs. – This growth of professional networks will support students access to work experiences. – Engagement with support contributes to reduced stress and anxiety, improving student confidence, wellbeing and mental health in relation to progression from university.
		(Existing) 'Book a Buddy' scheme introduced for careers fairs providing individual support for students attending to 'book a buddy' to accompany them around the fair and to feel more confident when meeting and talking to employers.		
		(Existing) Prep session for disabled students in advance of careers fairs. This workshop provides an overview of what to expect, how to speak to employers and the accessibility provisions throughout employer events e.g. the buddy scheme.		
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Pre/post evaluation surveys for Mentoring, Focus Group, Student feedback and Career Readiness data capture.			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Ongoing external case study publication opportunities. To share best practice into external Community of Best Practice (facilitated through Birmingham City University – 70+ HEI members).	

IS6.3	*(New activity)* Opportunity Fund	The Opportunity Fund supports eligible students cover costs associated with upcoming job interviews to reduce the financial impact/barrier to attending career opportunities. The fund supports a number of under-represented groups via eligibility criteria (available to students up to 15 months after graduation) where disabled students are a target group for fund promotion and applications, and priority for approval.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £69,235 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £20,000 (life of plan)	– Reduced financial barriers to accessing career opportunities. – Students/recent graduates are supported to attend interviews and work towards their career goals.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Student feedback/case study captured on transition into graduate level role and data tracked (students securing graduate role).			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Ongoing external case study publication opportunities.	
IS6.4	*(New activity)* Career Coaching	Disabled students (and Care Leavers) are able to access dedicated specialist career coaching. These sessions are held with a Careers Adviser who specialises in supporting students from these groups.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £40,199 (life of plan)	– Students will through regular support be able to explore career options and navigate the transition to graduate employment.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Narrative (Type 1) Student feedback/case study captured on transition into graduate level role.			**Publication Plan:** Overarching & monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Ongoing external case study publication opportunities.	
IS6.5	*(Existing activity)* Guaranteed Interview Scheme – Campus Jobs	Disabled students applying for roles advertised through Campus Jobs (the university's student employment agency) Central Pool, completing the application to the best of their ability and who meet the minimum essential criteria will be eligible for an interview. Students applying through the scheme are advised to access support for their CV and application through the Careers & Employability service.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £5,976 (life of plan)	– Disabled students are supported to access employment available on campus either for one off opportunities or regular job roles which supports their development of employability skills balanced around their studies.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS6.1 and IS4 **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Data tracked (students placed in work assignments).			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).	
IS6.6	*(Enhanced activity)* School Employability Leads	Colleagues in Careers & Employability work on an ongoing basis with School Employability Leads to provide additional support for areas identified which have gaps in progression rates. Courses with high disability numbers and/or existing gaps in progression rates are offered	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £7,731 (life of plan)	– Students' confidence in navigating workplace challenges will increase. – Students will have increased awareness about the transition to employment.

		further activities building on key content, including career confidence, skills matching and inclusive recruitment. This has included 7 Schools in 23/24 academic year.		– Gaps in progression rates within schools will be reduced.
Cross Intervention Strategy: None directly **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Student feedback surveys and gaps in progression rates data analysis.			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation).	
IS6.7	*(Existing activity)* Careers Readiness Programme (CRP)	A layered Career Readiness Programme is delivered to all students, scaffolded by three career stages 'explore, develop and apply' and levels (4, 5, 6). This is embedded into core modules or personal tutoring and comprises of 3 x 1-hour lectures per level. Access and Participation themes are embedded into the content, including themes on career confidence, inclusive employers, mentoring and signposting to 1:1 advice. This is implemented to scale across all academic schools. Complementary personal tutoring 'touch points' support ongoing learning & signposting individualised learning needs.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £140,646 (life of plan) **Allocated Funds:** £2,400 (life of plan)	– Students will have greater career confidence. – Increased student knowledge and awareness of Careers & Employability services. – Improved final year career readiness stage – movement from 'explore' – 'apply' (measured at enrolment stage). – Improved and increased uptake of work experience, placements, global opportunities, and wider work-based learning.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS6.4, IS6.6, IS4 and TLSE Strategy **Method(s) of Evaluation:** Empirical (Type 2) Optional session feedback measuring career confidence and knowledge gain and a filter option for disability on our Career Readiness dashboard (questions asked at enrolment stage) means that we will be able to do further analysis into career confidence gain for disabled students.			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Internal Careers Readiness Dashboard Ongoing external case study publication opportunities. HE Networks and Conference opportunities (previously RAISE-23 and UKAT-24) Showcase how personal tutoring touchpoints support ongoing teaching & learning UKAT Conference April 2025 (Learning Well)	
IS6.8	*(New activity)* Embedding Lincoln for Life Skills into the curriculum	Embedding skills into the core curriculum to support equality of access to skills development – 16 attributes are outlined within 4 sections 'Self Awareness and Wellbeing, Social Responsibility, Creativity and Global Mindset'. The current pilot (launched January 2024) includes guidance and training for programmes to map and surface existing skills through identifying learning outcomes and activities that will develop and/or assess these skills within core modules. Additionally, these skills will be placed into the context of lifelong career development through the Career Readiness Programme.	**Direct Input:** Staffing Costs £36,662 (life of plan)	– Students will have greater self-confidence in their skills (measured by a skills assessment). – Improved confidence – movement from 'explore' to 'apply'. – Active participation in skills development through a wide range of experiential learning (measured by increased work experience from enrolment questions). – Measured further through APP uptake of C&E led experiential learning activities e.g.

		All students are supported to complete a skills assessment reflecting on their current skills confidence; how to articulate this for the graduate labour market and provided with the opportunity to see their learning gain as they progress through university. This approach aims to ensure students have the opportunities to develop a range of skills and are supported to articulate these.		mentoring programme prioritising disabled students.
Cross Intervention Strategy: IS6.6, IS6.7, IS4 and TLSE Strategy			**Publication Plan:** Overarching annual monitoring and evaluation reports to be published and disseminated internally. For discussion and review through relevant University committee structures (including those meetings with SU/Student representation). Internal Career Readiness dashboard data. Annually: Dissemination into internal Teaching & Learning Showcase symposium. Ongoing sharing of best practice through AGCAS Heads of Service Regional Meetings (bi-monthly).	
Method(s) of Evaluation: Empirical (Type 2) Student skills assessment to inform insights into learning gain. Career Readiness Dashboard will provide analysis into disabled student work experience uptake.				

Sub-total for all costs included within this intervention strategy	**£480,284** (life of plan)

Evidence base and rationale (or similar): Activities set out in this intervention strategy are underpinned by the detailed evidence base and supporting rational as set out in Annex B. This includes a combination of internal evaluation and student consultation, examples of sector practice and research aligned with the overarching objective to enable students who disclose a disability to progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study in line with their non-disabled counterparts.

Aligned with our whole provider approach to support student success and progression ambitions, some of these activities are specifically targeted (unlocking potential, mentoring, opportunity fund, career coaching and guaranteed interview scheme) to the identified student group, while delivery of the Careers Readiness Programme and Lincoln for LIFE Skills will enable us to provide considered and evidence based support to all our students realise their progression ambitions upon completion of their programme.

Evaluation and Publication summary: We will evaluate each activity in this intervention strategy (as set out in the table above) and the intervention strategy as a whole, through a combination of OfS Type 1 and Type 2 standards. The results of evaluations will be published through a range of networks (both internal and external) and publications. This will include the University's peer-reviewed, open access and multi-disciplinary journal of higher education, IMPact.

We will evaluate the careers education programmes including Careers Readiness Programme annually to ensure content is accessible and APP considerations are throughout. Following introduction in 21/22, we have not been able to see the impact to graduate outcomes yet and won't see the full impact till 26/27 for students engaged from their first through to final year. However, the trajectory of increased work experience for disabled students, coupled with higher levels of career confidence already shows positive direction. Furthermore, year on year increased engagement with the Career Readiness Programme and service as a whole support this aim .

5. Whole Provider Approach

To address the risks to equality of opportunity outlined in our institutional objectives, the University of Lincoln is committed to an embedded whole provider approach. This consistent approach to access and participation ensures that we successfully deliver effective and impactful activities across the student lifecycle.

Our Access and Participation plan is one of a number of connected plans and strategies which relate to and are underpinned by our One Community ethos. The objectives set out in the plan to ensure equality of opportunity are aligned with our University Strategic Plan themes of 'we collaborate, we challenge, we transform' and our commitment to equality of opportunity is mapped in further detail within our Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Strategy.

Our continuing work with our Students' Union on building a sense of belonging (through the Student Futures Manifesto) for our students similarly reflects our focus on embedding this commitment in all areas of the institution, and we hold ongoing membership of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter programme, with our first Charter award application in the final stages of assessment. Lincoln currently holds OfS Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold status, awarded in 2023 for delivering consistently outstanding standards of teaching, learning and outcomes for our students (this comes on the back of our previous Gold award from 2017).

Beyond this, our wider Race Equality work and self-evaluation processes have been ongoing since 2017, leading to successful application for REC Bronze Award in April 2021. In addition, our Athena Swan project has served as a benchmark for our achievements (Athena Swan Silver Award in 2024) recognising the progress we have made towards gender equality, ten years on from our first Bronze Award in 2014. These equality, diversity and inclusion processes are co-ordinated through the Eleanor Glanville Institute, who are our central department for EDI and work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to deliver the strategic equality ambitions of the University, continually driving and embedding this cultural change.

Our Chief Student Officer has institutional oversight of the APP and is a member of the University's Senior Leadership Team, which, with the Board of Governors, has overall responsibility for agreeing the content and targets of this plan. This ensures that equality of opportunity remains a core focus for the business of the University and its wider governance.

The operational direction of this plan is monitored by the Access and Participation Plan Oversight Group (APPOG) chaired by the Chief Student Officer and maintains standing representation from across the University including our academic Schools (through College Leads), Marketing & Recruitment and Schools & Colleges Engagement, Planning & Business Intelligence, Student Services, Libraries & Learning Skills, Careers and Employability, the Students' Union, Finance Department, and internal evaluators.

Our institutional data, alongside the Office for Students sector data, informs our APP targets and strand activities (access, success, and progression). Performance against APP targets and more broadly internal equality and diversity targets are monitored through dashboards which report at University, College, School and Programme level. Within our academic Schools the focus on equality of opportunity is embedded through College and School leads, who work collaboratively with Programme Leaders and School Directors of Teaching and Learning to understand their data, and in turn ensure delivery and evaluation of activities and interventions which are relevant to their students. This is replicated in professional service teams through roles with a specific lead in this area to enable reciprocal engagement with academic support and provision.

Ensuring that student attendance, engagement and success is actively used to improve student outcomes, our Student Success and Engagement Team (introduced in 23/24 following a successful pilot) works with our attendance monitoring system data and our Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard to provide early interventions for those students we believe may be at risk of non-completion. Personal Tutoring dashboards also host engagement data drawn from student attendance, Library access & usage, and VLE engagement. This enables Personal Tutors to similarly identify students they have responsibility for, who are at risk of not achieving their academic potential and also intervene at an early stage. It is vital that this non-targeted support is available for all our students, particularly where we know that some mental health challenges are not necessarily diagnosed pre-university and only manifest in students when leaving home. These interventions underpin our whole provider approach to ensure that all our students, regardless of background have the same access and support to enable equality of opportunity. Lincoln is proud of its student retention rates which rank highly in sector benchmarks and

are attributed to the hypothesis that students thrive best where learning is individual, and support is easily accessible when required[6].

Clear and relevant communication with our students is also an important part of our whole provider approach, and we strive to ensure that we utilise digital technology and media platforms which best align with student accessibility, preferences, and habits. We recognise that where this is not the case communication traffic can become congested and impact on levels of engagement and lack of awareness of support and services. Work undertaken by our User Experience team, who work directly with a diverse body of students blogging, vlogging and posting about their experiences and top student tips, has been integral in influencing the mechanisms utilised for communication. These now regularly include Facebook, Instagram, and X, in addition to the University's VLE. Other additional and complementary mechanisms of signposting are undertaken through personal tutors as well as digital screens around the campus promoting a variety of student focused support campaigns – delivered across key touchpoints within the annual student calendar. In developing this greater awareness of how students engage in communications, this has led to the development of a new student app to act as a single portal where students can access information, announcements and news at a time which best suits them, developed and tested in partnership with our students.

Building on how we utilise the student voice to inform positive change, our Student as Producer ethos involves students in our decision-making processes and ensures that there is student representation within our committee structures (alongside Students' Union sabbatical officers). Informally, yet just as important are our Student Advisory groups within services, particularly Student Wellbeing, where student members (nominated by their Wellbeing Advisor) can contribute based on their established resilience and lived experience which is invaluable to inform change to and targeted development of our services. Student voice is also consistently captured through our Student Rep system and focus group and survey mechanisms. Our link to our student community is of course very much enabled through our relationship with the SU and our student services regularly meet with elected officers to share and engage reciprocal support for key initiatives or activities being led by the SU or the University. This also serves as a mechanism to discuss and take on board relevant feedback coming from SU, student and staff networks.

The University has an established community of practice for academic and professional staff with an interest in access and participation (built around our 20/21 to 24/25 APP). This group enables colleagues with this common interest to share new and best practice, as well as evaluation and impact findings through that work. Activities and updates are shared regularly through workshops, meetings and digital platforms, which also feature student speakers and external contributors to ensure ongoing insight into student experiences and engagement with sector practice. More recently this network has benefited from engagement with TASO as well as peer-learning and fostering collaboration between EDI colleagues. This community of practice continues to actively seek to build new connections both internally and externally (e.g. Poverty Truth Network and LocalMotion) to further enhance our ambitions for enabling and engaging with our local community in addressing inequality.

Staff in key roles aligned with access and participation are embedded members of sector networks to both share and inform practice, and where invited, challenges experienced to influence development of guidance and policies. This includes but is not limited to AGCAS Disability Task Group, Forum for Access & Continuing Education (FACE), NEON (supporting those involved in widening access to HE), NERUPI (Network Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) through our UniConnect/LiNCHigher partnership and working group (co-chairing a new NERUPI Student Voice working group), BERA (British Education Research Association) publishing through their blog and co-convening a Mental Health & Wellbeing Special Interest Group, and AMOSSHE which specifically supports our student services and wellbeing activities, promoting the development of and sharing of good practice across the HE sector.

As we approach the focus of this next plan, we acknowledge that there is still much we can do in relation to further building and raising APP awareness across our whole community. The access and participation experiences of our

[6] The Continuation (into second year) rate is 94.3% in the latest OfS published data for full-time first degree students. This is a composite rate utilising four years' worth of data. 94.3% is substantially higher than the OfS *minimum* threshold of 80% (B3 condition of registration monitoring) and exceeds the *expected* TEF benchmark value of 91.9%.

The Completion rate is 92.7% in the latest OfS published data for full-time first degree students. This is a composite rate utilising four years' worth of data and each year's rate is consistently between 92% and 93%. 92.7% is substantially higher than the OfS *minimum* threshold of 75% (B3 condition of registration monitoring) and exceeds the *expected* TEF benchmark value of 89.8%.

students begin before they enrol in their first year, and this is key to informing the actions we take ahead of that point and the services and support we have ready for when they arrive. While we continue to construct robust data sets which provide greater insight into our student cohorts and evaluate practice to inform maintaining interventions with impact, we need to ensure that staff understanding of these in relation to their teaching practice is timely and transparent. This includes ensuring that as we review and develop our academic experience and student policies these need to be informed by and reflect our broader access and participation understanding, objectives and goals. By empowering our student-facing staff with essential knowledge and skills, streamlining information platforms, and facilitating easy access to resources, we are committed to addressing the challenges that students face, and enhancing their higher education journey.

6. Student Consultation

Engagement with and capture of student voice across the whole student lifecycle is well established at Lincoln as a central element of how the University and the SU work with students in partnership. It is an authentic, inclusive, embedded, and ongoing practice which facilitates the whole community to come together, both informally and formally to ensure that all student voices are considered in every aspect of teaching, learning and decision making. This commitment is recognised by both the University and Students' Union, and is set out alongside our student commitment in our Student Charter.

Students who were identified by our target groups (IMD1, disabled and ABMO) were directly surveyed as part of constructing this plan to seek insight into their experiences in relation to accessing higher education and securing their place at Lincoln, achieving success as they progress through their studies, and support for their aspirations beyond their undergraduate degree. Additional smaller focus group discussions were held to discuss the same themes of experience and participants from target backgrounds were proactively recruited to these. We recognise that some students face barriers to taking part in consultation activities, so to ensure that the voices of seldom heard student groups are incorporated, we do incentivise participation to support their involvement. The findings from these engagement activities are reported in Annex B.

All students at Lincoln have the opportunity to provide feedback on their teaching and learning experiences, and the specialist services and support which go alongside this. This includes data captured by Schools Liaison (pre-enrolment), in-programme module evaluation mechanisms designed to align with subject disciplines, and end of year student experience survey for all students not in their final year of studies (who will complete the NSS). Specialist student services (Student Wellbeing, Libraries & Learning Skills, Careers & Employability) also collect opinion from their service users utilising a range of formats, including surveys, informal focus groups, as well as convening more formal advisory groups. The Student Wellbeing Student Advisory Group enables student members, nominated by their Wellbeing Advisor on the basis of established resilience and lived experience, to independently consider aspects of service provision and give provide valuable and authentic feedback. This all contributes to and continues to inform and shape service delivery to meet growing and changing student needs around mental health and wellbeing, particularly in light of the continued rise in students declaring a disability either in advance of, or while at university.

The University's link to its student community is very much enabled through its relationship with the Students' Union. In the context of student/staff partnership, Student Services meet regularly with the SU's elected Officers and key SU staff members to share updates on each area, and related services – which includes student mental health and wellbeing. These enable reciprocal support and feedback for key initiatives or activities being led by the SU or University. In addition, the Head of Student Services meets monthly with the SU's VP Wellbeing & Community and can relay student views back into relevant support teams to connect up, or address any issues raised. The Students Union also hold co-chair status with the Dean of Teaching & Learning for the Student Experience Committee. Meeting monthly this committee acts as a forum for key stakeholders to drive conversations concerning issues affecting the student experience, proactively engaging with students and members of the wider university community to make appropriate recommendations from these conversations, including informing the development of transformative pedagogies and contributing to the delivery of the University's access and participation targets.

Aligned with this, creation of our Student Futures Manifesto (2023) sets ambition to maintain a set of actions and commitments which are student owned and led, creating a sense of belonging for our students and enhancing their overall student experience. This builds upon work by the UPP Student Futures Commission which identified a baseline of students who had low confidence, were potentially behind in academic progress, and had increased anxiety and a loss of social skills following the Covid-19 pandemic. The demographic of appointed student

consultants involved in this work included those with a declared disability and/or an ABMO background. The resulting manifesto, based on six key themes, represents a commitment to providing pathways of guidance and support, and targeted interventions under each theme which are student-informed to address challenges or barriers that students may encounter. This ongoing work is very timely as it also contributes to targeted access and participation activities.

From AY24/25, all students (regardless of demographic group) will be given the opportunity to share their experiences in relation to all stages of the student lifecycle – accessing HE, achieving success in their studies, and progression beyond completion. This feedback mechanism will be built into new and existing student voice evaluations in order to inform continued understanding of the risks to equality of opportunity faced by those within underrepresented groups, as well as those students perceived to be less impacted by these challenges and barriers. This consistent approach to student surveys and feedback capture mechanisms forms a key part of our ongoing commitment to partnership working with our Students' Union.

The University maintains membership of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter programme. Having committed to achieving Charter status for the institution we have already been through the self-assessment and peer review process, auditing our services against the framework's principles of good practice. Now in the final stages of Award endorsement, this work is testament to the ongoing collaboration with our Students' Union and our student body.

Student views on the development and content of the plan were represented throughout the development of the plan by our partners from the Students' Union who are full members of the University's Access and Participation Plan Oversight Group (APPOG). APPOG is responsible for the management and governance of the activities in this plan. The APPOG Teams site was used to make sure that all members of the group had access to the new APP and the data used in its preparation as it developed. All members of the group were invited to comment on drafts and appendices throughout the process and regular meetings were held to discuss the development of the plan. The Teams site also holds the current plan, monitoring data and implementation plans to enable members to cross reference between the current and the new plan.

Three sabbatical officers are members of the APPOG with their areas of responsibility being Activities; Campaigns and Environment; Wellbeing and Community. The Students' Union is further represented on this group by the Group Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

The wider student community were consulted through a direct survey approach, which asked specific questions to inform the content of the plan rather than being asked to review the content of the plan once it was drafted. This was particularly helpful given that students after Easter are very focussed on assessments in April and May and have less time available to engage with formal consultation.

7. Evaluation of the Plan

At Lincoln we recognise the value in effectively assessing the impact of our APP interventions. Through rigorous evaluation processes, we can ensure that our activities under this plan are informed by this evidence base, to enable us to deliver and maintain the support that provides equality of opportunity for all our students.

In support of this new phase of our access and participation activity, a refreshed monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed, informed by our use of the OfS Evaluation Self-assessment Tool, which confirms our current practice as emerging. The University also recognises the role of TASO here and has found its information and advice relating to theory of change and evaluation invaluable in informing the next stages of the work we need to do.

While we already undertake some narrative (Type 1 evidence) and empirical enquiry (Type 2 evidence) of our access and participation activities, attributing any improvements specifically to our strategy and interventions (Type 3 evidence) may be challenging, due to the combined effect of our interventions, and many external factors that could be influencing outcomes. However, our evaluations will seek to understand the role of such influence and therefore also the contribution of our APP strategy to any change in outcomes.

Our evaluation approach will seek to inform the improvement of our APP strategy overall and provide an evidence base regarding the effectiveness of individual targeted interventions, as well as those activities intended to deliver a universal approach to supporting our students, developed with a more holistic ethos.

This delivery will encompass both summative and formative evaluations and combine elements of process and outcome evaluation.

- Process evaluation will collect data to explore whether our APP approach and interventions is being implemented and delivered as intended, and what the barriers and facilitators to this may be. The process evaluation will be used to continually improve our approach and interventions by informing delivery.
- Outcome evaluation will collect data about the outcomes and effects of our approach and interventions on participants to determine whether our strategy and specific interventions are meeting their intended goals and outcomes.

Our evaluation will be guided by our theory of change and therefore a key focus of building this revised plan will be embedding this into all our practices. Work will be ongoing to support and develop our staff expertise in utilising an agreed model collaboratively with key stakeholders, including staff and students, and where not yet in place, prior to the start of any evaluation.

As above, our key focus will be to use a combination of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical) data, as well as a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods and multiple sources of information to assess process and impact.

As we develop our plan this will be guided by a number of key evaluation questions including:

- What have been the challenges and successes in establishing our APP approach and interventions?
- What have been the challenges and successes in implementing our APP approach and interventions?
- What activities and outputs has our APP approach produced or achieved?
- What are the strengths of our APP approach and interventions? What is working?
- What improvements should be made to our APP approach and interventions?
- Are the intended outcomes being achieved? For whom and in what circumstances?
- What other (internal/external) factors may be affecting the implementation of actions and achievement of outcomes?
- How have specific interventions contributed to the achievement of outcomes?
- What, if anything, are the unintended outcomes and consequences (positive or negative) of our approach and interventions?

The full evaluation plan will identify key indicators against which to measure progress, noting that some of these are already identified throughout our intervention strategies.

A schedule for our monitoring and evaluation will also be produced to inform reporting of progress against key indicators, annual stakeholder engagement workshops and an annual evaluation report that addresses the evaluation questions identified above. We will continue to use the OfS Financial Support evaluation toolkit to assess the impact of our University of Lincoln Scholarship, intended for eligible UK students (based on household income thresholds), given the considerable sum invested in this bursary and one of our most significant expenditures under this plan.

In 2019 we developed our Community of Practice – conceived and created as a key mechanism for sharing best practice and enabling a peer-to-peer support forum for our staff. This has become particularly valuable for colleagues whose work contributes to APP targets, or who are interested in supporting under-represented groups of students. In addition to this, experienced evaluation colleagues at Lincoln continue to proactively publish their work in academic journals and share good practice with relevant APP networks (as detailed in our whole provider approach and Annex B) and the wider HE academic research sector, as well as publishing relevant content on our website.

Externally we utilise the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service which supports our monitoring and evaluation of outreach activities and as detailed elsewhere, and have established connections with sector networks (APPSIG, NERUPI and FACE) which also inform and support our intervention developments and evaluation practices. Through the work of our refreshed evaluation strategy, we intend to build further on this platform of connections and reciprocal sharing of practice.

8. Provision of Information to Students

Publication of the plan

This Access and Participation Plan (2025/26-2028/29) will be published on our external website on the page dedicated to Equality of Opportunity. Alongside the plan, we will also make available an accessible summary, which will condense the plan for current and prospective students, parents, carers, teachers, and other school or college staff.

Fee information and financial support

Our Undergraduate Fees and Funding page on our external website gives clear information on our fees. This includes:

- Tuition fees for current and prospective students
- How students will pay their tuition fees
- A link to information on Gov.uk about Maintenance Loans

Our Student Support and Advice Team are always there to help with any financial worries. Details on the financial support we offer can be found on our Financial support page on our website. This includes information on Cost-of-Living support, student finance and funding, and budgeting tools. A dedicated page on Scholarships and Bursaries also signposts students to which funds can be accessed, as well as provides details on eligibility criteria, and how to apply.

Our Scholarships and Bursaries include:

University of Lincoln Scholarship	£500 per year paid in 3 instalments for students whose household income is less than £25,000/year.
Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)	Provides funding for specific equipment, non-medical help and specific allowances as recommended by an assessor and agreed by the student's sponsor for students who have a diagnosed disability which may cause them difficulty during their studies.
Blackburn Bursary	£500 paid upon enrolment and £1,000 paid upon successful completion of each level of study for students who have previously received local authority care.
Foyer Supported Housing Bursary	£1,000 in 3 termly instalments for students who come directly from living in a Foyer or other supported housing, where they have lived between the ages of 16 to 18.
George Major Bursaries	£1,000 per year for students with life-limiting illnesses.
University of Lincoln Financial Assistance Funds (ULFAF)	ULFAF are broken into separate funds for targeted groups to provide grants of £100 - £4,000 per year based on need for Home students who are experiencing financial difficulty.

Prospective students, parents and teachers are signposted to this information by our recruitment and outreach teams and our University Prospectus. Our offer letter that we send to applicants also confirms their fees and links to the support available.

A comprehensive information and advice service run by the Students' Union provides students with guidance and support on finance and cost of living, which can be accessed online or face-to-face. This also directs students to University financial support (above).

The University provides accurate information to the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the Student Loans Company (SLC), Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and other relevant bodies to enable them to populate their databases for prospective applicants.

Annex A

Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity.

Overview

We have assessed our performance through an analysis of Lincoln's overall performance against the wider set of OfS access and participation indicators, across the five student lifecycle stages – access, continuation, completion, attainment, and progression. This assessment utilised data from the OfS Access and Participation dashboard, HESA Student Return and Graduate Outcomes Survey alongside our own internal data. This is based on full-time, home, undergraduate students only. Disaggregated data has been utilised in all lifecycle stages and indicators of risk to inform the level of aggregation which is most appropriate for each of our targets.

This process has then been used to inform the areas of consideration which underpin the development, delivery and evaluation of activities and interventions in relation to this.

Internal access to this data and comparison of our performance (year on year) is available through central dashboards, which facilitate live tracking to view and report on the University's performance against our APP targets and the sector, as well as drill into this detail at a College and academic School level.

In each of the sub-sections below, which reflect the lifecycle stages, we have outlined the groups which are experiencing the largest variances or gaps[7] . The data is from the latest available year (2021/22) in the official OfS access and participation dataset. We have also considered the data for the longer four-year aggregate period as well as the year-on-year performance and our local and institutional context.

There are eleven notable indicators of risk in Lincoln's performance. Five of these identified indicators are targets in our 20/21 to 24/25 APP. The rationale for which of these indicators has been subsequently identified as a target for this plan and the level of aggregation selected for each target is set out below. All indicators of risk are monitored internally regardless of whether or not they are a target in this plan.

Lifecycle stage – Access

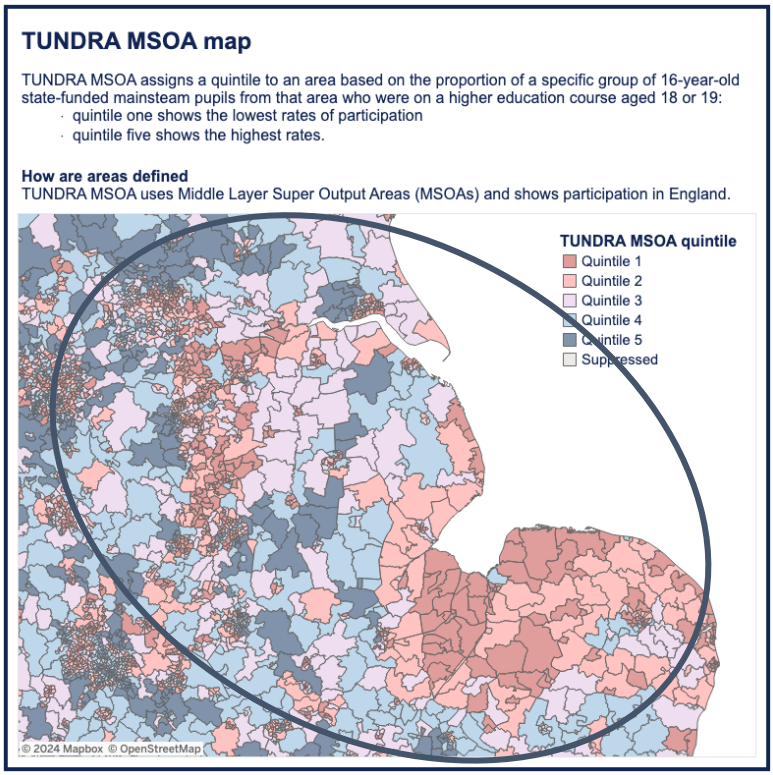
Risk 1 – The gap between the proportion of new entrants from IMD quintile 5 (least deprived) v quintile 1 (most deprived)

Lincoln's proportion of new entrants from an IMD Q1 background is 15.8% (n=548); the Q5 rate is 24.1% – this creates a gap of 8.3% for the latest year, and the 4-year aggregated data shows there has been very little change over this period (gap of 9.6%).

As an area of focus within our 20/21 to 24/25 APP, the target set to reduce that gap (between IMD1&2 and IMD 4&5) has been met for 2023/24.

In relation to this position, we acknowledge OfS TUNDRA data (below), which confirms levels of HE participation across the Greater Lincolnshire and adjoining regions, from where we recruit the majority of our new entrants.

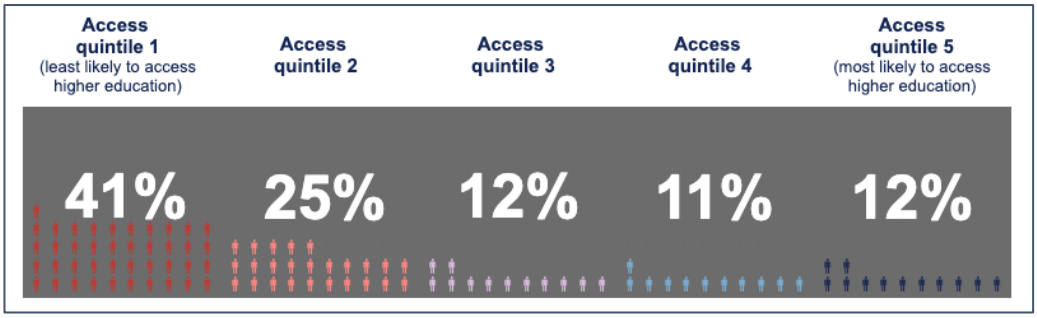
[7] The gap is the difference between the underrepresented group and their peers. This is expressed as a percentage point difference between the proportion of the first group being referenced minus the second.



In addition, the data below extracted from our 'New Entrants % by Region' dashboard confirms this recruitment position – despite the low levels of progression to HE indicated by the TUNDRA data set, in these regions.

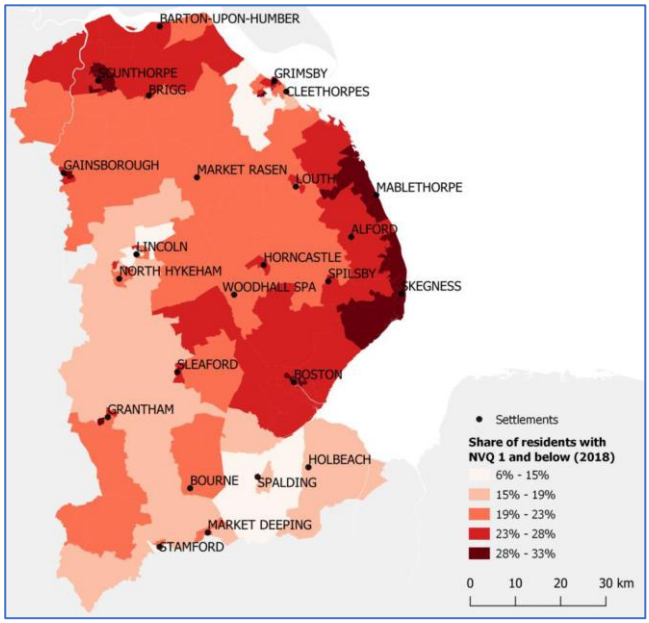
Top 10 Regions for New Entrants (23/24)	Total New UG entrants = 4453	% of New Entrants
Lincolnshire	756	16.9%
Nottinghamshire	297	6.6%
South Yorkshire	238	5.3%
Norfolk	204	4.5%
North East Lincolnshire	141	3.1%
Leicestershire	148	3.3%
North Lincolnshire	115	2.5%
Cambridgeshire	115	2.5%
Derbyshire	111	2.4%
Northamptonshire	117	2.6%
Total	**2040**	**45.8%**

OfS Access to HE data indicates the importance of maintaining a focus on this risk to equality of opportunity, where students with IMD1 characteristics have the lowest chance of accessing higher education (41%) versus their IMD5 counterparts (12%) – see OfS 2022 Associations between characteristics of students below.



Weighted average of the distribution of individuals across all the quintiles.

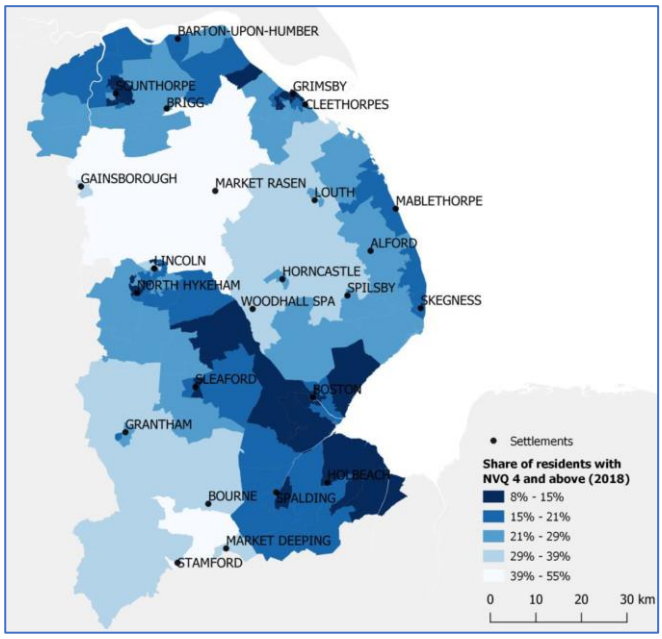
Office for Students. (2022) *Associations between characteristics of students*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/associations-between-characteristics-of-students/access-to-higher-education/



Further demographic data reinforces the importance of this position, the University's place within Lincolnshire, and the need to maintain our focus on improving the levels of HE participation for students from the most deprived backgrounds.

% Share of residents with NVQ1 and below (2018)

From: Metro-Dynamics Sept 21



% Share of residents with NVQ4 and above (2018)

From: Metro-Dynamics Sept 21

Against this position, continuing to focus on increasing representation within our student community of students participating in HE from the most deprived backgrounds will be maintained as an APP target.

Risk 2 - The proportion of new entrants eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

Lincoln's proportion of new entrants who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is 15.5% (n=425). Gov.uk data confirms that this is below the national average of 24.6% in 23/24. Our 4-year aggregated data shows there has been progress over the period with a shift from 13.3% of new entrants eligible for FSM to 15.5%.

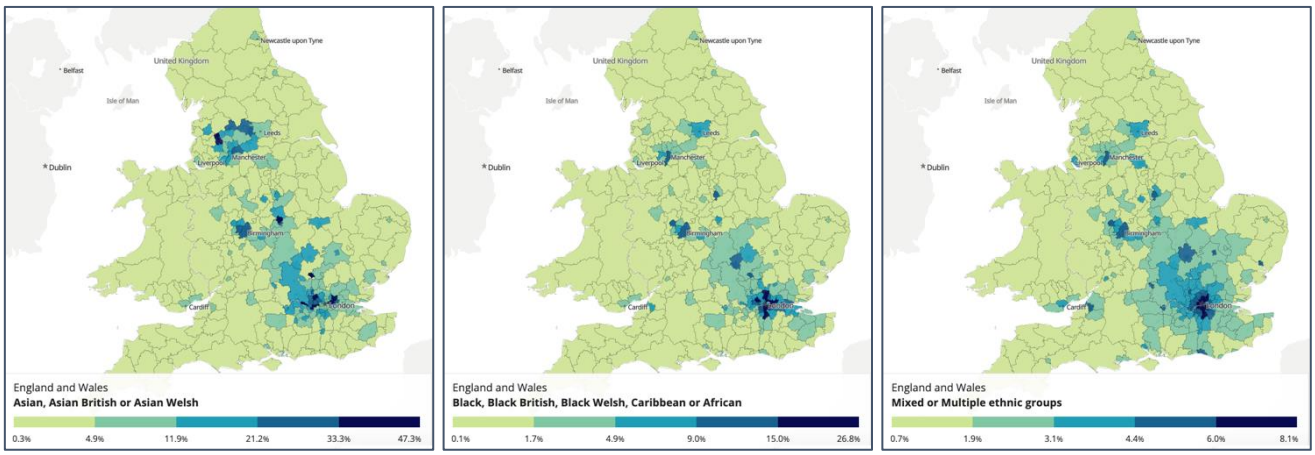
In this context we have determined that a continued area of focus regarding access is to increase the percentage of IMD quintile one new entrants and believe that this will improve access to our institution to those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and, therefore, we have decided not to set a FSM proportion as a target in this new Plan. We do however use FSM as an eligibility criterion in our contextual offer making to recognise the link between these two characteristics.

Risk 3 – The proportion of new entrants from an ABMO background

Lincoln's proportion of young new entrants from an ABMO background (n=283) is 13.2%. In our 20/21 to 24/25 APP, we set a goal to achieve a new ABMO entrant percentage of 11.3% by 24/25. This end of plan target has already been exceeded, as we currently have 13.2% representation of ABMO new entrants having increased our intake proportion year-on-year.

We note that this 13.2% is a cumulative rate comprised of 6.0% Asian, 2.4% Black, 3.7% Mixed and 1.1% Other. The four year dataset shows a similar split between Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups.

This improving trend is set against the context of our local and regional population demographics (see ONS Ethnic Group Census 2021 data below) where the proportion of the population from an ABMO background is significantly lower than that which makes up the University's student body. The areas where most of our students come from being the East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber and eastern areas of Peterborough, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.



The University's Race Equality Charter (2021-25) similarly sets out targets for increasing ABMO representation in our student community (at both undergraduate and postgraduate level) and those targets set go beyond our current APP (of 11.3% representation in 2024/25).

In this context, we have decided not to set new APP targets against this indicator, and instead focus on ensuring that we continue to support and maintain a diverse student body as set out in our Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement strategy, informed by our Race Equality Charter commitments.

Risk 4 – The gap between the proportion of new entrants that are male v female

The proportion of eighteen-year-old new entrants that are female at Lincoln is 60.3% (n=1290); this can be compared with the male proportion of 39.7% (n=850), producing a gap of 20.6%. Lincoln's 20.6% gap has increased year on year by 7.8%, meaning there is a growing gap between male and female new entrants, with the majority female.

We feel that this growing gap warrants monitoring and is therefore a targeted intervention in this APP.

Data on 13 of 15 of our primary feeder Schools/FE Colleges confirms that these all have a similar make up of male to female students, which aligns with the numbers we are reporting.

In all but one instance, the balance of females outweighs that of males, at its highest by 24.8% and overall by 16.4% – January 2023 Schools Census (see table below).

Provider	Student Numbers	Male		Female	
		No. in cohort	%	No. in cohort	%
Franklin Sixth Form College	1580	650	41.1%	930	58.9%
John Leggott College	1500	620	41.3%	880	58.7%
Wyke Sixth Form College	2240	850	37.9%	1390	62.1%
Vision West Nottingham College	2020	870	43.1%	1140	56.4%
New College Doncaster	1430	600	42.0%	840	58.7%
Lincoln College	1580	650	41.1%	950	60.1%
Thomas Rotherham College	1450	550	37.9%	910	62.8%
Loughborough College	3170	1610	50.8%	1570	49.5%
Boston College	1110	460	41.4%	640	57.7%
College of West Anglia, Kings Lynn	1440	570	39.6%	870	60.4%
Billborough College	1950	770	39.5%	1180	60.5%
Nottingham College, Nottingham	3740	1530	40.9%	2220	59.4%
City College Norwich	3100	1290	41.6%	1810	58.4%
Total	**26310**	**11020**	**41.9%**	**15330**	**58.3%**

This lower representation of 16–18-year-old males in education in our region contrasts with the slightly higher proportion of male pupils regionally pre-16 (gov.uk data indicates 51.1% in 2023/24) and indicates that the risk for this group occurs at the point of transition to 16-18 study and needs to be addressed within this local context.

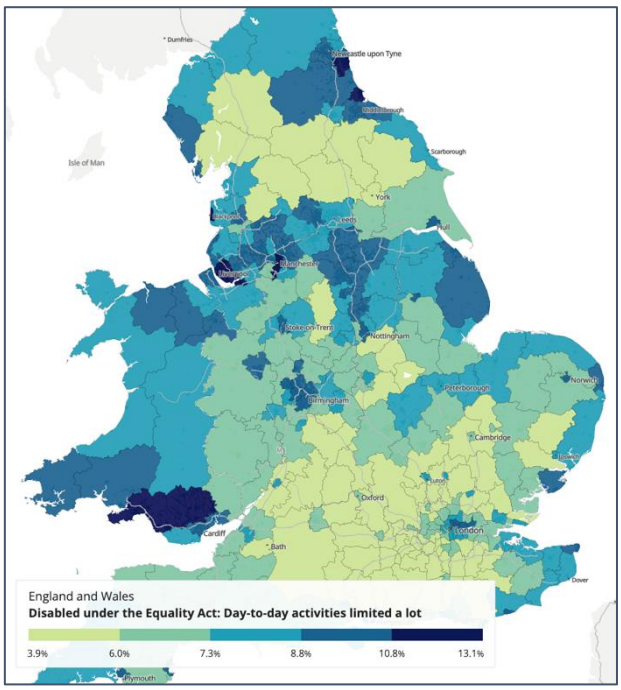
Against this position, a focus on increasing representation within our student community of male students participating in HE will be set as an APP target.

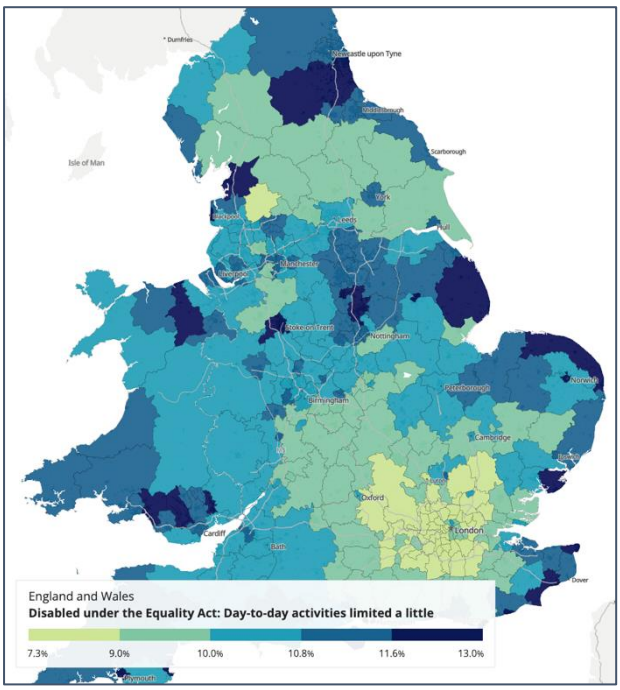
Risk 5 – The proportion of new entrants who are disabled

Lincoln's proportion of new entrants who have declared a disability is 21.3%.

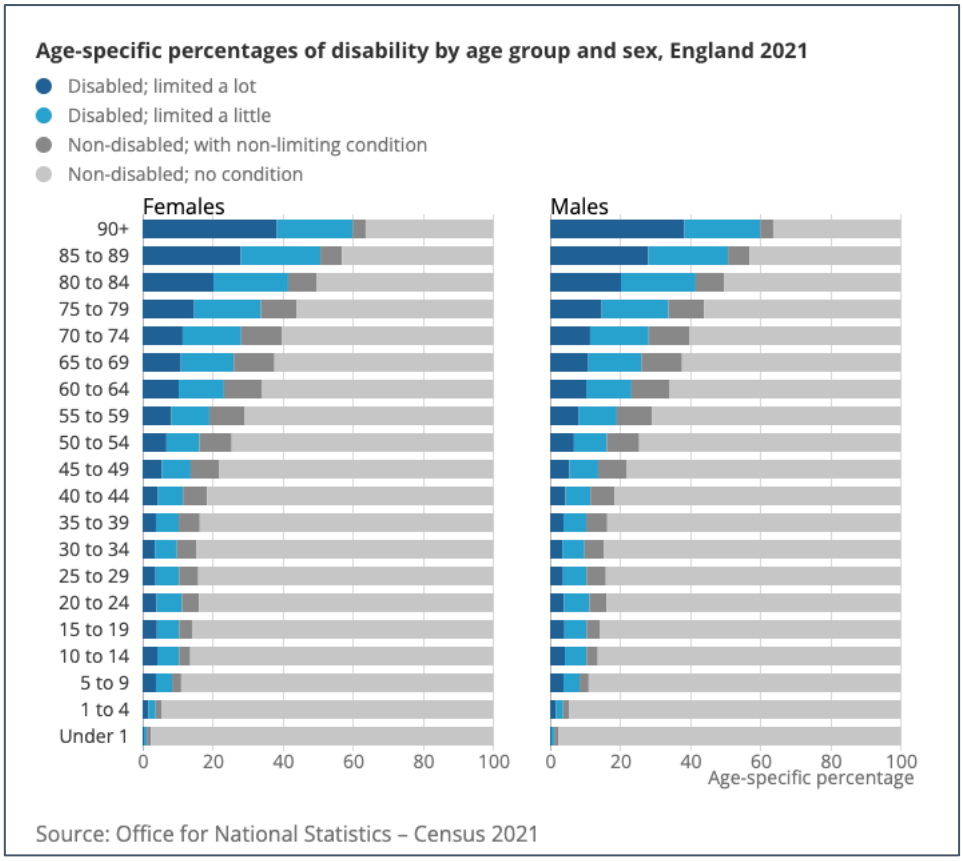
This proportion is higher than the local and national population demographics (see ONS Health/Disability Group Census 2021 data below) which indicates a maximum proportion of 13.1% in any one Local Authority District (for both categories of disability under the Equality Act: day-to-day activities limited a lot, and day-to-day activities limited a little).

ONS Health/Disability Group Census 2021





Further breakdown of this from ONS (below) indicates age-specific percentages of disability by age groupings and sex from the 2021 census. This includes the addition of mental health conditions and illness not in the previous 2011 census. This data confirms that disability prevalence increases with age. After the 15 to 19 years grouping, a higher percentage of females indicate a disability, with the percentage of disabled females increasing notably between the ages of 10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years, rising from 6.8% to 12.2% respectively. It then increases to 15.1% at age 20 to 24 years in comparison with 11.2% for males.



In this context of this national data, and the percentage of our new entrants declaring a known disability in our data (four year data average 18.9%) this is not an indicator of risk for the University and therefore we have not set an APP target against this indicator. We plan to use disability as an eligibility criterion in our contextual offer making to recognise the challenges faced by this group of students. We will continue to focus on ensuring that we support and maintain a diverse student body as set out in our Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement strategy, informed by our Mental Health Charter commitments.

Risk 6 – The proportion of new entrants that are mature (aged 21 and over)

Lincoln's proportion of its new entrants that are mature stands at 13.9% (n=489) for the latest year. The 4-year dataset suggests that there has been very little change over that period (11.2%). There was however a slight improvement in the latest proportion compared to the previous year.

Within our context challenges in addressing this gap include poor network and provision of transport links within Lincolnshire/locality affecting access for mature and commuter students.

We believe that this indication of risk is better served by the University's current strategy to grow its degree apprenticeship provision rather through being targeted in this APP. In 22/23 48% of apprenticeships starts were by people aged 25 and over, while 23% were aged under 19, and 29% were aged between 19 and 24. With a shift in profile of people starting apprenticeships in recent years, the proportion of starts by apprentices over the age of 24 generally increasing year on year – with the under 19 age group having had the largest percentage decrease in 22/23 with a 37% fall in the number of starts (https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06113/).

Our Apprenticeship and Skills Strategy to 2026/27 includes a student growth trajectory of 225 additional new entrants across the five-year life of that plan, although we aspire to significantly grow this number. This will include those who are already on an apprenticeship pathway where degree level (level 6) is the obvious or next stage of their career aspirations.

The University's Apprenticeship Strategy is informed by extensive consultation with employers, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP), which is Chaired by our Vice Chancellor and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The University works strategically with regional and national stakeholders to facilitate apprenticeship growth and progression opportunities, as a key partner in the Lincolnshire Institute of Technology (LIoT), along with the University of Lincoln Academy Trust and working in partnerships with Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation, other public sector bodies and employers including the Seafood Grimsby and Humber Alliance and the Humber Freeport consortium towards this end.

Diversifying access through apprenticeships is an important aspect of the University's access and participation aspirations, underpinned by our offering of 25 apprenticeship standards and a commitment to developing additional programmes where employer need is identified. Lincolnshire is a diverse and geographically isolated county with a very low HE participation rate. Our new standards are informed by review of our practice, matched to local and national employer need, and supported by a strong base of employers, many long-term strategic partners of the University.

The UK faces a range of challenges that will require workers to upskill. Productivity levels in the UK have remained weak and the coronavirus pandemic has led to significant disruption of the labour market. A host of longer-term trends such as automation, an aging population and the sustainability agenda will affect the type and nature of job roles available.

This impacts across the wider HE sector, culturally changing how we can visualise institutions that are fit for purpose in addressing our skills shortages. As universities continue to face a challenging landscape, our delivery of outstanding teaching and learning will continue to impact on the academic achievements, career prospects and community contributions of those reaching beyond what they thought was possible.

Lifecycle stage – Continuation

From analysis of the OfS Access and Participation dataset, we note that the largest continuation rate gap is between those students in predicted student outcomes (ABCS) quintiles one and five (gap of 8.7% in the latest year, n=210 in quintile one group).

For the continuation indicator, OfS data shows that Lincoln has relatively small gaps in continuation rates between students from higher education participation groups (Tundra), deprivation groups (IMD), ethnic groups, gender groups and age groups.

There are no groups to report where we have significant indicators of risk in continuation rates in both the latest data year and the four-year aggregate dataset. Analysis shows a 1.0% gap between disabled and non-disabled students; the sub-group with the largest continuation rate gap is for those with mental health conditions (4.2%, n=240). We also note a continuation rate gap of 5.9% for those students eligible for free school meals (FSM) (n=440) compared with students that were not eligible.

We have decided not to set targets around the continuation lifecycle stage due to a focus to reduce outcome gaps elsewhere in the student lifecycle and considering Lincoln's lack of significant indicators of risk. The Student Success & Engagement Team (SSET), using the Engagement Priority Marker (EPM) – as outlined elsewhere in this document – will continue to intervene with those students most at risk of non-engagement. This intervention additionally augments robust support from Personal Tutors.

Lifecycle stage – Completion

For the completion rate indicator, the OfS Access and Participation data set shows that Lincoln has relatively small gaps in completion rates between students from higher education participation groups (Tundra), ethnic groups, gender groups, age groups, and those that had free school meal status v those that did not.

We note that the largest completion rate gap is between those students in predicted student outcomes (ABCS) quintiles one and five (gap of 12.1% in the latest year, n=250 in quintile one group). We also note a gap of 6.4% for those students from an IMD quintile one background (n=530) compared with IMD quintile five students. Analysis also shows a 1.8% gap between disabled and non-disabled students; the sub-group with the largest completion rate gap is for those with mental health conditions (5.6%, n=120).

In this context there are no groups to report where we have significant indicators of risk in completion rates in both the latest data year and the four-year aggregate dataset and as above, we have decided not to set targets in relation to the completion lifecycle stage as per the reasons for continuation (above).

Lifecycle stage – Attainment

There are four key groups in which data indicates students are performing less well than their peers, as regards gaps in attainment rates, these are IMD1, ABMO, disabled students and male students.

Risk 7 – The gap in attainment rates between IMD1 and IMD5 students

For the degree attainment rate indicator, we note that students from IMD quintile one (compared to quintile five) have the largest attainment gap for aggregated groups (15.0%).

Reducing the gap in attainment rates between IMD1 and IMD5 students is an existing target in our 20/21 to 24/25 APP and latest year data indicates that the gap was 15.0%; 3.7% away from meeting the 21/22 performance target set within that plan.

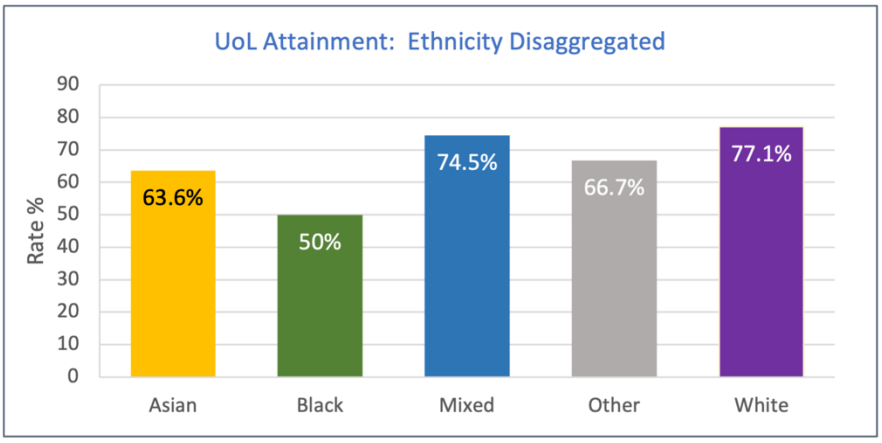
IMD (Gap Q5 v Q1)	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion	UoL Current Year Gap / Difference to previous year	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion
IMD Q1	65.4%	15.0%	7.7%	72.1%	11.7%
IMD Q5	80.4%			83.8%	

While we have confidence in the institution-wide interventions that are now in place to provide overarching and timely support in relation to student engagement and therefore attainment, we will nevertheless maintain a target in this plan to continue to address this gap, targeted at IMD1 students.

Risk 8 – The gap in attainment rates between ABMO and White students

Lincoln's latest year ABMO attainment rate is 64.7% versus White rate of 77.1%, indicating a gap in attainment rates of 12.4%. For context, the total number of students in Lincoln's denominator is 3470, with 320 in the ABMO group. As referenced above, this is against an increasing ABMO intake proportion year-on-year.

We note that the sub-group with the largest gap in attainment to white students at Lincoln is the black student group (27.1% gap in the latest year, n=70) however the attainment gaps for the Asian and Other student groups are significant enough that the target set in the plan relates to all ABMO student and not just those from the black student group.



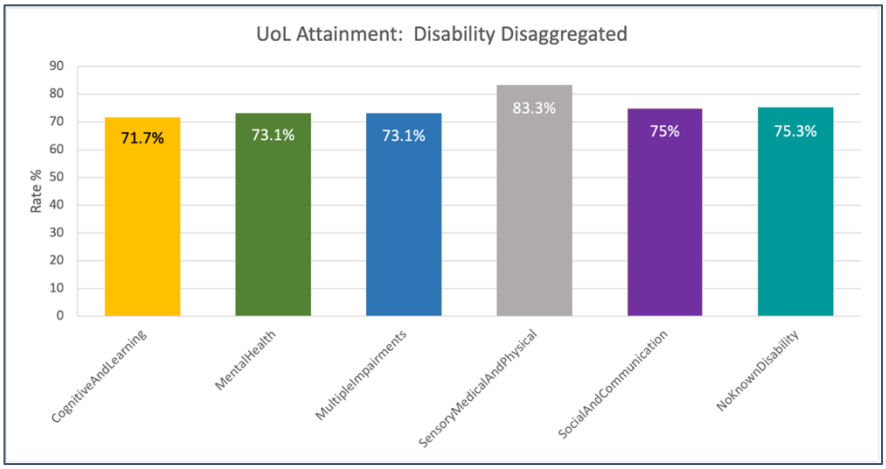
Reducing the gap in attainment for students from ABMO backgrounds is a target within our 20/21 to 24/25 APP. The current rate gap of 12.4% is currently 2.9% away from meeting the 21/22 performance target. We are committed to continuing to reduce this gap and therefore are maintaining this as a target in this plan. In this context we also report attainment gaps for our disaggregated ethnic groups and, therefore, will monitor the black attainment gap closely.

Risk 9 – The gap in attainment rates between Disabled and Non-Disabled students

Lincoln's latest attainment rate data from the OfS shows we have a 73.5% attainment rate for disabled students versus a rate of 75.3% for non-disabled students, indicating a gap in attainment of 1.8%.

We do note, however, that the gap for the last four-year aggregated period is 5.0% and this is representative of previous individual years' performance. With this in mind, we will maintain a target in this new APP to reduce our gap in attainment for disabled students. For context, the total number of disabled students in Lincoln's latest data year is 740 out of a total of 3980.

We note that the sub-groups with the largest gaps in attainment to non-disabled students at Lincoln are the cognitive and learning student group (3.6% gap in the latest data year, n=280) and the social and communication group (10.3% gap for the four year aggregated data).



Reducing the gap in attainment for disabled students is a target within our current 20/21 to 24/25 APP and the latest 1.8% gap is meeting the current target. We are committed to continuing to reduce this gap and therefore are maintaining this as a target in this plan.

Risk 10 – The gap in attainment rates between Male and Female students

Lincoln's latest year male attainment rate is 69.4% versus a female rate of 79.0%, indicating a gap of 9.6%. For context, the total number of students in Lincoln's denominator is 3230.

However, we note more recent local data (22/23 and not the official OfS dataset) shows that the gender attainment gap has decreased to 4.5% from around 9% the previous year. Interventions for minority (in terms of numbers) disadvantaged groups such as ABMO and subsequent increases in their attainment rates would have minimal impact on overall attainment rates (grade inflation). For male students this group is obviously much larger.

While we know that males from deprived backgrounds are more likely to have lower attainment rates, by adopting a more targeted approach through interventions such as SSET, we will be supporting students based on individual need rather than a wider 'target' group.

Males from IMD1/2 (OfS four year data set) confirms attainment rate of 67.9% compared with females from more affluent areas (IMD3/4/5) which have a rate of 86.8%. Further details on SSET activity can be found in Annex B IS4.10.

Lifecycle stage – Progression

Our assessment of performance shows that the indicator of risk is low between students from higher education participation groups POLAR4, (Tundra), deprivation groups (IMD), gender groups and those that had free school meal status v those that did not – see table below.

Measure	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion
POLAR4 (Gap Q5 v Q1)		
POLAR Q1	69.1%	2.1%
POLAR Q5	71.2%	
TUNDRA (Gap Q5 v Q1)		
TUNDRA Q1	68.5%	2.9%
TUNDRA Q5	69.9%	
IMD (Gap Q5 v Q1)		
IMD Q1	70.6%	0.1%
IMD Q5	70.7%	
Gender		
Female	69.1%	-2.4%
Male	71.5%	
FSM		
Eligible	69.9%	-1.1%
Not Eligible	68.8%	

Based on this current year data we are not directly targeting any of the above participation groups as part of this plan.

A target in the current APP to reduce the progression gap between Care Leavers and Non-Care Leavers (against low student numbers in this demographic, n=21) indicates for a gap of -15.7% (UoL care leaver progression rate of 85.7% v non care leaver progression rate of 70.0%) for the most recent data year and exceeds the latest performance target of 5.6%.

In the context of ABMO students our current data (below) indicates a more significant gap for Black students (disaggregated) when compared with Asian, Mixed and Other.

Ethnicity (ABMO v White)	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion	UoL Current Year Gap / Diff to previous year	UoL Rate (4 Year data)	UoL Gap / Proportion (Four Year data)
ABMO	**67.2%**	**3.2%**	**0.3%**	**67.9%**	**1.4%**
Asian	69.7%	0.7%	2.4%	71.1%	-1.8%
Black	59.5%	10.9%	6.6%	66.5%	2.8%
Mixed	68.6%	1.8%	-4.8%	66.0%	3.3%
Other	0.0%	n/k	-	61.6%	n/k
White	**70.4%**			**69.3%**	

While notable (at 10.9%) when compared with four-year data (at (2.8%) this isn't considered significant enough to warrant a specific target in this plan.

Risk 11 – The gap in progression rates between disabled and non-disabled students

However, the disabled group within the progression data indicates lower performance when considering both the latest year and four-year aggregated data and, in this context is a target in our current APP.

The disabled rate at Lincoln is 66.2% (n=470) compared with the non-disabled rate of 71.3%, resulting in a gap of 5.1%. Within the current plan, the 5.1% gap is exceeding the 21/22 performance target by 1.1%.

Measure	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion	UoL Current Year Gap / Diff to previous year	UoL Rate	UoL Gap / Proportion
Disability	**66.2%**	**5.1%**	**7.4%**	**67.1%**	**2.6%**
Cognitive and Learning	64.8%	6.5%	15.1%	69.2%	0.5%
Mental Health	66.6%	4.7%	3.2%	64.4%	5.3%
Multiple Impairments	71.4%	-0.1%	1.2%	69.2%	0.5%
Sensory Medical and Physical	59.0%	12.3%	14.5%	66.8%	2.9%
Social and Communication	66.7%	4.6%	-	60.3%	9.4%
No Disability	**71.3%**			**69.7%**	

The year-on-year progression gap at Lincoln for disabled students (disaggregated) has grown by 7.4% and therefore remains as a core focus and ongoing target of the next plan.

Annex B

Evidence base and rationale for intervention strategies (further detail)

This Annex sets out further detail in relation to the information and evidence we have used to underpin each of our intervention strategies and activities in order to mitigate the associated risks identified against the objectives and targets set.

This includes our student consultation (based around risks identified in the EORR) as well as internal/external evidence in relation to the individual components of each activity identified under our intervention strategies.

Student Consultation / Analysis of Risk to Equality of Opportunity

Aligned with our assessment of performance and identification of targets we surveyed all our FT UG Home students with APP associated characteristics (i.e. IMD1, ABMO and declaring a disability) totalling approx. 4,500 students.

This evaluation of risks to equality of opportunity will be embedded into our existing student voice survey cycle from AY24/25 (where this instance of this activity fell outside the start of the new academic year to specifically capture experiences of our incoming new entrants). See also Section 6. of this plan (Student Consultation).

In total 130 responses were received, reduced to 117 after data cleaning. Thirteen students had two categories of APP characteristics recorded, there were no students that recorded all three.

	Total APP characteristics				**Total**
Characteristic	One	+ ABMO	+ Disability	+ IMD1	
ABMO	5	-	6	0	11 (8.7%)
Disability	80	0	-	0	80 (66.9%)
IMD1	19	1	6	-	26 (24.4%)
Total	104	1	12	0	117 (100%)

Question 1

Did you experience any of the following challenges or barriers to securing your place at Lincoln?

Over half (55.6%) of APP target students experienced at least one challenge or barrier to securing their place at UoL.

Number of barriers	**APP Characteristic**			**Total**
	ABMO	Disability	IMD1	
None	4	36	12	52 (44.4%)
1	5	26	7	38 (32.5%)
2	1	9	2	12 (10.3%)
3	1	5	5	11 (9.4%)
4	0	4	0	4 (3.4%)
Total	11	80	26	117 (100%)

	ABMO (n=11)	Disability (n=80)	IMD1 (n=26)	Total (n=117)
Gaining the knowledge or skills you needed to be accepted onto a university programme matching your expectations and ambitions	2 (18.2%)	9 (11.3%)	6 (23.1%)	17 (14.5%)
Having the opportunity to access sufficient information and guidance to make an informed choice about your HE options	1 (9.1%)	13 (16.3%)	3 (11.5%)	17 (14.5%)
Feeling unable to apply to university despite being highly motivated	1 (9.1%)	12 (15.0%)	2 (7.7%)	15 (12.8%)
Impacts of COVID	3 (27.3%)	22 (27.5%)	7 (26.9%)	32 (27.4%)
Lack of help or support from others	2 (18.2%)	16 (20.0%)	7 (26.9%)	25 (21.4%)
None of the above	4 (36.4%)	36 (45.0%)	12 (46.2%)	52 (44.4%)
Other	1 (9.1%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (3.8%)	5 (4.3%)

(1) Highest ranked barrier or challenge
(2) Second ranked barrier or challenge
(3) Third ranked barrier or challenge

Percentages are shown as a proportion within an APP characteristic and of total responses.

Qualitative Open Text Comments

- Commentary on 'other' barriers or challenges experienced.
- What (if anything) the University could have done better through the application process that would have helped/supported students with the barriers or challenges they faced.

ABMO

One student noted mental health as an 'other' barrier they experienced in securing their place.

Despite none of the above being reflected as the category students most identified with, there was no specific commentary volunteered on what these were.

Action the university can take to provide support reflected better advertising of specific types of support and resources available.

Disabled

As above 'none of the above' was the highest ranked barrier but no detail was provided in this context, save for one comment relating to misunderstanding of military qualifications leading to a delay in application being accepted.

There were no additional comments from this student group regarding improvements or change the university could make.

IMD1

'Other' barriers or challenges reflected supporting student expectations about what to expect where first in immediate/extended family to go to university and similarly in relation to financing.

Improvements were reflected as information to be more accessible and students to be supported with all aspects of the application process. Suggestions include a dedicated email or support centre or helpline.

"It would have been a lot easier to know about what opportunities I could have had a lot sooner."

Question 2

Which of the following challenges, if any, are you facing now you are at the University?

A large proportion (87.9%) are facing one or more challenges now they are at the university.

Ten students did not answer this question.

Challenges now	APP Characteristic			Total
	ABMO	Disability	IMD1	
None	2	8	3	13 (12.1%)
1	4	16	5	25 (23.4%)
2	1	25	6	32 (29.9%)
3	1	12	7	20 (18.7%)
4	3	7	2	12 (11.2%)
5	0	2	1	3 (2.8%)
6	0	2	0	2 (1.9%)
Total	11	72	24	107 (100%)

Challenges Faced	ABMO (n=11)	Disability (n=72)	IMD1 (n=24)	Total (n=107)
Gaps in your knowledge and skills acquired at school or college that has impacted some of your learning at university	3 (27.3%)	31 (43.1%)	11 (45.8%)	45 (42.1%)
Insufficient academic support	2 (18.2%)	18 (25.0%)	6 (25.0%)	26 (24.3%)
Making friends either within or outside of your course	5 (45.5%)	24 (33.3%)	7 (29.2%)	36 (33.6%)
Accessing extra-curricular activities	2 (18.2%)	11 (15.3%)	3 (12.5%)	16 (15.0%)
Impacts of COVID	3 (27.3%)	20 (27.8%)	6 (25.0%)	29 (27.1%)
Cost of Living pressures	6 (54.5%)	43 (59.7%)	18 (75.0%)	67 (62.6%)
None of the above	2 (18.2%)	8 (11.1%)	3 (12.5%)	13 (12.1%)
Other	0	5 (6.9%)	0	5 (4.7%)

(1) Highest ranked barrier or challenge
(2) Second ranked barrier or challenge
(3) Third ranked barrier or challenge

Percentages are shown as a proportion within an APP characteristic and of total responses (and excludes the 10 non-responses).

Question 3

Are you currently accessing support to help you with any of these challenges?

Eleven students did not answer this question.

No. of support resources accessed	APP Characteristic			Total
	ABMO	Disability	IMD1	
None	2	16	11	29 (27.4%)
1	5	18	4	27 (25.5%)
2	3	19	7	29 (27.4%)
3	1	11	1	13 (12.3%)
4	0	7	0	7 (6.6%)
5	0	0	1	1 (0.9%)
Total	11	71	24	106 (100%)

Type of Support / Service Accessed	ABMO (n=11)	Disability (n=71)	IMD1 (n=24)	Total (n=106)
Engaging in study skills workshops delivered by the Library	0	8 (11.3%)	2 (8.3%)	10 (9.4%)
Online resources and tutorials	1 (9.1%)	15 (21.1%)	3 (12.5%)	19 (17.9%)
Accessing the University's Hardship Fund	2 (18.2%)	1 (1.4%)	1 (4.2%)	4 (3.8%)
Attending events delivered by the ResLife Team	0	5 (7.0%)	1 (4.2%)	6 (5.7%)
Engaging with support and services from Student Services/Student Wellbeing	2 (18.2%)	24 (33.8%)	5 (20.8%)	31 (29.2%)
Talking with your Personal Tutor	6 (54.5%)	30 (42.3%)	4 (16.7%)	40 (37.7%)
Accessing the Students' Union Advice Centre	0	4 (5.6%)	2 (8.3%)	6 (5.7%)
Joining an SU Social or Academic Society	2 (18.2%)	12 (16.9%)	4 (16.7%)	18 (17.0%)
None of the above	2 (18.2%)	16 (22.5%)	*11 (45.8%)	29 (27.4%)
Other	1 (9.1%)	18 (25.4%)	4 (16.7%)	23 (21.7%)

(1) Highest ranked support accessed

(2) Second ranked support accessed

(3) Third ranked support accessed

High proportion of students not accessing expected support

Percentages are shown as a proportion within an APP characteristic and of total responses (and excludes the 11 non-responses).

**Limitations only based on 11 of 24 students – high proportion of the students who responded that gives need for further work in this area.*

Qualitative Open Text Comments

- 'Other' challenges students are facing now they are at university.
- 'Other' support mechanisms being sought / utilised.
- What the University could be doing better to help and support student needs.

ABMO

There was no expansion of 'other' challenges in this respondent group.

In terms of university support cheaper accommodation (cost of living) and a better understanding of attendance – in the context of passing, not missing a few lectures – were noted.

Disabled

'Other' mechanisms of support or strategies for this student group fall into two main categories – working part-time and going home regularly (with some students doing both). This aligns with the high ranking of cost-of-living pressures identified by students. On a more individual level there was reference to DAS Onyx support sessions.

Support from the university included greater proactivity in implementing disabled student needs, more assignment, revision and exam support, establishment of different diverse student groups, teaching students to work as a team, easier access to *hardship* fund, and inclusion of finance/budgeting content in personal tutoring sessions.

	For IMD1 students 'other' in course challenges were mitigated by working part time and regularly going home – with one respondent indicating working *when at home* to afford food and replace clothes. As above, this aligns with the high ranking of cost-of-living pressures identified by students.
IMD1	Additional support that the university could deliver included additional exam support (revision sessions, mock papers, case studies), more time in delivery of support from Student Wellbeing Services, more paid student opportunities, better understanding and consistency of Personal Tutor support, financial support and timetabling to enable work commitments (e.g. consistent day when no teaching).

Question 4

After you complete your degree, which of the following, if any, are you concerned about?

A large proportion (82.7%) have one or more concerns for when they complete their degree.

Thirteen students did not answer this question.

Number of concerns	**APP Characteristic**			**Total**
	ABMO	Disability	IMD1	
None	2	11	5	18 (17.3%)
1	6	23	4	33 (31.7%)
2	0	20	6	26 (25.0%)
3	1	13	3	17 (16.3%)
4	1	2	3	6 (5.8%)
5	1	1	2	4 (3.8%)
Total	11	70	23	104 (100%)

Student Concerns	**ABMO (n=11)**	**Disability (n=70)**	**IMD1 (n=23)**	**Total (n=104)**
Lack of finance to study further	4 (36.4%)	27 (38.6%)	12 (52.2%)	43 (41.3%)
Lack of finance to relocate for internship or employment opportunities	3 (27.3%)	28 (40.0%)	13 (56.5%)	44 (42.3%)
Lack of confidence to apply for roles aligned with your qualification	4 (36.4%)	26 (37.1%)	11 (47.8%)	41 (39.4%)
Lack of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities or voluntary work, which would support your progression into employment or further study	4 (36.4%)	15 (21.4%)	5 (21.7%)	24 (23.1%)
Lack of information and guidance to inform options for post-graduate employment or study	3 (27.3%)	13 (18.6%)	6 (26.1%)	22 (21.2%)
None of the above	2 (18.2%)	11 (15.7%)	5 (21.7%)	18 (17.3%)
Other	0	6 (8.6%)	0	6 (5.8%)

(1) Highest ranked barrier or challenge

(2) Second ranked barrier or challenge

(3) Third ranked barrier or challenge

Percentages are shown as a proportion within an APP characteristic and of total responses (and excludes the 13 non-responses).

Question 5

What of the following University support services, if any, are you accessing to help address your concerns?

Fourteen students did not answer this question.

Number of concerns	APP Characteristic			Total
	ABMO	Disability	IMD1	
None	5	24	11	40 (38.8%)
1	4	25	7	36 (35.0%)
2	2	13	4	19 (18.4%)
3	0	5	1	6 (5.8%)
4	0	2	0	2 (1.9%)
Total	11	69	23	103 (100%)

	ABMO (n=11)	Disability (n=69)	IMD1 (n=23)	Total (n=103)
Careers and Employability	4 (36.4%)	19 (27.5%)	9 (39.1%)	32 (31.1%)
Student Services / Wellbeing	1 (9.1%)	28 (40.6%)	2 (8.7%)	31 (30.1%)
Your Personal Tutor	3 (27.3%)	23 (33.3%)	5 (21.7%)	31 (30.1%)
Students' Union Advice Centre	0	3 (4.3%)	2 (8.7%)	5 (4.9%)
None of the above	5 (45.5%)	24 (34.8%)	11 (47.8%)	40 (38.8%)
Other	0	1 (1.4%)	0	1 (1.0%)

Highest ranked support students are accessing.
High proportion of students not accessing expected support.

Percentages are shown as a proportion within an APP characteristic and of total responses (and excludes the 14 non-responses).

Qualitative Open Text Comments

- 'Other' concerns students may have about 'after' completion of their degree.
- 'Other' support services being sought / utilised.
- What the University could be doing better to help and support student needs.

ABMO	There were no additional comments provided by this student group.
Disabled	The main concerns reflected were not being able to get a job after university which aligned with the qualifications achieved – lack of employment opportunity, lack of finances having to move home. Importantly, one student reflected on their 'inability to get hired due to my disabilities'. Pressure to gain skills and qualities to 'impress potential employers' meant that course demands and part time working left no time or energy for extra-curricular activities. Specific comment made on value of Library support. Most of the comments regarding what the University could be doing better to help were concerned with work experience and post-graduate employment including more tailored careers support, including post-grad assistance for students with disabilities, making greater use of local SMEs for work experience opportunities '*Stronger partnerships with industry, exposure to more employers and prospective career paths'.*

IMD1	There was no additional commentary on 'other' concerns of services being sought/utilised by this student group. As regards more that could be done, this indicated more support and information on working with industry both during and post-university e.g., applying for internships, work experience opportunities. One student commented: '*…even seminars dedicated to employability aren't much help. They just say: 'build up these skills' but don't state how'.*

As set out in our Student Consultation section (6) of this plan, from AY24/25 all students (regardless of demographic group) will be given the opportunity to share their experiences in relation to these stages of the student lifecycle – accessing HE, achieving success in their studies, and progression beyond completion. This feedback mechanism will be built into new and existing student voice evaluations in order to inform continued understanding of the risks to equality of opportunity faced by those within underrepresented groups, as well as those students perceived to be less impacted by these challenges and barriers.

This consistent approach to student surveys and feedback capture mechanisms forms a key part of our ongoing commitment to partnership working with our Students' Union.

Access to HE

Objective / Intervention Strategy 1: Aligned with our Transforming Lives and Communities strategic plan, and Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement strategy, we will increase the representation within our student community of students participating in HE from the most deprived backgrounds to remove their barriers to access.

Overarching

- LiNCHigher, Lincoln's UniConnect partner, delivers pre-16 and post-16 outreach activity to ensure that students from underrepresented backgrounds have access to the information, advice and guidance they need to make informed choices about their futures. UoL has worked with LiNCHigher since 2017 to deliver a range of attainment-raising and progression interventions, focusing on cross-partnership work with local authorities, third-party providers, and the Careers Enterprise Company to improve outcomes for underrepresented learners in HE.

  UoL has representatives on both the LiNCHigher Operations and Governance Boards, and are also members of the SCiP Alliance, which LiNCHigher chairs for service children in the East Midlands region. Regular meetings are held with LiNCHigher to ensure the partnership is strong and effective.

  Overarching evaluations below also form part of this work.

- Humber Outreach Programme (HOP) is the UniConnect Programme in partnership with the University of Hull, with whom we maintain a close working relationship. As with LiNCHigher this similarly represents collaborative attainment raising interventions to remove barriers to equality of opportunity and enable students within their region to progress into HE.

- University of Lincoln (2021). *Transforming Live and Communities Strategic Plan 2022-27*. Lincoln: University of Lincoln. Available from: https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/media/responsive2017/abouttheuniversity/managementandstrategy/UOL-Strategic-Plan-2022-2027.pdf

- University of Lincoln (2021). *Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Strategy 2022-27.* Lincoln: University of Lincoln. Available from: https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/media/responsive2017/abouttheuniversity/managementandstrategy/Teaching,,Learning,,and,Student,Experience.pdf

- Rose, A. and Mallinson, L. (2023) Assessing the impact of regional transformative outreach activities aimed at widening university access, and participation among under-represented groups in schools.

Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, **24**(3). pp. 113-139. Available from: https://www.thefuturefocus.co.uk/media/lutc3g3r/s6.pdf

- Rose, A and Mallinson, L. (2022) Teachers' perspectives on the delivery of transitional outreach activities and their potential to raise secondary school students' Higher Education aspirations during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, **46**(5). pp. 695-707. Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0309877X.2021.2002281
- Rose, A. and Mallinson, L. (2023) *Student Researchers: A co-construction approach to evaluating Uni Connect outreach activities in schools and colleges aimed at raising post-16 / 18 higher education participation*. FACE: Co-constructing education for all / Student voice Conference, 28-30th June 2023, Derby University. Available from: https://repository.lincoln.ac.uk/articles/conference_contribution/Student_Researchers_A_co-construction_approach_to_evaluating_Uni_Connect_outreach_activities_in_schools_and_colleges_aimed_at_raising_post-16_18_higher_education_participation/25184882
- Rose, A. and Mallinson, L. (2023) *Student Researchers: Increasing evaluation capacity through peer evaluation.* NERUPI: Fostering Meaningful Student Voice Conference, 29 March 2023, Online (hosted by NERUPI at Bath university). Available from: https://repository.lincoln.ac.uk/articles/conference_contribution/Student_Researchers_Increasing_evaluation_capacity_through_peer_evaluation/25184885
- Office for Students. (2022) *Attainment raising: A toolkit.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/attainment-raising-a-toolkit/

IS1.1 – Contextual Offers

University Compare. (2021) *Contextual Offer.* [Online]. Available from: https://universitycompare.com/advice/ucas/contextual-offer

The table below shows the proportion of our applicants (for AY24/25) that fall into some of the different categories that are typically used for contextual offers (see reference above).

	Category	% of applications
Individual categories	UCAS POLAR Quintiles 1-2*	41.8%
	UCAS MEM1** Quintiles 1-2	39.2%
	UCAS MEM2** Quintiles 1-2	23.9%
	UCAS IMD Quintiles 1-2	32.2%
	UCAS Self-Declared Free School Meals (FSM)	14.6%
	Disabled	28.0%
	Resides in Lincolnshire LA Area	18.7%
Grouped categories	One (or more) of POLAR, MEM1, IMD and FSM	53.2%
	One (or more of) POLAR, MEM1, IMD, FSM and Lincs LA Area	70.9%

*Current contextual offer criteria
** MEM1 group accounts for the following characteristics and where one of these characteristics is missing, the MEM value is null: Polar4, IMD, School type. MEM2 group accounts for the following characteristics and where one of these characteristics is missing, the MEM value is null: Free School Meals, Polar4, Income deprivation affecting children index, School type

An individual who is in MEM1 (the metric recommended by UCAS for contextual offer making) is among the most disadvantaged in terms of their likelihood to enter higher education, and Lincoln had a high proportion of entrants from this group.

Office for Students. (2019) *OfS Insight 3: Contextual Admissions, Promoting fairness and rethinking merit.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/bf84aeda-21c6-4b55-b9f8-3386b21b7b3b/insight-3-contextual-admissions.pdf

- University of Bristol – 'students admitted to Bristol with one grade lower than the entry requirements do just as well, if not better, than those admitted on the standard offer'.

IS1.2 – Bursaries and Financial Assistance Funds

University of Lincoln (Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute – LHERI) internal report Financial Support Evaluation 2020/21 – Interview Tool Results (March 2022) *This is the most recent from a series of annual evaluation reports produced since 2018.*

- This report details the findings of interviews with undergraduate students in receipt of institutional scholarships, bursaries and financial assistance funds and their views of the financial support available at the University. Using the interview tool from the OfS Financial Support Toolkit (one of the three components) qualitative data was gathered from current students in receipt of institutional financial support.
- Study participants would have liked advance knowledge of their eligibility for the UoL Scholarship (captured in previous evaluation reports) where their understanding of eligibility for financial support appears to be undermined by the terminology of 'scholarships'. However, this language also helps to reduce the stigma associated with receiving income contingent bursaries.
- The bursary was considered to be useful in the context of the complexity and precarity of student incomes.

IS1.3 – Project Independence Medical School

Medical Schools Council. (2021) *Active Inclusion: Challenging exclusions in medical education*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2918/active-inclusion-challenging-exclusions-in-medical-education.pdf

- Informing accessibility and inclusivity of medical education, guidance and research within this framework is intended to support medical schools with their processes and help signpost examples of existing good practice across the UK, focusing on challenging those barriers and encouraging the sharing of resources between medical schools.

The bid to establish a medical school for Lincolnshire was originally driven by a partnership between the universities of Lincoln and Nottingham, with support from the local healthcare community. The same founding partners are now committed to the next phase of the medical school's development: for Lincoln Medical School to operate independently of the University of Nottingham from the 26/27 academic year, subject to General Medical Council approval. With first students enrolling in September 2019, the School currently delivers University of Nottingham Medicine and Medicine with Foundation/Gateway year programmes with the specific aim of improving the recruitment and retention of doctors to Lincolnshire.

Recognising that there is a large pool of potential applicants interested in the field of medicine, from 2026 the provision of a Gateway Year (6 years of study, including an integrated year 0) will only be open to students from a widening participation background. In addition, where applicants are unable to meet medicine entry requirements, engagement with the School will raise awareness of and provide the opportunity to feed applicants into alterative related HE programmes.

Data pulled from the UCAS Tracker (February 2024) in the table below shows there has been a slight increase within Quintile 1 student applications within the field of medicine and dentistry. Although there is decline across the other quintiles, with increased access provision in place this will encourage and support students from all backgrounds to apply to undertake a medicine degree.

POLAR4 Quintile	Sector this year	Sector last year	Sector change	Sector proportional change
Quintile 1	11,046	10,916	+130	+1.2%
Quintile 2	14,766	15,386	-620	-4.0%
Quintile 3	18,246	18,928	-682	-3.6%
Quintile 4	22,601	24,114	-1,513	-6.3%
Quintile 5	35,003	38,584	-3,581	-9.3%
Unknown	19,161	20,518	-1,356	-6.6%
Total	**120,824**	**128,446**	**-7,622**	**-5.9%**

IS1.4 – Boost that Grade

Theory of change mapping has been completed for Boost that Grade.

Facilitation of this activity was in direct response to UoL Schools and Colleges Liaison engagement with Schools/FE colleges and teacher feedback indicating that this support was needed to complement other outreach/engagement activity being delivered by the University.

University of Lincoln/Humber Outreach Programme (HOP) Boost that Grade: Evaluation Report (December 2023): Pre-event and post-event surveys were implemented on Jisc asking three questions when participants signed up for the event, which were then repeated after they had attended the training session (GSCE English and GCSE Maths). In addition, as part of the post-event survey, teachers were asked several questions about the usefulness of the session and the resources that were made available to them.

- Both events were very well received and appreciated by the attendees, and it was clear that this particular type of attainment raising CPD is not readily available to those teachers attending. Evaluation recommendations confirm the need to run similar sessions covering other subject areas
- English teachers welcomed an English Literature session and Maths teachers from FE colleges wanted more focus on how to help student re-sitting their GCSE.

AQA do not evaluate impact of this activity.

TASO. (2022) *Typology of attainment-raising activities conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review*. [Online]. Available at: https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/TASO-attainment-raising-typology-and-rapid-evidence-review.pdf

IS1.5 – Annual Access Conference

University of Warwick. (2019) *Choices that students make between different post-18 routes and whether these choices are effective and reliably informed: Review of relevant literature and evidence*. [Online]. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6389f4d3bf7f723ad68c34/DfE_Review_Educ_and_VET_choices_-_Final_1709.pdf

Introduced in AY22/23 post-engagement survey evaluation will be bolstered by changes to new student entrant data capture (from AY24/25) to identify direct corelation between event engagement and student progression into HE (and the subject area of their programme of study).

IS1.6 – Prepare for the Future

UoL Schools and Colleges Liaison introduced this activity in direct response to demand from Schools to host Y10 engagement days.

Previous delivery format as individual days for individual schools (20 days for 20 schools) and bought together in delivery as a single one-day event. This further developed as a *course builder day* showing students programme options that they might not know exist when studying at A level.

As part of our access intervention strategy, this is an activity that is yet to be subject to targeted evaluation which will see the introduction of an attendance impact evaluation (without personal student data capture) and engagement with participant Schools to survey and evaluate sample student groups.

This work will be used to inform the future delivery and shape of this intervention.

IS1.7 – Lincolnshire Children's University

UoL is part of Children's University (CU) where research below confirms that this opportunity for primary pupils directly contributes to attainment raising and aspirations of young learners, where we focus on this within Lincolnshire. Key outcomes set out by CU reflect ambition for participants to feel that learning can be fun, aspirational and lifelong, and they are empowered to make positive choices about their future as well as better cope with the challenges life will throw at them. In addition, children engaging with activities also build a broader range of essential skills in line with the Skills Builder Framework https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework

UoL is also now a 'Learning Destination' which means that where a School (participating in CU) visits the campus, children can collect a stamp which contributes towards credits they collect in their Passport to Learning – which applies to each activity of validated learning they engage with. At the end of each year the University hosts a graduation for Schools to participate in, enabling pupils to graduate with either a Bronze, Silver or Gold award (depending on the credits they have obtained).

Children's University Trust. (2022) *Learning beyond the classroom: Provision and Participation*. [Online]. Available from:https://childrensuniversity.co.uk/media/1475/learning-beyond-the-classroom-provision-and-participation.pdf

- This report provides a series of evidence-based reports examining the impact and importance of learning beyond the classroom (informed by data from 50,000 children, 12,000 activities and 310,000 hours of recorded participation). Findings confirm the disproportionate cost of living impact on children from lower income backgrounds in terms of their learning beyond the classroom, and while most children participate in free activities provided by schools, increasingly schools are unable to increase or continue this extra-curricular provision.

Education Endowment Foundation. (2017) *Children's University.* [Online]. Available from: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/childrens-university/

- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) carried out an efficacy study (2017) based on a randomised control trial of a Children's University programme (enrichment activities for young people) for year 5 and 6 pupils, suggesting that participation had a modest, positive effect on attainment in Maths and English. This was followed up by a further study from November to July 2023 (due for reporting in 2024) to undertake a further RCT involving 150 Primary schools.

IS1.8 & 9 – Parents Evening YR11 and YR12

UCAS (2024) *Project Next Generation*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.ucas.com/project-next-generation

- Study of 13–17-year-olds which looked into what the biggest barriers to accessing HE are – the top four were related to access. UoL Schools and Colleges Liaison arrange Parents Evening events to myth bust and support the planning of going to university.

UCAS. (2016) Through the lens of students: how perceptions of higher education influence applicants' choices. [Online]. Available from: https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/through-the-lens-of-students.pdf

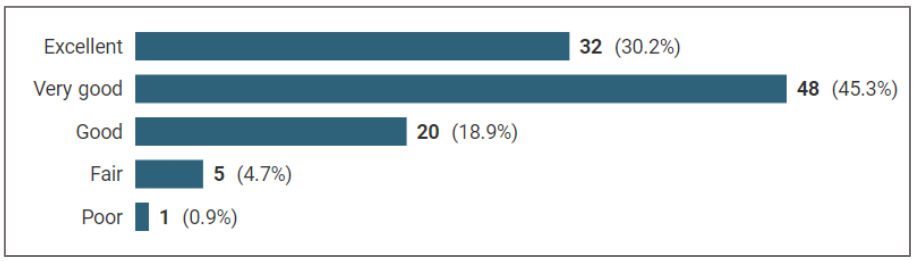
Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). (2024) *Parental influence on children's academic and employment choices.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.agcas.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/b6258e1f-ab7f-4a22-8423-d8400ee163d5

King's College London. (2018) *Partners in Progression: Engaging parents in university access*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Partners-in-Progression.-Engaging-parents-in-university-access.pdf

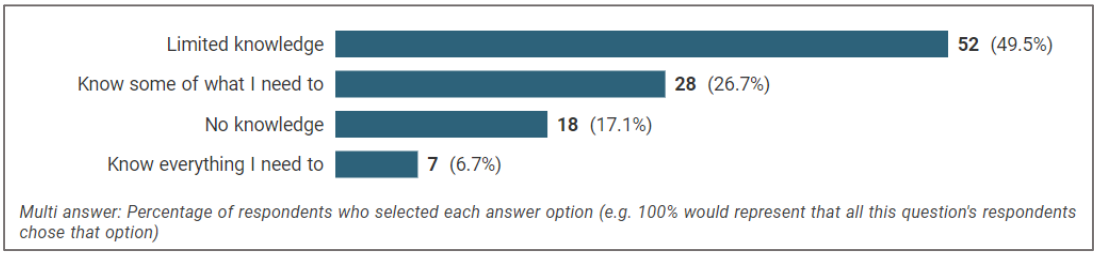
IS1.10 – Be Inspired Programme

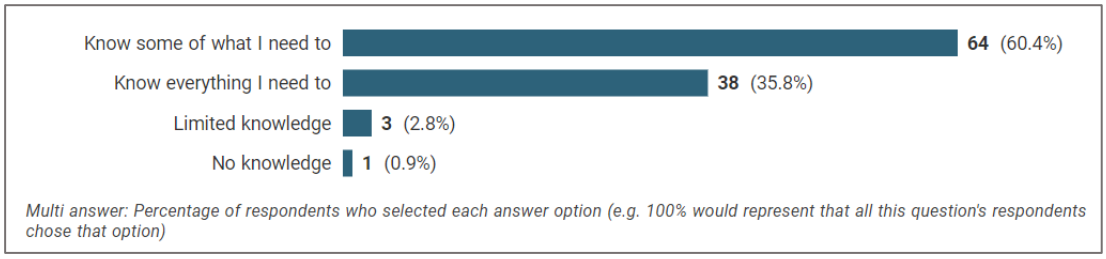
In academic year 23/24 the Be Inspired Programme facilitated engagement with 70 different Schools/Colleges (bringing over 2,100 students onto campus) across 36+ days. Results from the post-engagement student attendance survey captured between Sept-23 and May-24 are below.

Student rating of the Be Inspired event.

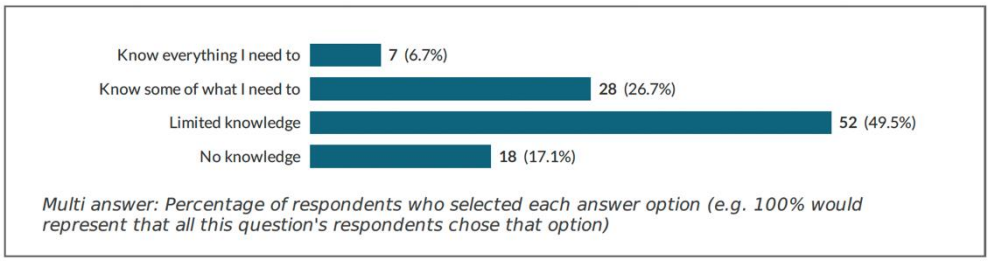


Students' knowledge of the University before and after attending the event.

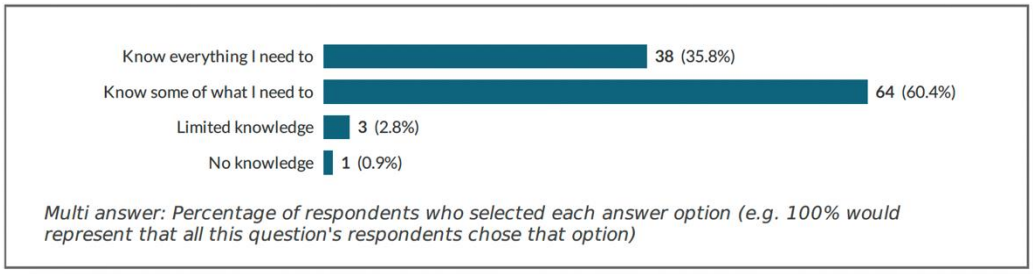




Students rated their knowledge of the University prior to attending the event (below).



Students rated their knowledge of the University after attending the event (below) which shows a significant shift in those leaving with a greater knowledge of Lincoln and about HE.



In relation to the exposure to subject disciplines in a different context to their experience at school, respondents focused on how it had informed their thinking *'originally I didn't want to attend because I live in Lincoln, but I gained an interest in the media production course'* and *'shown us a more interesting side to psychology, made me think about studying it further'*.

IS1.11 – Pathfinders Access Programme

Lincoln College University of Oxford. (2024). *Pathfinders: Lincoln's Flagship Access Programme*. [Online]. Available from: https://lincoln.ox.ac.uk/study-here/outreach/initiatives/programmes/pathfinders

CFE Research. (2023). *The benefits of and barriers to collaborative access activity by higher education providers*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3ad6de14-b501-4b3e-be63-d77e23e9fffa/benefits-and-barriers-to-collaborative-access-activity-by-higher-education-providers.pdf

- Benefits of collaboration between higher education institutions include understanding the diversity of need for young people, sharing ideas and good practice, engaging with harder to reach groups, reducing duplication, ensuring greater synergy in HE access goals, and greater evaluation resource.

HEPI. (2023). *Gaps in outcomes among Free School Meal students in higher education*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/06/01/gaps-in-outcomes-among-free-school-meal-students-in-higher-education/

- This paper highlights those institutions with a TEF Gold Award recruit significantly fewer Free School Meal pupils as a proportion of their overall intake compared to Bronze and Silver universities. Not a single provider with more than 30% of their students having been eligible for Free School Meals was awarded Gold in TEF (2020/21). This shows the work that needs to be done at Lincoln and Oxford to tackle these gaps.

Objective / Intervention Strategy 2: In seeking to address the increasing imbalance between male and female new entrants at Lincoln, we will build on work with our feeder schools focused on addressing socio-economic disparities and perceptions of higher education in order to specifically support and increase access for male new entrants.

Overarching

- King's College London. (2016) *Underrepresentation of white working-class boys in HE*: [Online]. Available from: https://www.cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-underrepresentation-of-white-working-class-boys-in-higher-education-baars-et-al-2016.pdf
- House of Commons Library. (2023) *Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England.* [Online]. Available from: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf *Includes content on white working-class boys (page 16)*
- Office for Students. (2020). *HE Can shows South Yorkshire boys that they CAN progress to higher education*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/heppsy-he-can/

IS2.1 – Addressing gender imbalance at Programme level

HESA. (2023). *Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2021/22 – Subject's studied.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2023/sb265-higher-education-student-statistics/subjects

University of Lincoln Athena Swan application, January 2024

- Objective 6 – confirms UoL intention to increase the proportion of men in female-dominated schools and departments. This will involve developing strategies to recruit, support and retain male academics in female-dominated disciplines e.g. Health and Social Care, Educations, Psychology. This aims to increase the number of male role models and representation, which is important for student inclusion.

IS2.2 – Inclusive Imagery

WONKHE. (2022) *The four foundations of belonging at university.* [Online]. Available from: https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-four-foundations-of-belonging-at-university/

Odgers Berndtson. (2022) A sense of belonging: the importance of inclusive imagery and language. [Online]. Available from: https://www.odgersberndtson.com/insights/a-sense-of-belonging-the-importance-of-inclusive-imagery-and-language/

Sense of belonging is an essential component of the student experience and embedded in our Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement Strategy. Visual media, such as images and graphics play a key role in conveying intended messages to evoke a desired response, and in turn inform or enhance that sense of belonging.

IS2.3 – Lincoln City FC / UoL Partnership

The University and Students' Union have been working with Lincoln City Football Club (LCFC) to establish a performance coaching programme as part of a strategy to develop sports, in particular the success of the university's competitive teams in the British Universities and College Sport (BUCS) leagues. This has now culminated in a formal (initially 3-year) partnership with agreements between the University and LCFC (detailing responsibilities and funding) alongside a Memorandum of Understanding (between the University, LCFC and Students' Union) underpinning the programme for both men's and (from AY24/25) women's football teams.

Both first teams are 'ring-fenced' within the SU structure, such that LCFC will undertake all player trials, provide a Head Coach for each team (overseen by Director of Football and Head of Academy), run all coaching sessions at a LCFC facility, select the squads and make all matchday decisions, provide support staff (physio, video analysis, etc.) and also provide suitable training and match facilities. The teams will play and train in LCFC provided kits displaying all party logos.

A former UoL student has now been employed by LCFC and will be directly involved in this partnership throughout. LCFC coaches, players and support staff will also attend open days, offer holder days throughout the year to support student recruitment and promote the programme.

British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS). (2020) *The value of university sport and physical activity: position statement and evidence.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.bucs.org.uk/static/c42d7259-5679-4c3a-aa44c439044a15ff/4cc6cb88-3396-46e7-93ac52148b102ddb/The-value-of-university-sport-and-physical-activity.pdf

- This extensive report and call to action reflects the value of sport and physical activity in relation to a positive student experience and for many students, creating that early sense of belonging. This also reflects on sport as a tool impacting student choice of HEI.
- An embedded case study from Sheffield Hallam references their recruitment of students (21%) from POLAR Q1 (least likely to enter HE) and the association with sport participation and lower withdrawal rates and achieving Good Honours compared to the whole student body (85% versus 77%). While not specifically attributable to differences in ethnicity, POLAR group, gender or age, this remained constant with a sport participant group than in the University as a whole.
- While the expectation is that additional male new entrants in relation to this programme will not be significant it does however provide an opportunity for those who would benefit from this deliberate engagement with football to reconsider HE.

IS2.4 – Pathfinders Access Programme

See details under IS1.11 above.

Success in HE

Objective / Intervention Strategy 3: To ensure Asian, black, mixed and other (ABMO) students successfully progress through their studies in line with their white peers. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap to white students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable ABMO students to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.

Overarching

- University of Lincoln Race Equality Charter Award (Bronze, April 2021)

  Work focused on self-reflection, building an understanding of the racial inequalities across our institution, and developing solutions to the racial inequalities we have so far identified.

- University of Lincoln. (2021) *Race Equality Action Plan*. [Online]. Available from: https://eleanorglanvilleinstitute.lincoln.ac.uk/action/equality-inclusion-projects/race-equality-project/race-equality-action-plan

- University of Lincoln. (2024) *Inclusive Education Resource Hub.* [Online]. Available from: https://lalt.lincoln.ac.uk/development-pathways/inclusive-education-resource-hub/

  The University of Lincoln's Inclusive Education Resource Hub forms part of our Equality Charter work and is important in informing the development and improvement of our teaching and learning practices.

- University of Lincoln. (2022) *Strategic Plan 2022-2027.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/media/responsive2017/abouttheuniversity/managementandstrategy/UOL-Strategic-Plan-2022-2027.pdf

  The University through its Strategic Plan (2022-27) Transforming Lives and Communities is committed to creating a purposeful community that will strive to make a positive difference and to building a diverse and inclusive culture.

- University of Lincoln. (2022) *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.* [Online]. Available from: https://eleanorglanvilleinstitute.lincoln.ac.uk/assets/downloads/EDI_Strategic_Plan_%282022-2027%29.pdf

- Universities UK. (2019) *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #Closingthegap.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf

IS3.1 – Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP) Higher

The interdisciplinary Lincoln Equality of Attainment Project (LEAP) was formally launched by the University in the 2018/19 academic year to examine and mitigate the differential student outcomes observed among undergraduates from ethnic minority groups.

Through the provision of advice, resources and support, LEAP was designed to facilitate the implementation (and subsequent evaluation) of research-informed and evidence-based changes to teaching and learning and assessment practices, and to make a strong and positive contribution to the student experience and the realisation of the University's student success targets, as set out in the University's 20/21 to 24/25 Access and Participation Plan (APP).

In line with the University's holistic approach to EDI and informed by the research and expertise of the Eleanor Glanville Institute (EGI), the LEAP project is being revised to take a far more holistic and intersectional approach to student experience and success. This broadened approach enables us to investigate and support student experience and attainment from an inclusion perspective while continuing to address differential learning outcomes as identified in the University's APP Success targets.

The University's Eleanor Glanville Institute (EGI) work on a variety of internal-facing and externally-funded projects that are contributing to, and under-pinning, LEAP Higher development (i.e. to support student experience and success across an inclusive student pipeline in HE). These include:

- The Inclusive Student Pipeline: Transitioning from statutory education through FE to HE (LiNCHigher)
- The Inclusive Student Pipeline: Supporting student success into and through HE (LiNCHigher)
- Supporting Disability Inclusion Across HE and Science Programmes
- Rethinking Student Sense of Belonging in Higher Education (UoL Pump-priming)

IS3.2 – LEAP Higher Toolkit

See LEAP Higher evidence base above.

Toolkit development will be informed and evidenced by the data collection undertaken and aligned with this activity.

IS3.3 – Lincoln Education Toolkit for Student Success (LETSS)

Why we need this Toolkit – within all higher education institutions, there is strong evidence of a differential outcome between white students and their ABMO counterparts (as the aggregation of Asian, black, mixed and other ethnicity) achieving 'good honours' degrees at graduation (2:1 and above). This is known across the sector as the attainment gap. UoL has a strong strategic commitment to creating a culturally diverse community where different ideas, values and beliefs are acknowledged, valued and respected equally and embedded into all of its core business.

The LEAP Higher Project (above) embodies this position within the institution's mission and strives to help the university better understand its own context-specific reasons why differential student outcomes exist and persist.

Work undertaken in the University's Eleanor Glanville Institute (EGI) confirms that:

- A common observation across research into attainment gaps and differential student outcomes has shown that there is no single reason why this gap exists and persists.
- The Lincoln Education Toolkit for Student Success (LETSS) aims to address differential student outcomes from an educational and pedagogical perspective to help improve ABMO student experiences and support their achievement and success at Lincoln.
- While the University as a whole, and individual Colleges or Schools, may have low numbers of ABMO students overall, this can lead to the mistaken idea that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in teaching, learning and assessment is of little importance. Embedding EDI is part of good practice that not only benefits ABMO students and staff, but all students and staff, as it enables open mindedness and diversity.

The Lincoln Education Toolkit for Student Success (LETSS) provides a resource of activities and advice for staff to facilitate the application and promotion of EDI in their practice. LETSS also aims to raise staff awareness of ABMO issues at local level and incorporates bespoke activities and support that will help to streamline the variety of pedagogies available. This seeks to help address attainment gaps or differential outcomes by ethnicity and improve ABMO students' academic experience. This is a dynamic, evolving and collaborative process engaging colleagues and students across the institution to share best practice in supporting student success.

IS3.4 – Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET)

Sharp. J. (2020) *An Initial Evaluation of the Enhances Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard Pilot.* [Online]. Available from: https://bpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/e/8583/files/2023/05/EPMD-Evaluation-Report-4.pdf

- This report presents case-study findings arising from a small-scale, largely qualitative and comparative evaluation of the value and positioning of Lincoln's enhanced Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard (EPMD) as an 'early warning' and ongoing alerting system for the purposes of identifying and supporting

those students 'at risk' of falling behind and dropping out of university altogether or failing to make progress in terms of their achievement potential. Undertaken between October 2019, and January 2020.

- Findings draw mainly on the interview narratives of one colleague in Planning and Business Intelligence (PBI) involved in the extensive and prior development of the dashboard itself and for setting up the EPMD for use across the period of the evaluation as a whole, four Student Support Advisors externally monitoring the dashboards of seven personal tutors recruited from a number of Schools across all four Colleges (132 students in total, 73 in the first year of study), and six personal tutors also recruited from a number of Schools across the Colleges internally monitoring dashboards by themselves (198 students in total, 139 in the first year of study).
- In terms of recommendations, the enhanced EPMD was considered best monitored externally for the purposes of student identification and effective 'intervention' and support, given the 'personal' nature of almost all of the matters arising, but in close contact and professional dialogue with personal tutors themselves who are better positioned and able to provide 'local' context and clarification as well as to respond to more academic concerns. Recommendations also extended to consider the potential training requirements for users scaling up (including the resource implications involved), and the potential for future developments associated with the dashboard itself should this proceed to consideration (also including the resource implications involved).
- It is from this pilot and evaluation that the Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET) was established to deliver this intervention to all students at Lincoln.

UOL Internal Student Success & Engagement Team Update (March 2024). The Student Success & Engagement Team (SSET) is now coming to the end of their first operational year of identifying and supporting home undergraduate students to successfully complete their chosen academic programme, which enables some initial data analysis to be undertaken and planning in response to this for the next academic year.

- The team use attendance data and the University's Engagement Priority Marker (EPM) dashboard to identify and reach the students who may benefit from the service. To date they have reached out to 1684 students and of these 382 (23%) have responded to the offer of support. According to the University dashboard, the number of withdrawals at week 25 (w/c 11 March) is 292 compared to 423 at the same point in the academic year 22/23, and 351 the year before.
- What has been noted, but not documented to date, is the attendance improvements made by students who have not responded to the offer of support. The improvement in attendance by these students indicates the lack of attendance was a choice and not due to a barrier, and the 'joined-up' approach from the Team and the Schools has resulted in students being aware that non-attendance is not a choice that will go unnoticed.
- The highest rate of overall attendance improvement has been in the School of Health & Social Care who have seen an increase of approx. 37%. As per the original proposal for the SSET, 1 FTE is allocated to offer an enhanced service to the Nursing students which has, by default, included all the Health & Social Care students.
- A significant function of the team is to signpost students to the most appropriate support within the University. Much of this is within the wider Student Services team including wellbeing concern, financial advice, housing and community issues. In addition, many issues can also be supported by colleagues from other areas including, academic issues which can be supported by services delivered by the library.
- As a new service, evaluation plans are under development with aspiration that future data analysis will identify if interventions/offers of support (even if not accepted) impact on outcomes, attendance rates and progression. Subject to a control group being identified (from a previous year) analysis will look at impact for those with a declared disability (as well as other underrepresented characteristics) and compared with students from similar backgrounds without disability or underrepresented characteristics.

IS3.5 – School Student Success Leads (SSLs)

Supported by overarching evidence above – establishment of School Student Success Leads is intended to raise awareness of and share good practice across the institution (informed by sector research/engagement and the wider work of EGI).

In relation to SSLs, it is the individual activities delivered within the School Plans that will be informed by framework interventions such as LEAP and LETSS which provide the overarching evidence base informing both rationale and development. In this context work undertaken in relation to ToC for each of these sub activities will similarly be informed by this wider practice and evidence.

Objective / Intervention Strategy 4: To enable students who disclose a disability to progress through their studies in line with their non-disabled counterparts. We continue to aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in degree attainment rates. Central to this objective will be disaggregation of groupings to ensure full understanding of student needs to inform intervention development and delivery.

Overarching

- Evans, C. and Zhu, X. (2022) *A checklist for making disability inclusion a reality in higher education.* [Online]. Available from: https://eleanorglanvilleinstitute.lincoln.ac.uk/resources/diif

  Disability Inclusion Framework (DIIF) developed by Professor Carol Evans (University of Southampton) and Dr Xiaotong Zhu (University of Lincoln – EGI) following extensive research into key issues impacting disabled student and staff access and equal opportunities to do well within a HE context.
- TASO. (2023) *What Works to Reduce Equality Gaps for Disabled Students in HE – Project Report.* [Online]. Available from: https://taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO-report-what-works-to-reduce-equality-gaps-for-disabled-students.pdf
- UoL membership of Student Minds Mental Health Charter Programme provides us with a set of evidence-informed principles to support us in adopting a whole provider approach to mental health and wellbeing for our students and staff.

  The university has committed to achieving Charter status for the institution (outcome pending) and alignment of this with our specialist Student Wellbeing and Student Services continues to be embedded and benefit from the community of institutions who also hold programme membership.
- Safer, A., Farmer, L., & Song, B. (2020). Quantifying difficulties of university students with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 33(1), pp.5-21.
- Wavehill. (2022) *What works in supporting student mental health.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/e64b9fb2-fa16-498c-819e-8aca308005ab/evaluation-of-the-mhcc-what-works.pdf
- UCAS. (2021) Starting the Conversation: UCAS report on student mental health. [Online]. Available from:www.ucas.com/file/513961/download?token=wAaKRniC

IS4.1 Writing Development

Introduced based on feedback and concerns around students writing ability, academic argument and critical thinking skills. The Writing Development team visited and learnt from several other universities who had developed writing centres such as Sheffield Hallam's Skills Centre and Coventry University's Centre for academic writing.

IS4.2 Maths and Stats Help (MASH)

Sigma. (2024) *Network for excellence in mathematics and statistics support*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.sigma-network.ac.uk/about/

- MASH was founded with the help of the SIGMA network in response to feedback and concerns around students' functional maths and statistic ability, particularly those on nursing and business programmes.
- Following the successful models of Loughborough and Coventry Universities, ongoing engagement and liaison continues to be maintained with both institutions.

- Mathematics underpins many university subjects to a significant extent, and quantitative methods are becoming increasingly essential in all disciplines. For many students, difficulties with mathematics and statistics can be a barrier to successful study in higher education.

IS4.3 Library Wellbeing team – Anxiety

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bostick, S. L., & Jiao, Q. G. (2004). Library anxiety: Theory, research, and applications. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.

- Library anxiety is 'an uncomfortable feeling or emotional disposition, experienced in a library setting, which has cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioural ramifications' (Onwuegbuzie, Bostick, & Jiao, 2004, p. 25). Built on feedback received by Library colleagues participating in the 2016/17 WOW Summer School, which asked students 'what could we do to make things better' it was suggested introducing a bookable 1-2-1 library orientation.

IS4.4 Library Wellbeing team – Accessibility

In building knowledge and understanding of improved accessibility technology for supporting students Library staff attended a best practice event at the British Medical Association in London, a talk given by Middlesex University (2018), and a subsequent discussion and visit from Leeds Beckett University (as an exemplar of sector best practice).

On the back of this session Lincoln's Library Wellbeing team hosted a visit by Leeds Beckett colleagues in conjunction with Student Wellbeing, and utilising student feedback were able to move to a similar model and update processes in line with new technology and the RNIB service. (https://libguides.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/your_library/library_disability_support)

IS4.5 Peer to Peer Student Assistants

In 2016, nursing students requested provision of learning support appointments at weekends as they have many demands on their time such as placements and families. The peer-to-peer student assistants came about to provide greater flexibility in offering different times and days for students to access support.

Bermingham, N., Boylan, F. & Ryan, B. (2023) *The 4C's of PAL – An evidence-based model for implementing peer assisted learning for mature students, Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 60:3, 401-411, DOI: 10.1080/14703297.2022.2050779

IS4.6 – Prospective Student Work – Student Wellbeing Services

Students Minds Mental Health Charter framework provides a set of evidence-informed principles to adopt a whole-university approach to mental health and wellbeing.

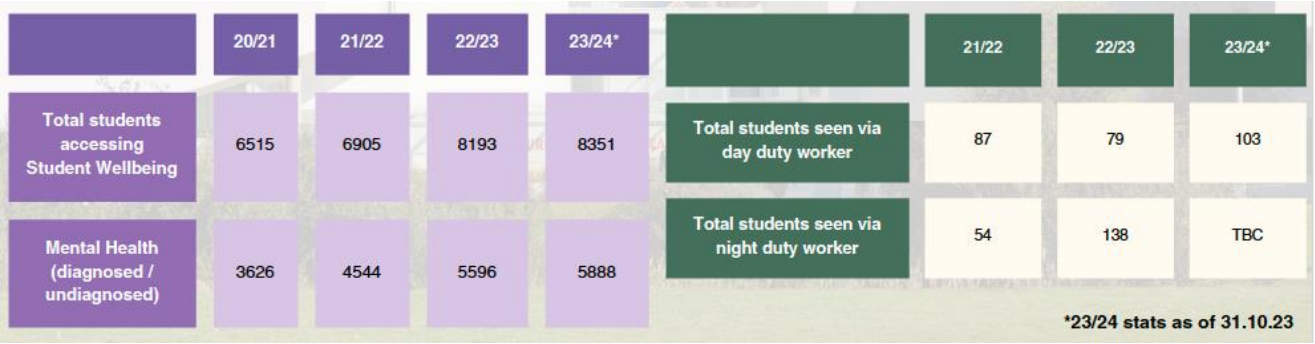
- The process of self-evaluation in applying for Charter status informs the need to consider student transition as a key aspect of establishing a student's sense of belonging. Theme 1 (Transition into University) principles 1.3 (measures to support transition aim to promote wellbeing, efficacy, academic integration and social connectedness); and 1.4 (universities provide additional or specific interventions for students who face additional barriers) are both a core aspect of our student application and enrolment processes to ensure that students who have declared a disability through their UCAS application are identified and support provided at the earliest opportunity to improve their experiences as they transition into HE.
- Higher Education institutions are experiencing a changing landscape in relation to support for student mental health and wellbeing: there is an ongoing debate around duty of care for students, a focus on a 'whole institution' approach to mental health supported by the University Mental Health Charter Programme for 2022/23, a requirement to gain more data and evidence on provision and impact of student support services as well as the recent appointment of the Student Support Champion, Edward Peck, by the Department for Education to lead the Mental Health Higher Education Implementation Taskforce.

Universities UK. (2023). *Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/uuk-stepchange-mhu.pdf

- This programme calls on universities 'to see mental health as foundational to all aspects of university life, for all students and all staff'.

The Office for Students also play a key role in ensuring that every student, whatever their background, 'is supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.' Their work includes supporting universities in areas such as suicide prevention and their Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) identifies mental health as a sector-wide risk that may affect a student's opportunity to access and succeed in higher education.

The University's Student Wellbeing Centre Annual Report (for AY22/23) confirms that student mental health and wellbeing is a key priority for Lincoln, with an increasing number of students declaring mental health conditions on their UCAS applications, as well as experiencing mental health challenges during their time at university (see data below).



	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24*
Total students accessing Student Wellbeing	6515	6905	8193	8351
Mental Health (diagnosed / undiagnosed)	3626	4544	5596	5888

	21/22	22/23	23/24*
Total students seen via day duty worker	87	79	103
Total students seen via night duty worker	54	138	TBC

*23/24 stats as of 31.10.23

- With a continuing upward trajectory of students' declarations early intervention to ensure students have support in place before they arrive remains a key and core focus.
- In AY22/23 the service supported 2,359 prospect students who disclosed on their application.
- Student Wellbeing operates an extended drop-in service from enrolment (week 0) until the end of week 2 (a 3-week period) whereby all students are contacted who have chosen to disclose a disability to the University and encourage them to attend the Student Wellbeing Centre for support and guidance. Numbers recorded in the table below outline the number of appointments over this 3-week period.

Disability Code	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**
Mental Health	308	590	530	490	618	643
SPLD (Specific Learning Difference)	197	239	296	198	299	456
VI (Visual Impairment)	3	3	3	3	4	45
HI (Hearing Impairment)	6	11	16	3	9	41
Mobility	6	41	26	22	37	49
Autism	39	40	39	21	61	203
Unseen	36	41	35	56	52	202*
ADHD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	41	8
Two or more disabilities declared	80	41	88	55	107	152
Not listed	34	87	117	242	46	276
TOTAL	**709**	**1093**	**1150**	**1090**	**1274**	**2075**

*including long-term

IS4.7 – PASS Plans

HE Professional. (2023) *8 benefits of individual learning plans (ILPs) for Higher Education.* [Online]. Available from: https://heprofessional.co.uk/edition/8-benefits-of-individual-learning-plans-ilps-for-higher-education

- Effective support plans and timely assistance prevents students from falling behind or leaving an institution. ILPs acknowledge that different students have varying needs and builds strategies tailored to these preferences, which enhances the overall learning experience.
- ILPs provide valuable data on student performance and their learning patterns, which has a knock-on effect on resource requirements and student retention. This also aligns with the work of our Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET).

Previous format of student Learning Support Plans was enhanced into PASS following a SU Commissioned Accessibility Report (April 2020) informing a wider review of barriers and challenges experienced by students. Now a document for the student, their academic school and the library, PASS encompasses information on a student's individual diagnosis and how they are impacted by this, setting out briefly phrased requests as reasonable adjustments to ensure that the individual student does not experience barriers to their learning. Detailed explanations of these are provided separately in a staff guide to PASS, alongside support guides (hosted online) which include suggested strategies and general teaching strategies for those involved in teaching and mentoring students with individual or multiple diagnoses.

IS4.8 – WOW

Internal evaluations for WOW have been produced annually since 2015. University of Lincoln. (2024) *WOW Summer School*. [Online]. Available from: https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/new-students/wow-summer-school/

- Latest 2023 report confirms 120 places were offered to prospective students (from 186 applications made) with 110 students arriving to register and 106 students completing the full programme. This was the highest number in the last eight years.
- All attendees are asked to complete a question about their experience of WOW – including sessions they found useful, as well as what else would have been beneficial for them. Students also rate their feelings around anxiety and managing change before and after the programme.
- Students who enrol after attending WOW have their attendance monitored where data confirms higher engagement compared to the University average. 2021 attendees had an attendance average of 72.68% - compared to the University overall average of 65.82%, and the University disability average of 61.27%.
- Student comments collected in 2022 and 2023 reflect participant experience of the programme:

  'A very helpful and brilliant experience. Making friends was good in a low anxiety environment.'

  'I am much less nervous about fresher's week now that I know the layout of the campus and made some friends. It was good to get to know the city too. I have a better idea of what uni life will be like'.

  'The delivery of WOW was perfect, the kindness of the staff stood out'

  'Really helpful and would highly recommend going. I feel a lot more confident and less worried about coming in September. All the staff were so lovely and supportive'.

  'Great experience. Made me feel more comfortable and confident meeting new people'.

  'Fantastic experience, accommodating, made to feel welcome.'

  'I definitely belong here'.

  'Definitely a life-changing experience, and helpful in allowing me to experience uni life in full'.

IS4.9 – Open Access Student Wellbeing Services

See Overarching Mental Health Charter link referenced (above).

Office for Students. (2023) *OfS Insight 20: Meeting the mental health needs of students.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8812/insight-brief-20-meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students.pdf

The Student Wellbeing Centre (SWC) is the central service for student mental health and wellbeing – facilitating access to the curriculum for those students with disclosed disabilities, including mental health, as well as prioritising the wellbeing of all students by:

- Advising students/staff in matters concerning strategies and arrangements for teaching, learning and academic assessment; policy development and maintenance.
- Advice and guidance to the University on a range of issues related to access and compliance with legislation.
- Running campaigns and events to support the wellbeing of the whole student population.
- Managing the University's Concern for Welfare process ensuring all students are assessed for risk.

Core activities are primarily casework-based and include pre-admission enquiries, dyslexia screening/arranging of diagnostic assessments, liaising with schools and academics regarding individual cases, and advising students on Disabled Students' Allowances. Staff within this service come from a variety of backgrounds including acute mental health services and NHS employment, Rape Crisis and Crisis Team, PIP/Disability assessors, as well as individuals qualified in Adult Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing and Occupational Therapy.

During AY23/24 the SWC has remodelled its service delivery, increasing the front end of the service to help meet increased student demand. This includes creating a self-referral form which students complete to request an appointment. Specific roles deliver 'first contact' appointments which mean students can be seen in a timely manner and assess needs quickly to prevent situations escalating. RAG rated Impact measurement scales have also been introduced for all appointments to support risk management and ensure students receive robust levels of support.

As part of the Mental Health Charter audit and assessment, changes have been introduced to counselling services provided, now offering 24/7 online support for students in terms of mental health. As a BACP accredited service students can access online advice through an App as well as the standard 6-session model of counselling sessions (facilitated through advisor first contact appointments). Signposting to this new model will be embedded in student induction information from AY24/25 as well as within the Personal Tutoring network.

IS4.10 – SSET

See details under IS3.4 above.

IS4.11 – School Student Success Leads

See details under IS3.5 above.

IS4.12 – Blackboard Ally

Blackboard Ally is an integrated tool within our VLE and allows students to download materials from module sites (associated with their programme of study) in a range of different formats, based on certain needs and aligned with specific assisted technologies.

- While some students will have a clearer understanding of the Ally feature (document format) that will benefit them the most, Ally will provide alternative format options within each document. This is available dependent on the original content type. These include but are not limited to:

Tagged PDF	A Tagged PDF uses tags and elements – such as blockquote, paragraph, and headings – to add meaning to a page. It aids screen reader users with good content structure.
Semantic HTML	Similar to a Tagged PDF, tags and elements aid screen reader users with good content structure, however it is viewed in a browser and adapts to the device you are viewing it on.

ePub	This file type is typically opened in an application like Apple Books or EasyReader on Android. It allows you to take notes, highlight content, adjust text and background, and use text-to-speech.
Audio	The audio alternative reads aloud the text in the original content. This also includes alternative descriptions for images if they are provided.
BeeLine Reader	BeeLine Reader displays text using a subtle colour gradient that helps pull your eye through your readings.

- The University is working to proactively support staff to an accessibility by default status, where it is normal practice to correctly format documents and learning resources before sharing with students (this is supported by ongoing training and awareness sessions). Reporting functions also enable Digital Education colleagues to assess module sites and target documents hosted where there are more severe accessibility issues being identified.
- While accessibility standards have been in place for a number of years, the expansion of online resources and pace of technological evolution has driven review of these standards, now passed into Law (as below). There are likely to be students across all our programmes with learning or sensory disabilities, and not everyone will disclose, nor are they required to. Rather than asking students to identify any limitations to their abilities it is essential to ensure that we employ practices that will reach and support all our learners.
- Colleagues in Digital Education regularly meet with Blackboard and having been involved in the development and testing of Ally are now able to feedback user experiences (particularly around accessibility during its pilot phase) and continue to work with them to maintain this input into their future development/mapping.

Gov.uk. (2023) *Understanding WCAG 2.2*. [Online]. Accessible from: https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag

- Digital Accessibility target standards are defined by the Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG 2.2.

Policy Connect. (2018) *Accessible virtual learning environments – making the most of the new regulations*. [Online]. Accessible from: https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/accessible-virtual-learning-environments-making-most-new-regulations

- The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Assistance Technology have further explored the impact of EU Accessibility Directive (2016) reporting its recommendations aiming to go further than meeting the minimum compliance, setting out how requirements can be met in such a way as to improve learning for all students whether disabled or not.

IS4.13 – LEAP Higher

See IS3.1 above

IS4.14 – FeedbackFirst pilot

Kjærgaard, A., Buhl-Wiggers, J. & Mikkelsen, E.N. (2023) *Does gradeless learning affect students' academic performance? A study of effects over time.* Studies in Higher Education. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2233007

- This report reflects on rising stress levels and a more hostile/competitive environment leading to the implementation of a gradeless first year in a large Danish business school. All first-year grades were replaced with pass/fail assessments, with written and oral feedback provided from instructors and student peers. Workshops were held for educators on how to give student feedback and hold gradeless exams. Qualitative methods (semi structured interviews) were used to examine the impact on the Business & Psychology programme and found mixed responses from students.

- Students felt the change allowed them to focus on learning over performance. Among other positives students reported '*reduced pressure, surplus energy, space to breathe, taking one thing at a time. getting through the first semester as whole human beings, time to learn to become learners, less peer competition, more willing to help each other and Psychological free space*'. Increased sense of belonging was reported due to more collaborative learning and supportive study culture.
- Conclusions drawn reflected that this gradeless learning could impact student motivation without negatively impacting future academic performance, albeit that investigation had been limited to a single study programme that attracted high-achieving students. Future research into education application being further encouraged.

The University's pilot FeedbackFirst study is proposed for Level 4 students across all UG programmes within the School of Psychology in AY23/24. Potential ungrading techniques identified include self-assessment, peer assessment, student made rubrics and portfolios, with the exact ungrading mechanisms chosen from discussion within and between module teams.

The 22/23 cohort experiencing usual grading practice will be used as a control group to allow evaluation of the trial.

This longitudinal study of performance will consider self-report and student performance measures to ascertain the impact of first year ungrading – while impact will not be fully known until the 23/24 cohort graduate in 25/26, initial review will establish whether or not to continue the pilot into AY24/25 and beyond.

Objective / Intervention Strategy 5: To ensure students from the most deprived backgrounds successfully progress through their studies in line with their counterparts from less deprived backgrounds. We maintain a firm aspiration to eliminate the degree attainment gap for these students completely. This will see continuation of work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan in relation to embedding supporting interventions which enable students from the most deprived backgrounds to progress successfully through their studies and attain the highest possible degree outcomes.

Overarching

- House of Commons Briefing. (January 2023) *Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England*. [Online]. Available from: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf
- Summers, R., Higson, H. and Moores, E. (2022) The impact of disadvantage on higher education engagement during different delivery modes: a pre-versus peri-pandemic comparison of learning analytics data. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.* **48**(1), pp. 55-66. Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2021.2024793
- Office for Students. (2023) *Students from disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to complete their course*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/students-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds-less-likely-to-complete-their-course/#:~:text=81.6%20per%20cent%20of%20students,from%20the%20most%20advantaged%20group
- TASO. (2023) *Student Mental Health in 2023*. [Online]. Available from: https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/student-mental-health-in-2023.pdf
- Office for Students. (2023) *Meeting the mental needs of students*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students/#:~:text=Those%20full%2Dtime%20students%20who,than%20those%20who%20did%20not.

  'Those full-time students who reported a mental health condition had lower continuation, completion and progression rates across all five quintiles than their counterparts who did not'

IS5.1 – Financial Assistance Funding

WONKHE. (2023) The government's failure on student support is destroying progress on equality. [Online]. Available from: https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-governments-failure-on-student-support-is-destroying-progress-on-equality/

- WONKHE article sets out evidence on disadvantaged students and the cost-of-living crisis and making a case for wholesale change on student finance.

Bournemouth University. (2016) Optimising the impact of university financial support to students. [Online]. Available from: https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Marcellus-Blog-post-Impact-of-Financial-Support.pdf

IS5.2 - SSET

See details under IS3.4 above.

TASO. (2024) *Using learning analytics to prompt student support interventions*. [Online]. Available from: https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024_TASO_Impact-student-support-interventions-learning-analytics.pdf

Foster, E. and Siddle, R. (2019) The effectiveness of learning analytics for identifying at-risk students in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 45(6), pp, 842-854. Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2019.1682118?scroll=top&needAccess=true

IS5.3 Libraries & Learning Skills Support

See details for Writing Development under IS4.1 and Maths & Stats (MASH) under IS4.2 above.

Lawrence, J., Gallimore, M. and Stewart, J. (2012) *Increasing student success, engagement and retention through a novel approach to mathematics support.* University of Lincoln: Conference contribution. Available from: https://hdl.handle.net/10779/lincoln.25165514.v2

Cox, A. and Brewster, L. (2020) Services for student wellbeing in academic libraries: three challenges. New Review of Academic Librarianship, **27**(6). Pp, 149-164. Available from: https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/151701/3/academic%20libraries%20and%20well-being%20final%20paper%20accepted%20version.pdf

IS5.4 Engagement Priority Marker (EPM) dashboard

Sharp. J. (2020) *An Initial Evaluation of the Enhanced Engagement Priority Marker Dashboard Pilot*. [Online]. Available from: https://bpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/e/8583/files/2023/05/EPMD-Evaluation-Report-4.pdf

- Additionally, this report provides reference to a case study example at NTU of their Erasmus+ funded ABLE Project: Achieving Benefits from Learning Analytics (ABLE 2015-2018), a joint venture between NTU, the University of Leiden and KU Leuven, focused on the transition experiences of first year students. This subsequently reports on practice and impact from use and understanding of analytics in relation to understanding outcomes for individual students alerting staff and students to the risks of under-performing:
  De Laet, T. and Foster, E. (2018) The ABLE project: How do we put what we have learnt from learning analytics into practice. [Online]. Available from:
  https://www.ntu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/365873/foster.pdf

IS5.5 – Open Access Student Wellbeing Services

See details under IS4.9 above.

Access (2023) *Student mental health – why is it important for students and how can universities improve it.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.theaccessgroup.com/en-gb/blog/hsc-student-mental-health-why-is-it-important-for-students-and-how-can-universities-improve-it/

- 75% of students have turned to their university for mental health support, and 59% of students have considered dropping out of university with over half the reasons being due to mental health.
- Students struggling to manage their finances and other 'social determinants of health' (housing, money, access to healthcare etc.) can contribute to mental health challenges. These difficulties may be particularly relevant to IMD1 students.

Progression from HE

Objective / Intervention Strategy 6: To enable students who disclose a disability to progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study in line with their non-disabled counterparts, continuing the work established in our 20/21 to 24/25 plan. We aspire to eliminate the absolute gap in progression between our disabled and non-disabled students, taking an individualised approach to focusing on the development and delivery of differentiated support enabling disabled students to successfully progress into graduate employment or postgraduate study.

Overarching

- AdvanceHE. (2020) *Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success: Embedding Employability in Higher Education.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/Embedding%20Employability%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Framework.pdf

  AdvanceHE framework for employability places the agenda as an institution wide priority and highlights the importance of underpinning principles; inclusivity, engagement, collaboration / literature highlights the concern for equality of access if an embedded approach is not applied.
- Research in the sector demonstrated the benefits of measuring career development using a three-stage journey and surfacing these for students:

  Daubney, K. (2021) *Careers Education to Demystify Employability*. London: Open University Press.
- Yorke M., Knight P. (2006) The Higher Education Academy Learning and Employability Series One (Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team). *Embedding employability into the curriculum*. Available from: http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/documents/Staff/HEABriefings/ESECT-3-Embedding_employability_into_curriculum.pdf
- **Task Group**

  The University's Careers Adviser for Access and Participation is a member of the AGCAS Disability Task Group. This group membership includes sharing best practice and challenges across the sector, influencing guidance and policies. This learning is shared regularly with the wider Careers and Employability service and employability leads to improve the service.
- **Theory of Change**

  The Career Readiness Programme and the Embedding Skills for Life Project aim to ensure all students can access careers education and skills development. The content is designed with EDI at the forefront and ensures all students are given access to the full 'EDA' (Explore, Develop, Apply) career readiness cycle and skills development opportunities throughout their student experience.

  Through follow-up conversations and proactive signposting students are provided with opportunities to access further person centred and differentiated resources, providing solutions to address imbalanced social system, including opportunity funding, mentoring and 1:1 coaching.

IS6.1 – Unlocking Potential (UP)

The UP series of workshops focuses on barriers/perceived barriers identified internally and externally for disabled students. This is signposted to throughout the Career Readiness Programme allowing students to discuss the topic in more detail in a small workshop setting.

Policy Connect. (2020) Arriving at Thriving: Learning from disabled students to ensure access for all. [Online]. Available from: https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/arriving-thriving-learning-disabled-students-ensure-access-all

- External research highlights the challenges disabled students have when accessing specific careers advice regarding the transition from education to employment. This influences the topics covered in the regular workshops including *'How, why and when: Talking to an employer about a disability or health condition'.*

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). (2024) The Buckland Review of Autism Employment. *AGCAS Disability Task Group Blog*. [Online]. Available from: https://agcasdtg.wordpress.com/2024/02/29/the-buckland-review-of-autism-employment/

- Specific research into autism graduate experiences shows that fewer than 1 in 5 felt comfortable to discuss adjustments.

University of Lincoln Careers Readiness dashboards

- UoL internal careers readiness dashboard data from enrolment shows a higher number of disabled students are at the *apply stage* in their final year than their non-disabled peers. Suggesting further support on the transition and entry into workplace support such as an understanding of reasonable adjustments and how to discuss requirements with employers.

Prospects Luminate. (2021) *Early Careers Survey 2021: Careers advice and guidance*. [Online]. Available from: https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/early-careers-survey-2021-careers-advice-and-guidance

- The UP programme is coupled with signposting to 1:1 career coaching for more complex and 1:1 advice with a Careers Adviser for Access and Participation. This links to the aforementioned student consultation (at the top of this Annex) which highlighted that 37.1% of respondents lack confidence to apply for roles aligned with their qualification. Data on Career Readiness dashboards similarly confirms that 41% of disabled students in 23/24 were at the 'explore' stage of their career planning. Students who selected this option are agreeing to the statement 'I have no or some ideas but need support to explore my options'.

  This relates to wider research on the increased priority of careers guidance and coaching due to inequitable social capitals with research demonstrating that graduates rely on family connections for advice.

- One of the regular workshops under this brand is about disclosing/discussing disability with an employer. This blog post is written by the University's Careers Advisor for Access and Participation (who is a member of the AGCAS Disability Task Group).

  Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). (2024) Not all disabled students identify as disabled. *Phoenix journal.* [Online]. Accessible from: https://agcasdtg.wordpress.com/2021/06/03/not-all-disabled-students-identify-as-disabled/

IS6.2 – Targeted and mentoring support

Prospects Luminate. (2023) *Employment levels among graduate with disabilities.* [Online]. Available from: https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities

- National data published by Prospects Luminate demonstrates the barriers disabled students face in gaining work experience. Perceptions and confidence about career options can equally be impacted by a lack of social capital representation within different sectors. Mentoring can provide a role modelling benefit and provide contacts to the workplace.

Lincoln Connect and Additional Structured Mentoring is informed by external and internal findings:

UoL Internal Focus Group: experiences of mentoring (2024) conducted with students from access and participation backgrounds demonstrates the importance of creating a supportive structured scheme.

UoL Internal Focus Group: Student confidence and mental health (2023) conducted with disabled students to share how their confidence and mental health has impacted their use of the Careers & Employability service.

- In November 2023, 8 disabled students attended a 1.5-hour focus group to share how their confidence and mental health has impacted their use of our Careers and Employability service. The focus group

findings have helped shape a more diverse approach to mentoring and a focus on a specific programme for disabled students, including training required for employers involved. It also demonstrates the importance of disabled students having disabled mentors.

Prospects Luminate. (2023). *Student recruitment and development in 2023*. [Online]. Available from: https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/student-recruitment-and-development-in-2023

- Research demonstrates student requests for mentoring interventions put in place by graduate employers to support transition and retention in the workplace for students with mental health

Prospects Luminate. (2021). *Barriers to placement years for widening participation students*. [Online]. Available from: https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/barriers-to-placement-years-for-widening-participation-students

- External research demonstrating the lack of connections/perceived lack of connections and the barriers this places on work experience access for widening participation students.

A Theory of Change model has been completed to create a new structured mentoring scheme focused on disabled students to complement Lincoln Connect and provide a bespoke approach, incorporating disabled mentors or those with experience of supporting disable students transition into the workplace.

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). (2024) Making employability accessible: a three-programme approach. *Phoenix journal.* [Online]. Accessible from: https://issuu.com/agcas_00/docs/phoenix_170_social_mobility/6?ff

Our 21/22 Annual Impact Report shows the impact of targeted initiatives for individual students with recommendations made to support engagement.

IS6.3 – Opportunity Fund

Policy Connect. (2020) Arriving at Thriving: Learning from disabled students to ensure access for all. [Online]. Available from: https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/arriving-thriving-learning-disabled-students-ensure-access-all

- Financial burdens are identified in this Policy Connect and HE Commission, confirming the additional challenges faced by disabled students in relation to the cost of living. This can result in students having less time for part time work. Additional financial challenges include travel requirements and accommodation which can be a barrier/perceived barrier when travelling for an interview.
- Internal UoL student consultation previously cited that 40% of disabled students consulted with faced a financial challenge linked to opportunities.
- The focus group with disabled students cited above highlighted the financial pressures currently felt by these students.

IS6.4 – Career Coaching

A further example of a blog post written by the University's Careers Adviser for Access & Participation (who is a member of the AGCAS Disability Task Group) provides some tips related to careers guidance and relates to this Career Coaching intervention.

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). (2023) Careers Guidance Tips for students with ADHD. *Phoenix journal.* [Online]. Accessible from: https://agcasdtg.wordpress.com/2023/05/31/careers-guidance-tips-for-students-with-adhd/

IS6.5 – Guaranteed Interview Scheme – Campus Jobs

Prospects Luminate. (2023) *Employment levels among graduate with disabilities.* [Online]. Available from: https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities

- Students with severe disabilities have limited opportunities to gain work experience. This report highlights low levels of access to careers advice and differentiated 1:1 support. Just 23% of survey participants answered 'yes' when asked if they had received any careers advice, work placements, or information

about transitioning into employment or further study which were tailored to them as a disabled student – while 6% said that this advice was helpful.

IS6.6 – School Employability Leads

The University's network of School Employability Leads has been developed following internal and external findings demonstrating the importance of academic leadership roles to advocate and forward plan their school's employability activity:

McCarron, H and Strudwick, K. (2023). Changing mindsets – embedding employability in the curriculum through the Careers Education Hub and Careers Readiness. *University of Lincoln IMPact Journal.* **6**(2). Available from: https://bpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/e/8583/files/2023/08/V62-3.-Changing-Mindsets-15.06.23.pdf

- Created as important academic leadership roles, supporting the dissemination of key activities, sharing and championing best practice and integrating key initiatives such as the career readiness programme supporting the aim to embed careers education equally and inclusively.
- This aligns to wider external research and frameworks such as Advance HE which highlights the importance of a collaborative approach with all stakeholders.
- The long-term planning for graduate outcome transitions by institutions links to recommendations from What Happens Next in Challenging Times

IS6.7 – Careers Readiness Programme

Theory of change mapping has been completed for Career Readiness Programme (based on TASO model).

Our Career Readiness Programme underpins students' work readiness gains, embedded into all taught curricula and supported by Personal Tutors, which was informed by key literature (Daubney, 2021; HECSU, 2018; Hodkinson, 2008; Shury et al., 2017) and theory along with internal findings:

- Daubney, K. (2021). *Ebook: Careers Education to Demystify Employability: A Guide for Professionals in Schools and Colleges*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Kerley, L., Offiler, B. and Purcell, A. (2018). *Why do some first-year undergraduate students not know where to start career planning despite wanting to?* Sheffield Hallam University. Available from: file://network.uni/staff/S2/HMcCarron/Downloads/hecsu-research-exploring-hesitant-students-perceptions-of-career-planning.pdf
- Hodgkinson, P. (2008). Understanding career decision making and progression: Careership revisited. *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, 5.
- McCarron, H and Strudwick, K. (2023). Changing mindsets – embedding employability in the curriculum through the Careers Education Hub and Careers Readiness. *University of Lincoln IMPact Journal.* **6**(2). Available from: https://bpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/e/8583/files/2023/08/V62-3.-Changing-Mindsets-15.06.23.pdf
- Shury, J., Vivian, D., Turner, C., & Downing, C. (2017). Planning for success: Graduates' career planning and its effect on graduate outcomes. London, UK: Department for Education

UoL Internal Careers Ambassadors Focus Group Summary Report (May 23) in relation to the student co-delivery aspect of CRP. This report summarises the findings from a one-hour focus group conducted with seven student careers ambassadors on the 26 April 2023.

- The purpose of the focus group was to inform the future design of the content of the Career Readiness Programme (CRP) and to establish the Careers Ambassadors' views of how to better engage and motivate students. Findings from this indicate no significant changes are required to the CRP. Recommendations suggest actions to further encourage student engagement with and help to improve that experience and Careers Ambassador delivery more effective.

UoL Lincoln Award Evaluation Report (October 23). The Lincoln Award is the University's employability framework design to support students prepare for their future career and/or postgraduate study. The Award framework helps students to develop and learn how to demonstrate their employability skills through a range

of relevant activities and self-reflection with an overall aim of enabling students to be confident in their career direction, skills articulation and understanding of the entire recruitment process.

- Findings confirm that overall, the Award was credited with building and increasing student confidence when applying for future positions in or outside of education. Graduates particularly, said the skills they had developed, along with the confidence it gave them, had definitely helped them to secure their initial graduate role. Student Completers also highly valued the skills and confidence the Award had given them and were already putting them into practice and seeing the difference they were making. However, the Graduates did point out that the Award probably had a shelf-life and that after four or five years they would no longer need to draw on what they had learnt from the Award when applying for new positions.
- The Award had also made the Student Completers and the Graduates more aware of what employers were looking for; that they want prospective employees to have more than just a good degree. However, some did note you get out what you put into the Award and that to be fully effective it needed to go alongside other career development activities that are ongoing and progressive. It was seen as a "*solid foundation"* on which to develop further skills and engage in extra curricula activities to ensure participants remained attractive to employers. All the students and graduates that took part in the focus groups said they would recommend the programme to other students.

Career Readiness Enrolment Questions

- Career Readiness questions have been added to the enrolment process from 21/22, which can be monitored on a shared dashboard site, allowing for tailored interventions aligned to career confidence. For example, 24% of disabled third year students feel ready to 'apply' for their next steps, compared to 18% of all third-year students. Furthermore, for disabled students this has had a positive move from second year (18% ready to apply) to third year (24% ready to apply). This shows a positive direction for current disabled student career confidence levels.
- In 21/22 57% of disabled students had gained work experience compared to 65% in 23.24 showing a positive trajectory for access to work experience. This compares to 68% of all students and therefore shows some further work to do to increase work experience access.

IS6.8 – Embedding Lincoln for Life Skills

Theory of change mapping has been completed for the Skills Programme (based on TASO model).
Curriculum sessions: Internal UoL Data Analysis from 20/21

- Data from curriculum sessions delivered to third year undergraduate students in 20/21 shows student interactions and the number of sessions delivered to each school have a positive correlation to a reduction in progression gaps.
- **All schools with a progression gap higher than 6 had lower student engagement:** (high priorities as indicated on the dashboard) had an average of only 10 students per session and an average of 2 sessions delivered for final year students.
- **Schools with a negative progression gap had higher student engagement:** Those schools with more disabled students entering grad level than non-disabled had an average of over 20 students per session and an average of 9 sessions. Furthermore, the school with the highest engagement was Life Science (over 500 student interactions and an average of over 80 students per session), which had a -1.7-progression gap.
- This could indicate that the higher reach for careers education in the curriculum has a positive impact for disabled student's progression. Therefore, the recommendation would be to continue to deliver careers education across the institution with a focus on increasing reach. This matches the university KPI which is working towards 50% engagement with embedded content and the continued roll out of the Career Readiness Programme and PGT Horizons.

Annex C

Targets, investment and fees

The OfS will append the information from the fees, investment and targets document when an access and participation plan is published.