Middlesex University

Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29

July 2024

Contents

1. Introduction and Strategic Aim

Middlesex is a global university with campuses in London, Dubai and Mauritius, with a reputation for equity of opportunity and success. Our mission centres on the provision of professional Higher Education, informed by research and supported by knowledge exchange. We aim to prepare our students for success at work, for life-long learning and for leadership. Our community of academics, students and industry partners are building a world that is fairer, healthier and more sustainable. We transform outcomes for individuals, communities and organisations through empowering people to change their lives. Our learning community has practice at the heart of everything we do; we create knowledge and put it into action. We are committed to supporting all our students in their journeys into, during and beyond university. Central to this is our Access and Participation Plan which we present here. This plan focuses on students studying within our London Campus only, to align with the OfS attention to UK-domiciled, full-time and first-degree students. This plan was developed collaboratively by our community, and whilst it focuses on interventions targeting the London campus, it will serve as a lodestar to guide and measure our activities across our global university over the next four years.

We have a proven track record in widening access and are proud of our diverse student population. Our new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shân Wareing, is leading the organisation through a strategic refresh that will ensure all students benefit from inclusive and supportive learning environments to realise their full potential. We are in the process of implementing our 2031 Learning Framework to deliver our vision for teaching and learning. At the heart of this framework are practical and evidence-informed pedagogical principles that speak directly to access and participation, for example: timetabled three day on-campus; student groups to build community and foster a sense of belonging and a broad, common first year curriculum; practice-based focus and authentic assessment. It is our belief that the 2031 Learning Framework will afford our students the best opportunities to be successful in their studies and their lives within university and beyond.

1.1 Our Students

Currently, approximately 11,000 students and apprentices from very diverse backgrounds are educated on our Hendon campus. This is reflective of our long-standing commitment to inclusivity and our location within London. We are above sector average across several widening participation (WP) demographic target groups. 69.6% of our students are from Asian, Black, Mixed or Other (ABMO) global majority ethnicities, which is 36.1pp above sector average. 60.9% are from IMD quintile 1 or 2, the highest level of deprivation, which is 17.5pp above sector average. 43.5% of our students were previously eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), which is 24.1pp above average and amongst the highest in the sector. Furthermore, 34.9% of our students are mature entrants, 9.3pp above sector average. Applications data from UCAS shows that we have the highest rates of applications and acceptances for BTECs within the London modern universities, with 37.4% of our students entering with a BTEC and a further 26.8% enter with an access qualification, other Level 3, or no entry qualifications. We have a significant number of students who report being the first in their family to go to university (63.5% of those who know), and 47.0% come from households classified as in ‘intermediate, routine or manual occupations, or never worked/unemployed'. It is the case therefore, that a significant majority of our students come to us with one or more characteristic(s) that would indicate a risk to equality of opportunity based on the OfS’ Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

We recognise that in society there are other, macro risks, outside of our control, facing the Higher Education (HE) sector and London specifically. These create challenging conditions for our students, that perpetuate the disadvantage for our London-based students. High living costs, including energy costs, food costs, and inflation, add further pressure on our students and impact their engagement with curricula and co-curricular opportunities or accommodation. Many of our students have no choice but to live off-campus, in their family home, which can lead to long and complex commutes and impacts opportunities for peer connections and engagement. Furthermore, the HE sector faces a challenging policy environment, with restrictions on immigration, funding arrangements, and escalating costs of teaching resources. We acknowledge these challenges, and try to mitigate them where we can, whilst focusing on interventions that are more directly within our control.

1.2 About Middlesex University

Middlesex University was formed from the merger of different London schools and colleges coming together, including St Katharine's College, a teacher training institute founded in 1878, and the iconic Hornsey College of Art, providing a long and rich history. We became Middlesex Polytechnic in 1973, with a radical new way of learning, focused on practical skills, and then Middlesex University in 1992. Our campus in North London serves the local community as an anchor institution and our Dubai and Mauritius campuses provide our global reach and place Middlesex on the international map. Our global outlook reflects the diversity of our students and prepares them to have successful careers in the country of their choice, ensuring that they are globally connected.

Our four faculties: Arts and Creative Industries, Business and Law, Health, Social Care and Education, and Science and Technology, drive our strategic priorities to implement a creative model of education that makes a transformative difference to our students. Following a portfolio review during 2023/24, we have tailored the number of our programmes and the modules on offer, to ensure that those offered are attractive, career-focused and sustainable. Our faculties work with more than 1,000 industry and employer partners, ensuring that teaching and learning are closely linked with industry and the professions.

As mentioned above, this plan has been developed by our community, and is owned by the community. Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) journey began with the evolution of the 2031 Learning Framework, following an all-staff survey, focus groups, key stakeholder meetings and Sprint weeks for curriculum teams. The APP document emerged from organisational data, which was then presented to staff during Faculty roadshows. We have also held monthly meetings and the core APP team draws from academic and professional services staff. The APP will be embedded into our governance, policy and structural processes to ensure action is taken and measurable.

2. Risks to Equality of Opportunity

Our assessment of performance identified gaps in relation to several student demographic and characteristic groups when compared to their associated comparator group. Our analysis represents internal calculations of the OfS individualised files drawing on a six-year time series when it was available, or otherwise used a four-year aggregate from 2018-19 to 2021-22 of full time first degree students (total 13,714); except in the case of data related to first-generation entrants to university (First in Family) which draws on a two-year time series.

2.1 Defining our Risks

Through our analysis we identified disparities of performance across a range of student demographic groupings that indicate a risk to equality of opportunity. Our disparities centre on the following student groups including those:

- from global majority ethnicities (Black, Asian, Mixed, Other) compared with White students
- who previously received Free School Meals compared to those who were not eligible
- from lower socio-economic groups (IMD quintile 1&2; TUNDRA) compared to higher socio-economic groups
- who are First in Family to enter higher education, compared to those whose family members have experienced HE
- entering with BTEC entry qualifications – including BTECs (at least DDM), one A-level and two BTECs; or BTECs (lower than DDM) - compared to those entering with only A level qualifications
- disclosing a mental health disability, compared to those who have no disability
- disclosing a mental health disability, compared to those other disability categories
- who are male, compared to the female peers
- who are young, compared to their mature peer group.

2.2 Risk Categories

We clustered our student demographic groupings where disparities had been identified into six broad risk categories, where they share common characteristics. These are summarised in sections which follow and are further expanded in Annex A. Table 1 below shows the percentage of the student population in each of the risk categories; as well as the percentage of students in each target group aligned to those risk categories.

Risk category	Student target group	% of population (total population of 13,714)
1. Awarding Gap	Asian	24.0
	Black	30.6
	Mixed	7.0
	Other	8.0
	ABMO	69.6
	Total for category	**69.6**
2. Financial circumstances	Free School Meal eligible	43.5
	IMD quintiles 1 or 2	60.9
	Total for category	**66.9**
3. Family circumstances	First in Family (of those who know)	63.5
	Commuter	19.3
	Total for category	**49.2**
4. Prior attainment	BTEC entry qualification	37.4
	Total for category	**37.4**
5. Mental health and wellbeing	Reported disability	11.2
	Reported Mental health disability	2.7
	Total for category	**11.2**
6. Other	Male	40.9
	Young	65.1
	Total for category	**62.6**
Total % of students falling into one or more of our risk categories		**98.0**

Table 1: Grouping and prevalence of our student population within each risk category

Notably, we have chosen to use the term '*awarding'* rather than an '*attainment'* gap in one of our risk categories in preference to naming our target group, as this reflects our rejection of a deficit model in favour of an emphasis on the university structures as the focus of change (Sanders & Rose-Adams, 2014, p. 12)[1]. We aim to promote an inclusive culture for all our students, underpinned by equity and fairness, reflective of our community principles. We also chose the term because it is in common use in the sector and is familiar to our staff. Our risk categories are associated with student demographics and in this context, 'attainment' has been found to be an outcome differentially impacting several of our demographic groups, including our global majority students. We chose not to categorise our risks around various stages of the student lifecycle to signpost, to our staff and to the OfS, which student groups were being targeted. Furthermore, although we have undertaken an intersectional risk analysis, we chose not to define intersectional risk categories. This is due to the prevalence of intersections across several demographic groups. Some of our biggest intersections are between our risk categories.

Further details about each of our risk categories are listed in the sub-sections that follow. For each of our six key risks, we summarise the student target groups(s) where a risk has been identified; the prevalence of the associated group(s); the allied risks, aligned to the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR); the differential performance identified and corresponding the stage of the lifecycle impacted. The data presented is further expanded upon in annex A.

[1] Sanders, J. and Rose-Adams, J. (2014) 'Black and minority ethnic student attainment: a survey of research and exploration of the importance of teacher and student expectations', Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning**,** 16(2), pp. 5-27. doi: 10.5456/WPLL.16.2.5. Available at: https://oro.open.ac.uk/40520/ [Accessed: 24 July 2024].

Risk 1: Awarding Gap

- **Student target groups**: Black; Asian; Mixed; Other
- **Prevalence**: 69.9% of our students are global majority ethnic groups including Asian, Black, Mixed or Other (ABMO).
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks 6, 7, 8, 12
- The term awarding gap is used within this plan to specifically highlight differences between the awards gained of global majority ethnic groupings. The reasons for awarding gaps are varied and multiple. They include students' prior levels of academic preparation, differential ability to engage with study due to family or other responsibilities, and the differential impact of intersections with financial hardship. There is also evidence that curriculum and assessment design, and the design and availability of support services, can contribute to differential outcomes for students. There is considerable evidence that a sense of belonging, identification with a cohort, and visible diversity on campus can all contribute to more equal degree outcomes.
- **Areas of differential performance**: We have a persistent awarding gap comparing our black: white student degree outcomes (-14.5pp) and ABMO white (-11.4pp). When intersected with gender, the gap is more significant, with male black students' attainment being lower than white students (-21.7pp) and lower still intersected with age, amongst young, male and black students (-24.3pp). When ethnicity, age, gender is further intersected with qualification on entry, our analysis shows an even greater disparity amongst BTEC, young, male and Black students (-25.9pp) compared to white students. Furthermore, our black students indicated (NSS, 2024 NSS) they were less satisfied with the Academic Support they received, when compared with both white students and with Asian and mixed students.
- **Lifecycle stages targeted**: Attainment

Risk 2: Financial circumstances

- **Student target groups:** Free School Meals; IMD quintile 1&2
- **Prevalence**: 43.5% of our students were eligible for Free School Meals, which is the 2nd highest in England. 60.9% come from IMD quintile 1 or 2, the highest level of deprivation. 47.0% come from households with intermediate, routine or manual occupations, or 'never worked/unemployed'. Excluding 'not classified' and 'not known', this figure increases to 74.1%. In our 2023-24 pre-arrival survey (67% response rate), 94% of students rated needing to undertake paid work during their studies as important and 82% requested more information about funding and finance.
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks: 7; 8; 10; 11; 12
- Financial pressures negatively impact students' ability to access higher education and participate fully in university life. Students from poorer backgrounds are more likely to seek paid work (and a greater number of paid hours) during their studies than their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds. This adversely affects their sense of belonging, as well as on-programme attendance, engagement and attainment. This, in turn, can have a detrimental impact on their ability to continue, complete and get a good degree outcome. Those working during their studies may be less likely to take up co-curricular opportunities outside of the curriculum (such as placements, internships, mobility exchange) or extra-curricular or social aspects of student life. This can impact their future progression opportunities. Financial pressures can also impact students' ability to afford programme materials, student accommodation, and public transport and can have a detrimental impact on their mental health and wellbeing. These impacts do not occur evenly across the student population and are likely to intersect with other indicators of disadvantage.
- **Areas of differential performance**: Across a four-year aggregate, we have identified a gap between those students who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and those who were not across all life cycle stages and in relation to attainment (-11.2pp), completion (-5.3pp) and progression (-4.9pp). Students eligible for FSM are also less likely to continue in their studies, albeit the relative differential is smaller (–3.6pp). Further investigation identified that those on FSM meals, who are First in Family to attend HE, have lower continuation rates than those who are not (-9.1pp). We have also identified an awarding gap of -6.9pp between students from IMD quintiles 1-2 compared to those from quintiles 3-5. When IMD Q1-2 is further analysed by age, we have identified an awarding gap of -3.1pp between young and mature.
- **Lifecycle stages targeted:** Continuation**;** Completion; Attainment; Progression

Risk 3: Family background and circumstances

- **Student target groups**: First in Family; commuting students; caring responsibilities.
- **Prevalence**: 63.5% (of students who know) are the first in their family to go to university. 1.0% have reported being care leavers. 65% of our students live in their parental or own home, with 76% of our UK students travelling for over 40 minutes to reach our campus. Furthermore, 80% of students, reported on our pre-arrival survey (60% response rate) that they had additional caring responsibilities in their home life, which they would be managing alongside their studies.
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12
- Familial factors can limit students' access to information and guidance throughout their education, and onwards into employment. Students may lack access to role models and support networks to positively impact their life choices and decisions. This can impact particularly severely on estranged students and care leavers. Familial background can also impact students' access to support – both academically and personally - throughout their studies, which in turn may have a detrimental impact on their confidence and self-efficacy. This may come from a lack of suitable information, advice and guidance and differences in social and cultural capital. Students who spend considerable time commuting, or those with caring responsibilities, may be less able to engage in timetabled teaching, or extra-curricular activities, and may experience barriers to establishing peer networks, which can impact on their ability to engage in their studies.
- **Areas of differential performance**: Across a four-year aggregate, we have identified a differential progression rate for students who are First in Family compared to those who are not (-7.2pp). We have further identified that when intersected with age, First in Family our progression gap widens to -18.9pp between young and mature students.
- **Lifecycle stages targeted:** Progression

Risk 4: Prior attainment

- **Student target groups**: BTEC
- **Prevalence**: 37.4% have BTEC qualification (BTEC [DDM or higher] or 1 A-level and 2 BTECs), and 26.8% have Access, Other L3 or no entry qualification (64.2% in total). When compared to the London modern universities, we have the second highest intake of BTEC students who have achieved below Distinction, Distinction, Merit.
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks: 6, 7, 12
- Students entering with BTEC qualifications may have different prior knowledge compared with those who enter with A Levels. They will also have experienced different forms of pedagogy and assessment and have different expectations of academic support services. These factors can contribute to students being less likely to feel a sense of belonging and may cause students to feel less confident in their ability to navigate the university. There are also intersections with demographic characteristics: having studied for BTECs is associated with being more likely to be eligible for Free School Meals, to be Black or Asian, and to be from an area with lower HE participation.
- **Areas of differential performance**: Across a four-year aggregate, we have identified a significant percentage point gap between students with a BTEC entry qualification compared to students with any other entry qualification across all life cycle stages: continuation (-5.9pp), completion (-7.9pp), attainment (-14.9pp) and progression (-10.4pp). When intersected with First in Family, students with BTEC entry qualifications have a lower continuation (-4.7pp) and progression rate (-9.2pp) than students who are not First in Family. Young students with a BTEC entry qualification have an attainment rate 5.0pp below mature students. We have identified that ABMO students with a BTEC entry qualification have lower rates than their white peers across the student lifecycle including continuation (-7.7pp), completion (-3.4pp), attainment (-10.2pp) and progression (-5.0pp).
- **Lifecycle stages targeted:** Continuation**;** Attainment; Completion; Progression

Risk 5: Mental health and wellbeing

- **Student target groups**: Disabled; Mental Health
- **Prevalence:** 11.2% of our students have a reported disability; with 2.7% reporting a mental health disability.
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks: 2; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12
- We recognise that poor mental health can have a detrimental impact on all aspects of student life and therefore have identified health and wellbeing as key determiner of student success. Whilst disclosure

rates of mental health disabilities are growing across the sector, wider research suggests that the true rate of mental health issues in the student community is under-recognised, underreported and has worsened because of coronavirus. Students who experience mental illness or are impacted by life events or circumstances which adversely affect their emotional health and wellbeing are less likely to continue and/or complete their studies. Students experiencing mental health difficulties may attend and engage less, feel less confident in their own academic ability, be less able to recover from academic setbacks and less optimistic that they can succeed at university. Students experiencing difficulties may find that some aspects of university life exacerbate difficulties, and may contribute to loneliness, social isolation, and an absence of belonging.

- **Areas of differential performance**: We have identified a disparity between disclosure rates at Middlesex University compared to sector trends. UCAS 2023 undergraduate end of cycle data identified that 21.4% of accepted applicants disclosed one or more disabilities or mental health conditions in 2023 admissions cycle (24.1% of female and 18% of male accepted applicants). 7.4 % of accepted applicants disclosed a mental health condition (9.9% of female and 4.1% of male). In comparison, in 2023, 15.4% of accepted applicants at Middlesex disclosed one or more disabilities or mental health conditions (16.9% female 12.9% male) and 5.1% disclosed a mental health condition (6.5% female, 2.7% male). Across a four-year aggregate, we have identified that students with a mental health disability have a lower continuation rate (-9.4pp) and completion rate (-7.2pp) compared to students with no declared disability. When compared to students with other disabilities, there is also a gap in continuation (-10.2pp) and completion (-9.8pp). When further analysed, those students with a mental health disability and who were eligible for Free School Meals, have lower continuation rates (-4.8pp) and completion rate (-17.7pp) than students who are not eligible. A further intersectional gap was identified for students with mental health disability and First in Family, who have a lower continuation rate (-7.7pp) than those who are not First in Family.
- **Lifecycle stages targeted:** Continuation; Completion

Risk 6: Other

- **Student target groups**: Gender; Age
- **Prevalence**: 40.9% of our students are male, with 59.1% female. 34.9% of our students are mature entrants, which is 9.3pp above sector average.
- **Risks to equality of opportunity**: EORR risks: 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12
  Students identifying as mature students are more likely to have additional responsibilities in comparison to their younger counter parts. We know that balancing significant responsibilities such as paid employment, family and caring responsibilities can have an impact on the amount of time students are able to engage on campus and to dedicate to their studies. Although mature students have tended to achieve well academically, additional learning opportunities (placements, additional guest lectures, etc) and extra curricula activities are often more difficult for these students to engage with, which can also lead to barriers in fostering strong peer support networks resulting in feelings of isolation. We know that younger students face different challenges in their studies and academic preparedness. The leap in learning at university level and increase in autonomous learning can be challenging in comparison with their previous educational experiences. We know that our younger students in particular face challenges in the transition to university life and ability to make connections in their learning to the graduate skills and competencies they are gaining. These perceived disconnections in learning can result in our younger students failing to see the relevance of the programme composition for their graduate aspirations. This can have an impact on progression opportunities available for young students. We know that male students are likely to enter HE with lower qualification levels than female students, and that HE overall is female-dominated (though this varies very significantly by discipline). This is likely to interact with students' other characteristics, making some male students less likely to experience a sense of belonging, and more likely to experience isolation and to have lower engagement with studying.
- **Areas of differential performance:** Across a four-year aggregate, we have identified gaps between male and female students in continuation (-5.9pp); completion (-10.5pp) and attainment (-6.2pp). Our black, mature, male students with a BTEC entry qualification have the lowest continuation rate, with -26.3pp lower compared to that of comparable females. We further identified a differential between young and mature students' rates of progression of -13.9pp.
- **Lifecycle stages targeted:** Continuation; completion; attainment; progression

2.3 Intersectional Analysis

Our data analysis shows that 98% of our full-time first-degree students fall into at least one of the risk categories identified above with a significant majority falling into more than one category. As such, intersectionality is prevalent across several of our risk categories, and hence there are multiple factors impacting our students' experience and outcomes.

As part of the analysis of our risk categories, we have considered multiple intersections, to better understand the characteristics of those most at risk. From doing so, we have identified further risks to equality of opportunity. These intersections cut across several risk categories, which are summarised in the following matrix (Table 2):

	Awarding Gap	Financial circumstances	Family background and circumstances	Prior attainment	Mental health and wellbeing	Other
Awarding Gap		x	x	ABMO /BTEC: attainment	x	ABMO / age & gender: attainment
Financial circumstances	x		Free School Meals /First in Family: continuation	x	x	IMD 1&2 /age: attainment
Family background and circumstances	x	x		x	x	First in Family/age: progression
Prior attainment	BTEC/ABMO: attainment	x	BTEC/First in Family: continuation & progression		x	BTEC/gender: attainment
Mental health and wellbeing	x	Mental Health /Free School Meals: continuation & completion	Mental Health /First in Family: continuation	x		x
Other	Young/Male /ABMO: attainment	Young/IMD 1&2: attainment	Young /First in Family: progression	Male/BTEC: attainment	x	

Table 2: Intersectional factors impacting equality of opportunity

2.5 Student Lifecycle

Our assessment of performance further considered the extent of the risk across the different stages of the student lifecycle. We identified that several of our risk categories were enduring across multiple stages of the student lifecycle, which is summarised in Figure 1:

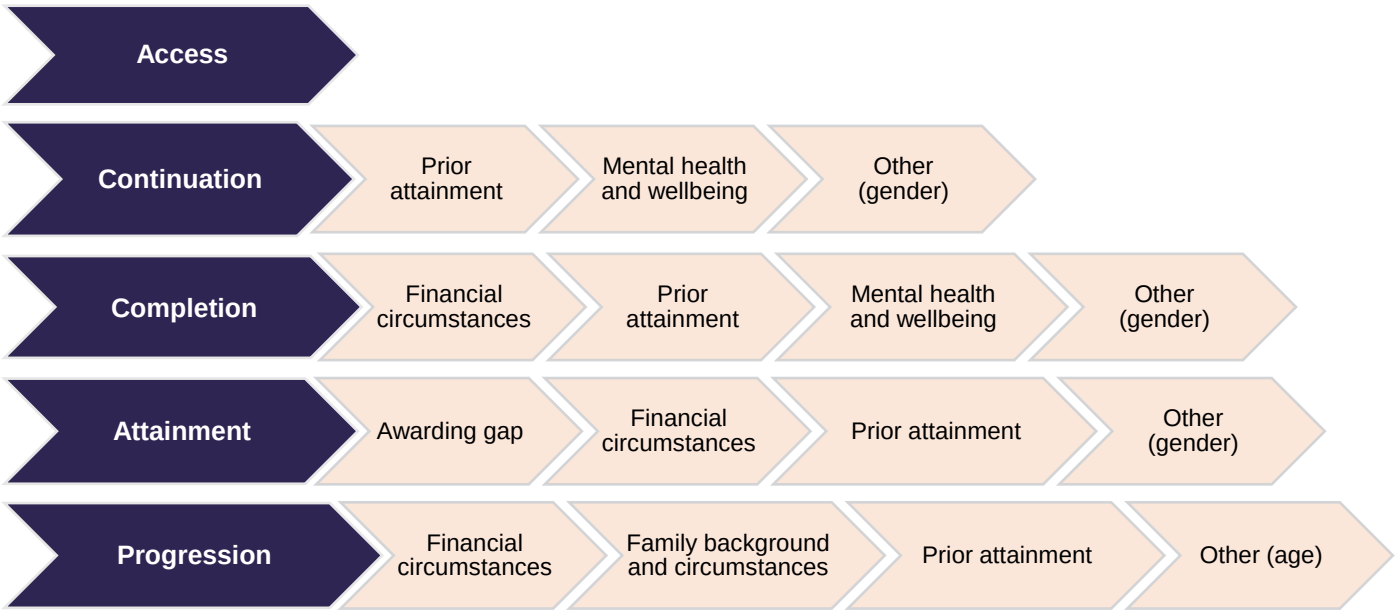


Figure 1: Risks identified at different stages of the student lifecycle

Access

We have strong historical and strategic drivers to enabling access, and we perform very well compared with the sector across several WP groups, including:

- ABMO students: 69.6% of our population is Global Majority, which is 36.1pp above sector average.
- FSM eligible students: 43.5% of our students were eligible for Free School Meals. This is one of the highest rates in the sector, at 24.1pp above average.
- IMD Q1 or Q2: 60.9% of our students come from the most deprived quintiles, which is 17.5pp above the sector average.
- Mature students: 34.9% of our students are mature, which is 9.3pp above the sector.

We know that both our London setting, and our mission group are factors in the diversity of our intake. We have therefore benchmarked ourselves against the London modern universities using the OfS Size and Shape dashboards for a more nuanced understanding of our performance (see Annex A for more details). Within that group, we have a relatively high intake of Asian and Black students, and of students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2. We have the lowest intake of White students for the group at 23.5%.

We are aware that the proportion of students with a reported disability is below the sector average. We believe that this is linked to the intersectional nature of our intake, and to the fact that some students may feel less comfortable declaring a disability, and particularly a mental health condition, than others[2]. We will therefore focus on encouraging and supporting students to disclose a disability or mental health condition, in order for us to be able to better support students on the programme. Our ABCS Q1-3, Polar Q1-2 and TUNDRA Q1-2 rates are lower than the sector average (-5pp). However, given that the majority of our students come from Greater London, this is expected, and therefore we are not using these measures to target students. There is well-established data to demonstrate that the significantly higher rates of HE progression in London than elsewhere in England mean that postcode measures based on national HE access propensity are not as helpful within the region[3]. We will therefore focus on FSM-eligible students, and IMD, which are more effective as broad measures of household income and deprivation.

[2] TASO (2021) 'A rapid review of evidence on interventions to improve outcomes for students from underrepresented backgrounds'. Office for Students. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2c6a1cfc-cec3-4368-957f-8ea546238616/taso-rapid-review.pdf & TASO (2022) 'What works to reduce equality gaps in employment and employability: Main report'. TASO. Available at: https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/TASO_Main-Report_What-works-to-reduce-equality-gaps-in-employment-and-employability.pdf

[3] AccessHE (2020) 'London Higher Polar Opposite Report'. AccessHE. Available at: https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdIx0u7/SBT2142-London-Higher-Polar-Opposite-Report-Design-v3.pdf

Whilst we do not have any objectives or targets for access, for the reasons set out above, our access work remains a firm commitment, integral to our mission. Our commitment to providing highly accessible education is one of three strategic priorities in our current university Strategy (Middlesex University Strategy 2031) and we will continue to focus on collaborative working in this area to maximise our students' life chances. Given our access of WP groups is above sector average, the focus of our targets, objectives and interventions in this plan are at the later stages of the student lifecycle.

Continuation
Our assessment of performance has identified gaps in continuation for the following student groups:

a)	BTEC	gap -5.9pp compared to those entering with any other entry qualification
b)	Disclosed mental health disability	gap -9.4pp, compared to students with no declared disability
c)	Male	gap -5.9pp compared to female students

Clear disparities exist within our student community as to who remains in study, and who is leaving their programme before their anticipated completion date. Students entering with BTEC qualifications, and male students are significantly less likely to remain in study and there is a significant intersection between these two groups, 47.9% of students entering with BTEC are male, with a 7.1pp difference in continuation between male compared to female students with BTEC qualifications. In total, those who are male and have a BTEC entry qualification represent 17.9% of our student body. As discussed above, students who have studied for BTECs, and particularly male BTEC students, are less likely to have a positive outcome at each stage of the student lifecycle. This student group will therefore be a focus of our work.

Our data shows a relatively small group of students disclose mental health disability for the four years between 2018-19 and 2021-22. Across the four years a total of 374 incoming students disclosed a mental health disability which is 2.7% of the population, compared to a sector average of 5.0%. These students are significantly less likely to continue to their next phase of study than students without a disclosed mental health condition. Given our relatively low levels of mental health disclosure compared to the sector, and the clear evidence of mental health distress in the UK student population, we recognise that there could be more students exiting their studies because of mental health difficulties and have identified this as an emerging area of focus. As discussed above, we will increase our efforts to encourage students to disclose to us. Our success interventions have also been designed to contribute to positive mental health for students, through developing stronger student communities, and designing programmes to fit around our students' lives. We will also ensure that signposting and appropriate specialist support happens quickly where needed. We have, therefore, decided not to set a specific objective around continuation for students who disclose a mental health disability, but we will keep this under review as we encourage greater disclosure. There are no significant continuation gaps for any other student groups.

Completion
Our assessment of performance has identified gaps in completion for the following student groups:

a)	Free School Meals	gap -5.3pp compared to those not eligible
b)	BTEC	gap -7.9pp compared to those entering with any other entry qualification
c)	Disclosed mental health disability	gap -7.2pp compared to those compared to students with no declared disability
d)	Gender (male)	gap -10.5pp compared to female students

We recognise that student groups within our cohort face significant challenges in completing their studies, and that there are substantial intersections between the groups least likely to complete their studies. Inequities in completion rates are most prominent amongst our male students, those entering with a BTEC, students who were eligible for Free School Meals and students with a disclosed mental health condition. As with our continuation risk groups, we recognise that mental health difficulties are potentially under-disclosed within our student cohort. Continuation and completion are closely linked, and so many of the interventions

we will put in place will address both continuation and completion. However, we also see gaps for completion for our FSM students, which we do not see to the same extent for continuation. This has informed the design of our interventions, particularly in relation to lessening the impact of cost of living and commuting issues for our students.

Attainment
Our assessment of performance has identified gaps in attainment for the following student groups:

a) ABMO gap of -11.4pp compared to white students
b) Black gap of -14.5pp compared to white students
c) Asian gap of -9.4pp compared to white students
d) Mixed gap of -5.3pp compared to white students
e) Other gap of -14.3pp compared to white students
f) Free School Meals gap of -11.2pp compared to those who were not eligible
g) IMD quintiles 1-2 gap of -6.9pp compared to those from quintiles 3-5
h) BTEC gap of -14.9pp compared to those entering with A Levels
i) Gender (male) gap of - 6.2pp compared to female students

We have identified attainment gaps across many demographic groups. Increasing attainment rates for these groups will be a significant focus of our interventions. As discussed above, we know that there are complex reasons for disparities in attainment, and that solutions will take time to have effect.

Progression
Our assessment of performance has identified gaps in progression across the following student groups:

a) Free School Meals gap of -4.8pp compared to those who were not eligible
b) First in Family gap of -7.2pp compared to those who are not First in Family
c) BTEC gap of -10.4pp compared to students with A level qualifications
d) Other (young) gap of -13.9pp compared to mature students

Our identified gaps in progression largely impact the same groups as are impacted by continuation and attainment gaps. We therefore expect that some of our interventions relating to these lifecycle stages will also impact positively on progression. We are aware that all of the identified gaps (apart from age which intersects considerably with the other categories) could be seen as proxies for socio-economic status. There is evidence (c.f. Friedman and Laurison, 2019)[4] that students from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to possess the social and cultural capital to progress to graduate careers and may need additional support to build networks and confidence. As a university that prides itself on social mobility, we consider work to close these gaps to be fundamental to our mission.

3. Objectives

Our objectives are organised across stages of the student lifecycle, which are further aligned to our Institutional Key Performance Indicators. The stages of the lifecycle will subsequently be used as an organising framework for our interventions. In selecting key objectives to focus on we have undertaken an impact calculation, considering the size of the gap and the size of the cohort impacted, informing our decision as to which areas to focus on. The timing of our targets has been chosen to align with the APP reporting cycle (2028-29) and our objectives are timed to the duration of our current University Strategy. Our objectives are selected to take account of the following:

- **Small cohorts:** Given the low number of students declaring disability, and a low number of students with a mental health difficulty, and despite performance disparities, we have selected a target to improve rates of disclosure of disability amongst enrolled students, from 15% to align with the sector [currently 21.4%] by 2025-26, rather than set an associated objective. We recognise that improved

[4] Friedman, S., & Laurison, D. (2019). *The class ceiling: Why it pays to be privileged* (1st ed.). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv5zftbj

disclosure rates will provide a clearer and more accurate picture of our students' needs from which we can identify disparities of performance. Our measures to improve disclosure are coupled with our wellbeing intervention strand, providing a multi-method approach focused on wellbeing for success. This strand includes plans to streamline our delivery structures; modify our delivery modes; enhance timetabled support and include wellbeing in our curriculum; to promote the health and wellbeing of all our students.

- **Large cohorts**: Two of our cohort groups, within the 'Other' risk category - young and male students - represent a large proportion of our student population. We recognise that the series of measures we have to improve the outcomes of all our students are designed to impact these groups. We have therefore selected not to have specific objectives for these groups, but we expect that our measures to target sub-sections of these groups (e.g. BTEC students) will have an impact on the whole cohort performance.
- **Biggest impact**: We recognise that we have a few disparities of performance impacting a sizable proportion of our student population. Our selection of objectives targets the most significant disparities of performance, of greater than -5pp. Selecting to reduce the disparities as we have, we have been informed by the impact of our recent Welcome and Induction approach on continuation, by greater than 2pp, within the last two years and thus have set targets that we believe are realistic and achievable. Notably, in each case we have included targets to reduce our differential performance gap to -5pp or less, relative to the size of differential identified. This aims to ensure that we are consistent, whilst realistic, across both risk categories and outcomes.
- **Intersections**: We have chosen not to include intersections of groups within our objectives, as per our risk categories, given that intersections impact each of our risk categories, as identified in Table 3.
- **Access**: Given our strong and sustained record of accomplishment in recruiting students from diverse backgrounds, we have chosen not to have an objective focused on access. It is, however, an area that we will continue to prioritise as part of our whole provider approach.

Lifecycle stage	Risk categories	Objectives	Targets
1. Continuation	Prior attainment	1.1. To eliminate the gap in continuation for students entering with BTEC qualifications by 2031.	– To improve continuation rates for students entering with BTEC qualifications from -5.9pp to below -2pp by 2028-29
2. Completion	Financial circumstances	1.2. To eliminate the completion gap between FSM eligible students/ those not eligible by 2031.	– To improve completion rates amongst students who were eligible for FSM from -5.3pp to below -2pp by 2028-29.
	Prior attainment	1.3. To eliminate the gap in completion for students entering with BTEC qualifications by 2031.	– To improve completion rates amongst students entering with BTEC qualifications from -7.9% to below -3pp by 2028-29
3. Attainment	Awarding gap	1.4. To reduce the attainment gap between ABMO and white students by 2031.	– To improve the awarding gap between White: ABMO from -11.4pp to below -5pp by 2028-29.
	Financial circumstances	1.5. To reduce the attainment gap across between students eligible for Free School Meals and those not eligible and between students from IMD quintiles 1-2 and quintiles 3-5 by 2031.	– To improve the attainment gap for those eligible for Free School Meals and those not from -11.2pp to below -5pp by 2028-29. – To improve the attainment gap for students from IMD quintiles 1-2 compared to those from quintiles 3-5 from -6.9pp to below -3pp by 2028-29.
	Prior attainment	1.6. To reduce the gap in attainment for students entering with BTEC qualifications by 2031	– To improve the gap in attainment rates for students entering with BTEC qualifications, compared to those entering with only A-level

			qualifications, from -14.9pp to below -5pp by 2028-29.
4. Progression	Family background and circumstances	1.7. To eliminate the progression differential between students who are First in Family compared to those who are not by 2031.	– To improve the progression rates of those who are First in Family from -7.2pp to below -3pp by 2028-29.
	Prior attainment	1.8. To reduce the gap in progression for students entering with BTEC qualifications by 2031.	– To improve the progression rates of students entering with BTEC qualifications from -10.4pp to below -5% by 2028-29.

Table 3: Overview of objectives

4. Intervention Strategies: Whole Provider Approach

Our whole provider approach underpins the interventions used to address each of our risk categories. Our analysis identified that 98% of our students fall into one or more of our six key risk categories (see Table 1). Our reforms are thus designed to systematically improve the experience and outcomes of all our students.

The majority of our interventions are targeted at student success rather than access, to address the differentials that we have. We have purposefully focused on the curriculum given what we know about our students and the prevalence of our risk groups, to maximise our impact. Most of our interventions are incorporated into our 2031 Learning Framework, including systemic and structural changes, to be implemented across all foundation and undergraduate programmes in 2024-25 (and apprenticeships and postgraduate programmes from 2025-26). Our co-curricular provision is largely scheduled around timetabled activity to maximise the chance for our students to engage and benefit. Our interventions include several related strands, covered in Table 4. The 'big bang' approach we plan to use will ensure that all programmes align to common standards, structures and approaches, building on our prior successes and distinctiveness. Our intentional focus on the curriculum addresses equality of opportunity, providing a systematic foundation for success that impacts the greatest number of our students in the shortest possible time frame.

Table 4 summarises our seven broad intervention strands and provides an overview of which strands will be applied to our risk categories and to mitigate the varying stages of the student lifecycle where gaps have been identified. In the sub-sections that follow, the associated range of activity aligned to each of these strands are described in greater detail. Whilst strands 1 to 6 are then applied to the intervention tables in section 5 below, strand 7 is underpinning, across all lifecycle stages and risks. In this we highlight the infrastructure changes which we believe are necessary and will enhance our capability to meet our objectives and targets.

Intervention strands	**Lifecycle stage supported**					**Risk Category**					
	Access	Continuation	Completion	Attainment	Progression	Awarding gap	Financial circumstances	Family background and circumstances	Prior attainment	Mental health and wellbeing	Other
Strand 1: Collaborating for access and success	√				√		√	√	√		√
Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Strand 3: Making the first-year count		√		√		√		√	√	√	√

Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success		√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√
Strand 5: Assessing for success		√		√		√	√		√	√	√
Strand 6: Preparing students for their future success					√		√	√	√		√
Strand 7: Enabling infrastructure	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 4: Summary of our intervention strands and their application to risk

4.1 Strand 1: Collaborating for Access and Success

Collaboration and partnership are at the heart of our access and our success activities, and we leverage maximum impact for our students through our breadth and depth of engagement with schools, colleges, employers, our local boroughs and national bodies. Our access activities are focused on addressing risks related to Knowledge and Skills (EORR Risk 1), Information and Guidance (EORR Risk 2), Perception of Higher Education (EORR Risk 3) and Cost Pressures (EORR Risk10). Our curriculum is delivered in partnership with businesses, employers and local boroughs, and is focused on activities to address Insufficient Personal Support (EORR Risk 7), Cost Pressures (EORR Risk 10) and Progression from Higher Education (EORR Risk 12).

Contributing to the following risk categories: 2,3,4, other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): access; progression

Continued practices	Funding our dedicated **Outreach Team** to deliver a wide-reaching programme partnering with schools, colleges, our local boroughs and other external partners. This activity facilitates the provision of information and guidance and builds skills and confidence for entry to Higher Education, reaching 10,000 pupils annually (EORR risk 1, 3).
	Continued hosting of the annual **NHS Careers Fair** and **STEM Science Fair** for schools, working in partnership with the NHS and British Science Week. These are keystone events in promoting access to professional health programmes and careers, early workforce planning for the NHS and to overcoming barriers to studying STEM subjects (EORR risk 12).
	Collaborating with Barnet Education and Learning Service on a **Midwifery T Level Insight Hours programme** for Saracens High School over a three-year period. This programme represents the largest intervention with the Barnet Education and Learning Service to support local pre-16 achievement with a particular focus on vocational attainment (EORR risk 1, 2, 3).
Enhanced practices	Expanding our **recruitment agency services** beyond the University to include organisations within and beyond the Borough of Barnet. This will increase work-based opportunities, offer more permanent and temporary graduate roles, give more student the chance to 'earn while they learn', and provide pathways from part-time work to permanent positions (EORR risk 10, 12).
	Augmenting **new local employer networks** for placements and project-based opportunities. The primary objectives include expanding the MDX Internship Scheme to include external vacancies for paid work experience, creating a greater pool of safer working roles and fostering collaboration between professional services, students, alumni, communities, businesses, policymakers, and the public (EORR risk 12).
New practices	Establishing a **Lifelong Learning pathway** with Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS). This will be available to everyone studying at Barnet schools and colleges and includes a compelling package of support to assist with applications to university and employment. The offer will also include career workshops to develop a range of skills and competencies needed for the world of work.
	Strengthening our commitment to employer-informed curricula, we are establishing new **Faculty Employer Panels** to bring academics and business partners together around teaching, learning, assessment and the relationship to future work and careers for our students (EORR risk 12).
	Launching two flagship **internship schemes** for up to 20 students: – Funded part-time external work experience and internships for students from WP backgrounds. – Funded summer internships within the Borough as part of a collaboration with Santander Bank and the Barnet Business Community (EORR risk 10, 12).

	Establishing **local Communities of Practice** by linking with companies like Saracens, Wembley, Lords, Brent Cross, and London Borough of Barnet, providing part-time jobs, placements, and graduate opportunities (EORR risk 12).
	Adopting a **wider community approach** to enhance the student experience, remove barriers to employment for students from underrepresented backgrounds, and create a sense of belonging within both the Middlesex and local communities. This initiative will also expand the Student Ambassador Scheme, generate more opportunities for prospective and new students, and increase recruitment potential (EORR risk 7, 12).

4.2 Strand 2: Preparing Student Transitions for Success

In 2017/18, we strengthened our approach to pre-arrival support and transition, to set consistent standards for transition into the university across all programmes with the introduction of the Academic Programme Induction Framework. This aims to connect new students with the university community and familiarise them with the expectations of academic study and the range of academic and pastoral support available. It recognises the enduring risk of reduced access to information and guidance, knowledge and skills, and/or support across the student lifecycle (EORR 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8). Preparedness for transition will be further expanded under this plan to pick up other key transition points (such as to level 5 or 6; first work-placement, first assessment).

Contributing to the following risk categories: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): access; continuation; completion; progression

Continued practices	Continuing our five-week '**Ready for Anything'** transition programme, introduced in 2020, sent to offer holders to help them get ready to join the university, including readiness to reach their goals; to thrive and to study (EORR risk 6, 7, 8). It offers tips, information, and sessions they can join.
	Continuing our revised (2023) **pre-arrival survey** (6 weeks before arrival) and **welcome survey** (3 weeks post-arrival) to better understand our students' levels of confidence and the importance they place on different aspects of provision; followed by targeted support communications based on their responses (EORR risk 7).
Enhanced practices	Expanding our **Student Success Essentials** course designed to help all our students understand academic expectations and the importance of academic integrity. We will work collaboratively with students and professional and academic services to incorporate different transition points across the student lifecycle (including the next level of study, assessment and placements) (EORR risk 6).
	Enhancing our **follow-up** following early transition surveys. From 2024 we will offer a more targeted programme of support replacing previously offered ad hoc support, based on areas where students express lower levels of confidence. For example, by inviting students with low confidence in academic writing to register for a new programme of support from our learning enhancement team (EORR risk 6).
New practices	Extending our **transition support across levels of study** including between level 4 and 5, levels 5 and 6, and levels 6 and 7 with a package of support co-developed and led with our students (EORR risk 6, 7, 8), including: – Student led celebration event at the end of each level. – Short bitesize introduction to modules offered in the level of study. – Welcome survey extended to each level of study, with follow-up targeted communications depending on student response.

4.3 Strand 3: Making the First-Year Count

Our Learning Framework reforms plans to target our students' initial years in higher education, whether at level 3 or 4, as a critical stage of their education. Our approaches are designed to enable our students to feel connected to their peer group and faculty; add value to their education and help inform the decisions they make about their ongoing pathways and options as well as their future career prospects and aspirations. Our new practices are making the first-year count across levels 3 and 4 in several ways.

Contributing to our following risk categories: 1, 3, 4, 5, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): continuation; *completion*

Continued practices	–	Building **social opportunities around timetabled sessions**, to support students to build and widen their networks within the faculty, university, and across our global campuses. We aim for our students to utilise their networks and continue to build and strengthen them throughout their time at Middlesex and beyond (EORR risk 12).
Enhanced practices	–	Roll out of a **flipped delivery approach**, from 2024-25, across all programmes including the routine use of key concept videos and/or curated resources in advance of timetabled sessions as well as the use of interactive, engaging pedagogies that focus on students' engagement with, rather than conveying, key concepts. This follows a successful pilot within one of our faculties, impacting students' continuation, satisfaction and attainment (EORR risk 6).
	–	Redesigning our **virtual learning environment,** My Learning, from 2024-5 to scaffold students' independent study, with a particular emphasis on students at levels 3 and 4 contributing to establishment of good study habits from the outset. The redesign aims to ensure students know what to do to prepare for their taught sessions, are supported to effectively study independently and thus derive maximum benefit from their timetabled sessions (EORR risk 6).
	–	Reducing **online teaching** from up to 25% to less than 10% across undergraduate programmes, from 2024-5, to maximise on-campus, face-to-face contact, cohort cohesion, and use of campus facilities (EORR risk 6).
New practices	–	Streamlining and redesigning of our suite of **foundation year** programmes from 2024-25 to increase the clarity of pathways available aligned to market needs. This will contribute to better supporting the onward progression of students (EORR risk 1,2, 5) and give students clear pathways and progression options, ensuring that prior educational experience, self-confidence, or family background do not present barriers to their progression.
	–	Introducing a **common first year at level 4** within 97% of our programmes from 2024-25; with only a few of them exempt on the grounds of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulatory requirements. This is intended to provide students with a broad-based knowledge, experiences and competencies from which they can identify areas of interest; underpinned by equality of access to knowledge, skills, information and guidance (EORR risk 1, 2). We believe having a full and broad curriculum, before specialising will inform students' choice of programme (EORR risk 5); of options and pathways at level 5 and 6 (EORR risk 1 and 2) and in their future career; ultimately helping our students to stand out in the marketplace (EORR risk 12).
	–	Introducing consistent **group teaching** (between 15-35 students), across most programmes from 2024-25, to enhance learning and support students to build their friendship and support networks, providing early and ongoing sources of academic and personal support (EORR risk 6,7, 8,9). Aligned to this, we will cease to teach using lectures or presentations longer than 20 minutes, formalising our use of **engaging and interactive pedagogies**. These will help students to get to know some of their peer group and staff members in greater depth and build supportive, collaborative communities even within larger cohorts, from which to quickly establish a felt sense of belonging (EORR risk 6, 7, 8).
	–	Setting a minimum number of **contact hours** from 2024-25 per level of study, to maximise on all programmes (EORR risk 6).

4.4 Strand 4: Supporting Students' Wellbeing for Success

We recognise that our students' wellbeing is a pre-requisite for their success and thus have standardised and streamlined our delivery structures and approaches, through our learning framework reforms, to maximise all students' potential for success.

Contributing to our following risk categories: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): continuation; *completion*

Continued practices	–	Continuing timetabled **academic advising** group interactions for all undergraduate students, standardised in 2023 and aligned to our Middlesex advising framework. Thus, all students have an allocated academic advisor, from enrolment, and receive a minimum of four interactions across an academic year (EORR risk 6).
	–	Continuing use of **engagement interventions,** targeting students who demonstrate that they may benefit from support; identified utilising a combination of data from several engagement

		proxies. These include peer-to-peer phone callers, additional academic advising support, or study consultations with our Progression and Support team (EORR risk 6, 7, 8).
	–	Offering **part-time, paid work** to prospective, new and continuing students through our Uni-temps platform, at London Living Wage rates. We target students from WP backgrounds, disabled students, and those that lack relevant work experience (EORR risk 10, 12).
	–	Sustained commitment to our **lifelong employability support offer,** guaranteeing careers advice and guidance for our past students throughout the whole of their working life (EORR risk 12).
Enhanced practices	–	Redesigning the curriculum to incorporate several distinguishing **priority themes**, across all programmes from 2025-25, nuanced to the discipline. These include an inclusive curriculum; health and wellbeing; internationalisation and Sustainable Development Goals (EORR risk 6, 7, 8, 12).
	–	Enhancing our well-established **peer support scheme** through student learning assistants. The Student Learning Assistants (SLAs), who are existing students at levels 5 and 6 in paid roles, provide academic support in teaching sessions to students at levels 3 to 5. These students largely reflect the make-up of our student body. We will continue to recognise SLAs in an annual awards event. The scheme will be enhanced to target the recruitment of students from our risk categories and to target disciplines where support is most required (EORR risk 6, 7).
	–	Expanding our **student ambassador scheme** to generate more opportunities for prospective and new students and increase their confidence and recruitment potential. We will continue to target students from diverse backgrounds representative of the University community, putting our “MDX equals” commitment into practice (EORR risk 10, 12).
	–	Enhancing access to relevant **learning resources** at the point of need, both centrally (e.g. free photocopying and a laptop / IT equipment lending scheme) and within faculties, heavily subsidising programme costs to ensure that financial resources (EORR risk 11) do not present a barrier to participation or success.
	–	Enhanced student awareness of support services including specific disability and wellbeing support. **Resources and campaigns will be co-created** with students to ensure authenticity and cultural competence. Staff training and resources will ensure colleagues are confident in signposting and referring students for intervention (EORR risk 7, 8).
New practices	–	Removing **pre-requisite modules** and bringing all learning, teaching and assessment activity within a semester from 2024-25; to give students breaks of study during holiday periods, rather than having to complete assessed work or prepare for assessment periods. This will enable them to undertake casual work, internships or other enrichment opportunities during non-teaching weeks to supplement their income and widen their networks or development of skills (EORR risk 1, 2, 10).
	–	Re-designing all our UG programmes to streamline the **number of modules** students are studying at any one time (EORR risk 8), ensuring 30 credit modules are our standard operating size, with 60 credit dissertation modules at level 6.
	–	Introducing a consolidated **timetable** over 3 days, for teaching and academic advising sessions (EORR risk 10, 11).

4.5 Strand 5: Assessing for Success

Our assessment interventions build on our practice-led focus. We recognise that our students may have had different experiences of assessment practice, have varying levels of support available to them from their friends and family networks; and many are juggling work and caring responsibilities outside of their studies. As such, our new interventions place particular emphasis on those transitioning to HE studies, in building their assessment literacy, ensuring parity of workload and prioritisation of wellbeing. This aims to improve students’ levels of self-confidence and chance of success at an informative stage of their programme, contributing to their continuation, completion and attainment.

Contributing to our following risk categories: 1, 2, 4, 5, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): continuation; attainment

Enhanced practices	–	Formalising the integration of **authentic assessment** as a standard part of assessment design, within the re-design of all UG programmes (EORR risk 6).
	–	Formalising the integration of **formative feedback** throughout the module as an underpinning element of assessment design across all UG programmes (EORR risk 6).

New practices	– Introducing at least one **additional resit opportunity** for mid-semester assessments for all level 4. This builds on our existing regulations which requires no capping of marks for resit attempts during L3/4. This in-semester retrieval of failure opportunity will help students understand assessment requirements of HE study and ensure they don't become overburdened by reassessment requirements between semesters or at the end of the level (EORR risk 6, 8).
	– Standardising the **number and spread of assessments** across programmes. There will be a maximum of two summative assessment points per 30 credits from 2024-25 and a requirement for assessment deadlines to be spread out; to ensure to ensure a manageable and fair workload (EORR risk 8).
	– Introducing monitoring of the submission of the first assessment, as a key indicator of success and performance. This will be coupled with **structured communication** in advance of submission deadlines pointing to relevant and tailored support (EORR risk 6, 7, 8).

4.6 Strand 6: Preparing Students for their Future Success

Our students tell us that their future employability is important to their choice to study at university and indicate they need clarity about pathways available to them with their degree and beyond. Our employer networks inform us that they want students to be confident in the workplace and be able to articulate their distinctiveness. We want our students to have continual opportunities to practise and apply their learning, to develop practical skills and to develop confidence about what they can offer to a future employer. This has informed our approaches, listed below, aimed at improving the progression and future success for all our students.

Contributing to our following risk categories: 2, 3, 4, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): Progression

Enhanced practices	– Strengthening our **practice-led focus** within all programmes to integrate problem-based, project-based and/or experiential learning opportunities within the curriculum, tailored to disciplinary and professional contexts. This will be formalised as part of the re-design of all programmes and builds on work piloted in 2021/22 (EORR risk 6, 12).
	– Enhancing the integration of **employability** within the curriculum through the launch of our Careers and Employability Curriculum. Providing a menu of recommended value-added interventions including consultancy projects, live briefs and 'recruit-ability' activities and assessment and case studies, to support the integration of employability, employers and graduate competencies tailored to levels 4-7. Being developed in collaboration with employers, it aims to ensure our students' learning is relevant, up-to-date and applied to students' future careers. Furthermore, we have aligned external part-time roles with **career pathways** to aid progression (EORR risk 6, 12).
	– We refined our **graduate competencies** in 2021/22 through extensive dialogue with employers to better reflect workplace requirements. Graduate competencies will be embedded into the curriculum, as part of the redesign process, providing opportunities for all students to articulate their distinct and transferable skills (EORR risk 6, 12).
	– Expanding our **Student Success Essentials Course** to include transition to employment and further study, incorporating placements, career and progression pathways. The course will be accessed through My Learning and include various learning activities and resources (EORR risk 6, 7, 12).
New practices	– Developing and launching our '**Handshake platform**' providing students with access to 18,000 UK employers. This one-stop hub will network students and graduates with employers and signpost available employment opportunities (EORR risk 12).
	– Introducing an **Alumni Career Conversations programme**, extending our Uni-buddy scheme, to provide students with direct access to alumni across our a global MDX graduate community. This will help democratise the reach and provides our graduates with access to potential mentors specific to MDX (EORR risk 12).

4.7 Strand 7: Enabling Infrastructure

We believe that tactical investment in the infrastructure, knowledge and skills underpinning the delivery of our APP objectives is an important part of our investment strategy. We are committing to targeted spending on growing data capabilities and optimising the skills our staff need to deliver the objectives for our students.

Contributing to our following risk categories: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Other
Contributing to the following lifecycle stage(s): Completion; Attainment; Progression

Enhanced practices	– Substantially augmenting **our data capacity and capability** to support greater access and analysis and thus drive the targeted and tailored interventions that are most impactful for our students. Our newly constituted Strategic Planning and Performance function will add oversight and institutional capacity, along with clarity of responsibilities and expectations throughout the organisation. Enhancements include programme-level health-check dashboards to enhance monitoring and intervention capability and support data-driven decision-making.
	– Embedding our objectives and targets across our **staff lifecycle** to augment our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, as a genuine part of our recruitment, induction, continuing development, performance management and reward processes. This builds on our skills and training matrix for our Heads of Department and Directors of Programmes and Organisational Development training plan. We will build specific references to and support APP objectives into our ongoing staff training and review processes associated with the learning framework. Our staff objectives, aligned with our strategic plan, will filter through every area of the organisation to ensure there is clear accountability, prioritisation and impact. Recognition for excellence in progress towards our targets will be built into our existing Teaching Excellence Awards Scheme.
	– Aligning and expanding our **monitoring and intervention capability**, as a strategic, designed to more effectively target and tailor our approach to students (as individuals and demographic groups) and/or programmes who require greater levels of support. This will enable us to make effective use of resources and personalise our provision to support us in meeting targets and objectives. Our strategy focuses on in-year, semester and end of year monitoring of behavioural, cognitive and affective measures, utilising our learner analytic systems as well as our existing Educational Monitoring and Enhancement (EME) and reporting process.
	– Enhancing our **learning resources** including student buddying, student caller schemes, and the provision of academic skills workshops specifically drawing on feedback from our students through pre-arrival and welcome surveys. We will continue to support equity of access to IT equipment, through our successful laptop/equipment loan scheme, as well as work to minimise additional programme costs (such as those associated with projects or exhibitions) through a combination of course design and direct funding. We are committed to **small group delivery of teaching and learning** as part of our new Learning Framework wherever this is practicable (EORR risk 7, 8, 10).
	– Reporting of APP objectives through our **governance process** for monitoring and accountability**.** We plan to routinely report progress against our objectives and targets. Ownership for deliverables will be held by our professional services and academic departments/ faculties. Our progress will be monitored and overseen by Academic Board.
New practices	– **Optimising our systems and processes** to inform monitoring and interventions that maximise student outcomes. We believe that the first submission at Level 4 is a key touchpoint and risk indicator for success, but presently depends on locally held data. We will explore more systematic approaches to hold and report on behaviours around students' first submission point at Level 4. We will also aim to optimise our timetabling system to support the delivery of the Learning Framework, focussing on our ability to timetable consistent groupings across modules, to aid student belonging and cohort identity.

5. Objective Level Interventions

5.1 Intervention Strategy 1: Continuation

Continuation Objective:

1.1. To eliminate the gap in continuation for students entering with **BTEC qualifications** by 2031.

Target: To improve continuation rates for students entering with **BTEC qualifications** from -5.9pp to below -2pp by 2028-29 **[PTS_1]**

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,042,000

Our theory of change:

Key areas of focus for our continuation interventions are on making the first-year count, which centres providing a broad-based, first-year curriculum at the discipline level, as well as ensuring that students feel connected to the Middlesex community, are fully orientated from the outset and understand the requirements of undergraduate study. We want students to be able to make informed decisions about their future pathways, make use of the opportunities and support available to them, and feel prepared and self-confident at key transition points, including first work placement, first assessment, between levels of study. We will reimagine our academic year, curriculum structures, pedagogy and assessment approach, all with a focus on supporting all students to succeed in their studies, build strong peer networks, and develop skills to maintain and improve their wellbeing, whilst also allowing for flexibility and study-life balance.

Intervention strand	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Indicators
Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success EORR Mitigation: 1,2,3,4, 6,7, 12	– Enhanced: Multi-stage, multi-modality **transition programme** supporting students in receipt of an offer, pre-arrival and between levels of study – Enhanced: Proactive monitoring and **intervention** plan, targeting low engagement, those in need of support, at risk of poor outcomes, or lacking confidence	Staff time Student time Guidance developed for staff and students Co-created resources and campaigns	**Short term** – Students are orientated to higher education and understand expectations of them at each level of study – Students knowledgeable and confident about what support is available to them whilst at university – Students build meaningful and supportive peer relationships – Students seek support or are identified as requiring support sooner	Year on year (YoY) increase in students engaging with transition activity YoY increase in uptake of early intervention support including increase in disability disclosure
Strand 3: Making the first-year count	– New: Providing a **broad, common first year curriculum** across discipline clusters, for 97% of our programmes – Enhanced: Setting purposeful **co-curricular and social** opportunities for students to connect with their peers			

EORR Mitigation: 1,2,5,6,7,8	– Enhanced: Formalising **group teaching** and engaging and interactive pedagogies. – New: Streamlining **pathways** from foundation programmes to level 4 – New: Formalising **structured independent study** with key concept videos routinely provided in advance of timetabled sessions. – New: Setting **minimum contact hours**, and maximum 10 % delivered online ensuring focus on face to face, on campus contact	Digital infrastructure to support processes such as effective timetabling, first submission at Level 4 and reasonable adjustment dissemination Workload planning Curriculum review	– Students recognise the value of attending and engaging in timetabled sessions – Students have time to balance work, study and life commitments – Students feel confident ins structuring independent study – Students feel able to manage assessment workload and submit on time – Students are proactive in using all support systems available. – Students learn to incorporate feedback for future success **Medium term** – Students learn at a deeper level and build on learning depth year on year. – Students grow increasingly confident in their own ability – Students continue to build and develop peer networks and sense of belonging – Students have ongoing successful continuation **Longer term** – Students continue their studies through to successful completion – Students attain good degree outcomes – Students are lifelong learners – Students develop attributes that contribute to long term good health and wellbeing	Incremental increase in confidence from pre-arrival throughout studies Increased % students feel they belong at university Increase in attendance and engagement rates Increase in students submitting assessments on time Reduction in assessment deferrals Increase in assessments passed at first attempt YoY increase in students continuing from one year of student to next year
Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success EORR Mitigation: 2,5,6,7,8,10, 11	– New**: Consolidated, on-campus timetable** across 3 days – Continued: Timetabled **academic advising** across all undergraduate programmes – Continued**: Targeted interventions** to students with low engagement rates – Enhanced: Integration of **inclusivity and wellbeing** into the curriculum – Enhanced: signposting of learning and support **resources** – New: Intervention to increase **disability disclosure** rates and access to Disability Student Allowance (DSA) – New: **Standardising and optimising the** number and size of modules; removing pre-requisite modules and integrating assessment periods within semesters			
Strand 5: Assessing for success EORR Mitigation: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10	– Enhanced**: Authentic assessment** as a standardised approach across all programmes – New: Additional opportunities to **resit** assessments supporting in-year retrieval of failed assessments – Enhanced: Use of frequent **formative feedback** throughout modules and on assessment – New: Standardised **number and spread of assessments**, reducing assessment burden and deadline bunching – New: Close monitoring of **first assessment point**, with targeted interventions for students who do not submit/fail their first attempt			

5.2 Intervention Strategy 2: Completion

Completion Objectives:

2a. To eliminate the completion gap between **FSM eligible** students / those not eligible by 2031.

Target: To improve completion rates amongst students who were eligible for FSM from -5.3pp to below -2pp by 2028-29. **[PTS_2]**

2b. To eliminate the gap in completion for students entering with **BTEC qualifications** by 2031.

Target: To improve completion rates amongst students entering with BTEC qualifications from -7.9% to below -3pp by 2028-29 **[PTS_3]**

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £2,513,000

Our theory of change:

Our approach to support successful completion mirrors that used to support continuation with an emphasis on students' transitions, wellbeing for success and assessing for success. We have prioritised whole curriculum reforms to maximise the impact on all students, recognising our students' diverse prior educational knowledge and experiences. Our approach aims to optimise structures and modes of delivery that maximise students' engagement and attendance, to enable them to access the full range of learning, teaching, support and enrichment opportunities on offer. We believe that engagement underpins the development of confidence, knowledge and skills needed to support success in assessments and work placements or keeping up with their studies. In-year success contributes to students' re-enrolment and attitude to learning, supporting their continuation needed for successful completion.

Intervention strand	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Indicators
Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success	– Enhanced: Multi-stage, multi-modality **transition programme** including between levels of study to Student Success Essentials Course – New: **Welcome back survey** for all re-enrolling students, followed by targeted communications – New: Proactive and targeted **monitoring and interventions** strategy – for low engagement; 1st submission; at risk; or low confidence	Academic staff (additional workloads associated with small group teaching; key concept videos; advising) Systems: – Resource repository – My Learning	**Short term** – Students recognise the value of attending and engaging in timetabled sessions – Students learn at a deeper level – Students have good assessment literacy – Students have breaks of study during the academic year	YoY increase in students engaging with transition activity YoY increase in uptake of early intervention support including increase in disability disclosure

	– New: **Peer support** programme - alumni career conversations	– Capturing behaviours at point of first submission Wellbeing service team Academic support team Student callers /Progression Support Team Admissions team Services to support Quality; CPD and Comms team	– Students feel able to manage assessment workload and submit on time – Students are proactive in using all support systems available – Students develop strong peer networks **Medium term** – Students have a felt sense of belonging – Students provide support and mentorship to their peer group – Students have ongoing successful attainment **Longer term** – Students successfully complete their degree programme. – Students attain good degree outcomes – Students are lifelong learners – Students have long term good health and wellbeing	Incremental increase in confidence from pre-arrival throughout studies Increased % students feel they belong at university Increase in attendance and engagement rates Increase in students submitting assessments on time Reduction in assessment deferrals Increase in assessments passed at first attempt YoY increase in students continuing from one year of student to next year
Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success	– New: Redesign of curriculum to standardise a **manageable** number of **standalone modules** per semester – New: Timetable use of **student groups** across all taught sessions and **consolidated** within a 3-day week across all UG programmes – Enhanced: Formalised **structured independent study**, with key concept videos routinely provided in advance of timetabled sessions – Enhanced: Formalised **engaging and interactive** pedagogies, rather than lectures. – Enhanced: Prioritisation of **health and wellbeing** – Continued: Timetabled **academic advising** for all UG students			

5.3 Intervention Strategy 3: Attainment

Attainment Objectives

3a. To reduce the attainment gap between **ABMO** and white students by 2031.

Target: To improve the awarding gap between White: **ABMO** from -11.4pp to below -5pp by 2028-29 **[PTS_4]**

3b. To reduce the attainment gap across between students eligible for **Free School Meals** and those not eligible and between students from IMD quintiles 1-2 and quintiles 3-5 by 2031.

Target: To improve the attainment gap for those eligible for **Free School Meals** and those not from -11.2pp to below -5pp by 2028-29. **[PTS_5]**

Target: To improve the attainment gap for students from **IMD quintiles** 1-2 compared to those from quintiles 3-5 from -6.9pp to below -3pp by 2028-29. **[PTS_6]**

3c. To reduce the gap in attainment for students entering with **BTEC qualifications** by 2031.

Target: To improve the gap in attainment rates for students entering with **BTEC qualifications**, compared to those entering with only A-level qualifications, from -14.9pp to below -5pp by 2028-29. **[PTS_7]**

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £2,040,000

Our theory of change:

Sector evidence suggests that several factors can impact differentially on students' attainment, including curriculum and assessment design, academic support, pastoral support, sense of belonging, and financial challenges. Given the significantly high proportion of our student body at risk of an inequitable attainment outcome, we have selected to take a whole institution approach to designing our interventions, to ensure that they have the broadest possible impact. We have therefore prioritised structural reforms to the academic year, to the curriculum and assessment, as well as standardising modes of delivery that optimise our students' deeper engagement with learning and their wellbeing. Rationalising the number of modules students are studying at any one time, is designed to ensure students have standard and manageable workloads to enable their success. Coupled with a consolidated timetable and breaks in study, we will support wellbeing by giving students designated time to balance the demands of the independent study and preparation of assessments, with other life responsibilities, such as paid work or caring duties. Our reforms to standardise the delivery of a flipped classroom approach that fosters deeper learning, through use of group teaching, engaging and interactive pedagogies, and structured independent learning aim to ensure that time spent in the 'classroom' is maximised. Dialogical approaches will start with students understanding and engagement with the learning materials. Our further focus on assessment as part of attainment, providing varied, authentic and manageable numbers of assessments, is designed to give students the best possible chance of success. Our students come to us with varied prior educational experiences and levels of confidence about assessment. Our methods are designed to help all students acquire assessment literacy, particularly in the first year. We have identified an attainment gap in level 4 module outcomes (see pg. 31) and therefore have particularly targeted the first year and will monitor

the first assessment outcomes and support accordingly. We believe that all this will help improve their assessment engagement and confidence (submit on time/first-time pass rates), which in turn will help galvanise their on-programme attainment and improve their degree outcomes.

Intervention strand	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Indicators
Strand 3: Making the first-year count EORR Mitigation: 7,8	– New: one **additional resit opportunity** at level 4 for all mid-semester assessments – New: Introduce a series of **assessment communications** in advance of submission deadlines, pointing to relevant and tailored support – New: Introduce monitoring of **first submission of assessment**	Academic staff (additional workloads associated with small group teaching; key concept videos; advising) Systems: – Resource repository – My Learning – Capturing behaviours at point of first submission Wellbeing service team Academic support team Student callers /Progression Support Team	**Short term** – Commuting requirements and travel costs are limited and predefined – Students recognise the value of attending and engaging in timetabled sessions – Students learn at a deeper level – Students have breaks of study during the academic year – Students feel their wellbeing is being supported and are proactively taking steps to help themselves – Students have good assessment literacy – Students feel confident to manage assessment workload and submit on time – Students are proactive in using all support systems available – Students have access to role models to positively impact their life choices and decisions **Medium term** – Students have ongoing successful attainment – Students provide support and mentorship to their peer group. – Students' wellbeing is maintained throughout their studies	YoY increase in uptake of support services Increase in rates of attendance and engagement – timetabled /non-timetabled activity Increase in students submitting assessments on time Reduction in assessment deferrals Increase in assessments passed at first attempt YoY increase in on-programme attainment Maintain high levels of satisfaction. YoY increase in students' re-enrolments
Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success EORR Mitigation: 2,5,6,7,8,10,11	– New: Redesign of curriculum to standardise a **manageable** number of **standalone modules** per semester – New: Timetable use of **student groups** across all taught sessions and **consolidated** within a 3-day week across all UG programmes – Enhanced: Formalised **structured independent study**, with key concept videos routinely provided in advance of timetabled sessions – Enhanced: Formalised **engaging and interactive** pedagogies, rather than lectures – Enhanced: Prioritisation of **health and wellbeing** – Continued: Provision of **academic advising** for all UG students			
Strand 5: Assessing for success EORR Mitigation: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10	– Continued: Integration of **authentic assessment** across all programmes, with explicit links to tasks or competencies required within a work-place context – New: Re-design of all UG programmes to **standardise assessment** (range, number and spread) and make explicit use of **formative feedback**			

Strand 7: Infrastructure for success	– New: Reforms to our academic year calendar – Enhanced: Staff/student inclusivity networks and actions to ensure representation of global majority ethnicities (staff, peer support schemes and employers) – Enhanced: Targeted interventions at students (non-submission; failed 1st submission; non-engagement)		**Longer term** – Students attain good degree outcomes – Students are lifelong learners. – Students have long term good health and wellbeing	

5.4 Intervention Strategy 4: Progression

Progression Objectives:

4a. To eliminate the progression differential between students who are **First in Family** compared to those who are not by 2031.

Target: To improve the progression rates of those who are **First in Family** from -7.2pp to below -3pp by 2028-29. **[PTP_1]**

4b. To reduce the gap in progression for students entering with **BTEC qualifications** by 2031.

Target: To improve the progression rates of students entering with BTEC qualifications from -10.4pp to below -5% by 2028-29. **[PTP_2]**

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,195,000

Our theory of change:

Our progression interventions commence from our students' first contact with the university. Our pre-arrival survey covers employment as one of our educational gains, with questions focused on confidence and level of importance, from which to better understand our students' employability needs and aspirations. The survey provides us with a benchmark to monitor changing levels of confidence. Through this, our students tell us that their future employability was a key factor in their choice to study and indicate they need clarity about pathways available to them with their degree and beyond. As such, interventions start with a focus on different career options; tailored to the discipline, to raise awareness of different career pathways and their future aspirations. Our plan ensures that employability is fully integrated and timetabled across all programmes, so it is accessible for all students and is tailored to the programme's disciplinary, professional, business and/or industry contexts. Our pedagogical approach is underpinned by our practice-based heritage, ensuring that students gain the practical and professional competencies that support them to not only stand out in the workplace but also feel confident to articulate their skills and distinctiveness to prospective employers.

Intervention strand	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Indicators
Strand 1: Collaborating for access and success *EORR Mitigation: 1,2,3,4, 6,7, 12*	– Continued: engagement with **employers** to enrich the curriculum, throughout levels 4-6	Systems – My learning – Handshake platform Student employability support team (MDXWorks) Employer networks and engagement Alumni networks and engagement Staff have up-to-date industry experience, knowledge and networks.	**Short term** – Students have high aspirations for themselves and their future success – Students can access the employability help and support available – Students routinely practice and/or apply their learning in societal, professional, industry or business contexts **Medium term** – Students are confident in their knowledge and skills – Students are confident to articulate their competencies and experience to prospective employers **Long term** – Students' successfully progress to (and retain) highly skilled employment /further study – Our graduates utilise their networks and MDX community to support their own success – Our graduates want to give back to the MDX community	YoY increase in placement uptake Increase uptake of employment opportunities through MDXWorks YoY increase in employer /professional practice relationships Improved progression metrics for target groups
Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success *EORR Mitigation: 1,2,3,4, 6,7, 12*	– Multi-stage, multi-modality **transition programme** aligned to Student Success Essentials Course and including peer support and Handshake Platform – New: **Welcome back survey** for all re-enrolling students, followed by targeted communications – New: Proactive and **targeted interventions** strategy – for low engagement; submission; at risk; or low confidence identified – New: **Peer support** programme - alumni career conversations			
Strand 6: Preparing students for their future success *Mitigation: EORR risk 1, 12*	– New: Our **common first year** broadens our students' first year curriculum, informing their ongoing choices and specialisms – Continued: **Practice-led** focused pedagogy, experiential opportunities, curricular and authentic assessment – Enhanced: **Employability,** scaffolded and integrated into the curriculum from level 4 to 6 – Enhanced: Integration of **graduate competencies** within programmes, nuanced to discipline and industry contexts – New: Provision of '**Handshake' platform**, extending students' employability networks and opportunities			

6. Evaluation

Our evaluation plan has three key aims:

a) to strengthen our monitoring of key indicators across the whole student lifecycle
b) to enhance the measures by which to evidence the effectiveness and impact of our intervention strands
c) to contribute to sector understanding and scholarship, particularly around students entering with BTEC entry qualifications and the factors contributing to an awarding gap.

Our plan thus sets out clear and measurable indicators for each intervention strand, from which we can monitor student and programme performance. For our students, we will monitor a range of lead data indicators (engagement, attendance, satisfaction), because they are actionable at the point of need and will help mitigate poor on-programme outcomes across a range of our risk categories. Thus, we plan to continue to invest in our learner analytics platform and maximise its use to bolster and support student programme engagement. Our previous students' engagement data will help as a baseline from which to monitor changes in their engagement behaviour once our 2031 Learning Framework interventions are fully implemented. Staff will continue to receive alerts, every other week, during the semester to flag students with low engagement, alongside a clearly defined process for supporting those identified.

We plan to embed enhancements to our monitoring of student performance at the programme level into our existing continuous improvement cycles, including our in-year and end-of-year monitoring process (Educational Monitoring Enhancement) and periodic review. This will ensure that our risk categories are considered as a matter of routine and inform timely and prompt interventions where necessary. We want our monitoring to lead to targeted action, with tailored interventions to support students and programmes at greatest risk of poor performance. This will help ensure that resources are targeted at those in greatest need of support.

We plan to make effective use of demographic variables as units of analysis; to analyse the impact of our interventions on our risk categories and enhance our monitoring capability for tracking our APP targets and objectives. To set us up to achieve this, through our Learning and Teaching Committee (June 2024), we have approved a move to confidential rather than anonymous student surveys. This received the backing of MDX Student Union. It will enable us to better understand differentials, across a range of characteristic and demographic variables.

We have re-established a strategic planning team, to lead the empirical work, correlation and statistical analysis required. This team will play a significant role in improving access to student data for our staff, identifying roles and responsibilities for data use, and enhancing the capability of our staff to make data-informed decisions. We recognise that our research community comprises several staff with a significant research interest in equity and social justice, bolstered by our recruitment and induction processes. Furthermore, several of our staff have been supported to undertake research qualifications at Levels 7 and 8; including leadership apprenticeships. We plan to widen the number of staff contributing to our empirical and causal evaluation and contributing to the evidence-base and understanding within Middlesex and across the HE sector.

Our overall progress, targets and objectives will be routinely monitored through our governance structures.

6.1 Phased Monitoring and Intervention Strategy

Our evaluation plan is underpinned by our monitoring and intervention strategy. It represents our plan over the next 3-5 years to improve our predictive capability and response to student performance. In summary, our enhancements include:

a) Improving our data systems, to increase automation and facilitate systematic data capture.
b) Enhancing staff access to meaningful student data and triangulating data sources to provide a holistic overview of entry data and performance outcomes.
c) Enhancing staff data capabilities to implement in-semester interventions and identify longer term enhancement to practice.

d) Enhancing student access to personal performance data in relation to their cohort; and ensure a student-centred user experience with systems throughout the student journey.
e) Improving our level of analysis, to track, monitor and compare student outcomes (across demographic, participation, engagement and pedagogic variables).
f) Widening the number of lead data points, whilst improving our interpretation of lag data as a lead indicator.

Table 5 overviews our monitoring and intervention strategy; structured by assigned monitoring points over the course of the academic year and aligned to our EME process.

We have identified a whole provider approach to improve the outcomes of our target groups which we have found are at risk of inequitable outcomes, due to the size of our target population. The scale of our proposed changes cannot be underestimated, and we don't believe that there is additional advantage in separately targeting our risk demographic groups, given the scale of the cohorts. However, we recognise the need to closely monitor our target populations to ensure that the differential outcomes are either reduced or eliminated in line with our ambitions, targets and objectives. Our monitoring and intervention strategy will help ensure that we are making progress and on track to meet our objectives. Our strategy (see Table 5) includes three forms of targeting, two focused on student performance and one focused on programme performance:

a) Targeting students with low /no engagement:

Our hypothesis: engagement is a precursor to student success (continuation, completion and attainment). As indicated in our theory of change models above, we believe that student engagement underpins success. Student attendance and engagement with learning, whether learning independently, in the classroom setting, or work-based contexts, supports the development of self-confidence and the relevant knowledge and skills which are required for in-year success. Having success, in turn, contributes to having good mental health and wellbeing and a positive attitude to learning, and thus are pre-conditions for being able to continue, complete and achieve good degree outcomes.

Current practices: In 2021-22, we invested in a learner analytics platform, StREAM, to identify students who have low /no engagement from which to personalise and target our support. After refining our metrics, we rolled out the use of the platform in 2022-23, using an alert system sent to academic staff that identifies their students with low or poor levels of engagement. We also established an intervention process to support those students, which includes contact from their academic advisor, a student caller and input from our progression and support team. An early intervention has been found to be highly effective, with such an early 'check in' with the student has been sufficient to improve levels of engagement behaviour and ensure students who need it are signposted to relevant sources of support (e.g. health and wellbeing, finance, learning enhancement team).

*Enhanced practice*s: We aim to build on the use of the StREAM system, monitoring students in our demographic risk categories to ensure that early action is taken and provides a more tailored and personalised approach to those in need of additional support.

b) First assessment point:

Our hypothesis: students' first assessment outcomes can be used to predict future attainment performance. We believe that the first assessment point is a key risk indicator, and thus scaffolded support around this time will be beneficial, as students acclimatise to level 4 study, including getting to know what support is available, building their assessment literacy and taking on board feedback received. Failing assessed work can lead to assessment bunching into subsequent semesters, which puts students under extra pressure, having a detrimental impact on performance in subsequent assessments. We believe that timely and structured support interventions around the first submission will contribute to students' self-confidence, engagement and likelihood to succeed; and furthermore, providing additional support for those who fail their first assessment will impact their confidence, engagement and future achievement.

Current practices: Our analysis has investigated whether there are differences in achievement between student groups across level 4 module outcomes. We looked at what proportion of students had a first and/or 2:1 in their level 4 modules and whether there were any differentials between our student risk groups and found significant variances. Our most significant differentials are between:

- Black: White -22.7pp
- ABMO: White -16.5pp
- BTEC: other entry qualifications -15.0pp
- IMD 1&2: 3,4&5: -13.0pp
- FSM eligible: not eligible: -10.7pp
- Young: Mature -10.0pp
- Mental health disability: not disabled: - 6.6pp

We also analysed pass rates amongst our risk groups and found similar and significant variances:

- ABMO: White -9.3pp
- Black: White -9.2pp
- Young: mature -8.7pp
- BTEC: other entry qualifications -5.4pp
- Mental health disability: not disabled: - 5.1pp

The smaller gaps between pass rates indicate that, whilst students in our risk categories are passing, they are more likely to obtain a 2:2 or 3rd classification, when compared with those who are not at risk. We believe that this adds weight to our hypothesis and indicates that the attainment gap needs to be addressed from the outset and informs our decision to make the first-year count.

New practices: Our new assessment intervention includes the provision of an additional re-sit opportunity for all level 3 and 4 mid-semester assessments and standardised number of assessments. Our monitoring approach will include several data points around the first assessment, drawing on demographic variables as a unit of analysis. These data points include on-time submission rates, first-time pass rates, rates of deferral, assessment grades, take up of additional resit opportunities; and extension requests (extenuating circumstances).

c) Programme targeting:

Our hypothesis: providing extra support for programmes who are at greatest risk of poor outcomes enables a collegiate and supportive culture and ensures resources are used efficiently and effectively. Our evidence base demonstrates differential performance across our faculties (see Annex A) and furthermore is clustered within particular programmes.

Monitoring at programme level will continue to be undertaken through our EME process. Additional monitoring and support structures will be targeted at programmes with the most significant gaps and where there are ongoing performance issues identified impacting our targets and outcomes. We will work with faculty to identify what support might be most appropriate and make the greatest impact.

6.1. Evaluation of our Intervention Strands

We are committed to evaluating the effectiveness and impact of our interventions on our risk categories. Table 6 overviews our evaluation approach, the range of evaluation measures we will draw on and our methods of evaluation. Our approach is structured by our intervention strands for ease of reference. Each strand incorporates data monitoring, which is aligned to our monitoring and intervention strategy (detailed in section 6.1). Our evaluation includes:

Analysis of student outcomes: We plan to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of our intervention strands at programme level, across those in one or more of our risk categories, through evaluation of outcome data including satisfaction, continuation, completion, graduate outcomes and progression. We will continue to analyse the reasons why students choose to withdraw from their studies, where data can be obtained. Our internal lag data sources, including assessment outcomes, student learning assistants survey, module evaluation, programme survey, pre-arrival survey, welcome/welcome back surveys will be analysed by demographic variables, to identify any differences or trends between student groups.

Tracking: Our evaluation includes plans to use our data to track over time including:

- any changes to students' levels of confidence across our pre-arrival, welcome, and welcome back surveys
- any differences in graduate outcome between programmes by the level or type of employability intervention used
- correlations between level 4 assessment (module) outcomes and future outcomes
- any correlation between withdrawal rates and payment of fees (within 2 weeks/before payment of fees)
- any differences in the number of students who choose to change their programme or module choice options
- any differences in students' academic performance by prior qualification or demographic risk groups from level 4.

Comparative analysis: We recognise we have a unique opportunity to analyse differences in student outcome between programmes with different delivery patterns; through our planned implementation for our learning framework where changes will be introduced at the same time across all undergraduate programmes. Programmes will be required to submit a business case for not implementing selected elements of our learning framework. This provides scope for comparing outcomes across programmes in delivery approach, when accounting for other disciplinary variables, including those with/without a common first year, with/without exams and with small or larger group teaching.

Empirical: We recognise that two of our risks, our awarding gap between global majority and white students, and our students entering with BTEC qualifications, require further investigation to better understand the factors contributing to their differential performance and inform our approach. We will work with our Student Union to facilitate student led inquiries into barriers and enablers based on their lived experience and potential effective forms of support. Furthermore, we plan to continue to support our staff to undertake research qualifications at Levels 7 and 8 and will investigate potential for studies contributing to our empirical and causal evaluation. We anticipate this will be of value to Middlesex and the wider HE sector.

	Transition	In semester	End of semester monitoring	End of year monitoring	Institutional annual review
	Lead indicators	**Lead indicators**	**Lag indicators**	**Lag indicators**	**Lag used as lead indicators**
Monitoring	- Enhancing automation for rates of enrolment /re-enrolment - Triangulating sources of data about students on entry (inc. demographics; prior qualifications) - Expanding pre-arrival/ welcome survey to include a welcome back survey for re-enrolling students at level 5 /6	- Continuing monitoring of student engagement (StREAM) and attendance - Improving monitoring of take up, around designated key opportunities	- Continuing module satisfaction monitoring of: + Programme voice groups + Module/programme/ + NSS response rates - Enhancing our monitoring of withdrawal data including: + In year withdrawal rates + Reasons for withdrawal - Enhancing our monitoring of attainment outcomes (cohort) through: + Submission rate (end-module) + First time pass + Rates of failure /referrals + Re-sit submissions/ success	- Continued monitoring of student outcomes including: + Attainment + Progression between levels + Onward progression + NSS + Continuation	- EME report - External examiner report - Assessment outcomes - NSS outcome - Recruitment report
	Embedded into our Education Monitoring Enhancement Process against APP objectives and targets and in year actions required				
Interventions	- Enhancing the student callers' scheme by matching students on demographic variables - Expanding the use of targeted communications, based on students' survey responses - Expanding the range of campaigns running based on student survey responses	- Continuing support for students with low engagement/ attendance through: +Contact from a designated academic advisor +Contact from a student caller +Contact from the programme leader	- Continuing to make in-semester adaptions to learning and teaching based on students' needs. - Introducing targeted interventions for students who fail a module assessment	- Enhanced action planning requirement to include interventions to improve assessment outcomes (improving failure and success)	- Enhanced faculty business planning to include revision to induction, transition support and first assessment

	- Improving the communications to programme leader on transition survey responses. - Adding additional transition activities where required	+Support to make informed choices to withdraw, defer or continue - Enhancing assessment related support including: +Contact from a designated academic advisor +Additional skills support sessions +Support from a student learning assistant +Drop-in clinics/workshops +Referral to wellbeing support - Introducing structured communications around assessment deadlines - Targeted interventions at students who don't submit first time or fail their first assessment			

Table 5: Our monitoring and intervention strategy

Stands of activity	Impact	Evaluation Measures	Methods of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Strand 1: Collaborating for access and success	Access Progression	– HEAT data tracking – Pre and post engagement questionnaires – Middlesex enrolment data	– Monitoring rates of satisfaction and engagement with activities (type 1) – Tracking of entry rates to Middlesex (type 2) – Tracking of entry rates to HE (type 2)	– Annual outreach monitoring report published on Middlesex website. – Contributions to ad hoc HEAT reports – Internal annual recruitment trends monitoring
Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success	– continuation – completion – attainment – Progression	– Pre-arrival survey – Welcome back survey – StREAM engagement data – Date of enrolment	– Monitoring rates of response, engagement, attendance, enrolment and course uptake (type 1) – Analysis of survey cohort need and levels of confidence (type 2) – Tracking students on-programme performance by entry qualification and demographic target groups (type 2) – Tracking withdrawal rates (within 2 weeks/before payment of fees) (type 2) – Research study comparing student experience and outcomes amongst entry qualifications with /without BTEC (type 3)	– Educational monitoring enhancement plan – Faculty business plans – Professional service plans – Committee reports – Monthly reporting on uptake of employment opportunities – Report on pre-arrival and welcome survey responses for each new cohort (Sept/Jan) – Annual summary report on Middlesex website
Strand 3: Making the first-year count		– Module evaluation – Welcome survey – StREAM engagement data – Attendance capture	– Monitoring rates of engagement (Unibuddy/student callers), On-programme engagement (StREAM); attendance (timetabled sessions /events); uptake of re-sits; rates of deferral (type 1) – Analysis of changing levels of confidence (type 2) – Tracking student numbers of changes to programme and module choice options (type 2) – Analysis of reasons for withdrawal (type 2) – Research study comparing student experience and outcomes amongst programmes with differing delivery modes (type 3) – Monitoring programme performance (type 2)	

Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success		– Module evaluation – Programme evaluation – Welcome back survey – StREAM engagement data – Attendance capture – Pulse survey (wellbeing) – SLA experience survey – NSS survey – Participation data (uni-temps)	– Monitoring rates of engagement (Uni-buddy/student callers), On-programme engagement (StREAM); attendance (timetabled sessions /events/academic advising) (type 1) – Monitoring uptake of internship/part-time roles (type 1) – Monitoring and analysis of programme performance (type 2) – Analysis of SLA feedback themes (type 2) – Analysis of NSS (type 2)	
Strand 5: Assessing for success		– First assessment data – MISIS assessment record (deferrals; extensions requests; resits) – module evaluation – NSS survey – SLA experience survey	– Monitoring assessment outcomes (in year/end of year); uptake of re-sits; rates of deferral/extensions; engagement (academic support) (type 1) – Analysis of NSS (type 2) – Analysis of SLA feedback on assessment (type 2) – Tracking first assessment submission and future outcomes (type 2) – Monitoring programme performance (type 2) – Research study investigating differential attainment (awarding gap/prior attainment/other) (type 3)	
Strand 6: Preparing students for their future success	Progression	– Module evaluation – Programme evaluation – Welcome back survey – StREAM engagement data – Attendance capture – SLA experience survey – NSS survey – Graduate outcomes survey – Early destination survey captured through Handshake platform	– Monitoring rates of engagement; take up (events, programmes, completions) (type 1) – Analysis of NSS (type 2) – Monitoring programme performance on graduate outcomes and progression (type 2) – Analysis of career registration through welcome back survey (type 2) – Analysis of graduate outcomes at programme level (type 2) – Correlation analysis between levels of employability intervention and graduate outcomes (type 2)	

Table 6: Evaluation measures by intervention strand

7. Work with our Students

7.1 Student Partnership

The importance of student voice and partnership at Middlesex
Meaningful partnership work with our students forms a critical part of the Middlesex approach. In the recent 2024 National Student Survey results, Middlesex University was above OfS benchmark and sector average in the Student Voice theme, scoring fifth highest in the country for student voice overall and fourth for acting on student feedback.

Our approach to student voice starts with ensuring that students are effectively represented and contributing to decision making at all levels of the University. We maintain two roles on our Board of Governors for elected students' union representatives. Academic Board, our most senior University committee, has both elected representatives and student union employees as part of its membership. All formal university committees have at least one student representative in their membership. We understand that membership of decision-making bodies is not enough and that we have a role in ensuring that students who sit on these committees are effectively trained and supported. All Students' Union officers receive training within their induction programme about how to effectively contribute to university committees and how to positively influence university projects. We will be expanding this training further, partnering APP leads with SU Executive Officers to deliver specific training on access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression to prepare them for working at committee level. The two elected officers who sit on our Board of Governors are also provided with mentorship from another board member. Academic Board agendas are set in partnership with the elected officers, who have co-chaired meetings on a regular basis. Furthermore, our PVC Education and Student Experience meets with MDXSU colleagues formally at least once a month. We have worked closely with the SU to develop co-leadership principles and an appropriate range of payments recognising the value of our students' time in undertaking work with us, including participation in focus groups.

Our student voice work is present throughout the student journey and delivered in close collaboration with our Students' Union. Delivery and promotion of all student voice initiatives is coordinated by our Student Voice Action Group, which includes joint representation from University and Students' Union teams. Regular module and programme evaluations ensure that student views are heard and acted upon throughout their learning journey.

We continue to co-lead the development of student resources by paying students to help co-create student-facing materials, linking different outputs and artifacts to the skills they acquire within their own disciplines. We plan for students to be key creators in enhancements to our Student Success Essentials course. This will be expanded to include key transition points across the student lifecycle, with new sections co-created by students and including key messages and tips about how to prepare at each transition point, alongside information and guidance about support materials available. Students will also help shape our planned communications ahead of key transition points, including the first assessment submission deadline; the first work placement and transition to the next level of study.

Student callers are now a key part of our pre-emptive support for those with low engagement, and we have found that response rates are higher for peer-to-peer calls than for staff led approaches. This scheme will be extended to match students with callers from similar cultural and family backgrounds.

As part of our plan, we will explore ways of involving undergraduate students in university service design that goes beyond focus groups and end-user experience input. This includes a consideration of framing some live research projects at Level 6 to contribute to shaping operating models. As part of our APP implementation, we will work alongside the SU to facilitate student-led inquiries into key areas of focus, including the global majority awarding gap and the impact of BTEC prior qualifications. In this way, we aim to co-lead aspects of our implementation as we have done in the planning phase.

Student partnership in the development of our Access and Participation Plan
As can be seen through the rest of this document, our approach to our APP is very closely aligned to reforms to our Learning Framework. The development of this new Framework has taken place over the last 18 months with close involvement from students at every stage.

The process of updating our Learning Framework began in 2022 with 'Speak Week' activities led by our Students' Union. This involved interactive on-campus activities where students could provide feedback on what they wanted to keep the same and what they wanted to change about their student experience (academic, social, financial, campus services, general). The Students' Union also ran a series of focus groups across this period to gather more detailed feedback from students. Feedback from these sessions was brought together and discussed collaboratively by Students' Union and University colleagues, which led to the creation of draft principles for our new Learning Framework. In early 2024, to gather feedback on these draft principles, the Students' Union led on one of our most ambitious student voice campaigns to date, running a series of 12 focus groups across just two weeks with over 250 students. These sessions were delivered jointly by University and Students' Union colleagues at the start, with university colleagues then 'leaving the room' to allow students to discuss feedback more openly. A formal report on the findings from this consultation was shared with all programme teams. This will be used by those involved in the re-design of programmes. In every programme where changes will be implemented, student ambassadors and student voice leaders will be invited to attend additional student consultation sessions on changes related to their programmes of study. This comprehensive student partnership work aimed to provide a shared confidence that the new Learning Framework, and its place within our APP, is fit for the needs of our diverse student body.

Students Union officers and colleagues have been involved in project meetings throughout the creation of the Access and Participation Plan and underlying data has been shared and discussed with them at a series of focussed meetings. They have provided feedback and input on drafts at regular intervals. Dedicated training sessions have been organised for Students' Union colleagues to ensure that they understand and can contribute meaningfully to conversations about risk categories and institutional gaps.
We also involved students from our Education Department in our approach to the APP, where it was embedded in the curriculum as part of a *Policy in Practice* strand. As part of this initiative, we ran two interactive seminars with PG Cert Higher Education students in January 2024 and MA Education students in May 2024. Both sessions included consideration of the Middlesex data, context and challenges, as well as reflections on their own lived and professional experiences. In total, this involved approximately 50 postgraduate-taught students, and student feedback on the sessions was extremely positive

Student voice and partnership in the evaluation of our Access and Participation Plan
Our students will be closely involved in the monitoring and evaluation of our APP. This will include how we gather feedback from students on the implementation of the new Learning Framework and through other interventions included within this plan. Students across all programmes will complete module evaluation surveys in each semester. Findings from these surveys will be discussed jointly by programme team staff and student voice leaders, so that feedback from students can be acted upon. The Students' Union will also be represented on university committees where student engagement, satisfaction and outcomes data will be discussed.

7.2 Provision of Information to Students

We are committed to improving equality of opportunity to enable students from all backgrounds and abilities to achieve their academic potential. Our financial support schemes alleviate some of the financial costs of university education, support wellbeing, facilitate responsibility, empower, and help remove financial barriers to improve student access, success, and progress. This section highlights the scope and scale of our financial support schemes, interventions, and provision of information and signposting.

We recognise the cost-of-living crisis is disproportionately felt by our students - high inflation and a depreciating income of a fixed £25,000 parental income loan threshold, and below inflation (2.8 %) loan rise (2023-24) and that these financial pressures are influencing students' choices to study, work, engage or abandon studies.

Our internal support services, delivered through a range of accessible channels, collaborate closely with professional services teams and academic staff across the campus, enabling a student lifecycle approach to personalised financial guidance and support, recognising the impact of financial hardship and Tuition Fee debt on mental health, assessment periods, engagement, extra-curricular activity, placements, access to university systems, friendships, and family.

We share information on fees, funding, and financial support with prospective and continuing students through regular email updates, internal communications campaigns, social media, digital screens, Open Days, outreach presentations, the student portal and our web pages. We engage influencers such as careers advisors and teachers, updating them on the financial support available to ensure they keep their students up to date. YouTube videos signpost students to access help and money for university, travel, and childcare, including finance that is not paid back such as scholarships and hardships funds, and loans and grants through the government. We recognise that (potential) students do not all have the same 'know-how' about Student Finance: where, when, and how to apply, eligibility criteria, and decisions that could impact their entitlement now or in the future. Support teams remind students to apply for funding in advance of the next academic year, providing individual help with funding applications. We have developed online enrolment to signpost students to apply to student finance to prevent delays to funding approvals, and our new payment platform will bring transparency and simplicity to tuition fee charging, payments, and instalments.

Our team of student callers, proactively reach out to students with low study engagement and explore any financial barriers hindering their ability to engage. Our Progression and Support Team advise students on academic outcomes and helps repeating students to prepare financially for the year ahead.

Our agile approach to financial support enables a student-focused response to current and emerging financial problems while recognising our students are impacted in diverse ways. The application process is designed to alleviate stigma by removing the need to explain or demonstrate hardship, while encouraging the student to seek help.

Financial support eligibility criteria

To access financial support, students should be UK-domiciled, be enrolled on a programme of study and provide evidence of financial hardship.

Financial support payments – methods of payments, amounts, frequency

- Food vouchers or cash for those in immediate financial need. Payments are normally in the £50 - £100 range. Multiple applications are considered, although support with budgeting and sign-posting to potentially greater financial support are part of the application process.

- Diagnostic assessment costs: £300 to offset costs of obtaining a diagnosis to support dyslexia or other conditions that may incur additional support costs. Usually paid once during a student's programme.

- Direct financial support: Tailored to individual circumstances, including care experienced students, those with caring responsibilities and emergency needs. Payments range from £150 - £4,150 per annum. Average payments are £300 per semester.

Financial support schemes are displayed on digital screens around the campus and communicated through student callers, social media, word of mouth, testimonials and in teaching sessions. University study is made more affordable with costs removed for day-to-day items that students need for their studies, including free laptop loans, e-journals, reading list books, specialist software, microwaves and hot water dispensers for home brought food, period products, clothes swaps and resources to help save on energy bills, shopping discounts, cheaper travel, budgeting and money management. Costs are also mitigated for projects and exhibitions, so that the cost of materials does not inhibit on-programme attainment.

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

Our initial performance analysis involved a detailed data analysis using the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard and Size and Shape Data Dashboard. The analysis was initially conducted for each stage of the student life cycle. The results were then compiled based on student characteristics to provide an overview of risk groups. This enabled us to identify statistically significant gaps (those above 5pp) throughout the student life cycle. Identified gaps were used to facilitate deeper exploration of the institution's individualised data files for 2014/15 to -2021/22 and internal data sources to comprehensively understand the underlying factors contributing to these gaps. Our approach to identifying gaps involved calculating the percentage point difference between indicators for different demographic groups. This helps us understand disparities and focus on developing targeted strategies to address and mitigate them effectively.

The APP dashboard was remodelled using OfS guidance[5], which enabled us to explore intersections in more detail. Four years of aggregate data were used to identify the risks, and six years of individual data were used to identify trends. Remodelling the APP dashboard enabled us to identify small cohorts without suppression and to allow multiple intersections to be analysed. In addition to the OfS student groups[6], additional groups were created during the reconstruction of the APP dashboard: Care leaver, Commuter, Entry qualification, First in Family to attend HE, Gender identity, and Socio-economic classification. This was done to align our analysis with the groups identified in the OfS Equality of Opportunities Risk Register[7].

TUNDRA and ABCS at Middlesex

The TUNDRA and ABCS metrics are valuable for analysing inequality in higher education outcomes and experiences. However, these metrics may not suit diverse London institutions like Middlesex. Study Location data from the Size and Shape Dashboard over the past four years show that 52% of full-time undergraduate qualifier students were local to Middlesex before entry, compared to the sector average of 23.1%.

OfS replaced POLAR4 with TUNDRA as the measure of progression to HE from an area. At Middlesex, only 4% and 5.8% of total postcodes in London fall under TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2, respectively, compared to the national distribution of 12% and 15.4% of postcodes. This inevitably results in variations between areas with the lowest and highest levels of participation at Middlesex. As a result, gaps that arise between TUNDRA quintiles are not considered areas of concern, particularly in Access.

It's important to note that while ABCS may help understand student outcomes based on the intersectionality of different characteristics, it's crucial to recognise that the modelling approach used in ABCS is based on a population where white students make up the majority. However, at Middlesex, white students are the minority, which may lead to gaps in the data. Recruiting more white students to align with the model is not justifiable or appropriate. Therefore, we do not see the gaps in ABCS metrics as significant areas of concern at Middlesex.

[5] Rebuilding student outcome and experience measures used in OfS regulation – 2023 rebuild instructions

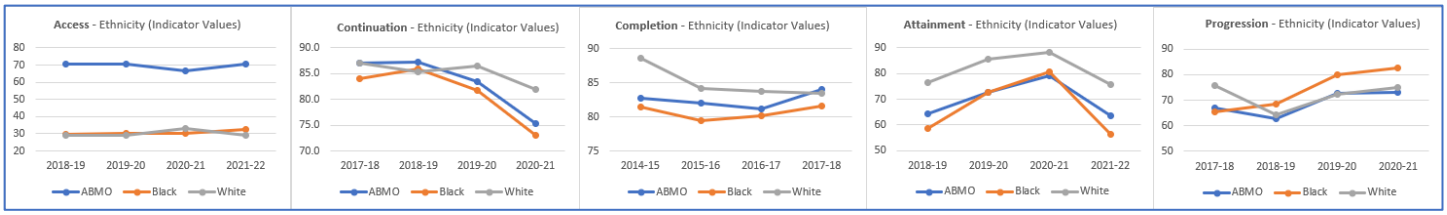
[6] ABCS quintile, Age on commencement, Disability, Disability type, English IMD quintile 2019, Ethnicity, FSM eligibility, POAR4 quintile, Sex, TUNDRA quintile

[7] Office for Students (2024) 'Equality of Opportunity Risk Register', Office for Students. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/

Data Review by Target Group

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
ABMO	70.7	70.8	66.8	70.6	69.6	33.5	87.0	87.2	83.4	75.3	83.3	85.9	82.7	82.1	81.2	84.1	82.4	85.9	64.3	72.6	79.3	63.6	69.6	71.9	67.1	62.7	72.6	73.2	68.8	69.6
Asian	26.9	26.1	21.2	21.4	24.0	14.7	89.8	88.8	86.8	79.0	86.6	88.2	84.7	86.1	82.7	86.8	85.0	88.2	67.3	71.8	78.6	69.1	71.5	74.4	68.1	56.3	66.3	66.5	64.0	68.7
Black	29.7	30.2	30.5	32.7	30.6	10.8	84.0	86.0	81.8	73.0	81.0	82.8	81.4	79.4	80.1	81.6	80.5	82.8	58.5	72.8	80.5	56.3	66.7	63.4	65.6	68.4	79.8	82.7	74.4	69.8
Mixed	6.8	6.6	7.2	7.5	7.0	5.4	84.8	86.5	78.6	75.7	81.4	86.3	81.2	78.9	82.0	81.1	80.8	86.3	70.7	81.7	80.6	71.8	75.7	79.7	73.4	67.1	75.4	76.7	72.8	72
Other	7.3	8.0	7.9	9.0	8.0	2.6	88.8	86.7	82.5	73.9	82.8	85.1	82.4	80.6	77.7	84.2	81.0	85.1	64.6	65.2	76.8	61.1	66.8	71.9	60.5	70.1	70.4	56.0	64.3	68.6
White	29.3	29.2	33.2	29.4	30.4	66.5	87.0	85.3	86.5	81.9	85.0	89.7	88.6	84.2	83.8	83.5	85.0	89.7	76.4	85.6	88.2	75.9	81.0	83.6	75.7	64.3	72.4	75.0	71.7	73



We have explored the possibility of breaking down the data for all ethnic groups at every stage of the student journey. The above chart and table summarise our analysis.

In 2021/22, 70.6% of entrants were from Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnicities (ABMO), with a four-year average of 69.6%. This is compared to a sector four -year average of 33.5%. The proportion of entrants identified as Black (four -year average of 30.6%) was 19.8pp higher than the sector average. Therefore, we don't consider that there is an indication of risk for Access.

In the most recent year (2021/22), continuation rate for students identifying as AMBO decreased by 9.1pp to 75.3%. The four-year average continuation rate for all ethnic groups was 83.3%, resulting in a -1.7pp gap (and -5.4pp gap against the sector) compared to students of White ethnicity. When focusing on students who identify as Black ethnicity, there was a four-year average gap of -4pp for students continuing their programme, in comparison to students identifying as White.

The completion rates showed a similar pattern to the continuation rates. Students from ABMO ethnicities had a completion rate of 82.4%, a -2.6pp gap compared to White students. However, students identifying as Black and Other had the most significant gap of -4.5pp and -4.0pp respectively.

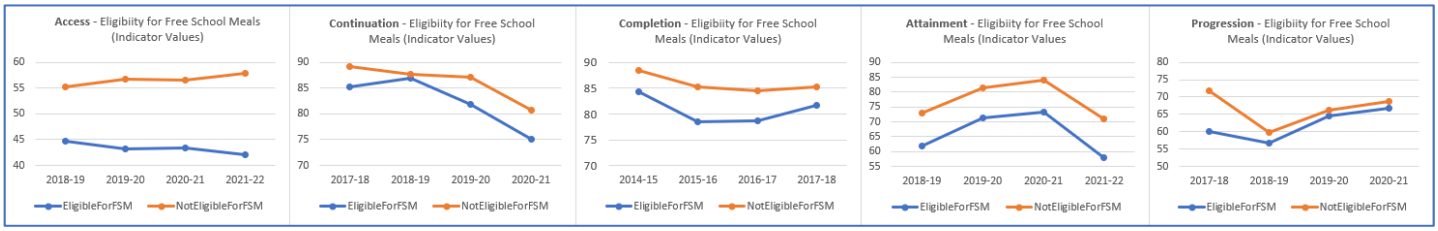
In 2021/22, 63.6% of students from ABMO ethnicities received a 1st / 2.1, with a four-year average of 69.6%. This showed a gap of -11.4pp, compared to students identifying as White. In addition to the significant awarding gap between White and ABMO ethnicities, the four-year sector average for AMBO students attaining a 1st / 2.1 was 2.3pp higher than Middlesex. The most significant gap within this group was for students identifying as Black compared to students identifying as White, with a one-year gap of -19.6pp in 2021/22 and a four-year average gap of -14.3pp**.** When intersected with gender, the gap for male black students increases to -21.7pp. Further intersectional analysis by age and qualifications on entry showed that the largest disparity, at -26.0pp, is for BTEC, young, male and Black students compared to white students.

RI 1 In 2021/22, there was a four -year average gap of -11.4pp for students identifying as AMBO, achieving a 1st / 2.1 compared to White students.

Progression rates have improved for students identifying as ABMO ethnicities. In the most recent year (2020/21), 73.2% progressed into graduate employment or further study with a gap of -1.8pp compared with students from White ethnicities. There was a four-year average of 68.8% progression and a -2.9pp gap. Therefore, we don't consider there to be an indication of risk for Progression.

Eligibility for Free School Meal

FSM	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
EligibleForFSM	44.7	43.2	43.4	42.1	43.5	19.4	85.3	86.9	81.8	75.1	82.7	88.4	84.4	78.5	78.6	81.6	80.4	84.0	62.0	71.2	73.2	58.1	65.6	71.2	60.0	56.6	64.5	66.7	61.6	65.3
NotEligibleForFSM	55.3	56.8	56.6	57.9	56.5	80.6	89.1	87.6	87.1	80.7	86.4	93.1	88.5	85.2	84.6	85.3	85.7	91.2	73.0	81.3	84.0	71.0	76.8	82.8	71.7	59.8	66.2	68.7	66.4	71.4



Middlesex attracts a significant number of students who were eligible for Free School Meals upon entry. The graphs above depict the trends for students eligible for Free School Meals at any time during the six years leading up to the completion of Key Stage 4 and those who were not eligible.

The data shows little change in the proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals entering the University. Over the last four years, the proportion has been relatively stable (44.7% in 2018 to 42.1% in 2021), with the four-year average of 43.5% of students entering Middlesex eligible for Free School Meals. This compares to a sector four-year average of 19.4% of students eligible for Free School Meals. Therefore, we don't consider there is an indication of risk for Access.

The continuation rates for students eligible for Free School Meals have significantly decreased over the past two years. In 2020/21, the continuation rates for this group are lower, with 75.1% continuing, which is 5.6pp lower than students not eligible for Free School Meals. The four-year average continuation rate of 81.2% is also 3.7pp below the sector average, indicating a higher risk of non-continuation for students eligible for Free School Meals at Middlesex. Further investigation shows that gap increases to -9.1pp for students who are eligible for Free School Meals and who are First in Family to attend HE compared to students who are not eligible.

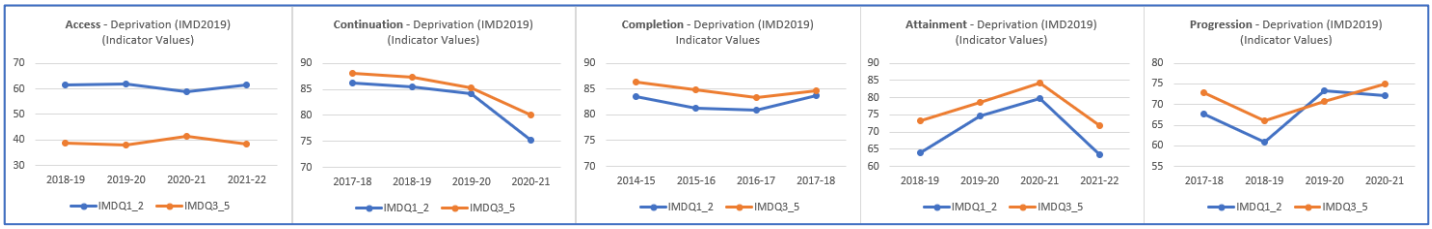
In the most recent year of completion data (2017/18), 81.6% of students eligible for Free School Meals completed their studies. While this rate showed improvement compared to the two previous years, there is still a -3.7pp gap compared to those who are not eligible. The gap widens even further to -5.3pp and -7.2pp when considering the four-year average and the sector average completion rates, respectively, indicating a higher risk indicator for completion. **RI 2: In 2021/22, the four-year average completion gap between students Eligible for Free School Meals and those not was -5.3pp.**

The attainment data indicates a significant gap in achievement between students who are eligible for Free School Meals and those who are not. In the most recent year of data (2021/22), the difference in attainment for students eligible for Free School Meals compared to those not was -12.9pp. The four-year average attainment gap of -11.2pp is 5.6pp lower than the sector average of 71.2%. **RI 3: In 2021/22, there was a four-year average attainment gap of -11.2pp between students eligible for Free School Meals and those not awarded a 1st or 2.1.**

Progression into further study or graduate-level careers has improved over the last two years for students eligible for Free School Meals. In the last year of data, 66.7% of students eligible for Free School Meals were in the progressed measure, with those not eligible being 2pp more likely to progress. The four-year average for students eligible for Free School Meals is 61.6% with a -4.8pp gap compared to those not eligible. While the gap has narrowed recently, the four-year average data suggests a borderline indication of risk for progression for students eligible for Free School Meals. **RI 4: In 2021/22, the four -year average progression gap between students eligible for Free School Meals and those not, was -4.8pp.**

Students from Socio-economically deprived areas (IMD Q1/2)

IMD 2019	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
IMDQ1_2	61	62	59	62	61	43	86	86	84	75	83	88	84	81	81	84	82	85	64	75	80	63	70	73	68	61	73	72	68	68
IMDQ3_5	39	38	41	39	39	57	88	87	85	80	85	93	86	85	83	85	85	91	73	79	84	72	77	84	73	66	71	75	71	74



When looking at IMD disparities, we can see that the gaps observed at Middlesex differ from what is seen in the sector. On average, the percentage of students from IMD Q1&2 at Middlesex is about 18 points higher than the sector average. In contrast, IMD quintiles 3 to 5 students are less likely to attend higher education (All UG, Full-time) than those from Q1&2. In the most recent year, only 6.3% of students came from Q5, while 24.3% came from Q1. Our data shows a reverse pattern, where students from lower IMD quintiles have higher rates of higher education access at our institution. Historically, the Middlesex has consistently experienced an ongoing trend of attracting students from the most deprived groups. There is no indication of risk for Access.

In the most recent year of data (2021/22), 75.2% of students from IMD Q1&2 continued; this represents a gap of -4.9pp to students from Q3 to 5. The four -year average for the gap in continuation for Q1&2 vs Q3 to 5 was -2.2pp. Compared with the sector average, continuation rates for both IMD groups (Q1&2 and Q3 to 5) are 4.7pp and 7.5pp below the sector average.

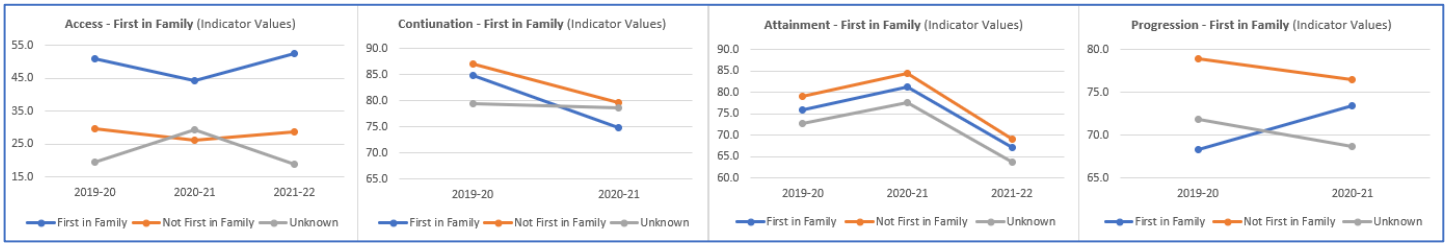
Completion rates for students from IMD Q1&2 are strong, with 83.8% completing their programme and a small gap of 0.9pp for students from Q3 to 5. The four-year average completion rate for students from IMD Q1&2 is 82.3%, with a four-year average gap to students from Q5 of 2.5pp. This small gap is not cause for concern, as both groups have consistently moved upward over the past three years. Therefore, we consider there to be no indication of risk for completion.

Attainment for students from IMD Q1&2 is low, with only 63.4% being awarded a 1st / 2.1. In 2021/22, the gap to students from Q3 to 5 was -8.6pp. The four -year average for students from IMD Q1&2 awarded a 1st / 2.1 was 69.9%, with a four -year average gap from Q3 to 5 of 6.9pp. When IMD Q1&2 are further analysed by age, there is a 3.1pp gap between mature and young students. **RI 5: In 2021/22, there was a - 8.6pp gap in degree awarding between students from IMD Q1&2 and Q3 to 5.**

Progression rates into graduate employment or further study for students from IMD Q1&2 have seen a noticeable improvement in the last two years. The four-year average progression rate for students from IMD Q1&2 was 68.4%, slightly higher than the sector average by 0.1%, but there was a -2.6pp gap from Q3 to 5. In the most recent, progression rates for students from Q3 to 5 have improved by 4.6pp to 75.1%. However, the average progression rate for the same group remains 3pp below the sector average for the same group.

Family background and circumstances

First in Family	Access					Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
First in Family	50.8	44.4	52.5	48.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	84.8	74.8	79.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	75.8	81.4	67.0	74.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	68.3	73.5	70.7	
Not First in Family	29.7	26.2	28.6	28.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	87.1	79.7	83.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	79.1	84.6	69.0	77.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	79.0	76.5	77.9	
Unknown	19.5	29.4	18.9	23.0	N/A	87.0	86.2	79.4	78.6	85.1	N/A	84.8	82.4	81.9	84.0	83.1	N/A	67.8	72.8	77.6	63.8	68.8	N/A	70.2	63.2	71.8	68.7	67.2	



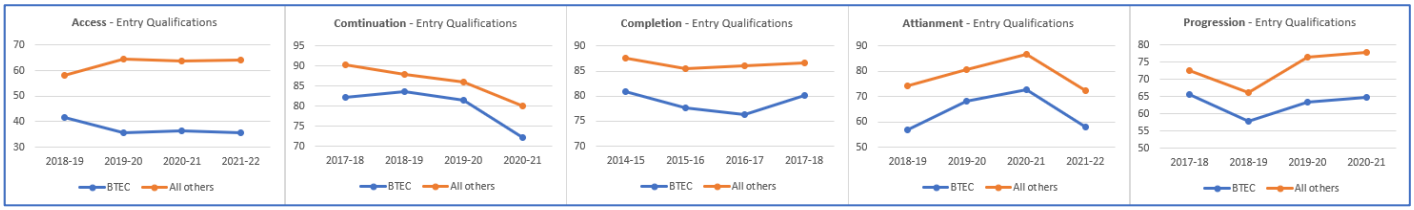
We examined a range of factors associated with family background and circumstances to understand potential barriers to student access and success at Middlesex. Our analysis included additional groups such as first-generation university students, care leavers, and commuters, to align with those identified in the OfS Equality of Opportunities Risk Register. The graph above shows performance data for students who are first in their

family to go to university, enrolled at Middlesex over a two-year time series, based on the availability of reliable data for this group. The data shows a -7.2pp gap between students who are the first in their family to attend university and those who are not, progression to graduate jobs or further study. When intersected with age, the progression gap widens to -18.9pp between mature and young, First in Family students. **RI 6: In 2021/22, there was a -7.2pp gap between first-generation university students and non-first-generation students in their progression to graduate jobs or further study.**

Our data review showed slight differences in outcomes for both Care leavers and Commuter groups. This indicates that there are no significant risk factors requiring intervention. Therefore, there is no evidence of risk at any stage of the student life cycle for these two groups. When intersected with age, the progression gap widens to 18.9pp between mature and young students. **RI 6: In 2021/22, there was a -7.2pp gap between first-generation university students and non-first-generation students in their progression to graduate jobs or further study.**

Entry Qualifications (BTEC vs All other qualifications)

Entry Qualifications	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
BTEC	41.8	35.5	36.3	35.7			82.1	83.7	81.6	72.1	80.0		81.0	77.7	76.2	80.1	78.5		56.7	68.2	72.9	58.1	63.4		65.7	57.8	63.4	64.7	62.7	
All others	58.2	64.5	63.7	64.3			90.4	88.0	86.0	80.0	85.9		87.6	85.6	86.1	86.6	86.4		74.4	80.8	86.6	72.5	78.3		72.5	66.2	76.4	77.8	73.2	



In the three years from 2019 /20 to 2021/22, the proportion of Middlesex entrants with BTEC qualifications has been relatively consistent. We don't consider that there is an indication of risk for Access.

Overall, the analysis reveals disparities between students with BTEC qualifications and those with All other entry qualifications throughout the stages of the student life cycle. The four-year average continuation rate for students with BTEC entry qualifications was 80%, 5.9pp lower than those with All Other entry qualifications. When intersected with First in Family, students who have BTEC entry qualifications and are First in Family to attend HE have a continuation rate 4.7pp lower than those with other entry qualifications. When the category of students with BTEC entry qualifications is Intersected with ethnicity, AMBO students have lower continuation rates than white students (-7.7pp) **RI 7: In 2021/22, the four -year average continuation gap for students with BTEC entry qualifications was -5.9pp compared to students with All other entry qualifications.**

Completion data shows a -6.5pp gap between students with All Other entry qualifications and those with BTEC qualifications. The four-year average continuation rate for students with BTEC entry qualifications was 78.5, 7.9pp lower than that for students with All Other entry qualifications. When the category of students with BTEC entry qualifications is intersected with ethnicity, AMBO students have lower completion rates than white students (-3.4pp). **RI 8: In 2021/22, the four -year average completion gap for students with BTEC entry qualifications was -7.9pp compared to those with All Other qualifications.**

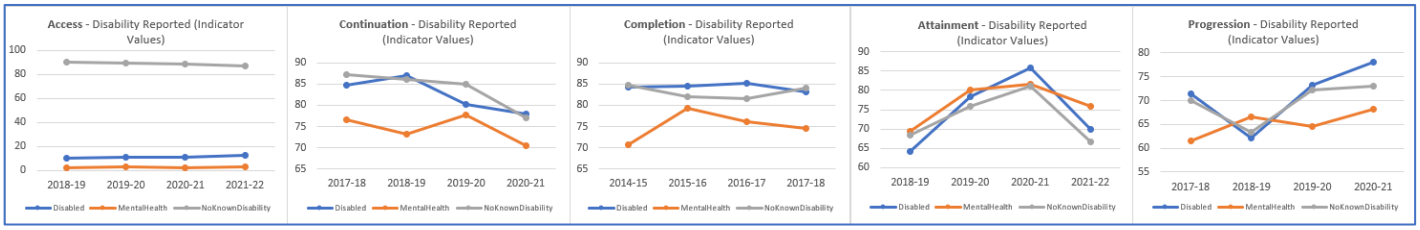
In 2021/22, the four-year average for students with BTEC entry qualifications who received a 1st/2.1 was 62.7%. This showed a significant difference of 14.9pp compared to students with All Other entry qualifications. Intersecting with age shows that, for BTEC entry qualifications, young students have an attainment rate 5.0pp below mature students. When the category of students with BTEC entry qualifications is intersected with ethnicity, AMBO students have lower attainment rates than white students (-10-2pp). **RI 9: In 2021/22, there was a large four-year average gap of -14.9 for students with BTEC entry qualifications, achieving a 1st / 2.1 compared to students with All Other entry qualifications.**

Progression rates for students admitted with BTEC entry qualifications were 64.7%, a gap of -10.5pp compared to students with All Other entry qualifications. When intersected with First in Family, students with BTEC entry qualifications, and who are First in Family to attend HE, have a progression rate 9.2pp lower than

those with other entry qualifications. When the category of students with BTEC entry qualifications is intersected with ethnicity, AMBO students have lower progression rates than white students (-5.0pp). **RI 10: In 2021/22, there was a four -year average gap of -10.5pp for students with BTEC qualifications progressing into graduate employment or further studies compared to students with All Other entry qualifications.**

Disability

Disability	Access						Completion						Continuation						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
Disabled	10.1	10.9	11.1	13.0	11.2	16.9	84.2	84.6	85.2	83.2	84.4	86.6	84.7	86.9	80.3	78.0	82.2	89.9	64.1	78.3	85.8	69.8	74.3	79.1	71.4	62.1	73.3	78.0	74.6	70.6
NoKnownDisability	89.9	89.1	88.9	87.0	88.8	83.1	84.8	82.1	81.6	84.1	83.0	88.9	87.2	86.1	84.9	77.1	83.8	90.6	68.3	76.0	81.2	66.6	72.6	79.9	70.1	63.4	72.2	73.0	65.8	72.5
CognitiveAndLearning	3.9	3.7	4.9	4.7	4.3	5.7	84.1	86.8	87.8	86.4	86.3	89.1	86.8	92.7	87.7	80.4	86.4	92.2	62.1	76.0	87.4	71.0	74.5	77.9	72.8	56.5	78.5	85.1	67.6	73.6
MentalHealth	2.3	3.1	2.4	3.2	2.7	5.0	70.8	79.2	76.2	74.5	75.8	82.7	76.5	73.2	77.7	70.5	74.4	87.8	69.4	80.0	81.6	75.9	76.5	80.8	61.5	66.6	64.6	68.2	65.8	67.8
MultipleImpairments	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.6	3.0	85.7	81	84.7	85	84.2	85.2	87.5	94.6	70.8	76.4	82.4	89.4	65.3	77.6	83.8	61.2	71.2	79.8	74.7	59.5	56.3	91.7	67.6	70.1
SensoryMedicalAndPhysical	1.3	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.7	2.2	89.1	85.5	82.1	84.5	85.2	86.9	86.4	80.4	80.0	77.8	81.3	89.7	60.7	90.9	86.2	67.8	75.6	79.3	69.2	67.9	75.0	73.6	70.8	71.4
SocialAndCommunication	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.0	88.9	85	91.7	76.2	85.1	84.6	81.8	93.3	73.9	91.7	85.9	89.3	70.0	64.3	86.7	61.9	70.0	74.4	80.0	70.0	62.6	44.4	62.5	61.0



While analysing the disability data, we focused on identifying differences among various student groups and their characteristics throughout the five stages of the student life cycle. However, the analysis revealed a consistent pattern, where the disparities between Middlesex and the sector average for most student groups were more significant than those between various student groups based on their characteristics. Addressing the discrepancies with the sector data is equally important.

In 2021/22, 13% of students entering Middlesex declared a disability. The four-year average of 11.2% compares to a sector four-year average of 16.9%. We consider there to be no indication of risk in Access.

Continuation rates for students with a declared disability have declined in the last two years, with a four -year average of 82.2% and a positive gap of 1.6pp compared to students with no declared disabilities and a -7.7pp gap compared to the sector average. We consider there to be no indication of risk for Continuation between students with declared disability and those with no declared disability. However, students with declared Mental Health disability have a four-year average continuation rate of 74.4%, a -9.4pp gap to students with no declared disability. When intersected with eligibility for Free School Meals, students who had a mental health disability, and were eligible for Free School Meals, had lower continuation rates than those who had no disability (-4.8pp). When intersected with First in Family, students with a declared mental health disability, and were First in Family to attend HE, had lower continuation rates than those with no declared disability. **RI 11: In 2020/21, the four -year average for continuation for students with declared mental health conditions was -9.4pp compared to students with no declared disability.**

Completion rates for students with declared disabilities have been static, with a four -year average of 84.4% and a positive gap of 1.4pp. We don't consider this to be any indication of risk for Completion for students with a declared disability. However, the group most at risk are students with declared mental health conditions, with a four-year average gap in completion of -7.2pp. When intersected with those eligible for Free School Meals, students who had a mental health disability had lower completion rates than those who had no disability (-17.7pp). **RI12: In 2021/22, the four -year completion rate for students with declared mental health conditions was -7.2pp less than that for students with no declared disabilities.**

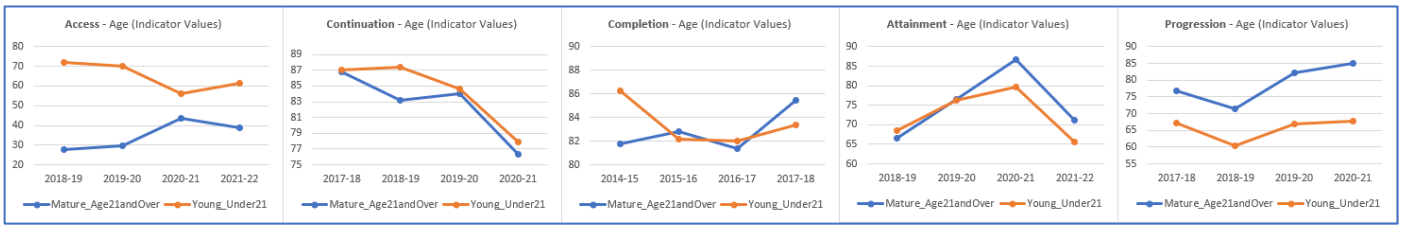
In 2021/22, 69.8% of students with declared disabilities achieved a 1st /2.1 degree, which is 3.2pp higher than students with no declared disability. Over the past four years, the average difference in attainment between these two groups was 1.7pp. During the same four-year period, students with declared mental health conditions achieved an average of 76.5%, a positive difference of 3.9ppp when compared to students with no declared disability. Based on these figures, we do not see any sign of risk for Attainment.

Students with declared disabilities had a progression rate of 78% in 2020/21, which is 5pp higher than students with no declared disability. Over the four-year period, the average progression rate for students with declared disabilities was 74.6%, 8.8pp higher than students with no declared disabilities. Our students with declared disabilities outperformed the sector average by 4pp. Based on these figures, there is no indication of risk for Attainment for these two groups. However, during the same four-year period, students with declared mental health conditions achieved an average progression rate of 65.8%, which is 8.8pp lower than students with no declared disability.

Furthermore, we have found that students with a disclosed mental health disability are significantly less satisfied compared to our students with no disclosed disability (NSS, 2024). This was found across all seven NSS themes, although more significantly within the theme of 'Organisation and management of the programme' (10% difference in satisfaction), 'building knowledge' and 'bringing together knowledge and skills from various topics'. This has informed our plan to increase communication, information and guidance, ahead of key transition points and, upfront, clear information and transparency of changes. illustrating the challenges for students with a registered mental health condition and the embedded support to promote deep learning and scaffold concepts.

Age

Age	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
Mature_Age21andOver	27.8	29.7	43.7	38.8	34.9	25.6	86.8	83.2	84.0	76.3	81.7	84.2	81.8	82.8	81.4	85.5	82.8	81.6	66.5	76.4	86.6	71.3	74.9	72.2	76.8	71.5	82.2	85.0	79.2	74.7
Young_Under21	72.2	70.3	56.3	61.2	65.1	74.4	87.1	87.4	84.6	77.9	84.6	92.5	86.3	82.2	82.0	83.4	83.2	90.4	68.5	76.2	79.7	65.5	72.0	81.6	67.2	60.4	66.8	67.8	65.3	71.5



The analysis of the age data across all stages of the student life cycle indicates a generally positive trend, with minimal or no significant difference between mature and young students. In terms of perceived satisfaction of their university experience the NSS (2024) data does indicate some differences. Students entering under 21 years of age scored above the OfS benchmark across all themes. Differences were noted in the age brackets of those classed as mature with those entering between 21-30 scoring less positively across all themes and the OfS benchmarks. Mature students entering university above the age of 30 score more positively in all themes, more positively than the OfS benchmark and more so than our students entering below the age of 21.

A sizable proportion (38.8%) of entrants in 2021/22 at Middlesex were mature students. The data indicates a notable increase in mature entrants in the last two years, with a four-year average of 34.9%, which was 9.3pp more than the sector average. There is no indication of risk for mature students accessing Middlesex.

Continuation rates for mature students in 2021/22 were 76.3%, with a small gap of -1.6pp for young students. Mature students have a four-year average continuation rate of 81.7% and a gap of -2.8pp. Intersectional analysis showed that the lowest continuation rates are for mature, male students with a BTEC entry qualification, at 26.3pp below that of comparable females.

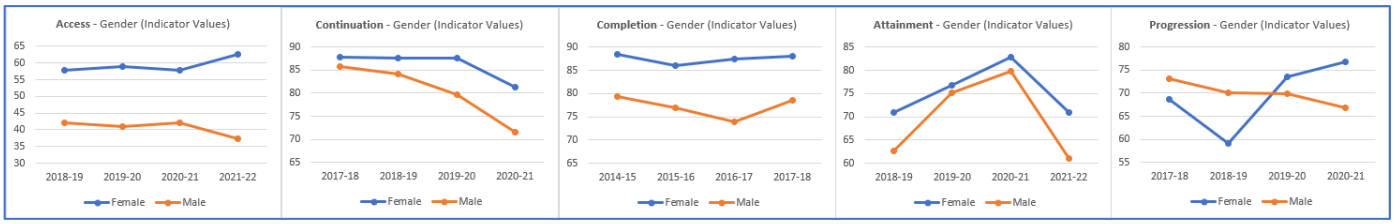
Completion rates for mature students were higher than young students, with an 85.5% completion rate in 2020/21r and a positive 2.1pp gap compared to young students. The four-year averages were 82.8% completion and -0.4pp gap to young students. In 2021/22, 71.3% of mature students were awarded a 1st /2.1, a positive 5.8pp gap to young students. The four-year average was 74.9%, a small gap of -2.9pp to young students.

Progression rates for mature students in the most recent year were strong. In the most recent year, 85% of mature students progressed into graduate employment or further studies compared to 67.8% for young students, a large but positive 17.2pp gap to young students. It is acknowledged that progression is expected to be higher for mature students, who generally have more work experience. This suggests that a sector wide observation of a gap is inevitable. The four-year average of 79.2% of mature students progressed into

graduate jobs or further studies, a significant positive gap of 13.9pp to young students. **RI 13: In 2021/22, there was a four-year average gap of 13.9pp between mature and young students progressing into graduate jobs or further studies.**

Gender

Gender	Access						Continuation						Completion						Attainment						Progression					
Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Agg	SecAgg	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Agg	SecAgg	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Agg	SecAgg
Female	57.8	58.9	57.8	62.6	59.1	57.5	87.9	87.7	87.7	81.4	86.1	91.8	88.5	86.1	87.4	88.1	87.4	90.9	71.0	76.8	82.9	70.9	75.1	81.5	68.6	59.1	73.5	76.9	69.4	71.6
Male	42.2	41.1	42.2	37.4	40.9	42.5	85.8	84.1	79.6	71.5	80.2	88.7	79.3	77.0	73.9	78.6	77.0	85.4	62.6	75.2	79.8	61.0	68.9	77.1	73.2	70.2	69.9	66.8	70.2	72.8



The analysis of the four-year cohort size shows that Middlesex University has approximately 60% female students. In the 2021/22 academic year, the male population decreased by 5.2pp compared to the previous year. However, the average male population over four years remains at 40.9%, which is 1.6pp lower than the sector average. Despite this difference, we do not consider it to be a risk for access. Continuation rates for female students in 2021/22 were 81.4%, with a significant gap of 9.5pp for male students. Female students have a four-year average continuation rate of 86.1% and a gap of 5.9pp to male students. **RI 14: In 2020/21, female and male students had a four-year average continuation gap of 5.9pp.**

Completion rates for female students in 2021/22 were 88.1%, with a 9.5pp gap compared to male students. The four-year averages showed a completion rate of 87.4% and a 10.4pp gap to male students. **RI 15**: **In 2021/22, female and male students had a four-year average completion gap of 10.4pp.**

In 2021/22, 70.9% of female students were awarded a 1st /2.1, a 9.9pp gap to male students. The four-year average was 75.1%, a gap of 6.2pp to male students. **RI 16: In 2021/22, the four-year average gap between male and female students achieving the 1st /2:1 award was 6.2pp.**

In the most recent year, 76.9% of female students progressed into graduate employment or further studies compared to 66.8% of male students, a 10.1pp gap. The four-year average of 69.4% of female students progressed into graduate jobs or further studies, with a small gap of 0.9pp to male students.

Data Review: Learning from COVID

As part of our analysis, we investigated the impact of our measures introduced during the pandemic on attainment. We recognised that COVID required transformational change at pace in terms of modes of delivery of learning, teaching and assessment. This was supported by enhanced levels of practical and pastoral help for students. Our response to the pandemic accelerated the move to authentic assessment and digital learning. This is turn led to the provision of laptops and tablets on a very wide scale to ensure no student was disadvantaged by lack of equipment. As was common for the sector, we introduced a number of No Detriment measures, including a more permissive approach to deferrals, resits and extenuating circumstances and a COVID degree algorithm calculation.

2019/20 and 2020/21 were the two years during which the greatest number of No Detriment mitigations were in place, partly because of the large number of deferrals between 2019/20 and 2020/21. During this time, ABMO, Black and White students all performed more strongly than in the previous year. After 2020/21, performance returned to pre-COVID levels and awarding gaps that had closed re-opened. The awarding gap between Black and White students, in particular, lessened significantly in 2019/20 and 2020/21, moving from –18.3pp in 2018/19 to –12.9pp in 2019/20 to –7.8pp in 2020/21. It then opened again, rising sharply to –19.6pp in 2021/22.

Because of the breadth of measures in place to support students in 2019/20 and 2020/21, we cannot be certain which activities were the most impactful in closing the gap, nor are we clear on the relationship between variables. Our evaluation approach, including empirical research, includes plans to grow our data

capacity and capabilities and improve our understanding, so we can better understand these issues and respond appropriately.

	2018 19		2019 20		2020 21		2021 22	
	Rate	Gap	Rate	Gap	Rate	Gap	Rate	Gap
Ethnicity *(excludes "Unknown")*								
ABMO	64.2	-12.0	72.6	-13.0	79.3	-8.9	63.6	-12.3
Asian	67.5	-8.7	71.9	-13.7	78.6	-9.6	69.1	-6.8
Black	58.0	-18.3	72.7	-12.9	80.5	-7.8	56.3	-19.6
Mixed	70.7	-5.5	81.7	-3.9	80.6	-7.6	71.8	-4.1
Other	64.4	-11.8	65.2	-20.3	76.8	-11.4	61.1	-14.8
White	76.3		85.6		88.2		75.9	

Table 7: Attainment rate and gap by ethnicity from 2018-19-2021-22

Data Review by Intersectionality

Our intersectional data review analysis primarily focuses on ethnicity, with other intersections identified in section 2. Having analysed our data by characteristic group, we then investigated whether there were more significant gaps across all split indicators by analysing across the main combinations. Significant gaps (those above -5pp) were highlighted for further investigation. A matrix for each split indicator combination was created to highlight areas where significant gaps existed between groups. Various combinations of ethnic groups were used to explore any relationships between them.

Ethnicity*	Cohort size	Rate	ABMO	White (W)	Asian (A)	Black (B)	Mixed (M)	Other (O)	AB	AM	AO	AW	BM	BO	BW	MO	MW	OW
ABMO	7,461	69.6		-11.4	-2.0	3.1	-6.1	2.9										
White	3,088	81.0	11.4		9.4	**14.5**	5.3	14.3	10.9	11.7	10.3		12.6	14.4		9.9		
Asian	3,216	71.6	2.0	-9.4		5.0	-4.1	4.9					3.2	5.0	-2.6	0.5	-8.4	-6.6
Black	2,788	66.5	-3.1	-14.5	-5.0		-9.2	-0.2		-2.8	-4.1	-9.7				-4.6	-13.5	-11.7
Mixed	712	75.7	6.1	-5.3	4.1	9.2		9.0	5.6		5.0	-0.5		9.1	1.6			-2.5
Other	745	66.7	-2.9	-14.3	-4.9	0.2	-9.0		-3.4	-2.6		-9.5	-1.7		-7.4		-13.3	

*(*excludes unknown)*

Table 8: Attainment intersections between ethnic groups

As black ethnicity was identified as having the largest gap to white students, all intersections were explored, with gaps existing within the age, gender and IMD quintile groups, compared against all other global majority ethnicities. This highlighted that black young students and black male students had a significantly lower attainment than all other global majority ethnic groups.

Categories	All ethnicities		Black		All others		Gap (B: all others)
	Cohort size	Rate	Cohort size	Rate	Cohort size	Rate	
Age							
All ages	10,732	59.3	2,788	66.5	7,944	56.8	9.7
Male	3,967	54.5	928	48.9	3,039	56.2	-7.2
IMD Q1-2	2,246	50.4	684	57.9	1,562	47.1	10.8
IMD Q3-5	1,676	59.6	236	63.6	1,440	59.0	4.6

Female		6,765	62.2	1,860	59.4	4,905	63.2	-3.8
	IMD Q1-2	4,092	59.9	1,408	68.9	2,684	55.2	13.7
	IMD Q3-5	2,605	65.6	446	74.0	2,159	63.9	10.1
Young		7,615	57.2	1,734	63.0	5,881	55.5	7.5
Male		2,950	53.7	633	46.4	2,317	55.6	-9.2
	IMD Q1-2	1,684	50.1	478	55.6	1,206	47.8	7.8
	IMD Q3-5	1,230	58.4	150	61.3	1,080	58.0	3.4
Female		4,665	59.4	1,101	52.4	3,564	61.6	-9.2
	IMD Q1-2	2,819	56.7	839	65.7	1,980	52.9	12.8
	IMD Q3-5	1,795	63.5	259	69.5	1,536	62.4	7.1

Table 9: Attainment intersection by ethnicity, gender and age

Once the OfS split indicators were analysed and significant gaps identified, further categories were constructed, namely care leaver, commuter, entry qualification, First in Family, gender identify, religious belief, socio-economic classification, and sexual orientation. This enabled an exploration of the makeup of the groups that exhibited significant gaps. When ethnicity was intersected with BTEC entry qualifications, it was discovered that entry qualification was a significant contributor to the gaps in attainment.

Categories	Cohort size	Rate	Gap
BTEC Black	1,133	57.1	-15.9
No BTEC Black	1,655	73.0	

Table 10: Attainment intersection by black ethnicity and entry qualifications

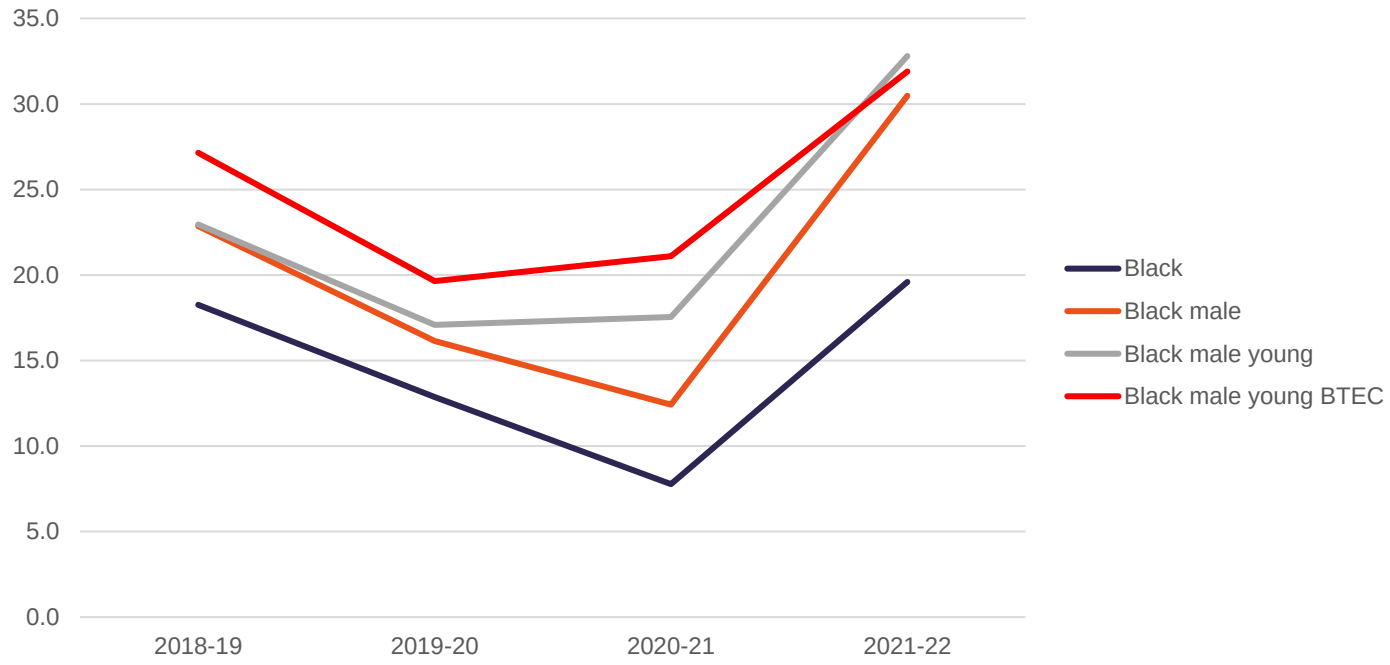
Once the three main categories underlying the black: white attainment gap were identified (young, male, BTEC entry qualification), the attainment rate for each combination of category was calculated and compared to the rate for white students. This confirmed that the lowest attainment rate was for black, young, males with a BTEC entry qualification.

Categories	Cohort size	Rate	Gap
Entry Qualifications Intersections			
BTEC	3,941	63.4	-17.6
BTEC Black	1,133	57.1	-23.9
BTEC Male	1,681	61.3	-19.7
BTEC Young	3,374	62.7	-18.3
BTEC Mature	567	67.7	-13.3
BTEC Male Young	1,442	61.2	-19.8
BTEC Male Mature	239	62.3	-18.6
BTEC Male	239	62.3	-18.6
BTEC Black Young	953	56.0	-25.0
BTEC Black Mature	180	62.8	-18.2
BTEC Black Young male	385	55.1	-25.9

Table 11: Attainment intersection by black ethnicity, entry qualification, age and gender

This analysis was repeated for all other ethnicities, and similar patterns (with smaller gaps) were identified for all students from global majority ethnic backgrounds. This identified the first risk category of attainment for ABMO (particularly black) students. The gaps for four or six years (depending on available data) were plotted to establish that the gap was persistent over time, rather than an individual year disproportionately altering the four-year aggregate. An attainment gap was enduring across all global majority ethnicities.

Attainment gap between global majority ethnicities and white students



Indicators of Risk & Risk to Equality of Opportunities Register

Theme	#	Indication of Risk	University wide or Faculty specific?	Student Characteristics	Lifecycle
Awarding Gap	RI 1	In 2021/22, there was a four-year average gap of 11.4pp for students identifying as AMBO, achieving a 1st / 2.1 compared to White students	University-wide. ACI 15pp, BAL 7.4pp, HSE 9.9pp, S&T 11pp	Ethnicity	Attainment
Financial circumstances	RI 2	In 2021/22, the four-year average completion gap between students Eligible for Free School Meals and those not, was 5.3pp	BAL 6.8pp	Free School Meals	Completion
	RI 3	In 2021/22, there was a four-year average attainment gap of 11.2pp between students eligible for Free School Meals and those not awarded a 1st or 2.1	University-wide. ACI 14.4pp, BAL 10.5pp, HSE 11pp, S&T 7.6pp	Free School Meals	Attainment
	RI 4	In 2021/22, the four-year average progression gap between students eligible for Free School Meals and those not, was 4.9pp.	ACI 8.5, HSE 15.5pp	Free School Meals	Progression
	RI 5	In 2021/22, there was a 6.9pp gap in degree awarding between students from IMD Q1&2 and Q3 to 5	ACI 12.8pp, HSE 5.4pp, S&T 6.2pp.	IMD	Attainment
Family background and circumstances	RI 6	In 2021/22, there was a 7.2pp gap between first-generation university students and non-first-generation students in their progression to graduate jobs or further study		First in Family to attend HE	Progression
Prior attainment	RI 7	In 2021/22, the four-year average continuation gap for students with BTEC entry qualifications was 6.0pp compared to students with All other entry qualifications	BAL 6.8pp, S&T 6.3pp	Entry Qualifications	Continuation
	RI 8	In 2021/22, the four-year average completion gap for students with BTEC entry qualifications was -7.9pp compared to students with All Other entry qualifications	ACI 8.3pp, BAL 7.7pp, S&T 6.3pp	Entry Qualifications	Completion
	RI 9	In 2021/22, there was a large four-year average gap of 14.9 for students with BTEC entry qualifications, achieving a 1st / 2.1 compared to students with All Other entry qualifications	University-wide. ACI 14.9pp, BAL 15.1pp, HSE 13.6pp, S&T 14pp	Entry Qualifications	Attainment
	RI 10	In 2021/22, there was a four-year average gap of 10.4pp for students with BTEC qualifications progressing into graduate employment or further studies compared to students with All Other entry qualifications	BAL 8.9pp, HSE 13.7pp, S&T 8.2	Entry Qualifications	Progression
Mental Health and Wellbeing	RI 11	In 2020/21, the four-year average for continuation for students with declared mental health conditions was 9.4pp compared to students with no declared disability	University-wide. ACI 11.3pp, BAL 9.9pp, HSE 9.1pp, S&T 8.3pp	Disability	Continuation

	RI 12	In 2021/22, the four-year completion rate for students with declared mental health conditions was 7.20pp less than that for students with no declared disabilities	ACI 11.4pp, BAL 8.1pp, HSE 20.6pp	Disability	Completion
Other (male and young)	RI 13	In 2021/22, there was a four-year average gap of 13.9pp between mature and young students progressing into graduate jobs or further studies		Age	Progression
	RI 14	In 2020/21, female and male students had a four-year average continuation gap of 5.9pp	BAL 5.7pp, HSE 5pp, S&T 6.3pp	Gender	Continuation
	RI 15	In 2021/22, female and male students had a four-year average completion gap of 10.5pp	ACI 7.9pp, BAL 7.9pp, S&T 11.8pp	Gender	Completion
	RI 16	In 2021/22, the four-year average gap between male and female students achieving the 1st /2:1 award was 6.2pp	ACI 6.4pp, BAL 5.1pp, S&T 7.4pp	Gender	Attainment

Annex B: Evidence Base

Evidence by our Risk Categories

Risk	
Awarding Gap Student groups targeted: ABMO EORR: 6, 7, 8, 12	Ethnicity awarding gaps are persistent and pervasive across almost all subject areas across the sector, and progress in closing the gap has been slow (Codiroli Mcmaster 2021). The sector has moved from using the term 'attainment gap' due to the focus placed on the individual, instead using the term "awarding gap" which recognises the structural inequalities that contribute to ABMO students achieving less well in Higher Education. There is a significant body of evidence to inform institutional understanding of causal factors, implications for students and intervention strategies. The term is readily understood within the sector. Research on sense of belonging highlights that factors such as loneliness, insufficient in-person contact, lack of inclusive spaces, weak connections within the institution, programme and student and staff communities significantly impact student success. (Jackson, Capper, Blake, 2023). ABMO students have a less positive experience of university life, they feel they learn too little and have very little access to teaching staff which impacts their levels of involvement and engagement (Kauser et al 2021). Students report experiences of implicit and explicit racism and microaggressions (Wong, et al, 2021) hampering a sense of belonging to both remain and succeed. When students question their belonging, they are likely to lose confidence, engage less and not achieve their potential (TASO, 2023). Sector evidence shows that helping black and minority students to 'see' themselves in HE through role modelling in staff structures across all levels (Thomas, Hill, O'Mahony & Yorke, 2017) fosters a sense of belonging and aspiration (Miller, 2016). Where students question their belonging, they are likely to lose confidence, engage less and not achieve their potential (TASO, 2023). – Arday, J., Branchu, C., and Boliver, V., (2022). What do we know about Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) participation in UK higher education? *Social Policy and Society*, 21(1), pp.12-25. – Codiroli McMaster, N. (2021). *Ethnicity Awarding Gaps in UK Higher Education in 2019/20*. Advance HE. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk [Accessed 20 July 2024]. – House of Commons Library, (2021). *Research Briefing: CBP-9195, The attainment gap: how wide is it and how can it be closed?* Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf [Accessed 1 July 2024]. – Kauser, S., Yaqoob, S., Cook, A., et al., (2021). Learning from the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) university students who withdraw from their undergraduate degree. *SN Social Sciences*, 1(121). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00115-8 [Accessed 1 July 2024]. – Miller, M., (2016). *The ethnicity attainment gap: a literature review*, Sheffield, UK: Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit, University of Sheffield. – Office for Students (OfS), 2024. *Effective Practice in Access and Participation*. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/ [Accessed 1 July 2024]. – Office for Students (OfS), 2024. *White British Males from Low Socioeconomic Status Backgrounds*. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/White-british-males-from-low-socioeconomic-status-backgrounds/ [Accessed 1 July 2024].

	– Sanders, J. and Rose-Adams, J., (2014). Black and minority ethnic student attainment: A survey of research and exploration of the importance of teacher and student expectations. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 16(2), pp.5-27. – Thomas, L., Hill, M., O'Mahony, J., & Yorke, M. (2017). Supporting Student Success: Strategies for Institutional Change: What Works? Student Retention and Success Programme. Higher Education Academy. – Wong, B., ElMorally, R., & Copsey-Blake, M. (2021). 'Fair and square': What do students think about the ethnicity degree awarding gap? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(8), 1147–1161. – TASO, 2024. *Foundation Year Programmes (Post Entry)*. Available at: https://taso.org.uk/intervention/foundation-year-programmes-post-entry/ [Accessed 1 July 2024]. – TASO, 2024. *The Impact of Curriculum Reform on the Ethnicity Awarding Gap*. Available at: https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Full-report-the-impact-of-curriculum-reform-on-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf [Accessed 1 July 2024]. – WonkHE, 2024. Time to go back to basics on belonging. Available at https://wonkhe.com/blogs/time-to-go-back-to-basics-on-belonging/ [Accessed 1 July, 2024]. – Wonkhe (n.d.) *Building Belonging in Higher Education: Recommendations for Developing an Integrated Institutional Approach*. Available at: https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/10/Building-Belonging-October-2022.pdf [Accessed 2 July 2024].
Financial Circumstances Student groups targeted: Free School Meals; IMD quintile 1&2 EORR: 7; 8; 10; 11; 12	Evidence from OfS shows that students from socioeconomically disadvantaged background have greater challenges at multiple stages of their university career and are less likely to complete their programme. Furthermore, students from disadvantage backgrounds are less likely to consider university as an option due to the costs associated with HE. The financial burden also limits their ability to work while studying, which in turn affects their progress and future opportunities (OfS, 2023). Furthermore, there is sector evidence that these students are also less like to engage is other aspects of university life such as co-curricular activities (Roberts et al, 2017) creating a more challenging environment to form peer relationships which can act as a source of support, especially during challenging times (Thomas, 2012). Recent studies have shown the ongoing cost of living crisis is felt across the whole student body and that inequalities are further intensified as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Black students and mature students being disproportionally affected (Jones, 2022). – Office for Students (OfS), 2023. *Students from disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to complete their course*. [Press Release] 29 March. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/students-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds-less-likely-to-complete-their-course/ [Accessed 3 July 2024]. – Thomas, L. (2012). *What Works: Student Retention and Success. Final Report*. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/building-student-engagement-and-belonging-higher-education-time-change-final-report-what-works-student-retention-success-programme [Accessed 5 July 2024]. – Jones, A. (2022). *Learning with the lights off: Students and the cost of living crisis*. Available at: https://millionplus.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Learning_with_the_lights_off_-_students_and_the_cost_of_living_crisis.pdf [Accessed 20 July 2024].

Family Background and Circumstances **Student groups targeted: First in Family; commuting students; caring responsibilities** EORR: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12	The HEPI report shows that students who are the first in their family to enter Higher Education experience a deficit in social capital (Spengen, 2013) and are less likely to have people in their personal support network, especially parents, with knowledge of Higher Education structures, including career support, and are less likely to proactively seek out individual support. This student group are likely to require support in navigating their post-degree pathways, including a realistic and achievable career plan (HEPI 2022). Students who commute a significant distance to university face barriers to positive engagement in their higher education experience, and frequently have poorer outcomes at university. They face additional costs in commuting to university and are frequently balancing additional responsibilities outside of university life and therefore may have less time to dedicate to their studies (HEPI 2018). Evidence shows that students with caring responsibilities face challenges when balancing their roles as parents/carers and as university students. The nature of their additional responsibilities means they have less time to dedicate to their student experience and can face barriers with timetabling of academic delivery (TASO 2021). – Anna E. Spengen, (2013). 'The Experiences of First-Generation University Students' [Accessed 10 July, 2024]. – Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), 2022. *First-in-Family Students, HEPI Report 146*. Available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf [Accessed 6 July 2024]. – Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), 2018. *Homeward Bound: Defining, understanding and aiding 'commuter students', HEPI Report 114*. Available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-%E2%80%98commuter-students%E2%80%99-Report-11429_11_18Web.pdf [Accessed 8 July 2024]. – TASO, 2021. *Evidence Review: Supporting Access and Student Success for Mature Learners*. Available at: https://cdn.taso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TASO-mature-students-literature-review-2021-1.pdf [Accessed 8 July 2024]
Prior achievement Student groups targeted: BTEC EORR: 6, 7, 12.	Student preparedness has long been cited as a key factor in student success (Yorke & Longden, 2008) with students' prior educational experiences seen as an influencing factor in their ability to achieve their potential. There is a significant number of students entering higher education with BTEC qualifications and these are a vital for gaining access to university. However, these students face challenges with satisfaction and progression and require tailored interventions and academic support (WonkHE, 2018). Furthermore, students entering university with BTEC qualifications are almost twice as likely to withdraw from their studies than a student entering with only A Levels; more likely to repeat to have to repeat the year; and also more likely to graduate below a 2:1 than a similar student entering with A Levels (Dilnot et al, 2022). – Dilnot, C., Macmillan, L. and Wyness, G. (2022). *Qualifications and University Outcomes*. Available at: https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Qualifications_and_university_outcomes_final.pdf [Accessed 26 July 2024]. – Wonkhe (n.d.) *How successful are BTEC students at university?* Available at: How successful are BTEC students at university? | Wonkhe [Accessed 10 July, 2024]. – Yorke, M. and Longden, B. (2008). *The First Year Experience of Higher Education in the UK*. Available at: https://improvingthestudentexperience.com [Accessed 12 July 2024].
Mental health and wellbeing	There is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate that higher education students are increasingly impacted by mental health difficulties and these difficulties frequently have a detrimental impact on students' ability to engage with study, remain in study, to complete their studies and on their level of academic achievement (TASO 2023).

	Whilst there has been a rapid and significant rise of students disclosing mental health conditions at the point of application to Higher Education (UCAS 2023), there is growing evidence that students under-report their experiences of poor mental health to universities and that some demographic groups (Black, Asian, male, young) are less likely to formally disclose mental health disability when entering into Higher Education (TASO 2023). There is evidence that some aspects of higher education design can have a detrimental impact on student mental health and wellbeing (Hughes, Spanner 2019) and evidence that more students have to prioritise work over attending lectures and seminars or engage with careers education and advice with concerning number of students being exhausted and lonely, and their mental health worsening (UPP 2024). – House of Commons Library (2023). *Student mental health in England: Statistics, policy, and guidance*. Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8593/CBP-8593.pdf [Accessed 12 July 2024]. – Hughes, G. and Spanner, L. (2019). *The University Mental Health Charter*. Leeds: Student Minds. – Johnson, J. and Crenna-Jennings, W. (2018). *Prevalence of mental health issues within the student-aged population*. Policy Analysis, Education Policy Institute. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/prevalence-of-mental-health-issues-within-the-student-aged-population/ [Accessed 20 July 2024]. – Office for Students (OfS), 2019. *Beyond the bare minimum: Are universities and colleges doing enough for disabled students?* Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/beyond-the-bare-minimum-are-universities-and-colleges-doing-enough-for-disabled-students/ [Accessed 30 June 2024]. – TASO, 2023. *Rapid review to support development of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR)*. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2c6a1cfc-cec3-4368-957f-8ea546238616/taso-rapid-review.pdf [Accessed 30 June 2024]. – UCAS, 2023. *Highest number of students sharing disability and mental health conditions secure place at university*. Available at: https://www.ucas.com/corporate/news-and-key-documents/news/highest-number-students-sharing-disability-and-mental-health-conditions-secure-place-university [Accessed 20 July 2024]. – University Partnership Programme (UPP), 2024. *UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission: Two Years On*. Available at: https://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Student-Futures-Commission-Digital.pdf [Accessed 20 July 2024].
Other Student groups targeted: Male; Young EORR: 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12	Evidence in the HEPI (2016) report shows that there are challenges across the sector with regards to male students. These challenges span the student life cycle with male students less likely to enter into Higher Education, less likely to continue and complete their studies and less likely to have positive progression outcomes. An OfS (2021) insight report states that mature students are more likely to discontinue their studies than younger students. There is a need for a greater choice of how to study, more flexible course structure and improved transitional support. – Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), 2016. *Boys to Men: The underachievement of young men in higher education – and how to start tackling it*. HEPI Report 84. – House of Commons Library (2021). *Mature students in England*. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8809/ [Accessed 20 July 2024]. – Office for Students (OfS) 2021. *Insight 9 May 2021: Improving opportunity and choice for mature students*. Available at: Improving opportunity and choice for mature students - Office for Students [Accessed 26 July 2024]. – Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (n.d.) *Presentation: Evaluating the Impact of Block Delivery*. Available at: Presentation: Evaluating the Impact of Block Delivery (qaa.ac.uk).

Interventions Evidence Base

Strand 1: Collaborating for access and success

Outreach support including Careers Fair and Science Fair; Midwifery T Level Insight Honour Programme; Employer engagement

Sector evidence: Evidence from the OfS (2022) and the Sutton Trust (Holt-White and Cullinane, 2023) suggests that effective information, advice and guidance increases learner confidence. Outreach activities increase the likelihood of students applying to HE, and meaningful interventions such as career fairs increase subject knowledge, confidence and skills. Such activities develop a sense of belonging and association with the University. Example studies include:

- Holt-White, E. and Cullinane, C. (2023). **Social Mobility: The Next Generation**. The Sutton Trust and COSMO Covid Social Mobility and Opportunities Study. Available at: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Social_Mobility_The_Next_Generation.pdf [Accessed 12 June 2024].

Office for Students (2022) **Review of impact evaluation evidence submitted by Uni Connect Partnerships**. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/review-impact-evaluation-evidence-submitted-uni-connect-partnerships/ [Accessed 26 July 2024].

Strand 2: Preparing student transitions for success

Transitions: Pre-arrival to 1st semester Ready for Anything; Pre-arrival survey; Welcome survey and Student Success Essentials

Sector evidence: Sector evidence indicates that students from underrepresented backgrounds benefit from tailored transition material and activities. Pre-arrival and transition materials offer an opportunity to prepare students for academic success by identifying gaps in knowledge and addressing concerns from the start, ensuring that appropriate support is available from the start (QAA, 2021; TASO). Furthermore, research suggests that pre-arrival activities help foster a sense of belonging among targeted student groups including, first in family, students with mental health issues, disabled students and LGBTQ+ (WonkHE, 2022). Relevant studies informing our approach include:

- Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) (2022). **Student Belonging and the Wider Context**. Available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Student-belonging-and-the-wider-context.pdf [Accessed 1 June 2024].
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (n.d.). **Supporting Successful Student Transitions Project**. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/qaa-publishes-latest-resources-in-supporting-successful-student-transitions-project [Accessed 10 July 2024].
- TASO (n.d.). **Evidence on Transition Activity**. Available at: https://taso.org.uk/intervention/programmes-of-student-support-post-entry/ [Accessed 1 July 2024].
- WonkHE (2022) **Building Belonging**. Available at: https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/10/Building-Belonging-October-2022.pdf [Accessed 20 July 2024].

Internal evidence: Students have reported increase in confidence through engaging in the Ready for Anything and Welcome onboarding activities. Pre-arrival survey information allows resources such as our Learner Enhancement Team, Student Wellbeing, to reach out to students tailored to student need. We have used this data to target and refine resources, and the timing of these, to support student transition. This data assists the programmes teams in getting to know their students and highlights support services early with academic support feedback via NSS showing a positive trajectory.

- Academic Programme Induction Framework and Transition Data (2019-2022)
- Lawson, L. (2024) 'Harnessing data to collect actionable insights at Middlesex University' Presentation at Evasys Conference, March 2024.

Strand 3: Making the first year count

Flipped delivery approach/ Use of My Learning (Virtual Learning Environment)

Sector evidence: There is a strong evidence base recognising the importance of the first year in supporting students' learning transitions. These include the importance of building assessment literacies through ongoing formative feedback helps to support understanding and confidence (Winstone, 2022). Our approach is informed by

research associated with a flipped delivery approach promotes deep learning, and that fostering collaboration for data driven improvements in learning and teaching supports in class engagement and embedding core graduate competencies (Fraga and Harmon, 2015; Baig and Yadegaridehkordi, 2023).

- Baig, M. I. and Yadegaridehkordi, E. (2023). 'Flipped classroom in higher education: a systematic literature review and research challenges'. **International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education**, 20, Article 61.
- Fraga, L. M. and Harmon, J. (2015). 'The flipped classroom model of learning in higher education: An investigation of preservice teachers' perspectives and achievement'. **Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education**, 31(1), pp. 18–27. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2014.967420 [Accessed 1 June 2024].
- Winstone, N. E. 2022. 'Characterising Feedback Cultures in Higher Education: An Analysis of Strategy Documents from 134 UK Universities.' *Higher Education*.

Internal evidence: One of the emerging themes raised by students through NSS open comments (17%) and module surveys, is the need for greater coherence in their online materials throughout their entire programme. They are seeking more consistency in the information provided before, during, and after sessions (including within My Learning VLE). Furthermore, post-covid student questionnaires highlight the importance students place on timetabled, face to face sessions. Students asked for the opportunity for discussion, clarification and deeper learning during the time spent together.

Common First Year

Sector evidence: Studies suggest that the first year can inform the choices and perceptions for students from diverse prior educational experiences and family circumstances. It is well recognised that it is also a critical period for students to connect with peers and build support networks. We recognise that various solutions are proposed in the sector, such as enhancing induction programs, scaffolding social opportunities, and tailoring support to individual student needs (WonkHE, 2022). Furthermore, studies suggest a common first year will support students to have a strong subject base, widening graduate employment opportunities by responding to students need from the outset.

- WonkHE (2022). *Building Belonging*. Available at: https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/10/Building-Belonging-October-2022.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2024].
- How do you make first year count enough to feel worthwhile? | TheUniversityBlog

Internal evidence: Of the 242 students engaged in the Learning Framework student consultation, 90% felt positive overall about the changes proposed and in particular about having a broad-based curriculum in the first year that could be beneficial to their future employment. They also raised the value of working alongside students from similar disciplines and the opportunity to network and build friendships.

- Student Consultation Report – 2031 Learning Framework, MDXSU

Group teaching /Interactive pedagogies

Sector evidence: Evidence indicates that students struggle with the level of support offered at university, and often cite feeling anonymous and 'lost' (Group teaching toolkit, Advance HE, 2013). Small group teaching fosters peer networks, discussion and deep learning. This enables the student to develop meaningful relationships with staff and other students (Gibbs, Hartviksen, Lehtonen and Spruce, 2019). Research into student engagement, progression and success (Thomas et al, 2017) highlights the benefits of the student cohort in peer support, building support networks and developing graduate competencies of teamwork, leadership, communication. Structure group learning encourages students to learn from one another drawing on individuals' experiences, strengths and viewpoints allowing for a far richer learning environment (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017). Learning from COVID19 UUK 2022 report highlights the needs for online activities to supplement and support in person teaching in a scaffolded and engaging way.

- Advance HE, 2013. Group work. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/group-work [Accessed 29 July 2024]
- Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group (2017). *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence*. Department for Education [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education [Accessed 26 July 2024].
- Gibbs, J., Hartviksen, J., Lehtonen, A., and Spruce, E. (2019). Pedagogies of inclusion: a critical exploration of small-group teaching practice in higher education. Teaching in Higher Education, 26(5), 696–711. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2019.1674276 [Accessed 30 May 2024].

- Thomas, L., Hill, M., O' Mahony, J. and Yorke, M. (2017). What Works? Student retention and success: What Works? Advance HE.
- Universities UK (UUK) (2024) *Lessons from the Pandemic*. Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/lessons-from-the-pandemic-making-the-most-of-technologies-in-teaching [Accessed 28 May 2024].

Internal evidence: Students in our post-covid student survey raised concerns about the lack of interaction within sessions and requested greater levels of engagement and interaction and more succinct learning materials. Also, student feedback via Programme Voice Groups in 2021/22 requested more opportunities to collaborate with their peers to assist in forming networks. This builds on prior research into consistently high-scoring programmes in the NSS identified the importance of 5 areas being built into programme design - Community, Collaboration, Context, Coherence, Communication.

- Boddington, J., and Gallacher, D. (2016) Behind the Themes: Looking for the learning and teaching enhancements that underpin satisfaction across the realm of the NSS questions. NSS Surveys for Enhancements Conference. 17th September 2016.

Strand 4: Supporting students' wellbeing for success

Academic Advising

Sector evidence: There is a breadth of evidence on the benefits of academic advising in Higher Education. Studies suggest Academic Advising has the potential to positively influence student outcomes, making it a vital factor for success of both, students and universities alike. It is essential that academic advisers are supported to deliver tailored academic support for students and understand how and when to signpost students for specialist support when required (Wakelin, 2021). Literature shows that students most needing support are often the least to access support and therefore the embedding of personal tutoring as a component within programme delivery removes the need for student identification and action for support (McIntosh et al, 2021).

- McIntosh, E., Thomas, L., Troxel, W.G., Wijingaard, O. and Grey, D. (2021) Editorial: Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Approaches. Frontiers in Higher Education. Available at (PDF) Editorial: Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Approaches (researchgate.net)
- Wakelin, Elyse. (2021). Personal Tutoring in Higher Education: an action research project on how to improve personal tutoring for both staff and students. Educational Action Research. 31. 1-16. 10.1080/09650792.2021.2013912 [accessed 29.7.24]
- A data-informed approach to Academic Advising using StREAM - Solutionpath

Internal evidence: Since the introduction of our institution-wide Academic Advising scheme, our NSS data on Academic Support has increased year on year. Feedback via student evaluations has shown that our students place value on having a named tutor, and group academic advising embedded within their programme.

- McIntosh, E., Gallacher, D., and Chapman, A. (2022) A whole of institution approach – what does a culture of advising and tutoring really involve? In Lochtie, D, McIntosh, E, Stork, A and Walker, B. (Eds) The *Higher Education Personal Tutor's and Advisor's Companion: Translating Theory into Practice to Improve Student Success.* Critical Publishing.

Peer support /Student Learning Assistants (SLAs)

Sector evidence: There are several studies suggesting that peer mentoring has particularly positive effect in terms of attainment, retention, and completion on disadvantaged students (global majority, mature, students from lower-socioeconomic background) (TASO, 2023). Studies show that these programmes are particularly effective for first in family and risk groups identified in OfS data (WonkHE, 2024).

- Harrison, R. (2023). When students are tutors, belonging is built. [online] WonkHE. Available at: https://wonkhe.com/blogs/when-students-are-tutors-belonging-is-built/ [Accessed 22 July 2024].
- TASO (2024). Mentoring, counselling and role models post-entry. [online] Available at: https://taso.org.uk/intervention/mentoring-counselling-role-models-post-entry/https://taso.org.uk/intervention/mentoring-counselling-role-models-post-entry/ [Accessed 19 July 2024].

Internal evidence: Peer mentoring is shown to have a favourable impact on students (Abrahamson and Barter, 2011), making them feel part of a community from the outset. In 2021- 2022, we funded 320 SLAs to provide academic support to over 6,000 students (30% of our student population). We conducted a centenary evaluation of the SLA scheme, in addition to the annual evaluation. One of our key findings was that our students particularly value support offered by SLAs - 85% students felt working with SLAs had positively impacted their learning. Informed by our learning analytics, our student callers' team have reached out to 20,000 students to support them with financial issues, mental health and navigating the university life to help students to progress.

- Abrahamson E., and Barter P. (2011). Using a student mentorship scheme to develop and raise academic attainment. Middlesex Journal of Educational Technology, 1, 21-29
- Gilani, D., Parke, R., and Wilson, N. (2022). Peer-to-Peer Phone Calls as a Method of Providing Proactive and Personalised Support to Enhance Student Engagement. Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal, 4(2), 82–104. Retrieved from https://sehej.raise-network.com/raise/article/view/1068

Inclusive Curriculum

Sector evidence: Our curriculum and cultural approach to inclusion is underpinned by a strong literature base (Hockings, 2010; May and Bridger, 2010). There is a sector recommendation for greater economic support, institutional commitment, representation of global majority staff and students, diversifying the curriculum and be proactive and reflective to ensure additional support and alternative provisions are in place (Wong et al, 2021). Theim and Dasgupta (2022) found that first generation students question whether they belong, they can become less engaged and may not care enough to complete their studies. Some research asserts that Eurocentricity of the curriculum contributes to the ethnicity of the awarding gap (Miller et al, 2022; Arday et al, 2021).

- May, H and Bridger, K. (2010) Developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice in higher education. Advance HE
- Hockings, C (2010) Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research. Higher Education Academy.
- Wong, B. ElMorally, R. and Copsey-Blake, M. (2021) 'Fair and square': what do students think about the ethnicity degree awarding gap? Journal of Further and Higher Education, 45 (8). pp. 1147-1161.
- Arday, J., Belluigi, D.Z. and Thomas, D., 2021. Attempting to break the chain: reimagining inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(3), pp.298-313.
- Thiem K. C., Dasgupta N. (2022). From precollege to career: Barriers facing historically marginalized students and evidence-based solutions. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 16, 212–251. https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12085
- Arday, J., Belluigi, D.Z. and Thomas, D., 2021. Attempting to break the chain: reimagining inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(3), pp.298-313.
- Miller, P., Lane, J., and Jaeggi, K. (2022). School leaders leading curriculum inclusion: Re-culturing pedagogy, re-imagining the student experience. *Equity in Education and Society*, *1*(1), 97-113. https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461211069133

Internal evidence: The foundations of the 2031 Learning Framework are underpinned by the inclusive curriculum and learnings from other internal research (Black Students Experience Report, 2021) from the Students' Union. Our longstanding commitment to embedding EDI is reflected upon looking at the focus for Middlesex based on our needs with recent strands focusing on Black and other global majority, disability and mental health and LGBTQIA+. These are built into evaluations plans for the Learning Framework.

- Black Students Experiences Report @ Middlesex University Students' Union (mdxsu.com)
- Intentionality for Inclusivity: The Middlesex Journey McGraw Hill MSXU diversity paper.pdf (mheducation.com)

Targeted student support /collaborative and co-created approach

Sector evidence: Growing mental health challenges and emotional distress is well documented across the sector (TASO 2023). Evidence shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are at substantially higher risk of experiencing mental health issues (Johnson and Crenna-Jennings, 2018; TASO, 2023; OfS, 2023). Culturally competent mental health support for students can be achieved though remunerated co-production with students (OfS 2023).

Best practice identifies the need for specialist appropriately qualified mental health roles to provide support to students (Cage et al, 2021). Research (Lim, 2024) tells us of the importance of empowering students to share their feedback and the ways to do so via a range of mechanisms utilising early data.

- Cage, E., Jones, E., Ryan, G., Hughes, G., and Spanner, L. (2021). Student mental health and transitions into, through and out of university: student and staff perspectives. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *45*(8), 1076–1089. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1875203
- Johnson and Crenna-Jennings, 2018 *Prevalence of mental health issues within the student-aged population*. Education Policy Institute. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/prevalence-of-mental-health-issues-within-the-student-aged-population/ (Accessed: 29 July 2024).
- Lim, H. (2024). Student feedback systems should contribute to student engagement and success, not turn students off. *WonkHE*. Retrieved from https://wonkhe.com/blogs/student-feedback-systems-should-contribute-to-student-engagement-and-success-not-turn-students-off/
- Office for Students (2023). Co-creation to develop culturally competent mental health support for students. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/co-creation-to-develop-culturally-competent-mental-health-support-for-students/ [Accessed: 26 July 2024].
- Office for Students (2024). Meeting the mental health needs of students. [online] Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students/ [Accessed 23 July 2024].
- TASO (2023). Rapid review of effective practice to improve student success. Office for Students. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2c6a1cfc-cec3-4368-957f-8ea546238616/taso-rapid-review.pdf (Accessed: 26 July 2024).

Internal evidence: Findings from our Black Students Experiences Report highlights that Black students are less likely to engage with counselling and well-being services. This finding was echoed across other ABMO global majority ethnic groups as well as amongst male students. We plan to change our data capture from 24-25 to monitor service uptake across our risk categories.

- Black Students Experiences Report @ Middlesex University Students' Union (mdxsu.com)

Structural change - Removing pre-requisite modules/Consolidated timetable

Sector evidence: We recognise that students, more than ever, need a flexible offer where they can earn credit for the work they do. Stand alone, 30 credit, 12-week block modules with no pre-requisites, makes it easier for multi entry points and the ability for students to drop in and out of education. Universities are adopting innovative methods for student engagement, driven by the need to maintain high-quality learning and teaching that upholds academic rigour and meets the standards of higher education (Buck and Tyrrell, 2022). The QAA highlights the opportunities via block delivery with early research suggesting block pedagogies support student attendance, retention and overall outcomes.

- Buck, E. and Tyrrell, K. (2022). Block and blend: a mixed method investigation into the impact of a pilot block teaching and blended learning approach upon student outcomes and experience. Journal of Further and Higher Education. 46(8), 1078-1091.
- QAA (n.d.). *Evaluating the impact of block* delivery. [online] Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/presentation/evaluating-impact-of-block-delivery [Accessed 2 July 2024].

Internal evidence: Feedback via student voice leaders and in open comments in NSS consistently, since 2016, highlight concerns associated with the theme of 'organisation and management to support their own planning. Evidence from our learning framework consultation suggested that a compressed, three-day on campus timetable would benefit our students, many of whom are required to work and have significant caring responsibilities alongside studying. 80% of those who responded to our pre-arrival survey (60% response rate) reported that they had additional caring responsibilities in their home life, which they would be managing alongside their studies.

- Student Consultation Report – 2031 Learning Framework. Unpublished, MDXSU

Strand 5: Assessing for success

Authentic Assessment

Sector evidence: Sector evidence suggests that authentic assessment emphasises critical thinking and problem solving and focuses on bridging the gap that underrepresented student groups face in transitioning from academic environments to their careers (Boud, 2000; Nicol, D. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). A wide body of evidence illustrates the benefits of assessments authentic to the subject area and graduate employments (Bosco and Ferns, 2014; 2021) growing students' confidence while building assessment for learning (Boud, 2000; Sambell and Brown). Building authentic assessments comes embedding ongoing feedback (peer, tutor, verbal, etc) which builds students' assessment literacies (Winstone and Boud 2019; Quinlan and Pitt, 2021).

- Advantages of authentic assessment for improving the learning experience and employability skills of higher education students: A systematic literature review (2021). [online] *ScienceDirect*. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191491X21000560 [Accessed 29 June 2024].
- Bosco, A.M. and Ferns, S. (2014). Embedding of authentic assessment in work-integrated learning curriculum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 15(4), pp. 281–290.
- Boud, D. (2000). Sustainable assessment: Rethinking assessment for the learning society. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 22(2), pp. 151-167. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713695728 [Accessed 26 July 2024].
- Nicol, D. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), pp. 199-218.
- Quinlan, K.M. and Pitt, E. (2021). Towards signature assessment and feedback practices: A taxonomy of discipline-specific elements of assessment for learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 28(2), pp. 191-207. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2021.1930447 [Accessed 21 July 2024]
- Sambell, K. and Brown, S. (n.d.). *A step-by-step guide to designing more authentic assessments*. [online] Available at: https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/GUIDE-NO31_A-step-by-step-guide-to-designing-more-authentic-assessments.pdf [Accessed 26 June 2024]
- Winstone, N.E. and Boud, D. (2019). 'Exploring cultures of feedback practice: the potential of learning environments to support sustainable feedback', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(6), pp. 878-889.

Internal evidence: NSS scores around assessment and feedback in both 2023 and 2024 have shown improvements in student satisfaction in the types of assessments within programmes. We have strengthened authentic assessments. We found disciplines using assessments aligned to practice had higher module pass rates (HSCE and ACI programmes consistently had 92-95% module pass rates between 2018-2021, whereas all other disciplines averaged 80-85%).

- Megeney, A., Barter, P., Mourouti, O., Graham. J and Parmar, D. (2023). Authentic by design: developing students for the talent economy. Advance HE's Assessment and Feedback Symposium 2023.
- Middlesex University Teaching Excellence Framework Submission. Available at: Open-Ancillary-Docs (officeforstudents.org.uk)

Assessment; Formative feedback; Additional resit opportunity; Standardising the number and range of assessments

Sector evidence: Student dissatisfaction around assessment and feedback has been a longstanding issue within the sector highlighted in NSS feedback (WonkHE, 2017) with concerns about the amount and type of assessments, opportunities for feedback and bunching of assessments (Nicol et al, 2014). The range of feedback, where it comes from and by whom has been seen as not explicit enough for students to be aware of (Hounsell, 2007) with institutions building support to help students to acknowledge the range of voices within feedback.

- Hounsell, D. (2007). Towards more sustainable feedback to students. In: Boud, D. and Falchikov, N., eds. Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education: Learning for the Longer Term. London: Routledge, pp. 101-113.
- Nicol, D., Thomson, A. and Breslin, C. (2014). Rethinking feedback practices in higher education: A peer review perspective. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 39(1), 102-122. [online] Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.795518 [Accessed 28 June 2024].
- Sambell, K., Brown, S. and Race, P. (n.d.). Giving formative feedback prior to submitting summative tasks. [online] Available at: https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guide-NO3_Giving-formative-feedback-prior-to-submission.pdf [Accessed 26 July 2024].
- What have we learned from the new (and improved) NSS? | WonkHE

Internal evidence: NSS data from 2023 and 2024 on assessment and feedback has shown positive improvements with 82.3 and 84.5% of students scoring positively. Work led by the Students' Union found that students welcomed assessments capped to two per 30 credit module highlighting this would support students in managing their workload and reduce stress associated with completing assessments. Students also highlighted advantages of completing formative assessment tasks in their modules.

- Student Consultation Report – 2031 Learning Framework. Unpublished, MDXSU

Strand 6: Preparing students for their future success

Enhancing the integration of employability; Graduate Competencies; Handshake platform; Alumni Career Conversations programme

Sector evidence: The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs report also highlights that future work will be more interdisciplinary in nature. It stresses the importance of students learning transferable skills that can respond to the socio-economic and technology trends that will shape the workplaces of the future (World Economic Forum). Universities now include internships, work placements and international study in their programmes intending to enhance graduate employment prospects (Clarke, 2017). Research shows that students who undertake a work placement have clearer views about their future careers and report higher confidence levels, learning capabilities and interpersonal skills (Bullock at al, 2009). Furthermore, there is evidence that students who completed work placement have higher rates of employment (Hejmadi et al., 2012).

- Bullock, K, Gould, V, Hejmadi, M and Lock, G (2009) Work placement experience: should I stay or should I go? Higher Education Research and Development, volume 28, issue 5, pp 481-494.
- Clarke, M. (2017). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(11), pp. 1923-1937.
- Hejmadi, M.; Bullock, K.; Gould, V.C. and Lock, G.D. (2012). Is choosing to go on placement a gamble? Perspectives from bioscience undergraduates. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. 37(5).
- TASO (n.d.). *Work experience post HE*. [online] Available at: https://taso.org.uk/intervention/work-experience-post-he/ [Accessed 26 June 2024].
- World Economic Forum (n.d.). *Reports*. [online] Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports [Accessed 21 July 2024].

Internal evidence: We review our feedback from our 30 employer partners of practice-based modules and 30 partner providers for placements regularly to inform programme and employer relationships.

Strand 7: Infrastructure

Access to Bursaries

Sector evidence: Access to bursaries and hardship funding are key to both allowing student access to HE and supporting them in their studies (Harrison and Hatt, 2012) with finance cited as a key contributors of student withdrawal (THE, 2023). A report from House of Commons (2023) suggests lack students, students aged over 25 and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to be hardest hit by rising cost of food, transport, rent and energy

- Hubble, S., and Bolton, P. (2021). Student retention and outcomes. *House of Commons Library Research Briefing*. [online] Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9886/CBP-9886.pdf [Accessed 26 June 2024].
- Harrison, N. and Hatt, S. (2012). Expensive and failing? The role of student bursaries in widening participation and fair access in England. Studies in Higher Education.
- Office for Students (2021). Students from disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to complete their course. [online] Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/students-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds-less-likely-to-complete-their-course/ [Accessed 26 June 2024].
- Sutton Trust (2021) *Universities and Social Mobility*. Available at: https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/universities-and-social-mobility/ (Accessed: 26 July 2024).

Learner Analytics

Sector evidence: Learner analytics offer significant opportunities to enhance student outcomes by identifying at-risk students and tailoring interventions accordingly and transform learning environments through data driven decision making (Umer et al., 2021). Broughan and Prinsloo (2019) advocate for a student-centred approach that ensures learner analytics supports student agency and equity.

- Umer, R., Susnjak, T., Mathrani, A., and Suriadi, L. (2021). 'Current stance on predictive analytics in higher education: opportunities, challenges and future directions', Interactive Learning Environments, p.1-26.
- Broughan, C. and Prinsloo, P. (2019). '(Re)centring students in learning analytics: In conversation with Paulo Freire', Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.

Internal evidence: Analysis of our student callers' approach, using a quasi-experimental methodology has found that the phone call interventions lead to a statistically significant increase in students' engagement levels in the short term (month that they're called), but no long-term increase when students receive only a single phone call. However, for students who received multiple phone call interventions within the same academic year, they had consistently higher engagement levels after this intervention and were significantly more likely to continue into the next year of study (Gilani et al., 2022). Analysis from the 2022/23 academic year showed that there was a clear trend between students' engagement data and their likelihood of continuation.

- Gilani, D., Parke, R., and Wilson, N. (2022). Peer-to-Peer Phone Calls as a Method of Providing Proactive and Personalised Support to Enhance Student Engagement. Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal, 4(2), 82–104. Retrieved from https://sehej.raise-network.com/raise/article/view/1068

Annex D: Glossary of Terms

Term	Usage
Analytics	The use of data to identify students who may be at risk, in order to focus interventions
Authentic assessment	A range of assessment types, which enable students to demonstrate professional competencies and/or application of knowledge and/or skills and typically relate to tasks required within a work-place context.
Cognate subject groups	The groups of related disciplines, within a department or faculty, used to define which programmes will share a common first year.
Co-leadership	Facilitating students to take ownership, be accountable and make decisions in the process of learning or quality enhancement; and a feature of our 2031 strategy[8].
Common first year	Providing a broad, interdisciplinary curriculum across pre-designated discipline groups, such that all students enrolled on related programmes undertake the same 6 core modules, with elective or optional modules removed.
Contact hours	Characterised as timetabled hours, where students interact with members of university staff, for example, seminars, labs, studio time, etc; in person, or up to 10% online.
Digital literacy/ Technology-enhanced learning	Continual development, within the curriculum, of students' digital competencies and literacy as well as application of a range of technological tools and enhancements to support learning.
Directed learning	Timetabled and independent study activity, directed by a member of staff (or invited external) to support students' learning.
Embedded practices	Systematic practices, indicative of our educational approach, associated with teaching, learning, assessment and feedback, universally applied across cohort, programme, service and/or campus contexts.
Employability	Continual development, within the curriculum, of students' work readiness, including the acquisition of relevant knowledge, competencies, experience and/or mindset, to maximise their confidence and potential to succeed in gaining highly skilled employment upon graduation.
Employer engagement	Ongoing opportunities for employers to input into the design and delivery of the curriculum to maximise its relevancy and application to the workplace; and for students to connect with employers to continuously build upon their networks, confidence, and experience.
Engaging	Learning content, resources or activities that motivate and inspire students, help them make connections and support their deeper learning.
Experiential learning	The process of learning through experience or 'doing', and integral to practice-led learning.
Flexible	One of our principles of curriculum design, promoting agility such that the programme (design and/or delivery) can change or be changed easily as a response to emerging circumstances (from students, colleagues or external factors).

[8] Middlesex University: Our Strategy to 2031 https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-strategy-to-2031/

Flipped classroom/ flipped learning	Our pedagogical approach where students are directed to undertake independent study activity (such as through pre-recorded or other learning material) in advance of timetabled sessions to make more effective use of directed learning time and enhance the potential for deeper learning.
Formative assessment	A range of forms of non-credit bearing assessment, used continually across a semester (and routinely in advance of credit-bearing assessments), to inform students' learning of the discipline/assessment process, as well as the approach used for teaching and support, contributing to improved student outcomes.
Formative feedback	Continual dialogue with students, both written and verbal, provided to inform their learning of the subject material and the assessment process and thus contributing to improved student outcomes. To be formative, in advance of assessment deadlines, with information given being ungraded, and improve summative assessment.
Graduate competencies	The defined behaviours and attitudes our students will have developed and nurtured through study at Middlesex, including leadership and influence; entrepreneurship; communication, empathy and inclusion; curiosity and learning; collaborative innovation; resilience and adaptability; technological agility and problem solving and delivery.
Health and wellbeing	Continual support to encourage students to take action to achieve and prioritise good health and wellbeing throughout their studies.
Impactful	One of our principles of curriculum design, advocating prior consideration of anticipated student outcomes and areas for improvement, and continual steps taken to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and impact.
Inclusive	One of our principles of curriculum design, necessitating that all students, regardless of background and immutable characteristics, have equitable opportunities to succeed and maximise their potential.
Independent study	A range of different types of study activity, both directed and non-directed, which students undertake outside of timetabled sessions and are associated with their programme.
Interactive	Learning activities that require students to interact, collaborate or take action, whether physically or virtually.
Internationalisation	Continual development, within the context of the discipline, of students' intercultural understanding, global perspectives and experience as well as take social responsibility for global issues, inequities, and injustice; supporting their preparedness to work in, and contribute to, globally interconnected societies.
Key concept videos	Short, bite-sized, engaging videos, related to students' learning outcomes and core concepts within the curriculum, providing clear and concise explanations of the significant topics, theories, principles or ideas.
Lecture	A formal talk or presentation, typically over 20 minutes in length, with limited opportunities for student engagement and/or dialogue about the topic or concepts covered.
Lifecycle	The phases of being a student, from application to graduation and employment.
Notional hours	The number of learning hours, applied universally by HE institution (10 hours to one credit), combining timetabled and independent study hours, used to guide students on what to expect will be required per module or level of study.
Pathways	Different routes within a programme, provided as options that students can select from. These may be within one semester (as a one-off choice between optional modules) or across semesters (as a series of connected modules associated with a particular specialism).

Personalised	One of our principles of curriculum design, tailoring of our provision to ensure it is relevant to students' diverse and evolving interests, needs and aspirations.
Practice-led learning	The use of experiential pedagogies, enriched by work-based learning or industry-led activity; and/or opportunities to practice and apply learning to different societal, professional, industry or business contexts.
Programme adjustment	The flexible application of the 2031 learning framework to particular programmes.
Programme based assessment	An integrated assessment approach for the whole programme, providing varied ways of assessing programme learning outcomes. The approach considers different levels of study, methods of assessment, and associated deadlines.
Research-informed teaching	The practice of linking teaching with research, supporting students' learning through doing research, learning about how to research, learning through critiquing the research of others (research and scholarship) as well as learning from academic researchers.
Resit	The opportunity to re-submit an assessment, reflecting feedback provided, having failed the first attempt. Regulations permit one resit attempt per assessment and, our learning framework, offers at least one further resit attempt for level 3 and 4 mid-semester assessments.
Retake	The repeat of a module which has been failed, to make up a credit deficit, following a failed first sit and a failed resit, or on request following a failed first sit, on one occasion only, with payment of a fee.
Semesters	The period of time allocated to induction, teaching and assessment activity, into which the academic year is divided.
Small Group teaching	Student groups of 15 to 35, which use engaging and interactive activities as the primary pedagogy.
Sprint methodology	The process used for the rapid design, development, and testing of Higher Education programmes, which has been used across several HE providers, and adapted for use in the Middlesex context.
Student group	The group, randomly assigned to a student on arrival, allocated per module, in which they will be taught and meet for academic advising group interactions or taught sessions.
Summative assessment	Credit-bearing assessments, which assess that students have met the learning outcomes of the programme or module.
Sustainable Development	A focus, within the curriculum, on driving positive impacts for people and the planet, working to address the global challenges set out in the United Nations' (UN) 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in accordance with our commitment signed through the UN SDG Accord.
Tailored	Differentiation of practices for particular students, or groups, as relevant to their needs or aspirations.
Targeted	Focusing on those students who need additional support to achieve their outcomes, making efficient and effective use of our resources.

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Middlesex University

Provider UKPRN: 10004351

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9250
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree		N/A	11100
Sandwich year		N/A	0
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	The College of Animal Welfare Limited	10001539	9250
First degree	WATFORD ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED(THE)	10030560	9250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	The College of Animal Welfare Limited	10001539	9250
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree		N/A	6935
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	6935
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	6935
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

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

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Middlesex University

Provider UKPRN: 10004351

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

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

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):
"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.
"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£844,000	£862,000	£878,000	£896,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£509,000	£510,000	£511,000	£512,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£204,000	£210,000	£214,000	£218,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£338,000	£345,000	£351,000	£358,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£422,000	£431,000	£439,000	£448,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£84,000	£86,000	£88,000	£90,000
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£844,000**	**£862,000**	**£878,000**	**£896,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment (as % of HFI)***	**4.4%**	**4.5%**	**4.6%**	**4.6%**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment funded from HFI (£)***	**£844,000**	**£861,000**	**£878,000**	**£896,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)***	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£71,000	£72,000	£73,000	£74,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£509,000**	**£510,000**	**£511,000**	**£512,000**
Financial support investment	***Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)***	**2.7%**	**2.7%**	**2.7%**	**2.6%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£204,000	£210,000	£214,000	£218,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Middlesex University

Provider UKPRN: 10004351

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
	PTA_1														
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To improve continuation rates for students entering with BTEC qualifications from -5.9pp to below -2pp by 2028-29	PTS_1	Continuation	Other	Other (please specify in description)	Other (please specify in description)	Aims to improve continuation rates for students who enter with BTECs as opposed to those to enter with only A-levels	No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage points	5.9%	5%	4%	3%	1.9%
To improve completion rates amongst students who were eligible for FSM from -5.3pp to below -2pp by 2028-29	PTS_2	Completion	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible		No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage points	5.3%	4.5%	3.5%	2.5%	1.9%
To improve completion rates amongst students entering with BTEC qualifications from -7.9% to below -3pp by 2028-29	PTS_3	Completion	Other	Other (please specify in description)	Other (please specify in description)	Aims to improve completion rates for students who enter with BTECs as opposed to those who enter with only A levels	No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage points	7.9%	6.5%	5%	4%	2.9%
To improve the awarding gap between White: ABMO from -11.4pp to below -5pp by 2028-29	PTS_4	Attainment	Ethnicity	Not specified (please give detail in description)	White	Aims to improve the awarding gap between ABMO and White students	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage points	11.4%	9.5%	7.5%	6%	4.9%
To improve the attainment gap for those eligible for Free School Meals and those not from -11.2pp to below -5pp by 2028-29	PTS_5	Attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible		No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage points	11.2%	9%	7%	5%	4.5%
To improve the attainment gap for students from IMD quintiles 1-2 compared to those from quintiles 3-5 from -6.9pp to below -3pp by 2028-29	PTS_6	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage points	6.9%	6%	5%	4%	2.9%
To improve the gap in attainment rates for students entering with BTEC qualifications, compared to those entering with only A-level qualifications, from -14.9pp to below -5pp by 2028-29	PTS_7	Attainment	Other	Other (please specify in description)	Other (please specify in description)	Aims to improve attainment rates for students who enter with BTECs as opposed to those who enter with only A-levels	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage points	14.9%	12%	9%	6%	4.9%
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To improve the progression rates of those who are First in Family from -7.2pp to below -3pp by 2028-29	PTP_1	Progression	Other	Other (please specify in description)	Other (please specify in description)	Aims to improve progression rates for those who are first in family vs those who are not.	Yes	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage points	7.2%	6%	5%	4%	2.9%

To improve the progression rates of students entering with BTEC qualifications from -10.4pp to below -5% by 2028-29	PTP_2	Progression	Other	Other (please specify in description)	Other (please specify in description)	Aims to improve progression rate for students who enter with BTECs as opposed to those who enter with only A-levels.	Yes	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage points	10.4%	8.5%	7.5%	6.5%	4.9%
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														