

# Northeastern University London: Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

## 1. Introduction and strategic aim

This Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out how Northeastern University London (the University) will ensure students are supported to enter, succeed, and secure good employment or further study regardless of their background or circumstances. The plan is focused on UK undergraduate students and identifies risks to equality of opportunity for these students, alongside a detailed overview of our planned intervention strategies designed to address those risks.

### 1.1 About Northeastern University London

Part of Northeastern University's Global Campus Network, the University seeks to provide a personalised and experiential education that supports diverse learners and empowers them for personal and professional success to make a meaningful impact in the world. This motivation is set out in our 2020-2025 strategic plan<sup>1</sup>.

The University was originally founded as New College of the Humanities (NCH), by Professor Anthony Grayling in 2012, with the key priorities to deliver personalised teaching in a supportive learning environment, enabling students to unleash the power of the humanities and liberal arts for their personal, professional, and intellectual fulfilment. In February 2019, NCH underwent a significant transformation, being acquired by Northeastern University, leading to its rebranding as 'NCH at Northeastern' (NCHNL). With the transition to NCHNL, 131 level 4 and 5 students were transferred to NCHNL degrees, ensuring continuity in their academic journey. In February 2020, NCHNL was granted taught degree awarding powers, graduating three undergraduate cohorts (in 2021, 2022, and 2023).

In April 2020, NCHNL expanded its offerings beyond traditional degree programmes as we were approved onto the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. This signalled our readiness to deliver degree apprenticeships, enabling the University to serve a wider audience and expand access to education through alternative pathways. These degree apprenticeships aim to reduce financial barriers for lower income and mature learners while appealing to individuals seeking practical, work-integrated learning opportunities.

The University's growth and evolution were further recognised in June 2022 when both the OfS and the DfE granted university title, officially becoming Northeastern University - London.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nulondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Northeastern-University-London-Strategic-Plan-2020-2025-2.2.pdf>

## 1.2 Students and courses

As a smaller university, we pride ourselves on our personalised approach to education, ensuring that every student receives the support and resources they need to succeed. Offering a diverse range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and degree apprenticeship programmes, we cater to the unique needs and aspirations of our student body. Students are taught across three faculties - Humanities, Social Sciences, and Computing, Mathematics, Engineering & Natural Sciences (CoMENS). Additionally, the University welcomes students through Northeastern University's "Mobility" programmes - these students study in London for one or two semesters, enriching our community with diverse perspectives and experiences.

In September 2023, we launched our brand new undergraduate degree programmes offering our students the unique and exciting experience, to study alongside a global student body, with the option to study in the UK and the US. Students can also customise their degrees with a range of elective subjects. A key feature of our degrees is experiential learning, which integrates classroom learning with wider world experience and "co-op" placements. Participating in a co-op gives students the opportunity to integrate academic studies with periods of immersive work experience, providing valuable professional insights, employability and practical skills.

At the University student numbers are growing steadily, with c.1800 students across undergraduate, postgraduate, degree apprenticeships and mobility programmes. Approximately 375 of these are undergraduate students studying across 12 degree programmes<sup>2</sup> and c.380 are degree apprenticeship learners.

## 1.3 Mission and vision

"Northeastern University London is where the power of learning and discovery through limitless global connections are unleashed.<sup>3</sup>" This is manifested by building on the University's current foundations to build differentiation in the UK market, to be a laboratory for global innovation and to become the European hub for the Northeastern network.

The University is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture within our community where each student and staff member feels supported and valued and where our diverse identities and lived experiences power our creativity, innovation and excellence as a global university.

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) values are:

- **A global outlook:** As part of Northeastern University's network, we hold and value a global outlook across all of our activities

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<sup>2</sup> Internal registry data for September 2024 cohort. Accurate as of September 2024. Note: this number does not include degree apprenticeship and postgraduate learners who join the University later in the year

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nulondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Northeastern-University-London-Strategic-plan-2020-2025-2.2.pdf>

- **Integrity:** Our values match our endeavours
- **Belonging:** Inclusivity and empowerment underpin the life-enriching opportunities we provide for staff and students
- **Courage:** Our diversity is our strongest asset, it powers our creativity and excellence as we break new ground in teaching and research

This Plan commits to delivering a variety of evidence-based activities aimed at improving outcomes through a whole-institution approach to access and participation. We will prioritise regular engagement with students, staff, and external stakeholders to gather feedback to ensure that our initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of our community. Through meaningful collaboration and partnership with our staff and student body, we aim to co-create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every individual can thrive and succeed.

## 2. Risks to equality of opportunity

After conducting our assessment of performance (see Annex A for in depth analysis) we have identified a number of key risks to equality of opportunity that will be addressed throughout our APP. We have primarily used the OfS Access and Participation Dataset and other relevant data (e.g. internal data, UCAS, DfE, census data, etc.). As a smaller provider, much of the data we have drawn upon is small cohort data so the analysis of data and statistical significance is often limited. This does limit our ability to make valid assessments and interpretations, particularly when exploring disaggregated data and intersections of characteristics. We have therefore explored and provided assessment where we consider it to be meaningful.

To understand how our indications of risks from our datasets link to potential risks to equality of opportunity, we have used the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR)<sup>4</sup>. The EORR identifies twelve sector-wide risks that may affect certain student groups experiencing equality of opportunity to access and succeed in HE. The EORR has been developed through an analysis of national datasets, relevant research papers, and a literature review. Of priority under this Plan, the indications of risk we have identified and the potential risks to equality of opportunity, are explored below.

### 2.1 Indicator of risk 1

**There is a lower percentage of IMD Q1 students at the University in comparison to sector average enrolment, and the national population of IMD Q1.**

Despite our local area/Borough having relatively high proportions of population in IMD Quintiles 1 (see Annex A), we have identified a gap in the enrolment of students from IMD Q1 (most deprived) compared to our intake of students from IMD Q5 (least deprived). There is a fairly consistent gap in access across data from 2018-19 to 2021-22, with a four-year aggregate gap of 10.5 percentage points (pp). Although our data is volatile due to our small student population and there does seem to be a trend towards this gap reducing over time,

<sup>4</sup><https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/about-the-equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/>

this data is still concerning. Particularly when compared to a sector four-year aggregate gap of -1.6pp which shows that IMD Q1 students participate at higher rates than IMD Q5. Therefore, we will be setting an access target to reduce the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 students.

**Risks:** The EORR suggests that this indication of risk may be caused by five underlying sector-wide risks relating to: knowledge and skills (Risk 1); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4); and limited choice of course type and delivery mode (Risk 5).

Our analysis in Annex A reveals a noticeable trend: students from IMD Q5 are more likely to apply, receive offers, and enrol at the University than those from IMD Q1, with offer rates of 23.2% for IMD Q5 compared to 13.2% for IMD Q1. This suggests that application success rates (Risk 4) may be a significant factor contributing to this indicator of risk. We will therefore focus on providing a personalised application and transition support to students in KS3, KS4 and KS5.

London has higher attainment rates than any other area in the UK and state-educated students in London have higher GCSE attainment rates than those in England as a whole<sup>5</sup>. There are still attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students in London - in Inner London in 2021/22, those who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at the end of Key Stage 4 were 12.4pp less likely to have gained Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A levels) than their peers who were not eligible for FSM. In Outer London this increased to 19.5pp<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, although this gap may not be as great as in other parts of England, knowledge and skills (Risk 1) could still be causing our indicator of risk.

The cost-of-living crisis in the UK has been seen to affect students' likelihood of attending university, with 92% of students being concerned about the cost-of-living crisis. This may damage students' perception of higher education (Risk 3). UCAS have seen a rise in students declining their place to take a gap year, and one of these reasons is in order to earn more money to support themselves before they start<sup>7</sup>. This is also linked to cost pressures (Risk 10) and demonstrates that financial concerns are a factor which could be important for the University considering we are based in the capital which can be significantly more expensive than other areas of the UK. Only one in five students feel that moving away from their hometown is important<sup>8</sup>. Our target region focuses on London, and therefore within our intervention strategies we are aiming to support our local London students to perceive HE in a positive way.

The cost of living in London has also been highlighted by our current students as an area of concern during our recent student experience research carried out in January 2024<sup>9</sup>. This

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infographic-gcse-results-2022/infographics-for-gcse-results-2022-accessible>

<sup>6</sup> <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/19-year-old-attainment-gap/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/influence-cost-living-student-decision-making>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bbk.ac.uk/news/cost-of-living-crisis-is-affecting-young-peoples-decisions-on-where-to-go-to-university>

<sup>9</sup> SEER Student Experience Research: staff and student focus groups. Initial internal insight report January 2024

was reported across various demographics, showing that it is likely a widespread issue. One student commented, “I found it very difficult because you know people are on such different budgets and people live, you know, not just spread across the whole city but some commuting from the other counties”. It was also noted that the high cost of university accommodation in London may prevent some students from living there and “others find they cannot afford to live in these types of accommodation because of the high price point”.

Considering that there is a lower percentage of IMD Q1 students at NU London, it is important that we make it a priority to focus on how we can support these students in the current economic climate. Perception of higher education (Risk 3) and information and guidance (Risk 2) may apply here, as we are a newer university and less well known to some in the UK sector, therefore, in times of economic uncertainty, students may focus on universities familiar and closer to home.

## 2.2 Indicator of risk 2

**There is a lower percentage of Global Majority, particularly Black and Asian, students at the University when compared to the sector average entrants, and to the national population (especially when compared to our local London population).**

The APP data dashboard shows a fairly consistent representation of Global Majority students at the University, with a four-year aggregate figure of 28.4%, below the sector average of 31.8%. Our student body does not reflect the broader population demographics of our local school population, where 45% of our cohort are recruited from,<sup>10</sup> - in London’s secondary schools 72% of pupils belong to an ethnic group other than white British, compared to the national average of 30%<sup>11</sup>. Our data shows that Black and Asian students are less likely to apply to NU London and receive an offer than White students. This is further explored in Annex A.

**Risk:** The EORR suggests that this indication of risk may be caused by four underlying sector-wide risks relating to: knowledge and skills (Risk 1); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4).

Our analysis in Annex A shows a similar trend for Black and Asian students, as discussed above for IMD Q1 students. Black and Asian students are less likely to receive offers and enrol compared to White students. For instance, while 9.6% of our applications are from Black students, only 5.6% of our entrants are Black. Conversely, 57.4% of applications are from White students, but they make up 71.6% of our entrants. This suggests that application success rates (Risk 4) may be a significant factor contributing to this indicator of risk. We will therefore focus on providing personalised application and transition support to students in KS3, KS4 and KS5.

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<sup>10</sup> Internal access data 2018/19 - 2021/22. 4 year average figure

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/3.secondary\\_march2021.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/3.secondary_march2021.pdf)

A report from London Higher's Access HE division has predicted that by 2030, Global Majority students will make up 74% of those entering HE in London<sup>12</sup>. White pupils are less likely than any other broad ethnic group to go to HE and it has been shown that Chinese, Indian and Black African backgrounds have the highest entry rates into HE<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, our analysis in Annex A, which shows that Black and Asian students are less likely to receive offers and enrol compared to White students may be contrasted with the findings across the sector.

At GCSE level, in 2022 to 2023, young people from the Black ethnic group on average had a similar combined English and Maths pass rate to those in the mixed, other, and White ethnic groups. The White ethnic group was found to have the lowest pass rate on this measure and Asian pupils have the highest pass rates<sup>14</sup>. This demonstrates how the attainment of Black and Asian students may not be the problem, but there is a gap in the number of offers that we give out, which shows that it is not only knowledge and skills (Risk 1) that is prevalent here. The perception of higher education (Risk 3) is also an important indicator and it seems more likely that it is a combination of risks that is creating the indicator of risk for us as a university.

It is likely that the cost-of-living crisis (outlined above in indicator of Risk 1) is affecting Global Majority students as Black Londoners are more than twice as likely to be in poverty than White Londoners<sup>15</sup>. Asian Londoners also have a significantly higher poverty rate (33%) than the average London poverty rate (25%). Therefore, due to the perceived high cost of university, it is likely that perception of higher education (Risk 3) may be affecting the equality of opportunity for young people in London.

Due to our relatively small student numbers, our focus will be on increasing the percentage of Global Majority students as an overarching group. However, we are aware that it is crucial to recognise the diversity within this broader category of students. In our data analysis, we have disaggregated ethnicities to gain a nuanced understanding of the unique challenges and experiences faced by specific communities and we will continue to monitor these nuances throughout the duration of the Plan. For detailed insights into our data analysis findings, please refer to Annex A.

## **2.3 Other risks and challenges**

### **Coronavirus pandemic**

It is crucial to acknowledge the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. This influence will continue throughout the system in the years ahead, over the lifetime of this Plan. Potential risks to equality of opportunity in access to higher education (HE), academic success, and progression into good graduate outcomes, were exacerbated by the pandemic and may have disproportionately affected underrepresented students. These outcomes are

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/about-us/journey-million/what-do-we-do-now/what-does-journey-million-mean-london>

<sup>13</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9023/CBP-9023.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9023/CBP-9023.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/news/who-is-in-poverty-in-london/>

still unfolding and are not yet fully understood, so the University will remain vigilant of this context throughout the Plan's lifespan by assessing and monitoring our data to detect and address any emerging performance disparities. Our student support strategies will remain adaptable and responsive to these evolving needs. Through these efforts, we aim to ensure opportunities and support for students, in navigating the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic and beyond.

### Small datasets

When deciding which risk areas to concentrate on in this Plan, we took into account our scale as a smaller provider. Given our smaller size, our data represents small cohorts, limiting our capacity for comprehensive data analysis and statistical significance. This constraint also impacts our ability to make accurate assessments and interpretations, particularly when examining disaggregated data and intersections of various characteristics. Nevertheless, we have conducted evaluations and provided insights where we deemed it meaningful.

## 3. Objectives

We will address the indicators of risk prioritised under this Plan through the following objectives:

Lifecycle stage	Targets reference (Annex C)	Objective	Intervention Strategy
Access	PTA_1	<p>Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of students at the university from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) to 14.1% by 2029 from a baseline of 12.9%</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting students from lower income backgrounds to gain the knowledge and skills, and access effective information, advice, and guidance, to support applications and acceptances to HE study</li> <li>Developing and maintaining high quality relationships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations, focusing on those with a high proportion of students from IMD Q1</li> <li>Engaging with parents/carers and the local community</li> </ul>	IS1 and IS2
Access	PTA_2	<p>Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of Global Majority students at the university to 29.6% by 2029 from a baseline of 28.4%. We will particularly focus on increasing the proportion of Black and Asian students.</p>	IS1 and IS2

		<p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting students from Global Majority backgrounds to gain the knowledge and skills, and access effective information, advice, and guidance, to support applications and acceptances to HE study</li><li>• Developing and maintaining high quality relationships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations, focusing on those with a high proportion of Global Majority students</li><li>• Engaging with parents/carers and the local community</li></ul>	
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## 4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

We have developed intervention strategies to address the identified risks to equality of opportunity and achieve the objectives and targets in this Plan. The intervention strategies:

- Outline activities to mitigate risks and meet objectives and targets
- Identify who will design, deliver, and evaluate the activities, along with an estimated cost
- Include an evaluation plan
- Are based on evidence from sector best practices and local insights from students.

We are committed to disseminating the findings from the evaluation of our activities. In addition to external publication, evaluation outcomes will be used to inform and continually improve our practices, as well as providing evidence bases for sound decision-making relating to addressing our broader commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

### 4.1 Intervention strategy 1 (IS1): Targeted outreach and partnerships with schools, colleges and third-party organisations

This intervention strategy aims to develop and maintain high quality, long term relationships with schools, colleges, third sector organisations and parents/carers to support underrepresented groups to gain the knowledge, skills, information and guidance needed to attend HE. Through coaching programmes and our summer school we will aim to increase motivation and engagement in learning and the sense of belonging at university.

#### Objectives:

- Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of students at the university from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) to 14.1% by 2029.
- Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of Global Majority students at the university to 29.6% by 2029. We will particularly focus on increasing the proportion of Black and Asian students.

**Targets:** PTA1\_1, PTA\_2 - see Annex C, Table 5d

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** Knowledge and skills (Risk 1); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4)

**Total cost of intervention strategy 1:** Across the four-year cycle we will invest approximately £288,000 in this intervention strategy

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation: standards of evidence denoted as Type 1 (T1), Type 2 (T2) and Type 3 (T3)
<p><b>Effective partnerships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations. Facilitating outreach activities and campus visits</b></p> <p><i>[Adapted activity]</i></p> <p>Development and maintenance of high quality, long term relationships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations. This activity will focus on those with a high proportion of students from IMDQ1 and Global Majority backgrounds. We will use partnerships to support this delivery such as Linking London, Uni Connect, careers hubs and third sector organisations.</p> <p>We aim to reach around 600 students per year (KS2 - KS5) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IntoUniversity: Year 6 and Year 8 one day campus visits</li> <li>• The Princes Trust: Year 9-11 one day campus visits</li> <li>• Discover Days: KS3 - KS5 one day campus visits inc. subject specific days</li> <li>• Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) presentations and workshops delivered in London schools and colleges, with a</li> </ul>	<p>Student ambassadors</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Event resources (printing, catering)</p> <p>Travel costs</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective (targeted, positive, structural, sustainable) relationships and partnerships</li> <li>- Identification of mutual goals and expectations</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration to design and agree the details, content and delivery processes of the activities</li> <li>- Identification and uptake of opportunities to further develop and improve collaborative practice to achieve the objectives</li> <li>- Deepening understanding and insights of the challenges, barriers and what works for target groups, to improve practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes</li> <li>- Improved motivation and engagement in learning</li> <li>- Improved self-perceptions about</li> </ul>	<p><b>Process evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data analysis: number and % of pupils attending activities with target characteristics (T1)</li> <li>- Output analysis: the number of activities delivered (T1)</li> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring whether content was appropriately delivered (T2)</li> <li>- Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder (practitioner and students) experiences and perceptions (T2)</li> <li>- Student surveys, including pre and post where proportionate (T2)</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and annual student survey exploring interim outcomes and perceptions of improved skills outcomes (T2)</li> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring perceptions of achievement of interim outcomes for students (T2)</li> <li>- Data analysis: analysis of predicted grades and/or mock assessments (T2). TBC: Subject to availability of school data and timing, could include:</li> </ul>

<p>particular focus on our local area, Tower Hamlets. Topics including: student finance, choosing a course and university, entrepreneurship projects, study and metacognition skills, "why study" series including careers paths</p>		<p>academic abilities and confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved sense of belonging in HE</li> <li>- Increased knowledge and awareness of HE</li> <li>- Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process</li> <li>- Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans</li> <li>- Improved confidence and preparation for the HE selection process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of mock v. predicted exam results</li> <li>• Analysis of pre/post mock assessment results</li> <li>• Tracking participant results/predicted results across year groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Get Ahead: Year 11 on campus summer school</b></p> <p><i>[Existing activity]</i></p> <p>On campus summer school to prepare students for starting sixth form or college, as they begin to think about applying to university.</p> <p>We aim to work with c. 30-50 Year 11 students per year.</p> <p>The sessions are delivered by Widening Participation (WP) staff, academics and student ambassadors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAG sessions e.g. student finance and budgeting</li> <li>• Metacognition, study and academic skills sessions</li> <li>• Academic taster lectures</li> <li>• Campus tour and social activities</li> </ul> <p>This is followed up with a programme of support throughout Year 12 and 13, including priority places for the NU London Plus programme (IS2).</p>	<p>Promotion and marketing</p> <p>Student ambassadors</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Event resources (printing, catering)</p> <p>Travel reimbursement costs</p>	<p><b>Long term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved mock assessment and/or predicted grades</li> <li>- Applications to HE</li> <li>- Offers from HE providers</li> <li>- Enrolments in HE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying to HE</li> <li>• Receiving offers from HE providers</li> </ul> <p>- Data analysis: number and % of participants:</p> <p>We currently subscribe to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) system and will use it for this tracking.</p>
<p><b>KS3 Aspire coaching programme</b></p> <p><i>[Existing activity]</i></p> <p>The programme is delivered through keynote assemblies, one-to-two coaching in school, a</p>	<p>Innerscope partnership costs</p> <p>Student ambassadors</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective (targeted, positive, structural, sustainable) relationships and partnerships</li> <li>- Identification of mutual goals and expectations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Process evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data analysis: number and % of pupils attending activities with target characteristics (T1)</li> <li>- Output analysis: the number of activities delivered (T1)</li> </ul>

<p>campus visit with IAG and academic taster sessions.</p> <p>The Aspire programme introduces KS3 students to themes related to academic aspirations and applied emotional intelligence. Students engage with a variety of coaching concepts and conversations, which enables them to successfully reflect, problem solve and action plan. This is delivered in partnership with Innerscope.</p> <p>We aim to reach c. 30 KS3 students per year.</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Event resources (printing, catering)</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration to design and agree the details, content and delivery processes</li> <li>- Identification and uptake of opportunities to further develop and improve collaborative practice to achieve the objectives</li> <li>- Deepening understanding and insights of the challenges, barriers and what works for target groups, to improve practice</li> <li>- Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes</li> <li>- Improved motivation and engagement in learning</li> <li>- Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence</li> <li>- Improved sense of belonging in HE</li> <li>- Increased knowledge and awareness of HE</li> <li>- Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process</li> <li>- Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans</li> <li>- Improved confidence and preparation for HE selection process</li> </ul> <p><b>Long term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved mock assessment and/or predicted grades</li> <li>- Applications to HE</li> <li>- Offers from HE providers.</li> <li>- Enrolments in HE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring whether content was appropriately delivered (T2)</li> <li>- Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder (practitioner and students) experiences and perceptions (T2)</li> <li>- Student surveys, including pre and post where proportionate (T2)</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and annual student survey exploring interim outcomes and perceptions of improved skills outcomes (T2)</li> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring perceptions of achievement of interim outcomes for students (T2)</li> <li>- Two to three student focus groups per annum to explore key themes from surveys (T2)</li> <li>- Data analysis: analysis of predicted grades and/or mock assessments (T2). TBC: Subject to availability of school data and timing, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of mock v. predicted exam results</li> <li>• Analysis of pre/post mock assessment results</li> <li>• Tracking participant results/predicted results across year groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Data analysis: number and % of participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying to HE</li> <li>• Receiving offers from HE providers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We currently subscribe to HEAT and will use it for this tracking.</p>
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<p><b>East London Parent Power group, in partnership with The Brilliant Club</b>  <i>[New activity]</i></p> <p>Partnership with East London Parent Power, through The Brilliant Club. This brings together local parents and carers and facilitates one-to-one and group meetings led by a local Community Organiser:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group meetings with local parents held on campus every six weeks, focused on learning about HE, developing community organising skills and building campaigns to fight against educational inequality</li> <li>• Relational one-to-one meetings between local parents and trained community organisers.</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership costs</p> <p>Student ambassadors</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Event resources (printing, catering)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents/carers become community leaders, developing skills in leadership and community organising</li> <li>- Parents/carers increase their confidence to support their children’s education</li> <li>- Parents/carers develop new knowledge, skills, and perceptions to act as HE champions in their community</li> </ul>	<p>From 2023/24, Parent Power will be using a new evaluation plan that enables the analysis of changes in parents’ attitudes towards discussing HE with their children and people in their community, confidence in their logistical knowledge of barriers to entry in HE such as the application process and loans available for students. This evaluation will be led by The Brilliant Club and findings will be shared with the University..</p>
<p><b>Parent/carer and community engagement</b>  <i>[Existing activity]</i></p> <p>Delivery of parent/carer specific sessions at open days and offer holder days with tailored information covering IAG and application support</p> <p>Resources made accessible on the website for parents/carers.</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Student ambassadors</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents/carers have increased awareness and knowledge of what NU London has to offer</li> <li>- Parents/carers have increased confidence to talk to the student about future education decisions</li> <li>- Parents/carers have increased positive attitudes towards HE</li> <li>- Parent/carer has increased intention to support and encourage the student to attend HE</li> <li>- Parent/carer has increased aspiration for the student to attend HE</li> </ul> <p><b>Long term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applications to HE</li> <li>- Offers from HE providers</li> <li>- Enrolments in HE</li> </ul>	<p><b>Process evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data analysis: number of parents/carers attending activities (T1)</li> <li>- Output analysis: the number of activities delivered (T1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent/carer survey (T2)</li> <li>- Longitudinal tracking of applications and enrolments to NU London and other institutions using HEAT</li> </ul>

*Note: partnerships with third party organisations will be reviewed on an annual basis based on impact and cost*

## **4.2 IS1 Summary of evidence base and rationale**

By using the EORR and our own research into our local context we developed IS1 based on addressing these four main risks: knowledge and skills (Risk 1); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4). The evidence used to inform this intervention strategy has been drawn from a range of sources including TASO, UCAS and the OfS EORR. Some of the key areas that are addressed in the intervention strategy from our evidence base are using student ambassadors as role models, creating a sense of belonging through campus visits and attainment raising. Alongside parent/carer and community engagement to reinforce this support.

Research highlights the significance of campus visits in creating familiarity and fostering a sense of belonging (Baker, 2020), which is crucial for underrepresented groups in higher education. Students with a stronger sense of belonging tend to exhibit higher motivation and greater academic self-confidence (Pedler, Willis, & Nieuwoudt, 2021). The use of student ambassadors as role models will be central to our outreach activity and campus visits, as research has shown their positive impact on young people's aspirations and academic achievement (Gartland, 2015), while also helping to counter negative perceptions of higher education (Austin & Hatt, 2005). Additionally, connecting academic studies to future career goals has been shown to enhance student expectations, motivation, and engagement with their studies (Midgley et al., 2000). Our outreach programme will include subject masterclasses and employability workshops to help young people link their current studies to their future careers.

For further detail, please refer to Annex B, section B.1.

### 4.3 IS1 Evaluation publication plan

Format of findings	Sharing findings
<p>We will produce an annual summary progress and review report, which will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide insights on the effectiveness and progress of relevant activities across our Intervention Strategies based on the achievement of intended outcomes.</li> <li>2. Capture learning and insights that inform improvements in practice and any appropriate changes and developments.</li> </ol> <p>Highlights and themes from this support will be shared online, for example through our website and/or the SEER website.</p> <p>Findings will also be shared internally to relevant committees/boards and forum groups, to inform practice and decision making</p>	<p>Progress 'highlights' of what both works and doesn't work will be shared annually.</p>
<p>We will produce an Evaluation to Date or End of Project Report (whichever is relevant) capturing all evaluation and findings, disseminated online via our website and the SEER website</p>	<p>4 years on from Plan commencement (Autumn/Winter 2029) and/or at the conclusion of projects.</p>
<p>We will also contribute at conferences and through workshops and events hosted by networks such as SEER, NEON, FACE and GuildHE.</p>	<p>At minimum every 2 years, starting from 2025-26.</p>
<p>We will contribute to other calls for evidence, such as through TASO.</p>	<p>As they arise, at minimum every 2 years.</p>

#### 4.4 Intervention strategy 2 (IS2): Holistic and personalised application and transition support

This intervention strategy aims to provide application support and readiness through an application support programme, personal statement workshops and contextual admissions. Further support will be provided through our financial support package and pre entry transition academic skills workshops.

##### Objectives:

- Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of students at the university from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) to 14.1% by 2029.
- Northeastern University London will increase the proportion of Global Majority students at the university to 29.6% by 2029. We will particularly focus on increasing the proportion of Black and Asian students.

**Targets:** PTA1\_1, PTA\_2 - see Annex C, Table 5d

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** Knowledge and skills (Risk 1); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4)

**Total cost of intervention strategy 2:** Across the four-year cycle we will invest approximately £551,000 in this intervention strategy

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation: standards of evidence denoted as (T1), (T2), (T3)
<p><b>NU London Plus: Application readiness and support programme</b></p> <p><i>[New activity]</i></p> <p>Our KS5 application support programme will be a sustained programme aiming to provide support with applying to university. This will be a series of sessions, both on campus and online, which covers topics including;</p>	<p>Marketing and promotion</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Student ambassadors</p> <p>Staff training</p> <p>Event resources</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved cognitive and metacognitive outcomes</li> <li>- Improved motivation and engagement in learning</li> <li>- Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence</li> <li>- Improved sense of belonging in HE</li> <li>- Increased knowledge and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Process evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data analysis: number and % of pupils attending activities with target characteristics (T1)</li> <li>- Output analysis: the number of activities delivered (T1)</li> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring whether content was appropriately delivered (T2)</li> <li>- Post-activity polls gathering stakeholder (practitioner and students) experiences and perceptions (T2)</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meta cognition and academic skills</li> <li>● IAG sessions</li> <li>● Personal statement and application support</li> <li>● Academic tasters</li> </ul> <p>Our student ambassadors will play an important role in this programme by facilitating mentoring.</p> <p>We aim to reach c.20-40 Year 12 students per year.</p>	<p>(printing, catering)</p> <p>Travel reimbursement costs</p>	<p>awareness of HE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased knowledge of HE pathways and the HE application process</li> <li>- Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans</li> <li>- Improved confidence and preparation for the HE selection process</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved mock assessment and/or predicted grades</li> <li>- Applications to HE</li> <li>- Offers from HE providers</li> <li>- Enrolments in HE</li> </ul>	<p><b>Impact evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and annual student survey exploring interim outcomes and perceptions (T2)</li> <li>- Annual end-of-year teacher/staff survey exploring perceptions of achievement of interim outcomes for students</li> <li>- Two to three student focus groups per annum to explore key themes from surveys (T2)</li> <li>- Data analysis: analysis of predicted grades and/or mock assessments (T2). TBC: Subject to availability of school data and timing, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analysis of mock v. predicted exam results</li> <li>● Analysis of pre/post mock assessment results</li> <li>● Tracking participant results / predicted results across year groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Data analysis: number and % of participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applying to HE</li> <li>● Receiving offers from HE providers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We currently subscribe to HEAT and will use it for this tracking.</p>
<p><b>Review of contextual admissions policies and analysis of data</b></p> <p><i>[Existing activity]</i></p> <p>Ongoing review and monitoring of the contextual admissions policy</p> <p>In depth analysis of application and admissions data to understand why Global Majority and IMD Q1 students are less likely to receive an</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>UCAS end of cycle data</p> <p>Direct application data</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased institutional understandings and any structural barriers relating to application and offer for target learner</li> <li>- Improvements to processes/policy/support</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A greater proportion of students from target groups apply to NU</li> </ul>	<p><b>Process evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Output analysis: number of students being considered under the contextual admissions system, courses (T1)</li> <li>- Output analysis: analysis of outcomes for those considered under the contextual admissions system compared with those not eligible (T1)</li> <li>- Brief survey asking current students who came through the contextual admissions system how the scheme helped them (T2)</li> </ul>

<p>offer at the University. [New activity]</p>		<p>London and are successful in receiving an offer - A greater proportion of students from target groups accept their offer of a place and enrol at NU London</p>	<p><b>Impact evaluation:</b> - Brief student survey (T2) - Comparison of applications and outcomes over a five-year basis to understand the potential impact of the scheme in supporting more students from under-represented groups to apply and enrol at NU London (T2)</p>
<p><b>Personal statement 121 support and workshops</b> [New activity]</p> <p>Delivery of personal statement workshops and 121 support</p> <p>We aim to reach c. 50 KS5 students per year</p>	<p>Staff time Staff training</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes:</b> - Increased knowledge and awareness of the application process - Increased confidence in successfully navigating the application process</p> <p><b>Longer term outcomes:</b> - Increased number of successful applications from target groups</p>	<p><b>Process evaluation:</b> - Output analysis: number of students who attended workshops and one-to-ones and the demographics of those students - Output analysis: number of sessions delivered - Student polls on experience of the sessions (T2)</p> <p><b>Impact evaluation:</b> - Brief student survey (T2) - Comparison of applications and outcomes over a five-year basis to understand the potential impact of the scheme in supporting more students from underrepresented groups to apply and enrol at NU London (T2)</p>
<p><b>Support for transition from offer to Year 1</b> [New activity]</p> <p>Series of pre entry academic skills workshops and events on campus for offer holders covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The "hidden curriculum"</li> <li>● Independent learning skills</li> <li>● Preparing for university</li> <li>● Budgeting</li> </ul> <p>Pre entry academic advising appointment to support with optional course selection [Existing activity]</p>	<p>Staff time Student ambassadors Event resources (printing, catering) Travel costs</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes</b> - Increased knowledge and awareness about HE - Improved sense of belonging in HE - Improved self-perceptions about academic abilities and confidence - Increased knowledge of financial support and student loans - Improved confidence and preparation for HE life and learning - Improved connections and engagement between students and with NU London, particularly amongst target groups</p>	<p><b>Process evaluation:</b> - Data analysis: number and % of students from target groups receiving support (T1) - Output analysis: number of sessions run (T1) - Post-activity polls gathering student experience and perceptions (T2)</p> <p><b>Impact evaluation:</b> - Data analysis: on-course engagement monitoring (T2) - Student survey exploring outcomes (T2) - Data analysis: continuation rates by target groups (T2)</p>

<p>Personal contact for students from WP backgrounds to support them from offer to transition <i>[Existing activity]</i></p>		<p>- Improved mental health and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Longer term outcomes</b></p> <p>- Improved continuation rates for target students</p>	
<p><b>Financial support package</b></p> <p><i>[Existing activity]</i></p> <p>Financial support will be offered to eligible students for pre entry events and throughout the student journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel fund for WP students to attend events including open days, offer holder days and summer schools</li> <li>• NU London bursary for eligible students with additional support for care leavers, estranged students, young carers, refugees and parents (up to £5000)</li> <li>• Reduced rate accommodation for eligible students in university partnered halls</li> </ul>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Bursary funding</p> <p>Bursary administration platform</p>	<p><b>Intermediate outcomes</b></p> <p>- Improved student emotional and mental wellbeing, linked to financial security</p> <p>- Student's financial needs are supported</p> <p>- Students are able to participate in various academic and social facets of university life (positively impacting sense of belonging)</p> <p>- Job/income pressure is decreased</p> <p><b>Longer term outcomes</b></p> <p>- Increased continuation and completion rates for target students</p> <p>- Increased attainment rates for target students.</p>	<p><b>Process evaluation</b></p> <p>- Data analysis: number and % of students receiving bursaries, analysed by student characteristics (T1)</p> <p>- Output analysis: total spend on fee waivers and bursaries, including by student characteristics (T1)</p> <p>- Poll gathering bursary holder's experience and perceptions (students and staff) of the process/allocation (T2)</p> <p><b>Impact evaluation</b></p> <p>As per relevant parts of the OfS Evaluating the Impact of Financial Support toolkit, every two years.</p>

## 4.5 IS2 Summary of evidence base and rationale

By using the EORR and our own research into our local context we created IS2 based on these four main risks: knowledge and skills (Risk c.); information and guidance (Risk 2); perception of higher education (Risk 3); and application success rates (Risk 4). The evidence used to inform this intervention strategy has been drawn from a range of sources including TASO, UCAS and the OfS EORR. Some of the key areas that are addressed in the intervention strategy from our evidence base are developing academic skills to support transition, providing financial support and using outreach programmes to support students through the application process.

Students without access to HE experienced support often struggle to navigate the application process effectively, potentially submitting weaker applications or making disadvantageous choices. Under-resourced schools may not be able to offer the same level of guidance as their more advantaged counterparts, leaving some students at a particular disadvantage when making application decisions (Wyness, 2017). Our new application support programme will aim to address this by offering tailored support to a small group of students to ensure they receive the support they need.

Students from underrepresented backgrounds may also face limited opportunities to develop the academic skills required for a successful transition to HE. Many students report lacking opportunities to build independent learning skills (MacFarlane, 2018). Interventions designed to introduce students to the expectations of HE can significantly boost their confidence. Providing support upon arrival, particularly in developing academic skills, helps students establish a positive learner identity and enhances their confidence (Jones, 2018). Therefore, a key focus of IS2 will be to implement transition activities that build student confidence. Additionally, students who lack HE-experienced guidance may be unaware of the "hidden curriculum"—unspoken expectations such as grading criteria and academic success markers (Koutsouris et al., 2021). This issue emerged as a central theme in our student focus groups (see Section 6.4, Student Consultation) and will be a core component of our intervention strategy.

Financial support has been shown to be an effective mechanism for supporting student retention, progression, and attainment (TASO, 2023). Receiving a bursary has been shown to reduce the likelihood of student dropout (Harrison et al., 2018). Based on insights from our student consultations (see Section 6.4, Student Consultation), we have reviewed and adjusted our bursary amounts and salary thresholds to better meet student needs.

For further information, please refer to Annex B, Section B.2.

## 4.5 IS2 Evaluation publication plan

Format of findings	Sharing findings
<p>We will produce an annual summary progress and review report, which will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide insights on the effectiveness and progress of relevant activities across our Intervention Strategies based on the achievement of intended outcomes.</li> <li>2. Capture learning and insights that inform improvements in practice and any appropriate changes and developments.</li> </ol> <p>Highlights and themes from this support will be shared online, for example through our website and/or the SEER website.</p> <p>Findings will also be shared internally to relevant committees/boards and forum groups, to inform practice and decision making</p>	<p>Progress ‘highlights’ of what both works and doesn’t work will be shared annually.</p>
<p>We will produce an Evaluation to Date or End of Project Report (whichever is relevant) capturing all evaluation and findings, disseminated online via our website and the SEER website</p>	<p>4 years on from Plan commencement (Autumn/Winter 2029) and/or at the conclusion of projects. For Financial Support evaluation, this will be every 2 years, from 2026-27.</p>
<p>We will also contribute at conferences and through workshops and events hosted by networks such as SEER, NEON, FACE and GuildHE.</p>	<p>At minimum every 2 years, starting from 2025-26.</p>
<p>We will contribute to other calls for evidence, such as through TASO.</p>	<p>As they arise, at minimum every 2 years.</p>

## 5. Whole provider approach

At the University we are committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture within our community where each student and staff member feels supported and valued. Our whole provider approach ensures consistency for all students throughout the student lifecycle and the student experience. To assess our whole provider approach we worked with SEER colleagues to use the emerging research tool developed by Professor Liz Thomas<sup>16</sup>. This demonstrates how an enabling environment which prioritises diversity, access and success, facilitates change and minimises barriers that affect staff and student engagement in an inclusive university experience. This is broken down into the six key sections below.

### **5.1 Commitment: our institutional and senior leadership commitment to WP, diversity and success**

The University is committed to creating and sustaining a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture within our community where each student and staff member feels supported and valued and where our diverse identities and lived experiences power our creativity, innovation and excellence as a global university. The University has an effective staffing infrastructure that enables us to embed DEI in every part of our organisation. Our DEI Committee<sup>17</sup> has a membership of senior staff from across every part of the university, as well as student and faculty representation. It reports directly into the University's Executive Committee as well as to the Academic Board. They oversee the implementation of our DEI strategic plan and monitor and report on its implementation on a quarterly basis.

We continuously review and evaluate our policies and procedures to ensure alignment with the Equality Act 2010, while promoting a culture of integrity, belonging and courage within our university. We are developing a new DEI strategy to further enhance our efforts in this area.

Our DEI work also spreads across the University through our Synergy Groups. Synergy Groups are staff-led groups for staff and students formed around shared characteristics or experiences. These groups aim to celebrate diverse identities and lived experiences, provide professional development and networking opportunities and engage in the development of community and industry partnerships.

In terms of governance for our APP, the Fair Access and Participation Strategy Group (FAPSG)<sup>18</sup>, which includes representation from students and staff across various levels, oversees the development and implementation of the APP on behalf of the Academic Board and Executive Committee. Both the Executive Committee and Academic Board are deeply committed to WP, our APP, and broader DEI work. Reports are submitted from FAPSG to

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<sup>16</sup> (Thomas, L. (2024) Higher Education Provider enabling environment review tool (version 1). WPA support programme. CRESJ, University of York.

<sup>17</sup><https://www.nulondon.ac.uk/academic-handbook/governance-structure/terms-of-reference-and-governance-structure-diagrams/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-committee>

<sup>18</sup><https://www.nulondon.ac.uk/academic-handbook/governance-structure/terms-of-reference-and-governance-structure-diagrams/fair-access-and-participation-strategy-group/>

The University's board, ensuring transparency and accountability in our efforts to promote fair access and participation.

## **5.2 Alignment: alignment of our policies and processes**

To ensure alignment between DEI and WP, the Head of WP sits on the DEI Committee and the Director of DEI sits on FAPSG: This integration ensures that DEI considerations are integral to the development and implementation of our APP, fostering a holistic approach to access and participation. Our DEI objectives have been developed to reflect the targets outlined in our APP, so our institutional efforts to promote diversity and equity are directly aligned with our goals for access. There is also close collaboration between the Head of WP and the Director of DEI, along with DEI leads, who sit within faculties.

Some key university policies are in the process and being redeveloped including the University Strategic Plan and the Teaching and Learning Strategy, these will reflect and support the challenges and objectives outlined in this Plan. The WP team works closely with leadership in Undergraduate Recruitment to ensure the University recruitment strategy aligns with objectives in the APP, and that those from underrepresented backgrounds are targeted and supported throughout this.

An example of a well-integrated policy is our contextual admissions policy that has been in place for a number of years and is regularly reviewed. Most recently, in September 2023, this was reviewed to expand our criteria to include young carers and refugees, acknowledging the unique barriers that those students face when applying to university. Our NU London bursary policy was then updated in April 2024 to reflect these changes.

## **5.3 Engagement: our staff and students engage in this agenda, and work together to create change and implement APP work**

Staff from across the university are engaged with WP work and our APP priorities. Staff and students were involved in the development of this APP, through focus groups, providing input into the development of intervention strategies and feedback on the plan. We will continue to seek input and feedback throughout the delivery of the plan.

Our academic faculty are involved with WP activity development and delivery such as through our Summer School and subject specific on campus Discover Days. The evaluation and outcomes received from this are then shared with academic faculty and the feedback informs future delivery.

The support for students is wide ranging and covers students across the lifecycle:

- Academic Advisors: help students to select their courses and degree pathways; liaise with faculty members to identify students with attendance or performance issues; and advise on a range of topics including adapting to studying at university, study skills, interpreting university policies and programme transfers and withdrawal.
- Student Support Coordinators: provide prospective and current students with advice on general student matters including budgeting and managing your finances at university

- Wellbeing Coordinators: offer general wellbeing support and support students with disabilities, neurodivergence and additional needs
- Mental Health Advisors: offer one-to-one confidential appointments for students facing personal circumstances which are affecting their mental health and impacting their studies. The mental health advisers provide individualised and tailored support in house, whilst also supporting students to access NHS services or other relevant community based specialist support where necessary to help ensure students are properly supported and safeguarded. Throughout the academic year mental health advisers contribute to mental health awareness-raising activities that promote the maintenance of good mental health and wellbeing for all students.
- Specific Learning Differences Advisors: provide support for students with learning differences such as autism, ADHD or dyslexia through one-to-one appointments to implement support through Learning Support Plans (LSP).
- Maths and English Tutors: support students in developing their mathematical and academic writing skills through one-to-one appointments, workshops and small group sessions
- Housing and Residence Life Coordinators: The Housing Services team oversees our housing application portal and provides personalised assistance to students looking for housing, either in partnered residence halls or in the private housing market. The Residence Life team lives on-site with students in our residence halls. Each student in our partnered halls is assigned a Residence Life Coordinator; their primary role is to support students as they adjust to living and studying in London to help them get the most out of their university experience. They also operate a 24/7 on-call emergency line to provide assistance and support to students in emergency situations.
- Careers team: supports students to find internships, co-ops and graduate jobs, offering employability workshops (covering topics such as: CVs, interviews and applications), one-to-one appointments (including interview practice) and industry talks (such as: how to get into banking, tech or the civil service).
- Financial Student Aid Manager: provides advice and guidance to students relating to the NU London Bursary and other University financial support, as well as managing applications and administering funds.
- Student life team: supports students in their transition to university through Welcome Week and hosting a varied and vibrant programme of events throughout the year to support and celebrate the diversity within our community from events for Black History Month and World Hijab Day to Diwali and the Lunar New Year

These teams also attend pre-entry events to engage with prospective students and offer holders to encourage them to seek early support. This supports students in their transition to the university and across the student lifecycle.

#### **5.4 Capacity: we develop the capacity of our staff and students to promote WP, equality, diversity, inclusion and success, and to tackle discrimination**

The University provides mandatory training in DEI for all staff and students. This is an important part of our support for a diverse and inclusive experience across teaching, research, University processes and procedures:



- DEI training for staff: provides staff with the fundamental basis for understanding issues around DEI within HE and encourages behaviours that build inclusive cultures at the individual and institutional levels. It provides basic training on the Equality Act (2010), discrimination in a HE setting and basic intervention training.
- DEI training for students: provides students with the fundamental basis for understanding issues around DEI within HE and equips students with practical tools to challenge discriminatory behaviour and to interact with other students in an inclusive and supportive way.

We have an accessible Teaching and Learning working group comprising of and faculty members from DEI, Student Support and Development and Teaching & Learning. In early 2024 the group drafted staff guidance documents that will provide support for staff on:

- Special educational needs (SENs)
- Assistive learning technologies
- How the LSP process works and accommodations for students
- Creating an inclusive classroom environment
- Accessible teaching mediums (lectures, handouts, recordings, Canvas pages, emails etc.).

Staff in the Enrolment Management team (admissions, recruitment, marketing) receive training on the APP and WP initiatives, and we are looking to expand this across the wider staff body in future.

The University partners with a range of external organisations to develop staff capacity and to offer additional support and development for staff. This involves partnering with SEER (Specialist Evidence Evaluation & Research) for research projects and the evaluation of our WP activities and student support initiatives. This also provides a network of small and specialist providers. Our other WP external partners include: Linking London, FACE (Forum for Access and Continuing Education), UniConnect and GuildHE. With our commitment to experiential education and impactful research, partnerships are central to our mission: from our work with EdAid and the Refugee Council to our collaborations with LIFT (Leading Inclusive Futures through Technology), Citizens UK, and RTC (Rewriting The Code), we prioritise partnerships that advance our goals of DEI.

Over the duration of this Plan we will focus on expanding the capacity of our existing higher & degree apprenticeships to offer to a wider range of young people. This will focus on those from more underrepresented backgrounds as research suggests that only 5% of those starting a degree apprenticeship in 2020-21 were from lower income areas, compared with 6.7% of those going to university<sup>19</sup>. We aim to widen access to our degree apprenticeships by:

- Delivering presentations and workshops in WP schools to increase awareness of degree apprenticeships and knowledge of the application process
- Running work experience days for WP students with employer partners to give firsthand experience of life as a degree apprentice

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/the-recent-evolution-of-apprenticeships/>

- Raising awareness of our degree apprenticeships with our employer partners so they can encourage their employees to apply, particularly for those that university may not have previously been accessible for
- Ensuring staff and student ambassadors are trained to provide IAG related to degree apprenticeships.

## **5.5 Communication: We communicate effectively with students and to improve the experience and outcomes of our students**

Staff are kept up to date with WP and DEI work through a quarterly DEI newsletter, regular updates within other staff newsletters and staff meetings. Communication with students is delivered through various mediums such as through the Northeastern University London Student Union (NUSU), newsletters and social media. The Student Support and Development team have recently redeveloped and launched their webpages to make them more informative and accessible to current and prospective students.

The University is committed to sustaining a culture of openness, collaboration and trust in relation to DEI, where every student and staff member feels free to share their observations and ideas. We have created a DE-Ideas form for all staff and students to put forward suggestions for DEI-related improvements within our organisation. We also have a direct DEI email address for all members of the University to contact our DEI team directly. Each year we hold an Open DEI Forum for staff and students to present and discuss our DEI work as an organisation.

Our Academic Advisors support students with the interpretation and to understand university policies and procedures, making these accessible and jargon-free. As we grow as a university we will work to ensure that communication remains clear and consistent to support the experience and outcomes of our students.

## **5.6 Data: using data and evidence to underpin and drive WP and success**

Data is used to support students who are at risk of not continuing or completing their degrees. The Academic Advisors monitor attendance to show early indicators of concerns, and if necessary refer at risk students to other support services and/or Support to Study. Support to Study takes a personalised approach, creating a support team based around each student's specific needs. Depending on the nature of these needs, the support team will typically include their Academic Advisor, a member of Student Support and Development, and a member of faculty from the student's main discipline. The team will work with the student to agree on a re-engagement plan. Examples of agreed actions in re-engagement plans include a weekly attendance target, a requirement to attend faculty office hours to assist with catching up on missed content, a referral to writing and/or maths support, and a referral to mental health and wellbeing services. The Student Support team may also decide to implement an LSP for the student or review and revise an existing LSP. The LSP is reviewed regularly to ensure it is still relevant to the student, and for any further amendments to be made as appropriate.

A key long term focus for the University is to develop more reliable and statistically robust internal data sets, particularly in relation to current students and their progression. This will enable us to effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of our plan particularly as we are growing as a university. To achieve this goal the WP team will collaborate closely with Registry and DEI leads. Together, we will review, monitor and analyse the relevant data at the appropriate times, facilitating regular monitoring and evaluation of our initiatives. By collaborating on data collection and analysis, we can strengthen our capacity to assess the impact of our strategies and make informed decisions to advance our access and participation objectives.

## 6. Student consultation

At the University, prioritising student engagement is important to our overall strategic vision and mission. Our approach involves active participation from the entire student body, alongside seeking targeted feedback from specific groups identified as APP target groups.

### 6.1 Involvement in strategic decision making

Students play a vital role in key university committees, ensuring their voices are heard in important governance matters. These include:

- The FAPSG, overseeing the development and implementation of the NU London APP on behalf of the Academic Board and Executive Committee
- The DEI Committee, is responsible for managing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the University
- The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee (TLEC), is responsible for managing the quality and delivery of our courses and programmes and all policies and regulations pertaining to those courses and programmes

### 6.2 Gathering student feedback

To shape our APP, we collaborated closely with students from underrepresented backgrounds and the wider student body via a series of specific focus groups. These discussions were facilitated by trained student ambassadors to encourage openness and honesty. Students had the option of one-on-one sessions with an external researcher if they felt more comfortable speaking with someone external to the University. Similar consultations were conducted with university staff. Feedback from these focus groups and the proposed recommendations were shared with the NUSU and FAPSG to refine recommendations and plan next steps.

Externally, our membership in SEER allows us to learn from a broader range of student experiences through a dedicated student representative on their Student Advisory Panel. This panel consists of student representatives from a wide range of SEER member institutions.

TLEC monitors student feedback from Discipline Meetings and Student Engagement Committees and the actions from Annual Faculty Reviews, ensuring projects and responses to student feedback are conducted in a timely manner, intervening, as required, to support any which need to be brought back on track. The Committee also receives the results of the

National Student Survey (NSS) and oversees the University's NSS Enhancement Plan, setting targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

On a regular basis we receive feedback and collaborate with students in a range of ways including through:

- Student Representatives
- Course Satisfaction Surveys
- Programme Surveys (tracking the questions on the NSS)
- Relevant student societies e.g. The 93% Club.

### **6.3 Involvement of student ambassadors**

Student ambassadors play a key role in designing and delivering access initiatives:

- A senior WP student ambassador is appointed annually to support the WP team with the development and delivery of access activities. They also provide feedback on our APP work, ensuring where possible that this is representative of wider student views
- All student ambassadors receive training on the APP during their induction
- After each activity, ambassadors submit evaluation forms, with opportunities for verbal debriefs for longer engagements such as summer schools
- We plan to involve student ambassadors in creating an accessible summary version of the APP.

### **6.4 Student consultation on development of this plan**

During the APP development phase, we presented our indicators of risk, risks to equality of opportunity and proposed intervention strategies to student focus groups, incorporating their feedback to enhance the plan. Some of the changes we made based on student feedback are:

- Reviewing and increasing the salary thresholds and the level of award for the NU London bursary by 25%. Students cited the increased cost of living as a key issue, especially in London, and there were cases where they had been “priced out” of the bursary due to their household receiving a small inflationary increase in salary. In future, we will be looking to decrease the administrative burden for students in applying for the bursary as this was common feedback
- Increasing the level of support for students in their transition from offer to first year (see IS2), students highlighted this as a key area that they would have liked extra support when starting at the University. They shared the importance of covering content such as “the hidden curriculum” and budgeting at university
- Expanding the reference book section in the Silent Study Area on campus. This was a direct response to students' requests to have more hard copies of core texts available to them on campus to reduce the costs of buying new or second hand books. This has proved to be so popular that we have allocated additional funding to grow this resource in future academic years
- Reviewing the late submission penalty for summative coursework assessments, in part, an acknowledgement that this may have a greater impact on APP target groups, particularly commuter students, those with caring responsibilities and/or part time jobs.

## **6.5 Future student engagement**

We value student input and will continue to seek feedback throughout our implementation of the APP. We will have feedback mechanisms in place throughout the duration of this APP, this includes ongoing consultations, activity creation, and evaluation. Student representatives will remain integral to the governance process, and we aim to establish a student advisory panel comprising individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to address concerns and provide input on APP implementation and evaluation.

## **7. Evaluation of the plan**

### **7.1 Strategic context for evaluation**

Evaluation and research are part of our whole institution approach to access and participation. Our academic and leadership teams contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of targets, intervention strategies and activities in this Plan through supporting and inputting on the range of evaluation measures. We work with SEER to ensure our data capture is appropriate for the required monitoring and evaluation outputs, including designing new reports and processes to capture, collate and extract data for various evaluation and research questions. We also draw on the skills of staff responsible for the delivery of the activities in this Plan, and our student representatives, to effectively incorporate evaluation.

In our assessment of our current context for evaluation, using the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool, we are 'emerging' across all areas. We have foundations in place, but need to develop our practices, including embedding evaluation into activity design and delivery and ensuring feedback cycles into improving practice. Therefore, as we are continuing to build our cross-institution capacities for effective evaluation and the application of findings to improve practice, staff and student representatives will be supported with relevant training in Theory of Change and evaluation methods, provided through our SEER membership.

Students are important in this work, and we will work in partnership with students on the design and implementation of evaluation and research, particularly where this pertains to current students.

SEER provides us with the evaluation and research expertise we need to deliver our commitments in these areas. We will actively participate in this network, which provides us with opportunities to be part of collaborative research and evaluation projects as well as learning and sharing practice with other members and external stakeholders. SEER hosts an annual Symposium and regular workshops, roundtables and 'learning lunches' throughout the year, as well as providing us with opportunities to showcase our practice and insights. We will also engage with TASO and other relevant organisations in calls for evidence, conferences and events, and training.

### **7.2 Activity design**

As detailed in Section 4 (Intervention Strategies) of this Plan, evaluation has been established at the start. We have built effective evaluation practice into our Strategies by establishing a range of evaluation attached to the individual activities that contribute towards

the overall objective of each Strategy. We can therefore build up an understanding of which activities are 'working' and which are not. We have taken a Theory of Change approach to the development of our Intervention Strategies, identifying clear intended outcomes (intermediate and end) and a supporting evidence base that has informed our activity development and challenged assumptions. With the help of SEER, we will continue to review, develop and strengthen our Theories of Change, adding to our evidence base as our evaluation findings emerge and developing enhanced activity-level Theories of Change where required.

### **7.3 Evaluation design**

We have collaborated with SEER and drawn from OfS and TASO toolkits and guidance on effective evaluation approaches. We have considered how the outcomes of activities can be evaluated credibly, particularly as our context as a smaller provider means that we are likely to be dealing with small cohorts. Employing mixed method approaches is particularly important, as we will need to rely on qualitative data to support our understanding, or fill gaps, in quantitative data. We will triangulate findings where possible and seek to deepen our insights through qualitative methods. Given the developmental stage of our evaluation practice, the majority of our evaluations are type 1 (narrative), and type 2 (empirical enquiry) of the OfS 'Standards of Evidence'<sup>20</sup>. We have however noted that we will explore and consider where type 3 evaluation could be implemented in future.

Our evaluation approach has also considered the context and scale of the activities and, as we have proposed working with strategic partners (such as schools, colleges, community groups, specialist service providers) in our Intervention Strategies, we wish to note that some flexibility and development may be required as our collaborations take shape, allowing for input and advice from partners. This may help to mitigate the issue of survey fatigue, which is a significant issue for effective evaluation and is compounded in small cohorts where the same students are more likely to be subjects of multiple evaluation and research projects. We will continue to be aware of this in collection of feedback and have aligned our evaluation and measures across our activities to enable us to minimise the number of collection points, where possible and appropriate.

Our evaluation approach, data collection and analysis have been formulated on the intended outcomes and objectives of our activities. Where appropriate and possible, we will consider and employ validated scales to our evaluation practices. We have also considered evaluation that spans process and impact, to provide comprehensive understanding of how our activities are working. We will explore, with SEER, further research projects in relation to our activities and our ambition to better understand the experiences and challenges of target students and issues of equality of opportunity.

### **7.4 Implementing our evaluation plan**

We will collaborate internally and with our strategic partners to deliver our evaluation plan. We will be guided by our school, college and community partners, and our students in respect of effective implementation of the plan. Our evaluation process will comply with University

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<sup>20</sup><https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/standards-of-evidence-and-evaluating-impact-of-outreach/>

policies and with all legal requirements relating to data protection, following ethical, safeguarding, legal and risk considerations.

As noted above, we are members of the SEER service, with whom we will work in partnership to deliver our evaluation plan. A Data Sharing Agreement has been established. SEER provides us with opportunities to collaborate on various evaluation and research items, including for example the evaluation of the impact of financial support, using the OfS toolkit.

The design of our evaluation has been heavily informed by intended and projected standardised outcomes being adopted by SEER across its membership base, which not only increases efficiency but provides opportunities to increase the sample size and evaluation, helping to mitigate the issue of small datasets. SEER incorporates and draws on TASO guidance on best practices for evaluations with small cohorts (small n). As a practice network, we are also able to participate in peer review of practice and evaluation, and share practice and findings.

As a smaller provider we are well placed to respond with agility to interim findings and emerging data. We can be responsive in flexing our activity accordingly to help to keep us on track to achieve our objectives and targets, and continuously improve our practice.

## **7.5 Learning from and disseminating findings**

We are committed to sharing our learnings and findings internally, with our partners, within our close networks and with the broader sector, to develop stronger and an increased volume of evidence about what works and what can be improved. We are pleased to help to grow the evidence base for equality of opportunity in higher education and we will submit evaluation outputs to OfS's repository of evidence as appropriate. In Section 4 (Intervention Strategies) we have set out our publishing plan, which includes publishing findings on interim and longer-term outcomes through a range of channels. In developing the format of our communications, we will consider creative and visual methods for different audiences purposes. We will ensure that our findings are open access.

Our SEER membership provides us access to academic experts in evaluation, including in access and participation and the broader teaching and learning arena. These staff are involved in design, delivery and analysis. We are also a member of UniConnect, FACE, GuildHE, NEON and HELOA which we can utilise to share and present findings. It is anticipated that we will actively contribute to conferences, network events and publications. Where appropriate we will draw on existing networks to collaborate and engage with similar organisations. We also look forward to sharing our findings and our thinking with other small institutions and SEER members and collaborating on the development of effective practice for this particular part of the sector.

Internally, developing a community of practice (staff and students) regarding access and participation will help to facilitate improvements to sharing of findings from evaluation, and subsequent improvements to practise. Shared practice across the institution allows for review and feedback on evaluation findings and reports, and discussion regarding the improvements that could be made. More broadly, evaluation findings related to access and participation work will inform other agendas and practice, such as programme review and

revalidation, communications and recruitment strategies and community engagement. We will publish the findings of our evaluation activities on a dedicated page on our website within our WP pages.

Further details about how we will evaluate our intervention strategies is included in Section 4 (Intervention Strategies).



## 8. Provision of information to students

### 8.1 Information on tuition fees and financial support

Annual tuition fee information is published on the University website ([nulondon.ac.uk/home-fees](http://nulondon.ac.uk/home-fees)). This page also details relevant scholarships and financial support that are available to undergraduate students.

Information about fees and financial support is provided to applicants and current students in various channels including:

- Presentations at Open Days and Offer Holder Days including sessions for parents/carers
- In our annual undergraduate prospectus
- Emails to offer holders confirming tuition fees and financial support, outlining the process for application
- Tailored student finance and budgeting presentations and workshops for schools, colleges and as part of WP outreach programmes
- The BlackBullion platform for financial education
- Dedicated support from teams across the University including Financial Student Aid, Student Support, Accommodation and WP.

### 8.2 Details of our financial support

Financial support	Purpose	Eligibility criteria	Level of support	Frequency of support
NU London Travel Fund	To support young people from underrepresented backgrounds to attend in person event such as open days, summer schools and offer holder days	UK (Home fees) domiciled who meet one or more of our WP criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attending an aspiring state school or college. The list of qualifying schools is updated on the <a href="#">University website</a> each year</li> <li>● Care experienced</li> <li>● Estranged from parents or guardians</li> <li>● Eligible for FSM</li> </ul>	Up to £200 reimbursed per event attended at the University	One-off  Attendees that meet our WP criteria are welcome to apply for the travel fund for each eligible event they attend at the university

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forced migrant, refugee or asylum seeker</li> <li>• Young adult carer</li> <li>• Live in an area of lower progression to higher education or high deprivation</li> </ul>		
NU London Bursary	To support NU London students from lower income backgrounds whilst they are at university	<p>UK (Home fees) domiciled and a household income of less than £63,500</p> <p>Bursary Uplift eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care experienced</li> <li>• Estranged from parents or guardians</li> <li>• Forced migrant, refugee or asylum seeker</li> <li>• Young adult carer</li> </ul> <p>The bursary award can be taken as cash, a discount in University affiliated housing or as a discount from fees.</p>	<p>Household income up to £31,250: £3,750 bursary</p> <p>Household income £31,251 to £63,500: £2,500 bursary</p> <p>Students who meet the eligibility criteria for a Bursary Uplift will receive a further £1,250 to their award.</p> <p>Students who can evidence childcare responsibilities to dependents under 18 will be eligible for a further one-off bursary award uplift of £500.</p>	Yearly - students are required to reapply each year of study and will be assessed for eligibility based on circumstances

Our financial support and the eligibility criteria is subject to change. For the most up to date information please visit the University website: [nulondon.ac.uk/home-fees](https://nulondon.ac.uk/home-fees)

### 8.3 Access and Participation Plans

The University's Access and Participation Plans, including previous plans relevant to those that enrolled before 2025/26, can be found on the University website: [nulondon.ac.uk/academic-handbook/widening-access-and-participation/plans](https://nulondon.ac.uk/academic-handbook/widening-access-and-participation/plans)

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

## A.1 Introduction

The analysis in this assessment of performance has informed the development of our APP. We have explored access, success and outcomes for students who have been identified as most likely to be impacted by risks to equality of opportunity.

Our primary data source for the assessment is the OfS Access and Participation dataset<sup>21</sup>. This provides insights into gap areas and highlights future areas to address and investigate. Due to our small data sets, much of the data on the APP dashboard is suppressed and unavailable for analysis - especially relating to continuation, completion, attainment and progression. We have therefore explored several internal and external data sources to undertake a thorough assessment of the University's performance across the student lifecycle:

- OfS National Equality of Opportunity Risk Register
- OfS individualised data files
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Census 2021
- Student Loans Company
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)
- Internal analysis from our student records system and data dashboards
- Qualitative data from staff and student focus groups

We have then reflected on our institutional context and the EORR to understand our risks.

A key long term focus for the University is to develop more accurate, reliable and statistically robust internal data sets, particularly in relation to current students and their progression. This will enable us to effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of our plan particularly as we are growing as a university. To achieve this goal, the WP team will collaborate closely with Registry and DEI leads. Together, we will review, monitor and analyse the relevant data at the appropriate times, facilitating regular monitoring and evaluation of our initiatives. By collaborating on data collection and analysis, we can strengthen our capacity to assess the impact of our strategies and make informed decisions to advance our access and participation objectives.

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<sup>21</sup> [Data dashboard - Office for Students](#)

The majority of our students (65%)<sup>22</sup> are full-time undergraduates, and therefore the analysis focuses on this group, although we have presented a summary of data from our degree apprenticeship learners in Figures 8 and 9. We commit to monitoring the access and success of these students and targeting them in intervention strategies, where appropriate, through our whole provider approach.

## **A.2 Performance assessment methods**

We have conducted an initial performance assessment based on the latest OfS APP dashboard data release (March 2023), at the time of development of the Plan, with the most recent data being from the 2021-22 monitoring year. The following analysis presents summary performance at each stage of the life cycle, for the primary target student groups:

- Access: enrolment
- Continuation: continuing students measured at 1 year and 15 days post initial enrolment
- Completion: track students through later stages of studies to see whether they qualified or remain studying
- Attainment: achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome
- Progression: progression into highly skilled employment or postgraduate study

Where we have not prioritised an area that has been highlighted in our performance assessment as requiring improvement, these decisions have been taken based on:

- Datasets being small and therefore data over the last four years being volatile and not statistically robust, which meant that trends and assessment were less valid
- Considerations of resources and where our focus needs to be on the primary areas of concern
- In order to have the greatest impact, the University has selected indicators with the highest number of target students, or where results are significantly worse than the national average.

Any areas which will not be addressed in the Plan will be monitored on an annual basis and we will consider them through our whole provider approach.

## **A.3 Access indicators of risk**

We have identified 5 indicators of risk in the access lifecycle stage (see Figure 1: Traffic light summary report: APP data dashboard). We have chosen to focus on the four-year aggregate data when analysing this to allow the largest pool of data. The risks are related to:

- Association Between Characteristics of Students (ABCS)
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
- Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)
- Global Majority
- Mature students.

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<sup>22</sup><https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>

**Figure 1: Traffic light summary report: APP data dashboard.** *Data source*<sup>23</sup>

		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2 year AGG	4 year AGG
Access	TUNDRA gap Q5-Q1 pp				23.1	25.8	24.6	30.5
	ABCS gap Q5-Q1 pp					17.9	26.8	26.1
	IMD gap Q1-Q5 pp		8.8	-2.8	19.4	9.7	14.14	10.5
	Disabled %	30.2	38.2	39.5	31.3	43.8	37.9	38.2
	Global Majority %				29.9	25	27.3	28.4
	Mature %	27.9	26.5	13.2	16.4	13.7	15	16.5
	Free School Meals (FSM) %				14.3	24.4	19.7	18.8

**Note:** Gap metrics are percentage points (pp); non-gap metrics are percentage of the population (%). Where there is no data, this is due to suppression for GDPR, as cohort sizes are too small to report.

### Indicator of risk 1: Access gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5

The APP data dashboard shows a significant indicator of risk for TUNDRA Q1 students with a four year aggregate gap of 30.5pp between Q1 and Q5. This suggests that students from regions with lower participation rates (TUNDRA Q1) are less likely to apply and register at NU London.

This gap can be partly understood by examining the distribution of TUNDRA quintiles across different regions and the makeup of our student body. Being situated in London, our university receives a significant portion, ranging between 38% and 45%, of applications from this area<sup>24</sup>. Our student body reflects this, with an average of 45% originating from London. Exploring the TUNDRA methodology within London reveals that only 0.8% of middle super output areas (MSOAs) are classified as TUNDRA Q1, compared to 23.8% of MSOAs in the North East<sup>25</sup>. London stands out as a region with a high concentration of areas classified as deprived according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), yet not categorised as low participation areas by POLAR4 or TUNDRA<sup>26</sup>.

Further analysis of our internal data shows that excluding applications and registrations from London reduces the four-year aggregate gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 to 8.8pp, falling below the sector average of 18.4pp. As a small WP team, we strategically focus our access initiatives to maximise our impact. This means we concentrate much of our efforts on our local area, particularly the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBoTH) and more generally

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>  
March 2023 release

<sup>24</sup> Internal access data 2018/19 - 2021/22

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/5515/tundra-methodology\\_20210311.pdf](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/5515/tundra-methodology_20210311.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd78246d-0072-4e2f-a25a-42ba54deea11/polar-and-tundra-faqs-september2020.pdf>

East London. Our focus on these areas not only reflects our institutional commitment to enhance community engagement in LBoTH but also aligns with our building planning permissions. Therefore we will continue to focus on areas where we believe we can make the greatest impact and will not set an access target for TUNDRA Q1 students.

### **Indicator of risk 2: Access gap between ABCS Q1 and Q5**

The APP data dashboard shows an indicator of risk for ABCS Q1 students with a four-year aggregate gap of 26.1pp between Q1 and Q5. This suggests that, based on the ABCS measure, students from more advantaged backgrounds (ABCS Q5) are more likely to register at NU London compared to students from less advantaged backgrounds (ABCS Q1).

Upon examining the distribution of ABCS quintiles alongside our provider data,<sup>27</sup> it appears likely that our access gap may stem from insufficient representation of various groups, including White males eligible for FSM, and students from ethnic backgrounds such as Black Caribbean, mixed Black and White, and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, as well as TUNDRA Q1 students.

While we will not set a specific target to address the access gap for ABCS Q1 students, we commit to continuous monitoring, particularly concerning White males eligible for FSM. This decision is due to several factors, including:

- The difficulty in targeting schools with a high proportion of ABCS Q1 students, as confirmed by HEAT's briefing paper indicating the unavailability of school-level ABCS data<sup>28</sup>
- The rationale outlined above regarding TUNDRA Q1 which similarly impacts our ability to target ABCS Q1 students
- Our focus on interventions for Global Majority students (addressed in Risk Indicator 4) aligning with target groups within ABCS Q1
- ABCS being a new measure with limited evidence on its implementation within access and participation

### **Indicator of risk 3: Access gap between IMD Q1 and Q5**

In London, 16.4% of areas fall under IMD Q1, compared with 12.9% under IMD Q5, which indicates a concentration of deprivation within local authorities. Although London boroughs are relatively less deprived compared to other regions in the country (19% of areas nationally are IMD Q1), there are still a significant proportion of boroughs (33%) within the top 30% of most deprived across England. Therefore, it remains comparatively more deprived than the rest of England as a whole<sup>29</sup>. In terms of individual domains of deprivation, London fares relatively well in education and employment. However, within domains such as crime, access to housing, and the living environment, London boroughs rank among the most deprived, reflecting the broader challenges facing the city.

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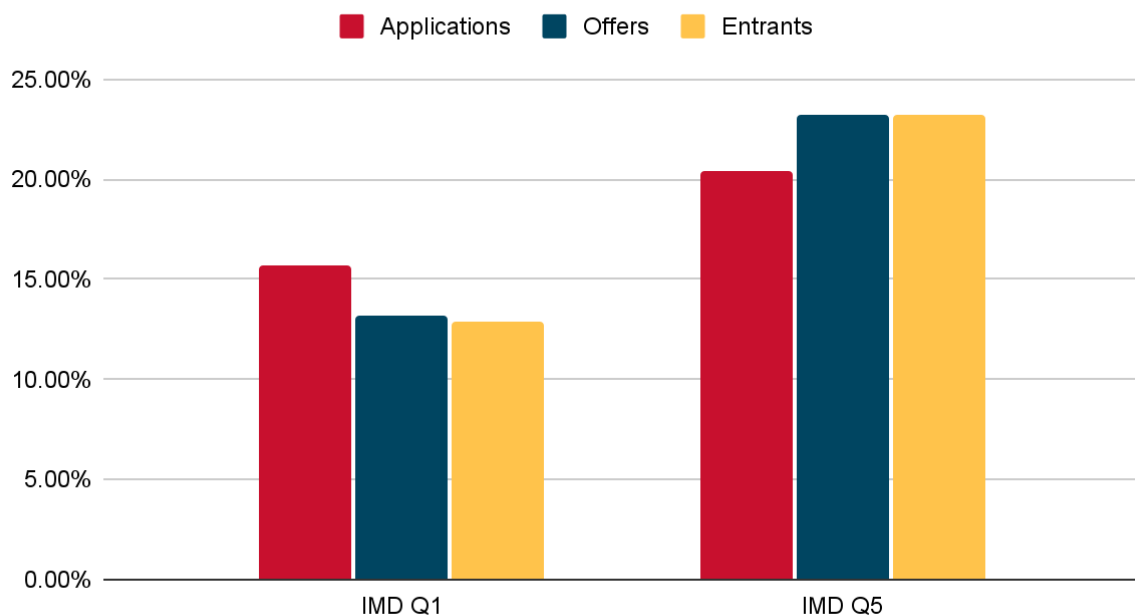
<sup>27</sup> <https://ofslivefs.blob.core.windows.net/files/ABCS%20Sept%202022/Access/abcs-access-quintile-distributions-xlsx.xlsx>

<sup>28</sup> HEAT service paper titled: Supporting members with the Office for Students (OfS) ABCS measure

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Indices%20of%20Multiple%20Deprivation%202019-a.pdf>

Despite our local area displaying relatively high proportions of population within IMD Q1, we have recognised a gap in the registration of students from IMD Q1 (most deprived) compared to those from IMD Q5 (least deprived). This gap has persisted consistently across data from 2018-19 to 2021-22, with a four-year aggregate difference of 10.5pp. Although our data is volatile due to our small student population and there does seem to be a trend towards this gap reducing over time, these findings are still concerning. Particularly when compared with a sector-wide four-year aggregate gap of -1.6, indicating that IMD Q1 students participate at higher rates than IMD Q5 students.

Figure 2: Applications, offers and entrants IMD Q1 and Q5: 4 year aggregate



A closer look at our internal data on applications, offers, and entrants,<sup>30</sup> as shown in Figure 2 and corroborated by the OfS APP data dashboard shows that students from the least deprived areas are applying to NU London in greater numbers than those from the most deprived. Of those who applied, 13.2% of offers made were to students from IMD Q1, compared to 23.2% to students from IMD Q5. This shows that applicants from less deprived areas not only apply in greater numbers but also receive a higher proportion of offers. The trend continues with entrants, where 12.9% are from IMD Q1 and 23.2% are from IMD Q5. This means that the representation of students from less deprived areas remains higher not just at the application and offer stages but also in the actual makeup of the entrant population.

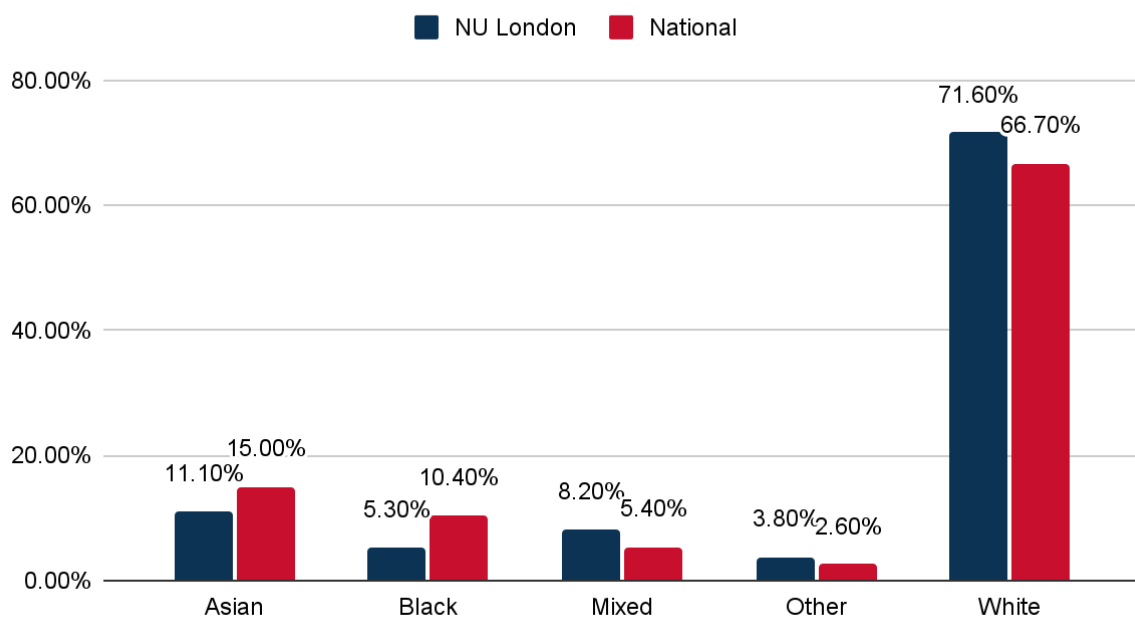
Therefore, we will establish an access target aimed at increasing the proportion of IMD Q1 students at NU London, emphasising our commitment to fostering greater diversity and equity within our university. These findings will be a key focal point in our intervention strategies, particularly around knowledge and skills during the application process and contextual admissions.

<sup>30</sup> Internal access data 2018/19 - 2021/22

#### Indicator of risk 4: Lower percentage of Global Majority students at the university compared to the sector

The APP data dashboard shows a fairly consistent representation of Global Majority students at NU London, with a four-year aggregate figure of 28.4%. However, upon disaggregating the ethnic groups (Asian, Black, mixed, White, and other)<sup>31</sup>, it becomes apparent that our university has a smaller proportion of students from Asian and Black backgrounds when compared to the sector average (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ethnicity by type comparison to national data: 4 year aggregate data



When taking into account our local London context, as shown in the Department for Education's (DfE) London Education report from 2020<sup>32</sup>, which indicated that 72% of secondary school pupils in London belong to ethnicities other than White British, compared to the national average of 30%. This shows that our student body does not reflect the broader population demographics of our local school population, from which 45% of our cohort are recruited<sup>33</sup>.

Further examination of our UCAS and direct application data<sup>34</sup>, illustrated in Figure 4 below, reveals a notable trend: while a higher number of Black and Asian students apply to NU London, they are less likely to receive offers and subsequently register, compared to their White counterparts. These findings will be a key focal point in our intervention strategies, particularly around knowledge and skills during the application process and contextual admissions. We have delved deeper into the potential reasons behind this indicator of risk,

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/3.secondary\\_march2021.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/3.secondary_march2021.pdf)

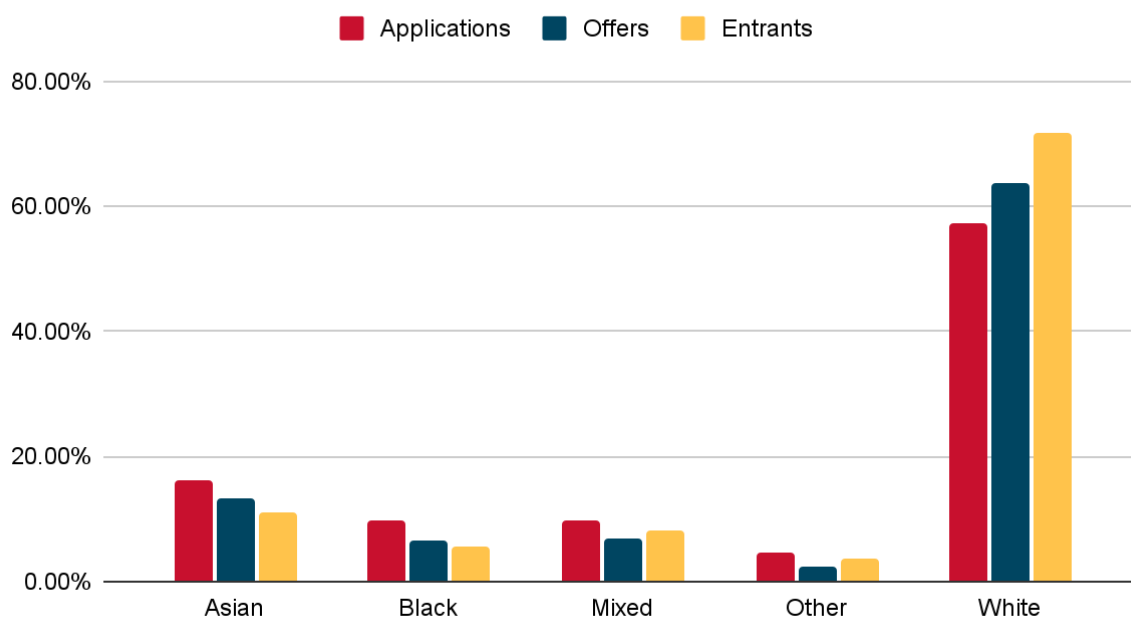
<sup>33</sup> Internal access data 2018/19 - 2021/22. 4 year average figure

<sup>34</sup> Internal access data 2018/19 - 2021/22



as well as explored underlying causes outlined in the EORR in Section 2 - Risks to Equality of Opportunity.

Figure 4: Applications, offers and entrants by ethnicity: 4 year aggregate



#### Indicator of risk 5: Lower percentage of mature students at the university compared to the sector

The proportion of mature entrants at NU London has fallen since 2018-19 with a four-year aggregate of 16.5%, notably lower than the sector average of 27.7%.

Our diverse provision includes higher and degree apprenticeship programmes which support and enhance access to HE for mature learners. The average age of our apprentice learners is currently 26.6 years old<sup>35</sup>, and the APP data dashboard shows a significant proportion of mature learners at 56.4% (2020-21 data). Recognising the demand and capacity for mature learners in our higher and degree apprenticeships, we will continue to prioritise this area. Whereas, our full-time degrees tend to lack subjects that are most attractive to mature learners, with 39% of them opting for subjects allied to medicine or healthcare<sup>36</sup>. Over the past few years, across the sector there has been a downward trend in applications from mature learners for full-time undergraduate degrees, with a 10% decrease noted in the most recent (2023 entry) UCAS data<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Average age on entry, internal degree apprenticeship data 2023-24

<sup>36</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8809/#:~:text=Students%20aged%2025%2B%20were%20more,drop%20out%20of%20their%20course>

<sup>37</sup> <https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/story-cycle-key-points-ucas-equal-consideration-deadline>

Due to the anticipated and significant increase in the number of 18-year-old entrants over the coming years<sup>38</sup>, coupled with our commitment to supporting mature learners through our higher and degree apprenticeships, we have concluded that it would not be feasible nor appropriate to introduce a target to increase the proportion of mature entrants for our full time undergraduate degrees at the current time.

#### A.4 Success indicators of risk

Due to our small student numbers, much of our data related to continuation, completion, attainment and progression is suppressed in the APP data dashboard due to data suppression protocols, even when examining aggregates. The data that is available is presented in Figure 5 below.

The limited data availability across success areas, coupled with the volatile and statistically uncertain nature of the smaller datasets, has posed challenges in accurately assessing trends and identifying areas of concern. Without comprehensive and reliable data, it becomes difficult to conduct thorough analysis and make informed decisions on specific student groups and areas to target.

In our efforts to mitigate these limitations we have undertaken a comprehensive examination of broader datasets. This includes the TEF (Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework) data dashboard, the OfS B3 student outcomes dataset, and internal data sources. Through these measures, we aim to identify potential indicators of risk and gain deeper insights into student outcomes and institutional performance.

**Figure 5: Traffic light summary report: APP data dashboard.** *Data source*<sup>39</sup>

		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2 year AGG	4 year AGG
Continuation	TUNDRA gap Q5-Q1 pp							
	ABCS gap Q5-Q1 pp							
	IMD gap Q1-Q5 pp							
	Disabled - non-disabled pp							0.7
	Global Majority-White pp							-2.3
	Mature - young pp							3.2
	FSM - non-FSM pp							

<sup>38</sup> <https://heinsight.co.uk/new-population-projections-change-the-long-term-game-for-uk-he/>

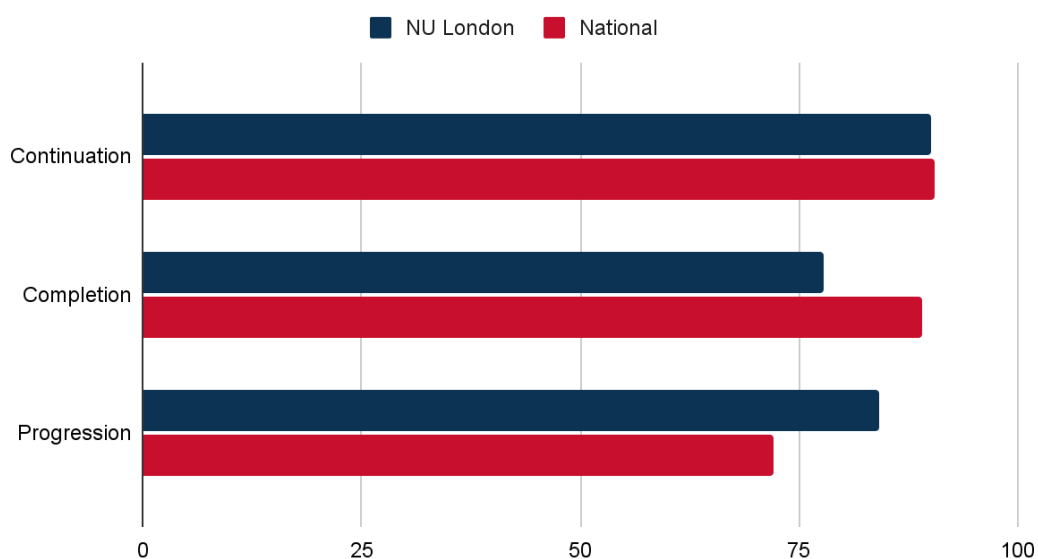
<sup>39</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>  
March 2023 release

		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2 year AGG	4 year AGG
	Male - Female pp							-3.2
Completion	Male - Female pp						-4.4pp	-3.0

**Note:** Gap metrics are percentage points (pp). Where there is no data, this is due to suppression for GDPR, as cohort sizes are too small to report.

The data in Figure 6, shows the OfS student outcomes data dashboard<sup>40</sup> which is used to inform the regulation of condition B3. It indicates that NU London students demonstrate positive outcomes in terms of progression, but are slightly below the average for similar providers<sup>41</sup> for continuation. Notably, the data reveals that the rate of completion is lower than the average for similar providers.

Figure 6: Student outcomes: B3 dashboard 2017/18 - 2020/21



This trend further highlighted in the TEF data dashboard<sup>42</sup> as shown in Figure 7, where the difference in both continuation and completion rates against the benchmark value are demonstrated. Internal data on continuation and completion rates shows that our small numbers are the most significant factor in our performance being materially below the benchmarks. Of the small number that did not complete their degree within three years, the majority completed either after resits or a break in study<sup>43</sup>. This shows that students are engaged, motivated, and supported to complete their studies, in a way that works with their personal circumstances, for example by the Support to Study intervention (detailed in the

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>

<sup>41</sup> All OfS registered providers, Full-time UG first degree

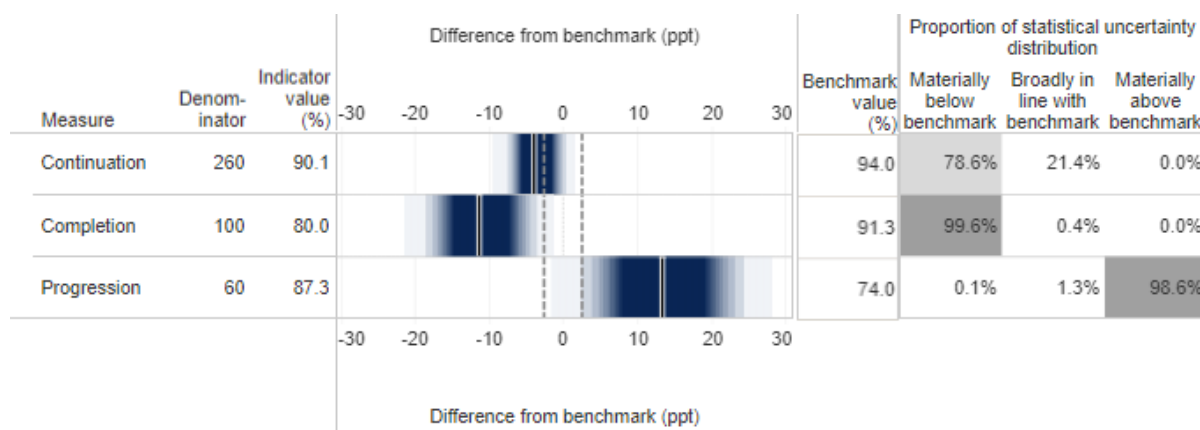
<sup>42</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/tef-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>

<sup>43</sup> Internal continuation and completion data 2017-18-2019-20. Due to GDPR this data cannot be published publicly

Whole Provider Approach). Rates of continuation and completion for students on standard undergraduate programmes are turning a corner. The year 4 rates of 91% for continuation and 83.3% for completion show an upwards trajectory and narrowing of the deficit with the TEF benchmark.

We will continue to monitor students at risk of non-continuation and completion, and this will be a key area of focus for student success interventions at NU London.

**Figure 7: TEF data dashboard student outcome measures**



More positively, our analysis of the TEF dashboard reveals encouraging results regarding student progression at NU London. In comparison to the benchmark, 98.6% of our students are deemed to be "materially above the benchmark," with only a minimal 0.1% falling into the category of "materially below the benchmark." This indicates a high level of student progression and suggests that our university is effectively supporting students in advancing through their academic journeys.

Building upon this outcome, and supported by our internal data monitoring, we have made the decision not to set any progression-based targets at this time. This aligns with our commitments made in our most recent TEF submission<sup>44</sup>.

### Indicator of risk 6: A continuation gap between mature and young students

The APP data dashboard shows a small continuation gap between mature and young students of 3.2pp, this is significantly less than the sector average of 8.7pp. Because of this, and in order to focus our resources as a smaller university, we will not set a specific objective or target for continuation for mature students, but will instead ensure that these students are targeted in wider intervention strategies and whole provider approaches.

By adopting this holistic approach, we aim to ensure that mature students receive the necessary support and resources to facilitate their academic progression and successful continuation at NU London. This approach allows us to maximise the impact of our intervention efforts across various student demographics while effectively utilising our limited resources.

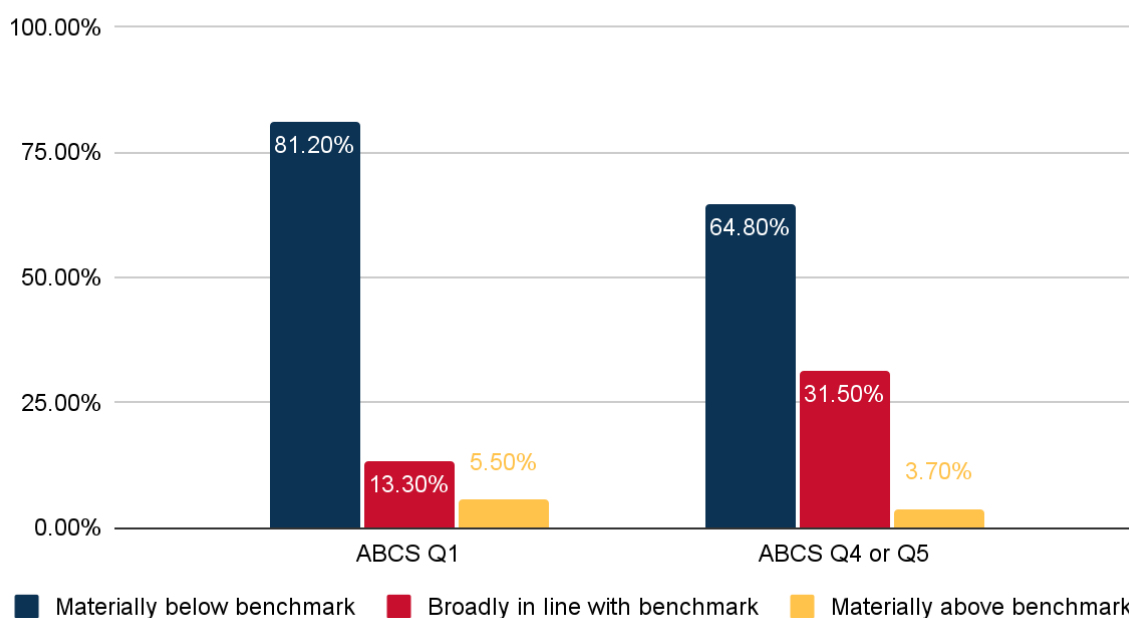
<sup>44</sup><https://tef2023.officeforstudents.org.uk/open-ancillary/open-ancillary-provider-submission/?id=e30036b0-2589-ee11-be36-0022481b5d22&summarystatement=7f5375b4-2589-ee11-be36-0022481b55ca>

## Indicator of risk 7 and 8: A continuation and completion gap between ABCS Q1 and Q5 students

Analysis of the OfS individualised data<sup>45</sup> has revealed an indicator of risk for ABCS Q1 students concerning both continuation and completion rates, this shows that they are less likely to continue and complete their degrees than students from ABCS Q5. This gap exceeds the sector average of 17.7pp for continuation and 23.2pp for completion. This risk is also echoed in the completion rates depicted in the TEF data dashboard<sup>46</sup>, as illustrated in Figure 8 below.

However, the presence of small, fluctuating datasets presents challenges in identifying the specific target group(s) affected by these trends. The inconsistency of data further complicates efforts to establish clear objectives or targets. While we acknowledge these challenges, we remain committed to monitoring these trends throughout the duration of the plan. However, we have chosen not to set specific objectives or targets at this time. Further rationale for this decision will be outlined in the conclusion.

Figure 8: TEF data dashboard: ABCS characteristic measure for continuation



### A.5 Degree apprenticeship learners

In 2021-22 our first cohort of degree apprenticeship students began their studies at NU London. The data available in the OfS APP data dashboard is presented below, along with a comparison to sector averages. The data presented in the dashboard currently reflects a single cohort of students, therefore many of the challenges relating to small data sets outlined throughout Annex A are echoed in this data set, and we are unable to analyse aggregated data until other cohorts are represented.

<sup>45</sup> OfS individualised unsuppressed data 2018-19 - 2021-22. Due to GDPR this data cannot be published publicly

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/tef-data-dashboard/>

**Figure 8: Traffic light summary report: APP data dashboard degree apprenticeships**

		NU London 2021/22	Sector average 2021/22
Access	TUNDRA gap Q5-Q1 pp	19.5	11.5
	ABCS gap Q5-Q1 pp	n/a	18.6
	IMD gap Q1-Q5 pp	-5.4	3.9
	Disabled %	6.4%	12.8%
	Global Majority %	37.4%	20.5%
	Mature %	56.4%	72.9%
	Free School Meals (FSM) %	8.8%	9.5%

**Note:** Gap metrics are percentage points (pp); non-gap metrics are percentage of the population (%).

We noted a higher proportion of Global Majority and mature students within our degree apprenticeship cohort compared to our undergraduate student body. This diversity is encouraging, especially considering that the Global Majority percentage exceeds the sector average for degree apprenticeships. Conversely, our degree apprenticeship cohort showed lower representation of disabled students, those eligible for FSM, and TUNDRA Q1 students compared to sector averages. These areas present opportunities for improvement.

Our most recent degree apprenticeship cohort data is presented below in Figure 9, we are pleased to see a growing number of learners each year.

**Figure 9: Internal data for 2023/24 cohort of degree apprentices.** Data source<sup>47</sup>

Access measure	NU London
TUNDRA gap Q5-Q1 pp	26.34
IMD gap Q1-Q5 pp	10.29
Disabled %	17.5%
Global Majority %	36.7%
Mature %	60.8%

It's encouraging to note an increase in learners declaring a disability, as well as the percentage of Global Majority students remaining stable above the sector average. We will maintain our focus on areas such as IMD moving forward.

We have decided against setting any specific objectives or targets for our degree apprenticeship learners in the APP but we will continue to prioritise monitoring the diversity of the cohort and their outcomes through our internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In

<sup>47</sup> Internal entry data for degree apprenticeships 2023/24 cohort

the Section 5 (Whole Provider Approach) we have explored how we intend to increase the number of underrepresented young people on our apprenticeships.

## **A.6 Conclusion**

It is positive to see areas of success across both access and success at NU London. We consistently see high numbers of students declaring a disability, which is significantly higher than the national average. These students perform well whilst they are with us, with no indicators of risk shown across the student lifecycle. We also see high rates of progression overall. These areas of success may be due to the smaller nature of our university, highlighting the personalised support provided.

While indicators of risk are evident in both continuation and completion rates, several challenges reduce our ability to pinpoint specific at-risk groups. Therefore, we have made the decision not to set numerical targets across continuation, completion, progression, and attainment at NU London in this APP. This decision is informed by several key factors.

Due to small datasets we are unable to disaggregate groups and identify those most vulnerable to challenges in continuation and completion. The dynamic nature of student populations and institutional context means that these indicators fluctuate annually. Therefore, setting numerical targets may not accurately address the root causes of potential issues.

Firstly, the data available for analysis is characterised by its small and volatile nature. This volatility stems from various factors, including the introduction of new degree programmes in September 2023 and previously small numbers in student registration. Over the years, our students have operated under a variety of academic regulations from the launch of NCH where the programmes were under three different sets of academic regulations, to the University receiving degree awarding powers and having our own academic regulations. This has resulted in there being a difference for continuation, completion and attainment regulations. As a result, it becomes challenging to establish reliable benchmarks or targets based on such data.

Looking in more detail at our internal data, we find that only a small number of students classified as not continuing or not completing their studies fail to earn their degrees entirely. It is much more common for these students to take a break in their studies and/or resit courses, ultimately extending their time to graduation beyond the typical three years. We remain committed to supporting students through our student success initiatives, accommodating their personal circumstances to help them achieve their academic goals.

Instead of committing to specific objectives and numerical targets in the APP, we will prioritise ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student outcomes across the key areas of continuation and completion. By continuously monitoring trends and patterns, we can remain agile in our response and adapt our strategies as needed to address emerging challenges. This approach allows for a more flexible and nuanced strategy to improve student success and performance over time, and as the new degree programmes are implemented across the University. Enhancing student outcomes across continuation, completion, progression,

and attainment will remain a priority at NU London and this is a key part of our commitments within our TEF submission<sup>48</sup>.

Regarding access to NU London, we will set objectives and targets relating to the risks affecting students from the highest areas of deprivation (IMD Q1) and Global Majority students. The chosen indicators are considered lead indicators and the actions associated with them are intended to also benefit the smaller intersectional or split metric cohorts as well as the ones specifically covered by the measure. For example, any action to benefit IMD Q1 students will also benefit FSM students. This approach allows the University to keep target groups more consistent through the different lifecycle stages and ensure underrepresented students benefit from the University's work at all lifecycle stages.

This assessment provides the basis for the focus areas in our new Access and Participation Plan, 2025-26 to 2028-29. As the size of our datasets grow, we will continue to monitor our performance across the lifecycle and for various target groups, whilst considering our own experiences as a smaller, specialised provider, as well as the broader national landscape concerning equality of opportunity.

We are committed to the focus areas we have chosen because they offer the greatest potential to make a significant impact on a large number of students and our university as a whole, despite our limited resources as a smaller provider. We therefore take a whole provider, strategic and embedded approach to our Plan to maximise the effectiveness of our efforts. This includes utilising the data and evidence that underpin our initiatives to ensure that they are well-informed and targeted for maximum impact.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://tef2023.officeforstudents.org.uk/open-ancillary/open-ancillary-provider-submission/?id=e30036b0-2589-ee11-be36-0022481b5d22&summarystatement=7f5375b4-2589-ee11-be36-0022481b55ca>



## Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan

### B.1 Intervention strategy 1: Targeted outreach and partnerships with schools, colleges and third party organisations

This intervention strategy focuses on increasing the proportion of students from IMD Q1 and Global Majority backgrounds at the university through:

- Effective partnerships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations - facilitating outreach and campus visits
- Preparing for Sixth Form/College Summer School
- Attainment raising through coaching programmes, metacognition, study and academic skills workshops
- Parent/carer and community engagement

A summary of the evidence base is presented in the table below:

Activity	Activity	Evidence base
Effective partnerships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations	Campus visits	<p>Mismatches in cultural capital can lead to potential students (particularly working-class students) feeling that HE or selective institutions ‘are not for them’. Working-class students can feel they do not belong in HE or particular institutions (Reay 2001<sup>49</sup>; Reay et al, 2009<sup>50</sup>; Reay et al 2010<sup>51</sup>).</p> <p>Campus visits are designed to introduce students to a diverse student population and can defamiliarise HE (Moore et al, 2013<sup>52</sup>) and create familiarity and a sense of belonging (Baker, 2020<sup>53</sup>).</p>

<sup>49</sup> Reay, D. (2001). Finding or losing yourself?: working-class relationships to education. *Journal of education policy*, 16(4), 333-346.

<sup>50</sup> Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2009). ‘Strangers in paradise’? Working-class students in elite universities. *Sociology*, 43(6), 1103-1121.

<sup>51</sup> Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2010). ‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British educational research journal*, 36(1), 107-124.

<sup>52</sup> Moore, J., Sanders, J., & Higham, L. (2013). Literature review of research into widening participation to higher education. Report to HEFCE and OFFA. AimHigher Research & Consultancy Network.

<sup>53</sup> Baker, Z. (2020). The vocational/academic divide in widening participation: the higher education decision making of further education students. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 44(6), 766-780.

		Students who have a greater sense of belonging tend to have higher motivation and more academic self-confidence (Pedler, Willis, & Nieuwoudt, 2021) <sup>54</sup> .
Effective partnerships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations	Use of student ambassadors on visits and in outreach	Studies show that using students ambassadors in outreach activities can have a positive impact on aspiration and attainment of young people (Gartland, 2015 <sup>55</sup> ). Ambassadors can dispel negative perceptions of HE (Austin and Hatt, 2005 <sup>56</sup> )  Student ambassadors can act as role models. A number of qualitative studies characterise student ambassadors 'role models' – a source of inspiration for students to look up to who can expand pupils' horizons about what is possible (Austin & Hatt, 2005 <sup>57</sup> Ylonen, 2010). <sup>58</sup>
Effective partnerships with schools, colleges and third sector organisations	Subject masterclasses and careers workshops	Activities to improve student expectations and link study with future career plans (e.g. subject masterclass and employability workshops) can have an impact on pupil expectations about the future impact on outcomes and increase motivation and engagement with work (Midgley et al., 2000) <sup>59</sup> . Evidence shows that schools have a significant importance in sustaining or changing expectations (Anders and Micklewright, 2015 <sup>60</sup> ) so running these workshops through schools and colleges could have a greater impact.
Get Ahead: Year 11 on campus summer school	Creating a peer network of support	First generation students may experience significant challenges in transition into HE - they may not have the support and encouragement provided by HE-experienced parents (Combs, 2022 <sup>61</sup> ). There is not currently the level of support that first generation students would like to have about HE (Morosanu et al 2010 <sup>62</sup> ). Students often lack a HE-experienced network of support but social networks can help students and

<sup>54</sup> Pedler, M. L., Willis, R., & Nieuwoudt, J. E. (2021). A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(3), 397–408.

<sup>55</sup> Gartland, C. (2015). Student ambassadors: 'role-models', learning practices and identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8), 1192-1211.

<sup>56</sup> Austin, M., & Hatt, S. (2005). The messengers are the message: A study of the effects of employing higher education student ambassadors to work with school students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 7(1), 1-8.

<sup>57</sup> Austin, M., & Hatt, S. (2005). The messengers are the message: A study of the effects of employing higher education student ambassadors to work with school students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 7(1), 1-8.

<sup>58</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329395971\\_Role\\_models\\_mentoring\\_and\\_university\\_applications\\_-\\_evidence\\_from\\_a\\_crossover\\_randomised\\_controlled\\_trial\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329395971_Role_models_mentoring_and_university_applications_-_evidence_from_a_crossover_randomised_controlled_trial_in_the_United_Kingdom)

<sup>59</sup> Midgley et al. (2000). The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS) 2000.

<sup>60</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283725528\\_Teenagers'\\_Expectations\\_of\\_Applying\\_to\\_University\\_How\\_do\\_they\\_Change](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283725528_Teenagers'_Expectations_of_Applying_to_University_How_do_they_Change)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> Morosanu, L., Handley, K., & O'Donovan, B. (2010). Seeking support: researching first-year students' experiences of coping with academic life. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(6), 665-678.

		potential students build their social capital and access relevant knowledge (Mishra, 2020 <sup>63</sup> ). Peer mentoring of students increases integration in HE environment (Collings et al, 2014 <sup>64</sup> ).
Get Ahead: Year 11 on campus summer school	Value added sessions inc. study skills, student life - External coach delivering keynote session - Academic taster sessions - Campus tour - Social activities - Q+A with current university students - Group/project work with other summer school participants	Research has shown that summer schools are positively associated with an increase in student confidence to progress to HE. Research shows that pupils' expectations about the future correlate with HE entry (Anders and Micklewright, 2015 <sup>65</sup> ), if students can see themselves at university and feel that they belong, they're more likely to apply.  Research has also found positive relationships between attainment and other soft skills, such as academic self-efficacy (Schneider and Preckel, 2017 <sup>66</sup> ). Non-cognitive skills are associated with positive outcomes for young people, evidence is strongest in relation to skills underpinning academic outcomes having a 'growth mindset' (Gutman and Schoon, 2013 <sup>67</sup> ).
Attainment raising - KS3 Aspire coaching programme	Coaching	There is some evidence for certain attitudes, aspirations and behaviours mediating the effects of poverty and affluence - intervening to change certain behaviours and beliefs of parents and children 'may make a contribution to reducing educational inequalities' (Goodman and Gregg, 2010). <sup>68</sup>  Oyserman et al. (2007 <sup>69</sup> ) tested an intervention that helped pupils see the connection between school and their future success. The intervention encouraged pupils to value obstacles and develop strategies to overcome them. The research found that the intervention increased the identity-based motivation among

<sup>63</sup> • Mishra, S. (2020). Social networks, social capital, social support and academic success in higher education: A systematic review with a special focus on underrepresented students. *Educational Research Review*, 29, 100307.

<sup>64</sup> Collings, R., Swanson, V., & Watkins, R. (2014). The impact of peer mentoring on levels of student wellbeing, integration and retention: a controlled comparative evaluation of residential students in UK higher education. *Higher Education*, 68, 927-942.

<sup>65</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283725528\\_Teenagers'\\_Expectations\\_of\\_Applying\\_to\\_University\\_How\\_do\\_they\\_Change](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283725528_Teenagers'_Expectations_of_Applying_to_University_How_do_they_Change)

<sup>66</sup> Schneider, M. and Preckel, F., (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *Psychological bulletin*, 143(6), p.565.

<sup>67</sup> Gutman, Leslie & Schoon, Ingrid. (2013). The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people. A literature review.

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/migrated/files/education-attainment-interventions-full.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Oyserman, D., Fryberg, S. A., & Yoder, N. (2007). Identity-based motivation and health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 1011-1027.

		participants.
Attainment raising workshops	Metacognition, study and academic skills workshops	There is evidence that metacognitive learning strategies (which aim to improve the way pupils approach and think about studying) and more general study skills interventions can contribute significantly to attainment (TASO <sup>70</sup> ). Research has also found positive relationships between attainment and other soft skills, such as academic self-efficacy (Schneider and Preckel, 2017 <sup>71</sup> )
Parent/carer and community engagement	Parent/carer and community engagement	Family or broader cultural perspectives can be negative towards HE and deter students from considering it as relevant. Higher education can be an alien habitus (O'Shea 2020 <sup>72</sup> ; Reay et al, 2005).  Family and friends can be an important influence on decision-making (Brooks 2010 <sup>73</sup> ). Parent engagement outreach designed to support their thinking about the potential of HE. Engaging parents can be effective in encouraging support of offspring (Fischer et al, 2019 <sup>74</sup> ).

## B.2 Intervention strategy 2: Holistic and personalised application and transition support

This intervention strategy focuses on increasing the proportion of students from IMD Q1 and Global Majority backgrounds at the university through:

- Pre application support such as personal statement workshops, contextual admissions and student ambassador mentoring
- Academic skills workshops and further 121 support for transition
- Travel funds, NU London bursary and reduced rate accommodation

A summary of the evidence base is presented in the table below:

<sup>70</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/study-and-soft-skills-support-pre-entry/>

<sup>71</sup> Schneider, M. and Preckel, F., (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. Psychological bulletin, 143(6), p.565.

<sup>72</sup> O'Shea, S. (2021). "Kids from here don't go to uni": Considering first in family students' belonging and entitlement within the field of higher education in Australia. European Journal of Education, 56(1), 65-77.

<sup>73</sup> Brooks, R. (2003). Young People's Higher Education Choices: The role of family and friends. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 24(3), 283–297

<sup>74</sup> Fischer, S., Barnes, R. K., & Kilpatrick, S. (2019). Equipping parents to support their children's higher education aspirations: A design and evaluation tool. Educational review, 71(2), 198-217.

Activity	Activity	Evidence base
NU London Plus: Application support and readiness programme	Application support	<p>Students without HE-experienced support may be unable to effectively navigate the application process and may submit an ineffective application or disadvantageous choices. Under-resourced schools may not be able to support their students as much as other more advantaged schools. Disadvantaged students may lack advice and do not always make optimum application choices (Wyness, 2017<sup>75</sup>).</p> <p>Outreach programmes with application guidance and support can help disadvantaged students negotiate the decision-making process and make more informed choices about HE (McCabe et al, 2022<sup>76</sup>).</p>
Review of contextual admissions policies and analysis of data	Contextual admissions	<p>Attainment outcomes are informed by student context – the same grade achieved in different contexts may indicate different academic potential. The use of contextual offers shows promise for a fair application system (Boliver et al, 2015<sup>77</sup>). Even where there are equalities in application rates, there are differences in offers that result. Consistency in the use of contextual offers could increase fairness (Mountford-Zimdars and Moore, 2020<sup>78</sup>).</p>
Support for transition from offer to Year 1	Pre entry academic skills workshops	<p>Students from disadvantaged schools may have less opportunity to develop the academic skills they need to transition effectively to HE study. Some students felt they didn't have opportunity to develop independent learning skills (MacFarlane, 2018<sup>79</sup>). Interventions inducting students' into HE study expectations can increase student confidence. Arrival support for developing academic skills can help students develop a positive learner identity. It can also increase their confidence (Jones, 2018<sup>80</sup>).</p>

<sup>75</sup> Wyness, G. (2017). Rules of the Game: Disadvantaged Students and the University Admissions Process. Sutton Trust.

<sup>76</sup> McCabe, C., Keast, K., & Kaya, M. S. (2022). Barriers and facilitators to university access in disadvantaged UK adolescents by ethnicity: a qualitative study. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(10), 1434-1446.

<sup>77</sup> Boliver, V., Gorard, S., & Siddiqui, N. (2015). Will the use of contextual indicators make UK higher education admissions fairer?. *Education Sciences*, 5(4), 306-322.

<sup>78</sup> Mountford-Zimdars, A., & Moore, J. (2020). Identifying merit and potential beyond grades: Opportunities and challenges in using contextual data in undergraduate admissions at nine highly selective English universities. *Oxford Review of Education*, 46(6), 752-769.

<sup>79</sup> MacFarlane, K. (2018). Higher education learner identity for successful student transitions. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(6), 1201-1215.

<sup>80</sup> Jones, S. (2018). Expectation vs experience: might transition gaps predict undergraduate students' outcome gaps?. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 42(7), 908-921.

		Students who lack HE experienced advice and support may be unaware of hidden curriculum expectations e.g.around academic expectations/marketing criteria for success etc. There is a hidden curriculum of HE expectations (Koutsouris et al 2021 <sup>81</sup> ). Medical students felt being taught the hidden curriculum helped them think critically about their studies (Neve and Collett 2018 <sup>82</sup> ).
Financial support package	NU London bursary	Financial support has been shown to be an effective mechanism for supporting students' continuation, progression, and attainment (TASO 2023 <sup>83</sup> ). Receiving a bursary can reduce a student's chance of discontinuing <sup>84</sup> (Harrison et al., 2018 <sup>85</sup> ) point to a range of other positive impacts that students derive from the receipt of financial support. These include capacity building around the ability to focus on their studies, have a social life and build a social network, and in terms of developing self-esteem
Financial support package	NU London travel fund	Students are choosing not to attend Open Days due to train fares - restricting their opportunity to explore the different potential environments, they have reduced the options available to them before they even apply. This was particularly seen amongst WP students, with those living within POLAR quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods, less likely to have attended open days due to the cost <sup>86</sup> . Providing support with travel costs will hopefully support students to overcome this.

<sup>81</sup> Koutsouris, G., Mountford-Zimdars, A., & Dingwall, K. (2021). The 'ideal higher education student: Understanding the hidden curriculum to enable institutional change. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 26(2), 131-147.

<sup>82</sup> Neve, H., & Collett, T. (2018). Empowering students with the hidden curriculum. *The clinical teacher*, 15(6), 494-499.

<sup>83</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/financial-support-post-entry/>

<sup>84</sup> Elisabeth Moores & Adrian P. Burgess (2022): Financial support differentially aids retention of students from households with lower incomes: a UK case study, *Studies in Higher Education*

<sup>85</sup> Harrison, N., Davies, S., Harris, R., & Waller, R. (2018). Access, participation and capabilities: theorising the contribution of university bursaries to students' wellbeing, flourishing and success. *Cambridge Journal of Education*.

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/influence-cost-living-student-decision-making>

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Northeastern University - London

Provider UKPRN: 10048199

## 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 CPIH

**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	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
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	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
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	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
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	*	*	*

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Northeastern University - London

Provider UKPRN: 10048199

### 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 OIS 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	£80,000	£89,000	£103,000	£118,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£99,000	£110,000	£127,000	£146,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£15,000	£17,000	£20,000	£23,000

**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 (£)	£53,000	£59,000	£68,000	£78,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£22,000	£25,000	£29,000	£33,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£5,000	£5,000	£6,000	£7,000
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>£89,000</b>	<b>£103,000</b>	<b>£118,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>£89,000</b>	<b>£103,000</b>	<b>£118,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£99,000	£110,000	£127,000	£146,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£99,000</b>	<b>£110,000</b>	<b>£127,000</b>	<b>£146,000</b>
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£15,000	£17,000	£20,000	£23,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%





