

The Trafford College Group

Access and Participation Plan: 2020-25

Introduction

The Trafford College Group (TCG) is committed to Widening Access and Participation to Higher Education and ensuring that individuals with the potential to benefit from higher education have every possible opportunity made available to them.

As a mixed economy provider of Further and Higher Education that serves the local and wider community, the success of the Group is contextualised to meeting the needs of our local economy of South Manchester and the wider context of Greater Manchester.

The Group now serves a large number of students across the South Manchester sub-region including 3300 young people, over 4000 adult learners and 1500 apprentices. The provision is located at three main campuses: Altrincham, Stockport and Stretford.

The Group has approximately 600 prescribed-Higher Education students studying a range of full-time (FT) programmes providing progression from Level 3 or part-time (PT) programmes for adult students in employment looking to up-skill or change career direction.

The provision has full QAA Confidence following a review in June 2018. The provision is evaluated annually by Governors and Leaders in The Trafford College Group Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document (SED), including the monitoring and evaluation of progress against the Access and Participation Plan (APP).

Vision

The Group's Vision, approved by the Board of the Corporation, is that all students will secure employment and progress in their careers because of the knowledge, skills and work ethic they have developed at the Group. Businesses will recognise TCG as the leading provider of a skilled workforce, meeting Greater Manchester's skills priorities and supporting the economic growth of the region.

Mission and Purpose

The Group's Mission, approved by the Board of the Corporation, is to provide students with an outstanding educational experience with excellent qualification outcomes, the acquisition of industry standard skills and the development of the personal attributes and resilience to enable them to achieve their potential and fulfil their career aims by:

1. being bold in all that we do
2. being ambitious
3. showing respect
4. working collaboratively
5. demonstrating a professional attitude

The Group's Purpose is 'Unlocking Potential, Fostering Success'.

The Group provides academic, technical and professional Further and Higher Education ensuring that all students gain the education, skills and personal development they need in order to meet the local and regional skills challenge and putting them ahead of the competition in terms of securing meaningful employment and progression to higher level study.

The Group places the development of employability and professional skills at the core of its programmes, which are underpinned practically by:

- digital entitlement
- values-driven curriculum
- emphasis on professional behaviours
- the setting of high-level standards for both aspirations and achievement.

1. Assessment of Performance

The assessment of the Group's performance for the APP has been undertaken using the Office for Students (OfS) access and participation data resources with consideration given to key performance measures. This has been carried out to allow a consistent approach to year-on-year monitoring of performance and tracking against targets set. Due to small datasets, we have focussed on 'all undergraduates' In addition, internal datasets have been included to enhance the assessment of current performance in areas either where the access and participation resources provide limited insight or where we were able to provide more recent sets of data (e.g. 2018-19, 2019-20). It is important to note any internal data is for indication only and is not validated OfS data. All internal data is from our central Pro-Solution system.

The Group has implemented a new Higher Education student record system to allow enhanced recording of student access, academic progress and outcomes together with the ability to report outcomes against all student characteristics. This significantly improves the ability of the Group to report against all student characteristics and will enable even closer monitoring of any gaps between groups. It will also enable the Group to identify and address any gaps as they exist or emerge year-on-year, and to put in place appropriate actions.

OfS continuation data is available up to 2016-17 for full time (FT) students and 2015-16 for part time (PT) students. The Group's most recent internal data sets for 2018-19 show further improvements in continuation rates to an overall 83%. Where relevant, internal data has been included and 'greyed out' in tables alongside OfS data.

OfS attainment data measures attainment for First Degree students, representing the minority of the Group's student body. To complement this, the Group has developed a reporting system that monitors student attainment for all students, informed by outcomes of formal assessment boards and recorded by registry. The internal report includes the most recent attainment data for First Degree students, where high grade is 2:1 or above, and 'Other Undergraduates' (other UG) where high grade is merit or above. This data can be split in to various demographics, and included to support analysis of trends.

Central data on student progression (e.g. DLHE and TEF4) has limitations with the sample size and eligibility cohorts, as well as response rates, but is the best indicator at this time. It is within The Trafford College Group Improvement Plan 2019-20 to develop better informed internal systems to measure and review student progression data rather than a reliance on external sources (e.g. DLHE, HESA) which have limitations for FECs. We are committed to completing an initial destinations survey by August 2021, capturing destinations of all student groups, with the intention to achieve this for at least the last two academic years of cohorts (i.e. 2018 and 2019 completers). The core metrics are based on 2 years of data, giving the Group an aggregated score of 92.6% whilst year 1 (2015-16) is non-reportable. Our DLHE shows 97% of our graduates progressed into employment or further study, 61% employed, 11% studying, 18% employed and studying, and just 3% unemployed.

Our main full time student groups measured by DLHE are the Health, Care and Early Years group and the Creative Arts students. The former progress in to local skill gaps and follow their career choices in such areas as Early Years practitioners, teaching assistants and social care workers; all of which are not classified as HSE, yet serve a purpose to the student and the local area. The Group would suggest that there are related mitigations associated data for Arts students, in which the nature of the subject and aspirations in to self-employment takes much more time to establish. This mitigation has been supported by the DfE research report (Sept 2016) that suggests a reduced probability of a HSE outcome, within a specific time frame, for arts subjects. This impact is intensified when taking into account the domicile variable; the North West region is one of only two nationally where there is a reduced probability of a HSE outcome, which is again likely to be a consequence of the relationship between variables and not chance.

Summary of target areas

Access (A). The Group will continue to widen participation with a with commitments to the following targets:

- A1 Reduce gaps in participation of young students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5
- A2 Reduce gaps in participation of part time students from POLAR4Q1 compared to POLARQ5
- A3 Raise participation rates of Care Leavers

Success (S). The Group will continue to improve continuation rates, with commitments to the following targets:

- S1 Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of full time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5
- S2 Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of part time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5
- S3 Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of BAME students compared to White students
- S4 Eliminate the continuation rate gaps of full time disabled students compared to non-disabled students

The Group will continue to improve attainment rates, with commitments to the following targets:

- S5 Eliminate attainment gaps of part time Asian students on 'other UG' compared to White students.

Progression (P). The Group will continue to raise progression to employment or further study, with commitments to the following targets:

- P1 Reduce the gap of progression in to highly skilled employment or further study of IMDQ1-2, compared to IMDQ3-5 students
- P2 Reduce gaps in progression rates in to employment or further study of BAME compared to White students.
- P3 Reduce the gap in progression rates in to highly skilled employment or further study of mature students, compared to young students.

Section 1.1 provides a detailed analysis of performance for all groups through the student journey, from access to success and progression. Where data is available, an analysis has been provided by FT and PT students, with similar student numbers across these modes of study.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

The Group has a strong record in recruiting students from lower economic groups (IMD quintiles 1-2) and low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 quintiles 1-2).

Full Time: Table 1 shows that students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 represented 54% of the population in 2017-18, compared to the sector average of 42%. This is a similar picture when analysing POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2, with students from these groups representing 44% of the FT student body in 2017-18, 16% points above the Higher Education sector. This increased to 51% for FT new entrants in 2018-19 (internal data).

Table 1: Full time student intake by IMD and Polar compared to sector (source: OfS DataDashboard)

IMD	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
TCG IMDQ1	31%	29%	35%	36%	31%
TCG IMDQ5	19%	18%	12%	10%	14%
TCG IMDQ1&2	52%	53%	63%	62%	54%
Sector IMD1&2	38%	40%	41%	41%	42%
POLAR					
POLAR 1	19%	23%	23%	14%	23%
POLAR 5	26%	30%	16%	20%	24%
POLAR 1&2	38%	43%	45%	48%	44%
Sector POLAR 1&2	27%	27%	27%	28%	28%

The percentage of full time students from IMD Q1 was significantly higher than from IMD Q5 and the gap between the two groups in year 5 remains high at -17%. This shows that the proportion of full time students from the most disadvantaged areas is consistently greater than the proportion from the least disadvantaged areas. Therefore, no action is required.

However, if we analyse this further within our own most recent data, we can report a gap between IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 groups for full time young students (18-21years); with 22% of the FT young student population from IMDQ1 compared to 48% from IMDQ5. The proportion from IMDQ1 has increased steadily over the last 4-years; with this identified as a target area to continue to increase by a further 5% points over the next 5-years of the plan.

Table 2: FT Young student intake by IMD (source: Internal Pro-Solution)

IMD	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
TCG IMDQ1	16%	19%	20%	22%
TCG IMDQ5	35%	45%	54%	48%

Target area A1: Reduce gaps in participation of young students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5

Part Time: There is a smaller proportion of PT students from low participation groups compared to the Group's full time cohorts, reflective of the fact that the vast majority of PT students are employed full time in the STEM sector and study on a 'day-release' model.

Table 2 shows that there has been a fairly consistent intake on of IMD Q1-2 students, at 38% in 2017-18 and within 3% of national data (Table 2). However, within this, those from the most deprived (IMD1) have declined from 21% to 17%. Likewise, intakes of students from POLAR4 Q1-2 has declined from 33% to 25% and now 15% below national data. Within this, POLAR4 Q1 has reduced from 13% to 9%, and is significantly below POLAR4 Q5 at 27%. As such, raising participation of PT students from POLAR4Q1 is considered the focus for greatest impact and a target area.

Table 2: Part time student intake by IMD and POLAR4 compared to sector (source: OfS DataDashboard)

IMD	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
TCG IMDQ1	21%	18%	27%	17%	17%
TCG IMDQ5	21%	12%	22%	23%	26%
TCG IMDQ1&2	40%	38%	48%	40%	38%
Sector IMD1&2	40%	40%	40%	40%	41%
POLAR					
POLAR 1	15%	11%	18%	13%	9%
POLAR 5	28%	31%	24%	33%	27%
POLAR 1&2	33%	33%	41%	28%	25%
Sector POLAR 1&2	37%	37%	37%	37%	40%

Target area A2: Reduce gaps in participation of part time students from POLAR4Q1 compared to POLARQ5

Success

Non-continuation

Full Time: Continuation rates for IMD1-2 have declined slightly over the last 5-years from 86% to 82% and 5% points below national data (Table 3). Continuation rates for POLAR4 Q1-2 have also shown a decline from 87% to 75% and 15% below national data (Table 4).

Internal data shows a significant improvement over the last 2-years, with continuation rates of 87% for FT students (2018-19 starts continuing in 2019-20). Data splits by IMD are available through OfS datasets, identifying a gap of 11.5% points between continuation rates of IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students, and therefore a target area for improvement.

Data is available by POLAR4, as illustrated. This shows an overall continuation rate of 92% for POLAR4 Q1-2 students at 75%, some 15% points below the sector. However, our most recent internal data (Pro-Solution 2018-19) shows continuation rates for this group at 92% and with no significant gaps.

Table 3: Full Time Continuation Rates by IMD category compared to sector (source: OfS DataDashboard)

IMD	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
TCG IMDQ1	80%	83%	82%	83%	79%
TCG IMDQ5	90%	90%	80%	DP	DP
TCG IMDQ1&2	86%	84%	84%	82%	82%
Sector IMD1&2	88%	88%	87%	87%	87%

Table 4: Full Time Continuation Rates by POLAR4 category compared to sector (source: OfS DataDashboard)

POLAR	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
POLAR 1	90%	DP	N	N	N
POLAR 5	90%	85%	80%	DP	DP
POLAR 1&2	87%	90%	75%	75%	75%
Sector POLAR 1&2	91%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Part Time: Group performance for IMD1-2 remains above the sector average at 66% in 2016-17 (+5%), but shows a decline of 15% points from 81% in 2011-12 (Table 5). Within this, IMD1 has declined from 80% to 53%.

POLAR4 data is limited (OfS). Internal data shows that continuation rates for POLAR4 Q1-2 students was 84% in 2016-17 (55 starts), 72% in 2017-18 (25) and 74% in 2018-19 (50) – some 2% above sector average. For POLAR4 Q3-5 this was 81%, 83% and 72% respectively.

Table 5: Part Time Continuation Rates by IMD compared to sector (source: OfS DataDashboard)

IMD	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
TCG IMDQ1	80%	70%	80%	75%	53%
TCG IMDQ5	80%	85%	95%	85%	85%
TCG IMDQ1&2	81%	73%	84%	71%	66%
Sector IMD1&2	61%	61%	61%	63%	61%

Target area S1: Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of full time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5
 Target area S2: Reduce gaps in continuation rates of part time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5

Attainment

OfS attainment data only includes attainment for First Degree students. The Group has developed a reporting system that monitors student attainment across all levels and groups.

First Degree (Full Time): Table 6 provides attainment data for First Degree students, where high grade is 2:1 or above. Over 98% of our First Degree students are on FT provision and therefore PT data is not included for analysis. This data can be split in to various demographics, including POLAR groups below.

Full Time First Degree students achieve well, with 61% high grades (2:1 profile or above), though high grades have declined slightly on First Degree programmes across all POLAR4 cohorts. The indication for 2018-19 is an overall attainment of 65% high grades, including 26% first class. There is an attainment (high grade) gap for POLAR4 Q1-2 students, though reduced student numbers make this less significant for target areas of improvement within this plan, though addressed through programme area improvement plans.

Table 6: Attainment of high grades for Full Time First Degree students by POLAR4 First Degree (Full Time) – (source, internal data, Pro-Solution)

POLAR4	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
1-2	45	29	64	38	21	55	52	30	58
3-5	56	39	70	51	29	57	47	30	64
Overall	101	68	67	89	50	56	99	60	61

Other Undergraduate (Full Time): There has been a significant improvement in student attainment rates on 'other undergraduate'. Table 7 shows that the proportion of students receiving high grades has increased from 47% to 64%, with a similar profile for 2018-19. Within this, all groups have improved, including a 27% points improvement for POLAR4 Q1-2 students.

Table 7: Attainment of high grades for Full Time 'other UG' students by POLAR4 (source, internal data, Pro-Solution)

Full Time POLAR4	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
1-2	38	17	45	49	19	39	50	36	72
3-5	48	23	48	57	24	42	70	41	59
Overall	86	41	47	106	43	41	120	77	64

Comparing attainment of lowest and highest participation neighbourhoods in 2017-18, 90% of POLAR4 Q1 achieved a high grade, compared to 78% at POLAR4 Q5. Therefore, this is not identified as a target area within the APP, but will be considered within our annual internal improvement plans to increase attainment of all groups.

Other Undergraduate (Part Time): Overall, attainment rates have also risen (58%), but not at the same rate as FT and are 6% below that of FT students (Table 8). POLAR4 Q1-2 have decreased slightly from 57% to 55%, whilst POLAR4 Q3-5 have increased from 50% to 59%. Due to low numbers and proportionality, these are grouped by lower (P1-2) and higher (P3-5) participation groups. There is a commitment to ensure these are reported by individual groups from June 2020. As a result of a small negative trend in P1-2 attainment, this is an area we are committed to reviewing internally, but is not identified as a target area for improvement in the plan due to proportionality.

Table 8: Attainment of high grades for Part Time 'other UG' students by POLAR4 (source, internal data, Pro-Solution)

Part Time POLAR4	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
1-2	46	26	57	68	41	60	64	35	55
3-5	103	51	50	111	65	59	129	76	59
Overall	149	77	51	180	106	59	193	111	58

Progression to employment or further study

Full Time: Table 9 (TEF4 data) shows that overall, across a 3-year period, progression is good at nearly 93% and within 2% of sector performance. However, progression to highly skilled employment is significantly low. Progression to employment or further study is similar across these groups. POLAR4 Q1-2 at 89% is slightly above POLAR4 Q3-5 at 87%, but not significant. 93% of those from IMD 3-5 progress, with no data available for IMD Q1-2. In each of these measures, progression rates are slightly below the sector, with POLAR4 Q1-2 at 4% below and POLAR4 Q3-5 almost 7% below.

Progression to HSE, reliant upon the measures used, is notably below sector performance for all student groups at 45% and 50% for POLAR4 Q1-2 and POLAR4 Q3-5 respectively and 62% for IMD Q3-5 (IMD Q1-2 data not available).

The DLHE is the main source that the College uses to inform us of the progression of our students. The progression data within the OfS data set is largely unreportable for 2012-13 – 2015-16, however data is available for 2016-17. As there is no data for progression for comparison between IMD 1 and IMD 5, we have analysed IMD 1-2 compared with those from IMD 3-5. The percentage of full time undergraduates from IMD 1-2 who progressed into highly skilled employment or further study was 46% compared to IMD 3-5 at 55%, highlighting a percentage difference of 9% points, and a target area for improvement.

Part Time: Table 9 (TEF data) shows that overall, across a 3-year period, progression is good at nearly 98% and in line with the sector. Progression to highly skilled employment is at 68%, some 6% points below the sector.

Progression to employment or further study is similar across POLAR4 and IMD groups, where data is available, at 97%. Again, there are no gaps between these groups for the highly skilled measure at 70-71%, though these fall below the sector. In particular, those from IMD Q1-2 are 9% points below.

To note, around one-third of PT students' progress from the HNC to HND, with the decision often determined by the employer need, with the vast majority employer-funded. In both 2016-17 and 2017-18, 100% of those that progressed on to the HND completed and achieved that academic year.

Table 9: student destination data (Source: TEF4)

Indicator (%)	Indicator%					Difference to benchmark %						
	Core metric	POLAR			National IMD		Core metric	POLAR			National IMD	
		Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	Q5	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5		Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	Q5	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5
Full-time												
Employment or further study	92.6	89.1	86.8	R	93.0	-1.8	-4.0	-6.8	R	-2.4		
Highly skilled employment or further study	60.4	45.7	50.5	R	62.2	-9.8	-16.7	-15.7	R	-11.0		
Part-time												
Employment or further study	97.7	97.8	97.4	DP	97.7	-0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3	-0.5		
Highly skilled employment or further study	68.4	71.7	70.1	DP	71.0	-6.5	-2.7	-5.4	-9.2	-6.4		

Target area P1: Reduce the gap of progression in to highly skilled employment or further study of IMDQ1-2, compared to IMDQ3-5 students

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (BAME)

Access

Over the previous five years the Group has remained relatively static in terms of BAME students accessing higher education at the group. The OfS dataset (table 10a) shows the proportion of BAME students accessing the Group is below the sector average, however this analysis looks at all students within England accessing HE. In the Context of the Group, 80% of students live within a 20-mile radius of the College and 'travel to learn', therefore our student body is reflective of the wider community (table 10b) with around 15% of HE students drawn from ethnic groups other than non-white.

Due to the demographics of Greater Manchester, TCG doesn't consider this a gap. However, we are committed to continuing to provide an accessible offer for all student groups, and shall continue to monitor those accessing HE against ethnicity groups.

Table 10a: Proportion of students accessing HE at TCG by ethnicity ((OfS dataset)

FT	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
White	82%	80%	81%	71%	83%
Black	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%
Asian	7%	7%	9%	20%	7%
Mixed	5%	5%	3%	2%	3%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%

Table 10b: Proportions of ethnic groups in the local population (Internal data, full 2018-29 HE Cohort, ONS data for Stockport, Trafford and GM)

Ethnicity	TCG 2018-19	Stockport	Trafford	GM
Asian/Asian British	6%	5%	8%	10%
Black British	3%	1%	3%	3%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	3%	2%	3%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%
White	88%	92%	86%	83%

Success

Non-continuation

Full Time: Table 11 reports that continuation rates for FT white students has shown a decline from 88% to 79%, and 12% below national performance. However, this has improved to 87% based on the most recent internal data for 2018-19 entrants continuing to 2019-20 (internal Pro-Solution data).

BAME has remained relatively steady at 81% in 2016-17 and 7% below national performance. The gap between white and BAME has reduced over the 5-years of OfS data, with just a 2% difference between white and BAME at 79% and 81% respectively. However, the most recent internal data shows a decline for this group to 64% (9 of 14 entrants). Splits were 40% continuation of black students (2 of 5) and 71% continuation of Asian students (5 of 7). Due to low numbers and proportionately of full time BAME and split groups, these are not a specific target area but will be monitored through our reporting systems and working groups; with an overall target area for BAME as a whole.

Table 11: Full Time Continuation Rates % by ethnicity (source: OfS DataDashboard)

Ethnicity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
White	88%	85%	85%	85%	79%
Sector White	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%
BAME	83%	85%	75%	80%	81%
Sector BAME	90%	90%	88%	88%	88%

Part Time: Table 12 shows that the PT continuation rates have declined. The most recent set of OfS data shows no significant gaps between ethnic groups, but the most recent Group internal data (2018-19, Pro-Solution) shows a significant difference, with BAME rates at 50%, though represents around just 5% of our student body in this group.

Due to proportionality of BAME groups, these are not split on to BAME sub-group, but with the commitment do so for future analysis by September 2020.

An overall target for BAME across full and part time is included as a target, with a current merged rate across full and part time at 56% compared to around 83% for white students.

Table 12: Part Time Continuation Rates % by ethnicity (source: OfS DataDashboard)

Ethnicity	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
White	88%	85%	85%	85%	79%
Sector White	63%	63%	63%	65%	64%
BAME	83%	85%	75%	80%	81%
Sector BAME	60%	59%	58%	60%	58%

Target area S2: Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of BAME students compared to White students

Attainment

OfS attainment data only includes attainment for First Degree students. The Group has developed a reporting system that monitors student attainment. The data below provides attainment of high grades data. Over 98% of First Degree students are on full time provision and therefore part time data is not included for analysis.

First Degree (Full Time): Table 13 shows that Full Time First Degree students achieve very well, with 61% high grades, and no significant difference by ethnicity. The indication for 2018-19 is an overall attainment of 65% high grades, including 26% first class. Due to proportionality of BAME groups, these are not split on to BAME sub-group, but with the commitment do so for future analysis by September 2020.

Table 13: First Degree First Degree Attainment % by ethnicity (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Full Time Ethnicity	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
BAME	25	14	56	23	9	39	23	13	57
NON-BAME	77	54	70	66	41	62	76	47	62
Overall	102	68	67	89	50	56	99	60	61

Other Undergraduate (Full Time): Table 14a shows there is just a 2% points difference between ethnic groups on other UG programme, reducing from a 10% points gap in 2015-16. There has been a significant improvement in student attainment rates for non-BAME students, increasing from 45% to 65% and BAME increasing from 55% to 63%. Overall, the proportion of students receiving high grades has increased from 47% to 64%, with a similar prediction for 2018-19. Within this, all groups have improved, including a 27% points improvement for Polar 1-2 students. Again, due to proportionality of BAME groups, these are not split on to BAME sub-group, but with the commitment do so for future analysis by September 2020.

Table 14a: Full Time 'other UG' High Attainment % by ethnicity (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Full Time Ethnicity	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
BAME	20	11	55	40	8	20	24	15	63
NON-BAME	67	30	45	66	35	53	96	62	65
Overall	87	41	47	106	43	41	120	77	64

Other Undergraduate (Part Time): Whilst small proportions are to be considered, there is a notable gap between attainment of PT BAME and non-BAME students (Table 14b). In 2017-18 this represents a 36% gap, with BAME declining by 9% points over a 3-year period, whilst non-BAME increased by 15% over the same time. In analysing low attainment rates of BAME, the majority of the population were Asian (43/49) – with an attainment of just 26%, representing a 41% gap compared to non-BAME. As such, a target area for improvement is to increase the attainment rate of BAME students, with a particular focus on Asian students.

Table 14b: Part Time 'other UG' High Attainment % by ethnicity (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Part Time	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
BAME	10	4	40	27	15	56	49	15	31
NON-BAME	140	73	52	153	91	59	103	69	67
Overall	150	77	51	180	106	59	152	84	55

Target area S5: Eliminate attainment gaps of part time Asian students on 'other UG' compared to White students.

Progression to employment or further study

Full Time: Table 15 (TEF data) shows that progression to employment or study for white students (94%) is in line with the sector performance, with a 10% points gap compared to BAME at 85% and 6% below sector. The proportion of students progressing to highly skilled employment or study is the same between white and BAME (around 60%), but 11% and 6% below the sector respectively.

Part Time: Table 15 (TEF4 data) shows that progression to employment or further study is very strong with white students at 98% and above the sector performance. Data splits are not available for BAME, but this group are 6% points below sector. There is a gap when looking at highly skilled employment, with white at 69% and BAME at 57%; both of which fall 6% below sector. This will be addressed within College improvement plans.

Table 15: TEF4 progression to employment by ethnicity (Source: TEF4)

	Indicator%			Difference against benchmark%		
	Core metric	Ethnicity		Core metric	Ethnicity	
		White	BME		White	BME
Full-time						
Employment or further study	92.6	94.5	84.7	-1.8	-0.9	-5.9
Highly skilled employment or further study	60.4	60.0	61.1	-9.8	-11.5	-6.6
Part-time						
Employment or further study	97.7	98.4	DP	-0.2	0.3	-6.0
Highly skilled employment or further study	68.4	69.3	57.7	-6.5	-6.4	-6.1

Target area P2: Reduce gaps in progression rates in to employment or further study of BAME compared to White students.

1.3 Mature students

Access

The Higher Education landscape suggests a decline in mature students entering higher education. As a FEC Group that delivers higher education and in line with trends of college based higher education, we tend to attract students over the age of 21.

Full Time: In 2017-18 mature students accounted for 66% of the full-time student body. This declined by 9% points compared to 2016-17, but reversed in 2018-19, with mature students accounting for 77% of full time new entrants (+11%).

Part Time: There are similar proportions of mature students on part time provision, with 63% in 2017-18, increasing slightly from 59% the previous year. Again, the proportion of mature entrants increased in 2018-19 at 75% (+12%).

Success

Non-continuation

Full Time: Table 16 shows that based on the last 5-years of OfS data, continuation rates declined by the same level across age groups, with no significant gap (2%). When compared to sector average, continuation rates of young students were 10% points below, though most recent internal data shows some improvements (+7%).

Continuation rates were 4% below the sector average at 2017-18, with most recent internal data (2018-19, Pro-Solution) showing improvements to 90% continuation rates for mature, compared to 89% for Young, and therefore with no gaps between ages.

Table 16: Full Time Continuation Rates % by age (source: OfS DataDashboard)

AGE	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Young_Under21	87%	85%	77%	86%	82%
Young_Under21 Sector	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Mature_Age21andOver	86%	84%	87%	84%	80%
Mature_Age21andOver Sector	86%	85%	85%	85%	84%

Part Time: Table 17 shows the steady improvement in continuation rates for young students up until 2017-18 of data, and above sector average (+3%). Internal data shows further improvements to 78% for 2018-19 entrants. OfS data shows a 5-year decline for mature students, from 88% to 73%. However, internal data (2018-19, Pro-Solution) shows a reverse in trend, with continuation rates at 78%, in line with our young students and above sector average by 16% points. There is a difference of around 10% points between FT and PT students based on the most recent internal data, with PT rates below. As there are no gaps between mature and younger students, this is not a target area for the APP. However, we have a commitment to address overall continuation rates across all groups, including part time, identified within our annual evaluation and improvement plan; monitored through our deliberative and executive committees.

Table 17: Part Time Continuation Rates % by Age (source: OfS DataDashboard)

AGE	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Young_Under21	72	75	90	76	77
Young Sector	68	69	71	73	74
Mature_Age21andOver	88	82	86	83	73
Mature Sector	62	62	62	63	62

Attainment

OfS attainment data only includes attainment for First Degree students. The Group complements this by developing a reporting system that monitors student attainment across all programmes. The data below provides attainment data for First Degree students (where high grade is 2:1 or above) and 'other UG' (where high grade is merit or above).

First Degree (Full Time): Attainment is very strong for mature students at 63% high grades, compared to a Group overall attainment of 61% for this provision in 2017-18, and improved by 7% points compared to the previous year.

Other Undergraduate: Attainment of high grades for mature students on 'other UG' is exceptionally strong at 75% for FT and 68% for PT students, increasing by 25% and 18% points respectively over the last 3-years, and above the College and sector. Overall, mature student attainment is strong, and above young students. As such, this is not identified as a priority area.

Progression to employment or further study

Full Time: Data is not available for comparisons of full time students by age. Overall, table 21 shows that young student's progression is 87.6%, 5% points below the Group core metric and 6% below sector. Progression to highly skilled employment is low for the Group (60% core metric) and further below this for young students at 49%, some 16% points below the sector profile. This is identified as a priority area within our internal improvement plan, with a commitment to improve progression rates for all students.

Part Time: Table 18 shows that progression to employment or further study is very positive for PT students at nearly 98% (core metric). There is a small difference between age groups, with young students at 98% and mature students at 94%. The mature student progression is 4% points below sector performance, but with very small margins.

Progression to highly skilled employment is slightly better than FT students at 68% (+8%), but remains below sector performance by 6%. There is a notable gap of nearly 20% points between age groups. Data for young students is good at 71.5% and within 4% of the sector. However, just 52% of mature students' progress to highly skilled, representing a 20% gap. Whilst improved progression to highly skilled employment for all students identified within our internal improvement plan; as mature is a priority area for the APP, a target for this plan is to improve progression rates of part time adults in to highly skilled employment.

Table 18: Student progression by Age (Source: TEF4)

	Indicator %			Difference to benchmark %		
	Core metric	Age		Core metric	Age	
		Young	Mature		Young	Mature
Full-time						
Employment or further study	92.6	87.6	R	-1.8	-6.0	R
Highly skilled employment or further study	60.4	48.9	R	-9.8	-16.1	R
Part-time						
Employment or further study	97.7	98.3	94.4	-0.2	0.4	-3.4
Highly skilled employment or further study	68.4	71.5	51.9	-6.5	-3.8	-20.9

Target area P3: Reduce the gap in progression rates in to highly skilled employment or further study of mature students, compared to young students.

1.4 Disabled students

For the purpose of this report we have evaluated performance between students with and without a disability. As the total student number of those with a disability in any one year is 20 or below, performance against disability types has not been included. The developing HE DataDashboard will allow reports on access, success and progression for disabled students, with the ability to monitor these by different disability types. Any significant differences will be reported through the monitoring activities of the OfS working group and management committee (figure 5).

Access

In 2017-18 there were 16% of new FT entrants with a recognised disability and 9% PT, representing a similar profile through the 5-years of OfS data (Table 19). In 2017, the Group appointed a dedicated Higher Education Disability and Support Officer (HE DSO), which has provided support to those students that have self-declared at the application and enrolment stage. The post has raised awareness to the Higher Education population and the Group has seen a growth in students coming forward seeking support to enable them to reach their full potential. The impact of this development is an increase in those identified with a disability in 2018-19 at 23% of FT new entrants (+7%) and 11% of PT students (+2%).

Table 19: Proportion of students with a Disability (source: OfS DataDashboard)

Disability %	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
FT Disability %	16%	9%	17%	18%	16%
PT Disability %	6%	6%	7%	9%	9%

Success

Non-continuation

Full Time: Table 20 shows that continuation rates for students with a disability dropped from 90% to 70% from 2012-13 to 2013-14 and then remained constant to 2016-17. Internal data (2018-19, Pro-Solution) shows a small improvement to 77% in 2018-19, but below continuation rates for non-disabled at 85%.

The disability group represents less than 20 students and therefore splits by disability type are not significant. Within this population, 50% of students had a mental health issue and a continuation rate of 70%; 35% had a learning difficulty and a continuation of 86%). As such, the target area will focus upon raising continuation rates of disability groups as a whole, and our working groups will continue to monitor any performance gaps by disability type to inform support and intervention.

Table 20: Continuation Rates for Full Time students with a Disability (source: OfS DataDashboard)

Disability	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Disability	90%	70%	DP	70%	70%
No Known Disability Type	86%	86%	83%	87%	84%
Disability Sector	90%	90%	90%	89%	89%

Target area S3: Eliminate the continuation rate gaps of full time disabled students compared to non-disabled students

Part Time: There is no OfS continuation data for disabled students (Table 21). Internal data (2018-19, Pro-Solution) shows continuation rates at 76%, similar to the Group rate for PT non-disabled at 78%, and therefore no gap identified.

Table 21: Continuation Rates for Part Time students with a Disability (source: OfS DataDashboard)

Disability	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability Sector	60%	59%	58%	59%	58%
No Known Disability Type	84%	78%	87%	81%	74%
No disability sector	63%	63%	64%	65%	64%

Attainment

First Degree (FT): Whilst student numbers are low, Table 22 shows that the proportion of disabled students achieving a high grade has risen from 46% to 65% and now at/ above the Group average, supported by the impact of a dedicated Higher Education Disability Support Team since 2017. Attainment for non-disabled has declined over the same period by 10% points to 60%, in line with a decline in attainment on First Degree programmes. This trend is expected to reverse in 2018-19, with projected attainment of 65% on First Degree programmes, compared to 61% in 2017-18.

Table 22: Attainment Rates for Full Time First Degree students with a Disability (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Full Time	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
Disabled	13	6	46	19	11	58	17	11	65
Non-Disabled	89	62	70	70	39	56	82	49	60

Other Undergraduate (Full Time): Attainment of high grades for those with a disability has improved over a 3-year period by 8% points to 53% (Table 23). Whilst recognising small cohort sizes, those with a disability do not attain as well as non-disabled, with an attainment gap of 13% points; these are also 12% points below similar students on First Degree programmes. Due to proportionality (i.e. 2017-18 represents 15 students), this is not a target area within the APP but we have a commitment to monitor and improve performance of this groups within our internal activities and annual evaluations. Attainment for non-disabled student has risen from 48% to 66% in the last 3-years of data, recovering from a significant dip in 2016-17.

Table 23: Attainment Rates for Full Time 'other UG' students with a Disability (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Full Time	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
Disabled	20	9	45	18	10	56	15	8	53
Non-Disabled	67	32	48	88	33	38	105	69	66
Overall	87	41	47	106	43	41	120	77	64

Other Undergraduate (Part Time): Table 24 shows that attainment of high grades for those with a disability has improved over a 3-year period by 20% points to 53% and, whilst recognising small cohort sizes, attain better than non-disabled students. Non-disabled students have improved slightly over the 3-year period to 57%, but below the Group average.

Table 24: Continuation Rates for Part Time 'other UG' students with a Disability (source: internal data, Pro-Solution)

Part Time	2015-16			2016-17			2017-18		
	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%	number in cohort	high grade	%
Disabled	20	9	45	18	9	50	17	11	65
Non-Disabled	130	68	52	162	97	60	176	100	57
Overall	150	77	51	180	106	59	193	111	58

Progression to employment or further study

Table 25 shows TEF4 progression data for students with a disability.

Full Time: Progression to employment or further study is good for disabled students at 90% and within 2% of sector performance, with no comparison data for non-disabled. Highly skilled employment for this group is 67% and in line with the Group core metric, 6% below performance for the sector.

Part Time: Progression to employment is high at over 91%, but 7% below non-disabled and 3% below sector. The gap between groups is more significant when considering highly skilled employment measure (11% difference), with both groups 6% below sector.

Table 25: Progression Data for students with a disability (Source: OfS data, TEF4)

	Indicator %			Difference to benchmark%		
	Core metric	Disabled		Core metric	Disabled	
		Yes	No		Yes	No
Full-time						
Employment or further study	92.6	90.2	R	-1.8	-2.5	R
Highly skilled employment or further study	60.4	60.8	R	-9.8	-6.3	R
Part-time						
Employment or further study	97.7	91.7	98.1	-0.2	-3.1	0.1
Highly skilled employment or further study	68.4	58.3	69.2	-6.5	-6.3	-6.5

1.5 Care leavers

Access

The Group supports a small number of care leavers entering Higher Education annually and was an area identified for scholarships in 2019-20. Due to low proportions (<2% of student population) any statistical analysis on access would put individuals at risk of identification. Low numbers also mean that any analysis on success and progression measures would be insignificant. We will continue to take positive steps to raise aspirations and progression in to Higher Education for students that are care leavers. The developing HE DataDashboard will allow reports on access, success and progression for care leaver cohorts.

The OfS Dataset does not include data on Care Leavers, however from our internal college data, over the previous five years we have supported fewer than 2% accessing Higher Education and is an area identified for financial support through fee waivers in 2020-21. Greater Manchester has a higher number of looked after children compared to national average and the average in other core cities and amongst statistical neighbours although this has been reducing year on year from 128 per 10,000 in 2014-15 to 88 per 10,000 in 2017-18. From 2020-21 we are committed to improving the collection and evaluation of care leaver data, this will include improving IAG before enrolment on the support packages available. The College is an active member of the Greater Manchester Higher "success for life", a project focusing on raising awareness and aspiration to higher education for looked after children and young people.

From 2020-21 we shall ensure our admissions processes clearly identify care leavers, with this data recorded centrally (Pro-Solution), allowing us to report on this student group through our DataDashboard, including reports on access, success and progression data.

Target area A3: Raise participation rates for Care Leavers

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Due to limited data and small student representations, reviewing access and outcomes by intersections is challenging. One area we have identified, through a review of performance against low income groups (IMD1-2) and gender, is the declining continuation rates for females (from 90% to 81%) and their lower attainment rates (50%). This just represents 20 students, and we know that the number of students completing First Degrees has reduced further in subsequent years, as we revise our offer to L4-5 with top-up routes to Level 6 (not captured in OfS attainment). As such, we are committed to reporting and monitoring performance against this group through internal measures, but will not include as a target area within this APP. This will be included within the tri-annual evaluation cycle from June 2020.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The Group has consulted on and developed plans to ensure opportunity for all across the student lifecycle. This has been undertaken through a detailed assessment and review of gaps in performance between groups of students within the Group and the Higher Education sector as a whole.

Despite some limitations with the data and small cohort sizes for representation, the Group has evaluated all gaps with a commitment to closing these. As an example, our reviews of BAME attainment shows a consistent picture of attainment gaps between BAME and White students; though a small representation of the student body. Equally, First Degree student intakes have declined, but nonetheless, show a decline in continuation and will continue to be addressed.

The effectiveness of the approach to widening participation is reflected in the Group's strong position with regards to under-represented groups, with the analysis identifying gaps more focussed on success and progression, compared to 'access' itself. That said, the Group will continue to be ambitious to ensure we continue to provide an accessible offer to all students.

This plan will focus on strategies to support and enhance student experience and outcomes for all groups recognising that, for example, continuation rates need to improve, as to the progression in to HSE. With this in mind, the Group has placed significant focus on these two areas, and specific groups within this, which are areas where the Group feels there is the largest scope for maximising positive student outcomes.

2.1 Target groups

Specific target groups have been identified against each of the stages of the student lifecycle, highlighting gaps are against the sector or the Group. Where performance is below the sector, these target areas are identified in bold and are a priority of the APP. Other areas identified (*) evidence a gap between groups within The Trafford College Group (e.g. FT and PT). Whilst performance may be above the sector average, it has been identified that these are internal areas for improvement in order to close the internal gaps, regardless of student background. This has been used to support to allocation and level of intervention, reviewed tri-annually (Fig. 7).

The HE Management Committee (Fig. 5) will scrutinise and approve the targets and milestones with operational monitoring and evaluation through the Access and Participation Working Group. The working group has been established to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the APP against aims and objectives, and is aligned to both the OfS Regulatory Group and Student Experience Group – all of which report in to the HE Management Committee.

We are ambitious for our students, with the intention that all gaps are closed during the lifetimes of the APP 2020-25. Where there is the case that gaps have not been closed, subsequent activities, targets and milestones will be agreed through the tri-annual evaluation model and continue to be monitored through the deliberative and executive committees. The annual self-evaluation now includes a reflection on performance against APP, with actions to inform the annual improvement plan. Any remaining gaps will be included in such a plan.

The approach to support and intervention has been considered at all levels, and groups in to one of six categories as below (figure 1), through the 'aims and objectives' to the "strategic measures":

IAG	Student Support	Financial Support	Curriculum	Scholarship
Investment in initial advice and guidance identified as an intervention or strategic activity	Investment in student support resource identified as an intervention or strategic activity	Investment in student financial support identified as an intervention or strategic activity.	Investment in the review and consideration of the curriculum offer is identified as an intervention or strategic activity	Investment in further scholarship activity identified as an intervention or strategic activity.

Monitor and evaluate	Investment in further resource to monitor and evaluate performance identified as an intervention or strategic activity.
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Figure 1: Approaches to intervention

2.2 Aims and objectives

The Group has set the following strategic aims and objectives to address identified access, success and progression gaps for students with specific characteristics.

APP Priority 1: Raise Access and Participation for All

Providing an accessible curriculum offer is a strength of HE provision at The Trafford College Group. Around half of the Group's FT students are from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1-2), significantly above the sector; though the Group has seen a decline in PT intakes from these groups. Over 70% enter with low or non-tariff and over 90% are local.

Target Area	A1 Reduce gaps in participation of young students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5
Aim by the end of the plan (2024-25)	To increase the proportion of full time young students from IMDQ1 accessing Higher Education at TCG, reducing the gap between the lowest (IMD1) and highest (IMDQ5) by less than 5% by 2025. This is a TCG target, supported in In collaboration and engagement in the GMHigher National Collaborative Outreach Programme (now UniConnect)
Justification	22% of the FT young student population from IMDQ1 compared to 48% from IMDQ5, representing a 26% gap.
Initial evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in programme areas which traditionally had a high proportion of students from this group (e.g. Stockport campus and health care provision). Disengagement of L3 students, with reduced aspirations to progress to HE as first choice, impacted by financial challenges. Change in the market place, with the many local HEIs now competing against general FECs for the same market share. Offering foundation years, low tariff entry and unconditional offers.

Strategy	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Current position* (gap)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	KPI 2024-25
IAG	Engagement in NCOP and school network projects	Lead on minimum of 10 outreach activities attended by 800 NCOP-targeted learners	Jun-21	Tri-annual	26%	20%	17%	12%	8%	3%
Financial Support	Allocation of bursary funds 2020-21 to raise access of targeted groups	Full allocation of bursaries met.	Dec-20	Feb & July 2021						
Scholarship	Investment in an internal survey of the Group's Level 3 students to understand motives and barriers to HE.	Completion of internal survey (minimum of 200 responses)	Dec-20	July-21						
Curriculum	Engage with stakeholders, including students and support groups, to review the curriculum offer to ensure it meets the needs of these student groups	Revised curriculum offer 2020, reflecting stakeholder input.	Sept-20	July 2021						

*internal data (Pro-Solution) 2018-19

Target Area	A2 Reduce gaps in participation of part time students from POLAR4Q1 compared to POLAR4Q5
Aim by the end of the plan (2024-25)	To increase the proportion of PT students from POLAR4 Q1 accessing Higher Education at TCG, reducing the gap between the lowest (IMD1) and highest (IMDQ5) by less than 5% by 2025.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9% of PT intake from POLAR4Q1 in 2017-18, compared to 27% from POLAR4Q5, representing a 18% points gap. Decline in the Group's student numbers for those on PT STEM provision; of which a significant proportion would typically be from lower participation groups. In 2016-17 the Group had 329 PT students on STEM provision, of which 35% were from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2; this reduced to 221 students in 2018-19, again with 35% from P1-2
Initial evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A market shift towards higher apprenticeships and employer in-house training, market competition for employer-led provision; as well as personal and employer financial barriers. Limited strategic focus on recruitment and incentive activity towards this student group.

Strategy	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Proportion of PT students from POLAR4 Q1						
					Current position (gap)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	KPI 2024-25	
IAG	Targeted guidance and recruitment activities within community settings.	Minimum of 5 community-focussed activities complete by Dec 2020.	Ongoing	Tri-annual							
Curriculum	To broaden our PT offer in other sector areas, with a focus on Health, Care and Childhood. This currently has 95% FT and 5% PT; with over 40% from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2	Revised curriculum offer 2020, reflecting stakeholder input. Include 2 intakes per year for all programmes	Sept 2021	Tri-annual	18%	15%	12%	8%	6%	3%	
	To complete stakeholder and employer periodic reviews of the Group's 3 main sector areas, including a focus on curriculum accessibility and currency, with outcomes to be reflected in the Strategic Plan (2020-25)	Reviews complete in all 3 areas. Revised curriculum offer 2020, reflecting stakeholder input.	Sept 2020	Tri-annual							
Financial Support	To introduce 'step up' bursaries to increase access to HE from targeted groups	Allocation of 'step up' bursaries fully allocated.	Dec 2020	Feb & July 2021							
Scholarship	To gather, through the Group's Partnership Strategy, evaluative feedback from current students in this target area to better understand motives and barriers to participation in HE.	Publication of findings in TCG scholarship journal	July 2020	Nov 2021							

OfS DataDashboard 2017-18

Target Area	A3: Raise participation rates for Care Leavers
Aim by the end of the plan (2024-25)	To increase the proportion of the student population from care leavers accessing HE at TCG from 2% to at least 5% by 2024-25.
Justification	As a general FE provider in Greater Manchester, the Group has over 60 students registered as Looked After Children (LAC). The majority of these students are from Stockport College on Level 1-2 programmes. As part of the Group's 'unlocking potential' initiative (an initiative for Stockport College, focused on raising aspirations and positive outcomes), the Group will take strategic steps to raise aspirations and opportunities to progress internally to HE. Additionally, the Group will engage with local Council partnership, within the Group's Community Partnership initiative, to widen this offer to LAC across Stockport and Trafford Council.
Initial evaluation	Continually small representation from this group (<2%) over the last 5-years, with no previous strategic focus on identifying and supporting progression to local HE for this group.

Strategy	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Proportion of TCG student population					
					Current position*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	KPI 2024-25
IAG	To engage with the local council and support services to increase awareness of the offer and financial support available through stakeholder events	3 stakeholder events (termly) in 2020-21 across both Councils	July 2021	Annually from Nov 2020	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	5%
	To provide targeted 'student aspirations' support programmes.	20 16-19 learners registered in aspirations programme.	June 2021	Tri-annual						
Financial Support	Provide 75% fee waivers to increase access and participation	Fee waivers in place for 5 new starts (care leavers)	Sept 2020	Feb & July 2021						

*internal Pro-Solution data 2018-19, based on student declarations at enrolment

APP2: Raise Success (Continuation) for all

The Group's most recent internal data shows improvements to reverse the negative trend in continuation rates, increasing from 80% in 2017-18 to 83% in 2018-19. However, this remains below national rates. The Group is taking further strategic steps to increase continuation rates across all groups included within section 3. Within this, the Group has identified 4 target areas where there are gaps in performance

Priority	Target	Current Gap	Target 2024-25	Justification	Initial evaluation
S1	Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of full time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5	11%	2%	Data splits by IMD are available through OfS datasets, identifying a gap of 11.5% points between continuation rates of IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students, and therefore a target area for improvement.	Evaluation of reasons for a decline by these groups is limited; with further undertaking of scholarly activity to understand barriers to support future intervention.
S2	Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of part time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5	32%	2%	TCG performance for IMD1-2 remains above the sector average at 66% in 2016-17 (+5%), but shows a decline of 15% points from 81% in 2011-12. Within this, IMDQ1 has declined from 80% to 53%. Significantly below overall IMDQ5 rates of 53% (OfS Data 2015-16).	
S3	Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of BAME students compared to White students	27%	2%	Internal Pro-Solution Data 2018-19 shows BAME at 56% compared to White at 83%, representing a 27% points gap.	
S4	Eliminate the continuation rate gaps of full time disabled students compared to non-disabled students	8%	2%	Internal Pro-Solution Data 2018-19 shows Disabled at 77% compared to White at 85%, representing a 8% points gap	Additional support in recent years has increased student attainment, achievement and continuation for disability groups; as well as increased engagement. Further early intervention with new entrants is needed to reduce continuation rate gaps.

*internal data (Pro-Solution)

Initial core activities	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Measures
Financial Support	Groups identified for bursary funds in 2020 (S1-3) to increase continuation of targeted groups, removing barriers to learning.	75% targeted students in receipt of bursary funds from identified groups	Dec 2020	Tri-annual evaluation of impact. June evaluation to determine September allocations.	Monthly/Termly report on retention and continuation rates by group. Termly student survey/focus groups. Annual scholarship report.
Student Support	To invest in scheduled weekly tutorials and academic skill sessions for all part time students, in addition full time, supported by allocated course leaders.	100% of courses have identified course lead and weekly scheduled tutorials	Sept 2020	Annual self-evaluation ('Student Development and Achievement')	
	To continue to monitor as a 'at risk' groups through monthly reports for support and intervention.	Monthly reports in place with gaps <2% for any risk group.	Monthly from Sept 2020	Monthly report /intervention. Tri-annual evaluation of impact from Oct 2020.	
	To invest in further staff and on-line academic support targeted towards these groups.	100% of courses have identified course lead and weekly scheduled tutorials	Dec 2020	Implement in Sept 2020. Tri-annual evaluation of impact: Feb 2021; July 2021; Nov 2022.	
To invest in further specialist staffing resource to support students with a disability (S4).	Increase staffing by 0.25FTE	Dec 2020			
Scholarship	To invest in scholarship activity to understand factors impacting on lower continuation rates for each of these groups, to inform future intervention.	Publication of findings in TCG scholarship journal	June 2020		

APP3: Raise Success (Attainment) for all

Overall, attainment rates are strong and continue to improve. A particular strength given the majority of the Group's intake have low tariff entry; with the proportion increasing each year. The Group's TEF4 data (2018-19) shows that 70% of FT and PT students entered with low or non-tariff entry; increasing proportionately by 60% and 65% respectively from TEF3 (2017-18); as the Group continues to support widening participation. The Group's analysis identifies one key target area, whilst being committed to supporting continued improvements in attainment across all groups.

Priority	Target	Current Perf* (Gap)	Target 2024-25	Justification	Initial evaluation
S5	Eliminate attainment gaps of part time Asian students on 'other UG' compared to White students..	41%	3%	BAME attainment declined by 9% points over a 3-year period, whilst non-BAME increased by 15% over the same time. In analysing low attainment rates of BAME, the majority of the population were Asian (43/49) – with an attainment of just 26%	Impacted by lower attainment on STEM and Business provision, which represented a large majority of the BAME and Asian student population. Business was a sub-contracted arrangement that Stockport terminated in 2017-18.

*internal data (Pro-Solution) 2018-19

Initial core activities	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Measures
Financial Support	Group identified for bursary funds in 2020 to raise attainment of targeted groups	75% students in receipt of bursary funds from identified groups	Dec 2020	Tri-annual evaluation of impact. June evaluation to determine September allocations.	Monthly/Termly report on retention and continuation rates by group. Termly student survey/focus groups. Annual scholarship report.
Student Support	To invest in scheduled weekly tutorials and academic skill sessions for all part time students, in addition full time, supported by allocated course leaders.	100% of courses have identified course lead and weekly scheduled tutorials	Sept 2020	Annual self-evaluation ('Student Development and Achievement')	
	To continue to monitor as a 'at risk' groups through monthly reports for support and intervention.	Monthly reports in place with gaps <2% for any risk group.	Monthly from Sept 2020	Monthly report and intervention. Tri-annual evaluation of impact from Oct 2020.	
	To invest in further staff and on-line academic support targeted towards this group.	On-line support system in place, with 80% student uptake	Dec 2020	Implement in Sept 2020. Tri-annual evaluation of impact: and evaluate impact from Oct 2020.	
Scholarship	To invest in scholarship to better understand the barriers to higher attainment and continue to monitor this group, to inform future intervention.	Publication of findings in TCG scholarship journal	June 2020		

APP4: Raise Progression for all

Overall, progression to HSE is below the sector; and the Group has identified 3 areas of high priority in relation to student progression. The Group shall take immediate steps to work towards reducing these gaps, along with an overall improvement across all groups. The strategic measures provide details of the Group wide approach to improving progression to HSE. Due to factors already reported in relation to demographic and student career choice, the Group does not expect this to achieve sector levels, but recognises attempts to make some improvements is important.

Priority	Target	Current Perf* (Gap)	Target 2024-25	Justification	Initial evaluation
P1	Reduce the gap of progression in to highly skilled employment or further study of IMDQ1-2, compared to IMDQ3-5 students	9%	2%	The percentage of full time undergraduates from IMD 1-2 who progressed into highly skilled employment or further study was 46% compared to IMD 3-5 at 55%, representing a 9% points gap.	Data based upon DLHE survey, with the need for the Group to capture further information on student progression to better inform intervention.
P2	Reduce gaps in progression rates in to employment or further study of BAME compared to White students.	10%	2%	84% compared to 94% (non-BAME), representing a 10% points gap	Initial stakeholder activity identifies the need to develop further approaches to support employability, including curriculum design, and assessment; and employability support.
P3	Reduce the gap in progression rates in to highly skilled employment or further study of mature students, compared to young students	20%	3%	Data for young students is good at 71.5% and within 4% of sector performance. However, just 52% of mature students' progress to highly skilled, representing a 20% gap.	

*TEF4 data

Initial core activities	Immediate Activity in 2020-21	Immediate targets	Complete	Evaluate	Measures
Student Support	To identify, as a priority, groups for initial caseloads for the TCG careers and employability team	100% from target groups completed 1:1 career coach tutorial in first 10-weeks of study	Dec 2020	Implement Jan 2021. Evaluate tri-annually from Feb 2021.	Annual surveys on student destinations and progression. Termly student survey/focus groups on readiness for employability. Annual scholarship report.
	To introduce aspirational strategies specific to this group, including links with alumni from these groups (e.g. BAME) that have successfully progressed to higher level careers.	Identify one Alumni from each of the 3 main sectors.	Dec 2021	Implement in Sept 2020. Tri-annual evaluation of impact: from Feb 2021.	
	To implement an employability strategy, including employability tutorial programme.	Tutorial programme scheduled in to all student timetables.	Sept 2021		
Curriculum	To review the Group's curriculum offer with stakeholders in 2019-20 to support curriculum currency	Revised curriculum offer 2020, reflecting stakeholder input.	Sept 2020	Evaluation of key findings from stakeholders to inform curriculum offer 2020-21.	
Scholarship	To engage with past and present BAME students to better understand barriers, motives and attitudes towards progression (P1), to inform future initiatives.	Publication of findings in TCG scholarship journal	June 2021	Evaluation of scholarship publication, July 2020. Implement initiatives in Sept 2020. Tri-annual evaluation of impact Feb 2021; July 2021; Nov 2022.	

3. Strategic measures

The Group's strategy for achieving stated aims, objectives and targets within the APP have been carefully considered alongside strategic approach (Corporate Plan), ensuring strategic 'fit' and direction (Figure 2).

The Corporate Plan gives a set of priorities, objectives and success measures that describe what the Group wants to achieve, how it plans to do it, and how it will measure success.

The Corporate Plan was developed following extensive consultation and engagement with staff, governors and key stakeholders in Spring/Summer 2018. Through this process the Group has developed its purpose and the six priorities that set the strategy to enable the Group to achieve its goals between now and 2021. The priorities of the APP have been aligned against these. Each priority is supported by Group targets and KPIs which form the basis for regular and robust management of the Group's performance in achieving its strategic objectives by Governors, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), managers and programme leaders. Progress against APP targets will be included within this cycle.

The Group's performance in delivering priorities and objectives will inform the development of departmental business plans, refreshed annually, which in turn shape the delivery plans for teams and individuals working at the Group. This structure ensures that the Group's key priorities are threaded throughout, shaping and aligning the development and performance management of each department, team and individual staff member.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

For the purpose of the APP, the Group has focussed upon five (of six) TCG Strategic Priorities, detailing how the APP is aligned to these.

Summary of Strategic Priority 1: Delivering Excellence

There is a culture and ethos ensuring that the Group is delivering the very best for its students, employers and local communities and that should be reflected in improving standards and customer satisfaction. The Group aims to embed a culture of continuous improvement that is reflected in the highest personal and professional standards across. Within HE, the central improvement plan focussed on the 3 inter-related aspects of the Access and Participation, Student Experience (Quality Code) and Regulation, supported and challenged by leaders and governors will support this approach.

Delivering excellence means getting the Group's response to the big challenges and opportunities right, including as example:

- 'The quality of our core teaching and learning delivery across all three sites': in support of this, the Group has centralised the HE staffing and curriculum model and invested a scholarship lead to provide a consistent approach to the learning experience across the three sites, underpinned by the Student Partnership Strategy and engagement with students as partners in quality; supporting our target areas around student success (continuation and attainment).
- 'Delivering excellent student support services': in support of this, the Group has invested in a centralised HE support model, led through the HE academic services and support team, including specialist support for advice and guidance, careers and employability, welfare and academic support. The Group has seen the value of investment in this area recently, including improved overall continuation rates and better outcomes for students with a disability. The APP includes an investment in this area in 2020 to extend services; supporting our target areas around student success (continuation and attainment).
- 'Ensuring our learners progress to jobs, careers and further study': in support of this, the Group has introduced revised HE employability officer roles in 2019 and will continue to invest in this area in 2020, with the focus on improving progression to HSE and the targeting of specific groups (e.g. BAME) where there is a gap; supporting our target areas around progression to employment. We plan to publish an Employability Strategy by September 2020, informed by progress of related activities in 2020-21, including the investment in destination survey to better understand student progression outcomes; investment in scholarly activity to better understand any barriers to employment; and the continue work with stakeholders to inform the HE strategy 202-25 and curriculum offer.

Summary of Strategic Priority 2: Ensuring Student Success

The Group's core function is to provide the best possible learning experience to everyone who enrolls on a course at each of the three campuses, enabling more students to achieve and progress into jobs, careers and further learning. The Group is committed to working in new and better ways to enable more students to get the very best out of their time studying with the Group; in doing so, this strategic measure is expected to positively impact on identified APP target areas around student success, as well as progression.

This strategic priority includes a focus on ensuring a richer, more varied, better planned curriculum co-created with employers and with reference to key local labour market insight – to ensure that all students are better prepared for their next step into a career or further learning. In support of this in HE, the Group is committed to a stakeholder review of the currency of its offer in 2019-20, engaging with students, employers and partner HEI across all three of the Group's main sectors. Alongside this, the Group will challenge itself where programmes are not meeting expectations.

The strategic priority also includes the way that the Group is trialling new ways to improve the support that students receive, both in college and at home, building the resilience, confidence and independence required to succeed. The Group is committed to developing its HE offer to ensure it meets the holistic approach (figure 2) to student outcomes reflected in the strategic plan:

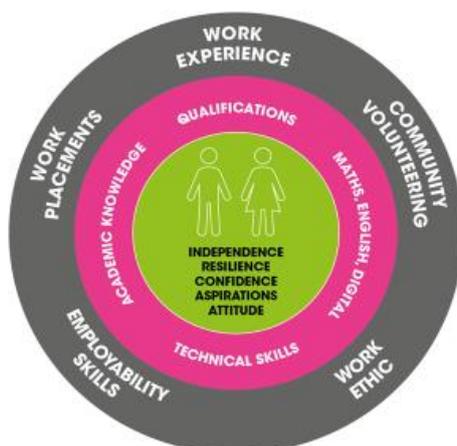


Figure 2: TCG holistic approach to student success

For example, in 2019-20, the Group has introduced external support services of the local NHS trusts to provide a programme of resilience for students, with a focus upon new entrants. The Group is committed to reviewing the HE curriculum offer in 2019-20 to ensure it has the best qualifications to continue to provide current and future academic knowledge and technical skills, as well as the embedding of core skills, for employment. The Group is developing a HE Employability Strategy for 2020-21 and is committed to investing in a survey in 2020-21 to better understand the destinations of students. In collaboration with awarding bodies, the Group is investing in significant curriculum developments to ensure all programmes in 2020 have weekly scheduled employability-focussed tutorials supported by an investment in the employability passport system, and that each level of every programme has a work-related credit-bearing module.

Summary of Strategic Priority 3: Achieving Sustainable Growth

As one of the largest colleges in the region, the Group capacity and resources give the platform to better enable growth. Sustainable growth will be delivered via two routes. First, the Group has embarked on a handful of strategic investments and alliances that will help grow both the quality and scale of the Group's FE and HE offer to students and employers, bringing new investment and demand. Second, the Group will grow by doing its job well – by delivering high quality learning that responds to what learners and the labour market need, enabling students to progress and providing the training that employers want.

Over the last 3-years the Group has seen a steady decline in student numbers; this is against a steady rise in quality and positive student outcomes, including two positive QAA reviews, improved achievement rates, student attainment of high grades and improving student continuation. We believe reduction in numbers has been impacted significantly by changes in the external market, and Universities approaches to lower-tariff entry, foundation years and unconditional offers.

The Group is committed to invest significant efforts with all stakeholders, including staff, students and employers as well as the local combined authority (Greater Manchester Combined Authority), to provide a shared HE Strategy 2020-25 that aligns with the APP 2020-25. The Group has a HE that celebrates its approach to widening participation and supporting positive outcomes for all, providing a local offer to meet local skills needs and aspirations. The strategy will provide clear direction on how the Group will support sustainable growth of such a valuable offer, considering its market place, long-term curriculum offer and delivery models; along with continued focus on improving outcomes for all.

Summary of Strategic Priority 5: Delivering Digitalised Transformation

This priority is responding and embracing how technology is changing how people learn, enabling new routes via which information can be gathered, new methods and channels via which learning can be delivered thereby expanding access. It recognises that digital brings new opportunities to colleges: ensuring that digital technologies are harnessed appropriately to enhance learning; equipping providers with the infrastructure and skills required to get the best out of new digital technologies. In particular, we expect this area to have a positive impact on access through a more flexible offer (e.g. blended), and success targets, through enriched and accessible digital resources to enhance learning.

The Group approved its Digital Strategy in 2019, with the focus on the three inter-related work streams of 'systems', 'digital for students' and 'digital for staff'. Specifically focussed on students, the digital strategy sets out the Group's commitment to harnessing online resources to improve learning outcomes; making best use of new classroom technologies; developing digital competencies in all areas of the curriculum; and supporting an innovative and high quality curriculum offer.

The Group has embraced this in HE and has invested significant capital, staff and student professional development in 2019-20. This has seen the investment in a pilot approach to the use of Cloud Books across HE for staff and students, captured through a funded staff-student scholarly activity project to evaluate the impact of cloud-based technologies in the classroom to enhance student learning; and the use of these technologies to harness improved student peer on-line communities – recognising the challenge of engaging with student-student and student-staff where the majority are only in college for one day a week. The outcomes of the project will be published within our annual scholarship journal in June 2020, along with recommendations for future investment and enhancement.

Summary of Priority 6: Transformational Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

This priority recognises that meeting the needs of employers and the communities that the Group serves is at its core. The Group's college sites are a key part of the fabric of the local community and the local economy, recognising that for the Group to thrive, the places and employers in the locality need to thrive too.

The Group has worked with its partners to move ahead with new investments and collaborations that form an integral part of the wider regeneration of Trafford and Stockport. Beyond these strategic investments, the Group aims to further develop engagement with employers and other stakeholders to transform its curriculum offer. As such, this priority area will support our APP progress towards improving student progression to highly skilled employment across all student groups.

Across all provision, including the Group's HE offer, this priority commits the Group to ensure it designs progression into programmes and offer to employers and stakeholders, so that the Group is not just seen as a source of high quality learning – but that it becomes integral to meeting the workforce and recruitment requirements of workplaces across Stockport and Trafford. A commitment to engaging in the stakeholder periodic review of the HE offer in 2019-20, and commitment to a HE strategic direction 2020-25 is central to this.

Alignment with other strategies

Beyond the APP alignment with the Group's Corporate Plan (figure 4) and developing HE Strategy, there is also clear alignment with the Group's strategic approach to equal opportunities; student engagement and teaching and learning.

- **Providing Equal Opportunities for All**

The Group is focussed on providing equal opportunities for all, and see the APP as a valuable tool to direct this. The Group's Equality and Diversity Policy provides a framework and overarching principles for the development and promotion of a learning environment that is accessible to all and that promotes equality of opportunity within the learning environment and employment.

The policy applies to all those who come into contact with and work for the Group including staff, governors, students, applicants for employment and for learning and other individuals who are affected by the services delivered by the Group.

The Access and Participation Plan has been developed to ensure that it meets the legislative expectations from the Equality Act 2010. The Group is committed to providing a learning environment where all students are given a fair and equal opportunity to reach their full potential. The Group aims to continue to develop a culture built around its values and to be inclusive at all levels and in every system, process and interaction. The Group's Equality and Diversity policy, sets out the Group's approach to promote equality across the Group covering staff, students and stakeholders, ensuring an inclusive environment for all.

The Group's Equality and Diversity Committee meets 4 times annually. This Committee is responsible for monitoring equality and diversity measures and developing action plans where necessary, including the monitoring of underrepresented groups. The Committee is chaired by the Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning and includes key members of the HE Management Team. Minutes of the meeting are discussed at the HE Management Committee.

The Group has a single equality scheme and welcomes applications from anyone with potential to benefit from higher education regardless of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

The Group's teaching, learning and assessment strategy takes the Equality Act 2010 into consideration, ensuring integrated support for all students. Curriculum and Support staff work together to ensure all students' needs are met which may include making reasonable adjustments for specific student groups.

- **HE Partnership Strategy**

The HE Partnership Strategy, developed in 2018-19 for full implementation across all three sites in 2019-20, deliberately connects Teaching and Learning with Student Engagement, and specifically the 10-point plan for student engagement (Fig. 3), developed and consulted with our students as partners in learning. This reflects a connected approach to teaching and learning in which students are seen as partners in the process qualitatively, strategically and pedagogically in the development and enhancement of knowledge.

- Every student is provided with clear and current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them.
- The Group takes deliberate steps to assist every student to understand their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and to shape their learning experience.
- Every student is enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic development through the provision of regular opportunities to reflect on feedback and engage in dialogue with staff.

UNIVERSITY CENTRE 10 POINT PLAN FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

You will notice that the 10-point plan for student engagement is aimed at students, tutors and college managers. It is important for us all to see active student engagement as a PARTNERSHIP and to get it right we have to work together.

> The whole plan is predicated on the belief that:

- 1 Teaching and teachers are central to student engagement

> The aspiration of the plan is to:

- 2 Enhance your self-belief and encourage learning agency
- 3 Enable you to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others, and feel that you are competent to achieve your own learning objectives
- 4 Support teachers to create learning that is active, collaborative, and to foster learning relationships
- 5 Support teachers to create educational experiences for you that are challenging and enriching and that extend your academic abilities
- 6 Ensure that the college culture is welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds
- 7 Invest in a variety of support services to maximise your participation and the fulfilment of your potential
- 8 Adapt to your changing expectations
- 9 Enable you to become an active producer rather than a passive consumer
- 10 Enable you to develop your social and cultural capital

To support the Group's strategic objectives, we developed a 10-point plan (figure 3) to ensure effective student engagement. All courses have student representatives, along with school and campus-level leads, and HE Student Governor. The Student Engagement component of the Partnership Strategy details the mechanisms by which the student voice is collected, processed and effective in enhancing and ensuring quality.

The process, by investing in a nominated HE Student Engagement and Scholarship Manager in 2019, continues to make a significant difference in both the collation and action of issues as they arise and confirmation that the cultural identity of our HE and wider student engagement initiatives – such as the 10-point plan – are supported and visible to all students. This commitment and the adoption of the plan as a pedagogic framework was recognised by QAA and by Sheffield Hallam University at the successful institutional review. (Figure 3 10-Point Plan)

Alongside the regular student engagement activities as partners in learning, including teaching forums, reviews and surveys, involvement in Committees; we are fully committed in continuing to embracing our Partnership Strategy to engage with students as partners is all aspects of the APP and related initiatives. Students will form the member of HE working groups, including the APP working group, from April 2020.

Our strategic focus on HE teaching and learning will positively impact and complement our APP target areas. Our peer review model encourages staff to engage in peer observation activity, including thematic areas such as embedding employability, supporting individual student progress, and enhancing emotional intelligence. Central to the strategy is the conscious effort to improve students social and cultural capital, through our pedagogic practices and models of support (e.g. tutorials). Staff are fully engaged in scholarship, with a number of 'commissioned' projects identified each year to further our understanding of target areas. For instance, in 2019-20, staff members have been commissioned (i.e. allocated teaching remission) to better understand barriers to participation in HE for certain groups, as well as factors impacting on attainment and progression – all of which complement our APP target activities.

- **Student Consultation (Access and Participation Plan)**

Student groups through the course and school-level representation model were consulted on throughout the journey of the Access and Participation Plan, with a particular focus on intervention activities to support improvement. Student engagement was sought with representation from students across all schools and modes of study.

The feedback from these forums was very valuable in steering specific intervention activity, particularly around student success measures. This included a number of proposals related to support systems that are now included without targeted activities. These include the development of an on-line tutorial support programme to better support academic and pastoral support for part time and 'day release' students. Within this, and based on student feedback, we are also committed to trialling Podcasts of core teaching sessions in 2020-21, for consideration of activities in 2021-22 onwards. The consultation has also led to our commitment to develop a pre-course module, to be designed to better prepare mature and part time students for HE study, including academic research activity and the development of peer groups. Alongside this is the student proposal to further develop our peer support activities, particularly through the investment in digital platforms.

The student consultation also considered approaches to improve student employability and, again, the plan has taken forward a number of these discussions. For instance, we are committed to rolling-out a student career passport system from September 2020-21, as well as the further investment in on-line modules from 2020 to provide on-line student CPD.

The Governing Body, including student representation at Committee and Board, considered the draft and final versions of the APP; and will continue to monitor APP targets and milestones through the tri-annual evaluation activity.

In 2019-20, our student body continue active members and contributors to, for example:

- The consultation and approval of the Access and Participation Plan, including strategic investments; along with the monitoring of progress against milestones through Committee and Governance attendance.

- Engagement within associated surveys, as well as co-leads in scholarly activity for target areas identified within the APP across the student journey, including barriers to participation of groups (e.g. low participation neighbourhoods), student success (e.g. BAME continuation and high grades) and progression (e.g. full time young students).
- Engagement in the HE Periodic Review process as active partners in the stakeholder review and development of our HE offer for September 2020; along with consultations to steer our HE strategic direction 2020-25.
- Engagement in our pilot HE investment in digital technologies to enhance student learning and experience.
- Engagement in the implementation and evaluation of our Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) initiative.

The Group's approach to HE scholarship, developed through an investment and commitment as early adoptees of the AoC national scholarship programme continue to support the development and embedding of a distinct college higher education scholarly ethos across the sector. In 2018-19, the Group committed funding of staff resource time to support commissioned research in to areas for development, including 'the development of a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) strategy' and 'an integrated tutor support model'. These were published in the annual journal in June 2019, with outcomes disseminated through the scholarship conference.

The Group values the impact of such projects to evaluate existing practices and develop future models. The Group is committed to supporting a number of commissioned projects in 2019-20 that are aligned specifically to address gaps identified within the APP. In all instances, these will be led by academic and support teams with engagement with students as partners, including co-led scholarly activity. For 2019-20 the Group has committed to the following projects to evaluate and inform future practice, including:

- Student Peer aspiration video to support student access and participation
- Implementation of an integrated model of student support
- Implementing Peer-Assisted Learning to enhance student outcomes
- Barriers to access and success of targeted groups
- Engagement with employer groups to design curricula

Strategic measures

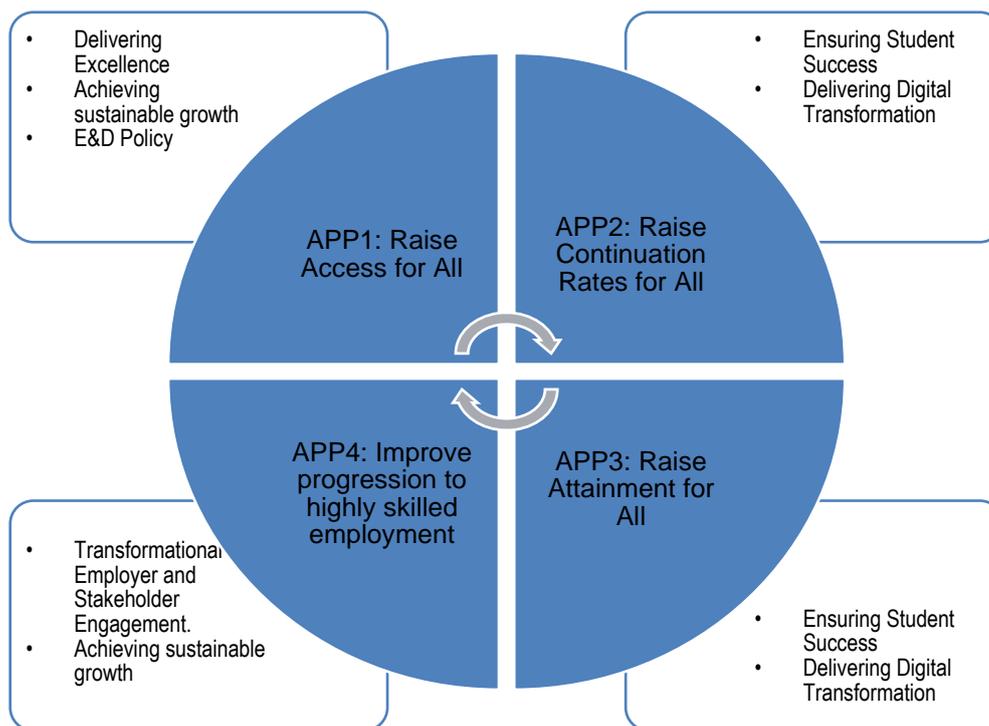


Figure 4: Alignment of APP priorities and TCG Corporate Plan

Theory of Change (see Appendix 1)

TCG has considered a change management process (Appendix 1) to ensure alignment of Group-level priorities, and activities within our Access and Participation Plan (APP). This includes the purpose of TCG and our strategic priorities, both current and developing HE-specific strategies, including our successful Partnership strategy, alongside key areas of focus for the lifetime of the APP 2020-25, with the impact of targets and milestones related to access, success and progression reviewed through our tri-annual evaluation model. This model will provide a framework for our approach over the next five years, managed through our APP Working Group and progress reported through our deliberative and executive committees.

We have set out a number of initial activities for completion in 2020-2021. Figure 7 illustrates our commitment to a tri-annual evaluation of performance and progress against APP targets, with the commitment to review targets annually over the 5-year period, and agreeing annual activities and investment towards these.

Priority Area	APP1: Strategic direction and investment to raise access and participation for all:			
Targets	A1: Reduce gaps in participation of young students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5 A2: Reduce gaps in participation of part time students from POLAR4Q1 compared to POLARQ5 A3: Raise participation rates of Care Leavers			
Core Strategies	IAG	Curriculum	Financial Support	Scholarly Activity

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
IAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take steps to support the internal progression of students from Level 3-4, where a University place is not sought, with a particular focus on those from under-represented areas. Invest in a 'raising aspirations' tutorial programme for these students, commencing January 2020. Continue to be committed to targeted outreach to raise attainment and aspirations to progress to HE, both through direct interventions and as part of the local National Collaborative Outreach Programme. Working in collaboration with NCOP, the Group shall appoint HE Student Ambassadors for each sector area, to support positive IAG events and aspire student progression to HE as positive role models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal progression from Level 3 to 4 is low at under 10%; and around 60% from TCG to any HE. A large proportion of students that do not progress are from the lower participating neighbourhoods and / or lower economic (IMD) groups. This is particularly the case at the Stockport campus. Engagement in NCOP activities has been limited within the early stages of merger. Recent re-engagement has included the appointment of a HE Outreach Officer, appointed in Summer 2019; engagement with external bodies to raise aspirations of students; and attendance at NCOP strategic oversight groups.
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in a new HE Strategic Plan 2020-25 that clearly aligns to the aims and objectives of this APP. The Strategy will also provide greater clarity on the Group's curriculum model and blended learning, working to further invest in resource to support an accessible offer. Complete stakeholder Periodic Review of all curriculum areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, HE student numbers at TCG have declined in a 3-year period by over 20%. In light of considerable changes in the external landscape of HE, and particularly College-based HE, there is the need to re-evaluate the Group's market place and practices; with a greater shift being seen towards the mature and under-represented groups; and less represented local younger students.

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
Financial Support	<p>Financial support to raise access and participation from targeted groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bursaries to target areas, reviewed annually. • Fee waivers (75%) for care leavers. • Allocation of hardship funds for all students to reduce any barriers to access (e.g. cover for travel costs); <p><i>We are committed to request a variation to the plan to amend our financial support offer for new entrants if our evidence through our annual evaluations shows any financial support measures to be ineffective; with these reviews taking place within our October tri-annual cycle (initial review October 2020), and submissions for any requests to variation by our February tri-annual cycle (from Feb 2021).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted bursaries have been effective, though greater evaluation is needed. In 2018-19, 59 new entrants received a bursary, with 90% continuation rates – above the Group overall rate of 83%. • Hardship funds have been used as an effective resource to support students through difficult financial pressures, enabling them to continue with studies. In 2018-19, nearly 90% of those in receipt of a bursary completed the academic year. • Internal evidence demonstrates the positive impact of bursaries and hardships on student continuation (success measure). We are now committed to ensuring we better measure the impact of such funds to evaluate the impact on student access, with the outcomes to inform future financial support from 2021-22. The initial evaluation will be complete by December 2020. • Fee waivers have not previously been used, but in consultation with stakeholders, considered a useful tool to encourage low participation groups.
Scholarship	<p>Investment in scholarship activities, and internal surveys, to better understand motives and barriers to progression to HE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCG has developed a successful HE scholarship programme, with some areas of action research leading to implementation of Group-level initiatives, including the Peer Assisted Learning programme. • This commitment and the adoption of the scholarship programme was recognised by QAA and by Sheffield Hallam University at the successful institutional review. • Engagement in scholarship to now better understand motives and barriers to student progression to HE is considered a positive development, with the evaluation of outcomes to support subsequent initiatives.

	APP2-3: Strategic direction and investment to raise success for all				
Priority Area	APP 2: Continuation			APP 3: Attainment	
Targets	S1: Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of full time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5 S2: Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of part time students from IMDQ1 compared to IMDQ5 S3: Eliminate gaps in continuation rates of BAME students compared to White students S4: Eliminate the continuation rate gaps of full time disabled students compared to non-disabled students			S5: Eliminate attainment gaps of part time Asian students on 'other UG' compared to White students.	
Core Strategies	Monitor and evaluation	Curriculum	Student Support	Financial Support	Scholarship

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
Monitor and evaluation	The Group shall develop a central HE Data Dashboard to monitor, evaluate and respond to trends by target areas, visible to leaders and governors. To be complete by January 2020, with target areas and associated milestones contained within the APP to be clearly identifiable measures, such as the attainment and continuation of BAME students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCG has developed good internal data reports to now monitor and review student access and success measures for all groups. A more accessible Dashboard will enhance oversight at all levels, allow monitoring of priority areas identified in the APP, and support early intervention of gaps in performance.
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group shall complete a 'roots and branches' periodic review of the offer within each of the 3 sector areas; challenging itself on fitness for purpose and outcomes for all. These sectors are STEM, Health and Care, Arts and Education. Panels shall include senior leaders and governors, curriculum teams, awarding bodies, student and employer representatives. To be complete by March 2020 and involve the following stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial stage includes engagement with the key local employers, agencies, council and combined authority (GMCA) to consider our offer against the higher level skills needs to the local area and alignment to priorities identified in the GMCA published Industrial Strategy. Stage 2 involves further scrutiny of our offer with students, employers and awarding bodies directly engaged with our provision; Stage 3 moves this on to 'deep dive' forums with staff and students. Outcomes of these 3 stages will support informing our strategic direction (stage 4) and curriculum plans for 2020 (stage5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are good processes in place to develop curriculum, supported through internal measures (e.g. Programme Approval Committees) and external scrutiny (e.g. awarding body validations). Now within the 2nd year of merger, the Group would benefit from a detailed review of its programme areas, in collaboration with students and stakeholders, alongside the development of a 5-year strategic plan.
Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group shall work on implementing a HE Integrated tutor model, developed from staff scholarship activity in 2018-19, for pilot activity in 2019-20 and full implementation 2020-21; supported by a series of staff CPD to provide a holistic approach to supporting individual needs, building upon increased focus and awareness of emotional intelligence – aligned to the Group's 10-point plan. Following consultation with staff and students, the Group shall invest in the development and implementation of a 'Learning to Learn strategy', providing tools to support student readiness for learning through pre-course blended learning of core academic skills – enhanced by the Group's digital strategy. The Group shall further invest in allocated specialist support resource to provide capacity to focus on target areas and, in doing so, increase the uptake of those accessing support – with a particular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students value tutorial support (+90% internal student survey). Common tutorial support on FT programmes has increased outcomes over the last 2-years, including continuation rates (+3%) and attainment (+10%). To be developed consistently across PT, making use of a range of methods (e.g. on-line) to provide accessible support. Student consultation identified 'student readiness to learn' as an area for improvement, particularly in supporting part time students returning to study. Pilot PAL programme effective in Creative Arts, with increases in student satisfaction (internal survey 100%) and student outcomes. Student consultation activities recognised this as a sound model to implement across the Group.

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
	<p>focus on low income groups and PT students. The Group shall increase staffing resource in this area by August 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group shall invest in staff CPD in 2020 to ensure a centralised tutor model differentiated by level across 3 sites. This will include a scheduled tutorial programmes within timetables for all students (FT and PT), increasing allocation of course hours in some areas. Full implementation in September 2020. In 2019 the Group invested in a scholarship project to inform the strategic implementation of a more robust and consistent student peer support model which includes the establishment of a Peer Assisted Learning model, where students are trained to provide study support for other students and is designed to support participatory and collaborative working on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The Group shall now continue to invest in developing and implementing a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Model, building upon the staff scholarship in this area and enhanced by our Digital Strategy. The Group shall pilot the model in 2019-20, and fully implement in August 2020. Building upon the good practice identified through the Group's scholarship programme in 2019 (Early Years and Childhood provision), the Group shall invest in the development of student peer-led aspirational films to raise confidence and esteem to continue in studies. These will be developed in 2020. Working in collaboration with local NHS Trusts and services, the Group shall invest in a counselling service accessible for all students, in place for January 2020. Alongside this, a programme of resilience and esteem building will be in place by January 2020. Invest in a suite of 'cloud-based' IT devices for staff and students to access within and outside the classroom. Pilot to take place in 2019-20 in priority areas, with a roll-out of resource by 2022-23. Invest in the design and development of an on-line 'live' support service and chat room, enhancing student access to academic support tutors beyond the traditional time schedules. To implement in 2020-21. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience training introduced to adults on Level 3 Access programmes, impacting positively on early retention (+5%); with the view that this would also benefit adults on HE programmes.
Financial Support	<p>Financial support to target groups to reduce barriers (financial) to learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bursaries to target areas, reviewed annually (S1 and S2 in 2020-21) Allocation of hardship funds for all students to reduce any barriers to academic progress (e.g. cover for travel costs); <p><i>We are committed to request a variation to the plan to amend our financial support offer for student success if our evidence through our annual evaluations shows any financial support measures to be ineffective. with these reviews taking place within our October tri-annual cycle (initial review October 2020), and submissions for any requests to variation by our February tri-annual cycle (from Feb 2021).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted bursaries have been effective, though greater evaluation is needed, including its impact on attainment In 2018-19, 59 new entrants received a bursary, with 90% continuation rates – above the Group overall rate of 83%. Hardship funds have been used as an effective resource to support students through difficult financial pressures, enabling them to continue with studies. In 2018-19, nearly 90% of those in receipt of a bursary completed the academic year.
Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group shall continue to invest in a HE Scholarship and student engagement lead to fully embed the 10-Point Plan, accountable to the HE Management Committee. To invest in scholarship activity to understand factors impacting on student success for each of these groups, to inform future intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCG has developed a successful HE scholarship programme, with some areas of action research leading to implementation of Group-level initiatives, including the Peer Assisted Learning programme. Engagement in scholarship to now better understand factors impacting on student success is considered a positive development, with the evaluation of outcomes to support subsequent initiatives.

Strategy	Initial Activity		Initial Evaluation (November 2019)	
Priority Area	APP4: Strategic direction and investment to raise student progression to employment:			
Targets	P1	Reduce the gap of progression in to highly skilled employment or further study of IMDQ1-2, compared to IMDQ3-5 students		
	P2	Reduce gaps in progression rates in to employment or further study of BAME compared to White students.		
	P3	Reduce the gap in progression rates in to highly skilled employment or further study of mature students, compared to young students.		
Core Strategies	Monitor and evaluate	Curriculum	Student Support	Scholarly Activity

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
Monitor and evaluate	The Group shall invest in the development of improved systems and processes to record student destinations . In 2019-20 the Group shall complete a survey of student destinations over the last 3-years, to inform future curriculum and strategy; additionally, the Group shall invest in a Student Passport system by 2020, allowing students to record and monitor progress of skills and experience against future career aspirations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous reliance on DLHE survey, with the need for the Group to capture further information on student progression to better inform intervention. • Student consultations identified the use of passport systems as a positive model to implement.
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group shall work towards an Employability Strategy for 2021, following further analysis of student destinations data and aligned to our revised strategic direction. • The Group shall invest in the development of an on-line student CPD and Employability module including, where appropriate, the offer of additional industry qualifications for employment from 2020-21. • In Collaboration with its partners, the Group is committed to continuing to review the currency of assessment methods to enhance student employability, completed by June 2020. This will be in two-parts for September 2020 delivery and assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with the Group's HEI partner to build on work-related credit-bearing units at each level of Foundation Degree programmes; - Engage with the Group's awarding body (Pearson), collaborative FECs and employers to consider the design of assessment on Higher Nationals, with a greater focus towards industry-led/informed assessment, to enhance opportunities for more HSE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group's performance against the HSE metric is impacted significantly by the vocations the Group delivers not being classed as highly skilled employment. The majority of the Group's provision is level 5 vocational HE such as Foundation Degrees and Higher Nationals. Progression to employment and Further Study is high, with the majority of students either progressing to a BA Hons progression degree or seeking employment. These would not be classed as HSE 6 months after graduating as defined by the Standard Occupational Classification. Undoubtedly this has a negative effect on the way in which the data is presented. However, the Group's view is that this is supported by very strong 'employment or further study' data. • Shared curriculum collaborations taken place with HEI partner to strategically develop and implement work-based credits at each level for 2020 intake. • Students value the support of the HE employability team (internal survey), currently within one school – with the intention to roll-out to all other areas across TCG.
Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group is committed to support student employability within and post-programme. The Group has a dedicated employability team, but will commit to annually reviewing the capacity of this to support future focussed activity, including: 	

Strategy	Initial Activity	Initial Evaluation (November 2019)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Group shall extend the scope and frequency of Careers Fairs, ensuring at least one Fair per academic year for each of the sector areas it serves from 2020-21. - The Group shall extend the support network of its HE work placement officers. Traditionally within the Early Years and Childhood provisions, the Group shall extend practices across all sectors. From September 2020, the Group shall assign career officer links to target areas; and extend this service to all students by September 2020. - The Group shall extend upon the good practice of the Alumni model in Creative Arts, to be implemented across all our sector areas by 2021. - From 2021, The Group shall extend the role and focus of its HE work placement team to maintain employability support for students up to 12-months after completing their studies, including job coaching – with an initial focus on priority areas identified in the plan. 	
Scholarly Activity	Through the peer observation model and 10-point plan, the Group shall provide a thematic review of teaching and learning methods to support and enhance employability . The initial review will be presented to HE Management Committee in 2020, with a proposal on future CPD activities for 2021.	Peer model has been effective in recent thematic reviews to inform change, including reviews of student-led delivery; and models of holistic assessment; recognised as a strength by QAA.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The overall responsibility of the monitoring and evaluating of the APP lies with the Higher Education Management Committee which is chaired by the Vice Principal. This is supported by the Group's Equality and Diversity Committee which the Vice Principal is also a member of, ensuring a consistency of approach to the student life cycle. The HE Management Committee (Figure 5) will scrutinise and approve the targets and milestones with operational monitoring and evaluation through the Access and Participation Working Group. The working group has been established to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the APP against aims and objectives, and is aligned to both the OfS Regulatory Group and Student Experience Group – all of which report in to the HE Management Committee. The Group reviewed its deliberative and executive model with leaders and governors in 2019-20 in recognition of continuing to ensure oversight of HE within a new regulatory framework and expectation. This now includes a Governors HE Curriculum and Quality Committee from Spring 2020.

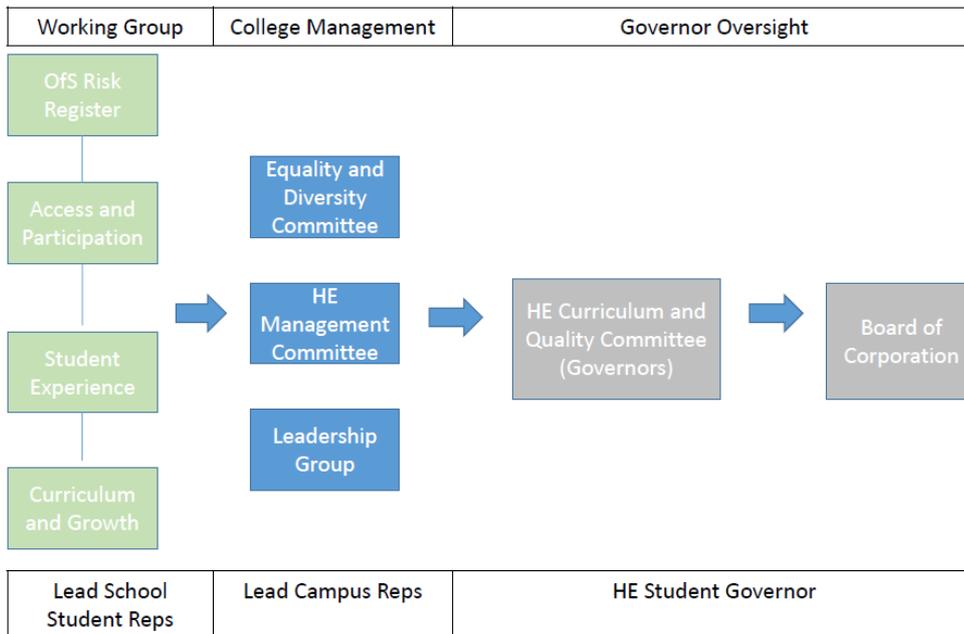


Figure 5: deliberate and executive overview

An impact report of progress and performance against each of the APP target areas will be presented tri-annually by the Dean of HE to the Board of the Corporation, with membership including the College Principal and Chief Executive, designated HE Governors and student Governor, and Chair of the Governors Curriculum and Quality Committee.

From 2019-2020 the Group has taken action to review its annual evaluation, with the College-Level HE Improvement Plan now an evaluation of the 3 inter-related aspects of:

- OfS Regulation and Risk Register
- Student Experience and QAA Quality Code
- Access and Participation

The Improvement Plan is monitored at all levels, using the RAG-rated risk register to identify areas where progress is below expectations. Student representatives hold membership on all of the Group's deliberative committees, with involvement and participation in these meetings providing them the opportunity to feedback on the plan, activities, monitoring and evaluation.

Tri-annually the Group shall review our approach against the 5 dimensions of evaluation, making use of the OfS self-assessment tool, building on existing activities and using effective evaluation to inform impact, future priorities and practice. Based on an initial evaluation using this tool, we give ourselves a baseline judgement of 'emerging' in each of the 5 dimensions (rather than above or below expectations), as the Group develops its practices in HE.

Dimension 1: Strategic context: This has been considered within the APP, aligning the Group Corporate Plan to the APP priorities, along with specific strategic approaches (e.g. HE Student Partnerships) or key Policy (e.g. Equality and Diversity). Within the APP cycle, the Group will consider and develop its evaluation culture to ensure it is appropriate and meaningful.

Immediate strategic steps 2019-20:

- As detailed, the Group is committed to aligning the APP 2020-25 to the developing HE Strategy 2020-25. This is being developed at all stages in consultation with students and employers. The HE Strategy is scheduled to be considered for Board approval in Summer 2020.

Dimension 2: Programme design: As we develop our experience and use of such APP plans, our annual evaluation will consider the rationale for programmes, the extent to which these steps are informed by evidence, and the use of evaluation at the design stage; assessed through the OfS assessment tool, built in to our annual assessment. We have taken immediate steps with the aim to secure continued improvement access, success and progression for our students. These have been informed through research and consultation activity, and through the annual self-evaluation process. However, we recognise the need to ensure this has greater evaluation at the design stage. As such, we are committed to reviewing our plan annually through our self-evaluation, and in doing so - committed to request a variation to the plan to amend our support offer where approaches are deemed ineffective, or subsequent evidence-based solutions are deemed more appropriate.

Immediate strategic steps 2019-20:

- The evaluation of access and participation, along with an associated improvement plan, is now built within the annual evaluation activity.
- We have now engaged in the use of the OfS self-assessment tool, and will develop this further within the annual evaluation cycle for 2020-21, including consideration around the programme design stage.
- We have introduced a revised deliberative and executive committee, with an APP working group, along with APP impact and evaluation now included as standing agenda item for Committees.

Dimension 3: Evaluation design: We have utilised the OfS evaluation toolkit which suggests that we are 'emerging' across all areas and this has supported our intentions for this plan. The Group recognises that evaluation is integral to support our ambitions in widening access and participation programmes in closing the gap for underrepresented groups. Our aim is to ensure that our evaluation approach is robust, informed by evidence-led practice, with that overarching question 'what works?'. In 2019 the group developed its HE data dashboard which provides rich analytical student data on access, success and progression however further development is needed to ensure this quantitative data is triangulated by research and evidence-led qualitative data where reflection, evaluation and scrutiny is part of our culture and processes.

The Group is confident that previous priorities of the APP have made some purposeful impact recently, such as the increase in the proportion of student from low participation groups, and the continuation rates of those that have been supported through bursaries. However, the Group needs to use a tool to better inform evaluation and impact, to better inform provision.

The design of our evaluations will be considered annually and tested with externals (i.e. external panels to consider annual evaluation or SED), leaders and governors, informed by the OfS self-assessment tools for evaluation design. Allowing us to understand the extent to which the evaluation of programmes and APP initiatives are proportionate and appropriate to the activities and measures of the intended impact. This will consider the expectations of OfS, the intended audience, and associated roles, responsibilities and resource - in line with the assessment indicators (OfS assessment tool).

Evaluation will consider each aspect of Access, Success and Progression, with a commitment to implement within our annual Self Evaluation Document for 2019-20, thus informing the 2020-21 Improvement Plan, approved by Board. Each aspect will be considered through a theory of change, evidence of activities and impact to inform future change; along with effective measures and design to ensure causality and rigour of result (i.e. assurances that we had intended to do had direct impact on the result).

Immediate strategic steps 2019-20:

- The Group has engaged in the use of the OfS self-assessment tool to consider the extent to which the evaluation of programmes is proportionate to the activity and appropriate for the purpose of measuring and generating evidence of impact. This will be used to inform the tri-annual assessment of the APP; resulting in the annual Self Evaluation Document.
- The Group has engaged in focused student evaluation activity to consider the impact of initiatives, such as the bursary and scholarship scheme, to enhance student access and positive outcomes. These will be used to direct future schemes.
- The Group has extended the application of its Student Partnership approach, to include students as partners in the development and evaluation of commissioned scholarly activity projects targeted towards APP priority areas; including the development and evaluation of the PAL model, and effectiveness of the use of cloud-based technologies to enhance learning. Each commissioned scholarship programme will include a measured evaluation against its objectives, agreed through the Student Experience Group, and reported to HE Management Committee. An evaluation of each project will be used to inform future practice.

Dimension 4: Evaluation implementation. In developing this APP, the Group will consider opportunities for improved measures and tools to evaluate, particularly given the challenges of data limitations for colleges and smaller providers.

Immediate strategic steps 2019-20:

- The Group has developed improved performance data systems to monitor and evaluate student access and outcomes, used to inform the APP and support target areas for improvement for all student groups.
- The Group is investing in the development of the HE data dashboard system to provide leaders, governors, staff and student representatives with clearly visible progress against performance, including performance against priority targets and milestones captured within the APP (e.g. BAME attainment rates); providing greater opportunities to evaluate impact on student outcomes.

- The Group has committed to the review of student destinations through a survey tool to gain a further understanding on the destination of our students to better evaluate the impact of the provision on student progression; and to inform future direction of the curriculum offer and model. The initial survey of student destinations will be complete by August 2021, with outcomes to inform future APP target areas.
- The Group will continue to reflect on the tri-annual evaluation of the APP targets, with student representation at all evaluation events.

Dimension 5: Learning from evaluation. Through on-going discussions within deliberative and executive committees and working groups, consideration will be given to approaches to the evaluation of findings and results associated with APP priorities to inform practice. Models of reflection, sharing and wider dissemination is encouraged in all aspects of HE, often supporting innovation in practice.

Immediate strategic steps 2019-20:

- This is best captured in the Group's continued investment and approach to HE scholarship, peer evaluations of teaching and learning, and the student partnership strategy; now enhanced through a central HE staff reporting structure across the 3 college sites, put in place in August 2019.
- Within the tri-annual evaluation, the Group will reflect and capture findings and results associated with APP priorities to inform practice, captured through a scholarly activity project, to be published annually within the College Scholarship Journal, and reflected in future planning.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The Dean of Higher Education, with support from the leadership team, will be responsible for the monitoring of performance against this APP, reporting to the Executive Team and Board of Governors (Figure 6).

A Student Experience and Outcomes working group, along with an Access and Participation working group, has been established to objectively monitor progress against the target areas, reporting to the HE Management Committee. Any under-performance against milestones will need to be addressed immediately, with progress reports to Board termly and Executive half-termly. In such occurrences of under-achieving, an internal evidence-based review will be put in place and outcomes reported to Executive, to ensure that the overall aims and objectives outlined in the APP are achieved. Where required, readjustments to investments and areas of priority will be considered and reported to staff and students.



Figure 6: Overview of monitoring process

As approved by HE Management Committee in summer 2019, the self-evaluation of the Group's HE provision has been revised. In recognising and valuing the significance of the APP, an evaluation of performance against targets will be included within the annual SED, along with quality and regulatory measures. As such, the annual evaluation will consist of 3 interrelated areas as below. Annual targets and milestones will inform the HE Improvement Plan, which will capture targets of the APP.



Figure 7: Tri-annual evaluation of impact

Progress against the plan will be reported tri-annually (fig. 7) to the governing body, which includes student governors, and to students, more widely, through our HE Student forums. This will also include impact of financial support on student access and success. Targeted bursaries have been effective, though greater evaluation is needed. In 2018-19, 59 new entrants received a bursary, with 90% continuation rates – above the Group overall rate of 83%. Hardship funds have been used as an effective resource to support students through difficult financial pressures, enabling them to continue with studies. In 2018-19, nearly 90% of those in receipt of a bursary completed the academic year.

Internal evidence demonstrates the positive impact of bursaries and hardships on student continuation (success measure). We are now committed to ensuring we better measure the impact of such funds to evaluate the impact on student access, with the outcomes to inform future financial support from 2021-22. The initial evaluation will be complete by December 2020.

Typically, the November evaluation considers performance against the previous academic year and a subsequent annual improvement plan, to be considered and approved by Board of Corporation. The annual review will consider an evaluation of performance against the 3 inter-related components of regulation, student experience and access and participation. The latter evaluating the impact of targeted activities on student access, success and progression, considering performance against the APP targets and milestones.

The February evaluation considers an initial indication of performance against KPIs, including those within the APP, giving particular consideration to the APP priority areas, and evaluation against aim and objectives. If required, the February review will provide the opportunity to re-evaluate associated activities and resource to achieve the plan. The Board of Corporation receive and approve the evaluation.

The July evaluation considers student outcomes, particularly pass rates and attainment, as well as intended student destinations. An evaluation of performance data will consider outcomes against APP targets, and identify any areas of priority to be considered for future resource. The Board of Corporation receive and approve the evaluation.

All APP targets and commitments will be contained within our annual APP action plan, with a RAG-rated system to monitor progress and report on impact. The impact of targeted activities towards improvements in APP priority areas will be monitored tri-annually, with any areas of risk identified to Board. There are a range of internal mechanisms to measure impact, the key ones for each included below:

Impact of access measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student enrolment data recorded on Pro-Solution and reported through a HE Data Dashboard, designed to report on trends in access data, including priority areas (e.g. proportion of BAME students, care leavers) • Student Survey tools to measure the impact of intervention on access, such as impact studies on the use of hardship and bursary funds to raise access. • Internally commissioned scholarly activity involving the annual publication of findings to evaluate the impact of intervention on access (e.g. impact of bursaries to support access)
Impact of success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student key performance data recorded on Pro-Solution and reported through the HE Data Dashboard, allowing visibility of impact against identified APP performance measures (e.g. continuation rates of BAME students; attainment rates of part time students from low participation neighbourhoods). • Student Survey tools to measure the impact of intervention on success, such as impact studies on the use of enhanced tutorial programmes to improve continuation. • Internally commissioned scholarly activity involving the annual publication of findings to evaluate the impact of intervention on success (e.g. impact of peer support model to support attainment).

Impact of progression measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student destination survey data, captured and recorded internally in Pro-Solution, reported through the HE Data Dashboard. Impact measured through destinations of graduates, including data splits by target areas (e.g. BAME, PT mature). • Student Survey tools to measure student satisfaction rates on employability, with data splits for priority areas (e.g. BAME) • Internally commissioned scholarly activity involving the annual publication of findings to evaluate the impact of intervention on to support progression (e.g. impact of student passport system to support progression).
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4. Provision of information to students

The Group is committed to ensuring the provision of information to prospective and current students about the Group, learning opportunities and support that is available is up-to-date and accessible. The Group uses a range of sources to ensure students have the correct information to make informed choices about their educational opportunities. Information for prospective students on financial support is available through the Group's websites (www.stockport.ac.uk or www.trafford.ac.uk) and is published within the higher education prospectus. Financial support is provided within open events and guidance sessions prior to enrolment, as well as additional drop in financial support workshops. Students can access information on financial support through the Group's websites and VLE. All information regarding the Group, learning opportunities and support is embedded within Welcome Week induction sessions. The Group is committed to ensuring the APP and this supplementary information is available to prospective and current students. Information will be publicly available on the Group's website within the HE Wider Information section.

The Group is compliant with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). Prospective students are provided with key information in respect to fees and additional costs. During the application stage, applicants are provided with the following information as part of their formal offer:

Course Fee: Information on fees throughout the duration of the programme and additional associated course costs.

Course Handbook: Information on the course, module delivery including credits and assessments.

Terms and Conditions: information regarding the payment of fees, liability periods, the total amount of tuition fees payable, cancellation and refund process.

Student Transfer Plan: information on the Groups process for a student wishing to transfer between higher education providers, which may impact on a student's fees and funding.

Student Protection Plan: Information on the Groups process where we may need to move provision to another location or a course can no longer run, which may impact on a student's fees and funding.

The Financial support is monitored and evaluated on an annual basis and discussed at the Higher Education Management Committee. Analysis undertaken in Autumn 2019 suggest that 90% of students that received the bursary award in 2017-18 progressed into Year 2 of study (compared to 74% the previous year) and 60% of students felt the bursary has supported them with their first year of study at college and the Group should continue to offer this.

In 2018-19 the Group introduced its first bursary scheme and supported up to 100 students with a one-off means tested bursary of £500 in their first year of study. Recent evaluation work included a survey to current students which confirmed that the bursary allowed them to support themselves with essential living costs and support family commitments. Only 15% of students felt that the bursary influenced their decision making in choosing to study with us. Analysis undertaken also shows that 90% of students that received the bursary progressed into year 2 and 63% agreed that the bursary supported their continuation. Whilst the initial survey highlighted some positive outcomes for students, the group recognises that we need to become more evidenced-led in our approach in understanding how financial support has had a true impact on students, in the simplest terms "has financial support, achieved our expectations in improving the student's life cycle". We will engage with the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit which will consist of the statistical and survey tool. We anticipate that both will be developed by September 2020 and be conducted by November 2020 to include students that have progressed to year 2 of study who had received financial support in the previous year. This approach will support the group to monitor the effectiveness of financial support and ensure our measures are appropriate and robust, allowing us to make an enhancement if necessary.

The rationale of allocating bursaries within Year 1 of study is that we know, similar to the national picture, that this is the year with the greatest risk of withdrawal or non-continuation. For instance, whilst TCG continuation rates from Year 1 to Year 2 of study are 83% (2019 internal Pro-Solution data), we know that retention during Year 2 is over 98%. As such, we believe that financial support at Year 1 to help remove some initial barriers, is the most effective period to offer bursaries to support student success. Clearly there are other existing resources, as well as new initiatives listed under 'supporting student success and progression' below, available through the learner journey of study to enhance student success.

Specifically looking at success we are committed to introduce a number of further initiatives for 2020-21. The introduction of a pre-course 'learning to learn' module was a model proposed through the student consultation, perceived as a valuable exercise to increase students' level; of readiness for study – particularly those that have been out of education for a period of time, including those returning adults on part-time employer sponsored programmes. Alongside this, those similar students proposed the benefits of an on-line 'live' academic support system, allowing greater access to support for those that typically attend college on a day-release model and work full time.

Additionally, the more rapid introduction and investment of cloud-based devices was welcomed by student groups, both as a tool to enhance the classroom experience, as well as support greater access to a student community remotely. This investment and impact has formed a commissioned scholarship project in 2019-20, with a pilot approach taken to the use of Cloud Books across HE for staff and students within a centre, captured through a funded staff-student scholarly activity project to evaluate the impact of cloud-based technologies in the classroom to enhance student

learning; and the use of these technologies to harness improved student peer on-line communities – recognising the challenge of engaging with student-student and student-staff where the majority of in college for one day a week. The outcomes of the project will be published within our annual scholarship journal in June 2020, along with recommendations for future investment.

Through our commissioned scholarship programme in 2019, we identified the need and value for the introduction of a centralised and integrated tutorial model, with the report suggesting that “contrary to current practices where the pastoral and academic functions are conceived as separate, findings ... suggest that integrating the two is perhaps more effective as it ensures pastoralism become a way of life rather than an add on” (Gabi and Gabi, 2019), recognising the importance of a culture of students feeling valued to enhance their student success.

Similarly, the rationale for the introduction of Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) model for 2020-21 was developed through our staff commissioned research in 2019, which recognised such a model for supporting student transition in to higher education, particularly important for those from the non-traditional backgrounds so evident at TCG, and in doing so “providing a safe place where L4 students can ask difficult questions whilst building friendships, enhancing study skills and developing studentship” (Allen, 2019).

A further investment from 2020 is the increase in additional HE staffing to enhance academic support and counselling. The Group has invested in a centralised HE support model, led through the HE academic services and support team, including specialist support for advice and guidance, careers and employability, welfare and academic support. Within the 2018-19 Self Evaluation Document, the Group reported on seen the value of investment in this area recently, including improved overall continuation rates and better outcomes for students with a disability. With over 70% of our students entering with low tariff points, further academic support is evident. Its impact since introduction saw a steady increase in continuation rates, along with further improvements in student attainment. Increased levels of counselling is an essential. We piloted a revised counselling model in 2019-20 with our Access to HE students, significantly contributing to an improving in-year retention by around 10% points; with a group programme focussed around resilience and self-worth; as well as greater access and awareness to 1:1 counselling support. With one in four university students now suffering when it comes to their mental health, with depression (77%) and anxiety (74%) revealed to be the most common (YouGov, 2016), an increased support service is evident.

Alongside our investment in success measures, we recognise the need for further developments to enhance student progression, with the majority of activity informed through student consultation and from our annual self-evaluation.

We plan to extend our support network of HE work placement officers recognising the positive impact they have within the education and health sector, to extend across all our offer, and to coincide with our commitment to move to a curriculum model that has work-related units within every Level 4 programme by 2021. The officers introduced bi-annual Careers Fairs in recent years, valued by our students, and now with the intention to extend the scope and frequency throughout the student calendar.

Our student consultation activity recognised the opportunity to invest in Student Passport system, enabling staff and students to have a central tool to monitor and evaluate their employability journey, including existing skills, knowledge and experience and identified areas for development. Similarly, and working alongside this, the student group proposed the introduction is an on-line student CPD and Employability module, building on the points above in relation to a cloud-based, accessible platform.

The improved use of Alumni across all HE provision was recognised through our annual self-evaluation, recognising the strengths of its use and visibility within the Arts provision to provide aspiration to those looking to enter HE, as well as motivations and role models to support student progression in to employment. The existing model in Arts includes regular opportunities for alumni to engage as peers with students, deliver specialist workshops and provide motivation talks within the tutorial and careers programme.

In recognition of the need to further improve our progression rates in to highly skilled employment, our annual evaluation recognised the importance and value of providing students with job coaching beyond the completion of their programme, and as an extension of the alumni developments.

The overall responsibility of the monitoring and evaluating of the APP lies with the Higher Education Management Committee which is chaired by the Vice Principal. The Student Experience Group, a working group of the HE Management Committee was introduced in 2019-20. The Management Committee will scrutinise and approve the targets and milestones with operational monitoring and evaluation through the Student Experience Group. Student representatives hold membership on all of the Group’s deliberative committees, with involvement and participation in these meetings providing them the opportunity to feedback on the plan, activities, monitoring and evaluation.

In 2020-21 the total bursary funds will be £25,000. This represents a 50% reduction of the 2019-20 bursary/scholarship funds, and therefore requires a particular focus on target groups. Reducing this allocation will allow the Group to direct further resource on student support to raise levels of success and progression.

The access investment outlines the plan from 2020-25, and we are committed to reviewing this annually to ensure we meet our outcomes.

Initially, the plan includes a small reduction in access investment over the course of the 5-year duration, with the rationale that associated investment is reduced as gaps reduce. Alongside this, a significant amount of investment is upfront on the initial years, around systems and processes, which will be sustained for subsequent years (e.g. Data Dashboard, Survey systems, scholarship to inform strategy).

Step Up Bursaries

A bursary of £500 in the first year of study at Level 4 only. This award will be available to any home student in receipt of a student loan for their tuition fees with a household income of up to £25,000 and that meet all other eligibility criteria of one or more of:

- Students from IMDQ1
- Students from POLAR4Q1

The eligibility of FT students will be assessed using the information which they have provided to the Student Loans Company, to be assessed for

financial support. The eligibility of PT students will be assessed by the Group. It will be awarded as follows:

- A cash award of £500 in the first year of study at Level 4 only (January and May), which is available to home students on FT and PT programmes of study within the scope of this agreement, payable in two equal instalments upon receipt of the first tuition fee loan payment.
- PT students will be paid on a pro-rata basis based on the annual number of academic credits studied. Attendance on the programme of study must be 90% or above (other than for extenuating circumstances) and student performance at Merit profile. As an example, a part time student completing Level 4 over 2-years would be entitled to £250 per year.

Waivers for Care Leavers

Fee waivers representing 75% of tuition fees for the duration of a programme will be available to students who are care leavers. This award will be made to any home student who has left local authority care in the 2 years prior to enrolment on the first year of study, irrespective of postcode.

Financial Hardship

The Group is committed to provide a hardship fund to support students who may face financial difficulties during their time at the Group. The Group has evaluated the effectiveness of the resource and taking into consideration that the increase of student numbers from the merger and the Group's student population, decided to double the level of the hardship fund from £5,000 in 2018-19 to £10,000 in 2019- 20. A hardship fund of £10,000 will remain in place for 2020-21.

Eligibility and the amount allocated to each student for the fund will be considered on an individual basis by the Dean of HE and Academic Registrar. Due to the confidential nature, these details will not be reported to the Student Experience Group, but will receive an update on expenditure against allocation. A maximum of £10,000 will be allocated for 2020-21. With an aim to ensure there is such funding throughout the student journey, a maximum of £5,000 can be spent within Semester 1 (Sept-Jan), ensuring that at least an equal amount is available for Semester 2 (Feb-June).

Supporting Student Success and Progression

Further investments to support student success and progression are included within the report, with key areas of direct investment in to student support from 2020-21 being:

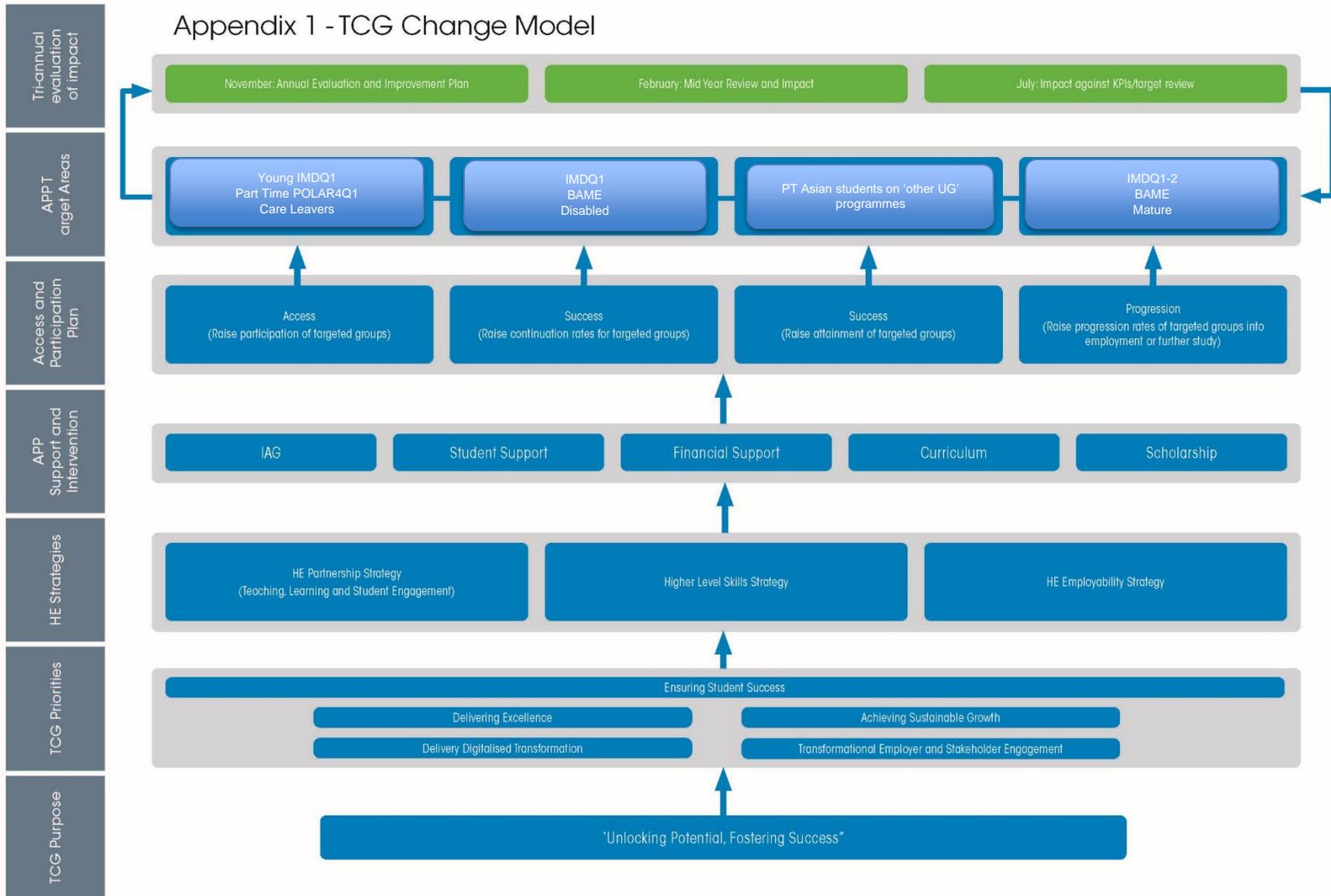
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Course 'Learning to Learn' Module • Additional HE staffing: academic support and counselling • Centralised and integrated tutorial model • Development of Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme • Suite of 'cloud-based' IT devices • On-line 'live' academic support system
Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended support network of HE work placement officers • Invest in Student Passport system • On-line student CPD and Employability module • Extended scope and frequency of Careers Fairs • Alumni across all HE provision • Job coaching post-qualification
Research and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in Data Dashboard • Investment in student destinations analysis • Annual investment in scholarly activity in target areas (e.g. retention of BAME students; assessment models to enhance employability) • Strategic development plans and stakeholder engagement activities to inform curriculum design and direction • Periodic Reviews of all sector areas, with a focus on strategic purpose and student outcomes for all, informing future curriculum

5. Appendix

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)

Appendix 1 - TCG Change Model



Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£7,995
Foundation degree		£6,995
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£6,995
CertHE/DipHE		£7,995
Postgraduate ITT		£7,995
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree		£3,600
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£3,600
CertHE/DipHE		£3,995
Postgraduate ITT		£3,995
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The Trafford College Group

Provider UKPRN: 10005998

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (post-16)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Access (other)	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Financial support (£)	£75,000.00	£88,000.00	£96,000.00	£104,000.00	£111,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£30,000.00	£25,000.00	£20,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HF1)	£332,400.00	£375,600.00	£396,350.00	£404,650.00	£417,100.00
Access investment	6.0%	5.3%	5.0%	4.9%	4.8%
Financial support	10.5%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.8%
Research and evaluation	9.0%	6.7%	5.0%	3.7%	3.6%
Total investment (as %HF1)	25.6%	22.6%	20.7%	19.3%	19.2%

