NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

1. Introduction and strategic aim

Nottingham Trent University is a teaching-intensive and research-inclusive institution, committed to enabling our students to transform their lives and enhance the social, cultural, and economic environment within which they live, study, volunteer and work. Our origin can be traced back to the Nottingham Government School of Design, established in 1843 to deliver innovation and skills to drive the prosperity of the textiles industry in the East Midlands.

The profile of our students is central to our context. In terms of equality characteristics, 13% of our undergraduates are mature; 23% declare a disability; 12% identify as black; 10% Asian; 6.5% mixed ethnicity; 1.5% other ethnicity and 1% undeclared. Just under half of our undergraduates' prior qualifications are A-levels *with* other level three qualifications or just other level 3 qualifications, primarily BTECs. Around 33% of our undergraduates qualify for the NTU bursary scheme, eligibility being from households with annual incomes of under £27,500. Our analysis of this data shows significant overlap in characteristics. For example, our black students, in comparison to our white students, are five times more likely to have been eligible for free school meals; twice as likely to have a BTEC qualification and twice as likely to have entered via Clearing. Each of these characteristics is, individually, associated with lower rates of academic success. Our students face multiple challenges and are clearly subject to the inequalities of the broader macrosystem. Whilst this context shapes our approach to access and participation, it limits the effectiveness of any Intervention Strategy.

With this context in mind, social mobility is a key commitment underpinning our educational mission. Our goal is to enable our students to transform their futures. This can be seen across the University. We are a TEF Gold institution; we have made a submission to the University Mental Health charter; we hold bronze awards for the Advance HE Race Equality charter and Athena Swann and we are a University of Sanctuary, awarded jointly with the University of Nottingham. In addition, we were the first university to sign the Social Mobility Pledge and have won several university of the year awards in recognition of our contribution to social mobility and student experience. With Kings College London and the Behavioural Insights Team, we initiated The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO).

Alongside our commitment to social mobility, three principles guide our ways of working: we change lives, we are bold, we do the right thing. These principles underpin strategic and operational decisions.

This commitment and our principles are central to our current strategy, *University, reimagined*. This was developed collaboratively and in parallel with the Nottingham Trent Students' Union's (NTSU) strategy which was informed by more than 4,000 student inputs. The Creating Opportunity ambition of the strategy guides our access and participation work with the Intervention Strategies detailed being central to it. They demonstrate how we create opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to develop the knowledge and skills required to transform their lives and enhance their environments.

2. Risks to equality of opportunity

Through our assessment of performance, we have identified a total of eight risks from the equality of opportunity risk register (EORR); three for Access, four for Student Success and one for Progression, as detailed below. We identified these risks using an evidence risk score approach. This and further information is provided in our assessment of performance in Annex A.

Access

Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is low progression rates to HE. The group identified as most affected is school pupils from Nottinghamshire (city and county) who are, or have been, eligible for free school meals. Evidence suggests that this low progression is a function of low prior attainment and differential perceptions of higher education. Therefore, the main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is a combination of **risk 1: knowledge and skills** (students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions) and **risk 3: perception of higher education** (students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified).

In addition, a second indication of risk from the EORR observed is low application rates to NTU**.** The group identified as most affected are students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Evidence suggests that these students are less likely to find that mainstream provision is their optimum route into higher education and/or more likely to prefer to study locally. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is **risk 5: limited choice of course type and delivery mode;** students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

Student Success

Our assessment demonstrates that the first indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is low continuation and completion rates. The group identified as most affected are NTU students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, although there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. Evidence suggests that these students are more likely to be affected by the current cost of living crisis, the effect of which may have been exacerbated by long-term educational implications of the pandemic. Therefore, the main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is a combination of **risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic) and **risk 10: cost pressures** (increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade)**.**

A second EORR risk indicator observed is low completion rates of students with a known mental health condition**.** Evidence suggests that the prevalence of symptoms of some common mental disorders is higher among young people who started higher education, compared with those who did not attend HE, due to factors such as exam stress, academic pressures, leaving home and financial strain. Therefore, the main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is **risk 8: mental health;** students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing**.**

Our assessment demonstrates that the third and final student success indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is low on-course attainment. The group identified as most affected are black students, although there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. Evidence suggests that these students often find it necessary to create their own social and cultural networks in order to remedy their perceived exclusion from the wider, 'white oriented' university community. Difficulties may arise from feelings of isolation, alienation, and a perceived lack of support. Through appropriate intervention and guidance, facilitating the development of belonging to a HE institution and/or campus can lead to an increase in black students' academic motivation and engagement. Therefore, the main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is **risk 2: information and guidance**; students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

Progression

Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is employment outcomes. The group identified as most affected are students from deprived neighbourhoods. Evidence suggests that graduate level employment opportunities may be limited in these poorer areas, where many students return post-graduation. Therefore, the main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is **risk 12: progression from higher education**; students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. In practice, the overarching risk 12 encapsulates several other risks identified in the EORR, most notably cost pressures, which can restrict students' access to key opportunities such as sandwich placements.

3. Objectives

We have identified a total of seven strategic objectives in the attempt to mitigate the risks identified through our assessment of performance and the underlying EORR; two for access, four for student success and one for progression, as detailed below.

Access objectives

Objective 1: Increase in HE participation rates of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County free school meals (FSM) eligible pupils. Our aim is to reach the national average by the 2028/29 year 11 pupil cohort. This is aligned with Risk 1 (knowledge & skills) and Risk 3 (perception of higher education).

Objective 2: Increase the number of learners from non-traditional pathways participating in HE at NTU. This is aligned with Risk 5 (limited choice of course type and delivery mode).

Student success objectives

Objective 3: Increase in continuation rates of NTU students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1). Our aim is to half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entrant cohort. This is aligned with Risk 9 (ongoing impacts of coronavirus) and Risk 10 (cost pressures).

Objective 4: Increase in completion rates of NTU students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1). Our aim is to half the current deficit compared to the average for all

NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entrant cohort. This is aligned with Risk 9 (ongoing impacts of coronavirus) and Risk 10 (cost pressures).

Objective 5: Increase in completion rates of NTU students with a known mental health disability. Our aim is to half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entrant cohort. This is aligned with Risk 8 (mental health).

Objective 6: Increase in Upper Second/First Class degree classification attainment rates achieved by black students. Our aim is to decrease the current deficit by one-third compared with the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 graduating cohort. This is aligned with Risk 2 (information & guidance).

Progression objectives

Objective 7: Increase in positive graduate progression outcomes (further study or highly skilled occupations) of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1). Our aim is to half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU graduates by the 2028/29 graduating cohort. This is aligned with Risk 12 (progression from higher education).

4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

We have identified a total of seven intervention strategies to mitigate the risks to equality of opportunity evidenced through our assessment of performance (Annex A); three for Access, three for Student Success and one for Progression stages of the student lifecycle. Collaboration with schools, charities and other third parties is a defining feature of many of these.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 1: SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OUTREACH PROGRAMME

This strategy aims to mitigate the effects of Risk 1 (knowledge & skills) and Risk 3 (perception of HE) and thereby help us achieve Objective 1 (increase in HE participation rates of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County free school meals (FSM) eligible pupils). This is underpinned by Target 1 (see supplementary fees, investments and targets (FIT) document). Our overarching objective and related target will be achieved by delivering a suite of attainment raising and outreach activities with disadvantaged young people and schools to improve performance standards at Key Stages 2 and 4 and enhance perceptions of higher education.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OUTREACH PROGRAMME – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Students in Classrooms (Objective 1, Risk 1) An existing programme, Students in Classrooms (run in collaboration with	Staff time, Student Ambassadors,	Short- to medium-term improvements in reading age based on a wide-ranging assessment to identify	N/A

the University of Nottingham) will place over 100 current university students in 28 targeted Primary and Secondary schools locally. The scheme will be divided into two strands: Primary Learning Advocates (PLA) predominantly support year 5 and year 6 classes (circa 1,900 pupils in 2028/29); Achievement Coaches (AC) provide 1:1 support to pupils in year 7 (circa 400 pupils in 2028/29).	travel and delivery costs	strengths and weaknesses in key reading skills. This is expected to manifest in a subsequent improvement in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attainment.	
Oracy (Objective 1, Risk 1) Oracy is a new initiative set to be designed and developed with the charity Go Mad Thinking and a Multi-Academy Trust. This new intervention emphasises the importance of spoken language and verbal interaction in the classroom. Stakeholder engagement has indicated strong interest in this subject from schools. This will be a sustained intervention over several weeks and is likely to focus on younger primary aged pupils. Anticipated number of schools for the 2024/25 pilot: 2 schools; 60 target pupils. Expansion would depend upon evaluation findings.	Staff time, travel and delivery costs	Outcomes are likely to be attainment / skills based; but details are still to be confirmed as this is a new initiative.	N/A
Pre-16 Widening Access Outreach Programme (Objective 1, Risk 3) We provide a series of progressive widening access outreach interventions for students in years 5 to 11, aimed at enriching their understanding of higher education and challenging any preconceived notions. These activities primarily target students eligible for free school meals and heavily involve student ambassadors. Our primary school outreach programme targets years 5 and 6,	Staff time, travel and delivery costs	We envisage that in the longer term, our core outreach provision will contribute to increasing the HE participation rate for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham FSM pupils.	IS3

introducing the concept and purpose of university. Building upon the primary programme, our secondary schools' outreach programme focuses on years 7 and 8, providing deeper insights into pathways to higher education and student life. Subsequent sessions in years 9, 10, and 11 concentrate on skill development, decision-making, and preparing for life beyond GCSEs. We are building on our existing programme and our aim is to offer 20,000 contact opportunities annually. We endeavour to increase the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals participating so that by the end of the APP, 50% of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire year 5 to year 11 pupils eligible for free school meals will have experienced our pre-16 widening access outreach programme.			
Post-16 Widening Access Outreach Programme and Contextual Admissions (Objective 1, Risk 3) An existing programme, we offer a comprehensive outreach package tailored to Level 3 students, providing information sessions, workshops, campus visits and events designed to offer timely and relevant information. These existing activities heavily involve student ambassadors. Our programme is carefully tailored to be relevant to students pursuing A levels, BTECs, or Access qualifications. We also conduct targeted outreach sessions for post-16 students, focusing on alternative degree options such as foundation degrees and degree apprenticeships.	Staff time, travel and delivery costs	We envisage that outreach work and varied course provision will help to increase HE participation for pupils from Nottinghamshire and Nottingham who face barriers to HE access (e.g. FSM eligible, care experienced, BTEC and Access qualified students.	IS 2

Almost all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire secondary schools and colleges are engaged with our post 16 outreach provision. In 2022/23, we worked with 63 schools/colleges in Nottinghamshire, and delivered 337 sessions to circa 14,000 beneficiaries. We also make contextual admissions offers to eligible applicants.			
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£4,525,000**		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 1 will be £4.5m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

The activities within our Schools and Colleges Outreach programme will be evaluated using primarily Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence standards. Each activity will be underpinned by a strong Theory of Change (Type 1), and will be triangulated using quasi-experimental statistical techniques (such as propensity score matching), by comparing outcomes between participants recorded on the HEAT database with a suitable control group (Type 2). In 2023/24, we undertook a randomised controlled trial for one of our Intervention Strategy 1 activities (Students in Classrooms) and we will utilise the learnings from this process to explore other opportunities to deliver Type 3 (causal) evidence, as appropriate. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Schools and Colleges Outreach programme is provided in Annex B, where we also set out evaluation plans for each individual activity.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 2: ALTERNATIVE COURSE PROVISION

Our Alternative Course Provision programme will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 5 (limited choice of course type and delivery mode) and thereby help us achieve Objective 2 (increase the number of learners from non-traditional pathways participating in HE at NTU). This is underpinned by Target 2 (see supplementary FIT document).

ALTERNATIVE COURSE PROVISION – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?

Alternative Courses We will expand our course offering to provide more courses aligned with local labour market needs. Courses available will involve include further Higher Technical Qualifications, Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas. Over the lifecycle of the plan, we will develop at least 10 additional level 4 / 5 qualifications (some of which will be at a UCAS tariff of 64 points). This will ensure that there is a rich and varied offer for students who would not traditionally access higher education. Providing non-traditional pathways is an existing initiative which we plan to expand. We will collaborate with local Academies and FE Colleges to ensure our offering meets local demand.	Staff time	We expect to attract more students to Level 4 and 5 'other undergraduate' qualifications at NTU, such as HTQs, HNCs, HNDs, Foundation Degrees.	IS 1, IS 5
Alternative Pathways We will modularise selected courses (from 2025/26) and develop further collaborative partnership agreements with FE and HE providers. This will facilitate progression to our alternative courses. We will also create additional part time routes. Attracting a wider diversity of students by enhancing non-traditional pathways is an existing initiative and we plan to scale it up.	Staff time	We expect to attract additional mature students studying level 4 and 5 qualifications as a result of these changes.	IS 5
Degree Apprenticeships We will expand our existing portfolio of 25 apprenticeship standards and add pathways to provide a greater number of apprenticeships, in line with demand from prospective students and regional labour market needs. These courses	Staff time and delivery costs	We expect to increase our apprenticeship starts by 10% per year with growth focused on the skills needs of the local and regional areas.	N/A

run from Level 4 to Level 7 in a range of industries and professions including both public and private sector employers. We aim to introduce two new apprenticeship standards per year, while actively engaging new and existing employer partners to increase the apprenticeships available on existing standards. NTU has over 2000 apprentices currently on-programme with 61% of these over 25 years old, 27% over 30, and circa 400 apprentices in their 40s. Degree Apprenticeships are an existing initiative and we plan to scale it up.		These include supporting our NHS and local government partners with their recruitment and upskilling efforts	
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£6,440,000**		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 2 will be £6.4m over the 4 year plan, which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

The activities within our Alternative Course Provision will be evaluated using primarily Type 1 (narrative) evidence standards, underpinned by a Theory of Change. In the absence of a natural comparator group, it will be challenging to embed robust Type 2 (empirical enquiry) standards. However, we will monitor enrolment numbers across the new courses and alternative pathways and triangulate our findings with qualitative feedback from beneficiaries. Achieving robust impact evaluation may also be hampered by external forces and/or the macro environment. To mitigate such factors beyond our control, we will embed implementation and process evaluation (IPE) methodologies to help us understand how alternative provision is being delivered, the student groups it is reaching and the perceived value from beneficiaries. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Alternative Course Provision is provided in Annex B, where we also set out individual evaluation plans for each activity.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 3: STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

Our Strategic Collaborations programme will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 1 (knowledge & skills), Risk 3 (perception of HE) and Risk 5 (limited choice of course type and delivery mode) and thereby help us achieve Objective 1 (increase in HE participation rates of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County free school meals (FSM) eligible pupils) and Objective 2 (increase the number of learners from non-traditional pathways participating in HE at NTU). This is underpinned by Targets 1 and 2 (see supplementary FIT document).

This will be achieved through bringing civic and community partners together to understand and address specific local needs, particularly educational outcomes. We aim to use the convening power of the institution to build stronger, more resilient communities by taking a systems thinking/collective impact approach through long-term, cross-sector initiatives.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Mansfield Hub NTU has opened a University Centre in Mansfield, one of the most deprived areas in the UK. In partnership with Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Mansfield and Ashfield District Councils and local employers, we are creating an integrated pathway of qualifications from Level 2 to Level 7 to transform the skills of local residents in the sectors where local employers need them most. Accompanying this provision, NTU is delivering a broader programme consisting of work in local schools and supporting economic growth through innovation and enterprise to facilitate the demand for higher level skills and qualifications.	Staff time, infrastructure and delivery costs	We would expect to see improvements in local skills levels and qualifications, ultimately leading to technical and professional occupations.	IS 1, IS 2
Clifton Collective Impact The Clifton Collective Impact Initiative (CCII) is a collaborative, inter-agency, community initiative which aims to bring together young people, residents, NTU, schools, community organisations, public sector organisations and statutory services to bring about change in outcomes for young people in the Nottingham wards of Clifton. It has been running since Summer 2022 and is facilitated by NTU.	Staff time and delivery costs	We expect more children starting schools to be 'ready' to attend by being able to listen and follow simple instructions. At the end of their reception year, the aim is to see improvements in 'Good Levels of Development'. Over	IS 1

		the longer term positive outcomes would include improved key stage 4 attainment levels.	
Getting School Ready Building on a pilot project within one under-served school, the Getting School Ready initiative brings together cross-sector partners, parents and carers within Mansfield, to co-produce a plan to address the persistent issue of high numbers of pupils across the District entering school and requiring significant extra support to thrive. Collaboration with multiple local stakeholders. This project will be Mansfield wide. However, the specific numbers of schools / target pupils engaged are yet to be agreed. These will be based on findings about areas of greatest need, based on mapping existing activity and school / community interest.	Staff time, travel and delivery costs	As above	IS 1
Strategic Partnerships with Schools, Colleges and Multi-Academy Trusts NTU actively collaborates with schools, colleges, and Multi-academy Trusts at a strategic level, fostering mutually beneficial relationships. These partnerships involve implementing systemic changes that promote equal opportunities. We currently have strategic partnership agreements with 2 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, 2 colleges and 3 MATs. A prime example of NTU's strategic partnership is with Vision West Nottinghamshire College. Our Mansfield Hub is co-located on the college's site and course offerings and transition arrangements have been	Staff time and delivery costs	Over the long term, at a higher level, we would expect to see improvements in local attainment. Shorter-term, specific outcomes are attainment / skills based.	IS 1

created to allow learners to seamlessly progress from Further Education to Higher Education. These strategic partnerships facilitate a range of activities which enhance this plan. In addition to the activities listed in Intervention Strategies 1 and 3, this includes well developed staff volunteer opportunities including 'Right2Read' and school Governor programmes.			
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£10,460,000**		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 3 will be £10.5m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

Our Strategic Collaborations are not specifically 'activity based', and in such a broad programme, one method of evaluation will not suit the range of provision. As such, specific evaluation methods are absorbed by the activities detailed elsewhere in our Intervention Strategy 1. Nevertheless, we will take inspiration from systems theory and develop Type 1 (narrative) evaluation standards for aspects of the strategy, underpinned by a strong Theory of Change. We will also learn from, and adapt our exiting implementation and process evaluation (Type 1), which we undertook for our flagship Getting School Ready project. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for our Strategic Collaborations is provided in Annex B.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 4: CONTINUATION AND COMPLETION

Our Continuation and Completion programme of interventions will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 9 (ongoing impacts of coronavirus) and Risk 10 (cost pressures) and thereby help us achieve Objectives 3 and 4 (increase in continuation and completion rates of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods). This is underpinned by Targets 3 and 4 (see supplementary FIT document).

CONTINUATION AND COMPLETION – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
NTU Bursary Schemes The NTU Bursary Scheme provides cash in hand financial support to students from households with low	Financial support and its delivery	We expect that the NTU Bursary Scheme will permit students from low income backgrounds	IS 6

incomes. Given the current cost of living crisis and aware of the value of extra-curricular activities (ECAs), in addition to our Maintenance Bursary, from 2023/24 we are providing an additional NTU Opportunity Bursary. This is designed to support students in engaging in ECAs which may otherwise not be available to them. Approximately one-third of NTU's UK domiciled undergraduates (circa 8,500 students) are eligible for both the NTU Maintenance Bursary and supplementary Opportunity Bursary.		to enjoy similar rates of success (continuation, attainment, graduate progression) to similar students not eligible for the bursary. We also envisage that the NTU Opportunity Bursary, will permit more students to access these than without this additional support.	
GRIT An existing programme, NTU partner with the charity Grit Breakthrough Programmes to deliver a range of self-reflection sessions which encourage students to examine and develop behaviours, approaches and expectations in order to facilitate their potential and success. It develops self-efficacy, belonging and wellbeing. The sessions include: • Welcome Workshops for all first year students as part of their NTU Welcome programme (circa 8500) • 'Back on track' sessions for students of all year groups with very low-engagement as measured by the NTU Learning Analytics Dashboard (circa 200) • 'Leadership' sessions to second year students of black heritage as part of the Black Leadership Programme activity (circa 150).	Consultancy activity	In the short to medium term, participants of the 'back on track' and 'leadership' sessions are expected to have improved engagement as measured by the NTU Learning Analytics Dashboard. In the longer-term we would expect to see improved rates of continuation and completion compared with students from the same categories who have not attended sessions.	IS 6
Academic Delivery Project (ADP) The ADP will reconsider course delivery models to mitigate risks related to cost	Staff time, student ambassadors	We envisage the redesign will increase attendance and engagement in modules by adapting	IS 5, IS 6

of living pressures, mental health, and ongoing effects of the pandemic.

The project will address:

- Sense of belonging
- Difficulty engaging with studies due to features of the timetable and academic calendar
- Difficulty managing assessment workload and subsequent lower performance
- Different experiences of delivery

The ADP will engage colleagues and students across the whole University, but will likely be more beneficial to those in target groups.

The ADP will support the review of learning and teaching delivery for courses proposing to trial block delivery across a compressed academic timetable (e.g. over 3 days per week). It will reconsider curriculum design, structure and learning and teaching approaches to maintain a high quality student experience in light of the identifi**ed** risks to equality of opportunity. | and delivery costs | our delivery model in light of changed student needs.

Intended outcomes within this include:

Academic calendars which support students to settle in, progress and engage.

Increased first time assessment pass rate and resit success rates.

Improved wellbeing due to more evenly distributed workload. | |
| **Student Mentors**

To address the differential knowledge and skills, the ability to adapt to a higher education environment of new students and to provide flexible, part-time work for higher level students, all first-year undergraduate students (circa 8,500) are assigned a Student Mentor who is a more senior student on the same course. Mentors support new students to settle into life at NTU and encourage their engagement with their studies and with extra-curricular activities. The scheme is designed for target groups, particularly IMD Q1, but is delivered to all students as literature suggests that target students are less | Staff time, student ambassadors and delivery costs | According to our Theory of Change, this will develop an increased sense of belonging and confidence and enhances the student experience. We envisage that these short-term outcomes manifest in improved Level 4 student (mentee) retention. We also expect higher rates of attainment (Levels 5 & 6) and highly | IS 7 |

likely to participate in an opt-in scheme (Source: Reeves et al, 2018).		skilled occupations of mentors.	
Engagement Analytics (EA) and Contact Engagement Service (CES) EA is an existing institution-wide approach to supporting students. Engagement data are provided for students, personal tutors and the CES to use. Engagement analytics are provided for all undergraduate students (PT/FT) studying on an NTU campus. This includes 4,250 students from IMD quintile 1, 2,100 students with a declared mental health condition and 3,500 Black students (2022/23). The CES reaches out to students who show poor engagement, as recorded by the above EA platform. The purpose of the call is to help students understand the University's expectations of engagement, to reassure students that support is available and coach them to taking positive steps to re-engage.	Staff time and delivery costs	By enabling students to see their own engagement in comparison to their peers, students can benchmark their activity levels. When the CES speaks to students, they can help students reflect on their current approach to studies, help understand any blockages to engagement and, ultimately, to re-engage with their studies. We envisage this manifesting in improved retention and (potentially attainment) of otherwise disengaged students.	IS 5, IS 6
Active Collaborative Learning (ACL) The intervention proposed builds on existing work at NTU, looking to increase the quantity and quality of active collaborative learning adoption in two key ways: • Staff development to increase understanding of how to implement the SCALE-UP pedagogy in a wider range of educational contexts, including: general teaching spaces (e.g. lecture theatres), online, and within small groups.	Staff time	Students' experience of ACL (either SCALE-UP or TBL) will lead to the enhancement of their belonging to the academic space. Longer term, we anticipate an increase in continuation, completion, and attainment rates.	IS 6

• Staff development to underpin the introduction of Team-Based Learning (TBL), alongside SCALE-UP, as another active collaborative learning approach.			
Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Pilot We will pilot programmes of supplemental PAL activity targeted primarily at students from non-traditional entry routes and backgrounds. These programmes will address success gaps through the provision of peer-led support in key areas. This is a new activity which (subject to evaluation) will be comprised of: • Pilot (2025/26): 100 students (Participant level/s of study determined by a 2024/25 pilot and underpinning research) • Roll out (2026/27): Identified courses within 1-3 academic schools (Participant level/s of study determined by evaluation of the 2025/26 pilot) • Embed (2027/28): Identified courses within all academic schools • Consolidate (2028/29): All academic schools	Staff time and delivery costs	We anticipate an improvement in participant outcomes, specifically: Increased Y1 continuation rates for BTEC entry* participants Increases in attainment grades for BTEC entry* participants * BTECs are disproportionately studied by IMD q1 students and black students. Therefore, we envisage the programme contributing to objectives 3, 4 and 6.	IS 6
Extended NTU Welcome 'NTU Welcome' is a social and extracurricular programme of activities for all students which sits alongside, and either side of, initial course induction. It is designed to welcome new students, orientate them socially and physically within their new environment, and signpost to support, community-building and extra-curricular opportunities.	Staff time and delivery costs	Increased participation of Level 4 students from target groups in welcome activities. This is expected to manifest in increased engagement with both academic and extra-curricular opportunities. Longer-term,	IS 5

Pilot work suggests that by expanding the initial Welcome period, to pre-arrival and into the year, students are less likely to be overwhelmed by the concentration of information and opportunities and more likely to engage with transition support.		evidence suggests this is positively associated with retention.	
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£40,967,000**		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 4 will be £41.0m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

The activities within our Continuation and Completion programme will be evaluated using a variety of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence standards. These will include theories of change, implementation and process evaluations, pre-post surveys and quasi-experimental matching methods (propensity score matching and/or case control matching). For one of our flagship programmes we also plan to embed some Type 3 (causal) standards via A/B testing. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Continuation and Completion programme is provided in Annex B, where we also set out evaluation plans for each individual activity.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 5: MENTAL HEALTH

Our Mental Health programme of interventions will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 8 (mental health) and thereby help us achieve Objective 5 (increase in completion rates of students with a known mental health disability)**.** This is underpinned by Target 5 (see supplementary FIT document).

MENTAL HEALTH – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Wellbeing Analytics The University will develop predictive analytics for wellbeing, to improve our understanding of the factors associated with poor mental health for students, and to identif**y** and support students who are at elevated risk of future poor mental health.	Staff time and delivery costs	This is a developmental project and so it is not possible to identify specific outcomes at this stage.	IS 4, IS 6

We will align this with the JISC core specification for engagement and wellbeing analytics. The service will be provided for all undergraduate students (PT/FT) studying on an NTU campus (circa 28,000). The underpinning hypothesis for wellbeing analytics, at this early stage in development, is that identifying the relative risks for different groups and designing intervention strategies around these risks will lead to improved channels of access.		However, overall, we are aiming to increase self-referral to support of students who are at risk of low mental health.	
Student disclosure We will implement a range of strategies to increase the disclosure rates of applicants and students with a mental health condition / neurodiversity or those seeking a diagnosis and to improve subsequent engagement of these students with our specialist support services. Particular focus will be placed on increasing the disclosure rate of black students and disadvantaged students. This is an existing activity which we will develop during the period from 2025/26 to 2028/29. Strategies include: pre-application / pre-entry / on course communications and awareness raising activities; transition support; the use of student / alumni role models; development of new systems to ensure data on a students' disability is shared effectively across the University; clarity for students on our inclusive offer at NTU	Staff time	We would expect student awareness about our support for students with a mental health disability / neurodiverse students to rise. Better understanding and systems will be in place to share information about students' mental health disability / neurodiversity. This will manifest in reduced barriers to disclosure. We expect that the resulting number of students who disclose a mental health disability / neurodiversity will increase, particularly for black students. This is expected to manifest in improved completion rates.	IS 4, IS 6

Total Investment over 4 year plan	£2,184,000

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 5 will be £2.2m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

The activities within our Mental Health programme will be evaluated using a variety of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence standards. This will include theories of change, implementation and process evaluations and quasi-experimental statistical matching and tracking of outcomes of service users compared with a control group which share similar characteristics but are less engaged. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Mental Health programme is provided in Annex B, where we also set out evaluation plans for each individual activity.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 6: BLACK STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Our Black Student Attainment programme of interventions will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 2 (information & guidance) and thereby help us achieve Objective 6 (increase in Upper Second/First Class degree classification attainment rates achieved by black students). This is underpinned by Target 6 (see supplementary FIT document).

BLACK STUDENT ATTAINMENT – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Black Leadership Programme (BLP) The BLP, established in 2021/22 following a successful pilot, is a series of activities which provides participants with information, guidance and opportunities to develop skills and characteristics such as belonging, identity, mattering and community. These have been shown to impact attainment and thus have the potential to contribute to reducing the gap in degree outcomes between black and white students. The programme consists of activities designed and/or delivered by NTU, the charity Grit Breakthrough Programmes, Birmingham City University and the	Staff time and delivery costs	Our Theory of Change, designed in collaboration with Staffordshire University and TASO, demonstrates that the BLP has the capacity to increase participants' sense of mattering, belonging and confidence, which in turn enhances their engagement and capitals. Longer-term, this is envisaged to	IS 7

University of Nottingham. The core BLP is for 150 Level 5 students of black heritage from across the University and we have extended the programme to Level 4 and 6 students.		manifest in improved attainment and graduate outcomes.	
Hidden Voices: curriculum decolonisation Hidden voices is an existing programme which has been co-created with students. Students and staff are invited to take part by sharing articles and books they have read, written by authors from a historically marginalised background. These will be added to the library collection and increasingly built into module resource lists, to allow better integration of authors from the Global South across different curricula, as required reading. More broadly, we will move our library collections away from a Euro-American framework, to reflect a worldview of knowledge. To support this we have designed a series of critical questions to be used alongside the resource lists to support the process of curricula decolonisation. This initiative enables academic colleagues to (re)design their modules and programmes based on inclusive curriculum design principals and to work closely with students to make substantial and lasting changes to learning and teaching.	Staff time and delivery costs	Increased student engagement with – and usage of – library services as more members of our student community feel reflected in the library and its resources. Academic staff also feel more confident, knowledgeable and able to take up the opportunities offered by decolonisation.	IS 4
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£1,089,000**		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 6 will be £1.1m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

The activities within our Black Student Attainment programme will be evaluated using primarily Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence standards. A flagship Black Leadership

Programme evaluation was undertaken in 2023/24, in collaboration with TASO and Staffordshire University, the external evaluator. Methods adopted included an implementation and process evaluation, qualitative impact evaluation and statistical analysis of participant outcomes using propensity score matching. We will learn from these evaluations and improve our evaluative processes accordingly, with the objective of moving towards Type 3 (causal) evidence, exploring different quasi-experimental designs, where possible and appropriate. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Black White attainment programme is provided in Annex B, where we also set out evaluation plans for each individual activity.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 7: RISE EMPLOYABILITY

Our Rise Employability programme of interventions will aim to mitigate the effects of Risk 12 (progression from higher education) and thereby help us achieve Objective 7 (increase in positive graduate progression outcomes (further study or highly skilled occupations) of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1) to reach the average for all NTU graduates by 2028/29 This is underpinned by Target 7 (see supplementary FIT document).

RISE EMPLOYABILITY – ACTIVITIES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Rise Plan Rise PLAN is a pre-placement development programme that began in 2019. It is designed to provide Level 5 disadvantaged students seeking sandwich placements the opportunity to learn through hands-on activities and networking spaces designed to build social capital and confidence in the target cohort. The programme specifically targets low income household, IMD, care experience, BTEC entrant and disabled students, and a high percentage of NTU students from black heritage fall into these cohorts. The PLAN provides up to 100 students per programme with opportunities to prepare for applying for and embarking on placements through 6 key themes; active listening, personal brand, commercial	Staff time	We expect this programme to support the aim of increasing the number of disadvantaged students applying for and undertaking sandwich placements. Secondly, we expect students' knowledge of the key topics, which will aid them in searching for placements and prepare them for the world of work, to improve. It is envisaged that these outcomes will manifest in increased progression rates to positive graduate outcomes.	IS 6

awareness, business communication, growth mindset and resilience. Employers, alumni, former placement students and colleagues from NTU's Student Finance team also have key roles within the programme.			
Assessed Work-Like Experience (AWLE) All undergraduate students at NTU must complete 240 hours (8 weeks) of assessed work-like experience (AWLE). The activity must be assessed for credit on-course, and, if the activity is not based at an employer's site, it must nevertheless involve employers directly. AWLE can include placements, live consultancy projects, community engaged learning or work insights visits. By positioning AWLE within the curriculum, we aim to facilitate equity and fair access for students who otherwise may not undertake extra-curricular activity. Implementation is rolling out across undergraduate courses for all students, from the 2022/23 entry cohort onwards.	Staff time	Students will gain experience within a professional environment, building confidence, providing greater exposure to external organisations and career possibilities. It is envisaged that this will improve educational attainment and graduate outcomes, particularly amongst the target group	IS 6
Professional Student Wardrobe The Professional Student Wardrobe is a new initiative launched in January 2024 and provides NTU students and graduates with free, professional clothing for career related activities. This project aims to: • level the playing field for students in the recruitment process • establish free access to professional clothing for NTU students and graduates • divert clothing from the waste stream	Staff time and delivery costs	We envisage students, particularly those from low income households, will be able to attend interviews with greater confidence garnered through their professional attire. The objective is to increase graduate progression rates to positive outcomes (e.g. highly skilled jobs).	N/A

• collaborate with sustainable fashion retailers and manufacturers. All students from any background can access up to 5 items of professional clothing each year. We estimate that 1,000-1,200 students will access an average of two items each year. The project is run in collaboration with a local retail charity called White Rose.				
Total Investment over 4 year plan	**£1,599,000**			

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

We estimate that the total cost of the activities delivered as part of intervention strategy 7 will be £1.6m over the 4 year plan which includes the evaluation of the overarching intervention strategy.

Summary of evidence base, rationale and evaluation plan

We have undertaken and will continue to improve both Type 1 'narrative' and Type 2 'empirical enquiry' evaluation methods for our Rise Employability programme. This includes pre-post programme assessments, student reflective activities, and comparing outcomes (e.g. Graduate Outcomes Survey) between participants and a matched control group. Further information on the evidence base and rationale for delivering the activities included in our Rise Employability programme is provided in Annex B, where we also set out evaluation plans for each individual activity.

5. Whole provider approach

We consider access and participation to be the responsibility of the whole university. Our Intervention Strategies consist both of activities run by a range of individual departments, for example, Students in Classrooms (IS 1) or Hidden Voices (IS 6), and cross-institutional structural initiatives such as the Academic Delivery Project and Active Collaborative Learning (both IS 4). As such, the APP/Intervention Strategies utilise multiple strengths of the University, from our digital expertise (IS 4 and 5), academic development (IS 2 and 4), pre-entry outreach and marketing (IS 1), student support (IS 4 and 5) and employability (IS 7). The nature of many of these, e.g. the Academic Delivery Project, Active Collaborative Learning and Peer-Assisted Learning, involve the work of all our academic schools. Furthermore, these Intervention Strategies embody the University's cradle to career approach: our work starts with early years pupils (IS 3) and continues to progression into graduate employment or further study (IS 7).

This is facilitated by a deliberately curated 'enabling environment'. The 'Introduction and Strategic Aims' section describes our commitment, our principles and the strategy ambition of Creating Opportunity. Policies, plans and even appraisal objectives flow from these. The APP targets are disaggregated to our academic schools and they are expected to support the aims of the Intervention

Strategies in their work not detailed in this plan. Annual monitoring of outcomes considers the aims of this plan, reflects on whether these are met and identifies how developments will be implemented and evaluated. Management of local plans is also considered in periodic quality review of academic schools.

An executive committee infrastructure ensures oversight. The main committee for directing this work across the University is the *Success for All Steering Group*. This is chaired by the PVC Education, with membership comprising Deputy Deans of each academic school, Students' Union representatives, the Executive Deans for Learning and Teaching, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Directors of several professional services. The steering group reports to the University Executive Team and Academic Board, our two most senior committees. Our Board of Governors has sightlines on this work and our strategic KPIs include an APP target.

The Access and Participation Plan is also aligned with the University's other relevant plans, particularly the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan, which has the goals of creating an inclusive environment and culture with diversity and inclusion embedded.

The diversity of our students and provision of a valuable experience are central considerations when designing our courses and policies. An example of this is our recent programme to ensure student-facing policies use compassionate language and are easily understood. Students were engaged and consulted throughout this work, and as a result staff have an excellent understanding the needs of all students and ensures these are embedded within provision design.

The APP is predicated on the requirement to ensure due regard (Equality Act 2010) in our decision-making. The tool we use for explicitly considering the impact of our activities on students with protected characteristics is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

6. Student consultation

The involvement of students from a range of backgrounds in the design, implementation and evaluation of the APP is reflective of the close and productive relationship NTU and Nottingham Trent Students' Union have, as defined in our Relationship Agreement. We work in partnership to support and encourage students to engage in meaningful dialogue about their academic experience. The University values the engagement between staff and students in all roles and is committed to fostering strong relationships.

We collaborate on ensuring an effective academic representation system detailed in our Quality Handbook and Joint Statement on Course and School Representation. The NTSU VP Education and VP Postgraduate lead on the system for over 800 student representatives who are regularly engaged in consultations on wider NTU and NTSU initiatives on equality diversity and inclusion. This ensures the student voice is central to policy and practice. NTSU has up to eight Equality and Diversity network chairs who, together with the full-time executive officers, consult widely with the student body. They ensure the input of students from all backgrounds is gathered on a wide range of University business including the Access and Participation Plan. In addition, NTSU also has over 120 student led societies including a range or academic, vocational, cultural and faith groups who provide valuable insight into the experiences of their members to the NTSU Executive.

NTSU is in the process of appointing an independent consultant to support a comprehensive evaluation and reform of its democratic structures. The aim is to modernise the current system to

meet the needs of the ever-changing student demographic. Part of this is a specific objective to embed under-represented groups in decision-making.

This input is channelled through NTSU's Student Council and regular Union Meetings to the NTSU Executive whose members sit on the key decision-making bodies in the University as full members. This includes the Board of Governors (our NTSU President is a full member of the Board and VP Education sits on the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee); Academic Board; Academic Standards and Quality Committee; the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Board; and the 'Success for All' Steering Group. In addition, the NTSU President co-chairs the Executive Student Forum alongside the Chief Operating Officer ensuring the views of students are raised with the University's senior decision makers.

We have a number of other channels through which we regularly obtain the input of students in our work. We make regular use of student panels in the design of our activities and interventions. These panels provide a 'voice mechanism' for relevant stakeholders and a 'critical friend' function for service providers. Our most active groups include an evaluation group and a panel from the Black Leadership Programme (see Intervention Strategy 6) and student feedback mechanisms through our Peer Mentoring programme (see Intervention Strategy 4). We ensure students from under-represented backgrounds sit on these panels to ensure the target voice is heard. There is also an expectation that panel members take part in evaluation and co-design activities outside of panel meetings.

We are currently drafting the Terms of Reference to establish a Student Voice Committee. This is to provide strategic oversight of the mechanisms which elicit student voices, and generate insight to inform provision, in particular into the student experience and quality management.

In addition, our provision is informed by the findings from our Student 2025 project. This is a longitudinal study seeking to explore NTU students' academic experience, social experience, and sense of belonging. This intensive research project, which ran from 2021/22 to 2024/25, followed participants through every stage of their student journey. The findings have been reported back to a number of University committees every year and have been used to inform the development of the Intervention Strategies

The development of the APP took place through discussion items at the Success for All Steering Group on two occasions, NTSU Executive on two occasions, once at Academic Board and once at Academic Standards and Quality Committee. As detailed above, NTSU Executive members sit on all these groups. Furthermore the NTSU President was included in the same regular briefings that all staff members involved in the production of the APP received and had regular additional meetings with the Director responsible for the APP. This provided an opportunity to give further support and provide information, materials and training to enable her and the Executive to make meaningful contributions.

7. Evaluation of the plan

We recognise the importance of and therefore place great emphasis and resource on monitoring and evaluation. We are one of the sector's leading institutions in this space and have built up considerable evaluation expertise as demonstrated by being one of three partners that established the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO). We continue to play an active role in TASO and, separately, have won numerous tenders from them for specific evaluation projects.

We also have a strong track record of collaboration with other universities and institutions and will continue this partnership working. We have improved considerably as a result of our participation in these externally-commissioned projects, particularly the peer reviewed Institutional Data Use project, which has informed new ways of carrying out Implementation and Process Evaluations (IPEs) and Quasi-Experimental Designs (QEDs).

Our provision, as demonstrated in the Intervention Strategies, is evidence and research-informed and our own evaluation work enables us to produce our own evidence. This is housed on an internal site to inform cross-university practice and we also regularly publish it in a range of media from peer-reviewed journals and blogs through to conference presentations, calls for evidence and at network meetings. We will continue to do this, publishing several pieces of evidence each year. This includes, but is not restricted to, an annual report for each of the four years of the plan summarising our main evaluation findings from the previous academic year.

However, we want to improve our institutional expertise in this space. Having undertaken the OfS evaluation self-assessment five years ago, we have recently repeated this assessment. We have improved in several areas (further details below), but the process also highlighted areas in which we need further improvement. We plan to develop these over the life of this plan.

In terms of **strategic context** (2019 score 21; 2024 score 22) we have improved on our already 'advanced' result. We draw on the skills and expertise across NTU, such as through the cross departmental Evaluation Working Group and Success for All Steering Group, both of which oversee our evaluation methods and strategies. We are also in the process of developing our own cross-institutional evidence and evaluation function which will draw on the skills, capabilities and expertise from across NTU and facilitate broader adherence to the OfS standards of evidence.

We have also improved from 'emerging' to 'advanced' in terms of **programme design** (2019 score 14; 2024 score 17)**.** For all new programmes, we will endeavour to build evaluation into the programme design, starting with a strong Theory of Change, heavily informed by the literature and our own research. This will ensure that we have a strong evidence base as to why new programmes 'should' work in theory, which we will build upon as we put the theory into practice. This ensures that the activities outlined in our Intervention Strategies are underpinned by clear objectives and their design is suitably informed by evidence and, where appropriate IPEs.

We have maintained our 'emerging' result for **evaluation design** (2019 score 6; 2024 score 6). Whilst our evaluation plans are in line with the standard expected by the OfS, with Type 1 a minimum endeavour for all our programmes**,** we would like to improve the quality and quantity of our Type 3 causal studies. As an interim measure, we will increase the level and quality of Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluations, building on some of the work we have undertaken with TASO, employing various QEDs. The aforementioned TILT EEG will provide the necessary strategic platform for us to further improve our evaluation design, particularly in terms of providing clarity on how the findings will be used to inform future provision.

It is not always feasible to build evaluation into the design of the intervention at the start of development, particularly for existing programmes. However, we will ensure evaluation is undertaken retrospectively in these cases, starting with a strong Theory of Change, to ensure we maintain a strong rationale for delivering the programme.

We will utilise a variety of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods; no one method suits all. As demonstrated in Annex B, we will also derive different evaluation standards, dependent upon the programme, whilst endeavouring to add to our growing number of Type 3 studies. We have undertaken several randomised controlled trials, but these can be logistically challenging, hence we are looking at employing more QEDs, although we are aware that not all QEDs are equal, and not all provide causal evidence, particularly if poorly designed.

We have increased our rating from 'emerging' to advanced in terms of **evaluation implementation** (2019 score 16; 2024 score 19). We have a very strong record of data processes that ensure participant outcomes data can be collected, stored and analysed. As part of the TASO institutional data use (IDU) project, we have led the transition to recording post-entry (student success) activities and participants onto the HEAT database, which was traditionally a tool for capturing pre-entry (access) interventions. We have also been key contributors to TASO's new post-entry mapping activities and outcomes tool (MOAT).

Finally, in terms of **learning**, we have maintained our 'emerging' rating (2019 score 15; 2024 score 15). There is room for improvement in terms of confidently attributing impact (or lack of) to some of our existing programmes and demonstrating that we have used our findings to inform improvements to our access and participation interventions cycle-on-cycle. The new TILT EEG should provide us the necessary platform to improve on these areas.

We will learn from this tool to deliver staff development opportunities for colleagues from Academic Schools and Professional Services responsible for devolved activities outlined in our Intervention Strategies. In particular, this will include sessions that support the development of an enhanced Theory of Change.

We will increase our external evaluation output by regularly publishing reports relating to specific activities and/or the Intervention Strategies that underpin them on a new page on our website. In addition to this, we plan to publish a report on an annual basis (by the end of each calendar year, starting 2026), for each of the four years of the plan, which summarises our main evaluation findings from the previous academic year.

Our plans for achieving robust impact evaluation may be subject to external forces and/or the macro environment. To mitigate any factors beyond our control, we will embed implementation and process evaluation methodologies to help us understand how our provision is being delivered, the student groups it is reaching and the perceived value from beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

More specific detail on evaluation plans for individual activities contained within our intervention strategies is provided in Annex B.

8. Provision of information to students

The University is committed to providing clear and accessible information to all prospective and current students, detailing exactly what they will have to pay and what financial support will be in place for the duration of their course. This includes arrangements for NTU bursaries and loans and grants provided by national funding authorities.

The University will also provide updated fees and bursary information to UCAS and SLC, in a timely manner, in order for these important external sources of information to provide the most up-to-date applicant-facing web content.

Our main financial provision consists of two bursaries. The NTU Maintenance Bursary and the NTU Opportunity Bursary (see Intervention Strategy 4). These are for new, eligible full-time and part time undergraduate students paying the maximum home tuition fee, who have a residual household income of £27,500 or less in their year of entry (as confirmed by their national Student Finance service).

The Maintenance Bursary is £750 for each year of the course (or 50% for part-time students), and the Opportunity Bursary is £170 for each year of the course (or 50% for part-time students), provided recipients are eligible in their year of entry on the basis of assessment of household income and other criteria[1].

In addition the University has:

- a bursary for students who have been in the care of a local authority in the UK (or have been looked after by relatives who have a court order to look after them in the UK) at some point since the age of 16; or have been a Foyer Resident in the UK. This bursary is £1000 for each year of their course.
- a bursary for students who have been financially assessed by their UK national Student Finance Service as an independent student on the grounds of estrangement from their parents or that the University has deemed is eligible through evidencing their estrangement in alternative means. This bursary is £1000 for each year of their course.

Continued eligibility for the bursaries in subsequent years will be dependent on the student remaining fully enrolled on their course at NTU. Students required to repeat a year of study will be considered eligible for the bursaries provided they are eligible for tuition fee support from their national Student Finance Service. Full terms and conditions are available for all students at www.ntu.ac.uk/ntu-conditions.

NTU's financial support provision, including the application process, is made available to both prospective students, their parents/carers and current students across a number of channels of communication including:

- Dedicated Fees and Funding web pages, with information on tuition fees and related financial information, such as 'Managing your Money' information which emphasises the importance of financial capability and other frequently asked questions and key contacts.
- Finance talks and workshops to young people and their parents/carers, sending follow up links to relevant webpages and information to attendees who provide their contact details.
- Visible coverage of financial matters at university open events including a student finance stand, staffed by financial support advisers and a finance talk for prospective applicants and their parents/carers, detailing tuition fees and the financial support and loan repayment arrangements.
- On-line, face-to-face and telephone enquiry services for prospective student enquirers, applicants and current students, to respond to individual queries on fees and funding issues.

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[1] In order to be eligible for the NTU Bursaries a student must have a household income level in their year of entry (as assessed by their national student finance service) of £27,500 or less and must be:
- enrolled on an undergraduate degree, Foundation degree, Certificate of Higher Education, Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma course full-time at NTU; and
- paying, whether directly or by Fee Loan, the full tuition fee for their course
- have UK home status for student funding purposes and are eligible to receive a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan from their national Student Finance Service.

All this information is regularly reviewed and updated.

Annual course fees for UK students are published in the tuition fees and student loans section of the NTU website. International student fees are published in the international webpages. These are linked to from across the site including from course pages. We are explicit in our wording that course fees may change for each year of study and confirm fees for all study abroad and placement years.

NTU is also committed to abide by CMA regulations and every prospective student is directed to details of their course information, including the course fee, an explanation of what is included within that course fee and any additional costs a student is expected to pay as part of their course of study, at the point an offer to study at NTU is made. This information is readily accessible on the website.

Our Access and Participation Plan is published on the NTU website, alongside the previous five years agreements, in easily accessible locations for both prospective students and current students. The primary published location on www.ntu.ac.uk for recent Agreements is within the 'Policies' section www.ntu.ac.uk/policies. Separately there is a link to the Agreements in the 'University applications' section of the NTU website for prospective students. Recent access agreements are also published on the current student's intranet in the student services section: Fees and Student Finance.

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2025-26 to 2028-29

ANNEX A: ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

> This section sets out the risks to equality of opportunity identified in your assessment of performance and the elements used to identify those risks. Include only those elements from your assessment of performance and consideration of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) that directly relate to identified risks. It is not necessary to include in the plan all the analysis you have undertaken.
>
> You may use charts and graphs to make the assessment of performance more presentable.
>
> Depending on its size and context, a provider may identify a greater number of indications of risk than it would have the capacity to address through its access and participation plan. In such a case, a provider should present a clear rationale for the number and nature of the indications of risk it has chosen to focus on in its plan in this section.

A note on NTU's assessment of performance

Where possible and appropriate, we have predominantly used the access and participation data dashboard[2] and accompanying dataset to assess our performance in terms of access, continuation, completion, attainment, and progression. We have analysed indications of risk based on numerous equality characteristics. For each of the key indications of risk we have identified, we have made evidenced judgements as to which of all the *possible* associated risks as detailed in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR, shown in Appendix 1), are the most pertinent to NTU. Our approach to this has been to calculate an evidenced risk score for each possible risk. The evidence used and the calculation are shown in Appendices 2a to 2h. For ease of navigation and scrutiny, and in accordance with the guidance, only those risks for which our supporting evidence demonstrates the greatest need for action are shown in the assessment of performance narrative, with the further detail provided in the Appendices.

The inclusion of a variety of providers (such as Colleges of Higher Education, small, specialist providers etc.) means that sector comparison can be of limited value. We have assessed our performance against universities that share similarities to NTU in terms of size, demographic make-up and entry characteristics.

These institutions have been abbreviated as follows:

BCU – Birmingham City University   MMU – Manchester Metropolitan University

LJMU – Liverpool John Moores University   UWE – University of West of England

SHU – Sheffield Hallam University

LBU – Leeds Beckett University

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1. Access

Summary

Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is **low progression rates to HE**. The group identified as most affected are school pupils from Nottinghamshire (city and county) who are, or have been eligible for free school meals. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is a combination of **risk 1: knowledge and skills** and **risk 3: perception of higher education.** Further detail below and in Appendix 2a.

In addition, a second indication of risk from the EORR observed is **low application rates to NTU.** The group identified as most affected are students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods whom may wish to study locally and/or for whom mainstream provision may not be the optimum route into higher education. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 5: limited choice of course type and delivery mode.** Further detail below and in Appendix 2b.

Given that our access intervention strategies will inevitably have a local focus, we have paid particular attention to our own area. NTU typically recruits only a small minority of its undergraduates from local areas; over 85% of our 2022/23 intake resided outside of Nottinghamshire upon application. For obvious logistical reasons, we work predominantly with young people attending schools located within Nottinghamshire, and many of the beneficiaries of our interventions will choose to study higher education courses further afield. For these reasons, our own widening access outreach programmes can only have limited impact on entry to NTU. Our overarching objective is to enhance equality of opportunity to the beneficiaries of our intervention strategies, regardless of which Higher Education Provider (HEP) they progress to. Our APP funded interventions are only targeted at pupils up to and including year 11, as those doing Level 3 courses are already on the trajectory towards Higher Education (HE). As a result, our access strategies and associated targets are focused on the outcomes of the recipients of our Access interventions. As our reach is geographically restricted, our target group is residents of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County, and our success should not be solely judged on the recruitment of these students to our own institution, but across the sector. This leads us to deduce that our main indication of risk for access from the EORR is low progression rates to HE.

Over the last 15 years or so there has been an increase in the percentage of free school meal (FSM) eligible pupils progressing to higher education. In 2005/06, just 8.5% of FSM pupils from both the city of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire county subsequently undertook a HE course by the age of 19, which has since risen to 24% and 19% respectively (Figure 1a). Whilst this should be seen as a success story in terms of collective widening participation policies, there is still progress to be made to enhance equality of opportunity. According to the latest data (for the 2017/18 15-year old pupil cohort who were 19 at the start of 2021/22), there was a 20 percentage points (pp) gap in HE access between FSM and non-FSM eligible pupils from Nottingham, with a larger 26 pp gap for those from Nottinghamshire county (Table 1a).

Therefore, our main indication of risk is **low progression rates to HE** and students most affected are FSM eligible pupils from Nottinghamshire.

Figure 1a: HE participation rates of free school meals eligible pupils[3]

Percentage of FSM eligible pupils aged 15 progressing to HE by age of 19
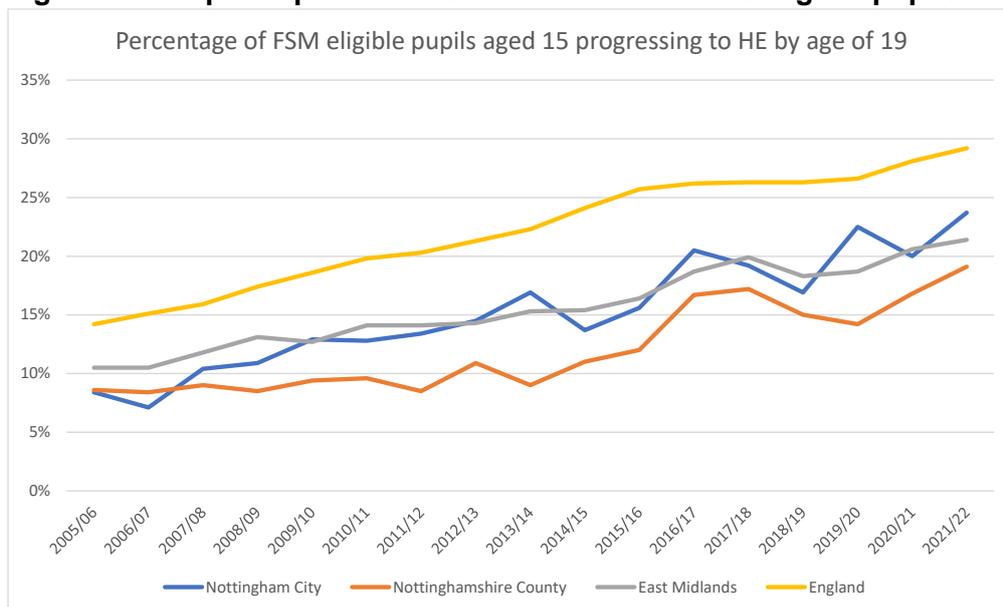
Table 1a: Percentage of pupils aged 15 progressing to higher education by the age of 19 (2021/22), by free school meals status[4]

	FSM	Non-FSM	Gap
Nottingham City	23.7%	43.5%	19.8 pps
Nottinghamshire County	19.1%	45.5%	26.4 pps
East Midlands	21.4%	45.7%	24.3 pps
England	29.2%	49.4%	20.2 pps

[3] Source: *https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/data-guidance*

[4] *Source: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/data-guidance*

Figure 1b: Proportion of pupils entering higher education by 19, by GCSE attainment and free school meal status between 2012-13 and 2016-17[5]
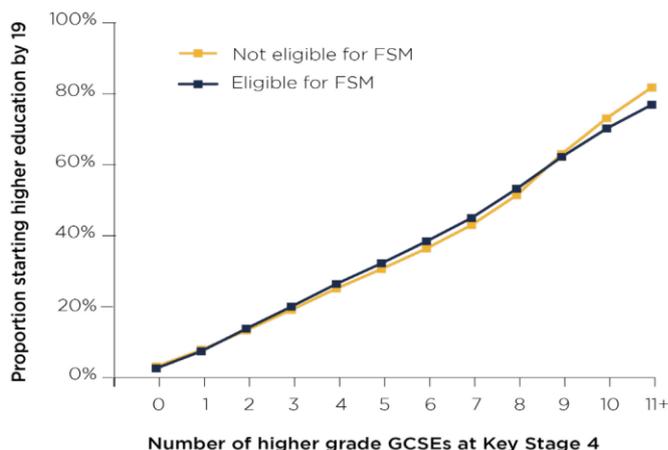
There is a growing recognition that the disparities evidenced above are not a result of low 'aspirations'[6]. An FSM-eligible pupil could have the highest of aspirations, but if they do not possess the requisite attainment to allow them to academically prosper, then these aspirations cannot be met. As illustrated in Figure 1b, nationally, differential attainment in school accounts for almost all the differences in participation rates between pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals.

According to the latest data, there is a considerable Key Stage 4 attainment gap between students not eligible and eligible for free school meals in Nottingham city and Nottinghamshire county. 46% of city and 45% of county FSM eligible pupils achieved a Level 4 in both English and Maths (widely seen as the minimum level required for subsequent progression HE), compared with 72% and 78% for non-FSM eligible students; a gap of 26 pps and 33 pp respectively (Table 1b). There was a similar gap for those achieving at the higher Level 5+ grade, potentially a pre-requisite for pupils wishing to progress to A-Levels (Table 1c). This demonstrates that our efforts to address equality gaps need to be focused on working with schools to contribute to the raising of attainment of target pupils. According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2a), this is most closely associated with **Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills**; students may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills.

Whilst prior attainment is the main barrier to access, it can be problematic to disentangle distinct 'attainment raising' activities from other types of interventions that facilitate progression to HE. It is important not to dismiss the influential effect that outreach interventions not explicitly related to attainment raising can have on enhancing participants' higher educational opportunities. For example, our tracking of participant data held on the Higher Education Access Tracker[7] (HEAT) database shows that outreach participants who come onto one of our university campuses are consistently more likely to progress to HE than those who

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[5] *Source: Office for Students Insight 13 – schools, attainment and the role of higher education*
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd782ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief-13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf
[6] https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/berj.3475; https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/12/02/the-pervasive-belief-in-low-aspirations-could-undermine-the-governments-reboot-of-widening-the-doors-to-higher-education/
[7] www.heat.ac.uk

only take part in activities in schools, for example (Figure 1c). Increased awareness of higher education options, demystifying universities and increasing a sense of belonging, for example, can, in turn, influence pupils' motivation to attain and/or help students realise their ambition and expectations to progress to HE.

Evidence from the EORR, underpinned by the OfS/TASO rapid evidence review,[8] demonstrates a positive association between *knowledge & skills* and pupil attainment. Our indications of risk identified in the above assessment show a clear link between low attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and their subsequent low progression rates to higher education. Whilst raising attainment through enhanced knowledge & skills is a key pre-requisite to equality of opportunity to access higher education, there remains a need to tackle disadvantaged students' perceptions of higher education, as the evidence from the EORR demonstrates that low perceptions are associated with low HE progression rates, irrespective of attainment. According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2a), this is most closely associated with **Risk 3: Perceptions of HE**; students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

Table 1b: Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 in 2021/22[9]

	FSM	Non-FSM	Gap
Nottingham City	46%	72%	26 pps
Nottinghamshire County	45%	78%	33 pps
England	48%	76%	28 pps

Table 1c: Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 in 2021/22[10]

	FSM	Non-FSM	Gap
Nottingham City	27%	51%	24 pps
Nottinghamshire County	25%	58%	33 pps
England	30%	57%	27 pps

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[8] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/rapid-review-to-support-development-of-the-equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/

[9] As per DfE guidelines, we have not shown data for earlier years because the pandemic rendered year on year on comparisons problematic.

[10] *Source: https://www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk/download-data*

Figure 1c: Percentage of CenSCE's pre-16 outreach participants progression to HE by the age of 19, by location of activity[11]

Percentage of CenSCE pre-16 outreach participants progressing to HE by 19

Legend: ■ No campus visit ■ Campus visit
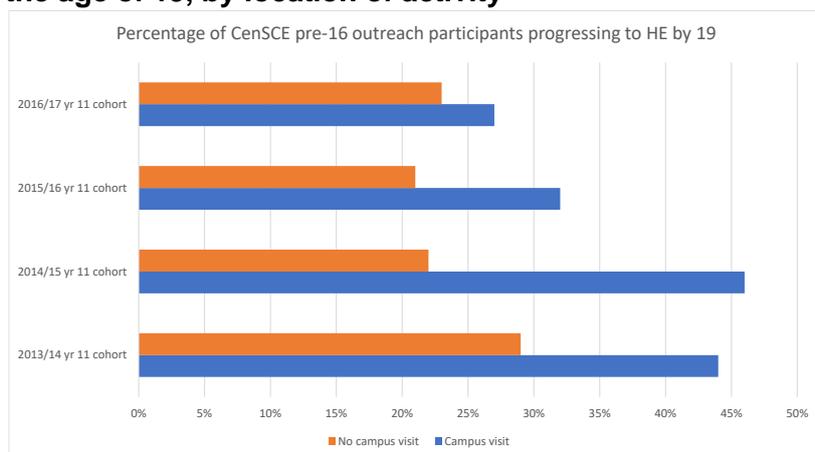
As previously stated, our above assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk, as observed in the data, is **low progression rates to HE**. The group identified as most affected are school pupils from Nottinghamshire (city and county) who are, or have been eligible for free school meals. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is a combination of **Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills** and **risk 3: Perception of Higher Education.** For further information, see Appendix 2a.

In addition, we can see from Figure 1d that there has been consistent growth in the number of full-time 'other undergraduates' studying Foundation Degrees at Nottingham Trent University over recent years. As we have developed new platforms through our community-driven university hubs, not only have the numbers studying these alternative routes increased, but so too has our proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for free school meals. In 2021/22, almost a quarter of 'other undergraduates' were eligible for FSM). This compares with circa 15% for all NTU's full-time undergraduates, which is lower than the sector average of 18% and also lower than most of our comparator institutions (Figure 1f). There were similar trends based on neighbourhood deprivation; 16% of NTU's intake resided in IMD quintile 1, which was lower than most of our comparator institutions and the sector as a whole (23%). From this evidence, we deduce that the most appropriate indication of risk from the EORR is **low application rates to NTU** of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Research shows that geographical distance to a higher education provider has a negative association with enrolment on a HE course. Students within a 10km distance from a provider had a significantly increased chance of enrolling at university than students in the 40km and above category, when controlling for deprivation and population density (see Appendix 2b for further information). This suggests that place-based higher education provision serving young people from disadvantaged areas, for whom mainstream provision may not be the optimum route, would mitigate the above geographical barriers to HE access. According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach, (Appendix 2b), this is most closely associated with **risk 5: limited choice of course type and delivery mode**; students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

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[11] *Source: NTU outreach participant data matched with National Pupil Database via HEAT tracking*

As noted, the vast majority of NTU's full-time first degree students reside outside of the Nottinghamshire area and our primary access objective is to contribute to widening access across the sector, not recruitment to our own institution. Nevertheless, we have observed in the data and evidence an indication of risk of low application rates to NTU of students who reside in disadvantaged communities, not within reasonable commuting distance of a suitable place to study a HE course. For these students, mainstream provision may not be the optimum route into higher education and/or they may wish to study locally. Students most affected by this risk are young people who are or were eligible for free school meals and/or those who live in deprived neighbourhoods (according to Indices of Multiple Deprivation data).

In summary, our above assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk, as observed in the data, is **low application rates to NTU** of students from disadvantaged backgrounds whom may wish to study locally and/or for whom mainstream provision may not be the optimum route into higher education. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR for these students is **risk 5: limited choice of course type and delivery mode.** For further information, see Appendix 2b.

Figure 1d: Number of full-time 'other undergraduates' and percentage that are FSM eligible[12]

No. of NTU full-time 'other undergraduates' and percentage that are FSM eligible

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
No. of full-time FNDs	270	290	280	330	340
% FSM eligible	16.5	17.8	18.5	20.9	24.5

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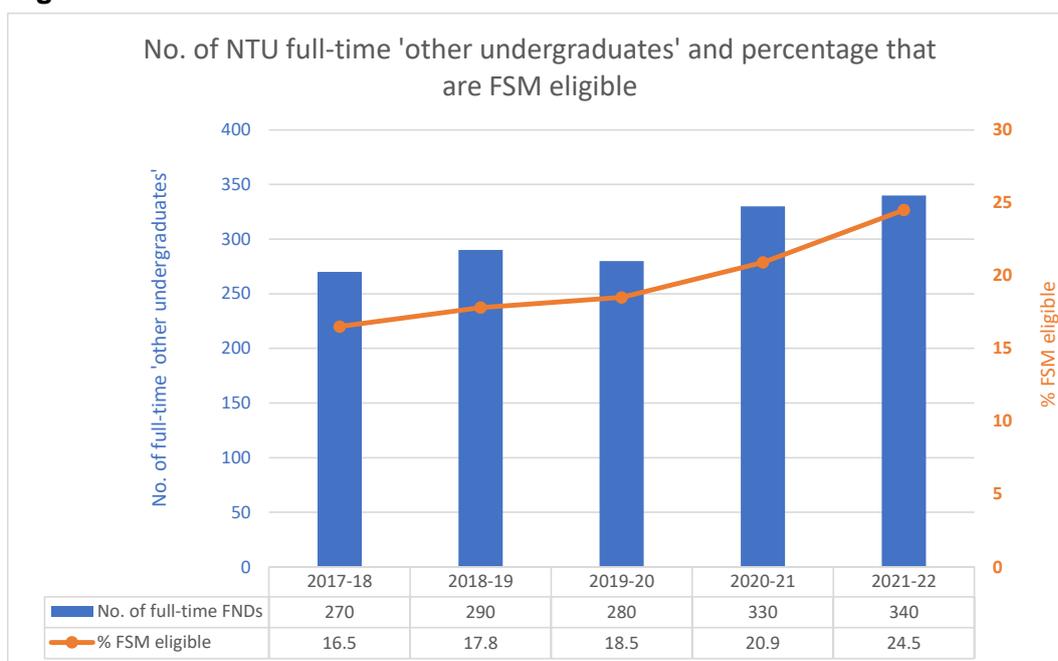
[12] Source: APP Dataset (Access)

Figure 1e: Percentage of full-time UK domiciled undergraduate entrants who were formerly eligible for free school meals[13]
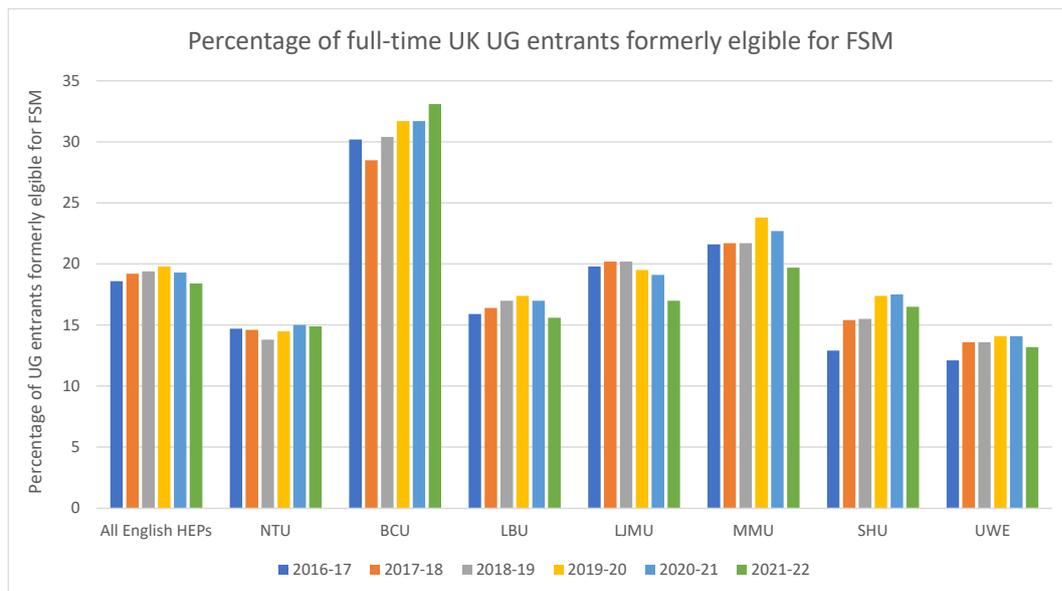
Continuation and Completion

Summary

Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is **low continuation and completion rates**. The group identified as most affected are NTU students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (according to IMD data), although there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. The main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is a combination of **risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus** and **risk 10: cost pressures.** Further detail below and in Appendix 2c.

In addition, a second EORR risk indicator observed is **low completion rates** of students with a known mental health condition**.** The main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 8: mental health.** Further detail below and in Appendix 2d.

According to the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard, there have been consistent gaps based on deprivation of neighbourhood (IMD). Our internal data show that there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. Students from deprived neighbourhoods are disproportionately more likely to:

- Enter NTU study via the BTEC qualification at Level 3 (pre-entry qualification route data are not available in the APP dataset).

- Be aged 21 or over on entry

- Have formerly been eligible for free school meals

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[13] Source: APP dataset (access)

Notably, these intersectional groups also have lower rates of continuation and completion, as shown in the APP Data Dashboard and our internal analysis. This is further demonstrated by the observed gaps based on ABCS (associations between characteristics of students) quintiles. The neighbourhood effect on successful student outcomes is effectively exacerbated by these other demographic and educational characteristics. It is not feasible to set a target based on these intersections because the populations become too small. We therefore use IMD as a proxy for these intersectional characteristics in this assessment of performance, whilst continuing to monitor internal trends for the other related equality continuation and completion gaps.

As illustrated in Figure 2a, NTU performs well in terms of non-continuation rates of disadvantaged (IMD quintile 1) students compared with the sector average and that of our comparator institutions. These students remain, however, around twice as likely to withdraw from their course before commencement of year two than their counterparts from the least deprived neighbourhoods. There are similar trends for non-completion; NTU performs well compared to the sector and comparator institutions, although our most disadvantaged students are considerably more likely to withdraw than their more advantaged counterparts (Figure 2b). These disparities have been fairly consistent over the last six years (Figures 2c & 2d).

Figure 2a: Non-continuation rates of 2020/21 full-time UK undergraduate entrants[14]

Non-continuation rates of 2020/21 UK UG entrants

	All English HEPs	NTU	BCU	LBU	LJMU	MMU	SHU	UWE
IMD quintile 5	6.5	4.2	7.7	6.2	7.4	6.4	7	7.4
IMD quintile 1	15.6	8.6	12.1	11.2	13.8	11.6	13.8	11.1
Gap	9.1	4.4	4.4	5	6.4	5.2	6.9	3.7

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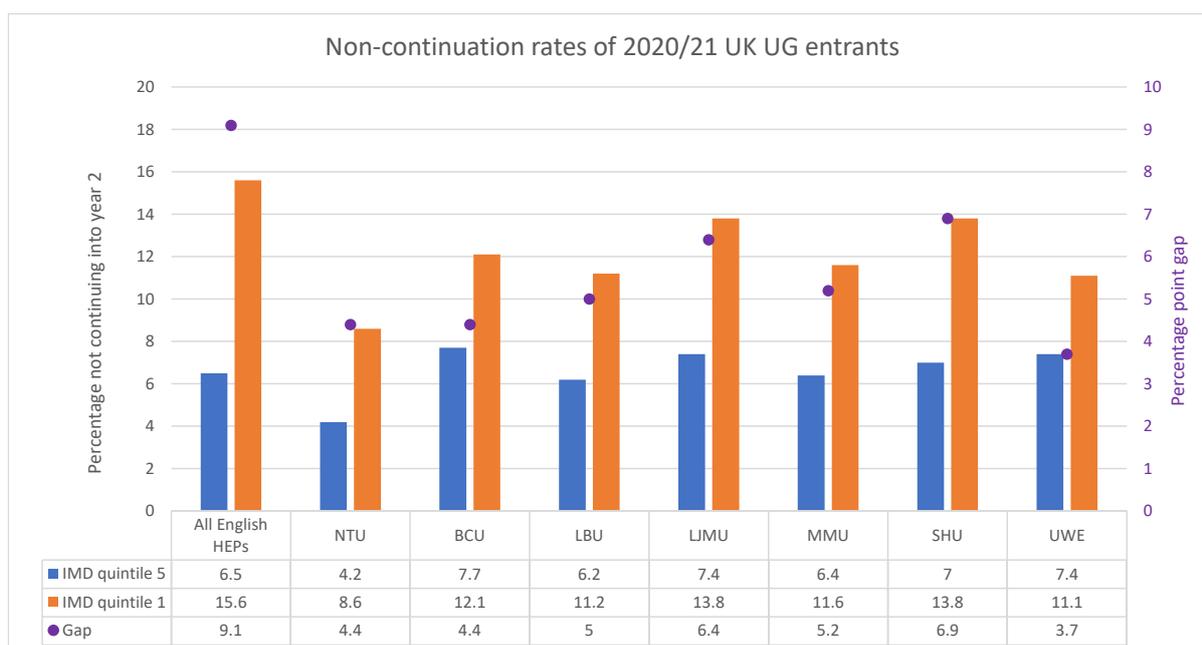
[14] Source: APP Dataset (Continuation)

Figure 2b: Non-completion rates of 2017/18 full-time UK undergraduate entrants[15]

Non-completion rates of 2017/18 UK UG entrants

	All English HEPs	NTU	BCU	LBU	LJMU	MMU	SHU	UWE
■ IMD quintile 5	12.5	8.6	12.6	20.6	14.5	10.6	11.3	15.1
■ IMD quintile 1	17.8	18	17.6	21.8	16.1	14.1	15.9	22.7
● Gap	5.3	9.4	5	1.2	1.5	3.5	4.5	7.6
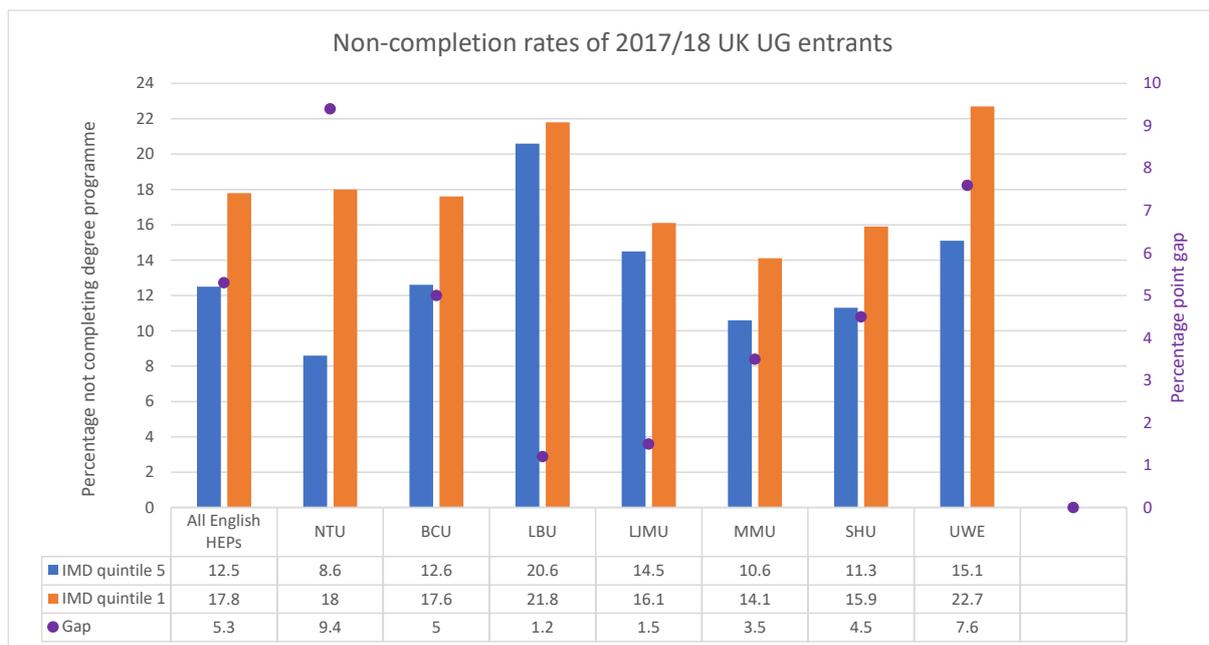
Figure 2c: Continuation at NTU by IMD   Figure 2d: Completion at NTU by IMD[16]
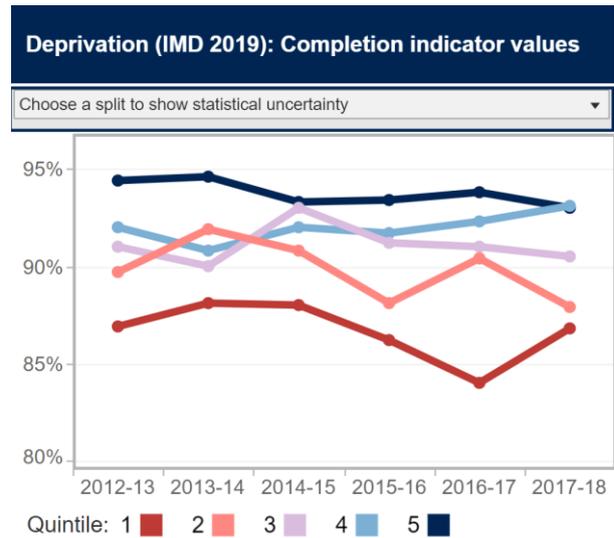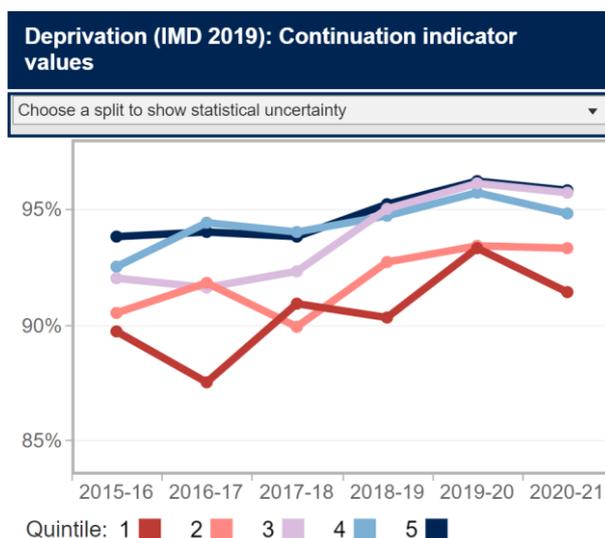
We deduce from the above analysis that our main indications of risk from the EORR are **low continuation and low completion rates.** The students most affected are those from deprived neighbourhoods according to IMD data, although these effects are compounded by complex intersecting factors of poverty, age and pre-entry qualification route.

Internal NTU analysis suggests that students may be less engaged with aspects of their academic study and extra-curricular interventions than pre-Covid-19 cohorts had been. This reflects evidence from the sector, detailed in appendix 2c, which demonstrate greater risk of

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[15] Source : APP Dataset (Completion)
[16] *Source: APP Data Dashboard (Continuation and Completion)*

student burn out and apathy post-Covid. Disadvantaged high attainers were over three times more likely to lack a suitable device to study at the beginning of the pandemic, and twice as likely to lack a suitable place to study. As a result, they fell behind their more advantaged peers and Key Stage 4 and 5 attainment gaps widened. Whilst the full effects of the pandemic are still unknown, these differential experiences of students in secondary and post-16 education is likely to have had a long-term impact. This may include differential knowledge and skills, and the ability to adapt to a higher education environment, leading to lower on-course success rates for some students (thereby potentially exacerbating existing inequality), and to a greater need for on-course academic and pastoral support.

This evidence is supported by the results of NTU student surveys. Students' sense of belonging to NTU, their course, their academic school, their tutorial group and their Student Union dropped significantly in the years of the pandemic. Scores increased again in 2022 and 2023, but in most cases have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Similarly, all levels of engagement and coping with their studies have improved since 2021, but remain lower than before the onset of Covid and its restrictions.

According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2c), the evidence discussed above is most closely associated with **risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus**; students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

External research, detailed in Appendix 2c, suggests that the current cost of living crisis means that at present, many students are experiencing increased concern around their financial wellbeing, which is having knock-on negative impacts on their mental health. The rising cost of living is causing high levels of stress and concern amongst university students, and many are worried about making ends meet. This is reflected in NTU's own data. 2023/24 has seen a 61% increase in hardship fund applications, compared with the same period of 2022/23. Rent increases in particular have been felt by our students; whilst the rise in utility bills hit many hard in 2022/23, a lot of students had already signed inclusive contracts well in advance of this. Our evidence suggests that students are feeling the cost of living harder this year.

Responses to NTU surveys confirm the above. Over two-thirds of students in 2023/24 considered the cost of university life to be more than they expected. This compares with 57% in 2022/23. Half of current students are actively looking for part-time work alongside studies, compared with one-fifth in 2022/23. Over a third of students surveyed were working during the term. A quarter of these students said that paid work had impacted on their class attendance, 43% said it had affected their independent study, 29% said working had impacted on their ability to complete assessments and 45% said it had affected their participation in extra-curricular activities.

Related to the above evidence and specifically linked to the overarching indication of risk (continuation and completion), in 2023/24 financial worries was one of the primary reasons first year undergraduates had considered withdrawing. Finance was cited considerably more than in previous years.

According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2c), the evidence discussed above is most closely associated with **risk 10: cost pressures**; increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

NTU has excellent student support mechanisms. This is evidenced by, for example, our TEF 2023 Gold rating, in which the 'supportive learning environment and readily available academic support tailored to needs' was found to be outstanding. However, the context for students is continuously evolving. The ongoing effects of the pandemic, combined with cost pressures for students, are likely to heighten the risks for continuation and completion.

In conclusion, our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk, as observed in the data, is **low continuation and completion rates**. The group identified as most affected are NTU students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (according to IMD data), although there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is a combination of **risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus** and **risk 10: cost pressures.** For further information, see Appendix 2c.

Additional analysis of our data shows that in of each of the last 6 years for which data are available, students with a known mental health disability had lower completion rates than their counterparts with no known disability (Figure 2e). For example, the latest data for 2017/18 undergraduate entrants shows that 18% of students with a mental health condition did not complete their studies, compared with 9% of non-disabled students. In effect, those with a mental health disability were twice as likely to fail to complete. The impact of this is exacerbated by the 8-fold increase in the number of NTU full-time undergraduate students who have declared a mental health condition over the last ten years (Figure 2f). This determines that our main indication of risk from the EORR is **low completion rates** of students with mental health conditions**.**

Figure 2e: Non-completion rates of full-time NTU UG entrants with known mental health disability[17]

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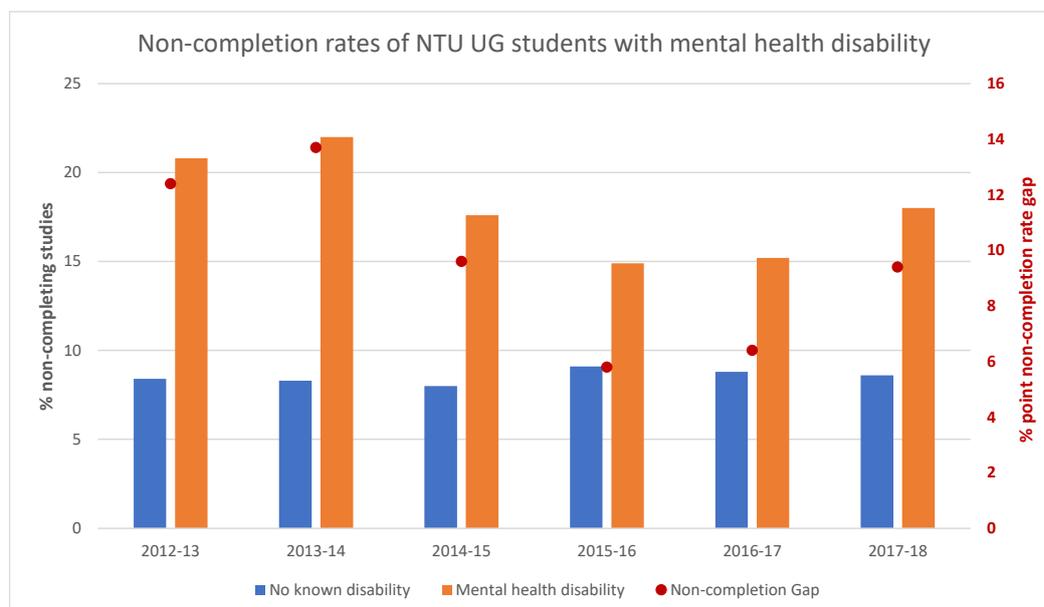
[17] *Source: APP Dataset (Completion)*

Figure 2f: Number of full-time NTU UG entrants with known mental health disability[18]

No. of full-time NTU UG entrants with known mental health disability
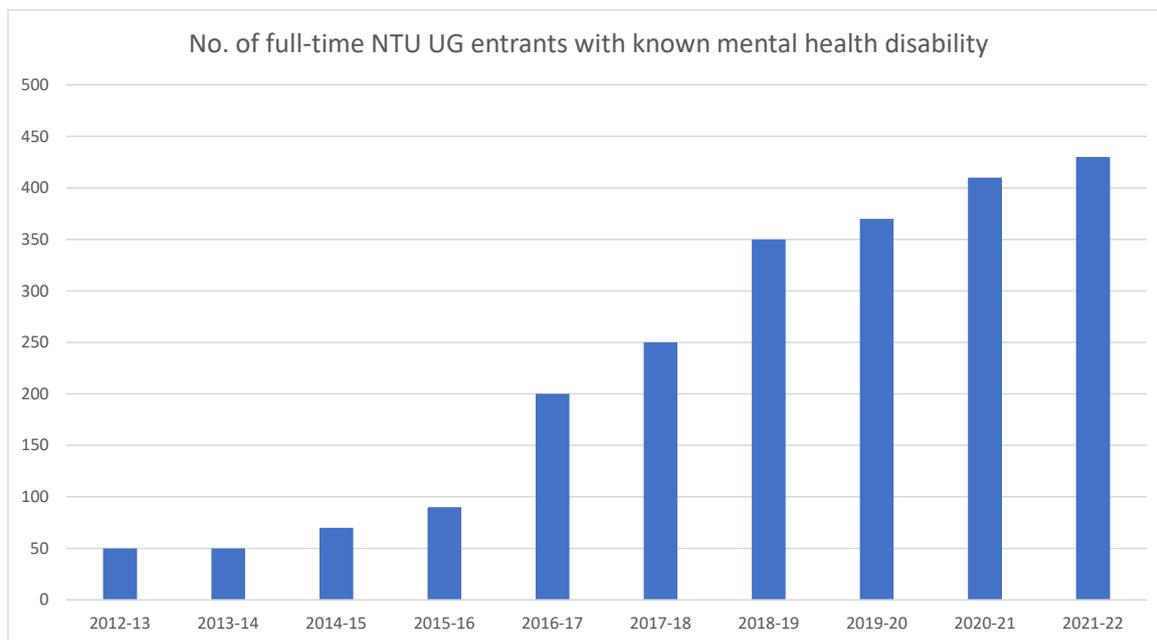
Most students in higher education (and NTU is no exception) are between 17 and 25 years of age, the peak age of onset for common mental disorders. Research has shown that there is mounting concern about the mental health of higher education students. There are several potential reasons why higher education might increase symptoms of common mental disorder, including academic pressures, exam stress, financial strain and changes to social support systems that result from leaving home. Evidence suggests that symptoms of common mental disorder is higher among 18/19 year olds who started higher education, compared with young people who did not attend HE.

According to our mental health award charter self-assessment, 2023/24 saw an increase in the number of 'red flag' referrals to mental health services; from 14% to 24% of all referrals. NTU has reviewed processes to increase responsiveness and resource for wellbeing advisors. Non-attendance has reduced considerably and satisfaction with the support services provided is exceptionally high. Students accessing this support are more likely to successfully progress through their course and have better attainment than those who do not access it. However, this is a subset of all students and some individuals and specific groups may be reluctant to access such support. As illustrated above, latest OfS data (for 2017/18 entrants) show that NTU's students with a known mental health condition were twice as likely as those with no known disability to have not completed their course and achieved a degree five years later (Figure 2e). Students with a mental health condition who are not accessing our support services are therefore more at risk of withdrawing from their course.

Research shows that in recent years, the coronavirus pandemic and rises in the cost of living have had a negative effect on some students' well-being. According to an NTU student lifestyle survey, for example, 37% of students reported that money worries were having a major or

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severe effect on their mental health. Living costs, followed by accommodation costs were the main concerns of the students.

According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2d), the evidence discussed above is most closely associated with **risk 8: mental health**; students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

In conclusion, a second indication of risk observed in the data is **low completion rates** of students with a known mental health condition**.** The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 8: mental health.** For further information, see Appendix 2d.

Attainment

Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is **low on course attainment**. The group identified as most affected are black students, although there are complex intersectional factors that influence these outcomes. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 2: information and guidance**; students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options. Further detail below and in Appendix 2e.

According to the APP data dashboard, NTU has had consistent gaps in final degree attainment based on neighbourhood deprivation (IMD) and eligibility for free school meals. However, the largest gap observed in the data is between our black and white students. With 77.5% of 2021/22 white degree qualifiers achieving a 2:1 or First Class, compared with 51.7% of black students, the gap was circa 26 pps, which was higher than the sector as a whole (20 pps), but on a par with our comparator institutions (Figure 3a). Further scrutiny of our own internal 2021/22 data shows that much of our gap remains unexplained; i.e. when statistically controlling for other 'structural' factors such as pre-entry route, pre-entry tariff, subject of study and other demographic confounding variables, an 'unexplained' attainment gap (estimated at circa 18 pps) between our black and white students remains. The gap has shown relatively little sign of narrowing over the years (Figure 3b).

The persistent equality gap in attainment between our black and white students has prompted us to deeply analyse our internal data in the attempt to find systemic reasons for the apparent under-performance of our black cohort. We found complex intersections between ethnicity, pre-entry qualification route, socio-economic factors and other equality characteristics. Black students were found to be disproportionately more likely to belong to other groups that also traditionally had lower rates of attainment, which compounds the equality challenge. For example, over an average of the five years 2017/18 to 2021/22, only 30% of black, male, BTEC entrants achieved at least a 2:1, compared with a much higher 66% of black, female, A-Level entrants. Therefore, when we focus on the black and white degree awarding gap, there are numerous interlocking factors that mask the overall average. Nevertheless, as noted,

even after controlling for these, there remain significant unexplained gaps. Therefore, our main indication of risk from the EORR is **low on course attainment** of black students.

Figure 3a: Percentage of 2021/22 UK domiciled full-time UG completers achieving a First or 2:1 degree classification[19]

Percentage of 2021/22 full-time UG completers achieving a First or 2:1 degree classification

	All English HEPs	NTU	BCU	LBU	LJMU	MMU	SHU	UWE
White	83.2	77.5	78.8	76.4	76.9	83.3	79	81.5
Black	63.1	51.7	45.8	52.1	55.9	63.8	57.8	47
Gap	20	25.8	33	24.3	20.9	19.5	21.2	34.5
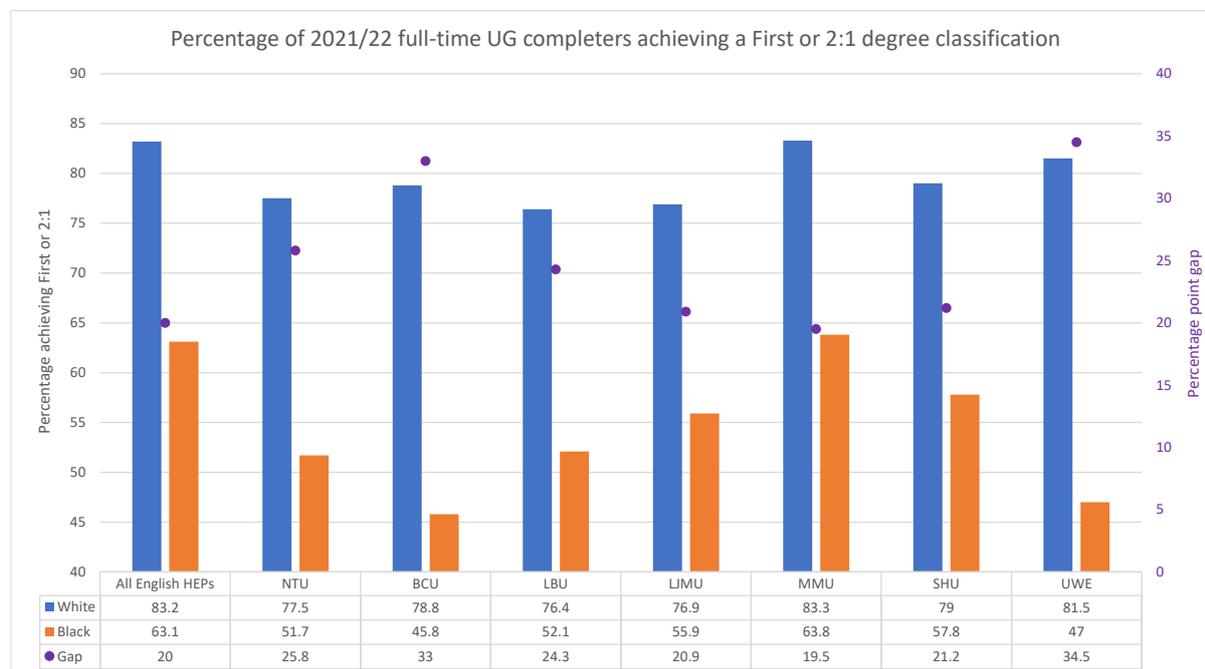
Figure 3b: Attainment of 2:1/First Class Degree at NTU by ethnicity, 2016/17 to 2021/22[20]
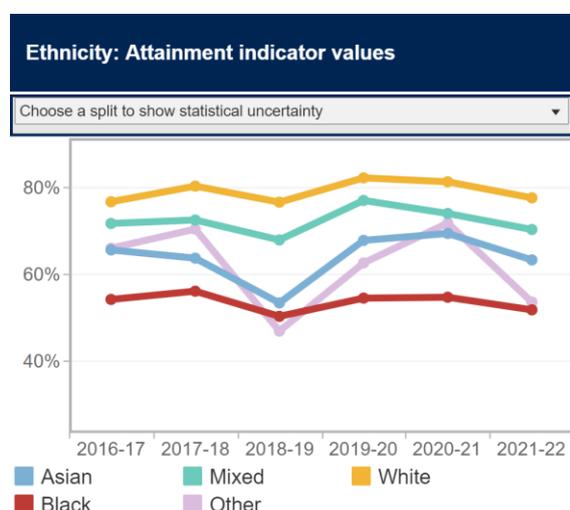
As indicated in the EORR, low quality, or a perceived lack of, information and guidance may result in lower course attainment than might be otherwise expected based on students' potential, as demonstrated in Appendix 2e. External research suggests that pastoral, administrative and academic staff may not be equipped with the skills and confidence to build relationships with students from ethnic minorities. Other evidence suggests that there is a lack of role models in leadership positions for black students to relate to and be guided by.

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[19] Source: APP Dataset (attainment)
[20] Source: APP Data Dashboard (attainment)

Choosing courses and university could be more of a challenge for black students whose parents had no knowledge of the admissions process or had not been to university themselves. This can be compounded by insufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) at schools and colleges, which manifests itself in lack of preparedness when students enter higher education. Representation, belonging and mattering all play into student behaviour and decision making, not just within university, but even prior to enrolment. For example, research found that many black students based their decision of which university to go to on the proportion of people 'like them' at that institution.

Further external research, detailed in Appendix 2e suggests black students often find it necessary to create their own social and cultural networks in order to remedy their perceived exclusion from the wider, 'white oriented' university community. Difficulties may arise from feelings of isolation, alienation, and a perceived lack of support. Through appropriate intervention and guidance, facilitating the development of belonging to a HE institution and/or campus can lead to an increase in black students' academic motivation and engagement.

According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2e), the evidence discussed above is most closely associated with **risk 2: information and guidance**; students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

In conclusion, the indication of risk observed in the data is **low on course attainment** of black students**.** The main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 2: information and guidance.** For further information, see Appendix 2e.

Progression

> Our assessment demonstrates that the main indication of risk from the EORR, as observed in the data, is **employment outcomes**. The group identified as most affected are students from deprived neighbourhoods, where graduate level employment opportunities may be limited. The main risk to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 12: progression from higher education**; students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. In practice, the overarching risk 12 encapsulates several other risks identified in the EORR, most notably cost pressures, which can restrict students' access to key opportunities such as sandwich placements. Further detail below and in Appendix 2f.

According to the APP data dashboard, the equality group with consistently the largest progression gaps over the four reporting years of the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) for 2017/18 to 2010/21 graduates, was based on neighbourhood deprivation (IMD). There were also consistent gaps between graduates eligible and not eligible for free school meals, albeit smaller in magnitude. In the last two reporting years, black graduates had similar progression rates to highly skilled employment (professional or managerial) or further study as white students, which, considering the attainment gaps between these groups, is quite surprising

(our internal analysis shows that degree attainment is quite highly correlated with graduate outcomes). Disability and age gaps were also relatively small.

Of the 2020/21 graduates, 67% of students from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD q1) progressed to highly skilled jobs or further study, compared with 75% of students from the most affluent areas; a gap a 8.5 pps (Figure 4a). Whilst this gap was lower than the sector average and several of our comparator institutions, it remains our biggest challenge in terms of equality of graduate outcomes. Whilst there has been a considerable increase in these positive graduate destinations since 2018/19 (across all IMD quintiles), the gap has remained fairly static (Figure 4b).

Further scrutiny of NTU's individual graduate level data demonstrates that when statistically controlling for other influencers, such as degree classification, subject area and other demographic factors, gaps for other equality groups can be explained by structural factors. Progression rates for those from deprived neighbourhoods (i.e. IMD quintiles 1 and 2), however, remain statistically significantly lower; i.e. they cannot be explained by other factors present in the data.[21] This could be reflective of a lack of prosperous opportunities in their home communities.[22]

Of the possible risk indicators present in the EORR, our analysis demonstrates that our main indication of risk is **employment outcomes** of students from deprived neighbourhoods, where graduate level employment opportunities may be limited.

Figure 4a: Percentage of 2020/21 UK domiciled full-time UG graduates progressing to highly skilled jobs or further study[23]

Progression rates to highly skilled jobs or further study, 2020/21 UK UG graduates

	All English HEPs	NTU	BCU	LBU	LJMU	MMU	SHU	UWE
IMD quintile 5	78.5	75.3	73	75	79.4	78.3	76	77.7
IMD quintile 1	67.7	66.8	64.1	63.3	73.1	66.5	72.3	72.5
Gap	10.8	8.5	8.9	11.7	6.3	11.8	3.7	5.2

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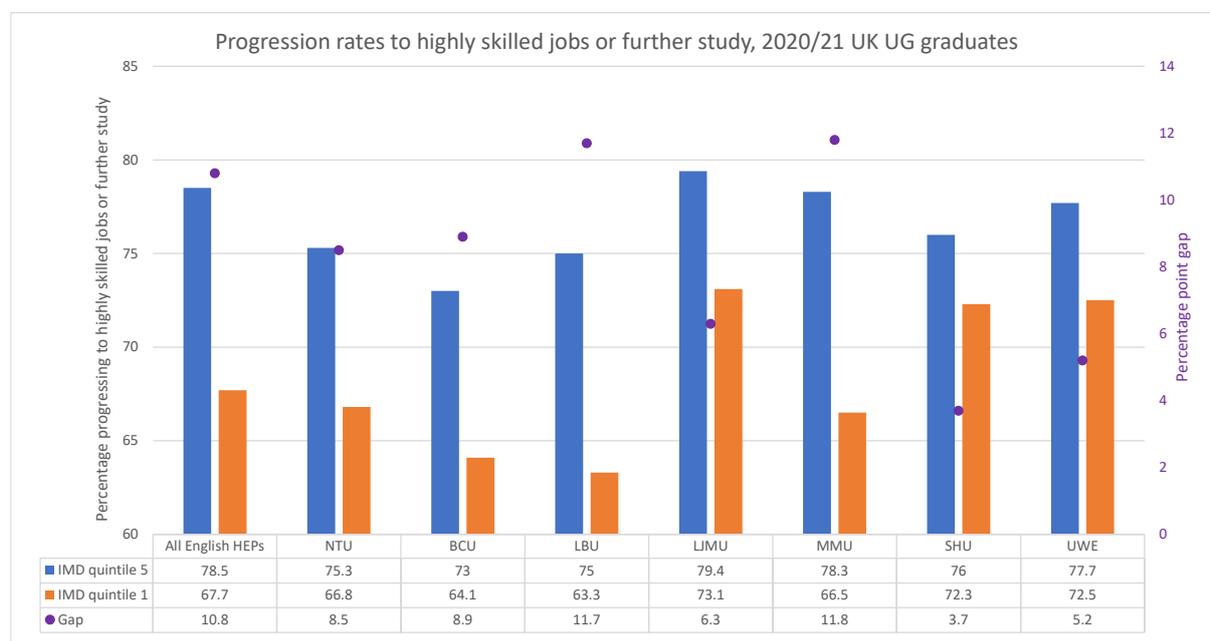
[21] For further details see https://wonkhe.com/blogs/to-address-gaps-in-outcomes-we-need-to-interrogate-the-data/
[22] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2023-people-and-places/foreword-and-executive-summary

[23] Source: APP Data Dashboard (progression)

Figure 4b: Progression rates of NTU graduates to highly skilled jobs or further study, by Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile, 2017/18 to 2020/21 graduates[24]
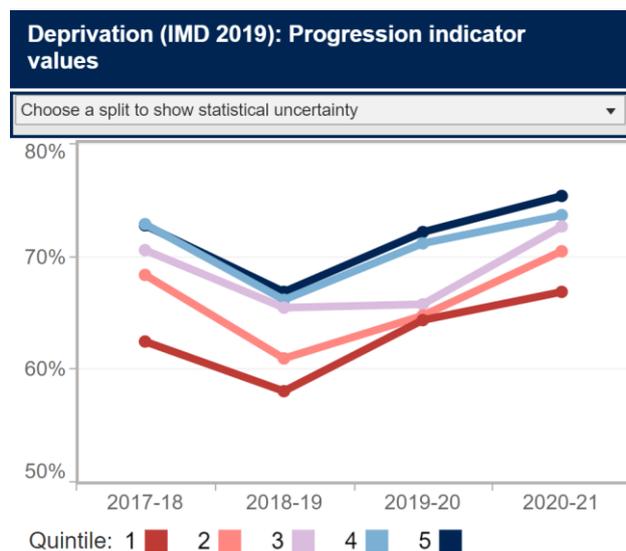
We know from additional analysis of our internal data and intelligence that students from deprived neighbourhoods are disproportionately more likely to live in low income households and have been eligible for free school meals. Supplementary research also demonstrates how participation in sandwich placements can help negate the socio-economic effects on graduate prospects, although disadvantaged students remain less likely to be able to access these opportunities, with financial constraints a major factor. If insufficient work experience opportunities are available to these students, there is a risk that they will not be equipped with the right skills to secure graduate level employment.

Geographical location is also influential; higher education providers based in London, the South-East and in larger cities tend to have higher graduate employability and salaries. National data indicate that there are more highly skilled job opportunities in London, Manchester, and Birmingham than in Nottingham and its region. Graduate mobility is therefore likely to be a factor influencing highly skilled employment, with students from deprived neighbourhoods particularly affected. This is confirmed by research from the OfS which found that considerable geographical disparities affect graduates in England; the availability of nearby graduate-level opportunities varies by location. These divergences are complex and can be local, but also may affect rural and coastal areas, and pockets of deprivation within major cities.

According to our analysis of the EORR, using our evidenced risk score approach (Appendix 2f), the evidence discussed above is most closely associated with **risk 12: progression from higher education**; students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. In practice, the overarching risk 12 encapsulates several other risks identified in the EORR, most notably cost

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[24] Source: APP Data Data Dashboard (progression)

pressures, which can restrict students' access to key opportunities such as sandwich placements.

In conclusion, the indication of risk observed is **employment outcomes** of students from deprived neighbourhoods, where graduate level employment opportunities may be limited. The main impediment to equality of opportunity from the EORR (using our evidenced risk score approach) for these students is **risk 12: progression from higher education.** For further information, see Appendix 2f.

Appendix 1: Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

Source: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities

Access

Risk 1: Knowledge and skills. Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

Risk 2: Information and guidance. Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

Risk 3: Perception of higher education. Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

Risk 4: Application success rates. Students may not be accepted to a higher education course, or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode. Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

On course

Risk 6: Insufficient academic support. Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 7: Insufficient personal support. Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 8: Mental health. Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus. Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

Risk 10: Cost pressures. Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Risk 11: Capacity issues. Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation.

Progression

Risk 12: Progression from higher education. Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

Appendix 2a: Indication of risk- <u>Low Progression rates to Higher Education</u> of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 1 Knowledge & Skills	Students may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills.	Low attainment and Key Stages 4 and 5	Differential attainment in school accounts for almost all the differences in participation rates between pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd78 2ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief-13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf	4*6=24
Risk 2 Information & Guidance	A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression.	Low quality, or a lack of, information and guidance may result in differential application patterns for different groups of students, and lower application success rates even where prior attainment has been controlled for.	NTU takes account of contextual data in admissions, including FSM. Disadvantaged students are more likely to receive an offer compared to more advantaged peers with the same Key Stage 5 attainment https://www.ntu.ac.uk/m/admissions/policies/ad missions-policy	2*4=8
Risk 3 Perception of HE	Even where a student has the grades and information or guidance required, they may not apply to HE.	A reluctance to apply for certain providers and/or courses by some students can lead to lower application	Increased awareness of higher education options, demystifying universities and increasing a sense of belonging can influence pupils' motivation to attain. Outreach participants who come onto campuses are consistently more	4*6=24

		rates by students with certain characteristics	likely to progress to HE than those who only take part in activities in schools https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/relationship-outreach-attainment-progression.pdf	

Appendix 2b: Indication of risk- <u>Low Application rates to NTU</u> of students from disadvantaged communities

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 1 Knowledge & Skills	N/A Covered in Appendix 2a	N/A Covered in Appendix 2a	N/A Covered in Appendix 2a	N/A
Risk 3 Perception of HE	Covered in Appendix 2a	Covered in Appendix 2a	Covered in Appendix 2a	N/A
Risk 4 Application success rates	For courses or providers that are competitive, students may not have equal application outcomes despite having the same attainment at Key Stages 4 & 5 as another student.	Differences in the way that an application is assessed, even where two students have the same prior attainment, may result in lower acceptance rates	We have undertaken robust analysis of our data, which showed no evidence of any bias in admissions decisions https://wonkhe.com/blogs/data-differential-offer-rates-do-not-indicate-bias-admissions/	1*4=4
Risk 5 Limited choice of course type and delivery mode	Regional differences in the availability of types of higher education courses (such as undergraduate, degree apprenticeship, HNC) and the mode of course delivery (such as part-time, distance or hybrid) that are offered	Differences in the availability of course type and delivery may result in more restricted choice for students with certain characteristics, and subsequently to lower progression to higher education rates.	Students from disadvantaged communities are more likely to seek to study different modes of higher education, such as apprenticeships, FNDs, foundation years and, potentially, the new HTQs. Research shows that geographical distance to university has a negative association with university enrolment. Students within the 10km measure had significantly increased odds	3*4=12

	may result in some groups of students not being able to attend a course of their choice.		of enrolling at university than students in the 40km and above category when controlling for deprivation and population density. https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/623056/	

Appendix 2c: Indication of risk- <u>Low continuation and completion rates</u> of pupils from low socio-economic groups (IMD)

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 1 Knowledge & Skills	Differences over access to a high quality education, and the resources needed to fully engage with it (including time and support), may limit opportunity.	Where students are accepted into higher education courses, it may also have a detrimental impact on their on-course success.	Classism can be transmitted onto campus through a 'hidden' curriculum; delivered by a particular dominant habitus. This can lead to exclusions of appreciation of other experiences, opinions and understandings https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/hidden-curriculum-higher-education	2*4=8
Risk 2 Information & Guidance	A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression.	Low quality, or a lack of, information and guidance may result in lower continuation and completion rates	Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may find it difficult to approach academic members of staff for information, clarification, guidance, feedback and academic support https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/what_works_final_report_1568036657.pdf.	2*4=8
Risk 5 Limited provision	N/A See Appendix 2b	N/A See Appendix 2b	This has been included as a separate risk in the Access stage. See Appendix 2b	N/A

Risk 6 Academic support	Differences in educational experiences before university did not equip them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge as other students.	If a student does not receive the necessary personalised academic support, they may withdraw from a course.	Upon entering a university environment, students encounter a cultural shock as they transition into a new realm of social and academic experiences. For those who from disadvantaged backgrounds, higher education institutions can seem like bastions of privilege, with unspoken academic norms and social rules. Friendships developed through co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities can enhance a sense of belonging and serve as a source and academic and emotional support. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf The NTU Student Dashboard enables early warning signs of disengagement with academic resources to be triggered and actioned as appropriate.	2*6=12
Risk 7 Personal support	Non-academic support comes in many different forms, from personal tutors or mentors to access to sports facilities or accommodation support. These may not be equally accessible. For many students, extracurricular activities are a core part of the higher education experience but these are not equally accessible.	Students who do not receive sufficient personal support on course, including (but not limited to) mentoring, advice, counselling and access to extracurricular activities may be more likely to report lower wellbeing and/or sense of belonging, experience poor mental health, achieve lower-than-expected on-course	Engagement in extra-curricular activities (ECA) has been associated with improved student outcomes https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2021/00000023/00000001/art00007#. NTU have introduced a new 'opportunity bursary' to help equal access to ECAs. Students with low engagement according to the NTU Student Dashboard are automatically contacted for individual support by a dedicated team of callers trained in coaching and welfare support.	2*6=12

		attainment and lower continuation rates.		
Risk 8 Mental Health	N/A	N/A	This risk has been included as a separate risk for completion	N/A
Risk 9 Ongoing impacts of Coronavirus	Access to school for students varied a lot during the coronavirus pandemic. This may result in differential knowledge and skills, and ability to adapt to a higher education environment.	The full effects of the coronavirus pandemic are still unknown. However, the differential experiences of students during their primary and secondary education is likely to have a long-term impact. It may also lead to lower on-course attainment rates for some students, and to a greater need for on-course academic support.	Disadvantaged high attainers were over three times more likely to lack a suitable device to study at the beginning of the pandemic, and twice as likely to lack a suitable place to study. As a result, they have fallen behind their more advantaged peers as a result of Covid-19. Attainment gaps have widened since the pandemic. This is likely to have a long-term effect on student well-being. https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Social-Mobility-The-Next-Generation-Lost-Potential-Age-16.pdf. Evidence suggests that, as a result of the pandemic, students expectations of their HE experience may differ from the reality. Providers need to consider whether these expectations enable or work against a successful transition into HE. https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdlx0u7/AccessHE-Best-Laid-Plans-Embargoed.pdf Internal NTU analysis suggests that students are less engaged with aspects of their academic study and extra-curricular interventions than pre-Covid cohorts had been. This reflects evidence from the sector, which suggest greater risk of student burn	4*6=24

			out and apathy post-Covid. https://environmentalpolicy.ucdavis.edu/news/great-disengagement-has-covid-tranformed-culture-higher-education	
			According to NTU student surveys, students' sense of belonging to NTU, their course, their academic school, their tutorial group and their Student Union dropped significantly in the years of the pandemic. Scores increased again in 2022 and 2023, but in most cases have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Similarly, all levels of engagement and coping with their studies has improved since 2021, but remains lower than before the onset of Covid and its restrictions.	
Risk 10 Cost Pressures	Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade. This is likely to be due to multiple factors, including (but not limited to): • some students undertaking more paid work than is feasible alongside full-time study • students experiencing poorer	Increasing costs of living, if not adequately addressed, may result in an increasing number of students undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, poorer mental and physical health for students, reduced attendance on-course, and less time to study. Together, these may increase the risk of lower	Homesickness, loneliness, academic pressures and financial difficulties are all common issues faced by students, and these can intensify at certain times during the academic year. However, the current cost of living crisis means that at present, many students are experiencing continuous, intense concern around their financial wellbeing, which is having knock-on negative impacts on their mental health. The rising cost of living is causing high levels of stress and concern amongst university students, and many are worried about making ends meet. https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/cost-of-living-students/	4*6=24

		mental health as a result of financial concerns • students having to support families.	continuation and completion rates.	Over three-quarters of students are "concerned" rising costs may affect how well they do in their studies. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are likely to be hardest hit by rising costs of food, transport, energy and rent, with the latter accounting for about 45% of monthly living costs. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-is-the-rising-cost-of-living-affecting-students/ Almost one in five students surveyed by the OfS said that they had considered dropping out of university or college because of increases in the cost of living. While financial concerns among students are not a novel issue, students are facing many new financial pressures stemming from cost of living rises. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6981/insight-brief-17-studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living.pdf This is borne out by evidence from NTU. 2023/24 has seen a 61% increase in hardship fund applications, awarded 75% more awards and spent 43% more money than the same period of 2023/24. Rent increase in particular have been felt by our students, according to their survey feedback. Whilst the rise in utility bills hit many hard in 22/23, a lot of students had already signed inclusive contracts well in advance of this. Evidence suggests that students are feeling the cost of living harder this year. Over two-thirds of students in 2023/24 considered the cost of university life to be more than they expected. This	

compares with 57% in 2022/23. Half of current students are actively looking for part-time work alongside studies, compared with one-fifth in 2022/23. Over a third of students surveyed were working during term. A quarter of these students said that their work had impacted on their class attendance, whilst 43% said it had affected their independent study, 29% completing assessments and 45% taking part in extra-curricular activities, that are known to be associated with student engagement and success.

37% of students reported that money worries were having a major or severe effect on their mental health. Living costs, followed by accommodation costs were the main concerns of the students.

Linked to all of the above and linked to the overarching indication of risk, in 2023/24 financial worries was one of the primary reasons first year undergraduates had considered withdrawing. Finance was cited considerably more by student 'doubters' than in previous years.

Risk 11 Capacity issues	Students with less money or who are accepted at a late stage in the application cycle, may not be able to secure suitable housing.	An increase in capacity issues may lead to issues such as lower quality teaching, less academic and personal support and low availability and/or	When accommodation shortages occur, students last in the queue often have no choice but to get their accommodation from what is left over in the private sector. Additionally, they are vulnerable to rising prices that are a consequence of those shortages.	2*6=12

		quality of accommodation for students.	Linked with Risk 10 – cost issues.	

Appendix 2d: Indication of risk- <u>Low completion rates</u> of students with a mental health condition[25]

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 8 Mental Health	Students may experience mental ill health that makes it hard to cope with daily life, including studying. These difficulties may be pre-existing, or may develop during higher education study. Some students may have difficulties that are not formally diagnosed or treated, and may experience delays in receiving a diagnosis, treatment or support. Some students may not report mental health difficulties. Where students do have an existing diagnosis, the transition point between	Where students experience poor mental health, this may result in lower continuation/completion rates.	In 2023/24 there has been an increase in the number of 'red flag' referrals to mental health services; from 14% to 24% of all referrals. NTU has reviewed processes to increase responsiveness and resource for wellbeing advisors. Non-attendance has reduced considerably and satisfaction with the support services provides is exceptionally high. Students accessing support are more likely to successfully progress through their course and have better attainment than those who do not access it (Source: NTU Mental Health Charter Award Self-Assessment). However, some students most in need of support may be reluctant to access it. There has been an 8-fold increase in the number of students known to have a mental health condition over the last ten years, and whilst those accessing student support services have been shown to have better outcomes, this is a subset of all students. According to the latest data from the	4*6=24

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[25] All possible risks for completion of studies are listed in Appendix 2c. As this indication of risk specifically relates to mental health, the only applicable risk is Risk 8.

	adolescent and adult services may lead to delays in treatment.		OfS APP dataset for 2017/18 undergraduate entrants, students with a known mental health condition were twice as likely as those with no known disability to have not completed their course and achieved a degree five years later. Students with a mental health condition who are not accessing support services may therefore be more at risk of withdrawing from their course.	
			Most students in higher education are between 17 and 25 years of age, the peak age of onset for common mental disorders. There is mounting concern about the mental health of higher education students. There are several potential reasons why higher education might increase symptoms of common mental disorder including academic pressures, exam stress, financial strain and changes to social support systems that result from leaving home. Research suggests that symptoms of common mental disorder is higher among 18/19 year olds who started higher education, compared with young people who did not attend higher education, with the difference observed during the first year of higher education. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60d5d9af8fa8f50aad4ddac0/Higher_education_and_mental_health__analyses_of_the_LSYPE_cohorts.pdf	
			In recent years, the coronavirus pandemic and rises in the cost of living have had a negative	

| | | | effect on some students' well-being https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/98870 732-d0c6-4e40-af36-6d584ca93cc7/insight-brief-20-meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students.pdf. | |
| | | | According to an NTU student lifestyle survey, 37% of students reported that money worries were having a major or severe effect on their mental health. Living costs, followed by accommodation costs were the main concerns of the students. | |

Appendix 2e: Indication of risk- <u>Low on course attainment</u> of black students

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 1 Knowledge & Skills	Differences over access to a high quality education, and the resources needed to fully engage with it (including time and support), may limit opportunity.	Where students are accepted into higher education courses, it may also have a detrimental impact on their on-course success.	The curriculum may not be relevant to all students. Reading materials and theoretical input should may be from a white / western perspective. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/black-and-minority-ethnic-student-degree-retention-and-attainment	2*6=12
Risk 2 Information & Guidance	A student's home circumstances and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression.	Low quality, or a lack of, information and guidance may result in lower course attainment	Pastoral, administrative and academic staff may not be equipped with the skills and confidence to build relationships with students from ethnic minorities. Students should be empowered to challenge poor practice and clarify feedback. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/black-and-minority-ethnic-student-degree-retention-and-attainment Research has found that there is a lack of role models in leadership models for black students to relate to and be guided by. Universities and students need to create more opportunities to talk directly about race, racism and the attainment gap and to identify what students think is causing it. Choosing courses and university could be more of a challenge for black	4*6=24

			students whose parents had no knowledge of the admissions process or hadn't been to university themselves. This can be compounded by insufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) at schools and colleges, which manifests itself in lack of preparedness when they enter higher education. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf	
			Representation, belonging and mattering all play into student behaviour and decision making not just within university, but even prior to enrolment. For example, research found that many black students based their decision of which university to go to on the proportion of people 'like them' at that institution https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075070309290.	
			Through appropriate intervention and guidance, development of belonging to a HE institution and/or campus can lead to an increase in academic motivation and engagement https://www.jstor.org/stable/20157456	
			Black students often find it necessary to create their own social and cultural networks in order to remedy their exclusion from the wider, white oriented university community. Of all problems	

			faced by black students on 'white campuses', those arising from isolation, alienation, and lack of support are seen to be most serious https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279741806_The_Color_of_Success_African-American_College_Student_Outcomes_at_Predominantly_White_and_Historically_Black_Public_Colleges_and_Universities	
Risk 5 Limited provision	N/A See Appendix 2b	N/A See Appendix 2b	This has been included as a separate risk in the Access stage. See Appendix 2b	N/A
Risk 6 Academic support	Differences in educational experiences before university did not equip them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge as other students.	If a student does not receive the necessary personalised academic support, they may achieve lower degree attainment.	Upon entering a university environment, students encounter a cultural shock as they transition into a new realm of social and academic experiences. For those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, higher education institutions can seem like bastions of privilege, with unspoken academic norms and social rules. Friendships developed through co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities can enhance a sense of belonging and serve as a source and academic and emotional support. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/First-in-Family-Students.pdf The NTU Student Dashboard enables early warning signs of disengagement with academic resources to be triggered and actioned as appropriate.	2*6=12

| Risk 7 Personal support | Non-academic support comes in many different forms, from personal tutors or mentors to access to sports facilities or accommodation support. These may not be equally accessible. For many students, extracurricular activities are a core part of the higher education experience but these are not equally accessible. | Students who do not receive sufficient personal support on course, including (but not limited to) mentoring, advice, counselling and access to extracurricular activities may be more likely to report lower wellbeing and/or sense of belonging, experience poor mental health, achieve lower-than-expected on-course attainment and lower continuation rates. | Engagement in extra-curricular activities (ECA) has been associated with improved student outcomes https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2021/00000023/00000001/art00007#. NTU have introduced a new 'opportunity bursary' to help equal access to ECAs. Students with low engagement according to the NTU Student Dashboard are automatically contacted for individual support by a dedicated team of callers trained in coaching and welfare support.

Black students are under-represented in some ECAs and over-represented in others. The Black Leadership Programme is targeted exclusively at black heritage students. | 2*6=12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk 8 Mental Health | N/A | N/A | This has been included as a separate risk | N/A |
| Risk 9 Ongoing impacts of Coronavirus | Access to school for students varied a lot during the coronavirus pandemic. This may result in differential knowledge and skills, and ability to adapt to a higher education environment. | The full effects of the coronavirus pandemic are still unknown. However, the differential experiences of students during their primary and secondary education is likely to have a long-term impact. It may also lead to lower on-course attainment | Evidence suggests that, as a result of the pandemic, students expectations of their HE experience may differ from the reality. Providers need to consider whether these expectations enable or work against a successful transition into HE. https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdlx0u7/AccessHE-Best-Laid-Plans-Embargoed.pdf | 2*6=12 |

		rates for some students, and to a greater need for on-course academic support.	No evidence that black students have been disproportionately affected by Covid; the attainment gap has been similar both pre- and post-pandemic.	
			Internal NTU analysis suggests that students are less engaged with aspects of their academic study and extra-curricular interventions than pre-Covid cohorts had been. This reflects evidence from the sector, which suggest greater risk of student burn out and apathy post-Covid. https://environmentalpolicy.ucdavis.edu/news/great-disengagement-has-covid-tranformed-culture-higher-education	
Risk 10 Cost Pressures	Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade. This is likely to be due to multiple factors, including (but not limited to): • some students undertaking more paid work than is feasible alongside full-time study • students experiencing poorer mental health as a	Increasing costs of living, if not adequately addressed, may result in an increasing number of students undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, poorer mental and physical health for students, reduced attendance on-course, and less time to study. Together, these may increase the risk of lower continuation and completion rates.	Homesickness, loneliness, academic pressures and financial difficulties are all common issues faced by students, and these can intensify at certain times during the academic year. However, the current cost of living crisis means that at present, many students are experiencing continuous, intense concern around their financial wellbeing, which is having knock-on negative impacts on their mental health. The rising cost of living is causing high levels of stress and concern amongst university students, and many are worried about making ends meet. https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/cost-of-living-students/	2*6=12

			Black students are disproportionately more likely to reside in deprived neighbourhoods. Cost pressures is therefore covered for black students in Appendix 2c; the joint greatest risk for which is Risk 10.	
	• students having to support families.			
Risk 11 Capacity issues	Students with less money or who are accepted at a late stage in the application cycle, may not be able to secure suitable housing.	An increase in capacity issues may lead to issues such as lower quality teaching, less academic and personal support and low availability and/or quality of accommodation for students.	When accommodation shortages occur, students last in the queue often have no choice but to get their accommodation from what is left over in the private sector. Additionally, they are vulnerable to rising prices that are a consequence of those shortages. Linked with Risk 10 – cost issues.	2*4=8

Appendix 2f: Indication of risk- <u>Low progression rates to highly skilled employment or further study</u> of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD)

Possible risk (from EORR)	Explanation of risk (from EORR)	Impact of risk (from EORR)	Evidence / Rational (various sources)	Risk score (Likelihood 1,2,3,4 x Impact 1,2,4,6)
Risk 12: Progression from Higher Education [26]	Some students do not have equal opportunity to access certain outcomes from higher education, such as further study or progressing into employment that is reflective of their qualification levels. This can be due to factors such as financial position, access and time to undertake extracurricular or supra-curricular	Differences in equality of opportunity relating to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with particular characteristics. It may also lead to low diversity in specific areas of the labour-market, lower earning for students with certain characteristics, and lower levels of job satisfaction.	NTU is under-represented in areas with good graduate employability (Allied Medicine and STEM) and over-represented in areas where graduate employability is poor (ARES, Social Sciences, Art and Design, and Arts and Humanities). Over-representation in areas with low graduate employability has an adverse effect on a university's overall score. This is also likely to disproportionately affect disadvantaged students who have lower rates of progression to positive graduate outcomes. Geographical location is also influential. Universities based in London, the south-east and in larger cities tend to have higher graduate employability and salaries. National data indicate that there are more highly skilled job opportunities in London, Manchester, and Birmingham than in Nottingham and its region. Graduate mobility is likely to be a factor influencing highly skilled employment.	4*6=24

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[26] The possible other risks according to the EORR are Risk 6: insufficient academic support; Risk 7: insufficient personal support; Risk 8: mental health; Risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus; Risk 10, cost pressures and Risk 11, capacity issues. All of these risks are discussed elsewhere in the Appendices relating to other indications of risk. They are also subsumed into the overarching Risk 12: Progression from Higher Education.

	activities, and lack of information and guidance.		Again, this particularly affects students who reside in deprived neighbourhoods where there may be fewer job opportunities.	
			Considerable geographical disparities affect students and graduates in England. The rate of gaining entry to higher education varies by location, as does the availability of nearby provision and of graduate-level employment opportunities after university. These divergences are complex and can be very local, but often affect rural and coastal areas, and pockets of deprivation within major cities. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/place-matters-inequality-employment-and-the-role-of-higher-education/	
			If insufficient work experience opportunities are available to students, there is a risk that they will not be equipped with the right skills to secure graduate level employment.	
			If suitable work experience options are hard to secure for WP students (particularly as numbers grow) – due to employer perception and social disadvantage – this could have a disproportionately negative impact on their post-graduation prospects.	
			Source of above: NTU Graduate Outcomes Deep Dive	
			Statistical modeling show that once the highly influential subject, degree outcome and participation in a sandwich course are controlled for, students from deprived neighborhoods (according to IMD data) are the only demographic group that have lower than expected successful progression rates to highly skilled occupations. Lack of	

			graduate level opportunities in such deprived areas disproportionately affect target students.	
			https://wonkhe.com/blogs/to-address-gaps-in-outcomes-we-need-to-interrogate-the-data/	
			Participation in sandwich placements can negate these socio-economic effects on graduate prospects https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2018/00000020/00000004/art00005;jsessionid=wb4monimpmgt.x-ic-live-03	

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2025-26 to 2028-29

ANNEX B: EVIDENCE BASE, METHODS OF EVALUATION AND PUBLICATION PLAN

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 1: SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Students in Classrooms	Pupil literacy is low across our region. Literacy support has been shown to be an effective attainment raising intervention. Reading comprehension strategies are high impact on average (+6 months) and alongside phonics is a crucial component of early reading instruction. On average, one to one tuition is very effective at improving pupil outcomes as it provides targeted support for pupils based on specific needs. Source: EEF toolkit	We undertook a (Type 3 evaluation standard – 'causal') RCT in 2023/24 to measure improvements in reading age of participants versus a control group, the findings of which will be built on over the next four years. This will include updating our existing Theory of Change (Type 1 – 'narrative'). Additional evaluation methodologies will include pre-post programme assessment, pupil tracking through HEAT (enabling further Type 2 'empirical enquiry' studies such as Propensity Score Matching), teacher surveys and placement student reflection.	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits.
Oracy	On average, oral language approaches have a high impact on pupil outcomes of 6 months' additional progress. Impact in early years (+7 months) and primary schools (+6 months) tends to be higher than that secondary schools (+5 months.) Source: EEF toolkit	A Theory of Change will be developed during the design of the programme, from which specific evaluation methods will emerge. We anticipate this will include both Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation standards, with the latter specifically focusing on the impact of participant attainment, compared with suitable comparator group.	As above
Pre-16 Widening Access	Outreach is most effective as a progressive, sustained programme of activity and engagement	We will periodically reflect on and update our existing Theory of Change (Type 1 – narrative evaluation	As above

Outreach Programme	over time (Source: BIS 2014). Approaches should be structured and contribute to an incremental journey taking learners towards their educational goals (Source: OfS 2020). Outreach therefore tends to begin young (Source: OfS 2018). The chances of young people from FSM backgrounds progressing to higher education are low and there is geographical variation in participation across the country for this group of learners (Source: NEON 2024)	standard), which underpins our progressive widening access outreach provision. Monitoring the uptake of our outreach offering to track whether cohorts receive a sustained and progressive offer is being prioritised over the coming years. Through tracking of pupil data via HEAT, we will also be able to undertake type 2 evaluation methodologies (e.g. case control matching) and determine differences in outcomes between cohorts who had varying numbers of sessions. This will allow us to identify an association between participation and student outcomes.	
Post-16 Widening Access Outreach Programme and Contextual Admissions	Supporting those studying Level 3 qualifications to make choices about further study is associated with improving local skill and qualification levels, particularly post-pandemic (Source: Nacro). The chances of young people from FSM backgrounds progressing to higher education are low and there is geographical variation in participation across the country for this group of learners (Source: NEON 2024)	This will include both Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation standards. A Theory of Change will be developed for our outreach for level 3 learners (Type 1). Through tracking of pupil application data via UCAS we will be able to track changes in HE admission rates and compare results against a suitable control group (Type 2).	As above

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 2: ALTERNATIVE COURSE PROVISION

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Alternative Courses	By 2030, an estimated 30 million UK workers may lack essential skills needed for job proficiency. (Source: McKinsey, 2020). NTU are focused on enhancing skill levels in our locality through, for example, a specific place-based approach which supports local needs. The university has a campus based in Mansfield (a small town in Nottinghamshire) where only 22% of the working age population have a degree level qualification (compared to the national average of 43.5%). There are specific skills shortages in Digital Services, Health Services, Manufacturing, Business Services Wholesale, and Hospitality (Source: Mansfield Skills Plan, 2020-2030)	We will undertake research to inform an overarching Theory of Change (Type 1 – narrative) evaluation standard. In the absence of a natural control group, it may be challenging to embed robust Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation standards. However, we will monitor enrolment numbers across the new courses and triangulate our finding with qualitative feedback from beneficiaries.	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits.
Alternative Pathways	Evidence demonstrates that time constraints are the primary barrier to mature persons acquiring new skills, which could be addressed by additional part-time routes and short 30 credit courses. This will allow mature students to study and develop	We will identify the specific needs of mature students through surveys, focus groups, and consultation with stakeholders. This will be inform an overarching Theory of Change (Type 1 – narrative) evaluation. We will monitor enrolment numbers across the new courses and triangulate our	As above

	skills alongside work (Source: gov.uk)	findings with qualitative feedback from beneficiaries.	
Degree Apprenticeships	By 2030, an estimated 30.5 million UK workers may lack essential skills needed for job proficiency (Source: McKinsey, 2020). There is strong desire for education providers to help to fill the skills shortage; the OfS has encouraged providers to develop more diverse pathways into and through higher education. UCAS report that 40% of undergraduate applicants are now interested in an apprenticeship role but the majority do no pursue one due to a lack of roles in their desired location (Source: UCAS, 2023)	We will continue to monitor the learner profile of NTU apprentices and the mix of SME and Large employers to ensure they meet the expectations of Government to widen participation and narrow the skills mismatch in the local and regional public and private sectors. We will also undertake qualitative research with prospective, current and past apprentices as well as other important stakeholders (e.g. SMEs and large employers) as part of an overarching Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE), providing strong Type 1 (empirical enquiry) standards of evidence.	

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 3: STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Mansfield Hub	Mansfield and the surrounding area exhibit many of the characteristics of a low-skill and low-wage economy (Source: Policy Exchange, 2000) and therefore local education and skills provision is crucial.	In such a broad programme, one method of evaluation will not suit the range of provision. Different methods for different activities will be used and these are detailed in the relevant activities in this and other Access Intervention Strategies	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits.

Clifton Collective Impact	Clifton has been identified as a place for receipt of funding for <u>Safer Streets 5</u>, through the Police and Crime Commissioner due to high levels of anti-social behaviour. Whilst attainment levels in English at Key Stage 2 from children in the Clifton area are comparable to their peers in Nottingham City, there is a notable drop in attainment levels between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Emerging evidence from a pilot related collective impact programme in Mansfield (see Getting School Ready) found that it had made significant strides in its first year, demonstrating potential for strategic investments in university-community partnerships (Source: Aeddi, not yet published)	We will take inspiration from Systems Evaluation Theory (<u>Renger, 2015</u>) to understand the interdependencies between aspects of the intervention and how they may hinder or support the achievement of outcomes. We will develop Theories of Change (type 1) for specific aspects of the intervention to help ensure their progress. This will be informed by engaging in listening exercises with the communities the interventions serve to ensure that the developmental and summative evaluation of the interventions is determined by community needs.	As above. In addition, as this is an innovative programme with potentially wider scope interest, we will seek to publish across other sector networks, as appropriate.
Getting School Ready	The Social Mobility Commission has shown that Mansfield is amongst the 10 least socially mobile of the 324 local authority areas in Great Britain (Source: <u>Making Mansfield</u>). Collective Impact initiatives are gaining increasing credibility following widespread examples of success (Collective Impact Forum). This was reinforced by an implementation and process evaluation of the	In its infancy, we undertook an Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE), which included some Type 1 narrative evidence of its early impact and potential. We will take further inspiration from Systems Evaluation Theory (<u>Renger, 2015</u>) to understand the interdependencies between aspects of the intervention and how they may support outcomes. We will develop Theories of Change (Type 1) for specific aspects of the intervention to help ensure their progress. This will be informed by	As above. In addition, as this is an innovative programme with potentially wider scope interest, we will seek to publish across other sector networks, as appropriate.

| | pilot year (Source: Aeddi, not yet published). | listening exercises with the communities the interventions serve.

We will seek to establish a Shared Measurement System between system partners to allow for the tracking of progress against a set of co-defined indicators, providing Type 2 'empirical enquiry' evidence. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Partnerships with Schools, Colleges and Multi-Academy Trusts** | Working in partnership will not only benefit the pupils who go on to higher education, but the institutions themselves and society in general. (Source: OfS) | In such a broad range of partnerships, one method of evaluation will not suit the range of activities. Refer to Intervention Strategy 1 for specific evaluation methods for our outreach programmes. | As above |

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 4: CONTINUATION AND COMPLETION

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
NTU Bursary Schemes	Our existing evidence using the OfS' financial support evaluation toolkit provided strong evidence that students from low household incomes who received the Maintenance Bursary had equal outcomes to those that were not eligible through household income, whilst statistically controlling for other influential characteristics (result 2).

Early feedback from our Opportunity Bursary scheme suggests students have highly welcomed this additional support, with many finding themselves | We will utilise the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit to extend our statistical analysis of student outcomes, and triangulate with student surveys and interviews. This will provide Type 2 'empirical enquiry' evidence. We will improve the robustness of this evaluation by undertaking propensity score matching and/or case-control matching (both quasi-experimental designs) to match participants with non-participants who otherwise share identical characteristics, and compare outcomes. We will employ similar methodologies for | We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits. |

	more able / more encouraged to access ECAs. We know from our internal statistical analysis and peer reviewed research that participation in ECAs adds considerable value to the student experience, which manifests in improved outcomes (Source: Kerrigan & Manktelow, 2021)	evaluating the new opportunity bursary.	
GRIT	Multiple studies have shown the evidence base for the GRIT approach (Sources: Bandura, 1977; Schunk, 1991; Duckworth et al), demonstrating how GRIT methods are associated with improved educational attainment and retention. In the early years of the NTU programme, we undertook a mixed methods evaluation which showed the sessions had a positive significant effect on student engagement and continuation rates for participants.	We have already conducted a mixed methods evaluation of the programme. We will triangulate this with an additional Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation, using techniques such as Propensity Score Matching, to compare continuation and completion rates of participants with non-participants who otherwise share the same characteristics.	As above.
Academic Delivery Project (ADP)	Recent internal research conducted with students demonstrates how the block delivery model in operation at the NTU Mansfield Hub enables students to undertake 'study alongside paid work and caring responsibilities,' as well as 'supporting students that need to live at home to reduce costs'. Block delivery was regarded as supporting student	We will undertake a combination of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation, via:

Comparative Study – compare student outcomes across similar projects, to provide statistical associations.

Pre & post survey – to evidence increased knowledge, development of | As above |

	learning, and this was particularly the case for widening participation students. Other internal research found that the pandemic evidenced our ability to negotiate timetabled access to specialist space and the adjust timetables to minimise cross-contamination and student flow around the buildings and estate.	confidence or other measurable shift. Implementation and process evaluation - to see what has and has not worked, with a view to amending the programme.	
Student Mentors	Multiple studies have demonstrated the value of peer support schemes on a range of outcomes, including retention (Source: Thomas, 2012; Haymen et al, 2022). Internal analysis shows that over the last three years, mentees who actively engaged in the mentoring programme (and thereby attended a specific event and/or were logged as a participant in a specific mentoring programme) had significantly higher levels of engagement with the University, as measured by the NTU Learning Analytics system.	We have undertaken some preliminary research on the mentoring programme, underpinned by a Theory of Change. We will use these findings to inform the methodologies behind an Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE), using a mixed methods approach. This will be triangulated with quasi-experimental quantitative studies comparing outcomes between students exposed to mentoring (mentees and mentors) and compared with a control group of those less exposed but with otherwise similar characteristics. Together, we aim for the realist and quasi-experimental designs to achieve strong Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence.	As above.
Engagement Analytics (EA) and Contact Engagement Service (CES)	There is a very strong positive association between engagement, continuation and completion. Students from the priority groups appear to have lower average	We aim to undertake a variety of evaluation methods, encapsulating Type 1 (narrative), Type 2 (empirical enquiry) and Type 3 (causal) standards of evidence, as follows:	As above

		engagement than their peers and are more likely to trigger 'no-engagement' alerts (Source: Foster & Siddle, 2020). NTU's internal data shows that when callers speak to students, engagement improves	Adaptation of existing Theory of Change and ongoing review of engagement analytics literature (Type 1) NTU Student Transition Survey – analysis of first year students' responses to using the NTU Student Dashboard (Type 2) Analysis of student responses to the CES and the relationship to academic progression and attainment, supported by interviews and focus groups (Type 2) Primary research A/B testing of the impact of changes in approach and associated processes following CES Interventions (Type 3)	
Active Collaborative Learning (ACL)		Studies (Groves & O'Shea, 2019; O'Shea, 2021; Trawalter et al, 2021) Studies have shown how students from lower socio-economic backgrounds can struggle to adjust to university and build relationships with peers due to the inaccessibility of university communities and spaces Source: (Groves & O'Shea, 2019; Trawalter et al 2021). The literature suggests that a structured approach to collaborative working can help to forge learning communities, build belonging, and offer students a chance to share experiences (Blake et al, 2022). Studies (Beichner et al., 2007; McNeil & Borg, 2020) have shown how	**Stage 1:** Utilising the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation, the following methods (combination of Type 1 and Type 2 standards) is proposed for understanding the impact of staff development on ACL adoption: **Level 1: Reaction** — Initial staff survey to monitor participants' satisfaction with staff development workshops; **Level 2: Learning** — Assessing the knowledge and skills gained by staff by utilising a pre and post-survey that measures changes in understanding of ACL pedagogies; **Level 3: Behaviour** — Assess staff's application of this learning in their classrooms, measuring how far participants have incorporated this in their lessons through teaching	As above

	SCALE-UP decreases failure rates and improves student outcomes for all students, and significantly those from ethnic minority and widening participation backgrounds. These attribute such positive outcomes to a range of factors, including improvements to students': conceptual understanding; application of knowledge; problem solving; communication skills; and teamworking.	observations and/or self-reported questionnaires/interviews. **Level 4: Results** — Compare student outcomes before and after staff training/implementation of ACL (See Stage 2). **Stage 2:** In understanding the result/impact of staff development on ACL adoption (level 4 of the Kirkpatrick model), schools will also need to evaluate the impact of ACL delivery on student outcomes. The following method for this stage is proposed as follows: • Pre and Post student survey, utilising TASO's recommended validated scale on student belonging (TASO, 2023). • Student focus groups to gather feedback on how ACL has impacted their learning. • Statistical analysis of student outcomes data, comparing against a suitable control group that do not receive ACL methodologies	
Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Pilot	Students entering NTU from a BTEC only qualification route have, on average, lower year one retention and 2:1/First class degree attainment rates than their A-level entrant peers. NTU's BTEC only entrants are also statistically more likely to be an ethnic minority of black and/or	A Theory of Change will be developed during the design of the programme, from which specific evaluation methods will emerge. We anticipate this will include both Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry).	As above

	from an IMD 1 quintile background. Recent case studies have shown Peer Assisted Learning methodologies to positively impact retention and attainment of students, particularly amongst students from non-traditional and mixed entry qualification routes. (Source: Theodosopoulous and Hardman, 2020)		
Extended NTU Welcome	Observable improvements in reported student experience from a 2023/24 pilot of the approach. Results saw increased YOY participation in Welcome events (+8%) and in students reporting them useful to helping them to settle into their studies (+16%). Targeted transition activities saw as much as an 88% YOY increase in the number of students engaging with events and support, with above-average increases in representation of WP, disabled and mature students.	We have undertaken Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evaluation standard analysis of the impact of an extended approach to NTU Welcome, which will be built upon over the next four years. This is currently monitored across multiple large scale interventions across the pre-arrival, and arrival periods, with plans to develop evaluation methods for monitoring the impact of extending activity further into the first six weeks of term, based around a series of student-centred and co-developed 'Know, Do, Feel' measures. This will be triangulated with analysis that tracks participant outcomes. This evaluation will be underpinned by an evidenced Theory of Change.	As above

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 5: MENTAL HEALTH

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Wellbeing Analytics	Student outcomes are poorer for students with mental health conditions across the sector (Source: OfS APP dataset). Internal analysis of NTU student data shows students with mental health conditions have consistently lower engagement than their peers in all years. However, students with mental health conditions in contact with Student Support Services have better outcomes than those who do not (Source: NTU Mental Health Charter).	We will develop a new Theory of Change and review learning analytics literature (Type 1 – narrative) We will test the quality of the capacity of analytics to identify students more likely to face wellbeing problems (Type 1 - narrative) We will analyse the outcomes of students who are communicated with following a wellbeing analytics triggered prompt and conduct qualitative research to test perceptions (Type 2 – empirical enquiry)	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits.
Student disclosure	Our data shows that students who have disclosed a mental health condition and engage with our support do better than those who don't (academic progression rate in 21/22 79% vs 71%). There are still barriers to disclosing mental health at University, both cultural, societal and also linked to students not feeling they have the appropriate evidence to demonstrate their mental health condition. Students who do not have support in place and present with a significant	Impact evaluation (Type 2 – empirical enquiry) will be gleaned via tracking the success of students that are engaged with our mental health and neurodiversity services and comparing against a control group which share similar characteristics but are less engaged. We will also undertake an implementation and process evaluation (Type 1 – narrative) to facilitate improved systems for sharing student disability information across academic schools and professional service.	As above

	mental health risk are more likely to have to take a break in study / leave their course and have lower progression rates		

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 6: BLACK WHITE ATTAINMENT

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Black Leadership Programme (BLP)	Choosing and navigating university could be more of a challenge for black students whose parents are less likely to have had knowledge or experience of it themselves. This can be compounded by insufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) at schools and colleges, which manifests itself in lack of preparedness when they enter higher education (Source: Universities UK, 2021). Representation, belonging and mattering all play into student behaviour and decision making. Black students often find it necessary to create their own social and cultural networks in order to remedy their exclusion from the wider, 'white oriented' university community and the information and guidance it provides (Source: Allen, 1992).	In 2024/25, we collaborated with Staffordshire University and TASO to undertake a thorough implementation and process evaluation (IPE), underpinned by a Theory of Change, providing strong Type 1 (narrative) evidence. We also evaluated the BLP via propensity score matching and case control matching, providing very strong Type 2 evidence. We will learn from these evaluations and improve our evaluative processes accordingly, with the objective of moving towards Type 3 (causal) evidence, exploring different quasi-experimental designs.	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits. In addition to the above, a series of impact and implementation & process evaluation reports are due to be published on the TASO website in the summer of 2024.
Hidden Voices:	When students work with academic staff to develop	A Theory of Change will be developed, from which	As above

| curriculum decolonisation | pedagogical approaches, they gain a different angle on, and a deeper understanding of, learning (Source: Cook-Sather, 2008). Our internal feedback from students revealed clear evidence that working with students as co-creators through the ideas, insights and value they bring serves to drive change in a way that enables the Library to deliver its services in relation to current student needs, rather than react to past requirements. | specific evaluation methods will emerge. We anticipate this involve interviews and focus groups with students and staff to generate Type 1 (narrative) evaluation standards. As part of an ongoing Implementation & Process Evaluation (IPE), we will analyse data termly to identify levels of engagement and resource list generation, and implement strategies for improvement. | |

INTERVENTION STRATEGY 7: RISE EMPLOYABILITY

Activity	Evidence base	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Rise Plan	Students from disadvantaged groups are underrepresented on sandwich courses, but sandwich placements can be particularly valuable in improving outcomes for WP students (Source: TASO 2023). A recent NTU study also identified that Black students on Sandwich (SW) degrees achieve upper awards at a rate of 71%, compared to just 38% on full time (FT) programmes. The influence of programme mode outweighs the influence of entry qualification for black students. Providing additional support to students from	We have undertaken and will continue to improve and undertake both Type 1 'narrative' and Type 2 'empirical enquiry' evaluation methods for this programme including pre-post programme assessment, and student reflective activities. Outcome measures will include pre-post programme assessment survey, tracking of participants successfully securing and completing a sandwich placement, career readiness survey and GOS results, compared with a suitable matched control group.	We are developing a dedicated website for publishing all of our evaluation reports. We also envisage sharing these with an external 'clearing house' to build on existing sector evidence toolkits.

	disadvantaged backgrounds from the early stages of placements searching via an intensive community-based programme of interventions can help to address this disparity.		
Assessed Work-Like Experience (AWLE)	Participation in year-long sandwich placements can negate the known socio-economic effects on employability prospects (Source: Kerrigan et al, 2018). A recent NTU study also identified that Black students on Sandwich (SW) degrees achieve upper awards at a rate of 71%, compared to just 38% on full time (FT) programmes. The influence of programme mode outweighs the influence of entry qualification for black students. Not all students will have the capacity to undertake a year-long experience, therefore AWLE will enable students to gain experience through a broader range of opportunities within the curriculum. More workplace opportunities to widening participation students is likely to contribute to upward social mobility.	We have undertaken and will continue to improve both Type 1 'narrative' and Type 2 'empirical enquiry' evaluations. Students will be assessed on the AWLE activity as part of their module, and grades will be reviewed as part of a long term evaluation of quality and impact. As AWLE is mandatory, there is no control group, hence Type 3 (causality) evaluation is unlikely to be feasible. Outcome measures will include assessment grading, career readiness surveys and GOS results	As above
Professional Student Wardrobe	Many of our students face financial barriers that have been seriously affected by the cost-of-living crisis. More students than ever lack the disposable	Evaluation methods for this programme including pre-post wardrobe visit questionnaires (Type 2 – empirical enquiry), and student reflections Type 1 – narrative). Outcome	

income to access opportunities and the lack of professional clothing is a contributing factor. This is not a hurdle that can be overcome with talent or hard work. It is an obstacle that forces some of the brightest, best, and most dedicated young people to not present themselves as successfully as their better off peers. Evidence has been used from the NTU Rise Progression Fund applications which showed that 34% of student applications for financial support for recruitment costs were to buy professional clothing. In addition, 76% of students surveyed in 2021/22, said expenses of a potential interview impacted their decision to apply for a role or attend an interview.	measures will include career readiness surveys and GOS results, with beneficiaries compared against a suitable control group (Type 2 – empirical enquiry).	

Fees, investments and targets
2025 26 to 2028 29

Provider name: Nottingham Trent University

Provider UKPRN: 10004797

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	LLB (Hons) Law Distance Learning (3 years)	N/A	6800
First degree	New & Continuing Students (excluding expection highlighted subject below)	N/A	9250
Foundation degree	New & Continuing Students	N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	General Engineering	N/A	7780
HNC/HND	New & Continuing Students (except exception highlighted subject above)	N/A	9250
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	New & Continuing Students	N/A	9250
Accelerated degree	New & Continuing Students	N/A	11100
Sandwich year	New & Continuing Students	N/A	1850
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	New & Continuing Students	N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Nova Centric Limited - New & Continuing Students	10020858	9250
Foundation degree	Nova Centric Limited - New & Continuing Students	10020858	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	LLB (Hons) Law (Flexible Learning)	N/A	6935
First degree	LLB (Hons) Law Distance Learning (4years)	N/A	5100
First degree	LLB (Hons) Law Distance Learning (5years)	N/A	5100
First degree	Other part time BSc and BA (Hons)	N/A	6935
Foundation degree	FdSc Horticulture PT	N/A	6170
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	Electrial and Electronic Engineering	N/A	5190
HNC/HND	Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering	N/A	5190
HNC/HND	New & Continuing Students (except exception highlighted subject below)	N/A	6935
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

Fees, investments and targets
2025 26 to 2028 29

Provider name: Nottingham Trent University

Provider UKPRN: 10004797

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£4,842,000	£4,988,000	£5,138,000	£5,293,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£9,823,000	£10,085,000	£10,374,000	£10,605,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£649,000	£668,000	£687,000	£707,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£762,000	£787,000	£813,000	£840,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£4,080,000	£4,201,000	£4,325,000	£4,453,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£4,842,000**	**£4,988,000**	**£5,138,000**	**£5,293,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment (as % of HFI)***	**7.1%**	**7.1%**	**7.1%**	**7.2%**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment funded from HFI (£)***	**£4,670,000**	**£4,816,000**	**£4,966,000**	**£5,121,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)***	**£172,000**	**£172,000**	**£172,000**	**£172,000**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£8,208,000	£8,436,000	£8,691,000	£8,887,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£1,615,000	£1,649,000	£1,683,000	£1,718,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£9,823,000**	**£10,085,000**	**£10,374,000**	**£10,605,000**
Financial support investment	***Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)***	**14.3%**	**14.4%**	**14.4%**	**14.4%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£649,000	£668,000	£687,000	£707,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

![Office for Students logo]

Fees, investments and targets

2025 26 to 2028 29

Provider name: Nottingham Trent University

Provider UKPRN: 10004797

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase in HE participation rates of Nottingham City FSM-eligible pupils	PTA_1	Raising attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		By working with pupils across the city to address knowledge and skills (attainment) and their perception of HE, our ambition is for an increase in FSM eligible pupils progressing to HE to reach the levels of the national average by 2028/29. Data source: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/data-	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2018-19	Percentage	24%	25%	26%	27%	29%
Increase in HE participation rates of Nottinghamshire County LA FSM-eligible pupils	PTA_2	Raising attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		By working with pupils across the county to address knowledge and skills (attainment) and their perception of HE, our ambition is for an increase in FSM eligible pupils progressing to HE to reach the levels of the national average by 2028/29. Data source: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/data-guidance	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2018-19	Percentage	19%	23%	24%	26.5%	29%
Increase in the number of 'other undergraduate' entrants (from non-traditional pathways) enrolling at NTU (all ages, full-time and part-time)	PTA_3	Access	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)		By expanding our portfolio of technical skills course types (e.g. HTQs and foundation degrees) that support learners from non-traditional pathways, we will address our stated risk (Risk 5 limited choice of course type and delivery mode for students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and/or low socio-economic groups). This is best captured through participation in 'other undergraduate' courses in the APP dataset / dashboard.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Headcount	520	560	580	600	625
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase in continuation rates of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1)	PTS_1	Continuation	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A	Our ambition is for an increase in continuation rates of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD quintile 1) to effectively half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entry cohort.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	91.4%	91.8%	92.2%	92.6%	93%

Aim	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase in completion rates of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1)	PTS_2	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A	Our ambition is for an increase in completion rates of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD quintile 1) to effectively half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entry cohort.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	86.8%	87.3%	87.8%	88.3%	88.9%
Increase in completion rates of students with a known mental health disability	PTS_3	Completion	Reported disability	Mental health condition	N/A	Our ambition is for an increase in completion rates of students with a mental health condition to effectively half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 entry cohort.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	82%	83%	84%	85%	86.5%
Increase in Upper Second / First Class degree classification attainment rates achieved by black students	PTS_4	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	N/A	Our ambition is for an increase in upper second / first class degree classifications achieved by black students to effectively decrease the current deficit by one third compared with the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 graduating cohort.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	51.7%	52.9%	54.9%	56.9%	58.9%
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase in positive graduate progression outcomes (further study or highly skilled occupations) of graduates from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (IMD q1).	PTP_1	Progression	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1	N/A	Our ambition is for an increase in successful progression rates of graduates from IMD quintile 1 to effectively half the current deficit compared to the average for all NTU undergraduates by the 2028/29 graduating cohort.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	66.8%	67.6%	68.3%	69.0%	69.7%
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														