

Royal Holloway, University of London

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

Royal Holloway, University of London, (RHUL) is a historic, inclusive university with a diverse student population, based close to London. It has its roots in two London colleges founded in the 1800s, both among the first in the UK to offer higher education to women. One of the earliest students was Sarah Parker Remond, the black American abolitionist campaigner and activist. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all students to access, succeed in and progress from higher education has therefore been fundamental to RHUL since it first began. Our founding values of inclusion, social justice, and educational excellence are reflected in the statement of our core values in 2024: Daring; Open; Respectful; Innovative. Our new strategy to take RHUL into the 2030s establishes us as a university of social purpose, with a bold and brave vision for the future. We are student centred and research intensive, and place inclusive education and research at the heart of everything we do.

Our student cohort has changed rapidly over the past few years, both in size and diversity. In the most recent year (2023/24) our total student population was 12,650 (up from 10,300 in 2017), with most students studying at undergraduate level (83%). An increasing proportion of our students come from the London area, and from West and South London in particular. Our student body has become much more ethnically diverse over the past few years, reflecting the hyper-diversity of London's population. In 2023/24 the majority of our students (51%) were from Black and Global Majority (BGM) ethnic backgrounds, with students from Asian backgrounds making up 32% of the total student body.

We have seen an increase in the proportion of our new home undergraduate students from the following groups: 40% are in the first generation to attend university, 20% have attended a school in the lowest performing quintile, and 32% come from the areas of the country that face the highest levels of deprivation (defined as Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1&2). (All percentages have increased since 2019/20 from 38%, 16%, 28% respectively.) In the most recent year of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data (2020/21), 89% of our students were from state schools.

An increasing proportion of our home undergraduate students choose to commute to RHUL, 40% in 2023/24 (up from 30% in 2019/20). Intersectional analysis shows a high level of association between commuters and underrepresented groups; 67% of commuters were from BGM backgrounds in 2023/24, and 42% from IMD Q1&2.

In terms of age on entry, Royal Holloway's students are less diverse. The majority (97%) of our home undergraduate students are aged 20 and younger on entry and are taking full-time degrees, and most enter with A level qualifications. In 2023/24, 11% of home undergraduate students held solely BTEC or a combination of A levels and BTEC qualifications.

We offer courses in a wide range of subjects, including performing and digital arts, humanities, law and social sciences, business and management, life and environmental sciences, and engineering, physical and mathematical sciences. Most of our teaching is provided at our main campus in Egham, with some key postgraduate courses taught at our London campus.

Our vision is for all our students, regardless of background, to have equity of opportunity to access and to succeed in higher education at RHUL, and to progress to the personal, social, and economic benefits of higher education.

In order to achieve this vision, we are committed to improving outcomes for all students, particularly those facing socio-economic deprivation, and from minoritised ethnic groups. Specifically, we know we have furthest to go to achieve equity in the following areas:

- The proportion of students joining us from the most deprived areas of the country, relative to those from the least deprived areas.
- The proportion of 1st / 2:1 degree classifications awarded to students from the most deprived areas of the country, relative to those from the least deprived areas.
- The proportion of 1st / 2:1 degree classifications awarded to students from minoritised ethnic groups, relative to students from white ethnic groups.

Risks to equality of opportunity

In our assessment of performance (see Annex A for more details) we analysed the Office for Students' (OfS) access and participation dashboard to identify the most significant indications of risk for students at Royal Holloway. We have prioritised the risks with the biggest impact on students, using a combination of the size of the cohort for each underrepresented group, and the size of the gap, or difference in outcomes, between the underrepresented group and their comparator group.

Alongside this, we have examined our own internal data across a range of areas including applications, offer and conversion rates, rates of early attrition, National Student Survey (NSS) responses, uptake of academic and personal wellbeing support, and use of extenuating circumstances. We have also consulted with students and staff to arrive at a holistic understanding of the risks faced by our students.

As a result, we have identified the following indications of risk, which we have mapped against the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), and which will be addressed in this plan. A list of acronyms used here and throughout the plan is included at the end on page 33.

Access

- **Indication of risk 1.1: The proportion of new students from the most deprived areas of the country as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is lower when compared to the least deprived areas** (10.3% from IMD Q1, 24.5% from IMD Q5 in 2021/22).

This is partly due to the number of applications received, with far fewer young people from IMD Q1 applying each year. In 2022/23 the number of IMD Q1 applicants was approximately half the number from IMD Q5.

In addition, an examination of RHUL offer rates shows that in 2022/23 a lower proportion of IMD Q1 students received an offer on application (82% compared to 89% from IMD Q5), and once offered, applicants from IMD Q1 were less likely to accept their place than those from Q5 (18% compared with 23%). Internal data suggests that this variation in offer rate is primarily due to the type and level of entry qualification, with applicants from IMD Q1 more than twice as likely to have BTEC qualifications on entry compared to those from IMD Q5 (18% compared to 8% in 2022/23), and to have lower range A level qualifications (grade D and below) than those from IMD Q5 (17% compared to 8% in 2022/23).

This indicates a risk relating to applicants' perception of higher education (EORR Risk 3), with lower numbers from IMD Q1 applying, coupled with a lack of the knowledge and skills required for acceptance onto their chosen HE course (EORR Risk 1), and a possible lack of opportunity to receive information and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their options (EORR Risk 2). In addition, it indicates that students from IMD Q1 may face a more limited choice of course type and delivery mode due to the restricted range of courses available (EORR Risk 5).

These risks will be addressed in Objective 1.1.

- **Risk 1.2: The proportion of school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve a grade 9-4 in English and Maths at GCSE level is lower than that for non-disadvantaged pupils.** Nationally the proportion is 45% compared to 68% for non-disadvantaged pupils (source Department for Education (DfE) KS4 data for 2022/23).

This links to a lack of knowledge and skills (EORR Risk 1) and will be addressed in Objective 1.2.

- **Risk 1.3: The proportion of students from some underrepresented groups is very low both nationally and at RHUL. This includes refugees and asylum seekers, service children, young carers, estranged students, and those from care experienced backgrounds.** (DfE) statistics indicate that in 2021/22 14% of 'Looked After Children' (LAC) progressed to higher education by the age of 19, compared with 47% for all other pupils. At Royal Holloway the proportion of care leaver students is also very low, making up less than 1% of the home undergraduate cohort. However, the number of students has increased over the past few years, from 12 new entrants in 2017/18 to 20 in 2023/24. We would like to continue this increasing trend and will be working collaboratively with other local universities to achieve this, as well as extending our work with other under-served communities in the local area.

Based on sector-level research, we believe the key risks faced by care leaver students are a lack of information and guidance (EORR Risk 2) and perception of higher education (EORR Risk 3).

Risks for care experienced students and other under-served communities will be addressed in Objective 1.3.

- **Risk 1.4: The number of young people choosing to study modern foreign languages (MFL) at A-level has fallen consistently over the last few decades, and MFL has often become the preserve of students from selective schools as state schools struggle across the country to recruit healthy numbers for their A-level cohorts.** The problem is a complex one, and languages are in crisis nationally. It's a challenge born of many factors including teacher shortage, national focus on STEM uptake, perceived difficulty of the subject, global dominance of English, and a lack of subject-specific information, advice and guidance. A number of universities are shutting their departments. However, as a globally-minded institution RHUL is committed to the provision of languages, and to making modern language study more inclusive and achievable by widening access to undergraduate degrees for local state school students.

This objective links to a lack of knowledge and skills (EORR Risk 1) as well as information and guidance (EORR Risk 2) and perception of HE (EORR Risk 3). These risks will be addressed in Objective 1.4.

On course success

Continuation and completion

- **Risk 2.1: The proportion of mature students continuing with their studies from year 1 to year 2 is lower than the proportion of young students doing so.** In 2020/21 87.1% of mature students (aged 21+ at the start of their course) continued into their second year of study, compared with 94.9% of young students aged below 21 at the start of their course. The gap between these two continuation rates was 7.8 percentage points (pp).

In addition, the rates of completion for mature students are lower than those for young students, with a gap of 10.1 pp for the 2017/18 cohort.

We believe that both these gaps are linked to the following risks:

- Insufficient personalised academic support (EORR Risk 6). This can be seen in the 2022 NSS responses from mature students at Royal Holloway, with fewer mature students responding positively to questions around learning resources compared to the cohort as a whole (78% compared to 83%).
- Insufficient personal support (EORR Risk 7). This is indicated by the higher-than-average proportion of mature students accessing wellbeing services (44% in 2022/23, with 31% for young students).
- In addition, the low levels of positive responses to the Learning Community questions from mature students may indicate a risk around sense of belonging. Just 53% of mature students agreed with the statement 'I feel part of a community of staff and students' (RHUL Risk – Sense of Belonging).

Although mature students face risks to both continuation and completion, we are focusing on the risk to continuation in this plan. In order for a student to complete their studies, they first need to continue into their second year, and we anticipate that as a result of improving continuation rates, completion rates will also improve. The OfS 2021 report "[Improving opportunity and choice for mature students](#)" provides support for this approach by emphasising the need for transitional support for mature students.

We will address this risk to continuation in Objective 2.1.

- **Risk 2.2: Students in receipt of financial support may be at risk of lower continuation rates and lower rates of 1st class and 2:1 classifications being awarded.** Analysis of student outcomes for our bursary recipients shows that the proportion of Band 1 bursary students who withdrew from their studies was in line with or lower than the main cohort, although higher than Band 2 bursary students; and that the rate of 1st/2:1 outcomes for Band 1 bursary students was below the rate for Band 2 bursary students, and for those with no bursary.

We know that the bursary provision makes a difference to students' ability to study. In a recent survey of bursary recipients, 87% of respondents agreed that the bursary was important or very important in allowing them to

financially continue their studies, and 83% agreed that it helped them to feel less anxious than they otherwise would. We are also aware that students with a low household income continue to be subject to cost pressures (EORR Risk 10) and that these are likely to contribute to the disparities in observed outcomes. We will address this continuing risk in Objective 2.2.

Attainment

- **Risks 3.1-3.4: The proportion of students from certain underrepresented groups who are awarded a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification is lower than those in comparator groups.** As stated in our assessment of performance (Annex A), most of the indications of risk for Royal Holloway students are around attainment, with statistically significant awarding gaps existing for a number of groups. These groups are all based on either ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation, or a combination of the two.

The awarding gaps addressed in this plan are for the following groups:

- **Students from Black and Global Majority (BGM) groups** – the proportion of BGM students awarded a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification in 2021/22 was 80.6%, compared with 90.0% for White students, a gap of 9.4 pp.
- **Students from Black ethnicity groups** – the proportion of Black students awarded a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification in 2021/22 was 68.6%, with a gap of 21.4 pp from the rate awarded to White students (90.0%).
- **Students from IMD Q1 areas (most deprived)** – the proportion of students from IMD Q1 areas awarded a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification in 2021/22 was 71.1%, compared with 90.6% for those from IMD Q5 areas, a gap of 19.5 pp.
- **Students from BGM groups living in IMD Q1/2 areas** – 79.0% of this group were awarded a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification in 2021/22, compared with 91.6% of students from White ethnic groups living in IMD Q3/4/5 areas, a gap of 12.6 pp.

The risks for these students are many and complex. However, we see clear links to the following risk areas from our analysis of internal and survey data, and from sector-level research (see Annex B for more information):

- **Insufficient personalised academic support (EORR Risk 6)** – we see lower levels of positive responses to 2023 NSS questions around Academic Support from students from BGM ethnic groups (78% positivity measure for BGM students in response to ‘How well have teaching staff supported your learning?’ compared to 83% for White students).
- **Insufficient personal support (EORR Risk 7) and Mental health (Risk 8)** – when it comes to accessing wellbeing support, we see much lower rates for students from Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups (between 20-29%, compared to 38% of White students), as well as those from IMD Q1/2 (between 25-29%, compared to 38% of IMD Q5). Sector evidence such as [TASO’s report ‘What works to tackle mental health inequalities in higher education’](#), suggests that this is not due to a lack of need but indicates either a lack of awareness of the support offered, or a barrier of some kind preventing students accessing the support. Both reasons require improved communication and signposting from the university to improve access levels and ensure students can access the support they need.
- **Cost pressures (Risk 10)** – we see higher proportions of students from the following demographic groups accessing our Study Support Grant (SSG) (formerly known as the Hardship Fund): Black and Mixed ethnicity students; IMD Q1 students.
- **Capacity issues (Risk 11)** – we see lower positivity measures from BGM groups and IMD Q1 in response to questions around Learning Resources in the 2023 NSS (BGM 82%, White 87%; IMD Q1 83%, IMD Q5 86%), suggesting that these groups risk a lower opportunity to access limited resources.
- **Sense of Belonging (RHUL Risk)** – we see particularly low positive responses to NSS questions around Learning Community from students from Black and Mixed ethnicity groups, with 49-51% responding positively to the statement ‘I feel part of a community of staff and students’ in the 2022 NSS.

We will address these risks to the level of degree classifications awarded in Objectives 3.1 to 3.4.

Objectives

The table below shows how the indications of risk that we have identified from our assessment of performance (see Annex A for more details) map to the risks included in the OfS' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and to the objectives we have chosen to address these risks.

The objectives identified here form the basis of the intervention strategies detailed in the next section of the plan, which we anticipate will allow us to achieve the changes in outcomes described.

Indication of risk		EORR risk	Objective	
Ref	Description	Number and description	Ref	Description
1.1	Access gap for IMD Q1 students	Risk 1 knowledge and skills Risk 2 information and guidance Risk 3 perception of HE Risk 5 limited choice of course type	1.1	To reduce the difference in the proportion of entrants from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) and the least deprived areas (IMD Q5).
1.2	Attainment for disadvantaged pupils (Pupil Premium)	Risk 1 knowledge and skills	1.2	To increase the number of year 9 students on track to achieve grade 4-5 (or above) in GCSE Maths and English, having completed the EMAR programme.
1.3	Access for care leavers	Risk 2 information and guidance Risk 3 perception of HE	1.3	To work collaboratively with local organisations and Higher Education Providers, specifically the University of Surrey (UoS) and the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) through our Uni Connect partnership, Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON), to raise awareness, aspirations, and attainment for learners from under-served communities in the region (collaborative objective). In addition, to include care experienced young people as a priority group for all access initiatives with the aim of increasing the numbers participating (RHUL specific).
1.4	Access to languages study at HE	Risk 1 knowledge and skills Risk 2 information and guidance Risk 3 perception of HE	1.4	To increase success in modern languages at GCSE (attainment raising, linked to speaking practice for oral exams); To increase language take-up at A Level and degree level.
2.1	Continuation gap for mature students	Risk 6 insufficient personal support Risk 7 insufficient academic support RHUL risk sense of belonging	2.1	To reduce the continuation gap in percentage points between mature (21+ at the start of the course) and young students.
2.2	Continuation and awarding gaps for all students in receipt of financial support	Risk 10 Cost pressures	2.2	To maintain the very low continuation gap, and reduce the awarding gap for all students in receipt of financial support when compared with all other students.
3.1-3.4	Awarding gaps for the following groups: - 3.1 BGM students - 3.2 Black students - 3.3 IMD Q1 students - 3.4 BGM IMD Q1/2 students	Risk 6 insufficient personal support Risk 7 insufficient academic support Risk 8 mental health Risk 10 cost pressures Risk 11 capacity issues RHUL risk sense of belonging	3.1-3.4	To reduce the awarding gap in percentage points between specified groups of students and their comparator groups (students from Black ethnicity groups (3.1), Black and Global Majority (BGM) ethnicity groups (3.2), IMD Q1 areas (3.3), and an intersection of BGM ethnicity groups and IMD Q1/2 areas (3.4)).

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups via outreach work

Objectives and targets

Objectives:

- To reduce the difference in the proportion of entrants from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) and the least deprived areas (IMD Q5) (Obj. 1.1)
- To work collaboratively with local organisations and Higher Education Providers, specifically the University of Surrey (UoS) and the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) through our Uni Connect partnership, Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON), to raise awareness, aspirations, and attainment for learners from under-served communities in the region (collaborative objective). In addition, to include care experienced young people as a priority group for all access initiatives with the aim of increasing the numbers participating (RHUL specific) (Obj. 1.3)

Target: PTA_1: To reduce the gap between entrants from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 from a baseline of 14 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 7pp by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1 knowledge and skills

Risk 2 information and guidance

Risk 3 perception of HE

Risk 5 limited choice of course type

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Structured priority schools programme	<p>This intervention provides a structured programme of activity with targeted Information and Guidance (IAG) and outreach activity to up to 5 WA target schools. There will be a whole school approach with focused delivery for each year group.</p> <p>Target student groups - schools will be selected based on the proportion of their students who are from IMD Q1 areas or eligible for FSM.</p> <p>The intervention builds on existing activity but adds enhanced structuring to provide interaction for each year group from year 7-13.</p>	<p>Widening Access team staff time</p> <p>Student Ambassador time</p> <p>Academic staff time</p> <p>Financial resource to host campus visit with lunches</p> <p>Availability of RHUL venues</p> <p>Promotional materials and physical resources e.g. workbooks</p>	<p>Short-term</p> <p>Participants have: Increased knowledge of HE; Increased motivation to study.</p> <p>Intermediate</p> <p>Increase students' likelihood to apply for other WA programmes (residential, link); increase participants' likelihood to apply for HE.</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Increase likelihood to apply to HE; Increase likelihood to apply to RHUL.</p>	

	A student voice group for care experienced students will be developed as part of this intervention. New activity.			
RH Link programme	Repeat contact programme of mentoring and revision skills workshops to Y13 pupils in their final year of school / college. It includes IAG sessions, a campus tour, and Q&A with Student Ambassadors. Existing.	<p>Widening Access team staff time</p> <p>Student Ambassador hours</p> <p>Financial resource for annual campus graduation visit</p> <p>Promotional materials</p> <p>Availability of RHUL venues</p>	<p>Short-term</p> <p>Participants have: Increased knowledge of HE; Increased motivation and sense of belonging; Increased knowledge of support available within HE.</p> <p>Intermediate</p> <p>Participants have: Increased capacity to make informed decisions about HE; Increased confidence to succeed in HE; Increased intention to attend HE.</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Increased applications from IMDQ1 students to HE</p>	
Spring University (collaboration with HEON)	Immersive campus experience for school pupils from Years 10-11 (GCSE) with access to workshops, lectures, academics, current students and halls of residence. Existing.	<p>Widening Access team staff time</p> <p>Student Ambassador hours</p> <p>HEON and RHUL staff time including academics and guest speakers</p> <p>Financial resource for activity, split 50/50 with HEON</p> <p>Availability of RHUL venues</p>	<p>Short-term</p> <p>Participants have: Increased knowledge of the range of options available in HE; Increased knowledge of skills required for study at HE; Increased knowledge of the benefits of HE; Increased understanding of what it is like to study in HE; Increased confidence in their ability to undertake the transition into HE; Improved strategies for critical thinking.</p> <p>Intermediate</p> <p>Participants have: Increased confidence that HE/apprenticeship is an achievable option; Increased confidence in their ability to make informed and independent decisions; Increased commitment to learning.</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Increased IMDQ1 student applications to HE.</p>	

<p>Summer University</p>	<p>Residential intervention for school pupils in Years 12-13 (A level) provides an authentic experience of university life and study, delivered across 2 days with IAG and subject taster sessions as well as a campus tour and Student Ambassador Q&A. Existing.</p>	<p>Widening Access team staff time Student Ambassador hours Financial resource for residential Availability of RHUL venues</p>	<p>Short-term Participants have: Increased knowledge of HE; Increased motivation; Increased sense of belonging / social self-efficacy. Intermediate Participants have: Increased intention to attend HE; Increased confidence to succeed in HE. Long-term Increased IMDQ1 applications to HE.</p>	
<p>Schools and colleges liaison activity</p>	<p>Our schools and colleges team works with schools and students to inform and inspire them about HE, and Royal Holloway in particular. Within their schools strategy they have added a specific objective to target potential students from groups underrepresented at RHUL, including from IMDQ1. Existing.</p>	<p>Targeted schools liaison team staff time Financial resource for school visits costs Open day costs</p>	<p>Short-term Participants have: Increased awareness of the benefits of HE; Increased awareness of the benefits of studying at Royal Holloway. Intermediate Participants are increasingly likely to attend other RHUL events (open days etc). Long-term Increased likelihood to apply to RHUL.</p>	
<p>Collaborative Community Outreach with local universities (Surrey and UCA) via HEON</p>	<p>RHUL, the University of Surrey, and the University for the Creative Arts are working together, through our Uni Connect partnership, HEON, to develop and deliver programmes of collaborative community outreach for young people from under-represented and under-served communities in and around our local area. This innovative way of working will enable each provider and HEON to contribute its strengths, effectively use resource and develop relationships with community organisations while ensuring young people and their supporters have access to a well-rounded sustained and coherent programme of tailored information and activity to support the development of awareness, expectations and attainment.</p>	<p>Widening Access team staff time Financial resource for campus visits</p>	<p>Short-term Increased knowledge of the range of options available in HE; Increased knowledge of the benefits of HE; Increased understanding of what it is like to study in HE. Intermediate Participants have: Increased confidence that HE/apprenticeship is an achievable option; Participants are increasingly likely to attend other RHUL, UCA or Surrey events. Long-term Increased applications from students from under-represented and under-served communities to RHUL, UCA and Surrey.</p>	

	<p>Initial targeting for the development of Collaborative Community Outreach will be on learners who are forced migrants, care experienced young people and young carers.</p> <p>Enhancement of existing activity.</p>			
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£938,000 over the course of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

There is emerging evidence from [TASO](#) and [HEAT](#) that multi-intervention outreach is one of the more effective mechanisms to impact on students’ progression to higher education. Given that evidence for the effectiveness of IAG is more limited, we will combine IAG work with [targeted study skills advice](#) and training, based around developing student self-efficacy. As evidence for the effectiveness of specific individual activities is also limited but supports the use of residential visits as a key element of a larger programme, we will be evaluating the different approaches we use thoroughly, building residential activity in as a key element of our programmes. We already have type 1 evidence of the impact of our existing residentials and will use this to shape the design of the programmes.

There are a number of groups that are disadvantaged and underrepresented in higher education, such as those highlighted in the [UCAS good practice guides](#). The challenges faced by these groups are many and diverse. In particular, care experienced children and care leavers face additional disadvantage in the education system more widely, and in HE in particular, highlighted by [TASO’s rapid review](#) in March 2023. With this in mind, and following guidance from sources such as this [Government policy paper](#) and [UCAS evidence on the needs of care leavers](#), we are increasing our work with care experienced young people.

In addition, as part of our collaborative work with the local Uni Connect partnership, HEON, we are working together with local universities to provide a range of activities that improve young people’s knowledge and skill, as well as increasing their knowledge of higher education. These activities are aimed at all underrepresented and under-served groups in the local area, including those from care experienced backgrounds. We will also focus on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), as a particularly vulnerable group within the care system, and are working with a specialist charity to provide educational support.

Evaluation

Each activity within this intervention strategy will be evaluated in the short and medium-term by using pre- and post-activity surveys which are designed using [TASO’s Access and Success Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#) and the [Toolkit for Access and Participation Evaluation \(TAPE\)](#). These scales have been tested and validated, so allow additional confidence in measuring the short- and medium-term outcomes as outlined above. Long-term outcomes for each activity will be evaluated by tracking entry into HE for all participants via the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service. This will all be used to generate OfS Type 2 evidence on whether the activities had the intended outcomes.

We will review results annually to assess whether activities need to be amended or discontinued if the results are not as expected or if outcomes are not improving as intended. Results of our evaluation will be published annually on our website, and via wider sector fora when opportunities arise, including the newly established HEON Impact Hub.

Intervention strategy 2: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups by providing additional pathways

Objectives and targets

Objective: To reduce the difference in the proportion of entrants from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) and the least deprived areas (IMD Q5) (Obj. 1.1)

Target: PTA_1: To reduce the gap between entrants from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 from a baseline of 14 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 7pp by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 4 application success rates

Risk 5 limited choice of course type

Risk 6 insufficient personal support

Risk 7 insufficient academic support

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Improvements to RHUL Foundation Year	<p>Improvements to RHUL Foundation Year (FY) as an alternative entry route to RHUL degrees.</p> <p>Introduction of more discipline-specific skills sessions (e.g. lab skills for science students).</p> <p>Introduction of student experience lead with specific responsibility for transition in and out of the course. Enhancement of existing activity.</p>	Foundation year teaching team staff time	<p>Short-term Students develop sense of belonging to RHUL and to the FY cohort.</p> <p>Students understand the skills they need to develop for their future studies.</p> <p>Intermediate Students are retained on course (improved continuation); students develop skills for future studies (e.g. lab skills for science students)</p> <p>Long-term Targeted students successfully transition to study at RHUL</p>	Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies

<p>Alternative pathway provision (diversifying curriculum)</p>	<p>Creation of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) as alternative ways of studying for a RHUL qualification. The intention is that these are on offer from 2025 entry to students in Health Studies and Health and Social Care. They will include a pathway to studying for a full degree qualification at Royal Holloway, and routes to careers as a qualified social worker, amongst other options. New.</p>	<p>Teaching staff time, in line with other courses with approx. 20 students in each cohort</p>	<p>Short-term RHUL receives approval to deliver the course</p> <p>Intermediate RHUL starts running the courses, students enrol, and successfully complete the qualification. Proportion of students enrolling from underrepresented groups, in particular IMD Q1/2, and mature, is higher than for standard degrees.</p> <p>Long-term Students graduate from the HTQ and go on to successful work in skilled shortage occupations</p>	
<p>Contextual Offer scheme</p>	<p>This intervention / activity provides an offer of a place at RHUL which is 2 grades lower than the standard RHUL offer. This is based on demographic criteria for the applicant.</p> <p>The targeted student groups are those listed in the criteria, namely care experienced, estranged, disabled, mature, those who attended a low performing school, those living in POLAR4 Q1 areas, those with no parental experience of HE. We are adding those living in IMD Q1 & Q2 to this list for the 25/26 admissions cycle.</p> <p>Enhancement of existing scheme.</p>	<p>Staff time, system development time</p>	<p>Short-term More students from IMD Q1 receive an offer from RHUL. More students from IMDQ1 receive a lower offer from RHUL.</p> <p>Intermediate More students from IMD Q1 choose RHUL as their first-choice institution. More students from IMDQ1 meet the conditions of their offer.</p> <p>Long-term Increased proportions of students from IMD Q1 enrol at RHUL.</p>	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£80,000 over the course of the plan, plus the cost of delivering the Foundation Year and HTQ courses.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

As well as working with local schools as detailed in Intervention strategy 1 above, we also intend to improve and extend pathways into RHUL to enable more students to enrol from underrepresented groups in general, and IMD Q1 in particular.

Our first FY cohort graduated in Summer 2023 and achieved the same proportion of degree outcomes at 2:1 level and above as Y1 direct entrants. We believe that by making minor changes to the FY programme, giving students more time developing skills relevant to their degree courses, we can support a larger number of the most disadvantaged

students to progress and succeed in undergraduate degrees. TASO evidence for the impact of foundation years is limited, and so we will focus on evaluating the programmes in a way that will provide evidence of their effectiveness for the sector.

Our evidence for the effectiveness of HTQs is necessarily limited as they are new qualifications, but we know that in the sector, students on alternative degree pathways (e.g. HNC/D) are more likely to be mature and more likely to be from IMDQ1 than students on undergraduate degrees. By improving our FY offering and adding additional pathways in the form of HTQs we are aiming to increase the number of entrants from IMD Q1/2 areas, as well as other underrepresented groups, and diversify routes into a RHUL degree.

Sector evidence supports the use of contextual admissions, with the Sutton Trust's report 'Social Mobility: The Next Generation' recommending that universities 'make better and more ambitious use of contextual offers', ensuring that students who have just missed out on their offer grades are not excluded from HE. Our assessment of performance shows lower proportions of students from IMDQ1 at each stage of the application process, with lower numbers receiving an offer, and enrolling. We will be adding IMD to the contextual offer eligibility criteria to mitigate against this and anticipate that this will have a positive impact on offer and enrolment rates for applicants from this group.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the improvements to Foundation Year provision will be based on a comparison of retention and continuation rates for students on foundation courses, compared with students entering directly onto year 1 of a 3-year undergraduate course, taking account of demographic characteristics. This will provide OfS Type 2 evidence on whether the improvements have had the desired effect of improving retention on these courses.

We will monitor whether entrants to the HTQs are more likely to be from IMDQ1 than our student population average and will monitor student success on the courses.

Evaluation of the contextual offer scheme will be based on analysis of application to offer and acceptance rates, and entry rates to RHUL for students from IMD Q1 when compared to previous years' data and a control group matched for demographic factors. The intention is to generate OfS Type 2 evidence on whether the scheme has improved application outcomes for students from IMD Q1.

We will review results annually to assess whether eligibility for the contextual offer scheme needs to be amended, and whether the alternative pathways (including the foundation year) need to be amended or discontinued if applications and entry rates are not improving as intended. Results of our evaluation will be published annually on our website, and via wider sector fora when opportunities arise.

Intervention strategy 3: Raising attainment for underrepresented groups through academic collaborative outreach

Objectives and targets

Objectives:

- To increase success in modern languages at GCSE (attainment raising, linked to speaking practice for oral exams); To increase language take-up at A Level and degree level (Obj. 1.4)
- To increase the number of year 9 students on track to achieve grade 4-5 (or above) in GCSE Maths and English, having completed the EMAR programme (Obj. 1.2)
- To reduce the difference in the proportion of entrants from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) and the least deprived areas (IMD Q5) (Obj. 1.1)

Target: PTA_1: To reduce the gap between entrants from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 from a baseline of 14 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 7pp by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1 knowledge and skills

Risk 2 information and guidance

Risk 3 perception of HE

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Languages For All (LFA)</p>	<p>The intervention is a multi-year collaborative partnership with the Reach Foundation to deliver the Languages For All (LFA) programme. LFA aims to increase the number of students taking languages at A-level in our local state schools and at university. The LFA programme works with pupils from Y11-Y13 across local schools in Hounslow.</p> <p>Target student groups - state school students in Hounslow who are studying GCSE and A-level modern languages. In particular more Pupil Premium pupils (mainly eligible for FSM) will be selected as the programme continues.</p> <p>Initially 12 schools will be included in the programme.</p> <p>This intervention is collaborative by design, with the main partners being the Reach Foundation and RHUL.</p> <p>New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RHUL and Reach Academy staff time • Student ambassador hours at RHUL events • Language tutors for Y11 taster sessions • Room bookings and refreshments for on campus events 	<p>Short-term Pupils' attitudes to languages improve Student self-efficacy improves</p> <p>Intermediate Student attainment increases, specifically through speaking practice for oral exams More schools offering A-levels in modern languages Schools using LFA to offer A-levels in a more financially efficient way</p> <p>Long-term More pupils doing A-level modern languages More students progress to language-related degrees</p>	

<p>English and Maths Attainment Raising (EMAR)</p>	<p>The intervention is a programme of English and Maths attainment raising activities with Year 9 FSM/Pupil Premium students currently achieving grades 3-6 resulting in reduced disparity in attainment scores between them and their 'non-disadvantaged' peers.</p> <p>There is an existing scheme for EMAR run by the Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON) which is part of the OfS' Uni Connect programme, but this will be a new, separate scheme targeting different schools.</p> <p>Target groups - schools will be targeted on IMD Q1 and FSM cohort as well as those with a good existing relationship with the WA team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening Access team staff time • Student ambassador time 	<p>Short-term Improved pupil engagement with core curriculum Improved pupil understanding of core curriculum concepts</p> <p>Intermediate Increased academic motivation Increased sense of belonging Increased cognitive study strategies Increased academic self-efficacy</p> <p>Long-term Increased subject knowledge (Maths or English) Improved attainment</p>	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£661,000 over the course of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Sector evidence shows that high levels of attainment at GCSE are associated with students' Access rates to HE, particularly at selective institutions. We are committed to working with local schools to improve attainment in key subjects for pre-16 students. In addition, there are inequalities in access to curriculum areas, with state schools facing particular challenges in offering post-16 subjects in all areas.

We will tackle these issues in two ways where we are particularly well-placed to contribute: through an extension of HEON's successful attainment raising model with local schools, and through our academic expertise in modern languages. Both activities are being undertaken in collaboration with partners.

Our **English and Maths attainment raising work** (EMAR) will be a collaborative expansion of the existing HEON scheme, based on evidence of what works in that scheme and drawing on sector research. We will share data with HEON which will allow us to draw findings from a larger pool of students, as well as receiving advice and assistance from our local HEON partner officer.

Our collaborative **Languages For All (LFA)** scheme aims to support attainment and curriculum provision for MFL in local state schools. Modern languages are often the preserve of students from selective schools as state schools struggle across the country to consistently recruit healthy numbers for their A-level cohorts, and as a result A-level MFL classes are run at a loss. From [British Council evidence](#), and our initial consultations with teachers and students in 2022/23, we know that students face barriers to continuing with language study; barriers of attitude, and barriers of cost. We will aim to address both of these through our LFA scheme.

We are basing our assumptions about the types of activity that can engage students in languages on discussions in focus groups and feedback from schools and students in the 2023/24 pilot which showed more students wanted to study a modern language at A-level as a result of taking part. We hope that if successful this intervention can be used as a template for other HEIs.

Evaluation

Pre- and post-surveys will be used at the start and end of the LFA programme, and mid-point surveys used after key events. This survey data will be triangulated with student demographic and performance data, to ensure we capture an accurate and comprehensive picture of our activity and progress towards outcomes, corresponding to OfS type 2 evaluation standards. Using pilot data, we will map the student journey through our programme and identify who the initiative has worked for, and who it has not worked for. We will clarify what the benefits to the students are at each exit point: post-GCSE, post-A-level, and university degree level. The emerging findings from the data at these exit points will inform future programme design.

The EMAR attainment-raising activity will be evaluated in the short and medium-term by using pre- and post-activity surveys, and the mean average increase in attainment in English and Maths. The surveys are designed using [TASO's Access and Success Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#) and the Toolkit for Access and Participation Evaluation (TAPE) with tested and validated scales. A control group (matched on attainment and demographic characteristics) will be used to provide a comparison. Long-term outcomes will be evaluated by tracking entry into HE for participants via the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service. This will all be used to generate OfS Type 2 evidence on whether the activity had the intended outcomes.

We will review results annually to assess whether activities need to be amended or discontinued if the results are not as expected or if outcomes are not improving as intended. Results of our evaluation will be published annually on our website, and via wider sector fora when opportunities arise. In addition, the Languages department at Royal Holloway participates in subject specialist groups including the University Council For Languages (UCFL, formerly UCML) Heads of Languages Special Interest Group. Possible publication outlets include academic journals, for example 'Languages, Society and Policy'.

Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies

Objectives and targets

Objectives:

- To reduce the continuation gap in percentage points between mature (21+ at the start of the course) and young students (Obj. 2.1)
- To maintain the very low continuation gap, and reduce the awarding gap for all students in receipt of financial support (Obj. 2.2)
- To reduce awarding gaps between target groups (BGM, Black, IMD Q1, BGM IMD Q1/2). (Obj. 3.1-3.4)

Target: PTS_1: To reduce the continuation gap between mature and young students from a baseline of 7.8 percentage points (pp) in 2020/21 to 2pp by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

- Risk 6 insufficient personal support
- Risk 7 insufficient academic support
- Risk 10 cost pressures
- RHUL risk sense of belonging

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Overall Transition Framework - #RHReady	The Transition Framework, #RHReady, will identify and provide student skills development to support successful and scaffolded transition into study and between stages of study. As part of this intervention we will identify multiple transition points throughout a student's time with us, and the most effective support mechanisms at those points. New.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic staff time • Professional services staff time • New role in Student Engagement team (0.5 FTE) • Digital resource required for Transition course 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make friends on their course Students understand where to go to get help Students understand academic expectations Students develop appropriate skills for success at their level of study <p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students engage with their studies Students feel a sense of belonging to the university Students engage with support services Students successfully complete their level of study <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increasing percentage of mature students progress to the second year of study Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close 	<p>Link to:</p> <p>Intervention strategy 2: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups by providing additional pathways</p> <p>Intervention strategy 5: Supporting students to successful awarding outcomes</p>
Academic induction and transition support	We will run training on curriculum design models for academic staff with responsibility for first year courses, during 2024/25. This will be a trial year, during which we will evaluate the effectiveness of the training and induction planning before designing the plan for future years. New.			
Practical underpinnings	We will undertake a project to provide reading lists and consistent timetables to students in advance of induction week. New.			
Pre-arrival activities	We will continue to develop our HeadStart in person pre-arrival early induction for those students with a contextual offer. We intend to evaluate this activity more fully over 2024/25 in advance of a relaunch in 2025/26.			

	<p>We will continue to develop our online transition module. This is offered to all students in advance of them joining the university. This is being reconceptualised to link it to the wider transition offer and align it with curricular delivery. There will be an increased focus on belonging, values and behaviours, and on the hidden curriculum.</p> <p>Enhancement of existing activity.</p>			
Student journey mapping	<p>We have recently undertaken work to map the student journey from arrival through to graduation and will use this to re-design the student experience in term one, with greater front-loading of key academic and digital skills to ensure all students start from a more equitable base, including an earlier focus on wellbeing and employability opportunities. New.</p>			
Bursary for students from the lowest household income backgrounds	<p>We will offer a bursary of £1,300 per year to students from households with incomes below £25,000, and £500 per year to students with household incomes between £25,000 and £30,000. Existing.</p>	Cost of bursary payments	<p>Short-term Students from the target groups are attracted to study at Royal Holloway Students from the target groups understand the financial support on offer</p> <p>Intermediate Students in receipt of bursaries are able to engage in university life</p> <p>Long-term Students from the target groups remain on course.</p>	
Access entry bursary	<p>We will offer a bursary of £1000 per year to mature students with a household income of under £25,000 if they have completed a recognised Access to Higher Education Diploma. Existing.</p>	Cost of bursary payments		
Care leavers and estranged students bursary	<p>We will offer a bursary of £3000 per year to students who are 18-25 years old, and have either been looked after by the state for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, or have 'independent - other' status with Student Finance England. Existing.</p>	Cost of bursary payments		
Study Support Grant	<p>The Study Support Grant is available to all students facing financial difficulties. Existing.</p>	Cost of providing grant payments		

Blackbullion	Investment in the financial education package Blackbullion to enable opportunities for students to develop their financial capability and budgeting skills, for financial success at university and as life-long personal development. New.	Cost of Blackbullion package		
Cost of living support	Continued support for students facing challenges with cost of living including provision of low-cost food and access to warm spaces on campus. Existing.	Cost of food provided		

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£15,961,000 over the course of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Our self-assessment indicates that we need to do more work to support continuation for mature students in particular. In addition, we have large awarding gaps between groups including Black and Global Majority (BGM) and White students, Black and White students, students from IMD Q1 (most deprived) and IMD Q5 (least deprived) areas, and the intersection of ethnicity and socio-economic background with the gap between BGM IMD Q1/2 and White IMD Q3-5 students. Enhanced transition support will impact on all these objectives: we know that gaps in outcomes for Black students in particular are largest at level 4, and then decline. If we can support students to start successfully we can impact on their likelihood to stay and succeed on course.

We have based our approach to transition support on [TASO evidence](#) of effective student support (accepting that causal evidence is limited, but there is substantial correlational evidence), and the QAA [Supporting Successful Student Transitions](#) project. We have also drawn on student survey data collected by Royal Holloway and by our SU.

Internal survey and focus group data suggests that concerns about finances and the cost of living are significant factors for our students, and may lead to them considering dropping out, or in devoting less time to their studies. Analysis of outcomes for students receiving financial support indicated that this is well received by students, with 87% agreeing that it has been important in their ability to financially continue with their studies, but that whilst there is some evidence that that the financial support is effective in supporting continuation, it has less impact on attainment outcomes. Consequently, we are focusing our bursaries and other financial support on ensuring students can continue on course.

There is significant [sector-level evidence](#) of the impact of the increased cost of living on student costs, for all students, not just those with low household incomes. We have therefore put into place a wide range of cost-of-living support and a Study Support Grant (SSG) for students. We know that care leavers and estranged students face [additional costs and barriers to study](#), and therefore have financial support targeted specifically at those groups.

Evaluation

Each activity within this intervention strategy relating to transition and student journey will be evaluated by generating OfS Type 2 evidence to show whether it has led to the intended outcomes for the relevant student groups. We will use data analysis of student outcomes, comparison with control groups, and survey responses to provide the evidence for evaluation. We will also work to understand the relative impact of each of the activities so that we know which make the biggest contribution towards improved outcomes.

We will use the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit to generate Type 2 evidence to show whether this intervention has led to the intended outcomes for the relevant student groups.

We will review results annually to assess whether activity needs to be amended or discontinued if the results are not as expected or if outcomes are not improving as intended. Results of our evaluation will be published annually on our website, and via wider sector fora when opportunities arise.

Intervention strategy 5: Supporting students to successful awarding outcomes

Objectives and targets

Objective: To reduce the awarding gap in percentage points between specified groups of students and their comparator groups (students from Black ethnicity groups, Black and Global Majority (BGM) ethnicity groups, IMD Q1 areas, and an intersection of BGM ethnicity groups and IMD Q1/2 areas). (Obj. 3.1-3.4)

Targets: To reduce the awarding gap between

- PTS_2: Black and White students from a baseline of 21.4 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 8pp by 2028/29
- PTS_3: BGM and White students from a baseline of 9.4 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 4pp by 2028/29
- PTS_4: IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from a baseline of 19.5 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 7pp by 2028/29
- PTS_5: BGM IMD Q1/2 and White IMD Q3/4 students from a baseline of 12.6 percentage points (pp) in 2021/22 to 7pp by 2028/29

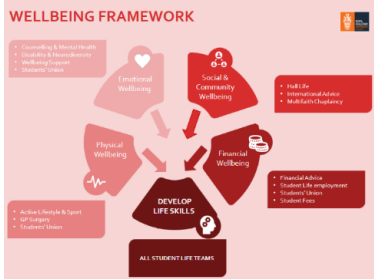
Secondary objectives:

- To reduce the continuation gap in percentage points between mature (21+ at the start of the course) and young students (Obj. 2.1)
- To increase students' awareness of, and engagement with, wellbeing services, and through this, increase their ability to engage with their courses.

Secondary target: PTS_1: To reduce the continuation gap between mature and young students from a baseline of 7.8 percentage points (pp) in 2020/21 to 2pp by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 6 insufficient personal support
Risk 7 insufficient academic support
Risk 8 mental health
Risk 10 cost pressures
Risk 11 capacity issues
RHUL risk sense of belonging

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Inclusive Curriculum Framework</p>	<p>The development, delivery, and evaluation of a Curriculum Framework. This will be a curriculum design, training and evaluation tool. It will take an outcomes-based approach, with student-centred design and delivery.</p> <p>A pilot of the framework in 2024/25 will be delivered for selected courses based on existing awarding gap data, with participating subject teams supported in the training and delivery of the pilot. The evaluated Framework will be available for full rollout from 25/26. New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) staff time Education Development Centre (EDC) staff time Academic staff time To involve Departmental Education Leads, Learning Developers Financial resource for digital resources and training programme 	<p>Short-term Enhanced relatability of course content to BGM students and from low socio-economic groups.</p> <p>Intermediate Students have higher engagement and satisfaction with course content. Higher levels of racial literacy for staff. Improved institutional understanding of the ways in which racial inequity manifests in taught content and practice and strategies for best practice. Improvements to interim measures e.g. retention, continuation, completion; belonging and engagement.</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>
<p>Pedagogic training and resources</p>	<p>Alongside the curriculum framework we will create digital resources and a training programme for academic staff involved in curriculum design and delivery. This will include case studies from good practice at Royal Holloway and elsewhere. New.</p>		<p>Long-term Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	
<p>Wellbeing Framework</p> 	<p>Development and implementation of a wellbeing framework. Our Wellbeing Framework covers the following areas of focussed support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional Wellbeing Financial Wellbeing Physical Wellbeing Social & Community Wellbeing Development of Life Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing staff time Access to central community spaces Communications support from internal comms team 	<p>Short-term Increased student awareness of support services Students believe that support services can and will meet their specific needs and requirements. Students know who their personal tutor is.</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>

	<p>As part of the development of the framework we will review and update the Personal Tutor model and how this could work alongside a wellbeing coaching programme. We will closely link this intervention to our curriculum framework development in order to embed traditional reasonable adjustments into the curriculum wherever possible to benefit all students and reduce stigma about seeking support.</p> <p>This work will lead towards University Mental Health Charter Award status no later than 2025/26. The framework will have a particular focus on providing student support aligned to the needs of all students, and in demonstrating cultural competency. New.</p>		<p>Intermediate Engagement with support services at an early stage of need Students are satisfied with engagement with their personal tutors Demonstrate to students the importance of early intervention and signposting for student support. Students do not perceive there to be stigma in seeking support</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to continue on their course Students are more likely to be actively engaged with their course</p>	
<p>Wellbeing communications plan, including 'I chose to disclose'</p>	<p>Development of wellbeing communications plan with targeted and adapted communications to under-represented groups, led by peer led messaging from students with lived experience wherever possible.</p> <p>Including a refresh of the 'I Chose to Disclose' campaign to encourage disclosure of disabilities, particularly for those groups who may be less likely to disclose, and active engagement with the support available including Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) provided support; work to have representative students leading promotion. New.</p>		<p>Short-term Communications are developed in conjunction with students with lived experience Students receive improved communications</p> <p>Intermediate Students know where to access wellbeing support</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to engage with support services at an early stage of need. Increasing numbers of students disclose disabilities.</p>	

<p>Hub & Spoke model of mental health and wellbeing support</p>	<p>Implementation of a Hub & Spoke model of mental health and wellbeing support, with advisers being more closely linked to academic schools and presented in more engaging ways – e.g. Wellbeing Café, Ask An Adviser, Learn 'How to....'. New.</p>		<p>Short-term Students perceive academic and support service offers as well-integrated</p> <p>Intermediate Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to engage early with support services</p>	
<p>PEMENTOS (Peer Mentoring to Succeed) scheme</p>	<p>The intervention is a peer mentoring scheme, based on the PEMENTOS scheme piloted in the School of Life Sciences and the Environment (LSE).</p> <p>The scheme will be open to all students but is targeted at Black and Asian students who are more likely to be affected by awarding gaps. Extension of existing scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic staff time • Professional services staff time • Student leads 	<p>Short-term Increased student engagement with peer mentoring</p> <p>Intermediate Students have strong peer relationships; Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to be actively engaged with their course Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>
<p>Student-led collaborative networks</p>	<p>Royal Holloway Students Union will work with the University of Surrey to facilitate collaborative student-led networks for students from specific under-represented groups with small numbers. This will depend on student interest, and is likely to include a group for care leavers, for mature students, and for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students. New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic staff time • Professional services staff time • Student leads 	<p>Short-term Collaborative student groups are created, and students engage with them Students meet peers from similar backgrounds</p> <p>Intermediate Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to continue on their courses.</p>	

<p>Student intervention leads</p>	<p>We will employ one student per success intervention to act as a critical friend for the intervention, with a specific remit to ensure that delivery remains on track.</p> <p>Students will be given training and support. New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic staff time • Professional services staff time • Student leads 		<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>
<p>EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) training</p>	<p>The specific intervention involves the addition of a pilot of new progressive EDI training – Inclusive Behaviours Training - for academic staff within Schools with highest awarding gaps.</p> <p>This will sit alongside existing mandatory training and will reflect contemporary approaches within sector good practice, forming part of an individual’s learning journey that is meaningful and impactful. New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning of external training resource • Staff time for those being trained 	<p>Short-term Academic staff in target Schools have engaged in new EDI training and associated reflection. Staff have an understanding of inclusive behaviours and how to implement them in their curriculum areas.</p> <p>Intermediate Staff implement inclusive behaviours in their curriculum areas</p> <p>Long-term Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>
<p>REC submission</p>	<p>Royal Holloway is working towards the renewal of our Advance HE Race Equality Charter award by late 2024. As part of this institution-wide work we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a university-wide Anti-Racism Action Plan, to ensure that anti-racist action and mindsets are developed and nurtured across the whole institution • Run a series of Conversations About Race (CAR) sessions. These will go beyond mandatory training and aim to bring about genuine and sustained positive change based on listening, inclusion, empathy and respect. We have provided training for a small cohort of staff and postgraduate student facilitators to build skills and confidence in hosting conversations. 	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Student time</p>	<p>Short-term The experiences and challenges of different racial groups are discussed and understood Increased conversations about race on campus Improved experiences and sense of belonging of BGM staff and students</p> <p>Intermediate Internal processes are adapted to become more inclusive and to foster diversity We have a university-wide anti-racism action plan that will enable systemic and sustained change</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to review the Academic Promotions Process to ensure it is a process we can trust. • Work together with students to co-create interactive interviews with fellow students from racially minoritised backgrounds <p>New.</p>		<p>Long-term Royal Holloway has a more diverse staff body Students are taught by staff from a wide range of backgrounds</p>	
Improved data dashboards	<p>This intervention will provide a dashboard, training in the practical and statistical skills to use it to draw conclusions. This will ensure that data becomes available to the right people, with the right skills, at the right time. New.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning staff time to develop and maintain dashboard • Academic staff time for consultation and coordination • Staff time for writing and delivering training 	<p>Short-term A single, centralised source of 'data truth' exists Colleagues understand how to access and interpret data</p> <p>Intermediate EDI dashboard is used and trusted Awarding gap data is shared and understood in all Departments Agreed schedule and mechanism for colleagues to interrogate the data and identify actions to address disparities in outcomes</p> <p>Long-term Confidence in interpreting EDI data increases Actions to reduce awarding gaps are consistently implemented Higher % of students in APP target groups are awarded a 1st / 2:1 degree</p>	<p>Link to Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies</p>

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£1,323,000 over the course of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Our self-assessment indicates that we have considerable work to do to reduce awarding gaps for students from minoritised ethnic groups and deprived socio-economic backgrounds, as well as intersectional groups. We have conducted extensive analysis of these gaps, the underlying causes, and the actions we could take to address these. Our approach as detailed in this intervention strategy will have three strands, along with underpinning work on EDI training, data availability and data literacy. The three strands are: an inclusive curriculum framework; student-led support activities; and a student wellbeing framework.

The current academic consensus points to the existence of a direct and causal relationship between the race award gap and a White, Eurocentric curricula and teaching practices in UK HE. There are similar hypotheses relating to socio-economic disadvantage, for example as explored in detail in the [Inclusive Education Framework](#) which was created by collaboration between HE providers, led by the University of Hull. There is [emerging evidence](#) in the HE sector that activity focusing on inclusive pedagogical approaches, curriculum and assessment design can have a positive impact on equality gaps. However, such evidence is in its early stages, and as such we intend to pilot our curriculum framework with selected courses in 2024/25, before a wider roll-out in 2025/26.

Internal analysis shows that students from minoritised ethnic groups are less likely to respond positively to NSS questions around academic support and learning community than the average for the cohort, suggesting a link to EORR Risk 7 on insufficient academic support, and the RHUL risk around sense of belonging. We intend to address both risks in our student-led support and wellbeing framework interventions.

There is [TASO evidence](#) of the effective features of peer mentoring schemes. We will learn from these approaches and our own internal pilot scheme, to ensure that targeting, training and the scheme organisation are set up effectively. Initial evaluation of the pilot scheme shows a statistically significant increase in confidence and decrease in measures of worry for our mentees relative to non-participants, a greater increase in confidence about socialising with their peers and managing their finances for BGM mentees, and higher levels of engagement and attendance when compared to non-participants.

Internal analysis shows that students from BGM ethnic groups, from lower IMD areas (Q1-3), who are commuters, who have no parental experience of HE and who are from particular religious groups, are less likely to access Wellbeing services. Sector research shows that the likelihood of students reporting mental health conditions varies by demographic characteristic with minoritised ethnic groups less likely than White students to report these. Our Wellbeing Framework intervention aims to address the underlying reasons behind this. Formal and informal student feedback (e.g. from our student TEF submission, and from focus groups run in preparation for this plan), supports the view that consistent support from personal tutors is important to students' sense of wellbeing. This is also reflected in the Wellbeing Framework, and as part of this we will review and update the Personal Tutor model, ensuring this aligns with a wellbeing coaching programme.

To underpin the three strands of activity we will adopt the approach piloted by [Kingston University](#) to create value added scores as part of our data project. We will offer Inclusive Behaviours training to target academic staff in Schools with highest degree-awarding gaps (as a pilot), with impact on student experience. Following positive evaluation of the intervention, the training can extend to all academic Schools. We believe that receiving excellent EDI training will help us to achieve our objectives in race equity. However, we are not aware of any research that explicitly addresses the effectiveness of this training in a HE setting. Therefore, we will evaluate this using a type-3 approach, offering training to all academic staff across randomly chosen programmes within the target schools, allowing us to contribute to causal evidence of EDI training's impact.

Evaluation

To evaluate the Inclusive Curriculum Framework and associated pedagogic training we will use quantitative analysis of module-level demographic awarding gap data and relevant retention, continuation, completion, and award data, alongside qualitative analysis to assess belonging and student voice. This will generate OfS Type 2 evidence to show whether it has led to the intended outcomes for the relevant student groups.

For each activity within the Wellbeing Framework (including the communications plan and hub and spoke support model) we will analyse quantitative and qualitative data based on support metrics, and open feedback survey responses. We will generate Type 2 evidence by comparing this with a control group of students with similar demographics who did not engage with wellbeing services. We will build a demonstrable evidence base of stories of belonging and community contributing to good mental health & wellbeing and academic success. We will also work to understand the relative impact of each of the activities so that we know which make the biggest contribution towards improved outcomes.

Several different evaluation approaches will be taken for different aspects of the student-led activities (PEMENTOS, student-led collaborative networks, student intervention leads). We will build on evidence from the pilot PEMENTOS scheme by using student analytics data to assess students' engagement levels and triangulate this with pre/post-survey data from participants. We will generate Type 2 evidence by comparing this with a control group of students who did not participate in the activity. We will provide qualitative evidence of impact by creating student 'storylines' where students generate narratives of their university experience and the impact of the schemes. We will work to understand the relative impact of each of the activities so that we know which make the biggest contribution towards improved outcomes.

Due to the lack of existing evidence around the effectiveness of EDI training in an HE setting (as mentioned above), and the high cost of this intervention, we will prioritise the evaluation of this activity, using a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) approach to create Type 3 evidence of causal impact. We will also evaluate the short- and medium-term outcomes for individual activities within other strands of the intervention, generating Type 2 evidence, to show whether the activities have led to the intended outcomes for relevant student groups.

We will review results annually to assess whether activity needs to be amended or discontinued if the results are not as expected or if outcomes are not improving as intended. Results of our evaluation will be published annually on our website, and via wider sector fora when opportunities arise.

Whole provider approach

Royal Holloway adopts a whole provider approach to access and participation to ensure that inclusivity is embedded across activities at all stages of the student lifecycle. Inclusive Education and Research is one of four ambitions forming the university's new strategy, RH2030s, with social change and inclusion continuing to be fundamental to everything we do. This means that inclusivity is embedded throughout the university, with some additional, tailored interventions set up to specifically target those areas with the largest gaps, that form our objectives. To ensure that colleagues from all areas of the institution are involved in the implementation of these interventions, each is co-led by one academic and one professional services member of staff, and will also have a student intervention lead to act as a critical friend.

The intervention strategies are overseen by our Access and Participation Operations Group (APOG). This group has representation at a senior level from all areas of the university and meets termly to ensure that the institutional approach to access and participation is applied across the student journey. The APOG is chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), with membership including senior roles from across academic departments, professional services and the Students' Union. APOG reports to the Executive Board, Council and other management committees on the development and ongoing monitoring of access and participation.

Royal Holloway is committed to principles of equity and inclusion and strives to go beyond the Public Sector Equality Duty placed upon us by the Equality Act 2010. We believe that all colleagues, students, and visitors should find the University to be a supportive, inclusive, and nurturing environment that embraces and celebrates diversity in all its forms. A key part of our 2018-2021 Equality Scheme was the development of an institutional Single Equality Action Plan, comprising actions from all EDI initiatives and accreditation schemes (including Athena Swan, the Race Equality Charter, Stonewall, and Disability Confident Employer) with a focus on developing actions that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based (SMART). We achieved a Silver institutional Athena Swan award in December 2023 and renewed our Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze award in February 2019. We are hoping to build on this success and achieve a Silver REC award when we submit in November 2024. For more details on our activities relating to REC, see intervention strategy 5.

We became a Stonewall Top 100 Employer in 2023 and achieved a Gold award as part of the Workplace Equality Index. We renewed our Disability Confident Employer status in 2020 and became a Disability Confident Leader in 2023. We also became a White Ribbon Campaign accredited organisation in 2021, demonstrating commitment to delivering awareness of this global movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls. As part of our community outreach we are working towards the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) Quality Mark to show our commitment to inclusion and success for care experienced students at RHUL. [Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Framework 2023-2028](#) is directly linked to our Access and Participation Plan, and is designed to ensure we take a methodical and coordinated approach to embedding equity, accessibility and inclusion throughout our entire university community. The framework outlines our EDI priorities and actions we will take to ensure our university is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment.

The university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team were consulted in the process of writing this Access and Participation Plan, to ensure it complies with the Equality Act 2010 and aligns with the institutional approach. Additionally, Vice Deans for EDI are involved in both APOG and the Equality,

Diversity and Inclusion Committee. This ensures that interventions within the Access and Participation Plan and the institutional EDI framework are complementary and operationalised effectively to ensure a holistic and joined-up approach to all activities across these two areas.

Through this plan, our ongoing commitment to collaborative outreach work will be strengthened. The Languages For All programme has been co-designed with the Reach Foundation and will be delivered in partnership with Reach, local schools and employers. RHUL is a core partner of the nationally recognised and award-winning Uni Connect Partnership, the Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON). HEON is a partnership of nine HE providers working in Surrey and Northeast Hampshire to promote and facilitate collaboration, and to support young people from under-represented backgrounds to make informed choices about their future education and to fulfil their academic potential. HEON facilitates collaborative working via its regional collaboration framework, which supports the development of collaborative programmes of delivery; mapping the work being undertaken by partners; the production of a regional data dashboard outlining the context for under-represented students in the region; and enabling the sharing of best practice amongst the partnership and with other local stakeholders.

RHUL staff work closely with the HEON team to ensure complementarity of delivery, and to collaborate on specific Uni Connect strategic outreach projects as detailed in intervention strategy 1. RHUL also oversees HEON's collaborative work supporting students identified in EORR risks including children from military families, students of Black heritage, adult learners and young carers. RHUL will work closely with HEON and partners to collaborate on the development of attainment-raising programmes and the alignment of identification of schools for partnership development.

Student consultation

Student voice is key to everything we do at RHUL, and we ensure this is embedded into our ongoing activity across the university in the following ways:

- We have an ongoing dialogue with the SU, with sabbatical officers being active members of key decision-making groups at the university including our governing body, Council.
- Our innovative student panel, RH100, is a large focus group of 100 student panellists from across the University. It was formed in 2016 and meets several times each year, ensuring student input on a range of relevant issues, and providing an example of good practice to the sector. Students from all demographic backgrounds are encouraged to participate.
- Throughout the year students are asked to share their views via a range of surveys from the wide-ranging and sector-wide National Student Survey (NSS) to the localised and specific end of module surveys for all students, and tailored surveys for specific groups such as those in receipt of a bursary. All survey responses are analysed to ensure that students' thoughts are understood and acted upon, with demographic insights included where appropriate. The university has recently established a new Surveys and Insights Group, who will coordinate the findings from all surveys to enhance our ability to understand and act on student feedback.

When preparing for this new APP we were keen to ensure that students were able to make meaningful and effective contributions throughout the planning, development, and implementation of the plan. This took various forms, as follows:

1. **RH100** – in February 2023 the panel met to discuss the Access and Participation Plan. The panel, which was representative of the UG student cohort as a whole in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic background, emphasised the importance of the following issues:
 - Importance of a genuine desire to hear from students and take action as a result

- Making sure inclusivity is visible and runs through all parts of the university
- Ensuring that university services are accessible to all, both in terms of physical location and extended opening hours

These messages, and other key points raised, have been taken on board and integrated into our planning for the new APP.

2. **Student focus groups** – these were run in May/June 2023 and November 2023 to explore students' thoughts on the OfS' EORR, the key risks identified at RHUL, the current offer for supporting student success and progression at the university, challenges and barriers associated with this, and suggestions for how this could be improved. The focus groups were run by our Student APP leads (see below for more detail) and were reasonably representative of our UG cohort as a whole in terms of ethnicity, with a higher proportion of students from IMD Q1 and mature age bands participating compared to the whole cohort.

As part of their discussions, the students identified the EORR risks they felt were most relevant to RHUL. Our assessment of performance took account of this and all risks are linked to our chosen objectives, with the exception of Risk 12 around progression from HE which was not included due to the lack of indications of risk in this area. We will continue to monitor this and all areas of risk over the course of the plan to ensure that any indications that risks are increasing are observed with appropriate action taken. For more information on the underlying data please see Annex A.

- Insufficient academic support (EORR Risk 6)
- Insufficient personal support (EORR Risk 7)
- Mental health (EORR Risk 8)
- Cost pressures (EORR Risk 10)
- Capacity issues (EORR Risk 11)
- Progression from higher education (EORR Risk 12)

Key themes to come out of these discussions, which are all addressed in the plan, were as follows:

- Cost of living
- Sense of belonging
- Commuter student challenges
- Academic and personal support (both were valued but subject to capacity issues)
- Accessibility

3. **Student APP leads** – these student ambassadors were selected to ensure representation of key underrepresented APP target groups – including socio-economic deprivation, BGM ethnicity, mature age band, disabled, commuting, eligible for FSM, LGBT. The leads were paid for their expertise and contributions, were responsible for running the focus groups and included in our APP planning workshops. They were consulted about our chosen APP interventions and encouraged to contribute to the development of these interventions.
4. **Liaison with the SU** – during the planning of the new APP we have held regular meetings with VP Education and key SU staff – Student Voice Manager, Head of Membership Engagement, Research & Insight Coordinator. These have been so helpful in allowing us to highlight and discuss key areas of concern that we would like to address in the plan. We have used a shared MS Teams area to ensure visibility and awareness of RHUL APP plans and drafting and have kept up a regular dialogue including flagging OfS updates and support available.

The Access and Participation Operations Group (APOG) includes student representatives, and this group will ensure ongoing implementation of the plan and evaluation of intervention strategies once it has been submitted and approved. We commit to continuing to work with students on all aspects of the plan going forwards, to ensure it addresses their needs and aligns with their lived experience.

Evaluation of the plan

The strategic aims and objectives of this Access and Participation Plan have been informed by our assessment of performance, which has been developed using a range of high-quality evidence including the OfS dataset, internal data and research. We are committed to ensuring continuous improvement in the evaluation of the strategic measures underpinning our aims and objectives to ensure that they remain effective in meeting their aims and ultimately our overarching vision. We ensure continuous improvement through our evaluation strategy, which has been informed by our evaluation self-assessment and is detailed further below. The OfS evaluation self-assessment tool has been helpful in enabling us to measure this improvement in our approach to evaluation. When this was used in preparation for the earlier APP 2020/21-2024/25, scores showed RHUL to be 'emerging' in all areas of evaluation practice, whereas a review of our performance using the tool earlier this year showed that in terms of strategic context and evaluation implementation RHUL is now 'advanced', with scores still classed as 'emerging' for other areas.

The Access and Participation Operations Group (APOG, discussed earlier in the plan) provides a mechanism for an overarching, whole provider strategic overview of evaluation of access and participation programmes. This group, which includes representation from academic and professional services staff and from students, meets termly and oversees the ongoing implementation of the Access and Participation Plan. This involves monitoring each Theory of Change to determine whether interventions are effective in meeting their desired outcomes. This ensures effective evaluation of the impact of those areas where we are investing heavily, allowing us to determine where changes need to be made in order to achieve our long-term objectives. Staff resource has been allocated to evaluation of access and participation programmes within Strategic Planning in order to co-ordinate a cross-institution approach to evaluation.

Staff responsible for delivering interventions attend a range of professional development activities and events to enhance their evaluation skills and understanding, including OfS and TASO workshops and conferences on evaluation. These mechanisms ensure that there is a whole institutional approach to access and participation, with evaluation activity coherently maintained across the whole programme of access and participation activities.

Programme design is informed by evidence of the impact of activities both at local and national level, for example through reviewing own evaluation and sector best practice and evidence on what works for the specific intervention. This exists at a local level by staff delivering access and participation activities, and will be joined up and enhanced through the APOG and through dedicated support from Strategic Planning regarding effective practice, monitoring and evaluation. Each programme contributes to defined deliverables as indicated in our intervention strategy, including a range of measures of impact as relevant to the activity such as enrolment and attainment rates and changes in self-reported skills, attitudes or behaviour determined from pre- and post-event questionnaires. The method of evaluation (and required data collection) is known from the start of activities, and work is underway to further develop consistency of approach.

Our access and participation programmes are underpinned by an understanding of what works in context and of the processes involved in achieving our overarching strategic vision. We evaluate and amend them on an ongoing basis as relevant following previous evaluations and research literature on the effectiveness of such programmes. This means that our programmes are underpinned in all cases by narrative evaluation, and in most cases by empirical evaluation. It is often not possible to undertake causal evaluation due to the ethical considerations in selecting only some students to be able to take part in a programme. However, we continue to consider how we might gather such evidence in future.

A range of quantitative and qualitative research methods are used across the university's access and participation programmes in order to collect data on outcomes and impact. Our approach to data complies with GDPR requirements on data collection and sharing, and procedures are in place for

addressing ethical considerations via the APOG. Where possible, data is collected for access and participation activities at an individual participant level, allowing changes to be captured in the outcomes of individuals as well as the group or cohort. This includes capturing student ID numbers (where appropriate) which can be used to track the outcomes of participants over time, for example in progression and attainment. The university understands the limitations of self-reported data, and as such considers qualitative data alongside quantitative data to maximise understanding on the outcomes of activities. The APOG will be considering measures to overcome such limitations, for example through using surveys that are pre-populated with an individual's personal details (e.g. name and date of birth). Such measures should enhance the ability to track individuals through the student journey and to avoid self-report errors.

The APOG has been established as a mechanism through which evaluation findings and results can inform practice through reflection and sharing. An earlier iteration of this group developed an evaluation toolkit and framework to provide impact evidence of initiatives taking place to close equality gaps. The toolkit outlines different types of evaluation, focusing on impact evaluation. It provides templates and some examples of evaluation methodologies that can be used depending on the type of activity. It was designed to support colleagues through the process from understanding what impact evaluation is, to establishing a Theory of Change, making a plan for their research questions and methodology, through to reporting and sharing findings. Evaluation outcomes will be published on the university's website alongside this Access and Participation Plan, which will be viewable by staff, students and external visitors in order to contribute to the latest research evidence. We will work closely with sector networks and evaluation organisations such as Advance HE, HEON, the University of London and TASO, and welcome opportunities to share evaluation findings to contribute to sector knowledge and best practice.

The university operates a holistic, multi-tiered approach to monitoring progress against delivery of the plan that is embedded across the provider. The Vice Chancellor has nominated an Executive lead for Access and Participation who is responsible for monitoring progress against the delivery of the plan and ensuring the achievement of targets. Reviews of performance are made by the following committees and groups operating at different levels throughout the organisation: Council; its sub-committee, Students, Education and Research (SER); the Executive team; the Executive lead; the University Education Committee (UEC); School boards; and the Access and Participation Operations Group (APOG). Council receives annually a report on performance against the Access and Participation Plan and scrutinises its performance with the Executive team. Council's sub-committee, SER, reviews performance data in detail and reiterates back to Council its concerns and other observations about the university's performance against targets for further review. Where progress is worsening, Council will direct the Executive lead to review resourcing, policy and procedures in the area of concern, ensuring that mechanisms are in place to drive an improvement in performance. Progress is monitored on a more regular basis through the termly meetings of the Access and Participation Operations Group (reporting to the UEC).

Provision of information to students

We provide all prospective students with clear and comprehensive information about Royal Holloway, including: our academic courses, their structure and assessment methods; entry requirements; tuition fees; financial support and eligibility; and approximate living costs. This information is easily accessible on our website and in our printed prospectus.

We offer a number of bursaries to support students who are most likely to require financial support during their studies. These bursaries are automatically awarded to eligible students, provided that a student has applied to Student Finance England (SFE), has been income assessed by them, and they and their sponsor(s) (the person(s) income assessed by SFE, where relevant) have given consent to share financial details with the University.

The table below provides an overview of the bursaries available to undergraduate students at Royal Holloway from 2025/26 to 2028/29. The full Terms and Conditions for these bursaries can be viewed online at <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/fees-and-funding/bursaries/>

Name	Amount	Payment	Eligibility
Royal Holloway Bursary (Band 1)	£1,300	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom • Household income verified by SLC as below £25,000 • Eligible for a full maintenance loan
Royal Holloway Bursary (Band 2)	£500	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom • Household income verified by SLC as between £25,000 and £30,000 • Eligible for a partial maintenance loan
Access Entry bursary	£1,000	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom • Household income verified by SLC as £25,000 or below • 21 years old or over at commencement of degree • Completed a QAA recognised Access to Higher Education diploma
Care Leavers and Estranged Students bursary	£3,000	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom • 18 to 25 years old • Looked after by the state for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 or • 'Independent – other' status on Student Finance England

All Royal Holloway students also have access to a Study Support Grant (SSG), should they face financial difficulties. This is advertised on the Student Intranet and promoted by personal tutors and the Student Services Centre. We also offer an alumni bursary, which provides Royal Holloway graduates with a 15% discount on postgraduate tuition fees.

Alongside our monetary support, our Wellbeing Financial Advice team offer advice and guidance on a variety of financial matters, from Student Loans and other funding opportunities, through budgeting and debt management, to part-time employment whilst studying, and accessing benefits. This advice helps students to manage their money effectively and appropriately, to ensure that their financial situation does not impact on their studies or wider university life, and to help support retention, progression and attainment rates in the students they consult with.

Our approved 2025/26 to 2028/29 Access and Participation Plan will be published on the Admissions section of our website with other policies. This page is easily accessible to both current and prospective students, and will be signposted from the student intranet.

List of acronyms used in Royal Holloway's Access and Participation Plan

ABCS – Association Between Characteristics of Students	MFL – Modern Foreign Languages
ABMO – Asian, Black, Mixed, or Other ethnicity	NNECL – National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
APOG – Access and Participation Operations Group	NSS – National Student Survey
APP – Access and Participation Plan	OfS – Office for Students
BGM – Black and Global Majority ethnicity	PEMENTOS – Peer Mentoring to Succeed
CeDAS - Centre for the Development of Academic Skills	PGT – Postgraduate Taught students
DfE – Department for Education	QAA – Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
DSA – Disabled Students' Allowance	RCT – Randomised Controlled Trial
EDC – Education Development Centre	REC – Race Equality Charter
EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	RHSU – Royal Holloway Students' Union
EMAR – English and Maths Attainment Raising scheme	RHUL – Royal Holloway, University of London
EORR – Equality of Opportunity Risk Register	SLC – Student Loans Company
FSM – Free School Meals	SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based
FY – Foundation Year	SSG – Study Support Grant
HE – Higher Education	STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
HEAT – Higher Education Access Tracker	SU – Students' Union
HEI – Higher Education Institution	TASO – The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education
HEON – Higher Education Outreach Network	TEF – Teaching Excellence Framework
HEPI – Higher Education Policy Institute	ToC – Theory of Change
HESA – Higher Education Statistics Agency	TUNDRA – tracking underrepresentation by area
HTQ – Higher Technical Qualification	UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
IAG – Information and Guidance	UCAS - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation	UEC – University Education Committee
LAC – Looked after Children	UG – undergraduate
LFA – Languages For All scheme	VP – Vice President
LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender	WA – Widening Access

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

In line with OfS guidance, this assessment of Royal Holloway's performance in relation to our students' outcomes is principally based on the OfS access and participation dashboard. We have examined all gaps for full-time students as these make up the vast majority of our home undergraduate cohort (in 2023/24 there were just 5 part-time students registered with us).

Identification of the most significant gaps in the access and participation dashboard

- We have considered gaps in outcomes across all five of the student lifecycle stages included in the dashboard: access, continuation, completion, attainment, and progression.
- We have used a risk-based approach by taking account of both the size of cohort for each underrepresented group, and also the size of the gap, focusing on those gaps with the highest statistical significance.
- We have prioritised the gaps at each stage of the student lifecycle by identifying gaps which have a probability of 99.7% or above of being above zero, as this is the most stringent confidence limit provided by the OfS.
- In addition to looking at data for the most recent years, we have also looked at aggregated data across the previous 2-year and 4-year timeframes to ensure we are not unduly influenced by fluctuations in outcomes.
- We have then multiplied these gaps by the denominator of the underrepresented group in each case, and combined these figures to arrive at an impact score which has been used to sort the gaps in order of priority.
- We have looked at gaps across the following student groups; age on commencement; disability; disability type; IMD Quintile 2019; ethnicity; FSM eligibility; intersection of IMD/ethnicity; intersection of IMD/sex; sex.

Analysis of internal data

In addition to this statistical approach to our assessment of performance, we have also:

- Examined internal data projections of student outcomes metrics for more recent years, where data is not yet included in official OfS dashboards
- Analysed internal data over a range of areas including applications, offer and conversion rates, rates of early attrition, NSS responses, uptake of academic and personal wellbeing support, and use of extenuating circumstances.

This has informed our understanding of the possible risks behind the indications of risk, and our choice of objectives, by providing context to the gaps observable in externally measured student outcomes. It has highlighted that particular student groups, and notably students from BGM ethnicity groups and from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are consistently flagged as being at a disadvantage across a number of measures; for example being less likely to access wellbeing services, more likely to request extenuating circumstances but less likely to have the request accepted, and in certain cases less likely to respond positively to NSS questions around academic support and learning community.

Small cohorts

There are a number of underrepresented groups across the sector that have small cohort numbers, such as care experienced learners, refugees and asylum seekers, estranged students, and student carers. The small size of these cohorts makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from their outcomes data, and as a result we have not included them in our assessment of performance. However, we are taking the following steps to improve student outcomes for these groups:

- Improving our data collection to allow us to monitor the number of students joining us from each group.
- Working collaboratively with other local universities through our Uni Connect HEON partnership to provide support to these under-served communities in our local area. For example, as part of our work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) we co-deliver the Big Leaf campus visit for displaced young people in Surrey along with other HEON partners.
- Improving our evaluation of activities aiming to support these groups, by working together with other local providers and pooling resources and knowledge.

TUNDRA and ABCS measures

The TUNDRA (tracking underrepresentation by area) Quintile groupings have been excluded from the analysis because they are unhelpful in RHUL's context, as explained in more detail below.

We do not believe that TUNDRA is effective in identifying young people who are at an educational disadvantage. As shown in research from the UCL Social Research Institute, the correlation between TUNDRA and permanent low income is low, with a correlation coefficient of 0.13, compared to 0.50 for IMD and 0.69 for FSM. Reliance on this indicator is therefore likely to lead to the majority of young people in genuine need of educational support being overlooked. [[John Jerrim \(03 Nov 2023\): Measuring parental income using administrative data. What is the best proxy available? Research Papers in Education](#)]

In addition, TUNDRA is unhelpful in our geographical context. The number of young people living in TUNDRA Q1 areas within a reasonable commuting distance of the University is very low. Much of our recruitment is from London, due to our proximity to the city, and data obtained from the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) shows that just 963 London-based young people in years 12 to 14 live in TUNDRA MSOA Q1 areas (data release 12/2/24). This equates to just 0.9% of the young people across London and compares to over 20,000 young people living in IMD Q1 in London, just under 20% of the total.

ABCS (Associations between characteristics of students) groupings were included in our analysis to identify the most significant gaps in outcomes for our students. However, although a number of gaps were identified as part of our analysis, these have not been chosen as the focus for the objectives and targets for this APP. We have done some work to understand the individual demographic characteristics represented by RHUL students in ABCS Quintile 1, who are the least likely to succeed in any given stage of the student lifecycle, and will continue to monitor outcomes for these groups. However due to the significant time-lag in the ABCS data being available to us (at least 18 months after a student has begun their course), we have chosen to focus our targets on different student groups where data is readily available; in particular IMD as a holistic measure of socio-economic deprivation, and ethnicity.

Summary of all statistically significant gaps at both 4-year and 2-year aggregate time series

The table below shows all gaps that are statistically significant at 99.7% or above at both the 2-year and 4-year timeseries, across all stages of the student lifecycle. Gaps are shown for all full-time home undergraduate students. Where the same gap exists for both all undergraduates and for first degree students, the gap for all undergraduates is shown as the larger group.

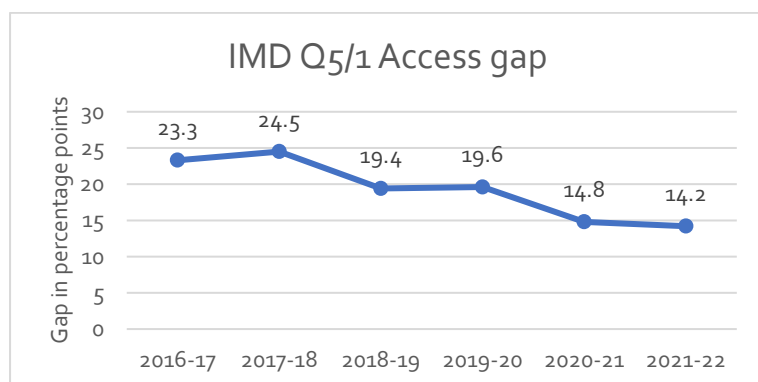
Key to target column	
Y = target included	
Alt = priority given to an alternative target in same area	

Lifecycle stage	Level of study	Grouping	Gap summary	Combined impact	4 year aggregate			2 year aggregate			Target area	4 yr gap vs 2 yr gap
					Comp group #	Target group #	Gap	Comp group #	Target group #	Gap		
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White ABMO		4,500	2,670	9.2	2,260	1,520	9.1	Y	0
Access	First degree	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ1		2,550	890	16.8	1,310	530	14.5	Y	-2
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ345_White IMDQ12_ABMO		3,640	1,100	12.6	1,810	650	12.8	Y	0
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ3_5 IMDQ1_2		5,270	1,880	7.2	2,740	1,070	7.6	Alt	0
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ345_White IMDQ345_ABMO		3,640	1,550	8.5	1,810	860	8.4	Alt	0
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Asian		4,500	1,620	7.9	2,260	930	7.3	Alt	-1
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ2		2,100	1,370	6.5	1,070	780	7	Alt	1
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	BMOW Asian		5,550	1,620	5.7	2,860	930	4.8	Alt	-1
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ12_White IMDQ12_ABMO		730	1,100	7.3	390	650	7.4	Alt	0
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ1		2,100	510	15.2	1,070	290	16.5	Y	1
Attainment	All UG	FSM	NotEligibleForFSM EligibleForFSM		4,550	830	8.9	2,380	500	8.7	Alt	0
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ3 IMDQ1		1,540	510	12.8	810	290	13.5	Alt	1
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ2345 IMDQ1		6,630	510	12.5	3,510	290	13.4	Alt	1
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ4 IMDQ1		1,620	510	12.2	850	290	12.9	Alt	1
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Black		4,500	330	18.3	2,260	180	19.7	Y	1
Completion	All UG	Age	Young_Under21 Mature_Age21andOver		6,780	440	13.8	3,580	230	9.5	Alt	-4
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	AMOW Black		6,850	330	15.6	3,610	180	16.8	Alt	1
Continuation	All UG	IMD	IMDQ3_5 IMDQ1_2		6,500	2,710	1.6	3,570	1,590	1.9	Alt	0
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ2 IMDQ1		1,370	510	8.7	780	290	9.5	Alt	1
Continuation	All UG	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ2		2,550	1,960	1.9	1,350	1,140	2.4	Alt	1
Continuation	All UG	Age	Young_Under21 Mature_Age21andOver		8,890	500	7.5	4,980	260	5.3	Y	-2
Completion	All UG	Age	Young_Under21 Age21_25		6,780	330	11.3	3,580	180	7.7	Alt	-4
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Mixed		4,500	470	6	2,260	270	8	Alt	2
Completion	All UG	FSM	NotEligibleForFSM EligibleForFSM		4,410	740	3.9	2,330	400	4.9	Alt	1
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Other		4,500	250	12.2	2,260	150	10.1	Alt	-2
Access	UG with PGT comp	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ1		100	40	18.4	40	20	12.9	Y	-6

Access

In terms of Access the most statistically significant gap over both timeseries is the gap between the proportion of IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 entrants. This is shown in the table above for both first degree students and for undergraduate students with postgraduate components.

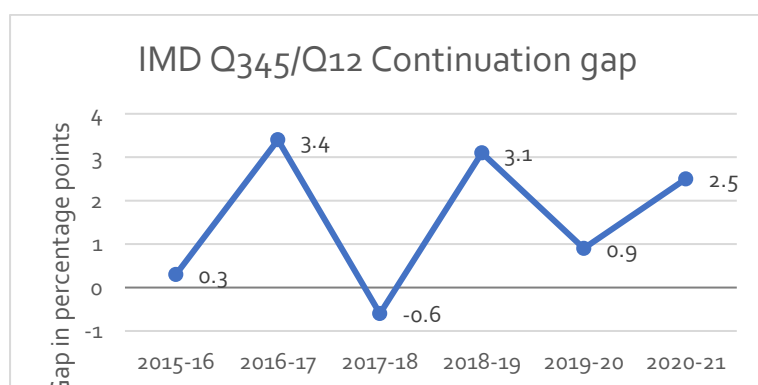
This was also a target for our previous APP and we have made considerable progress in reducing the gap over the past few years, as shown in the chart below.



We intend to continue to narrow this gap, which is statistically significant, and is also above the average gap for the sector which is -3.2 percentage points (pp) for 2021/22. The proportion of entrants from IMD Q1 areas has risen from just under 6% in 2016/7 to over 10% in 2021/22, and we believe there is scope to increase this further, particularly as the proportion of young people from IMD Q1 areas in years 12-14 in London is around 20% (based on Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) data released on 12/2/24).

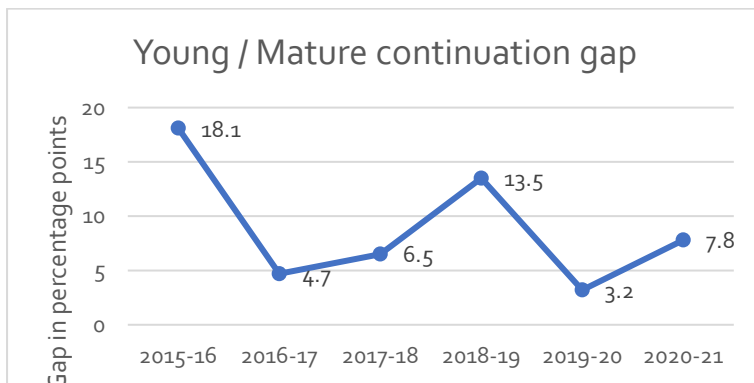
Continuation

For Continuation, there are two statistically significant gaps over both timeseries in relation to IMD. One is between students from IMD Q5 and Q2, and the other is between students from Q3, Q4 and Q5 compared to students from Q1 and Q2. Both gaps are similar in terms of size but as the second gap impacts a larger number of students and has a higher impact score this is shown below.



This gap is volatile, as shown in the chart above, and is smaller than other significant continuation gaps at Royal Holloway, as well as being below the sector average of 6.2 pp in 2020/21. For these reasons it has not been selected as one of our target areas. However, we anticipate that our intervention strategies aimed at improving awarding gaps, and in particular our Transition Framework (see Intervention Strategy 4), will have a positive impact on this gap.

There is also a statistically significant continuation gap for mature students aged 21+ compared to younger students aged under 21.

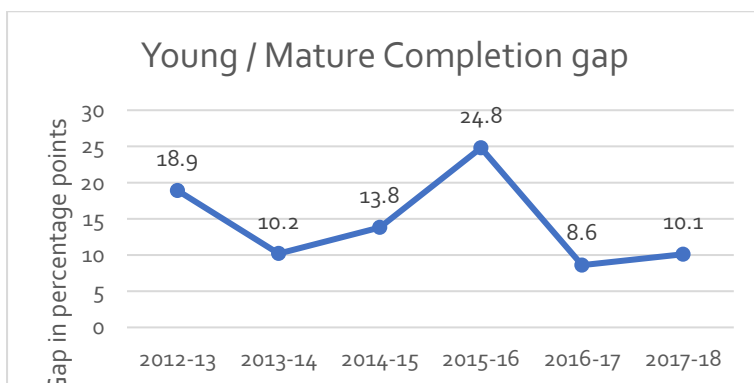


There has been volatility over the period shown, but although there is a downward trend overall, and the gap in the latest year is below the sector average of 9.8 pp, it increased between 2019/20 and 2020/21 and remains quite large in the latest published year of data.

As shown in the next section, there is also a completion gap for mature students, however as ensuring students continue with their studies is a necessary precursor to ensuring they complete them, we have chosen to focus our target on continuation with the expectation that this will also have a positive impact on completion.

Completion

There are two statistically significant gaps in terms of completion based on age. These relate to different age groups, firstly for all mature students aged 21+ when compared to younger students (under 21), and secondly for a subset of these, those aged 21-25 when compared to younger students. The chart below shows the gap for the wider grouping of all mature students.



As stated above in the continuation section, we have decided to focus on improving continuation for mature students with the expectation that this will also improve completion and have set a continuation target for this group.

In addition to these, there is a statistically significant gap between completion rates for students eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible. The gap is volatile, and below the sector average which has steadily increased to 8.2 pp for 2017/18. We have therefore chosen not to make this area a priority in our plan, but will continue to monitor completion for this group.

Attainment

Most of the statistically significant gaps for Royal Holloway students relate to degree outcomes. As shown in the table below, these are all based either on ethnicity group, socio-economic deprivation (IMD or FSM) or an intersection of the two.

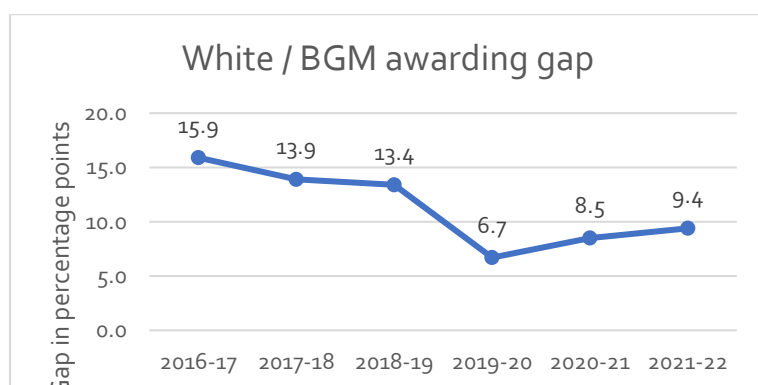
Lifecycle stage	Level of study	Grouping	Gap summary	Combined impact	4 year aggregate			2 year aggregate			Target area	4 yr gap vs 2 yr gap
					Comp group #	Target group #	Gap	Comp group #	Target group #	Gap		
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White ABMO	4,500	2,670	9.2	2,260	1,520	9.1	Y	0	
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ345_White IMDQ12_ABMO	3,640	1,100	12.6	1,810	650	12.8	Y	0	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ3_5 IMDQ1_2	5,270	1,880	7.2	2,740	1,070	7.6	Alt	0	
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ345_White IMDQ345_ABMO	3,640	1,550	8.5	1,810	860	8.4	Alt	0	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Asian	4,500	1,620	7.9	2,260	930	7.3	Alt	-1	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ2	2,100	1,370	6.5	1,070	780	7	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	BMOW Asian	5,550	1,620	5.7	2,860	930	4.8	Alt	-1	
Attainment	All UG	Intersection	IMDQ12_White IMDQ12_ABMO	730	1,100	7.3	390	650	7.4	Alt	0	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ5 IMDQ1	2,100	510	15.2	1,070	290	16.5	Y	1	
Attainment	All UG	FSM	NotEligibleForFSM EligibleForFSM	4,550	830	8.9	2,380	500	8.7	Alt	0	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ3 IMDQ1	1,540	510	12.8	810	290	13.5	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ2345 IMDQ1	6,630	510	12.5	3,510	290	13.4	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ4 IMDQ1	1,620	510	12.2	850	290	12.9	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Black	4,500	330	18.3	2,260	180	19.7	Y	1	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	AMOW Black	6,850	330	15.6	3,610	180	16.8	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	IMD	IMDQ2 IMDQ1	1,370	510	8.7	780	290	9.5	Alt	1	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Mixed	4,500	470	6	2,260	270	8	Alt	2	
Attainment	All UG	Ethnicity	White Other	4,500	250	12.2	2,260	150	10.1	Alt	-2	

As a result we have focused most of our objectives in this area. We have given priority to the gaps with the highest impact scores, while avoiding duplication of groupings that would be very similar in scope. We have also chosen a range of groupings with the broadest focused on the intersection between aggregated ethnicity and IMD groups, and the most specific targeting the disaggregated groups facing the largest awarding gaps; students from Black ethnic groups and students from IMD Q1 areas. Although the impact scores for these two smaller groups are lower, the gaps are persistent and at a high level, so we feel they should also be prioritised. Our chosen objectives in this area are to decrease the following:

1. Awarding gap between White and BGM students
2. Awarding gap between White and Black students
3. Awarding gap between IMD Q5 and Q1
4. Awarding gap between IMD Q345 White and IMD Q12 BGM

More details are provided on each of these below.

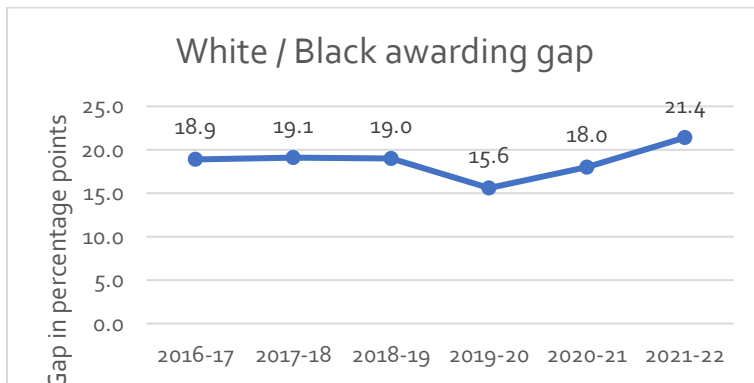
BGM awarding gap



The gap between degree outcomes for White and BGM students has the highest impact score as shown in the table above, and impacts a large number of students. Statistically significant awarding gaps also exist for students from Asian, Black, Mixed and Other groups, but rather than having a range of separate targets, we have chosen to have an overall target for BGM students as a wider group, with the exception of the target for Black students as they experience the largest and most persistent gaps.

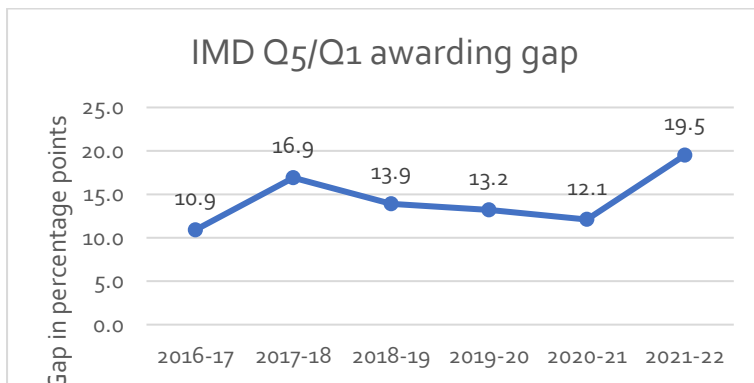
Although this aggregated gap fell between 2016/17 and 2019/20 and has generally been below the sector average (11.0 pp in 2021/22), it has risen again since 2019/20 and impacts a large number of students, with an increasing proportion of our student cohort being from BGM ethnic backgrounds (49% of UK undergraduates in the latest entry cohort, split between 27% Asian, 8% Black, 9% Mixed and 5% Other).

Black awarding gap



The awarding gap for Black students at Royal Holloway has been consistent and high over the past few years. Having been below the sector average since 2016/17, it rose above the average (20.0 pp) in 2021/22. Students from Black ethnic backgrounds are a relatively small group in our student cohort, but UK undergraduate numbers have doubled over the past few years since 2018/19, increasing to 250 (8% of cohort) in the most recent year of entry (2023/24), and we are determined to reduce the gap for this group.

IMD Q1 awarding gap

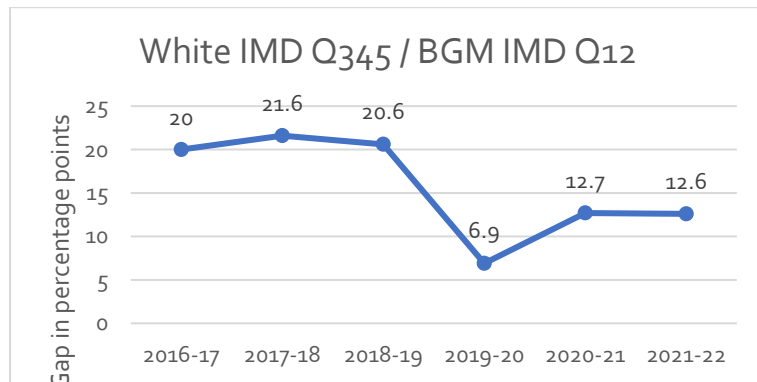


The awarding gap for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas has seen some variation over the past few years, but remains relatively high and above the sector average of 18.0 pp in 2021/22. We have chosen to focus on this particular group rather than the broader group of IMD Q1-2 compared with IMD Q3-5, despite this latter group having a higher impact score, due to the higher level of the gap for this smaller group.

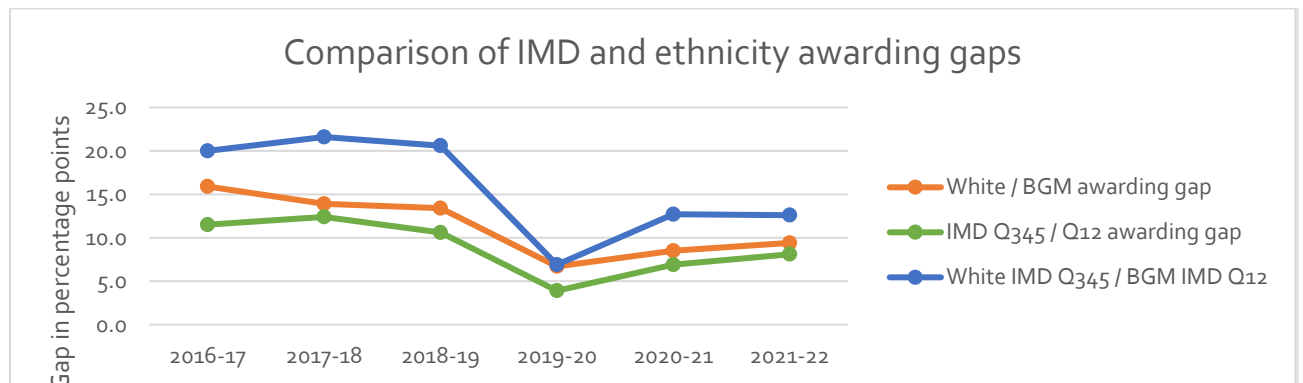
There is also a significant awarding gap between students eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those who are not eligible. Both IMD and FSM are proxies for long-term low family income. They have relatively similar rates of accuracy and scope, and sector research indicates a high correlation between lower IMD Quintiles and FSM eligibility. [The Institute of Fiscal Studies \(IFS\) report 'A comparison of commonly used socio-economic indicators' \(2023\)](#) shows a correlation score of 0.85 between the lowest three IMD deciles and eligibility for FSM. This is very high and indicates that the measures are likely to reflect the same aspects of socio-economic deprivation. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that aiming to reduce the gap in outcomes for one group is likely to reduce the gap for both. Both

measures have merits and drawbacks, but the IMD grouping is to be preferred for two reasons. Firstly, we do not receive accurate FSM data until approximately halfway through a standard student's (3 year UG degree) time with us. From a practical point of view this makes it harder to target and evaluate intervention activities. Secondly, the IMD gap and impact score are larger. This is likely to be the case because we are comparing the most disadvantaged students with the least disadvantaged, rather than the lowest income with all other students (as FSM does not allow for nuance in comparison). For these reasons we have not set a separate awarding gap target for students eligible for FSM, as we believe this gap will be improved through interventions aimed at improving the IMD awarding gap.

Intersectional awarding gap



As well as separate objectives for ethnicity and IMD groups we are including this intersectional objective comparing outcomes for White students from IMD Quintiles 3-5 with those for BGM students from IMD Quintiles 1-2. As shown in the chart below, this intersection of characteristics is associated with greater disparities in outcomes than either the ethnicity-based or IMD-based groupings on their own.



Progression

There are no statistically significant gaps in terms of progression, therefore we are not focusing any of our objectives in this area.

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

Evidence-base

An overview Theory of Change for each of the larger activities contained within the intervention strategies can be seen below on pages 56-70.

Intervention strategy 1 – improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups via outreach work

Our assessment of performance shows that we need to increase the number of students entering Royal Holloway from IMDQ1, relative to those entering from IMDQ5. Our analysis shows that whilst our proportion of entrants from IMDQ1 has risen in recent years, it is still below the proportion in our region. Accordingly, we have designed activities to impact on the number of students applying to Royal Holloway.

There is emerging evidence from [TASO](#) and [HEAT](#) that multi-intervention outreach is one of the more effective mechanisms to impact on students' progression to higher education. Given that evidence for the effectiveness of specific individual activities is limited, but supports the use of residential visits as a key element of a larger programme, we will be evaluating the different approaches we use thoroughly, building residential activity in as a key element of our programmes. We already have type 1 evidence of the impact of our existing residentials and will use this to shape the design of the programmes.

We have reviewed our wider approach to access target schools, and decided that given that evidence for the effectiveness of Information and Guidance (IAG) is more limited, we will combine IAG work with [targeted study skills advice](#) and training, based around developing student self-efficacy. The [TASO Widening participation evidence review](#) states that 'the more promising interventions are those that are tailored to the students, start early and are integrated into other forms of support, such as career advice and guidance.' In order to maximise the impact of our work we will target schools within a 10-mile radius of RHUL (mainly the Feltham and Slough areas) with a high proportion of IMD Q1 pupils but will also look at secondary Widening Access criteria to feed into this, such as FSM eligibility. We are aware that there are likely to be schools with a higher proportion of IMD Q1 pupils in London, however for this approach to work in the long-term the proximity of schools to our Egham campus is a key factor, and we believe building relationships with local schools will give us the best opportunity to succeed.

We have also drawn on evidence (for example [Challenging discourses of aspiration: The role of expectations and attainment in access to higher education](#)) that academic attainment and expectations should be the focus of widening participation work, rather than aspiration raising, since levels of aspiration are similar across different demographic groups. Accordingly, we are prioritising these areas in our outreach work.

There are a number of groups that are disadvantaged and underrepresented in higher education, for example students with care responsibilities, those estranged from their families, students with parenting responsibilities, refugees and asylum seekers, students from armed forces families, students in receipt of free school meals, and care experienced students. For more details see the [UCAS good practice guides](#). The challenges faced by these groups are many and diverse. In particular, our assessment of performance shows that care leavers are underrepresented at RHUL, and across the HE sector. There is a large body of evidence demonstrating that care experienced children and care leavers face additional disadvantage in the education system more widely, and in HE in particular, highlighted by [TASO's rapid review](#) in March 2023. We know that care leavers face additional disadvantage when applying to and studying in higher education. [The report 'Getting it right for care experienced students in higher education' \(Hauari, H. Hollingworth, K., Cameron, C \(2019\) UCL\)](#) states the following: "Most study

participants had little or no prior knowledge about university life and no one from family, friends or local authority advisors to guide them in their application and had to research HE institutions and courses without help”.

With this in mind, and following guidance from sources such as this [Government policy paper](#) and [UCAS evidence on the needs of care leavers](#), we are increasing our work with care experienced young people, prioritising them in all existing outreach activities, we will be introducing a student voice group for care experienced students as part of our structured priority school programme (see intervention strategy 1), and working towards the NNECL Quality Mark. In addition, as part of our collaborative work with the local Uni Connect partnership, HEON, we are working together with local universities (University of Surrey, UoS, and the University of the Creative Arts, UCA) to provide a range of activities that improve young people’s knowledge and skill, as well as increasing their knowledge of higher education. These activities are aimed at all underrepresented and under-served groups in the local area, including those from care experienced backgrounds.

We will also focus on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), as a particularly vulnerable group within the care system, and are working with a specialist charity to provide educational support. As care leavers and UASC are spread across many educational institutions, and our existing access activities are evidence-based, we have taken the approach of prioritising care leavers for our whole suite of activities, working alongside universities and charities in the region to collectively offer a comprehensive range of support.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Structured priority schools programme	Increased knowledge of HE; motivation to study; likelihood to apply for other WA programmes (residential, link); likelihood to apply for HE; likelihood to apply to RHUL.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website and on HEON’s Impact Hub as appropriate
RHUL Link programme	Increased knowledge of HE; motivation and sense of belonging; knowledge of support available within HE; capacity to make informed decisions about HE; confidence to succeed in HE; intention to attend HE; applications from IMDQ1 students to HE.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website and on HEON’s Impact Hub as appropriate
Spring University (collaboration with HEON)	Increased knowledge of the range of options available in HE; knowledge of skills required for study at HE; knowledge of the benefits of HE; understanding of what it is like to study in HE; confidence transition ability; critical thinking; confidence about HE/apprenticeship options; confidence in ability to make informed and independent decisions; commitment to learning; Increased IMDQ1 student applications to HE.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website and on HEON’s Impact Hub as appropriate

Summer University	Increased knowledge of HE; motivation; sense of belonging / social self-efficacy. intention to attend HE; confidence to succeed in HE; Increased IMDQ1 applications to HE.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website and on HEON's Impact Hub as appropriate
Schools and colleges liaison activity	Increased awareness of the benefits of HE; awareness of the benefits of studying at RHUL; likelihood of attending other RHUL events (open days etc); likelihood to apply to RHUL.	Narrative (Type 1)	Internal monitoring
Collaborative outreach with local universities (Surrey and UCA) via HEON	Short-term Increased knowledge of the range of options available in HE; Increased knowledge of the benefits of HE; Increased understanding of what it is like to study in HE. Intermediate Participants have: Increased confidence that HE/apprenticeship is an achievable option; Participants are increasingly likely to attend other RHUL, UCA or Surrey events. Long-term Increased applications from students from under-represented and under-served communities to RHUL, UCA and Surrey.	Narrative (Type 1)	Report to be shared with collaborative partners every 3 years

Intervention strategy 2: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups by providing additional pathways

As well as working with local schools as detailed in Intervention strategy 1 above, we also intend to improve and extend pathways into RHUL to enable more students to enrol from underrepresented groups in general, and IMD Q1 in particular.

Until relatively recently, almost all undergraduate options at Royal Holloway were for traditional, 3-year degrees. In 2019/20 we launched the integrated foundation year (FY) to allow students who may need more support in terms of transition to join us and to progress to a full degree. As anticipated, the student cohort for our FY differs in key ways from our main undergraduate cohort, with students typically coming in with lower tariff, being more likely to be from IMDQ1 areas, from BGM ethnicity groups, to commute, to be male, to have attended a low performing school and to be part of the first generation in their family to attend HE. Students from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1/2) in particular are a priority for RHUL, and there have been higher proportions of students from these areas enrolling onto the FY over the past few years (37% compared to 32% enrolling directly into year 1 for 2021/22-2023/24).

By improving our FY offering and adding additional pathways in the form of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) we are aiming to increase the number of entrants from IMD Q1/2 areas in particular, as well as other underrepresented groups, and diversify routes into a RHUL degree.

As our foundation year was launched in 2019/20, so far only the first cohort of foundation year (FY) students have graduated from undergraduate degrees, in Summer 2023. The same proportion (79% overall) of this cohort were awarded a 2:1 or above when compared to Y1 direct entrants. Given the diverse backgrounds of FY students (as detailed above), we believe that this is an excellent outcome. We believe that by making minor changes to the programme, giving students more time developing skills relevant to their degree courses, we can support a larger number of the most disadvantaged students to progress and succeed in undergraduate degrees. [TASO evidence](#) for the impact of foundation years is limited, and so we will focus on evaluating the programmes in a way that will provide evidence of their effectiveness for the sector. The recent [HEPI report 'Cracks in our foundations: evaluating foundation years as a tool for access and success'](#) shows evidence of foundation years as 'a powerful tool for access' but highlights the issue of lower continuation rates at a sector level. We have not seen this at RHUL, with continuation rates for FY students remaining high (94.3% compared to 94.0% for all full-time, first-degree students, and above the benchmark of 89.6% for 2017/18-2020/21). We are however aware of the ongoing challenges in this area, with internal data suggesting a slight decrease in continuation rates for all students including FY in more recent years, and we will monitor this closely as part of our planned improvements.

Our evidence for the effectiveness of HTQs is necessarily limited as they are new qualifications, but we know that [in the sector](#), students on alternative degree pathways (e.g. HNC/D) are more likely to be mature and more likely to be from IMDQ1 than students on undergraduate degrees. By expanding our offering to include HTQs, we will be providing alternative pathways to our existing undergraduate options of the foundation year or traditional 3-year courses, and intend that this will enable more students from these diverse backgrounds to study at RHUL.

For our standard 3-year undergraduate first degree courses, our assessment of performance shows lower proportions of students from IMDQ1 at each stage of the application process, with lower numbers receiving an offer, and enrolling. We conducted a review of our existing contextual offer scheme in 2021, and commit to continuing to review the scheme frequently. Following evidence that existing contextual offer schemes are [often too complex](#), we have decided to update the list of criteria for the scheme, and to include IMD for the first time. Based on our modelling this will mean that 35% of all applicants will receive a contextual offer, including all eligible students from IMDQ1&2 (previously in 2023/24 only 40% of students from IMDQ1&2 received an offer).

Analysis of internal applications data shows that the biggest factor determining whether an offer will be made in response to application is entry qualification. Both the type of qualification and the level of grades achieved play a part in this. Lower offer rates occur when a student either has lower entry grades, or BTEC qualifications. As different student groups are disproportionately more likely to have a lower entry tariff or BTEC qualifications, this results in lower offer rates for particular groups of students, including those from IMD Q1 areas. The proportion of applicants from IMD Q1 who were awarded ABB or above at A-level was 30% across 2019/20-2022/23, compared to 46% of those from IMD Q5, and the proportion of IMD Q1 applicants with BTEC qualifications was 20% across the same period, compared with 9% of those from IMD Q5. This is reflected in the offer rates, which were 82% for IMD Q1 in 2022/23, compared to 89% for IMD Q5. Including IMD Q1 as one of the eligibility criteria should therefore have a positive impact on offer rates for applicants from this group.

Sector evidence supports the use of contextual admissions, with the [Sutton Trust's report 'Social Mobility: The Next Generation'](#) recommending that universities 'make better and more ambitious use of contextual offers', ensuring that students who have just missed out on their offer grades are not excluded from HE.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Improvements to RHUL Foundation Year	Students develop sense of belonging to RHUL and to the FY cohort. Students understand the skills they need to develop for their future studies. Students are retained on course (improved continuation); students develop skills for future studies (e.g. lab skills for science students) Targeted students successfully transition to study at RHUL	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Alternative pathway provision (diversifying curriculum)	RHUL receives approval to deliver the course RHUL starts running the courses, students enrol, and successfully complete the qualification. Proportion of students enrolling from underrepresented groups, in particular IMD Q1/2, and mature, is higher than for standard degrees. Students graduate from the HTQ and go on to successful work in skilled shortage occupations	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Contextual Offer scheme	More students from IMD Q1 receive an offer from RHUL. More students from IMDQ1 receive a lower offer from RHUL More students from IMD Q1 choose RHUL as their first-choice institution. More students from IMDQ1 meet the conditions of their offer Increased proportions of students from IMD Q1 enrol at RHUL.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website

Intervention strategy 3: Raising attainment for underrepresented groups through academic collaborative outreach

Sector evidence shows that high levels of attainment at GCSE are associated with students' Access rates to HE, particularly at selective institutions. We are committed to working with local schools to improve attainment in key subjects for pre-16 students. While attainment levels in our local area are relatively high compared to national figures, the gap between outcomes for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students remains considerable (in Hounslow 58% and 69% respectively achieved grade 9-4 in English and Maths at GCSE level in 2022/23 – source DfE KS4 data). In addition, there are inequalities in access to curriculum areas, with state schools facing particular challenges in offering post-16 subjects in all areas.

We will tackle these issues in two ways where we are particularly well-placed to contribute: through an extension of HEON's successful attainment raising model with local schools, and through our academic expertise in modern languages. Both activities are being undertaken in collaboration with partners.

Our **English and Maths attainment raising work** (EMAR) will be a collaborative expansion of the existing HEON scheme, based on evidence of what works in that scheme, where we have emerging evidence of success in terms of a greater improvement in English grades following the scheme for those that took part, when compared with a control group. We will also draw on [OfS insight](#) on attainment raising, aiming to "establish creative, sustained and effective partnerships with schools and others, not simply to raise the expectations of children, their parents and advisers, but to improve their attainment in practical terms", on [TASO evidence](#) of the effectiveness of tutoring as an intervention, and on [sector research](#) supporting approaches that aim to improve specific skills. We will share data with HEON which will allow us to draw findings from a larger pool of students, as well as receiving advice and assistance from our local HEON partner officer.

Additional examples of sector research:

['What works' and 'what makes sense' in Widening Participation: an investigation into the potential of university-led outreach to raise attainment in schools](#) - doctoral thesis on what works to raise attainment in schools via outreach

[The role of attitudes and behaviours in explaining socio-economic differences in attainment at age 16](#) - IFS paper on how interventions related to attitudes and behaviours in secondary schools can close attainment gaps at GCSE

Our collaborative **Languages For All (LFA) scheme aims to support attainment and curriculum provision for MFL in local state schools**. Modern languages are often the preserve of students from selective schools as state schools struggle across the country to consistently recruit healthy numbers for their A-level cohorts. The problem in Hounslow, where we have established a pilot LFA scheme in collaboration with Reach Academy, is acute. On average, 1,700 out of circa 3,000 16-year-olds sit a MFL GCSE each year, but that converts to only about 35 A-level linguists in state schools in the borough, across German, Spanish, Italian, French, and Mandarin. Nationally, there is evidence from the [British Council](#) that take-up of A Levels in languages has declined significantly, and evidence from the [Higher Education Policy Institute](#) that improving perceptions of languages at GCSE would have a positive impact on A Level uptake. From the British Council evidence, and our initial consultations with teachers and students in 2022/23, we know that students face two barriers to continuing with language study:

1. **Barriers of Attitude:** students with good GCSE grades in MFL may choose not to study it at A-level for the following reasons: because they do not believe it is relevant to their future; they do not know about the benefits of language learning or the exciting content of the course; they do not know about the potential to live and work or study abroad at university; they judge themselves worse in the subject relative to others because they do not have fluency and assume it's a requirement at A-level; or they believe that the rest of the world learns English. Through our Year 11 outreach programme and the Global Languages Ambassador Award in year 12-13, we will demonstrate to students that languages open doors and open minds. We will link their language learning to careers and build a community of like-minded linguists to sustain their motivation and enthusiasm for language study.
2. **Barriers of Cost:** structural barriers exist that stop schools being able to afford to run the A-level programme in MFL. Typically, a school would need about 10-12 students in a class to pay for a teacher's salary to run the class. In Hounslow there are no schools breaking even - every state school A-level MFL class is run at a loss, and this is a consistent trend over the last 5 years and even more so

since Covid. By running an A-level Tuition programme, after school, that sixth forms can sign their students up to, taught by teachers from the local area, we will address this access barrier, ensuring that more students can study MFL as a result.

We are basing our assumptions about the types of activity that can engage students in languages on discussions in focus groups and feedback from schools and students in the 2023/24 pilot which showed more students wanted to study a modern language at A-level as a result of taking part. We hope that if successful this intervention can be used as a template for other HEIs.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Languages For All (LFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils' attitudes to languages improve Student self-efficacy improves Student attainment increases, specifically through speaking practice for oral exams More schools offering A-levels in modern languages Schools using LFA to offer A-levels in a more financially efficient way More pupils doing A-level modern languages More students progress to language-related degrees 	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website, and in academic journals where appropriate.
English and Maths Attainment Raising (EMAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved pupil engagement with core curriculum Improved pupil understanding of core curriculum concepts Increased academic motivation Increased sense of belonging Increased cognitive study strategies Increased academic self-efficacy Increased subject knowledge (Maths or English) Improved attainment 	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website

Intervention strategy 4 – supporting students to continue their studies

Our self-assessment indicates that we need to do more work to support continuation for mature students in particular. In addition, we have large awarding gaps between groups including Black and Global Majority (BGM) and White students, Black and White students, students from IMD Q1 (most deprived) and IMD Q5 (least deprived) areas, and the intersection of ethnicity and socio-economic background with the gap between BGM IMD Q1/2 and White IMD Q3-5 students. Enhanced transition support will impact on all these objectives: we know that gaps in outcomes for Black students in particular are largest at level 4, and then decline. If we can support students to start successfully we can impact on their likelihood to stay and succeed on course.

We have based our approach to transition support on [TASO evidence](#) of effective student support (accepting that causal evidence is limited, but there is substantial correlational evidence), and the QAA [Supporting Successful Student Transitions](#) project. We have also drawn on student survey data collected by Royal Holloway and by our SU.

Based on analysis of which student groups are more and less likely to leave either before or very soon after the start of Term 1, or during Term 1, it was noted that the following groups were more likely to

leave during this time: Mature (21+ on entry), male, no known disability, standard entry route (not via clearing), non-standard entry qualification, no parental experience of HE.

Student and staff consultation identified three main barriers to transition to university among target groups (based on ethnicity and socio-economic background): difficulty understanding and navigating university study and culture; difficulty managing university alongside other challenges and demands; not feeling good enough to study / feeling of not belonging / fear of not being accepted by others. Three underpinning factors were felt to improve these: connection; available and accessible information / support; proactive approach. These factors, alongside the analysis above, will inform the targeting and implementation of our intervention strategy.

Internal survey and focus group data suggests that concerns about finances and the cost of living are significant factors for our students, and may lead to them considering dropping out, or in devoting less time to their studies. This issue was highlighted in the recent [HEPI report – A Minimum Income Standard for Students](#). The purpose of our bursaries is to ease financial constraints and enable students to focus on their studies. In order to assess the effectiveness and impact of financial support in meeting this purpose, we recently ran a survey using the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit. The results indicated that, overall, the financial support offered by the bursaries is well received by students. 87% of students surveyed agreed that the bursary has been important in their ability to financially continue with their studies. Alongside the survey we have undertaken a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of our bursary provision using OfS' suggested methodology. This found that whilst there is some evidence that the financial support is effective in supporting continuation, the evaluation indicates that the bursary is having less impact on attainment outcomes. Consequently, we are focusing our bursaries and other financial support on ensuring students can continue on course. In addition, as our current APP targets focus our student success work on attainment, we have recently amended our bursary amounts to ensure that we can tailor funding more effectively to make faster progress in this area.

We are conscious that the financial circumstances of our students have changed significantly since the last bursary review, and therefore will commit to frequent reviews of the bursary scheme every two years. There is significant [sector-level evidence](#) of the impact of the increased cost of living on student costs, for all students, not just those with low household incomes. We have therefore put into place a wide range of cost-of-living support and a Study Support Grant (SSG) for students. We know that care leavers and estranged students face [additional costs and barriers to study](#), and therefore have financial support targeted specifically at those groups.

Additional examples of sector research:

[The contribution of pre-entry interventions to student retention and success. A literature synthesis of the WASRS national programmes archive](#) – Advance HE knowledge hub

[Building Belonging in Higher Education - Recommendations for developing an integrated institutional approach](#) – Wonkhe and Pearson report

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Overall Transition Framework - #RHReady	Short-term Students make friends on their course Students understand where to go to get help Students understand academic expectations Students develop appropriate skills for success at their level of study Intermediate Students engage with their studies Students feel a sense of belonging to the university Long-term An increasing percentage of mature students progress to the second year of study Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Academic induction and transition support		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Practical underpinnings		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Pre-arrival activities		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Student journey mapping		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Bursary for students from the lowest household income backgrounds	Short-term Students from the target groups are attracted to study at Royal Holloway Students from the target groups understand the financial support on offer Intermediate Students in receipt of bursaries are able to engage in university life Long-term Students from the target groups remain on course.	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Access entry bursary		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Care leavers and estranged student bursary		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Study Support Grant		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Blackbullion		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Cost of living support		Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website

Intervention strategy 5 - supporting students to successful awarding outcomes

Our self-assessment indicates that we have considerable work to do to reduce awarding gaps for the following groups:

- BGM students
- Black students
- IMD Q1 students
- BGM IMD Q1/2 students

We have conducted extensive analysis of these gaps, the underlying causes, and the actions we could take to address these. This has included data analysis, student focus groups, staff surveys, and literature reviews. Our approach as detailed in this intervention strategy will have three strands, along with underpinning work on EDI training, data availability and data literacy. The three strands are: an inclusive curriculum framework; student-led support activities; and a student wellbeing framework.

The current academic consensus points to the existence of a direct and causal relationship between the race award gap and a White, Eurocentric curricula and teaching practices in UK HE. There are similar hypotheses relating to socio-economic disadvantage, for example as explored in detail in the [Inclusive Education Framework](#) which was created by collaboration between HE providers, led by the University of Hull. There is [emerging evidence](#) in the HE sector that activity focusing on inclusive pedagogical approaches, curriculum and assessment design can have a positive impact on equality gaps. However, such evidence is in its early stages, and as such we intend to pilot our curriculum framework with selected courses in 2024/25, before a wider roll-out in 2025/26.

Internal analysis shows that students from Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups are 6-8% less likely to respond positively to NSS questions around academic support than the average for the cohort (2022 NSS). This indicates a link to EORR Risk 7 – insufficient academic support. In addition, students from Black ethnic groups are 7% less likely to respond positively to NSS questions around learning community than the average for the cohort (2022 NSS) which indicates a link to the RHUL risk around sense of belonging. We intend to address both risks in our student-led support and wellbeing framework interventions.

There is [TASO evidence](#) of the effective features of peer mentoring schemes. We will learn from these approaches to ensure that targeting, training and the scheme organisation are set up effectively. We have also conducted our own internal pilot scheme in one faculty, which provided us with survey evidence and engagement statistics to demonstrate the beneficial impact of the scheme. Analysis of the pre/post survey showed a statistically (Anova and Welch 2 tests) significant increase in confidence and decrease in measures of worry for our mentees relative to non-participants. BGM mentees reported a greater increase in confidence about socialising with their peers and managing their finances than white mentees. Mentees were more active on our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and had higher attendance than non-participants.

Internal analysis shows that students from BGM ethnic groups (in particular those from Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups), from lower IMD areas (Q1-3), who are commuters, who have no parental experience of HE and who are from particular religious groups, are less likely to access Wellbeing services. As noted in the Risks to Equality of Opportunity section, sector evidence suggests that this is not due to a lack of need but indicates either a lack of awareness of the support offered, or a barrier of some kind preventing students accessing the support. Both reasons require improved communication and signposting from the university to improve access levels and ensure students can access the support they need, and our wellbeing framework intervention aims to address these issues. The insight brief published by the OfS on [Meeting the mental health needs of students](#) shows that the likelihood of students reporting mental health conditions varies by demographic characteristic with Mixed (6.3% in 2021/22) and White (6.1%) students more likely to report than all other ethnic groups. Asian students were the least likely to report at 2.7%. Formal and informal student feedback (e.g. from our student TEF submission, and from focus groups run in preparation for this plan), supports the view that consistent support from personal tutors is important to students' sense of wellbeing. This is reflected in the Wellbeing framework, and as part of this we will review and update the Personal Tutor model, ensuring this aligns with a wellbeing coaching programme.

Amongst our findings from the recent Race Equality Survey for staff and students, we can see that our Black and Global Majority colleagues are more likely to experience or witness situations at work which lead to discomfort as a result of race or ethnicity. Asian students reported the lowest levels of confidence that staff can have open and honest conversations about race, underlining the importance of progressive EDI training for all staff.

To underpin the three strands of activity we will adopt the approach piloted by [Kingston University](#) to create value added scores as part of our data project. We will offer Inclusive Behaviours training to target academic staff in Schools with highest degree-awarding gaps (as a pilot), with impact on student experience. Following positive evaluation of the intervention, the training can extend to all academic Schools. We believe that receiving excellent EDI training will help us to achieve our objectives in race equity. However, we are not aware of any research that explicitly addresses the effectiveness of this training in a HE setting. Therefore, we will evaluate this using a type-3 approach, offering training to all academic staff across randomly chosen programmes within the target schools, allowing us to contribute to causal evidence of EDI training's impact.

There is a wealth of research across the sector around awarding gaps, and we will draw on this resource as we implement this intervention strategy. The following links are an illustrative but non-exhaustive list:

- [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #Closing the gap \(UUK / NUS\)](#)
- ['We Belong': differential sense of belonging and its meaning for different ethnicity groups in higher education](#)
- HEPI report: [The white elephant in the room: ideas for reducing racial inequalities in higher education](#)
- Advance HE: [Rebuilding the bicycle – using data to narrow the awarding gap](#)
- OfS Case study on Kingston University's Value Added metric: [Using a value added metric and an inclusive curriculum framework to address the black and minority ethnic attainment gap](#)
- Advance HE [Education for Mental Health Toolkit](#) with suggestions of what works in wellbeing support:
- [Student mental health profiles and barriers to help seeking: When and why students seek help for a mental health concern](#)
- [University Mental Health Policy Toolkit](#) from Charlie Waller trust: How to create a University Mental Health Strategy that works
- [Mentally Healthy Universities Programme](#) on evaluation from Mind
- [What works to tackle mental health inequalities in higher education?](#) TASO report
- [Student Money & Wellbeing 2023](#) Blackbullion report
- [ONS report](#) on the cost of living, higher education, and mental health

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Inclusive Curriculum Framework	<p>Short-term Enhanced relatability of course content to students of colour and from low socio-economic groups.</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Pedagogic training and resources	<p>Intermediate Students have higher engagement and satisfaction with course content. Higher levels of racial literacy for staff. Improved institutional understanding of the ways in which racial inequity manifests in taught content and practice and strategies for best practice. Improvements to interim measures e.g. retention, continuation, completion; belonging and engagement.</p> <p>Long-term Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Wellbeing Framework	<p>Short-term Increased student awareness of support services Students believe that support services can and will meet their specific needs and requirements. Students know who their personal tutor is.</p> <p>Intermediate Engagement with support services at an early stage of need Students are satisfied with engagement with their personal tutors Demonstrate to students the importance of early intervention and signposting for student support. Students do not perceive there to be stigma in seeking support</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to continue on their course Students are more likely to be actively engaged with their course</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Wellbeing communications plan, including 'I chose to disclose'	<p>Short-term Communications are developed in conjunction with students with lived experience Students receive improved communications</p> <p>Intermediate Students know where to access wellbeing support</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to engage with support services at an early stage of need. Increasing numbers of students disclose disabilities.</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website

<p>Hub & Spoke model of mental health and wellbeing support</p>	<p>Short-term Students perceive academic and support service offers as well-integrated</p> <p>Intermediate Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to engage early with support services</p>	<p>Empirical (Type 2)</p>	<p>Annually on website</p>
<p>PEMENTOS peer mentoring scheme</p>	<p>Short-term Increased student engagement with peer mentoring</p> <p>Intermediate Students have strong peer relationships Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to be actively engaged with their course Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	<p>Empirical (Type 2)</p>	<p>Annually on website</p>
<p>Student-led collaborative networks</p>	<p>Short-term Collaborative student groups are created, and students engage with them Students meet peers from similar backgrounds</p> <p>Intermediate Students have an increased sense of belonging</p> <p>Long-term Students are more likely to continue on their courses.</p>	<p>Empirical (Type 2)</p>	<p>Annually on website</p>
<p>EDI training</p>	<p>Short-term Academic staff in target Schools have engaged in new EDI training and associated reflection. Staff have an understanding of inclusive behaviours and how to implement them in their curriculum areas.</p> <p>Intermediate Staff implement inclusive behaviours in their curriculum areas</p> <p>Long-term Awarding gaps between target demographic groups close</p>	<p>Causality (Type 3)</p>	<p>Annually on website</p>

REC submission	<p>Short-term The experiences and challenges of different racial groups are discussed and understood Increased conversations about race on campus Improved experiences and sense of belonging of BGM staff and students</p> <p>Intermediate Internal processes are adapted to become more inclusive and to foster diversity We have a university-wide anti-racism action plan that will enable systemic and sustained change</p> <p>Long-term Royal Holloway has a more diverse staff body Students are taught by staff from a wide range of backgrounds</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website
Improved data dashboards	<p>Short-term A single, centralised source of 'data truth' exists Colleagues understand how to access and interpret data</p> <p>Intermediate EDI dashboard is used and trusted Awarding gap data is shared and understood in all Departments Agreed schedule and mechanism for colleagues to interrogate the data and identify actions to address disparities in outcomes</p> <p>Long-term Confidence in interpreting EDI data increases Actions to reduce awarding gaps are consistently implemented Higher % of students in APP target groups are awarded a 1st / 2:1 degree</p>	Empirical (Type 2)	Annually on website

Theories of Change (ToC) for key activities

The following pages include ToC for the key activities included in our intervention strategies. They are based on the [TASO Theory of Change resources](#).

Intervention strategy 1: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups via outreach work

- Structured priority schools programme
- RH Link programme
- Spring University
- Summer University

Intervention strategy 2: Improving Access to RHUL for students from lower socio-economic groups by providing additional pathways

- Curriculum diversification – includes Improvements to RHUL Foundation Year and Alternative pathway provision (diversifying curriculum)
- Contextual offer scheme

Intervention strategy 3: Raising attainment for underrepresented groups through academic collaborative outreach

- Languages For All (LFA)
- English and Maths Attainment Raising (EMAR)

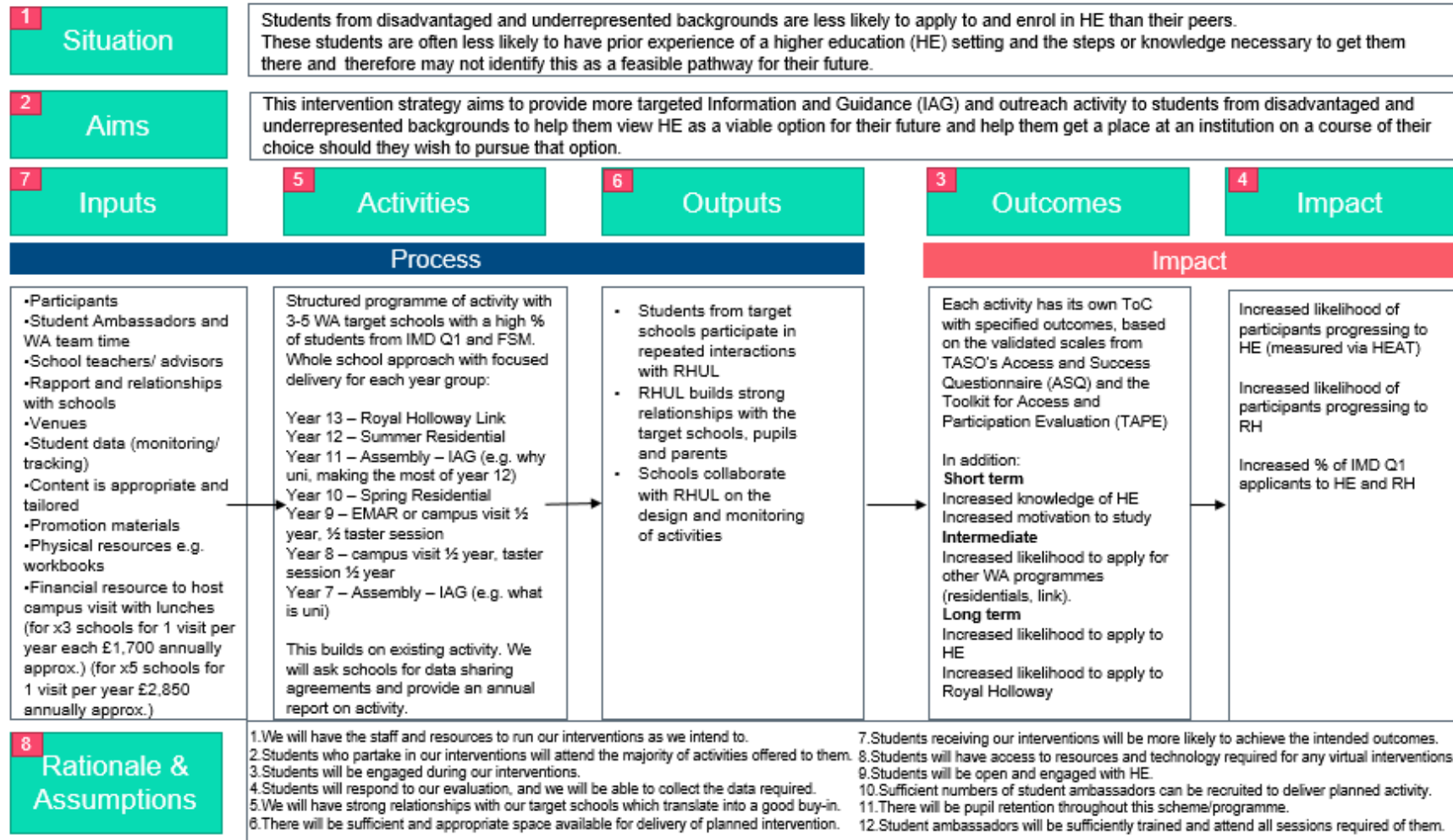
Intervention strategy 4: Supporting students to continue their studies

- Transition Framework – includes Overall Transition Framework – #RHReady, Academic induction and transition scheme, Pre-arrival activities and Practical underpinnings
- Financial support – includes Bursary provision, Study Support Grant, Blackbullion and Cost of living support

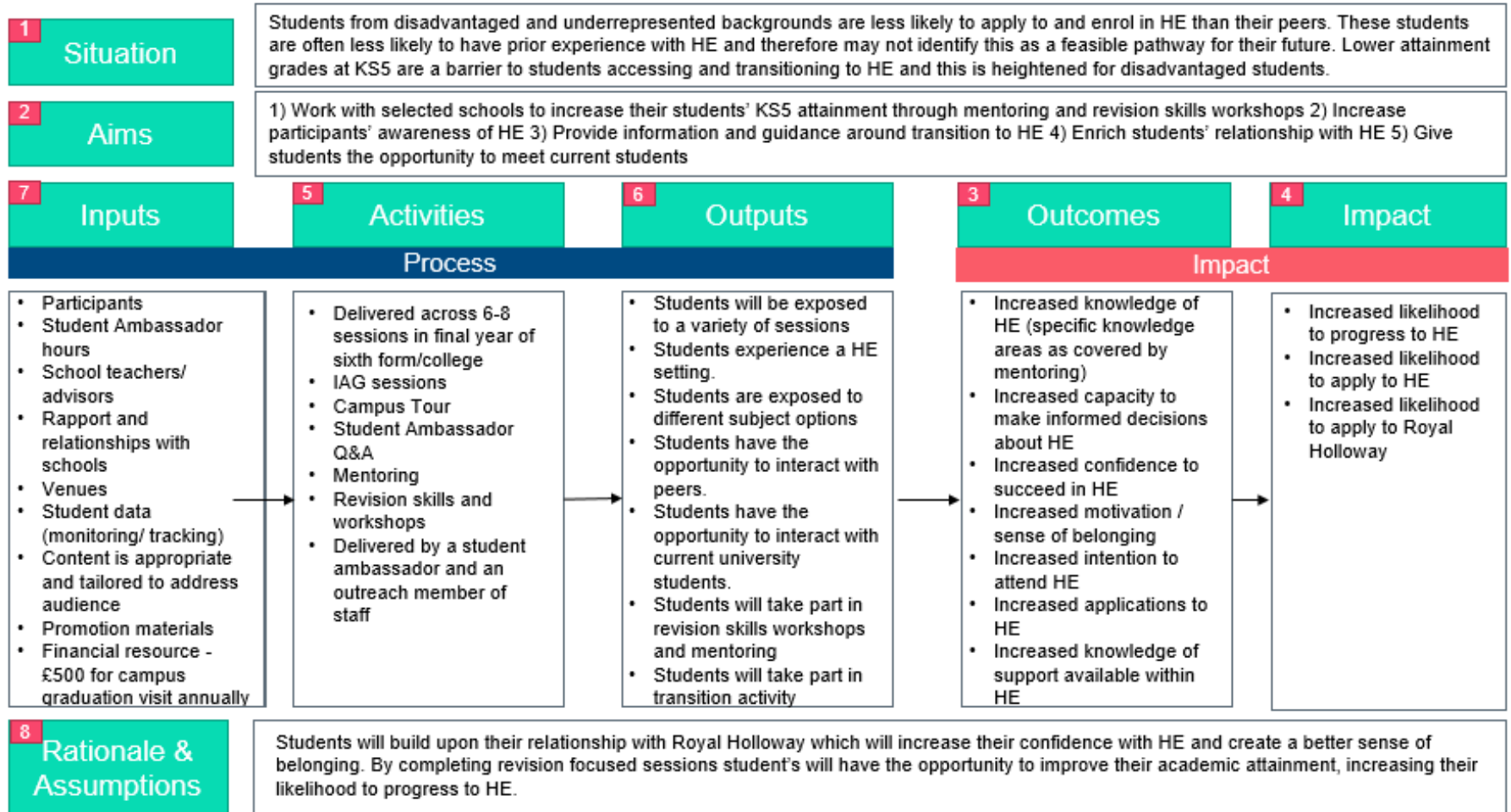
Intervention strategy 5: Supporting students to successful awarding outcomes

- Inclusive Curriculum Framework and Pedagogic training and resources
- Wellbeing Framework – includes Wellbeing communications plan, Hub & spoke model of mental health and wellbeing support and PEMENTOS peer mentoring scheme
- EDI training and Race Equality work
- Improved data dashboards

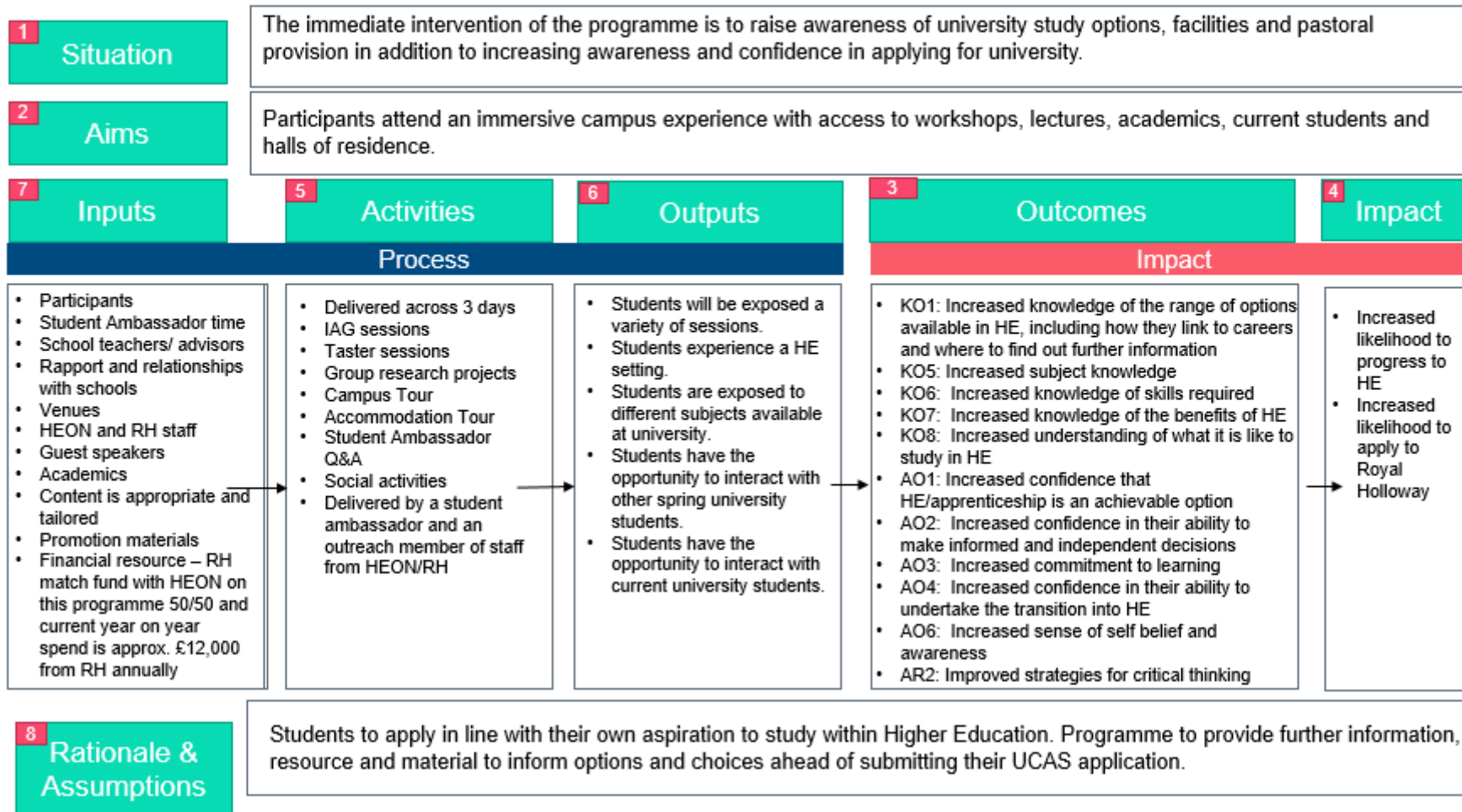
Theory of change: structured priority school programme



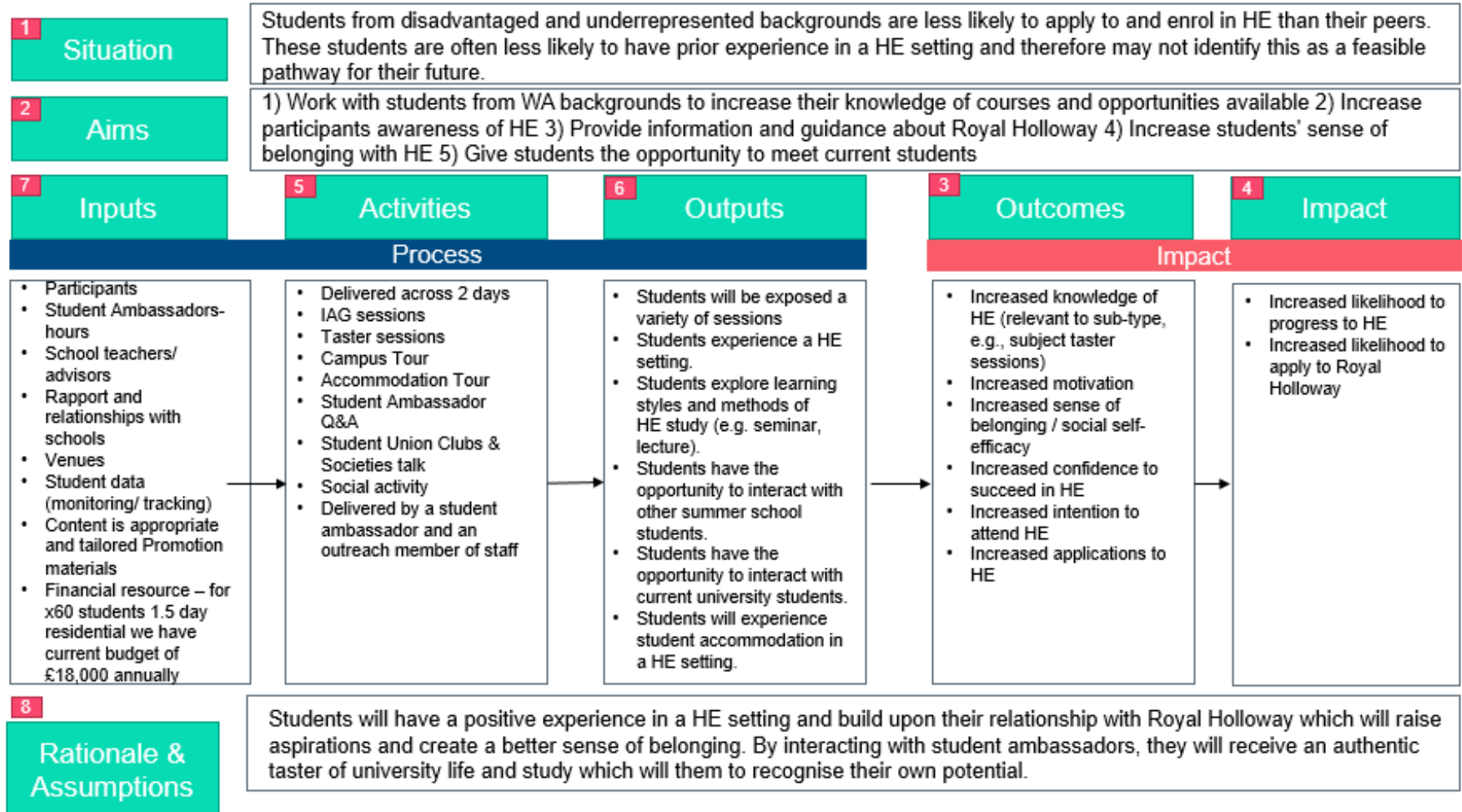
Theory of Change: RH Link



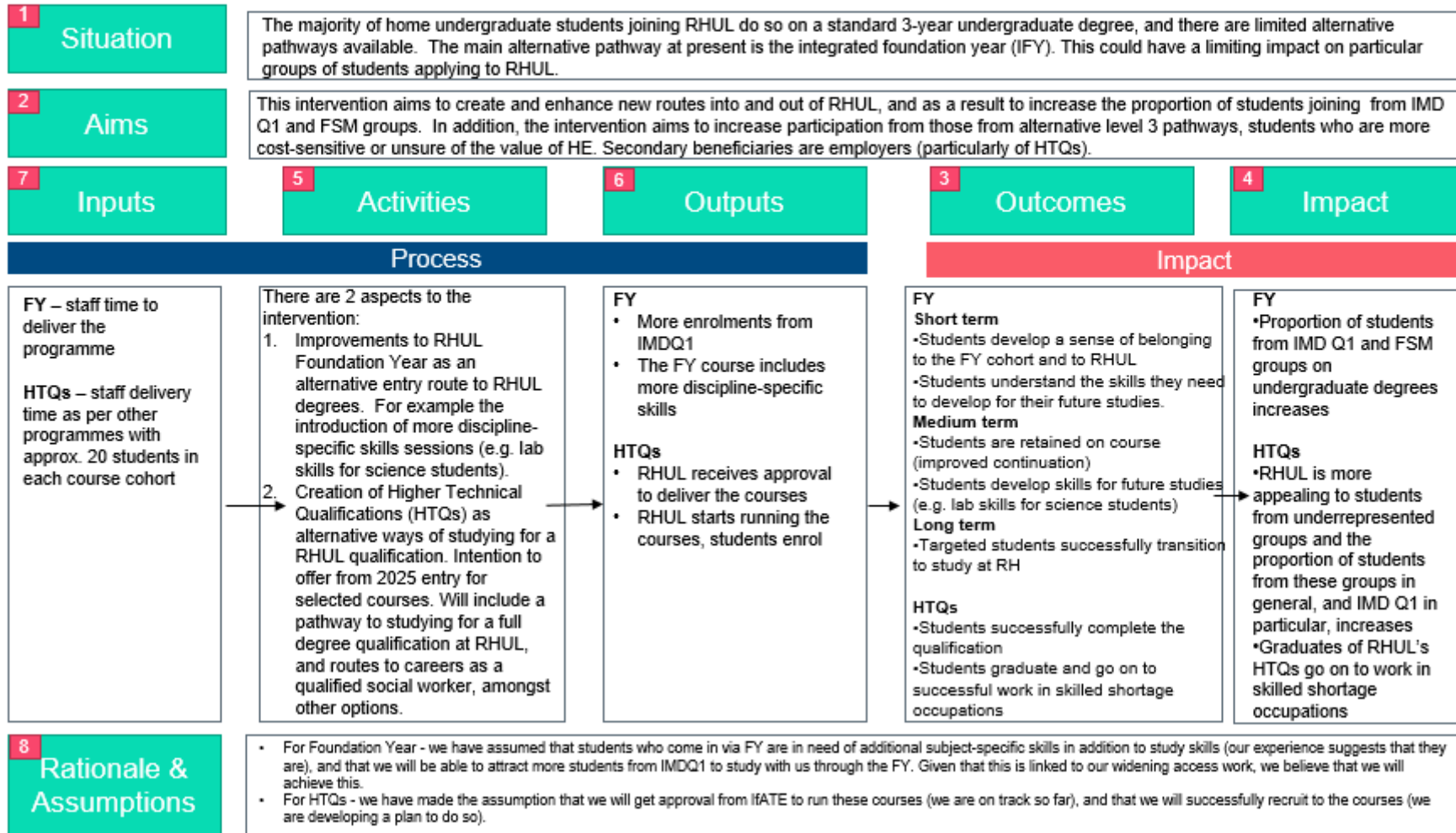
Theory of Change: HEON collab - Spring University



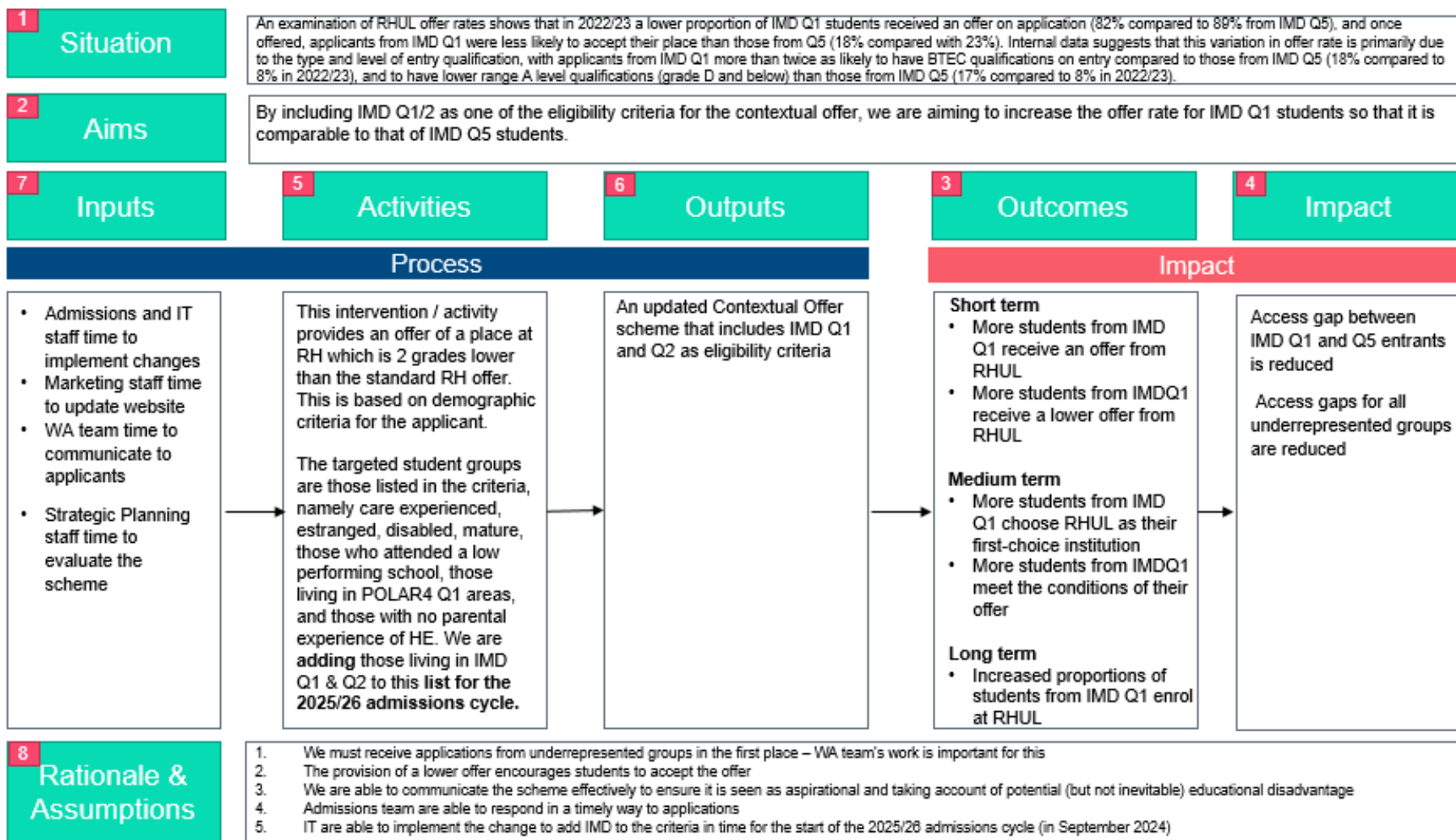
Theory of Change: Summer Schools



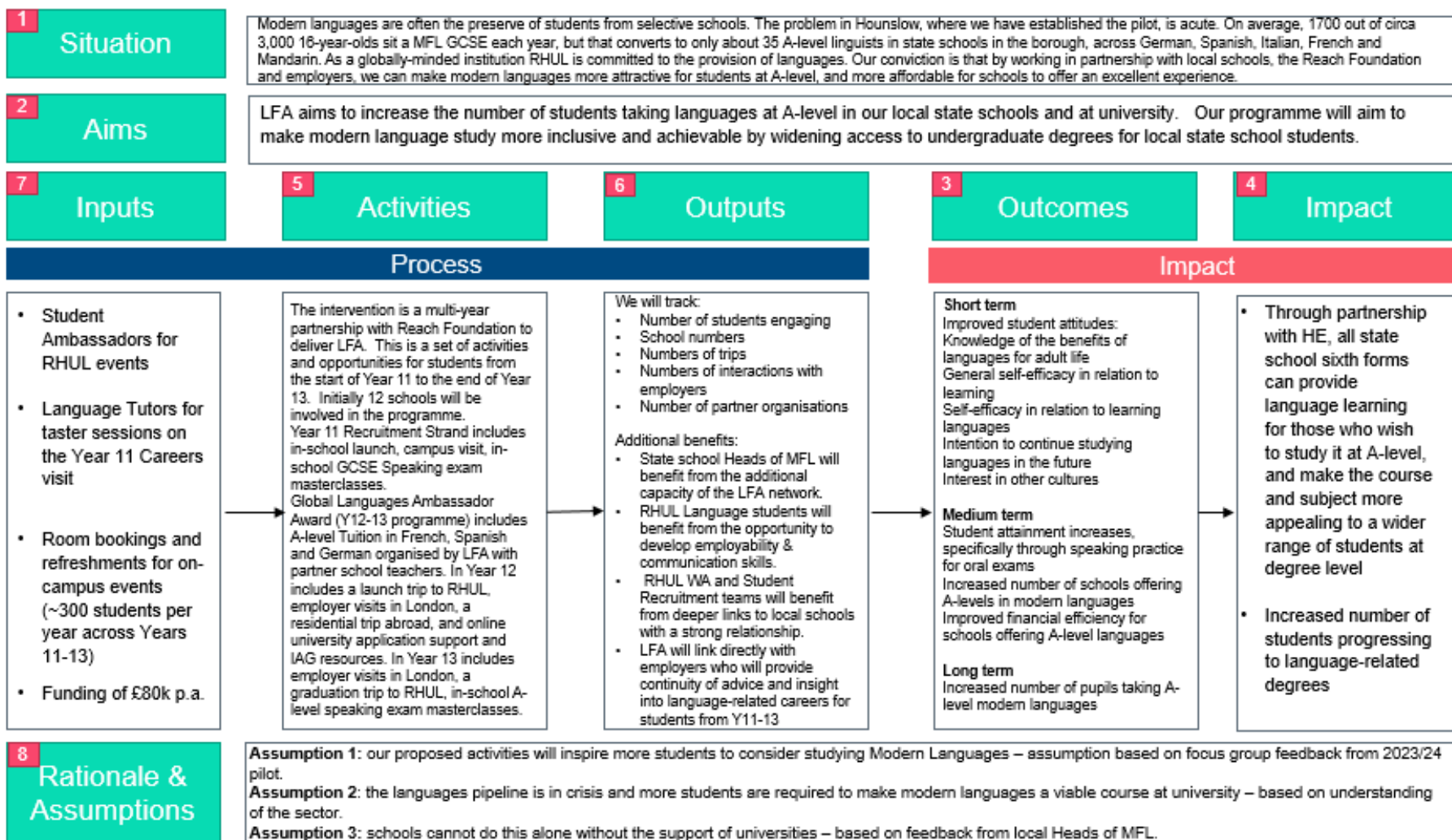
Theory of change: curriculum diversification



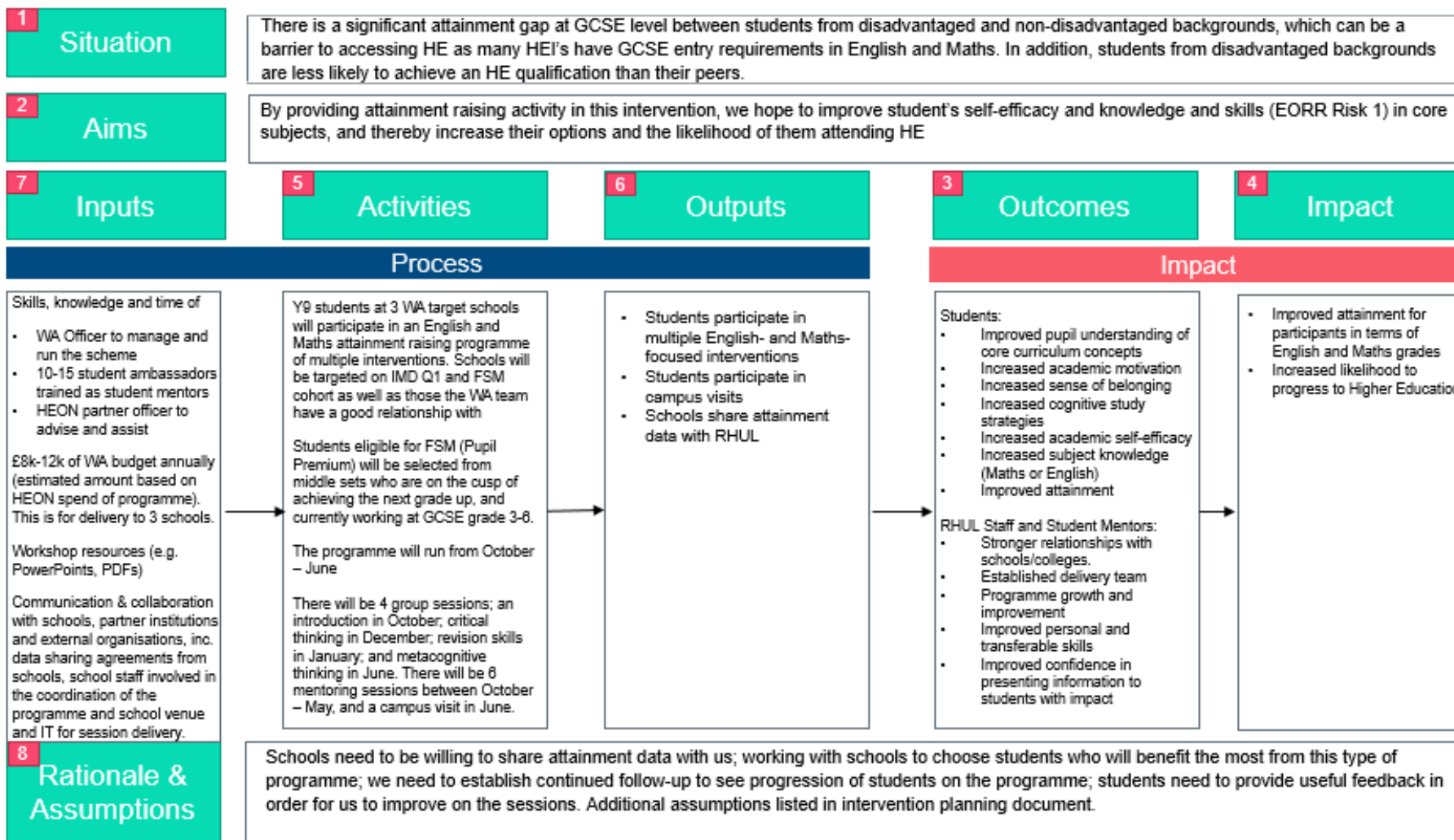
Theory of change: contextual offer scheme



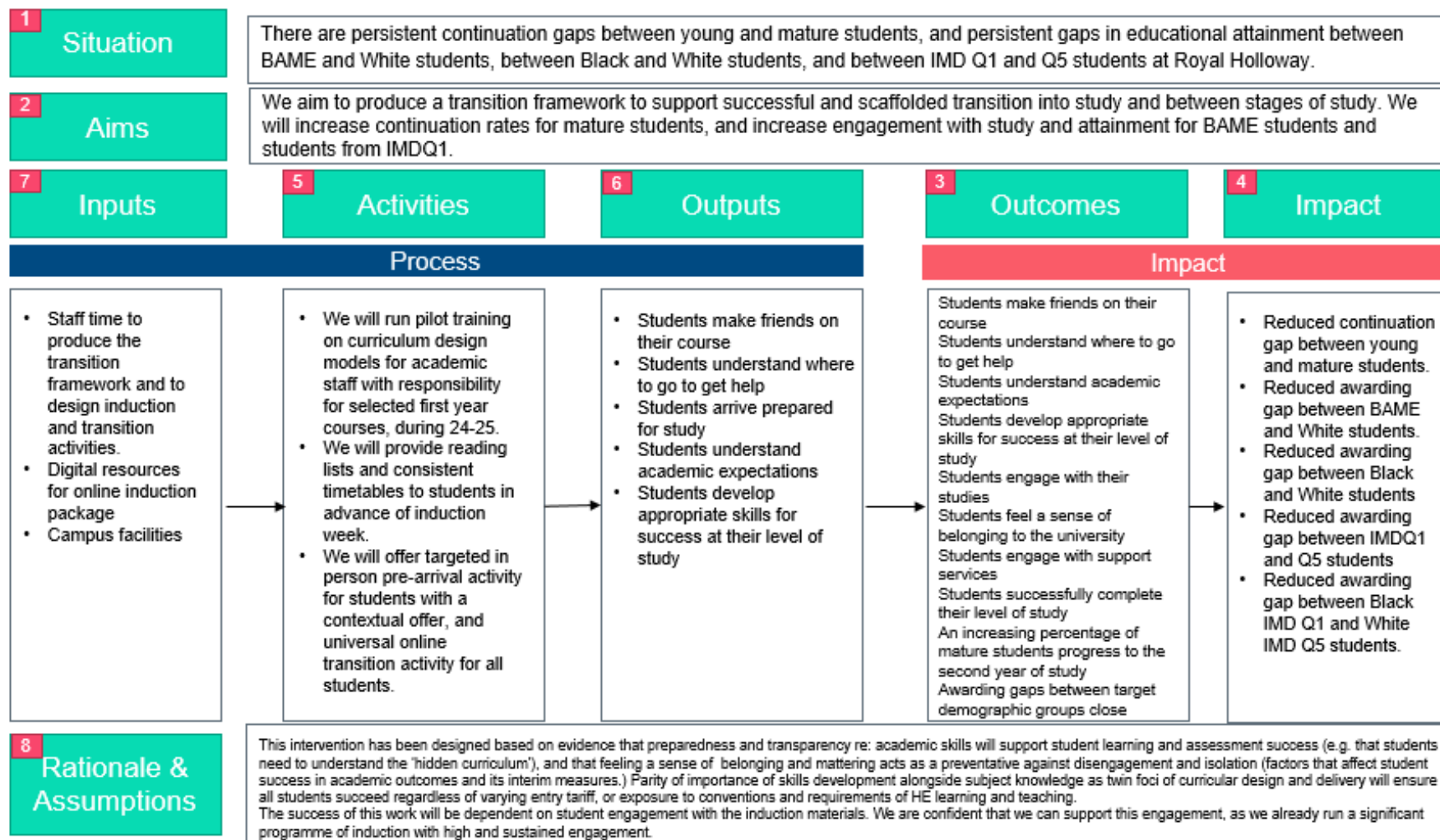
Theory of change: Languages for All (LFA)



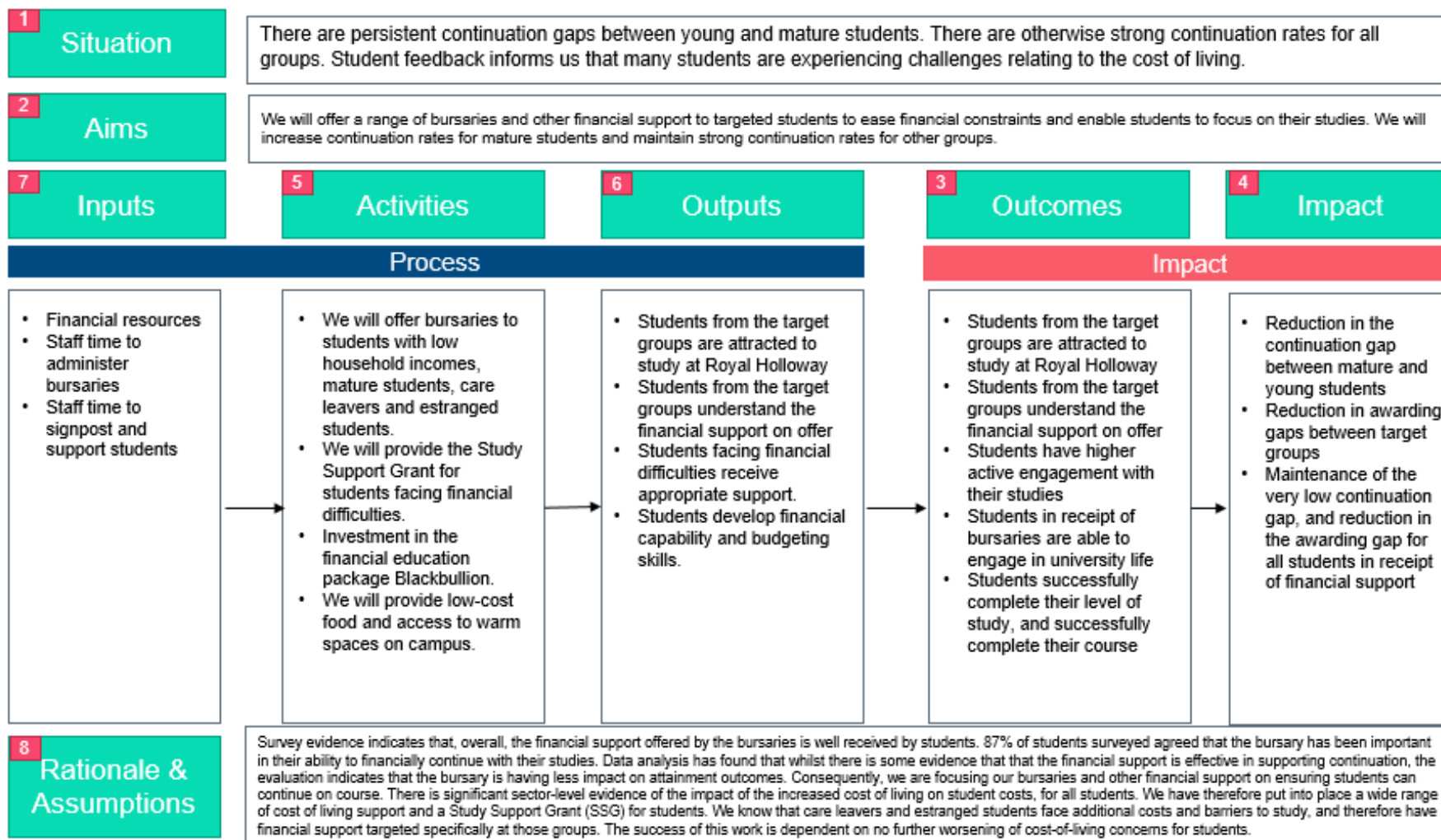
Theory of change: English and Maths Attainment Raising (EMAR)



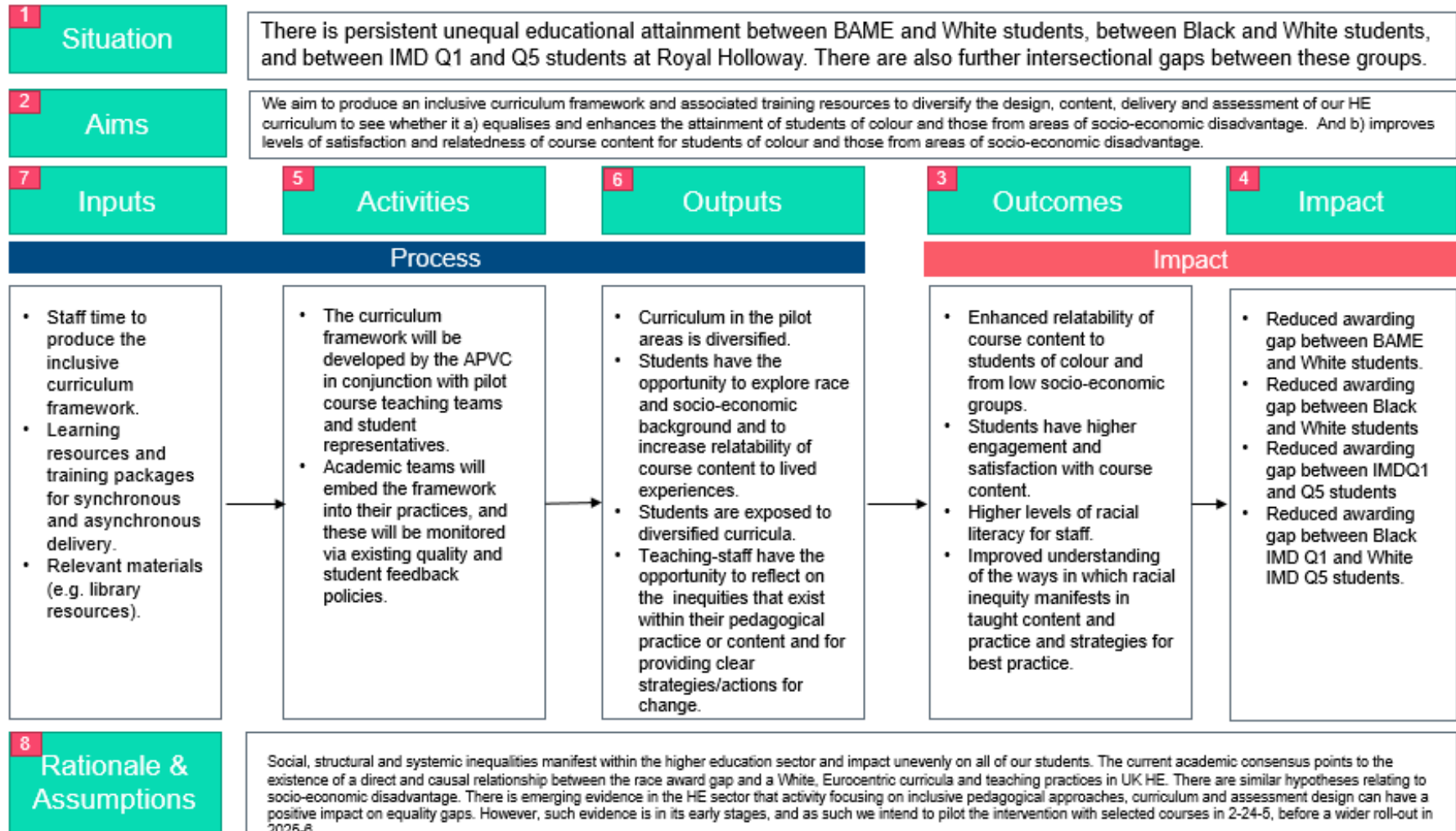
Theory of change: transition framework



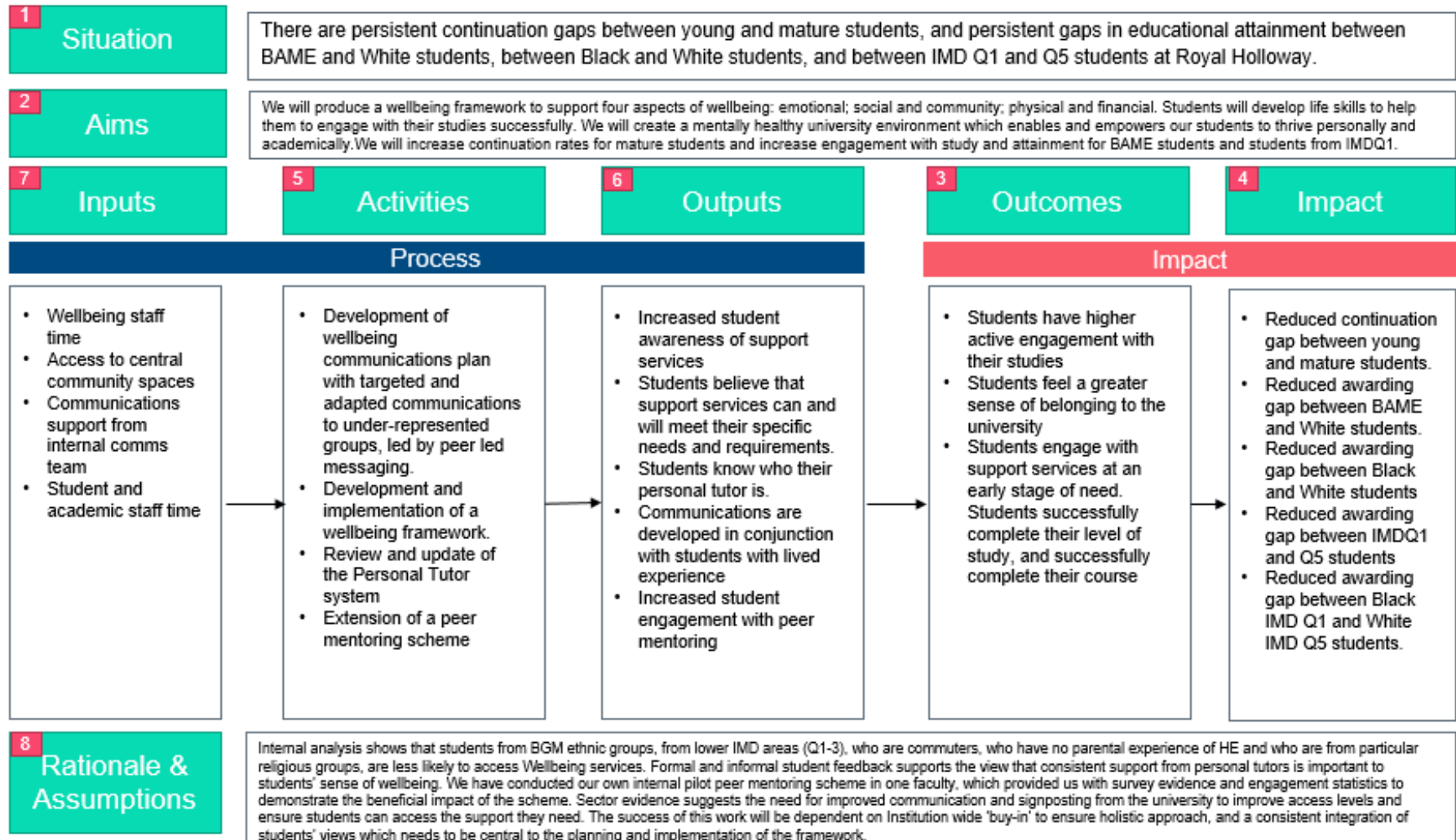
Theory of change: financial support



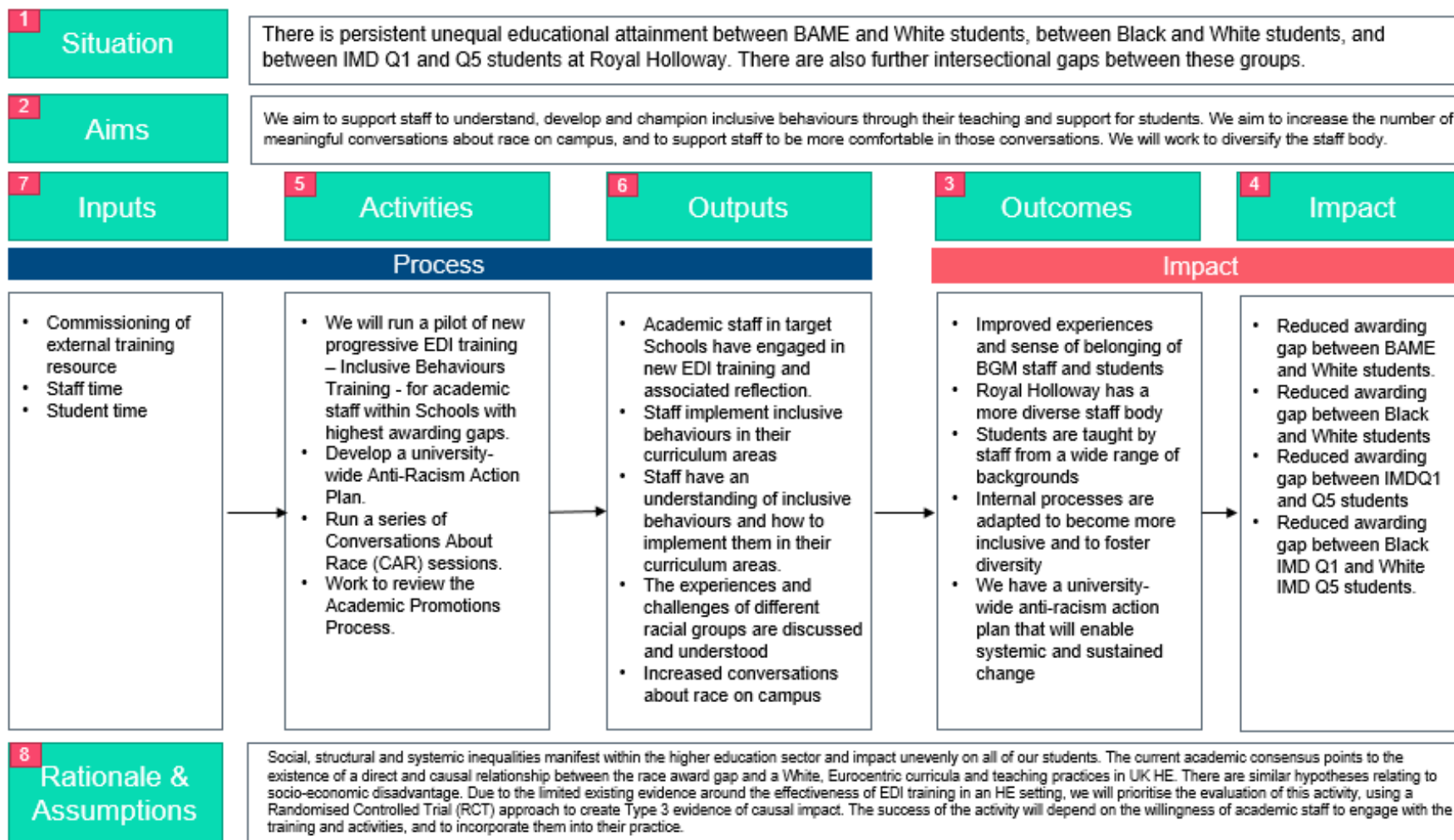
Theory of change: inclusive curriculum framework



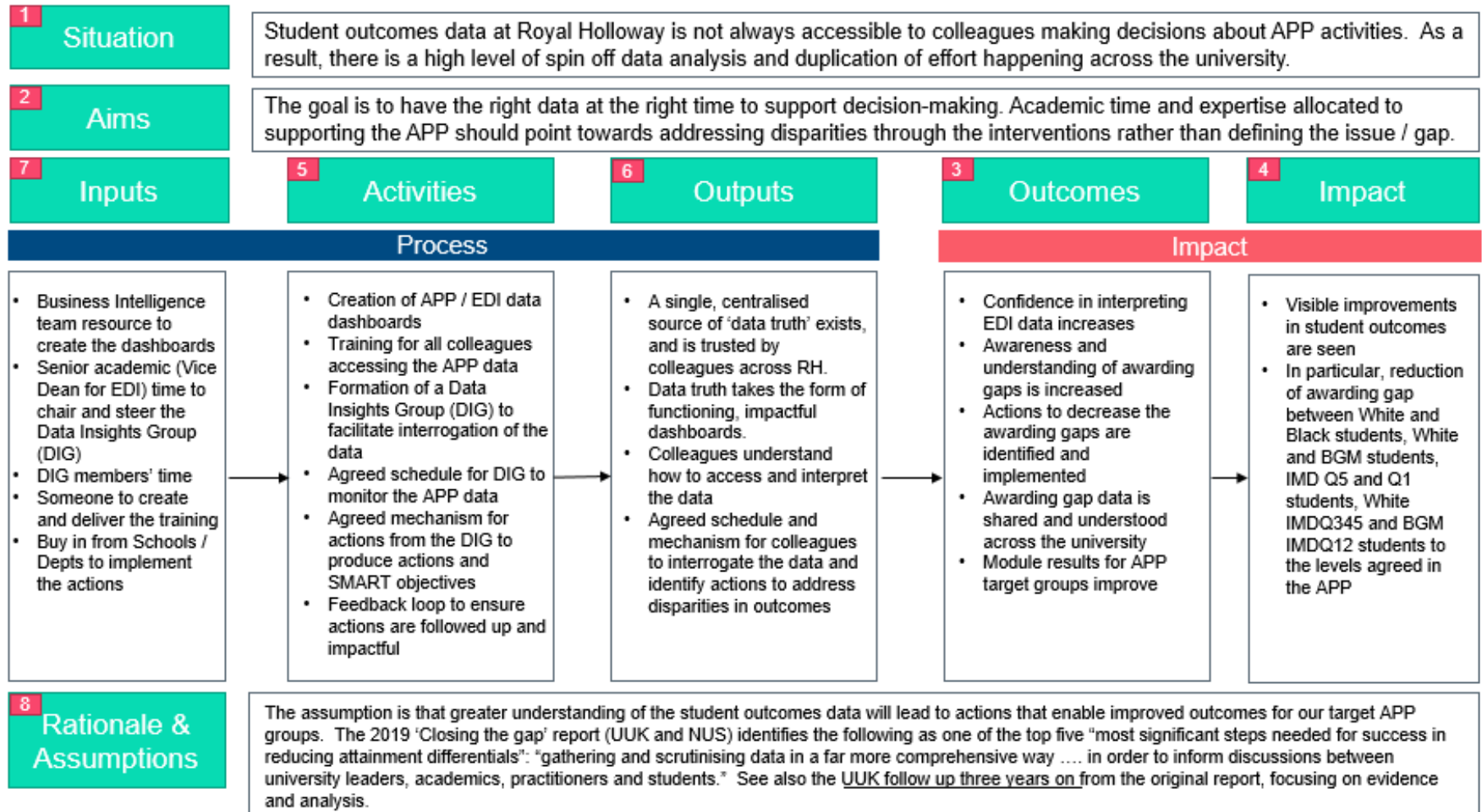
Theory of change: wellbeing framework



Theory of change: EDI training and Race Equality work



Theory of Change: Improved data dashboards



Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

Provider UKPRN: 10005553

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	5760
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9250
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree		N/A	11100
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

Provider UKPRN: 10005553

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	£2,100,000	£2,150,000	£2,200,000	£2,250,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£3,914,000	£4,029,000	£3,983,000	£4,098,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£210,000	£215,000	£220,000	£225,000

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 (£)	£1,950,000	£2,000,000	£2,050,000	£2,100,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£2,100,000	£2,150,000	£2,200,000	£2,250,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	6.8%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£2,100,000	£2,150,000	£2,200,000	£2,250,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£3,814,000	£3,926,000	£3,878,000	£3,990,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£100,000	£103,000	£105,000	£108,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£3,914,000	£4,029,000	£3,983,000	£4,098,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	12.9%	12.9%	12.4%	12.4%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£210,000	£215,000	£220,000	£225,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%

