

The City of Liverpool College

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

The City of Liverpool College's mission is to provide high quality skills and education by delivering opportunities for growth to all people and businesses of the Liverpool City Region. Throughout our history, we have remained consistent in our commitment to offer students from all backgrounds an excellent learning experience aimed at delivering skills to strengthen the economy. This is underpinned by our core values and strategic goals:

- World-class skills for business - Operating as “The College for Business”, with a focus on current need and industry innovations and supporting the post-pandemic recovery and economic growth across the City Region.
- Delivering an outstanding student experience - Tailoring our approach to the needs of our learners, our city and our communities as part of a dynamic partnership with all three.
- Developing talent for sustainable employment - Upskilling, reskilling and generating the talent of the future through a focus on careers, not courses.

Our Strategic Enablers

- 1) Turning disadvantage into advantage – recognising our student cohort and delivering an experience tailored to their needs, taking a student-centred approach (‘the whole student’).
- 2) Systems thinking by critical thinkers – changing the culture across the College from top to bottom to realise an impact that goes beyond individual actions (‘the whole college’) as a crucial part of the city region’s education and skills system.

The College has a small sized Higher Education (HE) provision with direct funding status. The geographic spread of our campuses means that most of our students are recruited from within the Liverpool City Region (LRC) and predominantly live at home and commute within the region to study.

Our ambition is to offer competitive and high quality, inclusive provision with outstanding quality of teaching and levels of support for all our students, ensuring they reach their full potential regardless of their background and identity. The College has partnered with Shaping Futures which is part of the wider National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), funded by the Office of Students (OfS). The outreach programme for the Liverpool City Region involves local HE providers and seeks to improve participation in Higher Education in Merseyside.

We are constantly adapting the way that we work in order to better meet the individual needs of our students. We are committed to ensuring that the support available leads to successful enrolments, retention, progression, completion and employment. This ambitious plan outlines the holistic approach that we are taking to address the equality-of-opportunity risks identified in our analysis of our performance.

Our student cohort is dominated by students recruited from Liverpool and the surrounding areas. Liverpool itself has been designated an Educational Improvement Zone, reflecting the poor outcomes of secondary education in the region. As highlighted in the Liverpool City Council Education Improvement Plan 2022/23, almost 1 in 5 pupils in Liverpool attend a school adjudged to be requiring

improvement or inadequate by Ofsted (18.6% against a 6.6% national average). The City Region also has higher rates of SEND than national averages, with the officially documented volumes doubling in 2022/23 following an overhaul of SEND processes in the College's largest local authority. Given The City of Liverpool College's specific regional context, we know that significant collaboration is required to support educational engagement and attainment in the city region, and progression to HE for student groups who face equality-of-opportunity risks. In line with our strategic goals, our access work takes place in partnership with local schools and other stakeholders who continue to foster our long history of collaboration, prioritising communities in the city region who experience disadvantage.

Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) identifies and prioritises risks to equality of opportunity. Our strategic enablers, 'Turning disadvantage into advantage', and 'Systems thinking by critical thinkers' demonstrate that we recognise our student cohort and deliver experiences tailored to their needs, taking a student-centred approach ('the whole student'). Furthermore, our success in widening participation is evidenced by the rich diversity of our student population: this diversity has shaped our approaches to teaching and learning through the application of inclusive approaches to all aspects of university life. The college recognises the complexity of our students' lives and the barriers that they encounter, both internal and external to the HE learning experience.

The City of Liverpool College has developed strategic partnerships with local industry experts, businesses, schools and universities alongside community partners such as the National Museums Liverpool, Community Libraries and groups to enhance equality of opportunity for local people. These partnerships also contribute to the diversification of our provision. We continue to work collaboratively to effect positive change within economically disadvantaged communities across Merseyside and ensure equality of opportunity for all students. Alongside the strengthening of our outreach activities, we are developing mechanisms to support young people through the application and transition phase to Higher Education. We are actively exploring new and deeper approaches to collaboration with local schools, universities, community organisations and other local and regional stakeholders to enhance curriculum opportunities and address gaps in education and skills provision across all levels of study.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk I: Risks to Access

Risk I.1: Recruitment of students from areas of low participation in HE

City of Liverpool College has consistently recruited a significantly higher proportion of young students from areas of lower participation in HE than most other HEIs. OfS data shows that TUNDRA 1 and 2 students made up 54% of all students in 20/21, 55% in 21/22 and 48% in 22/23, compared with a sector average of under 30% for these years.

However, despite this, the proportion of students from the lowest participation areas has decreased over time, and the proportion of students from the highest participation areas has increased. TUNDRA 1 students decreased from 30% to 20/21 to 24% in 22/23, and TUNDRA 5 students increased from 17% to 20% over the same period.

This developing trend has multiple reasons behind it, and potentially relates to several risks to equality of opportunity across the HE sector. These include a lack of opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills students need to apply successfully (EORR Risk 1) and the information and guidance students

receive (Risk 2). However, the main risk area that applies is the perception of students from lower participation areas of higher education (Risk 3) and the cost pressures they face (Risk 10).

Risk 1.2: Minority ethnic student recruitment

OfS dashboard data only records information on proportions of white and mixed ethnic groups. Our own data indicates around 80% of students on our higher education programmes identify as white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, and that this has remained consistent over time. The 2021 census showed that 74.4% of the UK population, and 77.3% of Liverpool's population, identify within this group,¹ but this compares to only 54% of the overall City of Liverpool College student population (including FE). This indicates that the proportion of minority ethnic students in our HE provision is consistent with their representation in the national and local populations from which we recruit, but also that they are significantly under-represented in HE compared with their representation in our FE programmes. Analysis also shows that nearly 25% of our TUNDRA 1 and 2 students come from minority ethnic groups, but these groups make up only half this proportion of TUNDRA 4 and 5 students.

The most significant indication of risk is that our HE student population is less ethnically diverse than our FE population, and a range of specific groups are significantly under-represented, and much more likely to also be part of other under-represented groups. They require sufficient information and guidance (EORR risk 2) to be aware of relevant opportunities in HE, and to correct specific negative perceptions they may have about progression to HE (EORR risk 3) once they are aware of suitable opportunities.

Risk 1.3: Recruitment of mature students

Sector data indicates that over 70% of HE students are consistently drawn from young students (under 21), with mature students (21 and over) making up less than 30% of the total. The proportion of mature students in HE at City of Liverpool has been consistently higher than this, and these students are afforded significantly more opportunities for access to HE. Our data indicates that significantly over 40% of all HE students are mature students, and OfS data confirms that this is even more marked for part-time students with mature students making up consistently over 75% of the total. This reflects and responds to the proportion of adults with HE qualifications in the Liverpool City Region, from which our students are largely recruited, which in most areas is in quintiles 1 and 2.2 However, since 2020/21, the proportion of mature students has shown some decline, falling from 55% to 47% of the total for all HE students in 2023/24 according to our data.

This decline reflects a need to ensure that potential adult HE learners, particularly in low participation areas, are suitably informed and guided about their HE options (EORR Risk 2), and that they are

¹ ONS, Statistical Bulletin, 'Ethnic group, England and Wales: Census 2021', 29 November 2022, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021>

² OfS, Adult HE 2011 participation data, Liverpool City Region: https://tableau.hefce.ac.uk/t/Public/views/InteractivemapSeptember2022/AdultHE2011?:embed_code_version=3&:embed=y&:loadOrderID=0&:display_spinner=no&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=n&:showVizHome=n&:origin=viz_share_link

financially able to access and sustain HE study, particularly in the context of increasing cost pressures brought about by the cost of living crisis (EORR Risk 10).

Risk 2: Risks to Continuation and Completion

Risk 2.1: Continuation and completion of students with mental health difficulties

Since 2018-19, when there was no difference in continuation, the continuation indicator values for students reporting and not reporting a disability has widened to 7.8pp, with students with no disability showing a higher continuation rate of 81.9% in 2021-22, and students with a disability recording 74.1%. Just over a quarter of our HE students declared a disability in 2023-24, so this represents a substantial part of our overall cohort. 10% of students (so just under half of those with disabilities) had disabilities related to learning such as dyslexia and other learning difficulties. A further 5.9% of students had mental health difficulties.

Evidence of student completion aligns closely with continuation for these indicators. Students with mental health difficulties had 6pp lower retention (in line with 2021-22). It is important therefore to ensure that students benefit from an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing and effectively supports them to maintain this (EORR risk 8).

Risk 2.2: Continuation and completion of students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2

Although a significant proportion of our HE students are 21 and over, and therefore not recently at school, eligibility for free school meals can serve as a useful proxy for measures of deprivation, including low household income, particularly where, as is the case for continuation, sufficient direct evidence (such as IMD) does not exist. When looking at this measure, we have moved from a position where in 2019-20 students eligible for FSM outperformed those who were not, to an increasing gap between the two, to the point that in 2021-22 86.5% of students not eligible for FSM successfully continued, compared with 69% of those who were eligible, a gap of 17.5pp. Where we have completion data related to deprivation (i.e. IMD), this generally supports these continuation gaps based on FSM eligibility. For example, for 2021-22, retention for students in IMD 1 and 2 (50% of all students) was 87% compared with retention of 91.5% for students in IMD 3 to 10, a gap of 4.5pp.

This risk indicator is closely aligned to risks 1.1 and 1.3. This is because we recruit a high proportion of our HE students from Liverpool and the Liverpool City Region, where there are low participation rates in HE for younger students and low HE qualification rates for older adults. These areas of low participation and low qualification are also, as already outlined, areas of high deprivation. Liverpool is the third most deprived local authority area in England, and Liverpool City Region is the most deprived of England's 38 LEP areas.³ As with these access risks, this risk is closely related to the cost pressures faced by many of our learners (EORR risk 10), based on the long-term impact of having a low household income, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis since the pandemic.

³ Liverpool City Council, 'The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019: A Liverpool Analysis', March 2020, [imd-2019-liverpool-analysis-main-report.pdf](https://www.liverpool.gov.uk/media/2020/03/19/imd-2019-liverpool-analysis-main-report.pdf)

Risk 3: Risks to Progression

Risk 3.1: Progression of students in IMD quintile 1

For City of Liverpool College, there is not enough data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey to compare positive progression between groups apart from mature (21 and over) vs young (under 21) students. Here, the gap has remained statistically insignificant since 2020-21 and shows in 2021-22 57% positive progression for under 21s and 57.9% positive progression for students who are 21 and over. However, this is in line with the progression data available for individual groups: for example progression for IMD1 students (the only group for whom Graduate Outcomes Survey data is available) is 57.2% for 2021-22, which has remained largely stable since 2018-19. This influences positive progression for our cohort as a whole, given that 38% of HE students are in IMD1. This compares with progression for IMD1 students across the sector of 67.2% for 2021-22, a 10pp gap that identifies this as an area of risk for this group of students and against sector performance as a whole. This is also relevant to EORR Risk 12, progression from higher education, as we need to ensure that students have the opportunity to undertake suitable preparatory activities, have appropriate information and guidance, and are in a financial position to progress to outcomes that are reflective of their levels of qualification.

Objectives

Objective 1: To improve recruitment of students from areas of low participation in HE

Indication of risk: The proportion of students recruited from TUNDRA 1 and 2, and POLAR 1, has decreased, and the proportion of students recruited from TUNDRA 5 and POLAR 5 has increased.

Risks to equality of opportunity: knowledge and skills, information and guidance, negative perceptions about HE, cost pressures.

Objective: To ensure that the proportion of students recruited from the areas of the lowest participation in HE in the Liverpool City Region reflects the proportion of the total population of LCR located in those areas.

Target: To recruit 65% of students from TUNDRA quintiles 1 and 2 by 2028-2029.

Objective 2: To recruit a greater proportion of minority ethnic students

Indication of risk: Although the ethnicity of our HE student population is proportionate to that of the population of the local region from which we recruit, non-white minority ethnic groups are under-represented compared to the student population of the college as a whole. This is particularly the case for students with African and Arab backgrounds, who are the third and fourth largest ethnic groups in our whole college population.

Risks to equality of opportunity: information and guidance, negative perceptions about HE

Objective: To ensure that the ethnicity of the college's HE student population reflects that of the overall student population of the college.

Target: Based on 2023-24 measures, to recruit 38% of HE students from non-British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish or other white backgrounds by 2028-29. This should include 8% of students from African backgrounds and 7% from Arab backgrounds.

Objective 3: To reduce the gap in recruitment between mature (21 and over) and young (under 21) students

Indication of risk: The proportion of mature students we recruit has fallen from over half to under half of all HE students. The fall in the proportion of mature students has affected full-time students in particular.

Risks to equality of opportunity: information and guidance, cost pressures.

Objective: To ensure that we return to recruiting a majority of students aged 21 and over, to reflect the low level of adults with HE qualifications in our main areas of recruitment.

Target: To restore the proportion of mature HE students to 2020/21 levels by 2028-29, so that they make up at least 55% of all HE students.

Objective 4: To ensure a higher proportion of students with mental health difficulties successfully continue and complete their courses

Indication of risk: Continuation and completion rates for students with disabilities have fallen in relation to those for students without disabilities. 5.9% of students report having mental health difficulties, and these students have lower retention than students without mental health difficulties.

Risks to equality of opportunity: an environment conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Objective: To ensure that students with mental health difficulties have the same opportunity to successfully continue in their course as other students.

Target: That students with mental health difficulties have the same retention on their courses as students without mental health difficulties by 2028-29.

Objective 5: To ensure a higher proportion of students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 successfully continue and complete their courses

Indication of risk: Where there is evidence that students have low household incomes, or other indications of deprivation, a lower proportion of them successfully complete their courses than students from affluent backgrounds.

Risks to equality of opportunity: cost pressures

Objective: To ensure that students with the highest levels of deprivation measured by IMD have the same opportunity to successfully complete their courses as other students.

Target: That students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 have the same retention on their courses as that of students in all other quintiles by 2028-29.

Objective 6: To ensure a higher proportion of students in IMD quintile 1 progress to outcomes that reflect their levels of qualification

Indication of risk: The progression of students who experience the highest levels of deprivation to positive destinations is lower than the positive progression of students in this group across the sector as a whole.

Risks to equality of opportunity: progression from higher education

Objective: To ensure that students with the highest levels of deprivation measured by IMD have the same opportunity to progress to outcomes that reflect their levels of qualification as students in this group across the sector as a whole.

Target: Based on 2021-22 benchmarks, that at least 67% of students in IMD quintile 1 progress to positive destinations by 2028-29.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Identifying and recruiting students from areas of low participation in HE in the Liverpool City Region.

Objectives and targets

The principal objective related to this intervention strategy is Objective 1: To improve recruitment of students from areas of low participation in HE.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Information and guidance, knowledge and skills, negative perceptions about HE.

Related objectives and targets

Objective 2, Objective 3, Objective 6.

Related risks to equality of opportunity

N/A

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Talks and resources promoting HE to current Level 3 students at the college	These talks are aimed at all students on Level 3 academic and vocational courses in the college about Higher Education options, both within City of Liverpool College and in other HEIs. They will be supported by follow-up online resources on HE options distributed to students and promoted on social media.	<p>Staff time in planning and delivering talks.</p> <p>Staff time producing and disseminating online resources.</p> <p>Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy 2. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £13625</p>	Increased recruitment of level 3 students to HE, including from COLC, comprising an increased proportion of TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students	Will contribute to intervention strategy 2.
Group and 1:1 progression support for students in low participation areas	Complementing talks to all Level 3 students, we will also be targeting TUNDRA 1 and 2 students with group and 1:1 careers coaching sessions to encourage progression to HE. This is a collaborative programme with Uni Connect.	<p>Staff time plus management and administrative support.</p> <p>Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy 2. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £13625</p>	Increased progression of POLAR 1 and TUNDRA 1 and 2 students to university.	Will contribute to intervention strategy 2.

<p>Community outreach workshops</p>	<p>Community support for disadvantaged students by working closely with libraries, schools and community partners in supporting skills gaps for current and potential students.</p> <p>Targeted workshops for community groups, employer engagement and Y10-11 students in schools. and campus visit for targeted learners.</p> <p>Development of existing activity. This is a collaborative activity with community stakeholders, employers and schools.</p>	<p>Staff time in designing, targeting and delivering workshops.</p> <p>Community stakeholder time and resources in providing venues and supporting attendance</p> <p>Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy 3. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £23125</p>	<p>Increased recruitment of young and mature students from low participation areas.</p>	<p>Intervention strategy 3 (shared activity).</p>
<p>HE skills masterclasses and summer schools for Level 3 students</p>	<p>In-college STEAM upskilling sessions (6 weeks - 90-minute workshops in the summer) in support for foundation knowledge and skills required at Level 4 and above study. Activities include step into HE talks and activities, taster sessions and masterclasses, study skills activities, student advice sessions. This is a collaborative activity with Uni Connect</p>	<p>Staff time in developing, providing and administering sessions.</p> <p>Cost of staff time and resources over 4 years: £13250.</p>	<p>Improved technical knowledge and skills in science and arts subjects. Improved learner understanding of routes into HE and entry requirements. Raised student aspirations about the prospects of studying at a higher level.</p>	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The cost of activities over 4 years is £64000. The cost of evaluation is estimated at £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Although aspiration raising pre-entry interventions do not have a strong evidential link to attainment and prior attainment is the dominant factor determining where students study, there is some evidence that improving students' expectations they will attend HE increases participation.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews	Narrative evaluation of student experiences of engagement activities	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Recruitment monitoring	Data on TUNDRA status of students recruited to HE programmes by year, broken down by programme.	Type 2	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Intervention strategy 2: To increase the ethnic diversity of HE students recruited to the college so that they reflect the ethnicity of the overall college population

Objectives and targets

The principal objective related to this intervention strategy is Objective 2: To recruit a greater proportion of minority ethnic students.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Information and guidance, negative perceptions about HE

Related objectives and targets

Objective 1, objective 3.

Related risks to equality of opportunity

N/A

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Information and advice sessions on L3 options at COLC	Information and advice sessions on L3 options, including vocational L3 and A-Levels, at COLC, and progression routes to HE, with tracking of attendance and engagement by ethnicity. Collaborative activity with local schools.	Staff time in designing and delivering sessions. Local schools' time and physical resources in facilitating session. Cost of staff time over 4 years: £16000	Increased applications by ethnic minority students to Level 3 courses with progression route to university	
Talks and resources promoting HE to current Level 3 students at the college	Information and advice sessions on HE options for L3 students, tracking attendance and engagement by ethnicity.	Staff time (shared activity with strategy 1). Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy 1. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £13625	Increased ethnic minority applications to HE	Combined with intervention strategy 1
Career coaching and advice	Careers coaching and advice for TUNDRA 1 and 2 students to promote progression to HE with tracking of takeup and outcomes of those in Black, Arab and other ethnic minority groups	Staff time in providing and administering coaching and advice. Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy 1. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £13625	Increased applications by ethnic minority students to HE, including City of Liverpool courses.	Combined with intervention strategy 1
Decolonising the curriculum	Review of the HE curriculum as part of the college's strategy for decolonising the curriculum. Highlighting of this work to staff and students including changed focus of curriculum.	Staff time in developing and implementing review of curriculum, and promoting outcomes. Staff time for activity over 4 years: £4000	Curriculum plans and delivery that reflects and promotes the principles of decolonisation.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The total cost of activities over four years is £47000. The estimated cost of evaluation is £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Based on existing pledge and activity for GTRSB, Black, Asian and other ethnic minority students which has led to increased cross-college recruitment of these groups. Pre-entry IAG has a small positive impact on participation, higher if it is personalised.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews	Narrative evaluation of student experiences of engagement activities	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Recruitment monitoring	Data on ethnicity of students recruited to HE programmes by year, broken down by programme.	Type 2	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Intervention strategy 3: To identify and recruit mature (over 21) students.

Objectives and targets

The principal objective that this intervention strategy contributes towards is objective 3: To reduce the gap in recruitment between mature (21 and over) and young (under 21) students.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Information and guidance, cost pressures.

Related objectives and targets

Objective 1, objective 3, objective 6.

Related risks to equality of opportunity

N/A

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Community outreach workshops	Community support for mature students in low participation communities by working closely with libraries and community partners in supporting skills gaps for current and potential students and promoting HE progression.	<p>Staff time in identifying student groups and stakeholders. Stakeholder time and resources in facilitating workshops.</p> <p>Cost of staff time and resources shared with activity in strategy I. Share for this strategy over 4 years: £24125.</p>	Engagement of potential students and stakeholders with outreach activities. Increased recruitment of mature students to HE courses.	Intervention strategy I (shared activity).
Targeted bursaries	Development and promotion of bursaries to mature students meeting low income criteria. Automatic payment of bursaries to students with household income under £25000.	<p>Staff time administering bursaries. Financial resources providing bursaries.</p> <p>Direct cost of bursaries including administration £120000 over 4 years (based on average 50% mature students over period and £240000 total targeted bursary cost).</p>	Increased applications of mature students to courses, increased proportion of mature students enrolled on HE courses.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The cost of activities over 4 years is £144000. The cost of evaluation is estimated at £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Financial support is supported by emerging high-quality evidence that needs-based grants promote retention/completion.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews	Narrative evaluation of student experiences of community outreach workshops.	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Analysis of takeup and impact of targeted bursaries	Analysis of allocation of targeted bursaries and correlation with mature student recruitment,	Type 2 and Type 3	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Intervention strategy 4: Support of students with mental health difficulties

Objectives and targets

The principal objective contributed to by this intervention strategy is Objective 5: To ensure a higher proportion of students with mental health difficulties successfully continue and complete their courses.

Risks to equality of opportunity

An environment conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Related objectives and targets

N/A

Related risks to equality of opportunity

N/A

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Coaching support for students returning from absence	New programme to identify students returning from absence, including those with mental health difficulties, and providing 1:1 support sessions to assist them to re-engage with learning.	Staff time providing support. Cost over 4 years: £14000.	Continuation and completion of students reporting mental health difficulties in line with other students.	
Promotion of support services for students with mental health difficulties	Promotion and delivery of support and counselling services for students with mental health difficulties, including HE students attending part-time and in the evening. Development of existing activity.	Staff time promoting and providing support. Cost over 4 years: £22000	Significantly above benchmark students reporting awareness of mental health support in NSS; continuation and completion of students reporting mental health difficulties in line with other students.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The total cost of activities over 4 years is £36000. The cost of evaluation is estimated at £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

There is some evidence coaching and counselling have a small positive impact, but it is not causal and local evaluation of impact is required.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Targeted student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews, analysis of NSS	Narrative evaluation of experiences of students with mental health difficulties.	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Analysis of continuation and completion of students with mental health difficulties	Analysis of outcomes for students with mental health difficulties and correlation with all students.	Type 2 and 3	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Intervention strategy 5: Support for students with low incomes to successfully continue and complete their courses

Objectives and targets

The principal objective contributed to by this intervention strategy is Objective 6: To ensure a higher proportion of students in IMD quintile 1 successfully continue and complete their courses.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Cost pressures.

Related objectives and targets

Objective 1, Objective 3

Related risks to equality of opportunity

Information and guidance

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Money advice and guidance for HE students	HE money advice and guidance service activity.	Staff time in planning and delivering advice and guidance. Cost over 4 years: £21000.	Increased takeup of service. Usage of hardship fund. Reduced level of non-continuation or non-completion due to financial difficulties.	Will contribute to impact of intervention strategies 1 and 3
Targeted bursaries for low income and other vulnerable groups	Continue and develop existing bursary scheme to ensure it is effectively targeted to support students with low incomes from IMD 1	Financial resources providing bursaries. Targeted bursary for students with low incomes over 4 years is £240000. Shared activity with strategy 3. Share for this strategy is £120000 (remainder of low income bursaries for students under 21). Staff administrative costs over 4 years for bursary scheme: £2000 (allocated to this strategy).	Distribution of bursaries in line with planned volumes. Reduced level of non-continuation or non-completion due to financial difficulties.	Shared activity with intervention strategy 2

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The total cost of activities over 4 years is £143000. The estimated cost of evaluation is £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

There is some evidence that post-entry (as well as pre-entry) financial support positively impacts continuation/completion.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Targeted student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews	Narrative evaluation of students' awareness and experience of access financial support, and impact of this.	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Analysis of takeup of financial support and comparison to continuation and completion	Analysis and correlation between take-up of support, continuation and completion by IMD 1 students.	Type 2, Type 3	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Intervention strategy 6: To support students' successful progression from their courses

Objectives and targets

The principal objective contributed to by this intervention strategy is Objective 7: To ensure a higher proportion of students in IMD quintile 1 progress to outcomes that reflect their levels of qualification.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Progression from higher education.

Related objectives and targets

N/A

Related risks to equality of opportunity

Information and guidance.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Enhanced careers information, advice and guidance	Continuation and development of careers information, advice and guidance programme for current HE students, enhanced and targeted for students at risk of not securing appropriate onward employment or education.	Staff time developing and providing advice and guidance. Cost over 4 years: £27000.	That students in IMD 1 have at least same proportion of positive progression as other students in the college, and of IMD 1 students across the sector.	
Careers mentoring programme	New mentoring programme for HE students, including IMD 1 students, by college alumni who have gone on to successful graduate employment or Level 5/6 qualifications to work with them to identify progression opportunities and build their readiness.	Staff time in developing alumni network and promoting scheme. Alumni time and resources contributing to scheme. Staff costs over 4 years: £4000.	That students in IMD 1 have at least same proportion of positive progression as other students in the college, and of IMD 1 students across the sector.	
Development of employability skills in the curriculum	Development of existing activity to review employability content of existing HE curriculum and to put in place new employability elements, including taught elements and work placement where possible and appropriate.	Staff time in reviewing curriculum and developing and delivering new curriculum elements. Staff costs over 4 years in developing curriculum elements: £4000. Delivery integrated into course modules as part of existing delivery hours.	That students in IMD 1 have at least same proportion of positive progression as other students in the college, and of IMD 1 students across the sector.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

The total cost of activities over 4 years is £35000. The estimated cost of evaluation is £4000.

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Post-entry IAG for employability has been shown to have a positive impact on career choices but there is not a detailed enough evidence base to show a causal link with specific interventions.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Targeted student surveys, focus group discussions and interviews	Narrative evaluation of students' awareness of progression opportunities and access to them, and impact of this.	Type 1	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.
Analysis of student progression	Analysis of student progression destinations and trends in progression overall and by student group	Type 2	Annual self-evaluation report, academic evaluation report in 2028/29.

Evaluation of the plan

We will undertake, where specified, Type 1, 2 and 3 evaluations for the activities detailed under this intervention strategy. Data linked to APP objectives is used to track progress against milestones and the evidence is shared through reports which feed into practitioner and leadership discussions and planning. We will use a combination of external data benchmarks, including OfS dashboards, and detailed analysis of our internal data. We will continue to ensure that we are proactive and responsive and that our work is agile, so that continuous improvements are made. Those responsible for the evaluation of each strategy will regularly highlight the progress against milestones and raise attention to new trends and new risks through summary reports that will also be used for governance. In addition, we will ensure that students are fully involved in evaluating our work using student voice.

To support evaluations, surveys will be designed to be accessible and to encourage higher returns. This comes from understanding historical patterns of low participation with internal and external surveys from HE students. Comparative methodologies will be applied so that gap analysis can continue to be applied. Surveys will help us ascertain the immediate impact of the interventions and support the focus of semi structured interview and focus group discussions.

Whole provider approach

Our access interventions begin with local school engagement. We work closely with partner schools through our outreach teams. Over the next 5 years, our HE provision will complement the overall strategic purpose of the college in continuing to establish key partnerships and develop co-produced and co-delivered curriculum models with business to develop sustainable talent for the higher-level skills needs of the local and national economy. We will collaborate with employers and industry experts to continuously enhance lecturers' knowledge and skills through co-production, co-delivery and CPD activity.

We are developing a high-impact strategy for progression between levels. We aim to raise the importance of progression plans to higher education in cross college curriculum planning structures and processes and continue evolving the Shaping Futures programme to target priority cohorts and skill areas, increasing progression to HE from under-represented groups. To support internal progression within the institution, we will continue to develop and implement a programme of wider HE tasters, masterclasses, exhibitions and career-focussed guidance events for level 2 and 3 students across the college to run throughout the academic year. Termly Progress Boards for all of our programmes, including HE, reinforce the ambition for all students to make, or exceed, expected progress across all aspects of their learning plan and include the wrap-around team for support and personal development. The process involves detailed analysis of individual progress against targets, attendance, and behaviour, and ensures prompt intervention where required.

We will place an increased focus on those students who are furthest from Higher Education, providing support and guidance throughout the application process. Our Access and Participation Plan supports our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and targets progression activity at under-represented groups to build an inclusive strategic approach to progression. We have signed the pledge to support care experienced young people through mentoring and outreach activities with the virtual school. We have also signed the GTRSB into Higher Education pledge to support students from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater communities breakdown barriers that prevent them from accessing and staying in higher education. In 2024, we were awarded the status of 'College of Sanctuary' in recognition of the work that the institution continues to engage with to create the sense of belonging for all of our students. We also work closely with regional and local partners in promoting the wellbeing of our students and staff from the LGBT+ communities.

Given the understanding of the history of Liverpool and its links to the slave trade, and its present aims of promoting race equality and social value, we have a long term focus on offering a decolonised curriculum, meaningful partnerships with key institutions across the city region and in reducing inequalities between the different group of students. We have formalised this work through key frameworks on The Liverpool Way- an inclusive pedagogy, the Trauma Informed College, the Personal Development Plan, The Social and Cultural Curriculum Framework, and the Decolonising the Curriculum Framework. We will deliver 'the Liverpool way' and ensure all HE students benefit from the most effective, research-informed approaches and building these into every aspect of the curriculum and every learning space.

Our operational implementation of the access and participation plan is managed by our Access and Participation Subgroup, chaired by our Dean responsible for our HE provision, with our Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the whole college acting as Deputy Chair. They work with managers responsible for additional learning support, careers and safeguarding across the college and is governed by the HE strategy group, chaired by the Director of Academic Studies and Higher Technical Education, and the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, and its work informs our core strategic objectives as an institution to eliminate disadvantage.

Student Consultation

We have consulted with the Students' Union on this plan, including the risks and intervention strategies identified in it. An earlier draft was shared and discussed with the HE Vice President of the Student Union in our HE strategy meetings. Following this, a further focus group was held with a group of current HE students. These students, from their own experience of applying to HE courses at the college from under-represented groups, identified that the most important access and participation activities are promoting HE opportunities in communities themselves, raising students' awareness of the support they can receive and using students and others from under-represented groups to tell their stories and act as role models. These insights prompted significant further development of the plan, and particularly confirmed and shaped the strategies for community-based workshops for access, promotion of support services and the use of students and alumni to provide mentoring for progression.

We recognise that further, systematic development of our mechanisms for student voice is required to ensure that we will be able to also submit a separate student submission with future access and participation plans. However, we will ensure that mechanisms for student representation include evaluation of the implementation of this plan over its lifetime.

Provision of Information to students

There is clear guidance available on our fees for existing and prospective students, and any financial support available to students (such as bursaries and scholarships) on our website, alongside eligibility criteria. Fees and Funding information will also be published in our prospectus and supplementary information produced and published both online (intranet) and in print. Outreach teams will disseminate information to students, teachers, parents and carers in schools, colleges and community groups. Information will also be shared at Open Days.

Our Recruitment and Outreach teams will disseminate information to schools, students, teachers, parents and supporters, carers and community groups. Information will also continue to be shared at Open Days. Information about UCAS and Student Finance England will be made available in a timely fashion. This will be provided in full and with accurate information of the aggregate amount of fees and other costs required to complete our HNC, HND, CERTED, HTQs, PGCE and degree programmes. Students can access our access and participation plan through our website and student intranet.

College HE Hardship Fund

The HE Hardship Fund offers grants to students in financial difficulty, which do not need paying back. The fund helps students meet the costs for things like rent, bills, food, course related costs, some study related travel or medical costs. Successful applicants are given financial assistance to help with costs.

College HE Hardship Fund DSA Refund

This fund supports students who are required to pay for evidence in order to claim Disabled Students' Allowance. Once the student has enrolled, they submit the receipt to confirm payment and are then refunded by the college.

College HE Bursary

We also provide a bursary for low-income students. For 2025-26 onwards, and through the lifetime of the plan, our bursary eligibility criteria will be as follows:

Full-time bursary: £1000 per year

Available to:

- Full-time students with a household income of £25,000 or below
- Full-time students who are care leavers, young adult carers, young people estranged from their family, people from the gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, refugees and students from military families of any household income.

Part-time bursary: £500 per year

Available to:

- Part-time students with a household income of £25,000 or below
- Part-time students who are care leavers, young adult carers, young people estranged from their family, people from the gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, refugees and students from military families of any household income.

Students who are fully funded by their employer or sponsor (excluding Student Finance England) are not eligible for this support.

The bursary is paid in cash in three instalments per year of study as follows:

	Full Time	Part Time	
1 st Payment	£400.00	£200.00	November
2 nd Payment	£400.00	£200.00	February
3 rd Payment	£200.00	£100.00	June

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

The City of Liverpool College set out to conduct a full assessment of performance to identify the most significant indications of risk to equality of opportunity for our students. We are a small HE provider who also offer a number of technical qualifications. We therefore drew our data from a number of sources to identify the potential indicators of risks, looking at our internal data sources and also drew some insights from the Office for Students (OfS) access and participation data dashboards.

We assessed student attendance, retention, performance and attainment gaps at individual and course level, and identified risks to equality of opportunity based on the following factors: gender; ethnic background; age; deprivation index; disability; TUNDRA; and previous qualifications, for which we seek to address through our commitments outlined in this plan.

We identified that the use of internal data could lead individuals to be identified, in these cases, we aggregated data. To draw understanding from a single characteristic reference point, where possible, we disaggregated student group data as much as possible. The analysis also followed suppression rules outlined by the OfS where data represented small population cohorts (for example minority ethnic groups with a population size of less than 5 over the years, phased out courses, and part-time students were not included).

We have identified the following risks to equality of opportunity. For each indication of risk identified there is an associated objective referenced in the 'Objectives' section.

Risk 1: Risks to Access

Liverpool ranks as the 3rd most deprived local authority⁴, with a 20.2% Absolute poverty indicator of children aged under 16 coming from low income families (2022). The Liverpool City Region average attainment 8 score in Key Stage 4 is 45.3% which is lower than the national average at 48.9%⁵.

In our Higher education student cohort (2023/24), approximately:

- 31% have an identified disability or mental health difficulty, of which 11% access Disabled Students' allowance.
- 37% of students have a Grade 5+ on entering HE, of which 32% have an identified disability.
- 18% are minority ethnic students.
- The Lancet Public Health report offers evidence that rising child poverty rates are contributing to an increase in children entering care in England. Internally we

⁴ IMD -Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

⁵ Source Liverpool City Council data <https://liverpool.gov.uk/council/key-statistics-and-data/headline-indicators/education-and-skills/>

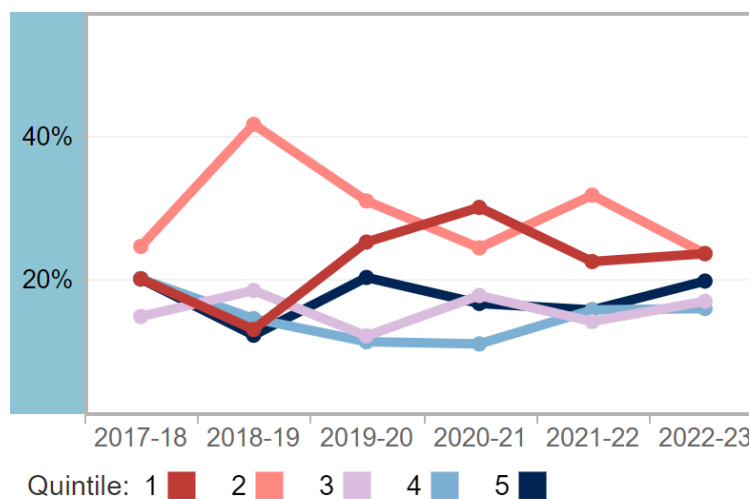
calculated that approximately 3% of our higher education cohort were care experienced over the last 4 years, with an average retention rate of 93%. In 2023/24, this fell to 2%.

We found variation in indications of risk between particular characteristics over the years identified the following:

Risk 1.1: Recruitment of students from areas of low participation in HE

City of Liverpool College has consistently recruited a significantly higher proportion of young students from areas of lower participation in HE than most other HEIs. OfS data shows that TUNDRA 1 and 2 students made up 54% of all students in 20/21, 55% in 21/22 and 48% in 22/23, compared with a sector average of under 30% for these years.

However, despite this, the proportion of students from the lowest participation areas has decreased over time, and the proportion of students from the highest participation areas has increased. TUNDRA 1 students decreased from 30% to 20/21 to 24% in 22/23, and TUNDRA 5 students increased from 17% to 20% over the same period. This is triangulated by our own POLAR data, showing the difference between the proportion of POLAR 1 and POLAR 5 students decreasing from 25pp in 20/21 to 20pp in 23/24. Around 65% (three year average 2021-24) of our HE students come from Liverpool City Region postcodes. An analysis of MSOAs in the Liverpool City Region shows that 65% of LCR MSOAs are in TUNDRA quintiles 1-2. This means that, even taking into account the variation in population between a range of 5000-15000 per MSOA, there is some work to do to restore the proportion of TUNDRA 1 and 2 students recruited to reflect the population of Liverpool City Region.



TUNDRA: indicator values for young (under 21) entrants (OfS dashboard – full-time students)

This developing trend has multiple reasons behind it, and potentially relates to several risks to equality of opportunity across the HE sector. These include a lack of opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills students need to apply successfully (EORR Risk 1) and the information and guidance students receive (Risk 2). However, the main risk area that applies is the

perception of students from lower participation areas of higher education (Risk 3) and the cost pressures they face (Risk 10).

Risk I.2: Minority ethnic student recruitment

OfS dashboard data only records information on proportions of white and mixed ethnic groups. Our own data indicates around 80% of students on our higher education programmes identify as white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, and that this has remained consistent over time. The 2021 census showed that 74.4% of the UK population, and 77.3% of Liverpool's population, identify within this group, but this compares to only 54% of the overall City of Liverpool College student population (including FE). This indicates that the proportion of minority ethnic students in our HE provision is consistent with their representation in the national and local populations from which we recruit, but also that they are significantly under-represented in HE compared with their representation in our FE programmes. Of these minority ethnic groups, only other white HE students are comparable to their counterparts in the college as a whole in percentage terms (6.6% vs 7.8%), and this group does not include Gypsy or Irish Traveller students. These and other groups have significantly lower proportions in HE than the general college population, particularly African and Arab students. This means it is not possible to report the representation of these specific groups due to the risk of identifying individual students.

Intersectional analysis of our own data shows that students who are not white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British and are HE students are disproportionately likely to come from areas of low HE participation. For example, in 2023/24 24.2% of TUNDRA 1 and 2 students were from minority ethnic groups, but only 12.9% of TUNDRA 4 and 5 students were from minority ethnic groups.

It should also be noted that the proportion of white English/Welsh/Irish/Scottish/Northern Irish/British students progression from our FE provision to all HEIs is 60%, with 40% coming from other ethnic groups. This is more closely in line with the population of the college as a whole and triangulates a disparity with progression to our own HE provision.

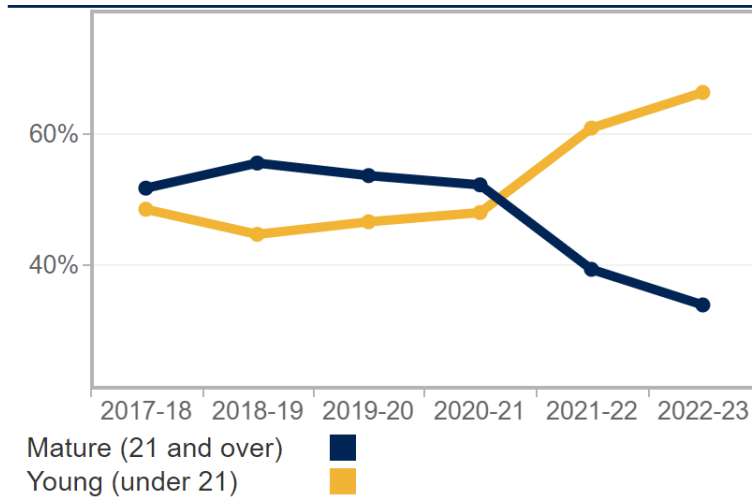
The most significant indication of risk is that our HE student population is less ethnically diverse than our FE population, and a range of specific groups are both significantly under-represented and more likely to also be part of other disadvantaged groups. They require sufficient information and guidance (EORR risk 2) to be aware of relevant opportunities in HE, and to correct specific negative perceptions they may have about progression to HE (EORR risk 3) once they are aware of suitable opportunities.

Risk I.3: Recruitment of mature students

Sector data indicates that over 70% of HE students are consistently drawn from young students (under 21), with mature students (21 and over) making up less than 30% of the total. The proportion of mature students in HE at City of Liverpool has been consistently higher than this, and these students are afforded significantly more opportunities for access to HE. Our data indicates that significantly over 40% of all HE students are mature students, and OfS data confirms that this is even more marked for part-time students with mature students making up

consistently over 75% of the total. This reflects and responds to the proportion of adults with HE qualifications in the Liverpool City Region, from which our students are largely recruited, which in most areas is in quintiles 1 and 2.⁶ However, since 2020/21, the proportion of mature students has shown some decline, falling from 55% to 47% of the total for all HE students in 2023/24 according to our data. As the OfS dashboard shows, this has been more significant for full-time students:

Age (indicator values for entrants, full-time students, OfS dashboard):



This decline reflects a need to ensure that potential adult HE learners, particularly in low participation areas, are suitably informed and guided about their HE options (EORR Risk 2), and that they are financially able to access and sustain HE study, particularly in the context of increasing cost pressures brought about by the cost of living crisis (EORR Risk 10).

Risk 2: Risks to Continuation and Completion

‘Continuation’ refers to any of the following three outcomes for a student one year and 14 days after they have started their studies: Students may have continued their studies at the same higher education provider. Alternatively, they may have qualified: that is they have received a higher education qualification. Finally, they may have transferred: continued their studies, but at a different higher education provider.⁷ Risks to continuation therefore are indicated by students who are not retained in learning beyond the first year of a course lasting more than one year, or students who do not successfully complete a course that lasts for a year or less.

This is particularly relevant for our provision as 79% of our undergraduate students are full-time (OfS access and participation dashboard), and, of enrolments, in 2023-24, 44% were following HNC courses, and a further 11% Cert Ed or PGCE courses, all of which are programmes which typically last one year for full-time students. This means that risks to equality of opportunity for

⁶ OfS, Adult HE 2011 participation data, Liverpool City Region:

https://tableau.hefce.ac.uk/t/Public/views/InteractivemapSeptember2022/AdultHE2011?:embed_code_version=3&:embed=y&:loadOrderID=0&:display_spinner=no&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=n&:showVizHome=n&:origin=viz_share_link

⁷ OfS- Continuation and transfer rates

a majority of our students occur up to the continuation stage of the student lifecycle, rather than later stages.

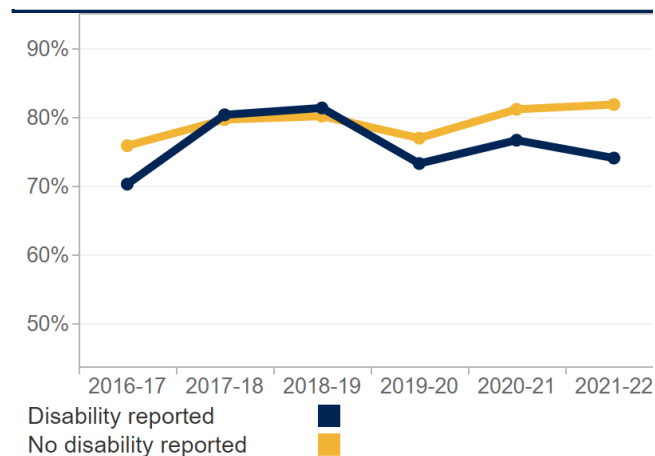
Given this considerable overlap between students continuing and completing their courses, and the risks associated with them, we have assessed completion (students who successfully complete their course of study) alongside continuation. In our assessment of risk we have also chosen to focus on these stages of the lifecycle and not attainment, as only a very small part of our provision consists of Level 6 study where degree classifications (which attainment measures) are available as an outcome.

The Access and Participation Dashboard indicates that there is insufficient data from our cohorts to provide a full set of indicator continuation or completion values based on TUNDRA, deprivation, ethnicity or ABCS, so we have not focused on these in identifying continuation risks. Furthermore, the dashboard shows that the continuation gap between young (under 21) and mature (21 and over) students has closed over time, and is now at 2.7pp. Our own data also indicates there is now (2023/24) no gap in retention between young and mature students. We have therefore focused on other characteristics where there is sufficient data to draw reliable conclusions and statistically significant gaps in continuation or completion.

Risk 2.1: Continuation and completion of students with mental health difficulties

Since 2018-19, when there was no difference in continuation, the continuation indicator values for students reporting and not reporting a disability has widened to 7.8pp, with students with no disability showing a higher continuation rate of 81.9% in 2021-22, and students with a disability recording 74.1%:

Disability reported: continuation indicator rates (full-time students, OfS dashboard)



Just over a quarter of our HE students declared a disability in 2023-24, so this represents a substantial part of our overall cohort. 10% of students (so just under half of those with disabilities) had disabilities related to learning such as dyslexia and other learning difficulties. A further 5.9% of students had mental health difficulties.

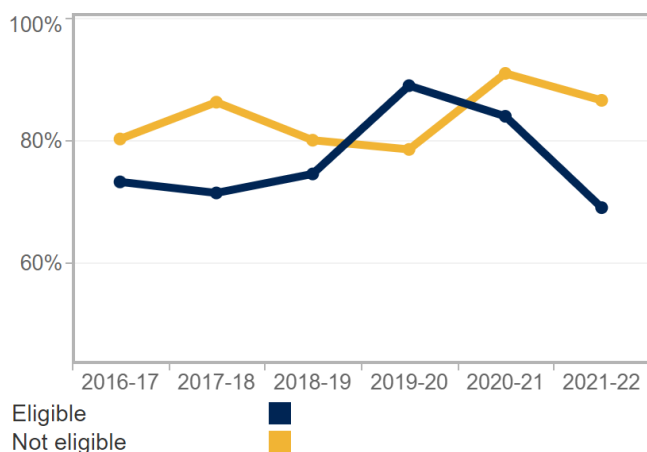
Evidence of student completion aligns closely with continuation for these indicators. Students reporting mental health difficulties have gone from a position of having 8pp higher retention than students not doing so in 2020-21 to having 9pp lower retention in 2022-23. It is therefore important to recover and sustain a situation where students benefit from an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing and that this effectively supports them to maintain these (EORR risk 8). Here, NSS results triangulate this somewhat declining picture, with the communication of information about mental wellbeing support services in line with national benchmarks for 2023, but falling 19.3pp below for 2024, demonstrating a need to show that these are appropriately targeted and promoted.

We also considered students with learning difficulties as a potential separate and specific area of risk. There is some evidence that these have had an impact on continuation and completion. For students with dyslexia (the largest group of learning difficulties) retention was 88% in 2023-24, 3pp down on overall retention and a drop from 2021-22. The indicators of this risk align to the need to ensure that all students, and particularly those with learning difficulties, receive sufficient and appropriate academic support (EORR risk 6). Having said this, NSS results for academic support have remained stable for 2023 and 2024, and in line with national benchmarks. Given the evidence overall, we do not consider that learning difficulties constitute a significant enough distinct area of risk to equality of opportunity to require a separate intervention strategy as part of the access and participation plan. However, we are nonetheless mitigating this risk by developing our support for all HE students with academic research and writing skills, consisting of a central programme of lectures and supporting online resources for whole cohort, and small group and 1:1 support for students with research and writing for assignments which will be tailored to the learning needs of individual students, including those with learning difficulties.

Risk 2.2: Continuation and completion of students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2

Although a significant proportion of our HE students are 21 and over, and therefore not recently at school, eligibility for free school meals can serve as a useful proxy for measures of deprivation, including low household income, particularly where, as is the case for continuation, sufficient direct evidence (such as IMD) does not exist. When looking at this measure, we have moved from a position where in 2019-20 students eligible for FSM outperformed those who were not, to an increasing gap between the two, to the point that in 2021-22 86.5% of students not eligible for FSM successfully continued, compared with 69% of those who were eligible, a gap of 17.5pp.

Eligibility for free school meals: continuation indicator values (full-time students, OfS dashboard).



Where we have completion data related to deprivation (i.e. IMD), this generally supports these continuation gaps based on FSM eligibility. For example, for 2021-22, retention for students in IMD 1 and 2 (50% of all students) was 87% compared with retention of 91.5% for students in IMD 3 to 10, a gap of 4.5pp.

This risk indicator is closely aligned to risks 1.1 and 1.3. This is because we recruit a high proportion of our HE students from Liverpool and the Liverpool City Region, where there are low participation rates in HE for younger students and low HE qualification rates for older adults. These areas of low participation and low qualification are also, as already outlined, areas of high deprivation. Liverpool is the third most deprived local authority area in England, and Liverpool City Region is the most deprived of England’s 38 LEP areas.⁸ As with these access risks, this risk is closely related to the cost pressures faced by many of our learners (EORR risk 10), based on the long-term impact of having a low household income, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis since the pandemic.

Risk 3: Risks to Progression

Progression is defined as students’ progression into managerial or professional employment, further study or other positive outcomes (OfS Access and Participation Dashboard). Positive progression for the sector as a whole has remained stable at just over 70% for full-time students and just over 80% for part-time students. There is also a sector-wide gap in positive progression based on deprivation, of 10.6pp between IMD quintiles 1 and 5 in 2019-20 and 10pp in 2021-22.⁹

⁸ Liverpool City Council, ‘The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019: A Liverpool Analysis’, March 2020, [imd-2019-liverpool-analysis-main-report.pdf](https://www.liverpool.gov.uk/media/2020/03/2020-03-17-imd-2019-liverpool-analysis-main-report.pdf)

⁹ Office for Students, ‘Findings from the access and participation data dashboard: Sector summary’, March 2023, [Access and participation resources - Findings from the data: sector summary \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2023/03/2023-03-23-access-and-participation-resources-finding-from-the-data-sector-summary)

Risk 3.1: Progression of students in IMD quintile 1

For City of Liverpool College, there is not enough data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey to compare positive progression between groups apart from mature (21 and over) vs young (under 21) students. Here, the gap has remained statistically insignificant since 2020-21 and shows in 2021-22 57% positive progression for under 21s and 57.9% positive progression for students who are 21 and over. However, this is in line with the progression data available for individual groups: for example progression for IMD1 students (the only group for whom Graduate Outcomes Survey data is available) is 57.2% for 2021-22, which has remained largely stable since 2018-19. This influences positive progression for our cohort as a whole, given that 38% of HE students are in IMD 1. This compares with progression for IMD 1 students across the sector of 67.2% for 2021-22, a 10pp gap that identifies this as an area of risk for this group of students and against sector performance as a whole. This is also relevant to EORR Risk 12, progression from higher education, as we need to ensure that students have the opportunity to undertake suitable preparatory activities, have appropriate information and guidance, and are in a financial position to progress to outcomes that are reflective of their levels of qualification.

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.

Each intervention strategy was developed and analysed as a theory of change using a TASO core framework. Outcomes and impacts were identified using TASO's Mapping Outcomes and Activities Tools (MOAT).

Intervention Strategy 1: Identifying and recruiting students from areas of low participation in HE in the Liverpool City Region.

Situation: COLC recruits a significantly higher proportion of TUNDRA 1 and 2 students than most other HEIs. However, over time this has started to become less marked, with TUNDRA 1 students decreasing and TUNDRA 5 increasing.

Aims: To ensure that the proportion of students recruited from the areas of the lowest participation in HE in the Liverpool City Region reflects the proportion of the total population of LCR located in those areas.

Inputs:

- Career coaches and administrative support staff time jointly funded by Uni Connect and COLC
- Achievement coach and HE programme leader time funded by APP
- L3 staff and Head of School support
- Support from community stakeholders

Activities:

Universal:

- Talks promoting HE to current L3 students at COLC
- HE skills masterclasses and summer schools for L3 students at COLC

Targeted:

- Community outreach workshops in TUNDRA 1 and 2 areas in LCR
- Group and 1:1 progression support for TUNDRA 1 and 2 L3 students (Uni Connect activity)

Outputs:

- Attendance at activities by all COLC L3 students
- Increased number of L3 students submitting applications to HE

- Students increase their knowledge and skills in science and arts subjects

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of benefits of HE
- Increased knowledge of academic life in HE
- Increased knowledge of future options
- Increased confidence to successfully apply to HE
- Increased motivation
- Increased resilience
- Increased applications to HE
- Increased enrolments to HE

Impact:

Increased number of underrepresented groups (TUNDRA 1 and 2) enrol in HE

Rationale: Although aspiration raising pre-entry interventions do not have a strong evidential link to attainment and prior attainment is the dominant factor determining where students study, there is some evidence that improving students' expectations they will attend HE increases participation (TASO toolkit)

Assumptions: all planned students/potential students attend and engage with sessions; attendance translates into intended knowledge, behaviours and increased HE applications; targeted students attend sessions.

Intervention Strategy 2: To increase the ethnic diversity of HE students recruited to the college so that they reflect the ethnicity of the overall college population

Situation: Although the ethnicity of our HE student population is proportionate to that of the population of our local region, non-white minority ethnic groups, especially African and Arab, are under-represented compared to the college as a whole.

Aims: To ensure that the ethnicity of the college's HE student population reflects that of the overall student population of the college.

Inputs:

Schools liaison team time.

Resources created by liaison team.

Career coaches and administrative support staff time jointly funded by Uni Connect and COLC

Time by leaders and managers and HE programme leaders to design and implement decolonising of HE curriculum.

Activities:

Universal

- Information and advice sessions on L3 options at COLC with tracking of attendance and engagement by ethnicity
- Information and advice sessions on HE options for L3 students, highlighting work to decolonise curriculum and tracking engagement by ethnicity

Targeted

* 1:1 progression support for students in targeted ethnic groups and TUNDRA 1 or 2 showing interest in HE

Outputs:

- Attendance at L3 sessions from COLC L2 students and students from local schools
- Involvement of L3 minority ethnic students year on year in 1:1/small group progression support
- Increased number of L3 students at COLC from ethnic minorities
- Increased ethnic minority applications to HE

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of benefits of HE
- Increased knowledge of future options
- Increased confidence to successfully apply to HE
- Increased applications to HE
- Increased enrolments to HE

Impact:

- Increased applications from targeted ethnic groups to HE
- Increased enrolments from targeted ethnic groups in HE

Rationale: Based on existing pledge and activity for GTRSB, Black, Asian and other ethnic minority students which has led to increased cross-college recruitment of these groups. Pre-entry IAG has a small positive impact on participation, higher if it is personalised (TASO toolkit).

Assumptions: all targeted students attend and engage with sessions; TUNDRA 1 and 2 intersectionality supports ethnic minority recruitment; decolonising the curriculum encourages ethnic minority applications

Intervention Strategy 3: To identify and recruit mature (over 21) students.

Situation: Although still higher than the sector-wide proportion of these students, the proportion of mature students we recruit has fallen from over half to under half of all HE students

Aims: To ensure that we return to recruiting a majority of students aged 21 and over, to reflect the low level of adults with HE qualifications in our main areas of recruitment.

Inputs:

- HE leaders developing and targeting community workshops
- Community stakeholders supporting and facilitating workshops
- Staff marketing bursaries and using SLC data to identify suitable students.

Activities:

- Community outreach workshops for mature students in low participation communities to support skills gaps and promote HE progression
- Establishment and promotion of automatically paid bursaries to mature students meeting low income criteria.

Outputs:

- Attendance and engagement of potential students in outreach activities
- Increased applications by mature students to HE courses
- Increased use of bursary fund by mature students.

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of benefits from HE
- Increased knowledge of support available within HE
- Increased knowledge of career options
- Increased knowledge of financial support available
- Increased confidence to apply successfully to HE
- Increased motivation
- Increased resilience
- Increased applications to HE
- Increased enrolment in HE

Impact:

- Increased number of underrepresented groups (i.e. 21 years and over) students enrol in HE.

Rationale: Financial support supported by emerging high-quality evidence that needs-based grants promote retention/completion (TASO Toolkit).

Assumptions: targeted mature students attend workshops, workshop attendance leads to increased suitable applications, bursary promotion leads to increased mature student applications.

Intervention Strategy 4: Support of students with mental health difficulties

Situation: Continuation and completion rates for students with disabilities have fallen in relation to those for students without disabilities. 5.9% of students report having mental health difficulties, and these students have lower retention than students without mental health difficulties.

Aims: To ensure that students with mental health difficulties have the same opportunity to successfully complete their course as other students.

Inputs:

- Leaders and managers developing and promoting support services
- Staff time providing pastoral coaching support

Activities:

- Coaching support for students returning from absence
- Promotion of support services for students with mental health difficulties

Outputs:

- Increased awareness of students of mental health support (reported in NSS)
- Increased attendance and engagement from students reporting mental health difficulties

Outcomes:

- Knowledge of support available
- Engagement with curriculum
- Knowledge of support available
- Confidence to declare support needs
- Wellbeing
- Student self-regulation
- Motivation
- Sense of belonging
- Staff: knowledge of support available

Impact:

Students with mental health difficulties continue and complete in line with other students.

Rationale: There is some evidence coaching and counselling have a small positive impact, but it is not causal and local evaluation of impact is required (TASO Toolkit).

Assumptions: Engagement of students with coaching support; promotion of support will lead to recognition; student attendance and engagement linked to continuation and completion

Intervention Strategy 5: Support for students with low incomes to successfully continue and complete their courses

Situation: Where there is evidence that students have low household incomes, or other indications of deprivation, a lower proportion of them successfully complete their courses than students from affluent backgrounds.

Aims: To ensure that students with the highest levels of deprivation measured by IMD have the same opportunity to successfully complete their courses as other students.

Inputs:

- Staff time to plan and deliver financial advice and guidance
- Staff time to administer bursary programme
- Financial resources to support bursaries

Activities:

- Money advice and guidance service
- Targeted bursaries for low income and other vulnerable groups

Outputs:

- Student takeup of financial advice service
- Increased use of bursary funding

Outcomes:

- Knowledge of support available
- Applications for financial support
- Social self-efficacy
- Student self-regulation
- Wellbeing

Impact:

- Reduced level of non-continuation or non-completion due to financial difficulties.

Rationale: There is some evidence that post-entry (as well as pre-entry) financial support positively impacts continuation/completion (TASO Toolkit).

Assumptions: students will access financial advice when it is offered; bursary availability will lead to student usage and usage of bursaries will lead to self-efficacy, self-regulation and wellbeing; these will lead to reduced non-completion or non-continuation.

Intervention Strategy 6: To support students' succession progression from their courses

Situation: The progression of students who experience the highest levels of deprivation to positive destinations is lower than the positive progression of students in this group across the sector as a whole.

Aims: To ensure that students with the highest levels of deprivation measured by IMD have the same opportunity to progress to outcomes that reflect their levels of qualification as students in this group across the sector as a whole.

Inputs:

- Staff time to provide CIAG
- Staff time to develop alumni network and set up and promote mentoring scheme
- Alumni time and commitment providing mentoring
- Staff time reviewing curriculum and developing employability elements
- Staff time delivering employability as part of curriculum

Activities:

- Enhanced careers information, advice and guidance
- Careers mentoring programme
- Employability skills in curriculum

Outputs:

- Targeted Students access CIAG
- Targeted students engage with careers mentoring
- Course curricula developed to include integrated employability skills

Outcomes:

- Positive progression
- Confidence in future success
- Student self-regulation
- Knowledge of support available
- Cognitive strategies

- Engagement (curriculum)

Impact:

- That students in IMD 1 have at least same proportion of positive progression as other students in the college, and of IMD 1 students across the sector.

Rationale: Post-entry IAG for employability has been shown to have a positive impact on career choices but there is not a detailed enough evidence base to show a causal link with specific interventions (TASO Toolkit).

Assumptions: targeted students will engage with CIAG and mentoring; CIAG and mentoring will lead to improved progression; employability skills in curriculum will lead to improved progression.

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The City of Liverpool College

Provider UKPRN: 10003955

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	8400
Foundation degree		N/A	8300
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	All subjects except Construction and Engineering and Computing	N/A	6700
HNC/HND	Computing	N/A	9000
HNC/HND	Construction and Engineering	N/A	7400
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	8450
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	RARE LIVERPOOL LIMITED - Performing Arts	10086067	6700
HNC/HND	Sysco Business Skills Academy Limited - Performing Arts	10013122	6700
HNC/HND	THE GAME ASSEMBLY LIMITED - Computing	10090393	8995
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	BA in Education and PD	N/A	4200
Foundation degree	Dental Technology	N/A	4200
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	All subjects except Construction & Engineering	N/A	3350
HNC/HND	Construction & Engineering	N/A	3700
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	4225
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: The City of Liverpool College

Provider UKPRN: 10003955

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	£29,000	£33,000	£36,000	£36,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£75,000	£83,000	£91,000	£93,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£5,000	£5,000	£6,000	£6,000

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 (£)	£6,000	£7,000	£8,000	£8,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£23,000	£26,000	£28,000	£28,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£29,000	£33,000	£36,000	£36,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>6.9%</i>	<i>7.1%</i>	<i>7.1%</i>	<i>6.9%</i>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	<i>£19,000</i>	<i>£23,000</i>	<i>£26,000</i>	<i>£24,000</i>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	<i>£10,000</i>	<i>£10,000</i>	<i>£10,000</i>	<i>£12,000</i>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£53,000	£58,000	£64,000	£65,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£22,000	£25,000	£27,000	£28,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£75,000	£83,000	£91,000	£93,000
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>17.9%</i>	<i>18.0%</i>	<i>17.9%</i>	<i>17.9%</i>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£5,000	£5,000	£6,000	£6,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>1.1%</i>	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>1.2%</i>

