**Provide Name: Blackburn College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10000747**

# Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

## Introduction and strategic aim

We are proud to provide education and training for communities of Blackburn with Darwen and beyond. We are determined to ensure everyone is able to access these opportunities, no matter what their background or circumstances are, we will support every learner to reach their full potential, gain sector leading qualifications and progress into rewarding careers. Our strategic aims are to improve access to Higher Education opportunities at University Centre Blackburn College for everyone. This will be achieved through supporting every student to ensure they have the best possible chance of success on their programme of study. This will then enable every student to progress from their higher education on to the path they want to follow, whether they want to undertake further studies or move into employment.

The University Centre Blackburn College is one of the largest college-based providers of Higher Education in the Northwest of England. The Colleges' mission is 'Transforming students' lives and our community through outstanding education, training and support'. We are committed to offering specialised Level 4, Level 5 and degree programmes focussed on high academic and supportive student experiences, equipping confident graduates for lifelong achievement in the world of work. We specialise in a range of degree pathways such as Education, Psychology, Criminology, Health, Creative and Digital.

Our partner universities are Lancaster University, University of Central Lancashire and the University of South Wales.

## Career Paths and Alumni:

Graduates from Blackburn College University Centre often pursue careers in various industries, depending on their field of study. Some typical career paths include:

1. Business: Many alumni start their own businesses or work in managerial roles within companies.

2. Healthcare and Social Services: Graduates often work as nurses, social workers, healthcare assistants, or in related roles.

3. Engineering and Technical Roles: Alumni may work as engineers, technicians, or in project management within engineering firms.

4.  Creative Industries: Graduates often find careers in design, media, and the arts, working as graphic designers, media producers, or performing artists.

5.  Education: Some alumni become teachers, lecturers, or educational teaching assistants.

6.  Law and Legal Services: Graduates from law and criminology programs may work as Solicitors, police officers, legal assistants, or in other roles within the justice system.

7.  IT and Digital: Alumni often work in software development, IT support, or cybersecurity.

## Notable Alumni and Who We Work With:

While Blackburn College University Centre might not have as widely recognised alumni as some larger universities, its graduates often make significant contributions to their respective fields and local communities. Many go on to further study, professional certifications, or specialised training to enhance their careers. It is clear graduates 'study local and go far'.

The diverse programs and supportive learning environment at Blackburn College University Centre help students from various backgrounds to succeed in their chosen fields, making them well-rounded and adaptable professionals.

Blackburn College University Centre collaborates with several prominent universities, including the University of South Wales (USW), the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), and Lancaster University, to validate its degree programs. These partnerships ensures that the curriculum meets high academic standards and aligns with the needs of the local and national labour markets.

Furthermore, we work with Future U, who are a collaborative outreach initiative based in Lancashire, designed to support young people in their educational and career aspirations. It is part of the national Uni Connect programme, funded by the Office for Students. Future U brings together universities, colleges, schools, and businesses across Lancashire, aiming to raise awareness about higher education, apprenticeships, and career opportunities. It focuses on helping young people overcome barriers to further education, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

**A selection of alumni:**

**Paloma Wood**

BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice

Employed as: Changing Futures Navigator

*'Being at university presents challenges but the tutors always helped us. I'm now working on a new programme to try to get people with multiple disadvantages working with services which is what I learnt was needed from my course.'*

**Mohammad Baqai**

BA (Hons) Accounting

Employed at: HMRC

*'University Centre at Blackburn College is friendly and supportive.*

*With my new qualification I will be a Grade 7 employee in HMRC which is the biggest achievement for me.'*

**Laura-Jane Clark**

BA (Hons) Social Care and Wellbeing

Employed as: Working for Drug and Alcohol Services

*'The tutors were just amazing. I've always struggled academically and I just loved how much support the university centre offers. I'm now working for the Drug and Alcohol Services, none of which would be possible without UCBC.'*

## The Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Dataset

**This provides vital data and information that shows how well we, as a college, enable everyone who wants to study with us to access Higher Education, compared to other colleges' and universities.**

In this plan, we have used this data to examine our own performance in access and participation to find out where we need to improve. We have also used our own local HE data dashboard to allow us to analyse performance in year.

At every stage of the plan we are guided by the key principles of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. This plan has been reviewed by both staff and student working groups and the Single Equality Committee.

To ensure a good all-round plan that supports students at every single stage of their journey with us (from application to graduation and further progression), we have involved student representatives and college staff.

- Single Equalities Committee
- Executive Leadership Team
- Central Leadership Team
- Staff – including those who teach degree level courses
- Quality, Admissions and student recruitment colleagues
- Student representatives/student Access and Participation Plan submission group
- FutureU outreach programme

## Collaborative Efforts and Program Validation

1. Program Validation: The validation by partner universities means that Blackburn College University Centre's degrees are recognised and meet the quality standards set by these universities. This partnership provides students with the assurance that their qualifications are respected both nationally and internationally.

2. Curriculum Alignment: The collaboration focuses on aligning the curriculum with industry needs and addressing skills gaps in the workforce. By working closely with universities like USW, UCLan, and Lancaster University, Blackburn College University Centre ensures that its programs are up-to-date with current industry practices and technological advancements.

3. Filling Labour Market Skills Gaps: The college offers courses designed to fill skills gaps in the labour market, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, engineering, IT, and business. By providing specialised training and education in these areas, Blackburn College University Centre supports the local economy and helps students gain the skills needed for high-demand jobs.

4. Levelling Up Initiatives: This collaboration also supports broader "levelling up" initiatives, which aim to reduce regional disparities and provide more opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. By offering validated degrees and tailored programs, the college helps to enhance the employability of its graduates, thus contributing to the socio-economic development of the region.

## Benefits for Students

Students benefit from these collaborations through:

- Access to Quality Education: The involvement of well-established universities ensures that students receive a high standard of education.

- Enhanced Career Prospects: With degrees recognised by partner universities, graduates are better positioned in the job market.

- Industry-Relevant Skills: Programs are designed to equip students with skills that are directly applicable to their chosen careers, addressing both current and emerging demands in the job market.

- Networking Opportunities: Collaborations with these universities also provide students with networking opportunities, exposure to a wider academic community, and potential pathways for further study or research.

Overall, these partnerships strengthen Blackburn College University Centre's ability to provide high-quality, relevant education that supports both individual student goals and broader economic needs.

# Risks to equality of opportunity

At University Centre Blackburn College, our overarching strategic aims with respect to equality of opportunity are designed to foster an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all. These aims focus on ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity and support to succeed.

**Overarching Access and Participation Strategic Aims**

1. **Enhancing Access for Underrepresented Groups**

   o **Aim**: To increase the participation of students from underrepresented groups, including those from low-income backgrounds, ethnic minorities, mature students, and those with disabilities.

   o **Initiatives**: Implement targeted outreach and recruitment strategies, develop partnerships with schools and community organisations, and provide clear pathways for non-traditional, first generation HE students.

2. **Promoting Inclusive Education and Curriculum**

   o **Aim**: To create an inclusive learning environment that respects and values diversity, reflecting a wide range of perspectives and experiences in the curriculum.

   o **Initiatives**: Review and update curriculum content to include diverse voices, train staff in inclusive teaching practices, and ensure that learning materials and resources are accessible to all students.

3. **Supporting Student Success and Wellbeing**

   o **Aim**: To provide comprehensive support services that address the academic, emotional, and financial needs of all students, ensuring their success and wellbeing throughout their educational journey.

   o **Initiatives**: Enhance academic advising, offer robust mental health and wellbeing services, and provide financial literacy programs and financial support resources and advice.

4. **Fostering a Culture of Respect and Inclusion**

   - o **Aim**: To promote a campus culture that promotes mutual respect, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging among all students and staff.

   - o **Initiatives**: Organise diversity and inclusion events, establish student diversity committees, and implement policies that prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

To set the objectives and targets, we conducted a thorough analysis of both Office for Students data dashboards and those from Blackburn College's HE data dashboards. This review provided a comprehensive understanding of our current position in relation to access and participation.

# Analysis of Performance
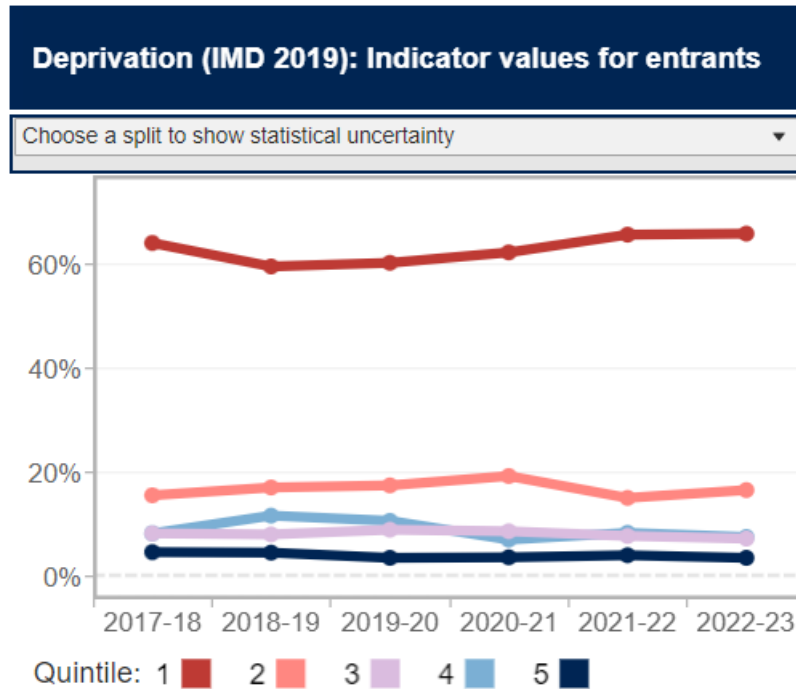
## Socio Economic Background and Polar Analysis

Blackburn with Darwen is a unitary authority area in Lancashire, England. The population of Blackburn with Darwen and the surrounding areas is a mix of moderate socioeconomic deprivation and low engagement. They typically fall into the POLAR quintile 1&2, as defined by the Office for Students' insert (ofS) measures of participation rates of young people in higher education by local areas.

**Polar Quintile**

## Access

**Deprivation**

**Deprivation (IMD 2019): Indicator values for entrants**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



Quintile: 1 ■  2 ■  3 ■  4 ■  5 ■

The graph above shows deprivation by quintile over the last six years, with a steady increase in Q1, this illustrates the growing socioeconomic challenges faced by students in Blackburn with Darwen and East Lancashire within our cohort.
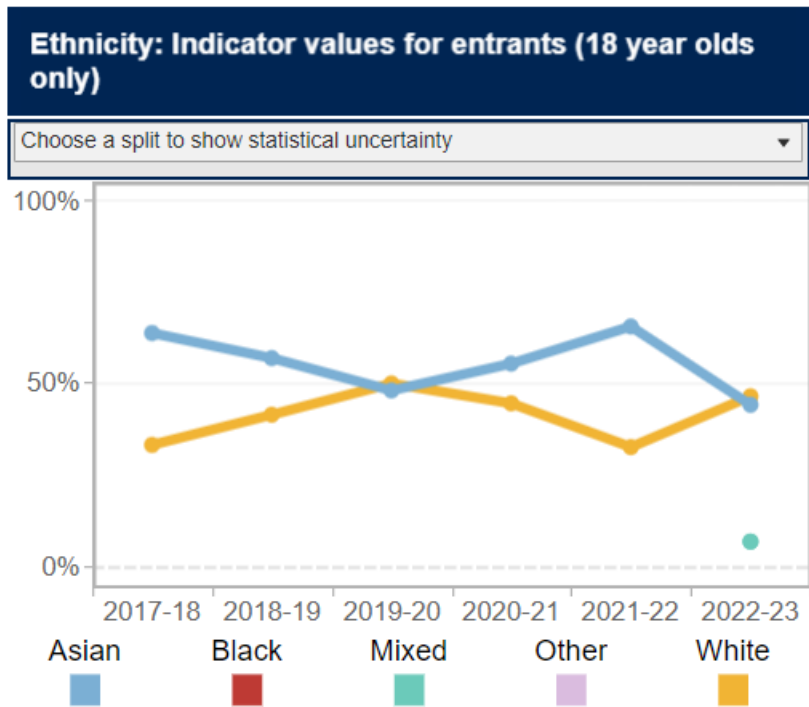
The first quintile (Q1) represents the most deprived segment, while the last quintile (Q4 or Q5) would represent the least deprived segment. The proportion of students coming from quintile 1 has increased as a proportional percentage from 62% in 21/22 to 65% in 22/23.

There are areas further out from the centre of Blackburn with Darwen, within a commutable distance, that are within regions of polar quintile 4&5, or areas where young people are more likely to attend higher education settings. These are places like Clitheroe, Rossendale, Pleasington.

The typical pattern of student recruitment is largely driven by a very small number of wards defined as Polar Q2 and 3, with the majority of pockets coming from polar Q1, where deprivation is considerable.

Whilst the OfS dashboard suggests that since 2017 the colleges student body has remained stable in relation to access for students from different quintiles, we do have information to suggest that our student body is made up of mainly quintile 1 students, and these in most cases are first generation Higher education students. This has led to continuation and completion issues. The proportion of students who come to college from areas of considerable deprivation has grown, however students with family backgrounds in Higher Education have chosen to move away from their local provision. This is partly due to local colleges and universities who are not restricted by limits to recruitment, and who appear to use unconditional offers to encourage admissions. The main trend to notice from this data table is that our student cohort continues to be, by and large, from areas of most deprivation.
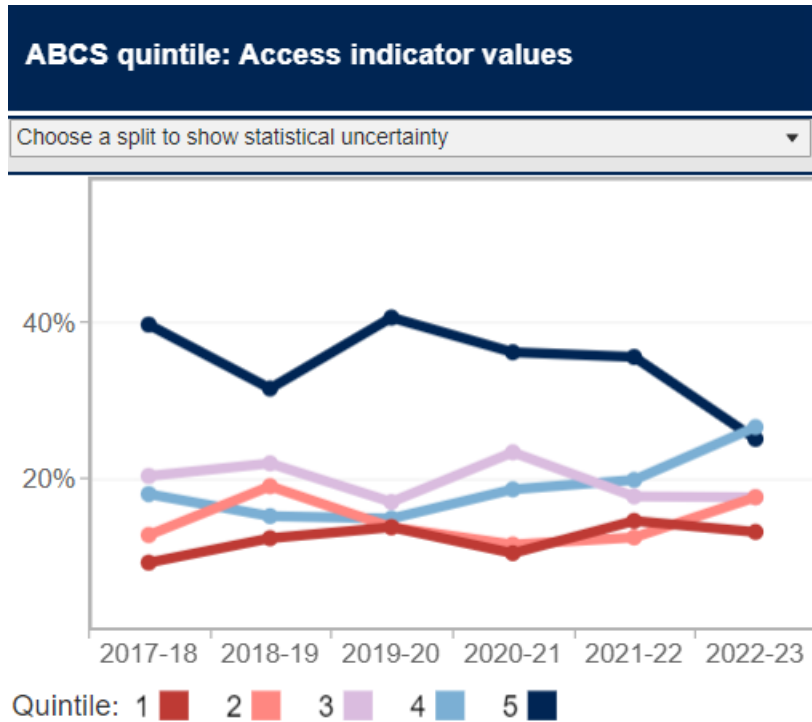
**Ethnicity**

**Ethnicity: Indicator values for entrants (18 year olds only)**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



Over the past 5 years the Colleges' HE population has reduced from around 3500 to 700 students. The College population has shifted from a majority of asian students, to now both white and Asian are around 50% of the overall college demographic. As illustrated above, the Colleges student population is diverse, and this is our norm.

Asian and white students are the most represented students groups at University Centre Blackburn College. Blackburn College reflects the local communities of which we are very proud. While our student access figures reflect this, we recognise the priority challenge to ensure the highest possible levels of attainment and successful progression among all of our students, especially those from quintile 1.
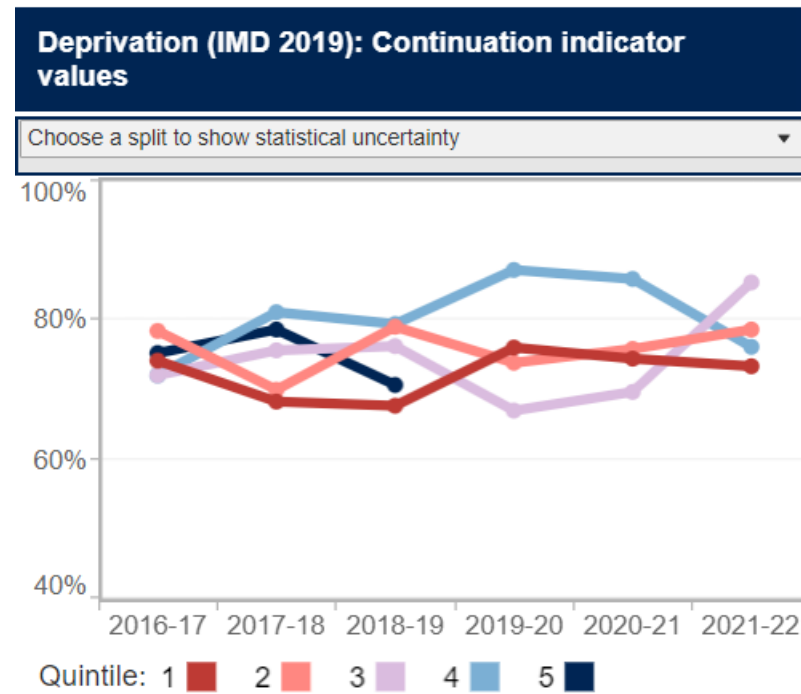
**ABCS - calculates the most and least likely to achieve based on all the data surrounding those students.**

**ABCS quintile: Access indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



Quintile: 1 ■  2 ■  3 ■  4 ■  5 ■

As you can see from the data, the majority of our student cohort are among the most likely to access. However, these proportions are statistically less spread for 2022-2023. The key takeaway from this is that, although we only have around 70% completion rates, we support a large number of students to achieve who would otherwise not have been expected to. The surprising aspect in relation to this data, is that the quintile 4 is representative of the highest proportion. This is surprising as our deprivation table suggests our cohort is mainly from areas of high deprivation. However, our ABCS seems to suggest the opposite, this is due to ABCS including more than just deprivation in its measurement.

# Continuation

**Deprivation**

**Deprivation (IMD 2019): Continuation indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



Quintile: 1 ■  2 ■  3 ■  4 ■  5 ■

As you can see from the data table above the data is erratic in regards to its representation of continuation in relation to deprivation. Comparing this table to the access table the clear areas for concern for our college, is that our student cohort is made up, by and large of entrants for quintile 1, however in our most recent data, these continued at the lowest rate. This emphasises the need for further intervention and support for this quintile.

**Ethnicity**

**Ethnicity: Continuation indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 80% | | | | | |
| 60% | | | | | |
| 40% | | | | | |
| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |

Asian        Black        Mixed        Other        White
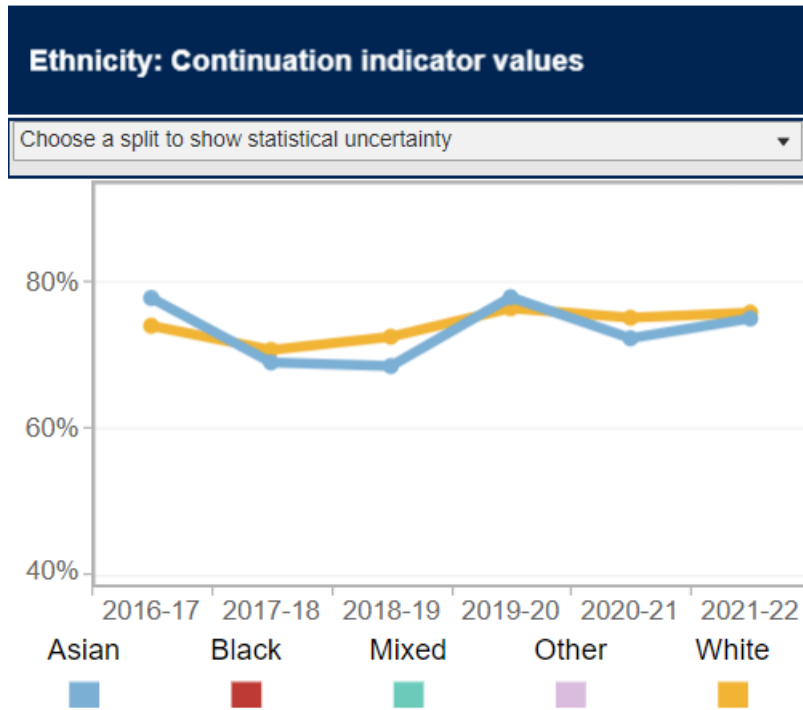
The most recent data from the OfS HE data dashboard shows that the gap in continuation rates between White and Asian students is narrowing. However, when analysing the last two years of data it is clear there is still work to be done to increase continuation for both ethnicities. However, the improvements to date reflect targeted efforts in UCBC to address disparities and promote equal support services. All students are now persisting in their studies, suggesting that interventions, such as mentoring programs and academic support, are yielding positive results. These advancements are critical in ensuring fair access and success for more students, regardless of ethnic background.
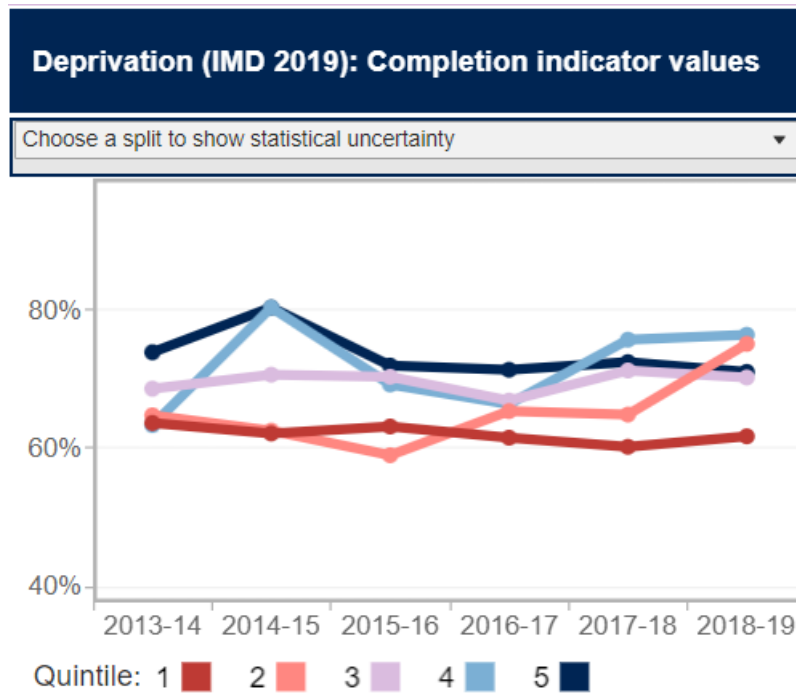
**ABCS**



**ABCS quintile: Continuation indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
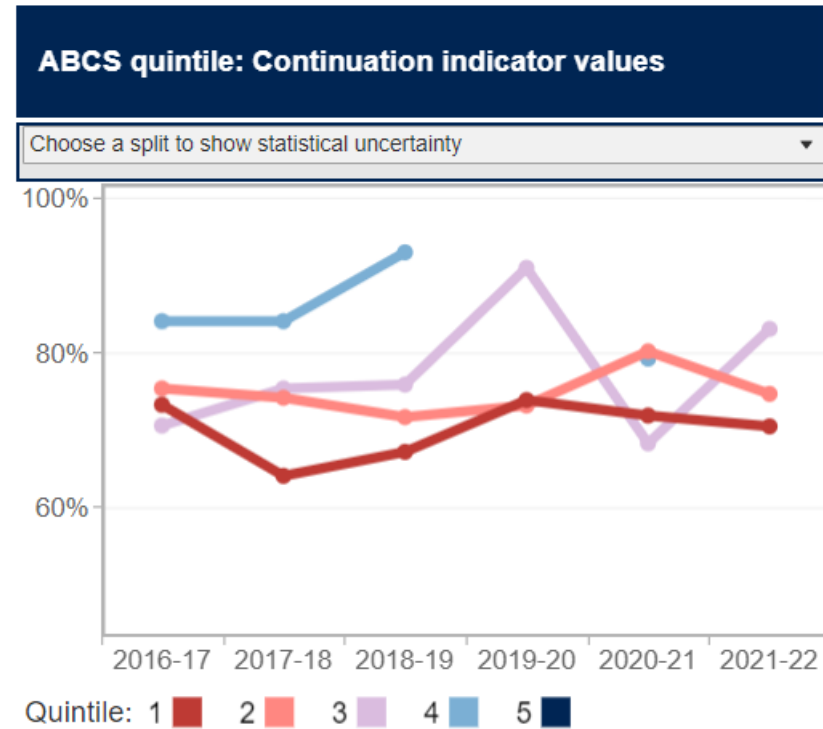
Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■

The ABCS data at UCBC shows that continuation rates are lowest for students in quintile 1, representing the least likely to access. This indicates that students from these areas face greater challenges in persisting with their studies, possibly due to socioeconomic barriers such as financial pressures, lower access to academic support, or limited cultural capital. To improve these outcomes, we will introduce targeted support initiatives for these students, focusing on mentorship, financial aid, and tailored academic resources to address the unique obstacles faced by those from the lowest participation backgrounds.
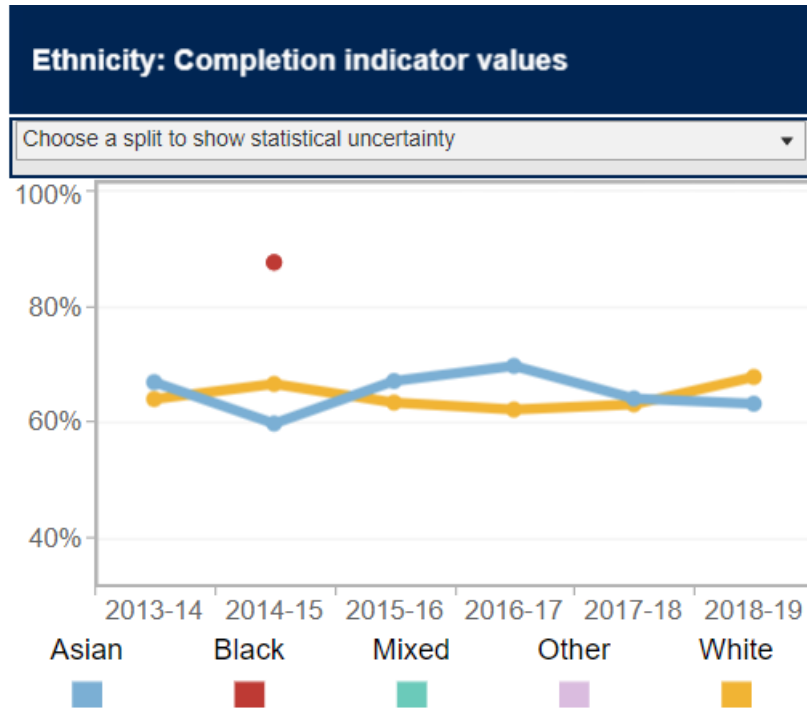
## Attainment/Completion

**Deprivation**

**Deprivation (IMD 2019): Completion indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼

[Line chart showing Completion indicator values from 2013-14 to 2018-19, with y-axis from 40% to 80%. Quintiles 1-5 are plotted. Quintile 1 (dark red) remains around 60-64% throughout, being the lowest. Quintile 5 (navy) and Quintile 4 (light blue) generally track higher around 70-80%.]

Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■

Attainment rates are problematic in some areas of provision compared to others, but the data tells us there is a clear need to raise attainment amongst the entire population of the University Centre Blackburn College, but specifically quintile 1. This is a major concern due to the fact that quintile 1 makes up the majority of our student cohort. This again emphasises, the need for further intervention and support for this quintile.

**Ethnicity**



**Ethnicity: Completion indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▾

Asian   Black   Mixed   Other   White

Attainment rates are problematic in some areas of provision compared to others. Comparing attainment/completion of White and Asian students at the college, it can be seen that these figures are now very close, but below our expectations and targets, meaning the need for continued support across these ethnicities.
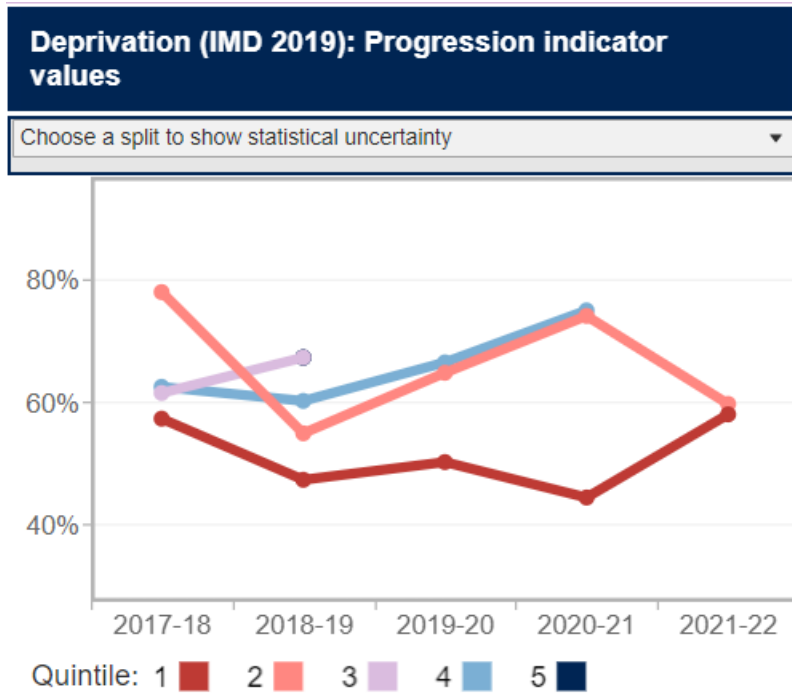
**ABCS**

**ABCS quintile: Completion indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
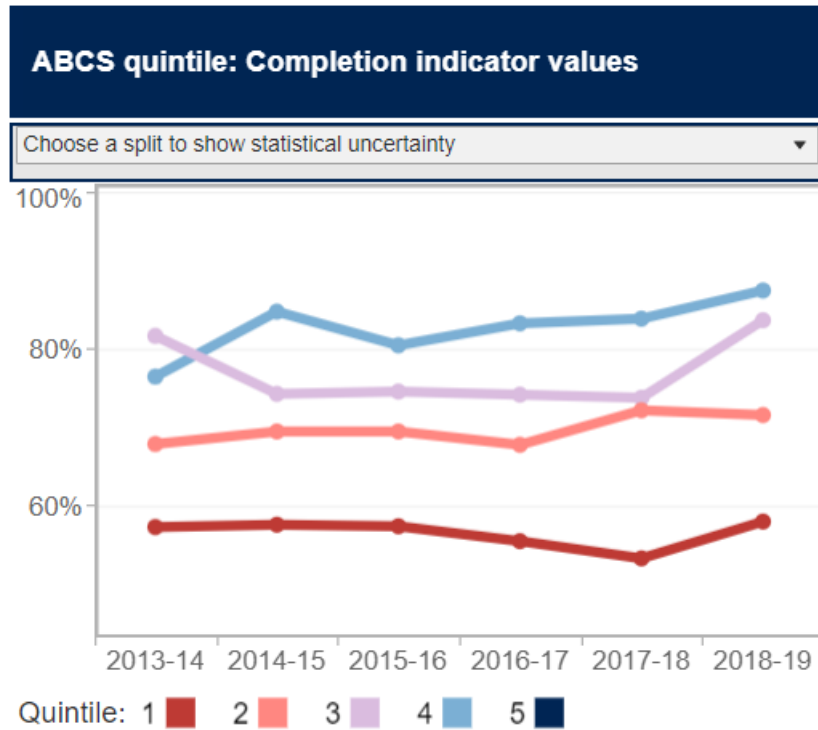


Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■

ABCS data at UCBC reveals that completion rates are significantly lower for students in quintile 1, representing the most least likely to access. These students are far less likely to achieve compared to their peers, likely due to compounding factors such as financial instability, limited academic support, and personal circumstances that hinder their ability to complete their studies. This stark gap highlights the need for more robust interventions, such as increased financial aid, academic tutoring, and mental health services, to better support students from the least likely to access backgrounds in reaching successful outcomes.

## Progression

### Deprivation



Deprivation (IMD 2019): Progression indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼

Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■

**Ethnicity**

**Ethnicity: Progression indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼



|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Asian | Black | Mixed | Other | White |

**ABCS**



**ABCS quintile: Progression indicator values**

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
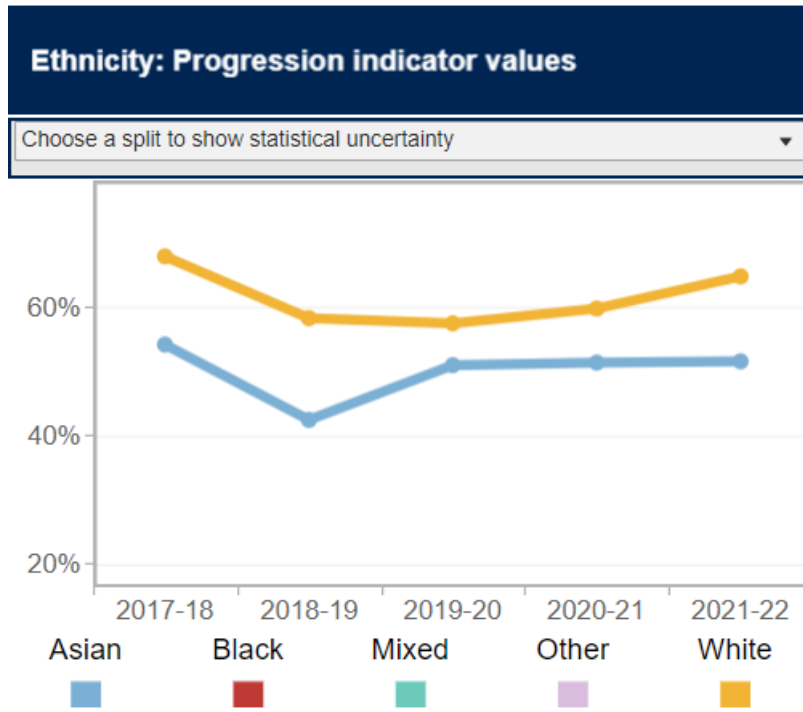
Quintile: 1 ■  2 ■  3 ■  4 ■  5 ■
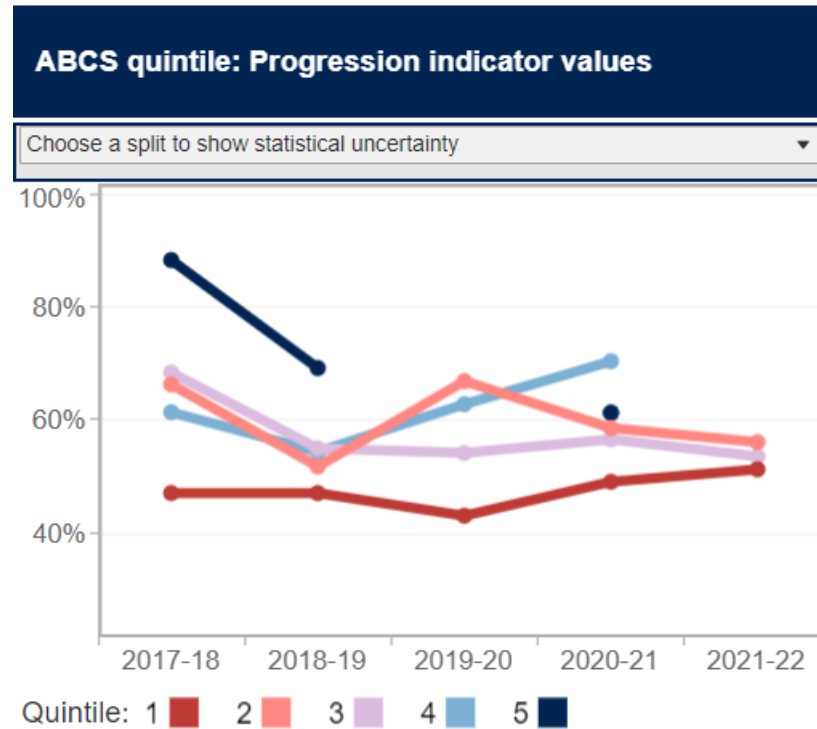
In summary of the datasets above, there has been some degree of improvement in progression for quintile 1 in both deprivation and ABCS. But in most cases this is relatively limited and absolutely needs to be improved. In the last two years of OfS data 20/21 and 21/22, full time study reflects a significant decline in relation to completion/progression data.

Through curriculum redesign, the college has made efforts to improve level 4 and level 5 provision, and the designed top up provisions/modular approach needs to be further developed.

Year zero programmes are being phased out of the offer and soon to be replaced with Access courses. This is to support adults with transitioning and progressing successfully into higher education.

More widely, the destination of leavers – Higher Education destination data over the past few years has indicated a shift towards this post graduate study as a choice for our students at all levels.

According to Blackburn with Darwen local employment opportunities have declined, however unemployment rates for alumni has also fallen. This suggests it remains possible for our students to positively progress.

Focusing our APP interventions on employability in the curriculum design and delivery, the college will continue to make sure there are suitable routes for progression and suitable options for postgraduate programmes associated with our most popular degree courses such as education and psychology, criminology.

By further aligning the programme offer with not only further education programmes but also careers, will continue to develop and support the ever-increasing demand for highly skilled employees of the future. The college hopes to improve the highly skilled employment attainment figures and contribute to the LSIP plan and skills gaps.

The previously detailed data in summary shows that:

- Post study experiences are most challenging for female students.

- Whilst Asian males also experience challenges, white males from Q1 and Q2 categories face particularly severe challenges.

- Male performance is buoyed by the better prospects of Q3-Q5 students statistically.

## Care Experienced

Whilst numbers of this cohort are relatively small we are committed to on going support for this group. Maintaining strong links with the local authorities and the student pastoral team at the college will be a priority and maximising collaborative efforts that deliver aspirational activities to engage this group are essential. Support through the admission process, financial support and through the

student experience and services teams will also continue for this target group.

Our targets indicate the need to increase the number of students declaring as a care experienced so we can provide quality and effective support at the earliest point in the students journey with us.

## Other groups who experience barriers to higher education

Our own data and tracking of the target group below requires development in order to undertake a gap analysis and to deliver evidence based interventions. That said, we recognise the sectors need to address gaps in terms of access and participation. Therefore we will work to develop programmes of activity across all lifecycles and improve impact measures ad tracking processes.

## Intersectionality

To truly comprehend the social environment, we must consider the lens of intersectionality; that social characteristics such as race, class, and gender create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. These factors position colleges as sites of intersectionality with a potential intersection of opportunity for policymakers. At the College we firmly believe that to address interconnected structural social challenges, colleges play a pivotal role.

| Most deprived local authorities based on Score | Most deprived local authorities based on Proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% nationally |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Blackpool | 1. Middlesbrough |
| 2. Knowsley | 2. Liverpool |
| 3. Liverpool | 3. Knowsley |
| 4. Kingston upon Hull | 4. Kingston upon Hull |
| 5. Middlesbrough | 5. Manchester |
| 6. Manchester | 6. Blackpool |
| 7. Birmingham | 7. Birmingham |
| 8. Burnley | 8. Burnley |
| 9. Blackburn with Darwen | 9. Blackburn with Darwen |
| 10. Hartlepool | 10. Hartlepool |

## Conclusion of Performance

University Centre Blackburn College is committed to advancing equality of opportunity through these strategic aims and future access and participation priorities. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, we aim to empower all students to reach their full potential, ensuring that diversity and equality are at the heart of our educational mission. These efforts will not only enhance the academic and personal growth of our students but also contribute to the broader goal of creating a more equitable community in Blackburn with Darwen.

## Blackburn College compared to the wider sector:

There has been an increase in black, Asian and minority ethnic population as a whole, and the Asian population in particular. In the context of the local population, this reflects the College's principal catchment areas which are predominantly Asian households.

Whilst the number of Asian students is robust, the College still has a significant role to play in engaging students from the local communities. The representation of polar Q1 students/areas least likely to engage with higher education by the age of 19 has increased proportionally. This has increased from 65.4% to 65.6%. We recognise the need to address this through initiatives and interventions, action plans and evaluation strategies. These measures also support the polar Q1 populations who make up the vast majority of the student body.

** White students make up a large majority of the most economically deprived groups, though, as expected, a relatively small proportion as a whole.

There is a small but significant and growing gap amongst our Asian and white groups. The UK census (2023) data for the region shows the non Asian BME population to be relatively small, and University Centre Blackburn College recruitment of this group is proportionality higher than the census data. University Centre Blackburn College data reflects the communities closest to the College. This is a growing population and one that requires clear strategies for attainment and progression.

Amongst our mature students, the proportionate difference here is very small. We are keen to ensure that we support admissions and recruitment with providing the correct CEIAG for mature students.

## Objectives

As stated previously in the plan, at University Centre Blackburn College, our commitment to widening access and participation is rooted in a belief that higher education should be inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all. We strive to create an environment where every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to excel academically and personally. Our Access and Participation Plan outlines key objectives aimed at increasing the diversity of our student body, enhancing the support for underrepresented groups, and fostering a college culture that values and respects the unique experiences and perspectives of each individual. By focusing on these goals, we aim to empower students from all walks of life to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to society.

## Target groups

The College takes a realistic approach to targeting based on a current performance measures and the enrolment forecast. The College recognises that interventions require careful use of resources and planning to have maximum impact.

## Interventions, evaluation, and support

The table overleaf illustrates some of the general interventions the College will use to improve student outcomes across access, success and progression. Specific interventions for students with disabilities, care experienced and part time students are also embedded in the student journey.

The following objectives remain relevant for the University Centre Blackburn College as we work to ensure that everyone with the ability and desire to undertake Higher Education studies has the opportunity to access University Centre Blackburn College.

We are passionate about making sure whatever background, or identity of a student we do not present barriers to their access, success and progression. Furthermore, where gaps are identified within our College population we will tackle and remove these barriers.

Our investment in supporting students to access higher education in previous years has been £1.6 million, however this figure is due to reduce in 2024/2025.This reduction is in recognition that our targets and actuals have been declining for a number of years.

## Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

**Increase access rates for all students. (PTA1)**

**Priority**: to ensure all students are supported to Access and succeed on their programmes of study.

**Actions**: Implement targeted strategies to support all students in accessing degree programmes at UCBC. We will also Implement regular reviews and assessments, collect and analyse data on student demographics and outcomes, and seek feedback from students and staff to guide future strategies.

**Objective 1: Increase continuation rate for most socio economically disadvantaged students. (PTS1)**
*OfS data dashboard suggests there is a significant gap between IMD Q1 and other quintiles in terms of continuation.*

**Priority 1**: To broaden the availability of scholarships, bursaries, and emergency funds, ensuring that financial barriers do not hinder continuation to education.

**Action 1**: Increase awareness of financial support available through HE Tutorial led activity and streamline the application process for financial support to ensure students are able to access support funds timely.

**Priority 2**: To further introduce HNC programmes to support students having lifestyle breaks between year end dates.

**Action 2**: To increase at least 3 new HNC programmes per year for the duration of this plan.

Intervention strategy 1: To Support students from less socially advantaged areas of our community to continue their course through to completion.

**Intervention Activities:**

*Access and Participation Plan, community/schools focused outreach programme:* This intervention strategy is for community and school-focused outreach aims to enhance educational access and participation among underrepresented groups. The plan identifies key barriers such as financial constraints, lack of information, and cultural factors, and targets groups like low-income families and first-generation students. Key initiatives include hosting information sessions at University Centre Blackburn College, mentorship programs, and school visits to raise awareness and support academic success.

The program also emphasises academic support through tutoring, study skills workshops, and summer programs, alongside providing clear information about financial aid and scholarships. Partnerships with local schools, community organizations, businesses, and alumni are crucial for broadening outreach and offering additional resources like internships and mentoring.

Evaluation and sustainability are integral to the APP, with success measured by metrics such as participation rates and academic improvement. Feedback mechanisms ensure continuous improvement, while funding strategies aim for the long-term viability of the program. This comprehensive approach fosters a more inclusive educational environment, encouraging community involvement and student engagement.

*CIAG team to provide advice for students considering F/T and P/T programmes:* The careers team can implement the following strategies:

1. ***Tailored Information Sessions****:* The careers team can organise specific information sessions that cover the differences between F/T and P/T programs, highlighting the benefits and challenges of each option. These sessions can include insights into how program choice impacts workload, time management, and career prospects. By involving academic staff and alumni, the sessions will offer real-world perspectives on balancing study with work or other commitments, especially for students who due to their lifestyles should potentially consider P/T options over F/T options.

2. ***One-on-One Guidance and Counselling****:* Personalised 1:1 sessions will be offered to help students understand how F/T and P/T study modes align with their career goals, lifestyle, and financial situation. The careers team can provide guidance on topics such as time management, financial aid options, and balancing study with other responsibilities. They can also discuss the impact of different study modes on work opportunities during and after the program, ensuring that students make informed decisions based on their unique circumstances.

3. ***Resource Development and Online Tools****:* The careers team can signpost to the 'Exchange Online' service that is an online store of various careers and LMI data to outline to students where the jobs are and skills gaps in both the local region and nationally. The Careers team will also create and distribute resources like brochures, online guides, and FAQs that compare F/T and P/T programs. They can also develop interactive online tools or quizzes to help students self-assess their readiness for either study mode. These resources should cover essential aspects such as scheduling flexibility, financial implications, and the expected duration of study, providing students with a clear understanding of what to expect and how to prepare for their chosen path.

By implementing these strategies, the careers team can effectively support students in making well-informed decisions about their educational and career pathways at University Centre Blackburn College.

*All programmes offered with P/T route where possible:* Offering all programs with a part-time (P/T) route wherever possible is crucial for enhancing access and participation at University Centre Blackburn College. This approach supports inclusivity by accommodating diverse student needs, particularly for those who may face barriers to full-time (F/T) study. Here are key reasons why this is important:

1. **Accessibility for Diverse Students**: Part-time study options make higher education more accessible to a wider range of students, including working professionals, caregivers, and individuals with other significant commitments. These students often cannot commit to F/T programs due to time constraints but still seek to further their education and skills.

2. **Financial Flexibility and Affordability**: Many students in Blackburn with Darwen face financial barriers that often make F/T study challenging. P/T programs allow students to spread their tuition costs over a longer period, making higher education more affordable. Additionally, P/T students can maintain employment while studying, reducing the financial strain and potentially allowing them to apply their learning directly to their current job. This flexibility can also mitigate the risk of student debt, making higher education a more viable option for financially constrained individuals.

3. **Increased Participation and Retention**: Offering P/T routes can enhance participation rates, particularly among underrepresented and non-traditional student populations. P/T study options can improve retention and completion rates by allowing students to progress at a manageable pace, reducing the risk of burnout and dropout. This inclusive approach not only broadens access but also supports the long-term success of a diverse student body, fostering a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

Overall, providing P/T study options is essential for promoting access and participation, supporting a diverse range of students, and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

*Study skills package revision with Academic Skills Coaches:* The Study Skills package with Academic Skills Coaches is vital for ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary tools for academic success. This package is tailored and updated to meet the evolving needs of students, and focuses on essential skills such as time management, critical thinking, and effective study techniques. The importance of this initiative is underscored by student feedback gathered through consultations for the Access and Participation Plan (APP), which highlighted the necessity and the effectiveness of Academic Skills Coaches. Students expressed that these coaches play a crucial role in enhancing their understanding and application of academic concepts, thereby improving their overall academic performance and confidence. This feedback emphasises the value of continuous improvement and personalisation in academic support services, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have access to the resources they need to thrive in their studies.

*Clear policy and process around attendance, engagement and interventions expected for students:* University Centre Blackburn College has a clear policy and process around attendance, engagement, and interventions are critical components of an effective Access and Participation Plan (APP).

Such a policy ensures that students understand the expectations for their participation and the support available to them. It helps identify and address issues early, such as disengagement or attendance problems, which can be key indicators of academic or personal challenges. By establishing clear guidelines and intervention strategies, institutions can proactively support students, offering timely assistance such as academic counselling, tutoring, or personal support services. This structured approach not only promotes a culture of accountability but also fosters a supportive environment that encourages consistent engagement and maximizes the likelihood of student success. Ultimately, this clarity in policy and process is crucial for reducing dropout rates and ensuring equitable outcomes for all students, particularly those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds.

*Develop programme to offer more modular technical qualifications such as HNC/HND pathways. (To introduce 3 new HN's per year for the next 3 years):* Developing a HE curriculum offer that includes more modular technical qualifications, such as Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), is an important strategic initiative aimed at enhancing educational accessibility and career readiness for the community we serve. These qualifications provide practical, industry-aligned training that equips students with specific skills sought after by employers, making them valuable pathways for immediate employment or further academic progression.

The importance of this initiative lies in its ability to cater to diverse student needs and career aspirations. HNCs and HNDs are particularly appealing to students seeking to gain practical skills and enter the workforce more quickly, including those who may not be interested in or able to commit to traditional, longer-term degree programs. These modular qualifications also offer flexibility, allowing students to study part-time while working, which can be crucial for those balancing education with employment or other responsibilities.

To implement this plan, we aim to introduce three new Higher National qualifications each year over the next three years, from 2025 to 2028/29. This phased approach allows for careful development and integration of new courses, ensuring that they meet industry standards and the needs of the local and regional job markets. The program development will involve collaboration with industry partners to ensure relevance, as well as consultations with academic staff and students to align offerings with demand and interest.

*Develop Access to HE offer to support mature students with accessing L4 and above:* University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC) is taking a proactive approach to developing its Access to Higher Education (HE) offer, specifically tailored to support mature students in accessing Level 4 and above qualifications. This new strategy recognises the unique challenges and needs of mature learners, who may be returning to education after a significant time away or seeking to upskill in a new field.

The importance of this initiative lies in its potential to widen participation and create more inclusive educational opportunities. Mature students often bring valuable life experiences and diverse perspectives but may face barriers such as financial constraints, time management challenges due to work or family commitments, and the need to refresh foundational academic skills. The Colleges' Access to HE courses are designed to bridge these gaps, providing tailored support in key areas such as study skills, time management, and confidence building. These courses offer a flexible entry route into higher education, helping students to transition smoothly into Level 4 and above programs.

To implement this approach, the college plans to offer a range of Access to HE courses that are modular and flexible, across several curriculum areas. This flexibility is crucial for mature students who need to balance their studies with other responsibilities. The college will also provide dedicated academic and pastoral support, including personalised guidance and mentoring, to address the specific needs of this demographic. Additionally, the college aims to foster a supportive learning environment by offering preparatory workshops and bridging modules that ease the transition into higher education, focusing on areas like academic writing, critical thinking, and subject-specific knowledge. We will also be offering an Access to HE at Level 2 to support further widening participation.

By enhancing its Access to HE offerings, we are not only promoting lifelong learning but also supporting the economic and social mobility of mature learners. This approach aligns with broader educational goals of inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that higher education is a viable option for all, regardless of age or prior educational background.

*HE Financial Bursaries in place to support Access, Participation and Completion of studies:* University Centre Blackburn College Higher Education (HE) financial bursaries play a crucial role in supporting access, participation, and completion of studies for students. The bursaries are designed to alleviate financial barriers that often hinder our students, particularly those from underrepresented or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, from pursuing and completing their education.

The importance of the HE bursaries lies in their ability to provide essential financial support that can cover tuition fees, learning materials, and living expenses. This financial relief is particularly vital for students who may otherwise struggle to afford higher education, thus increasing access for those who may not have considered it an option. Our bursaries can also reduce the need for students to work excessive hours alongside their studies, allowing them to focus more on their academic commitments and maintain a healthier work-study balance.

Moreover, financial bursaries at UCBC contribute significantly to promoting participation by encouraging a diverse range of students to enrol in higher education programs. By easing financial concerns, these bursaries enable students to engage more fully in the academic and social aspects of college life, which are critical for building networks, gaining practical experience, and enhancing personal development. This inclusive approach fosters a richer learning environment that benefits all students by exposing them to a wider array of perspectives and experiences.

Finally, bursaries are instrumental in supporting the completion of studies. From the analysis into why students are dropping out and not continuing, it is clear financial stress is a leading cause of student dropout, and by providing targeted financial support, UCBC can help ensure that students are able to complete their programs. This not only benefits the individual students, by enhancing their career prospects and personal development, but also contributes to the institution's success metrics and reputation. The availability of financial bursaries thus represents a vital component of UCBC's broader strategy to enhance student success and equity in higher education.

Details of the bursaries are as follows:

**£500 Study Bonus**

Full time undergraduate students will be offered a bonus worth £500 per year provided they meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Enrolled onto an Undergraduate degree paying fees of £8250 and up-to-date with all payments

- Satisfactory attendance of 90% or above AND successful completion of all assignments and exams

- Foundation Entry and students fully funded by an employer/sponsor are not eligible

**£500 Progression Bonus**

If you progress onto a full-time course at the University Centre Blackburn College after completing a Level 3 qualification at Blackburn College the previous year, you will be entitled to a £500 progression bonus. You will automatically be assessed after applying for your study bonus. Payments for this are processed in the November of the following year.

The University Centre Blackburn College is committed to providing support to students from lower income households. A limited number of University Centre Blackburn College Bursaries and Financial Support is available, to provide discretionary financial assistance for students to access and remain in Higher Education, particularly those students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support.

Priority groups/eligibility criteria includes students with children, lone parents, mature students with existing financial commitments, students from low-income backgrounds and students in unexpected financial hardship.

• Progression Bonus: students who are progressing from FE to HE are supported through a £500 progression bonus. This is based on attendance within the first half term the following academic year.

• University Centre Blackburn College Bursary: University Centre Blackburn College applicants who demonstrate or promote excellence in their subject may be eligible for financial support. The UCBC Bursary is worth £500 per year students are expected to have 80% + attendance and fully up to date with work submission for their subject.

• Childcare Grant: The Childcare Grant helps full-time students with the cost of childcare during term times and holidays only. The amount you receive will be dependent upon your household income and is based on 85% of your actual childcare costs.

Further information available: Childcare Grant: What you'll get - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Despite the positive impact of interventions such as modular technical qualifications, tailored Access to Higher Education (HE) courses for mature students, and financial bursaries at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC), there remain risks to equality of opportunity. These risks include potential disparities in the awareness and uptake of these initiatives among different student demographics, particularly those who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. For instance, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or marginalised communities may not fully access these resources due to a lack of information or cultural barriers that discourage them from seeking help. Additionally, while financial bursaries alleviate some financial burdens, they may not entirely address the needs of students facing multiple disadvantages, such as housing insecurity or additional caregiving responsibilities. Through student consultation this is a clear barrier and concern for our student community.

**Related objectives and targets**

See APP Table of objectives and SMART Targets below.

**Objective 2: Increase continuation rate of students from all ethnicities. (PTS2)**

*OfS data dashboard suggest that all students are under benchmark. (when categorised by ethnicity)*

**Priority**: To ensure that HE Pastoral and Academic support staff are available to offer targeted support for this underperforming group.

**Actions**: HE pastoral and Academic support staff to run targeted support sessions for white students in terms of academic writing and assignment management.

**Intervention Strategy 2: Ensure strategies are in place to allow students from all ethnicities the same opportunity to succeed**

**Intervention Activities:**

*Study skills package revision with Academic Skills Coaches:* The Study Skills package with Academic Skills Coaches is vital for ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary tools for academic success. This package is tailored and updated to meet the evolving needs of students, and focuses on essential skills such as time management, critical thinking, and effective study techniques. The importance of this initiative is underscored by student feedback gathered through consultations for the Access and Participation Plan (APP), which highlighted the necessity and the effectiveness of Academic Skills Coaches. Students expressed that these coaches play a crucial role in enhancing their understanding and application of academic concepts, thereby improving their overall academic performance and confidence. This feedback emphasises the value of continuous improvement and personalisation in academic support services, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have access to the resources they need to thrive in their studies.

*Student experience team to be involved to support ALL students from a pastoral perspective and for targeted intervention for our white students:* The involvement of the Student Experience Team is critical in supporting all students from a pastoral perspective, ensuring holistic well-being and academic success. This team plays a key role in providing personalised support and creating an inclusive environment that addresses the diverse needs of the student community. Additionally, targeted interventions for white students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or areas with low higher education participation rates, are essential to address specific barriers they may face.

The Student Experience and Services Team can offer a range of services, including mental health support, academic advising, and career guidance, which are crucial for fostering a positive and supportive educational experience. By proactively engaging with students through regular check-ins, workshops, and support groups, the team can identify and address issues early, preventing potential dropouts and enhancing overall student satisfaction and performance.

For targeted interventions aimed at white students, the team can focus on outreach programs that raise awareness about available resources and support systems available at UCBC. This could involve mentoring programs, financial support workshops, and community-building activities designed to boost engagement and continuation. By understanding the unique challenges faced by these students, the Student Experience and Services Team can tailor their approach to provide the necessary guidance and support, ultimately promoting equity and inclusion across the entire student community at UCBC

*Progression boards/summits to identify early causes for concern and at risk students:* Implementing progression boards and quality summits is a proactive strategy for identifying early causes for concern and at-risk students at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC). These boards and summits serve as collaborative forums where the Executive, Heads of School, Managers and student support staff regularly meet to review student performance data and identify individuals who may be struggling academically, socially, or personally.

The primary importance of these progression boards and summits lies in their ability to provide a structured and systematic approach to monitoring student progress. By regularly assessing key indicators such as attendance, submissions, grades, and engagement levels, the boards can quickly

pinpoint students who are at risk of falling behind or dropping out. This early identification allows for timely and targeted interventions, such as personalised academic support, pastoral services, and additional resources tailored to the student's specific needs.

Moreover, these meetings facilitate a holistic understanding of each student's circumstances, enabling a more comprehensive support strategy. For instance, academic difficulties might be linked to personal issues such as mental health challenges or financial stress, which the progression boards and quality summits can address through coordinated efforts involving various support services. This integrated approach ensures that interventions are not only reactive but also preventative, aiming to resolve issues before they escalate.

Overall, the establishment of progression boards and summits is a crucial element in promoting student success and continuation at UCBC, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to continue to thrive and complete.

*Student voice evaluation of support and a clear You Said We Did strategy to improve further*: Incorporating student voice evaluation into the support framework at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC) is essential for continuous improvement and fostering a responsive educational environment. A "You Said, We Did" strategy ensures that student feedback is actively sought, carefully considered, and visibly acted upon, thereby enhancing trust and engagement between students and the college.

**Student Voice Evaluation of Support**:

1. **Feedback Mechanisms**: Regularly gather student input through surveys, focus groups, suggestion forums. These should be designed to capture feedback on various aspects of quality of education, support services, including academic assistance, pastoral care, and extracurricular activities.

2. **Transparency**: Communicate the purpose and impact of student feedback clearly, ensuring that students understand how their input will be used to drive improvements.

3. **Engagement**: Foster an inclusive environment where all students feel empowered to share their experiences and suggestions. This involves reaching out to diverse student groups and ensuring their voices are heard.

**You Said, We Did Strategy**:

1. **Analysis and Action**: Systematically analyse the feedback to identify common themes and specific areas for improvement. Develop actionable plans to address these areas, assigning clear responsibilities and timelines.

2. **Implementation**: Execute the improvement plans, making visible changes to policies, services, and facilities based on student feedback. This could include extending library hours, enhancing mental health support, or improving campus facilities.

3. **Communication**: Regularly update students on the actions taken in response to their feedback. Use various channels, such as email newsletters, social media, and campus noticeboards, to highlight the "You Said, We Did" outcomes. This transparency not only validates student input but also demonstrates the institution's commitment to their well-being.

4. **Continuous Loop**: Establish an ongoing feedback loop where the impact of implemented changes is monitored, and further input is solicited to refine and enhance support services continuously.

By prioritising student voice evaluation and implementing a robust "You Said, We Did" strategy, UCBC can create a dynamic and supportive learning environment. This approach ensures that student needs and concerns are addressed promptly and effectively, leading to higher satisfaction, improved continuation rates, and a stronger sense of community within the college.

*HE Financial Bursaries in place to support Access, Participation and Completion of studies:* University Centre Blackburn College Higher Education (HE) financial bursaries play a crucial role in supporting access, participation, and completion of studies for students. The bursaries are designed to alleviate financial barriers that often hinder our students, particularly those from underrepresented or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, from pursuing and completing their education.

The importance of the HE bursaries lies in their ability to provide essential financial support that can cover tuition fees, learning materials, and living expenses. This financial relief is particularly vital for students who may otherwise struggle to afford higher education, thus increasing access for those who may not have considered it an option. Our bursaries can also reduce the need for students to work excessive hours alongside their studies, allowing them to focus more on their academic commitments and maintain a healthier work-study balance.

Moreover, financial bursaries at UCBC contribute significantly to promoting participation by encouraging a diverse range of students to enrol in higher education programs. By easing financial concerns, these bursaries enable students to engage more fully in the academic and social aspects of college life, which are critical for building networks, gaining practical experience, and enhancing personal development. This inclusive approach fosters a richer learning environment that benefits all students by exposing them to a wider array of perspectives and experiences.

Finally, bursaries are instrumental in supporting the completion of studies. From the analysis into why students are dropping out and not continuing, it is clear financial stress is a leading cause of student dropout, and by providing targeted financial support, UCBC can help ensure that students are able to complete their programs. This not only benefits the individual students, by enhancing their career prospects and personal development, but

also contributes to the institution's success metrics and reputation. The availability of financial bursaries thus represents a vital component of UCBC's broader strategy to enhance student success and equity in higher education.

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Further information available: Childcare Grant: What you'll get - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Expanding on the previously identified risks, it's crucial to consider the specific challenges related to Academic Skills Coaches, the Student Experience and Services Team, and the student voice (SV) system. Each of these targets presents unique risks to equality of opportunity that must be addressed to ensure a truly inclusive environment at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC).

1. **Unequal Access to Academic Skills Coaches**:

   o **Visibility and Awareness**: Some students may be unaware of the availability and benefits of Academic Skills Coaches, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds who might not have prior experience with such support services.

   o **Demand and Availability**: High demand for Academic Skills Coaches can result in unequal access, with some students receiving more support than others due to limited availability. This can disproportionately affect students who may need more intensive or regular assistance.

2. **Bias in Academic Skills Support**:

   o **Standardised Approaches**: There is a risk that Academic Skills Coaches may use standardised approaches that do not account for the diverse learning needs and backgrounds of students. Tailoring support to individual needs is crucial to avoid reinforcing existing disparities.

3. **Student Experience Team Limitations**:

   o **Resource Constraints**: The Student Experience Team might face resource limitations that restrict their ability to provide comprehensive support to all students. This can lead to unequal distribution of support services, with some students benefiting more than others.

   o **Targeted Interventions**: While targeted interventions for specific groups (e.g., white students from disadvantaged backgrounds) are important, there is a risk that other groups may feel neglected or underserved if resources are not balanced appropriately.

4. **Student Voice System Inequities**:

   o **Engagement Disparities**: Not all student groups may engage equally with the student voice system. Marginalised or less confident students may be less likely to provide feedback, leading to an incomplete representation of student needs and priorities.

   o **Feedback Utilisation**: There is a risk that feedback from more vocal or influential student groups may be prioritised over that from quieter or less represented groups. This can result in interventions that do not adequately address the needs of all students.

**Mitigation Strategies:**

1. **Inclusive Communication and Outreach**:

   o **Awareness Campaigns**: Implement targeted campaigns to raise awareness about the availability and benefits of Academic Skills Coaches and the Student Experience Team, ensuring that all students know how to access these resources.

   o **Diverse Channels**: Use diverse communication channels to reach different student demographics, including digital platforms, posters, and in-person sessions.

2. **Training and Development**:

   o **Personalised Support Plans**: Encourage coaches to develop personalised support plans that take into account the unique backgrounds and needs of each student.

3. **Equitable Resource Allocation**:

   o **Monitor Demand and Availability**: Regularly assess the demand for Academic Skills Coaches and adjust resource allocation to ensure equitable access.

   o **Balance Interventions**: Ensure that targeted interventions for specific groups do not come at the expense of support for other student demographics. Maintain a balanced approach to resource distribution.

4. **Enhancing the Student Voice System**:

- o **Inclusive Feedback Mechanisms**: Design feedback mechanisms to be inclusive and accessible, encouraging participation from all student groups. Consider anonymous surveys, focus groups, and suggestion boxes to capture a wide range of perspectives.

- o **Transparent Reporting**: Regularly report on the feedback received and the actions taken in response, highlighting how the needs of different student groups are being addressed.

5. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation**:

- o **Feedback Loop**: Establish a continuous feedback loop where the effectiveness of interventions is regularly evaluated, and adjustments are made based on ongoing student input.

- o **Accountability Framework**: Develop a robust accountability framework to ensure that all initiatives are implemented effectively and equitably, with clear metrics for success and regular reporting.

By addressing these risks through thoughtful and inclusive strategies, UCBC can enhance equality of opportunity and ensure that all students have access to the support and resources they need to succeed.

**Related objectives and targets**

See APP Table of objectives and SMART Targets below.

**Objective 3: Increase completion rate for most socio economically disadvantaged students. (PTS3)**

OfS data dashboard suggest there is a significant gap between Q1 and Q4/Q5 in terms of completion.

**Priority**: To build stronger partnerships with local communities, industries, and schools to support students from low socio-economic background accessing and being successful on Higher education programmes.

**Action 1**: Further develop specific outreach school liaison programme to support students from most deprived backgrounds accessing Higher Education.

**Action 2**: Ensure pastoral and academic support is available and accessed by students from this disadvantaged group, and further transition work is developed to support FE students progressing into HE.

**Intervention Strategy 3: Provide a supportive learning experience and environment that creates a culture of success for our community**

**Intervention Activities:**

*Access and Participation Plan, community/schools focused outreach programme:* As above.

*CIAG team to provide advice for students considering F/T and P/T programmes:* As above.

*All programmes offered with P/T route where possible:* As above.

*Study skills package revision with Academic Skills Coaches:* As above.

*Clear policy and process around attendance, engagement and interventions expected for students:* As above.

*Develop programme to offer more modular technical qualifications such as HNC/HND pathways. (To introduce 3 new HN's per year for the next 3 years):* As above.

*Develop Access to HE offer to support mature students with accessing L4 and above:* As above.

*HE Financial Bursaries in place to support Access, Participation and Completion of studies:* As above.

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Providing a supportive learning experience and environment that fosters a culture of success at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC) is essential for student achievement and satisfaction. However, several risks to quality need to be carefully managed to ensure that this objective is met effectively and equitably:

**Risks to Quality:**

1. **Resource Limitations**:

     o **Insufficient Funding**: Limited financial resources can constrain the ability to provide high-quality facilities, learning materials, and support services. This can impact the overall learning environment and the quality of student support.

- **Staffing Levels**: Inadequate staffing can lead to high student-to-teacher ratios, reducing the quality of personalized attention and support that students receive. Overworked staff may also experience burnout, affecting their ability to deliver high-quality education and support.

2. **Inconsistent Support Services**:

   - **Variability in Service Quality**: Inconsistencies in the quality of support services, such as academic advising, mental health support, and career guidance, can result in unequal student experiences. Some students may receive excellent support, while others may not, leading to disparities in student success.

   - **Accessibility Issues**: Support services may not be equally accessible to all students, particularly those with disabilities or those studying part-time or remotely. This can create barriers to success for these students.

3. **Technology and Infrastructure Challenges**:

   - **Outdated Technology**: Reliance on outdated or insufficient technology can hinder the learning experience, especially in an increasingly digital education landscape. This includes inadequate access to online learning platforms, software, and hardware.

   - **Infrastructure Limitations**: Poor physical infrastructure, such as inadequate classroom spaces, insufficient study areas, and lack of modern facilities, can negatively impact the learning environment and overall student experience.

4. **Curriculum Relevance and Flexibility**:

   - **Outdated Curriculum**: An outdated or rigid curriculum that does not align with current industry standards or student interests can limit student engagement and readiness for the job market. Regular curriculum reviews are necessary to maintain relevance.

   - **Lack of Flexibility**: Inflexible academic programs that do not accommodate diverse learning styles, schedules, and life circumstances can hinder student success. This is particularly important for mature students, part-time students, and those with significant outside responsibilities.

5. **Student Engagement and Well-being**:

   - **Low Engagement Levels**: Insufficient efforts to engage students in their learning and campus community can lead to lower satisfaction and retention rates. Active engagement is crucial for a supportive and successful learning environment.

- **Mental Health and Well-being**: Neglecting the mental health and well-being of students can adversely affect their academic performance and overall college experience. A supportive environment must include robust mental health services and well-being initiatives.

**Mitigation Strategies:**

1. **Secure and Allocate Resources Effectively**:

   - **Increase Funding**: Pursue additional funding opportunities through grants, partnerships, and alumni donations to enhance facilities, technology, and staffing.

   - **Optimize Resource Allocation**: Ensure that resources are allocated strategically to areas that most impact student success, such as support services, technology, and infrastructure improvements.

2. **Standardize and Enhance Support Services**:

   - **Quality Assurance**: Implement standardized procedures and regular training for support service staff to ensure consistent quality across all services.

   - **Inclusive Accessibility**: Enhance the accessibility of support services for all students, including those with disabilities, part-time students, and remote learners. This could include online support options and extended service hours.

3. **Upgrade Technology and Infrastructure**:

   - **Invest in Technology**: Regularly update and maintain technological resources to support modern learning environments. Provide students and staff with access to the latest software and hardware necessary for academic success.

   - **Improve Physical Spaces**: Invest in upgrading physical infrastructure to create modern, comfortable, and conducive learning environments. This includes classrooms, laboratories, study areas, and recreational facilities.

4. **Curriculum Development and Flexibility**:

   - **Regular Reviews**: Conduct regular curriculum reviews to ensure alignment with industry standards and student interests. Engage industry professionals and alumni in the review process.

- o **Flexible Learning Options**: Develop flexible academic programs that accommodate diverse learning styles and schedules, including part-time, evening, and online course options.

5. **Promote Student Engagement and Well-being**:

   - o **Engagement Initiatives**: Implement initiatives to actively engage students in their learning and campus community, such as clubs, organizations, events, and volunteer opportunities.

   - o **Mental Health Support**: Strengthen mental health services and well-being programs. Offer counseling, stress management workshops, and wellness activities to support student mental health.

By addressing these risks through targeted strategies, UCBC can enhance the quality of its supportive learning experience and create a culture of success for all members of its community.

**Risks to Equality:**

Providing a supportive learning experience and environment that fosters a culture of success at University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC) is essential for promoting equality. However, several risks to equality need to be managed carefully to ensure that all students benefit equitably from this supportive environment:

1. **Unequal Access to Support Services**:

   - o **Awareness and Outreach**: Not all students may be equally aware of the available support services due to ineffective communication or outreach efforts. Students from underrepresented backgrounds or those who are first-generation college attendees may be less familiar with navigating these resources.

   - o **Physical and Digital Accessibility**: Students with disabilities may face barriers in accessing physical and digital support services.

2. **Cultural and Social Barriers**:

   - o **Cultural Competence**: Support services that are not culturally competent may fail to address the unique needs of students from diverse backgrounds. This can lead to feelings of alienation and disengagement.

- **Social Stigma**: There may be social stigmas attached to seeking support, particularly for mental health services, which can disproportionately affect students from certain cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds.

3. **Variability in Support Quality**:

    - **Inconsistent Quality**: The quality of support services can vary, with some students receiving more effective assistance than others.

    - **Staff Training**: Insufficient training for support staff on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion can result in biased or inadequate support for students from marginalised underperforming groups.

4. **Academic Flexibility**:

    - **Rigid Curriculum**: A lack of flexibility in academic programs can disproportionately affect students, such as those who are working, have family responsibilities, or are part-time learners. These students may find it difficult to balance their commitments without adequate flexibility in their academic programs.

5. **Engagement and Participation**:

    - **Differential Engagement**: Not all students may feel equally encouraged or able to participate in extracurricular/curriculum enhancement activities. Students from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds might face additional barriers to engagement.

**Mitigation Strategies:**

1. **Inclusive Communication and Outreach**:

    - **Targeted Awareness Campaigns**: Implement targeted campaigns to raise awareness about support services, focusing on underrepresented and first-generation students. Use multiple communication channels to reach a diverse student body.

    - **Accessible Information**: Ensure that information about support services is available in accessible formats for students with disabilities, including digital accessibility enhancements and clear physical signage.

2. **Cultural Competence and Sensitivity**:

- o **Diversity Training**: Provide regular training for support staff on cultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion to better serve the diverse student population.

- o **Inclusive Support Services**: Develop support services that are sensitive to the cultural and social contexts of all students, including mental health services that address stigma and encourage usage.

3. **Financial Support and Equity**:

- o **Equitable Bursary Distribution**: Regularly review the criteria and distribution of financial bursaries to ensure they are meeting the needs of all students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

4. **Flexible Academic Programs**:

- o **Flexible Scheduling**: Develop flexible academic scheduling options, such as evening and online wider reading, to accommodate students with diverse life circumstances..

By addressing these risks through thoughtful and inclusive strategies, UCBC can ensure that its supportive learning environment promotes equality of opportunity and success for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances.

**Related objectives and targets**

See APP Table of objectives and SMART Targets below.

**Objective 4: Increase completion rate of students from all ethnicities. (PTS4)**

*OfS data dashboard suggest that all ethnicity groups are below benchmark.*

**Priority**: to ensure all students are supported to continue and succeed on their programmes of study.

**Actions**: Implement targeted strategies to support all students in continuing degree programmes at UCBC. We will also Implement regular reviews and assessments, collect and analyse data on student demographics and outcomes, and seek feedback from students and staff to guide future strategies.

**Intervention Strategy 4: Create a wraparound network of support for all parts of the student journey**

**Intervention Activities:**

*Employability skills, placements and working life experience:* Developing employability skills and providing opportunities for placements and real-world working experiences are crucial for enhancing student engagement and improving continuation rates. These activities help students see the practical application of their studies, increase their motivation, and prepare them for future careers. The following steps will be taken:

- **Workshops and Seminars**: Organise regular workshops and seminars focusing on key employability skills such as resume writing, interview techniques, communication, teamwork, and leadership.

- **Industry Partnerships**: Establish partnerships with local and national businesses to offer placements, internships, and work-shadowing opportunities. Ensure these opportunities are accessible to all students, with targeted support to encourage participation from white students.

- **Mentorship Programs**: Pair students with industry professionals and alumni for mentorship, providing guidance on career paths and professional development.

*Disability service to forensically monitor performance and to provide timely effective intervention for ALL students, including targeted activity to support white students further:* A proactive approach by the HE Disability Service can significantly impact student continuation, particularly for students with disabilities. Monitoring performance and intervening early can prevent small issues from becoming significant barriers to continuation.

- **Performance Tracking**: Implement a system to monitor the academic performance and engagement of all students, identifying those who may be at risk of falling behind.

- **Timely Interventions**: Provide timely interventions such as personalised support plans, and additional support for students identified as at-risk.

- **Targeted Support for White Students**: Develop targeted activities and support mechanisms specifically aimed at white students, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance to overcome any challenges and therefore continue and complete.

*CIAG and learning support team guidance on using access to work services:* The Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) and Learning Support Teams play a vital role in helping students navigate available resources, including Access to Work services. These services can provide critical support to students with disabilities, helping them succeed in their academic and professional lives.

- **Awareness Campaigns**: Conduct awareness campaigns to inform students about Access to Work services and how they can benefit from them.

- **Personalised Guidance**: Offer one-on-one sessions with the CIAG and Learning Support Teams to guide students through the process of applying for Access to Work services.

- **Workshops and Training**: Host workshops and training sessions on how to utilise Access to Work services effectively, ensuring students can access the support they need to thrive.

*HE Financial Bursaries in place to support Access, Participation and Completion of studies:* As above.

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Based on the interventions outlined (Employability Skills, Placements, and Working Life Experience; Disability Service Monitoring; and IAG and Learning Support Team Guidance), there are specific risks to equality of opportunity that need to be carefully managed to ensure all students benefit equitably:

**1. Employability Skills, Placements, and Working Life Experience**

**Risks to Equality of Opportunity:**

- **Unequal Access to Opportunities**:

  - **Risk**: Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including some white students, may lack the social networks or resources to access high-quality placements.

  - **Mitigation**: Establish transparent and equitable processes for placement selection and ensure that information about opportunities is widely disseminated. Provide additional support to help disadvantaged students prepare applications and secure placements.

- **Bias in Selection Processes**:

  - **Risk**: Implicit biases in the selection process for workshops, placements, and mentorship programs may favour certain student groups over others.

o   **Mitigation**: Implement bias training for staff involved in the selection processes and use standardised, objective criteria to evaluate candidates. Regularly review selection outcomes to ensure equity.

## 2. Disability Service Monitoring and Intervention

**Risks to Equality of Opportunity:**

- **Visibility and Stigma**:

    o   **Risk**: Some students with disabilities may not disclose their needs due to stigma, resulting in a lack of support.

    o   **Mitigation**: Foster an inclusive environment where students feel safe to disclose their disabilities. Provide confidential channels for disclosure and ensure that information is handled sensitively.

- **Resource Limitations**:

    o   **Risk**: Insufficient resources could lead to inadequate support for students with disabilities, impacting their academic performance and continuation rates.

    o   **Mitigation**: Secure sufficient funding and staffing for the Disability Service to ensure comprehensive support. Regularly review resource allocation to address any gaps in service provision.

- **Targeted Support Imbalance**:

    o   **Risk**: While targeted support for white students is important, there is a risk that focusing too narrowly on this group could lead to neglect of other students with disabilities who also need support.

    o   **Mitigation**: Ensure that interventions are inclusive and provide support based on individual needs, without excluding any groups. Maintain a balanced approach to resource allocation.

## 3. IAG and Learning Support Team Guidance on Using Access to Work Services

**Risks to Equality of Opportunity:**

- **Awareness and Utilization**:

  - **Risk**: Not all students may be aware of Access to Work services or understand how to utilise them effectively.

  - **Mitigation**: Conduct comprehensive awareness campaigns and provide clear, accessible information about these services. Offer personalised guidance sessions to ensure all students understand and can access the support available.

- **Accessibility of Services**:

  - **Risk**: Students with disabilities or those from disadvantaged backgrounds might face challenges in accessing the IAG and Learning Support Team services, whether due to physical barriers, scheduling conflicts, or lack of digital access.

  - **Mitigation**: Ensure that support services are physically accessible, offer virtual consultations for remote or time-constrained students, and provide assistive technologies where needed.

**Comprehensive Mitigation Strategies:**

1. **Inclusive Communication**:

   - Use multiple communication channels to ensure all students are informed about available support services, employability opportunities, and how to access them. Ensure materials are accessible and easy to understand.

2. **Regular Training and Development**:

   - Provide ongoing training for staff on cultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion to better serve the diverse student population.

3. **Monitoring and Evaluation**:

   - Establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track the progress and impact of interventions. Use data to inform continuous improvement efforts and ensure interventions are meeting the needs of all students equitably.

4. **Feedback Mechanisms**:

o Implement feedback mechanisms that allow students to voice their experiences and suggestions. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and improvements to support services and interventions.

By addressing these risks through targeted strategies, UCBC can enhance equality of opportunity, ensuring that all students benefit from a supportive learning environment and are empowered to continue their studies successfully.

**Related objectives and targets**

See APP Table of objectives and SMART Targets below.

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Increase continuation rate for most socio economically disadvantaged students. PTS1** <br><br> **Increase completion rate for most socio economically disadvantaged students. PTS4** <br><br> **Increase continuation rate of all students. PTS2** <br><br> **Increase completion rate of all students. PTS3** <br><br> **Increase access rates for all students. PTA1** | | | |
| APP community/schools focused outreach programme. | The Access and Participation Plan (APP) community and schools-focused outreach program aims to enhance educational access and inclusivity by actively engaging with local communities and schools. This initiative involves targeted activities designed to raise awareness about higher education opportunities, particularly among underrepresented groups. | Dedicated Outreach Team <br><br> Partnerships and Collaborations <br><br> Educational Materials and Resources <br><br> Funding and Budget <br><br> Event Logistics and Venues <br><br> Data and Research <br><br> Marketing and Communication <br><br> Training and Professional Development <br><br> Support Services | Target: Organise a minimum of 12 engagement events per year (e.g., workshops, information sessions, or school visits). <br> Purpose: Measure the frequency of outreach efforts aimed at raising awareness about higher education opportunities. <br><br> Target: Ensure that at least 50% of event participants come from underrepresented groups (e.g., low-income, minority ethnic backgrounds, first-generation students). <br> Purpose: Track the reach and impact of the program on its target audience. <br><br> Target: Achieve a 10% annual increase in higher education applications from students in schools that participate in the outreach program. <br> Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of outreach activities in encouraging students to apply to higher education institutions. <br><br> Target: Attain a 90% satisfaction rate among participating students, parents, and school staff based on post-event feedback surveys. <br> Purpose: Evaluate the quality and relevance of outreach activities from the perspective of key stakeholders. |

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| | | | Target: Establish and maintain at least 5 long-term partnerships with local schools and community organisations annually.<br>Purpose: Strengthen collaborative efforts and ensure sustained engagement with the local community.<br>Target: Achieve a 15% conversion rate of participants progressing to higher education within 2 years of engaging with the program.<br>Purpose: Monitor the long-term impact of outreach activities on participants' educational choices. |
| CIAG team to provide advice for students considering F/T and P/T programmes. | The CIAG (Careers Information, Advice, and Guidance) team provides crucial support for students exploring both full-time (F/T) and part-time (P/T) higher education programs. This service aims to guide students through the decision-making process by offering personalised advice on program options, career pathways, and application procedures. The CIAG team helps students understand the differences between full-time and part-time study, how these options align with their career goals, and the practical implications of each choice. This support includes one-on-one consultations, workshops, and informational resources designed to ensure that students make informed decisions that best suit their academic and career aspirations. | Trained Career Advisors<br><br>Up-to-Date Programme Information<br><br>Personalised Career Guidance<br><br>Guidance Materials and Resources<br><br>Workshops and Information Sessions<br><br>Support for Application Processes | Target: Conduct a minimum of 200 one-on-one consultations with students annually.<br>Purpose: Measure the accessibility and individual support provided by the CIAG team to assist students in exploring full-time (F/T) and part-time (P/T) higher education options.<br><br>Target: Achieve a 90% satisfaction rate from students, based on post-consultation feedback surveys.<br>Target: Organize at least 15 workshops or group sessions annually focused on F/T and P/T study options, career pathways, and application guidance.<br><br>Purpose: Evaluate the team's outreach efforts in providing accessible information to larger student groups and ensuring diverse participation.<br><br>Target: Ensure that at least 70% of students who receive one-on-one advice from the CIAG team proceed to submit applications for F/T or P/T higher education programs.<br>Purpose: Track the effectiveness of the team's guidance in helping students make decisions |

| | | | and take concrete steps toward higher education. |
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| | | | Target: Ensure 85% of students who attend workshops or consultations demonstrate an improved understanding of the differences between full-time and part-time study options, as measured by pre- and post-session surveys. Purpose: Gauge the impact of the team's efforts to educate students on the practical implications and benefits of different study modes.<br><br>Target: Ensure at least 80% of students who engage with CIAG services access additional informational resources (e.g., brochures, online guides, or career planning tools) provided by the team.<br><br>Purpose: Measure how effectively the CIAG team promotes and distributes resources that help students make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. |
| Programmes offered with P/T route where possible. | The "Programs Offered with P/T Route Where Possible" initiative is designed to enhance accessibility and flexibility in higher education by offering part-time study options for a range of degree programs. This initiative aims to accommodate students who need to balance their studies with other commitments, such as work or family responsibilities. By providing part-time routes, the institution enables students to pursue their academic goals at a pace that suits their individual circumstances, making higher education more inclusive and accessible. | Curriculum Development and Modification<br><br>Advising and Guidance Services<br><br>Communication and Promotion<br><br>Financial and Funding Advice | Target: Ensure that at least 50% of all degree programs offer a part-time route within the next academic year. Purpose: Track the expansion of part-time study options to enhance accessibility and flexibility for students with diverse commitments. Target: Achieve a 15% annual increase in student enrolment in part-time degree programs. Purpose: Measure the success of part-time offerings in attracting students who need flexibility due to work, family, or other commitments. Target: Maintain a minimum 85% retention rate of students enrolled in part-time programs. Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of part-time study routes in supporting students throughout |

| | | | their academic journey and ensuring they continue their studies. |
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| | | | Target: Achieve a 90% satisfaction rate from students enrolled in part-time programs, based on end-of-year surveys. Purpose: Evaluate the perceived quality, flexibility, and support provided within part-time study routes, ensuring students feel accommodated and satisfied with their experience.<br><br>Target: Ensure that at least 30% of part-time program enrolments come from underrepresented groups (e.g., low-income, mature, or first-generation students). Purpose: Measure the initiative's success in making higher education more inclusive and accessible to those with additional barriers to full-time study.<br><br>Target: Increase awareness of part-time study options by 25%, as measured by student inquiries and website traffic related to part-time programs. Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of outreach and marketing efforts in promoting the availability of part-time study routes to potential students. |
| Study skills package revision with Academic Skills Coaches. | The "Study Skills Package Revision with Academic Coaches" initiative is designed to enhance students' academic performance by providing targeted support in study skills development. This program involves revising and refining existing study skills resources and approaches with the help of Academic Coaches. The initiative aims to equip students with effective strategies for time management, research, writing, and exam preparation, | Assessment of Current Study Skills Packages<br><br>Development of Revised Study Skills Content<br><br>Training for Academic Skills Coaches<br><br>Delivery Methods and Formats<br><br>Collaboration with Academic Schools | Target: Ensure at least 70% of the student population engages with study skills sessions led by Academic Coaches each academic year. Purpose: Track participation rates to measure the reach and impact of the revised study skills package and tailored support. Target: Achieve a 10% improvement in average student grades (coursework and exams) among those who have participated in study skills sessions. |

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| | thereby improving their overall academic success. Academic Skills Coaches work closely with students to tailor these skills to individual needs, offering personalized guidance and support throughout their studies. | | Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of the initiative in enhancing academic performance and helping students achieve better outcomes.<br><br>Target: Attain a 90% satisfaction rate from students who receive support from Academic Coaches, based on post-session surveys.<br>Purpose: Evaluate the quality and perceived value of the personalised support provided by Academic Coaches.<br><br>Target: Complete the full revision of the study skills package, incorporating feedback from Academic Coaches and students, by the end of the academic year.<br>Purpose: Measure the progress and effectiveness of efforts to update and improve study skills resources to better meet students' needs.<br><br>Target: Ensure 80% of students who participate in the initiative report improvements in time management and study habits, as measured by pre- and post-session surveys.<br>Purpose: Monitor the specific impact of study skills coaching on students' ability to manage their studies effectively.<br><br>Target: Ensure that at least 60% of students who receive initial support from Academic Coaches engage in follow-up sessions throughout their studies.<br>Purpose: Track ongoing student engagement and the development of long-term study habits, ensuring continuous academic support. |
| Clear policy and process around attendance, engagement and | The "Clear Policy and Process Around Attendance, Engagement, and Interventions Expected for Students" initiative aims to establish a structured and transparent approach to managing student | Policy Development<br><br>Communication of Policies<br><br>Tracking and Monitoring Systems | Target: Ensure 100% of courses have implemented the new attendance and engagement policy by the start of the next academic year. |

| interventions expected for students. | attendance, engagement, and academic interventions. This initiative is designed to ensure that all students understand the expectations for their participation in courses and the support mechanisms available to them if they encounter difficulties. By implementing clear policies and processes, the institution seeks to enhance student retention and success, while providing timely and effective support to those who may be struggling. | Intervention Framework<br><br>Student Awareness and Education | Purpose: Measure the successful roll-out and adoption of clear guidelines for managing student attendance and engagement across all programs.<br><br>Target: Achieve 90% student awareness of the new attendance, engagement, and intervention policies, as measured by surveys and informational session participation.<br>Purpose: Ensure that students fully understand the expectations around attendance and engagement, and the support mechanisms in place if they face challenges.<br><br>Target: Reduce unauthorised absences by 20% within the first year of implementing the attendance policy.<br>Purpose: Track the effectiveness of the policy in encouraging students to meet attendance expectations and stay engaged in their studies.<br><br>Target: Ensure that 95% of students identified as at-risk due to poor attendance or engagement receive timely interventions (e.g., academic support or personal tutoring) within two weeks of identification.<br>Purpose: Monitor the promptness and effectiveness of support provided to students who are struggling, ensuring they receive help before issues escalate.<br><br>Target: Increase student retention rates by 10% within two years of implementing the initiative, particularly among students who have received interventions.<br>Purpose: Measure the impact of clear attendance and engagement policies on overall student retention and success.<br><br>Target: Ensure 100% of academic and support staff receive training on the new attendance, |

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| | | | engagement, and intervention processes by the end of the first semester.<br><br>Purpose: Track the preparedness of staff to effectively enforce policies, monitor student engagement, and provide necessary interventions, ensuring consistency across the institution. |
| Develop programme to offer more modular technical qualifications such as HNC/HND pathways. (To introduce 3 new HN's per year for the next 3 years) | The "Develop Program to Offer More Modular Technical Qualifications" initiative focuses on expanding the range of technical qualifications available to students by introducing more modular pathways, such as Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND). This program aims to meet the growing demand for flexible, industry-relevant qualifications by offering three new HNC/HND programs each year for the next three years. By providing modular qualifications, the initiative supports students who seek specialized skills and knowledge in specific technical fields while allowing them to tailor their studies to their career goals and existing commitments. | Curriculum Design and Development<br><br>Employer Consultation<br><br>Program Approval and Accreditation<br><br>Course Delivery Planning<br><br>Marketing and Recruitment | Number of New HNC/HND Programs Developed and Launched<br><br>Target: 3 new HNC/HND programs developed and launched per year. Measurement: Number of new programs offered each year compared to the target.<br><br>Student Enrolment in New Modular Programs<br><br>Target: Achieve at least 100 students enrolled in the new modular HNC/HND programs within the first year of launch. Measurement: Total number of students enrolled in the new programs annually.<br><br>Student Retention Rate<br><br>Target: Maintain a retention rate of 80% or higher for students enrolled in modular HNC/HND programs. Measurement: Percentage of students who continue from one module or semester to the next.<br><br>Industry Partnership Involvement<br><br>Target: Secure partnerships with at least 5 industry leaders or employers per year to ensure the relevance of the modular programs. |

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| | | | Measurement: Number of active partnerships formed each year.<br><br>Student Satisfaction with Program Flexibility<br><br>Target: Achieve a student satisfaction score of 90% or higher regarding program flexibility and relevance to career goals. Measurement: Feedback from student satisfaction surveys.<br><br>Expansion into New Technical Fields<br><br>Target: Introduce at least one modular HNC/HND program in a new technical field each year to diversify the program offering. Measurement: Number of new technical fields covered by the modular programs.<br><br>Target: Gain industry-recognised certification or accreditation for 100% of the newly introduced modular HNC/HND programs. Measurement: Percentage of new programs that receive certification/accreditation from relevant industry bodies. |
| Develop Access to HE offer to support mature students with accessing L4 and above. | The "Develop Access to HE Offer to Support Mature Students with Accessing L4 and Above" initiative aims to expand and enhance access to higher education for mature students by providing targeted support for progression to Level 4 and above qualifications. This initiative focuses on creating pathways that facilitate entry into higher education for adult learners who may have been out of the academic environment for some time or who are seeking to upskill or change careers. By developing tailored Access to Higher | Needs Assessment and Research<br><br>Program Design and Development<br><br>Phase out year zero HE courses<br><br>Outreach and Recruitment<br><br>Student Feedback and Improvement | Number of Access to HE Programs Developed<br><br>Target: Develop at least 2 new Access to HE programs tailored to mature students each year. Measurement: Number of new Access to HE programs developed and launched annually.<br><br>Enrolment of Mature Students in Access to HE Programs<br><br>Target: Enrol at least 150 mature students in the Access to HE programs annually. |

| | Education (HE) programs, the institution intends to help mature students overcome barriers to education, achieve their academic goals, and advance their careers. | | Measurement: Total number of mature students enrolled in these programs each year.

Progression Rate to Level 4 and Above

Target: Ensure at least 90% of mature students who complete the Access to HE program progress to Level 4 qualifications or higher. Measurement: Percentage of students advancing to Level 4 and above after completing the Access to HE program.

Student Retention in Access to HE Programs

Target: Achieve a retention rate of 90% or higher for mature students enrolled in the Access to HE programs. Measurement: Percentage of students who continue through the program without dropping out.

Student Satisfaction with Tailored Support

Target: Attain a student satisfaction score of 90% or higher regarding the support provided to mature students (e.g., academic, career guidance, flexible study options). Measurement: Feedback from student satisfaction surveys focused on the support provided.

Graduate Employment or Further Study Rate

Target: 90% of mature students completing Access to HE programs either gain employment or progress to further study within six months. Measurement: Percentage of students employed or continuing to study at a higher level based on follow-up surveys. |
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| | | | Student Financial Support Uptake |
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| | | | Target: 90% of eligible mature students successfully access financial support (scholarships, grants, or loans) to help with tuition fees and study costs. |
| | | | Measurement: Percentage of mature students who receive financial assistance through available support schemes. |
| | | | Completion Time for Access to HE Programs |
| | | | Target: 90% of mature students complete their Access to HE programs within the expected timeframe. Measurement: Time taken by students to complete the programs compared to the expected duration. |
| HE Financial Bursaries in place to support Access, Participation and Completion of studies. | The "HE Financial Bursaries in Place to Support Access, Participation, and Completion of Studies" initiative is designed to provide financial assistance to students pursuing higher education, with a focus on enhancing access, supporting participation, and ensuring the successful completion of their studies. This initiative aims to alleviate financial barriers that may prevent students from enrolling in or completing their higher education programs. By offering targeted bursaries, the institution seeks to support students from diverse backgrounds, including those who may face financial challenges, and to promote equitable access to higher education opportunities. | Bursary Design and Structuring<br><br>Funding Allocation<br><br>Application and Selection Processes<br><br>Communication and Promotion<br><br>Student Support Services | Number of Financial Bursaries Awarded<br><br>Target: Award at least 200 bursaries annually to students across various programs. Measurement: Total number of bursaries awarded each year.<br><br>Student Enrolment Increase due to Bursaries<br><br>Target: Achieve a 10% increase in enrolment of students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds as a result of the bursary program. Measurement: Percentage increase in enrolment compared to previous years among students receiving financial aid.<br><br>Participation Rate of Bursary Recipients<br><br>Target: Ensure that 90% of bursary recipients actively participate in their academic programs |

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| | | | (e.g., attending classes, completing coursework). |
| | | | Measurement: Attendance and participation rates of students receiving bursaries. |
| | | | Student Retention Rate for Bursary Recipients |
| | | | Target: Maintain an 85% retention rate for students receiving bursaries, ensuring they progress from one academic year to the next. |
| | | | Measurement: Percentage of bursary recipients who continue their studies year-over-year. |
| | | | Completion Rate of Bursary Recipients |
| | | | Target: Achieve a 85% completion rate for students receiving financial bursaries. |
| | | | Measurement: Percentage of bursary recipients who successfully complete their higher education programs. |
| | | | Student Satisfaction with Financial Support |
| | | | Target: Attain a student satisfaction score of 90% or higher regarding the financial support provided through the bursary initiative. |
| | | | Measurement: Feedback from student satisfaction surveys focused on financial aid and its impact. |
| | | | Bursary Application Processing Time |

| | | | Target: Process 90% of bursary applications within 4 weeks of submission.

Measurement: Average time taken to process and award bursaries after application submission.

Graduate Employment Rate of Bursary Recipients

Target: Ensure that 70% of bursary recipients find employment or pursue further study within six months of graduation.

Measurement: Percentage of graduates who are employed or in further education based on follow-up surveys. |
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| Study skills package revision with Academic Skills Coaches. | The "Study Skills Package Revision with Academic Coaches" initiative is designed to enhance students' academic performance by providing targeted support in study skills development. This program involves revising and refining existing study skills resources and approaches with the help of Academic Coaches. The initiative aims to equip students with effective strategies for time management, research, writing, and exam preparation, thereby improving their overall academic success. Academic Skills Coaches work closely with students to tailor these skills to individual needs, offering personalized guidance and support throughout their studies. | Assessment of Current Study Skills Packages

Development of Revised Study Skills Content

Training for Academic Skills Coaches

Delivery Methods and Formats

Collaboration with Academic Schools | Target: Ensure at least 70% of the student population engages with study skills sessions led by Academic Coaches each academic year. Purpose: Track participation rates to measure the reach and impact of the revised study skills package and tailored support.

Target: Achieve a 10% improvement in average student grades (coursework and exams) among those who have participated in study skills sessions. Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of the initiative in enhancing academic performance and helping students achieve better outcomes.

Target: Attain a 90% satisfaction rate from students who receive support from Academic Coaches, based on post-session surveys. Purpose: Evaluate the quality and perceived value of the personalised support provided by Academic Coaches. |

| | | | Target: Complete the full revision of the study skills package, incorporating feedback from Academic Coaches and students, by the end of the academic year. |
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| | | | Purpose: Measure the progress and effectiveness of efforts to update and improve study skills resources to better meet students' needs. |
| | | | Target: Ensure 80% of students who participate in the initiative report improvements in time management and study habits, as measured by pre- and post-session surveys. |
| | | | Purpose: Monitor the specific impact of study skills coaching on students' ability to manage their studies effectively. |
| | | | Target: Ensure that at least 60% of students who receive initial support from Academic Coaches engage in follow-up sessions throughout their studies. |
| | | | Purpose: Track ongoing student engagement and the development of long-term study habits, ensuring continuous academic support. |
| Student experience team to be involved to support from a pastoral perspective. | The "Student Experience Team to Be Involved to Support from a Pastoral Perspective" initiative focuses on integrating pastoral support into the student experience to enhance overall well-being and success. The initiative aims to provide comprehensive support for students' personal, emotional, and academic needs, ensuring they have the resources and guidance necessary to thrive in their educational journey. By involving the Student Experience Team in pastoral care, the institution seeks to create a supportive and nurturing | Staff Training and Development Creation of Support Framework Integration with Academic Support Outreach and Engagement Activities Personalised Support Plans | Student Engagement with Pastoral Services

Target: Engage at least 70% of the student population with pastoral services offered by the Student Experience Team each year. Measurement: Percentage of students who utilise pastoral support services, workshops, or one-on-one sessions.

Student Satisfaction with Pastoral Support

Target: Achieve a satisfaction score of 90% or higher from students who receive pastoral support. Measurement: Results from student |

| | | | satisfaction surveys regarding the quality and effectiveness of pastoral care.<br><br>Pastoral Support Awareness<br><br>Target: Ensure that 95% of students are aware of the pastoral support services available to them. Measurement: Percentage of students who acknowledge knowing about the available pastoral services through awareness campaigns and orientation programs.<br><br>Response Time for Student Support Requests<br><br>Target: Respond to 95% of student support requests within 48 hours. Measurement: Average response time for student inquiries or requests for pastoral support.<br><br>Reduction in Student Dropout Rates<br><br>Target: Decrease dropout rates by 15% over the next two years by providing timely pastoral support to at-risk students. Measurement: Comparison of dropout rates before and after implementing pastoral care interventions. |
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| Progression boards/summits to identify early causes for concern and at risk students | The "Progression Boards/Summits to Identify Early Causes for Concern and At-Risk Students" initiative aims to systematically identify and address potential academic and personal issues that may affect student success. This initiative involves convening regular progression boards or summits where key stakeholders—including academic advisors, faculty, and support staff—review student performance data to identify early warning signs and at-risk students. The goal is to proactively address issues before | Formation and scheduling of Boards/Summits<br>Data Collection and Analysis<br>Regular Meetings and Reviews<br>Action Planning<br>Integration with Support Services<br>Documentation and Reporting | Frequency of Progression Boards/Summits<br><br>Target: Hold at least 4 progression boards or summits each academic year. Measurement: Number of summits convened annually compared to the target.<br><br>Identification of At-Risk Students<br><br>Target: Identify 90% of at-risk students within the first four weeks of each semester. |

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| | they escalate, ensuring that students receive timely support to help them stay on track and succeed in their studies. | | Measurement: Percentage of at-risk students identified early through academic performance data, attendance, and other risk factors.<br><br>Timely Intervention Implementation<br><br>Target: Ensure that 95% of identified at-risk students receive intervention plans within two weeks of being flagged. Measurement: Percentage of students receiving timely interventions (e.g., tutoring, pastoral support, mentorship) after being identified. |
| Student voice evaluation of support and a clear you said we did strategy to improve further | The "Student Voice Evaluation of Support and a Clear 'You Said, We Did' Strategy to Improve Further" initiative focuses on actively involving students in evaluating the support they receive and implementing a responsive feedback mechanism to drive continuous improvement. This initiative aims to ensure that student feedback is systematically collected, analysed, and used to make tangible improvements in the support services provided. By establishing a clear "You Said, We Did" strategy, the institution demonstrates its commitment to addressing student concerns and enhancing the overall student experience based on direct input from students. | Focus Groups and Consultations<br>Survey Design and Distributions<br>Data Collection and Analysis<br>Action Plan Development<br>Implementation of Changes<br>Communication of Actions Taken | Student Participation in Feedback Surveys<br><br>Target: Achieve a 75% response rate from students in support service feedback surveys each semester. Measurement: Percentage of students participating in surveys evaluating support services.<br><br>Implementation of 'You Said, We Did' Actions<br><br>Target: Implement at least 90% of actionable feedback received through the "You Said, We Did" initiative within the same academic year.<br><br>Measurement: Percentage of student suggestions that lead to tangible changes in support services.<br><br>Student Awareness of 'You Said, We Did' Initiatives<br><br>Target: Ensure 90% of students are aware of the changes made as part of the "You Said, We Did" strategy. |

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| | | | Measurement: Results from student surveys or focus groups on awareness of improvements driven by student feedback.<br><br>Timeliness of Feedback Implementation<br><br>Target: Address 85% of student feedback within 4 weeks of receiving it, with visible updates on actions taken. Measurement: Average time taken from collecting feedback to implementing changes or communicating progress. |
| Disability service to forensically monitor performance and to provide timely effective intervention. | The "Disability Service to Forensically Monitor Performance and Provide Timely Effective Intervention" initiative focuses on closely tracking the performance and progress of students with disabilities to ensure they receive the necessary support to succeed. The initiative aims to identify any challenges or barriers that may impact their academic experience and provide timely, targeted interventions to address these issues. By implementing a forensic approach to monitoring, the Disability Service ensures that interventions are both data-driven and responsive to individual needs, ultimately enhancing the academic outcomes and overall experience of students with disabilities. | Monitoring Framework Development<br>Data Collection Systems<br>Regular Performance Reviews<br>Collaboration with Academic and Support Staff | Identification of Students Requiring Support<br><br>Target: Ensure that 100% of students with registered disabilities are identified and assessed for support needs at the beginning of each academic term. Measurement: Percentage of students with disabilities who have been assessed and have support plans in place by the start of each term.<br><br>Frequency of Performance Monitoring<br><br>Target: Monitor the academic performance and well-being of students with disabilities at least twice per semester. Measurement: Number of performance reviews and check-ins conducted with each student per semester.<br><br>Timeliness of Interventions<br><br>Target: Implement interventions within 2 weeks of identifying an academic or personal challenge for 95% of students with disabilities. Measurement: Time taken from identifying an issue to delivering the appropriate intervention or support service. |

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

## Financial Support that will be offered to the following target groups:

### Access and Participation Spending

**2023 £1.65m**
- £142,000
- £4,000
- £296,000
- £1,212,000

**Legend:**
- Access Investment
- Financial support provided to students
- Support for disabled students
- Research and evaluation expenditure

**2022 £1.54m**
- £121,000
- £9,000
- £279,000
- £1,128,000

## Aims and objectives

The target objectives will be implemented to enhance the existing outreach programmes which target young people and adults from areas of deprivation and low participation, such as white working class males.

This will ensure we continue to embed and further develop our work with our schools and colleges as well as developing new ways approaches to reaching the adult population.

## Specific interventions

## Attendance Intervention Mentors

Intervention and attendance mentors will follow-up on students who are missing lessons to quickly ascertain if there are issues that the College is able to help with e.g. attendance, academic support, financial advice, and hardship support or pastoral support.

Evaluation of data has demonstrated that by intervening quickly, it is envisaged that the students' barriers to learning can be managed before they become overwhelmed and not continue with their studies.

## Academic Skills Coaches

Academic skills coaches will support students with their academic writing and other academic related aspects of study.

Improved data reporting for academic and support staff

Introduction of new College HE data dashboard to report on progression information, tracking and monitoring systems will provide Business Intelligence live data on cohort, target

group data and individual achievement and continuation profiles.

•• This information will be available to inform termly quality summits.

•• To support data use, quality summits are in place for all schools – as a result of linear management structure change.

## Staff development

Connect before you correct, trauma informed etc – supports widening participation

All staff will be provided with knowledge and skill development opportunities through staff training days to raise awareness of their roles and responsibilities in increasing access to learning for students and understanding of the Access and Participation Plan.

## Personal tutors now in HE

Personal tutors will be supported to work with the Head of Student Experience to help students plan their next steps to further learning or professional employment.

## Attendance Bursaries

Higher Education bursaries are financial awards given to students to support their studies at colleges or universities. Unlike loans, bursaries do not require repayment. They are typically granted based on financial need, though some may also consider academic merit or specific circumstances such as disability, geographic location, or belonging to an underrepresented group. Bursaries aim to make education

more accessible by alleviating financial barriers, covering costs such as tuition fees, living expenses, books, and other educational materials. Various organisations, including governments, educational institutions, private companies, and non-profits, offer bursaries.

## HE Health and Wellbeing Officer

The University Centre Blackburn College's Health and Wellbeing Officer plays a vital role in promoting and supporting the mental, emotional, and physical health of students.

They provide one-on-one support sessions, crisis intervention, and health promotion through workshops and campaigns on various health topics. Additionally, they manage resources, develop policies, and advocate

for student needs, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of services. They also offer training for staff and faculty to recognise and respond to student health issues. With a background in psychology, counselling, or a related field, these officers use their empathy, communication,

and problem-solving skills to enhance students' overall wellbeing, academic performance, and retention rates, fostering a positive and healthy campus environment.

# Student Assistance Programme

The Student Assistance Programme with Health Assured is a comprehensive support service designed to help students manage personal and academic challenges. It provides 24/7 confidential access to professional advice, counselling, and resources on various issues including mental health, financial worries, relationship problems, and academic stress.

Services include telephone support, face- to-face or online counselling, and self-help materials. The programme aims to enhance student well-being, promote resilience, and support academic success by offering practical assistance and emotional support.

# School Liaison HE Outreach work

The School Liaison Team is dedicated to recruiting school students for higher education by building strong connections between secondary schools and universities. They organise outreach activities such as school visits, campus tours, workshops, and information sessions to inform students about higher education opportunities. The team provides guidance on the application process, entry requirements, and available courses, often involving current university students as ambassadors. Their efforts aim to inspire and motivate school students to pursue further education, ensuring they have the information and support needed to make informed decisions about their academic futures.

# Summary of evidence base and rationale

We want to ensure that all students have the opportunity to study for a degree qualification, regardless of background or financial circumstances. The University Centre Blackburn College is committed to providing support to students from lower income households. A limited number of University Centre Blackburn College Bursaries and Financial Support is available, to provide discretionary financial assistance for students to access and remain in Higher Education, particularly those students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support.

Priority groups/eligibility criteria includes students with children, lone parents, mature students with existing financial commitments, students from low-income backgrounds and students in unexpected financial hardship.

• Progression Bonus: students who are progressing from FE to HE are supported through a £500 progression bonus. This is based on attendance within the first half term the following academic year.

• University Centre Blackburn College Bursary: University Centre Blackburn College applicants who demonstrate or promote excellence in their subject may be eligible for financial support. The UCBC Bursary is worth £500 per year students are expected to have 80% + attendance and fully up to date with work submission for their subject.

• Childcare Grant: The Childcare Grant helps full-time students with the cost of childcare during term times and holidays only. The amount you receive will be dependent upon your household income and is based on 85% of your actual childcare costs.

Further information available: Childcare Grant: What you'll get - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

• Parents' Learning Allowance: This can help pay for course-related costs such as books, materials and travel if you have dependent children. The amount you receive will be dependent upon your household income.

Further information available: Parents' Learning Allowance: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

• Adult Dependants' Grant: Under the current funding guidelines, students with a husband, wife, partner or another adult family member who is financially dependent on them may be eligible for a non-repayable grant.

Further information available: Adult Dependants' Grant: Overview - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](www.gov.uk))

# Strategic Measures

This section documents our strategy and key interventions for achieving our stated aims and objectives and provides details of our approach to the student consultation, engagement and evaluation.

# Strategic approach

To support our Access and Participation Plan, we have drawn on the College's vision and HE strategic goals and priorities (as per the SED and HE QIP)

We have one very simple aim at Blackburn College and that is to transform students lives through outstanding education, training and support.

We are passionate about our students, the student experience they have, the support we provide and the opportunities we generate.

# Strategic Pillars/Aim:

**Student Experience**
To provide an excellent student experience which leads to high levels of student success and support progression to employment, education and training, raising future aspirations.

**Teaching and Learning**
To deliver outstanding teaching, learning and assessment practice that enables, students of all abilities to succeed in their ambitions, progress to their chosen next steps and prepares them for leading successful and prosperous lives.

**Curriculum**
To have an academic and in industry led technical curriculum which meets the needs of employers, the local economy, addresses the regional skills shortages, has employability at its heard and provides a holistic education experience.

**Learning Environment and Sustainability**
To provide students with an inspiring, sustainable and outstanding learning environment, which prepares them of industry and enables innovation in teaching and learning.

**Partnerships and Communities**
As an anchor institution, lead and be known for partnership work and collaboration that increases social mobility and the opportunities for different groups of students and helps communities grow and thrive.

## Delivering the plan

The College Executive Leadership Team and the Single Equality Committee will deliver the plan by:

Ensuring all Heads of School are fully aware of the significance of the APP to their function and their responsibility to the APP

Ensuring a robust system and method of measuring required outcomes

Collaborating with other partner organisation to share best practice and implements learning from the pilot collaborative evaluation

Ensuring capability of systems and processes to capture relevant data of vulnerable groups at suitable points in the student journey and lifecycle

Supporting the improvement of admissions systems to capture, evidence and collate entry grades/ qualifications and target group information

## Evaluation

This section outlines the evaluation framework for the intervention strategies discussed in the plan and how they then feed into the main access and participation targets. This section will also detail the assessment of key activities including implementation commitment, participant engagement, outcome measures, and process evaluation. Each activity will be evaluated through quantitative and qualitative analyses, along with cost-effectiveness assessments where applicable. The overall intervention strategy will also be evaluated to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and scalability, providing comprehensive insights into its impact and guiding future improvements to further support widening participation. This will be evaluated on an annual basis through a number of committee's part of the governance structure at the college.

## Whole provider approach

At University Centre Blackburn College, we adopt a comprehensive, whole-provider approach to address risks to equality of opportunity and ensure compliance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. This approach integrates access and participation strategies across all aspects of our institution, aligning them with broader cross college strategies and equality objectives to foster an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

**Whole Provider Approach to Equality of Opportunity**

**1. Institutional Commitment to Equality and Diversity**

Our commitment to equality and diversity is embedded at all levels of the college. This is reflected in our core values, policies, and strategic planning, ensuring that every student has equal access to educational opportunities and resources.

- **Governance and Leadership**: Our governing body, executive and college leadership team are actively involved in promoting equality, with dedicated oversight to ensure that strategies for access and participation are consistently implemented and reviewed.

- **Policies and Procedures**: We have established comprehensive policies that promote equality and diversity, covering areas such as admissions, curriculum design, student support, and staff recruitment and training. These policies are regularly updated to reflect current legal standards and best practices.

## 2. Addressing Risks to Equality of Opportunity

We identify and address potential risks to equality of opportunity through a variety of measures:

- **Data Analysis and Monitoring**: We systematically collect and analyse data related to student demographics, retention, achievement, and progression. This helps us identify gaps in participation and outcomes for underrepresented groups, such as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities, disabled students, and mature learners. This is discussed at a number of strategic committees including the strategic single equality committee.

- **Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching**: We strive to offer an inclusive curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives and experiences. Our teaching staff are trained in inclusive pedagogies and cultural competence, ensuring that the learning environment is welcoming and supportive for all students.

- **Financial Support and Accessibility**: We provide targeted financial support, including bursaries and scholarships, to alleviate financial barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, we work to ensure that our campus facilities are accessible to all, including those with disabilities.

## 3. Alignment with Published Equality Objectives

Our access and participation strategies are aligned with the institution's broader equality objectives, which are publicly documented and regularly reviewed. These can be found in our annual EDI report and within our EDI Policies and Procedures. These strategies are integral to achieving the following key objectives:

- **Reducing Gaps in Access and Participation**: By implementing targeted outreach and engagement activities, we aim to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in our student population.

- **Improving Retention and Success Rates**: We focus on providing comprehensive support services, such as academic advising, mental health resources, and career guidance, to ensure that all students can thrive and succeed. This will intern support continuation, completion and progression.

- **Enhancing the Inclusivity of the Learning Environment**: Through staff training, inclusive curriculum development, and student-led diversity initiatives, we work to create a college campus culture that values and respects diversity.

**Due Regard to the Equality Act 2010**

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010, we are committed to:

- **Eliminating Discrimination**: We actively work to prevent and address any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation within our institution. This includes maintaining clear procedures for reporting and responding to complaints.

- **Advancing Equality of Opportunity**: We aim to remove or minimise disadvantages faced by students due to their protected characteristics, ensuring equal access to educational and extracurricular opportunities.

- **Fostering Good Relations**: We promote understanding and respect between people from diverse backgrounds, encouraging a sense of community and shared responsibility among students and staff.

## Conclusion

By integrating our access and participation strategies with our overall equality objectives, University Centre Blackburn College ensures a holistic approach to promoting equality of opportunity. This commitment not only fulfils our regulatory obligations but also enhances the educational experience for all students, fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse learning environment for all. We remain dedicated to continuous improvement and proactive engagement in these areas, striving to make higher education accessible and equitable for everyone

## Staff consultation

The staff consultation and working group for Access and Participation focused on ensuring equitable access to Higher Education and supporting the success of underrepresented and disadvantaged student groups. This group collaborated to develop and implement strategies aimed at increasing the enrolment, retention, and achievement of these students.

By engaging with a diverse range of staff, the group gathered insights and feedback to inform policy and practice. They analysed

data on student demographics and outcomes, identified barriers to access and participation, and create targeted interventions to address these challenges.

The working group also monitored the progress of implemented initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with institutional goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through this collaborative effort, this group aims to foster a more inclusive

and supportive educational environment, enhancing the opportunities and experiences of all students.

## Student consultation

At the University Centre Blackburn College, several meetings were held with students to discuss issues related to access and participation. These meetings aimed to gather student feedback, address concerns, and enhance the overall educational experience by making higher education more inclusive and accessible. Here's a comprehensive summary of these discussions:

**1. Purpose and Objectives**

The primary objectives of these meetings were to:

- **Understand Barriers**: Identify the challenges and barriers that students face in accessing and participating in higher education.

- **Collect Feedback**: Gather input on how the University Centre can better support students from diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups.

- **Develop Strategies**: Formulate strategies to improve access, continuation, and completion rates among all students.

**2. Key Discussion Points**

**A. Access to Education**

- **Financial Barriers**: Students highlighted issues related to tuition fees, accommodation costs, rise in cost-of-living costs and other financial burdens that can hinder access to higher education.

- **Information and Awareness**: There were discussions on the need for better information about available courses, financial support, and support services, especially for first-generation HE students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Entry Requirements**: Concerns were raised about the fairness and transparency of entry requirements, and the need for flexible pathways to accommodate non-traditional students.

**B. Participation and Inclusion**

- **Support Services**: The importance of accessible support services, including academic advising, mental health support, and career guidance, was emphasised. Students requested more proactive engagement from these services.

- **Diversity and Inclusion**: Students discussed the need for a more inclusive campus environment that respects and celebrates diversity, including cultural, racial, and socio-economic differences. This included having facilities for students with young children.

- **Student Engagement**: There were suggestions for more inclusive and varied extracurricular/curriculum enhancement activities that can engage students from different backgrounds and interests.

**C. Continuation and Completion**

- **Academic Support**: The need for tailored academic support, such as tutoring and workshops, was discussed, particularly for students who may be struggling academically or adjusting to the demands of higher education.

- **Mentoring Programs**: Students expressed interest in mentoring programs where they could receive guidance from 3rd year peers.

- **Feedback Mechanisms**: The importance of effective and timely feedback on academic performance was highlighted, as well as the need for a clear understanding of grading criteria and academic expectations. The use of effective formative feedback was highlighted.

**3. Outcomes and Actions**

Following these meetings, several actions were proposed and implemented to address the issues raised:

- **Financial Aid Workshops**: Information sessions and workshops were organised to help students understand and apply for financial bursaries timely.

- **Enhanced Support Services**: The University Centre committed to enhancing its support services, including increasing accessibility and visibility of mental health resources and academic support/advising.

- **Inclusive Initiatives**: Initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion were expanded, such as cultural awareness events, inclusion training for staff, and a review of curriculum content to ensure diverse representation.

- **Student Feedback Channels**: Improved channels for ongoing student feedback were established, allowing students to continuously share their experiences and suggestions for improvement through a dynamic student voice system.

**4. Future Plans**

The University Centre Blackburn College plans to continue these meetings regularly to ensure that the voices of students are heard and integrated into the planning and implementation of policies, and HE programs. There is a commitment to continuously monitor the effectiveness of implemented measures and to adjust strategies as needed to improve access and participation, and therefore widen participation.

These meetings reflect the colleges commitment to creating an inclusive educational environment that supports the diverse needs of all its students, ensuring that higher education is accessible and equitable for everyone.

# Evaluation of the plan

At University Centre Blackburn College, strengthening our evaluation activity is a crucial component of our strategy to enhance the effectiveness of our programs and initiatives, particularly those aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and student success. By refining our evaluation processes, we aim to make data-driven decisions that improve student outcomes and ensure that

our interventions are impactful and aligned with our strategic goals. This will be achieved through the evaluation of OfS data and local UCBC data dashboards.

**Strategy for Strengthening Evaluation Activity**

1. **Developing a Comprehensive Evaluation Framework**

   o **Objective**: To establish a robust, systematic framework for evaluating the effectiveness of our programs, initiatives, and policies.

   o **Actions**:

      ▪ **Standardisation**: Develop standardised metrics and indicators for assessing various aspects of our programs, including access, participation, student engagement, retention, and completion rates.

      ▪ **Data Collection**: Implement consistent data collection methods across all departments and programs. This includes quantitative data (e.g., enrolment figures, academic performance) and qualitative data (e.g., student feedback, case studies).

      ▪ **Baseline and Benchmarks**: Set baseline measurements and benchmarks to compare progress over time and evaluate the impact of specific interventions.

2. **Enhancing Data Analysis Capabilities**

   o **Objective**: To improve our capacity to analyse and interpret data, enabling further insights into program effectiveness and areas for improvement.

   o **Actions**:

      ▪ **Data Analytics Tools**: Invest resource in an advanced data analytics tool/HE data dashboard that can handle complex datasets and provide detailed reports to inform intervention and strategies.

      ▪ **Training and Expertise**: Provide training for staff in data analysis techniques, including statistical analysis, trend analysis, and predictive modelling.

      ▪ **Integrated Systems**: Ensure that data from different sources (academic records, financial aid, student services) is integrated and accessible for comprehensive analysis via the data dashboard.

3. **Incorporating Feedback and Stakeholder Engagement**

   o **Objective**: To actively involve stakeholders, including students, staff, and external partners, in the evaluation process.

- o **Actions**:

    - ▪ **Surveys and Focus Groups**: Conduct regular surveys and focus groups with students, staff, and alumni to gather feedback on the effectiveness of HE programs and support services.

    - ▪ **Single Equality Committee**: Further develop this committee to ensure it comprises of specific discussion on and around the Access and Participation Plan, involving students, HE Heads of School, and external stakeholders to review evaluation findings and provide recommendations.

    - ▪ **Public Reporting and Transparency**: Publish evaluation reports and key findings to maintain transparency and accountability. This also fosters a culture of continuous improvement. This will be included within the EDI annual report.

4. **Using Evaluation Findings for Continuous Improvement**

    - o **Objective**: To ensure that evaluation findings are systematically used to inform decision-making and improve programs and services.

    - o **Actions**:

        - ▪ **Regular Review Cycles**: Integrate evaluation findings into regular review cycles for all programs and services. Use these reviews to refine program design, delivery methods, and resource allocation.

        - ▪ **Action Plans**: Develop and implement action plans based on evaluation outcomes. These plans should include specific, measurable goals and timelines for achieving improvements.

        - ▪ **Monitoring and Follow-Up**: Establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of action plans and evaluating the effectiveness of changes made.

5. **Promoting a Culture of Evidence-Based Practice**

    - o **Objective**: To embed a culture of evidence-based practice across the institution, ensuring that all staff understand and value the importance of rigorous evaluation.

    - o **Actions**:

        - ▪ **Professional Development**: Offer professional development opportunities focused on evaluation methodologies, data analysis, and evidence-based decision-making for HE Heads of School to ensure they can effectively review current position of a HE provisions and what things need to be considered to improve provision performance in terms of widening participation.

- **Best Practices Sharing**: Facilitate the sharing of best practices and successful case studies within the institution and with external partners.

- **Incentivising Innovation**: Encourage and support innovative approaches to teaching and student support, using evaluation findings to identify and scale up successful initiatives.

# Conclusion

Strengthening our evaluation activity at University Centre Blackburn College is essential for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of our educational offerings and support services, in regard to widening participation and access to UCBC. By developing a comprehensive evaluation framework, enhancing data analysis capabilities, incorporating stakeholder feedback, using evaluation findings for continuous improvement, and promoting a culture of evidence-based practice, we ensure that our strategies are both effective and responsive to the needs of our diverse student community. This commitment to rigorous evaluation underpins our broader goals of fostering equity, inclusion, and excellence in higher education. Regular reviews as part of key college committees that make up the governance structure at the college. This therefore allows the evaluation of the plan to be completed on a regular basis to identify progress and areas of concern.

# Provision of information to students

At University Centre Blackburn College, we prioritise providing clear and accessible information on fees and financial support to both prospective and current students. This ensures that students are well-informed about the costs associated with their education and the financial support options available to them. Our comprehensive approach includes a variety of methods to disseminate this information, ensuring it reaches all students in a timely and effective manner.

**1. Information Dissemination to Prospective Students**

**A. Pre-Enrolment Communications**

- **HE Prospectus/Course Cards and Online Resources**: Detailed information on tuition fees, additional costs, and financial support options is prominently displayed in our prospectus, course cards and on our website. These resources are updated regularly to reflect any changes in fees or financial support policies.

- **Open Days and Information Sessions**: During open days and other recruitment events, we provide sessions specifically focused on explaining the fee structure and financial support options. Student Finance staff are available to answer questions and provide personalised guidance.

- **School Visits and Outreach Activities**: As part of our outreach efforts, we conduct visits to schools and in other community venues where we provide information on financial planning for higher education. This includes details on bursaries and grants.

**B. Application and Admission Process**

- **Application Guidance**: During the application process, prospective students receive guidance on estimating the total cost of attendance, including tuition, books, accommodation, travel and other living expenses.

- **Financial Support Workshops**: We offer workshops and now online webinars on applying for student finance, covering how to apply for government loans, grants, and scholarships. These sessions also include information on budgeting and financial planning.

## 2. Information for Current Students

### A. Onboarding and Induction

- **Welcome Pack**: Upon acceptance, students receive a welcome pack containing detailed information about tuition fees, payment schedules, and financial support options.

- **Induction Program**: Our induction program includes sessions on managing finances, understanding student loans, and accessing college-based financial support services.

### B. Ongoing Support and Communication

- **Dedicated Financial Support**: We have a dedicated Student Finance team where students can get one-on-one advice on financial matters, including student loans, bursary applications, and managing debt.

- **Regular Updates and Reminders**: Throughout their course, students receive regular updates and reminders about key dates and deadlines for financial support applications and payments. This is communicated through emails, Moodle, and campus screen noticeboards.

- **Financial Literacy Programs**: We provide ongoing financial literacy programs, including workshops on budgeting, financial planning, and debt management. These programs aim to empower students to make informed financial decisions.

### C. Accessible Information Channels

- **Online Resources**: All information regarding fees and financial support is easily accessible on our website, which is designed to be user-friendly and navigable. This includes FAQs, detailed breakdowns of costs, and links to external funding bodies.

- **Printed Materials**: For students who may have limited internet access, we provide printed materials available at the Exchange in both the Beacon Centre and the Exchange in the UCBC building.

## 3. Ensuring Clarity and Accessibility

### A. Clarity

- **Clear and Transparent Language**: All communications use clear and straightforward language, avoiding jargon and complex terms. We provide examples and scenarios to help illustrate financial concepts and options.

- **Visual Aids**: We use charts, infographics, and videos to explain complex information about fees and financial aid, making it easier for students to understand.

## B. Accessibility

- **Accessibility Standards**: Our online platforms comply with web accessibility standards to ensure that information is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

- **Support Services**: We offer additional support for students who may need help understanding the financial information, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

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

In our assessment of performance at University Centre Blackburn College, we have identified several key risks to equality of opportunity that may impact student access, participation, and success. These risks have been identified through a combination of data analysis, stakeholder feedback, and review of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

Below, we outline the identified risks, the methods used to identify them, and our planned mitigating actions. Additionally, we provide a rationale for focusing on specific risks in our access and participation plan.

**Identified Risks and Methods of Identification**

1. **Underrepresentation of Certain Demographic Groups**

   o **Risk**: There is a noticeable underrepresentation of students from certain demographic groups, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, ethnic minorities, mature students, and students with disabilities.

   o **Identification Methods**: Analysis of enrolment data revealed lower participation rates among these groups compared to the regional demographics. Additionally, feedback from student focus groups highlighted perceived barriers to access.

   o **Mitigating Actions**:

      - Expand targeted outreach programs to underrepresented/underachieving community groups.

      - Increase financial support and bursary opportunities for these groups.

      - Collaborate with schools, community organisations to raise awareness and support prospective students from these communities.

2. **Retention and Success Gaps**

   o **Risk**: Data indicates gaps in continuation and completion rates between different student groups, with lower continuation rates observed among students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and white students.

- o **Identification Methods**: Continuation and completion rates were analysed, revealing disparities in academic outcomes. This was further supported by qualitative data from student surveys and staff consultations.

- o **Mitigating Actions**:

  - Implement targeted academic support services, including tutoring and mentoring.

  - Develop tailored continuation strategies that address the specific needs of at-risk groups.

  - Enhance student engagement through inclusive extracurricular/curriculum enhancement activities and support networks.

3. **Financial Barriers to Continuation and Completion**

- o **Risk**: Financial barriers, such as tuition fees and living expenses, are a significant concern for many students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. This has been linked to lower continuation and completion rates.

- o **Identification Methods**: Analysis of financial support data and student feedback highlighted concerns about the affordability of higher education/cost of living and its impact on students' ability to continue and complete their studies.

- o **Mitigating Actions**:

  - Increase the availability of bursaries, grants, and emergency funds.

  - Provide financial literacy workshops and personalised financial planning support.

  - Explore flexible part-time study options, to allow students to continue working.

4. **Digital Accessibility and Inclusion**

- o **Risk**: With increasing reliance on digital resources and remote learning outside of the classroom, students without reliable internet access or suitable technology are at a disadvantage. This is particularly a concern for students from low-income families.

- o **Identification Methods**: Feedback from students during the student consultation highlighted issues with access to technology. Surveys indicated that a lack of digital resources affected students' ability to participate fully in their education.

- o **Mitigating Actions**:

  - Expand the availability of loaned laptops and provide access to high-speed internet on campus.

- Offer training and resources to enhance digital literacy among students and staff via the Exchange staff.

- Ensure that online platforms and materials are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

**Rationale for Focus Areas in the Access and Participation Plan**

Given the scope and resource limitations, we have prioritised certain risks in our access and participation plan based on their impact on student outcomes and alignment with our strategic goals. Our focus will be on:

1. **Enhancing Access and Representation**: Addressing the underrepresentation of key demographic groups is crucial for fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment. We believe that by increasing access, we can also positively impact continuation and completion rates across the board.

2. **Improving Continuation and Completion Rates**: Ensuring that all students have the support they need to succeed is a priority. By targeting academic support and engagement strategies for specific student groups, we aim to close the gaps in continuation and completion rates.

3. **Reducing Financial Barriers**: Financial challenges are a significant barrier to both access and continuation. By increasing financial support and providing financial literacy resources, we can help students manage the costs of higher education and the general costs of living, and improve their chances of success.

4. **Ensuring Digital Accessibility**: As digital resources become more integral to education, ensuring that all students have the necessary tools and skills is essential for equitable participation.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, our assessment of performance has identified several critical risks to equality of opportunity at University Centre Blackburn College. While we acknowledge there are additional areas that may require attention, our access and participation plan focuses on the most pressing risks based on data analysis and stakeholder feedback. We are committed to continuously monitoring these risks and adapting our strategies to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed in their educational journey.

## 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.

At University Centre Blackburn College, our intervention strategies are carefully designed based on a robust evidence base and a clearly articulated theory of change. This ensures that our efforts to promote equality of opportunity are effective and targeted. In this section, we outline the evidence supporting each intervention strategy, along with the rationale and assumptions that form the underpinning theory of change.

1. Enhancing Access for Underrepresented Groups

Evidence Used:

- Enrolment Data Analysis: We analysed demographic trends in our student community and compared them to regional and national data, identifying significant underrepresentation of certain groups.

- Research Studies: National research on barriers to higher education access, particularly among low-income and minority students, informed our understanding of these challenges.

- Stakeholder Feedback: Feedback from community partners and potential students highlighted specific barriers such as lack of awareness and financial constraints.

Rationale and Assumptions:

- Theory of Change: Increasing awareness and reducing financial and informational barriers will lead to greater enrolment from underrepresented groups.

- Assumptions: We assume that targeted outreach and financial incentives are effective in influencing enrolment decisions. Another assumption is that these groups have an interest in higher education but face external barriers preventing them from enrolling.

2. Improving Continuation and Completion Rates

Evidence Used:

- Continuation and Completion Data: OfS and college data showing lower continuation and completion rates among certain groups, such as students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and white students.

- Literature Review: Academic literature on student retention highlights the importance of academic support, sense of belonging and support, and early intervention.

- Student Surveys: Direct feedback from students about their challenges, including academic difficulties, financial challenges and lack of support, guided our strategies.

Rationale and Assumptions:

- Theory of Change: Providing targeted academic and personal support will improve students' academic performance and sense of belonging, thereby increasing continuation and completion rates.

- Assumptions: We assume that personalised support services and fostering a supportive campus environment can mitigate the challenges faced by at-risk students. Another assumption is that these interventions are accessible and well-utilised by the students who need them most.

3. Reducing Financial Barriers

Evidence Used:

- Financial Support Data: Analysis of financial support utilisation and feedback from students highlighted gaps in support and the impact of financial stress on student outcomes.

- Focus Groups: Focus groups with students identified specific financial concerns, such as the cost of living, unexpected expenses, and the complexity of the financial support application processes.

Rationale and Assumptions:

- Theory of Change: Increasing financial support and simplifying access to these resources will reduce the financial barriers to enrolment and continuation, leading to improved educational outcomes.

- Assumptions: We assume that financial barriers are a significant deterrent for many prospective and current students, and that alleviating these will have a positive impact on retention and completion. It is also assumed that students will engage with financial literacy resources provided.

4. Ensuring Digital Accessibility and Inclusion

Evidence Used:

- Digital Access Surveys/student consultation: Consultations identified disparities in access to technology and reliable internet among students.

- Best Practices from Other Institutions: Case studies and best practices from other educational institutions highlighted effective strategies for ensuring digital inclusion for all students, had a positive impact of student continuation and completion.

Rationale and Assumptions:

- Theory of Change: Providing necessary technology and digital literacy training will enable all students to fully participate in digital learning, improving continuations and educational outcomes.

- Assumptions: We assume that providing equipment and training will effectively bridge the digital divide, and that students will use these resources to enhance their learning experience.

Conclusion

The evidence underpinning each of our intervention strategies at University Centre Blackburn College is derived from a combination of OfS/institutional data, academic research, and direct stakeholder feedback. Our theory of change for each strategy is based on the belief that targeted, evidence-based interventions can significantly enhance equality of opportunity and widen participation. By addressing the identified risks and barriers, we aim to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that enables all students to succeed. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these interventions, adjusting our strategies as needed to ensure they remain responsive to the needs of our diverse student community.

# Fees, investments and targets
## 2025-26 to 2028-29

**Provider name: Blackburn College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10000747**

### Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

**Inflation statement:**

We will not raise fees annually for new entrants
Raising fees annually for new higher education entrants can undermine efforts to widen access and participation. Increasing costs may deter students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds, exacerbating existing inequalities in access to education. By keeping fees stable, we will demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent capable students from pursuing higher education. This approach supports our diverse student body, enriching the learning environment and fostering social mobility. Stability in fees also allows potential students to plan their finances better, making higher education more accessible to a broader population.

**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 | 8750 |
| First degree | LLM | N/A | 6500 |
| Foundation degree | | N/A | 8750 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | N/A | 4900 |
| HNC/HND | | N/A | 8750 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | N/A | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | | N/A | 8750 |
| Accelerated degree | * | N/A | * |
| Sandwich year | Industry year | N/A | 875 |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | N/A | * |
| Other | * | N/A | * |

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

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

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

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|---|
| First degree | Degree - Part time per 20 credit module | N/A | 1300 |
| First degree | LLM | N/A | 3250 |
| Foundation degree | * | N/A | * |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | N/A | * |
| HNC/HND | HNC / HND / LLB - per 20 credit module | N/A | 1300 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | N/A | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | PGCE | N/A | 4375 |
| 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: Blackburn College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10000747**

### 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 | £520,000 | £533,000 | £547,000 | £561,000 |
| Financial support (£) | NA | £220,000 | £226,000 | £231,000 | £237,000 |
| Research and evaluation (£) | NA | £25,000 | £25,000 | £25,000 | £25,000 |

**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 (£) | £75,000 | £77,000 | £79,000 | £81,000 |
| Access activity investment | Post-16 access activities (£) | £325,000 | £333,000 | £342,000 | £350,000 |
| Access activity investment | Other access activities (£) | £120,000 | £123,000 | £126,000 | £130,000 |
| **Access activity investment** | **Total access investment (£)** | **£520,000** | **£533,000** | **£547,000** | **£561,000** |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment (as % of HFI)* | *35.3%* | *35.3%* | *35.3%* | *35.3%* |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment funded from HFI (£)* | *£250,000* | *£256,000* | *£262,000* | *£268,000* |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)* | *£270,000* | *£277,000* | *£284,000* | *£290,000* |
| Financial support investment | Bursaries and scholarships (£) | £200,000 | £205,000 | £210,000 | £215,000 |
| Financial support investment | Fee waivers (£) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Financial support investment | Hardship funds (£) | £20,000 | £21,000 | £21,000 | £22,000 |
| **Financial support investment** | **Total financial support investment (£)** | **£220,000** | **£226,000** | **£231,000** | **£237,000** |
| **Financial support investment** | *Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)* | *14.9%* | *15.0%* | *14.9%* | *14.9%* |
| Research and evaluation investment | Research and evaluation investment (£) | £25,000 | £25,000 | £25,000 | £25,000 |
| Research and evaluation investment | *Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)* | *1.7%* | *1.7%* | *1.6%* | *1.6%* |

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

**Provider name: Blackburn College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10000747**

## Targets

### Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

| Aim [500 characters maximum] | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase access rates for all students | PTA_1 | Access | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | Other (please specify in description) | All other quintiles | Increase access rates for all students. (PTA1)  Priority: to ensure all students are supported to access and succeed on their programmes of study. Actions: Implement targeted strategies to support all students in accessing degree programmes at UCBC. We will also Implement regular reviews and assessments, collect and analyse data on student demographics and outcomes, and seek feedback from students and staff to guide future strategies. | No | The access and participation dashboard | 2022-23 | Headcount | 650 | 675 | 700 | 725 | 750 |
| | PTA_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Table 5d: Success targets

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase continuation rate for most socio economically disadvataged students. | PTS_1 | Continuation | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 | All other quintiles | OfS data dashboard suggests there is a significant gap between IMD Q1 and other quintiles in terms of continuation. Priority 1: To broaden the availability of scholarships, bursaries, and emergency funds, ensuring that financial barriers do not hinder continuation to education. Priority 2: To further introduce HNC programmes to support students having lifestyle breaks between year end dates. | No | The access and participation dashboard | 2021-22 | Percentage points | 76.9% | 78% | 80% | 82.5% | 85% |
| Increase continuation rate of ALL students from all ethnicities | PTS_2 | Continuation | Ethnicity | Not specified (please give detail in description) | Mixed | OfS data dashboard suggest that all students are under benchmark. (when categorised by ethnicity) Priority: To ensure that HE Pastoral and Academic support staff are available to offer targeted support for this underperforming group. Actions: HE pastoral and Academic support staff to run targeted support sessions for white students in terms of academic writing and assignment management. | No | The access and participation dashboard | 2021-22 | Percentage points | 78.8% | 80% | 82.5% | 82.5% | 85% |

| Aim | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase completion rate for most socio economically disadvataged students | PTS_3 | Completion | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 | All other quintiles | OfS data dashboard suggest there is a significant gap between Q1 and Q4/Q5 in terms of completion. Priority: To build stronger partnerships with local communities, industries, and schools to support students from low socio-economic background accessing and being successful on Higher education programmes. Action 1: Further develop specific outreach school liaison programme to support students from most deprived backgrounds accessing Higher Education. | No | The access and participation dashboard | 2021-22 | Percentage points | 63.5% | 68% | 70% | 72.5% | 75% |
| Increase completion rate of ALL students from all ethnicities | PTS_4 | Completion | Ethnicity | Not specified (please give detail in description) | Mixed | OfS data dashboard suggest that all ethnicity groups are below benchmark. Priority: to ensure all students are supported to continue and succeed on their programmes of study. Actions: Implement targeted strategies to support all students in continuing degree programmes at UCBC. We will also Implement regular reviews and assessments, collect and analyse data on student demographics and outcomes, and seek feedback from students and staff to guide future strategies. | No | The access and participation dashboard | 2021-22 | Percentage points | 52.2% | 60% | 65% | 70% | 75% |
| | PTS_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 5e: Progression targets**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PTP_1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |