



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Access and Participation Plan

2025/26 to 2028/29



The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

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Section 1: Introduction and strategic aim

The London School of Economics and Political Science ('the School') is one of the world's leading specialist social science institutions, founded in 1895 'for the betterment of society'. Although this plan focuses on our efforts relating to UK undergraduates (c.20% of our students), in our current strategy, [LSE 2030](#), we outline our ambition to make the School an inclusive home for learning and our commitment to equality of opportunity. In two of our three strategy pillars – 'Educate for Global Impact (EGI)' and 'Develop LSE for Everyone' – we demonstrate how work to widen access to higher education and ensure an inclusive education and equitable outcomes for all students.

Recognising societal and institutional factors play a fundamental role in shaping students' experiences and outcomes, we reject a deficit-based approach that seeks to explain or address differential outcomes by focusing on individuals' perceived deficiencies. Our strategic aim is to create long-term structural and cultural change, particularly through our EGI Student Community, Inclusion and Wellbeing (SCIW) programme. This includes our Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework (SMHWF), foundational to creating a rewarding, supportive learning environment in which our students can succeed, and our Inclusive Education Action Plan (IEAP), bringing together, guiding, and supporting services and academic departments to develop inclusive scholarly communities.

We acknowledge that our position as a high-tariff provider with a strong international profile places particular responsibility on us to ensure fair access and consistently positive outcomes for students from under-represented groups. As demonstrated by our Silver Award in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework and top five ranking in the 2023 English Social Mobility Index¹, we have made good progress against targets in our previous plan. Our entry rate for applicants from areas with high socioeconomic deprivation has significantly increased and outcomes for student attainment, continuation, completion and progression are generally very positive compared to sector averages. In this plan we present a holistic approach to addressing the most significant risks to equality of opportunity that still remain for some groups, drawing on a combination of universal and tailored provision.

We have carefully considered how to address the three sector-wide APP priorities identified by OfS in 2023, within our context as a London-based social sciences provider with a small UK undergraduate population.

- **Working in partnership with schools and colleges to raise attainment:** our approach builds on our wider civic engagement priorities and commitments in our previous APP which have been refined following consultation, resulting in a focus on two key areas: a new pre-16 multi-intervention programme for girls in maths in local schools in London, delivered in partnership with Imperial College London and a third-sector tutoring organisation; and continuing to enhance our recently-launched School Governor Scheme, matching staff and alumni with school governance opportunities across the country and supporting them to carry out this role.
- **Supporting student mental health and wellbeing:** our approach is based on our current SMHWF, which was informed by student consultation and aligns with Universities UK guidance on mentally healthy universities² and on suicide-safer universities³. Our framework has three themes: changing academic cultures and practices; instilling a sense of belonging; and promotion, prevention and provision. Recent actions have included investing more in supporting transition and ongoing student community-building, collaborating with LSE Students' Union (LSESU) on a new digital student support map and launching all-staff online training module. In 2022/23 we also invested in and re-designed our Student Wellbeing Service provision to respond more effectively to student needs. One of the key priorities for this APP period will be preparing an application for the University Mental Health Charter, supporting us to evaluate, share and continually improve our practice.
- **Exploring diverse pathways and flexible provision:** In 2022/23, we commissioned external consultants to undertake a feasibility study into these areas. Following careful consideration of the findings within the context of the School's wider strategy, we are not planning significant developments to pathways or provision at present. This will consider to be reviewed in future in line with ongoing reviews of our programme portfolio and longer-term education strategy developments. We continue to promote access for UK undergraduate applicants with level three qualifications other than A-levels by engaging with a wide range of post-16 providers and regularly reviewing entry requirements, which has led to changes such as applicants with the Access to HE Diploma being accepted for direct entry in most cases.

¹ [LSE comes fifth in social mobility list](#)

² [Universities UK Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities](#)

³ [Universities UK Suicide-safer Universities](#)

Section 2: Risks to equality of opportunity

Our Assessment of Performance highlights several areas where students from specific groups may not experience equal opportunities to access, succeed at, or progress from, LSE. This assessment has been informed by student outcome data, internal and sector-wide research and evaluation, LSE student-led research projects and various consultations with students and staff. Further detail is included in [Annex A](#).

In the table below, we summarise the most significant indications of risk we will address, explaining why these risks occur, with reference to the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and our own internal analysis which has identified two additional 'LSE-specific risks'. Further detail is included in [Annex B](#).

Recognising that risks to equality of opportunity go beyond the student groups identified below and are likely to change over time, we will also ensure ongoing monitoring of a wider suite of indicators and characteristics to assess our performance. Further detail is included in [Section 14: Evaluation of the Plan](#).

Risk Indication	Risks	Risk in LSE's context
Under-representation of female students at LSE in quantitative subject disciplines	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills	Female students have low application and entry rates to quantitative subject disciplines at LSE. Available evidence suggests that this may be related to: - Disparities in uptake of A-level Maths and Further Maths for female students, despite comparable attainment at GCSE - Lack of awareness of destinations/pathways in quantitative subject disciplines - Lack of role models in maths - Inconsistent access to advice and guidance that encourages routes in maths - Low engagement and future intentions to study maths
	EORR Risk 2: information and guidance	
	EORR Risk 3: perceptions of HE	
Under-representation at LSE of students from TUNDRA Q1&2	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills	Students from TUNDRA Q1&2 have low application and entry rates to LSE. Available evidence suggests that this may be related to: - LSE's historic recruitment from London, where very few postcode areas are classified as TUNDRA Q1&2 - Practical barriers to visiting LSE's campus, including costs/travel time. - Inconsistent access to advice and guidance for post-16 qualifications, subject choices and HE options - Limited opportunities to engage with peers with lived experience of HE, which may lead to reduced confidence to explore HE options - On average, lower GCSE and A-level attainment for pupils living outside of London - Lower awareness of LSE and its subject range amongst prospective applicants and their supporters - Inconsistent access to professional development for teachers/advisers, especially regarding/ supporting pupils to access high-tariff providers and LSE specifically - Negative perceptions amongst prospective applicants and their supporters about studying in London and at a high-tariff institution - LSE's highly competitive context with a relatively small number of UK UG places and high numbers of applicants per place
	EORR Risk 2: information and guidance	
	EORR Risk 3: perceptions of HE	
	EORR Risk 4: application success rate	
	EORR Risk 10: cost pressures	
Under-representation at LSE of students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at secondary school and	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills	Students who were eligible for FSM at secondary school have lower entry rates to LSE. They are also less likely to progress into high-paid careers or further study. Available evidence suggests that this may be related to: - Low household incomes limiting students' ability to access or participate in super-curricular and extra-curricular activities, to build social and cultural capital - On average, lower A-level and GCSE grades for students in receipt of FSM - LSE's highly competitive context with a relatively small number of UK UG places and high numbers of applicants per place - Negative perceptions amongst prospective applicants and their support networks about studying in London and high cost of living
	EORR Risk 2: information and guidance	
	EORR Risk 3: perceptions of HE	

Risk Indication	Risks	Risk in LSE's context
Lower progression to good graduate outcomes of LSE students eligible for FSM at secondary school	EORR Risk 4: application success rate	• Inconsistent access to advice and guidance to students support post-16 and post-university destinations • Students may have fewer role models, mentors or peers who can provide advice on post-16 or post-university destinations • Practical barriers to visiting campus, including costs and travel time • Students may have fewer role models, mentors or peers who can support the development of career literacy • Less financial stability and/or social capital which can aid progression to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study • The need to work part-time may limit opportunities to engage with all parts of the LSE experience and support • Students may feel less confident that they can thrive in highly skilled roles • Students may feel socially and/or academically isolated at LSE
	EORR Risk 10: cost pressures	
	EORR Risk 12: progression from higher education	
Ethnicity awarding gaps	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support	Available evidence suggests that a range of factors may contribute to awarding gaps at LSE: ▪ Limited awareness and inconsistent implementation of inclusive education, in terms of inclusive curricula and teaching practice ▪ Limited engagement from staff in learning and development opportunities relating to inclusive education ▪ Lack of ethnic diversity amongst academic staff across LSE ▪ Lack of student diversity in some departments ▪ Variability in the delivery and quality of academic mentoring ▪ Limited awareness of the range of student support provision amongst staff and limited ability to tailor communications ▪ Inconsistent implementation of inclusive and welcoming practices across support services ▪ Limited availability of tailored wellbeing support ▪ Increased proportion of students undertaking part-time employment due to high cost of living in London and to afford accommodation, limiting access to additional educational opportunities ▪ Distributed accountability and limited leadership capacity for embedding consistently inclusive practices in education and student experience ▪ Students may feel socially and/or academically isolated at LSE
	EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support	
	EORR Risk 8: mental health	
	EORR Risk 10: cost pressures	
	LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures	
	LSE Risk 2: structures and cultures that mean students do not feel equally included, valued and supported in our LSE community	
Completion rate gaps between students with and without declared disability	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support	Available evidence suggests that a range of factors may contribute to the observed completion rate gaps at LSE: ▪ Limited awareness and inconsistent implementation of inclusive education, in terms of inclusive curricula and teaching practice ▪ Variability in the accessibility of teaching materials ▪ Limited awareness of the range of student support provision amongst staff and limited ability to tailor communications ▪ Inconsistent implementation of inclusive and welcoming practices across support services ▪ Lack of preventative mental health support, and limits to capacity for providing mental health support ▪ Distributed accountability and limited leadership capacity for embedding consistently inclusive practices in education and student experience
	EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support	
	EORR Risk 8: mental health	
	LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures	

Risk Indication	Risks	Risk in LSE's context
	LSE Risk 2: structures and cultures that mean students do not feel equally included, valued and supported in our LSE community	Students may feel socially and/or academically isolated at LSE
Inconsistent outcomes and experiences of care-experienced students	EORR Risk 2: information and guidance	Available evidence suggests that care-experienced students may experience risks to equality of opportunity across the student journey: - Educational disruption and lack of financial resources may limit opportunities for participating in extra-curricular and super-curricular educational activities, to build social and cultural capital - Limited access to formal or informal advice and guidance for post-16 qualifications, subject choices, and HE options - Lack of sufficient advice on applying to high-tariff universities - Limited awareness and consistent implementation of inclusive education, in terms of inclusive curricula and teaching practice - Limited staff resource to advocate for care-experienced students and provide ongoing, tailored support - Negative perceptions amongst prospective applicants and their support networks about studying in London and high cost of living - High cost of living in London and lack of affordable accommodation leading to financial anxiety and limited access to additional educational opportunities - Fewer role models, mentors or peers who can support the development of career literacy - Less financial stability and social capital which can aid progression to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study - Students may feel less confident that they can thrive in highly skilled roles
	EORR Risk 3: perceptions of HE	
	EORR Risk 4: application success rate	
	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support	
	EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support	
	EORR Risk 8: mental health	
	EORR Risk 10: cost pressures	
	EORR Risk 9: ongoing impacts of coronavirus	
	EORR Risk 12: progression from higher education	
	LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures	

Section 3: Objectives

We have developed seven objectives to address the greatest risks to equality of opportunity for the student groups identified in [Section 2](#). Of these, five have a corresponding outcome-based numerical target, some of which extend beyond the period of this plan to take into account time lags in the availability of outcome measures. We have set out the objectives and targets in the table below and yearly milestones can be found in the Fees, Investment and Targets document.

We have prioritised objectives which will make significant improvements in equality of opportunity in our context and deliver tangible improvements to student outcomes and experiences at the School. We recognise that these objectives do not address every risk to equality of opportunity identified, but by delivering structural and cultural change through LSE2030 and our emerging inclusion strategic priorities, we will continue to support all students to access, succeed and progress at LSE.

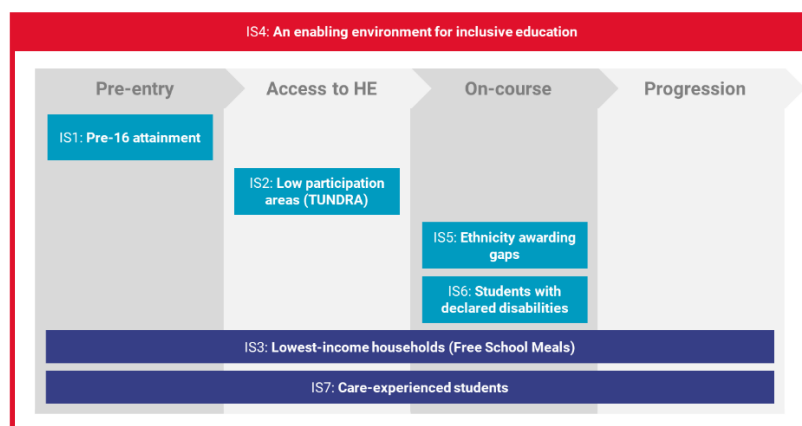
Objective	Target (or rationale where no target)	Relevant IS
Work in partnership with schools and expert	<i>We have explored a variety of potential target options around intermediate measures of improved attainment; however, we do not propose a target at</i>	IS1

Objective	Target (or rationale where no target)	Relevant IS
organisations to raise pre-16 attainment	<i>this stage as there is no baseline data available as our interventions are new.</i>	
Increase access to LSE for students from low participation areas	PTA_1: Increase the proportion of UK UG students from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 or 2 from a baseline of 13.2% to 17.0% by 2028/29.	IS2
Increase access to LSE and progression to good graduate outcomes for students from lowest income households	PTA_2: Increase the proportion of UK UG students who were eligible for Free School Meals during secondary school from 14.6% to 23.0% by 2028/29.	IS3
	PTP_1: Reduce the progression rate gap between students who were eligible for Free School Meals during secondary school and those who were not eligible from a baseline of 10.4 percentage points to 5.1 percentage points by 2031/32.	IS4
Building an inclusive LSE that welcomes all students and enables them to achieve their full potential	PTS_1: Reduce the First Class Honours awarding gap between Black and White students from a two-average baseline of 28.1 percentage points to 14.0 percentage points by 2028/29.	IS4 IS5 IS6
	PTS_2: Reduce the completion rate gap between students with a declared disability and those without a declared disability from a baseline of 8.5 percentage points to 5.5 percentage points by 2030/31.	
Eliminate ethnicity awarding gaps	PTS_1: Reduce the First Class Honours awarding gap between Black and White students from a two-average baseline of 28.1 percentage points to 14.0 percentage points by 2028/29.	IS4 IS5
Close the completion rate gap for students with a declared disability	PTS_2: Reduce the completion rate gap between students with a declared disability and those without a declared disability from a baseline of 8.5 percentage points to 5.5 percentage points by 2030/31.	IS4 IS6
Ensure equality of opportunity at all stages of the student lifecycle for care-experienced students	<i>Having explored a variety of potential target options, we concluded that a specific numerical target is not feasible, as very small cohort sizes lead to year-on-year variation and render data unreliable.</i>	IS4 IS7

Section 4: Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Each objective is associated with one or more of our intervention strategies (see Figure 1), with IS4 providing foundations for successful implementation of all other intervention strategies. Each intervention strategy is underpinned by an extensive evidence base as set out in [Annex B](#), and in our existing change theories. Across our intervention strategies we have identified and prioritised opportunities for collaboration, particularly where there is evidence that partnership working will support our intended outcomes. We have developed evaluation plans for each intervention strategy, committing to a broad range of analysis, evaluation and research projects to aid our understanding of the efficacy and impact of our interventions and improve sector knowledge in areas such as First Class Honours awarding gaps.

Figure 1:
Overview of the seven intervention strategies



Section 5: Intervention Strategy 1 (IS1): Pre-16 attainment

Intervention Strategy 1 (IS1)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Work in partnership with schools and expert organisations to raise pre-16 attainment
Secondary objective(s)	To contribute to sector knowledge around the effectiveness and impact of university student-led tutoring in specific subject areas
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills, EORR Risk 2: information and guidance and EORR Risk 3: perception of higher education See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	LSE x Imperial College London collaborative widening participation programme (new activity, collaborative with Imperial College London and a tutoring delivery partner) Launching a new raising attainment programme for 80 female key stage three pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds with high prior attainment at risk of not achieving their potential in GCSE Maths. This will include small group tutoring by undergraduate students, visits to both university campuses to explore future pathways in maths, workshops to develop entrepreneurial mindsets with LSE Generate and interdisciplinary thinking with LSE100: The LSE Course and ongoing engagement with parents and carers	Staff time Trained student tutors Funding	Improved maths confidence, problem-solving and academic resilience Reduced maths anxiety Greater awareness of and interest in maths educational routes and careers Increased intention to study post-16 maths and quantitative subjects at university	
2	LSE School Governor Scheme (enhanced activity, collaborative with Governors for Schools) Supporting LSE staff and alumni to volunteer as school governors and launching a community of practice at LSE for school governors to share experience and best practice	Staff time	Increase in LSE staff and alumni taking up school governance volunteer roles Increase in skills, knowledge and confidence of volunteers to contribute to good governance practice Increase in governance volunteers' awareness of attainment gaps and impact on university progression	
	Total cost of activities	£315,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
1	LSE x Imperial collaborative widening participation programme	1. Improved maths confidence, problem-solving ability and academic resilience 2. Reduced maths anxiety 3. Greater awareness of and interest in maths educational routes and careers	1-2: Pre-post design: comparing maths and problem-solving ability, confidence and skills before and after the programme 1-4: Pre-post design and thematic analysis of qualitative feedback comparing participants' reported confidence,	Report on website by autumn 2026 Collaborative conference session

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
		4. Increased intention to study post-16 maths and quantitative subjects at university	maths anxiety and future expectations and intentions before and after the programme 1: Matched comparison: comparing ongoing assessment outcomes, teacher assessed grades and key stage four outcomes to students with similar prior attainment	
2	School Governor Scheme and community of practice	1. Increase in LSE staff and alumni taking up school governance volunteer roles 2. Increase in governance volunteers' skills, knowledge and confidence 3. Increase in governance volunteers' awareness of attainment gaps and impact on university progression	1: Monitoring uptake of information sessions and conversion to placed volunteers through Governors for Schools 2-3: Annual survey of known school governance volunteers measuring self-reported skills, knowledge and confidence of key school governance topics	Report on website by spring 2026

Section 6: Intervention Strategy 2 (IS2): Low participation areas (TUNDRA)

Intervention Strategy 2 (IS2)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Increase access to LSE for students living in low participation areas Target (PTA_1): Increase the proportion of UK UG students from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 or 2 from a baseline of 13.2% to 17.0% by 2028/29
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills, EORR Risk 2: information and guidance, EORR Risk 3: perception of higher education, EORR Risk 4: application success rates and EORR Risk 10: cost pressures See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	LSE Springboard widening participation programme (existing activity, collaborative with The Brilliant Club) Delivering a multi-intervention hybrid programme for 50 Sixth Form students per year from outside London & the South East, including a university-style academic project	Staff time Funding	Increased confidence in applying to LSE, studying in London and sense of belonging to the LSE community Greater understanding of financial support available Increased skills and ability to submit competitive application Improved university study skills and academic self-efficacy Increase in applications, offers and enrolments from participants	IS3, IS7
2	Outreach activity to highlight the range of subject disciplines at LSE (existing activity, collaborative with the University of London) Running LSE Explore subject webinars and in-person University of London Taster Courses	Staff time	Greater awareness of diverse social science subject options at LSE Improved understanding of how a subject or studying at university is different to school Increase in applications, offers and enrolments from target groups	IS3, IS7
3	Contextual admissions approach (enhanced activity) Applying additional admissions consideration to applicants who meet specific criteria, which may lead to a contextual offer being made (enhanced activity)	Staff time	Increased awareness of LSE's contextual admissions and offers approach Increase in applications from target groups Increase in offer and conversion rates for applicants from target groups	IS3, IS7
4	Student recruitment activity outside of London and the South East (enhanced activity) - Prioritising engagement with schools/colleges outside of London and in areas of low progression to HE (existing activity) - Enhancing digital content (enhanced activity)	Staff time Funding	Increased awareness of LSE brand and subjects offered Increased applications from students outside of London Increased likelihood of participating in other LSE pre-entry activities	

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
	Offering a travel fund for prospective applicants and offer holders			
5	Professional development for teachers and advisers with information about pathways to high-tariff universities (enhanced activity, collaborative with Russell Group universities) - Participating in Advancing Access, offering free in person and online events and resources - Delivering the 'World Class Study in London (WCSiL)' conference	Staff time Funding	Increased teacher awareness of LSE and subjects offered Increase in teacher knowledge of LSE pre-entry activities	IS3, IS7
6	Pilot an 'informed university choices' project (new activity, collaborative with Causeway Education) Exploring options to better support prospective applicants in areas of low progression to HE to make informed choices given their academic potential, and to upskill teachers and advisers	Funding	Improved confidence in accessing and succeeding at high-tariff universities Increase in applicants making well-matched university choices	
	Total cost of activities	£1,509,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
1	LSE Springboard widening participation programme	1. Increased confidence in applying to LSE, studying in London and sense of belonging to the LSE community 2. Greater understanding of financial support available 3. Increased skills and ability to create a competitive university application 4. Improved university study skills 5. Increase in applications, offers and enrolments at LSE and other similar universities from participants	1-5: Pre-post design and focus groups: comparing self-reported confidence, skills and sense of belonging 4: Pre-post design: comparing academic achievement and self-efficacy through baseline and final assessments of university-style projects 5: Matched comparison design comparing university progression using HEAT and UCAS Outreach Evaluator	Report on website by spring 2026 Conference session
2	Online and in-person subject taster activities	1. Greater awareness of subject options at LSE 2. Improved understanding of how a subject or studying at university is different to school 3. Increase in applications, offers and enrolments from target groups	1-2: Pre-post design: comparing awareness and understanding of specific subject area and university study 3: Descriptive statistical analysis of participants' applications, offer rates and enrolments at LSE	Report on website by autumn 2025

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
3	Contextual admissions and offers approach	1. Increased awareness of LSE's contextual admissions and offers approach 2. Increase in applications from target groups 3. Increase in offer and conversion rates for applicants from target groups	1: Descriptive statistical analysis comparing self-reported awareness in offer holder and decliner surveys 2-3: Mixed methods contribution analysis project analysing pact on admissions stages/enrolment patterns 2-3: Descriptive statistical analysis of offer and conversion rates, and student experience/outcomes once at LSE	Report on website by autumn 2026 Journal article published in 2025 (pending peer review)

Section 7: Intervention Strategy 3 (IS3): Lowest-income households (Free School Meals)

Intervention Strategy 3 (IS3)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Increase access to LSE and progression to good graduate outcomes for LSE students from the lowest-income households Target (PTA_2): Increase the proportion of UK UG students who were eligible for Free School Meals during secondary school from 14.6% to 23.0% by 2028/29 Target (PTP_1): Reduce the progression rate gap between students who were eligible for Free School Meals during secondary school and those who were not eligible from a baseline of 10.4 percentage points to 5.1 percentage points by 2031/32
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 1: knowledge and skills, EORR Risk 2: information and guidance, EORR Risk 3: perception of higher education, EORR Risk 4: application success rates and EORR Risk 10: cost pressures See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	Pilot tailored support programme for contextual offer holders (new activity, collaborative with LSESU) - Supporting contextual offer-holders from pre-application to enrolment and facilitating a successful transition to HE - Delivering student-led community building, events and connections and working with LSESU and Student Communities team to raise awareness of, and encourage engagement with 'Menu of Opportunities' provision - Supporting students to build a personalised career exploration plan, and opportunities to develop skills and networks with structured engagement from pre-enrolment through to two years post-graduation	Staff time Funding	Increased sense of belonging and participation in peer support networks at LSE Increased engagement with student support services and career exploration activities Increased conversion from application to enrolment, and improved student outcome and experience measures for contextual offer holders Improved career literacy and preparedness and increased participation in professional networks and work experience Increased confidence of success in chosen career	
2	Pathways to the Professions widening participation programmes (existing activity, collaborative with the Sutton Trust) - Sustained widening participation programmes for Y12/13 students to explore routes into specific professions - Online and in-person IAG and taster sessions, work placements with leading firms and mentoring from undergraduate students	Staff time Funding Philanthropic funding <i>Subject to funding beyond 25/26</i>	Increased understanding of degree-level study in relevant subjects Increased understanding and experience of relevant professions Increased sense of belonging to the LSE community and interest in and understanding of the legal and financial sectors Increase in progression to university and specific subject areas for participants	

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
3	LSE Uggle Family Scholars programme (existing activity, collaborative with Uggle Family Foundation) Offering significant financial support alongside a tailored programme of mentoring, skills development and personal and professional development opportunities	Staff time Philanthropic Funding	Improved self-efficacy and self-advocacy, sense of belonging at LSE and participation in peer and professional support networks Improved enrolment, continuation, completion and degree attainment for students from underrepresented groups	
4	LSE Bursary for students from lowest household incomes (enhanced activity) - Enhancing means-tested, non-repayable financial support for students from the lowest income households - Ensuring ongoing monitoring of the impact of financial support provision for UK UG students - Publicising financial support provision including case studies from current students and alumni	Staff time Funding	All students can afford essential university living and study costs Reduced financial anxiety Increased ability to use time to study, participate in extra-curricular activities or undertake work experience opportunities Increased confidence that studying in London is financially viable	IS2
5	LSE Careers social mobility programme (existing activity, collaborative with range of employers) Funded internship opportunities, career mentoring, employer engagement and workshops for specific student groups, including the Summer Internship Programme for students with little or no previous work experience	Staff time Funding	Increased engagement with LSE Careers and improved relevance of services Improved career literacy and preparedness and confidence in ability to be successful in chosen career Increased participation in professional networks and work experience opportunities	
Total cost of activities		£14,507,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
1	Pilot tailored support programme for contextual offer holders	1. Increased sense of belonging and participation in peer support networks at LSE 2. Increased engagement with student support services and career exploration activities 3. Increased conversion from application to enrolment, and improved student outcome and experience measures for contextual offer holders 4. Improved career literacy and preparedness 5. Increased confidence of success in chosen career	1, 4-6: Pre-post design: comparing participants' sense of belonging at LSE with non-participants' and comparing career literacy, preparedness and confidence before and after activity participation 1-6: Thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from focus groups, feedback forms and interviews to explore participants' experiences and career intentions and understanding 1-2: Non-random comparison / test of statistical association: comparing Career Development Cycle movement and engagement with LSE and LSESU services	Interim report on website by spring 2027 Final report on website by summer 2029

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
		6. Increased participation in professional networks and work experience opportunities	and activities for target groups with peers from similar backgrounds 3: Descriptive statistical analysis of participants' applications, offer rates and enrolments at LSE 3: Non-random comparison / test of statistical association: comparing student outcome measures	
2	Pathways to the Professions widening participation programmes	1. Increased understanding of degree-level study with respect to law and banking and finance 2. Increased understanding and experience of law and banking and finance careers 3. Increased sense of belonging to the LSE community and interest in and understanding of the legal and financial sectors 4. Increase in progression to university and specific subject areas for participants	1-3: Pre-post design, comparing understanding of subject-specific university-level study, related professional careers, and sense of belonging in HE and the relevant professional sector before, during and after the programme 1-2: Thematic analysis of Sutton Trust national pre-post survey data 4: Descriptive statistical analysis of participants' applications, offer rates and enrolments at LSE 4: Matched comparison design: comparing university progression of participants to similar students using HEAT and UCAS Outreach Evaluator	Report on website by summer 2026
4	LSE Bursary	1. All LSE students can afford essential university living and study costs 2. Reduced financial anxiety 3. Increased ability to use time to study, participate in extra-curricular activities or undertake work experience opportunities. 4. Increased confidence that studying in London is financially viable	1-3: Annual survey of recipients of financial support to understand their financial wellbeing and student experience 4: Thematic analysis of students' perception of the financial viability of studying at LSE through focus groups (pre-entry and post-transition) 4: Descriptive statistical analysis of scholarship applications and offers by student characteristic	Report on website by winter 2025
5	LSE Careers social mobility programme	1. Increased engagement with LSE Careers and improved relevance of services 2. Improved career literacy and preparedness and confidence in ability to be successful in chosen career 3. Increased participation in professional networks and work experience opportunities	1, 3: Analysis of perceptions of & engagement with career services over time, where possible, exploring association with change activity and comparison between groups 2-3: Pre-post design, comparing career literacy, preparedness and confidence before and after activity 2-3: Thematic analysis of qualitative feedback provided in feedback forms and interviews 2-3: Descriptive statistical analysis: comparing Graduate Outcomes Survey responses to similar students	Interim report on website with findings on short and medium-term outcomes by spring 2029

Section 8: Intervention Strategy 4 (IS4): An enabling environment for inclusive education

Intervention Strategy 4 (IS4)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Building an inclusive LSE that welcomes all students and enables them to achieve their full potential Target (PTS_1): Reduce the First Class Honours awarding gap between Black and White students from a two-year average baseline of 28.1 percentage points to 14.0 percentage points by 2028/29 Target (PTS_2): Reduce the completion rate gap between students with a declared disability and those without a declared disability from a baseline of 8.5 percentage points to 5.5 percentage points by 2030/31
Secondary objective(s)	Secondary objective: Eliminate ethnicity awarding gaps Secondary objective: Eliminate completion rate gap for students with a declared disability
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support, EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support, EORR Risk 8: mental health, LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures and LSE Risk 2: structures and cultures that mean students do not feel equally included, valued and supported in our LSE community See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	Improving governance and accountability of access and participation - Implementing new governance structures (eg, Inclusion Management Board) and new Associate VP and PVC (Education) role (new activity) - Enhance departmental engagement through EDI representatives and Administrative Partnership Forum (enhanced activity) - Ensuring programme development, review and enhancement incorporates inclusive education and educational gain (new activity)	Staff Time	Staff across LSE are aware of and engage in LSE's work on access and participation Policies and processes across LSE support the successful delivery of access and participation objectives Inclusive education teaching practices embedded across LSE departments Improved academic experience for students	All
2	Inclusive education action plan and academic development activity - Enabling educators and teaching staff to reflect, critique and adapt curricula through LSE Inclusive Education Mapping Exercise (new activity) - Delivering research-based and practice-based staff development workshops and resources, focused on anti-racist praxis, inclusive and principled teaching (enhanced activity) - Creating a new Inclusive Education Practice Sharing Hub for educators (new activity) - Fostering meaningful change and empowering student collaborations through the LSE Inclusive Education Student Partnership programme (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Increased awareness, understanding and knowledge of inclusive education practices among academic staff and departments, drawing on an expanded evidence base and sector best practices New and/or improved practices to embed inclusive education at department level, relevant to the different academic disciplines Strengthened culture of inclusiveness in education and openness to change Increased number of student-informed institutional policies and practices across different areas of LSE.	All

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
	- Funding six Inclusive Education Fellows to undertake research into inclusive education praxis and develop resources at a disciplinary level (existing activity) - Convening a Departmental Inclusive Education Leads group, raising awareness, understanding and knowledge of inclusive education and encouraging uptake of new and improved education praxis (existing activity)		Changed teaching and/or academic mentoring practices using inclusive approaches (eg, in course design, interactions with students)	
3	Enhancing data and insight to drive strategic change - Embedding enhanced analysis/discussion in departmental monitoring (expanded activity) - Enhancing systems to make more contextual information available to relevant staff for better provision of tailored support (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Increased awareness of LSE's access and participation priorities across LSE and increased local efforts to address issues Improved students' experience of LSE's support and increased awareness of relevant support	All
4	Supporting student mental health and wellbeing by ensuring access to the right support, at the right level, at the right time - Creating a single gateway for support through the Student Wellbeing Team and access to a 24/7 dedicated support line (enhanced activity) - Building on existing Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework and working towards the University Mental Health Charter (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Improved capacity for mental health support and reduced waiting times Improved awareness of mental health support among students Improved student well-being	All
5	Academic support and personal development - LSE LIFE Quantitative Study Adviser role (new activity) - Offering workshops for students re-sitting assessments in "In-Year Re-Sit and Deferred Assessment Period" (IRDAP) (new activity) - Reviewing peer support and mentoring schemes and their impact, and enhancing training and resources for peer supporters/mentors (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Improved students' learning skills, study skills and sense of institutional support Fewer quantitative student entering IRDAP Improved learning strategies, outcomes, and study strategies for Quantitative students in IRDAP Improved mentors' understanding of factors affecting access and participation for different groups Improved signposting of students to relevant services	All
6	Ensure high-quality academic mentoring for all students - Improving quality and consistency of academic mentoring and sharing best practice and resources through a Community of Practice (existing activity) - Launching Departmental Senior Student Adviser team to enhance departmental student advice landscape (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Increased awareness, understanding and knowledge of best practice among academic mentors to enhance practices relevant to different subject contexts Improved student experiences with academic mentoring including improved access to LSE support	All
	Total cost of activities	£1,273,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
	Across whole IS Evaluation & Monitoring	1. Reduce awarding gaps between Black and White students 2. Reduced all ethnicity awarding gaps 3. Reduced completion rate gaps between students with and without a declared disability	1-2. Descriptive statistics or matched comparison / test for statistical association: analysing patterns in grade awards across LSE and over time, where possible, identifying association between change activities and student outcomes 3. Descriptive statistics or matched comparison / test for statistical association: analysing patterns in non-completion at LSE, where possible, identifying association between change activities and changes to completion rates	Presentation to LSE fora and learning lunch by Summer 2026
2	Inclusive education action plan and academic development activity: Enabling educators and teaching staff to reflect, critique and adapt curricula through LSE Inclusive Education Mapping Exercise (new activity)	1. New and/or improved practices to embed inclusive education at department level, relevant to the different academic disciplines	1. Thematic / content analysis: identifying mapping tool outputs, identifying change commitments and, if possible, patterns within and between departments	Blog posts, conference presentations and/or presentation in LSE fora by winter 2026
2	Inclusive education action plan and academic development activity: delivering research-based and practice-based staff development workshops and resources, focused on anti-racist praxis, inclusive and principled teaching (enhanced activity)	1. Changed teaching and/or academic mentoring practices using inclusive approaches (eg, course design, interactions with students)	1.1 Content analysis: Extracting and coding information on the development of intended actions per workshop, over time and across workshops 1.2 Inferential statistical analysis: based on staff survey, assess whether workshop participants are more likely to adopt inclusive education practices	Blog post and presentation in LSE fora by winter 2026
4	Supporting student mental health and wellbeing by ensuring access to the right support, at the right level, at the right time	1. Improved student well-being	1. Descriptive statistical analysis or matched comparison / test for statistical association: analysing patterns in students' reported well-being across LSE and over time, where possible, identifying association between change activities and student outcomes	Report on website by spring 2028
5	Academic support and personal development: new LSE LIFE Quantitative Study	1. Fewer quantitative student entering IRDAP	1. Matched comparison / inferential statistics: Analysing reported cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and	Presentation at ALDinHE South East Regional Network

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
	Advisor role and their role in supporting students in the IRDAP process in liaison with Quantitative departments	2. Improved learning strategies, outcomes, and study strategies for Quantitative students in IRDAP 3. Improved sense of institutional support	sense of institutional support / gains to them for students taking up workshops compared to non-participant peers	Event or Association of Learning Developers Annual Conference in 2028
6	Ensure high-quality and academic mentoring for all students	1. Increased awareness, understanding and knowledge of best practice among academic mentors to enhance practices relevant to different subject contexts 2. Improved student experiences with academic mentoring including improved access to LSE support	1-2. Content analysis: extracting and coding feedback on participants experiences in the CoP and descriptions of new practices or changes to existing ones 2.1 Descriptive / inferential statistical analysis, time series analysis: analyse students' description of engagement and quality of academic mentoring; if possible, identifying association between student experiences, characteristics, outcomes and mentors' engagement in change work 2.2 Content analysis and/or descriptive / inferential statistical analysis: Explore role of academic mentors in signposting and compare rates of access to support services at LSE across departments and role of personal tutoring in that	Report on website, journal article (pending peer review) and/or conference presentation by summer 2027

Section 9: Intervention Strategy 5 (IS5): Ethnicity awarding gaps

Intervention Strategy 5 (IS5)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Eliminate ethnicity awarding gaps Target (PTS_1): Reduce the First Class Honours awarding gap between Black and White students from a two-average baseline of 28.1 percentage points to 14.0 percentage points by 2028/29
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support, EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support, EORR Risk 8: mental health, EORR Risk 10: cost pressures, LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures and LSE Risk 2: structures and cultures that mean students do not feel equally included, valued and supported in our LSE community See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	Reviewing and enhancing the evidence base and sharing effective practice in eliminating awarding gaps, especially for First Class Honours (enhanced activity) - Improving School-wide collection, visibility and use of student data to identify department and programme-level gaps, especially at First Class Honours, to share learnings and to develop departmental-level plans - Continue reviewing existing research and evidence to identify possible causes, future research needs and possible mitigations, in collaboration with the sector and LSE staff and students	Staff Time Funding	Improved practices in response to robust & actionable research and evaluation	
2	Developing and enhancing LSE100: The LSE Course, our flagship interdisciplinary course for first year UG students (enhanced activity) - Continuing to diversify and decolonise the course - Expanding LSE100 assessment workshops and 1:1 appointments - Continuing to enhance small group peer-learning provision	Staff Time Funding	All students experience an LSE100 curriculum that they feel represents & reflects a diverse range of perspectives and experiences Assessment workshops and tailored 1:1 appointments enhance students' study and learning strategies and improve students' sense of institutional support	IS4
3	Improving and enhancing services to ensure they are welcoming, inclusive and enabling for students of Black heritage, including: - Tailored peer support and workshops (existing activity, collaborative with Black People Talk) - Tailored programme of employer engagement (enhanced activity) - Developing an action plan to improve Black students' experience in halls (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Provide a safe space to discuss mental health at university & provide effective tools to improve wellbeing Improved students' enjoyment, sense of community and belonging in LSE Halls of Residence Improved students' sense of belonging at LSE Improved career literacy and preparedness	IS4

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
	Expanding analysis of student engagement with support services (new activity)			
4	Widening participation activities for students of Black heritage - Delivering the LSE Thrive sustained programme including mentoring from current students, and the LSE Black Achievement Conference (existing activity, with relevant LSESU societies) - Increasing tailored provision at student recruitment events (new activity) - Co-creating activities with relevant student societies (enhanced activity)	Staff Time Funding	Increased awareness of life as a student at LSE Increased preparedness for university-level study Increased knowledge of LSE and its support services Improved sense of belonging to the LSE community	
5	Facilitating stronger links with the LSE alumni community - LSESU BME Mentoring Scheme (collaborative with LSESU, existing activity) - Black Alumni Network to facilitate connections (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Mentees have a network of LSE alumni whose knowledge and experience they can draw upon and feel part of the wider LSE community Improved Black students' sense of community and belonging at LSE	
	Total cost of activities	£398,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
1	Across whole IS Evaluation & Monitoring	1. Reduced awarding gaps between Black and White students 2. Reduced all ethnicity awarding gaps	1-2. Descriptive statistics or matched comparison / test for statistical association: analysing patterns in grade awards across LSE over time, where possible, identifying association between change activities and student outcomes	Presentation to LSE fora and learning lunch by Summer 2026
2	Developing and enhancing LSE100: The LSE Course, our flagship interdisciplinary course for first year UG students (enhanced activity)	1. All students experience an LSE100 curriculum that they feel represents & reflects a diverse range of perspectives and experiences 2. Assessment workshops enhance students' study and learning strategies, and improve students' sense of institutional support	1. Descriptive / inferential statistical analysis: analysing post-course survey data on students' experience with curriculum and test for possible associations with other indicators of student experience 2. Matched comparison / inferential statistics: Analysing reported cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and sense of institutional support / gains to them for students taking up workshops and tailored 1:1 sessions compared to non-participant peers	Report on website by Autumn 2026

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
3	Improving and enhancing services to ensure they are welcoming, inclusive and enabling for students of Black heritage: Developing an action plan to improve Black student experience in halls (new activity)	1. Improved students' enjoyment, sense of community and belonging in LSE Halls of Residence	1.1 Co-creation of plan with students: gathering qualitative feedback to identify current issues & ways of improvement in LSE halls for students 1.2 Descriptive statistical analysis / time series analysis: Analysing Annual Halls Survey to understand patterns in student satisfaction by student characteristic, over time and across halls	Report on website by summer 2027
4	Widening participation activities for students of Black heritage	1. Increased awareness of life as a student at LSE 2. Increased preparedness for university-level study 3. Increased knowledge of LSE and its support services 4. Improved sense of belonging to the LSE community	1-3: Pre-post design: comparing students' reported awareness of life as a student at LSE, preparedness, and knowledge of LSE and its support services before and after events 4: Matched comparison / test for statistical association: comparing participants' sense of belonging to LSE with non-participants' at the beginning and end of year one, including association with reported preparedness scores	Report on website by autumn 2027
5	Facilitating stronger links with the LSE alumni community: LSESU BME Mentoring Scheme	1. Mentees have a network of LSE alumni whose knowledge and experience they can draw upon and feel part of the wider LSE community	1. Pre-Post Survey Design: Analyse mid and post event survey feedback to understand if students expanded their network, improved understanding of working world, and felt like part of the LSE community	Report on website by autumn 2027

Section 10: Intervention Strategy 6 (IS6): Completion rate gaps for students with a declared disability

Intervention Strategy 6 (IS6)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Close the completion rate gap for students with a declared disability Target (PTS_2): Reduce the completion rate gap between students with a declared disability and those without a declared disability from a baseline of 8.5 percentage points to 5.5 percentage points by 2030/31
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support, EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support, EORR Risk 8: mental health, LSE Risk 1: uneven provision of support and dispersed responsibility and accountability structures and LSE Risk 2: structures and cultures that mean students do not feel equally included, valued and supported in our LSE community See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	Review and enhance our evidence base to promote and share effective practice to improve completion rates for disabled students (new activity) - Conducting research into the quality and impact of My Adjustments, our system for recording the adjustments and support available for disabled students, tracking impact and informing future change - Conducting research to improve understandings of when and how students declare their disability status to encourage early engagement with services and timely declarations - Identifying risk-factors for students not completing their degrees through statistical data analysis	Staff Time	Improved practices in response to robust and actionable research and evaluation	
2	Improve School-wide oversight and coordination - Creating a Disability Working Group to examine the challenges and barriers being experienced by disabled staff and students and the adoption of new sector-wide good practice frameworks (new activity) - Ongoing enhancement and review of My Adjustments (new activity)	Staff Time	Increased awareness of & accountability for LSE's access and participation priorities by academic and professional staff across LSE Simplified My Adjustments process to improve transparency for students and ensure easier, fully consistent implementation of adjustments by staff Improved outcomes for disabled students in receipt of My Adjustments to narrow disparities in outcomes	
3	Enhancing support for disabled students and improving accessibility of learning resources Ongoing piloting of Neurodivergent Student Academic Mentoring scheme (enhanced activity)	Staff Time Funding	Improve engagement with volunteering opportunities, and facilitate rewarding experiences Provide neurodivergent students with supportive peer mentors and provide personalised academic support Improved career confidence and readiness	

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
	- Delivering LSE Library Buddy scheme with a dedicated staff member, improving accessibility of study spaces and providing assistive technology support through Digital Skills Lab (existing activity) - Delivering a dedicated careers programme for disabled students and accessible summer volunteering placements (existing activity, collaborative with a range of employers and charity partners) - Improving accessibility of teaching materials through digital review tool (existing activity) - Further rolling-out e-examinations as part of Digital Education Futures transformation programme (new activity)		Improved accessibility of learning resources & reduced incidence of accessibility issues Improved student experiences of assessment and improved quality of feedback	
4	Delivering staff learning and development to strengthen inclusivity - Continually developing Inclusive Teaching Guides and resources (enhanced activity) - Encouraging staff to engage with learning and development on supporting student mental health and wellbeing (new activity)	Staff Time Funding	Enhanced staff knowledge and awareness of student mental health and well-being, and available support Improved accessible teaching practices and better signposting by staff Improved educational experiences and access to support for disabled students Increased staff awareness and action to improve accessibility of digital learning resources	
	Total cost of activities	£402,000		

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
	Across whole IS Evaluation & Monitoring	1. Reduced completion rate gaps between students with and without a declared disability	1. Descriptive statistics or matched comparison / test for statistical association: analysing patterns in non-completion at LSE, where possible, identifying association between change activities and changes to completion rates	Presentation to LSE fora and learning lunch by Summer 2026
2	Improve School-wide oversight and coordination: Ongoing enhancement and review of My Adjustments, our system for recording the adjustments and support available for disabled students (new activity)	1. Simplified My Adjustments process to improve transparency for students and ensure easier, consistent implementation of adjustments by staff 2. Improved outcomes for students with My Adjustments to narrow disparities in outcomes	1.1 Content & descriptive statistical analysis: Analysing survey feedback from My Adjustments users about effectiveness and consistency My Adjustments process collected through annual DMHS survey 1.2 Time series analysis: comparison of feedback on My Adjustments and patterns in feedback over time 2. Non-random comparison / test of statistical association: Identifying patterns grade outcomes for disabled in	Report on website by autumn 2028

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
			students in receipt of a My Adjustment compared to disabled students without My Adjustments	
3	Enhancing support for disabled students and improving accessibility of learning resources: Improving accessibility of teaching materials through digital review tool (existing activity)	1. Improved accessibility of learning resources and reduced incidence of accessibility issues 2. Increased staff awareness and action to improve accessibility of digital learning resources	1. Descriptive data analysis: Analysing annual survey for student reports on digital accessibility 2.1 Content analysis / descriptive data analysis: collecting qualitative feedback and usage data on digital accessibility tool by staff and students to explore usage and usefulness 2.2 Descriptive analysis & time series analysis: identifying patterns in digital accessibility ratings as provided by accessibility tool reports over time	Report on website by winter 2027
4	Delivering staff learning and development to strengthen inclusivity: Encouraging staff to engage with learning and development on supporting student mental health and wellbeing (new activity)	1. Enhanced staff knowledge and awareness of accessible teaching practices and student mental health and well-being 2. Improved educational experiences and access to support for disabled students	1. Descriptive statistical analysis: analysing staff data on engagement with learning opportunities, and analysing observational data on staff completion of online courses 2. Descriptive statistical analysis / time series analysis: analyse students' assessment of accessibility of teaching and signposting to services	Report on website by spring 2026

Section 11: Intervention Strategy 7 (IS7): Care-experienced students

Intervention Strategy 7 (IS7)	
Objectives and targets	Objective: Ensuring equality of opportunity at all stages for care-experienced students
Risks to equality of opportunity	EORR Risk 2: information and guidance, EORR Risk 3: perception of higher education, EORR Risk 4: application success rates, EORR Risk 6: insufficient academic support, EORR Risk 7: insufficient personal support, EORR Risk 8: mental health, EORR Risk 10: cost pressures and EORR 12: progression from higher education See Section 2 for further details on risks to equality of opportunity in LSE's context

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
1	Pre-entry information, advice and support for prospective care-experienced students and engagement with supporters and carers - Dedicated activities and focused support at student recruitment events and widening participation programmes, including specific sessions for supporters/carers (new activity) - Developing links with expert organisations supporting care-experienced young people (new activity, collaborative with local authority virtual schools and third sector partners)	Staff time Student Ambassadors Funding	Increased knowledge of support available for care-experienced students, confidence in university options and sense of belonging at LSE Successful progression to LSE and Higher Education for care-experienced students Supporters/carers have increased confidence supporting care-experienced students to apply to LSE	IS3
2	Improving tailored support and priority access to services - Providing dedicated staff contacts throughout student journey, including named contacts in each department (new activity) - Facilitating early access to Student Academic Mentoring and priority booking for 1-2-1 appointments with the LSE100 teaching team and LSE LIFE Study Advisers (enhanced activity)	Staff time	Increased awareness of and timely access to academic support Increased sense of belonging at LSE and preparedness to study Improved continuation, completion and degree attainment for care-experienced students	
3	Enhanced accommodation support package for care-experienced students - Providing 365-day accommodation during all years of study, including for summer period after graduation and a deposit delay/waiver scheme (enhanced activity) - Offering a free guarantor scheme for students in private accommodation (new activity) - Practical support to move into accommodation, including a student starter pack (new activity)	Staff time Student Ambassador costs Funding	Increased sense of belonging at LSE Increased confidence and certainty around accommodation options for care-experienced students Access to suitable accommodation and residential support Improved enrolment rates, continuation and completion for care-experienced students	
4	Additional financial support and advice for care-experienced students	Staff time	Care-experienced students can afford essential university living costs, reducing financial anxiety	

	Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
	- Guaranteed bursary for care-experienced students for the duration of their degree programme, with some funding provided before enrolment (new activity) - Providing tailored financial support advice (new activity) <i>For additional activity addressing cost pressures risk, see IS3</i>	Funding for bursary	Increased uptake of appropriate financial support Increased ability to use time to study, participate in extra-curricular activities or undertake work experience Increased confidence that studying in London is financially viable	
5	Learning and development on supporting care-experienced students - Training and resources for student-facing support staff, named points of contact and peer supporters/mentors (new activity) - Launching a Care-Experienced Student Panel with senior stakeholders and a care-experienced student support working group (new activity)	Staff and student staff time Training delivery and membership fees	Increased awareness of care-experienced students' academic/pastoral needs for staff and peer supporters Increased awareness of support available for care-experienced students Student voice represented in development of support	IS4
	Total cost of activities		£386,000	

	Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Publication plan
	Across whole IS Evaluation & Monitoring	1. All student-facing outcomes	1.1 Pre-post design: comparing reported knowledge and sense of belonging before and after participation in pre-entry activities 1.1 Descriptive statistical analysis: care-experienced students' outcomes at each stage of the student journey 1.2. Descriptive statistical analysis of survey data by student characteristic 1.3 Descriptive statistical analysis: engagement with support services and uptake of financial support 1.4 Thematic analysis: qualitative feedback collected through focus groups and a student advisory group	Report on website by autumn 2027
5	Learning and development on supporting care-experienced students	1. Increased awareness of care-experienced students' academic/pastoral needs for staff and peer supporters/mentors 2. Increased awareness of support available for care-experienced students 3. Student voice represented in development of support	1-2: Pre-post design, comparing colleagues' reported awareness of support for care-experienced students and confidence in providing support before and after training 1-2: Thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from staff 3: Case studies: student voice impact on policies/practices	Report on website by spring 2027

Section 12: Whole provider approach

Embedded within our overarching commitment advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), access and participation is a key priority throughout the School, including at the highest levels of leadership.

Fostering EDI is a fundamental aspect of our values and is delivered through the School's strategic EDI objectives and implementation framework, which is tailored to the School's specific context and specifically includes the objectives and targets in this plan. Our holistic approach to EDI encompasses a wide range of areas, including student recruitment and attainment, staff recruitment and progression, inclusive leadership and governance, and creating an inclusive culture. It is overseen by our School-wide Inclusion Management Board, chaired by the President and Vice Chancellor and seeks to embed EDI principles into every aspect of the staff and student experience - essential for creating meaningful change. This builds on existing good practice, from example in our recent race equity work where we have been working hard to increase the ethnic diversity of our faculty, with around one third of our Assistant Professors identifying as from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

This plan has been approved by our School Management Committee, which is chaired by our President and Vice Chancellor. It was also discussed with our Council, the School's governing body, prior to submission and they will continue to receive twice-yearly updates on progress towards our objectives and targets. Ongoing oversight of the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of our APP sits with the APP Steering Group and our EGI Student Community, Inclusion and Wellbeing Board, both of which are chaired by our Vice President and Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) and report regularly to Education Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board.

A whole-School approach has also underpinned the development of our plan. A specific APP Project Board, including two Vice Presidents and Pro-Vice Chancellors and five senior professional service staff, including our Head of EDI, was convened to oversee the plan's development, informed by extensive consultation with staff and students (see [Section 13: Student consultation and partnership](#)). We also conducted a detailed Equality Impact Assessment, which assures us that we have followed our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between groups who share different protected characteristics when developing this plan.

To signify our collective, School-wide responsibility to access and participation, APP activities have been developed collectively by staff with relevant professional expertise and in partnership with our student body, building on their lived experiences. Activities are embedded across the School to ensure strong alignment with strategic priorities and operational plans. Responsibility and accountability for activities has been clearly articulated and communicated to staff. A variety of mechanisms, such as our annual departmental monitoring and feedback processes, LSE and LSESU liaison meetings and yearly review of APP data dashboards by the APP Steering Group, are used to monitor implementation and take action where progress is not as expected. All teams are sufficiently resourced to ensure the effective delivery of commitments in our plan, including robust monitoring and evaluation.

Our whole provider approach to access and participation extends beyond the work included in this plan. For example, our commitments in this plan to work with schools in London to raise pre-16 attainment are rooted in our School-wide approach to civic engagement, enabling us to share our passion and expertise in the most beneficial ways possible for the benefit of our local communities. Given the size of our postgraduate student body, we are also committed to improving access to postgraduate research study. We are currently piloting a new Attaining Comprehensive Equality in Research Initiative⁴ and developing a holistic EDI strategy for our Doctoral Training Partnership, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, which will reflect our widening access and participation commitments.

In recent years, we have also begun to make concerted efforts to strengthen links between our world-leading academic research in topics of direct relevant to access and participation and our own practice in this area. This has already led to several fruitful developments, including a joint working paper published by the Eden Centre for Education Enhancement and Department of Sociology⁵ on the role of social class at LSE and through specialist academic representation on our APPEMG. This is an area we are looking to build on even further in future to ensure that our world-leading research on areas such as inequality informs our practice.

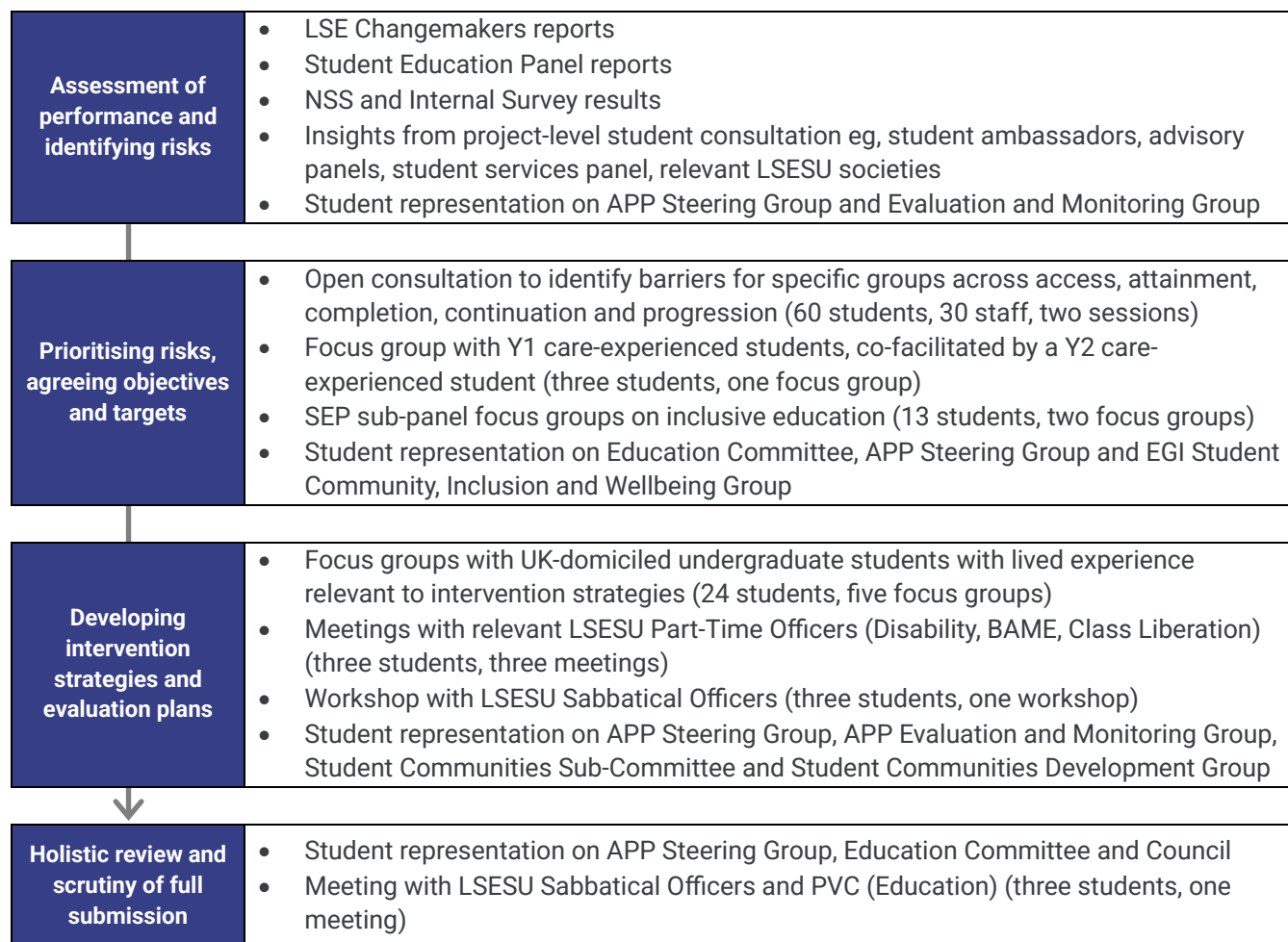
⁴ [Attaining Comprehensive Equality in Research Initiative](#)

⁵ [Analysing inequalities within the LSE student body: bringing social class into the mix](#)

Section 13: Student consultation and partnership

Ensuring effective student partnership and meaningful opportunities for students to provide feedback to the School is one of the key priorities of LSE 2030. This is achieved through a range of methods, including strengthening our partnership work with LSESU on areas such as community and belonging and student academic representation on Staff-Student Liaison Committees; and via formal engagement mechanisms, such as student representation on governance committees and annual internal and external surveys. We offer many opportunities for students to contribute to strategic change, such as through the Student Education Panel (SEP) and LSE Changemakers initiative⁶, as well as share feedback on specific services, via groups such as our Student Wellbeing Service Panel and LSE Careers Student Advisory Panel.

A range of consultations and existing insights have been used to ensure that student voice has systematically and consistently informed every stage of the development of this plan. We have engaged with a diverse range of groups, including the specific groups of UK undergraduates students referenced in our APP objectives.



Recommendations from various consultations were collated and shared with relevant colleagues who were asked to reflect and respond to these, to consider where adaptations and enhancements to existing interventions and support could be made and where new activity could be developed as part of the APP development. This input directly supported the decisions on identifying priority risks, proposing objectives/targets and informing activities to include in intervention strategies. Throughout this consultation period we employed an LSE student (a previous OfS student panel member) to co-design and co-facilitate engagement activities, as well as to co-author internal reports to disseminate findings internally to inform decision-making. Building on our successful co-creation of Welcome Week with the LSESU since 2019 and our existing approach of partnering with LSESU on our student communities work, our cross-lifecycle intervention strategy for students from lowest-income households (IS3) has been co-designed with LSESU, who will partner with the School on its delivery and evaluation.

⁶ [Changemakers](#) - a collaborative programme with the LSESU which funds students to undertake independent academic research focused on education and student experience.

IS	Student feedback received	Action taken in response to feedback received
IS1	Students shared that they felt that their teachers did not always have enough knowledge about LSE and applying to high-tariff institutions to be able to provide the right level of support, for example with personal statements.	This feedback led to the development of a pilot 'informed university choices' project with Causeway Education, which will aim to better support prospective university applicants to make informed choices given their academic potential, and to provide professional development opportunities for their teachers and advisors so they are more confident to support their pupils with progression to HE.
IS3	Feedback from various consultations demonstrated a strong need and demand for tailored provision for students throughout their journey at LSE, such as supporting their transition from school to university study, community building and exploring career plans.	This feedback guided the development of the pilot programme for contextual offer holders, which is integral to IS3 (the cross-lifecycle approach to supporting students eligible for Free School Meals).
IS4	Students in the SEP sub-panel focus groups on inclusive education shared the need for accountability mechanisms for academic mentoring, to make sure there is a minimum quality standard across LSE.	This feedback supports the strengthening of initiatives such as the Academic Mentoring Community of Practice, designed to disseminate good practice and establish shared approaches.
IS4	Students recognised the need to reach long-established / more senior academic staff to strengthen change processes regarding inclusive education teaching practices and academic support.	This feedback supports the initiatives designed to improve governance and accountability of access and participation, eg, Inclusive Education Leads, Inclusion Management Board, engaging with senior staff.
IS4	Students have a positive view of academic staff who show awareness of issues related to inclusive education. They suggest embedding training or awareness activities in the on-boarding process of new staff, as well as integrating aspects regarding inclusive teaching practice into promotion criteria for current staff.	This feedback supports the continuation and enhancement of initiatives such as, the LSE Inclusive Education Mapping Exercise and the Inclusive Education Workshops. It should be noted that none of these activities are mandatory, however, engagement is expected to increase with new governance structures aimed at strengthening inclusive education at LSE.
IS7	Students in the IS7 focus group shared a strong need for a single point of contact for care-experienced students at LSE, who could signpost students to relevant support and regularly check in with students at key points in the year, such as transition periods, festive periods, exam seasons and graduation.	This feedback reinforces the approach being developed in IS7, which now includes a key activity to introduce a new staff role to act as a single point of contact for care-experienced students, aligning with sector research and best practice. Students expressed that they were happy to see this implemented within IS7.

Section 14: Evaluation of the plan

LSE has built effective processes for monitoring our APP. Responsibility for monitoring the delivery and implementation of activities sits with APP Steering Group (APPSG), while APP Evaluation and Monitoring Group (APPEMG) coordinates and monitors the delivery of evaluation commitments, following the consistent approach to evaluation set out in our Education Evaluation Framework. Departmental monitoring and feedback processes also include discussion of measures relating to our APP with senior faculty members. Responsibility for monitoring overall progress towards our APP objectives and targets on an annual basis is overseen by the APP Steering Group and our EGI Student Community, Inclusion and Wellbeing Board, who will address areas of concern and report on progress to governance committees, including School Management Committee and Council. Audit Committee, a sub-committee of Council, monitors the School's compliance with OfS Condition of Registration A1.

Since our last APP submission, we have also significantly increased the resourcing and implementation of data analytics, monitoring, and evaluation. APPEMG, in addition to its coordinating function, has been established as our APP evaluation community of practice, becoming central to the dissemination of, and learning from, evaluation projects. For the APP development, the group also engaged with the OfS APP evaluation self-assessment toolkit. The results highlighted our recent progress in creating a strategic environment that centres evaluation, as well as examples of good practice in evidence-led programme design and evaluative practice. However, the group also identified areas for further improvement which are set out below, including the consistency of evaluative excellence, robustness of produced evidence, and engagement with the sector.

Improving data analysis & monitoring

We have enhanced our capacity and capability in data analysis and monitoring, specifically in relation to our APP. This includes appointing a Senior Data Analyst and implementing a more robust APP monitoring process including an annual review of targets. Current analysis and monitoring are not yet tailored to the needs of all stakeholders and as such, insights are not always consistently considered and acted upon. By the end of 2025/26 we will:

- Refine our data analysis and monitoring approach to ensure that relevant data on APP targets and commitments is accessible to and understood by stakeholders and actively used by them (cf. IS4).
- Pilot a new Analytical Framework for LSE Careers, allowing us to better understand gaps in our current student careers landscape and identify areas for future development.

Improving evaluation capacity & capability

Current efforts have produced some excellent examples of evaluative practice that we now want to embed consistently and across APP-related activities. By the end of 2025/26, we will:

- Increase investment into evaluation and analysis functions to improve capacity.
- Develop an ongoing programme of training on data, monitoring and evaluation for non-specialist staff.
- Pilot an APP Evaluation Internship scheme, facilitating co-design and co-delivery of evaluation with students.

Improving robustness of evaluation design

Our self-assessment identified scope for further improvement in the robustness of the design of our impact evaluations as to date, we have emphasised developmental and utilisation-focused evaluation, prioritising concrete improvements to projects over large scale impact evaluations. Our small UK undergraduate cohort limits the feasibility of many (quasi-)experimental designs, as highlighted by a TASO-funded impact evaluation undertaken in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, which concluded that ‘evaluation approaches specifically designed for small samples being of likely higher relevance’ (p.2)⁷ to the type of interventions we are proposing in our plan. Thus, while our evaluation plans focus on ensuring consistently robust empirical evidence – a standard we know we can deliver with available data and within the timeframe – we are committed to exploring the use of suitable impact evaluation methods. Therefore, over the course of the APP period, we will:

- Continue to leverage internal academic expertise and sector-wide learnings to strengthen the robustness of impact evaluation designs drawing on a variety of methods and sharing our own learnings where possible.

Disseminating research & evaluation

APPEMG has worked with the School’s Research Ethics Committee to agree a new process for ethics review of APP-related research and evaluation, as well as with senior stakeholders to develop an external publication review process. We recognise the importance of both learning from and sharing with the sector and are committed to exploring a range of methods to do this. Therefore, over the course of the APP period, we will:

- Explore building a repository for institutional research, analysis and evaluation to collect and organise knowledge resources.
- Work with colleagues in other Russell Group institutions to develop guidance on publications and use it to strengthen practice.
- Explore hosting a conference on evaluation and research in access and participation and where possible, share work in academic contexts, such as at conferences and in journals.

Section 15: Provision of information to students

We are committed to publishing clear, accurate and accessible information about fees and financial support in a timely fashion and through a range of communication channels:

- **LSE website:** prospective applicants can access information about tuition fees and financial support from our [fees and funding webpages](#), and information on living costs on our [student life webpages](#) and from [student bloggers](#). Current students can access information related to finances, including budgeting advice and on-course financial support, on our dedicated [student support webpage](#).

⁷ [Efficacy Pilot Evaluation Report: London School of Economics’ Disabled Students Career Appointments](#)

- **In-person and virtual events:** information is provided at in-person events such as Open Days, Offer Holders' Days and widening participation events and also during virtual events, such as [LSE Discovery sessions](#) and [Study at LSE webinars](#). Students who need assistance with the cost of travel for campus-based events may be eligible for the [LSE Travel Fund](#).
- **Digital and printed publications:** fees and funding information is listed in relevant publications, including the Undergraduate Prospectus/Guide, the UK Financial Support Guide and the Offer Guide for Undergraduates.
- **Email communications:** prospective applicants, applicants and offer holders are provided with a range of information about financial support, budgeting and living costs through regular e-newsletters.
- **Social media:** Financial support provision is promoted on the School's social media channels such as X, Facebook and Instagram. Student-led videos on YouTube highlight topics such as how to apply for scholarships, and these are also shared via social media, emails and on our website.

We regularly review published information so that it is clear and accessible and to ensure compliance with consumer protection law. We also provide relevant information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) in a timely fashion.

The table below summarises the financial support available to undergraduate students with Home Fee status for the course of this APP period.

Award	Amount	Eligibility
LSE Bursary	£1,250 - £4,250 per year, for a maximum of 4 years of study	Awarded to students based on household income, on a sliding scale up to £50,000.
LSE Discretionary Bursary	Up to £4,000 per year	Awarded to students with exceptional financial need but who may not be entitled automatically to the maximum value of LSE Bursary.
LSE Care-Experienced and Estranged Student Bursary	£1,000 per year, for a maximum of 4 years of study	Awarded to care-experienced students or students who are estranged from their parents or carers.

From time to time, other financial support may also be available, such as donor-funded scholarships and accommodation bursaries for eligible students. Full details are published on our [website](#). LSESU may also offer financial support to students, including a hardship fund, a graduation gown and photography support fund and funds to support student participation in LSESU societies and activities. Full details are published on the LSESU [website](#).

Our approved plan will be published on our APP [webpage](#).

Annex A – Further information on the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

Our detailed assessment of performance has highlighted several areas where students may not experience equal opportunity to access, succeed at or progress from LSE. Our assessment was developed using the OfS access and participation dataset as our starting point, coupled with internal student outcomes and experience data and insights. This quantitative analysis was supplemented by a range of qualitative data, including a review of LSE student-led research, insights from internal student surveys and the NSS, and feedback from APP consultations undertaken with students and staff. In addition, we undertook a rapid literature review using sector resources, TASO and academic journals to identify relevant sector evidence.

Initial indicators of risk at every stage of the student journey were identified through this comprehensive analysis. Discussions took place with key stakeholders at each stage to review evidence and analysis, consider possible reasons for the indications of risk identified and identify priority areas for APP objectives and interventions.

The following indicators and characteristics were considered as part of our comprehensive analysis process, along with intersections between characteristics where available:

- Socioeconomic deprivation: eligibility for Free School Meals and EIMD 2019
- Low participation areas: POLAR4 and TUNDRA
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Sex
- Age: students aged 21 or over
- Care-experienced students

We have used the following definitions for student outcome measures, as defined by the Office for Students⁸:

Student lifecycle stage	Indicator	Definition
Access to HE	Entry rate	The proportion of entrants with a particular characteristic, as a proportion of all UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants.
On-course	Continuation rate	The proportion of entrants with a particular characteristic who continue in active study one year and 15 days after their commencement date.
On-course	Completion rate	The proportion of entrants with a particular characteristic who qualify or continue in active study four years and 15 days after their commencement date.
On-course	Attainment rate	The proportion of qualifiers with a particular characteristic awarded a Good Honours degree (First or 2:1 degree classifications). <i>Note: we have also used internal outcomes data to look at First Class attainment rates and gaps.</i>
Progression	Progression rate	The proportion of qualifiers with a particular characteristic who reported being in professional or managerial employment, further study or other positive outcomes, 15 months after gaining their qualification.

Our prioritisation considered the following factors:

- Where a gap or pattern in outcomes has a large impact on the identified group of students
- Where a large number of individual students may be affected
- Where a gap or pattern is persistent over time
- Where outcomes at LSE are an outlier against our comparator providers outlined above
- Where a gap or pattern was linked to one of the OfS sector priority areas

⁸ [Description of student outcome and experience measures used in OfS regulation](#)

From this, a longlist of potential priority areas was discussed with key stakeholders including students, practitioners and members of governance committees.

As LSE has a relatively small population of UK-domiciled undergraduate students (usually around 850 entrants a year), the ability to analyse outcomes by specific student characteristics is sometimes restricted. In some cases, aggregated data across multiple years has been used to aid analysis and identify longer-term trends which sit underneath year-on-year variability.

Given the small population sizes, we have carefully considered our approach to analysing outcomes for intersections between student characteristics. Where an indication of risk has been identified in one characteristic, we have supplemented our data analysis with sector evidence to understand if intersections between characteristics may act as mediating or compounding factor in the manifestation of risks to equality of opportunity.

We have also considered the Associations Between Characteristics of Students (ABCS) measures to highlight areas where intersections of characteristics may increase the likelihood of risks to equality of opportunity. This supplements the analysis described here, and we have chosen to focus our objectives and targets on measures and student characteristics that are better suited to operational delivery of interventions.

Given LSE's context (a high entry tariff, central London location, and sole focus on social sciences), we have used five comparator providers (King's College London, University College London and the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Warwick) to supplement comparisons with the English HE sector. This adds vital context to understand LSE's performance across a range of measures.

As a result, we have identified six priority indications of risk to address through our APP objectives:

- Access to quantitative subject areas at university for female students
- Entry rates at LSE for students from areas with low progression to HE (TUNDRA Quintiles 1 or 2)
- Entry rates at LSE for students from lowest-income households (who were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school)
- First Class and Good Honours attainment rates for specific ethnic groups
- Completion rates for disabled students
- Progression rates for students from lowest-income households (who were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school)

In the following, we summarise the key findings of our assessment of performance and how these have informed our chosen objectives, targets and associated intervention strategies.

Access to LSE

Access: Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)

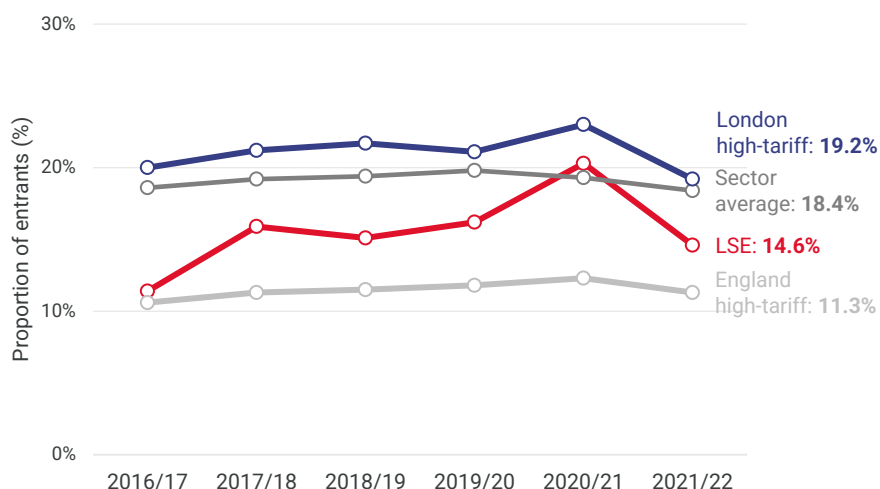
The proportion of LSE entrants who were eligible for FSM at secondary school has risen from 11.4% in 2016/17 to 14.6% in 2021/22 (see Fig. 1). A peak of 20.3% was reached in 2020/21. However, we consider that this was due to COVID-related changes to A-level exams and grade awarding methods, and hence treat this as an outlier against a lower long-term trend.

Although LSE's FSM entry rate is below the sector average in every year (apart from 2020/21), it is consistently above the national rate at high-tariff providers, which has remained stable between 10.6% and 12.3%⁹. LSE's FSM entry rate is in the middle of our comparator providers, with those located in London consistently achieving higher entry rates than those outside of London. We have also considered entry rates at high-tariff providers specifically in London, given the high proportion of secondary school pupils eligible for FSM in the region and our strong trend of student recruitment from London. The overall proportion of London's pupils who are eligible for FSM at secondary school has been rising for several years – reaching 27.5% in 2022/23 (recorded at the end of Key Stage Four)¹⁰.

Sector evidence shows that intersections between ethnicity and low household income or living in an area with low progression to higher education increase the likelihood of individuals experiencing risks to equality of opportunity¹¹. White British pupils eligible for FSM have the lowest entry rate to LSE of any intersection analysed (four-year average of 3.2%), compared to 20.9% of secondary school pupils across England who were White British and eligible for FSM¹². This risk to equality of opportunity will be addressed through our APP objectives related to eligibility for FSM and TUNDRA (IS3 and IS2).

The entry rate at LSE for students from low-income households has increased, but remains under the sector-wide entry rate

Figure 1: Proportion of entrants eligible for Free School Meals at key stage 4



We will set an ambitious target to increase the proportion of entrants who were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school to 23.0% by 2028/29, from a baseline of 14.6% in 2021/22. This would bring the proportion of eligible LSE entrants in line with national FSM eligibility levels of the 2025/26 HE cohort.

Access: English Index of Multiple Deprivation (EIMD 2019)

LSE has made substantial progress in closing access gaps for young people residing in areas of high socio-economic deprivation, with our IMD Q1:Q5 gap narrowing from 26.0 percentage points in 2016/17 to 10.0 percentage points in 2021/22 (see Fig. 2). Although the sector-wide gap was 3.3 percentage points in 2021/22, our gap is smaller than the gap at all but one of our comparator providers.

⁹ Using the Office for Students': Provider typologies 2022

¹⁰ Table created from Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2022/23

¹¹ OfS topic briefing: White British males from low socioeconomic status backgrounds

¹² Table created from Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2022/23

The proportion of LSE entrants from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 has increased considerably since 2016/17, with the proportion of IMD Quintile 1 entrants nearly doubling from 7.5% in 2016/17 to 16.0% in 2021/22, a proportion that is higher than any of our comparator providers. Internal data shows that five-year average acceptance rates (the proportion of applicants who are accepted) for applicants from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 is in line with applicants from IMD Quintiles 3, 4 or 5.

We will continue to widen access for young people from socioeconomically deprived

backgrounds, with eligibility for FSM at secondary school as our chosen measure. Recent access to this data through UCAS allows us to assess socio-economic information at an individual level, as opposed to area-based measures, which are less valid methods of identifying individual disadvantage.

Access: Low university participation areas (POLAR4 and TUNDRA)

LSE has made good progress in closing access gaps for young people residing in areas of low progression to HE, with the POLAR4 Q1:Q5 gap narrowing from 48.1 percentage points in 2016/17 to 39.2 percentage points in 2021/22.

Internal data shows that acceptance rates (the proportion of applicants who are accepted) for applicants from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 or 2 areas is higher than applicants from POLAR4 Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 areas.

Despite good progress in reducing the POLAR4 access gap, a large and persistent gap remains for entrants

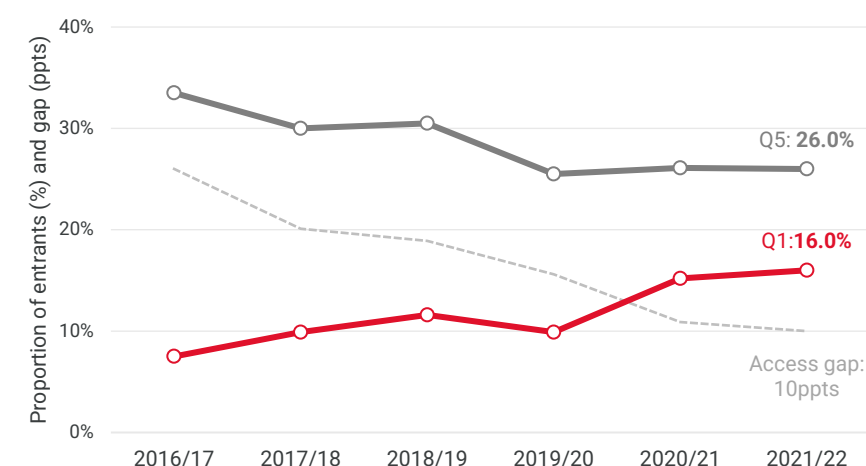
from TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas. The four-year average access gap between entrants from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 areas is 46.7 percentage points, compared to a sector-wide gap of 18.4 percentage points. This gap is similar to those of London-based comparator providers, but higher than those outside of London.

Although there has been a slight increase in the proportion of entrants from TUNDRA Quintile 1 areas from 5.4% in 2016/17 to 6.5% in 2021/22, the proportion from TUNDRA Quintile 2 decreased from 8.8% to 6.7% in the same period, resulting in a Q1+Q2:Q5 access gap of 38.1 percentage points in 2021/22 (see Fig. 3).

We have decided to focus on TUNDRA as our primary area-based measure of HE participation moving forwards, as we believe it offers methodological improvements compared to POLAR4 that create a more accurate measure of young people's progression across England.

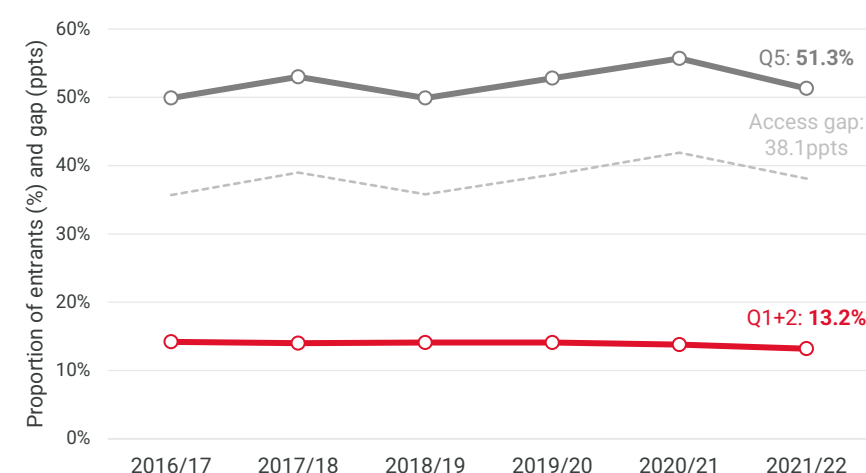
Access gaps for students from the most deprived areas have narrowed since 2016/17

Figure 2: Proportion of LSE entrants from IMD Q1, Q5 and the IMD access gap



Access gaps for students from low university participation areas remain high, and underlying populations have fallen

Figure 3: Proportion of LSE entrants from TUNDRA Q1+2, Q5 and the Q1+2:Q5 access gap



We will set a target to increase the proportion of entrants who come from the TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas to 17.0% by 2028/29, from a baseline of 13.2% in 2021/22.

Access: Disability

The proportion of LSE entrants who declare a disability has increased from 10.6% in 2016/17 to 14.9% in 2021/22, with a four-year average entry rate of 14.4%. This is below a sector-wide four-year average entry rate of 16.7% but is above the proportion of young people aged 15 to 19 years old in England who were disabled, which was 11.3% according to ONS 2021 census data.¹³ Small population sizes by disability type limit detailed analysis and comparisons to other providers, but there has been a notable increase in the number of LSE entrants who have a declared mental health condition, in line with sector trends.

Analysis of internal student records has identified a sizeable proportion of entrants who declare a disability once they begin studying at LSE, but after the census date when disability status is included in the OfS access and participation dataset. Across the most recent three years of data available, 26% of entrants who declared a mental health condition in their first year of study did so after this census date. We recognise the benefits of early declaration where possible and will continue work to encourage and support entrants to engage with appropriate support services at an early stage.

We have chosen in this APP to focus on improving disabled students' experience whilst studying at LSE through our targeted intervention strategy focused on improving completion rates for students with a declared disability (IS6), where we have identified indications of risk for disabled students already studying at LSE. We believe improving our on-course support will also see a continued improvement in entry rates for students with a declared disability and promote earlier declaration to enable individuals to access relevant support and resources.

Access: Sex

Access gaps between female and male entrants have closed, from 14.2 percentage points in 2016/17 to -1 percentage points in favour of female entrants in 2021/22 (see Fig. 4). Most comparator providers have a higher proportion of female entrants, with trends showing proportions continuing to increase.

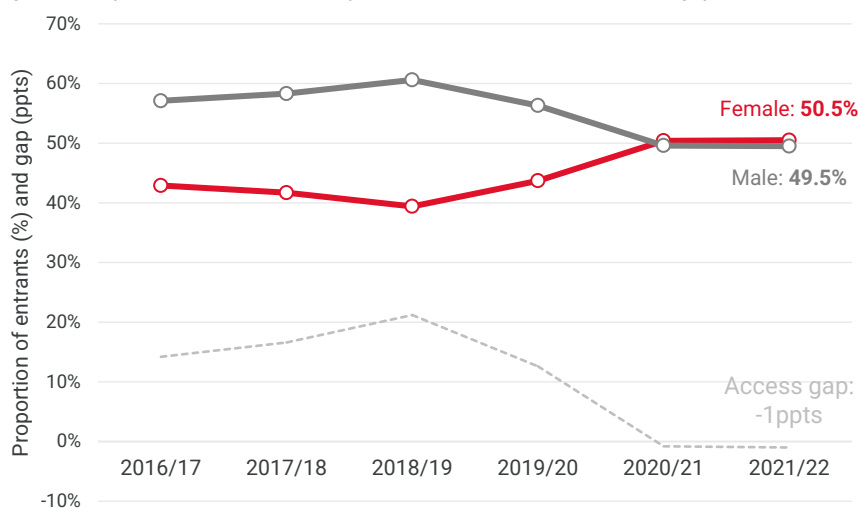
The rapid closure of the access gap for female entrants at LSE that occurred between 2019/20 and 2021/22 could be linked to the impact of alternative A-level grade awarding methods during the COVID pandemic. In years where exams have been used to assess A-level attainment, male pupils have achieved A*s in 'facilitating subjects'¹⁴ and Maths at a higher rate than female pupils¹⁵. During the pandemic, when exams were not used (and/or when results were supplemented by teacher judgement), female pupils achieved A* grades at or close to the rate for male pupils. We will continue to monitor this trend now that exams have returned.

However, female and male entrants are not evenly distributed across all subject disciplines at LSE. In five out of six 'quantitative'¹⁶ departments, there is an imbalance greater than 60:40 towards male students in 2021/22. Similarly, in nine out of twelve 'qualitative' departments there is an imbalance greater than 60:40 towards female students.

National data shows large disparities in the uptake of A-level Maths and Further Maths between female and male pupils despite comparable attainment in top grades at GCSE¹⁷. 20.1% of female pupils in the 2022/23 A-level

The access gap at LSE for female students has now closed

Figure 4: Proportion of LSE entrants by sex and female:male access gap



¹³ [ONS Census 2021: Disability in England and Wales](#)

¹⁴ [16-18 accountability measures: technical guidance](#)

¹⁵ [Table created from A level and other 16 to 18 results, Academic year 2022/23](#)

¹⁶ 'Quantitative' degree programmes are those feature A-level Maths in their entry requirements, whereas 'qualitative' degree programmes are those which do not have this requirement.

¹⁷ [Table created from Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2022/23](#)

cohort studied Maths, compared to 40.2% of male pupils¹⁸, making up 37.4% and 62.5% of the A-level Maths cohort respectively.

This imbalance is worse for A-level Further Maths, with 2.4% of female pupils in the 2022/23 A-level cohort studying Further Maths compared to 7.5% of male pupils. 27.9% of pupils studying Further Maths in 2022/23 were female, compared to 72.1% who were male.

Given the eventual impact on graduate earnings (see section on Progression: Sex), our desire to contribute to the sector-wide APP priority on raising attainment and to support efforts to encourage more female pupils to choose A-level Maths and Further Maths, we have set an objective to work in partnership with schools and expert organisations to raise pre-16 attainment.

Access: Ethnicity

Trends in LSE's population are similar to those of comparator providers. The proportion of LSE entrants of Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities has increased since 2016/17, with the proportion of White entrants decreasing. Underlying population sizes have also increased – with the number of Black entrants doubling between 2016/17 and 2021/22. Entry rates for Black students have increased from 5.5% in 2016/17 to 8.6% in 2021/22. Across England, 6.4% of 18-year olds were of Black ethnicity¹⁹, compared to LSE's two-year average entry rate of 8.5%.

Looking at detailed ethnicity categories, the five-year average proportion of applicants who are accepted who are of Black or Black British Caribbean ethnicity is 0.5%, compared to 1.2% of all 18-year-olds across England. Conversion for this group from application to acceptance is lower at each stage of the admissions process compared to the rate for all other ethnic groups, apart from the offer rate, where the proportion of Black Caribbean applicants who receive an offer is higher than for all other groups.

We believe this is an indication of EORR Risks 1 and 2 manifesting for students of Black Caribbean ethnicity, so we therefore propose to continue our pre-entry widening participation activities tailored to pupils of Black heritage to promote routes into HE, provide bespoke application support and improve experiences in the transition to university-level study, as described in IS5.

Given the overall representation of students of Black heritage at LSE, we have chosen to focus on addressing risks to equality of opportunity while students are studying with us. This is demonstrated in our evaluation plans for pre-entry activities in IS5, which seek to understand the role of pre-entry activities in better preparing students for HE.

Access: Care-Experienced Students

Although still a small proportion of entrants, the number of care-experienced entrants at LSE has increased fivefold since 2017/18 (first year of data availability), with internal data demonstrating over 15 care-experienced students enrolling in 2022/23. Given that national data shows around 0.5% of all children are in care²⁰, the proportion of LSE entrants who are care-experienced (2.0% in 2021/22) is above underlying population levels. The definition of 'care-experience' associated with the self-declaration in UCAS applications²¹ has widened over time, which may account for some of this growth in LSE's population.

Despite this growth in access to LSE for care-experienced students, national research and qualitative insights from our consultation highlight that significant risks to equality of opportunity remain.

We have set an objective and intervention strategy (IS7) to provide tailored support to ensure equality of opportunity at all stages of the student lifecycle for care-experienced students.

Access: Age

Whilst LSE's entry rate for students aged over 21-years old on entry remains very low compared to the sector-wide entry rate (four-year average of 1.4% compared to 27.7%), we do not believe there is a substantial risk to equality of opportunity for this group due to the hyper-diverse HE landscape in London and the availability of flexible study options at a range of other high-tariff providers. We have therefore chosen not to set any targets for this group.

¹⁸ [Table created from A level and other 16 to 18 results, Academic year 2022/23](#)

¹⁹ [ONS Census 2021: Ethnic group by age and sex in England and Wales](#)

²⁰ [Main findings: children's social care in England 2021](#)

²¹ [UCAS undergraduate: care-experienced students](#)

On-course – continuation, completion and attainment

On-course: Age

Students aged 21 or over on entry at LSE experience higher rates of non-continuation and non-completion, but if they attain a degree there are no discernible awarding gaps. While the observed gaps are large and consistent over time, the population of students at LSE who are 21 or over on entry is very small (four-year average of 1.4% of UK undergraduate entrants, no more than 16 entrants in any year since 2016/17). Therefore, the outcomes of individual students have a disproportionate impact on the continuation and completion rates for students aged over 21 on entry, and rates are volatile from year to year.

We believe that the indications of risk to equality of opportunity from outcomes data are likely to be a result of other factors alongside age (for example, caring responsibilities or cost pressures). The small population size of this group precludes robust intersectional analysis and as such this indication of risk was not considered an appropriate priority group for the APP. We will continue to monitor outcomes and student experience for this group, to better understand the causes of lower continuation and completion rates.

On-course: Disability

Disabled students may experience risks to equality of opportunity at all on-course stages, but these differ based on disability type.

There are small gaps in continuation rates for students with a declared disability, with a two-year average gap of 1.1 percentage points.

The gap between completion rates for students with a declared disability and those without appears to be growing (see Fig. 5), with a two-year average gap of 6.6 percentage points compared to a four-year average gap of 4.9 percentage points. Gaps in the most

recent data are larger than those at any of our comparator providers (where the highest two-year average is 5.5 percentage points) and when compared to the two-year average sector gap of 1.9 percentage points.

The largest proportion of students within the overall category of disabled students are those with a mental health condition and for this group, LSE's completion rate gap is also the largest of all comparator providers. While population sizes for other disability types are small and result in year-on-year volatility in completion rates, these gaps are consistently larger than at comparator providers.

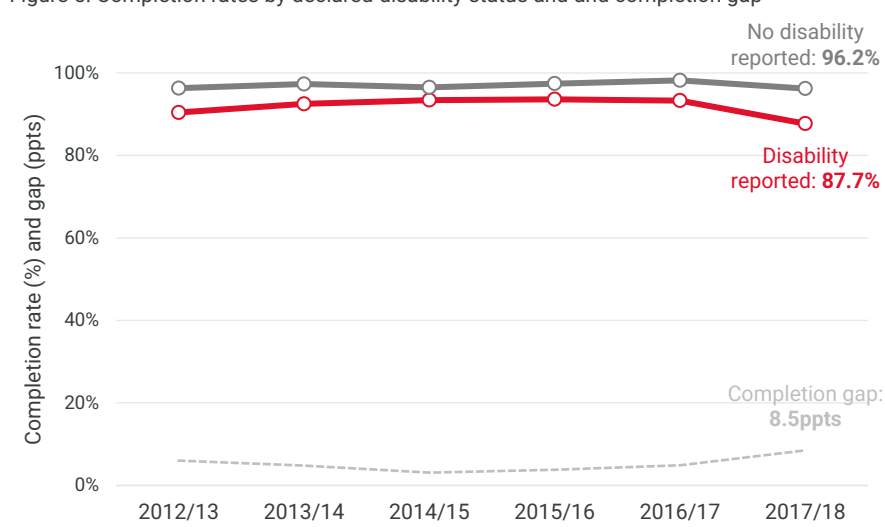
Continuation rates for students with mental health conditions are within the range of comparator providers, and have increased in the last three years of available data. Internal data and advice from colleagues with professional expertise in this area suggest that interrupting studies may be a beneficial outcome for some students experiencing mental health difficulties (resulting in a lower continuation rate), as long as they receive support to re-engage with their studies when they are ready (as counted in completion rates).

Students with physical, sensory, medical or multiple disabilities continue their studies at comparable rates to students with no disability but are less likely to complete their degree. Students with mental health conditions, or physical, sensory, medical or multiple disabilities, do not experience Good Honours awarding gaps compared to students without a declared disability. However, there is an awarding gap for students with cognitive or learning difficulties, compared to students with no reported disability.

Small underlying population sizes introduce substantial year-on-year variability into these outcomes, so we have chosen to focus our intervention strategy on activities that will improve experiences and outcomes for students with any type of disability.

The completion gap for disabled students has increased

Figure 5: Completion rates by declared disability status and completion gap



We will focus on completion rates for all disabled students in our target and intervention strategy as we believe our activities will have beneficial impacts on the completion rates for multiple student groups. Our target is to reduce the gap in completion rates between students with a declared disability and those without to 5.5 percentage points by 2030/31, from 8.5 percentage points in 2017/18. This target extends beyond the period of this APP due to the delay between an intervention and observable impact on completion rates.

Our intervention strategies will also contribute to the wider sector priority to support students' mental health and wellbeing.

On-course: Ethnicity

Indications of risk across continuation, completion and attainment have been assessed at both aggregate and detailed ethnicity category level, as aggregate groupings mask differential experiences and outcomes for some groups. We have also analysed First Class Honours degree attainment rates, as internal analysis has demonstrated disparities at this level and we believe this is an important area of focus for high-tariff providers such as LSE.

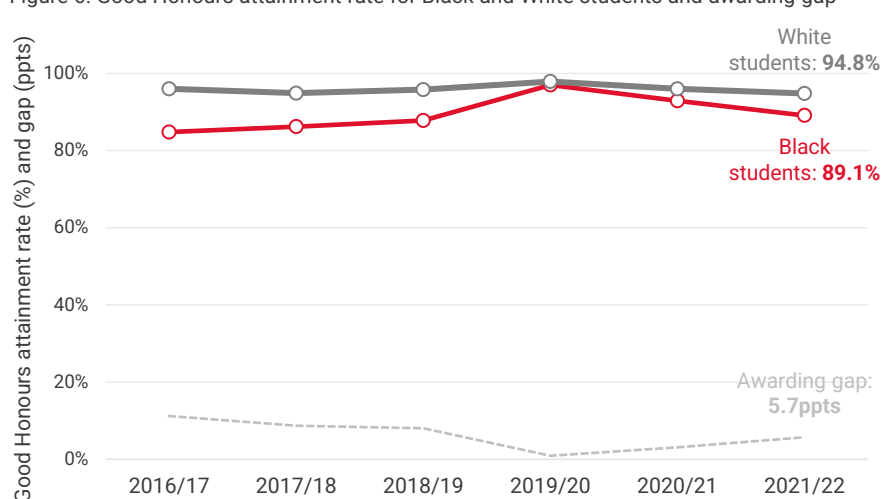
Continuation rates are high for all groups, and the small gap present between Black students and students of all other ethnic groups is closing in the most recent data available for 2020/21.

There was a 12.9 percentage point fall in completion rates for Black students (81.8% compared to a sector average of 80.7%) in the latest available data, for 2017/18. The two-year average gap in completion rates for Black students compared to White students is therefore 9.1 percentage points, above the highest two-year average gap at any comparator provider (5.3 percentage points). Due to the small population size (compounded by the historic nature of this data) introducing volatility into completion rate measurements we will continue to monitor completion rates for Black students during the period of this APP.

Good Honours awarding gaps between Black and White students at LSE decreased from 11.2 percentage points in 2016/17 to 5.7 percentage points in 2021/22 (see Fig. 6). Two-year and four-year average Good Honours awarding gaps are lower at LSE than at any of our comparator providers. This gap has increased slightly since 2019/20, which may be because of post-COVID changes to teaching and assessment practices. We will continue to monitor Good Honours awarding gaps between Black and White students during this APP period.

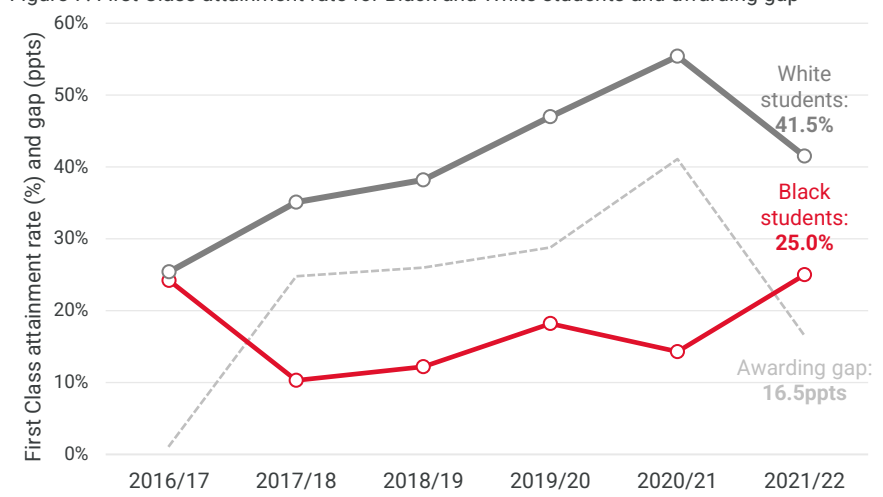
The Good Honours awarding gap for Black students had narrowed, but has begun to increase in recent years

Figure 6: Good Honours attainment rate for Black and White students and awarding gap



The First Class awarding gap for Black students has widened since 2016/17

Figure 7: First Class attainment rate for Black and White students and awarding gap



First Class Honours awarding gaps between Black and White students remain large, with a two-year average awarding gap of 28.1 percentage points (see Fig. 7). Internal analysis has shown this gap is not explained by

differences in prior academic attainment before university, but that there is a relationship with the degree programme taken. Degree programmes in predominantly quantitative disciplines award First Class Honours degrees at a higher rate. However, Black students are less likely to be represented in these subject areas, and when Black students do take quantitative subjects, analysis shows that they are still less likely to be awarded a First Class Honours degree than their peers.

Looking at detailed ethnicity categories also reveals a number of other groups who experience awarding gaps, particularly at the First Class Honours level. There is a two-year average First Class Honours awarding gap of 29.6 percentage points for students of Asian and Asian British – Bangladeshi ethnicity, and of 18.8 percentage points for students of Asian and Asian British – Pakistani ethnicity. There are no discernible awarding gaps for these groups of students at Good Honours level, suggesting particular barriers in reaching First Class Honours.

When intersections with eligibility for FSM are considered, there are no groups with additional indications of risk for continuation or completion rates. Where awarding gaps have been identified for students from a specific ethnic group who were also eligible for FSM, these patterns are observed for all students belonging to that ethnic group rather than specifically for those also eligible for FSM.

We have set an objective to eliminate ethnicity awarding gaps at LSE, with a target to halve the First Class awarding gap between Black and White students to 14.0 percentage points by 2028/29, from a two-year average baseline (2020/21 and 2021/22) of 28.1 percentage points.

We have chosen to focus on this target to measure our overall progress to eliminate ethnicity awarding gaps for all groups where indications of risk are identified. Outcomes for all ethnic groups will be monitored through our annual review processes.

On-course: Eligibility for Free School Meals

We do not observe consistent indications of risk to equality of opportunity in continuation, completion or attainment for LSE students who were eligible for FSM at secondary school. Outcomes are generally ahead of or in line with the top of the comparator providers, and are well above sector averages.

However, when using eligibility for Free School Meals as a proxy indicator for students from low-income households, we believe there may be intersections with other characteristics that do impact upon students' experiences and outcomes.

There is a small gap in continuation rates for students eligible for FSM and those who were not (a four-year average of 0.8 percentage points), a gap which is persistent across all years of available data but amongst the lowest gap at any comparator provider. Good Honours attainment for students eligible for FSM is very high, and in some years higher than for students who were not eligible for FSM.

With the wider context of ongoing cost of living challenges and increasing shortfall in student finance funding amounts relative to inflation, and because we are proposing a target to increase the proportion of entrants who were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school, we are cognisant of the potential for risks to equality of opportunity to emerge in the future. Therefore, we have designed a holistic cross-lifecycle intervention strategy for students eligible for FSM, which has been informed by in-depth consultation with current LSE students eligible for FSM. Our objectives and targets relate to access and progression stages, but the intervention strategy includes activities to improve student experience and outcomes across all stages of the student journey.

On-course: English Index of Multiple Deprivation (EIMD 2019)

Continuation rates for students from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 have improved, with the gap compared to students from IMD Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 now less than one percentage point. This gap is much smaller, and overall performance higher, than almost all our comparator providers.

Completion rates for students from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 are consistently lower than for students from IMD Quintiles 3, 4 or 5. The two-year and four-year average gaps are higher than almost all comparator providers, but remain lower than sector averages. We believe that activities to support students from low-income households outlined in intervention strategy three will contribute to mitigating the possible risks to equality of opportunity this data may indicate.

Historically small attainment gaps between students from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 and Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 appear to be closing over time, and these gaps are smaller than almost all comparator providers.

On-course: Sex

Female and male students have equally high continuation and completion rates – with continuation rate gaps no larger than 1.0 percentage point in any of the last six years, and a small completion rate gap of 3.1 percentage points closing in the most recent data.

There is a small Good Honours awarding gap for male students compared to female students (1.9 percentage points in both two-year and four-year averages), although this remains at the lowest end of awarding gaps observed at our comparator providers. This gap is present in every year of data available, but there is no corresponding gap at continuation or completion. Considering the small size of the gap and relative to comparator providers, we have not judged this to be a risk to equality of opportunity that we should prioritise in this APP.

When considering First Class awarding gaps, the opposite is true, where male students are awarded First Class degrees at a higher rate than Female students. This is likely linked to lower uptake of degree programmes in quantitative disciplines for female students, which award First Class degrees at a higher rate.

On-course: Care-Experienced Students

Given the small population size, there is limited data available to analyse the outcomes of care-experienced students studying at LSE and make reasonable comparisons to other groups. Year-on-year trends are extremely variable, and the outcomes of each student have a large impact on overall proportions so therefore must be interpreted with caution.

There are awarding gaps at both Good Honours and First Class Honours levels for care-experienced students compared to all other students – with a two-year average gap of 22.1 percentage points and 33.0 percentage points respectively. Due to small population sizes, this corresponds to fewer than five students not receiving Good Honours awards. Continuation rates appear to be improving, but sector evidence and in-depth feedback from current care-experienced students at LSE demonstrates the potential for large risks to equality of opportunity at every stage of the student journey.

We have set an objective with an associated intervention strategy (IS7) to provide tailored support to ensure equality of opportunity at all stages of the student lifecycle for care-experienced students.

On-course: Low university participation areas (TUNDRA)

There are no observable continuation, completion or Good Honours awarding gaps for students from TUNDRA Q1 or 2 areas – in a number of years these students experience better outcomes than those from TUNDRA Q3, 4 or 5 areas. Small underlying populations limit analysis of completion rates (combined with the historical nature of this data), but we will continue to monitor this as we increase the proportion of entrants from TUNDRA Q1 or 2 areas in line with our access targets.

Progression to good graduate outcomes

Progression: Disability

Progression rates for LSE graduates with a declared disability are amongst the highest in the sector and well above most comparator providers. Over a four-year average, our progression rate for graduates with a declared disability was 85.3% compared to 88.7% for graduates without a declared disability. We note a large drop in the latest year of data (for 2020/21) after three consistent years, decreasing 77.3% from 89.7%. Given low response rates to the Graduate Outcomes Survey, we will continue to monitor this to understand whether there is an emerging risk to equality of opportunity (perhaps due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic) or whether this data point is anomalous.

Small population sizes limit thorough analysis of progression rates by type of disability, although these are typically in line with or exceed progression rates at comparator providers. Progression rates for LSE graduates with a cognitive or learning disability or multiple impairments did drop in 2020/21 as described above, which we will continue to monitor, but this fall depends on the outcomes of fewer than five graduates a year. Similar patterns were not seen at comparator providers. Hence, although we have decided not to set a target specifically around progression rates for disabled students, a tailored programme of careers support is included as an activity in IS5.

Progression: Ethnicity

Progression rates for LSE graduates from most ethnic groups are consistently high, with around one percentage point difference between the four-year average progression rates for graduates of Asian, Black, Mixed and White ethnicities. These rates are amongst the highest out of all comparator providers.

Small population sizes limit interpretation of this data somewhat – particularly for students of Other ethnic groups where lower progression rates are observed (four-year average is 11.0 percentage points below the next group in 2020/21), but where the overall graduate population is no larger than fifteen individuals in any year of data. We therefore do not believe this poses a large risk to equality of opportunity that needs to be addressed in this APP.

This also makes analysis of intersections between ethnicity and socioeconomic characteristics challenging. We do recognise that the four-year average progression rate of 65.6% for White students eligible for Free School Meals is much lower than the progression rate for White students who were not eligible for FSM, which was 87.7%. However, we have chosen not to set a target for this specific group due to the small population size and the inclusion of activities intended for all students eligible for FSM in IS3.

Progression: Eligibility for FSM

Historically, LSE has been one of the top universities in England for social mobility according to research by the Sutton Trust and the Institute for Fiscal Studies²² - with the highest proportion of disadvantaged students (measured by eligibility for Free School Meals at age 16) becoming high earners out of all Russell Group universities. When combining access and progression measures for disadvantaged students, LSE is 18th out of all universities included, and second out of Russell Group universities.

Progression rates for LSE graduates who were eligible for FSM at secondary school remain well

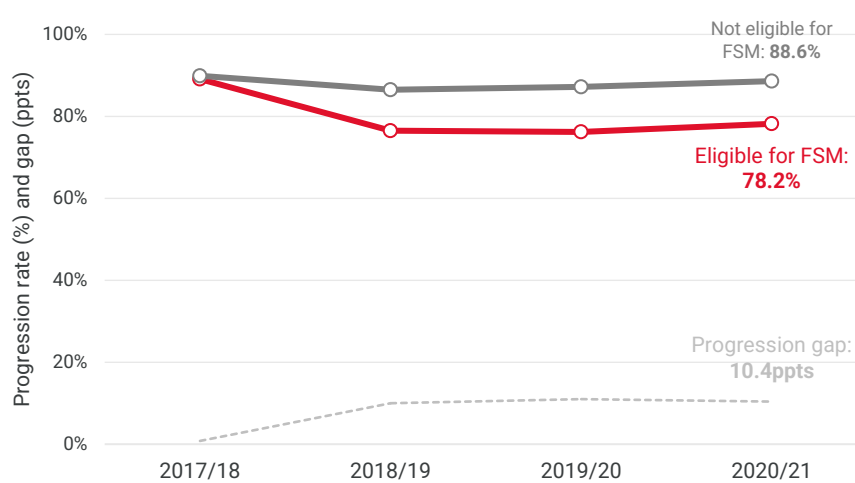
above sector average - 78.2% for LSE graduates in 2020/21 compared to 67.8% across the sector (see Fig. 8). However, a gap in progression rates between LSE graduates who were eligible for FSM and those who were not emerged in 2018/19 and has remained steady since, at 10.4 percentage points in 2020/21. This gap is larger than the overall sector gap, which is 6.8 percentage points.

LSE's progression rate for graduates who were eligible for FSM is lower than most comparator providers, although there is large variability in year-on-year rates. Considering two-year average progression rates, LSE's rate is lower than all our comparator providers.

We also remain cognisant of low response rates to the Graduate Outcome Survey, which could mean the recorded rate does not accurately reflect the true outcome for different groups.

Graduates from low-income households have consistently lower progression to good graduate outcomes

Figure 8: Progression rate for students by eligibility for FSM and progression gap



We will set a target to reduce the progression rate gap between students who were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school and those who were not to 5.1 percentage points by 2031/32, from a baseline of 10.4 percentage points in 2020/21.

Our target extends beyond the period of this APP due to the delay between an intervention and observable impact on progression rates.

²² [Which university degrees are best for intergenerational mobility?](#)

Progression: English Index of Multiple Deprivation (EIMD 2019)

Whilst progression rates for students from areas of high socioeconomic deprivation (IMD Quintile 1 or Quintile 2) have declined over time, they remain well above sector averages. LSE's two-year average progression rate for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas is 82.2%, which is in line with comparator providers and much higher than the sector average of 67.0%. The two-year average IMD Q1:Q5 gap is also smaller than the sector average - at 7.8 percentage points for LSE compared to 10.7 percentage points for the sector. Although this gap is larger than at our comparator providers, the underlying progression rates remain high and thus, at this stage our focus will be on continuing to monitor potential risks to equality of opportunity in this area. Activities in IS3 to support students from the lowest-income households across the whole student journey will have a positive impact on potential risks to equality of opportunity.

We also note LSE's high ranking in the English Social Mobility Index 2023²³, which considers the graduate outcomes of students from IMD Quintiles 1 or 2 alongside access and continuation rates.

Progression: Sex

Progression rates for female graduates have decreased slightly, from 89.4% in 2017/18 to 84.2% in 2020/21, with a two-year average rate of 84.7%. Over the same period, progression rates for male graduates have remained stable, with a two-year average rate of 89.1%. The progression rate for female graduates remains higher than at many comparator providers considered, where there are similar gaps between male and female graduates.

We believe that differential patterns of degree programme uptake between female and male students could be the underlying reason for disparities in progression rate observed (see Access: Sex section of Annex A and IS1). Female students are more likely to enter a qualitative degree programme, which typically have lower progression rates.

Progression: Care-Experienced Students

Numbers of care-experienced students in the progression datasets are very small, due to small underlying population sizes and Graduate Outcome Survey response rates. We will continue to monitor progression for care-experienced students as the population at LSE grows and seek to use intermediate measures such as engagement with work experience opportunities and confidence to monitor trends and better understand any risks to equality of opportunity around progression.

Progression: Low university participation areas (TUNDRA)

Small population sizes of students from TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas in available datasets prevent in-depth analysis of progression rates for these groups. The reported outcomes of small numbers of students have a large impact on progression rate headline figures, and must be interpreted with caution.

Progression rates for students from the lowest participation areas (TUNDRA Quintile 1) are exceptionally high, reaching 100% in 2020/21, although based on the outcomes of 20 graduates. The two-year average progression rate gap is -10.3 percentage points, in favour of graduates from TUNDRA Quintile 1 areas. This compares to a sector-wide two-year average progression rate gap of 6.9 percentage points, in favour of graduates from TUNDRA Quintile 5 areas.

For students from TUNDRA Quintile 2 areas, progression rates have been highly variable across the period of available data, but there has been a decrease from 95.4% to 86.7%. This compares to more stable patterns for students from TUNDRA Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 areas. Comparator providers also saw variability in progression rates for students from TUNDRA Quintile 2 area, with the majority of their rates lower than LSE's.

We believe this risk to equality of opportunity will be addressed through activities in IS3, as they aim to provide a programme of tailored support to students at LSE who receive a contextual offer. We will continue to monitor progression rates for any emerging risks, but do not intend to set a specific target in this APP.

²³ [English Higher Education Social Mobility Index 2023](#)

Annex B – Evidence base and rationale

Intervention Strategy 1: Pre-16 attainment

Prior attainment at GCSE and A-level is a significant predictor of HE participation, attainment, continuation, completion and labour market prospects. Internal analysis has also shown a strong association between higher A-level grades and both higher degree course marks and degree awards at LSE. However, at both GCSE and A-level, attainment gaps exist in the UK for students with certain characteristics. In 2022, the attainment gap between advantaged students and their less advantaged peers (defined as those eligible for Free School Meals or who were care-experienced) widened in GCSE Mathematics and English, leading to the largest gap since 2012 (Social Mobility Commission, 2022). Activities to raise attainment are therefore key to widening access to HE, supporting students from less advantaged backgrounds to fulfil their educational potential, enabling them to have the opportunity to apply to, and succeed at, high-tariff providers such as LSE.

LSE has identified two areas where it can make a meaningful contribution to support pre-16 attainment. Firstly, through a new collaborative programme with Imperial College London which will focus on raising confidence, engagement and attainment amongst girls in maths at early secondary school and support them to continue to study maths beyond GCSE. At LSE, female students are less likely to study quantitative degree programmes, for which A-level maths is a required subject. Secondly, by proactively sharing the expertise of LSE staff and alumni with schools and colleges through the LSE School Governor Scheme. Additionally, we continue to support pupils with high academic potential with attainment at A-level to unlock HE destinations through our LSE Springboard and LSE Thrive widening participation programmes.

LSE x Imperial Girls Maths Tutoring Programme

High-attaining students at key stage two (KS2) who have been eligible for Free School Meals at any point during their secondary education are twice as likely to fall out of the top third of attainment by GCSE in comparison to non-FSM students (Holt-White & Cullinane, 2023). High-attaining girls who have been eligible for Free School Meals are also less likely to pursue maths beyond GCSE, even with strong grades (STEM Learning, 2022). High-attaining girls who are eligible for Free School Meals may therefore experience a 'double disadvantage' in maths.

LSE x Imperial collaborative tutoring programme will engage girls in Years 8 and 9 who were in the top third of attainment in maths during KS2, aiming to support them to continue at this higher level of attainment through to GCSE. Three key themes emerge in research exploring the maths gender gap: differing patterns of attainment between boys and girls; girls' confidence and self-concept in maths; and gender stereotypes associated with maths. The programme therefore takes a holistic approach, combining targeted small group tutoring in maths with enrichment activities designed to increase enjoyment of the subject, expose participants to positive role models, demystify quantitative subjects and raise awareness of a range of career pathways. The programme design responds to broader inequalities in careers education and the availability of tutoring, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have access to these opportunities (Cullinane & Montacute, 2023; Holt-White et al., 2022). Early engagement with girls during KS2 is a key aspect of the programme as it has been identified that 'ameliorating girls' loss from the mathematics excellence stream needs new approaches earlier in secondary education' (Noyes et al., 2023, p.5). This early intervention will also mean that the programme has the potential to influence participants' decisions to study 'Double' or 'Triple Science' at GCSE. Previous research has identified Triple Science as a form of capital that students from lower income households are less likely to have, but which is significantly associated with higher level study of science and maths (Archer et al., 2023; Francis et al., 2023).

The core part of the programme involves small group tutoring. There is a significant body of evidence that demonstrates that small group tutoring is an effective intervention for improving attainment, suggesting an average improvement of four additional months' progress in maths over the course of a school year (EEF, 2021; TASO, n.d.). The programme will follow best-practice recommendations that the content is tailored to individuals' specific needs; tutors are sufficiently trained and supported; the group size is as small as possible; and sessions are delivered regularly over a sustained period.

The tutoring will be delivered by current undergraduate students at LSE and Imperial, who will receive specific training. Due to their shared status as students, tutoring of school students by university undergraduates can be likened to cross-age peer tutoring (Anthony, 2019). As well as having positive effects on academic achievement, peer tutoring has been found to positively influence academic self-concept (Leung, 2005). Additionally, there is

evidence that university students can become powerful role models when interventions are carefully designed and implemented (Brown, 2023).

Evidence on how to raise girls' confidence and engagement in maths specifically is less conclusive, but points to some promising directions. Research suggests that providing female role models and tailored careers advice, including promoting maths as a subject that 'keeps options open', may support more girls to continue with maths beyond GCSE (Archer et al., 2023; Cassidy et al., 2018; Smith & Golding, 2017). Working in partnership across social sciences and STEM to deliver the enrichment activities will ensure that participants gain insight into a wide range of future pathways.

Existing evaluation of similar activities, such as Archer et al.'s (2014) study into the effects of a STEM careers intervention for Year 9 students, highlights the complexities of shifting students' perceptions. At the same time, this research found some evidence that young people's awareness of 'where science can lead' may be amenable to intervention. Qualitative findings from the study also indicated that high-attaining girls who took part in the programme felt it had been successful in countering stereotypes of scientists. LSE and Imperial will analyse quantitative and qualitative pre/post data to evaluate the impact of the intervention on girls' understanding and perception of the available pathways with maths. There is also evidence which suggests that the planned targeting of the programme at girls, rather than a mix of boys and girls, may be beneficial. Although not directly focused on outreach initiatives, research has found an association between single-sex schooling and higher maths self-concept among girls (Sullivan, 2009) and evidence that girls in single-sex schools are more likely to achieve top grades in 'Triple Science' subjects than peers in mixed-sex schools (Plaister, 2023).

Overall, the emerging evidence suggests that the programme's combination of high-quality tutoring with activities which provide insight into the journeys and experiences of women who have taken maths into higher study and employment could have the most impact.

Supporting schools and teachers to raise attainment

LSE will partner with an expert organisation (Governors for Schools) to match staff and alumni with school governance volunteer vacancies across the country, supporting high quality school accountability and improvement.

Firstly, the LSE School Governor Scheme is a whole-School activity that connects the expertise of LSE staff and UK-based alumni with schools. It is aligned with the School's priorities to encourage volunteering amongst staff and alumni, as demonstrated through dedicated volunteering leave allowances for staff and a target for alumni engagement in volunteer activities as part of LSE's [Shaping the World](#) campaign. There is existing consensus that effective school governance and leadership are critical to driving school improvement and student outcomes (EEF, 2019; Wellcome Trust, 2012). However, underperforming schools and schools in deprived areas can struggle to recruit volunteers with the necessary skills and professional expertise for school governance roles (James & Goodall, 2014). LSE has a diverse body of staff and alumni with a wide range of experience, skills and backgrounds and is thus well-placed to work with Governors for Schools to fill school governance vacancies in schools which have experienced recruitment challenges. Since launch the scheme in 2023, it has received 67 applications from LSE staff and alumni, with 30 successfully placed in school governance roles as of April 2024.

In 2023, LSE partnered with TASO to produce an enhanced Theory of Change for the School Governor Scheme as a raising attainment initiative, to produce best-practice examples to share with the sector (TASO, 2023). As noted in the Theory of Change narrative, there is currently limited evidence of a link between improved governance in schools and improved student outcomes, particularly due to the complexity of school improvement and the long timeframe of the necessary evaluation (TASO, 2023). However, a 2018 evaluation of Governors for Schools' work found that school governance volunteers can be effective in making positive impacts on the schools they are placed in and are able to contribute to a range of strategic and operational decisions which are linked to school improvement (Pro Bono Economics, 2018).

Intervention Strategy 2: Low participation areas (TUNDRA)

Where students live in England affects how likely they are to access HE. There are lower rates of HE participation amongst students from regions outside of London (Office for Students, 2021b), and students from rural or coastal areas are also less likely to access HE and high-tariff institutions in particular (Davies et al., 2021; Playford et al., 2023). In 2017, the Social Mobility Commission noted that "the new social mobility coldspots in our country are concentrated in remote rural or coastal areas and in former industrial areas" (Social Mobility Commission, 2017, p.v) and that "a divide exists between London (and its affluent commuter belt) and the rest of the country" (p.1). As

a high tariff, London-based university, LSE aims to contribute to reducing this place-based inequality, by widening access to LSE for students from geographical areas where HE participation rates are low (see [Annex A](#) for further details).

TUNDRA is a relatively new measure of HE participation, but existing research for regions outside of London, detailed below, suggests that attainment and access to information, advice and guidance about HE may influence access for students living in TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas.

On average, students from regions outside of London attain lower GCSE and A-level grades compared to students from the capital. There is also evidence that students in general can have inaccurate expectations of degree-level study, which can negatively impact their academic transition to HE (Briggs et al., 2012). However, through realistic academic taster sessions and skills development activities, widening participation programmes can improve students' understanding of what studying at university is like (Annetts et al., 2019), which is particularly important for students who cannot gain an understanding of degree-level study through personal networks.

The provision of HE information, advice and guidance (IAG) varies between areas and between schools, with pupils from more advantaged backgrounds likely to receive higher quality support (DfE, 2017; Jones, 2013). Through a student feedback session during the development of the APP, current LSE undergraduate students from outside of London noted that the access to and the quality of IAG was limited in their schools, and that teachers and advisers lacked knowledge of LSE to support them in their application journey. Similarly, The Sutton Trust found that teachers' understanding about what makes a strong personal statement for high-tariff universities was not consistent with admissions specialists' views (Jones, 2016).

LSE will therefore continue to offer two widening participation programmes (LSE Springboard and LSE Explore) which focus on improving young people's insights into degree-level study, providing opportunities to develop important academic skills and access to high-quality IAG, especially focused on progression to high-tariff universities. The eligibility criteria for the programmes will include and prioritise participants living in TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas.

Firstly, LSE Springboard is a long-term programme for Year 12 and 13 residing outside of London and the South East of England, delivered in partnership with the social mobility charity The Brilliant Club. Participants undertake a tailored version of The Brilliant Club's [Scholars Programme](#), engaging with online tutorials delivered by LSE PhD Tutors and completing a university-style graded assignment. In 2022/23, a UCAS evaluation found that participants in The Scholars Programme were 'significantly more likely to apply to a competitive university than students from similar backgrounds', and that 21% of participants might not have applied to a competitive university without the programme (The Brilliant Club, 2023). Similarly, using HEAT tracking data, TASO found that taking part in more intensive widening participation programmes (like LSE Springboard) is associated with higher KS4 attainment and increased HE progression to top third institutions (TASO, 2021a). Case studies from the Access Project and Abertay University have also demonstrated that long-term widening participation programmes can have a positive impact on students' learning, behaviours, and confidence with respect to applying and the transition to HE (Annetts et al., 2019; The Access Project, 2020).

This academic component of LSE Springboard focuses on the development of students' academic self-efficacy, written communication and critical thinking. The development of these skills, particularly during the transition to HE, is linked to academic success in HE (Schneider & Preckel, 2017; Robbins et al., 2004; McEwan, 2017). Data from the 2022-23 LSE Springboard pilot showed that participants' average final assignment mark increased by 10% compared to the average baseline assessment mark, with both written communication and critical thinking skills also increasing. Through relationship-building with their LSE PhD Tutor during tutorials, the programme also aims to increase participants' confidence to actively participate in an academic HE setting. There is evidence that widening participation activities delivered by university student staff help school students to explore and develop their learner and HE student identity (Gartland, 2015). Respondents to an internal LSE Springboard survey noted that their academic self-efficacy increased after participating in the programme, with 91% of respondents saying they would feel confident talking to academics, such as their tutor, in future. In addition to the tailored version of The Scholars Programme, LSE Springboard also includes visits to the LSE campus, so that participants can engage in in-person academic activities and become more familiar with LSE and London. Participation in campus visits is associated with higher attainment at school (TASO, 2021a). However, in 2023, UCAS discovered that the cost of travel had caused 39% of prospective students to cut down on the number of university open days they attended, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to cut back (UCAS, 2023). Nevertheless, prospective students still view in-person open days as preferable to virtual open days, noting that in-person visits allow students to gain an insight into campus facilities and to get a feel for student life (UCAS, 2023). Travel costs for all

campus visits are fully covered by LSE and train tickets are pre-paid, allowing participants to attend without financial barriers or concerns. LSE Springboard participants also receive clear information on student finance, LSE financial support provision, and budgeting through a webinar and written resources. As a London-based university, we are aware that student living costs are higher in the capital than elsewhere in the UK. It is therefore key that students are fully informed about the bursaries, scholarships and hardship funding available at LSE, so that they can make an informed decision about their university destination.

There is also evidence of a phenomenon of ‘undermatching’ when making HE choices, in which some student groups enrol in degree programmes for which they are academically overqualified for, or than would be expected of their secondary school attainment (Campbell et al., 2019). Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are at greater risk of undermatching, especially for those who attend a university close to home (DfE, 2017) and who do not have access to tailored, high-quality IAG about HE choices. LSE intends to deliver a targeted pilot activity in partnership with Causeway Education to improve IAG in schools with regard to making better-matched university choices, aimed at schools in areas of low progression to HE.

The second programme supporting the entry rate for students living in TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas is LSE Explore, a series of virtual subject taster events for Year 12 students from across the UK. The series aims to increase students’ awareness of the social science degree programmes available at LSE and provide an insight into degree-level study. A variety of subjects are selected for LSE Explore, focusing on subjects which may be less well known, or subjects not taught in secondary school/college. This is because LSE sees a concentration of applications in certain subjects, both in general and amongst applicants from under-represented groups. Findings from TASO indicate that subject tasters can help students to understand and experience different HE degree programmes in an immersive environment (TASO, 2022). Pre/post survey data from LSE Explore 2023 showed that across the five virtual events, participants’ understanding of studying the subject at university improved by 29 percentage points, and that after attending LSE Explore, 94% of respondents believed they would be able to thrive academically at LSE.

Both LSE Springboard and LSE Explore include IAG sessions on the LSE admissions process so that prospective students can access specific information about creating a competitive university application. The sessions are delivered by LSE admissions specialists, and cover the UCAS process, entry requirements, personal statements, and contextual admissions and offers. Internal survey data showed that after participating in the pilot LSE Springboard 2022-23 programme, 97% of participants had a good understanding of the university admissions process, representing an increase of 34 percentage points on their level of understanding before completing the programme.

To improve access to LSE, applicants living in TUNDRA Quintile 1 or 2 areas will also be eligible for [contextual admissions and offers](#). Internal evaluation, based on collaborative work with six other universities and forthcoming for publication, has demonstrated that LSE’s contextual offer scheme has a positive impact on contextual offer holders’ initial consideration of top universities and a significantly positive impact on selecting LSE as their firm choice. In 2022/23, contextual offer holders were 46% more likely to accept their offer than offer holders with a standard offer.

LSE will also continue to contribute to the Advancing Access partnership in collaboration with the other 23 Russell Group member institutions. The Advancing Access partnership aims to increase the representation of disadvantaged students at high-tariff institutions by providing free Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to teachers and careers advisers. This CPD, collaboratively produced by admissions, recruitment and widening participation professionals across the institutions, equips teachers and advisers with the information needed to inform their learners about pathways into Russell Group institutions. Advancing Access targets schools and colleges with disproportionately lower levels of progression to high-tariff universities when compared with attainment. As of August 2023, 58.6% of mainstream schools (with a sixth form) and colleges in England had engaged with Advancing Access. An evaluation of Advancing Access by King’s College London found that Advancing Access likely improves teachers’ and schools’ knowledge of how to support students, and that the partnership is having a positive impact on the number of applications to Russell Group institutions (Styrnol et al., 2021).

Intervention Strategy 3: Low-income households (Free School Meals)

In 2022-23, 23.8% of students in state-funded schools in England were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), representing over 2 million students (DfE, 2023). The proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals in state-funded schools in England has increased every year since 2017-18, when 13.6% of students were eligible (DfE, 2023).

Throughout their educational journeys, FSM-eligible students experience worse outcomes than non-FSM-eligible students. On average, students eligible for FSM have lower GCSE and A-level attainment (DfE, 2024; Tuckett et al., 2021). Despite increases in HE participation in recent years, they are still less likely than their peers to progress to HE, particularly to high tariff institutions (Bolton & Lewis, 2023). Across the university sector, students who were eligible for FSM are more likely to withdraw and are less likely to attain a first or upper second-class degree (Office for Students, 2020). Students who were eligible for FSM during their time in secondary school also have persistently lower earnings in adult life, even when qualifications and secondary school attainment is accounted for (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Graduates earn approximately 10% less than other graduates and have lower rates of employment and progression further study compared to graduates who were not eligible for FSM (Bolton & Lewis, 2023).

This persistent inequality over a lifetime suggests that a long-term comprehensive ecosystem of support would be beneficial for students who were eligible for FSM at LSE, which underpins our work towards the associated objective of increasing the representation of students who were eligible for FSM at LSE, and progression to positive outcomes after graduation. Following Engstrom and Tinto's (2008) assertion that 'access without support is not opportunity', LSE will pilot a tailored programme for contextual offer holders, which includes students who were eligible for FSM, from pre-entry through to beyond graduation. This tailored approach aligns with the perspective of TASO, who emphasise that different student groups have varying needs and experiences, and some student groups may therefore benefit from bespoke student-centred and provider-specific support (Andrews et al., 2023). Similar programmes which exist at other HE providers have informed the design of LSE's pilot programme, including the University of Leeds' [Plus Programme](#) and the University of Southampton's [Ignite Your Success Programme](#). Internal analysis at the University of Leeds has found that participants on the Plus Programme have higher completion rates and are more likely to achieve a good honours degree compared to similar students who did not participate in the programme (University of Leeds, 2023). Likewise, participation in the University of Southampton's Ignite Your Success Programme was found to be associated with higher awarding outcomes compared to the university cohort average (University of Southampton, 2023).

The first element of the LSE contextual offer holder programme involves tailored communication and information to facilitate a smoother transition to LSE. Within their personal networks, students eligible for FSM may have limited access to the knowledge and cultural capital which would help them to successfully navigate the HE journey and reach their potential (Appadurai, 2004). Furthermore, disadvantaged students often have high aspirations, but they can be unsure about how to achieve their aspirations (Menzies, 2013; Gale et al., 2013). Through consistent communication of relevant information, the aim is that students eligible for FSM will be able to make informed decisions about HE, have a greater awareness of the support services and opportunities available to them at LSE, and have more opportunities to build their social and cultural capital in the HE context.

The second element involves working in partnership with LSESU and LSE student communications colleagues to facilitate student-led community building and connections. Feedback from current FSM students at LSE indicated that most had struggled to make friends at LSE and had experienced social exhaustion when attempting to find other students that they could relate to. This correlates with the findings of a major survey of over 5,000 students by Wonkhe and Pearson, which noted that although connections were critical to sense of belonging, only 39% of students surveyed felt a sense of community at their university (Blake et al., 2022). Through the survey, students suggested that the optimal way to increase sense of belonging at university was through building friendships and peer connections (Black et al., 2022).

The collaborative programme with LSESU aims to create a student-led structure in which students from similar backgrounds can meet and build networks. Evidence suggests that peer support networks and activities are highly effective and help new students to integrate and form social bonds (Thomas, 2012). These connections are also critical for continuation, as friendships have a positive impact on students' sense of belonging and their wider student experience (Wilcox et al, 2005; Murphy et al., 2020). Greater sense of belonging at university is also linked to higher motivation, increased academic self-efficacy, higher levels of academic engagement and higher attainment (Nwosu et al., 2020; Pedler et al., 2022).

The final element of the contextual offer holder programme is tailored and targeted support from LSE Careers, including one-to-one careers education and guidance, work-based learning opportunities and internships, and opportunities to build professional connections. The impact of graduate progression interventions is a relatively under-researched topic, and this is particularly true of programmes which are tailored for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ramaiah & Robinson, 2022). However, in general, there is evidence that one-to-one career choice support is strongly associated with improvement in a range of outcomes, including greater self-

efficacy in career-related decision-making (Whiston et al., 2017). Furthermore, in a large-scale UK study, graduates who reported having found a job through their university careers service had higher earnings on average, and where graduates agreed that their current employment 'fit their career plan', this was associated with both higher earnings and greater reported job satisfaction (Percy & Emms, 2020). Furthermore, evaluations of large-scale student internship programmes have provided some evidence that these are associated with more positive labour market outcomes for graduates (Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, 2012; Saniter & Siedler, 2014). There is therefore evidence that individualised careers support and work experience interventions can have positive impacts on students' career development and graduate outcomes. Through evaluation of the contextual offer holder and LSE Careers social mobility programmes, we aim to contribute to expanding the specific evidence base for the effect of progression-focused interventions for students from the lowest-income backgrounds.

Pathways to the Professions

In the UK, employees in elite or leading professions are disproportionality from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (The Sutton Trust, 2019). Students' pathway for joining leading professions begins at school and continues through to graduation. However, as noted above, students who are eligible for Free School Meals are less likely to progress to HE and less likely to attain the degree classification required to access many leading professions. This means that students eligible for FSM can be less likely to join a pathway which will lead to employment in a leading profession. Additionally, school students' imagining of what is possible for their future (or their 'possible selves') can be limited by their current socioeconomic status and knowledge of university and graduate options (Stevenson & Clegg, 2011), meaning that students might not consider leading professions as a viable or suitable option for them, irrespective of their academic potential.

In partnership with The Sutton Trust, LSE delivers the long-term Pathways to Law and Pathways to Banking and Finance programmes for Year 12-13 students to widen access to these professions, with students who are eligible for Free School Meals as a priority group. Through the programmes, students engage in organised work experience placements in the legal and financial sectors, gaining an insight into professional workplaces and networking with sector professionals.

High quality work experience helps students to gain a real-world understanding of different sectors and jobs and to develop their employability skills. Work experience conducted during secondary school can also lead to improved economic outcomes for students. Research involving over 2,000 young people found that for each additional type of work experience completed in secondary school, a 3.4% higher average wage was reported in adult life (Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2022). However, in 2022, the Sutton Trust found that less than a third of Year 13 students had completed work experience (Holt-White et al., 2022). Inequality also exists in the type of work experience which students complete, with other research identifying that the lower the socioeconomic status of pupils at the school, the less likely that work experience placements are in a managerial and professional workplace (Gallais & Hatcher, 2014). The Pathways programmes aim to reduce the unequal access to work experience, so that students from the lowest-income households can explore leading professions and future career goals.

Students also explore law and finance-related degree programmes at LSE, to gain a clear understanding of the route to these professions. In the LSE Pathways to Law 2022-24 post-programme survey, 95% of respondents reported a good understanding of studying Law at university and 98% reported a good understanding of what working in the legal sector is like.

The impact of the Pathways Programmes will continue to be evaluated through LSE pre/post surveys, Sutton Trust consortium-level surveys, and tracking of progression to LSE and other HE destinations (the latter via the Higher Education Access Tracker).

LSE Bursary

The LSE Bursary provides targeted and means-tested financial support to UK UG students from the lowest income households. The Bursary aims to ensure that students with the lowest household incomes can access LSE, and that they are able to thrive and succeed during their time at LSE. The 2023 National Student Money survey found that the average student's maintenance loan fell short of covering their living costs by £582 every month (Save the Student, 2023). This was a marked increase on the previous year when the average shortfall was £439. Students from the lowest income households are unlikely to receive additional support from their households to address this shortfall. The LSE Bursary therefore aims to help students from the lowest income households to afford their essential living and study costs.

Findings from an internal survey in 2023 showed that the LSE Bursary has a significantly positive impact on students from the lowest income households who received financial support in 2021/22:

- Supporting continuation: 92% of respondents said that the LSE Bursary was 'very important' or 'important' to being able to continue with their studies at LSE.
- Increasing student satisfaction: 84% of respondents agreed that the Bursary had allowed them to feel more satisfied with their life as a student.
- Supporting academic engagement: As a result of receiving financial support from LSE, 84% of respondents felt that they were able to concentrate on their studies without worrying about finances. Nearly half of respondents said they were able to work fewer hours in a paid employment as a result of the financial support provided.
- Reducing anxiety: The Bursary also supported the wellbeing of most respondents, with 88% agreeing that receiving financial support made them feel less anxious than they would have felt otherwise.

LSE will continue to conduct an annual survey of LSE Bursary recipients in the year following their award to evaluate the impact of the Bursary on students' experience and wellbeing. In times of exceptional economic circumstances, LSE will conduct ad-hoc surveys to monitor students' financial wellbeing in a timely manner (for example, LSE recently conducted a cost of living survey of Bursary recipients during a period of exceptionally high inflation and awarded an additional cost of living payment to Bursary recipients as a result of the findings). There are also plans to conduct additional analysis on the academic outcomes of Bursary recipients at LSE, so that the School can further understand the experience of students from the lowest income households who receive financial support at LSE.

Overview of on-course Intervention Strategies (IS4, IS5, IS6)

Our plans to address the risks identified in the on-course part of the student lifecycle is underpinned by an approach that combines the benefits of both universal and tailored provision and support. Activities in Intervention Strategy 4 –an enabling environment for inclusive education – are critical to deliver and embed structural and cultural change throughout the School and to develop an education that is informed by research and responsive to societal change. This work is complemented by Intervention Strategies 5 and 6, which include activities that are designed to achieve our specific APP objectives.

We are clear that eliminating ethnicity awarding gaps and disability completion rate gaps requires a whole-provider approach, encompassing changes to all aspects of education and student experience at the School and including all members of our School community. Our focus is therefore on achieving systemic and structural institutional change, with the onus being on LSE to make these changes, which are being facilitated through a range of strategic change programmes.

At the same time, we recognise that every student is unique, and that social and institutional barriers to accessing, succeeding in, and progressing from higher education will affect them in different and unique ways. We are therefore mindful that to drive meaningful change, we need to examine the interplay between individual students and our institutional structures, reflecting the research consensus that a complex range of factors cause and perpetuate inequalities (Campbell, 2022; Singh, 2011). However, we unequivocally reject the 'student deficit' model, meaning that we do not think that observed differences can be explained or addressed by focusing on individual learners' deficiencies.

Thus, our School-wide provision encompasses a combination of universal provision for all students alongside tailored provision, where there is internal or sector evidence that it can successfully meet the specific needs of identified groups of students within our community. In most cases students will be invited to engage with this provision based on their own self-identification of need for or their assessment of the benefits they can derive from the initiative.

In this section we set out the evidence base for interventions to deliver on each objective in turn, drawing on activities from IS4, and IS5 (for ethnicity awarding gaps) and IS6 (for disability completion rate gaps).

Intervention Strategies 4 and 5: Ethnicity awarding gaps

Ethnicity awarding gaps are systematic differences in the rate at which HE providers award first-class honours and upper second-class honours to students from different ethnic backgrounds. Ethnicity awarding gaps are persistent and endemic across the sector (OfS, 2021c). Despite a proliferation of work to address ethnicity awarding gaps (TASO, 2023b), evidence on what works to reduce or eliminate gaps is limited. Our focus on *first-class honours* ethnicity awarding gaps in this APP – alongside the more common good honours degree measure – introduces further limitations to assessing the existing evidence base for our work. Fundamentally, we consider that many of the mechanisms perpetuating Good Honours degree awards are also responsible for First Class Honours awarding gaps, although we realise that further research and evaluation are needed to confirm this. The interventions designed to reduce awarding gaps draw on a wide range of evidence sources in their design, including academic research, extensive internal statistical analysis on module level awarding gaps, evaluation results, as well as our student consultations. Overall, there are nine areas of work, as set out between IS4 and IS5.

Ensuring inclusive, engaging & welcoming services

A key aim of our interventions is to ensure inclusive, engaging, and welcoming academic and pastoral services. Activities in this category support our aim to reduce ethnicity awarding gaps through two routes. These interventions will firstly address challenges raised consistently across internal analysis and research, student research projects and APP consultations, to address specific factors negatively affecting Black students' experiences at LSE including mental health and wellbeing, experiences in halls of residence, and transition support, which students directly link to their academic experience (Camacho-Felix, 2019; Saunders et al., 2020; Wei, 2023). The proposed changes may also begin to address the lack of belonging and sense of isolation that Black and other minoritised students have previously reported both at LSE and across the sector (Camacho-Felix, 2019) and which have been identified as one of the possible explanations of degree awarding gaps (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; Mountford-Zimdars & Moore, 2023). While we believe that this evidence supports the intervention strategy overall, there is currently no direct, causal evidence linking activities such as these to reductions in grade awarding gaps in the sector evidence base. This is particularly pronounced for the role of 'belonging'. While strongly associated with student outcomes, it may only act as a mediator in a more complex causal relationship that also needs to consider students' academic motivation and wellbeing (UCL, 2020).²⁴ Drawing on LSE's recent work on its learning gain survey, we will therefore investigate and, where necessary, refine our underlying theory of change on an ongoing basis, in addition to learning from project level evaluations over time.

We consider four interventions will contribute directly to this aim:

- Black Students Talk: a peer wellbeing support programme for Black students at LSE, run in collaboration with Black People Talk. This was piloted between March and November 2023, with the initial evaluation highlighting the effectiveness in creating safe spaces for students to share their experience of LSE, in particular to talk about the impact of racism on their well-being and helped participants receive practical advice, tools and resource on how to cope with stressful experiences. Over the course of the APP, we aim to expand on this work and improving its reach to Black students across LSE.
- A programme of work by LSE Careers to provide a programme of employer engagement and careers support tailored for Black, Asian and Diverse Heritage students.
- Work by LSE Residences to develop an action plan to improve the experiences of students of Black heritage in halls of residence. This work aims to identify reason for the current disparities in student experiences across halls and address them, based on analysis of existing data and co-creation with students.
- Work by the LSE Widening Participation team to deliver two outreach programmes for students of Black heritage, LSE Thrive and the Black Achievement Conference. Previous evaluation shows that participants are more familiar with life as a student at LSE and are more prepared for university study, as self-reported by students. After attending the 2023 Black Achievement Conference, 90% of participants agreed that they knew what studying at university would be like, compared to only 40% of students before the activity. Additionally, 95% of students agreed that they felt that LSE has an inclusive environment that would encourage their learning and allow them to thrive. Based on further evaluation findings and feedback during the student consultation for the APP, we aim to strengthen this activity by working more closely with

²⁴ Cf. Ostrove and Long (2007) for an analogous discussion on the relation between social class and social and academic outcomes in US college students.

LSE's student societies to co-create activities that allow participants to build connections with LSE and peer networks at an earlier stage, while also offering additional tailored opportunities at student recruitment events such as Open Days, ensuring that information about LSE's networks and student societies is available to applicants. We aim to strengthen the evaluation of this work further, by linking students' engagement with pre-entry outreach work to attitudes and behaviours once at LSE.

Strengthening governance, oversight and consistency of inclusive practices

Alongside the service enhancements detailed above, we will be working towards strengthening the governance, oversight and consistency of our inclusive practices. For this we will be implementing improved internal monitoring and governance mechanisms, reviewing leadership structures and capacity as well as enhancing partnership between central teams and academic departments through the Administrative Partnership Forum and our network of EDI representatives. The overarching aim is to promote more consistent engagement with access and participation priorities and our wider EDI commitments to raise staff awareness, facilitate engagement, and ultimately ensure that policies and processes are building inclusive practice. Research by UUK (2022) highlights the importance of specific local responsibilities for action, beyond simple high-level leadership commitments.

Strengthening Peer Mentoring and links with LSE's Alumni community

A third area of activity towards reducing awarding gaps is to expand and strengthen mentoring opportunities at LSE. Mentoring, understood as the practice of the intentional guidance, support and counsel by a more experienced or skilled mentor of a less experience or skilled mentee towards achieving a self-defined goal (Johnsson, 2016) has consistently been shown to be an effective tool to share knowledge and support personal development across a range of domains (Wanberg *et al.*, 2003), as well as more specifically in relation to Black students' experiences and outcomes in HE (Haywood & Darko, 2021). Throughout our consultations and in discussion with LSESU Sabbatical Officers, there was also a strong call by students for continuing to enhance existing peer support provision. This work forms part of LSE's wider peer support and mentoring portfolio, which comprises a variety of schemes run by central professional service teams and in departments.

Our plans for work in this area include four specific projects:

- The LSE BME Mentoring Scheme, run by LSESU. The scheme provides a programme of mentorship through which students at LSE receive support and advice for their personal, academic, and professional development. The programme matches students with LSE alumni based on preferences. These matched mentors and mentees then meet regularly over an 8-month period with support from LSESU staff, including training, events, and networking sessions.²⁵ Existing evaluation has highlighted that the scheme is successful at matching mentors and mentees, with almost all students agreeing that they had been well matched, although the evaluation also highlighted further opportunities for improvement in support offered. We aim to strengthen the provision over the APP period by investing in a staff member to manage this work and enhance the programme over time, drawing on this feedback.
- A new scheme led by LSE's Philanthropy and Global Engagement team. Established in 2023, the Black Alumni Network serves as a platform for former LSE students who identify as Black to engage with LSE and the wider alumni community. The network aims to facilitate professional development, promote diversity and inclusion, and advance the collective interests of its members. Ultimately, the Black Alumni Network is a professional one that strives to strengthen connections of its members globally whilst also supporting students and recent graduates.
- We also aim to carry out a review of its existing mentoring and peer support schemes across departments and central services to build on recent improvements in central schemes, enable the sharing of good practices across the whole provider a strengthen the evaluation of all schemes.

Providing financial support

As described the Financial Support Office's theory of change, the LSE Bursary aims to ensure that students from the lowest income households can access LSE without financial barriers, and that they are able to thrive and succeed during their time at LSE. In recent internal research, student research and throughout our consultations,

²⁵ <https://www.lsesu.com/support/bme/>

students reported a clear link between academic performance and financial support (Camacho-Felix, 2019; Chung, 2021; Dean, 2021). These findings are further corroborated by internal statistical analysis, which finds a persistent association between financial hardship and module-level grade awarding gaps, even when ethnicity, course type and other salient factors are controlled for. Addressing this concern, LSE's APP commitment includes improvements to our means-tested, non-repayable financial support, most notably by increasing the award amount. Drawing on recent improvements to data on student experience, we also hope to further strengthen our evaluation of our financial support beyond the current OfS evaluation toolkit²⁶, ensuring that our financial support provision is sufficient to ensure that students can spend sufficient time on their degree, and reducing financial stressors which have been shown to negatively affect student outcomes (Britt et al., 2016). See IS3, section 3 for further details.

Strengthening academic support and personal development

As part of its work on grade awarding gaps, LSE also aims to further strengthen its academic skills development work, in two key areas:

- Introducing a new role in LSE LIFE to offer specialised extra-curricular support on topics including mathematics and statistics. Such work is commonly considered to improve retention, achievement and employability of students in quantitative programmes (Croft et al., 2022), with a growing body of scholarship identifying the mechanisms and conditions under which mathematic skill development in higher education is most effective, in turn directly influencing our programme development (Delderfield & McHattie, 2018; Fitzmaurice & Bhaird, 2023; Samuels & Patel, 2010).
- Expanding LSE100 assessment workshops, first piloted in 2023/24. The workshops are design to provide students sitting their first assessment with LSE100 the opportunity to receive personalised feedback on their submission ahead of grading. This work has potential benefits for many students, it is the very first graded assessment at LSE, thus this individual feedback has the potential to support students' familiarisation with HE assessment. In the pilot year, sessions were well attended and garnered positive qualitative feedback. Throughout the APP, we aim to strengthen this evaluation further to explore further whether the project can improve students' study and learning strategies more generally.

Building inclusive curricula

Inclusive curricula are widely acknowledged as important good practice in inclusive education, with several providers providing their faculty with guidelines for reflecting and reviewing their courses, identifying areas for improvement (Advance HE, 2022; Kingston University, n.d.; SOAS, 2018; UCL, 2018; University of Kent, 2024). Pursuing inclusive pedagogies and decolonised curricula can tackle the systemic issues such as the marginalisation of minority ethnic learners, and the exclusion and reproduction of stereotypes about minorities (Arday et al., 2021). The benefits of an inclusive curriculum are associated with the reduction in awarding gaps, improvements in student experience and perceptions (eg, NSS) and the subsequent enhancement of higher education providers' profiles, graduate employability, and future recruitment of students (Department for Education, 2017). Campbell et al.'s (2022) recent evaluation further underscores that inclusive curriculum "*has clear and significant transformative potential* for improving levels of student satisfaction and relatability of course material [...] not only for students from minority backgrounds but for all students." (p. 7, original italics).

To this end, and in addition to the staff development workshops set out in section 7 below, LSE is building on the successes of its recently introduced Inclusive Education Mapping Exercise to now embed a requirement that every department undertakes this exercise every two years. This pedagogical exercise is structured to encourage teaching staff to reflect, critique and adapt curricula to embed different areas of inclusive education in their teaching, with the view to co-creating a curriculum enhancement framework. The work includes annual meetings with departments to discuss the use of the tool and potential actions such as developing or piloting new strategies for teaching, learning and assessment. Academic staff can also attend workshop sessions to accompany their use of the tool. Additionally, we will also work to continue our diversification and decolonisation work of LSE100, our flagship interdisciplinary course for all first year UG students. Based on regular work to review curriculum content, we want to ensure that the curriculum continues to represent all students' experiences and is relatable to them. Through our new educational gain survey, we are looking to explore the relation of these outcomes to students' wider experience of LSE and academic outcomes.

Enhancing Inclusive Education Staff Praxis

²⁶ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/>

A further element of LSE's approach to addressing awarding gaps is by improving inclusive education praxis across LSE. Two strands of work are included in this.

- Research and practice-based staff development workshops, focusing on anti-racist practice and inclusive and principled teaching. As Wang et al. (2024)'s systematic review about anti-racism training shows, most studies report statistically significant positive changes in the outcomes of interest following the training interventions. Improvements were most often observed in participants' self-reported knowledge, attitudes, and awareness related to EDI and anti-racism topics. Improvements in participants' skills or behaviour change were observed less frequently after the training interventions, but this was likely to increase if a longitudinal approach to training is employed.
- Inclusive Education Practice Sharing Hub. As an online platform for sharing good practice, such hubs have been shown to have potential to facilitate cross-boundary knowledge sharing and collaboration (ie, across types of staff, disciplines, and providers) and in turn, can foster the development of communities of practice (Chedid et al., 2020; Corcoran & Duane, 2018). Other positive impacts relate to furthering transparency and a culture prone to open knowledge (Chedid et al., 2020), which can improve professional development and learning at the organisation level over time (Quarchioni et al., 2022; Witt et al., 2007).

Academic mentoring

Further work is focused on improving academic mentoring at LSE. As set out in LSE's academic code²⁷, Academic Mentors are the first point of contact for students regarding academic and personal matters. As such, they play a central role in not just providing academic guidance, but also in providing personal advice on mental health and student wellbeing, including signposting to available support. As noted below in IS 4&6, section 7, internal evidence suggests that current academic mentoring practices are not supporting all students to a consistent level of excellence.

We aim to address this through ongoing development of the Academic Mentoring Community of Practice, which brings together academic mentors from across departments to share best practices and challenges that they are facing as well as discuss and disseminate information on School-wide changes. The CoP provides a space for academic mentors to work collectively to find solutions and co-create resources. As existing research highlights, communities of practice facilitate work-based learning, where faculty can learn through everyday experiences and reflection with colleagues. This experiential learning is valuable for faculty development and can lead to improved teaching practices and student support (Steinert, 2010). More generally, communities of practice contribute to knowledge management practices in universities by facilitating collaboration, social learning, improving research and learning processes, and encouraging interdisciplinary practices (Dei & van der Walt, 2020). Furthermore, based on an evaluation of virtual communities of practice, these can bridge the academic and professional services staff divide, leading to a more holistic understanding of student experiences and challenges, enabling better support through shared knowledge and collective efforts (Corcoran & Duane, 2018).

Student Co-Creation

As the literature highlights, staff-student partnerships are important tools to renegotiate power dynamics and can cultivate reciprocal learning between staff and students. Benefits include mutual understanding of perspectives, enhanced teaching/curriculum through student consultancy, and student empowerment/metacognition (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Nichol et al., 2023; UUK, 2022). For marginalised groups, partnerships increase belonging, confidence, and critical awareness (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; UCL, 2023), although, careful implementation is needed to overcome challenges like institutional resistance, power imbalances, and lack of inclusivity. Done effectively, partnerships transform institutional culture and educational outcomes (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Stevens, 2022).

Throughout the APP, we are committed to working closely with students as partners. For inclusive education in particular this takes the form of the Inclusive Education Student Partnership work. This work consists of termly meetings with the Student Education Panel (SEP) and sub-panels to discuss different aspects of students' educational experience at LSE. The panels are formed by students from any level of study and encourages reflection and analysis of specific themes. After each cycle, panel members generate discussion summaries with key points and recommendations for action on topics such as assessment enhancement, transitions in higher

²⁷ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/lse-academic-code>

education and digital futures. The outputs are shared across the School and showcased in practice-sharing instances such as LSE Education For a to prompt institutional action.

Research and Evaluation

As noted in the introduction, LSE's focus on First Class Honours awarding gaps exacerbates the existing paucity of impact evidence of 'what works' in reducing awarding gaps. As such, LSE is committed to embedding robust evaluation across the activities set out in IS4 and IS5. Additionally, we consider that research, co-creation with students, and engagement with the sector are themselves central parts of our planned approach for eliminating ethnicity awarding gaps. Building on existing evidence, we will conduct analysis to better understand patterns specifically in First Class honours awarding gaps, and potential similarities and differences to the good-honours degree awarding gaps already observed. We will also conduct a review of existing research and evidence to validate the above assumptions that the same core mechanisms in addressing good honours awarding gaps allow us to make progress against a first-class honours target.

Additionally, LSE will continue to fund six Inclusive Education Fellowships. As a recent evaluation conducted in a UK university shows, teaching and learning fellowships drive engagement, leading to deeper understanding of evidence-based practices and how students learn. The research skills gained also support disciplinary research for improving pedagogy and student outcomes (Minocha & Collins, 2023). However, to truly transform practice, these fellowships need to be valued equally as disciplinary research, embedded into educators' roles, and supported by sustained leadership commitment across departments, institutions, disciplinary societies, funders, and accreditation bodies. This institutionalisation ensures findings inform pedagogical and curricular changes (Arday et al., 2021; Minocha & Collins, 2023).

Intervention Strategies 4 and 6: Completion rate gaps for students with a declared disability

LSE's approach to eliminating the completion rate gaps observed for disabled students is underpinned by a range of evidence, including institutional research, a systematic review of the last five years of LSE Changemaker student research reports, a review of sector literature (incl. TASO and OfS reports), the consultations conducted throughout the APP development process, as well as findings from ongoing evaluation and monitoring. A summary of this evidence is set out for each of the proposed key mechanisms below. However, as noted by TASO (2023), there remain significant evidence gaps. Where applicable, we are therefore committed to carrying out robust evaluation of our activities and publishing our findings; this commitment is summarised in the relevant Intervention Strategies and elaborate in each of the individual mechanism. Given the overlap to IS4&5 above, we also note that activity clusters 5-9 from the awarding gap intervention strategies are also applicable to making substantive changes to the retention of disabled students and should be read in tandem.

Overall, LSE is addressing its completion rate gaps through a range of interventions carried out across the provider and across the whole student journey. The underlying theory of change identifies seven broad change mechanisms that, based on the available evidence, we believe will together support us to achieve our APP target, although evaluation and research remain key priorities to validate and where necessary change this theory of change. These mechanisms target the risks identified in Annex A, as well as in relevant literature on student retention (cf. Thomas, 2002; Tinto, 1975).

Improve mental health & wellbeing services

Internal consultations, the wider literature and the TASO rapid evidence review underpinning EORR Risk 8 (Mental Health), consistently highlight a strong association between student mental health and non-completion (Lipson & Eisenberg, 2018; Hjorth et al, 2016). Although most of these studies fall short of establishing a causal link, they suggest that effective mental health support is strongly associated with improving students' ability to fully participate at university and complete their degree. This is particularly salient for our intervention strategy and target area, which is focused on disabled students generally, thereby including students specifically with declared mental health conditions as well as those that have declared a mental health condition alongside another disability. We also note that the interventions will have an impact on those students who may not have a declared mental health condition but who may experience poorer wellbeing and mental health in general. The work hence also addresses the wider priority, set out by the OfS, for "all students to have the good mental health and wellbeing that they need to succeed in their higher education".

Internal research and evaluation have identified two closely linked areas for improvement, which are included in IS4 and IS6:

- Improve capacity and reduce waiting times for key mental health services, as long NHS waiting lists have increased the strain on university provision generally (Thorley, 2017) and lead to students reporting dissatisfaction with current services (Saunders *et al*, 2020); here, we aim to increase the capacity for support through additional investment in our counselling service, as well as the creation of a new Student Wellbeing team, who can that can offer timely triage and referrals to students.
- Improving signposting and support through staff training. As Gulliver *et al.* (2019) find, improved mental health literacy is positively associated with staff feeling able to assist students better, as well as enabling them to access both formal and informal support available within the institution (though the study relies on self-reported staff attitudes, rather than observational data).

To ensure that students can access LSE's support services, we are also intending to conduct novel research to help us to understand how to reduce barriers to disclosure of disability, building on previous student research that identified that the current processes around declaring a disability were alienating some students (Swanke, 2020). We hope that this research will allow us to better identify disabled students earlier, and hence better reach them with our support offer.

Ensuring consistent staff awareness, knowledge, accountability & engagement

The second cluster of activity seeks to ensure greater consistency of staff engagement with, and accountability for, disability inclusion, thus leading to improvements in how consistently it is embedded across the School. As highlighted in TASO's (2023) evidence review, this reflects the growing consensus in research and literature that disability inclusion "requires an institution-wide approach", (p.7) and in particular "a culture of responsibility for [disability inclusion] across the entire organisation [...] along with the requirement for senior leaders to prioritise the needs of disabled students." (p.7). In our approach, we consider that staff awareness, knowledge, accountability and actual engagement with work on disability inclusion go hand in hand, although our theory of change reflects that these stages are sequential: we consider that a combination of awareness, knowledge and accountability, taken together, is what will lead to the proliferation of new and adapted work on a local level across academic and professional service teams. This may either include further action plans, or improvements to signposting of existing services. Ultimately, this work reflects our ambition to build an inclusive environment consistently across the School while acknowledging that action often needs to be taken on a local level, specific to teams, projects, or academic environments under consideration.

Concrete work in this area includes two strands:

- The creation and strengthening of existing governance mechanisms; and staff training, including the provision of Inclusive Teaching Guides and resources and learning and development opportunities on how to support student mental health and well-being. We expect work to establish new governance groups and boards, as well as closer collaboration with departments, to straightforwardly translate into greater engagement by involved staff. We also consider that these mechanisms straight-forwardly provide the leadership commitment and increased accountability we seek to achieve.
- To verify these assumptions, we are further planning on conducting robust research and evaluation that will allow us to trace the impact of local projects and embed evaluation in them to add to the research literature in these areas. As TASO notes, however, despite consensus that awareness raising and staff training are important, "there is a lack of focus on the evaluation of the effectiveness of EDI training on staff and student outcomes." (2023, p.8.) This lack in evidence is subsequently represented in our evaluation focus, where we aim to explore the engagement and impact with staff learning opportunities to provide either qualitative or quantitative evidence of its impact.

Improving accessibility of learning resources

A third focus of our work is to improve the accessibility of learning resources at LSE. This follows from both student feedback collected in the design and consultation of the APP, as well as literature highlighting the importance of accessibility to student success and retention. For example, McNicholl, *et al.*, (2023) find that disabled students' whose assistive technology needs were met report significantly higher academic self-efficacy and well-being, and higher educational engagement – intermediate outcomes central improving the identified completion rate gap. Kilpatrick *et al* (2016) also identify accessible digital resources vital to supporting "the enrolment, retention and success of students with disability", although, as TASO (2023) notes, most studies about the use of assistive technologies remain relatively small scale and fall short of establishing causal relationships.

We aim to improve the accessibility of our learning resources in three ways. Firstly, we want to ensure that students can make effective use of the assistive technology they already have access to by expanding our personalised training offer, which the literature highlights as an important part of improving accessibility and assistive technology use (Kamei-Hannan *et al*, 2012). Secondly, we aim to strengthen the accessibility of digital learning resources through use of digital accessibility software that will allow teaching staff at LSE to easily review and adjust learning content to be accessible. While the novelty of this work makes the existing evidence highly limited, we hope that the digital nature and School-wide scope of the project will allow us to conduct and publish robust evaluation of impact, seeking to link qualitative research into the detection of accessibility issues with broader outcomes data on completion and grade awards. Lastly, we continue to deliver our 'Library Buddying Scheme', which has a designated member of staff provide advice to students with disability and will continue to support them in accessing relevant learning resources across the library.

Improving implementation of MyAdjustments

The fourth area of work outlined in IS6 concerns the evaluation and improvement of LSE's MyAdjustments, our reasonable adjustments process. While reasonable adjustments are part of LSE's legal responsibility, we seek to use recent insights and evaluation to better understand if and how MyAdjustments are currently benefitting students, and how we can increase their efficacy. While LSE internal analysis recently found that receiving MyAdjustments was associated with better module level outcomes – a fact consistent with literature reviewed by TASO (2023) – the overall evidence for a *causal* impact remains limited. However, adjustments were consistently raised as an important area of disability inclusion in our student and staff consultation, as well as in student led research (Beck and Nenzen, 2019; Schulte *et al*, 2020), hence forming a focus area of our work.

In addition to planned systems work to improve the consistency and visibility of MyAdjustments, the focus of this work is also to expand the existing evidence base on this and conduct novel research into outcomes for students in receipt of MyAdjustments. For this, we seek to gather additional quantitative and qualitative insights into the quality of the process, effectiveness of implementation, and impact on student experiences and outcomes, and use this information to improve both the process and impact of the current adjustments process.

Improving academic mentoring

The fifth area of work is to improve academic mentoring at LSE. As set out in LSE's academic code, Academic Mentors are a first point of contact for students in regard to academic and personal matters. As such, they play a central role in not just providing academic guidance, but also in providing personal advice on mental health and student well-being, including signposting to available support. While student research and the wider literature provide strong evidence that good academic mentoring is pivotal to effective student support (Advance HE, 2024; Klint, 2023; Gafforio *et al.*, 2019), the student research, as well as our consultations and internal research highlight that the consistency and quality of Academic mentoring at LSE should be improved. This is particularly concerning as Yale (2020) suggests that poor first experiences of personal tutoring "will firmly decide on the worth of their [Personal Tutor]" (p.746). The aim of this work is therefore two-fold: firstly, to address raised concerns and improve the quantity and quality of academic mentoring, and secondly, to evidence that improvements to academic mentoring translate into improved student experiences and outcomes.

Our approach towards this end is set out in IS4. In the first instance, we are seeking to augment the existing departmental advisory landscape through new staff, the Departmental Senior Student Advisors, who can assist existing academic mentors with complex cases and provide additional points of contact for students. The second strand of this work seeks to improve the quality of existing academic mentors through training and the Academic Mentoring Community of practice (see also IS4 and 5, section 8 above). Existing research highlights that such work can lead to a more holistic understanding of student experiences and challenges, enabling better support through shared knowledge and collective efforts (Corcoran & Duane, 2018). As set out in our evaluation approaches, we are committed to reviewing this work closely, aiming to evaluate and publish our findings on its impact.

Peer mentoring for neurodivergent students

In addition to improving academic mentoring, our work to improve disabled students' completion rates also builds on peer mentoring work, including piloting the Neurodivergent Student Academic Mentors by building on LSE's well-established Student Academic Mentoring (SAMs) programme. While the programme itself is a direct response to student research suggesting that such a programme could improve neurodivergent students' experience of LSE (Crutcher, 2022), a breadth of literature highlights benefits to both mentors and mentees. This includes improvements to mentees' ability to navigate the university and accessing support report by Hillier *et al.* (2019)

though the study fails to find any impact on academic success, as well as improvements to mentors' personal growth and skills development (Agarwal et al., 2021). Cardinot and Flynn's (2022) rapid evidence assessment further emphasises the benefits of mentoring for disabled students concerning their transition into higher education and social and academic engagement, including empowerment and a sense of belonging. These studies collectively suggest that mentoring can have a positive impact on the overall university experience and personal development of disabled students in UK higher education.

Enhancing extra-curricular opportunities

The final strand of work included in IS4 & IS6 is centred on improving the provision of extra-curricular opportunities and career guidance for disabled students at LSE. Much of the foundational research into, and models of, student retention emphasise the importance of social connections and ability to participate in extra-curricular opportunities, including and facilitated by supportive institutional services (Thomas, 2002). The tailored programmes of provision for disabled students included in our intervention strategy – covering volunteering opportunities and careers support – are also linked to improving intermediate outcomes relevant for student completion. Fenyess and Pallay (2021) report a positive association between greater career-consciousness indicators of persistence in a survey covering 2,199 university students from Central and Eastern Europe; Szucs and Harpur (2023) find robust evidence for the benefits of extra-curricular activities including volunteering and placements on the graduation rates and academic achievement of disabled students in secondary education in Australia, though they note that academic literature on outcomes in tertiary education is missing. Previous research on students' experiences of volunteering at LSE suggests that the inference to tertiary education is justified, however: students reported that their volunteering work has benefitted their well-being, confidence in their abilities, and career prospects (Coles, 2021).

Based on this evidence, we believe that two areas of work will contribute improving disability completion rates. The first area of work is the Summer Volunteering Scheme for disabled students, run in collaboration by the LSE Volunteer Centre and LSE Careers. The project advises charity partners for how to improve the accessibility of volunteering opportunities, and works with and for disabled students at LSE, providing them tailored support in accessing these opportunities, including advice, recruitment, ongoing support and networking opportunities. The second is work by the Careers team to offer a programme of careers support to disabled students, covering 1:1 appointment, career placements, specific events related to disability rights in the workplace, as well as alumni mentoring.

Research and Evaluation

As set out for each of the seven mechanisms above and in the intervention strategies, the main focus of evaluative activity is on the project level. To ensure that we understand the joint impact of the IS and its constituent activity, however, we are committed to a robust, annual review of how disabled students' completion rates change over time. If possible, we seek to use more sophisticated statistical approaches such as matching or regression analysis to refine this analysis and attribute changes in outcomes to specific change work. However, we recognise that the very small number of students not completing their studies at LSE every year presents a risk to this approach and are therefore conscious not to over-commit.

Supplementing this monitoring work, we are also committed to carrying out two additional areas of research, as set out in IS6: research to improve understanding of when and how students declare their disability with LSE, with a view to enhance the current declaration process and increase the rate at which students feel able and willing to declare their disability to LSE, hence allowing us to engage with them earlier and in a more targeted way; and research into risk factors for students not completing their degrees, seeking to better understand drivers of disabled students in particular withdrawing from their programmes.

Intervention Strategy 7: Care-experienced students

Care-experienced students are recognised as one of the most disadvantaged student groups in higher education. They are less likely to attend highly-selective universities and have lower rates of continuation, completion, lower grade awards, and progression than their peers who are not care-experienced (Office for Students, 2021a & 2022).

As recommended in a report commissioned by the Unite Foundation, LSE has taken a cross-lifecycle approach to supporting care-experienced students to provide consistency in support and to reduce anxiety throughout their student journey (Stevenson et al., 2020).

At the pre-entry stage, care-experienced students can experience a lack of tailored information, advice and guidance (IAG) about higher education and how to apply (Hauri et al., 2019; UCAS, 2020). Additionally, UCAS

analysis in 2020 found that 60% of care-experienced students surveyed had not received any guidance during the application process which was specific to their circumstances as a care-experienced student (UCAS, 2020). It is therefore recommended that institutions increase the accessibility and clarity of tailored IAG for care-experienced students and their supporters (TASO, 2021b). LSE's package of pre-entry information, advice and guidance in our intervention strategy seeks to address this need through targeted events, communication and relationship building (including with teachers and local authority contacts). This aims to ensure that both care-experienced students, and the adults who support them, are accurately informed about the admissions process and the support available for care-experienced students at LSE.

A specific, named point of contact for care-experienced students is widely regarded as essential for addressing the complex barriers care-experienced students face (DfE, 2019), helping students to build trust with large bureaucratic organisations and better navigating HE institutions (Styrnol et al., 2021; O'Neill et al., 2019). By providing a named, trained point of contact for care-experienced students at both the pre-entry stage and during their time as an LSE student, we aim to ensure that all care-experienced students at LSE can build 'reliable, consistent relationships with a trusted member of staff' (O'Neill et al., 2019). This point of contact will proactively support and advocate for care-experienced students at LSE.

As Harrison (2017) notes, however, better training about care-experienced students' needs is necessary all staff who might support care-experienced students (ie, not just for the named contact). This was echoed during a focus group and a feedback session with care-experienced students at LSE. As recommended by NNECL and the OfS (Ambrose et al., 2021), to deliver this training to LSE staff, LSE aims to collaborate with external training partners who have expertise of supporting care-experienced students.

In terms of care-experienced students' practical needs in HE, accommodation provision is a key consideration. In a UCAS study, 54% of care-experienced students surveyed agreed that year-round accommodation was a factor in their decision-making when researching universities (UCAS, 2020). There is a correlation between having a stable place to live and care-experienced students' success and continuation at university (Stevenson et al., 2020; Ellis & Johnston, 2019), with the Unite Foundation noting that 'having a home at university means security, creating a solid foundation [...] allowing students to evolve, to grow, to build self-esteem, and most importantly to be a student' (Unite Foundation, 2022). Our intervention strategy ensures 365-day accommodation across all years of study and the ability to delay or waive deposit payments – providing vital stability for care-experienced students while studying at LSE. Financial support is similarly influential in care-experienced students' decision making about university, with 64% regarding it as a key factor (UCAS 2020). The 2023 Student Academic Experience survey found that 88% of care-experienced students surveyed worked in paid employment compared to 58% of non-care-experienced students (Ellison, 2023), potentially limiting the time they can spend on academic studies and extracurricular activities. To reduce the financial pressures which care-experienced students might experience at LSE, we will introduce the guaranteed LSE Care-Experienced and Estranged Student Bursary in 2024/25, paid in two instalments across each year of study with the first before the start of the academic year. This will provide essential support with accommodation and moving costs during the transition to university. We will also ensure that care-experienced students have access to specific advice on financial support, such as additional scholarships tailored to their circumstances. This echoes the structure and support provided in the successful Royal Central School of Speech and Drama case study highlighted by the Office for Students (Office for Students, 2021a). Additionally, LSE will pay the first instalment prior to the start of term, to assist with moving and transition costs, and reducing barriers to accessing LSE.

Within HE, there has been limited exploration of care-experienced students' sense of belonging. From internal LSE focus group and feedback sessions, we know that care-experienced students often experience a lower sense of belonging than other student groups at LSE. A lower sense of belonging can negatively impact care-experienced students' continuation (O'Neill et al., 2019), and sense of belonging is recognised as a factor in continuation amongst students in general (Thomas, 2012). The 2023 Student Academic Experience survey also found that 48% of care-experienced students said that they felt lonely some or all of the time, compared to 26% of non-care-experienced students (Ellison, 2023). The Unite Foundation advises that a holistic approach (Stevenson et al., 2023).

To address this, we will offer several activities to care-experienced students which provide opportunities to make connections and create peer support networks. Care-experienced students at LSE will receive early priority access to the LSE Student Academic Mentoring Scheme and will receive peer-to-peer check-in calls during their first year, in collaboration with LSESU. Mentoring and peer support has been identified as an activity, 'which has strong

evidence of impact on confidence, engagement, retention, and academic outcomes' for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hauri et al., 2019).

Research lastly highlights that care-experienced students commonly receive insufficient advice and guidance around planning for graduate employment and/or postgraduate study (Baker, 2022). Fear of unemployment after graduation has also been found to be a source of concern for care-experienced students (Stevenson et al., 2020). Through LSE's pilot support programme for contextual offer holders in IS3 (which will include all care-experienced students), care-experienced students will have unlimited access to tailored careers advice, including job search support for two years after graduation. This practical support intends to aid care-experienced students to build their knowledge and skills and improve access to professional networks and work experience so that they can explore a range of career plans. This tailored support is recommended in research, so that 'the needs of those without family safety nets are acknowledged and supported' (Baker, 2022). The approach also aligns with LSE's aim of supporting care-experienced students to make connections across the LSE staff, student and alumni community so that they can fully benefit from the diverse range of opportunities at LSE.

In line with the whole-lifecycle approach of this intervention, evaluation will occur at key points across the student journey. Due to the small population of care-experienced students and the relatively small UK UG population in general at LSE, analysis will seek to compare the average experience of care-experienced students with the wider student population through descriptive statistical analysis. This will be achieved through comparison of care-experienced students' responses in cohort surveys throughout the student lifecycle and comparison of key outcome measures. Focus groups with care-experienced students will also be conducted to explore students' experiences in more depth, particularly with respect to themes and trends observed in the survey and outcomes analysis. As care-experienced student numbers have grown substantially at LSE in the last two years, this evaluation will provide a useful evidence base to continue the development of support for care-experienced students at LSE.

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Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The London School of Economics and Political Science

Provider UKPRN: 10004063

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X
The School chooses to set its Home undergraduate fee in line with the maximum fee limits determined by the UK Government.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The London School of Economics and Political Science

Provider UKPRN: 10004063

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	£1,334,000	£1,272,000	£1,279,000	£1,335,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£2,546,000	£2,810,000	£3,002,000	£3,183,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£394,000	£388,000	£410,000	£432,000

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 (£)	£233,000	£248,000	£262,000	£274,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£1,003,000	£921,000	£966,000	£1,008,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£98,000	£103,000	£51,000	£53,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£1,334,000	£1,272,000	£1,279,000	£1,335,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	15.6%	14.8%	14.8%	15.5%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£1,265,000	£1,252,000	£1,257,000	£1,312,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£69,000	£20,000	£21,000	£22,000
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£2,497,000	£2,759,000	£2,950,000	£3,129,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£49,000	£51,000	£52,000	£54,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£2,546,000	£2,810,000	£3,002,000	£3,183,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	29.8%	32.6%	34.8%	36.9%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£394,000	£388,000	£410,000	£432,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	4.6%	4.5%	4.8%	5.0%

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Table 5d: Success targets

Table 5e: Progression targets

[illegible]

[illegible]