

The Oldham College Access and participation plan

Dates for which this plan applies: 2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of performance

In 2017/18 the key **gaps** for The Oldham College (TOC) to improve were: **access** for 18 year olds from the town across POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2, of White, and Asian backgrounds; improving **continuation** and **retention** of students across the lifecycle; reducing the gap between White and BAME higher classifications and grades; reducing the gap between Mature and Young higher classifications and grades; continuing to improve **progression** into further study and graduate level employment.

TOC delivers validated and franchised HE programmes at the University Campus Oldham (UCO), and has been charging the higher fee of £7,500 since 2017/18. Over that period, TOC has improved its collection and sharing of relevant data, increased engagement with data, and colleagues at all levels have begun to understand more about the student groups' performance across the HE lifecycle. This is reviewed and monitored at each lifecycle stage, by student groups, and intersections. 55% of our students are from Polar 1 and 2 households in a diverse, economically challenging setting.

While most attainment figures saw an apparent high in the year 13/14, and a dip in 14/15 this reflected the change in University partner and resulting course closures. Data since then shows a trend of improvement. It must be noted here that the data collection in 2013/14 was during a period of transition of business from the University of Huddersfield to the College and does not accurately represent the full picture. This has been reported to HEFCE through the APR process. Subsequent changes to Senior Management have enabled a change in culture, increasing the importance of a data and metric management philosophy throughout the organisation. Recruiting with integrity, maximizing retention and student satisfaction are now key themes for all staff roles within UCO with a greatly increased emphasis on maintaining accurate data and monitoring risks throughout the student lifecycle.

The OfS Dataset¹, indicates significant gaps in the number of 18 year olds accessing HE at TOC. These are the lower than average (as per the UK HE population, and local population) number of 18 year old Asian and White male learners from POLAR4 Quintile 1,2 and 3 areas.

Our own data shows that over the last 4 years the student population of UCO has remained at around 28%

Young to 72% Mature. Engagement with the College's FE learners through internal progression and stronger outreach links with local schools and other colleges will be part of the range of interventions put in place to address these gaps.

Table 1 2017 ONS and College Data by Ethnic Group/s

	Oldham	Greater Manchester	TOC HE
White	77.5%	83.8%	55%
BAME	22.5	16.3	45%

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/> <accessed 20/08/19>

Pakistani	10.1%	4.8%	16%
Bangladeshi	7.3%	1.3%	12%
Indian	0.7%	2.0%	N/A
Black (African/Caribbean)	1.2%	2.8%	6%
Mixed	1.8%	2.3%	N/A
Other Ethnic groups	1.4%	3.1%	N/A

TOC provides HE in FE in a diverse and socially deprived town in Greater Manchester, attracts more Mature students than Young, has a larger proportion of Female compared to Male students, and a large percentage of South Asian (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) students compared to the population of the town. Oldham's population of 233,759 has decreasing White residents, increases in the South Asian community and people of Polish and Roma backgrounds and an increasing Younger population in the BAME communities.

Considering the gaps in TOC's performance the key challenges and **targets** are set out below along with our commitments.

- i) Addressing the gap in **Access** for White Male, and BAME 18 year olds from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 in the town (target)
- ii) Improving the gap in **Attainment** of all BAME compared to White students of higher classifications and grades, with a specific aim around BAME Male from Polar Q1 and 2 (target)
- iii) Improving the gap in **Attainment** of all Mature compared to Young students of higher classifications and grades (target)
- iv) Continuing to reduce **non-continuation** across all groups of students (commitment)
- v) Improving the **Progression** of all groups of students into graduate level employment/further study (commitment)

While we have baseline data for i), ii) and iii) we will work to establish the definitive starting points for iv) and v) which will then inform our targets and commitments and will be submitted in 2019/20 as a variation to this plan. In committing to reducing non-continuation of students, our ambition is for this to be 10% or below. Note here that the TEF non-continuation internal figure was 13% in 2017/18. As TOC currently collects TEF continuation data but not continuation data for years 2 to 3, the College MIS team are working on extending this and gathering the relevant data over the year 2019/20. This will then enable us to establish essential starting points, set out ambitious targets and plan suitable interventions. A variation to the plan will be submitted in 2019/20 to reflect this.

Data on Progression to employment or further study: note

Tables 3 -13 contain internal data, we do not yet have sufficient statistics to enable us to provide an examination of performance for BAME, Mature and disabled students in the **progression** lifecycle stage. The data the college uses to measure students progression into employment/higher study historically comes from the DLHE

(Destinations of Learners in Higher Education) survey, with the base data provided each year. We don't yet have the latest base data for student progressions. When data from the GO survey is made available we will include it into the internal data sets in the data warehouse, it will then become available in the existing College reports and be able to be used as the baseline. This will enable us to analyse and examine our performance, put work in

place to support students into appropriate employment/further study and plan engagements with alumni. Once established a variation to this plan will be submitted in 2019/20 with appropriate timescales.

The positive increase in the median salary of UCO graduates from 2013/14 – 2016/17, £14,500 to £17,000, indicates continuous improvement is in train. The quality of the support is evidenced too in TOC's Silver TEF² Award, stating '...a Graduate Hub that is highly regarded by students...' and '...strategies to ensure students progress into meaningful and sustained employment'.

Alongside receipt of the Graduate Outcomes Survey, the College will ascertain how to strengthen existing alumni work, data collection and engagements during 2019/20 for implementing a more comprehensive programme from 2020/21 and will add this to the variation to the plan in 2019/20. The interim period of transition from DLHE to Graduate Outcomes prevents us providing external data. A key development and strategic target is to create Alumni involvement consistently and dynamically that will provide mutually beneficial functions.

Table 2 DLHE data

Year	TOC Median Salary (DLHE)	Current TOC graduate outcomes remain below the national average with the most recent DLHE Survey revealing the median salary for TOC graduates is £17,000 and 57% being in highly skilled employment (TOC DLHE Survey) with 31% of UCO graduates in SOC 6, with the caring and health sector being a local priority area. 47% of our graduates were working in Oldham in January 2017, 1/3rd of these earning £18,500 P/A (DLHE data). From this and our surveys it is clear that many wish or need to remain in the town despite the depressed wage levels in the area. (ONS ³)
2013-14	£14,500	
2014-15	£14,793	
2015-16	£15,000	
2016-17	£17,000	

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access (see Table 3)

TOC has a larger than average proportion of HE students from Polar 1 and 2 households, 23% and 34% respectively in 2017, compared to the national picture in HE, and 86% from Polar 1, 2 and 3. This reflects the College vision to provide HE in FE in Oldham for students from traditionally low participation backgrounds. Access for 18 year olds (Table 11 below), is a significant gap for the College. A range of interventions will be put in place to address this, setting an ambitious target over the 5-year plan to more closely reflect the population of the town and HE in the UK. The Young student population accessing HE at UCO is in the minority. Internal data also shows that many 18 year-olds progressing from the FE courses at the College take a year out before entering HE. The percentage of Young Males to Young Females recruited has shown a slight rise for Males from 7.6%/24.3% in 13/14 to 11.9%/16.1% in 17/18. The number of Young students at UCO does not reflect the town population by age and is a gap to address, (as set out in our targets).

² <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10006770> <accessed 28/06/19>

³ [Oldham in Profile - oldham.gov.uk](http://oldham.gov.uk) <accessed 20/08/19>

Continuation (see Table 3)

The general picture of improved continuation across Polar groups Q1, Q2 and Q3 reflects the input provided by the support services, (Graduate Hub, Academic Hub, HE Disability and Mental Health Officers). Whereas noncontinuation of Q4 and Q5 has seen the biggest increases – in 15/16 and 17/18. The specific support provided for lower participation background students may not address the needs of the students from Q4 and Q5 and will be further analysed and any findings added as a variation to the plan in 2019/20.

Comparisons year to year vary, our data shows that, over the last 3 years Young students have higher noncontinuation than Mature students (Table 11).

While Young students nationally are not an under-represented group, the majority of Young students at UCO are from low socio-economic areas and we are therefore committed to supporting their transition, retention, and will continue our actions to improve Young student retention across the years of the plan.

This will be set out in the variation to plan.

Attainment (see Table 3)

The attainment of Q 1 students has remained below those of Q2 and Q4 and Q5. See further intersectional examination below which highlights gender differences in attainment.

Progression See page 2 above: note regarding Progression to employment or further study, variation to plan to be submitted.

Table 3

Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	106	25%	91%	27.0%	78%
14/15	127	25%	69%	7.7%	32%
15/16	145	25%	90%	12.5%	47%
16/17	138	24%	96%	27.0%	60%
17/18	150	25%	92%	12.7%	68%
Q2	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	110	26%	92%	16.4%	80%
14/15	138	27%	88%	12.5%	35%
15/16	162	28%	87%	11.5%	46%
16/17	169	29%	97%	17.9%	71%
17/18	181	30%	97%	14.7%	82%
Q3	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	137	32%	93.0%	20.9%	83%
14/15	142	28%	88.0%	12.1%	41%
15/16	170	29%	93.0%	20.3%	60%
16/17	157	27%	97.0%	16.9%	81%
17/18	161	27%	96.0%	7.4%	69%
Q4 & Q5	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	70	17%	100%	6.3%	100%

14/15	98	19%	95%	11.8%	55%
15/16	110	19%	100%	25.0%	63%
16/17	120	21%	92%	10.5%	71%
17/18	104	17%	95%	33.3%	81%

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access (see Table 4)

Learner numbers overall have risen across the 5 years and the proportion of BAME to White has shifted and appears to have stabilised at 46% to 54%. This is a higher proportion of BAME C.F. the town's population. However, for 2017/18 there is a gap in Access for BAME (8%), Mixed (4%) and 'other' students (OfS Dataset). This highlights the need for the College to continue to monitor Access on a regular basis, ascertain if trends are emerging and use the process and data collection to identify interventions should this worsen.

Continuation (see Table 4)

While non-continuation has been higher for White students except for the year 2016/17, we see general improvement over the years. For 17/18 the % of BAME withdrawals was slightly higher than for White, compared to the UCO population: 48% compared to 46%. Addressing this and improving is a key target for TOC.

Attainment (see Table 4)

Attainment for all students, while falling in 2014/15, is now on an upward trajectory. While there is no clear pattern in the difference between BAME and White attainment with %'s fluctuating. For 3 of the last 5 years the BAME overall attainment % has been higher than White, see table 5 below. The College will continue to monitor Attainment on a regular basis. There is an Attainment gap of 15% Asian students C.F. White, 2017/18, which is an increase from -10%. Again there is no consistent pattern here, therefore we will monitor to ascertain if trends are emerging and use our reporting processes and data collection to identify interventions should this deteriorate.

The College repeats its commitment to equalise attainment across all groups.

Progression See page 2 above: note regarding Progression to employment or further study, variation to plan. The data and numbers of 'other ethnicity' students are low and thus prevent reporting.

Table 4

13/14	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Asian	125	30%	95%	19%	76%
Black	56	14%	92%	7%	77%
Mixed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	46	11%	80%	29%	50%
White	187	45%	91%	24%	85%

Total **414**

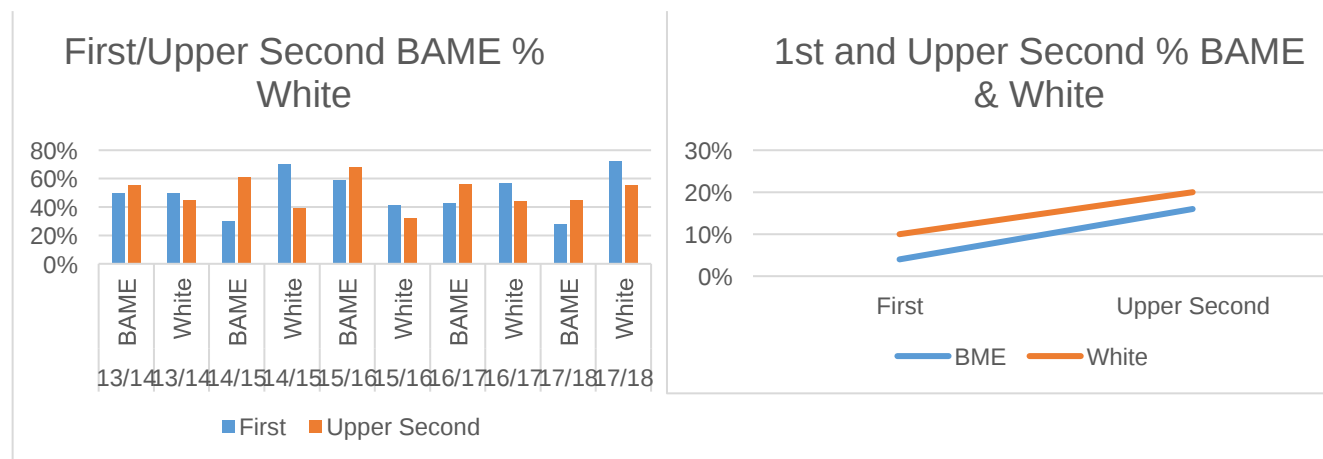
14/15	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Asian	131	26%	91%	16%	33%
Black	70	14%	75%	4%	33%
Mixed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	32	6%	75%	7%	27%
White	271	54%	85%	11%	49%
Total	504				

15/16	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Asian	168	29%	98%	11%	62%
Black	65	11%	87%	18%	63%
Mixed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	31	5%	50%	7%	40%
White	321	55%	92%	16%	49%
Total	585				

16/17	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Asian	169	29%	96%	19%	80%
Black	55	9%	95%	36%	62%
Mixed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	37	6%	84%	14%	64%
White	321	55%	97%	17%	69%
Total	582				

17/18	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Asian	184	31%	95%	13%	81%
Black	53	9%	83%	11%	56%
Mixed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	28	5%	94%	7%	79%
White	332	56%	97%	14%	74%
Total	597				

Table 5 BAME and White Degree Classifications (internal data)

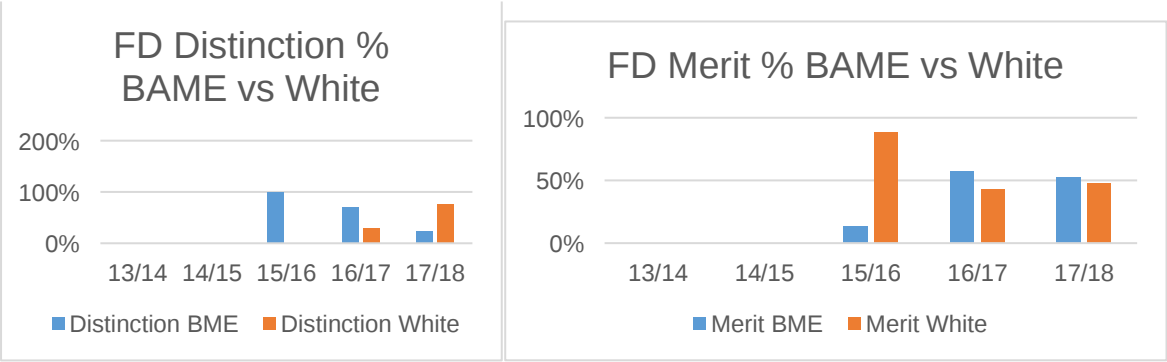


Over the last 3 years the percentage of BAME First Class degrees has fallen, while the number of White First Class has risen, the percentage of 2:1's while higher for BAME students from 2013/14 to 2016/17 fell for BAME students in 2017/18. UCO does not reflect the 2017/18 23.1% gap in achievement of higher classification degrees nationally between BAME and White students⁴. The gap at UCO for 2018/19 was 4%. For the majority of years in scope BAME students at TOC have achieved a higher percentage of 2:1s, however, the gap in the achievement of 1sts between BAME and White students requires improvement. This is a key target for the College, to reduce the gap from 4% to equity by 2024/25.

In 2014 TOC took a strategic decision to develop a range of Foundation Degrees (FDs) alongside the BA (Hons) provision. This addresses local employer needs, provides access for non-traditional learners, has involved employers in curriculum design, and presents a route that some students prefer to take in order to enhance their employability skills. Very small numbers on the FD's for the years 2013/14 and 14/15 limit reporting. The small number of students on the Part-time HNC Construction prevents reporting on performance of this group. Further research on the choices that students take when applying for FDs or Degrees and the intersectional categories will be carried out to better understand the any differences and trends and a variation to the plan submitted. Table 6 shows that the grades of students completing Foundation Degrees reflects the Hons degrees picture with the ratios of highest grade (distinction) and merit compared to First Class and 2:1. BAME FD students have recently begun to fare better at Merit than their White counterparts but attain less Distinctions. Each FD has a level 6 top-up route – these classifications are amalgamated into the Honours degree data. Small numbers limit detailed reporting on some groups' degree outcomes.

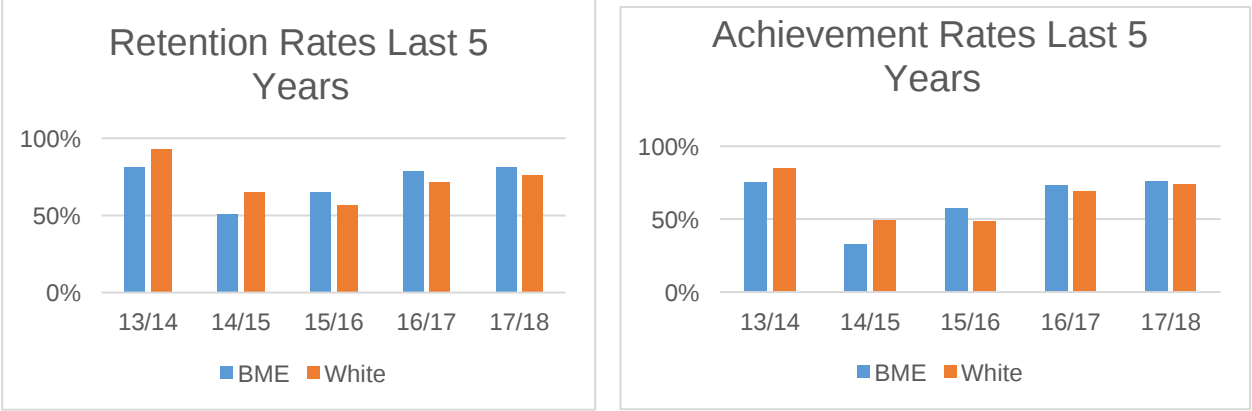
⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/> <accessed 20/08/19>

Table 6



From 2014/15 there has been fluctuation in retention rates for BAME students with no clear pattern emerging, however in 2017/18 BAME non-continuation was the same as White. Over the years in scope there is 43% improvement in attainment rates for BAME students. Retention is monitored regularly and any additional interventions will be added to the variation to the plan.

Table 7

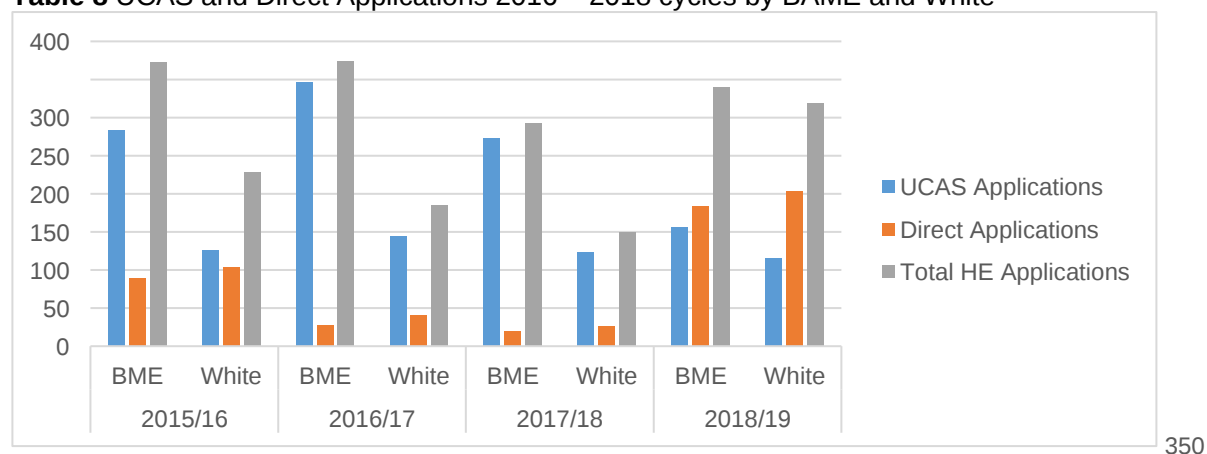


UCAS TOC data suggests a 67% decline in the recruitment of black and minority ethnic students from 2016 to

2018 entry cycles. The percentage of applications via UCAS to TOC for 16/17 was 88% compared to 41% in 18/19. However, the number of direct applications increased from 12% in 16/17 to 59% in 18/19. The percentage of BAME students who accessed HE at TOC over that period fell, from 46% to 40%.

BAME UCAS applications dropped from 93% in 16/17 to 46% 18/19 with a rise in direct applications from 7% to 54% for the same period. At this stage we speculate that this may be accounted for in the increased use of direct applications at a local level. The College has used this method where applicants may wish to only apply to the local HE provider, internally progress and where the cost of making an application through UCAS is a barrier. In addition to this, for the year 2016/17, the College was going through several validations with new HEI partners and could not place courses in UCAS until validation was secured. The Direct Application process was used once the approvals were in place to ensure student access to places. All Direct applications are then transferred into UCAS using the RPA (Record of Prior Acceptance) process.

Table 8 UCAS and Direct Applications 2016 – 2018 cycles by BAME and White



The totals of White and BAME students at the application stage saw a dip for all groups in 2017/18 from 2016/17 and has picked up in 2018/19. The college will henceforth take action to ensure that all application methods are monitored by protected characteristics on a termly basis and include this measure in the KPIs for HE provision and internal progression from FE programmes. The significant increase in direct applications is set in the context of the financially depressed local context where wages are lower than the national and regional average. While we may surmise that this is a contributing factor, further analysis and monitoring is required to establish the evidence. For example, a significant number of direct applications are made to the Business Foundation Degree from TOC's Access course. These are Mature learners, set on remaining in the locale to pursue their education. Further evidence and strategies will be included in the variation to this plan 2019/20.

1.3 Mature students

Access (see Table 10). A constant figure of around 70% of students studying HE at TOC are Mature and form the majority and of the total student body has consisted of Mature Female 50% and Mature Male 20%. **Continuation** (see Table 9). While the TEF non-continuation data has fluctuated for Mature students, this has dropped over the last 2 years and forms a key commitment for TOC to attain 90% continuation across all years.

The Mature students have the lowest non-continuation data.

Attainment (see table 10). While Mature overall attainment has steadily improved each year, (this may be connected to the improved retention of Mature students), there is a gap in the attainment of Firsts and 2:1s of Mature students C.F. Young students. The gap in 2015/16 was 10% higher for Young but in 16/17 this gap reduced to zero, before rising to 10% again in 2017/18. Eliminating this gap is set out in our targets. While we may speculate as to why this is occurring – family, caring, work commitments – further research into the causes is required and will be a focus for academic and support teams to investigate during 2019/20 in preparation for actions and activities from 2020 onwards. The increased use of data analytics, by academic and support staff, at UCO will also aid this project. This will be included as a variation to the plan in 2019/20.

Progression See page 2 above: note regarding Progression to employment or further study, variation to plan to be submitted.

Table 10 Mature Students

13/14	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Mature	288	68.1%	95.2%	21.0%	88.9%
14/15	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Mature	365	72.3%	83.3%	6.7%	39.0%
15/16	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Mature	425	72.6%	91.3%	11.0%	51.7%
16/17	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Mature	414	71.1%	94.8%	15.4%	69.7%
17/18	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Mature	429	72.0%	95.9%	12.0%	75.1%

Table 11 Young Students

13/14	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Young	135	31.9%	71.4%	20.1%	71.4%
14/15	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Young	140	27.7%	94.7%	16.3%	46.2%
15/16	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %

Young	160	27.4%	95.0%	17.5%	61.3%
16/17	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Young	168	28.9%	100.0%	25.2%	75.4%
17/18	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
Young	167	28.0%	89.7%	14.8%	71.4%

1.4 Disabled students

Please note that all N/A in Table 10 refers to groups of less than 5 students to prevent any breach of OfS guidance on GDPR and possible identification of individuals. If numbers should increase we will publish the appropriate data and will also be able to identify trends and actions to support or intervene. We are committed to providing support for Disabled students and investment continues to enhance this element of provision at UCO.

Access (see Table 12)

The numbers of students who are accessing support and identify their needs has risen significantly over this period, from 19 to 84. Students with disabilities now form a larger % of the student body. Meeting their varied and complex needs will continue to be a key focus of TOC. For 2017/18 40% of Disabled students reported mental ill health.

Continuation (see Table 12)

While continuation has fluctuated the overall direction for Disabled students is improving. For 2017/18 students reporting mental ill health had 100% success and 10% non-continuation.

Attainment (see Table 12)

For 2017/18 students reporting mental ill health had 92% attainment. Students reporting 'other' disabilities attainment has fluctuated over the years with no real picture emerging. Broad improvements in the attainment of Disabled students over the last 3 years may coincide with the focus of the senior team and subsequent appointment of the HE Disability Officer in 2016/17. The service's work with individuals at each stage of the lifecycle from application, interview, induction, and on-course, their engagement with course teams, and support staff have given a focus and awareness that has enhanced practice and approaches across the campus. For reasons explained above there is a dip in attainment during 2014/15. This is repeated here, since then both access and attainment has risen each year.

Progression See page 2 above: note regarding Progression to employment or further study, variation to plan to be submitted.

Table 12 Disabled Students Disaggregated

13/14	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability affecting mobility	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
emotional/behavioural difficulties	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A

hearing impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
mental ill health	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Multiple Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	7	39%	100%	50%	100%
other medical condition	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A
other physical disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
visual impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	18				

14/15	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability affecting mobility	N/A	8%	N/A	0%	N/A
emotional/behavioural difficulties	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
hearing impairment	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	100%
mental ill health	5	19%	N/A	33%	N/A
Multiple Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%	50%
Other	11	42%	67%	13%	33%
other medical condition	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
other physical disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
visual impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	26				

15/16	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Disability affecting mobility	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
emotional/behavioural difficulties	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
hearing impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
mental ill health	6	16%	N/A	0%	N/A
Multiple Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	15	39%	100%	17%	22%
other medical condition	6	16%	100%	0%	100%
other physical disability	N/A	3%	N/A	0%	N/A
visual impairment	N/A	5%	N/A	0%	N/A
Total	38				

16/17	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability affecting mobility	5	11%	100%	0%	100%
emotional/behavioural difficulties	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
hearing impairment	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
mental ill health	12	26%	100%	11%	33%
Multiple Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	14	30%	100%	0%	70%
other medical condition	10	21%	100%	33%	50%
other physical disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
visual impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	47				

17/18	Learner Number	Access	Success	TEF Non Continuation	Attainment
Disability	N/A	4%	N/A	0%	N/A
Disability affecting mobility	8	9%	100%	17%	100%
emotional/behavioural difficulties	N/A	4%	N/A	0%	N/A
hearing impairment	N/A	1%	0%	0%	0%
mental ill health	34	40%	100%	10%	92%
Multiple Disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	15	18%	100%	22%	67%
other medical condition	15	18%	100%	0%	62%
other physical disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
visual impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	85				

1.5 Care leavers

Data for our Care Leavers is very limited across all lifecycle stages due to extremely low numbers. TOC began collecting this data in 2017/18.

Studies show that Care Leavers face real challenges to participating and succeeding in HE⁵. Local statistics for Oldham and Rochdale indicate that there is a significant number of Care Leavers locally⁶. Figures for Oldham indicate that of the 44 aged 17 to 18 in 2017 none had accessed education above Level 3, 73% were in education or training. The neighbouring town of Rochdale had a similar mix with none in HE and 68% in education or training. Linked to the work on improving access for 18 year olds the College will include a strand to improving access for Care Leavers. We will be guided by national initiatives, best practice and research e.g. the Care Leaver Covenant⁷. From 2019/20 TOC will work with the Local Authority and other agencies to ascertain how to put into practice work with Care Leavers, how to support Care Leavers through programmes and prepare them for progression to graduate level employment and/or further study. The initial target is to improve Access from the current small numbers.

A variation to the plan will be submitted in 2019/20 as the initiatives are implemented and the work is established.

⁵ <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/a-patchy-picture-support-for-care-leavers-in-higher-education/> <accessed 28/06/19>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018> <accessed 28/06/19>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/care-leaver-covenant--2> <accessed 28/06/19>

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

While assumptions may be made around learners of multiple disadvantage we aim to further understand our students over the period of the plan through qualitative and quantitative study of data and experiences. As such our narrative here is speculative in inferences. UCO's HE body is predominantly made up of students who will be facing complex challenges because of their multi-faceted demographic identity, i.e. returners to HE, Female, carers, non-traditional students, White and BAME working class. The majority of HE students at UCO are Female.

Access (see table 13)

The numbers of Female and Male learners accessing HE from Polar Q1 has steadily increased over the last 5 years. However, the numbers of Polar Q1 Males has not significantly shifted for the last 3 years.

Continuation (see table 13)

Retention for Male Q1 students is higher than for Female Q1 students. We have identified a gap in noncontinuation in Male Polar Q1, Q2 groups across White and BAME. We are committed to reduce this. However, we need to collect evidence, disaggregate the information in order to establish and produce an Action Plan to reduce this and begin interventions in 2020/21. This will be submitted as a variation to the plan at the end of 2019/20.

Attainment (see table 13)

Male and Female Q1 students' attainment has seen the Campus wide dip in 14/15 and since then has improved each year to a near parity of 70% and 68%.

Progression See page 2 above: variation to plan to be submitted.

Table 13 Polar and Gender

Female Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	80	18.9%	89.0%	20.0%	96.0%
14/15	98	19.4%	71.0%	10.3%	36.0%
15/16	102	17.4%	88.0%	12.5%	49.0%
16/17	95	16.3%	97.0%	12.2%	62.0%
17/18	106	17.8%	96.0%	14.5%	68.0%
Male Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	26	6.1%	75.0%	30.0%	67.0%
14/15	29	5.7%	50.0%	15.4%	10.0%
15/16	43	7.4%	100.0%	18.2%	41.0%
16/17	43	7.4%	95.0%	40.9%	58.0%
17/18	44	7.4%	83.0%	10.0%	70.0%

Polar, Gender, Ethnicity

Access (see Table 14). Students from the poorest and most challenging areas of the town continue to form a significant proportion of the student body, around a third each year.

Continuation (see Table 14)

The provision of academic and pastoral provision, supports retention and continuation for the many nontraditional learners, learners with disabilities and learners with caring responsibilities. The extent of take-up of this and the additional strategies to develop are set out further below.

The poorest non-continuation statistic is for 2016/17 and is for Female and Male Polar Q1 BAME students, where White Females fared better than their Male and BAME Female colleagues. While Males were a smaller proportion of the UCO total population in 2017/18 they were proportionately higher for withdrawals at 52%. This will be further investigated by course to establish how and what interventions can be implemented. This too highlights the need for all academic staff, support processes and monitoring to reflect an analysis of data by intersections **Attainment** (see Table 14)

While Male Polar Q1 attainment has improved over the years, the BAME Polar Q1 learners attain lower than their White colleagues with a 12% difference in 2017/18. Whereas Female Polar Q1 BAME learners attain the same as all Polar Q1 Females. Male BAME Polar Q1 students are consistently lowest in attainment. Female to Male attainment has fluctuated with Females attaining higher for the last 2 years (2016/17, 2017/18). Mature Male attainment has been slightly higher than Mature Female and is now (17/18) levelling out.

TOC has evolved a holistic wraparound support service for our students, further intersectional analysis indicates that more differentiated approaches may need to be implemented to e.g. evaluating and addressing the needs of POLAR Q1 Young Males.

Progression See page 2 above: variation to plan to be submitted.

Table 14 Polar, Gender, Ethnicity

Male Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	26	6.1%	75.0%	30.0%	67.0%
14/15	29	5.7%	50.0%	15.4%	10.0%
15/16	43	7.4%	100.0%	18.2%	41.0%
16/17	43	7.4%	95.0%	40.9%	58.0%
17/18	44	7.4%	83.0%	10.0%	70.0%
BAME Male Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	13	3.1%	60.0%	38.5%	43.0%
14/15	10	2.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
15/16	18	3.1%	100.0%	7.7%	30.0%
16/17	19	3.3%	90.0%	50.0%	53.0%
17/18	22	3.7%	70.0%	N/A	58.0%

Table 13

Female Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %
13/14	80	18.9%	89.0%	20.0%	96.0%
14/15	98	19.4%	71.0%	10.3%	36.0%
15/16	102	17.4%	88.0%	12.5%	49.0%
16/17	95	16.3%	97.0%	12.2%	62.0%
17/18	106	17.8%	96.0%	14.5%	68.0%
BAME Female Polar Q1	Learner Number	Access %	Success %	TEF Non Continuation %	Attainment %

13/14	36	8.5%	100.0%	15.6%	87.0%
14/15	45	8.9%	67.0%	0.0%	27.0%
15/16	41	7.0%	77.0%	0.0%	50.0%
16/17	36	6.2%	92.0%	26.3%	58.0%
17/18	38	6.4%	95.0%	4.5%	68.0%

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

A large proportion of TOC HE students are mature students with **caring responsibilities**. These are predominantly Female, while many are studying on health, caring and education courses this is also a factor on Business and Psychology programmes. Collection of data on this group is not yet in place to gather quantitative information. This will be in place from 2019/20. Feedback from students at course panels, student forum and via Annual Evaluation reports indicate that TOC strategies are supportive of the needs of these groups e.g. timetabling hours, emergency hardship payments.

The local towns of Oldham and Rochdale have attracted several groups of **refugees** who are able to access HE. While motivated to succeed they also have specific needs related to language, cultural expectations of HE, and often have caring responsibilities for children and family members. This information will begin to be gathered in 2019/20 as part of the enrolment process. Additionally **Military families** have not yet featured in our data but this is a demographic for TOC to explore during the years in scope. We will scope out how we can start to work with students from **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller** communities. This is a really new area for TOC and we will rely on examples of best practice, links with the LA and outreach teams to inform our practice, this will be included in the variation to the plan, 2019/20. Understanding the needs of students who were in receipt of **Free School Meals** (FSM) will also be a key aspect of our work around the student journey. While the FE data is collected on these students this now requires analysis for HE learners and will be included from 2019/20 enrolment information. The collection of information regarding learners who are **estranged** from their families has not yet taken place and will similarly be threaded into our enrolment process. It is likely that the numbers of these latter groups are and will remain small and limit reporting. However as data improves Group Profiles will be introduced in 2019/20 to provide key information to Academic staff to inform pedagogical and support approaches. This will sit alongside more stringent Quality monitoring systems and information to inform pedagogical and support responses.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The College strategic plan states that we will continue to strengthen relationships with awarding bodies and other stakeholders to grow the HE and Higher Skills provision to meet employer, student and community needs and keep students engaged locally, enhancing their development before, during and after their studies. The College Strategic Plan spans the first 2 years of the APP. TOC's strategic aims align with the Local Authority and Greater Manchester's education and employment priorities and with national priorities of access to high-level qualifications, education and training for non-traditional learners. Further development of the curriculum (HE, and Degree Apprenticeship) will respond to these needs across the Local Authority (LA) and the College's areas of Health, Digitisation, Construction and Professional Services. Oldham's largest employment sectors are Health and Social Care and Business and Professional Services. The LA has set out the key employment sectors of strategic development for the town i.e. Construction, ICT and the Creative industries. This is reflected in the College's curriculum plans to strengthening existing provision and developing its HE and Apprenticeship offer. The whole organisation works primarily with local students, internal data tells us that the bulk travel 5 miles or less to study. As stated above, the majority are from disadvantaged backgrounds, including Mature, commuting, BAME, carers, and a high proportion of first generation HE level participants. The College is committed to providing excellent quality of teaching, support, resources in an environment that enables all students to succeed to their full potential. This was

recognised in the TEF Silver awarded to TOC. ‘...an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching...’.⁸ In accessing and continuing through the stages of HE and beyond to employment or further study TOC will maintain a focus on **continuation** and **success** for all learners and adapt this to the needs of specific groups e.g. BAME, Mature. In addressing the low numbers of 18 year olds TOC will target **access** activities for this group disaggregated to include Male and BAME Male. TOC will work to improve the **success** of all groups of students into employment/further study in a challenging local context. The commitments herein are intended to have impact both in the short term and more sustained and embedded over the period of the plan.

2.1 Target groups

Table 15

Group	Stage/s of lifecycle
Male 18 year olds Polar Q1 and 2	Access/ Continuation/Progression/Success
BAME 18 year olds Polar Q1 and 2	Access/Continuation/Progression/Success
Care leavers and other under-represented groups in HE*	Access/ Continuation/Progression/Success
BAME	Continuation/Progression/Success
All under-represented groups* (commitment)	Success
Mature	Success

As TOC works mainly with under-represented groups the above table indicates the main focus of work to address our gaps, however, there is inevitably a substantial overlap in the work we do with each group at each stage.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Table 16

Strategic Measure	Target group and gap	Measurable objectives	timescale
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⁸ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10006770> <accessed 28/06/19>

ACCESS Reputation and Specialism, Community	<i>Improve the entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 male 18 year old students.</i> 18 year olds Polar Q1 and 2, Access Care leavers and other under-represented groups in HE, Access <i>Improve the numbers of BAME 18 year olds from POLAR 1 and 2 gaining Access to HE.</i> Male 18 year old, and BAME 18 year old Polar Q1, Q2 Access	Increase the participation of local 18 year-old males from under-represented areas A1 i) Target, to increase the percentage of male students from Polar quintiles 1 & 2 to 19% by 2024/25. Access teams to work with 13-16 year-olds over the 5-year period in a range of interactions with feeder schools and community groups. Improve internal progression of FE learners to UCO and other HE providers by course and access teams collaborating on projects, sharing space, shared teaching. Differentiate Access activities to include Care Leavers, FSM groups, and other under-represented groups. Set ambitious internal progression targets to both the College HE and other HE providers of 50% of Level 3 learners at the College. A2 i) Target, increase the percentage of BAME 18 year old students from Polar quintiles 1 & 2 to 25%, by 2024/25. Employability and Access teams to work with employers to target Younger students and create range of mentor, raising attainment programmes. Deliver programmes of activities with local school, feeders. Implementation of Internal Progression Strategy agreed with activities from the FE learners at the college. Review and develop curriculum routes to reflect needs of local 18 year olds e.g. Computing, Construction, Degree Apprenticeships. Provide a range of access options for 18 year olds e.g. Mentor Schemes with Employers to highlight access opportunities. Increase numbers of Male BAME 18 year olds from under-represented areas (Polar 1 and 2). The Targets for Male 18 year old students and Mature BAME males Access to be confirmed as full data on this is not yet available.	Annual review of work against targets with biannual milestones, as set out in the investment plan, 2020/21 – 2024/25
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		Design and deliver a programme of differentiated activities for working with specific groups. Engage with relevant stakeholders and community groups e.g. Positive Steps, Local Authority to implement Access activities for specific groups, to establish strategic collaborative relationships.	
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Continuation High performance	BAME, Mature, Continuation	Improve retention and continuation of Male, BAME and Mature learners to reflect equity and close gaps. SC1 Improving Continuation of all students. Commitment, non-continuation rate of 10% by 2024/25. Research and produce evidence-based responses to address non-continuation. Utilise learner analytics, risk register, academic and pastoral tutorials and support to facilitate continuation. Work with students prior to enrolment in preparation for the demands of the transition to HE. Work with students during semester 1 in support of the demands of the transition to HE. Work with employers and alumni to develop mentor programmes. Utilise learner analytics to support tracking of students and inform interventions to reduce noncontinuation. Provide Financial support incentives where this is identified as a barrier to continuation. Establish group profiles of learners to inform pedagogical approaches in addressing the needs of learners. Utilise Learner analytics across all activities – course, tutorial, and support - to aid tracking of students and inform interventions. Monitor At Risk students and specific triggers e.g. course deadlines, Xmas holidays, attendance.	Annual review of work against targets with biannual milestones as set out in the investment plan, 2020/21 – 2024/25
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Attainment High Performance, Community, evidencing impact	BAME, Attainment	ST1 Eliminating the 4% gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between BAME and White students (2018/19 baseline figure). Target, 60% of all first degree students achieve 1st/2:1 by 2024/25. Reduce the gap between BAME and White students in Honours degree and Foundation Degree outcomes Establish group profiles of learners to inform pedagogical approaches in addressing the needs of learners. ST2 Eliminating the 10% gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between Mature and Young students (2017/18 baseline figure). Target, 60% of all first degree students achieve 1st/2:1 by 2024/25. Reduce the gap between mature and young students in Honours degree and Foundation Degree outcomes Work with students and tutors to achieve an inclusive curriculum delivery for all programmes. Differentiate support activities to include intersections of Care Leavers, FSM learners, other under-represented groups across BAME learners. Establish and deliver an achievement programme to improve achievements of BAME Male learners from Polar Q1 and 2. Work with employers and alumni to develop mentor programmes. Use group profiles to inform pedagogical approaches differentiating for Mature and Young students. Provide support at key points of the year on site to compliment classroom timetables e.g. portfolio workshops during holiday periods. SC2 Improving overall Attainment of all students. Commitment, 85% attainment for all students by 2024/25.	Annual review of work against targets with biannual milestones, as set out in the investment plan, 2020/21 – 2024/25
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Progression Community, evidencing impact, digitalisation and technology	All under-represented groups	P1 Improve the numbers of students progressing into higher paid/graduate level Employment. Targets to be confirmed once Graduate Outcomes data is available. P2 Improve the numbers of students progressing into postgraduate Further Study. Targets to be confirmed once Graduate Outcomes data is available. Improve the outcomes of all graduates into further study and/or graduate level employment Build on existing Career provision to include a range of opportunities for individuals and groups. Mentor Schemes with Employers to highlight access opportunities. Design and implement Graduate Employment Schemes with local employers. Create robust Alumni links, activities of mutual benefit for the College, Learners, ex-students, Employers.	Annual review of work against targets with biannual milestones 2020/21 – 2024/25 (to be confirmed once Graduate outcomes data is available)
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3. Strategic measures

The College is explicitly committed to Widening Participation across the whole organisation to deliver high quality technical and professional education and training which adds economic and social value to the communities of Oldham and Greater Manchester. Given the location, the socio-economic context, history and remit, all of TOC's activities, developments and measures are underpinned by this commitment. This is articulated in TOC's Strategic plan. In addressing the guidance set out by the OfS, further adaptation of practices are required, to ensure this work is continuously and consistently applied, monitored and reviewed. The theory of change will apply to several strands of engagement and action. TOC recognises that these developments require a deeper and more informed approach to evaluation and monitoring of interventions and initiatives. The whole provider approach to engagement with the data is at the beginning of a journey. The College MIS team are now producing reports and updates across the OfS Key areas, by student category across the lifecycle. This has identified that over the last 3 years there has been an improvement on continuation, however the numbers of 18 year old students accessing HE remains low and needs improvement.

The interventions and practices already in place and the development of strategies to support access, continuation, progression and success are now in sharper focus at programme reviews, internal Quality Reviews, and staff briefings. Alongside this, the governance and QA processes have been strengthened to include regular monitoring and review; from staff student panels through to staff meetings and groups, to deliberative committees at senior manager, Principalship and governor levels. TOC HE KPIs were substantially realigned to reflect the TEF requirements and are being further refined to reflect the APP strands, groups and categories. This updating will continue to enable reflection and action around the gaps that the College can self-identify as well as being able to respond to e.g. the OfS alert regarding recruitment of BAME via UCAS from 2016/17 to 2018. The whole provider approach to WP has the basic foundations and structures to further build on and is unequivocal in TOC's Strategic Plan. There is more work required in order to implement the ambitious

shifts in our practice. By engaging with the opportunities offered by the OfS Evaluation Tool, and developing an improved understanding of our work, the changes we can make in responding to the new regulatory framework will result in more precise, credible, concrete impacts on the student journey.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Our work is already focussed on inclusivity of access, progression and success through outreach and school transition activities, pedagogical and teaching learning and assessment approaches and the work of the Graduate Hub. As indicated above this is all contained in the whole provider's strategic priorities. There is an imminent need to further embed and sharpen our achievements and outcomes at every level. Opportunities to increase the awareness, involvement and contributions of all academic and support staff are now in train and will continue through Staff Development sessions, bite-sized updates, the programmes themselves and the reporting mechanisms of the College. This shift change will run through all reporting, monitoring, reviewing and planning. The whole college approach to effective changes in practice and outcomes will require:

- i) The increased utilisation, sharing and collection of data, to then inform the development of our evaluation skills, consider more closely our responses, how we analyse and understand the interventions and how we improve this practice. This will include the development of systematic and robust collection of data on progression to employment or further study
- ii) Strengthening and embedding the meaningful engagement of students in consultation and decision making panels and groups

The College's Strategic plans presents the following priorities:

Priority 1: **Reputation and specialism** sets out a commitment to three specialist centres of excellence in higher skills and degree level provision, focussing on the three main employment sectors for Oldham – digital and creative; construction, and health and social care. Over the period of the Plan the College will continue to provide and develop a dynamic suite of vocational and academic curriculum programmes that deliver the higher skills relevant to national, regional and local strategic objectives, ensuring that students develop the necessary knowledge, skills, aptitudes and abilities to secure, retain and develop graduate career opportunities. This supports the recruitment strategy to improve Access for under-represented 18 year olds, the pedagogical steps to reduce the gap in outcomes of BAME and White students and outcomes strand of improving success of all learners. As a central priority in Oldham, where the proportion of adults with skills at Level 4 and above is low, UCO has a key role to play in supporting the transition between study and employment. An underpinning theme within all UCO provision is the embedding of employability skills and real-world experience as well as dedicated graduate career support.

Priority 2: **High performance**. We deliver a high quality HE experience, we are committed to maintaining the highest standard in inspirational teaching, learning and assessment that is informed by professional practice, research and scholarship to promote an inclusive curriculum and enhance the learning experience. TOC will target to deliver ambitious transformative engagements at all stages of the student lifecycle e.g. reducing attainment gaps between BAME and White students and improving the Success of learners into graduate level employment. Employers' involvement in curriculum design helps to set highly relevant expectations, standards of knowledge and context that equips students to function in their chosen area of work.

Priority 3: commits to engagement with **Digitalisation and technology** in all aspects of operations – teaching, pedagogical and MIS. A key activity for this plan is the increased utilisation, sharing and collection of data, to then inform the development of our evaluation skills, consider more closely our responses,

how we analyse and understand the interventions and improve this practice. This will include e.g. systematic and robust collection of data on progression to employment or further study. Engagement across the whole provider e.g. using learner analytics to improve understanding and responses to supporting continuation, and informing the development of innovative practices to enable learners to progress. Rapid technological changes are having an impact on teaching, learning and assessment methods and the specialist nature of HE curriculum demands that staff engage in continuing professional development, maintain currency and expertise in industry practice to constantly update and reflect industry requirements. Curriculum planning, collaboration and strong engagement with local employers ensures that courses are designed in collaboration with industry professionals and enhanced by industrial engagement being embedded at each stage of the programme. UCO has built a curriculum that ensures all students leave equipped with the skills they need to succeed in their careers.

An inclusive curriculum in which digital literacy and employability skills are effectively and consistently embedded is an important feature of the strategy. The flexible, responsive, creative approach the College takes to HE Curriculum development and delivery means it is able to adapt to the changing technologies within the world of work. Students studying at UCO can be assured that all courses are topical, relevant, work relevant and develop the skills required in industry.

Priority 4: **Community:** The College is focussed on supporting employment for learners, and business growth and development for employers, and is mindful of its wider contribution to Oldham and Greater Manchester. Adding social value as well as economic impact, is central to this. UCO recognises the particular challenges and opportunities that Oldham presents and shapes its strategies to include a clear community focus so that opportunities to acquire higher skills are more accessible locally. The continuing broadening of relevant curriculum at UCO will include specialist higher skills pathways at Levels 4/5 and above. Our place in the town means that we can attract more students to study locally. Our role in the town is explicitly linked to local priority areas in supporting the economic and social regeneration of the town the future development of Oldham's growth. By delivering a curriculum portfolio relevant to local strategic and economic priorities the higher education offer is future-focused. This delivery is underpinned by the provision of an appropriate and well-resourced and supportive learning environment that provides an enriching, engaging and challenging learning environment for all students, that encourages participation in higher education by students from diverse and non-traditional educational backgrounds.

Upskilling the local labour market and supporting career aspirations remains crucial to the ongoing socioeconomic improvements of the local community; the College places a high value on creating well-rounded graduates who are equipped to compete in a challenging employment market. Through rigorous and contextappropriate embedding of employability skills and curriculum design UCO has prioritised 'graduate destinations' as a core theme in order for graduates to progress into roles which are vital to the local economy and align with local key strategic priorities.

Priority 5: **Evidencing impact:** The College is committed to agreeing a methodology for measuring and capturing this impact, and to sharing this with local stakeholders to inform a better understanding of the College's role and an evidence-based approach to understanding its forward development. This links to the whole provider approach to engaging with challenging and ambitious targets through robust programmes.

The TOC's Strategic Plan covers the 5-year period of 2020/21 to 2024/25. The milestones for each year follow the operating and strategic meeting and governance cycle. Progress of programmes and interventions associated with the APP will also be monitored via the APP Steering Group (APP SG) where individual programmes will report on the targets and milestones specific to these projects. This will feedback to the College's senior managers and operational groups. The APP SG will produce the Annual Impact Report drawing on review and monitoring and any actions through this process and submit any variations to the APP. Key dates for monitoring and evaluating the APP as a whole will be once per term with an initial meeting convened at the beginning of each Academic Year. Reports will be submitted to Principalship and Governors at the relevant meetings e.g. Curriculum and Quality, Resources.

Alignment with other strategies

The Oldham College **Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024** sets out the next phase of the College's development. The mission statement: To deliver high quality technical and professional education and training which adds economic and social value to the communities of Oldham and Greater Manchester resonates with the college's commitment to WP in HE.

The provider's **HE and Higher Skills Strategy** is informed by the college **Strategic Plan**. HE provision at UCO has emerged from a strong commitment to offer a broad vocational curriculum which can also provide higher level skills to meet the needs of employers and students in a local environment where they feel able to study, increase in confidence and progress further towards their goals. Through this strategy the College reaffirms its commitment to the development and enhancement of its Higher Education and Higher Skills provision over the period of the plan, with clear aims and objectives identified to achieve these goals. The overarching objectives are to diversify the range and quality of provision to appeal to a broader range of potential students e.g. the introduction of the new FD Computing, employers and the local community and to continue quality improvement in order to gain external recognition for the quality of delivery and the student experience.

As the expert provider of work related education in Oldham the college recognises the need to respond to the changing education and skills landscape by introducing additional pathways into careers that provide opportunities to achieve skills up to degree level, but not always delivered through the traditional degree format. In the current climate of strong competition from universities and other providers the College is planning for further growth in HE provision through increasing and diversifying the HE curriculum offer and a key theme within this is to attract more Oldham college students to progress to UCO.

The College Values set out: **Inclusion**: Creating opportunities, challenging prejudice and removing barriers across the community, irrespective of social background or characteristics and providing a genuinely comprehensive offer, tailored to the needs of individuals.

Equality and Diversity Strategy: The College is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst staff and students with a vision for Oldham College to be a successful, recognised, prosperous college that fully utilises the creativity, innovation and talents of its people, placing us at the leading edge of the sector and making us one of the best places to work, study and visit. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can reach their full potential and have a real choice to participate in and contribute to our activities and processes, without prejudice and discrimination. The College actively supports Widening Participation, encouraging maximum access to the full range of courses, and other educational services, for people of all social backgrounds and cultures. This includes monitoring patterns of recruitment to courses. The College recognises its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and is confident that it meets these in this plan.

The College's FE **Teaching for Distinction Strategy**, the HE **Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy** and **Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy** have been designed to respond to the needs of the learners, reflects the college vision for high performance, success and the continued development of staff pedagogical practice. These both align with the sector guidelines e.g. the Advance HE UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). The development of academic and vocational skills and experience that are embedded into the curriculum strengthen students' employability prospects, aligning with the College's strategy to deliver a high quality HE experience, with the highest standard in inspirational teaching, learning and assessment informed by professional practice, research and scholarship to promote an inclusive curriculum and enhance the learning experience.

The **Steps2Success** programme, already delivered on the HE campus, provides differentiated support for all HE students via 1 to 1 and group sessions that address e.g. preparation for each stage of the HE journey, summer dissertation preparation courses, programmes for learners where English is not their first

language. The Academic Development Team deliver these sessions in close collaboration with teaching teams, LRC staff and the Career and Employment Service. The support services produce Annual reviews which provide statistical evidence on take-up of support and narrative feedback from students on the interventions and engagement. Course Leaders then add this to the Annual Evaluation Report and reflect on the impact of the support on e.g. retention, achievement, and progress.

The College **Internal Progression Strategy** is being reenergised to both raise the number of students moving through the FE levels and also to capitalise on the opportunities for more local 18 year olds to progress to HE and HE within the College. This is in response to the framework set out in the Gatsby Benchmarks, Ofsted's requirements to improve the destinations of leavers and therefore ensure that the Whole Provider approach from this institution becomes a seamless process straddling FE and HE/Higher level opportunities and access. The Enhanced Monitoring of the College by OfS sets out the need for strengthening and embedding the meaningful engagement of students in consultation and decision-making panels and groups. The College **Parental Engagement Strategy** commits to the range of work we will carry out with parents and families of all learners - from FE to HE. This supports all stakeholders through the decision-making processes, provides advice and guidance on key topics e.g. career routes, financial decisions and facilitates positive engagements e.g. at Open Days, advice sessions.

The HE **Student Voice Strategy** reflects the College value of **Responsiveness**: Listening to learners, policymakers, employers and partners, so that we are relevant and always improving.

Over the period of the plan the **Student Voice Strategy** will be further implemented to support this key initiative, providing more regular training for student representatives, include steps to involve part-time students, focus group consultation, and seek to address the barriers for students where other commitments may preclude this engagement e.g. caring responsibilities, part-time work.

Strategic measures

TOC is evolving its approach and practice to a consistent implementation of evidence informed initiatives across the institution. The gaps in performance that the College will address involve a range of measures that will build on and add to existing practice. These measures are linked to the College's Strategic Plan Priorities, section 2. The explicit targets (as per the Targets and Investment Plan) and our commitments are set out below.

Access Targets

- A1 Increasing **Access** for local male 18 year-olds from low participation areas.
Target, increase the percentage of male students from polar quintiles 1 & 2 to 19% by 2024/25
- A2 Increasing **Access** for 18 year old BAME students from low participation areas.
 - i) **Target**, increase the percentage of BAME 18 year old students from Polar quintiles 1 & 2 to 25%, by 2024/25.

Success Targets

- ST1 Eliminating the 4% gap in **degree outcomes** (1sts and 2:1s) between BAME and White students.
Target, 60% of all Honours students achieve 1st or 2:1 and 60% of Foundation Degree students achieve Distinction or Merit by 2024/25.
- ST2 Eliminating the 10% gap in **degree outcomes** (1sts and 2:1s) between Mature and Young students.

Target, 60% of all Honours students achieve 1st or 2:1 and 60% of Foundation Degree students achieve Distinction or Merit by 2024/25.

Success Commitments

SC1 Improving **Continuation** of all students. **Commitment**, non-continuation rate of 10% by 2024/25.

SC2 Improving **Attainment** of all students. **Commitment**, 85% attainment for all students by 2024/25.

Progression

P1 Improve the numbers of students progressing into higher paid/graduate level **Employment**. Targets to be confirmed once Graduate Outcomes data is available.

P2 Improve the numbers of students progressing into postgraduate **Further Study**. Targets to be confirmed once Graduate Outcomes data is available.

The whole institution will continue to implement a range of interventions and responses and also build on existing initiatives where evidence informs us there are gaps to address. For example: outreach and transition work with local schools and feeders to engage more with community groups and employers, sustained approaches to developing and embedding inclusive curriculum content, continuing to provide and improve on the range of services available for students with disabilities, students experiencing mental health issues and the financial challenges that learners experience: tailored, pro-active interventions within the classroom through the HE Tutorial Scheme, and Academic Support that is differentiated where key gaps are identified e.g. sessions for English speakers of other languages.

Access, success, progression within the curriculum, pedagogic and student support

3 HE Faculty Leads have recently been appointed to manage the 3 key stages of the student lifecycle. These are responsible for the line management of staff teams and the strands of recruitment, retention and progression with monitoring of data on recruitment, retention and attainment threaded into each of these roles. The measures we are taking to engage with and improve recruitment and access from WP groups include working on assignments with local schools, the annual Excel Performance Festival with local colleges, photography competitions with the Oldham Gallery, and industry specialist days with speakers from companies and staff delivering sessions and promoting HE. The College's **Internal Progression Strategy** is now keenly focussed on the routes that the FE learners can take to progress to HE and Higher Skills. Work will continue through engagement across staff teams, scrutiny of the curriculum offer, developments where there are gaps, activities for 18 year olds to access nontraditional programmes, e.g. women into Construction, men into Caring professions. Engagements will continue with other local feeder schools and Colleges. We continue to contribute to the schedule of recruitment days for HE e.g. advising on Personal Statement writing. Alongside this, the 5-year period of the plan will involve longitudinal programmes of engagement with children and Young people under the age of 16 with local schools, community organisations and networks. Collaboration will be a key factor of our work with the Local Authority and voluntary groups that will also cross over access, progress and employment targets of this plan. Visits to the campus for applicants and prospective students is an important aspect of our access work. As UCO has a history of working with non-traditional students we have done this through contextualisation of making offers. Taking the applicants' broader history and potential into consideration e.g. employment, maturity, motivation, a holistic picture can be established and support also identified. Applicants are invited to interview and applicant days where they meet staff, tour teaching and support areas and meet students. Students with Learning Needs are interviewed to establish how they can be supported and provided with advice on funding. Academic staff are closely involved in access activities e.g. representing at Open Days, HE Events at feeder colleges, taster events, and outreach work with school groups. There will be an increased focus on this as the Plan addresses the gap in local 18 year olds' access to HE.

Curriculum developments over this period are in train and in response to key priority areas for the local authority and Greater Manchester i.e. digital: a new FD Computing, construction: links with Level 3 Construction to the HNC, a proposed top-up in Construction and Degree Apprenticeship provision. The measures we are taking to ensure continued improvements to learner success through the stages of the programmes include Peer Learning projects,

students acting as mentors within their courses, preparation for Dissertation at the end of year 2, specific sessions focussed on English language for speakers of other languages and the 'pass first time' initiative designed to reduce attrition that may occur during the summer break. UCO staff are supported in carrying out relevant pedagogical research and applying this to their practice. Papers presented by staff at the annual UCO Research Symposium have also been accepted at HEI national and international conferences. E.g. Academic Support Lecturers represented the College at the International Forum for Peer Learning 2019 to display poster presentations of two research projects conducted at TOC. The research project 'Steps to Success: Examining The Impact of Academic Development Services on First Year Undergraduates Studying Within a HE in FE

Environment', highlighted techniques to improve the transition experience of first year students at TOC, as well as the positive impact of Academic Development Services on undergraduates' confidence, attainment and development. In addition, the study 'Does PAL Work? An Exploration of Affect amongst First-Year HE-in-FE Students', illustrated the usefulness of peer-assisted learning in reducing anxiety amongst undergraduates⁹. The Early Years team ran a workshop at the NEON Summer Symposium, 'Powerful Play in a Teaching Excellence Framework'¹⁰. While the campus is relatively small the ambitions, impact and richness of these activities will continue to be supported and encouraged with more involvement and input of students. The wraparound support service engages with the academic, pastoral and aspirational elements of each student's HE journey. The Central Induction programme dovetails into the curriculum timetable ensuring that key messages and information are conveyed to all students e.g. orientation of the LRC, use of the VLE, location of the various support teams. This is then followed up at transition points throughout the year with each cohort and in 1 to 1 sessions. The HE Tutorial Scheme has been running for 2 years and is a structured schedule of activities and topics delivered by the teaching teams. This brings together multiple elements of the student journey - e.g. election of student rep's, discussion of the expectations of HE, evaluations of teaching and learning, time management sessions in preparation for assignment work, and mini-projects around entrepreneurial skills.

Tutors are focussed on supporting students to continue and progress, structures are in place to provide individual and group tutorial support, Learner Analytics are now being used across the campus and a picture of the key points and occurrences of withdrawal, likelihood of withdrawal are being understood and recorded on the **At Risk Register**. This has provided evidence in the last year on the range of challenges that students may encounter. The occurrences, cohorts, gender and situations that present difficulties for students can now begin to form a year on year picture to respond to in our commitment to reduce non-continuation. For example, our data indicates that the period over the summer is a vulnerable point in time for those re-sitting assignments; structured assignment support is in place to avert this. Similarly, the first year cohorts are more vulnerable to withdrawing from their programmes during Semester 1. Our research indicates that this is a period where the combination of transition to HE and its expectations and a period of waiting for Student Finance presents real challenges which not all new students can withstand, this has a particular impact on Mature returners. The College is mindful of its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and colleagues follow the reporting procedure should any serious concerns be raised. The **HE Retention Strategy** has been instigated in response to evidence of low continuation highlighted by TEF metrics. All support and academic staff are now engaged in monitoring students' attendance, engagement and intervening where this performance dips or issues emerge. Staff are focused on pre-emptive actions wherever possible, before situations escalate. Academic and pastoral tutorials assist students in targetsetting their journey through each stage of the programme. Students have access to Mental Health and Wellbeing services onsite along with the HE Disability Officer. These measures will continue and where possible be augmented. The support that Mature students require and that needed by Younger students may vary according to their external commitments and past experiences and the College is committed to closing this gap in attainment over the period of the plan. The College will continue to fund assessments of learning need for students e.g. Dyslexia testing. As the student body continues to grow and diversify the College will continue to develop evidence-based responses and to differentiate the support provided.

⁹ <https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ahs/Publicdocs/LATEST%20Full%20Agenda%202019%20Forum%20for%20Peer%20Learning.pdf> <accessed 13/06/19>

¹⁰ <https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk/agenda-2019/> <accessed 13/06/19>

Employability and skills development

We are confident that TOC's HE graduates will continue to attain positive outcomes from their courses – developing academic and graduate attributes. As referred to on page 2 above, comments from the College's TEF Silver award and improving DLHE rates. However, the geographic, socio-economic context of Oldham and the mobility of its population remains challenging in terms of securing graduate level employment at a local level. Employability work starts in Year 1 with employability events and coaching in the soft skills needed by successful graduates. We will continue to work with industry partners, and the Local Authority to stimulate and enable the pipelines of talent into local graduate opportunities. Oldham does benefit from its proximity to Manchester city centre¹¹, and the Career service has started working on expanding the horizons of students who may not yet have considered the options of travelling to secure the better paid work available. Most of our students travel 5 miles or less to study¹², fitting education around work, and family commitments. The Career service provides dynamic interventions within cohorts and at a 1 to 1 level. Sessions delivered on Growth Mindset, for improving confidence, sit alongside more traditional sessions on CV writing, and preparing for interview. Every final year student has an individual career session - take up of this has improved year on year and data on student perceptions and readiness for employment /further study has informed further interventions and work. Students report that they need skills in building self-confidence, and presenting themselves better at interview. 'Getting over the graduate line' is an initiative now in place and will continue over the period of the plan.

Each course team is engaged with industry in organising bespoke key events pertinent to their area e.g. the Social Sciences and Criminology conferences, Business Breakfast networking events, the end of year Creatives Festival. These will continue and build into annual schedules where HE learners are in contact with practitioners in a meaningful exchange, which in turn supports continuation and underpins the acquisition of graduate attributes. In addition, all programmes have either industrial placements, live briefs or research projects that bring students into direct contact with their vocational field. Module evaluation feedback indicates that this engagement improves students' prospects of entering into employment as confident agents ready for this shift change. Consideration will be needed too for the increased number of 18 year old learners we will recruit, and their aspirations e.g. 'More Young people are getting stuck where they grew up or went to university because they cannot afford rents in places where they can earn more money, according to the Resolution Foundation thinktank. It found the number of people aged 25 to 34 starting a new job and moving home in the last year had fallen 40% over the last two decades.'¹³

The layers of input to improve student progression begins at student induction with an orientation tour of the support services. 1 to 1 sessions then work at the micro-level of empowering the individual to build capacity and resilience, to help overcome the barriers of social mobility and social capital. Many graduates find employment through existing connections and work experience – by collaborating with employers to provide mentors and placement/internships for non-traditional students the intention is to both step up students' potential and also benefit local businesses.

Self-confidence may be compounded by unconscious bias – internal and external. A strand of our research will focus on raising awareness, and aspirations outwardly with our business and community partners across Oldham. The intersections of gender, age and ethnicity also impact on social mobility: to add to this our students are often juggling caring and domestic responsibilities with job-seeking. The importance of developing graduate schemes with local employers will be a key target for the College over the period of the plan and is acknowledged as an area that needs investment and resources to have significant impact. Collecting information on TOC's HE Alumni, then developing this community of graduates will require initial investment and resourcing. A successful TOC Alumni scheme in place at the start of the period of the plan (2020) and developed over these years will play a vital role in supporting students, connecting TOC with employers, and inform curriculum developments and career advice and interventions.

¹¹ [Oldham in Profile - oldham.gov.uk](https://oldham.gov.uk) <accessed 20/08/19>

¹² Internal data

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/06/high-rents-in-english-cities-forcing-Young-to-stay-in-small-towns> <accessed 07/06/19>

Collaboration and alignment with other work and funding sources

We are committed to working collaboratively with other HEIs, third sector organisations and employers in the region through the Greater Manchester Higher partnership to raise awareness of, and encourage progression to, the full range of Higher Education opportunities. We aim through our collaborative work to:

- Raise the HE participation rate for learners from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 in Greater Manchester
- Increase the proportion of Care Leavers from the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities who progress to HE A baseline and numerical targets will be developed during 19/20 to be finalised ahead of 20/21.

Financial support

We are committed to continue supporting students facing financial difficulties. There are points in the HE journey where students may encounter financial hardship that could affect their attendance, continuation, and/or decisionmaking¹⁴. The College will re-assess the provision of the current bursary with a view to enhancing this with more focussed support at these points in the year. Mature students and those with caring responsibilities may face additional financial burdens that challenge their ability to continue on their course. Internal evidence suggests that Female students, with caring responsibilities and part time work, experience particular difficulties in the first semester of their courses. Delays to receipt of student finance affects this group and their dependents. From 2020/21 students will continue to have access to the Hardship Fund, short-term loans, and emergency payments where their circumstances present serious disruption to their ability to continue to engage in their studies. Further consultation with students during 2019/20 onwards will inform any changes to financial support provided.

3.2 Student consultation

Student feedback is facilitated through various methods: each cohort elects one or more student representatives (to address confidence and attendance at meetings), the role is discussed as part of the HE Tutorial Scheme, course teams hold staff student panels each term with a set agenda on course, quality, and environmental topics. The cross-campus Student Forum is held at least once a semester where student representatives meet with senior managers to discuss course feedback, work together on specific concerns e.g. IT, employability. Each of these has a feedback and actions mechanism that are reported to the College's deliberative groups. The Student Union and Governing body elections take place each October; the HE Student Governor is re-elected annually. Students have been involved in developing the content of the APP. Student involvement in planning and consultation has taken place through the Student Forum, discussions with senior staff and students, a focus group and production of the student submission. Students involved in this process represent a cross section of courses and backgrounds, i.e. students with learning needs, Mature students, Male and Female and Female BAME students. The Vice Principal Finance spoke with students at an APP Briefing where a range of responses, and scenarios were discussed and debated. The HE Student Governor was also present. The students were clear in each of these settings that the College's support wraparound had played a positive role in each of their experiences and that the Academic, Career, Disability support must continue and be strengthened if possible. Having read the draft APP, students praised the support services and recommended that this is more widely communicated, that consistent practice around assessment and deadline information is put in place and stressed that there is still work to do to raise the profile of the HE provision in the town. Suggestions around assignments and contacts through summer and holiday periods were also proposed. All of this links with the whole college approach to supporting WP, its vision of Responsiveness, and providing a learning environment and interventions that provide a locus for success and progression. Students also suggested strengthening the

¹⁴ Internal data collected at tutorials and recorded on MyCap

opportunities to take English and Maths Level 2 alongside their HE programme. Students Representatives and Student Ambassadors play other roles in Access work e.g. at open days and events for applicants and potential students.

Fee levels were discussed at the Student Forum and noted for wider consultation – this will follow through the appropriate processes. Consultation, monitoring of the APP will be further extended to course Staff Student Panel Agendas, the Student Forum, and the Student Representative Handbook. This will feed into the deliberative committees of the College and includes student representation at each level.

Student representative training takes place at the Forum where briefings are delivered and discussed and the Vice Principal Finance attends, via the HE Tutorial Scheme, and through the schedule of group sessions covering e.g. the student rep handbook, effective campaigning, making the most of the role, speaking in public.

The College now has an elected Student HE Governor, has involved student representatives and members of the student body in discussions and processes around a range of issues. However, this is still an area to continue to develop in raising student engagement, and enabling the participation across the wide range of student groups. The majority of students are 'commuter students' and have external commitments – part time work, families, caring responsibilities – limiting the time they can spend contributing to the student voice. We also have a growing number of part time students whose attendance patterns (evenings) and availability will be factored into the meetings schedules and feedback loops.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

We acknowledge here that the development of an embedded and consistent approach to evaluation is at an early stage at TOC as a small provider of HE. Our Strategic Priority of 'Evidencing Impact', and the OfS Evaluation Tool, will both energise and inform our practices. The College is committed to making improvements, will gather internal and external data, internal and external qualitative evidence where we have identified gaps, and bring teams together to evaluate the problems, generate ideas to respond, review and monitor and in a spirit of learning put in place actions to address the issues.

The Evaluation methodology that the College will use will be influenced by resources available and the issue/gap to be addressed. Narrative methodology e.g. from NCOP best practice, may be useful in developing and deciding on our Access activities for 18 year olds. However, in determining the most effective mode, Empirical Enquiry is a more suitable method for our size and scale. This is based on existing statistics that we have and can be used to ascertain and analyse the impact of interventions considered and used.

The targets of the APP plan will be reported on from the teams involved. The APP Steering Group will have oversight of the programmes and feed this to the HE Quality Improvement Committee, HE SMT, Principalship and report to the College's Governing board. Existing course team meetings will include reports on progress against outcomes and the Annual Evaluation Report will contain self-evaluation of the programmes. To ensure the deep focus on this work and the critical importance of succeeding in closing our gaps the APP targets will be reflected in the College's HE KPI's.

The following tables set out our ambitions against the gaps in performance that we have identified and the investment, engagements and outcomes we are committed to achieving over the period of the plan. We will use 2019/20 to set up the frameworks and structures to carry this out. As further data becomes available e.g. external information on Graduate Outcomes and internal statistics on continuation, variations to this plan will be submitted. A group of colleagues from across the organisation carried out the self-evaluation of the OfS Evaluation Tool. The group considered our work around the theme of students at risk and Retention. In setting out our activities and programmes across our APP Targets the Evaluation Tool will guide our practice, where the approach to evaluation does already exist this practice will be shared e.g. the study 'Does PAL Work? An Exploration of Affect amongst First-Year HE-in-FE Students'. There will also be other areas of research pertinent to our strategic context in Oldham and our targets, e.g. targeting the needs of 18 year old local learners, inclusive curriculum development, Growth Mindset provision, inclusive curriculum practice which will offer opportunities for staff: student collaboration.

Training and development will be made available for key projects to support the whole provider engagement with evaluation. These will support the targets in this plan and outcomes will be shared across the organisation. The following logic chains describe broadly the inputs, outputs and outcomes related to our key aims, objectives and targets (above) and the linkages of resources, activities, and results that we will put in place and will be actioned. **Logic Chain 1:**
Access

Improving Access from low participation areas for local 18 year- old males, improving Access for 18 year old BAME students		
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
Access and transition team time Access and outreach budget Activity budget (e.g. prizes, competitions, venue hire) Student Ambassador and mentor costs Time and resources for evaluation Links with schools and colleges FE staff at TOC time and resources Links with Care Leavers groups and professionals English and Maths tutors Collaborative partners time	Pre-16 provision: Engagements with local schools. Coursework support. Mentor activities. Children's University projects. Taster sessions, weekdays and weekends. Targeted and generic HE Experience days.	Local pupils and teachers more knowledgeable about HE and Higher Skills routes and provision
	18 year old provision: Internal progression activities to both the College HE and other HE providers of 50% of Level 3 learners. University Course Guarantee scheme for local 18 year olds. Care Leavers support workshops and events. Employability teamwork with employers to target Younger students and create mentor, raising attainment programmes. Targeted and generic HE Experience days. Review and develop curriculum routes to reflect needs of local 18 year olds. Level 2 English and Maths support	Increase in recruitment of local 18 yearold males from under-represented areas. Increase in numbers of BAME 18 year olds from under-represented areas. Increase of numbers of 18 year olds progressing form TOC to HE at TOC and other HE providers. Range of Curriculum offer responsive to the needs of applicants, local schools and local economic developments.
Local authority, Positive Steps, Community groups (e.g. Oldham Boxing Gym, Madhlo, Oldham Library, Gallery, Oldham Enterprise, Business groups)	Range of access projects for 18 year olds e.g. Mentor Schemes with Employers to highlight access opportunities.	
	Community and family outreach: Activities and events within local areas. HE Experience days at community venues. Interactions with employers, community groups.	Increase numbers of students from low participation areas. Increased awareness and knowledge of HE provision locally and nationally.

	Other groups, activities and focused work e.g. Care Leavers, Free School meals recipients: Targeted engagements around HE expectations, coping with transitions, events with inspirational speakers, mentors and guidance from academics	Increase in number of Care Leavers and other under-represented groups accessing HE.
	18 year old Male and Mature Male BAME Access Targeted engagements, Curriculum developments, employer liaison to develop pipe line of recruitment. HE experience days.	
Assumptions: The partners and local school pupils take up the activities, marketing and communications reach the target groups	External Factors: 18 year olds' qualifications levels e.g. attainment of Maths and English GCSE. Schools willingness to collaborate. Parents' participation. Links to NCOP and other outreach projects.	

Logic Chain 2: Attainment gaps between BAME and White students

Attainment , reducing the 4% gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between BAME and White students (and equity in Foundation Degree outcomes)		
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
Academic staff time Student time Support Staff time Progress Coaches input Specialist Visiting Lecturers Specialist resources and LRC materials Financial investment Hardship support fund Staff training	CPD events for Academic teams. Termly reviews carried out sharing good practice on pedagogical interventions and developing an inclusive curriculum. Focused Academic Support sessions within curriculum. Annual symposia showcasing Teaching and Learning includes Inclusive Curriculum. Curriculum developments incorporate inclusive practice. Support Teams deliver additional 1 to 1 and group sessions to stretch students from 2:1 profile to 1 st class. Specialist input from guest lecturers, alumni and employers. Targeted alumni mentor sessions within Induction programme, at transitional points and during final year. Final year HE Tutorial support programme designed to address attainment gaps. Summer and holiday study sessions focus on stretch and challenge. Financial support targeted to facilitate attendance e.g. at holiday study sessions.	The gap between BAME and White students in degree outcomes is reduced. (target) The gap between BAME and White students in Foundation Degree outcomes is reduced. (target) Attainment across all students improves to 85% by 2024/25 (commitment)

Specialist input Venue hire and expenses	Subject specific Conferences.	
	Curriculum Students and tutors collaborate to design inclusive curriculum content for all programmes.	
Assumptions: Prior learning of students	External Factors: Demands on students' time, external commitments may preclude involvement with planned activities.	

Logic Chain 3: Achievement gaps between mature and young students

Attainment , reducing the 10% gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between Young and Mature students (and equity in Foundation Degree outcomes)		
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes

Academic staff time Student time	Establishment of Student Success Working group, led by Subject Lead for student Success. CPD events for Academic teams.	The gap between Young and Mature students in degree outcomes is reduced. (target)
Support Staff time	Termly reviews of data carried out, sharing good practice on pedagogical interventions and developing an inclusive curriculum.	
Progress Coaches input	Focused Academic Support sessions within and additional to curriculum.	The gap between Mature and Young students in Foundation Degree outcomes is reduced. (target)
Specialist Visiting Lecturers	Annual symposia showcasing Teaching and Learning includes Inclusive Curriculum. Curriculum developments incorporate inclusive practice and the views of learners.	
Specialist resources and LRC materials	Support Teams deliver additional 1 to 1 and group sessions to stretch students from 2:1 profile to 1 st class.	Attainment across all students improves to 85% overall achievement by 2024/25 (commitment)
Financial investment Hardship support fund	Extra-curricular support and advice sessions, provided by support teams, to discuss barriers experienced by mature learners and signpost to support available	
Staff training	Specialist input from guest lecturers, alumni and employers. Targeted alumni mentor sessions within Induction programme, at transitional points and during final year.	
Specialist input Venue hire and expenses	Final year HE Tutorial support programme designed to address attainment gaps. Summer and holiday study sessions focus on stretch and challenge. Blended delivery model to support students who may not be able to attend on site Financial support targeted to facilitate attendance e.g. at holiday study sessions. Subject specific Conferences. Membership of cross-sector bodies to access research and best practice, such as NEON	
	Curriculum Students and tutors collaborate to design inclusive curriculum content for all programmes.	
Assumptions: Prior learning of students	External Factors: Demands on students' time, external commitments may preclude involvement with planned activities.	

Logic Chain 4: Continuation Commitment

Improving Continuation of all students		
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes

Academic staff time	Financial support incentives in place where this is identified as a barrier to continuation e.g. returning after summer recess. Maths and English Level 2 provision facilitated alongside courses Group profiles of learners inform pedagogical approaches in addressing the needs of learners. Individualised support for 'at risk' learners to address specific needs e.g. course deadlines, Xmas holidays, attendance, enable early interventions. Progress Plans in place with 'at risk' students. Range of Progress workshops and events, drop-in and by invite. Activities and assignment workshops during holiday periods. Learner analytics used across all activities – course, tutorial, support - to aid tracking of students and inform interventions. Review of Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategies.	Reduction in number of withdrawals in-year (commitment) Improved continuation of all learners (commitment)
Student ambassador and mentor time		
Access team time		
Support Staff time		
Progress Coach time		
Specialist resources and LRC materials	Academic Support Team. Build on existing Career provision to include a range of opportunities for individuals and groups. Mentor Schemes with Employers to highlight access opportunities. Design and implement Graduate Employment Schemes with local employers. Create robust Alumni links, activities of mutual benefit for the College, Learners, ex-students, Employers.	
Hardship Funds		
Financial Support funds		
Staff training	HE Tutorial Scheme activities at key points of year to flag up support needs. Support activities include intersections of Care Leavers, FSM learners, and other under-represented groups. BAME learners Establish and deliver an achievement programme to improve achievements of BAME Male learners from Polar Q1 and 2. Work with students prior to enrolment and on course in preparation for the demands of the transition to HE.	Reduced non-continuation rates between stages. Improved retention and continuation of BAME and Mature learners. (target)
Specialist input		
Training of Employer and Alumni mentors		
	Semester 1 Induction programme has key activities, advice, input aimed at range of groups. Each course has employers and alumni mentor programmes.	Improved classifications and higher grades of BAME students and equity with White students. (target)
Assumptions: Previous data provides research findings to signpost and inform the right solutions to implement		External Factors: Availability of mentors from Alumni and employer networks

Logic Chain 5: Progression

Improving Progression into Graduate Level Employment / Further Study of all students		
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
TOC Staff time Budget for Specialist Speakers Career Service time and resources HE Graduate and Alumni Officer HE Business Development Officer Facilities, space Employer input and time Partner work with key organisations e.g. Local Authority, Post-graduate Providers Training of student ambassadors Training of alumni mentors Alumni time	Graduate Hub Activities. Annual Industry week showcase. Vacancies portal. Programme of Employer Visits from each course area. Growth Mindset Programme. Imposter Syndrome Research project. Launch Graduate Gap project.	Improve the outcomes of graduates into graduate level employment.
	Curriculum-based Success activities. 1 to 1 and group input programme: induction, transition, preparation for job interviews. Graduate Job Application Workshops and 1 to 1 input.	Improve the outcomes of graduates into further study.
	Employer engagement initiatives within each programme. Graduate Employment Scheme. Intern Schemes. Mentor link up activities with groups and individuals. Graduate Research projects.	
Assumptions: Employers and alumni willing to effectively engage with students.		External Factors: Awaiting Graduate Outcomes data and findings. Launch of HE Graduate and Alumni Unit. Availability of employers and partners.

Where investment is planned the evaluation findings will also require a breakdown of inputs, resources and the impacts of each of these against planned outcomes and targets. We have used our own data and the OfS Dataset which have provided evidence of e.g. the low number of 18 year olds accessing HE, and the gap in classifications between BAME and White learners. This provides further detail in targeting e.g. focussed internal progression activities from cognate areas of curriculum from level 3 to 4, and work on specific courses where interventions are required to support BAME learners.

The College used the OfS toolkit to gather feedback from the first cohort of students who paid the increased tuition fee. The findings show that 88% of respondents agreed the bursary was important in their ability to continue with their studies. *“Having the bursary was brilliant because it always came at the end of term when money was sparse, and really helped me go that extra mile in class as I could spend less hours working, giving me more time to focus on my uni (sic) work”*. 79% agreed that the financial support received helped them to concentrate on their studies without worrying about finances, and 79% agreed the financial support received helped them to afford to participate with their fellow students, helped them to feel more satisfied with life as a student

and helped them to feel less anxious than they would have otherwise been. This provides a clear indication that financial support aimed at the needs of the demographic groups of TOC HE learners is needed. Further analysis and focus on targeting this will be an objective to be addressed in the next 5 years to fine tune this provision. This will continue with student involvement to ensure responses are pertinent to their needs.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

TOC has set up the APP Steering Group that will support and coordinate the steps needed to embed the APP and associated initiatives across the College. The group consists of colleagues from academic and service areas and will expand to include student representatives and tutors as the infrastructure develops. It is chaired by the Director of HE Curriculum. Overall responsibility for the APP lies with the Director of HE Curriculum. The College's KPIs are monitored, reviewed and evaluated through the existing reporting structures, at operational and strategic levels. Henceforth the targets, milestones and commitments to provide variations to the plan will be included in the College KPIs. The whole provider approach will involve programmes of training on reading and using data - from student representatives to course tutors through to Governors. All colleagues will be enabled and equipped to participate via their own roles and remits to address the College's KPIs, the APP's targets in bringing about the required changes across the whole provider. Evaluation of the impact of the activities will take place each semester, again through the existing reporting structures. Any further interventions can then be actioned. An additional twice per Semester Course Review mechanism has been put in place for 2019/20. Course Leaders meet with their Line Managers to report on data across the student lifecycle and identify any issues that need addressing. This is then fed to HE SMT and further as described above where actions can then be instigated. Should progress worsen this will be identified from Course Reviews, APP Steering Group meetings who will then report to SMT, Principalship and governors. The APP Steering Group will be responsible for instigating and drawing up time based, targeted Action Plans to be put in place to respond to any such deteriorating performance against targets with a schedule of dates for regular updates and consideration of reporting to the OfS.

4. Provision of information to students

We are committed to ensuring that the financial support available to students is clearly signposted on our website, the VLE, at induction and in course related communications. This includes information regarding their course fees, any additional costs, and access and eligibility criteria for the Bursary and Hardship fund.

Prospective students and other stakeholders can access up to date information on the fees that will be charged for the duration of courses on the Oldham College HE website, along with any additional costs related to specific programmes.

TOC currently offers a Bursary to first year students. This may be amended to a range of support to address particular issues. Feedback from students is positive, see above, however an evidence based interrogation of the impact is planned and any updates to this provision will be included in the variation to this plan.

Eligibility criteria is determined by assessing the category of protected characteristics (e.g. care leavers) the student falls into and/or one of our target Widening Participation groups (e.g. BAME, 1st generation HE participant, Polar4 Quintile 1, 2, 3 residence). The eligibility criteria for the Hardship Fund is available on the HE website.

The Hardship Fund provides financial support for students to help them remain on their higher education course, and can help alleviate unexpected financial hardship. Payments cannot be used to help with the cost of tuition fees. Support is normally in the form of a non-repayable grant. Groups of students who are prioritised include:

- Students with children
- Students from low-income families

- Mature students with existing financial commitments
- Students with disabilities
- Students who are Care Leavers
- Students of Armed Forces families
- Students in their final year of study

Appendix 1: Variation to Access and Participation Plan for 2023/24

Priority B: Partnerships with schools to raise attainment

The Oldham College recognises that we have an important role to play in the national reshaping of the post-16 education system that is underway, which can be achieved more effectively through close and mutually beneficial partnerships with all our local schools. We commit to continuing with our school liaison and outreach work with all our school partnerships in Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Manchester, ensuring that there is a clear focus on raising attainment within the planned activity, whilst still encompassing the existing targets and commitments, included in the original plan.

We're pioneering new approaches to prepare the most at risk students for further and higher education. By working collaboratively with schools and other agencies, and by further developing our preparatory programmes for all pre-16 and post-16 students, we can improve their readiness for further and higher education. We are also committed to offering support to schools which will facilitate improving educational standards, especially in English and maths, by sharing initiatives like our flagship Teaching for Distinction programme. We are committed to offering bespoke classroom presentations which can be requested by schools in a chosen curriculum area. Working closely together creates powerful partnerships that benefits all our schools, students and the local economy.

Oldham College and partners from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Department of Education will continue to deliver the Oldham Technical Education Project. This aims to provide Oldham's young people with a 'line of sight' to understand Technical & Professional Education progression, to encourage them to consider Technical & Professional Education and to increase attendance and attainment. The project offers a selection of experiences for both young people and staff in the world of digital and construction including discovery sessions and enterprise sessions. The project initially focused on careers in the Digital and Construction particularly in the Greater Manchester areas. We have now produced local versions of all 14 Occupational Maps as a careers resource for schools. IFATE and CEC have commended this work.

We will remain an active member of our local Uni Connect Partnership: Greater Manchester Higher and will deliver attainment raising activities through this network. This network will provide high quality outreach activities, impartial information, advice and guidance about progression routes to higher education for students and their key influencers at all state schools and colleges (Y9-13) in Greater Manchester. The Uni Connect offer from University Campus Oldham will continue to contribute to raising the pre-16 attainment of young people across Greater Manchester by delivering curriculum sessions such as English and Mathematics boosters.

Priority C: Access to higher education leads to successful participation

This has been addressed in Section 3 of the Access and Participation Plan. We are committed to enhancing our existing practices supporting successful participation, (3.1, pp18-20 of the Access and Participation Plan), which includes the academic support offer, tutorial offer alongside targeted intervention for identified 'at risk' students which will be monitored by the Retention and Achievement Monitoring Group. This group will triangulate the risk factors and

recommend timely support requirements and action plans to be implemented for students. We are one of the first organisations to have achieved the NNECL Quality Mark for our support for Care Experienced learners.

Priority D: Develop more flexible and diverse provision

As a provider of technical and professional education we currently have a level 4/5 offer, which includes higher apprenticeships in Construction, and we have ambitious plans to grow and diversify this provision into the sectors where there are skills shortages and upskill the local community, to prepare them for employment in these sectors. The plans include a significant increase in part time provision across all the current and future courses. We will be offering level 4/5 courses which are Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) mapped to occupational standards with the introduction of Computing Higher National qualifications in 2022/23, expanding to Cyber Security in 2023/24. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, our offer will introduce cycle 2 of the HTQs in Construction and Health, phasing in the Higher National pathways, over this two year period.

The strategy provides for a clear focus on a flexible delivery model which will include a part time offer of full course qualification and certification of stand alone modules. The model will utilise the investments we have made in split classroom technology and our new 'Its Learning' virtual learning environment with the aim of reaching sectors of the local community where there have previously been barriers to learning within the 'traditional' higher education offer.

Our Access and Participation Plan (page 21) highlights our commitment to early stage evaluation with a strategic priority of evidencing impact. As a small provider, we will publish the impact of our activities to share what has and has not worked. In developing our approach, we commit to working with the Centre for Transforming Access and Students Outcomes (TASO) to maximise understanding of what works.

Access and participation plan

Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: The Oldham College

Provider UKPRN: 10006770

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£7,500
Foundation degree		£7,500
Foundation year/Year 0		£7,500
HNC/HND		£7,500
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£7,500
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree		£3,750
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£3,750
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£3,750
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The Oldham College

Provider UKPRN: 10006770

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£169,575.00	£178,500.00	£189,000.00	£204,750.00	£210,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£25,436.25	£26,775.00	£28,350.00	£30,712.50	£31,500.00
Access (post-16)	£84,787.50	£89,250.00	£94,500.00	£102,375.00	£105,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£50,872.50	£53,550.00	£56,700.00	£61,425.00	£63,000.00
Access (other)	£8,478.75	£8,925.00	£9,450.00	£10,237.50	£10,500.00
Financial support (£)	£145,000.00	£158,000.00	£170,000.00	£182,000.00	£194,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£891,780.00	£945,847.00	£999,915.00	£1,082,018.00	£1,114,725.00
Access investment	19.0%	18.9%	18.9%	18.9%	18.8%
Financial support	16.3%	16.7%	17.0%	16.8%	17.4%
Research and evaluation	3.4%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%
Total investment (as %HFI)	38.6%	38.7%	38.9%	38.5%	38.9%

[illegible]