Provider's name: ACM Guildford Ltd (ACM)
Provider's UKPRN:10067853
Legal Address: Rodboro Buildings, Bridge Street, Guildford, GU1 4SB

2020-21 to 2024-25
ACCESS
AND
PARTICIPATION PLAN

1. 11.1. Background
1
1.2. Preparation for the Access and Participation Plan 1
2. 12.1. Higher Education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status
2
2.1.1. 2*2.1.2.* 2*2.1.3.*
3*2.1.4.* 42.2.
Black, Asian and minority ethnic students 4
2.2.1. 5*2.2.2.* 5*2.2.3.*
6*2.2.4.* 72.3.
Mature students 7
2.3.1. 8*2.3.2.* 8*2.3.3.*
8*2.3.4.* 92.4.
Disabled students 9
2.4.1. 10*2.4.2.* 10*2.4.3.*
11*2.4.4.* 122.5.
Care leavers 11
2.5.1 Access *11*
2.5.2 Success – Retention and Attainment *12*
2.5.3 Progression *12*
2.6. Intersections of disadvantage 12
2.6.1. 13*2.6.2.* 15*2.6.3.*
162.7. Other groups who experience barriers in higher education
16
3. 183.1. Target groups
17
3.2. Aims and objectives 17
3.2.1. 18*3.2.2.* 20*3.2.3.*
21*3.2.4.* 21**4.**
224.1. Whole provider strategic approach
21
4.1.1. 234.2. Specific measures and activities
25
4.2.1. 26*4.2.2.* 28*4.2.3.*
354.3. Student consultation
38
4.4. Evidence to support measures 40
4.4.1. 45*4.4.2.* 464.5.
Evaluation strategy 42

© ACM

4.6. Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan 47

5. 53

© ACM

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

ACM is a higher education institution that specialises in delivering programmes that prepare learners for careers in music, music business, and the wider creative industries. Our mission is to provide an immersive student experience, with a curriculum that is connected to the industry in real-time, based on a 'learning by doing' ethos. Our values seek to support inclusivity and the provision of supportive environments and therefore widening participation is core to our ethos. ACM has campuses in Guildford and Birmingham with c.1500 students on full-time further and higher education programmes. The majority of students are enrolled on BA(Hons) programmes and typically hold low/medium tariff entry qualifications. 92% are from the UK, with 13% categorised as local students, and 78% from POLAR4 Quintiles 3-5.[1] The decision to open a campus in Birmingham was underpinned by the strategic aim of providing increased access to ACM programmes to a more diverse student body, to further widen participation. Typically, over 50% of ACM's further-education students progress onto ACM Higher Education programmes. This Plan sets out the measures we will undertake to achieve our targets in relation to supporting access, success and progression for under-represented groups, from 2020-21 to 2024-25

1.2. Preparation for the Access and Participation Plan

2019/20 is the first year in which ACM will have operated under an Access and Participation Plan in accordance with OfS Approved Fee Cap registration. Despite the fact the students have, until September 2019, had to self-fund a component of their studies, which itself provides a barrier to certain underrepresented groups, ACM has performed reasonably well against sector benchmarks relating to the participation of under-represented groups. The availability of student loans to cover the full tuition fee for the majority of students is therefore expected to have a significant positive impact on widening participation performance. ACM has also only recently been subject to certain data requirements of the regulatory framework including an individualised HESA AP Student return and the DLHE/LEO survey. Consequently, ACM does not have a comprehensive set of data (historical or otherwise) to measure performance and set targets. Assessment of performance and identification of measures and targets is therefore based on the data currently available to the institution. Where it has not been possible to include specific data or benchmarks, reference has been made to comparison with performance of non-underrepresented groups at the institution, or to national benchmarks or other sector indicators. In terms of monitoring and evaluating performance it has not been possible to measure impact of the recently approved 2019-20 Plan, as the impact of this will not be fully understood until 2020/21. Any trend data therefore only considers impact of ACM's currently unfunded measures and activity. As ACM Birmingham is a relatively new provision there is limited data on which to assess current performance. However, we have undertaken an assessment of current enrolment profiles, and referenced data from comparable institutions in the same geographical area to provide a basis for assessment and comparison for access.

2. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

ACM's performance in relation to underrepresented groups has been assessed, considering the gaps between underrepresented groups and their peers, and progress over time in closing gaps, at different stages of the student lifecycle. In addition to considering ACM's student population, local and national

[1] ACM TEF (Year 4) contextual data

© ACM

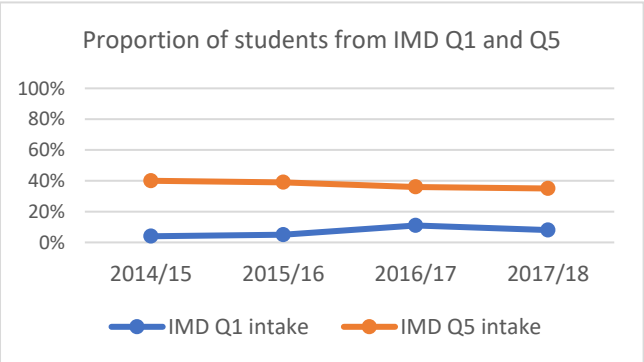
performance has also been referenced, alongside the OfS access and participation performance measures. The most recently available OfS data set has been used alongside ACM's own data for the most recent year for access, continuation and classifications. As a small and specialist provider, we are aware that our student profile is characteristic of students who specifically choose music related subjects. Consequently, as part of the analysis of data we have considered data from comparable providers to provide comparative understanding. This has included providers with arts focus based locally, and nationally with similar tariff entry profiles and programme portfolio. The Index of Multiple Deprivation[2] (IMD) has been used alongside POLAR4. Where applicable and available we have used IMD data as another supporting matrix.
Data sources referenced in the performance analysis:

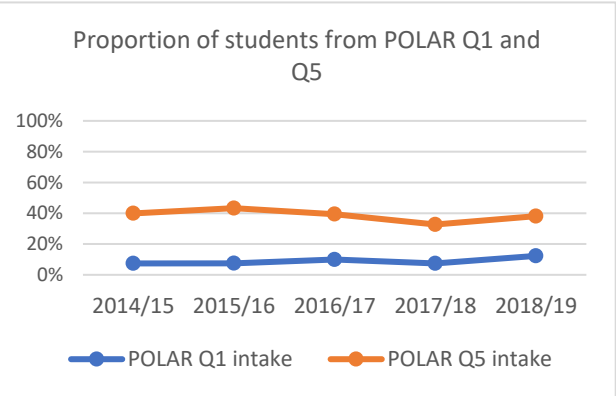
- OfS dataset[3]: Access 2016/17, 2017/18; Continuation & Progression 2015/16, 2016/17; Attainment 2016/17, 2017/18; HEI sector data; Comparable provider.
- ACM internal datasets[4]: Access 2018/19; Continuation 2017/18

ACM internal datasets are used within the assessment of performance to provide a more up to date appraisal. Where internal data is used HEI sector data and comparable provider data, typically for the previous year, is used to provide some contextual comparison.

2.1.Higher Education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

2.1.1. Access (Guildford)





	Q1	Q5	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2017/18)	8% (-2.9)	34.9(-1)	26.9% (+1.9)	0.4%	12.3 to 21%
POLAR4 (2018/19)	12.1% (+4.7)	38.2% (+5.5)	26.1% (+0.8)	18.4%	14.2 to 26%

Note: Figures in brackets represent change from previous year.

The gap between IMD Q5 and Q1 is significant compared to the HEI sector and has widened slightly, although the gap is not dissimilar to comparable providers in terms of location and subject. Similar gaps in access are seen when comparing IMD Q1-2 with Q3-5 with an ACM gap of 57.8%, compared to sector gap of 18.4%. More recent data for students from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) indicates a 4.7% increase in the number of Q1 students (12%) although the 3-year trend indicates a 1.1% average annual increase.

2.1.2. Access (Birmingham)

	Q1	Q5	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015

[3] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/ and dataset provided to ACM by OfS.

[4] Data provided by ACM Student Management Information System.

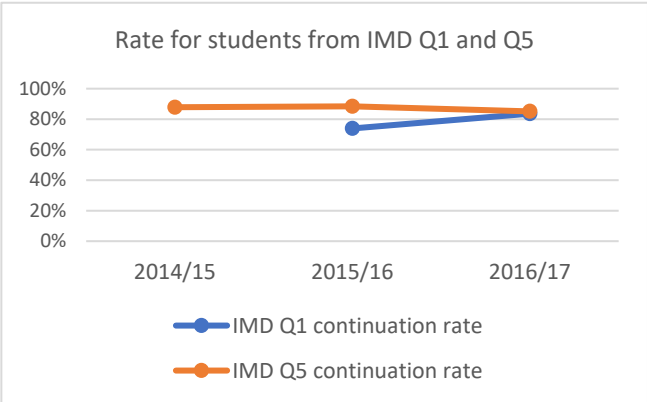
© ACM

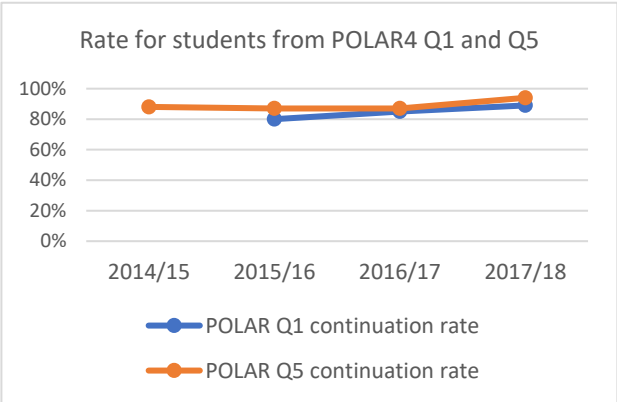
POLAR4 (2018/19)	16.8%	17.7%	0.9%	18.4%	11.1% to 26%

POLAR4 data[5] indicates a gap significantly smaller than that for the HEI sector and comparable providers. Similarly, a significant smaller gap is seen when comparing Q1-2 with Q3-5 with an 8% gap compared to HEI sector gap of 45.4%. As a recently new provision analysis of trends is not possible due lack of available data. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.1.3. Success

Continuation





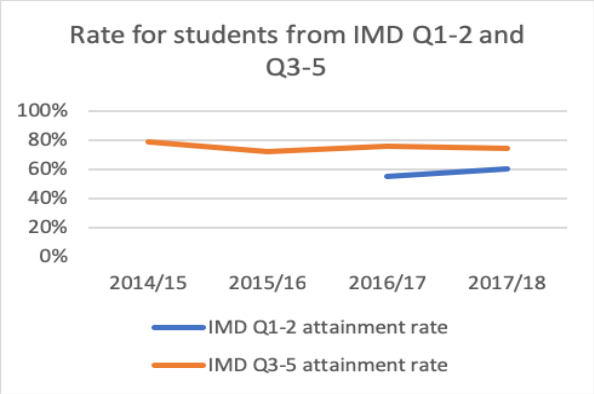
	Q1	Q5	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	83.6% (+9.7)	85.1% (-3.3)	1.5% (-13)	7.2%	1% to 4%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	89.2% (+5.9)	94.1% (+7.5%)	4.9% (+1.6)	4.3%	1%

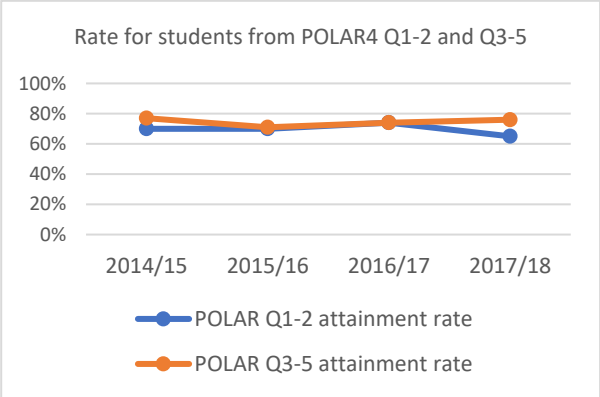
Gaps in continuation rates for students from IMD Quintile 1 areas are significantly smaller than those for HEI sector, and similar to those for comparable providers. POLAR4/IMD Q1 data for 2014/15 is not available. The gap for LPNs has significantly closed compared to previous years with a 4.0% average annual increase for POLAR4 Q1 since 2015/16. More recent data for LPNs indicate a gap similar to that for HEI sector. Similar gaps are seen between POLAR4 Q1-2 and Q3-5. Whilst overall continuation rates have improved across all groups in the last three years the gap in continuation rates has remained fairly static.

[5] IMD data is currently not available for ACM Birmingham.

© ACM

Attainment (students achieving first and upper-second class degrees)





	Q1-2	Q3-5	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2017/18)	61% (+3.9)	74.2% (-1.5%)	13.2% (-5.4)	12.1%	9% to 15%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	66.7% (-6.8)	75.5% (+1.3)	8.8% (+8.1)	5.2%	1% to 7%

Gaps in attainment rates[6] for students from IMD Q1 or Q2 are similar to those observed in HEI sector and in comparable providers, and the gap has closed in the last year. POLAR4 data indicates a gap slightly larger than the HEI sector and comparable providers, and has widened in the last year. However, variation may be due to cohort size; attainment rates taken over the last three years indicate an average annual change of -1.7%. It has not been possible to assess gaps between IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5 due to limited data. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.1.4. Progression to employment or further study

	Q1-2	Q3-5	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	45%	51%	6%	4.8%	6% to 16%
POLAR4 (2016/17)	48.9%	50.3%	1.4%	2.4%	6% to 9%

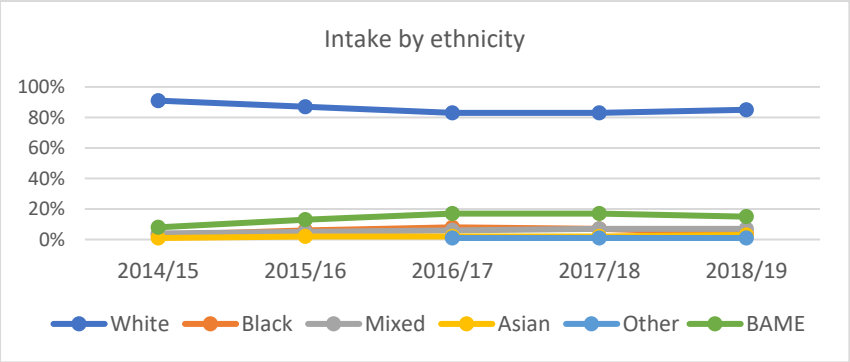
The gap in progression rates into highly skilled employment or higher-level further study for students from IMD Q1-2 is slightly higher than that observed in the HEI sector. POLAR4 data indicates a gap smaller than that for HEI sector and comparable providers. It is not possible to assess trends for either IMD or POLAR4 due to limited data from previous years. Particularly given the small cohort sizes, the relatively small gap observed between Q1-2 and Q3-5 for both IMD and POLAR4 groups are not considered significant. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

[6] A comparison of Q1-2 and Q3-5 has been used here due to lack of data for Q1. Q1 cohort sizes for both IMD and POLAR Q1 are typically less than 20

© ACM

2.2. Black, Asian and minority ethnic students[7]

2.2.1. Access (Guildford)



Ethnicity	% of ACM (2018-19)	a) Population	b) HEI Sector	c) Area (SE)[8]	Population vs ACM	Sector vs ACM	Area vs ACM
Mixed	6.8%	3.2%	5.0%	1.9%	-3.6%	-1.8%	-4.9%
Other	0.8%	1.1%	2.0%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	-0.2%
White	84.9%	84%	69.0%	90.6%	-0.9%	-15.9%	5.7%
Black	4.2%	3.6%	10.5%	1.6%	-0.6%	6.3%	-2.6%
Asian	3.3%	8.2%	13.5%	5.2%	4.9%	10.2%	1.9%
ABMO	15.1%	16%	31%	9.3%	0.9%	15.9%	-5.7%

The table above compares the percentages of students of different ethnicities entering ACM Guildford compared to a) the population of all 18-year olds, b) the HEI sector c) the South East area. Negative figures indicate that the percentage at ACM is higher than in the comparison group. In 2018/19 15.1% of students entering ACM were from an ethnic minority compared to 31% for the HEI sector. Compared to population ACM has a slightly higher percentage of students from Mixed ethnic groups, and similar percentage of Black and 'other' ethnic groups. Whilst the percentage of Asian students at ACM has increased, rising from 1% in 2014/15 to 3.3% in 2018/19 it still represents a gap in access compared to sector and population, and to a lesser extent, area. However, as previously noted, such disaggregation of data results in very small numbers, which means the percentage data is subject to volatility. Given this context and the fact that our total percentage of AMBO students is half that of the sector average, ACM will therefore prioritise access for AMBO students as a whole, while continuing to monitor the disaggregated groups and particularly Asian student enrolment.

2.2.2. Access (Birmingham)

Ethnicity	% of ACM (2018-19)	a) Population	b) HEI Sector	c) Area (West Midlands)[9]	Population vs ACM	Sector vs ACM	Area vs ACM

[7] BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups

[8] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest#ethnic-groups-by-area

[9] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest#ethnic-groups-by-area

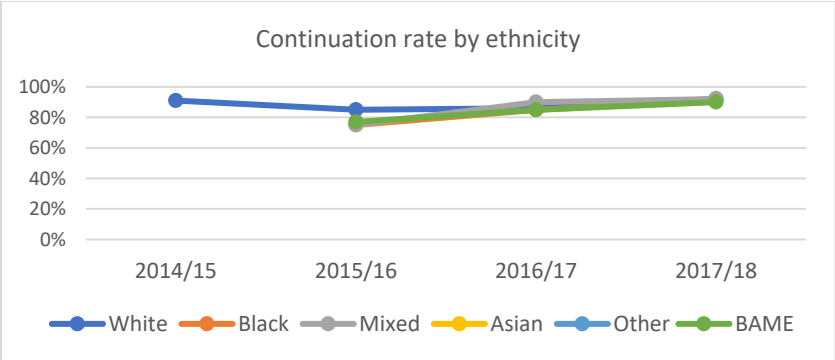
© ACM

White	78.5%	84%	69%	82.8%	5.5%	-9.5%	4.3%
ABMO	21.5%	16%	31%	17.2%	-5.5%	9.5%	-4.3%

The table above compares the percentages of students from ABMO groups entering ACM Birmingham compared to a) the population of all 18-year olds, b) the HEI sector c) the West Midlands area. Negative figures indicate that the percentage at ACM is higher than in the comparison group. Compared to population and area ACM has a higher percentage of students from ABMO ethnic groups. However, there is a gap compared to sector, although this is smaller than that at ACM Guildford. Analysis of individual ethnic groups is not possible due to small student numbers. As a recently new provision trend analysis is not possible due lack of available data. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.2.3. Success

Continuation

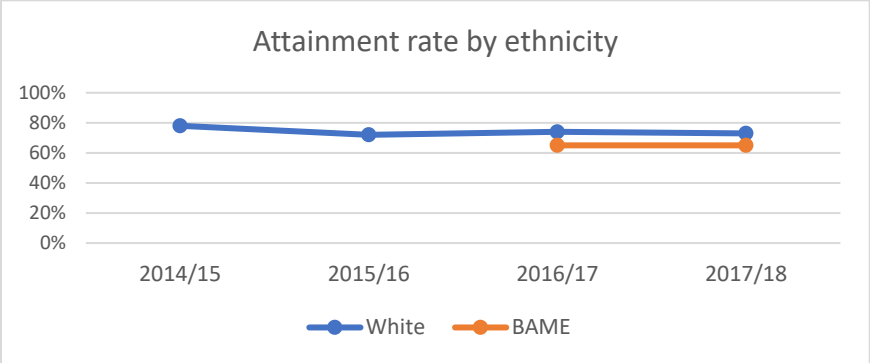


	NON-BAME	BAME	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2017/18	92.1% (+5.8)	89.7% (+4.9)	2.4% (+0.9)	2.9%	1.1% to 3%

The gap in continuation rates for students from BAME groups and non-BAME groups is relatively small and similar to that within HEI sector and with comparable providers, although the gap has widened very slightly in the past year. The gap in continuation rates for black students and white students is 0.8% and this gap has closed by over 9% over the last three years. A similar trend is observed in the continuation rate for mixed ethnic groups. The gap for Asian students in 2016/17 was 9.4%. Limited student numbers do not make it possible to comment on the most recent year for this group, or the year before. However, average continuation rates for last two years indicate the gap between white and Asian students has closed by about 3%. Data for 'other' ethnic groups is not available due to student numbers. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, where data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

© ACM

Attainment (students achieving first and upper-second class degrees)



	NON-BAME	BAME	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDER (GAP)
2017/18	73.3% (-0.9)	66.7% (0)	6.6% (-0.9)	13.7%	21%

The gap in attainment rates between students from BAME groups and non-BAME students is smaller than that observed for HEI sector and at a comparable providers, and the gap has closed slightly compared to previous year. Due to small numbers of students within the ethnic groups it is not possible to comment on all groups in detail. However, the most recent data available for mixed ethnic groups indicates an attainment rate 4.4% above that for non-BAME students, and a significant gap in attainment rates for black students compared to non-BAME students (17.1%). Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.2.4. Progression to employment or further study

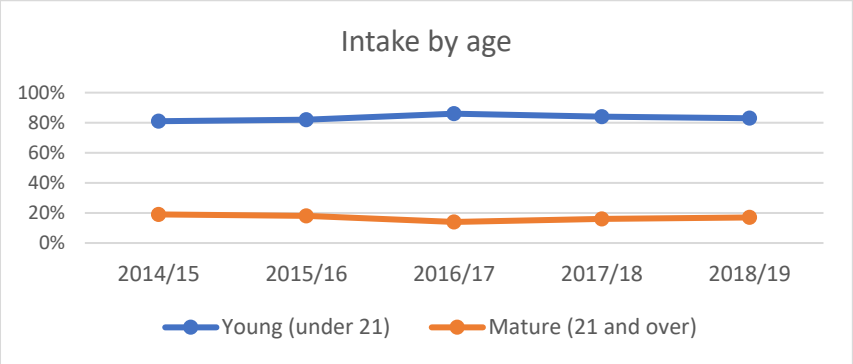
	NON-BAME	BAME	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDER (GAP)
2016/17	50.5%	52.2%	-1.7%	5.3%	6%

Progression rates to highly skilled employment or higher further study for BAME students is above that for non-BAME so compares well to HEI sector and comparable providers. Data is not available for previous years, or for sub-groups so it is not possible to comment in more detail although HEI sector trends indicate gaps of between 3.8% and 5.8% for these groups compared to non-BAME students. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

© ACM

2.3. Mature students

2.3.1. Access (Guildford)



	YOUNG	MATURE	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2018/19	83.4% (-1)	16.6% (+1)	66.8% (-2)	53%	68% to 69%

The gap in access rates for young and mature students is above that for HEI sector, although it is similar to comparable providers in terms of location and subject. The three-year trend indicates an average 1.2% annual increase in mature students.

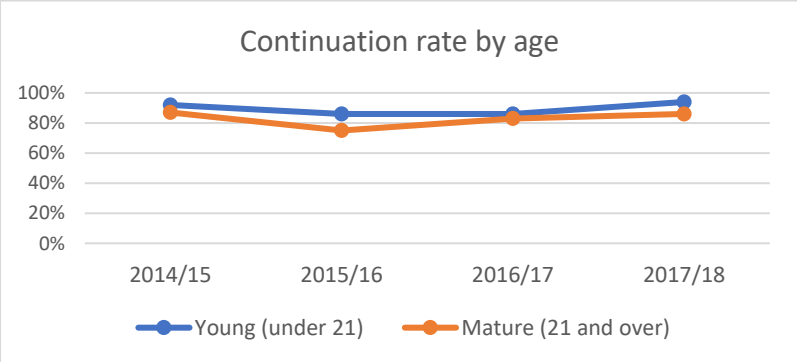
2.3.2. Access (Birmingham)

	YOUNG	MATURE	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2018/19	55.8%	44.2%	11.6%	53%	59% to 68%

The gap between young and mature groups is significantly small compared to HEI sector and comparable providers. The variation in gap is due to significant enrolment of students aged 21 or over onto a Level 6 'top-up' year. This programme is in teach-out so the figures for further years are expected to be similar to those for ACM Guildford.

2.3.3. Success

Continuation

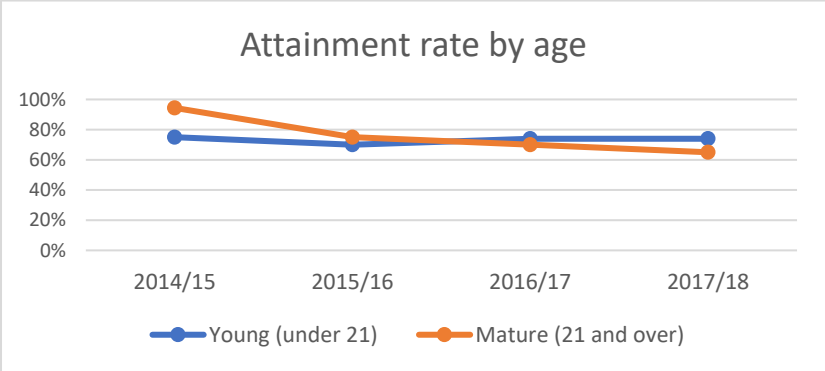


	YOUNG	MATURE	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2017/18	94.3% (+7.9)	85.7% (+2.6)	8.6% (+5.3)	7.1%	5.6% to 24%

© ACM

The gap in continuation rates is similar to HEI sector and the gap has widened in the most recent year although the three-year trend indicates an average 5.4% annual increase in continuation rates for mature students. The gap is comparable to similar providers in terms of location, but is significantly smaller than comparable provider in terms of subject.

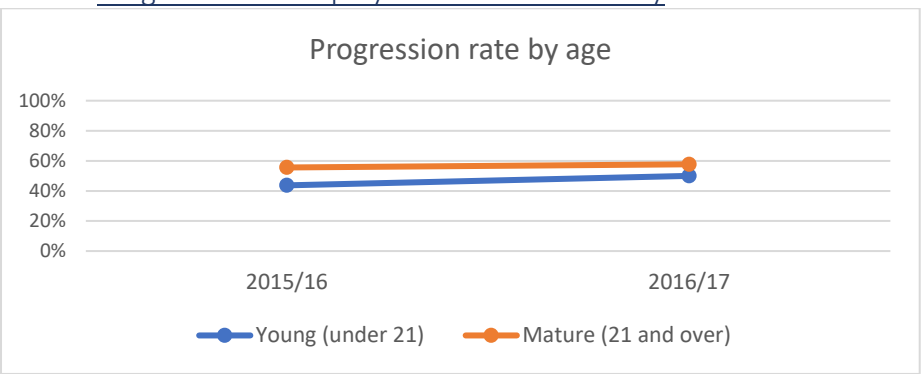
Attainment (students achieving first and upper-second class degrees)



	YOUNG	MATURE	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2017/18	73.9% (+0.1)	65.8% (-4.8)	8.1% (+4.9)	9.5%	1% to 11%

The gap in attainment rates is similar to HEI sector, although the gap has widened in the most recent year and this is in line with three-year trend which shows an average annual 4.6% increase. The gap is larger than a similar provider in terms of location, but is smaller than a comparable provider in terms of subject. It is noted that the attainment rate for mature students has dropped significantly over the last four-years, with a rate in 2014/15 of 19% above that for young students. It is possible that this significant variation could be an anomaly caused by the impact of small numbers. Whilst a target will be set for attainment ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to reviewing targets should more significant gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, where data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.3.4. Progression to employment or further study



	YOUNG	MATURE	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2016/17	50% (+6.3)	57.7 (+2.1)	-7.7% (+4.2)	-4.8%	-3% to +6%

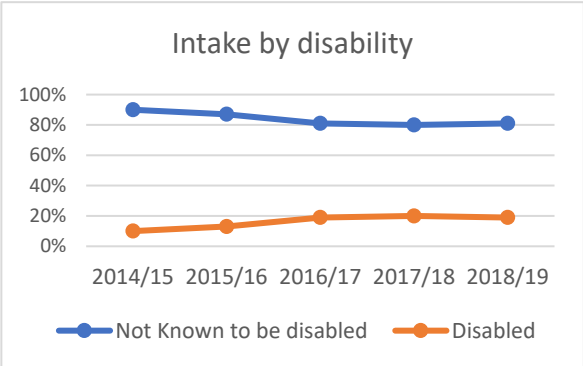
Progression to highly skilled employment or higher further study for mature students is above that for young students, and the gap has closed slightly in the most recent year. The gap is similar to HEI sector and with comparable providers in terms of location and subject. It is not possible to comment on previous years as

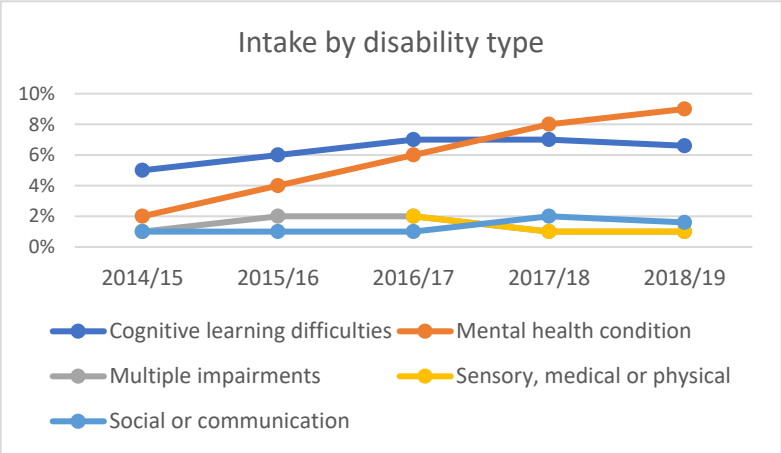
© ACM

data is not available pre-2015/16. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, where data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.4. Disabled students

2.4.1. Access (Guildford)





	NOT KNOWN TO BE DISABLED	DISABLED	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2018/19	81.3 (+0.9)	18.7 (-0.9)	62.6% (+1.8)	70.4%	52.4% to 54%

The gap between disabled and non-disabled groups is smaller than that for the HEI sector, although larger than that at comparable providers. The gap has widened very slightly over the last year, although the three-year trend the gap is closing. In terms of disability type the majority of students have either a mental health (8.7%) or cognitive and learning condition (6.6%). There has been an 2.6% increase in students identifying as having a mental health condition over the last three years.

2.4.2. Access (Birmingham)

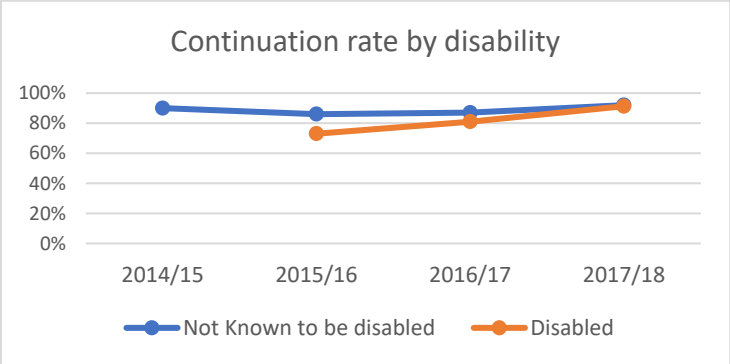
	NOT KNOWN TO BE DISABLED	DISABLED	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2018/19	77.9%	22.1%	55.8%	70.4%	54% to 77.8%

The gap between disabled and non-disabled groups is smaller than that for the HEI sector. In terms of disability type the majority of students have a mental health condition (8.8%). Assessment of other disability types is not possible due to small student numbers. As a recently new provision trend analysis is not possible due lack of available data. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

© ACM

2.4.3. Success

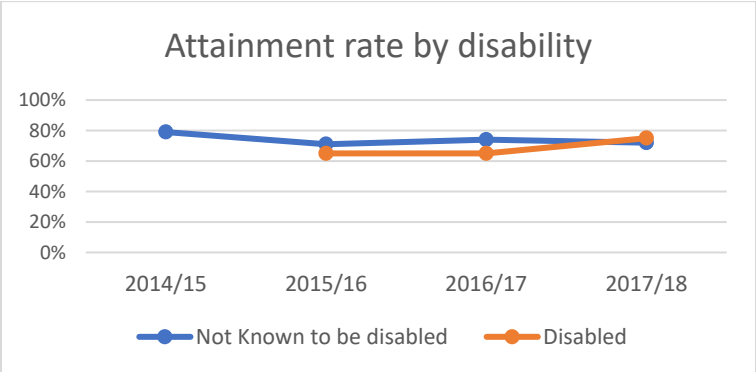
Continuation



	NOT KNOWN TO BE DISABLED	DISABLED	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2017/18	92% (+4.9)	91.3% (+10.3)	0.7% (-5.4)	0.8%	-0.3% to +5%

The gap in continuation rates is similar to HEI sector, being very minor, and has closed significantly in the recent year. The gap is comparable to similar providers. Analysis for disability type is limited due to small student numbers. However, continuation rates for students with a mental health condition, or cognitive and learning condition have continuation rates at or above that for students with no known disability. Students with a sensory, medical or physical condition the last years of available data indicate an average continuation rate of 64.6%. However, as this relates to cohort size less than 20 variation may be subject to small numbers. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

Attainment (students achieving first and upper-second class degrees)



	NOT KNOWN TO BE DISABLED	DISABLED	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
2017/18	72.2% (-2.3)	75.5% (+11.4)	3.3% (-7.1)	2.6%	11% to 18%

The gap in attainment rates is similar to HEI sector, and the gap has closed significantly in the most recent year, and across the last three years. The gap is smaller than comparable providers. Analysis for disability type is limited due to small student numbers. Where data exists for individual disability types continuation rates are above those for those Not known to be disabled. Students with a mental health condition are 5.5% below that for students with no known disability. However, as this relates to cohort size less than 30 variation may be subject to small numbers. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be

© ACM

undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.4.4. Progression to employment or further study

	NOT KNOWN TO BE DISABLED	DISABLED	GAP	HEI (GAP) 2016/17	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP) 2016/17
2015/16 to 2016/17	50.5%	31%	19.5%	1.2%	-5% to -29%

The gap in rates for Progression to highly skilled employment or higher further study is significantly above that for HE sector and comparable providers. Due to small student numbers average figures for the last two available years have been evaluated. It is not possible to comment on performance by disability types, due to student numbers, although HEI sector performance indicates gaps within 2% of rate for students Not known to be disabled. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

2.5.Care leavers

ACM recently started to track care leaver information at point of induction. We currently have insufficient data to comment on access, continuation and progression at this stage. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.
National data indicates the following broad issues and gaps for care leavers:

i. 2.5.1 Access

Nationally, young participation rates for care leavers are approximately only 6% (2017-18), while this figure doubles by the age of 23 (DfE, 2017-18[10]). This is low when compared to a young participation rate of 42%. Barriers to access include a lack of access to information and guidance about university choices; anxiety about accommodation out-of-term time; complexities of, and contrasting levels of support from key influencers (foster carers, social workers, local authorities); and uncertainty about financial support (Jackson et Al, 2005). ACM will ensure these barriers are addressed in provision of information and advice to care leavers.

ii. 2.5.2 Success – Retention and Attainment

While ACM data is insufficient to draw conclusions here, ACM acknowledges that national data suggests that a higher proportion of care leavers do not complete their course (OfS, 2019). Reasons for attrition are complex and often multi-faceted, including complex mental health and special educational needs (Harrison, 2017). Due to care leavers also often facing additional academic difficulties due to gaps in their understanding derived from disrupted schooling (Jackson et Al, 2005), attainment levels for this group are

[10] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757922/Children_looked_after_in_England_2018_Text_revised.pdf

© ACM

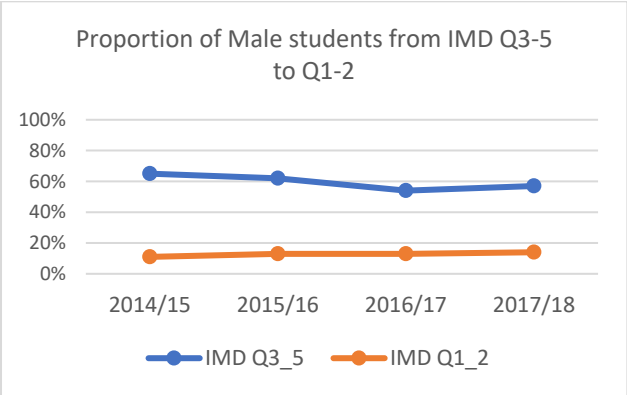
also generally lower (Flynn, Tessier and Coulombe, 2013). Therefore, as further data emerges (and potentially targets are set if gaps emerge), ACM will ensure appropriate support is provided across the lifecycle. As data capacity and intake improves, ACM also commits to ensuring a deeper understanding of the particular barriers this target group face in relation to course completion, in our context. ACM's bursary scheme would also be particularly helpful in providing support for care leaver participation, as one of the main barriers is financial stability, particular to living costs.

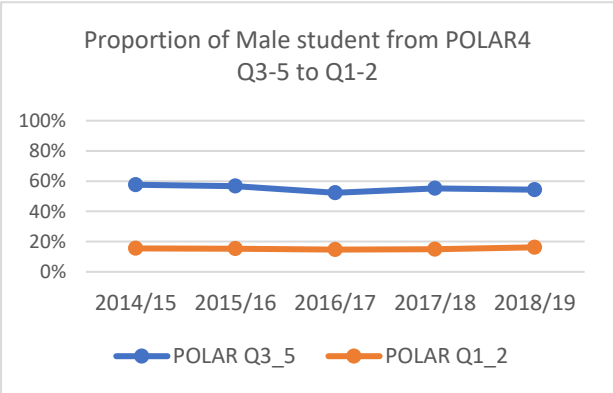
iii. 2.5.3 Progression

National data and research suggest that the disadvantage that care leavers experience often follows them through to later life, affecting their life chances and careers[11]. They often have fewer professional networks upon which to draw. The support and opportunities ACM provides in relation to careers, and our experiential approach to teaching and learning, will enable care leaver students to develop the skills and confidence they need to gain, stay and progress in work. ACM will therefore prioritise this area for this target group, and ensure it is part of the lifecycle approach of support for this group.

2.6. Intersections of disadvantage

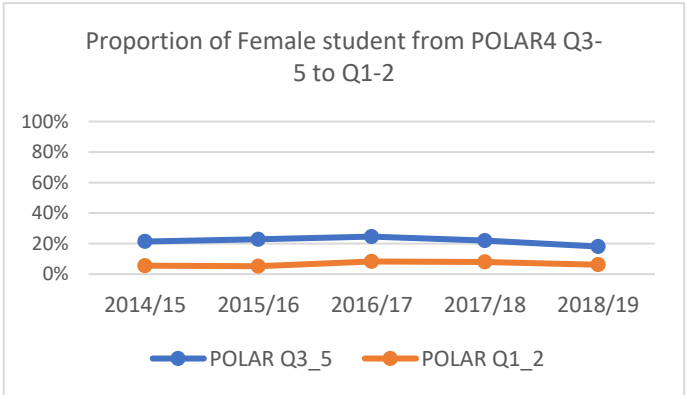
2.6.1. Access (Guildford)





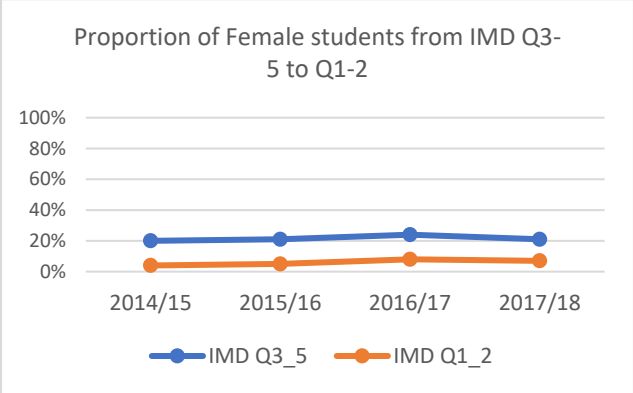
	Q3-5 (Male)	Q1-2 (Male)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2017/18)	57% (+3)	14% (+1)	43% (+2)	8.7%	11% to 12.9%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	55% (+3)	15% (0)	40% (+3)	21.6%	11% to 13%

The gap between IMD Q1-2 (Male) and IMD Q3-5 (Male) is significantly larger than that for HEI sector and for comparable providers. The gap has widened in the most recent year although the three-year trend indicates it is closing.



[11] Learning and Work Institute (2017) Building Successful Careers:

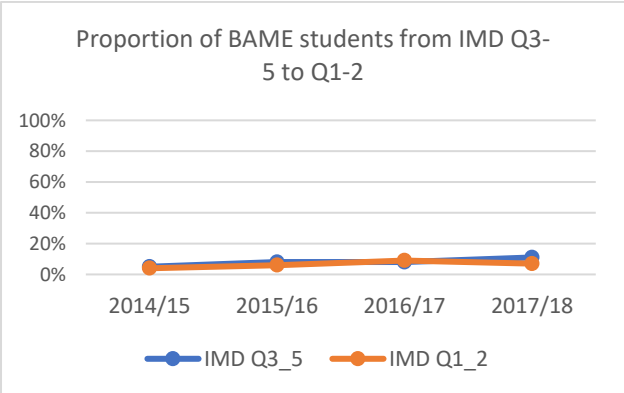
© ACM

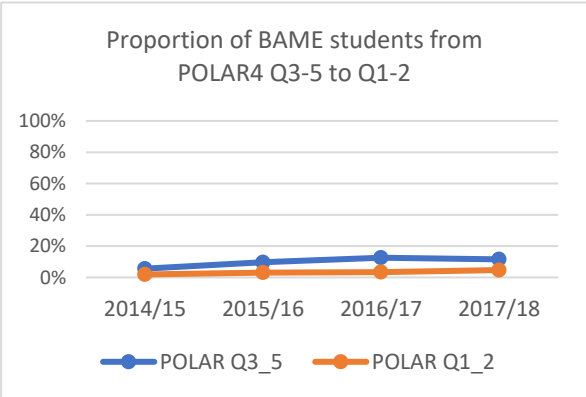


	Q3-5 (Female)	Q1-2(Female)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2017/18)	21% (-3)	7% (-1)	14% (-2)	8.1%	24.7%-37%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	22% (-3)	8% (0)	14% (-3)	32.9%	28%-39%

The gap between IMD Q1-2 (Female) and IMDQ3-5 (Female) is significantly smaller than that for comparable providers, although slightly more than that for HEI sector. POLAR4 data indicates that the gap at ACM is significantly smaller than that for the HEI sector and comparable providers. The overall trend indicates that the gap has closed marginally.

Whilst we note that the gap between IMD Q1-2 and Q3-5 is particularly significant for our male students, this performance gap will be addressed in the overall target we have set to reduce the overall gap between IMD Q1-2 and Q3-5. We will continue to monitor this yearly during the lifetime of the plan and seek amendment to Plan where insufficient progress is evident.

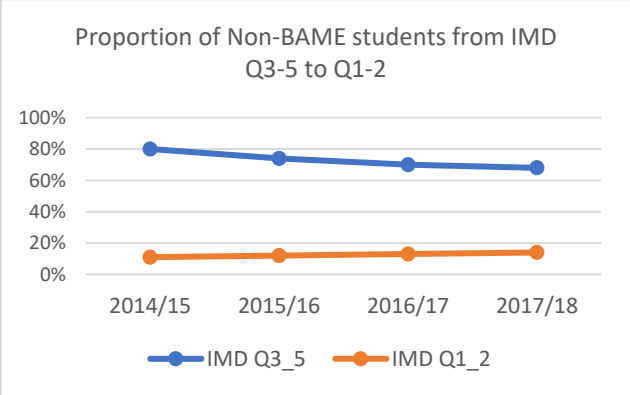


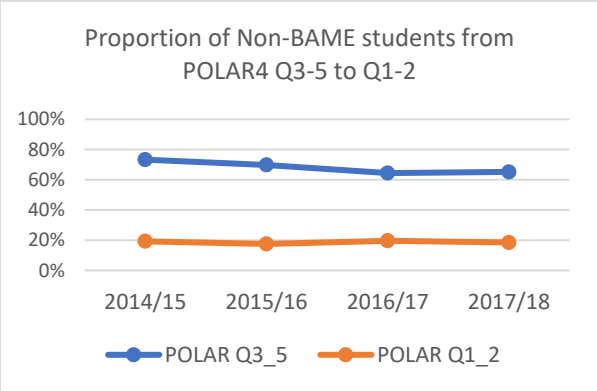


	Q3-5 (BAME)	Q1-2(BAME)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2017/18)	11% (+3)	7% (-2)	4.0% (+3)	+9.5%	1 to 1.4%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	12% (-1)	5% (+2)	7%	15.1%	4-13%

The gap between IMD Q3-5 (BAME) and IMD Q1-2 (BAME) is smaller than that for HEI sector although it has widened slightly in the last year. LPN data shows similar small gap.

© ACM





	Q3-5 (Non-BAME)	Q1-2(Non-BAME)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD(2017/18)	68% (-2)	14% (+1)	54% (-3)	26.6%	36.4% to 48%
POLAR4(2017/18)	65%	19%	46%	29.4%	28.4% to 44%

The gap between IMD Q3-5 (Non-BAME) and IMD Q1-2 (Non-BAME) is larger than that for HEI sector although the overall trend is that it is closing. Whilst we note that the gap between IMD Q1-2 and IMD Q3-5 is particularly significant for our Non-BAME students, this performance gap will be addressed in the overall target we have set to reduce the overall gap between IMD Q1-2 and Q3-5. We will continue to monitor this yearly during the lifetime of the Plan and seek amendment to Plan where insufficient progress is evident.

2.6.2. Access (Birmingham)

	Q3-5 (MALE)	Q1-2 (MALE)	GAP	HEI	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS
POLAR4(2018/19)	40.7%	38.1%	2.6%	21.6%	11% to 13%

The gap between POLAR4 Q1-2 (Male) and Q3-5 (Male) is significantly smaller than that for HEI sector and for comparable providers. As a new provision IMD data and previous year data is currently not available. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

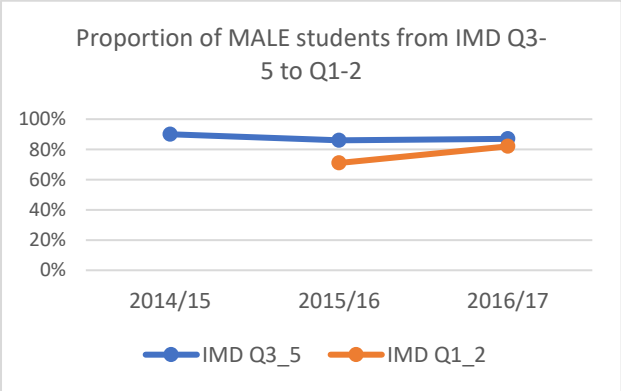
	Q3-5(FEMALE)	Q1-2 (FEMALE)	GAP	HEI	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS
POLAR4 (2018/19)	13.3%	8%	5.3%	32.9%	28%-39%

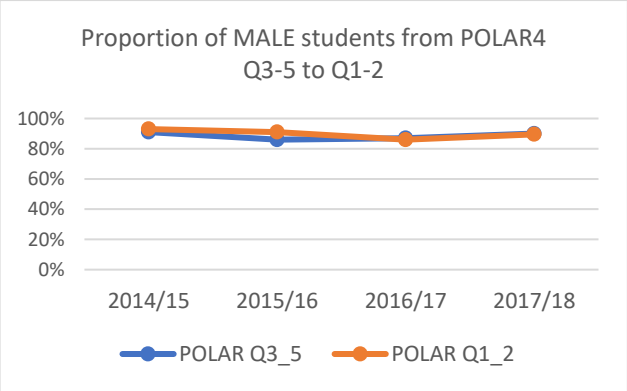
The gap between POLAR Q1-2 (Female) and Q3-5 (Female) is significantly than that for HEI sector and for comparable providers. As a new provision IMD data and previous year data is currently not available. Ongoing collection and analysis of available data will be undertaken during 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS. We will continue to collect and analyse data year-on-year and, as data is limited by small cohorts, trend averages over 3-5 years will be used.

© ACM

2.6.3. Success

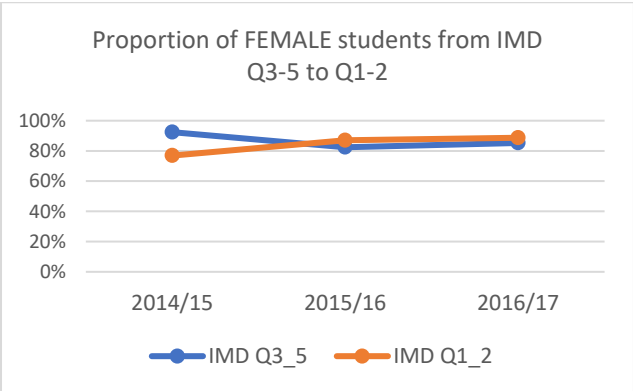
Continuation

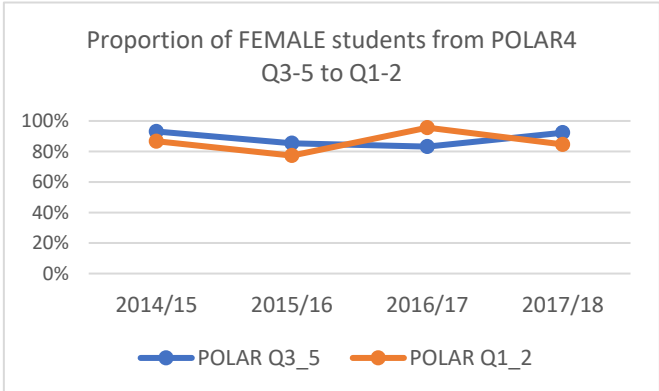




	Q3-5 (MALE)	Q1-2 (MALE)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	86.7% (+0.6)	81.9% (+10.9)	4.8%	6.8%	0%-5%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	93% (+6.5)	90.2% (-0.4)	2.8%	3.1%	4%

The gap in continuation rates for male students from IMD Q1-Q2 and Q3-5 is similar to that for the HEI sector and comparable providers, and the gap is closed over the last two years. More recent data for males from LPNs indicates a similarly small gap and a gap that has closed over the last two years.

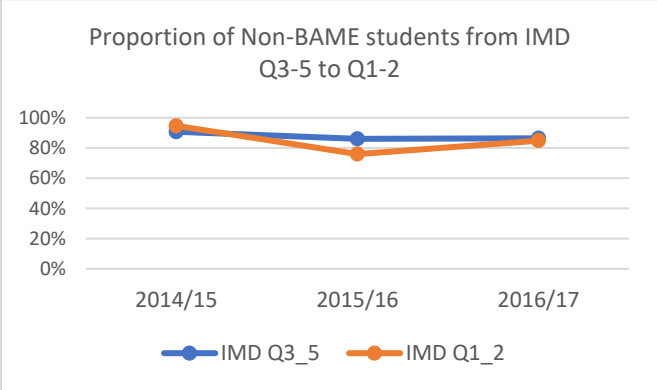


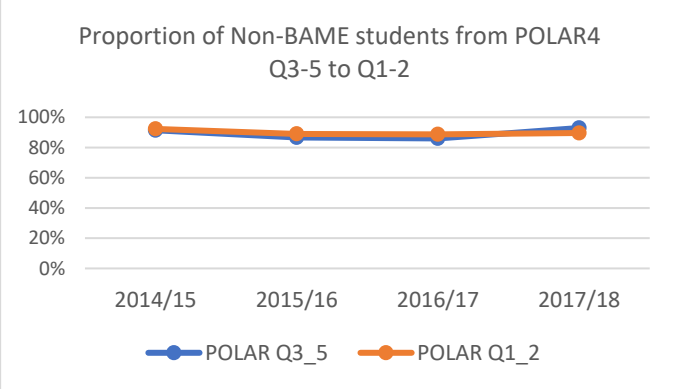


	Q3-5 (FEMALE)	Q1-2 (FEMALE)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	85.3% (+2.9)	88.7% (+1.7)	-3.4%	4.4%	2%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	92.3% (+9.1)	84.6 (-11)	7.7%	2.7%	1%-4%

The gap in continuation rates for female students from IMD Q1-Q2 and Q3-5 is significantly smaller than that for the HEI sector and comparable providers, and the gap is closing. More recent data for females from LPNs indicates a slightly larger gap, and a gap that has closed within the recent year. Significant variation compared to previous years for POLAR4 Q1-2 may be due to small cohort size.

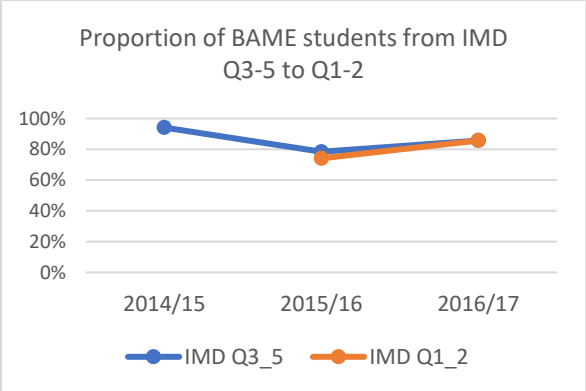
© ACM

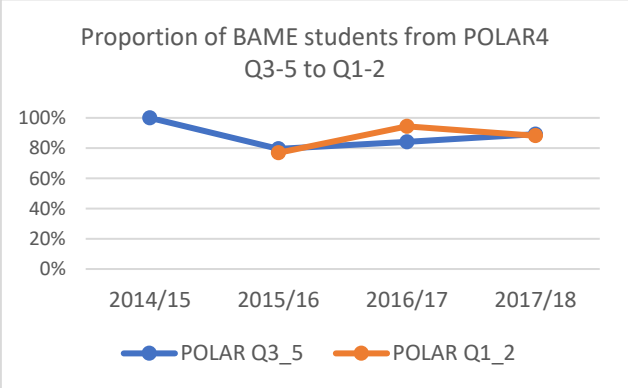




	Q3-5 (Non-BAME)	Q1-2 (Non-BAME)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	86.4% (-0.4)	84.8% (+8.9)	1.6%	1.3%	1%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	92.9% (+6.9)	89.6% (+0.9)	2%	1.8%	0%

The gap in continuation rates for Non-BAME students from IMD Q1-Q2 and Q3-5 is significantly small and similar than that for the HEI sector and comparable providers, and the gap is closing. More recent data for females from LPNs indicates a similar small gap, and a gap that been consistently small.





	Q3-5 (BAME)	Q1-2 (BAME)	GAP	HEI (GAP)	COMPARABLE PROVIDERS (GAP)
IMD (2016/17)	85.7% (+7.3)	85.5% (+11.4)	0.2%	1.5%	-1%
POLAR4 (2017/18)	89.2% (+5.1)	88.2% (-6.2)	1%	-1.4%	-1%

The gap in continuation rates for BAME students from IMD Q1-2 and Q3-5 is significantly small and similar than that for the HEI sector and comparable providers, and the gap is closing. More recent data for BAME from LPNs indicates a similar small gap, and a gap that is closing. Significant variation compared to previous years for POLAR4 Q1-2 may be due to small cohort size.

2.7.Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

ACM has recently introduced changes to its records systems to monitor and track more effectively students from other groups including refugees, those from Romany and traveller communities, carers, those from military families, LBGTQ+ groups, and those estranged from their families. This should enable us to provide more targeted support for these groups and better understand impact of measures and activity. Given the small cohort sizes, trends and patterns will remain difficult to analyse. Therefore, ACM anticipate we will need a minimum 3-years' worth of data to determine any emerging meaningful assessments. Therefore, while ACM may be able to make some comments on emerging performance for these groups by 2022-23, it is likely that more rigorous reporting and analysis will not be possible until 2024-25 and beyond. Nevertheless, our new monitoring systems will allow for internal review and data capture. Should we be in a

© ACM

position to report and comment on performance for these groups before 2024-25, we will include these analyses in impact reports and, should gaps emerge, we will seek to set additional targets in an agreed amendment to this Plan.

3. Strategic aims and objectives

Strategic aims and objectives in this Plan respond to the gaps in performance ACM has identified in its assessment of performance, and in particular a wish to address areas where most improvement is required. Gaps in access and attainment are of a priority concern and in considering these gaps, two of the four national Key Performance Measures are represented[12].

3.1. Target groups

Summary of key target groups across the lifecycle, based on the assessment of performance.

Target group	Access	Success (continuation)	Success (attainment)	Progression
POLAR Q1 (Guildford)	X			
IMD Q1 (Guildford)	X			
POLAR Q1-2			X	
IMD Q1-2			X	
BAME students (Guildford)	X			
BAME students (Birmingham)	X			
BAME students (black)			X	
Disabled students				X
Mature students		X	X	

As identified in Section 2 there are a number of gaps in the assessment of performance which internal data indicates have closed in the most recent year and therefore have not been considered as targets. A commitment is made to monitor the performance of these gaps in 2019/20 and in each year of this plan to ensure that gaps do not re-emerge. ACM commits to setting targets should gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS.

3.2. Aims and objectives

3.2.1. Access Targets

Considering the performance assessment, ACM has prioritised targets related to access gaps.

(1) **Aim**: To reduce the gap in the proportion of students at ACM Guildford from the most and least represented groups (POLAR4 Q5 and 1, respectively). **Objective:** reduce the gap between undergraduate POLAR Q1 and Q5 by a factor of 33% by 2025 (from a baseline of 26.1% in 2018/19), and thereafter apply a trajectory of continuous improvement to eliminate the gap by 2038-39.

Baseline 2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
26.1%	24.6%	23%	21.5%	19.5%	17.5%

(2) **Aim**: To reduce the gap in the proportion of students at ACM Guildford from the most and least deprived groups (IMD Q5 and 1, respectively). **Objective:** reduce the gap between undergraduate

[12] As a low-tariff provider, the OfS KPI relating to high-tariff providers is not applicable.

© ACM

IMD Q1 and Q5 by a factor of 35% by 2025 (from a baseline of 26.9% in 2017/18), and thereafter apply a trajectory of continuous improvement to eliminate the gap by 2038-39

Baseline 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
26.9%	24.9%	23.5%	22%	20%	17.5%

(3) **Aim**: To increase the percentage of undergraduate BAME students at ACM Guildford **Objective:** Increase the current percentage of BAME undergraduate students by 11% by 2024-25 (from a baseline of 15% in 2018/19) to a total BAME population of 26%. This sets an ambitious target towards achieving current sector levels (27.4% in 2017/18), given Guildford's context.

Baseline 2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
15%	17%	19%	21%	23.5%	26%

(4) **Aim**: To increase the percentage of undergraduate BAME students at ACM Birmingham **Objective:** Increase the current percentage of BAME undergraduate students by 10% by 2024-25 (from a baseline of 21.5% in 2018/19) to a total BAME population of 31.5%. This sets a target above that for the sector (27.4% in 2017/18) although more in line with Birmingham's context.

Baseline 2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
21.5%	23%	24.5%	26.5%	28.5%	31.5%

As identified in the assessment of performance access for students from black, mixed, and 'other' ethnic groups is at or above the ratios for population and area, although entry for Asian students is significantly less. ACM is keen to improve minority ethnic group access in line with HEI sector figures and therefore an overall target has been set for BAME ethnicity groups, as opposed to separate targets for individual ethnic groups (i.e. for Asian students), to enable greater focus on a broad set of measures to increase numbers of BAME students, and to acknowledge the small number of students in the individual ethnic groups which could impact on outcomes. As stated above a clear commitment is made to monitoring performance of individual groups and to reviewing targets in 2019/20 and in each year of this plan to ensure that gaps do not re-emerge.

The gap identified in terms of access for mature students is not being considered as this stage as this can be explained to a certain extent as 'structural' with regards the subject area and delivery model. Given nature of provision, which is entirely full-time undergraduate, the relatively low proportion of mature students is expected. Current strategy, including subject diversification, alternative delivery methodologies, and increased recruitment at specific sites, is expected to positively change the student demographic over time and ACM may consider future targets for mature learners as an amendment to this Plan in future years. Long-term strategy will seek to improve access rates for mature students by 14% over a 20-year period to bring ACM in line with current HEI sector ratios. However, we recognise that HEI sectors might themselves improve overtime and therefore we commit to monitoring this and may adjust our ambition in line with continuous sector progress, and our context, or other emerging data and benchmarks.

© ACM

3.2.2. Success Targets

Considering the performance assessment, ACM has prioritised targets related to continuation and attainment gaps. Targets in the success area only relate to Guildford campus data as there is no data currently available for the Birmingham campus. Emerging data will be monitored through the life of this Plan and appropriate targets set if gaps emerge. This is not likely to occur until after 2022/23 as 3-year average data will be used to mitigate the limitations of small data sets.

(5) **Aim**: To reduce the gap in non-continuation between mature (21 and over) and young (<21) undergraduates. **Objective:** for undergraduate students, reduce the unexplained gap between mature and young continuation rates, to 2% by 2024/25 (from a baseline of 8.6% in 2017/18), and thereafter apply a trajectory of continuous improvement to eliminate the gap by 2028-29. The initial target accounts for potential structural reasons relating to mature students and work/family commitments. Strategy relating to development of flexible delivery methodologies will seek to eradicate gap by 2028/29.

Baseline 2017/18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
8.6%	6.6%	5.6%	4.6%	3.5%	2%

(6) **Aim**: To eliminate the gap in degree attainment outcomes between mature (21 and over) and young (<21) undergraduates. **Objective:** for undergraduate students, eliminate the gap between mature (21 and over) and young (<21) degree attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) by 2024/25, from a baseline of 8.1% in 2017/18

Baseline 2017/18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
8.1%	6.1%	4.8%	3.5%	2%	0%

(7) **Aim**: To eliminate the gap in degree attainment outcomes between the most and least deprived groups (IMD Q3-5 and Q1-2, respectively). **Objective:** for undergraduate students, eliminate the gap between IMD Q1-2 and Q3-5 degree attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) by 2024/25, from a baseline of 13.2% in 2017/18

Baseline 2017/18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
13.2%	11.5%	9.5%	7%	3.5%	0%

(8) **Aim**: To eliminate the gap in degree attainment outcomes between the most and least represented groups (POLAR Q3-5 and Q1-2, respectively). **Objective:** for undergraduate students, eliminate the gap between POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5 degree attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) by 2024/25, from a baseline of 8.8% in 2017/18

Baseline 2017/18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
8.8%	7.0%	5.7%	4.2%	2.5%	0%

© ACM

(9) **Aim**: To eliminate the gap in degree attainment outcomes between the white and black students. **Objective:** for undergraduate students, eliminate the gap between the white and black students degree attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) by 2024/25, from a baseline of 17.1% in 2017/18

Baseline 2017/18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
17.1%	15%	12%	8.5%	4.5%	0%

A gap in continuation of 9.4% (in 2016/17) for Asian students is observed, although publishable data is not available for previous and subsequent years, and is based on small student numbers. Therefore, while this gap is noted and will be closely monitored during 2019/20 and in subsequent years of this plan, it may be in part caused by impact of small numbers on percentage outcomes. Therefore, ACM does not propose setting a formal target for this area at this stage, although should further data reveal consistent gap trend, ACM will seek an amendment to this Plan.

3.2.3. Progression

Considering the performance assessment, ACM has prioritised the following target relating to graduate outcomes. Targets in the progression area only relate to Guildford campus data as there is no data currently available for the Birmingham campus. Emerging data will be monitored through the life of this Plan and appropriate targets set if gaps emerge. This is not likely to occur until after 2022/23 as 3-year average data will be used to mitigate the limitations of small data sets.

(10) **Aim**: To reduce the gap in progression outcomes between disabled students and students not known be disabled. **Objective:** for undergraduate students, reduce the gap between disabled students and students not known to be disabled by 9.5% by 2024/25, from a baseline of 19.5% in 2016-17, and thereafter apply a trajectory of continuous improvement to eliminate the gap by 2028-29.

Baseline 2016/17	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
19.5%	17.5%	16%	14.5%	12.5%	10%

3.2.4. Commentary on 2019/20 targets

Within the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan a commitment was made to setting some targets that have not been continued as targets for the 2020/21 5-year plan. As a small and specialist provider without a track record of access and participation work in higher education, and in line with the revised OfS guidance for such providers[13], it was deemed impractical to cover every gap identified. Therefore, in preparing the targets for the 2020/21 5-year Plan original targets have been reviewed and in line with the OfS guidance focus on resources reconsidered so that there is maximum impact on students where the biggest gaps have been identified. The following specific targets were set within the 2019/20 Plan and have not been considered for inclusion in this Plan.

Ethnicity (BAME)

[13] S.46 https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-6-how-to-prepare-your-access-and-participation-plan-effective-practice-advice/

© ACM

A new access baseline was identified for 2020/21 Plan reflecting the most recently available dataset which indicated a widened gap. Consequently, the original ambition set out in the 2019/20 plan has been adjust in this Plan to reflect the revised baseline, but maintain the overall ambition.The gap in attainment rate between white and BAME students, as identified above, is significantly smaller than that for HEI sector, and has remained fairly consistent over the last few years, and has closed very slightly. A significant gap was observed for black students and a specific target has been set in relation to this.

Disabled

The gap in attainment rates between disabled students and those not known to be disabled, as identified above, has closed significantly in the most recent year, and across the last three years. A commitment is made to monitor the performance of these gaps in 2019/20 and in each year of this plan. ACM commits to setting targets should significant gaps in performance be identified, and this will be done through an agreed Plan amendment with the OfS.

4. Strategic measures

4.1.Whole provider strategic approach

ACM is committed at the highest level to providing the highest standards of teaching and learning and an unparalleled student experience to those with a talent and enthusiasm for the music and wider creative industries, regardless of their economic or social background. Our mission is 'to enable all students to fulfil their potential and enjoy a sustainable career within the creative industries'[14]. ACM is committed at the highest level to ensuring equality of opportunity and outcomes for all students regardless of background. This is enshrined within our mission statement, as identified above, and within our published values which include 'to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds, to maintain accessibility, and provide an inclusive organisation structure' and 'to provide environments that support personal and professional development through a holistic approach and bring the benefits of the creative arts to the wider community'.

The ACM mission therefore demonstrates a strong and ambitious commitment to encourage wider participation and to present opportunities, and to ensure students from all backgrounds are supported successfully in their higher education journey, and into excellent career outcomes. Specifically, work in access will concentrate on opportunities and access for students from the most deprived and under-represented backgrounds, and BAME students. Engagement with these target groups will be through the continued development of our school and community relationships, which ACM proposes to broaden and deepen, underpinned by a developing outreach framework and practice (which is increasingly evidence-informed).

In relation to student success, and particularly attainment outcomes, ACM considers that student navigational capacity, career and employability outcomes, and the value of inter-disciplinary, experiential, intensive needs-based approaches to learning and teaching, will improve outcomes for target groups under this Plan. Real world challenges, with professional mentors, form an essential and continually developing part of ACM curriculum, ensuring students can capitalise on their talents and make future connections part of their learning experience. Inclusivity, creativity and diversity are explicitly celebrated, and this approach will be further developed during the life of this Plan to ensure continuous improvement in gap areas for continuation and attainment. ACM's approach and ambition necessitates collaboration and engagement of

[14] https://www.acm.ac.uk/acm-vision-and-mission/

© ACM

key stakeholders across the whole institution, ensuring a whole-provider, embedded approach. This includes academics, student support services, senior management, careers services, library services, and administrative staff.
For example:

- Access and participation is led by the executive team and embedded across all academic departments. It is a key aspect of the staff induction programme, and the widening participation strategy is reflected and amplified within the operational and governance frameworks across the university (see "alignment with other strategies" section). The executive team has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the Access and Participation Plan, with progress being reported on a scheduled basis to the ACM Board and Academic Board.
- A key institutional objective for ACM is to reach out to students who feel that higher education is not for them, through creative and practical applied learning which aims to address the differentiated learning needs, supporting those who may have not previously responded to traditional education paradigms. Creativity and diversity are actively celebrated within our community and delivery model that values different approaches and different backgrounds.
- This is a key message promoted within open days and outreach activities, and supported through the audition process. ACM believes that these activities and initiatives should be available to all and is therefore committed to inclusive practice and widening participation, founded on a culture of mutual respect and recognition of individuality. ACM's statement on inclusivity is outlined in our Equality and Diversity policy[15].

At the mission level, ACM's Equality and Diversity policy also reflects and reinforces access and participation in its objectives, in its intent to 'ensuring and promoting equality through teaching and learning, and also in the selection, enrolment, assessment and progression of students'.

4.1.1. Alignment with other Strategies

Equality and Diversity

ACM's Equality and Diversity policy sets out our approach with regards to ensuring equality for underrepresented groups. Our access and participation plan ambition and strategy will continue to align with and support these aims, whilst recognising the potential equality challenges related to targeted support for specific groups. For example, consideration of protected characteristics in relation to success and progression gaps helps to inform our exploration of the intersections of disadvantage, as these students are more likely to be adversely affected in their success and progression outcomes. The policy is aligned with the different target groups identified with this Plan; equality and diversity protected characteristics overlap with these target groups. The Equality and Diversity policy, and access and participation target groups, are core to other policies and strategies including admissions policy, transition and recruitment strategy, and teaching learning and assessment strategy. Our strategy will endeavour to ensure that where additional financial support or other activity is made available there will be a clear rationale as to why the support is being offered to a particular group. We will also seek to ensure that a sufficient framework is in place, prior to allocating financial support, to assess suitability for support on basis of meeting certain criteria in a fair and transparent manner. For example: use of independent evidence to identify where financial support for low income groups can be given. In consideration of our strategy we will view the benefit of measures that are available to all students as well as activity that is specifically targeted. This will ensure that certain underrepresented groups do not feel isolated and that we are sensitive to how provision of measures might

[15] https://www.acm.ac.uk/policies/

© ACM

be perceived by students. However, where it is clear a specific targeted measure is needed this will be provisioned. For example, bursary support for disabled students. In accordance with ACM's published Equality and Diversity Policy, the Access and Participation Plan will pay due regard to the Equality Act. We consider this part of ACM's whole provider approach, being led and monitored from the centre at the executive level and having impact across academic, professional and leadership areas; as well as integration across a range of key institutional agendas (as described above). Many of the key stakeholders for both Equality and Diversity, and access and participation, are the same staff and student representatives, which means that this strategic alignment, and integrated activity and monitoring, is well established.

Admissions and recruitment strategy

ACM's admissions policy is linked to the Equality and Diversity policy to ensure equality of access. In addition, ACM's contextual admission process and emphasis on interview and audition provides a more holistic and balanced view of applicant suitability providing an entry route for those who might not have traditional formal academic achievement expected for higher education. This is of particular value and importance to students from IMD/POLAR Q1, and BAME groups who may be disadvantaged by traditional admission processes where there is little or no opportunity to present full potential and aptitude. ACM's provision of contextual admissions and interview/ audition processes also help to form initial sense of belonging and identification/demystification at this critical transition point where, for our target students, barriers are more likely to occur. Students have the opportunity to meet and seek advice from ACM staff and students, and any misconceptions can be addressed. As part of the whole provider approach, ACM staff across the whole institution (academic, professional) and current students, are aware of, and contribute to, this agenda to ensure positive experiences for potential students; particularly those from target backgrounds. In line with our equality and diversity policy quality checks are in place to ensure that there is no bias within the interview/audition process. Assessment criteria is recorded through completion of a form by the admissions tutor, and an audio/video record kept. Ongoing monitoring of all rejections includes a review by a separate team to ensure consistency and fairness of decisions. During 2019/20 ACM is piloting a 'blind' audition process for implementation in 2020/21. Admission tutors currently receive annual training on the interview/audition process and unconscious bias training is being built into this for 2019/20.

Transition and Retention strategy

Attendance and engagement monitoring activity is used to provide early indication of students at risk of withdrawal or non-achievement. The Student Engagement Team meet on a weekly basis to consider individual cases and implement and monitor actions and activity to support and re-engage. Early indication is of value for students from target groups, including black students, mature students, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 groups, and at increased risk of non-continuation and low attainment in enabling prompt intervention to address and resolve potential issues. Further work is being developed through ACM's continuous improvement in this area during 2019/20, for implementation in 2020/21, to ensure that target students are identified early and supported with tailored, relevant activity at any early stage of "risk".

Teaching and learning development, and employability

Teaching, learning and assessment strategy supports the use of wide range of delivery and assessment methods to promote learning and encourage success within learners with a diverse group of learning approaches. The curriculum encourages students to develop a range of key attributes in: creativity, self-reflection, technical application, sociability, resilience and industry preparedness. Attributes are developed further through the availability of pro-workshops, industry focussed masterclasses and opportunities, and strengthening opportunities for collaboration. Use of varied delivery and assessment methods and close connection to professional practice supports engagement with target groups, including mature students,

© ACM

black students, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 groups, that might be at increased risk of non-continuation and low attainment. It is also of benefit to students with disabilities, who may be at increased progression risk, through development of key skills required of the sector. This is part of ACM's Inclusive teaching and learning practices, which are being built-in to ongoing developments in curriculum design and content; delivery and pedagogy; and student assessment and feedback. As well as curriculum design, this includes staff training in inclusivity and diversity, implicit bias and engagement with a range of student voices to inform practice. These improvements will be implemented during 2019/20 as part of ongoing development of effective teaching and learning practices that improve attainment outcomes for all students, with focused areas on challenges for mature and black learners, and those from the most deprived and under-represented backgrounds.

ACM re-evaluated its priorities with regards to access and participation and has identified the following key areas for strategic development linked to a theory of change models

Theory of Change				
		Inputs	Change Factor	Impact
Key Institutional enablers	Strategy and Leadership	Cohesive strategy and leadership; effective stakeholder and cross-institutional engagement	Institutional practices & outputs are embedded and aligned to mission	Increased performance outcomes across access, success & progression; a proactive & capable institution.
	Enhanced monitoring and evaluation	Working with an external consultant to provide in-house staff training with regards to evaluation and monitoring	Staff supported & developed; active & consistent performance monitoring in place	Increased performance outcomes across access, success and progression; a proactive & capable institution.
	Influential role models and communications strategy	Engagement of staff and student representatives from underrepresented groups in activities and promotions	Increased staff awareness and understanding. Increased 'sense of belonging'; students are more likely to engage and achieve higher satisfaction.	Better student outcomes (success, engagement, NSS & TEF); inclusive and collaborative community of practice.
Access Strate	Engagement in the Arts	Provision of a range of experiences in the arts through school, community and industry outreach.	Inspires, engages and stimulates interest in the music and the creative arts; target students more likely to consider and apply to HE	Student are equipped with the ability (knowledge, skills and experience) to progress to HE. Student successfully apply and enrol.
	Partnership, collaboration	Partnerships and collaborations with schools and other HE and FE providers.	Improves activity reach & effectiveness; increases teacher and student engagement	Target groups are more aware & likely to apply to HE. Influence on school curriculum
	Supporting access and	All applicants have access to the audition/ interview process and	Stimulates confidence; target students more likely to consider and apply to HE	Reduces negative stigmas; improve access for all students; students

© ACM

gies	contextual admissions	various experience opportunities. Provision of audition fee waivers		more likely to successfully apply and enrol.
Outcome Strategies	On programme support	Provision of range of services and opportunities to support students on programme	Supports the ongoing success, participation and progression of students	High proportion of student continuation, attainment and graduate level progression, with comparable rates across cohort & target groups
	Curricular and learning	Development of curriculum, content, pathway and assessment methods with a more diverse appeal	A more inclusive curriculum appeals to more diverse student groups; supports the ongoing success, participation and progression of students	High proportion of student continuation, attainment and graduate level progression, with comparable rates across cohort & target groups
	Financial Support	Provision of bursaries and hardship funds.	Enables target students to successfully participate in HE; students are more likely to be retained.	High proportion of target student participation, and continuation
	Enhanced study skills support	Enhance study skills student support for target students through a range of academic and technical primers, enrichment and online activities	Stimulates confidence and expertise; students are more likely to be retained, engage and achieve higher degree & satisfaction outcomes.	Students are equipped with technical ability to succeed in HE and excel in their art form; high proportions of target student continuation, attainment and graduate level progression.

4.2. Specific measures and activities

The following provides an overview of the activities and support we will undertake to achieve our goals and contribute to the priorities identified.

4.2.1. Institutional Enablers

We consider the first three strategic measures to be institutional enablers (see our theory of change model). This means that they support all major targets across Access, Success & progression by ensuring institutional readiness for change.

Strategic Measure 1: Strategy and Leadership

Clear strategy and strong leadership are essential for continuous improvement throughout the access and participation lifecycle. The leadership and governance framework will seek to ensure strategy is aligned to institutional mission and values, and is coherent and clearly communicated to encourage full stakeholder and cross-institutional engagement, across ACM core and academic teams[16]. This strategic measure relates to all targets, aims and objectives.

Practice and outcomes

[16] "Action by core and academic teams" is one of the four areas in the approach used by "What Works?2" Model of Working https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf

© ACM

- The leadership team will use this Plan to develop and drive the implementation of the Access and Participation Strategy across the student life-cycle.
- Institutional wide review of values and mission undertaken in 2019/20 to ensure key values including those relating to equality and diversity are fully embedded within departments and perceived as such by students.
- The Widening Participation Working Group (WPWG) instigated in 2019 will provide various resources across the institution including expertise, support, facilitation, resources, monitoring and reporting
- Improved engagement of professional and academic staff, and students, will be realised through strengthened communications, staff development opportunities and access to external expertise (see Strategic Measure 2). Work has already commenced in each of these areas for implementation in 2019/20, and we will continue to explore how they can be enhanced further during the lifetime of the Plan.

Evaluation measures
Performance will be monitored and measured on ACM's ability to progress successfully the access and participation agenda, achieve the 5-year targets, and through staff feedback and consultation, student council formal feedback, and external consultation reports.

Strategic Measure 2: Enhanced monitoring and evaluation
ACM recognises current limitations in its monitoring and evaluation capacity across the lifecycle. Data capacity and collection is already fairly well established although increased capacity to track certain underrepresented groups (including care leavers) has only recently been introduced. As an institution relatively new to Access and Participation much of its evaluation, monitoring and research capacity is currently in development. The leadership team and WPWG Group will work closely with external partners to enhance its monitoring, evaluation and research capacity through access to external expertise, staff training and enhanced delivery of evaluation and research projects. As well as meeting commitments, this model is an efficient and effective way to continually build internal capacity and improve practice[17]. Work in these areas has already commenced and will continue to be developed during the lifetime of the Plan. This strategic measure relates to all targets, aims and objectives.

Practice and outcomes
- Significant progress in data capture, collation and analysis has been made through utilisation and continued enhancement of in-house management information system (MIS) 'Insight'.
- Monitoring, evaluation and research capacity will be developed and practice embedded during 2019/20 through engagement with external consultants, and through staff development and training.
- Student engagement reports are now disseminated to academic departments and professional services, via weekly reports, to provide prompt opportunity to assess and action students at risk. This supports move from reactive, to proactive and preventative interventions. Students can access engagement data via 'MyACM' app which provides greater capacity for self-monitoring.

Evaluation measures
Performance will be monitored and measured on ACM's ability to progress successfully the access and participation agenda, achieve the 5-year targets, and through staff feedback and consultation, and external consultation reports.

[17] "Use of data, evaluation and feedback" is one of the four areas the approach used by "What Works?2" Model of Working https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf

© ACM

Strategic Measure 3: Influential role models and communications strategy
Key to encouraging engagement and success within higher education at ACM and with the wide range of activities provided is through the increased use of positive role models[18] [19], and effective communications strategy to promote this to prospective and current students. This strategy was implemented in 2019 and will be further developed and enhanced during the life of the Plan. This strategic measure relates to all targets, aims and objectives.

Practice and outcomes

- Recent staff appointments from underrepresented groups should help strengthen academic attainment, and the increased use of student representatives, that reflect a diverse range of groups, to inform and develop policy and activity should help engage those that could benefit most from these activities.
- Student Representatives indicated their support for increased use of students from underrepresented groups to support engagement.
- Communication strategy will consider inclusion as a high priority to signal participation in relation to all activities and opportunities.

Evaluation measures
Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured on ACM's ability to progress successfully the access and participation agenda, achieve the 5-year targets, and through staff feedback and consultation, student council formal feedback, and external consultation reports.

4.2.2. Access Strategies

Strategic Measure 4: Engagement in the Arts
This strategic measure relates to the provision of a range of experiences in the arts through school, community and industry outreach to inspire, engage and stimulate interest in music and the creative arts. In response to the new (2022) Office for Students (OfS) priorities[20], we have also included a focus on supporting attainment raising amongst target groups, to help increase the likelihood of meeting entry requirements for higher education. Strategy will be focussed on effective targeting of schools and learners, including local schools and communities. Targeted institutions and communities will be reviewed each year of the Plan to ensure activity and investment is consistently targeted.

Practice and outcomes
Schools outreach and applicant experience
Long-term partnerships between schools and ACM will support those from underrepresented groups to develop the knowledge and skills required to succeed[21]. Each year ACM visit around 50 schools across the UK to promote music and creative industries education, and entry to further and higher education. In addition to providing information and guidance on further study, ACM provide a range of services and benefits for

[18] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf
[19] https://mediadiversified.org/2013/12/08/blacks-around-the-table/
[20] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/advice-on-requests-to-vary-access-and-participation-plans-2023-24/
[21] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/strategic-relationships-with-schools-and-raising-attainment/

© ACM

schools and colleges including investing in music equipment, providing GCSE support classes, and music industry career guidance classes. These activities aim to support student achievement, given that target students are far less likely to get the GCSE grades they need to enter higher education[22]. This existing work supports new priorities from the Office for Students (2022) regarding focusing on raising attainment in schools, with emphasis on pre-16 learners[23]. Building from this activity, in 2022-23, we will seek to understand how we might develop our activities that focus on supporting attainment raising. We will consult with 3-5 schools through our partnerships to consider effective practices, bringing the context of our specialist provision. We envisage these developments will build on our current support including provision of Music GCSE support classes and access to equipment and facilities, given that access to the right, quality music equipment means that students are supported to demonstrate their talents. We will also consider with our partners our industry career guidance classes, which allow students to consider their further opportunities and see 'possible selves'. Linking to future goals supports engagement, and in turn achievement, in the classroom (Hughes et al 2016; Harrison and Waller 2018; Bennett et al 2016)[24]. We will also consider support related to resilience, self-efficacy and mental health(Cassidy 2015; Etherton et al 2022; Konaszewski et al 2019)[25], particularly through song-writing which has already, for pupils in one of our schools, "raised their confidence, given them the experience of recording, and will improve their song-writing skills" (teacher feedback on song-writing and recording project). Following consultation with teachers and other key stakeholders in 2022-23, which will provide insights into effective attainment raising practices for our schools and consider how support may best be tailored, we intend to design a pilot programme for rollout in 2023-24, to a target 3-4 schools in first instance. We will also develop a robust evaluation process from the outset to ensure we capture what works, and to inform future developments.

ACM also arranges for individuals, families, community groups, and a large number of schools to visit ACM. In addition to providing tours and talks additional learning activities are arranged. Information regarding disabilities is tracked within the booking process so appropriate support and advice can be given. Although many of the school visits are typically of benefit to all potential students, presentations focus on support provided for underrepresented students. During 2019/20 activity has been undertaken to organise increased number of specific schools visits to schools with high percentage of pupils from underrepresented groups. Targeted schools outreach activity is in place for 2019/20 and will continue for the duration of this Plan.

This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, and increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this by targeting schools and colleges with a high percentage of students from these groups.

---

[22] Department of Education (2018) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/774014/2018_KS4_main_text.pdf

[23] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/advice-on-requests-to-vary-access-and-participation-plans-2023-24/

[24] Hughes, D., Mann, A., Barnes, S.-A., Baldauf, B., & McKeown, R. (2016). Careers education: International literature review. *Education Endowment Foundation*, *1*(July), 1–115; Harrison, N., & Waller, R. (2018). Challenging discourses of aspiration: The role of expectations and attainment in access to higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, *44*(5), 914–938; Bennett, D., Roberts, L., & Creagh, C. (2016). Exploring possible selves in a first-year physics foundation class: Engaging students by establishing relevance. *Physical Review. Physics Education Research*, *12*(1), 010120.

[25] Cassidy, S. (2015). Resilience building in students: The role of academic self-efficacy. Frontiers in Psychology, 6, 1781–1781; Etherton, K., Steele-Johnson, D., Salvano, K., & Kovacs, N. (2022). Resilience effects on student performance and well-being: the role of self-efficacy, self-set goals, and anxiety. The Journal of General Psychology, 149(3), 279–298; Konaszewski, K., Kolemba, M., & Niesiobędzka, M. (2019). Resilience, sense of coherence and self-efficacy as predictors of stress coping style among university students. Current Psychology (New Brunswick, N.J.), 40(8), 4052–4062

© ACM

Community outreach

ACM is involved in a number of community projects[26] both currently and planned for 2020 to support entry to HE and to widen awareness of social and cultural benefits of the creative arts. These include:

- 'Music for All' charity to support annual 'Learn to play days'[27] to provide free taster music lessons.
- Intergenerational music making (IMM), supporting musical collaborations between young and old to combat loneliness and isolation, ACM will be hosting an intergenerational concert in December 2019 and facilitating workshops with referred young people, our own students and care home residents throughout 2020.
- Hosting and managing a community lantern and music festival with Electric Theatre (Guildford) in December 2019, training volunteers and families in drumming and lantern making, targeting those who have little access to the arts.
- Working with the British Dyslexic Association, launching a project 'Dyslexia Creates' a celebration of neurodiversity and the arts, the launch is at the V&A in September 2019[28], we will be working with them to find new ways to reach young people looking for non-traditional higher education opportunities in the creative industries.
- Supporting through recording sessions, musicians and students, the Up! orchestra, a special needs orchestra, in partnership with Surrey Arts, and the I Speak Music project[29], music making for displaced and refugee young people.
- ACM will continue to be part of the local play development network, offering family and young people outreach and taster days.
- In 2020 partnership with Surrey Music Hub, in the launch of a youth music in health festival, alongside Catch 22, Surrey County Council and local arts, health and public service providers, the event will appoint a youth committee to shape, lead the event.
- Work with schools in the south-east to deliver a school's competition and associated workshops, including a residency at local secondary school Kings College (Guildford). To note in respect of the OfS 2022 refocusing on supporting raising attainment in schools, this activity includes for example music tech workshops which align with the learning priorities and outcomes of the school curriculum.
- Supporting charity Never Such Innocence, a national poetry and song-writing competition for schools, exploring themes of conflict.

Community outreach activity commenced in 2019/20, with additional activity being undertaken during 2020, as identified above. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this by working with community groups with a high percentage of individuals from these groups that might typically not engage with arts through provision of activities to support engagement and interest. A commitment is made to continue with this activity throughout the duration of this Plan. Specific partnerships will be maintained although the nature of some projects could vary year-to-year.

Student Ambassadors

[26] Community partnerships are an evidenced way to support target student progression to higher education. For example, an IntoUniversity collaborative project with the Royal College of Music (2018) identified that local authority partners are best able to identify students from disadvantaged backgrounds and are the key to successful projects.

[27] https://musicforall.org.uk/learntoplayday/

[28] https://www.vam.ac.uk/event/XajgZAyP/dyslexia-creates-neurodiversity-creativity-in-the-arts-sept-2019

[29] https://surreymusichub.com/learning/play-and-perform/i-speak-music/

© ACM

ACM have in place a Student Ambassador scheme, currently consisting 18 students and 4 alumni across Guildford and Birmingham, involved in various outreach activity including open days, experience days, audition days, and schools outreach. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, and increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this by providing a relatable experience and context of particular value to those that might typically engage with HE. ACM's Student Ambassador scheme has been in place for a number of years and a commitment made to continuing the scheme for the duration of this Plan.

Evaluation measures
Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: Pre/Post evaluation surveys, interviews/focus groups, record of stakeholder perspectives, analysis of cohort data sets, tracking participation behaviours, use of partner datasets

Strategic Measure 5: Partnerships Collaboration
This strategic measure relates to the development of specific targeted activity through formal collaborative partnership with specific schools and colleges to address specific access targets outlined within this Plan. Activity will seek to encourage student engagement, staff involvement and curriculum development. Targeted institutions and communities will be reviewed each year of the Plan and developed to ensure activity and investment is consistently targeted.

Practice and outcomes

FE college partnerships
As part of our outreach activity a relationship has been formed with ELAM, a 16-19 Academy in 'one of the most deprived areas of the UK'[30] and Walsall Studio School, a school with above the national average for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Projects include event days organised by ACM, providing various experience sessions across different subject areas for pupils, with lunch and transport costs covered. FE college partnerships are already in place and activity is planned for 2019/20. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, and increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this by working directly with colleges with a high percentage of students from these groups through provision of targeted activities to support access and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. ACM commit to providing various activities and opportunities including experience sessions for key FE college partnerships during the duration of the Plan.

Local school partnerships
Through collaboration with a local secondary school (Kings College, Guildford) we will be providing various outreach activities to support attainment (such as curriculum-linked music tech workshops and resources, provided online and for teacher use) and access through a sustained and progressive outreach plan for Year 7 - 11 pupils facilitating initiatives and activities, linked to music and the wider creative industries, that inform and build aspiration, and provide successful transitions into further and higher education. The project will aim to specifically help pupils from underrepresented groups that might not typically consider progression into higher education especially those from lowest participation neighbourhoods and those with SEND complex needs. Local school partnerships are already in place and activity is planned for 2019/20. Activity and development will draw on best practices in partnership development, including guidance

[30] https://www.elam.co.uk/about/

© ACM

provided by the Department for Education[31] and the School-University Partnership Report. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5. It will aim to do this by working directly with schools with a high percentage of pupils from these groups through provision of targeted activities to support access and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. ACM commit to providing various activities and opportunities outlined above during the duration of this Plan.

In respect of the OfS' updated priorities for access and participation in 2022 and specifically the expectation for providers to partner with schools to help raise attainment, we are exploring how we can build on our successful relationships with schools and other community organisations to offer meaningful support. In 2022-23, we will consider how we can strengthen partnership practices to make them more efficient through, for example, targeted networks such as music hubs, UniConnect and Surrey Arts.
As noted above, we already have several long-term relationships with schools that we plan to develop (including having a focus on attainment raising where appropriate). Our intention is to continue to develop a working partnership initially through Surrey Arts, allowing us to work across multiple schools. We wish this partnership to be collaborative and in 2022-23 we will consider how a programme of activity will work in practice. A raising attainment strand of work will form part of this programme and accordingly we will seek to consider and develop activities linked to supporting attainment, working strategically with school stakeholders. Such work may consider supporting both learners and staff. We will draw on research to inform our approach, including the EEF teaching and learning toolkit and DfE and UUK guidance on qualities of successful partnerships. We will also continue our relationship with our UniConnect partnership (HEON), and in 2022-23 will explore activities that support attainment raising for schools in this partnership.

Partnership with HEON
The Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON) is one of the 29 partnerships delivering the OfS funded National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). HEON are a partnership of eleven local institutions and organisations that works with students in Years 9 to 13 in eleven wards across Surrey (7 wards) and East Hampshire (4 wards) where HE participation is low overall and lower than would be expected given GCSE attainment rates. Phase 2 of the programme (August 2019-July 2021) sees the addition of an Outreach Hub offering wider support to the 11 LAU1 areas of Surrey and 2 LAU1 areas in North East Hampshire as well as continuing with the targeted programme. HEON work to deliver activities and events that are complementary to other locally delivered outreach programmes, giving students a wide range of opportunities and experiences of Higher Education. As a partner ACM will be providing input to development of strategy, and providing resources, both in terms of expertise and physical spaces, to support strategy. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5. It will aim to do this by working directly with schools with a high percentage of pupils from these groups through provision of targeted activities to support access and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Partnership with HEON commenced in 2019/20 with initial activity and involvement being planned for that year. ACM commit to active engagement with scheme during the duration of this Plan, subject to continued NCOP provision.

Industry outreach
ACM work with a number of industry organisations including PRS Foundation, and BASCA Trust[32] as well as commercial organisations like Metropolis Studios to provide access to scholarships, and experience activity.

[31] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-school-partnerships/guide-to-setting-up-partnerships
[32] https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/news/first-major-uk-fund-for-songwriters-and-writer-producers/37039

© ACM

Role models, including staff, students, alumni, and industry will be used to help encourage engagement from underrepresented groups. A recent report on transition programmes identified providing encounters and experience with employers, working people and workplaces evidenced as one area successful transition programmes should focus on, in particular for young adults with SEND.[33] Industry outreach activity at ACM, as outlined above, has been in place for a number of years, and activity planned for 2019/20. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of targeted activities that promote access and music and the arts for those that typically might not be able to easily access them. Activity is in place for 2019/20 and ACM commit to provision of industry outreach during the duration of the Plan.

Evaluation measures
Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: Pre/Post evaluation surveys, interviews/focus groups, record of stakeholder perspectives, analysis of cohort data sets, tracking participation behaviours, use of partner datasets.

Strategic Measure 6: Support access and contextual admissions
This strategic measure relates to provision of activities and opportunities to support access for applicants typically less likely to engage with HE. Four key areas have been identified to support targeted activities for access to higher education. These are: Transition and experience events; Contextual admissions, Accessible courses and pathways. Support for access is made available for all applicants. However, learners from under-represented groups, and in particular those from deprived backgrounds are most likely to benefit from this approach in that they are less likely to have the necessary or existing social capital for higher education[34] and therefore more likely to need further opportunities and experiences to make informed choices. This is relevant to creative industry professions that typically have low percentage of those from deprived backgrounds[35]. Provision of the following is in place for 2019/20 and a commitment is made to continuing this scheme for the duration of this Plan.

Practice and outcomes

Transition and experience events
ACM provide a number of transition and experience events throughout the year including experience days on campus and with our industry partner, at Metropolis Studios. These are provided to all students. However, as identified above there is evidence to support the value of these types of activity in particular for young adults with SEND, and those typically less likely to engage in HE including BAME and IMD/POLAR Q1 groups. All applicants to ACM programmes are provided with an 'Access All Areas' card[36] that gives them access to various benefits and services, similar to those available to students. This includes access to masterclasses, tutorials, and other experience opportunities to help prepare them for further and higher education study. Applicants are also able to access a number of online 'primer modules' in certain subjects, designed to give students a solid footing in the skills required to succeed on the degree. These are particularly useful for those that might feel concerned about their confidence and knowledge in certain areas. Transition activity and experience events, including the 'access all areas' scheme is already in place

[33] https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/careers-enterprise-what-works-report-transition-prog.pdf.pdf
[34] https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2017/08/16/new-insights-widening-participation-importance-social-capital-paul-clarke/
[35] https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/28474/1/The_class_pay_gap_and_intergenerational_worklessness.pdf
[36] https://www.acm.ac.uk/aaa/

© ACM

and activity is planned for 2019/20. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of activities to support transition into higher education. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. ACM commit to providing various activities and opportunities outlined above during the duration of this Plan.

Contextual admissions

All applicants can access the audition and interview process providing opportunity for those without formal technical skills certification (i.e. graded syllabus exams). A contextual admission process enables those with low tariff achievement or alternative qualifications to demonstrate programme suitability through interview and task completion. A recent government report supported use of contextual admissions to improve social mobility[37] and other reports[38]. ACM has for a number of years provided access to audition/interviews for the majority of its applicants. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of admission processes that support access to higher education. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. Provision of a contextual admission scheme is in place for 2019/20 and a commitment is made to continuing this scheme for the duration of this Plan.

Accessible courses and pathways

Summer School and 'boot camps'

Each year ACM run a week-long summer school[39] for those aged 12 to 18. These provide opportunity to experience music industry education in a relaxed and fun environment. ACM also run a number of 'boot camps'[40] that provide opportunity to upskill in specific areas prior to commencing study in September. Whilst these courses are available to all students we recognise the value they can have to those that might not have access to these through private tuition or school resources. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of activities to support transition into higher education. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. ACM has run a Summer School every year, for a number of years. ACM commit to providing various activities and opportunities, including provision of 'boot camps', during the duration of this Plan.

Foundation Entry Year – Level '0', and FE provision

A Foundation Entry Year degree pathway is available for those that do not meet the entry requirements for degree entry at level 4. ACM is able to provide access to Degree programmes, via this pathway, to over 150 students each year, where higher education might not normally be an option for them, supporting widest possible participation. ACM also provide provision of funded Level 2 and Level 3 programmes at both sites, providing further opportunity for access to higher education. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of activities to support transition into higher education. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. ACM's

[37] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798404/SMC_State_of_the_Nation_Report_2018-19.pdf

[38] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/contextual-admissions/

[39] https://www.acm.ac.uk/summer-school/

[40] https://www.acm.ac.uk/music-theory-bootcamp/

© ACM

Foundation Year programme was launched in 2016, and Level 3 FE provision in place for over 20 years, and Level 2 introduced in 2016. A commitment is made to providing access routes of this type for the duration of this Plan.

This provision supports the Office for Students' updated 2022 priority for providers to consider alternative and entry pathways at Levels 4 and 5. In addition, we offer a Certificate and Diploma of HE, providing entry routes to degree programmes. Accessibility has been enhanced by online provision of these programmes. The Foundation Programme also provides flexible and traditional routes for prospective degree students who do not currently meet the entry requirements of the degree programme. These include students with entry level creative skills but lower academic skills; entry level academic skills with lower creative skills; and lower skills than entry level for both requirements. The Foundation Programme enables students to build their creative and academic portfolio which demonstrates required Level 3 achievement to meet the entry requirements and prepares them for study in ACM degree level programmes. This programme is negotiated with each learner and the progress of their entry-level portfolio is regularly reviewed to support progression and achievement. The flexibility of this programme is used to target creative learners in adult and community learning contexts to increase and support widening participation. We do not have plans to develop degree apprenticeships at this time.

Innovative pathway offer

In 2019 ACM launched a pioneering Rap and MC degree pathway[41]. ACM recognised that current higher education degree programmes did not sufficiently meet the expectations of those interested in studying these subject areas. Teaching staff, with experience in these areas, have been appointed to provide relevant cultural context, act as positive role models, and support engagement. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5, increase numbers of students applying from BAME groups. It will aim to do this through provision of programme to support transition into higher education. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. ACM enrolled its first students on Rap and MC pathway in September 2019. A commitment is made to providing innovative programme routes of this nature for the duration of this Plan.

Financial support (audition fee waivers)

Audition fee waivers are offered to applicants in receipt of means-tested state benefits. Audition fee waivers are already in place for 2019/20 with a commitment to provide financial support for the duration of this Plan. This measure links to the access aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in access between students from IMD/POLAR Q1 and Q5. Reducing such financial pressures on students reduces stress and supports better ongoing social and academic engagement (Hovdhaugen 2015). Particularly for these target students, who are also more likely to be debt and loan adverse (UUK 2005; Stevenson 2012; Callendar 2008), reducing financial barriers to participation is critical.

Evaluation measures

Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: pre/post evaluation surveys, interviews/focus groups, record of stakeholder perspectives, analysis of cohort data sets, tracking participation behaviours, use of partner datasets.

4.2.3. Outcomes Strategies

Strategic Measure 7: On programme support

[41] https://www.acm.ac.uk/acm-launches-brand-new-rap-mc-degree-pathway/

© ACM

This strategic measure relates to provision of activities and opportunities to support students on programme and improve outcomes for targeted groups. On-programme support is typically made available to all students. However, as identified in Strategic Measure 6 ACM recognise that learners from under-represented groups, and in particular those from deprived backgrounds are most likely to benefit from this approach in that they are less likely to have the necessary or existing social capital for higher education. Four key areas have been identified to support targeted activities for continuation and attainment in higher education: Student engagement and assessment of risk; Transition and induction activity; Academic tutorial support; and Wellbeing and mental health support. During 2019/20 work is being undertaken by the WPWG to promote value of these activities to certain underrepresented groups, namely mature students, students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, and students from BAME groups to ensure they are not disadvantaged by the broad availability of the measure. A specific area of focus being undertaken in 2019/20, through use of influential role models (as identified in Strategic Measure 1) will seek to improve attainment outcomes specifically for black students.

Practice and outcomes

Student engagement and assessment of risk

Engagement is monitored by the Student Engagement Team on a weekly basis. Poor or decreasing engagement is a key indicator in identifying students at risk of attainment and continuation. A framework for response is in place to contact and support those at possible risk, and monitor outcomes. A commitment is made to continuing strategy and activity to monitor attendance for the duration of this Plan. All students have access to a MyACM app that provides them access to their engagement statistics, and other functionality via their smart phone to enable them to self-monitor. It also provides a 'help button' that students can use to access specific types of support and alert support teams. Such integrated support positively impacts student experience and outcomes, particularly in the transition phase[42]. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through monitoring of engagement and the implementation of response frameworks to support engagement and improved outcomes. Monitoring of engagement is already in place and a commitment is made to continuing provision of technology that enables students to easily access support and help for the duration of this Plan.

As part of the Office for Students' updated 2022 priorities, specifically in respect of ensuring that target groups are supported during their study and into positive graduate outcomes, in 2022-23 we are strengthening our monitoring to specifically consider engagement amongst our target learners. We will analyse data by target groups, and seek to conduct further evaluation or research to better understand any emerging concerns, such as the specific challenges faced by our target learners. This follows improvements in 2021-22, where (with the introduction of Pathway Leaders), monitoring of student engagement (including attendance, assessment submissions, and asynchronous engagement with VLE content) has become a shared responsibility distributed across the pathways. Regular monitoring is reported to the Risk Intervention Group, a weekly meeting of cross-disciplinary stakeholders across ACM's Integrated Student Services. Chaired by the Registry Manager, the Pathway Leaders present the outcomes of their student

[42] For example: Simmons, O. (2011). Lost in Transition: The Implications of Social Capital for HE Access. *The Notre Dame Law Review, 87*(1), 205-252; Fuller, C. (2014). Social Capital and the role of trust in aspirations for higher education. *Educational Review, 66*(2), 131-147; Pokorny, H., Holley, D., & Kane, S. (2017). Commuting, transitions and belonging: The experiences of students living at home in their first year at university. *Higher Education,* 74(3), 543-558; Singh, G (2009) *A synthesis of research evidence Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' participation in higher education: improving retention and success*.

© ACM

monitoring, and staff across the services share the input and intervention they have had with the student(s). A personalised intervention plan is then developed and agreed between all stakeholders and is implemented by the relevant staff. This approach has seen the consolidation of services and contact with a student, so they can feel supported by one dedicated staff member with input from others. This is as opposed to multiple staff members contacting them about different areas of their support in a way that is not connected or mindful of one another.

Transition and induction activity

ACM runs an extensive induction activity for all new students and 'Academic Transition Events' for all continuing students. These are provided to help prepare students for academic study and student life at the start of each academic year, and new term for continuing students, and this is acknowledged of particular benefit to students at risk of non-continuation and poor attainment. Generally, activity is made available to all students, although for 2019/20 induction events and networking opportunities have been specifically arranged for mature students to help them transition back into formal education. A 'buddy' scheme is in place specifically for students receiving education guidance support including those in receipt of DSA. This links a student up with a nominated peer at early stages of the programme to support transition and engagement. Where activity is made available to all students activity is being undertaken by the WPWG to ensure engagement of underrepresented students is maximised, and in particular for mature students, BAME groups, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, to ensure they are not disadvantaged. The scheme is in place for 2019/20 and commitment made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through provision of transition and induction activity to support engagement and improved outcomes. Targeted induction activity was implemented for 2019/20 and a commitment is made to continuing provision of extensive induction activity for the duration of this Plan, recognising the importance of the transition-in phase[43].

Academic tutorial support

All students have access to academic tutorials within their timetabled classes provision which provides opportunity to speak to tutors in a regular group or one-to-one throughout the term. Group tutorials are additionally offered to targeted student groups for support and peer learning, providing access to role models. This supports the OfS revised 2022 priorities regarding ensuring target students are supported on course and into good graduate outcomes. We have developed this provision to make tutorial provision more relevant and accessible, using a 'community' 'cohort' and 'project' sessions approach. These provide small group and one-to-one academic support, which can be tailored and more responsive to target student need, bringing in the context of specific projects or communities. To negate the issue of lack of engagement, where target groups are less likely to self-select (Bornschlegl et al 2022; Raaper et al 2022)[44], these sessions are now mandatory.

[43] Meehan, C., & Howells, K. (2018). In search of the feeling of 'belonging' in higher education: Undergraduate students transition into higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-15;

[44] Bornschlegl, M., & Caltabiano, N. J. (2022). Increasing Accessibility to Academic Support in Higher Education for Diverse Student Cohorts. Teaching and Learning Inquiry, 10, 1–18; Raaper, R., Brown, C., & Llewellyn, A. (2022). Student support as social network: exploring non-traditional student experiences of academic and wellbeing support during the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational Review (Birmingham), 74(3), 402–421.

© ACM

The 'enhancement of student learning opportunities' was commended in ACM's QAA Higher Education Review report. Academic tutorial support has been in place at ACM for a number of years. and is acknowledged of particular benefit to students at risk of non-continuation and poor attainment. Generally, this measure is made available to all students and has been in place for a number of years. However, activity is being undertaken by the WPWG in 2019/20 to ensure engagement of underrepresented students in maximised, and in particular for mature students, BAME groups, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, to ensure they are not disadvantaged. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through provision of academic tutorials to support engagement and improved outcomes. A commitment is made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan.

Wellbeing and mental health support

Mindfulness and wellbeing services and information is already integrated into the programme design to support the holistic approach in supporting student development and achievement by giving them tools to become self-aware and build resilience[45]. Further support is provided through Student Services team who provide access to support and guidance as well as regular events and activity weeks. In 2017 ACM received the Outstanding Support for Student Learning Experience award from the prestigious Independent Higher Education awards. From 2019/20 onwards the Student Services team will be providing three distinct levels of support: *universal support* for all students through online resources, podcasts etc, *targeted support* including 1-2-1s with student hub advisers, and *specialist support*, covering performance anxiety, NLP, mindfulness, and access to qualified counsellors. All students are provided with free access to Big White Wall online mental health community service[46]. Generally, this measure is made available to all students and has been in place for a couple of years. However, activity is being undertaken by the WPWG in 2019/20 to ensure engagement of underrepresented students in maximised, and in particular for mature students, BAME groups, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, to ensure they are not disadvantaged. A commitment is made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan. As identified above additional provision to support wellbeing and mental health support was introduced in 2019/20. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through provision of wellbeing and mental health to support engagement and improved outcomes. A commitment is made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan.

Evaluation measures

Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: NSS and other student satisfaction surveys, attendance monitoring, focus group activity with sample target students, monitor support engagement, number of students (by target group) gaining employment, student representatives/ councils, feedback. Financial support evaluation toolkit will be used to undertake qualitative evaluation of financial support.

Strategic Measure 8: Curricular and learning, including teaching and assessment practices

[45] Craig Thorley, 'Not by degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's universities', Institute for Public Policy Research, 2017, and the UUK initiative #stepchange.

[46] https://www.bigwhitewall.com

© ACM

ACM's 'learning by doing' approach[47] was recognised as good practice within the ACM's QAA HER report[48]. We will seek to maintain this and further enhance our approach to learning, teaching and assessment specifically for underrepresented groups during the lifetime of the Plan. A key aspect of this is to enhance and develop digital learning methodologies to support differential learning, which as identified above can be of specific value to those less likely to have the necessary or existing social capital for higher education or have non-traditional academic qualifications. One key outcome, supporting the OfS new (2022) priorities for ensuring target students are supported through and beyond study, is the provision of recorded and archived lectures, so that students may return to, repeat and have flexible access to learning (Serrano et al 2019; Castro 2019; Li et al 2020)[49].

Provision includes a range of course support material available including use of recorded lectures, the development of innovative approaches to assessment and feedback, and flexibility in modes of assessment, and programme design to support the diverse needs of learners. A pilot scheme to provide students with recorded verbal feedback from the tutor was identified as good practice and will be extended. Generally, this approach is embedded for all students to benefit. However, activity is being undertaken by the WPWG in 2019 to ensure engagement of underrepresented students in maximised, and in particular for mature students, black students, and those from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, to ensure they are not disadvantaged. By way of update in response to the OfS 2022 priorities to ensure under-represented students are supported, we have for example developed a plan to embed Equality Assessment Form into all projects to make sure that underrepresented groups are taken to consideration when redesigning administrative procedures, curriculum, or students focused events; the Head of Diversity, Access and Participation regularly meets with the Student Council and Student Voice committee to update students and ensure activity is targeted. A commitment is made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan. ACM's 'learning by doing' (work-based learning method) approach is already embedded into delivery for 2019/20 and a commitment made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan, as a best practice approach[50]. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through its 'learning by doing' approach to support engagement and improved outcomes.

Evaluation measures

Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: NSS and other student satisfaction surveys, attendance monitoring, focus group activity with sample target students, monitor support engagement, number of students (by target group) gaining employment, student representatives/ councils, feedback.

Strategic Measure 9: Financial support (bursaries, hardship funds, and travel bursaries)

Students report that financial support reduces the risks of their dropping out from their studies (Nursaw Associates 2015). Financial support can reduce the pressure on students to take on excessive amounts of term time work which can impact on attainment (Moreau and Leathwood 2006; Richardson et al 2014).

[47] https://www.acm.ac.uk/acm-vision-and-mission/

[48] p.2 https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/the-academy-of-contemporary-music-ltd-her-ap-17.pdf

[49] Serrano, D. R., Dea-Ayuela, M. A., Gonzalez-Burgos, E., Serrano-Gil, A., & Lalatsa, A. (2019). Technology-enhanced learning in higher education: How to enhance student engagement through blended learning. European Journal of Education, 54(2), 273–286; Castro, R. (2019). Blended learning in higher education: Trends and capabilities. Education and Information Technologies, 24(4), 2523–2546; Li, X., Yang, Y., Chu, S. K. W., Zainuddin, Z., & Zhang, Y. (2020). Applying blended synchronous teaching and learning for flexible learning in higher education: an action research study at a university in Hong Kong. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 1–17

[50] OfS: Addressing Barriers to Success Programme: Aston University, *Levelling the playing field through work-based learning*. Available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/aston-university/

© ACM

Reducing the financial pressures on students reduces stress and mental ill health and supports better social and academic engagement (Hovdhaugen 2015). A range of financial support schemes will be made specifically available to underrepresented students on programme to support continuation and attainment. While previous formal evaluation in respect of student financial support has not been undertaken, ACM notes that due to the additional upfront costs of study (equipment, for example software, headphones, musical instruments, etc.) students benefit from financial support particularly at the start of their first year, and are unable to pay back small loans that have previously been offered by ACM to support these costs. Bursaries will therefore be made available to new starts to help transition students during the first year of study and manage the costs typically associated with starting a higher education course. In line with best practice, support is targeted at the learners who need it most[51] (target disadvantaged students with lower income thresholds), and is aligned with considerations for the costs of transition-in. These include additional costs of moving location; IT and other equipment; participation in activities in the transition-in phase; other living costs. Eligibility for both bursaries will be assessed through the HEBS bursary scheme managed by the Student Loans Company. Financial bursaries are already in place for 2019/20. The above scheme will be implemented for 2020/21 with commitment to provide financial support to new starts for the duration of this Plan. Additional financial support will be available to students in the form of hardship funds and travel bursaries. Financial support will be targeted at those from most deprived groups. From 2019/20 onwards and throughout the life of this Plan, ACM will evaluate its financial support offer to test the model on an annual basis. We will use appropriate components of the OFFA toolkit for measuring the impact of financial support. If findings of this evaluation suggest that the model should be changed, ACM will seek timely and appropriate changes to this Plan in an amendment with the OfS. It is anticipated that ACM will need to evaluate for a minimum of 3 years, to 2021/22, at which point an amendment based on evidence and evaluation may be sought for the 2022/23 intake. We will also explore sector data and evidence, and compare our offer and experience with other appropriate providers, to inform our approach.

Practice and outcomes

Financial Bursaries

A bursary of £1000 will be made available for new applicants applying for the first year of study on a full-time ACM undergraduate programme who have a household income of £25,000 or less. Bursary support will be paid to students in termly instalments. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5. It will aim to do this through provision of bursaries to support engagement and improved outcomes. Evidence for approach is identified above.

A bursary of £250 will be made available for new applicants applying for first year of study on a full-time ACM undergraduate programme, with household incomes of greater than £25,000 but less than £40,000, and will be paid as a single payment. The £250 bursary will be available to applicants from any underrepresented group not already in receipt of the £1000 bursary. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in non-continuation and attainment between young and mature students, and to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students. It will aim to do this through provision of bursaries to support engagement and improved outcomes. Evidence for approach is identified above.

Hardship fund

[51] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/

© ACM

Hardship funds are available to provide financial assistance to those identified through staff referral or self-referral. The funds are allocated to allow students to meet financial obligations in the event of exceptional and unexpected circumstances to enable them to continue their studies. The fund can also be used to cover DSA assessment costs. Students can apply for up to £1000 within an academic year. Eligibility is assessed through submission of an application form and supporting evidence. The travel bursary scheme, currently available to further education students, is being extended to higher education students in 2019/20. The scheme will be targeted to support mature students, care leavers, and carers, and will provide up to 25% of individual student travel costs. The hardship fund and travel bursary provision will be implemented for 2020/21 with commitment to continue scheme for the duration of this Plan. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5. It will aim to do this through provision of hardship funds to support engagement and improved outcomes.

Evaluation measures
The OFFA Evaluation of the Impact of Financial support evaluation toolkit will be used to undertake qualitative evaluation of financial support, using appropriate tools (e.g. the survey).

Strategic Measure 10: Enhanced Study Skills Support
This strategic measure relates to provision of activities and opportunities to support students on programme and improve outcomes for targeted groups, in particular as relate to attainment and progression into careers. Through consultation with students and staff, and through an understanding of entry profiles, including qualifications and academic background, it was recognised that enhanced support for study skills, specifically reading and writing, could have a positive impact for many of the target groups.
As identified in Strategic Measure 6 ACM recognise that learners from under-represented groups, and in particular those from deprived backgrounds are most likely to benefit from this approach in that they are less likely to have the necessary or existing social capital for higher education. Work is being undertaken by the WPWG in 2019/20, for implementation during that year and in 2020/21, to maximise engagement for underrepresented groups, namely mature students, students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2, black students, and those with disabilities, to ensure they are not disadvantaged. A specific area of focus being undertaken in 2019/20, through use of influential role models (as identified in Strategic Measure 1) will seek to improve progression outcomes specifically for students with disabilities. A commitment is made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan.

Practice and outcomes

Extra-curricular support
Skill development and extra-curricular activity is supported through provision of 'pro-workshops'. These provide students with access to a variety of additional structured workshops and study opportunities that support skill development as well as having sociological benefits to the students in general (i.e. ensemble singing). A number of the workshops specifically address areas that traditionally are lacking for students that have not had a specific training in certain skill areas at school and are potentially more likely for disadvantaged groups. For example, music theory, writing skills, and research skills. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between mature and young students, students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students, and to reduce the gap in progression outcomes between disabled and students not known to be disabled. It will aim to do this through provision of 'pro-workshops' to support improved attainment and progression outcomes. Evidence

© ACM

in support of approach is identified above. A significant provision of extra-curricular activity was implemented for 2019/20. A commitment is made to continuing provision of skill development and extra-curricular activity during the duration of this Plan.

In respect of the OfS new (2022) priorities for ensuring target students are supported through and beyond study, an update to this skills development activity is the provision of new skills units within curriculum. This improvement to practice draws on evidence that target students are less likely to self-select for support (Chang et al 2020; Bornschlegl et al 2022)[52], and often have less available time (due to work or caring responsibilities) (Runacres et al, 2021)[53] to dedicate to extra-curricular activity. Embedding these skills sessions into programme design ensures that target students access activity that will support their attainment and progression outcomes.

Study skills and technical 'primers'

Provision of academic and technical primers, and online activities is made available at various stages of the student lifecycle. A key aspect of this will be to help support and encourage independent learning through use of personal and career mentoring. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between mature and young students, students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students, and to reduce the gap in progression outcomes between disabled students and students not known to be disabled. It will aim to do this through provision of academic and technical primers to support improved attainment and progression outcomes. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. Provision for study skills and technical primers was implemented in 2019/20. A commitment is made to continuing provision of skill development and extra-curricular activity during the duration of this Plan.

Enrichment weeks

Every term ACM run 2 weeks of enrichment activity offering workshops covering skill development, transferable skills, song-writing camps, and dissertation support amongst many other areas. Activities are phased to align with stages of the student lifecycle with earlier events focusing on activities to support transition and learning, and later events supporting entry to careers and further study. The communication strategy will be linked to the social networks and support staff for targeted groups. This measure links to the success aims, objectives and targets to reduce the gap in attainment outcomes between mature and young students, students from IMD/POLAR Q1-2 and Q3-5, and black and white students, and to reduce the gap in progression outcomes between disabled students and students not known to be disabled. It will aim to do this through provision of enrichment activities to support improved attainment and progression outcomes. Evidence in support of approach is identified above. Provision of enrichment weeks is in place for 2019/20 and commitment made to continuing provision for the duration of this Plan.

Evaluation measures

Performance within this strategic measure will be monitored and measured through the following methods: NSS and other student satisfaction surveys, attendance monitoring, focus group activity with sample target

[52] Chang, J., Wang, S., Mancini, C., McGrath-Mahrer, B., & Orama de Jesus, S. (2020). The Complexity of Cultural Mismatch in Higher Education: Norms Affecting First-Generation College Students' Coping and Help-Seeking Behaviors. Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 26(3), 280–294; Bornschlegl, M., & Caltabiano, N. J. (2022). Increasing Accessibility to Academic Support in Higher Education for Diverse Student Cohorts. Teaching and Learning Inquiry, 10, 1–18.

[53] Runacres, J., Herron, D., Buckless, K., & Worrall, S. (2021). Student carer experiences of higher education and support: a scoping review. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 1–18.

© ACM

students, monitor engagement, number of students (by target group) gaining employment, student representatives/ councils, feedback.

4.3.Student consultation

Preparation of the Plan

Student representatives were consulted throughout the drafting of this Plan. ACM continues to be interested in, and value student thoughts and ideas on the types of measures that could be employed as well as student views on proposals. Interviews were conducted with a number of students to gain their understanding and views on access and participation strategy. More than half of the current representatives are from underrepresented groups, including particular target groups e.g. BAME, POLAR 4/IMD Q1, mature, and students with disabilities, so it was possible to get a comprehensive and informed opinion; a number of these students also had profiles across multiple groups. Students were supportive of the planned priorities and measures and the following observations made from the consultation:

- a recognised need for support at early stages of the student lifecycle including opportunities for skill development prior to programme commencement and study skills during the first year
- support for financial bursaries for travel and living costs for those from IMD Q1-2. These further support engagement and integration with student community
- availability of audio/video recording of lectures to support differentiated learning styles.
- a scheme to provide loan laptops was raised (by some students and staff) as a possible measure to support access and success for students from IMD Q1-2. At this stage we understand similar schemes at other universities have met with limited success and there have been issues with regards support and maintenance of such equipment. ACM currently provide access to IT resources including specialist software outside of normal class times to enable students to complete assessments., and students can access the bursary scheme. No plans therefore to implement a scheme at this stage, although the WPWG will continue to monitor potential for such a scheme.
- provision of bursaries should be managed with appropriate controls in place to ensure funds are not misused by recipients.
- Students representatives welcomed increased use of representatives as positive role models to improve engagement of underrepresented groups in activities

As a result of student consultation, ACM actioned a range of activities including:

- In 2019-20 ACM and student body will work together to explore how to deepen and strengthen student collaboration, and document rapid consultation-into-practice examples
- Inclusion of specific strategies for:
    - Explicit recognition of the need to strengthen student collaboration, and agreement of a model for doing so;
    - Establishment of a collaborative working group to consider student access, retention, progression and success;
    - Inclusion of a specific strategy for building belonging, a commitment for ACM and the Student Council to work closely together on this;
    - Maintaining a focus on inclusive curriculum, activities and measures that are embedded rather than ‘spotlighting’ student groups, as student feedback and input raised concerns against further stigmatising certain groups;

© ACM

- Ensuring rigour in the process for provision of bursaries to ensure allocation is fair and transparent. As a result of student feedback and input ACM adopted to use external assessment of eligibility;
- Use of role models to encourage engagement and achievement as student feedback and input identified this as a positive action;

Student involvement in Plan implementation, monitoring and evaluation

ACM is committed to ensuring students are consulted in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of access and participation work and as a result, will engage with students in a number of different ways, as outlined below. Various mechanisms have been introduced to enable students (including student ambassadors and student representatives) to be involved in the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the plan. Channels include:

- **Working groups and informal forums:** The WPWG will work with students, both individually and in groups, via working groups and forums to help assess impact of measures and activity identified within this Plan and to help guide and improve practice.
- **Formal Committees:** Students are represented across the governance framework including membership of Academic Board, and Student Engagement and Quality Committee. Consideration of progress, impact and risk related to the Access and Participation Plan, the widening participation agenda, and equality and diversity policy are within this governance framework.
- **Student Council:** Implemented in September 2019, the ACM Student Council, will liaise closely with the formal committees and working groups to ensure adequate and meaningful representation and inclusion with regards widening participation and measures to support access, success and progression for underrepresented groups.

A matrix of student involvement across the lifecycle is provided below. These examples include measures for 2019-20, which will be strengthened and expanded via student consultation over the life of this Plan, in a model of continuous improvement.

	Implementation	**Monitoring**	**Evaluation**
Access	Students are involved in the design and implementation of success strategy through involvement with the WPWG Student ambassadors are involved in the design and delivery of outreach activity.	Activity and outcomes are monitored by the WPWG, upon which students sit. This group will benefit from continuous improvements in data and analysis capacity to support effective monitoring.	Student ambassadors are involved in the evaluation of outreach activity, providing their evaluation via survey tools and de-briefings following events. These data are considered in evaluation reports, which produce findings that then inform practice. Students are surveyed to determine their routes to ACM and their evaluation on the applicant cycle. Findings inform practice.
Success	Student representatives are involved in the design and implementation of success strategy through involvement with the WPWG	Activity and outcomes are monitored by the WPWG, upon which students sit. This group will benefit from continuous improvements in data and analysis capacity to	Evaluation of success activity is undertaken by the WPWG, upon students sit.

© ACM

	Students are involved in design and delivery of success activity, e.g. social and networking events, and project collaboration. Each student representative is linked to a specific programme to provide support to students and input to academic programmes.	support effective monitoring.	Students are surveyed to determine impact of success activity. Findings inform practice.
Progression	Students are involved in the design and implementation progression strategy through involvement with the WPWG Students are involved in the design and delivery of progression activity e.g. student led record label 'Metropolis Blue'.	Activity and outcomes are monitored by the WPWG, upon which students sit. This group will benefit from continuous improvements in data and analysis capacity to support effective monitoring.	Evaluation of progression activity is undertaken by the WPWG, upon students sit. Students are surveyed to determine impact of progression activity. Findings inform practice.

4.4. Evidence to support measures

Many of the measures outlined above are already in place at ACM and there is evidence, both anecdotal feedback, and access, success and progression outcomes, to support their value and to inform their continuation as appropriate measures within the Access and Participation Plan. For example, a) enhancements to mechanism for tracking student engagement and initiating appropriate response activity have led to reductions in non-continuation rates, b) support tutorials for students with an assessed learning support need have seen an increase in Degree award achievement, and c) increase in outreach activity, open days and other access related activity have seen increase in recruitment against sector trends. Further evidence in support of measures outlined above is as follows:

4.4.1. Collaborative working and raising attainment

There is a clear link between academic attainment at schools and colleges and access to higher education as highlighted in a TeachFirst report 'Beyond access: Getting to university and succeeding there' (2017)[54] 'No matter how much support is provided to students from disadvantage background, they will not get into university unless they reach the required academic standards'. Further reports by Institute of Fiscal Studies[55], and UniversitiesUK[56] support the need for collaborative partnerships and raising attainment.

A UCL report further highlights the impact music in schools can have in 'Boosting achievement, enthusiasm, and participation'[57]. A recent study[58] of a project for school children, aged 11 to 15 at risk of being expelled, to learn more about electronic, grime and hip-hop music identified substantially improved attendance and increased attainment in maths and English GCSEs.

[54] www.teachfirst.org.uk/reports/beyond-access

[55] www.ifs.org.uk/publications/8799

[56] www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/Raising-attainment-through-university-school-partnerships.pdf

[57] http://www.ucl.ac.uk/impact/case-study-repository/music-in-schools

[58] Study commissioned by Youth Music. Research undertaken by Birmingham City University.

© ACM

The Music Commission ten-year report[59] published in March 2019 made the following observations:

- the cost barriers to families represent a significant inequality of access to music education
- there is insufficient support beyond first access programmes for learners who wish to progress their music education
- schools need greater support in delivering a rich music curriculum that focuses on key musical skills
- resources and organisations are not working together effectively enough to support every learner to progress

4.4.2. Reducing attainment gaps

Evidence[60], provided in a HEFCE report, shows that attainment gaps persist for groups of students with certain characteristics, even when taking into account prior attainment. The report highlighted four types of explanatory factors for differential outcomes for students. Each of these has been evaluated with regards to the measures and activities identified by ACM to support access, success and progression for underrepresented students.

1. **Curricula and learning, including teaching and assessment practices**
   ACM's approach to programme offer, 'learning by doing' ethos, programme support material, induction and transition activity, the range of student and academic support services all aim to recognise that different student groups have different levels of satisfaction with what they learn and with the user-friendliness of learning, teaching and assessment practices.
2. **Relationships between staff and students and among students**
   ACM's Industry Link, Business Link, and networking activities, academic support tutorials, extra-curricular activities, student mentors, student ambassadors, wellbeing and mental health support recognise the need for a 'sense of belonging' as a key factor that influences student outcomes.
3. **Social, cultural and economic capital**
   ACM's Industry Link, Business Link and networking activities, academic support tutorials, extra-curricular activities, student mentors, student ambassadors and buddies, wellbeing and mental health support aims to help resolve problems associated with differences in how students experience higher education, how they network and how they draw on external support. Financial support, including scholarships, bursaries, and hardship funds recognises that financial situations also affect student experience and their engagement with learning.
4. **Psychological and identity factors**
   ACMs student services provision, including wellbeing and mental health support, academic support tutorials recognises the importance students attach to feeling appropriately supported and encouraged, to support learning and attainment.

A number of recent reports have highlighted the link between wellbeing and educational attainment. An IPPR report[61] in 2017 highlighted the level of mental illness, mental distress and low wellbeing among students as increasing and high relative to other sections of the population. A HEPI report[62] in 2018 recognised the issues that academics felt with regards to their role in supporting the mental health. A more recent report from HEPI[63] highlighted the need for early interventions for students before a crisis arises.

[59] http://www.musiccommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/WEB-Retuning-our-Ambition-for-Music-Learning.indd .pdf
[60] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/inequality/differential/
[61] https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-09/not-by-degrees-summary-sept-2017-1-.pdf
[62] https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2018/01/30/whats-role-academics-responding-supporting-student-mental-health/
[63] https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2018/06/19/enough-policy-already-lets-get-real-student-mental-health-wellbeing/

© ACM

Aligned with this ACM's approach to wellbeing support has been to develop a more holistic and refined understanding of the range of diversity of student mental health and wellbeing issues. Measures identified within the plan reflect the desire to provide support for all students, and a framework that provides early indication of possible problems. The approach also considers the wide range of issues that can potentially influence student wellbeing including accommodation problems, financial issues, and work load. A recent UUK report[64] highlighted the importance of engagement with industry to support routes to high level skills.

4.5. Evaluation strategy

ACM used the OfS evaluation self-assessment resources[65] to help identify and understand its current capacity and future needs with regards evaluation strategy.

Self-assessment of our evaluation practice highlighted the following:

- Strategic context: A framework (i.e WPWG, committee structure) is in place to support evaluation, and organisation culture recognises the importance of the widening participation agenda, and robust data collection and evaluation, although evaluation activity was acknowledged as emerging or in development. Skill assessment identified specific need for support in the area of evaluation and research and staff development.
- Programme design: Rationale for programmes, indicators and measures, and research strategy were acknowledged as emerging or in development.
- Evaluation design: Activity was acknowledged as emerging or in development.
- Evaluation impact: Data collection is well established. Resource allocation as relates to evaluation was acknowledged as emerging or in development.
- Learning: Use of evaluation findings and results was acknowledged as emerging or in development.

The following identifies the work that has already been undertaken, and that planned, in each of the areas identified within the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool. Strategy has been considered as proportional to a small and specialist provider.

Strategic Context

As part of the preparation for the Access and Participation Plan, a Widening Participation Working Group (WPWG) was formed in early 2019 to considered strategy and agenda. Membership included a broad range of stakeholders including student services (including wellbeing and education guidance), finance, student engagement, registry, education delivery and learning resources). The working group considered an analysis of widening participation data to understand gaps in performance and agree priorities, targets and measures. Going forward, for implementation during 2019/20, the working group will take on a broader remit to include monitoring of progress against the agreed targets, and instigate research and evidence collation to support and inform approach. The WPWG meet as a minimum at least once every two months.

ACM's Management Information System 'Insight' has been enhanced to provide greater range of data to complement that already provided by OfS and TEF datasets. This includes more up to date information on access, continuation an attainment, including degree classifications, as well as tracking student attendance and engagement. Further enhancements are being added for September 2019 to provide more

[64] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/Routes-to-high-level-skills.aspx

[65] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/standards-of-evidence-and-evaluation-self-assessment-tool/evaluation-self-assessment-tool/

© ACM

comprehensive collation of student and applicant information. ACM already has a well-established culture that considers student risk including vulnerable groups through its student engagement teams informed by both qualitative and quantitative data.

Historically ACM has approached its widening participation agenda, including student support, and outreach activity and community projects, through separate projects and good practice rather than activity informed as part of a cohesive widening participation strategy. Provision of the working group alongside specific appointments in the area of project administration under the direction of a member of the education executive, will seek to ensure evaluation activity is coherently maintained across the whole programme of widening participation activities. In addition to staff already involved in schools and community outreach ACM will appoint a dedicated member of staff to coordinate widening participation activity in September 2019.

Programme design

The rationale for many of the widening participation measures and activities already in place is based on existing good practice observed within higher education and through ACM's own experience in running these activities. These are overseen and reviewed in terms of effectiveness and impact on an annual basis by the governance framework in response to qualitative (surveys and feedback) and quantitative data (internal and external), as relate to all students in general. As part of the revised framework, outlined above, the WPWG will be responsible for a more focussed understanding of how these activities and measures are linked to a specific project to reduce gaps for underrepresented groups, and to gain key stakeholder involvement in programme design. They will be responsible for ensuring programme design is informed by clear rationale and research strategy, and clearly defined indicators and measures.

Evaluation design and implementation

Development of the access and participation plan has enabled ACM to review the range of data, quantitative and qualitative and internal and external, that it can already access in order to gain an understanding of gaps in performance for underrepresented groups. Current provision and planned enhancements position it to be able to effectively evaluate progress with its measures and activities, and be able to assess impact in-year. Existing systems that monitor attendance to all timetable activities, tutorials and resource usage provide visibility on various aspects related to access, success and progression. As identified above, the current governance framework provides clarity on intended audience for purposes of evaluation. Going forward the WPWG will provide a more focussed evaluation as relate specifically to underrepresented groups, reporting to the Academic Board via an Annual Evaluation Report. The working group will also consider ethical considerations for approval through the governance framework.

Specific skills development with regards evaluation and monitoring has been identified as an institutional need and ACM is working with an external consultancy company to provide services and in-house staff training from September 2019 onwards. This will include developing a greater understanding of impact measurement of financial support, and work needed to enhance breadth of quantitative surveys available to inform evaluation. The following table has been developed to identify the various success and evaluation measures that will be considered across the lifecycle areas.

Evaluation Strategy

ACM's evaluation strategy focuses on evidence-informed practice. Our strategy particularly draws on NESTA guidance on developing theories of change; and OfS core outcomes in relation to building a culture of evaluation. Over the life of this Plan, ACM aims to:

© ACM

1. Review capacities, gaps and priorities across data, evaluation, monitoring and evidence, and research (2019-20; annual iteration)
2. Better understand its target groups, using our continuously improving data collection and analysis capacity (ongoing, 2019-20 to 2024-25). In turn, develop continuously improving theories of change that will inform and underpin practice. For example, current priorities are:
    a. Further understanding of barriers to access for identified target groups, and any emerging patterns (focuses on awareness, aspiration, expectation, navigational capacity and specific misconceptions/ concerns, e.g. finance)
    b. Evaluate range of outreach activities to better understand 'what works' (for whom)
    c. Understand patterns of behaviour and barriers for target groups across the 'transition-in' journey (offer to enrolment)
    d. Further understanding of reasons for non-continuation; identify barriers
    e. Further understanding of patterns of engagement and participation on campus for target groups
    f. Explore attainment for target groups; map to course design and curriculum and identify patterns / successes and barriers
    g. Further understanding of target group career readiness and access to networks/ professional contacts.
    h. Develop consistent tools/ methods of evaluation
    i. Progress relevant benchmarking / comparisons in relation to performance outcomes for target groups
3. Draw on existing sector research and evidence to ensure that ACM practice is further informed by the latest sector developments (2019-20 and reviewed annually)
4. Commission deeper-dive research and evaluation to further understand the ACM- specific context and inform continuous improvement in practice and outcomes (including further enhancements to data capture, analysis and implementation of findings) (annual process of priority and project identification, from 2019-20).

Developing data, evaluation and research capacity will start from 2019-20. Capacity building will include a range of stakeholders across ACM, particularly those responsible for access and participation measures. ACM will draw on external experts as collaborators to strengthen its capacity. As such, a 'community of practice' at ACM will develop. This includes a consistent, shared approach to the development and use of evaluation tools, resources and good practice. Evaluation measures will be built into programmes at the outset, or are being reviewed and redeveloped/ implemented into existing programmes using this new approach. At the same time, evaluation outcomes will form part of a clear formative feedback loop into continuous practice improvements, driven by the community and monitored by the WPWG.

As part of the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan 'variations' requirements (2022), we note the focus on evaluation, and the requirement that providers should 'significantly increase the volume and quality of evaluation across their access and participation activity', as well as considering how findings are recorded, published and shared to grow sector understanding of what works. We also note OfS's intention to require independent evaluation in the future. To meet these requirements, we are a member of the 'SEER' (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research) service, which supports our evaluation and research efforts. Membership means that much of our evaluation is already being carried out by an independent body, who support us in strengthening our own practices and provide a range of evaluation tools, processes and training, as well as conduct a range of evaluation and research into key areas on our behalf, providing recommendations into improving practices.

© ACM

ACM has used a six-stage, cyclical process for ensuring effective evaluation and theory of change inform all current and future access and participation activity.

Stage	Detail
1. Prior to Activity planning	**Internal Data Analysis -** Our enhanced data capacity will provide us with granular data about where and how gaps are apparent. We will be able to compare outcomes for different student groups across the access, retention, success, outcome and progression domains and to break this down into particular courses. This will tell us where we need to concentrate, and in the case of ongoing interventions what impact our activities are having in closing these gaps.
3. Prior to Activity planning	**Literature review / information gathering -** We will carry out or commission a rapid review to gather information about the issue we are addressing or seek out existing literature reviews. This could include academic research, grey literature, collaboration with academic colleagues, investigation of related activities delivered by comparator institutions.
4. During Activity planning	**Development of Theory of Change -** Using the information gathered, we will work with delivery leads and practitioner staff and other stakeholders to explore and interrogate assumptions about how and why the activity works and for whom it works (or does not work). This stage leads to the formulation of mechanisms (Pawson and Tilly 1996).
5. Prior to Activity delivery	**Development of Evaluation Measures -** On the basis of the documented theory of change we will review the implications of the mechanisms established (in stage 3) and decide on appropriate evaluation measures. We will then test these measures and sample output data with key evaluation stakeholders and sponsors to ensure that evaluation outcomes are meaningful, useful, relevant to the development of practice, and reflect assumed causal factors in the activity.
6. Activity delivery	**Implementation and evaluation of activity -** The activity and the evaluation will be undertaken as planned. Any implementation issues will be logged for later discussion.
7. Post-activity delivery review	**Review and reflect on formative evaluation measures / outcomes** ● Interview or ask for reflections from delivery stakeholders / participants to gather qualitative data about perceived outcomes ● Capture implementation challenges / successes from delivery practitioners ● Analysis and contextualisation of evaluation outcomes Evaluation outcomes and reflections on implementation issues will be used to review the outcomes and impacts of the activity. Any revisions or changes will be discussed and agreed for the next phase of delivery. In light of any revisions and an assessment of the usefulness and relevance of the evaluation measures and consider whether the evaluation approach, theory of change or selected measure also need revision to reflect changes to the activity.

© ACM

Lifecycle framework

Lifecycle Area	Success/Evaluation Measures	Using these measures to understand impact
All areas (institutional capability)	• Evidential growth of the access and participation plan • Accomplish annual milestones and five -year targets • Whole institution approach assessed through staff feedback and consultation • Staff focus group and survey feedback • Effective collaboration arrangements with student assessed through formal feedback from Student Council • Making evaluation a regular agenda item at WPWG meetings with regular review cycles	These measures will allow us to understand the impact of measures relating to leadership, capability development and data-driven strategy. Evidence of progress towards targets in this Plan demonstrates the impact of the combinations of measures in this Plan.
Access	**Qualitative methods** • Pre-/Post- evaluation surveys with individual participants. Tracking: - Level of understanding of what HE involves including financial aspects. - Understanding the knowledge, skills and experience required to progress to HE - Attitudes to HE (Are participants more or less likely to progress to HE as a result?) - Psycho-social skill development (Has the project developed individual self-confidence?) • Interviews/ focus groups to gain in-depth insight • Record of successful relationship building • Gathering perspectives on the impact on outcomes from other key stakeholders i.e. teachers, ambassadors, parents. **Quantitative methods** • Using administrative datasets to analyse the outcomes of cohort (e.g. how far the outreach impacts at a structural/societal/organisational level) • Track participation behaviours, for example a decision to apply to HE/enrol (e.g. through follow up, tracking progression and attainment outcomes over time) • Using partners' datasets (e.g. HEON) to track outcomes and make comparisons • Increase in application from target students • Increased number of partner schools • Increased number of pupil's engagements	These measures will promote understanding of what activities are working in schools and community. They will help to assess the strength of our partnership working, and whether activities being run in schools and communities are impacting positively on targets student engagement, aspirations, attainment and progression towards higher education pathways. We will also be able to determine our markets based on better understanding of learner aspirations, attitudes and expectations in respect of higher education and career outcomes. Finally, we will gain insight on whether our work is reducing barriers to higher education, at various points of the applicant journey.
Transition	• Survey students to assess sense of belonging/ transition process feedback • Student engagement levels along the applicant journey • Attendance monitoring	These measures will allow us to understand whether our outreach activities are positively impacting on student transition to ACM, including whether we are supporting a sense of belonging and reducing entry barriers.
Success	• NSS and other student surveys on student experience and teaching, learning and assessment, by target groups and programmes • Student satisfaction measures to assess academic engagement/ learning and teaching • Focus group with sample of target students to assess sense of belonging and relationship to pedagogic aspects of course, and ACM community • Monitor support and development take up and engagement by student demographic • Focus group with participating students (support and development activities) • Number of students (by target group) gaining employment	These measures will support our understanding of the impact of our measures relating to improving performance in our success and progression targets. For example, student feedback on the NSS and in focus groups; and, other feedback from students will enable us to specifically understand the impact of our student support activities, induction (transition) events, and the developments we are undertaking in inclusive curriculum and "learning by doing" approach.

© ACM

	• Regular review of student satisfaction survey-increase response rate. • Feedback from student mentors/reps/council • Evaluation of financial support will use the qualitative parts of the OFFA Impact of Financial Support evaluation toolkit (datasets are too small to run a statistical analysis)	
Progression	• Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment or progressing on to further education. Particularly those who participated in our various activities and programmes. • Student course reps and broader student feedback, e.g. via focus groups and committees • Student engagement in careers and employment conversations /activities • Module evaluation forms (modules with employer related study)	These measures will provide evidence as to the impact of our careers and employability support, and particularly the "learning by doing" and integration of professional, work-based practices in curriculum. ACM will better understand the value of this work in terms of student graduate outcomes.

Learning to shape improvements

The WPWG and its broad stakeholder membership will provide opportunity for sharing of findings through cross-institution networks. The nature of provision, i.e. small and specialist, will provide an environment conducive to collective learning. The annual evaluation plan, prepared by the working group, will detail arrangements for dissemination, agreeing and monitoring recommendations. The plan will also detail any issues or limitations in the research design, which may need to be taken into account when interpreting the results, including sample sizes involved and selection bias. A project commenced in 2019 is exploring the development of research culture within the institution. This will provide greater scope to inform programme design and impact assessment and for ACM to contribute its findings to the wider sector.

4.6. Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan takes place at several levels.

Overall strategy for access and participation, including monitoring of progress against delivery of the plan will be led by the Education Executive, supported by the Leadership Team, reporting to the ACM Board (the Governing body). The WPWG will work closely with institution wide departments involved in supporting under-represented groups, to ensure actions are agreed at local level. The WPWG, reporting to the Academic Board, will analyse quantitative and qualitative feedback on a termly basis, and review progress against targets and milestones and report on outcomes. Access and Participation Plan strategy and progress is discussed as a standing item within the Academic Board committee meetings, which includes student membership.

The ACM Board and the Education Executive receive reports from the Academic Board on a scheduled basis (normally termly) to ensure appropriate monitoring and reporting of benchmarks are in place, and that actions can be adjusted as appropriate. The strategic risk of not achieving the targets set out in our Access and Participation Plan is listed in our institutional risk register, and the above governance structure ensures that risk is mitigated through appropriate monitoring and reporting procedures. In the event of insufficient progress towards targets, the Academic Board will task the WPWG with investigating and addressing the issues. The WPWG meets at least once every two months and will provide a plan on actions to be undertaking including, where appropriate, evidence to support effectiveness. This plan will be provided to Academic Board, who may also refer it to the ACM Board and Education Executive if deemed necessary (e.g. where additional resources may be required.)

© ACM

Following a consultation and review process the formation of a 'Student Council', has been agreed and developed by the student representatives for implementation in 2019/20. This will enable greater involvement in governance, and development of policy and strategy, to further support ACM's widening participation agenda. This will include participation in the WPWG, which will be involved in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of access and participation work. Student representation within the WPWG will match the target groups identified in this Plan to ensure their voices are heard. A training schedule has been implemented to support the development of student representatives and their roles and responsibilities.

5. Provision of information to students

ACM will ensure that all material is presented in a clear and unambiguous way that is accessible to all. The access and participation plan and any alternative versions will be clearly accessible through our website and paper copies will be made available upon request. In terms of financial support, the student finance team works with communication staff to inform students and applicants in the following ways:

- Provision of detailed information on fees and financial support for current and prospective students is outlined, and regularly maintained on the ACM website. A section of the website, 'Fees' provides details on tuition fees, bursaries and other funding sources. A separate section provides details on 'Scholarships'.
- Information relating to fees is provided to prospective and current students on regular basis via email, SMS, and telephone. ACM has a schedule for content that is distributed across these channels at the appropriate time according to institutional and individual student timelines.
- ACM has invested in a student services oriented module within its VLE, Canvas. The module provides students with interactive content including advice on student loans, bursaries, budgeting and related topics.
- Producing a student finance advice booklet, which outlines both Student Finance England funding and financial support offer from ACM
- Emailing applicants directly to advise them that Student Finance England is open to applications
- Providing students who have indicated a disability with guidance and support on the resources available through DSA and offer support on the DSA application process.
- Emailing current students to advise that they need to re-apply for funding for the upcoming academic year
- Providing student finance advice at open days, and giving talks and one-to-one advice and information
- Running regular drop-in sessions to students and undertaking one-to-one support when necessary persistence to resolve any issues they may have with Student Finance England
- Dedicated email advice inbox for funding and bursary enquiries
- Direct marketing campaigns to draw attention to new and revised funding opportunities
- Details of the bursary scheme sent to all eligible students offered a place, including a bursary application form.
- Supplying timely information to UCAS and SLC, such as the award profile for each bursary that ACM is offering in the upcoming academic year and fees information.

© ACM

Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree		£11,100
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	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
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: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

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 (£)	£495,938.00	£565,630.00	£602,807.00	£613,507.00	£624,744.00
Access (pre-16)	£119,996.00	£136,859.00	£145,854.00	£148,443.00	£151,162.00
Access (post-16)	£241,366.00	£275,284.00	£293,378.00	£298,585.00	£304,054.00
Access (adults and the community)	£99,262.00	£113,210.00	£120,651.00	£122,793.00	£125,042.00
Access (other)	£35,314.00	£40,277.00	£42,924.00	£43,686.00	£44,486.00
Financial support (£)	£381,476.00	£457,029.00	£492,478.00	£492,478.00	£492,478.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£25,500.00	£26,000.00	£26,500.00	£27,000.00	£27,500.00

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)	£4,190,000.00	£5,008,900.00	£5,397,400.00	£5,397,400.00	£5,397,400.00
Access investment	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%
Financial support	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%
Research and evaluation	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Total investment (as %HFI)	16.9%	16.8%	16.8%	16.8%	16.8%

Office for Students

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: ACM Guildford Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10067853

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	To reduce the percentage point gap between POLAR quintile 5: quintile 1 students at ACM Guildford	No	Other data source	2018-19	26.1%	24.6%	23%	21.5%	19.5%	17.5%	Applicable to ACM Guildford campus. Internal data has been used as the data source for baseline year.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_2	Socio-economic	To reduce the percentage point gap between IMD quintile 5: quintile 1 students at ACM Guildford	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	26.9%	24.9%	23.5%	22%	20%	17.5%	Applicable to ACM Guildford campus.
To increase the proportion of students from BAME backgrounds	PTA_3	Ethnicity	To increase the percentage of BAME students at ACM Guildford	No	Other data source	2018-19	15%	17%	19%	21%	23.5%	26%	Applicable to ACM Guildford campus. Internal data has been used as the data source for baseline year.
To increase the proportion of students from BAME backgrounds	PTA_4	Ethnicity	To increase the percentage of BAME students at ACM Birmingham campus	No	Other data source	2018-19	21.5%	23%	24.5%	26.5%	28.5%	31.5%	Applicable to ACM Birmingham campus. Internal data has been used as the data source for baseline year.
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_1	Mature	To reduce the percentage difference in non-continuation rates between young and mature students	No	Other data source	2017-18	8.6%	6.6%	5.6%	4.6%	3.5%	2%	Data and target relates to Guildford campus. Internal data has been used as the data source for baseline year.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_2	Mature	To reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between young and mature students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	8.1%	6.1%	4.8%	3.5%	2%	0%	Data and target relates to Guildford campus.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_3	Socio-economic	To reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment between IMD quintile 3-5 and quintile 1-2 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	13.2%	11.5%	9.5%	7%	3.5%	0%	Data and target relates to Guildford campus.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_4	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	To reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment between POLAR quintile 3-5 and quintile 1-2 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	8.8%	7.0%	5.7%	4.2%	2.5%	0%	Data and target relates to Guildford campus.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_5	Ethnicity	To reduce the percentage difference in degree attainment between white students and black students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	17.1%	15%	12%	8.5%	4.5%	0%	Data and target relates to Guildford campus.
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the progression gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTP_1	Disabled	To reduce the percentage difference in progression to graduate level employment or further study between Not known to be disabled and disabled students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	19.5%	17.5%	16%	14.5%	12.5%	10%	Baseline date - 2 year average for 2015-16, 2016-17 has been used due to small cohort size. Data and target relates to Guildford campus.
	PTP_2												
	PTP_3												
	PTP_4												
	PTP_5												
	PTP_6												
	PTP_7												
	PTP_8												