

St George's, University of London

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

At St George's, University of London, our mission is to improve health for everyone through inspiring education and research. Co-located with St George's Hospital in Tooting, south west London, we are the UK's only specialist health university, offering a focused portfolio of healthcare and health science programmes. Diversity and inclusion are at the core of our mission to improve health for everyone; we are committed to ensuring that our student body is as diverse as possible and that all students thrive on our courses, to support the development of a diverse healthcare and health science workforce which reflects the population it serves.

St George's, University of London has a prestigious history of providing excellent education in medicine, healthcare and science which spans nearly 300 years. Located since 1980 in the diverse inner London Borough of Wandsworth, we have around 4,800 students across nine undergraduate and seventeen postgraduate programmes. The majority (79%¹) of our UK domiciled undergraduate students join us from London and the South East, and we admit more students from minoritised ethnic groups, more mature students, and more students previously eligible for Free School Meals than the sector average². Issues of fair access and participation have long influenced our educational mission; an inclusive culture is core to our current success and future ambitions. In recent years we have made good progress towards the targets laid out in our previous Access and Participation Plan, however significant work remains to be done and we welcome this opportunity to submit a new plan covering our priorities and commitments for the coming years.

At the time of writing, in the 2023-24 academic year, St George's is preparing to merge with City, University of London, to create a combined university which will become one of the largest suppliers of the health workforce in London. The new merged institution – subject to regulatory approval to be called City St George's, University of London – is due to begin operating from 1st August 2024. Office for Students (OfS) guidance advises that providers will be given a minimum of 12 weeks' notice to submit a new Access and Participation Plan following a reportable event such as a merger³, and following detailed discussions between St George's, City and the OfS it has been agreed that during the 2024/25 academic year the newly-merged institution will be required to submit a new Access and Participation Plan covering all its provision. Nonetheless, given St George's status as a (currently independent) early recruiter institution, we are required to seek approval for this full version of the plan to ensure future students applying to us from the October 2024 UCAS deadline onwards are covered by its provisions. This plan therefore sets out our intentions and commitments, as well as fee levels and financial support, for students applying to St George's courses for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29.

Risks to equality of opportunity

To identify risks to equality of opportunity for current and potential St George's students we have considered both internal data sources and national evidence, including the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). We have also consulted with current undergraduate students, and academic and professional services staff from across the university. We have identified a number of risks impacting our students at each stage of the student lifecycle.

¹ HESA data 2021-22 www.hesa.ac.uk

² Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Data Dashboard. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

³ Office for Students (2023) Regulatory notice 1 Access and Participation Plan Guidance. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8921/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance-dec-2023.pdf>

Table 1. St George's risks to equality of opportunity

Lifecycle stage	Indications of risk	Relevant risks from the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register
Access	Lower entry rates for students from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1.	Risk 1: Knowledge and skills Risk 2: Information and guidance Risk 3: Perceptions of higher education Risk 4: Application success rates
Continuation	Lower continuation rates for students from IMD quintile 1 and disabled students.	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support Risk 7: Insufficient personal support Risk 8: Mental health Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus Risk 10: Cost pressures
Attainment	Degree awarding gaps between: Black and White students; Asian and White students; Students from different IMD quintiles; Disabled and non-disabled students.	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support Risk 7: Insufficient personal support Risk 8: Mental health Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus Risk 10: Cost pressures
Progression	Fewer students from IMD quintile 1 or from Black or Asian backgrounds in highly-skilled employment or higher-level study than institutional averages.	Risk 12: Progression from higher education

Access

For access, we have identified that students from the most-deprived IMD quintile are less likely to access our university than students from other areas. As detailed in Annex A, this may be in part because only 10% of IMD areas in London are quintile 1, however considering we also recruit many students from the broader South East, where 34% areas are quintile 1, this is an underrepresentation we are committed to addressing. Internal applications and enrolment data show that in 2021-22, 16% applicants to our undergraduate programmes were from IMD quintile 1 areas, compared to 12% students who went on to enrol. The fact that fewer than 20% of our applicants are from IMD quintile 1 areas is likely to align with the first three risks in the OfS's Equality of Opportunity Risk Register: potential applicants not having had equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to be accepted onto our courses, not having equal access to information and guidance to develop their ambition and expectations, and having unequal perceptions of higher education so that they do not feel able to apply. The fact that when students from this group do apply, they are less likely to be accepted onto a programme, aligns with risk four on application success rates. We will work to address these risks both through efforts to increase applications from this group, and through enhanced support for applicants through targeted information, advice and guidance. This is particularly important given sector evidence that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely than average to wish to work in healthcare and health science⁴. We are aware that the Office for Students prefers individual measures such as eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) to determine a student's level of socioeconomic disadvantage. However, as explained in detail in Annex A, only 55% of our entrants between 2016 and 2021 are included in HESA data for this measure – in part because of the large proportion of mature students we recruit – whereas IMD covers almost all of our UK domiciled students. We have cross-referenced FSM and Index of Multiple Deprivation status for our entrants across a five-year period and found strong correlation, and are therefore proposing IMD is a more valuable measure in our context to enable both monitoring and enhancement of student outcomes.

Underlying the access sections of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, a significant national risk to equality of opportunity is inequities at school level, exacerbated by underfunding of all levels of education and the Covid pandemic. We will help to address this locally by supporting local secondary schools in improving GCSE attainment. Given that all of our undergraduate programmes require a pass in GCSE Science, our flagship attainment raising programme, Science Stars, will continue to focus on tutoring pupils studying this qualification, addressing risks one and four in the Risk Register.

⁴ Universities UK (2024) News: Huge interest among young people in NHS careers. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/huge-interest-among-young-people-nhs>

Success (Continuation, completion and attainment)

Both before and during consultation for our new plan, our students have told us that the cost of living crisis (EORR risk 10) is the most significant risk impacting their ability to achieve success at St George's. In recent years increasing numbers of students – both at St George's and nationally⁵ – have become reliant on long hours of paid work alongside full-time study, and we have also seen increases in the proportion of students commuting long distances from family homes to attend university, rather than taking on the costs of relocating. With similar underfunding impacting universities themselves, our ability to meaningfully influence these financial barriers is limited, and while St George's is merging with City, University of London in order to enable opportunities for growth which will hopefully improve our financial situation in the longer term, the immediate financial need to our students remains significant. In addition to the cost of living crisis, the ongoing impacts of coronavirus (EORR risk 9) are continuing to pose barriers to student continuation and attainment. Particularly for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD quintile 1)⁶, disruption to compulsory schooling during the pandemic has reduced preparedness for university, subject knowledge, and professional behaviours. Evidence from the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register aligns with feedback from academic staff on barriers faced by recent cohorts around professionalism and preparedness for university, including engagement with their course. We have considered sector evidence around financial, academic and personal support⁷, and prepared intervention strategy 3 (below) aimed at addressing these risks and enabling students to succeed on course.

As explained in Annex A, we have considered student completion data split by different demographic groups and found no consistent patterns of inequality. While we will continue to monitor these data, we do not propose to use completion as a measure for any targets or objectives. For continuation, while rates for all our student groups are higher than the sector average⁸, in recent years gaps have emerged when comparing the continuation of disabled students with non-disabled students, and students from IMD quintile 1 with students from other areas. For both of these splits statistical uncertainty is high. For disability, we have disaggregated these data into the five categories of impairment recommended in OfS guidance, at which point patterns of gaps disappear, with students in all five categories achieving 'positive gaps' in comparison to non-disabled students in some years. As a small university, our low student numbers mean fluctuations of this kind often appear in our data; for this reason we propose to consider disabled students as an aggregated group when setting targets, while continuing to monitor internally the outcomes of different students across different disability categories.

As mentioned above sector evidence, as well as our internal qualitative data, shows that the cost of living crisis and disruptive effects of coronavirus have impacted disproportionately on students from minoritised groups, including disabled students, those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, and those from some minoritised ethnic groups⁹. Having said this, our awarding gaps between White students and those from Black or Asian ethnic groups are longstanding. We have made some progress towards closing these gaps during our last access and participation plan, focusing on introducing diversified and inclusive curricula, improving assessment literacy and staff awareness of bias in observed assessments, and driving broader cultural change around race equity. The structural factors impacting the attainment of students from minoritised ethnic groups remain important, but taking account of the Equality of Opportunity Risk

⁵ Office for Students (2023) Insight Brief: Studying during rises in the cost of living. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living/>

⁶ Anders, J., Macmillan, L., Sturgis, P. & Wyness, G. (2021). *'Inequalities in young peoples' educational experiences and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic'* (CEPEO Working Paper No. 21-08). Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, UCL. Available at: <https://repec-cepeo.ucl.ac.uk/cepeow/cepeowp21-08.pdf>

⁷ Higher Education Policy Institute (2023) Student Academic Experience Survey. Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-2023.pdf> ; Universities UK and National Union of Students (2021) Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at Uk Universities #closingthegap. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>

⁸ Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Data Dashboard. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

⁹ Anders, J., Macmillan, L., Sturgis, P. & Wyness, G. (2021). *'Inequalities in young peoples' educational experiences and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic'* (CEPEO Working Paper No. 21-08). Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, UCL. Available at: <https://repec-cepeo.ucl.ac.uk/cepeow/cepeowp21-08.pdf>

Register we will also enhance the academic and personal support available to our students, including targeting interventions through enhanced data reporting and learner analytics.

Within intervention strategy 3 we outline plans to increase support for disabled students, including students with a declared mental health condition, who are the second largest group within this category. While the last ten years have seen significant increases – at St George’s and across the sector – in the number of students declaring a mental health condition¹⁰, we are aware that the mental health crisis among young people in particular is not limited to those with a diagnosis. In addition to targeted interventions through counselling and disability support, intervention strategy 5 commits us to a suite of universal activities to enhance our students’ mental health, welfare and well-being. Similarly, while we have outlined above the largest groups of students to experience differential outcomes at St George’s, we are aware that many other circumstances and characteristics – some protected, some not – from students’ backgrounds may impact on their chances of success at university. In intervention strategy 6 we identify smaller-scale activity which we will target at students who face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey, including student carers, care leavers and estranged students.

Progression

Comparing graduate outcomes data for students from different ethnic groups, at a university-wide level we see wide gaps in outcomes for Black and Asian students, compared to their White counterparts. To some extent, these gaps are an effect of the different demographic makeup of our nine undergraduate programmes. While the majority of our programmes are aligned to specific healthcare professions, meaning graduates are extremely likely to progress to pre-defined occupations upon completion, two of our programmes cover broader bioscience curricula (Biomedical Sciences and Clinical Pharmacology) and enable progression to a wide range of career pathways across industry and the health sector. For the 25%¹¹ of our students on these courses, progression outcomes, although strong relative to the sector at 81%, are below those of peers on our healthcare courses, where progression averages 95%. The fact that Biomedical Science and Clinical Pharmacology are two of our programmes with the greatest proportions of Black and Asian students (in 2022-23, 71% of entrants to Science courses were Black or Asian, compared to 47% on Healthcare courses) produces something of a programme effect, lowering the overall progression outcomes for students from these ethnic groups.

We have discussed differential progression outcomes across our different programmes with students as part of consultation for this plan, exploring whether admissions policies which target students from specific ethnic groups should be pursued in order to influence these programme effects. However, as all of our cohorts are currently more diverse than the sector averages¹², feedback from our community was against taking such an approach. Instead, we propose to continue to internally monitor progression outcomes at a programme level, and focus initially on eradicating the gaps which exist between students from different demographic groups studying the same disciplines. In line with the Office for Students’ access and participation glossary¹³, we will refer to these as ‘unexplained gaps’, meaning the difference in outcomes that remains when the structural factor of subject choice is accounted for. As shown in Annex A, when comparing progression outcomes by ethnicity for students on our seven undergraduate healthcare programmes, there is no ethnic group where rates are routinely higher than all others, and so our target in this area will focus on addressing ethnicity progression gaps on our science programmes.

¹⁰ Office for Students (2023) Insight Brief: Meeting the mental health needs of students. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students/>

¹¹ HESA data 2022-23 www.hesa.ac.uk

¹² Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Data Dashboard. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

¹³ Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Glossary. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-glossary/>

Objectives

We are proposing six objectives based on the indications of risk identified within our assessment of performance (see Annex A) and the national Equality of Opportunity Risk Register:

1. To support primary and secondary school pupils in Wandsworth and the surrounding areas to gain the knowledge and skills they need to take positive next steps in their career and educational journey, including into higher education where appropriate. We will prioritise pupils who face intersecting barriers to higher education, such as those living in areas of high deprivation and those who are eligible for free school meals.
2. To improve access rates for students living in areas of high deprivation.
3. To enable our global majority¹⁴ students, disabled students and those living in the most deprived areas to succeed in their courses of study by improving rates of continuation and attainment.
4. To enable our global majority students and those living in the most deprived areas to progress to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study.
5. To create an environment that proactively and pre-emptively supports our students' mental health, welfare and well-being.
6. To enable students who may face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey to succeed at St George's, complete their course, achieve good grades, and progress on to graduate-level employment or further study.

¹⁴ Where our previous Access and Participation Plan used the acronym 'BAME' to group Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students for the purposes of data monitoring, feedback from students and staff has led to university-wide adoption of the preferred term 'global majority' when referring to people from ethnic groups which are currently minoritised within the UK. We are therefore using this term within the current plan where the intention is to describe more than one minoritised ethnic group; when setting targets and for data monitoring purposes going forwards we will specify the ethnic group being described.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Outreach			
<p>1. To support primary and secondary school pupils in Wandsworth and the surrounding areas to gain the knowledge and skills they need to take positive next steps in their career and educational journey, including into higher education where appropriate. We will specifically focus on pupils who face intersecting barriers to higher education, such as those living in areas of high deprivation.</p> <p>Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 1: Knowledge and skills; Risk 2: Information and guidance; Risk 3: Perceptions of higher education.</p> <p>Targets: PTA_2: To raise attainment prior to application for target students in the local community through the Science Stars programme.</p>			
Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Primary Practice</p> <p>Existing activity: A multi-intervention programme to increase knowledge of healthcare careers for primary school aged children in Tooting and Morden who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years. The programme consists of an information session for parents and carers, six after school clubs, a taster day, summer school and graduation. Up to 50 pupils at five schools currently participate.</p>	<p>0.8FTE plus 15 student ambassadors.</p>	<p>Acquisition and development of study skills.</p> <p>Experience of overcoming challenges.</p> <p>Improved knowledge of medicine and healthcare.</p> <p>Increased confidence when meeting new children and adults in an educational setting.</p> <p>Parents prepared for challenges of transition to secondary school.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Science Stars</p> <p>Existing activity: Multi-intervention GCSE Science tutoring programme for Year 11 pupils in two schools in Tooting. The programme consists of a launch event on campus, sustained, small group science tutoring delivered to Year 11 students and a graduation event on campus. Up to 48 pupils can participate in the programme each year. Pupils are chosen by their schools, with a focus on those eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding.</p>	<p>0.6FTE plus up to 12 student ambassadors.</p>	<p>Improved study skills.</p> <p>Improved performance in school Science examinations, leading to increased GCSE attainment.</p> <p>Increased likelihood that student will enter HE, increasing access to HE for disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Insight to Healthcare</p> <p>Existing activity: Multi-intervention programme for Year 12 students in Greater London. The programme consists of a launch event, a 'Communication in healthcare' workshop, a 'Meet the professional' workshop, a shadowing opportunity and a reflection session. Previously Insight to General Practice, the broader version of this programme has been developed in response to access data and covers a broader range of healthcare professions.</p>	<p>0.1FTE plus up to 14 student ambassadors.</p>	<p>Improved abilities and self-confidence.</p> <p>Stronger clarity and navigation when making decisions for the future.</p> <p>Ability to articulate and reflect on their skills and abilities.</p> <p>Submission of a successful application to their chosen course.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>London Med</p> <p>Existing, collaborative activity: Multi-intervention programme for Year 12 students in Greater London. The programme consists of a number of sessions to support young people to make a successful application to medicine. The programme is delivered in collaboration with Kings College, UCL and Queen Mary.</p>	<p>This programme is funded by the General Medical Council. Internal staff FTE of 0.3 plus up to 14 student ambassadors.</p>	<p>Participants feel more confident in applying to medicine.</p> <p>Participants' confidence in presenting their thoughts and ideas increases.</p> <p>Participants' understanding of careers available in health increases.</p>	<p>No</p>

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £895,000 for the four years of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

As explained above, we have identified the first four risks on the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register as potentially impacting on access to St George’s, and our students have confirmed that they agree these risks may impact students from similar backgrounds to themselves. Those risks are not having equal opportunity to develop requisite knowledge and skills, not having equal opportunity to receive appropriate information and guidance, having negative perceptions of higher education, and being less likely to be successful within our application process. Our outreach intervention strategy targets the first three of these risks (the fourth is targeted within our access intervention strategy), where we aim to improve the knowledge, skills and HE perceptions of students from disadvantaged groups and to ensure tailored information and guidance reaches as many students as possible. For a summary of the evidence base for these interventions, as well as theories of change for each of the St George’s-led outreach programmes, please see Annex B.

Evaluation

Evaluation has been embedded into our pre-enrolment interventions from the planning stage, informed by theories of change developed for each programme (see Annex B for more detail) and in proportion to the level of investment and intensity of each programme. ‘Primary Practice’ and ‘Insight To Healthcare’ are evaluated through Type 2 (Empirical) methods, including pre and post surveys tracking participant progress, and focus groups and interviews held both with participants and with other stakeholders such as parents and those delivering the programme. By collecting a range of data from multiple sources, we get a rounded picture of the programmes’ outcomes. Science Stars is similarly evaluated through pre/post surveys, analysis of participants’ GCSE results, and qualitative evaluations with participants and tutors, but with the addition of Type 3 (Causal) evaluation via analysis of a control group of non-participants. For Primary Practice and Science Stars, evaluation is conducted by our external partners ImpactEd, with annual reports published on the university’s website. Going forwards, we will also publish evaluation reports for our internally evaluated activities on the university’s website.

Intervention strategy 2: Access

2. To improve access rates for students living in areas of high deprivation.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 1: Knowledge and skills; Risk 2: Information and guidance; Risk 3: Perceptions of higher education; Risk 4: Application success rates.

Targets:

PTA_1: Increase the proportion of entrants from IMD 2019 quintile 1 to 20% by 2028-29.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
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<p>Pre-application support</p> <p>Continuing activity: Targeted application advice, information, advice and guidance (IAG) virtual events and widening participation activities. These are targeted at student carers, care leavers, estranged students and refugees and asylum seekers, service children, mature students, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, as well as those who meet two of five socioeconomic and school-based criteria.</p>	<p>Post 16 Widening Participation Manager and other administrative support.</p>	<p>Participants have improved understanding of admissions and interview processes.</p> <p>Improved understanding leads to improved confidence and more effective performance during application and interview.</p> <p>Sense of belonging enhanced and imposter syndrome reduced through participation in community-building events.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Contextual offers</p> <p>Continuing activity: Under the contextual offer scheme, eligible applicants will be made an offer two grades lower than the standard entry requirements as published on the St George's website, even if their predicted grades are higher. These are targeted at student carers, care leavers, estranged students and refugees and asylum seekers, as well as those who meet two of five socioeconomic and school-based criteria.</p>	<p>Administrative resources within admissions team.</p>	<p>Consideration of contextual factors enables admissions tutors to appropriately identify candidates' aptitude for study at St George's.</p> <p>Admissions rates increase for students from target groups.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Post-application support</p> <p>Continuing activity: Travel bursaries to attend St George's open days, applicant interview days and offer holder days as well as fitness to practice bursaries to assist with the costs of meeting police and occupational health check requirements. These are targeted at student carers, care leavers, estranged students and refugees and asylum seekers, service children, mature students, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, as well as those who meet two of five socioeconomic and school-based criteria.</p>	<p>Applicant travel costs within the UK. £85 per applicant requiring Fitness to Practise applications.</p>	<p>Barriers to conversion are removed for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Sense of belonging enhanced and imposter syndrome reduced through participation in community-building events.</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Development of foundation year</p> <p>New activity: St George's is committed to developing a foundation year facilitating entry into our health science courses, following merger with City, University of London.</p>	<p>Additional staffing resource to be confirmed as part of scoping exercise.</p>	<p>Students with non-traditional educational backgrounds have an entry pathway for progression onto our undergraduate science programmes.</p> <p>Students on the foundation year are supported to develop academic skills and self-confidence to enable effective continuation and progression throughout their higher education journeys.</p>	<p>IS3</p>
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £260,000 for the four years of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

St George's acknowledges that the context in which young people are studying can have an impact on the grades they achieve. Contextual admissions enables universities to recognise that not everyone has access to equal standards of education and that social or socio-economic factors can impact and/or disrupt schooling. By considering the context and barriers a student may face, the application process is fairer, creating a level playing field to identify potential. We also use this contextual data to provide additional support to applicants pre- and post-application to increase the likelihood of success in their application and in their studies, or to make Contextual Offers, whereby eligible applicants are made an offer with reduced requirements.

While contextual admissions enable a greater range of potential applicants to access our existing courses, our ambition to develop a new foundation year targets Equality of Opportunity Risk Register risk 5, that limited choice of course type or delivery mode may prevent students from disadvantaged or minoritised groups from being able to study at universities like ours. Together with our merger partners, City University of London, we hope to develop a foundation year which will enable applicants with non-traditional qualifications or educational backgrounds to access our health science courses. For a summary of the evidence base for each of the activities in this intervention strategy, please see Annex B. More information about our intentions to diversify our provision over the lifetime of this plan can be found under the Whole Provider Approach section of the main plan.

Evaluation

Engagement and satisfaction with pre- and post-application support is evaluated through participant questionnaires to collect type 2 evaluative evidence. Efficacy of contextual offers scheme is evaluated through annual monitoring of access rates for target students, and tracking of their future continuation, attainment and progression. Once established, the impact of the foundation year on the development of students' academic skills and self-confidence will be evaluated through type 2 qualitative evidence in the form of questionnaires and focus groups. All interventions are supported through type 1 (narrative evidence), see Annex B. An annual report evaluating our access initiatives will be published annually on our website. More information about our evaluation approach is also available in the Evaluation section of this Plan.

Intervention strategy 3: Success

3. To enable our global majority students, disabled students and those living in the most deprived areas to succeed in their courses of study by improving rates of on-course completion and attainment.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 9: The ongoing impact of coronavirus; Risk 10: Cost pressures.

Targets:

PTS_1: Eradicate gap between continuation rate of disabled students and institutional average continuation rate by 2028-29.

PTS_2: Eradicate gap between continuation rates of IMD 2019 quintile 1 students and institutional average continuation rate by 2028-29.

PTS_3: Eradicate gaps between rate that 1st/2:1 degrees are awarded to disabled students and institutional average awarding rate of 1st/2:1 degrees by 2028-29.

PTS_4: Eradicate gap between rate that 1st/2:1 degrees are awarded to IMD quintile 1 students and institutional average awarding rate of 1st/2:1 degrees by 2028-29.

PTS_5: Eradicate gap between rate that Asian students are awarded 1st/2:1 degrees and rate White students are awarded 1st/2:1 degrees by 2028-29.

PTS_6: Eradicate gap between rate that Black students are awarded 1st/2:1 degrees and rate White students are awarded 1st/2:1 degrees by 2028-29.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Financial support</p> <p>Continuing activity. We will continue to provide our Opportunity Fund Grant bursaries for student from low income backgrounds, approximately 30% of our undergraduates.</p> <p>Current bursary rates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For students with a household income between £0 and £16,000, a bursary of £1,700 in their first year of study and £1,000 in each subsequent year. - For students with a household income between £16,001-£25,00, a bursary of £1,250 in their first year of study and £500 in each subsequent year. - For students with a household income between £25,001-£30,000, a bursary of £750 in their first year of study and £500 in each subsequent year. 	<p>Between £500 and £1700 per eligible student per year of course.</p> <p>Staff time for administration.</p>	<p>Financial support enables students to dedicate sufficient time to their studies rather than paid work, and ultimately to remain on course.</p>	<p>IS6</p>

<p>Learner analytics</p> <p>New activity. We will begin to use learner analytics across all programmes to track engagement of individual students with their Virtual Learning Environment, course assessments, and on-site attendance.</p>	<p>Staff time and training, plus administrative costs.</p>	<p>Barriers to success are identified on an individual level as early as possible.</p> <p>Personalised support targets barriers to success and improves feelings of belonging and connectedness.</p> <p>Continuation and attainment rates improve.</p>	<p>IS6</p>
<p>First year mentoring</p> <p>New activity. We will roll out a mentoring scheme for first year students to support their transition to university. Senior students across all programmes will be paid to support junior peers.</p>	<p>Mentor training and pay expenses. New staff member 0.2FTE. Administrative costs within each programme.</p>	<p>Student preparedness for university is improved early in their course through discussion with near peers.</p> <p>Barriers to success are identified on an individual level as early as possible.</p> <p>Personalised support targets barriers to success and improves feelings of belonging and connectedness.</p> <p>Continuation and attainment rates improve.</p>	<p>IS6</p>
<p>Assessment reform</p> <p>Continuing activity. We will continue to reform our assessment and mitigating circumstances (extenuating circumstances) policies and processes to ensure they are supportive of students and enable assessment for learning.</p>	<p>Staff training and total 0.3FTE shared across multiple existing roles, plus administrative costs.</p>	<p>Student assessment literacy improves success in assessment.</p> <p>Reduced assessment burden decreases student stress and time pressures.</p> <p>Empathetic mitigating circumstances processes enable disabled and neurodiverse students to thrive, and supports better mental health for all students.</p>	<p>IS6</p>

<p>Transition support.</p> <p>Enhanced activity. We will enhance support provided to students pre-entry and post-entry through new resources and engagements to develop a sense of community, understanding of first year expectations, and confidence in students' sense of belonging.</p>	<p>0.4FTE new staff role. Payment for students as consultants and for developing resources. Administrative costs.</p>	<p>Students' sense of belonging improves through early contact with near-peer students.</p> <p>Preparedness for university is enhanced early in targeted ways to improve first year continuation.</p>	<p>IS6</p>
<p>Counselling support</p> <p>Enhanced activity. The counselling service includes dedicated staff time focused on supporting the needs of underrepresented students in higher education.</p>	<p>0.2FTE. Administrative costs.</p>	<p>Improved retention for students from protected groups. Improved satisfaction and feeling of belonging.</p>	<p>IS5, IS6</p>
<p>Student welfare support</p> <p>Enhanced activity. We will expand the student welfare team to ensure timely response to student need and the development of tailored support strategies for students with specific demographic profiles.</p>	<p>Additional staff resource and administrative costs.</p>	<p>All students are able to access a trained professional to support them with their welfare needs soon after enquiring.</p> <p>Support for adverse circumstances is provided in a timely manner to prevent unnecessary escalation.</p>	<p>IS5, IS6</p>
<p>Learning development support</p> <p>Enhanced activity: We will expand our current offer to provide more one-to-one study appointments with students. In collaboration with enhanced learner analytics new appointments will be targeted at students where barriers to engagement or success have been flagged.</p>	<p>0.4FTE new staff role.</p>	<p>Personalised support enhances students' sense of belonging.</p> <p>Improved metacognition and self-efficacy skills supports learning and assessment success, leading to improved continuation.</p>	<p>IS6</p>
<p>Inclusive education framework</p> <p>Continuing activity. The Inclusive Education Framework provides resources for educators to develop their practice around inclusivity, and access to specialist student-facing training in allyship and advocacy. Student equity champions provide consultancy on inclusion and accessibility, and an ongoing community of practice promotes discussion across the university.</p>	<p>2.0FTE plus administrative costs and student pay for consultancy.</p>	<p>Enhanced community of practice contributes to inclusivity becoming a whole-institution priority.</p> <p>Staff access resources to enhance their teaching practice and reflect on diversity of curricula.</p> <p>Students feel empowered to share experiences and collaborate to work towards meaningful change.</p>	<p>IS5, IS6</p>

<p>Disability Support</p> <p>Enhanced activity. We will expand our disability support through increased staff resource and review of student disability policy.</p>	<p>1.0FTE plus administrative costs</p>	<p>Increased casework capacity means timely personalised support for disabled students.</p> <p>Reformed disability policy supports cultural change around disability positivity and inclusivity.</p>	<p>IS5, IS6</p>
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £5,651,000 for the four years of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

Our success intervention strategy encompasses a range of academic and personal support to enable students to adapt quickly to the demands of higher education, coupled with curriculum development to ensure that teaching and learning is accessible for all students, and infrastructure to enable timely and personalised support at points of need. As explained in the Whole Provider Approach section of this plan, our approach to student success is in the first instance embedded and universal, avoiding deficit approaches so that no student feels stigmatised, and in recognition that barriers to success are the responsibility of the institution rather than the individual. At the same time, we plan to enhance our use of learner analytics to ensure full personalisation of academic and personal support, responding to real rather than perceived need. For a summary of the evidence base for individual activities please see Annex B.

Evaluation

The individual support schemes detailed in this intervention strategy will be evaluated through a mix of type 2 and type 3 data; student engagement and satisfaction data will be monitored annually, supported by more in-depth qualitative data through student focus groups. The infrastructural developments (assessment reform and the introduction of learner analytics) will be evaluated more holistically through monitoring of student engagement and outcomes data. All interventions are supported through type 1 (narrative evidence), see Annex B. An annual report evaluating our student success initiatives will be published annually on our website. More information about our evaluation approach is also available in the Evaluation section of this Plan.

Intervention strategy 4

4. To enable our global majority students and those living in the most deprived areas to progress to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Targets:

PTP_1: Eradicate the gap between progression rates for Asian students on Science courses, and progression rates for White students on Science courses by 2028-29.

PTP_2: Eradicate the gap between progression rates for Black students on Science courses, and progression rates for White students on Science courses by 2028-29.

PTP_3: Increase the rate that IMD quintile 1 students progress to the institutional average by 2028-29.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
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<p>Equal Representation in Academia</p> <p>Work shadowing research placements and funded research studentships for undergraduate students interested in pursuing a career in academia to gain hands-on laboratory experience. This is targeted at disabled students, students from a Global Majority background, and those who receive a university, in order to address the underrepresentation of graduates from these groups in academia. It is a collaborative programme delivered with St Mary's, University of London and aims to provide 13 placements per year.</p>	<p>Academic and administrative staff time to facilitate scheme. Stipends and travel costs for students involved in placements, and funding to cover cost of consumables within research laboratories.</p>	<p>Participants' understanding of academic research and career paths increases.</p> <p>Students gain skills and experience in designing and conducting research projects.</p> <p>Students may produce conference submissions or journal articles to evidence their work.</p> <p>Participants have increased employability skills to either apply to research degrees or engage in research in industry.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Embedding careers and employability into the curriculum across all programmes</p> <p>Enhanced activity: Curriculum development to embed careers and employability across all programmes, including use of the St George's My Skills and Attributes (MySA) survey.</p>	<p>Staff time from careers and employability leads.</p>	<p>All students participate in self-reflection on careers aspiration and development.</p> <p>Programme-specific guidance is available to students from established experts in their field.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Resilience resources</p> <p>Enhanced activity: Updating resources to reference and acknowledge the experiences of global majority students.</p>	<p>Dedicated careers consultant time, uplift to current FTE or engagement of freelance consultant to support.</p>	<p>Global majority students are equipped with knowledge to interpret and apply the concept of resilience from their experiences, especially in the challenging sector of health care.</p> <p>Global majority students feel more inclusion, greater sense of belonging and visibility.</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Graduate Careers Coaching sessions</p> <p>New activity: One-to-one careers coaching for graduating students to provide support and guidance to graduates towards securing their career goals and objectives. Activity will be targeted at students who have indicated in their exit surveys that they would like support with finding work or in the explore and planning stage in their career journey, with monitoring of take up to ensure students from APP target groups are benefitting.</p>	<p>Uplift of 0.2FTE for St George's Careers Consultant.</p>	<p>Graduates are moved forward in their career journey into employment or further study. They also gain improved motivation and confidence to act and manage their career development needs.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Summer Speaker events</p> <p>New activity: Three facilitated workshops and a global majority panel event each year with professionals from industry and alumni. Themes covered to include imposter syndrome, racism in the workplace and resilience from a global majority perspective.</p> <p>The workshops will be targeted to global majority students, although open to all students.</p>	<p>Delivered by external consultant, industry, and alumni.</p>	<p>Increased positive self-identity, confidence around capacity to navigate and manage issues that might impact career development and progression.</p> <p>Opportunity to network with global majority professionals and Alumni in industry.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>One to one Careers Coaching/Mentoring sessions</p> <p>One to one 30 minute careers coaching/mentoring following on from the summer speaker events. Sessions will be delivered by a global majority facilitator from the summer speaker workshops and promoted during the sessions.</p>	<p>Delivered by external consultant</p>	<p>Tailored support that will help students with their career thinking and exploration, gain insights and confidence that will increase their likelihood of transitioning into professional level roles and further study.</p> <p>Increased student sense of belonging, confidence, and capacity for action.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £200,000 for the four years of the plan.</p>			

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

When speaking to our students in preparation for developing this plan, 59% survey respondents felt that students from backgrounds like their own might face barriers to progressing into their desired careers, a significant finding given that 86% all respondents identified as belonging to an access and participation target group. While it is beyond the capacity of universities to influence the systemic discrimination which exists within the broader labour market¹⁵, we can influence the confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy of students while they are with us. We can also influence our own internal employment culture, working to support students to transition into academic careers and address the leaky pipeline¹⁶ that currently exists across the sector for global majority students. The activities within this intervention strategy target these two aims. The evidence base for each activity can be found within Annex B.

Evaluation

Progression initiatives are evaluated in several ways to measure learning gain, impact, and satisfaction:

- Pre and post activity questionnaires are used to measure learning gain around confidence, capacity for action, positive self-identity, and sense of belonging.
- Questionnaires are used to measure and collect feedback on satisfaction, key learning and areas of the programme needing improvement.
- Focus groups are used to gain key learning and insights especially around positive self-identity and sense of belonging.

The Equal Representation in Academia scheme is evaluated annually through qualitative feedback from participants (both students and research staff), with testimony published on the university website. Going forwards, an annual report evaluating all of our progression activity will be published on our website. All interventions are supported through type 1 (narrative evidence), see Annex B. More information about our evaluation approach is also available in the Evaluation section of this Plan.

Intervention strategy 5

5. To create an environment that proactively and pre-emptively supports our students' mental health, welfare and well-being

Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 6: Insufficient academic support; Risk 7: Insufficient personal support; Risk 8: Mental health; Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus; Risk 10: Cost pressures.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
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¹⁵ European Network Against Racism (2022) Structural Racism in the Labour Market. Available at: <https://www.enar-eu.org/structural-racism-in-the-labour-market/>

¹⁶ Higher Education Policy Institute (2022) Representation Matters: Reflections on Academia' 'Leaky Pipeline' by Blessing Marandure. Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/10/17/representation-matters-reflections-on-academias-leaky-pipeline/>

<p>Strengthening induction/ transition arrangements</p> <p>Enhanced activity: Strengthen induction resources, including pre-arrival information and a mental health freshers pack.</p>	<p>Resource from student services, welfare team and disability service.</p>	<p>Student sense of belonging strengthened and impostor syndrome lessened through engagement with community-building activities and resources.</p> <p>Early signposting of welfare, well-being and mental health resources provides support through potentially-difficult transition phase.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Peer support activities</p> <p>Enhanced activities: Developing new peer support activities, including peer mental health support and a pre-arrival phone campaign.</p>	<p>Staff resource to provide initial training and ongoing supervision to peer supporters. Administrative resource.</p>	<p>Students feel able to open up to (trained) peer supporters, building a sense of community and preventing isolation exacerbating mental health risks.</p> <p>Pre-arrival phone campaign creates sense of belonging for arriving students.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Wellbeing programme for halls of residence</p> <p>New activity: A co-curricular education and engagement events programme for halls of residence, and expansion of peer support scheme for residents.</p>	<p>Student services staff resource. Administrative support.</p>	<p>Events programme builds sense of community and belonging for those resident in halls.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Embedding mental health and student self-care in curriculums.</p> <p>Enhanced activity: Expansion from hugely successful Blue Light Champions scheme within Paramedic Science to cover other programmes.</p>	<p>Academic staff resource to enable sharing of good practice and training of programme teams. Administrative support for programme integration.</p>	<p>Students learn to value self-care as an important part of healthcare professional practice.</p> <p>Embedded programmes reduce isolation and ensure at-risk students are able to access support.</p>	<p>IS3</p>
<p>Developing training for staff supporting students</p> <p>Enhanced activity: Basic mental health awareness training for all staff, more in-depth training (mental health risk, sexual assault, domestic violence) for relevant staff.</p>	<p>Staff resource for in-house experts delivering training to colleagues, and for external trainers providing bespoke sessions.</p>	<p>All university staff become able to triage students in difficulty, and appropriately signpost specialist support.</p> <p>Increased group of staff members have specialist mental health and welfare training.</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Increase counselling service sessions</p> <p>Enhanced activity: New FTE within counselling service to respond to increased student need.</p>	<p>Counselling staff FTE and increased administrative support.</p>	<p>Waiting list times reduce due to increased staff resource.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Mental Health Advisor</p> <p>New activity: New staff role to better manage triage of student cases and onwards referrals as well as providing immediate support to students awaiting clinical support.</p>	<p>1.0 FTE.</p>	<p>Speed and efficacy of student case triage increases, shortening waiting times and associated risks for students.</p>	<p>No</p>

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £280,000 for the four years of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

During the student consultation phase of preparing this Access and Participation Plan, students rated the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register’s risk 8, students not experiencing an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing, as the third most pressing risk impacting student success at St George’s. As across the sector¹⁷, we have seen increasing numbers of students identifying with a mental health condition in recent years, and are aware that the significant pressures facing young people and other student groups at the moment have an impact even beyond those with mental health diagnoses. The activities within this intervention strategy will enable us to proactively and pre-emptively supports students’ mental health, welfare and well-being. For the evidence base for each activity, please see Annex B.

Evaluation

All interventions are supported through type 1 (narrative evidence), see Annex B. Individual activities will be evaluated through participant surveys and the efficacy of overall approach will be discussed with students during annual evaluative focus groups. Activity within this intervention strategy will be included within the annual report evaluating our student success activity published on our website. More information about our evaluation approach is also available in the Evaluation section of this Plan.

Intervention strategy 6: Discrete groups

6. To enable students who face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey to succeed at St George’s, complete their course, achieve good grades, and progress on to graduate-level employment or further study.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Risk 12: Progression

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
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¹⁷ Office for Students (2023) Insight Brief: Meeting the mental health needs of students. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students/>; [https://assets.website-files.com/602d05d13b303dec233e5ce3/60305923a557c3641f1a7808_Mental%20Health%20Report%202019%20\(2020\).pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/602d05d13b303dec233e5ce3/60305923a557c3641f1a7808_Mental%20Health%20Report%202019%20(2020).pdf)

<p>Support for student carers</p> <p>New activity: Work towards the Quality Standard Accreditation in Carer Support with a development plan covering outreach and raising aspirations, student induction, ongoing support and data collection and monitoring.</p>	<p>Staff working group overseeing development plan in first 18 months of project and designated member of student services staff as permanent carers lead.</p>	<p>Student carers are aware of support available from first contact with the university.</p> <p>Staff are aware of and responsive to the needs of student carers, and show empathy when making adjustments for them.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Private housing guarantor support for care leavers and estranged students</p> <p>New activity: We will support care leavers and estranged students to access private housing if they so wish through funding Housing Hand Ltd's guarantor service for students in these groups. Places in halls will also remain available to them.</p>	<p>Approximately £1000 per eligible student per year (6.5% of the student's annual rent).</p>	<p>Estranged students and care leavers are enabled to move into private accommodation after a year in halls, often with friends and peers met in halls, reducing isolation and improving feelings of community and belonging.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Bursaries for care leavers</p> <p>Continuing activity: Care leaver students are a priority group for the St George's Opportunity Fund Grant and, subject to meeting the usual eligibility criteria, will receive the maximum award for their year of study regardless of their household income.</p>	<p>£1700 in first year of study and £1000 in each subsequent year.</p>	<p>Financial support enables care leavers to focus on studies and community building rather than taking on additional paid work.</p>	<p>No</p>

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £160,000 for the four years of the plan.

Summary of evidence base and rationale:

While we have detailed elsewhere in the plan (see Whole Provider Approach and the Annex B section on intervention strategy 3) how our approach to student success is primarily inclusive and universal, we are aware that specific groups of students face additional barriers to success at university, beyond those which can be addressed through inclusive education and personalised learning. Intervention strategy 6 identifies new and existing support strategies for students whose background or circumstances mean they face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey. The evidence base for each of these activities is detailed in Annex B.

Evaluation

As with our broader bursary provision, additional bursary support for care leavers is evaluated annually using the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit. The two new activities within this intervention strategy, private housing guarantor support and our intention to seek Quality Standard Accreditation in Carer Support will also be evaluated annually, the first through monitoring of take up and qualitative feedback on its impact, the second through the tracking of milestones during the project development phase. Updated objectives and evaluation processes will be identified in the later stages of project development.

Whole provider approach

While the strategic context of our access and participation work is likely to change as part of our forthcoming merger, a strength of our current status as a small provider is the relative ease of cross-institutional work, with access and participation fully embedded across all parts of our institution. Access and Participation is explicitly represented on the university's two most senior committees, Executive Board and Academic Senate, and makes regular reports to our governing body, the university's Council. The Inclusive Education Monitoring and Advisory Group has chief oversight for the development and monitoring of access and participation activity, and reports directly to three committees: the Education and Students Strategy Committee, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, and the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. This is in recognition that successful inclusive education is not just a matter of diversity and inclusion, but curriculum and staff development, student experience, and quality assurance. Beyond university committees, a strong community of academic and professional services staff are regularly involved in tracking and enhancing the outcomes of students from access and participation target groups, with related items routinely appearing on the agenda of a wide range of university groups. The Admissions Decisions Group connects professional services staff in widening participation, student recruitment and admissions with Admissions Tutors on academic programmes to ensure inclusive and – where appropriate – targeted approaches are employed across the recruitment and admissions cycle, while the Recruitment and Admissions Group makes strategic decisions about admissions policy in the light of access and participation priorities, among other drivers. For success and progression, the Student Outcomes Monitoring and Advisory Group works in partnership with its Inclusive Education equivalent to ensure student success work is both universal and targeted at key groups, while the Programmes Forum and the Race Equality Action and Engagement Group both regularly discuss interventions covered by this plan.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, attended by centre directors and senior teaching and learning staff, oversees the annual development of a Course Action Planner by each programme as part of annual programme monitoring. This document requires programme directors to reflect on their course's performance against the strategic objectives of the Inclusive Education Framework, identifying areas of good practice for broader dissemination, and areas for future enhancement. Detailed understanding of student outcomes data is crucial to this process: programmes are required to report on their student outcomes across all stages of the lifecycle, comparing the outcomes of students who share a protected or target characteristic with those who do not. This enables our institution-wide access and participation targets to be understood and acted on at an individual course level, as well as by dedicated professional services staff within access and participation.

While these mechanisms enable oversight of indications of risk in terms of barriers to student success at both programme and institutional level, the resources to address these barriers once they have been identified also depend on a collaborative, cross-institutional approach. As part of the roll-out of our Inclusive Education Framework, each programme has appointed an academic staff member as inclusive education lead; these individuals lead enhancement of inclusivity work within the curriculum, and meet regularly in a community of practice with other inclusive education leads. A representative from each academic centre also sits on the Inclusive Education Monitoring and Advisory Group. Beyond these formal roles, staff and students across all programmes are encouraged to participate in the Inclusive Education Forum, a bi-monthly meeting which targets a different theme within access and participation each time, featuring training, sharing of practice and discussion. For education-focused academic staff, the requirement to support access and widening participation activities, as well as mentoring and tutoring of current students, is included within all job descriptions.

St George's approach to enabling student success combines universal (non-targeted) support with personalised learning tailored to the needs of students as individuals. In order to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented students we work to ensure fully inclusive teaching and learning which removes barriers to success for all students. This is based on research evidence that initiatives should be universal and discipline-based, supporting 'academic socialisation'¹⁸, and on our understanding that many barriers facing students from minoritised groups are imposed within the social structures which govern

¹⁸ Lea, M., and Street, B. (1998) 'Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach.' *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), pp. 157–172. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079812331380364>

higher education, including our own organisational culture and curriculum¹⁹. The Centre for Innovation and Development in Education (CIDE) is an academic unit specialising in educational enhancement, and providing institutional leadership for inclusive education across the lifecycle. Working collaboratively with programmes and departments across the university, they support student success through curriculum development and the development of academic staff, as well as providing student-facing learning development through in-course teaching, self-access study resources and one-to-one study appointments with students on all courses. CIDE are also currently leading a project to develop capacity for education evaluation across the university, as discussed in our evaluation section.

Few of our current support interventions focus on specific groups of students on the basis of a protected or target characteristic, as we are committed to avoiding the deficit model²⁰ which further marginalise already underrepresented groups. This said, it is clear that recent sector and societal developments – namely the ongoing impact of coronavirus and the cost of living crisis – are disproportionately impacting some groups of students in ways which are beyond the reach of inclusive teaching and learning. It is for this reason that we are enhancing our use of learner analytics to enable personalised learning on the basis of genuine, rather than perceived, individual risk. This work is led by the Centre for Technology and Innovation in Education (CTiE), an academic and professional services unit working cross-institutionally to embed inclusive technology-enhanced learning across the university.

Our approach to careers involves collaboration between academic and professional services staff, in partnership with The University of London Careers Group. As discussed above, many of our programmes align with specified medical or allied health professions, and programme staff support the development of employability skills while preparing their cohorts for these professions. For our broader science programmes, employability is embedded within modules, supported by a Senior Lecturer working as Academic Lead for Employability, and students can benefit from a Professional Training Year in industry during their degree. This provision is supported by consultancy from the University of London Careers Service.

Diverse provision

As part of our whole-provider approach to access and participation, the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register's risk 5, related to 'limited choice of course type and delivery mode', is informing course development plans at both a university-wide and local level. While we have previously committed to scoping an integrated foundation year to enable students with a diverse range of prior educational experiences to apply to our healthcare and health science courses, this work was put on hold during our merger discussions with City, University of London. As the merger is now confirmed, and thanks to City's existing strength in providing foundation years for diverse groups of students, we are optimistic that during the period of our next Access and Participation Plan we will be able to expand access to our courses through foundation pathways. We plan to align City's existing Foundation course in Health to enable progression onto our allied health programmes, while complementing this offer with a new Foundation year in Biosciences (name to be confirmed) articulating with our Biomedical Science and Clinical Pharmacology programmes. At the same time, our Paramedic Science team are currently collaborating with the Health and Care Professions Council and the College of Paramedics to develop the country's first Paramedic Science programme accessible to students who, for reasons of health or disability, are unable to meet ambulance service requirements around holding a C1 class driving licence and being able to lift heavy manikins up and down stairs. Due to recruit from 2025, this adjusted programme will enable students to progress to non-ambulance Newly Qualified Paramedic routes being developed between the College of Paramedics and Higher Education Institutions. Once these programmes have begun we will monitor engagement from target groups and share evaluative findings with the broader sector.

¹⁹ Universities UK and National Union of Students (2021) Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at Uk Universities #closingthegap. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>

²⁰ Universities UK and National Union of Students (2021) Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at Uk Universities #closingthegap. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>

We are aware that the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan includes an intention to expand the NHS workforce, in part through the use of apprenticeships²¹. While we had paused recruitment to our Healthcare Science degree apprenticeship in recent years, we are relaunching this for 2024 entry, and post-merger we will use City's existing strength in offering degree apprenticeships to consider this route for our Allied Health programmes. Although sector research currently suggests that students from underrepresented groups are less likely to enrol on a degree apprenticeship compared to a traditional degree²², the potential of this route to open up opportunities for underrepresented groups will be an important consideration for our strategy in this area going forwards.

Student consultation

Co-partnership with students is embedded throughout our inclusive education and widening participation work. This plan has been written by the Access and Participation Plan Writing Group, made up of one third students (alongside one third academic staff and one third professional services staff). It has been shared with a number of groups and committees featuring both students and staff on their membership (our Education and Students Strategy Committee, the Inclusive Education Monitoring and Advisory Group, the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, and ultimately the university's highest academic body, Senate), and each of these groups and committees will continue to receive annual updates on the monitoring, evaluation and delivery of the Plan.

Our Inclusive Education Equity Champions are a group of students paid by the university to advocate for inclusive education in a wide range of university environments, and to lead consultation with students more broadly to garner their views. The payment of students providing consultancy is a key element of our approach to student partnership; research has shown that underrepresented students face barriers to engaging in volunteering opportunities²³, so to ensure diversity of viewpoints we pay students for all contributions across widening participation, inclusive education and curriculum development. Our Equity Champions are drawn from a range of undergraduate programmes, and are representative of the student groups targeted in this plan (disabled students, those from Black and Asian backgrounds, and those from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas). For this plan, Equity Champions co-developed a student survey on St George's performance and priorities in supporting students from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. Undergraduates in every programme and every year group responded, with 14% respondents not identifying as belonging to an access and participation target group. 37% respondents identified as disabled, neurodiverse or having a mental health condition, and 49% identified as coming from a Global Majority ethnic background. There were also large numbers of responses from students who are in receipt of a bursary, received a contextual offer or participated in a widening participation scheme prior to enrolling, while one in five respondents identified as an estranged student, care leaver, student with caring responsibilities or as coming from another disadvantaged or minoritised group.

The feedback from these students has been embedded in our decisions throughout this plan, as described in the Risks to Equality of Opportunity section. In particular, students told us that cost pressures are the most pressing risk to their equality of opportunity at St George's: 51% respondents chose this as the most important risk for St George's to address, with only 18% respondents choosing the second most popular

²¹ NHS England (2023) NHS Long Term Workforce Plan June 2023. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan-v1.21.pdf>

²² The Sutton Trust (2022) The Recent Evolution of Apprenticeships. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-recent-evolution-of-apprenticeships.pdf>

²³ Universities UK and National Union of Students (2015) Breaking down the barriers to Student Opportunities and Youth Social Action. Available at: <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Breaking-down-the-barriers-to-Student-Opportunities-and-Youth-Social-Action-2015.pdf>

choice (insufficient academic support), and 15% choosing the third most popular (a university environment which is not conducive to good mental health). As described above, our significant commitment to student financial support aims as far as possible to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis on our student body, while we have also committed to expanding academic and personal support (chosen by 6% respondents), as well as developing a dedicated intervention strategy on mental health, welfare and well-being. In the access part of the lifecycle, our students have told us that we should be prioritising information, advice and guidance (risk 2) and knowledge and skills (risk 1) within our outreach and access activity, and we have ensured that intervention strategies 1 and 2 focus on these areas. For progression, 59% respondents felt that students' backgrounds could disadvantage their progression opportunities, which we have responded to with intervention strategy 4.

Evaluation of the plan

Each new intervention across all stages of the access and participation lifecycle has evaluation planned in at the design stage. Given the diversity of activity within each intervention strategy, we do not intend to evaluate each strategy overall, beyond regular monitoring of any changes to student outcomes data. However, all activities detailed within each of our strategies have been chosen thanks to the type 1 (narrative) evidence available to us on the impact of similar activities elsewhere, this evidence is available in Annex B. For the majority of activities, we also have existing or planned processes for collecting type 2 (empirical) evidence on the impact of an activity on those who participate in it, with data reviewed on an annual basis to assess the efficacy of continuing the activity. Where this evidence does not yet exist, we will focus in the early years of the plan on collecting type 2 evidence for the interventions with weaker type 1 evidence bases, as suggested in OfS guidance²⁴. Type 3 (causal) evidence is most difficult to collect owing to the need for an appropriate comparator group. As detailed in our whole provider approach, for student success activity our primary approach is universal so that no student is excluded from access to academic or personal support. Rather than conduct our own type 3 evaluative research for student success, we will continue to monitor research literature and sector briefings for narrative evidence on the efficacy of interventions, and collect our own empirical data on student engagement and development. In the outreach part of the lifecycle we do have a successful example of type 3 evaluation for attainment raising activity through our Science Stars programme.

Alongside the new and continuing interventions detailed in this Plan, we remain committed to continuing to develop our evaluative capacity, both with a focus on access and participation, and as part of a broader culture change within the university. The university has invested in training a cohort of academic staff on educational evaluation through the Quality Assurance Agency in 2023-24, and are currently setting up a community of practice, suite of resources and cascading training to expand the reach of this work. This is alongside our existing dedicated evaluation resource within the widening participation team, and our long-standing partnership with external evaluators ImpactEd. Effective evaluation depends on the availability of accurate and meaningful quantitative and qualitative data. The Data Improvement Group, chaired by the Associate Dean for Access and Participation, reports to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and meets on an ad hoc basis to consider the quality of data available for the evaluation and monitoring of inclusive education work, among other priorities.

We currently publish independent evaluation of our outreach programmes on the university website. Going forwards, we will expand this site to include internal evaluation reports completed annually for interventions across the student lifecycle. We also plan to use our Inclusive Education blog to disseminate the results of evaluative activity, and host internal events on this theme, including within our Inclusive Education Forum. Once the Office for Students launch their repository of evaluation findings we will be glad to submit both our external and internal reports to it.

²⁴ Office for Students (2023) Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan – effective practice advice. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-6-how-to-prepare-your-access-and-participation-plan-effective-practice-advice/>

Provision of information to students

Tuition fee information is included alongside details of each course on our website, so it is clear to prospective students from the outset. There is a note that fees may increase as permitted by government, which will normally be in line with inflation. Full details of the funding available to support students with their university tuition fees and living costs are available on our website, including guidance on how eligible students can apply for a tuition fee loan, a maintenance loan and extra help if they have a disability, or children or adult dependents they need to support.

We also widely promote our bursary scheme, which aims to assist students from lower income backgrounds, through a dedicated page on our website and by including it in presentations and e-newsletters to prospective applicants. We are clear that there is no separate application to complete to receive this funding. The only step required is to ensure that students and their parents/sponsors give permission on their student finance application for financial information to be shared with the university. Continuing students eligible for the bursary are contacted annually with information to confirm the package they will receive, in line with the amount advertised at the point of application.

Our Access and Participation Plan and summary are published on our website in a dedicated section which also provides support for prospective applicants, information about our contextual admissions and applicant travel bursary schemes, and published evaluations of our Access and Participation activity.

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

Assessment of Performance

Background and context

The assessment of performance below relies primarily on individual learner record (ILR) data collated and supplied by the Office for Students, supplemented in places by St George's University's internal data. Unless otherwise stated, the data discussed below all relate to full-time, undergraduate, UK domiciled students.

An Access & Participation Plan Writing Group with staff and student members was formed to review these data, considering access, continuation, completion, degree outcome and progression measures split by ethnicity, age, sex, English IMD, POLAR4, disability, FSM and sexual orientation.

For each of the measures, the group looked for indications that some groups of students were at a greater risk of inequality than others. Where there is strong evidence of consistent risk, a target has been proposed to reduce that risk. In some areas there are signs of a pattern of inequality, but they are not consistent or severe enough to warrant a target. In these situations, SGUL will monitor the data annually.

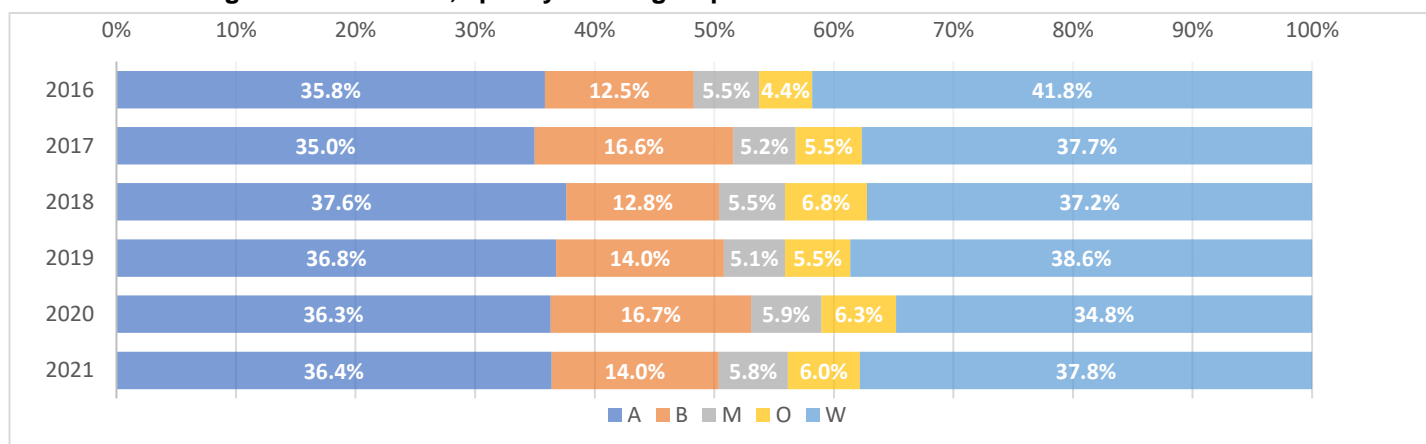
In order to keep limited resources focused where they are most useful, areas where there is little to no evidence of consistent inequality are not discussed below. Students were determined not to be at risk of inequality due to age, sex and sexual orientation across any of the measures considered.

Ethnicity

Access, continuation and completion

SGUL has a diverse student body and access does not appear to be an area of inequality for those from global majority backgrounds; the majority of undergraduates are from Black, Asian or other global majority groups.

Chart 1: undergraduate entrants, split by ethnic group



A review of continuation and completion rates showed no consistent indications of risk for Asian, Black and other global majority students, with high, comparable proportions of all ethnic groups continuing in and completing their studies.

Table 1: Proportion of students continuing in studies, and gaps between rate for global majority and White students

Year	Asian	gap	Black	gap	Mixed	gap	Other	gap	White
2017	96.5%	-3.1%	94.5%	-5.1%	100.0%	0.4%	97.3%	-2.3%	99.6%
2018	97.1%	1.8%	94.8%	-0.5%	90.2%	-5.1%	84.3%	-11.0%	95.3%
2019	97.3%	1.6%	95.7%	-0.1%	92.9%	-2.9%	95.5%	-0.3%	95.8%
2020	95.1%	1.6%	90.4%	-3.1%	100.0%	6.6%	96.2%	2.8%	93.4%
All	96.5%	0.5%	93.8%	-2.2%	95.8%	-0.3%	93.3%	-2.7%	96.0%

Table 2: Proportion of students completing their course, and gaps between rate for global majority and White students

Year	Asian	gap	Black	gap	Mixed	gap	Other	gap	White
2014	95.6%	-0.1%	94.3%	-1.4%	94.4%	-1.3%	95.5%	-0.2%	95.7%
2015	93.8%	-0.8%	94.9%	0.3%	94.6%	0.0%	100.0%	5.4%	94.6%
2016	96.3%	2.0%	89.5%	-4.8%	100.0%	5.7%	94.3%	0.0%	94.3%
2017	97.3%	1.8%	96.3%	0.7%	94.1%	-1.5%	97.3%	1.7%	95.6%
All	95.8%	0.7%	93.7%	-1.3%	95.8%	0.7%	96.8%	1.7%	95.0%

Degree outcomes

Degree outcome data, however, show consistent indicators of inequality, with White students awarded 1st and 2:1 degrees at a higher rate than other ethnic groups, particularly Black students (see: Table 3). This is an urgent risk that SGUL has been monitoring through multiple targets set in the 'Access and Participation Plan' for 2020-21 to 2024-25, but while a range of interventions have been put in place to begin to address the gap, it remains persistent and appears to have widened in 2020-21 and 2021-22. SGUL therefore proposes to retain and extend a version of our current target to reduce the degree awarding gap between Black students and White students studying for Honours degrees.

Table 3: Proportion of students receiving 1st or 2:1, and gap between rate for global majority and White students

Year	Asian	gap	Black	gap	Mixed	gap	Other	gap	White
2016	75.6%	-11.9%	72.2%	-15.3%	90.0%	2.5%	75.0%	-12.5%	87.5%
2017	77.0%	-8.0%	66.7%	-18.4%	95.7%	10.6%	90.5%	5.4%	85.0%
2018	76.7%	-7.0%	78.4%	-5.3%	71.0%	-12.7%	75.0%	-8.7%	83.7%
2019	85.1%	-1.4%	81.5%	-5.0%	76.9%	-9.6%	90.5%	3.9%	86.5%
2020	86.3%	-1.5%	62.8%	-25.0%	91.7%	3.8%	80.6%	-7.2%	87.8%
2021	83.3%	-7.6%	72.2%	-18.7%	82.1%	-8.7%	85.2%	-5.7%	90.9%

Progression

There are indications of an equality risk in progression data (which measure the proportion of students who progress to managerial/professional employment or further study 15 months after leaving their course) for global majority groups compared to White students.

The majority of SGUL's courses are Healthcare courses that prepare students for specific roles within the NHS. Institutional progression rates therefore conceal the greater inequality risks that students on Science courses face compared to students on Healthcare courses (see Table 4).

Table 4: Progression rates and gap between rate for global majority and White students, split by course type

Group	Year	Asian	gap	Black	gap	Mixed	gap	Other	gap	White
All courses	2017	88.1%	-4.3%	96.6%	4.2%	91.3%	-1.1%	85.7%	-6.7%	92.4%
	2018	91.9%	-4.4%	95.1%	-1.3%	95.9%	-0.4%	90.0%	-6.3%	96.3%
	2019	88.6%	-10.6%	79.1%	-20.1%	95.0%	-4.2%	87.5%	-11.7%	99.2%
	2020	86.5%	-8.1%	89.9%	-4.6%	85.7%	-8.9%	88.6%	-6.0%	94.6%
	All years	88.7%	-6.9%	89.8%	-5.9%	92.2%	-3.5%	88.2%	-7.4%	95.6%
	No. students	628	-	172	-	91	-	77	-	617
Science	2017	78.9%	1.2%	100.0%	22.2%	85.7%	7.9%	66.7%	-11.1%	77.8%
	2018	84.7%	-9.7%	93.3%	-1.1%	88.9%	-5.6%	100.0%	5.6%	94.4%
	2019	85.3%	-14.4%	60.0%	-39.7%	85.7%	-14.0%	66.7%	-33.0%	99.7%
	2020	81.7%	-5.3%	78.5%	-8.4%	62.5%	-24.5%	77.8%	-9.2%	87.0%
	All years	82.5%	-5.7%	80.8%	-7.4%	80.6%	-7.5%	80.0%	-8.2%	88.2%
	No. students	305	-	68	-	31	-	30	-	85
Healthcare	2017	98.5%	2.9%	94.2%	-1.4%	93.8%	-1.8%	100.0%	4.4%	95.6%
	2018	98.3%	1.7%	96.0%	-0.5%	99.6%	3.0%	81.8%	-14.7%	96.6%
	2019	91.0%	-8.2%	95.7%	-3.5%	99.6%	0.5%	100.0%	0.9%	99.1%
	2020	91.8%	-4.2%	96.3%	0.4%	100.0%	4.0%	94.0%	-2.0%	96.0%
	All years	94.6%	-2.2%	95.7%	-1.1%	98.1%	1.3%	93.4%	-3.4%	96.8%
	No. students	323	-	104	-	60	-	47	-	532

Gaps in progression have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), Risk 11 (Capacity issues), and Risk 12 (Progression from higher education).

Socioeconomic status

As part of the assessment of performance process, the APP Writing group considered several measures of socioeconomic status: participation in higher education as measured by POLAR4, deprivation as measured by the English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD), and free school-meal eligibility (FSM).

POLAR4 was found to be of little utility in detecting risks to equality at SGUL. It is narrow in focus and especially limited in London (where the majority of SGUL's entrants are from) where the dense population and high overall rate of progression into higher education mean that the measure is not sensitive enough to identify students who may face equality risks.

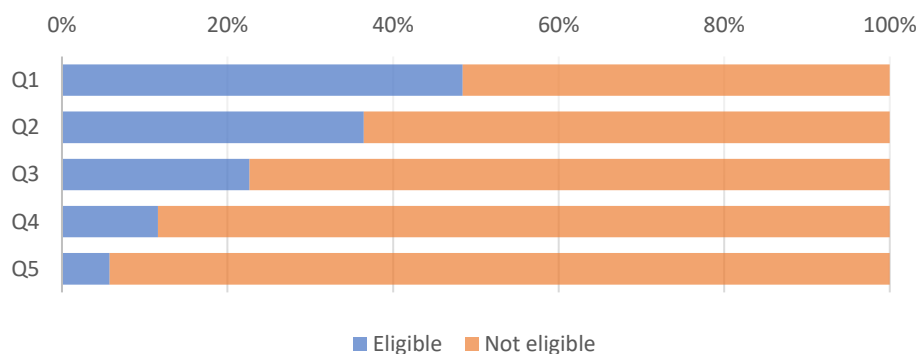
While FSM eligibility is a much more sensitive measure, based on individual circumstances, its use in monitoring is restricted by its limited coverage, with only 55% of entrants between 2016 and 2021 included in the population for the measure. Coverage does appear to be improving and SGUL will continue to monitor performance data split by FSM status internally (especially as free school-meal status was added to the eligibility criteria for our contextual admissions process for 2023 entry), but a measure that covers a higher proportion of our student body is preferred.

IMD covers almost all our UK domiciled students, ranking areas in England by how deprived they are and then assigning each to a quintile based on that rank so that Q1 is the 20% of

areas in the country that are most deprived, and Q5 the 20% of areas that are least deprived.

While IMD is area based, it uses smaller areas than POLAR4 (lower layer super output areas typically between 400 to 1.2k households, rather than middle layer super output areas of between 2-6k households) allowing for greater granularity and accuracy. An analysis of the intersection between FSM eligibility and IMD quintile showed correlation between the two measures, with a larger proportion eligible for FSM within areas classified as deprived under IMD, supporting the supposition that both are useful as a measure of socioeconomic status.

Chart 2: cross-reference of FSM and IMD status within APP dataset for entrants 2016-2021



IMD 2019 will therefore be the primary measure of socioeconomic status discussed within this assessment of performance.

Access

While the proportion of SGUL entrants that come from the 20% of areas in England that are most deprived (quintile 1) is below the national average, it tends to be slightly above the proportion that would be expected within London (see Table 5).

Chart 3: entrants split by IMD quintile

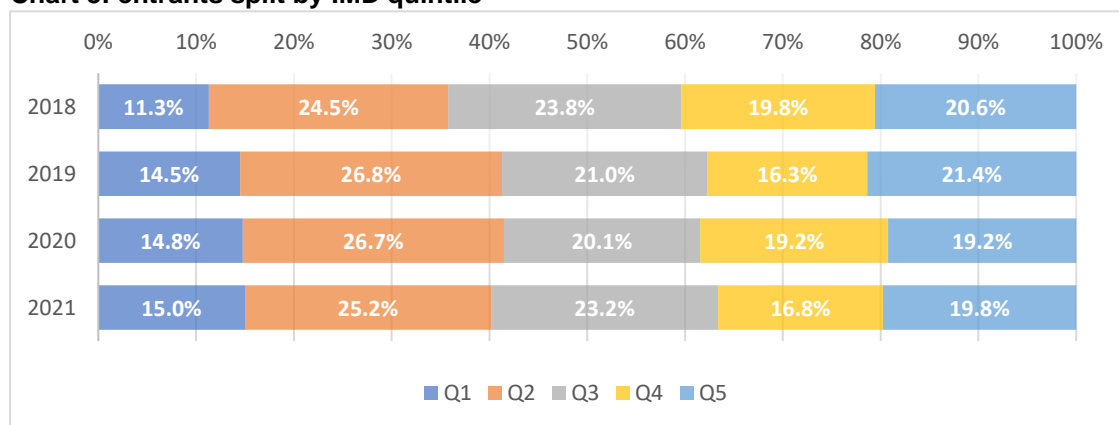


Table 5: proportion of LSOAs per region in each IMD 19 quintile (source: gov.uk)

Group	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
London	10.0%	17.8%	24.5%	22.1%	25.6%
North West	18.0%	19.3%	18.8%	21.6%	22.3%
West Midlands	16.4%	30.4%	22.6%	17.6%	12.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	34.5%	22.4%	14.4%	15.0%	13.8%
South East	34.0%	18.9%	15.1%	17.3%	14.7%
East Midlands	8.3%	15.0%	19.8%	23.6%	33.4%
East of England	10.9%	19.6%	24.9%	23.8%	20.9%
South West	28.7%	19.3%	19.7%	17.7%	14.6%

North East	30.3%	17.5%	17.7%	19.0%	15.5%
England	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Gaps in access have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), and Risk 3 (Perception of higher education).

Continuation

Although continuation rates are high overall, students from England's more deprived areas consistently continue in their studies at a lower rate than average.

Table 6: Proportion of students continuing in studies, and difference from overall rate for the year

Year	Q1	gap	Q2	gap	Q3	gap	Q4	gap	Q5	gap	All groups
2017	90.4%	-7.2%	97.5%	0.0%	98.0%	0.4%	100.0%	2.5%	99.2%	1.7%	97.5%
2018	84.0%	-10.9%	94.4%	-0.5%	95.3%	0.5%	97.2%	2.3%	98.7%	3.8%	94.9%
2019	93.1%	-3.4%	96.3%	-0.2%	96.4%	-0.1%	98.4%	2.0%	97.6%	1.1%	96.5%
2020	89.2%	-4.8%	94.9%	0.9%	93.3%	-0.7%	94.3%	0.3%	96.8%	2.8%	94.0%
All	89.1%	-6.6%	95.8%	0.0%	95.8%	0.0%	97.5%	1.8%	98.1%	2.4%	95.7%

Gaps in continuation have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 5 (Limited choice of course type and delivery mode), Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), and Risk 11 (Capacity issues).

Completion

While there are some indications of a risk to equality in this area, the pattern is more erratic, with students from more deprived quintiles occasionally completing their degrees at a higher rate than average. While SGUL will continue to monitor these data internally, a specific target is not proposed.

Table 7: Proportion of students who complete their course, and difference from overall rate for the year

Year	Q1	gap	Q2	Gap	Q3	gap	Q4	gap	Q5	gap	All groups
2014	95.0%	-0.3%	96.2%	0.9%	91.7%	-3.6%	99.2%	3.9%	94.2%	-1.1%	95.3%
2015	93.8%	-0.7%	94.9%	0.4%	91.8%	-2.7%	93.8%	-0.7%	97.8%	3.3%	94.5%
2016	91.6%	-2.9%	93.6%	-0.8%	95.6%	1.1%	93.3%	-1.1%	96.8%	2.4%	94.4%
2017	96.3%	0.1%	96.2%	-0.1%	94.6%	-1.7%	96.9%	0.6%	97.6%	1.4%	96.3%
All	94.2%	-0.9%	95.2%	0.1%	93.4%	-1.7%	95.8%	0.7%	96.6%	1.5%	95.1%

Gaps in completion have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), and Risk 11 (Capacity issues).

Degree outcomes

Students from deprived areas are consistently awarded 1st and 2:1 degrees at a lower rate than students overall.

Gaps in on-course attainment have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 5 (Limited choice of course type and delivery mode), Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal

support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), and Risk 11 (Capacity issues).

Table 8: Proportion of students receiving 1st or 2:1, and difference from overall rate for the year

Year	Q1	gap	Q2	Gap	Q3	gap	Q4	gap	Q5	gap	All groups
2018	70.7%	-8.7%	77.1%	-2.3%	76.9%	-2.6%	84.1%	4.7%	86.4%	6.9%	79.4%
2019	83.3%	-1.5%	81.5%	-3.3%	83.5%	-1.3%	88.2%	3.4%	87.2%	2.4%	84.8%
2020	68.9%	-14.5%	74.8%	-8.5%	85.2%	1.9%	88.5%	5.2%	93.4%	10.1%	83.3%
2021	83.1%	-1.8%	77.6%	-7.3%	86.1%	1.3%	84.6%	-0.3%	96.2%	11.3%	84.9%
All	76.5%	-6.6%	77.7%	-5.4%	82.9%	-0.2%	86.4%	3.3%	90.8%	7.7%	83.1%

Progression

Students from deprived areas progress a lower rate than those from less deprived areas, and the gap is wider and more consistent for those from the most deprived Q1 areas.

Table 9: Progression rates, and difference from overall rate for the year

Year	Q1	Gap	Q2	gap	Q3	gap	Q4	gap	Q5	gap	All groups
2017	86.0%	-4.5%	86.4%	-4.1%	93.6%	3.1%	89.7%	-0.8%	94.5%	4.0%	90.5%
2018	91.2%	-2.8%	92.3%	-1.7%	94.2%	0.2%	96.0%	2.0%	95.0%	1.0%	94.0%
2019	89.3%	-2.8%	86.4%	-5.8%	89.9%	-2.3%	98.7%	6.5%	95.2%	3.0%	92.2%
2020	85.8%	-3.8%	92.5%	2.8%	88.7%	-1.0%	88.5%	-1.2%	90.7%	1.0%	89.7%
All	88.1%	-3.5%	89.4%	-2.2%	91.6%	0.0%	93.2%	1.6%	93.8%	2.2%	91.6%

Gaps in progression have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), Risk 11 (Capacity issues), and Risk 12 (Progression from higher education).

Disability

Completion and progression

Completion and progression data for students who have declared a disability, both aggregated and disaggregated by type of disability, show no consistent indications of inequality. Some groups of disabled students have been more like to complete their degrees and progress into high level employment or further study.

Continuation

Although continuation rates remain high, a gap in continuation rates does appear to be opening up between disabled and non-disabled students.

Table 10: Proportion of students continuing in studies, and gap with institutional average

Year	Declared disability	gap	No disability declared	gap	All
2017	95.7%	-1.9%	97.9%	0.3%	97.6%
2018	94.5%	-0.4%	94.9%	0.1%	94.9%
2019	93.4%	-2.8%	96.7%	0.5%	96.2%
2020	89.7%	-4.4%	94.8%	0.7%	94.1%
All	93.3%	-2.4%	96.1%	0.4%	95.7%

Among disabled students, students with cognitive and learning difficulties and students with mental health conditions appear to be at greater risk, although the small numbers when data is disaggregated by type of disability mean that data become more erratic.

Table 11: Proportion of students continuing in studies disaggregated by type of disability, and gap with institutional average

Year	Cognitive/ learning diff.	gap	Mental health conditions	gap	Multiple/ other impair.	gap
2017	100.0%	2.4%	76.9%	-20.7%	90.9%	-6.7%
2018	95.5%	0.6%	92.9%	-2.0%	94.4%	-0.4%
2019	90.9%	-5.3%	90.9%	-5.3%	100.0%	3.8%
2020	87.2%	-6.9%	89.3%	-4.8%	100.0%	5.9%
All	93.4%	-2.3%	87.5%	-8.2%	96.3%	0.6%

Year	Sensory/ medical/ physical impair.	gap	Social/ communication impair.	gap	No disability declared	gap	All
2017	100.0%	2.4%			97.9%	0.3%	97.6%
2018	92.3%	-2.6%	100.0%	5.1%	94.9%	0.1%	94.9%
2019	100.0%	3.8%	80.0%	-16.2%	96.7%	0.5%	96.2%
2020	88.5%	-5.7%			94.8%	0.7%	94.1%
All	95.2%	-0.5%	90.0%	-5.7%	96.1%	0.4%	95.7%

Gaps in continuation have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 5 (Limited choice of course type and delivery mode), Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), and Risk 11 (Capacity issues).

Degree outcomes

Students with a disability are consistently awarded 1st and 2:1 degrees at a lower rate than students without a disability.

Table 12: Proportion of students receiving 1st or 2:1, and gap with institutional average

Year	Declared disability	gap	No disability declared	gap	All
2018	69.4%	-9.9%	81.2%	1.9%	79.3%
2019	75.0%	-10.0%	87.3%	2.3%	85.0%
2020	82.6%	-0.7%	83.4%	0.1%	83.2%
2021	79.8%	-4.7%	85.7%	1.1%	84.5%
All	76.7%	-6.3%	84.4%	1.3%	83.0%

Students with cognitive and learning difficulties, students with mental health conditions and students with multiple or other impairments appear to be at particular risk, though the data do become less consistent with smaller groups.

Table 13: Proportion of students receiving 1st or 2:1 disaggregated by type of disability, and gap with institutional average

Year	Cog./ learning diff.	gap	Mental health conditions	gap	Multiple/ other impair.	gap
2018	70.6%	-8.8%	50.0%	-29.3%	85.7%	6.4%
2019	71.9%	-13.1%	80.0%	-5.0%	77.8%	-7.2%
2020	81.8%	-1.4%	78.3%	-5.0%	80.0%	-3.2%
2021	77.8%	-6.8%	81.8%	-2.7%	71.4%	-13.1%
All	75.5%	-7.5%	72.5%	-10.5%	78.7%	-4.3%

Year	Sensory/ medical/ physical impair.	gap	Social/ communication impair.	gap	No disability declared	gap	All
2018	62.5%	-16.8%	50.0%	-29.3%	81.2%	1.9%	79.3%
2019	81.8%	-3.2%	100.0%	15.0%	87.3%	2.3%	85.0%
2020	100.0%	16.8%	100.0%	16.8%	83.4%	0.1%	83.2%
2021	90.0%	5.5%	66.7%	-17.9%	85.7%	1.1%	84.5%
All	83.6%	0.6%	79.2%	-3.9%	84.4%	1.3%	83.0%

Gaps in on course attainment have been linked to multiple risks in the EORR: Risk 1 (Knowledge and skills), Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 5 (Limited choice of course type and delivery mode), Risk 6 (Insufficient academic support), Risk 7 (Insufficient personal support), Risk 8 (Mental health), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus), Risk 10 (Cost pressures), and Risk 11 (Capacity issues).

Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.

Intervention strategy 1: Outreach

Objective: To support primary and secondary school pupils in Wandsworth and the surrounding areas to gain the knowledge and skills they need to take positive next steps in their career and educational journey, including into higher education where appropriate. We will specifically focus on pupils who face intersecting barriers to higher education, such as those living in areas of high deprivation.

Primary Practice focuses on supporting primary school age children in developing knowledge of healthcare careers, in recognition of the importance of developing science capital in pupils as young as 10, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds²⁵. The *Insight to Healthcare* programme works with much older students, in year 12, to improve both abilities and confidence levels when beginning the journey towards healthcare careers. This is important to access and participation as research shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely than their peers to be interested in healthcare careers²⁶, and because of St George's commitment to developing a future healthcare and health science workforce which reflects the community it serves. *London Med* is a collaborative programme delivered jointly with Kings College, UCL and Queen Mary. St George's has not been as involved in the design of this programme as with our other provision, but our need for it is confirmed by our internal conversion data, which shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to receive an offer on a medicine course than students from more advantaged backgrounds. *Science Stars* is our flagship attainment raising programme and independent evaluation to date has shown promising impact on the GCSE grades of participants²⁷. The programme focuses on small group tuition, which research by the Education Endowment Foundation shows can have a moderate impact on student outcomes for a low cost²⁸. In keeping with the recommendations of this research, this small group tuition is targeted at pupils' specific needs, identified for us by participating pupils' schools, and recommended by the OfS as an effective approach to attainment raising²⁹.

The 'theories of change' we have developed for each of our St George's-led outreach activities can be found below:

²⁵ Archer, L., Moote, J., MacLeod, E., Francis, B., & DeWitt, J. (2020). ASPIRES 2: Young people's science and career aspirations, age 10-19. London: UCL Institute of Education. Available at: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10092041/6/Moote_9538%20UCL%20Aspires%20%20report%20online%20version.pdf

²⁶ Universities UK (2024) Huge interest among young people in NHS careers. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/huge-interest-among-young-people-nhs>

²⁷ ImpactEd (2023) St George's, University of London: Science Stars Programme Evaluation Impact Report 2022/2023. Available at: <https://www.sgul.ac.uk/study/documents/Science-Stars-2022-23.pdf>

²⁸ Education Endowment Foundation (2021) Small Group Tuition. Available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition>

²⁹ Office for Students (2020) Topic briefing: Raising attainment in schools and colleges to widen participation. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/536f4e79-4e32-4db0-a8a2-66eb4e2b530b/raising-attainment-in-schools-and-colleges-to-widen-participation-ofs-topic-briefing.pdf>

Figure 1: Theory of change for Primary Practice programme

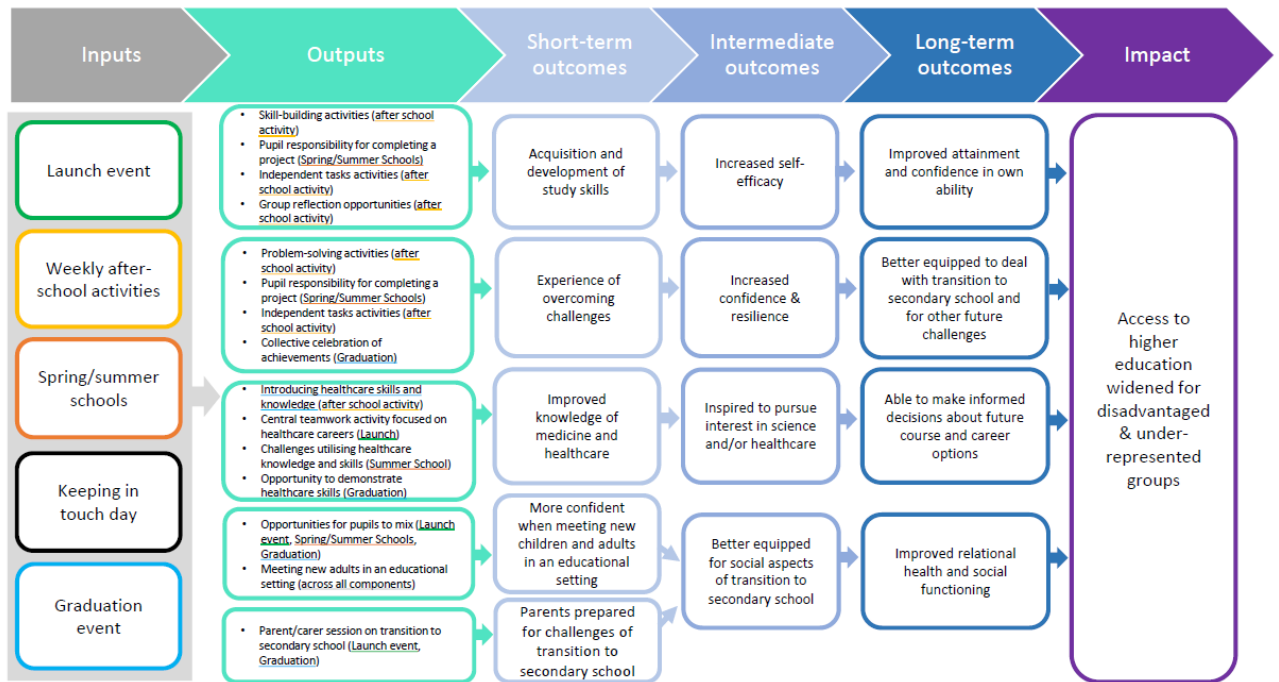


Figure 2: Theory of change for Insight to Healthcare programme

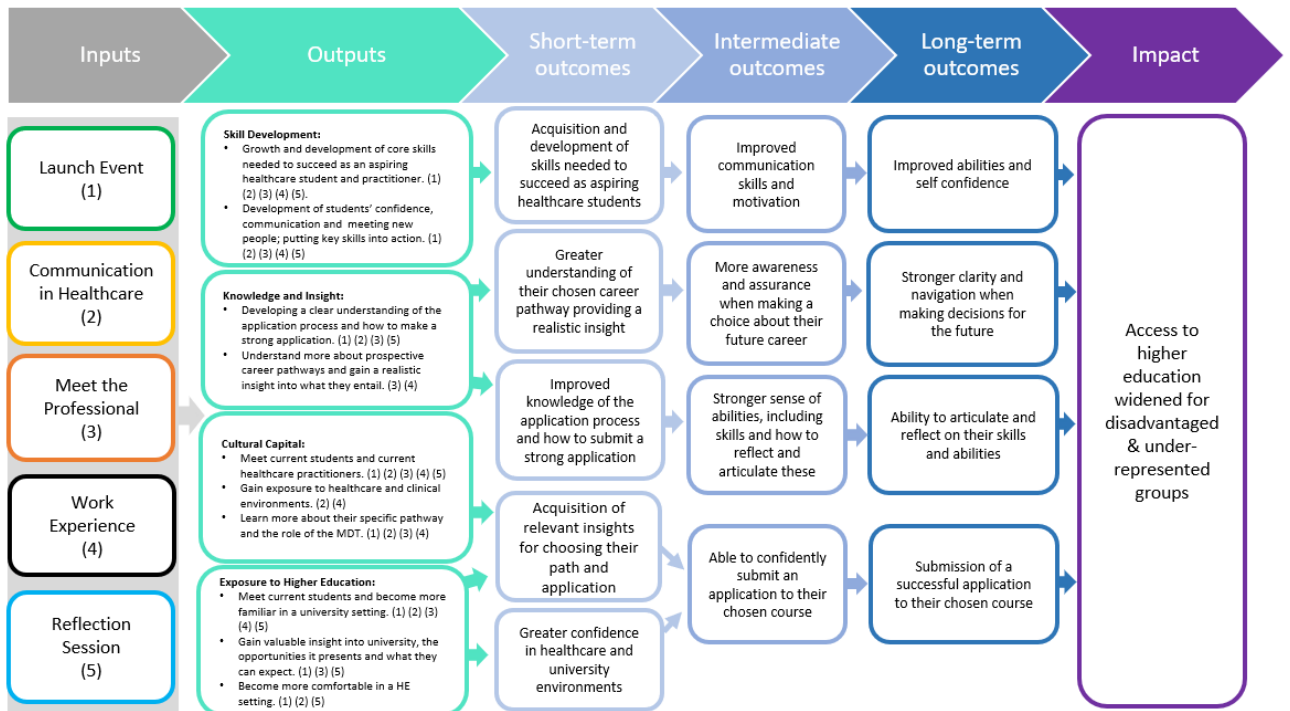
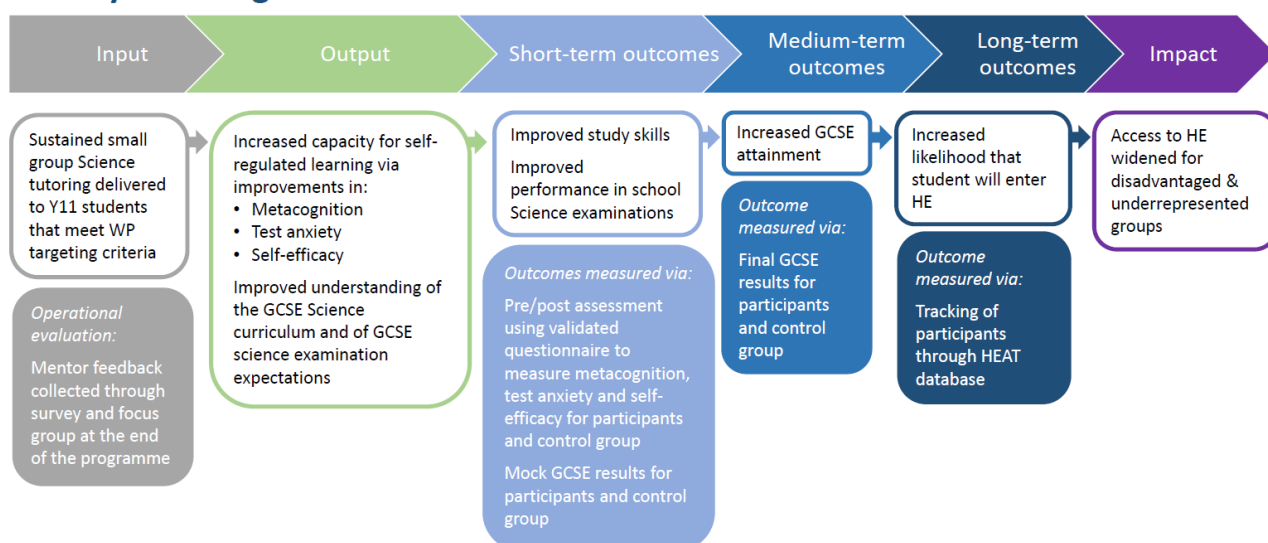


Figure 3: Theory of change for Science Stars programme

Theory of Change: Science Stars



Intervention strategy 2: Access

Objective: To improve access rates for students living in areas of high deprivation.

Our application conversion data, supported by student testimony, shows that socioeconomically disadvantaged applicants to St George's are less likely to be offered a place on a course than their peers, while the overall rate of applicants from IMD quintile 1 is below both the sector average (22.8% in 2021-22)³⁰ and below the 20% we would expect if students from all IMD quintiles had equal opportunity to enrol on our programmes. The fourth risk on the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, application success rates, explains our poor conversion of IMD q1 applications to enrolments, while risks one, two and three (knowledge and skills, information and guidance, and perceptions of higher education) are all likely to impact our low application rates. To counter these, our *pre-application support* for eligible students aims to demystify the university application process, particularly through providing advice and guidance on our Multiple Mini Interview process for healthcare courses. Students from low performing schools or disadvantaged groups are at particular risk of feeling alienated by the Multiple Mini Interview process, with research showing emerging evidence that this process might be biased against those from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds.³¹ Our admissions staff and tutors of course make every effort to mitigate this risk, but the individual support provided throughout students' pre-application journeys is an additional tool to improve success rates for these applicants.

Our *contextual offers* scheme has been in place for a number of years, having developed from a previous 'adjusted criteria' scheme. Evidence so far shows a positive impact on access rates for disadvantaged students, in keeping with OfS findings that contextual admissions are an effective tool used by many providers³². Our approach aims to mitigate disadvantage students have faced within their school careers, acknowledging that individual success in a low-performing school is at least equal to that of high performing students in advantaged areas. As a specialist healthcare and health science university, a majority of our applicants are required to undertake fitness to practice screenings prior to enrolment at the university, with the costs of police and occupational health check requirements traditionally funded by the student themselves. Our *post-application support* provides bursaries to cover these costs for students from

³⁰ Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Data Dashboard. Available at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

³¹ Curnow, G. (2018) MMI – An unbiased approach to health education selection? MedEdPublish 7:111. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10699372/>

³² Office for Students (2019) Insight: Contextual Admissions Promoting fairness and rethinking merit. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/bf84aeda-21c6-4b55-b9f8-3386b21b7b3b/insight-3-contextual-admissions.pdf>

target groups, as well as providing travel costs to enable offer holders to attend on site events and begin to build community and belonging, crucial ingredients in a successful transition to university study.

Within our previous Access and Participation Plan we committed to scoping work for a new *foundation year*, to facilitate entry onto our programmes for students from disadvantaged groups. While our forthcoming merger has delayed the development of new provision, we remain committed to developing diverse provision to enable applications from students from non-traditional educational backgrounds. With the existing expertise of City University in providing foundation years (including on healthcare programmes), we are confident that a new course articulating onto our health science programmes will be developed during the course of this new plan. TASO reports that the evidence base on the efficacy of foundation years remains patchy³³ and that causal evaluation should therefore be embedded into any new programme design. Our future discussions with City will take this into account, and we hope too to learn from their existing experience in developing a suite of foundation courses.

Intervention strategy 3: Success

Objective: To enable our global majority students, disabled students and those living in the most deprived areas to succeed in their courses of study by improving rates of continuation and attainment.

Within a student survey conducted as part of consultation for our new Access and Participation Plan, St George's students told us that the cost of living crisis is the number one risk impacting their chances of success at university. Both this internal data and recent sector research suggests that some of the groups covered by our Access and Participation Plan have been disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis³⁴, while the efficacy of *financial support* in enabling students from disadvantaged groups to continue on their programmes and attain a degree has been identified by both TASO³⁵ and the OfS³⁶. Although financial support is by far our largest expenditure within access and participation, we remain committed to supporting our students in this way. The impact our bursaries has on the students who received them is evaluated annually using the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit.

We are committed to removing barriers to success for all of our students, and our primary approach to enacting this is through the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. Our *Inclusive Education Framework*, launched in 2022, provides resources for course teams to develop and diversify curricula, supports staff understanding of barriers facing minoritised students, and partners with students to reform their educational experiences. As part of the framework, all course teams are required to complete an annual Course Action Planner, identifying local indicators of risk to equality between students, and developing action plans to address these. The Inclusive Education Framework adapts learning from successful similar projects across the sector, such as that at Kingston University³⁷, our previous partner institution, and the Quality Assurance Agency's work with the same name³⁸. While the framework is constantly adapted to incorporate new guidance addressing emerging developments within higher education, we have decided to look separately at the issue of inclusive assessment, which will form part of

³³ TASO (no year) Foundation year programmes (post-entry). Available at: <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/foundation-year-programmes-post-entry/>

³⁴ Anders, J., Macmillan, L., Sturgis, P. & Wyness, G. (2021). 'Inequalities in young peoples' educational experiences and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic' (CEPEO Working Paper No. 21-08). Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, UCL. Available at: <https://repec-cepeo.ucl.ac.uk/cepeow/cepeowp21-08.pdf>

³⁵ TASO (no year) Financial support (post-entry). Available at: <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/financial-support-post-entry/>

³⁶ Office for Students (2018) Financial support evaluation report. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/474c9580-e99a-4d24-a490-3474e85ae199/financial-support-evaluation-report-2016-17-2017-18.pdf>

³⁷ Kingston University (no date) Inclusive Curriculum Framework. Available at: <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/our-inclusive-curriculum/inclusive-curriculum-framework/>

³⁸ QAA (2023) The inclusive education framework. Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework>

a university-wide *assessment reform project*. Goals of this project include reducing assessment burden³⁹, ensuring that the development of students' assessment literacy is built into teaching⁴⁰, and introducing authentic assessment⁴¹ across our programmes. Each of these will benefit all students at St George's, but will in particular support the needs of our disadvantaged or minoritised students, with research showing in particular that improving students' understanding of assessment processes is an effective tool in addressing awarding gaps⁴².

Alongside enhancing teaching, learning and assessment, we have been exploring ways to personalise students' learning for a number of years, investing in new educational technologies even prior to the pandemic. However, since disruption to education and work patterns caused by Coronavirus between 2020 and 2022 we have seen a marked impact on students' engagement with the university, characterised by spending less time physically on site. This is in common with QAA findings on what current students consider to be 'normal' ways to engage with teaching and learning⁴³. Our Learning Engagement Monitoring and Reporting project will introduce the use of learner and learning analytics to enable early monitoring and support of students demonstrating engagement patterns which are predictive of non-continuation or low achievement. A national study in 2023 suggested that students are in favour of learner analytics for the purpose of student support⁴⁴, while a TASO review has found causal evidence to show that early identification of student barriers through the use of learner analytics can improve outcomes⁴⁵. The effectiveness of our approach will be evaluated through the monitoring of flagged students' subsequent engagement with academic and personal support, and through qualitative work with students who have experienced the use of learner analytics after their first year.

We are introducing learner analytics to sit alongside our existing personal and academic support provision, which in many cases will be expanded and/ or enhanced within the lifetime of this plan. Our *counselling service* has recently expanded with new staff resource focused specifically on students covered by our access and participation plan. This is in recognition of recent research findings of a strong relationship between discrimination and distress, isolation and suicidality among university students⁴⁶. Similarly, we are expanding our *student welfare team* to respond to increased numbers of welfare cases and queries, in keeping with a national increase in mental distress among young people⁴⁷, and our *disability support* to increase caseload capacity with increasing numbers of students identifying as disabled. Our *learning development* service, which provides personalised academic support to students within and alongside their programmes of study, has seen a 15% increase in demand in the last year, and will also be expanded to meet this increased student need.

In addition to expanding current support, we intend within the next two years to develop a significant new *project supporting first year student transition*. This is in response to our falling first-year continuation rates for students (from all demographics, but particularly evident for those from access and participation target groups). A learner developer with specialist expertise in supporting student transition will be recruited in

³⁹ College Development Network (no date) Reducing the assessment burden on learners: A strategic model. Available at: <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/mini-bites/reducing-assessment-burden-learners/>

⁴⁰ AdvanceHE (2023) Framework for Enhancing Assessment in Higher Education. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/framework-enhancing-assessment-higher-education>

⁴¹ McArthur, J. (2023) Rethinking authentic assessment: work, well-being, and society. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-022-00822-y>

⁴² QAA (2023) An evaluation of the Racially Inclusive Practice in Assessment Guidance Intervention on students' and staffs' experiences of assessment in HE: A multi-university case study. Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/evaluation-radical-inclusive-practice-assessment-guidance-interventions-staff-students-experiences-of-assessment-in-he>

⁴³ QAA (2023) Student Engagement Guidelines: Learning from innovative practices introduced in response to Covid-19. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/members/qaa-report-on-student-engagement---gh-02-05-23.pdf?sfvrsn=639aa81_8

⁴⁴ WonkHE and SolutionPath (2023) Students' views of engagement data analytics. Available at: <https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2023/09/Students-views-of-engagement-analytics-Wonkhe-Solutionpath-October-23.pdf>

⁴⁵ TASO (no date) Learning analytics (post-entry). Available at: <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/learning-analytics-post-entry/#heading-how-effective-is-it>

⁴⁶ Centre for Collegiate Mental Health (2023) Annual ReportL Bringing Science and Practice Together. Available at: https://ccmh.psu.edu/assets/docs/2023_Annual%20Report.pdf

⁴⁷ Office for Students (2023) Insight Brief: Meeting the mental health needs of students. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/meeting-the-mental-health-needs-of-students/>

2024/25, to develop and roll out additional support schemes for students enrolling in 2025/26. In keeping with sector evidence, these are likely to focus on developing students' confidence, community building, and identifying and addressing early knowledge gaps⁴⁸. Prior to this, a new *first year mentoring scheme* will launch in autumn 2024, in which senior students provide personalised support to new students in helping them adapt to life at university. Academic research supports the value of peer mentoring schemes in supporting new students' socialisation and adaptation to university study⁴⁹, and our new scheme follows from successful pilots in individual programmes in recent years.

Intervention strategy 4: Progression

Objective: To enable our global majority students and those living in the most deprived areas to progress to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study.

St George's is aware that, as with other areas of student access and success, our students' progression outcomes are determined only in part by the academic experience they receive at the university, with broader systemic inequalities within the labour market⁵⁰ impacting on the large majority of our students who are from global majority ethnic groups or socioeconomically deprived backgrounds. Our approach to supporting students with the inequalities they will face post-graduation is to develop their confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy through *resilience resources*, *summer speaker events* and one-to-one support (both *coaching/ mentoring for current students* and *graduate careers coaching*) which are open to everybody, but include explicit focus on difficulties which can impact on the careers of global majority graduates.

As explained in the Risks to Equality of Opportunity section of our Access and Participation Plan, the differences in outcomes seen between different ethnic groups when considering our institution-wide progression outcomes hides differences between particular programmes and disciplines when thinking about indications of risk (see Annex A: Assessment of Performance for more detail). For our healthcare-focused programmes, which each have clear and pre-determined progression routes into a medicine or allied health professional role, differences in the progression outcomes of different ethnic groups are small and erratic, with the vast majority of students securing highly-skilled employment or higher-level study. For our science programmes, our progression rates are equally higher than sector averages⁵¹, but lower than they are for our healthcare programmes. The fact that more Black and Asian students choose to study on our science programmes therefore creates something of a cohort effect on the institutional data. Nonetheless, gaps exist between students from different ethnic groups on our science programmes, and we are committed to addressing gaps which we see as being caused by 'unexplained factors'⁵² (rather than the explained factor of subject choice).

One of these factors is described by the 'leaky pipeline'⁵³ phenomenon within academia, in which the large numbers of undergraduate students from particular minoritised groups (historically the term has been used for women, but is now also used to refer to global majority students) reduce at a faster rate when progressing into postgraduate courses and ultimately academic roles, than do their less underrepresented peers. The *Equal Representation in Academia* programme aims to address this, through providing funded research opportunities for undergraduate students from global majority backgrounds, or who meet other access and participation criteria, such as disability or socioeconomic background. The programme aims to

⁴⁸ QAA (2022) Supporting Student Transitions. Available at:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/membership-areas-of-work/teaching-learning-and-assessment/flexible-pathways-and-student-transitions/supporting-student-transitions#>

⁴⁹ See, for example, Tsang, A. (2020) The value of a semi-formal peer mentorship program for first-year students' studies, socialization and adaptation. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 24(2).

Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1469787420945212>

⁵⁰ European Network Against Racism (2022) Structural Racism in the Labour Market. Available at: <https://www.enar-eu.org/structural-racism-in-the-labour-market/>

⁵¹ Office for Students (2024) Access and Participation Data Dashboard. Available at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

⁵² Office for Students APP Glossary page – <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-glossary/>

⁵³ Sarraju, A. et al. (2023) The leaky pipeline of diverse race and ethnicity representation in academic science and technology training in the United States, 2003-2019. *PLoS One*. 18(4). Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10132634/>

support students who are thinking about a science career through experience, confidence building and networking, and has been very well received in qualitative evaluations with participants. For students on science courses who may not be interested in a career in academic science, we are committed to *embedding careers and employability into the curriculum*, to ensure that all students reflect on their progression journeys throughout their time with us. This follows an approach advocated by AdvanceHE for a number of years⁵⁴, and supported by more recent academic research⁵⁵.

Intervention strategy 5: Mental health, welfare and well-being

Objective: To create an environment that proactively and pre-emptively supports our students' mental health, welfare and well-being.

Recent research shows that students with mental health issues may experience loneliness, social isolation, excessive worry, panic, and depression, they additionally may not feel that they have their own capacities to deal with their issues⁵⁶. Our work to *increase transition arrangements* to include pre-arrival information on wellbeing support and a mental health freshers park will mean early signposting for students at risk of experiencing these issues. *Peer support activities* and a new *wellbeing programme within halls of residence* will help with the development of a sense of belonging⁵⁷ through student community-building, as a protective factor against loneliness and isolation. Our increased staff resource, through a *new mental health advisor role* and the *expansion of the current counselling service* will ensure quicker access to trained professionals for students who would otherwise experience long waiting lists, while *the development of both basic mental health awareness training for all staff, and more in-depth training around mental health risks for relevant staff*, will mean a greater proportion of student-facing staff are well equipped to respond to their heightened needs. Alongside these extra-curricular and student support activities, *embedding mental well-being and student self-care in the curriculum* will ensure that all students learn, as part of their course requirements, about the importance of self-care in order to be a functioning healthcare or health science professional, an approach which can help maximise success for all students and staff⁵⁸.

Intervention strategy 6: Supporting students from discrete groups

Objective: To enable students who may face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey to succeed at St George's, complete their course, achieve good grades, and progress on to graduate-level employment or further study.

We are aware that a number of student groups at St George's face additional barriers on course, beyond those targeted by our success intervention strategy. We are therefore committed to increasing our support

⁵⁴ AdvanceHE (2006) Embedding employability into the curriculum. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/embedding-employability-curriculum>; AdvanceHE (2013) Embedding employability into the curriculum strategic enhancement programme. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/embedding-employability-curriculum-strategic-enhancement-programme>

⁵⁵ See for example, Lowe, T. (2023) Embedding employability into the curriculum: five recommendations to improve widening participation students' graduate employability. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* 26. Available at: <https://journal.aladinhe.ac.uk/index.php/jldhe/article/view/925>

⁵⁶ Barkham, M. et al (2019) Towards an evidence base for student wellbeing and mental health: Definitions, developmental transitions and data sets. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 19(4). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334406741_Towards_an_evidence-base_for_student_wellbeing_and_mental_health_Definitions_developmental_transitions_and_data_sets

⁵⁷ HEPI (2022) What have we learnt about student belonging and inclusion? Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/05/23/student-belonging-and-inclusion/>

⁵⁸ AdvanceHE (2017) Embedding mental wellbeing in the curriculum: maximising success in higher education. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/embedding-mental-wellbeing-curriculum-maximising-success-higher-education>

for students from particular 'discrete' groups during our next plan. Research⁵⁹ and advocacy by a social epidemiologist at St George's, Dr Becca Lacey, has contributed to the addition of student carers into the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register in 2024, and we will use this expertise within our organisation to work towards Quality Standard Accreditation in Carer Support⁶⁰ to enhance our *support for students carers* over the next 18 months, developing our outreach, induction and support offer for these students by 2026-27. We are also bringing in a new *housing guarantor support scheme* for students who are care experienced or estranged, to ensure they are able to access private housing equally with their peers, supporting community and belonging and hopefully reducing the isolation which can be felt by senior students living in halls (our care leavers can also access guaranteed halls accommodation throughout their degrees). We will continue to provide *bursaries for care leavers* at the maximum rate, regardless of their household income.

⁵⁹ Baowen X. et al. (2023) 'Does providing informal care in young adulthood impact educational attainment and employment in the UK?', *Advances in Life Course Research* 56. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2023.100549>

⁶⁰ Carers Federation (2024) Carers Quality Standard Accreditation. Available at: <https://www.carersfederation.co.uk/services/carers-standard/#:~:text=The%20Carers%20Federation%20Quality%20Standard,and%20improve%20access%20to%20support.>