



University of Oxford

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Summary

1. Oxford is a university with high entry requirements, stretching programmes of study, and excellent continuation, completion and progression outcomes. Our main equality issues relate to access and degree outcomes for students with certain characteristics. On access, our main challenges are that many applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to achieve the school grades to make a competitive application, and that many perceive Oxford as a remote, very traditional university that is 'not for them'. While students admitted to Oxford generally perform very well, we see some gaps in degree outcomes related to difficulties in making the transition to a different style of studying, and not developing a sense of belonging in the University.
2. We use a range of approaches to address these issues, grouped here into six intervention strategies. The first four follow key stages of the student life cycle: 1. Supporting students in schools, at all stages from primary upwards; 2. Sustained engagement and support for potential Oxford applicants; 3. Transition and skills support for new students; and 4. Support (including financial) for students on course. Strategies 5 and 6 offer additional measures to support disabled students, and to promote race equality.

Introduction and strategic aim

3. Oxford University is a world-leading institution recognised for its outstanding teaching, research and academic resources. We have over 26,000 students, including 13,425 undergraduates: 95% studying full-time courses and 5% studying part-time. Our degrees are rigorous, intensive and intellectually stretching, and equip our graduates with the skills to make outstanding contributions to society. Oxford offers considerable social mobility to its students, and graduates from all backgrounds have excellent career destinations.
4. Oxford's education is in high demand, and is suited to students with intellectual ability and a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. We are committed to identifying and addressing risks to equality of opportunity, so that Oxford is accessible to students from all backgrounds, and that all our students thrive while they are here, and after they leave. We support students before they apply, during the application process, throughout their course, and beyond.
5. The University's strategic aims for equality of opportunity are set out in our Equality Policy: we are 'committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected. We recognise that the broad range of experiences that a diverse staff and student body brings strengthens our research and enhances our teaching, and that in order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution we must continue to provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows everyone to grow and flourish.'

6. Our thorough admissions process identifies candidates with the greatest potential to succeed. We have demanding selection criteria, and use contextual information to understand each candidate's achievements in the context of their individual background.
7. Oxford University is made up of subject departments and colleges, working in partnership to teach undergraduates. Each full-time student is a member both of a department and a college. The colleges are legally independent entities. Students on course are supported by their college, their department, and by the central University. This includes a wide range of academic and personal support such as academic skills provision, extensive welfare support, inclusive teaching and assessment practices, and financial support.
8. Our Careers Service helps students to progress from their undergraduate course into employment or further study. The Service offers opportunities for students to gain skills and experiences that are valued by employers, through programmes supporting work readiness.
9. Oxford has been ranked first in the world in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings every year from 2017 to 2024. In the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) we were awarded gold ratings for both student experience and student outcomes. The TEF panel judged there to be compelling evidence that the very high quality and outstanding features of our student experience and student outcomes apply to all our students, including those from under-represented groups.

Risks to equality of opportunity

10. We have used both the Office for Students (OfS) public dashboards and the individualised Oxford data supplied by OfS to examine our data for indicators of risk. We also analysed additional admissions data, including UCAS information and other statistical data prepared and considered as part of our selection processes. This includes individual, postcode and school data.
11. We analysed all these data by student characteristics and stages of the student lifecycle, as well as comparing the performance of groups of students with different characteristics, and considering intersections between those groups. We also compared our performance with other similar institutions. We were mindful of risks created by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, and how students' experiences of the pandemic may have affected their equality of opportunity. Further details are included in Annex A.
12. Our analysis revealed the following four main risks:

Risk 1: Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented at Oxford. We believe this reflects multiple risks to equality of opportunity, including unequal opportunity to develop knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education (HE) courses that match their expectations and ambitions; unequal opportunity to receive information and guidance; students may not feel able to apply, despite being qualified; students may not be accepted, despite being qualified; and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

Risk 2: Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to achieve a good¹ degree outcome. Evidence suggests that contributory causes are risks to equality of

¹ A degree outcome of 2:1 or above.

opportunity in accessing academic and personal support through periods of academic transitions, the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, and financial pressures arising from the cost-of-living crisis.

Risk 3: Students with a declared disability (particularly, but not only, related to mental health) are less likely to obtain a good degree than other students. Evidence suggests that risks to equality of opportunity include risks to accessing timely support while we develop our service model to meet the needs of a growing number of students declaring a disability, and barriers in accessing Oxford's teaching and assessment without the need for individual adjustments.

Risk 4: Black students² are significantly less likely to be awarded a good degree than their white counterparts. This gap is partly related to the intersection with socio-economic disadvantage, and we believe that Black students also face particular risks to equality of opportunity which may impact on their sense of belonging, including a lack of ethnic diversity among University staff; under-representation in curricula and teaching; racism, including microaggressions; and the burden of representation in equality and diversity activities.

13. We also found modest indicators of risks to opportunity for students in the data for continuation and completion, which we believe to have been heightened by the pandemic. The numbers involved were much smaller than the access and outcome measures identified as our main risks above, since the non-continuation and non-completion rates at Oxford are extremely low. The interventions described below to improve outcomes will also contribute to improving continuation and completion. Our analysis did not find significant concerns about progression, but this is an area that we will continue to monitor closely. We will also continue the range of targeted support offered by our Careers Service including specific programmes for disabled students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
14. We will also continue to monitor other indicators of risk, the associated risks to equality of opportunity, and the students most likely to be affected. We will address these risks and support the affected students through other ongoing work. This includes, but is not limited to, our continuing support for care-experienced and estranged students, students with caring responsibilities, members of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) communities, and children of military families. For example, Oxford's financial assistance for on-course students aims to support students facing additional costs in a range of circumstances. The University has recently achieved University of Sanctuary status, and is committed to recruiting more refugee students at all levels of study, supporting them and learning from their experiences.³

Objectives

15. We have selected the following objectives for our Plan, following our analysis of the data indicators, and careful consideration of the risks above. Objective 1 relates to access and admissions and objectives 2, 3 and 4 relate to awarding rates. Small student numbers for the outcome targets can mean large year-on-year fluctuations, so the annual rates over the lifetime of the Plan are to be within 95% confidence interval of the annual target.

² Students who declare their ethnicity to be Black African, Black Caribbean or Black other.

³ www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/oxford-community-sanctuary

Objective 1: We will increase the representation of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds at Oxford. We will increase the proportion of entrants from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 and Q2 to 23.0% by 2028, and increase the proportion of entrants to Oxford with free school meal (FSM) eligibility to 10.7% by 2028.⁴ We will achieve this by extending our collaborations with schools and the third sector to support raising pre-16 attainment, and by encouraging and supporting post-16 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to make competitive applications to Oxford.

Objective 2: We will increase the proportion of students with FSM eligibility awarded good degrees to 94% by 2028/29.⁵ We will do this by providing extensive financial support across the collegiate University, by developing more inclusive teaching and assessment practices, and by expanding access to transition and skills support.

Objective 3: We will increase the proportion of disabled students awarded good degrees to 94% by 2028/29. We will do this by delivering joined-up commitments and services for disabled students. We will take a whole institution approach to supporting students' mental health and wellbeing, and we commit to ensuring the opportunity for disabled students to be involved in both delivery and evaluation of our intervention strategies.

Objective 4: We will increase the proportion of Black students awarded good degrees to 94% by 2028/29. We will do this by working in partnership with students to better understand how they experience and participate in education at Oxford, and to identify barriers to engagement. We will work with students to co-create interventions to address the risks to their equality of opportunity.

⁴ Access-target dates refer to the UCAS cycle

⁵ On-course-target dates refer to the academic year in which awards are made

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Raising attainment in schools (RAIS)

This intervention strategy continues and extends the University's evidence-informed commitment to support raising attainment in schools. We will offer appropriate forms of enrichment across different age groups, geographies and demographics, co-designed with schools, to address the risks to equality of opportunity for pre-16 pupils. We will work with teachers to support their efforts to reduce attainment gaps.

The strategy identifies the most significant activities from the many projects dedicated to supporting raising attainment in schools which are run by the University, colleges and departments, including activities in particular subjects.

The strategy is underpinned by collaborations with schools, education experts at the University and public sector organisations tackling barriers to social mobility to help raise academic self-confidence and self-resilience, as these are strong predictors of higher attainment in schools. Findings from evaluations will be shared with partners and publicly.

Our most significant interventions are listed in the table below. Additional examples not listed include Masterclasses in Mathematics which inspire and engage local students by introducing them to aspects of Mathematics not usually covered in the school curriculum. The OxLat project provides full teaching of GCSE Latin to pupils in local state schools that are unable to offer the subject, supporting improved learning in Latin, English and other languages.

As part of the Uni Connect programme, Oxford is a collaborative partner in the Study Higher⁶ programme, with Oxford Brookes University, Buckinghamshire New University and University of Reading. The programme works with schools and colleges in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Swindon with pupils less likely to progress to HE, including working with young carers, care-experienced students, and young people from armed-forces families. The University also runs community outreach through its gardens, libraries and museums⁷, opening our significant collections to family learning groups and schools.

The intervention strategy will support the progression of students to HE, and contribute to objective 1 and targets PTA_1 and PTA_2.⁸ It will address risk 1 above, and risks 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) set out by the Office for Students.

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£9,685,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theories of Change and other information in Annex B.

⁶ www.studyhigher.ac.uk/about-us/what-is-study-higher

⁷ www.glam.ox.ac.uk/community-outreach

⁸ Target reference numbers relate to those set out in the Fees, Investments and Targets document (FIT).

| Activity | Description | Inputs ⁹ | Outcomes | CIS ¹⁰ |
|--|--|--|---|-------------------|
| <p>IntoUniversity Oxford South East centre</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with the IntoUniversity charity.</p> | <p>One of a network of learning centres in areas of economic disadvantage, seeking to improve life chances of young people who face the greatest risks to equality of opportunity, the Oxford South East centre opened in 2014 in partnership with Christ Church (an Oxford college) and the University.</p> <p>Collaborative activities include mentoring, a buddy programme, and workshops and trips to support students' learning and increase knowledge of HE.</p> | <p>Student ambassadors</p> <p>£610,000</p> | <p>Pupils from areas of low HE progression are supported to become and remain high attainers, leading to a higher proportion achieving grades that will enable them to access HE.</p> <p>Pupils from backgrounds with lower levels of representation in HE are aware of its benefits.</p> | |
| BeUNIQ | <p>BeUNIQ is a sustained-contact programme for UK state-school students aged 14-16 from groups and regions under-represented at Oxford. Initially it will work with BME students who have experienced disadvantage, and their schools, families and community organisations and then with other groups under-represented in HE and especially at Oxford.</p> | <p>University staff</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups.</p> <p>Early-career researchers / graduates to co-deliver sessions.</p> <p>£671,000</p> | <p>Students make successful applications to UNIQ residential programme.</p> <p>Increased likelihood of applications and progress to Oxford and other HEIs.</p> <p>Improved perception of high-tariff institutions in identified regions.</p> | IS2 |

⁹ Any additional costs met by partners are not reported here.

¹⁰ Cross intervention strategies

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| Oxplore programme | <p>Oxplore is a free website with classroom resources to support super-curricular learning and development of critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Oxplore Teach offers research-based Continuous Professional Development for UK state-school teachers, and ready-to-deliver classroom sessions supporting pupils to become and remain high attainers.</p> <p>Oxplore Festival will deliver learning activities to KS3 pupils in areas with lower progression to HE and particularly Oxford, focusing on state schools with high proportion of FSM pupils.</p> <p>Oxplore Communities aims to enable local groups who support young people from under-represented backgrounds to develop essential skills using Oxplore resources.</p> | <p>University staff</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups and early-career researchers / graduates / academics to co-design and co-deliver sessions.</p> <p>£4,030,000</p> | <p>Teachers recognise pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds as potential high attainers and have tools to support them.</p> <p>Pupils and teachers encouraged to engage further with access initiatives at Oxford and other universities.</p> | IS2 |
| Inspire St John's College | <p>The Inspire programmes aim to raise academic aspirations by working in partnership with schools to raise attainment.</p> <p>Activities include events, visits, workshops summer schools and online contact including Inspire Primary, Inspire Years 9,10 and 11, Inspire Years 12 and 13, and Inspire Inreach for St John's undergraduates. Inspire for Teachers provides conferences, academic teaching opportunities and mentorship.</p> | <p>Around 6.0 FTE staff, and interns, student ambassadors and early-career researchers/graduates and emeritus fellows for content design/delivery.</p> <p>£3.5m</p> | <p>Participants gain confidence in their academic abilities, and gain the tools to make informed academic choices and submit strong applications to competitive courses and universities.</p> | IS2 |

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| <p>Queen's College Translation Exchange</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with Cambridge University, Stephen Spender Trust, the Chartered Institute of Linguistics and WoLLow (The World of Languages and Languages of the World).</p> | <p>QTE aims to encourage the study of languages through school and beyond.</p> <p>'Think Like a Linguist' runs interactive language sessions with 6 state schools in Rochdale. In 2025 it will expand to 6 state schools in Blackpool.</p> <p>Other programmes included the Anthea Bell Prize for translation, and Creative Translation Ambassadors.</p> | <p>About 2.2FTE college staff</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups; early-career researchers / graduates to co-design materials, deliver sessions and judge competition entries; freelance translators to train ambassadors.</p> <p>£316,000</p> | <p>Increased uptake of modern languages to GCSE, A-Level, and HE in participating schools, particularly amongst under-represented groups.</p> <p>Increased visibility and status of modern languages in participating schools.</p> <p>Students more informed about HE courses in modern languages.</p> | IS2 |
| <p>Universify</p> <p>Partnership between Oxford colleges and Universify Education.</p> | <p>A year-long sustained-contact raising-attainment programme, running from the summer after year 10, for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds predicted to achieve at least grade 6 at GCSE.</p> <p>Residentials in Oxford, including university taster sessions and GCSE revision.</p> <p>Monthly coaching with student mentors to tackle academic challenges, and support with university applications.</p> | <p>The residential intervention costs ~£900 per young learner in accommodation, rooms and food.</p> <p>£400,000</p> | <p>Increased university aspirations, self-efficacy and self-confidence.</p> <p>Enhanced GCSE attainment and progression to high demand universities.</p> | IS2 |

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| <p>Pathfinders</p> <p>Partnership between Lincoln College at Oxford, and the University of Lincoln.</p> | <p>Pathfinders aims to empower FSM-eligible students in Years 9-11 to consider and pursue HE. The programme includes challenging academic sessions focused on raising attainment and ambition on site at Lincoln College and Lincoln University. A new initiative will also begin in 2024-25 when students completing the programme will be invited to join a network of former students. They will be invited to bespoke online sessions about UCAS applications.</p> | <p>Around 0.5FTE staff support.</p> <p>£38,000 - costs include academic staff and student ambassadors, transport and teacher cover.</p> <p>Cost per participant when the programme is at full capacity will be around £400.</p> | <p>Improved knowledge of university life, financial support available, and academic and practical subjects in HE.</p> <p>Increased sense of belonging, and students' confidence in accessing academic and admissions support.</p> <p>Increased engagement with other access schemes.</p> | |
| <p>Primary School Twinning Project, in partnership with charities The Oxford Hub and Assisted Reading for Children (ARCh)</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration</p> | <p>Several Oxford colleges are twinned with local primary schools in a pilot to help tackle educational inequality and close the attainment gap in the city.</p> <p>Activities include academic tutoring in core subjects Maths and English between Years 4-6, and visits to schools and colleges. Once the pilot phase is completed, reading support will also be offered to pupils.</p> | <p>Around 30 student volunteers.</p> <p>0.2FTE staff support</p> <p>£120,000</p> | <p>Improved attainment levels, reading scores, academic self-concept and self-efficacy.</p> <p>Increased awareness of university and its benefits. Increased knowledge of Oxford University.</p> <p>Increase in community sense of engagement with and support from the University.</p> | |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation ¹¹ | Summary of publication plan |
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| IntoUniversity | Pupils from areas of low progression to HE are supported to become and remain high attainers, and made aware of benefits of HE. | See Theory of Change in Annex B. | Annual impact report published on IntoUniversity website each autumn |
| Primary School Twinning | Improved attainment levels, reading scores, academic self-concept and self-efficacy. Increased awareness of benefits of HE. Increased knowledge of Oxford University. Increase in community sense of engagement with and support from the University. | Type 2: teachers share pupil levels before and after the intervention, and give qualitative feedback on student improvement. Pupil surveys. | Annual impact report will be shared with partners by the end of the autumn term each year, with a full report on whole cohort outcomes by the end of the fourth year of the programme |
| Oxplore | Increased engagement with target schools. Increased enrichment provision for mixed groups of learners. Increased use of enrichment activities among target populations. | Type 1: ensure provision is informed by research and practice. Type 2: mixed methods analyses of feedback from stakeholders. Type 3: develop research partnerships and demonstrate improvement in measured learning outcomes. | Published on University website to share findings internally and externally, circa July 2028 |

¹¹ Following the OfS access and participation standards of evidence: type 1 provides a narrative or theory of change; type 2 collects data on impact and reports evidence that those receiving an intervention have better outcomes; type 3 provides evidence of a causal effect.

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| BeUNIQ | A greater proportion of BeUNIQ participants are offered places on UNIQ residential programme, and make successful applications to study at Oxford or other HEIs. | Type 1: ensure provision is informed by research and practice. Type 2: number of students engaged, number who applied to UNIQ. HEAT engagement, focus group and survey analysis. Programme team reflexive practice. Co-production with participants. | Published on University website to share findings internally and externally, circa July 2028 |
| QTE | Numbers of pupils, teachers and schools participating. Number of students who choose to study a language to GCSE and A-level. | Type 2: data on pupil numbers opting for languages GCSE and A Level, and applying to university. Teacher and pupil questionnaires. | Findings published annually on college website Press release and articles in publications such as <i>The Linguist</i> and <i>Languages Today</i> |
| Pathfinders | Events provide insights into subjects available at university including vocational and academic. Students experience specific features that make Oxford University different. Network raises student confidence in making HE applications. | Events: type 1 and 2 evidence gathered in student surveys and teacher feedback. Network: type 1, 2 and 3 evidence. Student surveys include qualitative and quantitative measures. We will also track applications made by students and determine how likely the programme was to have influenced their ambitions. | Termly reports to the college Governing Body (three times a year) Event evaluation reports circulated to Lincoln College and Lincoln University after each event (twice a year) Statements on Lincoln College website and in associated college publications after each event |
| Inspire | Raised aspirations and support education and learning. Supported learning for improved applications. | Internal evaluation, including questionnaires and feedback on events. External evaluation of university destinations of Inspire participants, using HESA data. | Annual impact report published on college website in January each year |

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| Universify | <p>Improved understanding of HE and higher aspirations.</p> <p>More successful applications to university.</p> <p>Improved GCSE attainment.</p> | <p>Type 2: student and teacher surveys, and observational studies</p> <p>Type 3: statistical testing of cohort's GCSE performance. Also UCAS benchmarking against potential applicant database.</p> | <p>Annual impact report published in late spring/early summer each year</p> |
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Intervention strategy 2: supporting applicants to Oxford

This intervention strategy supports students through their applications to Oxford by offering in-person residential and online programmes which target students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are under-represented at Oxford and other universities. The strategy includes a sustained-access programme supporting Black students from disadvantaged backgrounds to secure places at Oxford and Cambridge.

The strategy is complemented by the support Oxford's colleges offer to schools and colleges within their linked local authority areas.¹² By forming this linked-area scheme, 'Oxford for UK', groups of colleges work together to help local students from backgrounds currently under-represented in HE to make competitive applications to universities, and especially to Oxford.

The evaluations of these programmes ensure provision is informed by research and practice, triangulate feedback from multiple stakeholders and track applicants' progression to Oxford. Findings are published externally.

The University is also a member of Advancing Access, a partnership between 24 Russell Group universities working with schools and colleges. Advancing Access supports the progression of students from under-represented groups to Russell Group universities by providing teachers and advisers with support to improve their understanding of the admissions process.

This intervention strategy contributes to objective 1 and targets PTA_1 and PTA_2, increasing the representation of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds at Oxford. It will address risk 1 above, and EORR risks 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£6,261,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theories of Change and other information in Annex B.

¹² www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordforUK

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | CIS |
|---|--|---|---|-----------|
| UNIQ | UNIQ offers around 1,350 places for an in-person academic residential and around 250 for an online academic programme, plus sustained online admissions support. UNIQ targets students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are under-represented at Oxford and other universities. | <p>University and college staff</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups.</p> <p>Early-career researchers / graduates / academics to co-design and co-deliver sessions</p> <p>£5,581,000</p> | Improved academic self-confidence, knowledge and understanding of HE, better skills to navigate independent living, networks and friendship groups built, and practical skills acquired to apply to Oxford and other highly selective universities. | IS1 and 6 |
| Target Oxbridge Collaboration with Rare Recruitment and Cambridge University | Target Oxbridge is a sustained-access programme supporting Black students from disadvantaged backgrounds to secure places at Oxford and Cambridge. Oxford provides information on financial support, evaluation guidance, and the delivery of University experiences for an annual cohort of 160 students. | <p>University staff</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups.</p> <p>Academics to co-deliver sessions</p> <p>£680,000</p> | <p>Increased understanding of the student experience at Oxford and Cambridge.</p> <p>Submission of competitive applications to Oxford and Cambridge.</p> | IS6 |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation | Summary of publication plan |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| UNIQ | <p>Increase number of UNIQ participants applying to Oxford.</p> <p>A greater proportion of UNIQ participants are shortlisted, offered a place and enrol in Oxford than a matched comparator group.</p> | <p>Type 1: ensure provision is informed by research and practice.</p> <p>Type 2: mixed methods analyses triangulating feedback from multiple stakeholders, paired samples pre-post testing, and progression reviewed in linked data dashboard, including HEAT HESA track high-tariff/Russell Group Institutions.</p> <p>Type 3: logistic regression analyses of HE/Oxford progression using matched comparator group. Monitor progression to Oxford</p> | Published on University website to share findings internally and externally, circa July 2028. |
| Target Oxbridge | <p>Increased application, offer and acceptance rates of programme participants to Oxford.</p> <p>Undergraduate student population at Oxford becomes more ethnically diverse.</p> | Type 2: Qual: programme survey, focus groups and interviews with participants and supporters. Also quant: number of students applied to outreach programmes like UNIQ, and progression within the Oxford admissions process (applications, interviews and offers). | Published on University website to share findings internally and externally, circa July 2027. |

Intervention strategy 3: providing transition and skills support

This intervention strategy will provide targeted academic transition and skills support to students from backgrounds under-represented at Oxford, so that students from all backgrounds feel welcome at Oxford, know that they belong here, and can develop the appropriate academic skills to thrive.

This strategy builds on the support already provided to our students through the Oxford tutorial system which offers regular, supportive and academically stretching interactions with senior academic staff in very small groups. Undergraduates typically have one or two tutorials every week during term time, and these are usually meetings between one member of academic staff, and two or three students.

The strategy also takes a whole-university approach to expanding access to academic skills provision through its integration into support services and college and departmental teaching so that all students encounter academic skills development as a normal part of their studies. This approach draws on findings from student partnership activities which identified barriers students experience in accessing existing academic support arrangements. Given that mastering academic skills has a disproportionate impact on success for disadvantaged students, this approach can serve as a powerful tool for equity, contributing to the reduction of attainment gaps.

The strategy is underpinned by evidence-based programme design and delivery and evaluation of specific activities, findings of which will be shared internally and externally.

Several parts of this intervention strategy contribute to our objective 1 and targets PTA_1 and PTA_2, increasing the representation of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds at Oxford. It will address risk 1 above, and EORR risks 1, 3, 4 and 9.

The intervention strategy also contributes to objective 2 and target PTS_1, improving the proportion of good outcomes for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It will address risk 2 above, and EORR risks 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£12,913,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theories of Change and other information in Annex B.

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | CIS |
|---|--|---|---|-----------|
| Opportunity Oxford academic bridging and transition programme | <p>Opportunity Oxford is an eight-week online course, followed by a two-week residential, for students from under-represented backgrounds who meet our standard offer but who may not otherwise be offered a place. The programme also covers services including financial support, the Disability Advisory Service, and Counselling Service.</p> <p>Numbers of offers for the full programme to increase to around 350 a year by 2028-29.</p> <p>We will also continue to provide access to the online course to other offer-holders who have experienced educational disadvantage.</p> | <p>University and college staff.</p> <p>Student ambassadors from target groups.</p> <p>Early-career researchers / graduates / academics to co-design and co-deliver sessions.</p> <p>£5,348,000</p> | <p>Increase to 280 the number of students who start on course each year.</p> <p>Enrol 75% of the standard eligible offer holders onto the online course.</p> <p>Positive impact on participants' study skills, self-reliance, self-confidence and sense of belonging.</p> <p>Deepen tutor knowledge and impact positively on the attitudes of admitting tutors so they can confidently make offers to target students who are at the boundaries of being made an offer.</p> | IS4 |
| Astrophoria Foundation Year | <p>The Foundation Year takes 20-50 students a year with significant academic potential who have experienced severe personal disadvantage or disrupted education.</p> <p>Students pay no fees or accommodation charges, receive a non-refundable bursary to cover living costs and have access to other funds as required to support additional needs.</p> | <p>£6,304,000 covering staffing, course fees, accommodation and bursaries.</p> | <p>Students develop aptitudes needed to progress in their subject. A substantial majority progress to and complete full Oxford degrees, and the remainder progress to other selective universities.</p> <p>Students feel they are an integral part of a scholarly community.</p> | IS1 and 2 |

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| On-course support - Academic Skills Development | <p>The project takes a whole-university approach to supporting colleges, departments and University services to integrate academic skills development into their provision.</p> <p>Consultancy for colleges and departments to evaluate and enhance their provision.</p> <p>Knowledge exchange forums for those who teach on access, transition and academic skills courses.</p> <p>An Academic Writing Hub will provide guidance and materials in developing essential academic writing skills.</p> | Staffing: £216,000 | <p>Students encounter opportunities for academic skills development as a normal part of their studies and can access specialist support as needed.</p> <p>Colleges and departments adopt tested models for integrating academic skills development in the curriculum.</p> <p>Tutors incorporate materials or practices into their teaching.</p> <p>Students have free access to resources to help them improve their academic writing.</p> | IS4 and 5 |
| College-led transition and skills support | <p>Examples of college-led academic skills support include the Somerville College Skills Hub, which delivers seminars and workshops to support students' academic and intellectual development, and the Porter Fellow in Academic Skills at Hertford College, who offers one-to-one tutorials, academic skills workshops, group study sessions and online resources to students in all subjects.</p> | <p>2 college staff</p> <p>£575,000</p> | <p>Improved belonging and understanding of academic expectations.</p> <p>Students find the support they need, when they need it.</p> | IS4 |
| Specialist support – information literacy | <p>We will improve library support for academic transition, including the iSkills workshop programme and other teaching offered by subject-specialist library staff. This will help students develop skills in research, critical thinking, and scholarly communications.</p> | <p>A programme of workshops</p> <p>£470,000</p> | <p>Students have the skills they need to find, evaluate, organise, use and communicate information, and to think critically and make balanced judgements about information.</p> | IS4 |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation | Summary of publication plan |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Opportunity Oxford | <p>Increased diversity of Oxford University undergraduate student population.</p> <p>Reduced gap in participation rates for disadvantaged and under-represented students.</p> <p>Participants perform similarly to a matched comparator group for rates of on-course continuation, completion, outcome and post-degree progression.</p> | <p>Type 1: evidence-based programme design and delivery. Evaluate admissions practice and policies.</p> <p>Type 2: mixed-methods analyses triangulating feedback from multiple stakeholders, using pre-post exploring transition to undergraduate degree, focus groups/interviews. Monitor numbers of students who complete programme and go on to receive Crankstart scholarships or Oxford bursaries. This helps to monitor socio-economic disadvantage and its proxies in contextual data.</p> <p>Type 3: comparative analyses of composition of student body with or without initiative (i.e. difference in difference quasi-experimental design). Comparative longitudinal study tracking on-course outcomes (first year exams, degree award) and progression.</p> | Published on University website to share findings internally and externally, circa July 2026 |
| Astrophoria Foundation Year | <p>Students develop aptitudes needed to progress in their subject. A substantial majority progress to and complete full Oxford degrees, and the remainder progress to other selective universities.</p> <p>Students feel they are an integral part of a scholarly community.</p> | Type 2: mixed method evaluation | Interim updates to be published on the University website every autumn with a full evaluation by autumn 2027 |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Academic Skills Development | Students encounter opportunities for academic skills development as a normal part of their studies. | Type 1: literature review Type 2: tracking of standardised measures from university surveys. | Literature review to be published on University website by summer 2025, with annual reports of measures to follow from 2025-26 |
| College-led transition and skills support | Improved belonging and understanding of academic expectations. Students find the support they need, when they need it. Tutors incorporate materials or practices into their own teaching. | Type 2: evaluation of different models of college provision using most significant change methodology triangulated with survey data. | Reports shared with relevant committees during 2025-26 |
| Information literacy support | Students have the skills they need to find, evaluate, organise, use and communicate information and to think critically and make balanced judgements about information. | Type 2: mixed methods analyses, including standardised measures from university surveys. | Student feedback shared with instructors each term (three times a year) Annual reports shared internally with governance bodies in autumn term each year Reader survey and action plan reports published every three years |

Intervention strategy 4: supporting students' needs on course

This intervention strategy will provide extensive financial support to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as supporting students who face unexpected financial difficulties while on course. It aims to encourage more applications from under-represented and disadvantaged groups and support students from lower-income households to remain on course.

The strategy also anticipates students' varied learning needs and proactively makes common reasonable adjustments available in advance. It seeks to embed a broader range of more inclusive teaching and assessment practices into courses, so that all students can access materials, activities and assessments in the format they need.

The strategy is underpinned by annual monitoring and reporting to assist in evaluating students' awareness and usage of support services and understanding their impact, and findings will be shared internally.

The intervention strategy will primarily contribute to objectives 2 and 3 and target PTS_1 and 2, improving the awarding rate of good outcomes for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and for disabled students. It will address risks 2 and 3 above, and EORR risks 3, 6, 7, 9 and 10.

This intervention strategy will also contribute to objective 4, and target PTS_3, improving the awarding rate of good outcomes for Black students. The strategy will therefore also address risk 4 above.

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£52,946,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theory of Change and other information in Annex B.

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | CIS |
|-------------------|---|--|---|-----|
| Financial support | <p>In 2025, Crankstart scholarships include a non-repayable annual bursary of up to £6,090, and Oxford Bursaries provide a non-repayable annual bursary of up to £4,200 for students with qualifying household incomes.</p> <p>(Around 20% of students on course receive either a Crankstart Scholarship or an Oxford Bursary.)</p> <p>Travel supplements of up to £550 for bursary holders who live more than 80 miles from Oxford.</p> <p>Additional annual bursary of up to £3,000 for care-experienced and estranged students.</p> <p>Financial assistance grants of up to £3,000 for students in financial difficulty, as well as college and departmental financial support.</p> <p>Annual inflationary uplifts to be applied in subsequent years.</p> <p>Further details on financial support arrangements and eligibility are on page 26 below.</p> | <p>5 FTE staff</p> <p>College and departmental staffing: additional administration of funding taking place locally to support students.</p> <p>Financial support investment: £48,618,000</p> | <p>Encourage more applications from under-represented and disadvantaged groups by minimising financial concerns.</p> <p>Students from lower-income households able to fully participate in University life. Those who get into financial difficulties are supported to remain on course.</p> <p>Students with year-round accommodation needs can continue to stay in Oxford accommodation with an appropriate study place and support network during vacations.</p> | IS2 |

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|---|--|--|---|-----------|
| Inclusive teaching and assessment practices | <p>We will review and revise relevant policies and processes to embed inclusive practices in course design and expand the range of summative assessments available to departments.</p> <p>We will continue to develop, communicate and encourage use of the Centre for Teaching and Learning's toolkits, communities and resource collections by academic and professional services staff.</p> <p>We will extend the capacity of the Centre for Teaching and Learning's consultancy service, offering local support for departments to embed inclusive practices and systematically anticipate disabled students' needs.</p> | <p>4 FTE Educational Developers</p> <p>2 FTE Policy Officers</p> <p>4 FTE Disability Inclusion Coordinators. One in each division.</p> <p>Assessment Centre for Excellence</p> <p>£3,409,000</p> | <p>Courses use a more diverse and inclusive range of summative assessments.</p> <p>The most commonly recommended reasonable adjustments for disabled students are proactively made available to students.</p> | IS5 and 6 |
| Accessible digital learning environments | <p>Continuous improvement to the virtual learning environment and associated tools to ensure content is available in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>The accessible resources unit provides alternative formats to printed materials.</p> | <p>Staffing and license fees, £919,000</p> | <p>Students can access course materials and activities in the format they need.</p> | IS5 |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation | Summary of publication plan |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Financial support | Financial support provision is effective and bursary levels are tailored appropriately to meet students' needs. | <p>Annual financial survey of all UK-domiciled means-tested undergraduates in years one and three, with a household income below the upper threshold for the means-tested element of the government maintenance loan. Survey is to assist in evaluating awareness of financial support arrangements before starting university and attitude to financial support on course. Survey based on OfS Evaluation toolkit with supplementary questions included.</p> <p>Questions included in wider open day surveys to understand the impact of financial support arrangements on participants' university choice and awareness of provision.</p> <p>To ensure bursary provision remains at an appropriate level, Oxford's living costs are reviewed and updated annually, with a detailed student expenditure survey carried out every three years in conjunction with the SU. Existing data from a variety of sources including the government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey, and the National Union of Students (NUS) is also considered. Regular reviews of national household income trends are also used to inform bursary levels.</p> | <p>Reports to University committees annually from spring term comprising survey findings, further analysis, and recommendations for financial support package adjustments and updates to living costs information</p> <p>Updates to website published annually from each summer, setting out revised arrangements and provision following approval</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Inclusive teaching and assessment practices | <p>A more diverse and inclusive range of summative assessments.</p> <p>Most-commonly recommended reasonable adjustments for disabled students are made proactively.</p> | <p>Type 2: monitoring the number of courses using diverse and inclusive summative assessments.</p> <p>Type 2: monitoring the number of students with declared disabilities needing to request individual adjustments</p> | Annual reports to University committees during the lifetime of the plan |
| Accessible digital learning environments | Students are able to access materials in the format they need. | Type 2: mixed methods analyses drawing on monitoring usage of accessible content tools and internal survey responses. | Annual reports to University committees during the lifetime of the plan |

Financial support for undergraduate students

Oxford aims to offer an outstanding financial support package to all UK students with relatively modest household incomes (up to £50k). The rationale is that, by ensuring all students have sufficient finance without taking on extensive term-time work commitments, they are able to participate fully in Oxford's academic, extra-curricular and social life and get the most out of their university experience. We believe this contributes to their academic performance, their wellbeing and their future career prospects. Our financial package is reviewed regularly to ensure it keeps pace with the cost of living, particularly student accommodation costs.

After a major review of funding in autumn 2022, which saw a new package implemented for 2023 entrants, Oxford's undergraduate financial support package was further reviewed in spring 2024. Discussions took place with the Oxford Students Union, an Undergraduate Financial Support Working Group, college and University committees and other target groups, drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative data. Adjustments have been made to the current package to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our students in academic year 2025-26.

The financial support package is targeted at students from low income households, as well as care-experienced students, estranged students, and mature undergraduates. Funding is provided towards living costs rather than in the form of fee reductions, taking into account student feedback.

Financial support provision and eligibility

Oxford's bursary provision is funded by the University and the colleges, from their own funds and through philanthropy. In 2025-26, the University will provide non-repayable Crankstart Scholarships to eligible first-degree, UK resident undergraduates whose annual household income is £32,500 or less (£6,090 for incomes less than £7,500, and £5,250 for incomes less than £32,500).

Crankstart Scholars are also able to access funded internships to develop employability skills and activities that build a scholar community. Scholars are encouraged to participate in voluntary work, including outreach, with the aim of further developing their transferable skills and inspiring those from similar backgrounds to aspire to higher education.

In 2025-26, the University will provide non-repayable Oxford Bursaries¹³ to eligible students who are not in receipt of Crankstart Scholarships, ranging from £4,200 for those with annual household incomes of less than £25,000 to £1,050 for those with incomes of £50,000 or less. The University has extended its support to those students from households with incomes of between £42,875 and £50,000, reflecting inflationary salary increases over time.

¹³ The maintenance bursaries will be available to students settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Republic of Ireland (ROI) nationals living in the UK or Ireland, and students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland who have been granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme may also be eligible for an Oxford Bursary if they meet the residence requirements.

| Household Income | Annual Crankstart Bursary | Annual Oxford Bursary |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| £7,500 or less | £6,090 | £4,200 |
| £7,501 - £25,000 | £5,250 | £4,200 |
| £25,001 - £32,500 | £5,250 | £3,680 |
| £32,501 - £37,500 | N/A | £3,150 |
| £37,501 - £42,875 | N/A | £2,100 |
| £42,876 - £50,000 | N/A | £1,050 |

Students are only eligible to receive either a Crankstart Scholarship or an Oxford Bursary.

All bursary holders (Crankstart and Oxford bursary) studying for their first undergraduate degree who live more than 80 miles from Oxford within the UK will receive additional support to help with the costs of travelling to and from Oxford each term, to further address potential financial concerns and ensure their core bursary can be used towards Oxford living costs. A travel supplement of £220 a year is available to those living between 80 and 150 miles from Oxford, and £550 a year is available to those living more than 150 miles away.

Students following the six-year Medicine course and the four-year accelerated Medicine graduate course who start in 2025-26 will be eligible for a bursary in all years of their course, according to their household income¹⁴.

The University will take into account all forms of government support available for PGCE students, including the Department for Education's Teacher Training Bursaries. If a PGCE student has a household income of £50,000 or less and is not eligible for a Teacher Training Bursary, it is expected that Oxford will provide a bursary according to the rates for undergraduate students¹⁵.

Full-time UK students following the certificate and diploma courses in Theological Studies starting their course in 2025-26 will be eligible for an Oxford Bursary.

Additional financial support for on-course students

Supplementary targeted support funded by colleges, the University and through philanthropy will be available to specific groups of UK students facing additional costs. Students who have spent any time in care will be eligible for an annual supplementary bursary of up to £3,000 to help with costs during the vacations. As part of Oxford's commitment to helping students without family support (see the Stand Alone legacy pledge¹⁶), a non-repayable annual bursary of up to £3,000 will also be available to estranged students to help with vacation costs.

¹⁴ These arrangements assume that the current NHS funding practices will continue for 2025 entry Medicine students.

¹⁵ Subject to confirmation of the Department for Education's funding arrangements for 2025-26.

¹⁶ www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk/champion-institutions/23-south/133-university-of-oxford

Colleges and departments also provide financial assistance, e.g. overseas travel/book grants and other bursaries, which supplement centrally administered funds and further ensure that financial concerns do not detract from student success.

In addition to this provision, Oxford Financial Assistance is available to assist UK students who may require support due to a funding shortfall or additional exceptional costs such as those with caring responsibilities who may face increased costs due to travelling home more regularly during term-time. Funding is available through the Student Support Bursary and Oxford Assistance Fund, with up to £3,000 of non-repayable funding available per year.

2025-entry bursary rates will be subject to an annual uplift in subsequent academic years in line with the cost of living, with the specific increase signed off by the University's Education Committee.

Intervention strategy 5: services for disabled students

This intervention strategy will deliver joined-up commitments and services for disabled students, including those with mental health and social and communicative conditions, recognising that a whole institutional approach is needed to deliver comprehensive and integrated support across the collegiate University. It will implement a new service model so that disabled students receive the support they need in a timely way.

The strategy also includes a review and diversification of mental health and counselling services in light of a stratified understanding of psychological and mental health needs. It aims to offer a more diverse counselling service and a peer support programme which better reflects the diversity of the student population.

Disabled students will have the opportunity to be involved in both the delivery and evaluation of these services. Research from university experts in wellbeing will also continue to inform plans. Capacity will be expanded to review and evaluate disabled students' experiences and some activities will be disseminated publicly.

This intervention relates to risk 3 and objective 3 above, target PTS_2, increasing the proportion of disabled students awarded good degrees, and EORR risks 6, 7, 8 and 11

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£4,831,400

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theory of Change and other information in Annex B.

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | CIS |
|---|---|--|---|-----|
| Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students | <p>We will review the implementation of the Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students¹⁷ through the networks of disability leads in colleges and departments. The review will include consultation with disabled students.</p> <p>We will create a delivery plan to adopt the Disabled Student Commitment¹⁸.</p> | <p>A Project and Evaluation Officer</p> <p>£315,000</p> | <p>Revised role descriptors for disability leads, coordinators and new disability inclusion coordinators, and sharing of their effective practices.</p> <p>Adoption by the University of the Disabled Student Commitment.</p> | IS4 |
| Revised service model for the Disability Advisory Service | <p>We will implement and evaluate a new service model which enables all disabled students registered with the Disability Advisory Service to access a range of standard reasonable adjustments in a more timely and efficient way. This will enable Disability Advisors to prioritise bespoke discussions with those students with the most individualised requirements.</p> <p>The Disability Advisory Service also signpost Oxford Financial Assistance where there are costs related to their disability that are not covered elsewhere.</p> | <p>Cost of the Disability Advisory Service.</p> <p>Expansion of library services for disabled students in line with the new service model.</p> <p>£1,998,000</p> | <p>Disabled students receive Student Support Plans in a timely way, that match their study needs.</p> <p>Eligible students can access financial assistance without barriers.</p> | IS4 |
| Common Approach to Support Student Mental Health | <p>We will implement the new Common Approach to Student Mental Health, incorporating the review and diversification of mental health and counselling-related services in light of a stratified understanding of psychological and mental health needs.</p> | <p>Supported by the Counselling service and our engagement with the Universities Mental Health Charter Programme.</p> <p>£838,400</p> | <p>Improved access to information and guidance for students about mental health and wellbeing services.</p> | |

¹⁷ <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/common-framework-for-supporting-disabled-students>

¹⁸ www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/disability-equality-higher-education/disabled-students-commission/disabled-student-commitment

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|--|---|---|--|-----|
| Culture of safe and competent practice | <p>We will embed Mental Health Awareness Training for staff and an associated Mental Health Masterclasses Programme.</p> <p>Skills and knowledge developed through training consolidated through individual and group Welfare Supervision and staff reflective practice, provided by clinical team.</p> | <p>Led by a Mental Health training co-ordinator with additional part time training support.</p> <p>Welfare supervision is provided by clinical staff in student services.</p> <p>£206,000</p> | <p>750 staff take MH awareness training annually.</p> <p>Non-clinical staff can respond to students in distress and confidently identify and signpost those experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> | |
| A diverse Counselling Service | <p>We offer the option for students to request to work with clinical practitioners with certain identity characteristics, including counsellors of colour, – this is then cross referenced with a matrix of staff profiles at initial allocation (listing clinical modalities and specialisms in addition to identity characteristics).</p> | <p>The Counselling Service will employ four additional counsellors with a range of identity characteristics and provides clinical supervision and CPD for them.</p> <p>£1,046,000</p> | <p>Students who access and are satisfied that the counselling service better reflects the diversity of the student population.</p> | IS6 |
| Peer Supporters Programme | <p>The Peer Supporters Programme, including Peers of Colour, Rainbow Peers, Peers of Faith, and Disability Diversity Peers, offers a safe and inclusive talk-led space for students to improve active listening, discuss impactful themes, encourage self-reflection and help with onward referral.</p> | <p>Costs of the programme. led by a service lead in Student Welfare and Support Services.</p> <p>£428,000</p> | <p>Students have access to Peer Supporters who reflect the diversity of the student population, delivering empathic and informed support.</p> | IS6 |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation | Summary of publication plan |
|---|--|---|---|
| Common Framework for Disabled Students | Revised role descriptors for disability leads, coordinators and new disability inclusion coordinators, and sharing of their effective practices. | Type 1: narrative inquiry using staff and student voices, assessing the extent to which the Common Framework has been implemented, and identifying which activities support implementation and any barriers to implementation. | Published on University website by summer 2027 Sector conferences on student welfare |
| Revised service model for the Disability Advisory Service | Reduction in the number of students with declared disabilities needing to request individual adjustments. | Type 2: pre and post analysis of the number of the different Student Support Plans in place and the time taken for them to be issued. Type 3: comparing the impact of early adoption of proactive implementation of cohort-level reasonable adjustments with later adopters on the need for individual adjustments and attainment. | Initial report to University committees by summer 2026, with comparative reports by summer 2028 |
| Common Approach to Support Student Mental Health | Improved access to information and guidance for students about mental health and wellbeing services. | Type 2: collection of case studies | Mental Health Chartermark on website by summer 2027 |
| Culture of safe and competent practice | Non-clinical staff can respond to students in distress and confidently identify and signpost those experiencing mental health difficulties. | Type 1: feedback on mental health awareness training programme. | Annual reports to University committees usually in the spring term |

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|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| A more diverse counselling service | Students who access the service are satisfied that the counselling service better reflects the diversity of the student population. | Type 2: mixed methods analysis of students accessing the service and students' experiences of using the service. | Annual reports to University committees usually in the spring term |
| Peer Supporters Programme | Students have access to Peer Supporters who reflect the diversity of the student population, delivering empathic and informed support. | Type 2: narrative of significant changes by students triangulated with students' experiences of using the programme. | Report published on University website by summer 2026 |

Intervention strategy 6: Race Equality Actions

This intervention strategy, building on the work of the University's recent Race Equality Task Force and its Race Equality Charter action plan, will deliver a more diverse and inclusive learning environment, that values racial diversity, and promotes a sense of belonging among Black and other racially minoritised students. This will be supported by campaigns to report racial harassment and microaggressions, and to diversify curricula and library collections.

The strategy will also strengthen partnerships with Black and other racially minoritised students and will support student-led initiatives, so that students feel empowered to contribute to changes across the collegiate University.

Research with students and Education experts at the University has informed the planned actions. Further investigations will be supported, building capacity to undertake participatory research and offering appropriate emotional and advocacy support for staff and students involved, as well as increasing the visibility of the lived experiences of racially minoritised groups. Some findings will be published externally and shared in sector networks.

This intervention strategy relates to risk 4 and objective 4 above, target PTS_3, increasing the proportion of Black students awarded good degrees, and EORR risks 2, 7, 8 and 10

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

£3,356,000 (not including the costs of financial support which are included above in IS3)

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Please see Theory of Change and other information in Annex B.

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | CIS |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|-----|
| Financial support | The Crankstart scholarship programme has a higher representation of Black and other racially minoritised students compared with the wider undergraduate population. Crankstart scholars are supported with access to enhanced funding, dedicated internship opportunities and support from advisors and Student Fees and Funding to support their progression and success on course. | See IS4 | Black and other racially minoritised students from lower-income households are able to participate fully in University life. Those who get into financial difficulties are supported to remain on course. | IS4 |
| University-wide anti-racism campaign | <p>We will develop a university-wide anti-racism campaign, supported by a programme of training and awareness activities, to underline the University's zero tolerance of racial harassment and bullying and increasing conversations about race equality.</p> <p>We will ensure an effective response to incidences of bullying and harassment, implementing an online reporting tool and strengthening communication of relevant policies and procedures.</p> | <p>3 FTE and 2 Student Associates in the Equality and Diversity Unit, supported by EDI officers in divisions and colleges.</p> <p>£841,000</p> | Black and other racially minoritised students report improved awareness of and confidence in the reporting of racial harassment and microaggressions. | |
| Student partnerships | <p>We will partner with Black and racially minoritised students and relevant student societies to design and conduct inquiries into their university experiences.</p> <p>We will support participatory research projects and disseminate their approaches and findings.</p> | <p>Evaluation Officer and financial recompense for students engaging in these projects.</p> <p>£379,000</p> | Black and other racially minoritised students feel empowered to contribute to changes in the collegiate University. | IS5 |

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|---|--|---|--|-----|
| Diversify curricular, teaching and assessment | We will support departments to diversify curricula, teaching and summative assessment methods to better reflect the diversity of society and/or scholarship. | 2 FTE in the Centre for Teaching and Learning £506,000 | An inclusive learning environment that values racial diversity and promotes a sense of belonging among Black and other racially minoritised students. | IS4 |
| Accessibility and representation in libraries and collections | <p>We will identify and address the barriers preventing under-served groups from accessing library resources.</p> <p>We will review and refresh our existing policies and practices of global and inclusive collecting, to reflect a breadth of scholarship and include previously under-represented areas.</p> <p>We will develop an efficient digitisation programme that transforms the scale and scope of our digital library collections, offering greater diversity and a broader representation of our collections.</p> | <p>Projects in the Bodleian Libraries</p> <p>£1,630,000</p> | Black and other racially minoritised students feel their backgrounds, cultures, and identities are represented in the libraries' collections, and presentation of these collections and they have equality of access to these materials. | |

Evaluation

| Activity | Outcomes | Method(s) of evaluation | Summary of publication plan |
|--|---|---|--|
| University-wide anti-racism campaign | Black and other racially minoritised students report improved awareness of and confidence in the reporting of racial harassment and microaggressions. | Type 2: student accounts of changed perceptions as a result of the campaign. | Reports published on Equality and Diversity website by summer 2026 |
| Student partnerships | Black and other racially minoritised students feel empowered to contribute to changes in the collegiate University. | Type 2: number of committee papers co-authored with students increases. Type 2: student and staff changes as result of participation. | Reports to University committees. Presentation at sector network event Reports published on Centre for Teaching and Learning website by summer 2027 |
| Review and update curricula, teaching and summative assessment | Improved sense of belonging among Black and other racially minoritised students. | Type 2: mixed methods analyses of data from university surveys. Also consultancies, data on usage of race equality toolkit, and data on significant changes as a result of use. | Reports published on University website by summer 2027 Reports to University committees |
| Accessible and representative libraries and collections | Physical and psychological comfort. | Type 2: comparison of pre-activity and post-activity feelings of belonging created by access to, and breadth of, collections. | Ongoing communications to departments and relevant committees. Reader survey and action plan reports published every three years Presentation at higher education library conferences and network meetings |

Whole provider approach

16. Consideration of equality of opportunity, and our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, are woven into every stage of the student lifecycle at Oxford. The University's Education Committee is responsible for governance that ensures a whole-provider approach to addressing risks to equality of opportunity. Colleges, academic departments, divisions (groups of departments) and central services all work in partnership to deliver our collective aims and targets.
17. The University's **Equality Policy** sets out the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.
18. The **Common Framework on Admissions** sets out agreed requirements for the admissions process, aligned with the Universities UK/Guild HE Fair admissions code of practice (2022). This document, supplemented by the University policy on contextual data, seeks to ensure consistency of practice, so that candidates' chances of admission are not affected by college choice.
19. The University works to create an inclusive culture where all LGBTQ+ people are treated with dignity and respect. LGBTQ+ students are represented on a Task and Finish Group that will advise on progressing LGBTQ+ inclusion. The University has achieved an institutional **Athena Swan Silver** award in recognition of its progress towards gender equality.
20. A **Race Equality Task Force** was established in 2020, and the **Race Equality Strategy** was published in 2022. The strategy's objectives include to 'attract, admit and support students from all backgrounds' and to 'ensure teaching and the wider student experience are inclusive and embed race equality'. A new senior role of **Chief Diversity Officer** (CDO) was created and appointed in 2023 to support delivery of this strategy. A new high-level **Committee for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** provides oversight for the University's Strategy and Policy on all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion, and includes members of the University, the colleges and the SU. A University EDI Strategy is now in the advanced stages of development.
21. The University received a **Race Equality Charter Bronze** renewal award in 2024. The Race Equality Charter action plan sets out commitments including a reduction in awarding gaps between students of different ethnic groups; support for departments to review and update curricula; and ensuring student support services meet the needs of our diverse community.
22. The **Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students** was agreed by the collegiate University in 2014 and aimed to create a joined-up approach to supporting disabled students. The Framework created a network of Disability Coordinators and Disability Leads who are supported by the Disability Advisory Service. The framework is supported by the Guide for Supporting Disabled Students published in 2020.
23. The University and colleges agreed a Common Approach to Support Student Mental Health in 2023-24. These commitments outline a University-wide, holistic approach to supporting students, covering all aspects of university experience and recognising the interconnections in mental health provision across the collegiate University. We will use our membership of the University Mental Health Charter programme to review the commitments made in the Strategy and our provision for improving student mental health, and to assess our institutional readiness for a future application for the Charter Award.

Student consultation

24. In accordance with the University policy on student engagement and representation¹⁹ SU representatives have been members of the working group which wrote this University-level submission, as well as sitting on senior University committees including Council which have considered and approved drafts. SU representatives and other student groups have played an important role in discussions of the working group and the development of this plan.
25. Actions to inform the APP include the Diversity of Student Experience project, which began in October 2022. The project piloted innovative methods to engage diverse student voices, and to learn from student experiences, as well as soliciting feedback on the methods themselves. The project has produced evidence to support the plan, and engaged students in co-design activities, including the production of a grassroots APP Theory of Change, and consultation on the draft plan. The full suite of project outputs is published online.²⁰
26. The SU hosted a student-led APP working group, including members of the student groups identified as experiencing particular risks to equality of opportunity. The University and SU collaborated to run focus groups to discuss the identified risks, proposed interventions, and possible impacts on student wellbeing.
27. Oxford participates in the National Student Survey (NSS) but did not meet the publication-threshold response rate from 2017 to 2022, largely because of a sustained SU boycott. Our results for 2023 show sector-leading levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, academic support and learning resources. Lower scores were achieved for course organisation, with indications that students, particularly those from under-represented backgrounds, find the University a complex environment to navigate. This finding has informed our APP on-course interventions. There was also low satisfaction with the SU, and the University is currently working with the SU to ensure it provides a representative and articulate student voice.
28. As part of Oxford's ongoing commitment to evaluate the effectiveness of our financial support, our bursary holders are surveyed regularly to ensure our support continues to meet the needs of our students. We carried out an in-depth review of our undergraduate financial support package in 2023, including input from the SU. As a result of this review we introduced a number of key changes to the bursary package, including an annual uplift in recognition of cost-of-living increases. SU representatives also contributed to refinement of the financial support package for 2025-entrants, as outlined in this APP.
29. The Centre for Teaching and Learning runs a Student Experience Internship scheme which enables students and graduates to work in partnership with academics, educational developers and other stakeholders, investigating students' academic transitions to Oxford, race and the curriculum, and academic and digital skills. Outputs are published online.²¹
30. Consultation with students is also an important part of the design and delivery of Oxford's outreach programmes. Our consultation process aims to create an open environment where students feel able to express their concerns and ideas. These then inform, challenge and

¹⁹ <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation>

²⁰ www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/diversity-of-student-experience-project

²¹ www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/student-experience-internship-scheme

develop our outreach programmes, and ensure the programs are relevant, responsive, engaging and impactful.

Evaluation of the plan

31. Oxford has been taking a leading approach to the evaluation of access and participation initiatives in the sector. The intervention strategies are grounded in research, and evaluation is built into interventions from the beginning. There are dedicated teams in central University services who drive and support these activities, drawing on expertise from the University's Departments of Education and Experimental Psychology. These teams contribute to the evidence base to inform this plan and we will continue to build their capacity.
32. Oxford's approaches to designing and evaluating evidence-based interventions have been recognised nationally. For example, Oxford's evidence-based approach to raising attainment in schools has been shared by the OfS as an example of effective practice.²² Student participation in evaluation projects has, and will continue to be, a key theme at Oxford. For example, the 'What Matters to Students' project is collaborating with sector partners including TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in HE) and the Evaluation Collective to examine how an effective use of student voices in evaluating access and participation activities could lead to better student outcomes and influence policy more widely.²³
33. Evaluations of transition and on-course support interventions have focussed on working with students to understand their experiences, alongside engagement with the latest relevant research and evaluation. Reflective spaces are created for practitioners and scholars to come together to consider the complex contributory causes of awarding gaps.
34. The Analysis and Evaluation team within the admissions office supports Oxford's admissions processes by providing contextual data, school performance data and course-level admissions reports. The process is reviewed annually to develop a more sophisticated and granular approach to contextual data which uses individual, geographic and school data. The team supports the planning and evaluation of interventions using a Theory of Change approach and development of logic models. Where appropriate, independent evaluations are commissioned and findings will be published externally.
35. Plans to enhance the University's in-house evaluation capacities have been informed by an initial survey of current projects and exploration of the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment tool. A community of practice will be established for evaluators, connecting those who evaluate outreach, admissions and on-course interventions and encouraging the development and use of an institutional theory of change and standardised measures to assess change over time. An institutional research hub will convene specialist expertise from both academic and professional services, providing advice on project aims and methods, facilitating the engagement of students in the co-creation of evidence, and supporting publication and dissemination of findings.

²² www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/university-of-oxford-a-different-approach-to-a-university-schools-collaboration

²³ www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/what-matters-to-students-embedding-student-voices-in-evaluations-to-improve-student-outcomes/

Provision of information to students

36. The University has a comprehensive communications plan to make fees and funding information readily available for prospective and current students, with a particular focus on ensuring that the undergraduate financial support package and additional on-course funding provision are as visible and accessible as possible to target groups.
37. The admissions website gives detailed information on fees, funding support and living costs to help prospective students understand their course costs, and possible sources of support. A search tool is available to help applicants understand their eligibility for bursary and government financial support. These webpages include guidance specifically aimed at parents and carers, estranged and care-experienced students, mature students and disabled students.
38. The financial support package is also promoted through our access programmes, and at outreach events such as open days, including bespoke talks for care-experienced and estranged students, recognising the particular risks to equality of opportunity experienced by these groups. We also communicate financial information to teachers and pupils, with additional materials sent to target schools. Briefing sessions are provided to University and college outreach colleagues and student ambassadors to ensure a full understanding of the financial support package.
39. The University runs an annual email and online communication campaign to introduce offer holders to Oxford's support services. This covers vital and time-sensitive information such as application deadlines for government support. Offer holders receive a guide to fees and funding which confirms the fee arrangements and outlines the funding available. Colleges also run their own programmes for their offer holders.
40. Another section of the University website contains comprehensive information for current students about fees charged for current and previous years of study, latest information on the costs of studying, and deadline reminders for accessing government and Oxford funding. This website is continually updated with tailored information about on-course financial support, including additional funding opportunities, relevant to each specific entry year, as new information is released. A fortnightly student news bulletin highlights essential fees and financial support information, new funding opportunities and forthcoming deadlines.
41. Eligible students are contacted before the start of the academic year to confirm their core bursary entitlement and to provide details of any additional funding for which they may qualify, based on their individual circumstances.
42. In 2022-23 the University set up a dedicated website²⁴ in response to the cost-of-living crisis. This site outlines the steps we are taking to address cost of living issues as these evolve, and signposts current students to sources of support.

²⁴ www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/financial-advice-and-support.

Annex A

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

Introduction

1. The data sets used in the University of Oxford's assessment of performance report include, but are not limited to:
 - OfS Access and Participation Dashboards;
 - OfS individualised data sets, supplied March 2023;
 - Other relevant OfS dashboards;
 - UCAS end of cycle data;
 - purchased HESA data for the University of Oxford and sector comparisons;
 - the University of Oxford's student databases;
 - the University of Oxford's NSS results and other student survey outcomes.
2. The assessment of performance focusses predominately on full-time undergraduates studying for a first degree or an undergraduate degree with postgraduate components¹ – 95% of the undergraduate student population.²
3. The analysis reflects annual patterns over the six-year period of the OfS data and dashboards, as well as the OfS 4-year and 2-year averages. Oxford-specific data, alongside that provided by the OfS, was used to reconstruct key elements of the OfS APP dashboards.³ The combined data provided a greater degree of granularity, enabling analysis of characteristics not publishable due to small numbers, as well as additional years of data, UCAS in-cycle reporting, and metrics used by Oxford tutors during the admissions process.
4. The statistical significance of any outcomes was considered carefully, given the small number of students in some of the groups. The intersections of characteristics for all students, and in particular those where total numbers are very small, were also considered carefully to understand:
 - compound risks;
 - how very small groups could be incorporated into appropriate larger groups based on potential risks for the delivery of interventions.
5. Because of the high levels of intersectionality, students with characteristics such as care experience, estranged students, those with refugee status and those from Gypsy, Traveller,

¹ A small number of Oxford undergraduate programmes with postgraduate elements classify final outcomes on a taught postgraduate system of Distinction, Merit or Pass. These have been excluded from the attainment analysis.

² The remaining 5% are studying part-time for other awards (undergraduate certificates and diplomas). This population tends to have different characteristics from the full-time student population, and different motivations for study.

³ Using the 2023 rebuild instructions at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8377/rebuilding-student-outcome-and-experience-measures-used-in-ofs-regulation-july-2023.pdf.

Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) communities are included within the group of socio-economically disadvantaged.

6. Whilst noting that Oxford's APP will be assessed on its specific combination of undergraduate population and environment, it was felt useful to understand the wider context of providers who have similarities in undergraduate bodies, entry requirements and teaching characteristics. We carried out a simple comparator analysis to consider Oxford's performance against a selection of Russell Group providers, across each of the measures and student characteristics, to understand where Oxford students might experience worse outcomes.
7. The data were also analysed in conjunction with the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), with particular focus on students with the following characteristics:
 - Composite measure of disadvantage: ABCS
 - Social disadvantage: Free school meal eligibility, IMD
 - Participation in higher education: POLAR4 and TUNDRA
 - Ethnicity
 - Disability
 - Sex
 - Age on entry
 - Care experienced, estranged students, or children in need
 - Parental education/first in family to attend higher education
 - Gender identity or sexual orientation
 - Religious belief
 - Refugee or asylum seeker.
8. Ethnicity and disability were disaggregated for the analysis. The HESA 6-way split of ethnicity was used: Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, Other and White. For disability, categories of specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions and other disabilities were considered. Numbers declaring specific physical disabilities are too small to provide statistical robustness and therefore were included with other disabilities.
9. Regression analysis was undertaken to understand those student characteristics which appear to have the largest significant impact on the probability of not continuing with studies, not completing the course, failing to gaining a good outcome, and not progressing from undergraduate study. These characteristics explain only a small proportion of the probability of an Oxford student continuing and completing their course, gaining a good outcome or progressing to higher study or graduate level employment. The regression results were considered in modelling targets (to take account of possible intersectionality of student characteristics), and in understanding how proposed interventions might support these targets.
10. In addition, during the academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24, Oxford undertook research into the diversity of student experience, engaging with students to understand any barriers to learning they have experienced at the University, with specific focus on those sub-groups of

students flagged as most likely to face equality of opportunity risks. Furthermore, the project worked collaboratively with the students to design the research framework to ensure the right questions were asked and provide solutions to input into interventions to improve student journey outcomes.

11. The key risks identified as needing mitigation within Oxford's Access and Participation Plan (APP) are:
 - **Risk 1:** Unequal opportunity to develop knowledge and skills required.
 - **Risk 2:** Unequal opportunity to receive information, advice, and guidance.
 - **Risk 3:** Perception of higher education – Students may not feel able to apply, despite being qualified.
 - **Risk 4:** Students may not be accepted, despite being qualified.
 - **Risk 6:** Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.
 - **Risk 7:** Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.
 - **Risk 8:** Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.
 - **Risk 9:** Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.
 - **Risk 10:** Increase in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.
 - **Risk 11:** Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education.
12. In Tables A1-A6 below, Oxford data is compared against the whole English HE sector, and against six peer universities with broadly similar course offerings and entry requirements. Given the diverse missions of universities, the latter group is felt to offer a more meaningful point of comparison in many cases. However, universities in London tend to recruit large numbers of BME students as a reflection of their local population mix; ethnicity comparisons should therefore be made with a degree of caution.
13. Table A1 presents Oxford's admissions performance against the comparator group for key groups. The proportions entering Oxford are mostly lower than the sector, with the exception of disabled students – this is to be expected given the restricted pool of under-represented groups who meet Oxford's high entry requirements. The comparison with the six peer universities is more complex; while Oxford's performance is broadly in line with our peers, it is not leading among this group. Oxford has worked hard over recent years to use contextual data during the selection process to improve equality of opportunity, but Table A1 suggests there remains scope to go further.

14. Looking at trends over time, the assessment of performance concluded that representation of students from minority groups at the University of Oxford has increased significantly in recent years (see for example Figs A1 to A6 later in this annex), at the application, shortlisting, offer and final accept stages. There is evidence of a slight reversion relative to 2020 and 2021 for all indicators except FSM. This is largely caused by the acceptance success rate changes related to the pandemic and changes in A-level grading across this period.

Table A1: Comparison of minority group access rates for Oxford, the sector and selected providers⁴

| % entrants: | Participation/Social Disadvantage | | | | | Ethnicity | | Disability | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|------|
| University | IMD Q1 | POLAR4 Q1 | Tundra Q1 | ABCS Q1 | FSM | Black | Asian | Any | MH |
| Oxford | 7.5% | 6.9% | 7.4% | 3.1% | 7.9% | 3.6% | 10.4% | 20.9% | 5.4% |
| Sector | 21.8% | 12.1% | 11.9% | 6.9% | 18.6% | 10.4% | 15.7% | 17.2% | 5.1% |
| Provider A | 12.4% | 4.9% | 5.5% | 2.1% | 12.5% | 6.4% | 42.5% | 14.5% | 2.5% |
| Provider B | 7.6% | 5.2% | 5.9% | 3.0% | 8.6% | 4.8% | 15.4% | 13.5% | 3.6% |
| Provider C | 8.6% | 8.3% | 9.0% | 6.3% | 8.7% | 1.7% | 6.0% | 17.6% | 4.5% |
| Provider D | 11.5% | 4.9% | 4.5% | 1.4% | 16.2% | 6.0% | 36.6% | 14.3% | 5.4% |
| Provider E | 5.8% | 6.9% | 7.9% | 3.3% | 7.6% | 2.7% | 8.7% | 16.9% | 5.9% |
| Provider F | 18.9% | 8.8% | 7.4% | 3.2% | 14.0% | 8.1% | 23.2% | 14.9% | 4.3% |

Note: % of students with the characteristic using 2-year average

15. Considering the variation in local population distributions and composition of student population by course and study types, the largest variations for Oxford are for socio-economic disadvantage, measured by IMD quintile 1 and free school meal eligibility – with a noted high intersectionality between these two measures. Along with maintaining current access programmes targeting minorities groups, the recommended focus for the APP is specific access targets around IMD and FSM indicators.
16. For on-course and progression, the assessment of performance concluded that overall rates of continuation, completion, attainment and progression are high at Oxford and well above the sector average and OfS benchmarks of expected performance, and in line with or above the comparator group (Table A2).

⁴ All data in Table A1 to A6 use the OfS 2-year and 4-year aggregated data. For access this covers entry years 2020/21 and 2021/22. For continuation the 2-year and 4-year averages cover students entering in 2019 and 2020, and 2017-2020 respectively.; for completion the averages are for student entering in 2016 and 2017, and 2014-2017; for attainment they are for students completing in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and 2018-2021; for progression the data are for leavers is for 2019-20 and 2020-21, and 2017-2020.

Sector covers all English providers. The Russell Group providers used for comparison have been selected because of a mixture of similarities in expected entry tariffs, student characteristics, teaching methods and geography. This is felt to be a better guide for Oxford as the lower overall rates of the sector average give a wider gap between highest and lowest achieving groups. The comparison group includes The University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, University of Durham, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University College London.

Table A2: Comparison of rates for Oxford, the sector and selected providers⁴

| University | Continuation | | Completion | | Attainment | | Progression | |
|------------|--------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | 4-year | 2-year | 4-year | 2-year | 4-year | 2-year | 4-year | 2-year |
| Oxford | 98.5% | 98.4% | 98.8% | 99.0% | 95.7% | 95.6% | 87.9% | 88.3% |
| Sector | 90.9% | 90.8% | 89.0% | 88.7% | 80.5% | 81.1% | 73.8% | 74.5% |
| Provider A | 96.6% | 96.8% | 97.9% | 98.3% | 96.1% | 96.0% | 92.5% | 93.1% |
| Provider B | 99.1% | 99.2% | 99.0% | 99.1% | 94.2% | 93.6% | 87.7% | 88.9% |
| Provider C | 97.5% | 97.7% | 97.7% | 97.7% | 95.0% | 95.3% | 83.4% | 84.0% |
| Provider D | 96.4% | 96.8% | 95.5% | 95.0% | 94.6% | 95.5% | 84.7% | 85.0% |
| Provider E | 97.3% | 97.4% | 96.6% | 96.7% | 93.4% | 93.3% | 81.2% | 82.6% |
| Provider F | 96.8% | 96.6% | 96.0% | 96.2% | 92.2% | 92.5% | 80.7% | 82.2% |

17. Students with minority characteristics achieve high rates of success in their student journey through and after Oxford, though there remain gaps between these students and the majority characteristic. The comparative performance of Oxford (Tables A3 to A6) aligns with characteristics highlighted in regression analysis, with gaps consistently greater than Russell Group comparators' average for students in the following categories:

- intersectional measures (ABCS and TUNDRA quintiles),
- the socio-economic background for students (based on IMD and FSM eligibility),
- ethnicity (in particular Black students),
- disability (specifically those with mental health conditions).

Table A3: Gaps in continuation rates, Oxford and selected providers⁵

| Gap: | Participation/Social Disadvantage | | | | | Ethnicity | | Disability | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-----------|-------|------------|------|
| University | IMD | POLAR4 | Tundra | ABCS | FSM | Black | Asian | Any | MH |
| Oxford | 4.1% | 1.1% | 0.9% | 7.4% | 2.0% | 3.6% | 0.5% | 1.5% | 1.3% |
| Sector | 8.1% | 4.5% | 3.2% | 13.8% | 4.6% | 5.4% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 2.5% |
| Provider A | 3.9% | 0.1% | -0.5% | 0.4% | 6.7% | 4.5% | -0.3% | -1.2% | DP |
| Provider B | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.8% | DP | 2.6% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 1.0% | 1.1% |
| Provider C | 6.2% | 4.8% | 3.7% | 9.0% | 2.4% | 5.9% | 1.3% | 2.2% | 5.1% |
| Provider D | 2.2% | 1.7% | 0.4% | 4.3% | 0.8% | 1.2% | -1.5% | 2.2% | 2.5% |
| Provider E | 2.1% | 1.6% | 1.2% | 6.6% | 1.7% | 1.1% | -0.4% | 2.9% | 4.9% |
| Provider F | 3.8% | 2.3% | 1.3% | 6.4% | 4.0% | 2.0% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.1% |

Note: Gaps between most and least advantage (Q5 to Q1), eligible or not for FSM, white and ethnicity, no declared disability and recorded disability. The data is an aggregate of those entering in years 2019 and 2020

18. All continuation rates are high, with small numbers of students in minority groups, and the gaps in continuation are only statistically significant at 95% confidence interval (CI) for IMD Q1 vs Q5 and Black vs white students in Table A3.

⁵ DP appearing in Tables A3 to A6 indicates where the OfS has suppressed results for data protection reasons
Annex A

Table A4: Gaps in completion rates, Oxford and selected providers⁵

| Gap: | Participation/Social Disadvantage | | | | | Ethnicity | | Disability | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-----------|-------|------------|------|
| University | IMD | POLAR4 | Tundra | ABCS | FSM | Black | Asian | Any | MH |
| Oxford | 0.8% | -0.1% | 0.9% | 5.2% | 1.3% | 1.6% | 0.0% | 1.9% | 2.3% |
| Sector | 10.6% | 6.8% | 4.9% | 23.5% | 8.0% | 7.6% | 1.6% | 1.9% | 5.1% |
| Provider A | 0.8% | 1.9% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.7% | 0.4% | -1.6% | 2.0% | 3.4% |
| Provider B | 2.4% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 7.5% | 1.0% | DP | 0.6% | 0.3% | 2.1% |
| Provider C | 5.6% | 3.5% | 1.7% | 15.8% | 3.1% | 4.5% | 0.1% | 3.1% | 8.4% |
| Provider D | 4.6% | 1.0% | -1.6% | 14.4% | 1.2% | 5.3% | -0.5% | 3.9% | 7.6% |
| Provider E | 4.3% | 4.4% | 4.1% | 16.9% | 3.5% | -0.4% | -0.6% | 2.9% | 8.0% |
| Provider F | 4.0% | 1.6% | 2.2% | 15.7% | 3.8% | 3.8% | 0.2% | 4.0% | 6.1% |

Note: Gaps between most and least advantage (Q5 to Q1), eligible or not for FSM, white and ethnicity, no declared disability and recorded disability. The data is an aggregate of those entering in years 2016 and 2017

19. Again, all completion rates are high, with the gaps in completion only statistically significant at 95% CI for IMD Q1 vs Q5 and those with a disability (Table A4).

Table A5: Gaps in good degree attainment rates, Oxford and selected providers

| Gap: | Participation/Social Disadvantage | | | | Ethnicity | | Disability | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| University | IMD | POLAR4 | Tundra | FSM | Black | Asian | Any | MH |
| Oxford | 5.4% | 3.7% | 1.5% | 5.7% | 14.1% | 1.9% | 1.0% | 4.1% |
| Sector | 16.7% | 9.6% | 6.2% | 11.3% | 19.2% | 7.3% | 0.3% | -1.1% |
| Provider A | 3.1% | 3.7% | 1.8% | 0.6% | 3.0% | 2.3% | 0.3% | -0.5% |
| Provider B | 8.0% | 5.7% | 4.7% | 9.8% | 11.2% | 5.4% | 2.1% | 4.9% |
| Provider C | 8.6% | 7.9% | 4.8% | 8.2% | 16.4% | 1.5% | 2.7% | 4.7% |
| Provider D | 5.2% | -2.0% | -2.8% | 6.0% | 5.9% | 1.9% | -0.1% | -0.2% |
| Provider E | 11.2% | 6.6% | 3.4% | 9.2% | 9.1% | 8.1% | 2.6% | 2.7% |
| Provider F | 12.1% | 5.0% | 3.2% | 12.5% | 16.9% | 8.3% | 2.2% | 1.5% |

Note: Gaps between most and least advantage (Q5 to Q1), eligible or not for FSM, white and ethnicity, no declared disability and recorded disability. The data is an aggregate of those gaining their award in years 2019-20 and 2020-21

20. Whilst attainment rates remain high overall, there is more of a variation in the proportion of students gaining a good outcome between student groups and across years. Attainment gaps are statistically significant at 95% CI for IMD Q1 vs Q5, for those eligible for FSM, for Black students, and for disabled students – which is strongly influenced by those with mental health conditions (also statistically significant) (Table A5).

Table A6: Gaps in progression rates, Oxford and selected providers

| Gap: | Participation/Social Disadvantage | | | | | Ethnicity | | Disability | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|------|
| University | IMD | POLAR4 | Tundra | ABCS | FSM | Black | Asian | Any | MH |
| Oxford | 6.5% | 5.1% | 0.0% | 13.3% | 1.1% | -6.0% | -6.1% | 2.1% | 4.7% |
| Sector | 10.7% | 9.0% | 6.9% | 19.6% | 6.7% | 4.0% | 3.3% | 1.9% | 4.1% |
| Provider A | 12.0% | 10.1% | 5.9% | 8.0% | -0.2% | 1.1% | -0.4% | -0.8% | 2.2% |
| Provider B | 4.6% | 2.2% | 3.8% | 14.2% | -0.1% | 2.0% | -3.2% | 3.5% | 9.1% |
| Provider C | 12.5% | 7.9% | 3.7% | 14.1% | 0.1% | -6.7% | 4.1% | 1.4% | 5.8% |
| Provider D | 2.7% | 2.2% | 0.7% | 9.7% | 2.5% | -2.3% | -1.5% | 4.3% | 7.0% |
| Provider E | 2.1% | 0.3% | -0.1% | 10.1% | 7.1% | 1.9% | -0.4% | 3.2% | 8.7% |
| Provider F | 5.5% | 0.2% | -2.0% | 10.8% | 6.4% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 1.0% | 4.0% |

Note: Gaps between most and least advantage (Q5 to Q1), eligible or not for FSM, white and ethnicity, no declared disability and recorded disability. The data is an aggregate of those gaining their award in years 2019-20 and 2020-21

21. Progression rates are good for all student groups, though there are statistically significant gaps at 95% CI only for students from the lowest ABCS quintile, and those with social or communication conditions (Table A6).
22. Given the high rates of successful continuation, completion and progression across all student groups, with few statistically significant gaps for minority groups, the focus of our APP is around attainment, with a focus on those from socio-economically challenged backgrounds (using eligibility for free school meals and lower IMD quintiles), as well as Black and disabled students. The proposed attainment interventions for these groups will also support continuation and completion rates.
23. The analysis for ALL measures has used a mix of data sources, each of which uses slightly different versions of data characteristics or different years. As a result, there will be slight differences in the data proportions presented in the charts in this section.
24. Oxford considered setting targets to reduce gaps between more and less advantaged groups, but felt that this would not be appropriate as these gaps may be reduced without achieving any improvements to equality of opportunity for the least-advantaged students. For example, a target to reduce the access gap between IMD Q5 and Q1 might be achieved by admitting fewer students from Q5 and more students from Q4, without admitting any more students from Q1 and Q2.
25. Likewise for awarding gaps, it would be possible to reduce the number of students in the reference group achieving a good outcome. This might reduce the awarding gap without achieving any improvements for students in the target groups.
26. We do not want to close gaps without improving outcomes, as it is the absolute improvement that we really want to achieve. We therefore decided it was most appropriate to set targets for absolute improvements.

Access – explanation

27. Analysis has identified four key risks to equality of opportunity of access to Oxford:
- Risk 1 – Unequal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required, given Oxford's high entry requirements and academic expectations.
 - Risk 2 – Unequal opportunity for those from backgrounds which typically have not considered Oxford as a post-18 destination to receive information, advice, and guidance on the additional steps required as part of an application to Oxford. Students from minority groups are more likely to say that they received no help/guidance from family, friends or current students/alumni with their decision to apply⁶.
 - Risk 3 – Perceptions of Oxford as “a place not for people like me” are higher amongst minority groups. Feedback suggests Black students feel Oxford is still a predominantly white space, with biases built into the system, whilst those from lower socio-economic backgrounds feel there is a regional bias⁷.
 - Risk 4 – Students may not be accepted, despite meeting the entry requirements.
28. Considering the intersectionality between these risks and student characteristics, those characteristics identified as having the greatest probability of impacting on a prospect applying to Oxford or on a successful application to Oxford are:
- those with prior **socio-economic disadvantage** – using FSM⁸ and IMD as indicators, especially when linked to lower prior attainment (by A-level bands); and
 - **Black** students, with specific reference to the proportion of the aged 18 population applying to Oxford. (However, Black students who do apply to Oxford have a high offer rate – see paragraph 33.)
29. It should be noted that there is a high degree of intersectionality between these groups: 50% of Black applicants are flagged with FSM eligibility and 61% are in IMD quintiles 1 and 2, compared to 7% and 16% respectively for white applicants.

⁶ Student Barometer 2017 to 2022, responses to arrival questions.

⁷ Student Union APP consultations.

⁸ For analysis and modelling for target setting, Oxford has used KS4 FSM6, included in the UCAS data set. KS4 FSM6 is sourced from the NPD, Northern Ireland FSM6 is sourced from the Northern Ireland School Census, and Wales FSM is sourced from the Welsh PLASC, i.e. it includes data from a greater range of home nations helping identify a wider group of disadvantaged students. As a result, this data will be slightly different than the FSM proportions calculated by the OfS.

30. Gaps in access rates for Oxford students in lower socio-economic groups are shown in Figures A1 to A4:

Figure A1: Access, IMD (2019) All quintiles

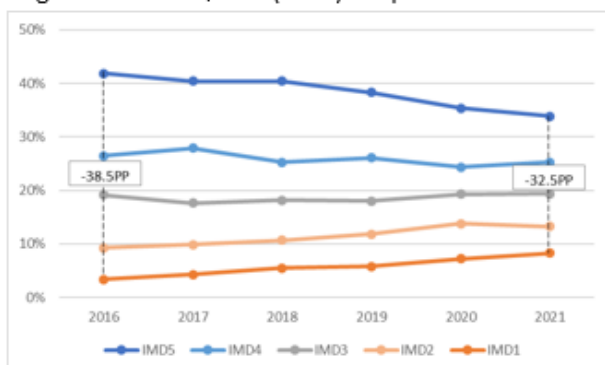


Figure A2: Access, IMD (2019) Quintiles 1&2 vs 5

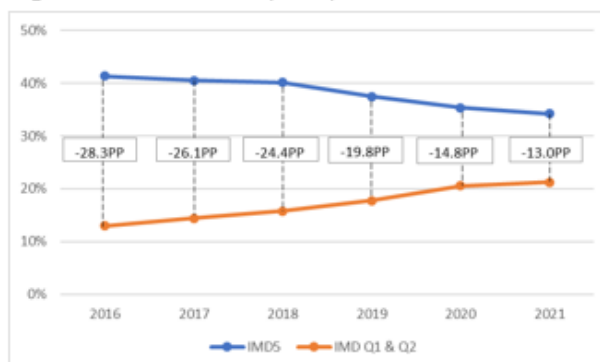


Figure A3: Access, FSM eligibility

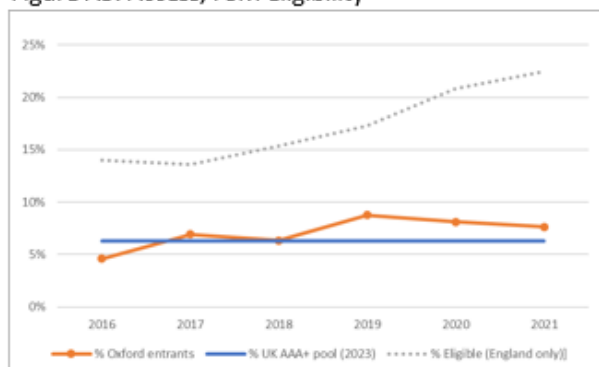
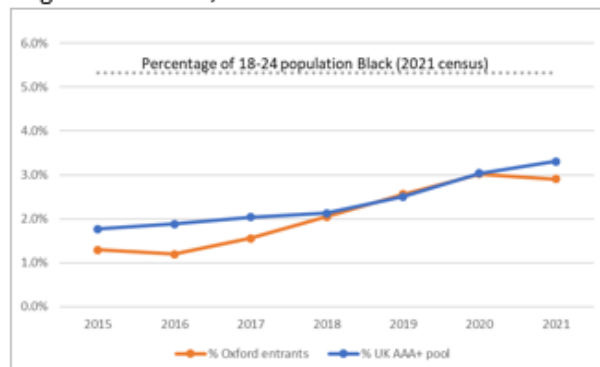


Figure A4: Access, Black entrants



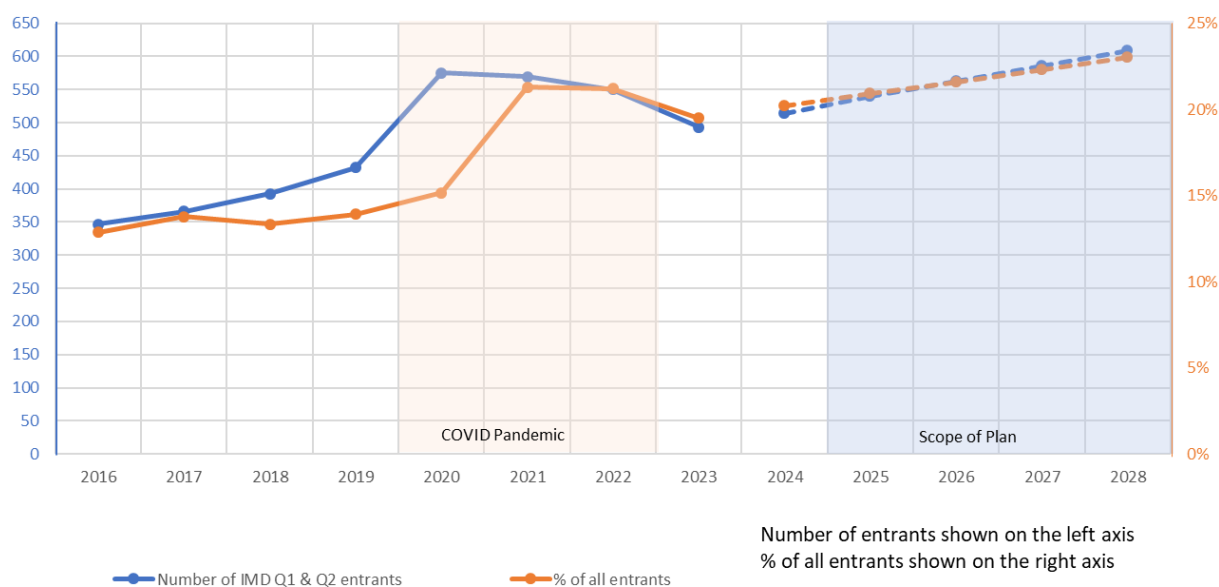
Data source A1 – A2: Ofs Oxford individualised data for students entering in academic years 2016/17 to 2021/22
 A3: UCAS FSM AAA+ pool; Ofs individualised provider data; ONSFSM statistics
 A4: HESA: Black AAA+ pool; Oxford internal data: annual Black entrants; 2021 Census: population

31. The University has in place a number of interventions to address the risk to equality of opportunity of access to Oxford. Some of these have been in place for a number of years and are proven to have a successful impact on widening participation. Others are much newer and in earlier stages of evaluation and development. Examples are given in Oxford's current Access and Participation Plan.
32. For example, significant work is ongoing with regard to access for Black students, with outreach/admission programmes focussed specifically on these prospects from a young age within their educational journey. With applications from Black students continuing to rise and Oxford taking more of the available pool with the required entry qualifications (illustrated in Figure A4), no specific access target for Black students is recommended.
33. In addition, the offer rate to Black students is consistently ahead of the UCAS expected offer rate, which takes account of prior qualification and course choice, showing a high level of success for these applicants. The UCAS-adjusted offer rates for Black students exceeded the benchmark by 4.3PP in 2023 compared to 3.2PP in 2022, 4.4PP in 2021 and 4.0PP in 2020.
34. The gap between the proportion of entrants from the lowest two and higher three IMD quintiles has been closing steadily since 2016, with marked narrowing before the pandemic. The gap between those from quintiles 1 and 5 also continues to narrow, with the proportion of students

from quintile 1 progressively increasing, with that of students from quintile 5 dropping more quickly.

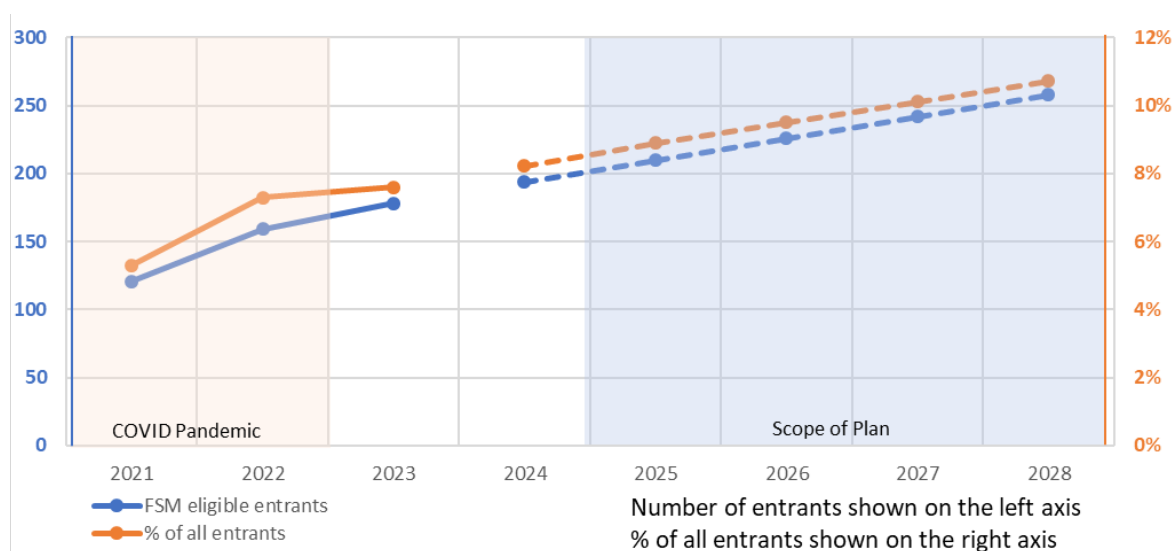
35. For access, we will maintain and strengthen our focus on socio-economic disadvantage in the specific targets set for the APP. With nearly two thirds of Black students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 in 2020 and 2021 (compared with under 16% of white students and 32% of other ethnicities), a focus on potential candidates from socially disadvantaged backgrounds will favour Black prospects in particular. Likewise, with the high proportion of Black student eligibility for FSM, this focus will provide further support.
36. To address socio-economic disadvantage, we will consider both FSM eligibility and IMD. The first of these is a robust and reliable individual-level indicator of disadvantage. However, there is a drawback to this measure in that it results in a 'cliff-edge' between eligibility and non-eligibility. Considering IMD quintiles 1 and 2 enables the University to consider a broader group of students from under-represented backgrounds, including those who narrowly miss the FSM criterion.
37. Detailed analysis of A-level attainment rates, (that is, the current pool of students who are reaching the minimum entry requirements for Oxford), by FSM eligibility and IMD quintile underpins the targets proposed for these two measures – ensuring they are realistic yet challenging. This prior attainment is considered with reference to Oxford's use of contextual data and its rigorous assessment process to identify students with the greatest potential to thrive and succeed at Oxford.
38. Each access intervention has been considered with regard to how it is likely to increase applications and success rates for students with FSM eligibility and/or in the lower two IMD quintiles. As discussed in paragraphs 24 to 26, the proposed Access targets focus on increasing the overall proportion of admitted students with these characteristics, rather than narrowing gaps.
39. Given the unusual recruitment patterns experienced as a result of A-level grading during the pandemic, the baseline for the access targets is taken from the actual entrants in 2023/24 and the expected entrants for 2024/25 based on current offers.
40. Detailed modelling was undertaken, based on expected student numbers over the Plan period, with specific consideration of each of the main interventions proposed. Challenging, but realistic, uplifts in applicants from lower IMD quintiles and those with FSM eligibility based on these interventions were considered and form the basis of the proposed Access targets.
41. The target proposed for IMD quintiles is to increase the proportion of students from the lowest two quintiles from the 2023 entrants' rate of 19.5% to 23.0% of 2028 entrants. This is shown in Figure A5.

Figure A5: Access target for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2



42. The target proposed for entrants with FSM eligibility is to increase the proportion from 7.6% in 2023 to 10.7% of 2028 entrants. This is illustrated in Figure A6.

Figure A6: Access target for students with FSM eligibility



Continuation – explanation

43. As is clear from Table A2, continuation rates at Oxford are very high. This section considers differences in continuation between student groups.
44. Oxford has such a high overall continuation rate, and small numbers of students with certain minority characteristics, that a single student from the minority group failing to continue their studies may unduly impact the calculated gap. It is therefore difficult to draw out clear conclusions for this measure.
45. There are three potential risks to equality of opportunity for Oxford students continuing in their studies:
- Risk 8 – students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing. Evidence for this is mixed, with 60% of respondents to the Student Barometer⁹ declaring that they feel stressed 'always' or 'quite often' while 88% of respondents state they are happy with their life at the University. In addition, the proportion of students joining the University with pre-existing mental health conditions is high by sector standards.
 - Risk 11 – linked to Risk 8 is the capacity of Oxford's Disability Advisory Service to support the increasing number of students with declared disabilities, with some disabled students also mentioning that not all academics fully take on board adjustments in support plans. Some disabled students have also mentioned that, whilst they recognise the interventions put in place to support them academically, they do not always see this reflected in extra-curricular activities.¹⁰
 - Risk 10 – financial pressures can impede some students from lower socio-economic backgrounds from fully engaging with life at Oxford. These students are at greater risk of failing to continue with their studies. Included within this group are care experience, estranged and refugee students. In addition, Black students significantly over-index in this group.
46. Subject to the caveat in paragraph 44 the student characteristics which appear to give a greater potential risk to equality of opportunity are:
- those with a **disability**, in particular mental health conditions, multiple conditions (often a mental health condition in conjunction with another disability) and social/communication disorders;
 - those with prior **socio-economic disadvantage** – using FSM and IMD as indicators, especially when linked to lower prior attainment (by A-level bands); and
 - **Black** students.
47. Gaps in continuation rates for Oxford students in these minority groups are shown in Figures A7 to A10:

⁹ Student Barometer 2017 to 2022, responses to wellbeing questions

¹⁰ Student Union APP consultations

Figure A7: Continuation, Disability

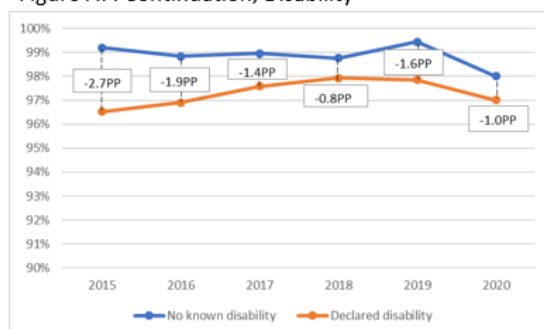


Figure A8: Continuation, IMD (2019) All quintiles

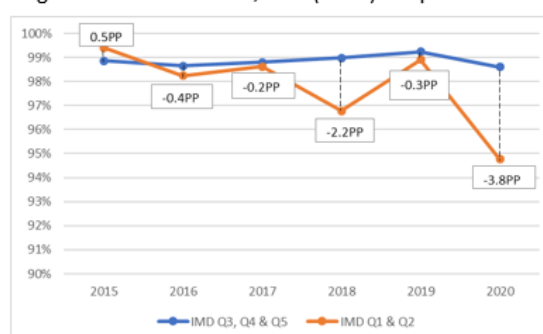


Figure A9: Continuation, FSM eligibility

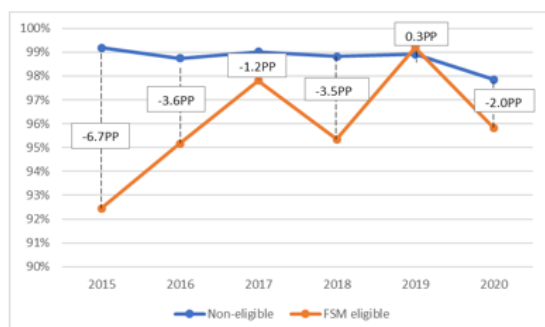
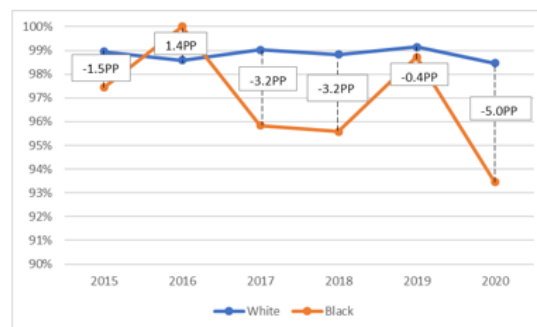


Figure A10: Continuation, Black students



Data source: OfS Oxford individualised data for students entering in academic years 2015/16 to 2020/21 continuing into years 2016/17 to 2021/22 respectively

48. As with the whole sector, overall continuation rates for Oxford in 2019-20 and 2020-21 were affected by the pandemic, with a rise in rates at the start of the pandemic, but a fall during the challenging academic year of 2020-21. For the groups identified in paragraph 46, this drop was most marked. This is recognised as an unprecedented circumstance but is being monitored carefully, especially in light of the on-going impact of adjusted A-level grades through to the 2022 entrants.
49. Further analysis of continuation for disabled students suggests that, whilst there is a gap, rates for all types of disability remain high. There is a narrowing trend in the gap with non-disabled students, there is no statistical significance in this gap, and in several of the last six years students with certain disability type equal or exceed the continuation rates for non-disabled students.
50. Continuation for students from lower IMD quintiles is similar year-on-year to that for students from IMD quintiles 3 to 5. A substantial gap is noted for 2020, a probable impact of the pandemic which is known to have impacted those returning to more-challenging home environments at a greater rate than others. We will continue to monitor this.
51. Continuation rates for students eligible for free school meals have risen steadily over the last six years, reaching parity with non-eligible students before the pandemic. The gap widened in 2020, probably for the same reasons for IMD continuation discussed above and, likewise, will continue to be monitored.
52. Black students have seen a similar variation in continuation rates over the last six years, with a widening negative gap in 2020. Because of the high level of intersectionality of Black students

with FSM eligibility and lower IMD quintiles, this is also likely to be a pandemic-related, and will continue to be monitored.

53. Given the high continuation rates across the board and the small and variable gaps, no specific interventions or targets are proposed for continuation. However, the interventions proposed to address the attainment gaps for students with a disability, those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and Black students will all help to support the continuation rates for these students.

Completion – explanation

54. As with continuation, Table A2 indicates extremely high completion rates at Oxford. This section considers differences in completion between student groups. Equally, given the high overall rates and small numbers of students with certain characteristics, the gaps in rates are not statistically significant and it is difficult to draw clear conclusions for this measure.
55. The key risks to equality of opportunity for Oxford students completing their studies are very similar to those impacting continuation:
- Risk 8 – Oxford’s teaching and assessment environment.
 - Risk 9 – the challenges of the pandemic have increased over the period of study for some students. Some students did not sit final public exams at school, or first year exams at Oxford, and were then faced with an intensive period of exams in the final year of their degree.
 - Risk 11 – access to disability support and engagement in wider extra-curricular activities.
 - Risk 10 – increasing financial pressures and a perceived accumulation of debt.
56. Our analysis suggests that student groups at potential risk of equality of opportunity in terms of completion are:
- students with a **disability**, who have a higher risk of non-completion, especially those with mental health conditions and social/communication disorders;
 - students with prior **socio-economic disadvantage** – using FSM and IMD as indicators;
 - **Black** students; and
 - students studying certain **subjects**, with those on particular mathematical and life science programmes having a higher propensity for non-completion.
57. Gaps in completion rates for Oxford students in these minority groups are shown in Figures A11 to A14:

Figure A11: Completion, disability

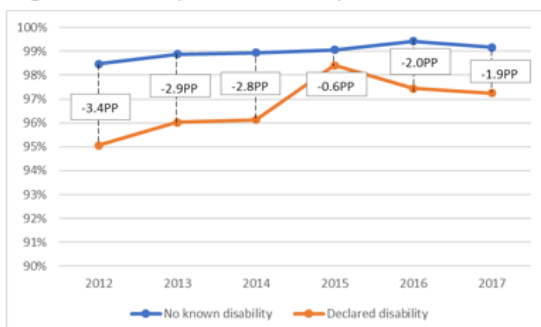


Figure A12: Completion, IMD (2019) All quintiles

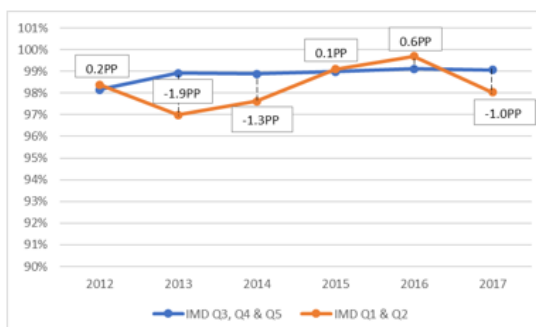


Figure A13: Completion, FSM eligibility

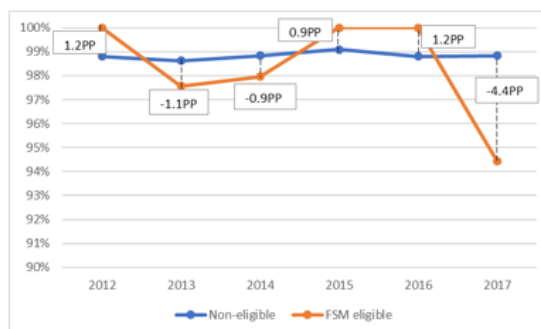
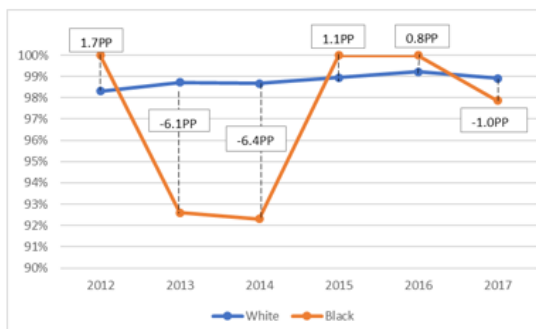


Figure A14: Completion, Black students



Data source: OfS Oxford individualised data for students entering in academic years 2012/13 to 2017/18 and completing their course within four years

58. Similarly to continuation, 2020 completion rates appear to drop slightly across all student groups, but particularly minority groups and those identified as most at risk of equality of opportunity. We believe this to be an effect of the pandemic, and will continue to monitor this. Likewise, given high overall rates and small numbers of students with certain characteristics, the small gaps in rates are not statistically significant and it is difficult to draw clear conclusions for this measure.
59. The gap in completion rate for students with a declared disability has been present over the last six years. However, in recent years disabled students' completion rate has exceeded 97%. Students with mental health conditions are most at risk of non-completion, though this gap has narrowed from 16% in 2015 to an average of 4% in the most recent years. The proposed interventions to support disabled students (in particular those with mental health conditions) are considered likely to narrow this gap still further and reduce the risk of failure to complete for disabled students. No specific target with regard to completion for disabled students is therefore proposed.
60. Completion for students from lower IMD quintiles is similar year-on-year to that for students from IMD quintiles 3 to 5, with no substantial gaps. No specific target for this group is proposed.
61. Equally, completion rates for students eligible for free school meals vary little around the rates for non-eligible students over the last six years, with both higher and lower rates. This is well within normal expected variation and no specific target is considered appropriate for this characteristic.
62. Black students experienced a significantly lower completion rate than their white counterparts in the years 2016 and 2017, whereas in more recent years the rate has been at or above that for

white students. The overall number of Black students (and their total proportion of the student body) has more than doubled over this period, so it is felt that no specific target is appropriate.

63. Given the very small numbers of students at a programme level in each minority group, regression analysis reveals no individual factors are significant. Departments with programmes that have a lower completion rate than the Oxford average will be tasked with considering whether any student groups may face specific barriers to equality of opportunity. Numbers are too small to provide a reasonable targeted intervention.
64. As with continuation, the interventions proposed to address the attainment gaps for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, disabled students and Black students will help to support the completion rates for these students as well. No separate interventions or targets are proposed for completion.

Attainment – explanation

65. Student attainment at Oxford is high, with over 95% achieving a First or 2.1. This means that numbers falling below this level are small and therefore awarding gaps are sensitive to the performance of small numbers of students around the 2.1/2.2 boundary.
66. Three main areas have been identified as being the greatest risk to the equality of opportunity for Oxford students gaining a good outcome. These are:
 - Risk 6 – insufficient academic support. Student groups have expressed concerns regarding their preparedness for their academic studies on arrival at Oxford¹¹. Black students are significantly less likely to state that they feel well prepared, as are disabled students (in particular those with mental health conditions). Whilst students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and care-experienced students are no less likely to report feeling unprepared than other students, they highlighted difficulties in the academic transition, feeling that they had developed fewer specific academic skills prior to attending Oxford than their peers from more advantaged backgrounds. Disabled students expressed concerns around available technology being used in the best way to support them learn, as well as accessibility to learning spaces.¹²
 - Risk 7 – insufficient personal support. Black students experience some sense of discomfort and exclusion, especially in very-small-group tutorial teaching, and do not always feel comfortable raising their concerns. Those from lower socio-economic groups also express a sense of inadequacy compared to some of their peers and are concerned that additional support may come with negative connotations.¹⁴ Feedback from students with mental health conditions suggests concerns regarding engagement with some of their wider needs.
 - Risk 9 – ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds suffered greater impacts from the pandemic during critical final years of school and during their early university experience. They expressed greater concerns over learning during the pandemic than their peers, having more limited access to resources.¹¹

¹¹ Student Barometer 2017 to 2022, responses to learning questions and COVID-specific questions

¹² Student Union APP consultations

This will continue to affect attainment as adjustments are made for this at the point of university entry.

67. The student groups identified as having the greatest potential risk of equality of opportunity to the probability of a good outcome are:
- prior **social disadvantage** and a background of family/area **low participation** in higher education (POLAR4, IMD, FSM and prior attainment combined are key metrics);
 - **ethnicity** – in particular **Black** students have a lower propensity of gaining a good outcome; and
 - **disability** – across all disaggregated disability types.
68. Gaps in attainment rates for Oxford students in these minority groups are shown in Figures A15 to A20:

Figure A15: Attainment, all disability

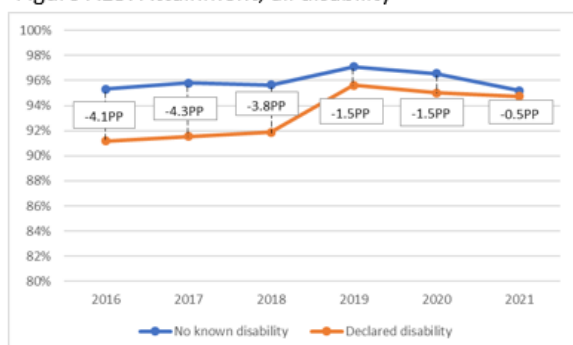


Figure A16: Attainment, Mental health conditions

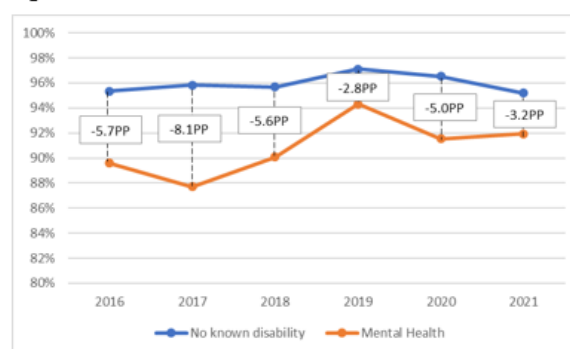


Figure A17: Attainment, IMD (2019) All quintiles

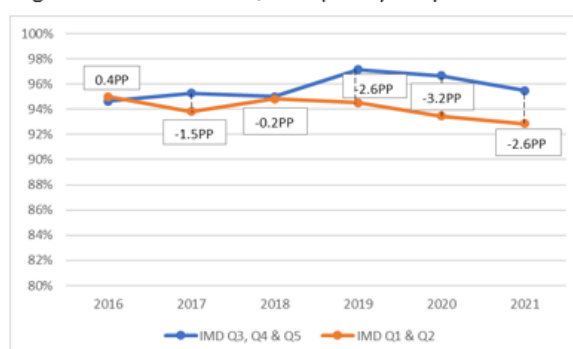


Figure A18: Attainment, IMD (2019) Q1 vs Q5

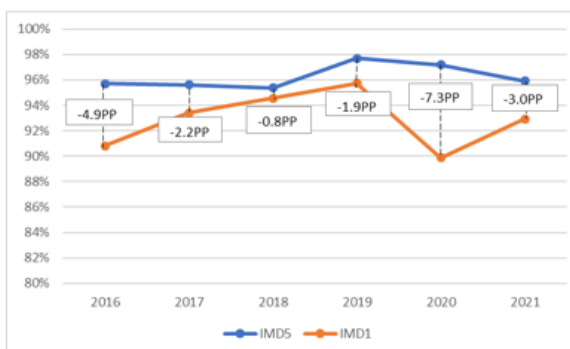


Figure A19: Attainment, FSM eligibility

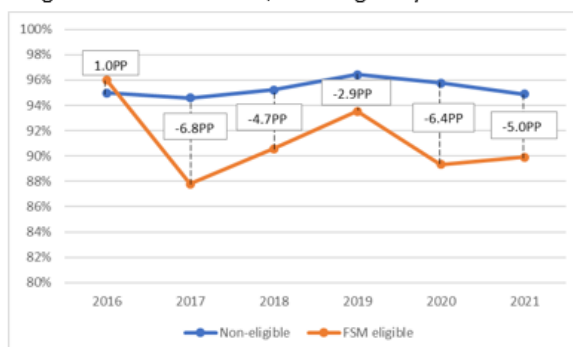
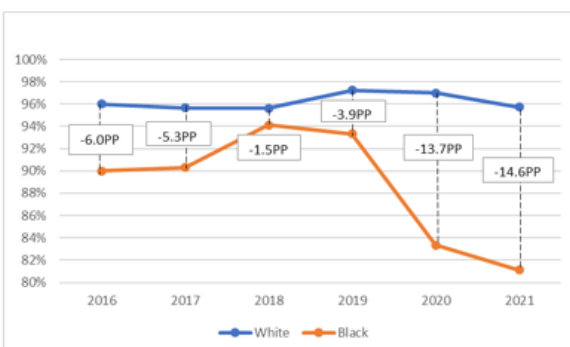


Figure A20: Attainment, Black students



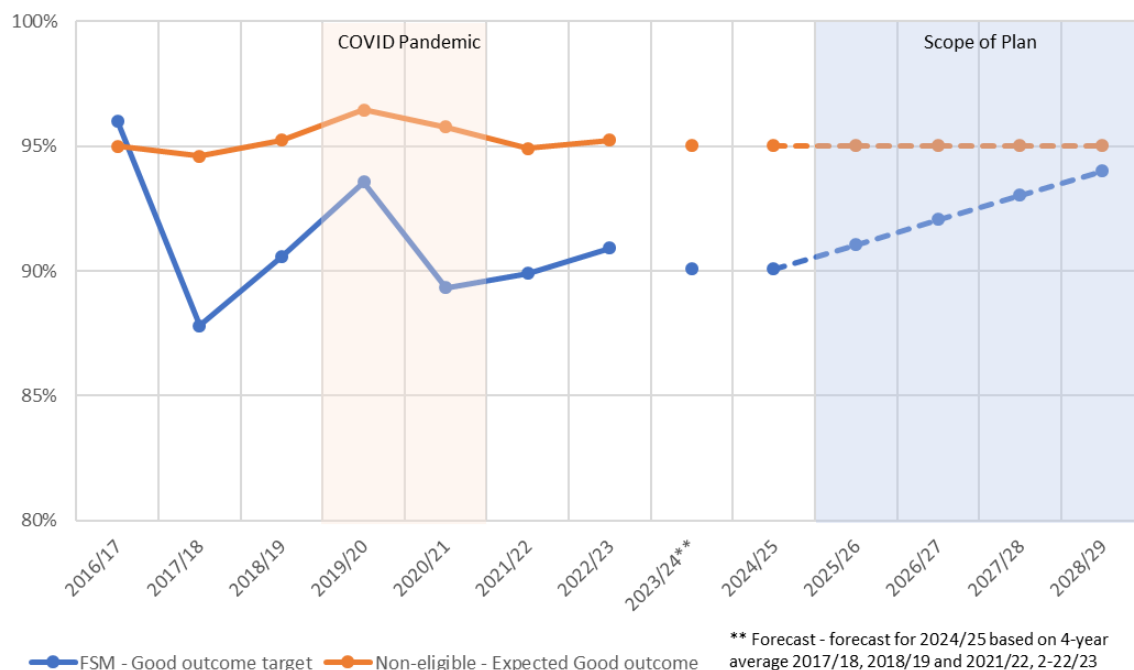
Data source: OfS Oxford individualised data for students gaining their final award in academic years 2016/17 to 2021/22

69. Data on student outcomes over the last six years has been reviewed in conjunction with a range of qualitative measures to consider the impacts of the pandemic on teaching, learning and assessment, both before and during study at Oxford. This includes on-going project work on the diversity of student experience and academic skills development.
70. During the pandemic, there was an increase in the proportion of all students, regardless of personal characteristics, gaining a Good outcome, with this generally dropping back to pre-pandemic levels as safety-net policies and adjustments to assessments were lifted. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds saw less of an uplift during the pandemic and steeper downward adjustment.
71. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds also reported that they found the academic transition from school to Oxford challenging and have highlighted difficulty with learning specific academic skills.

72. Strong progress was made in the attainment of Black students before the pandemic, but Good attainment levels have dropped significantly in recent years. This is partly related to the high degree of intersectionality between minoritised ethnic groups (in particular Black students) and lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, Black students also face an additional set of challenges around belonging, engagement, and perceived and real biases.
73. Students with a declared disability saw a rapid closing of the gap in Good outcomes at the start of the pandemic and this continued to close until 2023, where there was a slight widening. However, those with mental health conditions continue to see poorer outcomes than students with other disabilities and those with no declared disability. In conjunction, the proportion of students with declared mental health conditions is rising. We have chosen to consider all disabilities in setting our target rather than focusing just on the mental health conditions group, because we know that the 'multiple disabilities' group also includes many students with a mental health disability alongside another condition.
74. Given the findings outlined in paragraphs 70 to 73, the University will maintain its focus on the attainment of Black and disabled students in the specific targets proposed for the APP, and include an additional measure to cover socio-economic disadvantage. FSM eligibility is considered the better measure for an attainment target given its focus on the individual. The choice of these measures helps Oxford to focus on the same groups throughout the student lifecycle, from access to progression.
75. As with access targets, each attainment intervention has been considered with regard to how it will support the improvement of outcomes for the identified groups. Again, proposed targets focus on increasing the overall proportion of students with these characteristics gaining a Good outcome, rather than narrowing gaps.
76. For each minority group, the expected number of students sitting final exams in each year of the Plan was modelled on planned student numbers and the access targets for minority groups. The expected impact of proposed interventions has also been considered. While this modelling suggested setting slightly different attainment targets for the different groups, we decided that an aim to ensure ALL groups achieve a minimum standard of 94.0% Good outcomes offered the greatest level of equity and simplicity.
77. Given the relatively small numbers of students in the minority groups compared to the comparator groups, coupled with unusual fluctuations in the data as a result of the pandemic, the confidence intervals around outcomes for minority groups are generally wide. Therefore, the baseline for the attainment targets is built on the four-year average attainment for the target group and comparator group for the two years before the pandemic and the two years immediately after the most significant impacts of the pandemic on in-person teaching and more normal assessments (that is, disregarding outcomes from the highly atypical academic years 2019/20 and 2020/1).
78. In addition, given the high degree of variability described in paragraph 77, the three attainment targets should be considered valid within a 95% confidence interval – we would expect to see some natural fluctuation around the linear improvements indicated in Figures A21 to A23.

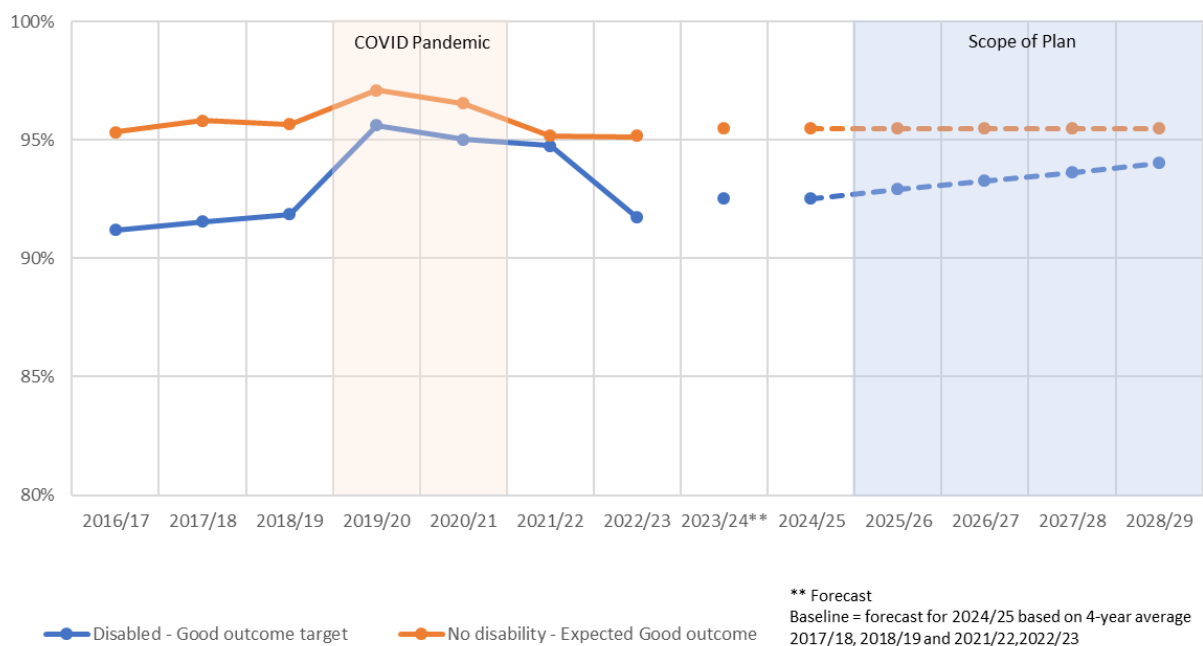
79. The target proposed for students with prior FSM eligibility is to increase the proportion leaving with a Good outcome from a baseline of 90.1% to 94.0% by 2028/29. This is shown in Figure A21.

Figure A21: attainment target for students with FSM eligibility



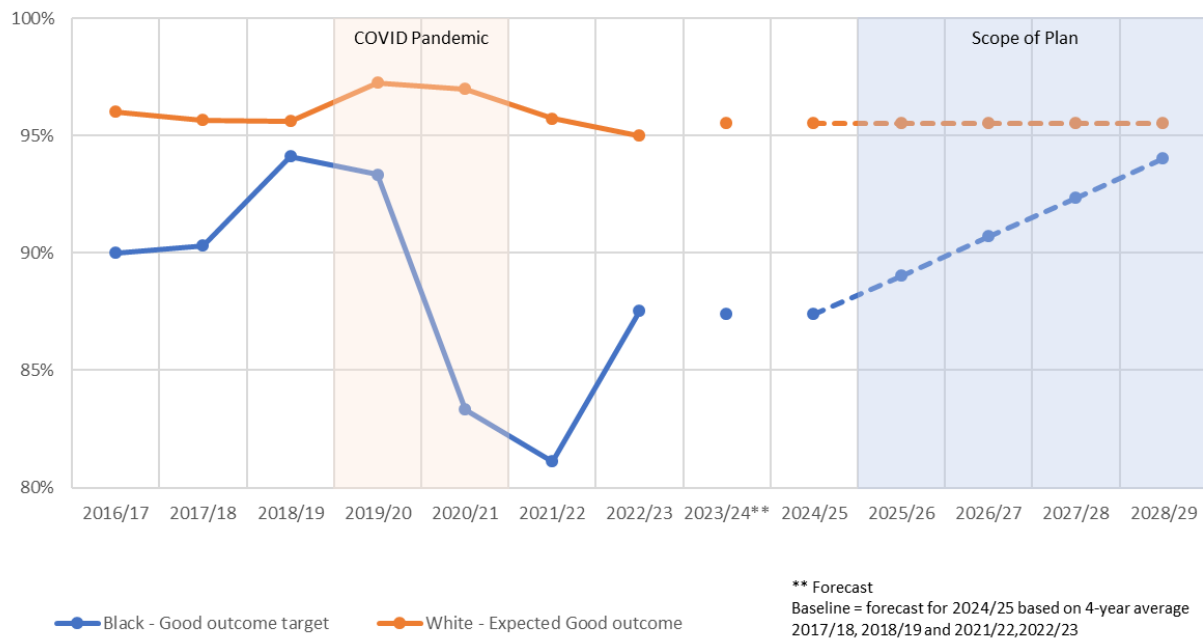
80. The target proposed for students with a declared disability is to increase the proportion leaving with a Good outcome from a baseline of 92.5% to 94.0% by 2028/29. This is shown in Figure A22. Specific monitoring will continue for those with mental health conditions.

81. **Figure A22: attainment target for students with a declared disability**



82. The target proposed for Black students is to increase the proportion leaving with a Good outcome from a baseline of 87.4% to 94.0% by 2028/29. This is shown in Figure A23.

Figure A23: attainment target for Black students



Progression – explanation

83. The analysis of progression data took into consideration that the measure is based on responses to a survey undertaken 15 months post-qualification. The overall pool of responders is around half the number analysed for the other measures. This means that minority groups may be particularly small and what appear to be notable variations may not be statistically significant. These small numbers result in large year-on-year variations. The population is also self-selecting, which may mean bias in the survey outcomes.
84. The equality of opportunity risk of focus for this measure is Risk 12 – students may not have equal opportunity to progress to what they consider a positive outcome. Overall progression for Oxford is good (with a progression rate 5PP higher than the Russell Group average and in the top four in the UK).
85. Also considered during analysis is the fact that a wider range of external factors affects progress than other measures, whether these are within the students' control (such as their personal preference in career choice and industry), or outside of their control (such as employers' decisions on who they recruit).
86. Students identified as having the greatest probability of progressing at a lower level than their degree outcome would suggests are those with:
- **social disadvantage and low participation experience**, as shown strongly by the ABCS performance – **IMD** being the strongest indicator, especially when coupled with prior attainment; and
 - **disability** – especially social and communication and mental health conditions.
87. Gaps in progression rates for Oxford students in these minority groups are shown in Figures A24 to A29:

Figure A24: Progression, all disability

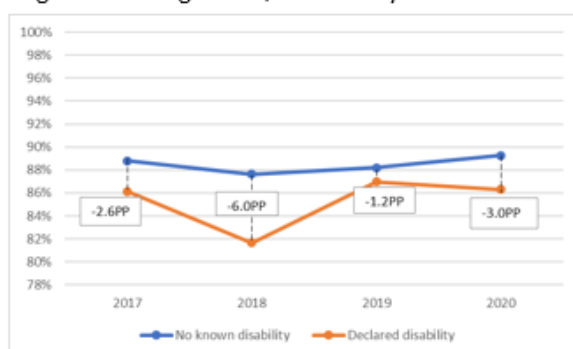


Figure A25: Progression, mental health conditions

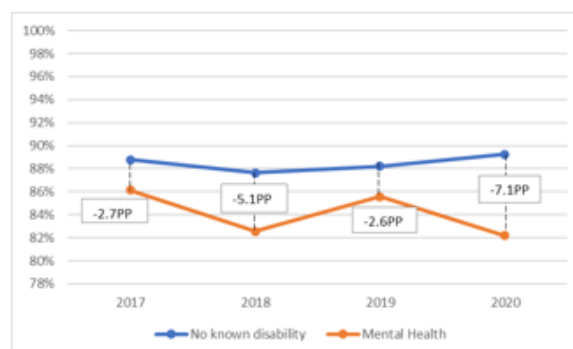


Figure A26: Progression, IMD (2019) All Quintiles

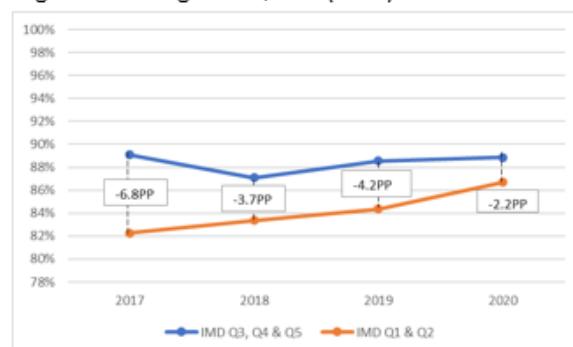
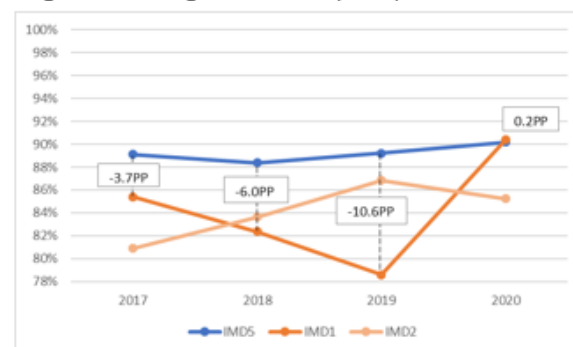


Figure A27: Progression, IMD (2019) Quintile 1 vs 5



Data source: OfS Oxford individualised data for students finishing their degree in academic years 2017/18 to 2020/21

88. As with the four previous measures, pre-university social disadvantage remains a factor of risk in progression. There is intersectionality between prior attainment and social disadvantage in progression, following the correlation between social disadvantage and prior attainment at point of access through to the correlation of prior attainment on final degree outcomes. Proposed interventions through the academic skills programme should help to support a reduction in this correlation through the student journey.
89. The gap in progression between students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and quintiles 3, 4 and 5 is seen to narrow year on year, with the rate of progression of quintile 1 and 2 students rising steadily at a faster rate than other quintiles. Considering quintiles 1 and 2 individually against quintile 5 (Fig. A27), there is an interesting variation with the two lower quintiles almost mirroring each other. Small numbers in each of these quintiles are likely to be causing the degree of variation year to year.
90. There are lower overall progression rates for students with declared disability, but the trend for this gap is narrowing. This overall trend masks the fact that students with social and communication disorders, and those with mental health conditions, have a trend towards a widening gap with those with no known disability (though it should be noted that the absolute numbers of responding graduates with social and communications issues is extremely low). This will be monitored.
91. Black students have voiced concern regarding their progression from Oxford into higher-paying careers, highlighting their perceptions of fewer connections than their white peers. However, the data shows progression rates for Black students are generally higher than for white students.

92. The Careers Service already offers a range of targeted support including internships, a career mentoring scheme, a career fair, and a development programme and bespoke internship scheme for Crankstart Scholars (students from lower socio-economic backgrounds), and extended sessions with specially trained advisers for students with disabilities. In addition, the service runs talks and workshops designed to help neurodivergent students and those with other disabilities to navigate the recruitment process. The Careers Service has also expanded its written guidance on the intersection of disability and careers, including answers to frequently asked questions and other useful resources. Given these well-established programmes and limited statistical significance in progression rates, no specific target is considered appropriate.
93. The interventions proposed to address the attainment gaps for students with a disability and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds will help to build confidence in these students, as well as raise their attainment rate, supporting an improving progression rate. In addition, the on-going targeted support for minority-group students will also support improvements in progression. Therefore, no separate targets are proposed for progression.

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.

We propose six intervention strategies to achieve our access and participation aims. Strategies 1-4 address sequential parts of the student life-cycle: building pre-16 students' academic skills and self-confidence; supporting diverse groups of students to access Oxford University; supporting their transition to university life and study; and giving them the financial, academic and welfare support to succeed in their studies. Strategies 5 and 6 offer additional, targeted interventions to support disabled students, and Black students.

Intervention strategy 1: raising attainment in schools (RAIS)

This intervention strategy continues and extends the University's evidence-informed commitment to support raising attainment in schools. We will offer appropriate forms of enrichment across different age groups, geographies and demographics, co-designed with schools, to address the risks to equality of opportunity for pre-16 pupils. We will work with teachers to support their efforts to reduce attainment gaps.

This strategy includes a mix of activities: some coordinated by the University and others led by individual Oxford colleges. A particular benefit of this direct college involvement is that it allows different approaches to be trialled and evaluated at a moderate scale, with the more successful ones then scaling up beyond the college. A recent exemplar of this approach is Opportunity Oxford (see IS3), initially a collegiate scheme but now a successful pan-University initiative.

Activities within this strategy include our regional outreach scheme 'Oxford for UK', where Oxford colleges are linked with different areas of the country, and other long-term collaborations such as work with the IntoUniversity Oxford South East centre and through Oxplore, building on the University's work with The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) in Warrington, Cheshire.

Some of our ongoing projects are well-established and embedded, while other newer projects are still in the pilot phase, or still under earlier phases of development. Further information on the projects included in our Access and Participation Plan is given below.

The strategy is underpinned by collaborations with schools, education experts at the University and public sector organisations tackling barriers to social mobility to help raise academic self-confidence and self-resilience, as these are strong predictors of higher attainment in schools. Findings from evaluations will be shared with partners and publicly.

IntoUniversity Oxford South-East centre

Through the Oxford-IntoUniversity partnership, the University supports students in parts of the city with severe disadvantage and low educational attainment. Oxford's resources – academics, facilities, outreach experts and our student body – have been combined with IntoUniversity's proven expertise, offering educational interventions for young people from Year 3.

Activities include:

- after school academic support with homework;
- guidance and support on subject choices at GCSE and A-Level;
- support with university applications;
- subject immersion workshops; and
- mentoring from current and former students, and corporate mentors.

Since the Oxford South-East centre opened in Blackbird Leys in 2014, a partnership between Christ Church (an Oxford college) and the University, the centre has supported over 5,000 unique students with academic support, and many more students have accessed the centre and the resources of the collegiate University.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

BeUNIQ

BeUNIQ is a new initiative which is piloting in the 2023-24 academic year, building on the central themes of the UNIQ programme (see IS2): the fostering of the potential and individuality of each participant, as well as nurturing a sense of belonging within Oxford. BeUNIQ will provide early and additional support to students in Years 10-13 from under-represented ethnic groups and disadvantaged backgrounds. The programme will primarily focus its engagement in regions where students don't apply to Oxford at a high rate.

BeUNIQ will recognise the role that families, supporters, school staff and communities play in the journey to higher education of the relevant target groups.

In its first iteration the programme will engage with UK-domiciled Bangladeshi and Pakistani students, then expand to other groups of students currently identified as under-represented at Oxford and in HE including Black males of Caribbean heritage, white British males with experience of socio-economic disadvantage, and care-experienced children. It will engage 80-100 Year 10 and Year 11 students per year, and their families, from regions where students don't currently apply to Oxford at a high rate.

BeUNIQ activities are underpinned by four key themes:

1. Bespoke engagement, with an emphasis on small-group sessions, which play a key role in supporting academic confidence.
2. Aspire and Achieve sessions to provide students with the tools and knowledge necessary to reach their higher education goals.

3. Community as a Partner: empowering the school and local community to support students with their higher education goals.
4. Support and Communication, to keep students engaged.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Oxplore programme

Oxplore Home of Big Questions is a free-to-access website containing over 60 'Big Questions', which are bundles of resources for use alone or in the classroom to support super-curricular learning and development of critical thinking skills ('The Oxplore Key Skills'). The intervention targets Years 7 to 9, as well as Years 3 to 6, and Years 10 to 11, to support transition across year groups. Building on the success of Oxplore, we will develop new initiatives to extend its reach and impact.

Oxplore Teach will build on the success of the Oxplore-Raising Attainment in Schools programme (the work with The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) in Warrington, Cheshire, which is included in our current APP and showcased on the OfS website¹) to engage with a wider audience by expanding its digital reach. The Oxplore Teach platform will be a highly practical resource which aims to become a leading platform for sharing research, ideas, resources, best practice and understanding.

The Oxplore Festival will enable the University to work with hard-to-reach schools and students on supporting raising attainment. By encouraging learners to think beyond the requirements of the school curriculum and develop more positive attitudes to learning, the project also aims to develop more positive attitudes towards Higher Education and Oxford amongst students, teachers and parents. The content developed for the Festival fits with the wider strategic aims of Oxplore to continue to develop innovative digital content.

Key research supporting the Oxplore programme includes:

- Crawford, C., Macmillan, L., and Vignoles, A (2014). 'Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds', Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission¹, identifies the significance of Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) for pupils from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage, a key area of focus for the Oxplore suite of programmes.
- Sammons. P, Toth. K & Sylva. K, 'Subject to Background: What promotes better achievement for bright but disadvantaged students?' (2015), The Sutton Trust, University of Oxford Department of Education, March 2015², highlights the importance of access to enrichment, super-curricular learning and out-of-classroom learning for pupils from backgrounds of disadvantage, particularly those who were high-attaining at Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6).
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., Mayo, A., Melhuish, Edward C., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., Sylva, K. (2011) 'Performing against the odds: developmental trajectories of children in the EPPSE 3

¹ www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/university-of-oxford-a-different-approach-to-a-university-schools-collaboration/

² www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SUBJECT-TO-BACKGROUND_FULL-REPORT.pdf

to 16 study'³ identifies a number of key 'protective factors' for young people from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage who achieved highly at secondary school, all of which are promoted by Oxplore's provision of support for teachers and pupils.

Please see the Theories of Change below for further information.

St John's Inspire

The St John's Inspire Programme is a series of events, visits, workshops and online contact for pupils from Primary to Year 13 from non-selective state schools, to raise the academic aspirations of the participants. Participants have the opportunity to:

- explore academic subjects they are enthusiastic about in a more structured and deeper way;
- gain confidence in their academic abilities; talking about their subject and making applications to competitive universities;
- meet people who share a passion for their subject;
- receive up-to-date and accurate advice on all aspects of university admissions and funding, and
- gain the tools to make informed academic choices and submit strong applications to competitive courses and universities.

The programme is co-created with school teachers and leaders, based on their personal experience with the relevant groups of students, and is guided by a steering group with wide teacher representation.

Queen's Translation Exchange (QTE)

QTE aims to inspire school pupils about the joy and value of studying foreign languages, and to help arrest the decline in the study of languages to GCSE level and beyond. Recent studies such as the British Academy and University Council of Modern Languages report from 2022, 'Languages Learning in Higher Education: Granular Trends'⁴, have demonstrated regional disparity in MFL provision across the UK and identified some 'cold spots'. Furthermore, the British Council 'Language Trends' report⁵ in the same year found that 45% of state secondary schools reported no international activities in their school (compared to 18% of schools in the independent sector).

Initiatives run by QTE aim to demonstrate to students that the study of languages in Higher Education goes further than the school curriculum, enabling them to make informed choices about the subjects they study at GCSE, A-Level and university. Initiatives offered by QTE include an annual, national creative translation competition for children in Years 7 to 13, which attracted over 15,000 applicants last year, and the sustained-engagement 'Think Like a Linguist' programme, targeted on specific, disadvantaged communities.

³ https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/3997/1/3997_DFE-RR128.pdf

⁴ www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/languages-learning-higher-education-granular-trends/

⁵ www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight/language-trends-2022

Please see the Theory of Change for the 'Think Like a Linguist' programme below.

Universify

Oxford University supports Universify Education, a charity which targets students at the pre-16 level to support GCSE attainment and widen the pool of students who can access higher education. Participating Oxford colleges have included Somerville, St Hugh's, Jesus and Trinity.

The year-long Universify programme aims to increase higher education participation by supporting raising attainment at GCSE level, increasing knowledge of and aspirations towards higher education, and breaking down misconceptions about higher education. It does this through:

- a summer residential in Oxford, introducing students to university life and study, changing perceptions around university;
- pairing individuals with current university students who coach them monthly throughout Year 11, providing tailored, effective attainment and decision-making support;
- a spring residential, where students receive 7 hours of intensive revision – shown to increase students' attainment in the subject by a grade – and sessions to prepare for exams ahead of their GCSEs.

Ultimately, the programme aims to equip students who are underachieving in Year 10 with the skills, knowledge, and belief to make an informed decision about attending university and ensure that they are supported to attain highly at GCSE. Universify have worked with over 1000 students and the programme has a seven-year track record of boosting attainment, increasing aspirations, and doubling the number of students going to university. For Oxford and Cambridge University where the programme's residentials are hosted, students have applied at between 4 and 10 times the rate compared to UCAS' benchmark, based on their background, and have received places to study at these universities.

The one-year sustained support programme is evaluated in the short, medium and long-term via quantitative, qualitative and statistical data. Areas such as self-efficacy and self-confidence are evaluated using nationally recognised, independently validated psychological scales. The impact on students' GCSE attainment is assessed using a combination of teacher surveys and grade data.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Pathfinders

The Pathfinders programme is a strategic partnership between Lincoln College, Oxford and the University of Lincoln, and is specifically targeted towards students who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), in Years 9-11. It aims to empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider and pursue higher education.

Activities include events at the University of Lincoln and at Oxford University, where academics from both institutions deliver sessions based on their research. The subjects covered reflect the diversity of offerings available at both universities.

Pathfinders participants are drawn from state schools in Lincoln College's link regions of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Lincolnshire is a region with higher than average levels of socio-economic disadvantage (with, for example, 25.8% FSM eligibility compared to a national average of 23.8%), rural poverty and military families. In Northamptonshire, three key areas have been identified as among the most deprived areas in the England, with many schools with FSM eligibility as high as 28%.⁶

The key objectives of the programme are: to tackle a specific area of educational inequality prevalent in Lincoln College's link regions; create a long-term, sustainable and evidence-based engagement with a geographic region with high levels of inequality and disadvantage; to enable more FSM-eligible pupils to be in a position to apply to leading universities, including Oxford.

Primary School Twinning Project

In partnership with the charity The Oxford Hub⁷, this programme twins local primary schools within the City of Oxford with an Oxford college. The aim of the initiative is to tackle educational inequality to help close the substantial attainment gaps in the city.

The Oxford Hub, primary schools and colleges are working together to provide children with academic tutoring support and enrichment opportunities. This is an evolving project in which eight of the highest priority schools have now been partnered with a college. Over the next two years our aim is for the twelve primary schools with the greatest proportion of disadvantaged children to be twinned with an Oxford college. In partnership with the charity Assisted Reading for Children (ARCh⁸), an additional element to the programme is also being piloted during 2024-25, to support the reading skills of disadvantaged children currently underachieving for their age.

The aims of the twinning project are:

1. Reduce the Year 3-6 attainment gap between the city's most and least disadvantaged children, with a particular focus on reading;
2. Raise educational expectations of the city's most disadvantaged children;
3. Offer additional enrichment opportunities to the city's primary schools with the largest proportion of disadvantaged children; and
4. Build long-term relationships between these local primary school communities, their teachers and the University.

The twinning project aims to measure the following outcomes:

- A significant improvement in attainment levels after a tutoring intervention;⁹

⁶ Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough - www.northnorthants.gov.uk/adult-learning/adult-learning-accountability-agreement-202223/local-context-north-and-west

⁷ www.oxfordhub.org/schools-plus

⁸ <https://archoxfordshire.org.uk>

⁹ Attainment may also be defined as the development of self-concept and self-efficacy, therefore changes in these two areas will also be measured as an outcome. This project will use the About Me survey as used previously by the University in the Oxplore-RAIS project: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/university-of-oxford-a-different-approach-to-a-university-schools-collaboration

- A significant improvement in reading scores after one year supported reading intervention;¹⁰
- Improvements in academic self-concept and self-efficacy.

Participation data shows that children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, specifically those from low-income households or children in receipt of free school meals, are the least likely to enter higher education and when they do are significantly less likely to apply to high tariff universities.

In Oxfordshire, the progression rate to HE at age 19 for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 (2021/22) is just 21.4%, lower than the national figure of 29.3% and significantly lower than the rate of 48% for non-FSM Oxfordshire residents. Progression to High Tariff universities for Oxfordshire FSM young people students is even more concerning at just 4.6%.¹¹

Early prior attainment is a well evidenced barrier to university access. Data shows that only 8% of children reaching expected levels in reading, writing and maths in Years 3 to 6 go on to achieve a pass in English and Maths at GCSE (Farquharson, McNally, and Tahir, 2022)¹².

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds who participate in enrichment activities such as visiting libraries, playing sports or home reading tend to perform better in school (Sammons, Toth and Sylva, 2015,¹³ Beecher & Sweeny, 2008; Reis & Renzulli, 2010)¹⁴. These activities are also linked to increased intentions to stay in education beyond the age of 18 (Donnelly et al, 2019).¹⁵. However children from the lowest income households are the least likely to participate in all types of activities (Sutton Trust, 2014)¹⁶.

To address this, the twinning project aims to offer a variety of enrichment visits and opportunities to five primary schools in the city of Oxford with greater proportions of FSM-eligible children. This includes school visits, university tours, and talks aimed at informing children about higher education, particularly those who may not have family role models with experience of HE. If the reading pilot is successful, disadvantaged children at risk of not achieving the expected levels in these schools will also be offered the supported reading element of this project.

Please see the OX4OX Twinning Theory of Change below for further information.

¹⁰ To follow the 2024-25 pilot period

¹¹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/a9a53777-6c2e-4a9d-c025-08db465931c0>

¹² Farquharson, C., McNally, S., Tahir, I., (2022), 'Education Inequalities', IFS Deaton Review of Inequalities, <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/chapter/education-inequalities/>

¹³ Sammons, P., Toth, K., & Sylva, K. (2015) Subject to Background What promotes better achievement for bright but disadvantaged students? The Sutton Trust.

¹⁴ Beecher, M., & Sweeny, S. M. (2008). Closing the Achievement Gap With Curriculum Enrichment and Differentiation: One School's Story. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 19(3), 502-530.

Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2010). Opportunity Gaps Lead to Achievement Gaps: Encouragement for Talent Development and Schoolwide Enrichment in Urban Schools. *Journal of Education*, 190(1-2), 43-49.

¹⁵ Donnelly, M., Lažetić, P., Sandoval-Hernandez, A., Kumar, K., and Whewall, S. (2019) An Unequal Playing Field: Extra-Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility. Social mobility Commission.

¹⁶ Sutton Trust (2014) Research Brief: Extra-curricular inequality www.suttontrust.com/our-research/enrichment-brief-private-tuition-extracurricular-activities/

The IntoUniversity Theory of Change

The issue / need

Our solution and outcomes

Our impact

IntoUniversity students live in local communities where:

IntoUniversity operates centres that offer a suite of long and short-term programmes and opportunities that:

As a consequence, we have this impact:

Young people are at risk of underachievement.

Are evidenced to have a positive impact on learning skills and attainment.

Young people are at risk of not developing the personal skills that enable success.

Develop skills and personal capacities- such as teamwork and communication- that are required to succeed.

Young people are likely to hold 'limiting beliefs' about their future potential.

Provide positive feedback and reinforcement that build self-efficacy and self-belief.

Understanding of and access to HE and career options is typically limited.

Provide knowledge of HE and career options, and contact with universities and employers.

The young people we work with are:

More likely to make successful transitions through education.

More likely to succeed in public examinations.

More likely to progress to a positive post-school outcome.

More likely to enter HE.

The HE progression gap narrows and local tradition of HE participation is strengthened.

Society will benefit from young people who can use their talents to contribute more fully to their community and the wider world.

Other documented proven public social benefits will follow.

The Model



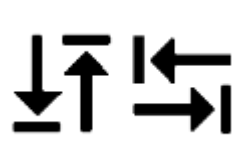
Place-based



Long-term



Home-from-home learning centres



Multi-intervention programmes



Early intervention



Evidence-based

The Approach



Pastoral care



Excellent delivery



Positive relationships

How we evaluate our Theory of Change



Our Solution



We provide...

Local Learning centres



Evidence-based
multi-stranded
programmes



Skilled educators who
practise long-term
pastoral care



Evidence

We collect and analyse...

Staff feedback
Student, parent and teacher
questionnaires
Research evidence
Delivery observations

Which we use to conduct our...

Annual programme review cycle
Termly delivery quality audit

Examples of findings and actions

4 In-depth programme reviews in 2022/23 resulted in key adaptations to improve effectiveness

95% of parents would recommend IntoUniversity to other parents

“IntoUniversity creates an environment where you feel **safe**, you can **learn** but also where you can grow and develop as a person. The belief that **IntoUniversity** had in me encouraged me to **believe in myself**.”

Robyn, **IntoUniversity** Associate

How we evaluate our Theory of Change



Our Outcomes



Attainment

We aim to...

Develop learning skills and support raised attainment



Skills

Develop skills and personal capacities required to succeed



Belief

Build belief in future success



Knowledge

Develop knowledge about HE and career options and provide contact with universities and employers

Evidence

We collect, analyse and respond to...

Student, parent and teacher questionnaires

Student interviews & focus groups

External deep dive evaluations



Attainment



Skills



Belief



Knowledge

Example findings

Attainment

External analysis by FFT Education Datalab found that students who regularly attend **IntoUniversity's** Academic Support over several years make **3 months' additional progress** in Key Stage 2 Maths

84% of parents report noticing positive changes to their child's attitude to learning

88% of parents report their child is more confident after attending Academic Support

92% of teachers report that their students know more about university

How we evaluate our Theory of Change



Our Impact

Young people are more likely to...

- Make successful transitions
- Succeed in public examinations
- Have a positive post-school outcome
- Enter HE
- Narrow the progression gap
- Use their talents to benefit society

Evidence

We collect, commission and review...

Benchmarked student destination data

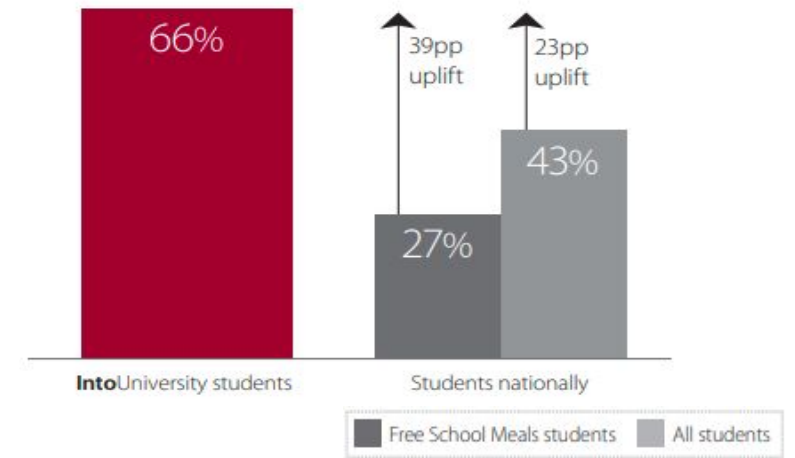
External deep dive evaluations

Research evidence

Example findings

Progression to Higher Education

66% of IntoUniversity 2021 alumni progressed to Higher Education compared to 27% of students from similar backgrounds nationally



Our 2019 university progression data was independently assured by PWC against the ISAE 3000 (revised) standard.

For more information about IntoUniversity's impact reports see here: <https://intouniversity.org/our-impact/>

BeUNIQ Theory of Change (ToC)

The core theory of change diagram represents overall impact the programme can aim to foster for target groups and communities through its niche and bespoke activities.

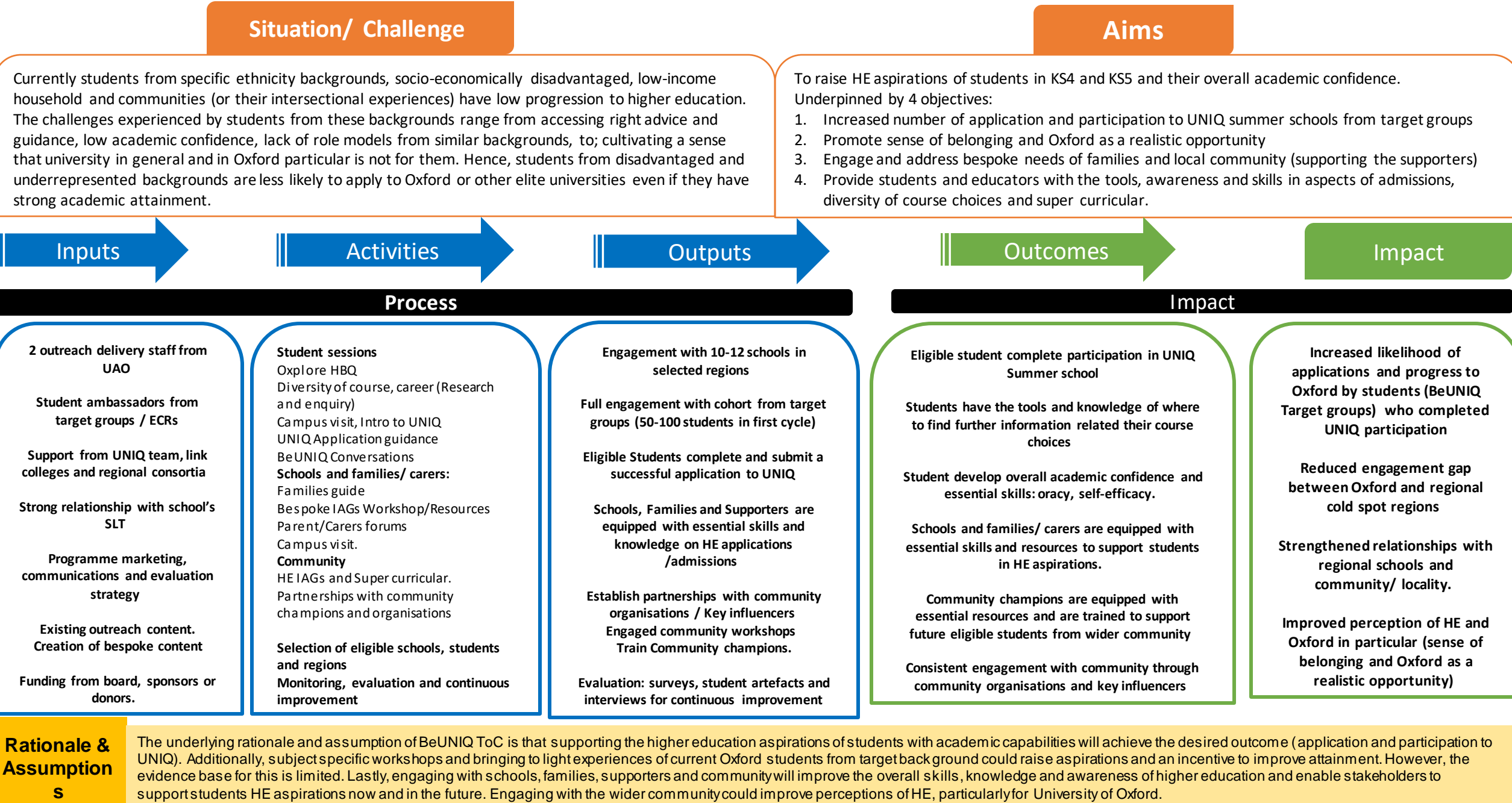
The enhanced theory of change diagram is underpinned by core ToC and is strand specific to target group (British Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Mixed-race Background)

The ToC includes Inputs, activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact. This template is guided by resources on TASO's website to ensure BeUNIQ is at par with best practices in articulating widening participation outcomes.

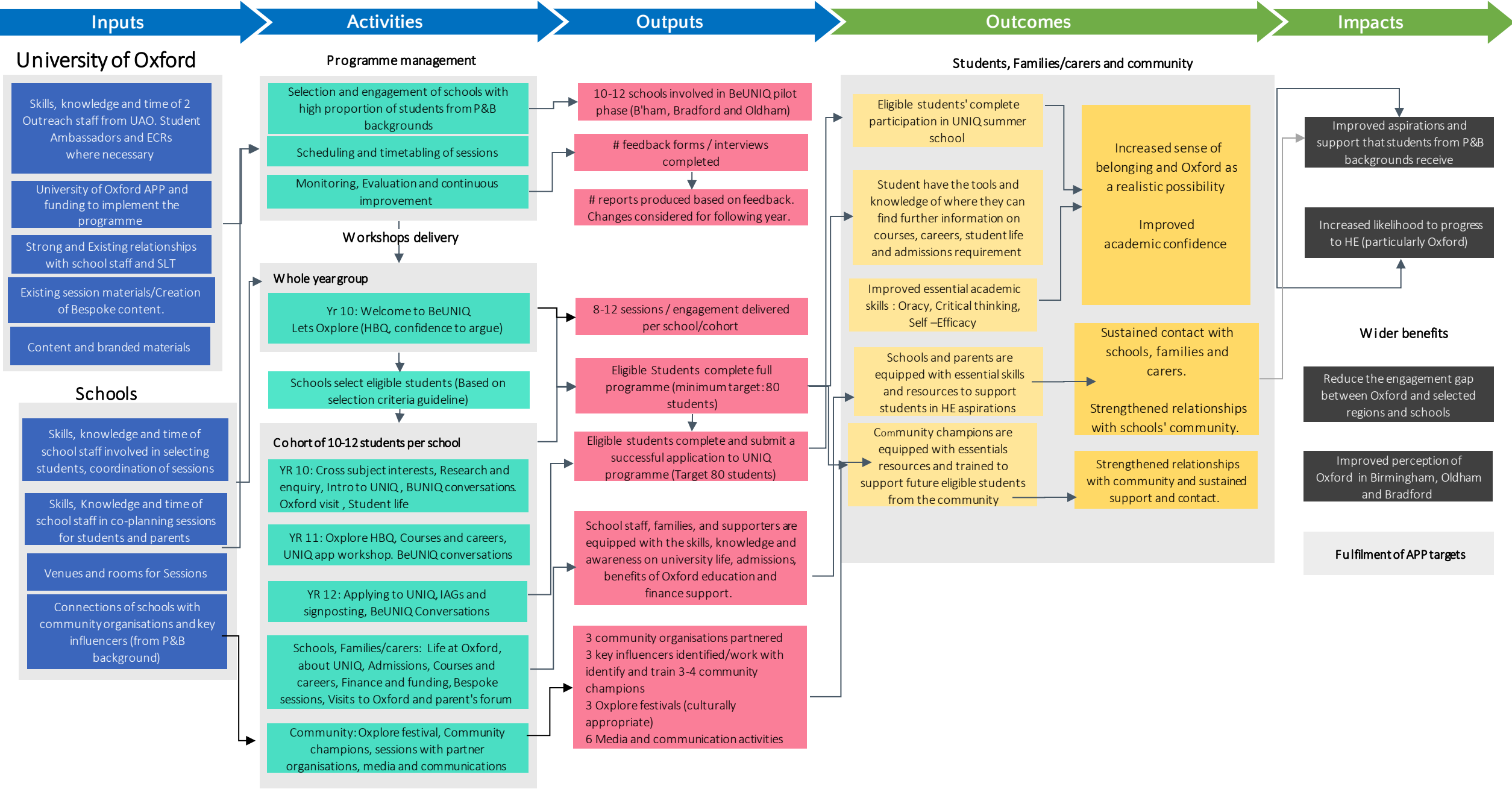
The diagrams are accompanied by a narrative that elaborate core ToC



BeUNIQ: Core Theory of Change (Supporting higher education aspirations)



BeUNIQ: Enhanced Theory of Change, Supporting HE aspirations for students from British Pakistani and Bangladeshi, mixed race heritage



OXpLORE : HOME OF BIG QUESTIONS

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Oxplore Festival is a website for young people aged 11-18, providing resources for supercurricular engagement grouped around the theme of “Big Questions”.

Situation/Challenge:

Supercurricular engagement is frequently cited as an important element in university applications (including by many Oxford colleges)*, and in preparation for higher education. However, pupils' access to this type of learning is not evenly distributed, and those in geographically isolated regions may particularly struggle to access opportunities. Recent research** also shows that following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, a growing number of young people are less engaged/more frequently absent from school, reducing the ability of teachers and other educators to support supercurricular engagement for these pupils.

Aims:

To 1) create a freely-available online resource for supercurricular engagement allowing young people to independently build their subject-specific knowledge, practice their critical thinking and argumentation skills and develop their interest in a wide variety of courses available for study at Oxford, and 2) support teachers and other educators in helping their students to develop these skills and knowledge areas where possible.

Rationale and assumptions:

The underlying rationale of Oxplore Home of Big Questions is that allowing young people to engage with bespoke content featuring a range of university subjects and disciplines will 1) enable them to enjoy learning and develop their critical thinking and other transferrable skills, and 2) increase the likelihood of them making an application to higher education/Oxford and of being successful. The project runs on the assumption that young people engaging with the platform are independent learners who are able to confidently engage with the materials, or that they will be supported by a teacher or other adult who is able to scaffold them to do so.

* See, for example: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordforEM/resources>; <https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/explore-your-subject/>; <https://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk/study-here/outreach/digital/challenge/>;

** In a recent survey by youth mental health charity Stem4, 28% of young people aged 12-18 said that they had avoided going to school due to anxiety over the past 12 months: <https://stem4.org.uk/children-and-young-people-more-worried-than-ever-about-going-to-school-feb-24-press-release/>

OXpLORE : HOME OF BIG QUESTIONS

THEORY OF CHANGE

INPUTS

- Functioning website platform
- Staffing (Learning Designer/Content Creator x 1, Assistant x 1, Tech Co-ordinator x 0.25, Admin support, IMC support)
- Engagement from young users
- Engagement from teachers and other educators
- Engagement from College and Departmental Access and Outreach teams
- Knowledge (from Oxford academics and the wider world)
- Funding (Elba Foundation)
- Project sponsor (UAO director)
- Elba Foundation
- Participation from Oxford student ambassadors

ACTIVITIES

- Pupils and educators register for accounts on the site
- Pupils engage in self-directed study on the site
- Teachers design lessons, after-school club sessions or assignments around Oxplore resources
- Pupils participate in Livestream sessions (either independently or as a class with teacher mediation)
- Pupils participate in competitions
- Pupils propose Big Questions
- Newsletters
- Pupils leave comments on Big Questions and submit feedback via other channels (eg. email)
- Pupils engage in discussions of Big Questions via social media presence.

OUTPUTS

Direct:

- Completion of online resources
- Participation in Livestreams
- Participation in competitions
- Teachers and Access Officers use Oxplore as basis for lessons/activities

Indirect:

- Students develop a broader knowledge base
- Students develop increased confidence around critical thinking, argumentation and independent research
- Students develop awareness of the breadth of university courses and where they lead
- Teachers and students build familiarity with/positive feelings towards Oxford

OUTCOMES

- Number of student accounts created*
- Number of teacher accounts created*
- Sign-ups to Livestream events*
- Entries to competitions*
- Comments and discussions on site and social media

Indirect:

- Raise aspirations about progressing to HE in support of APP target 6
- Raise awareness of lesser-known courses
- More positive perceptions of Oxford amongst participating students & teachers

* Note that these metrics can also be analysed in light of geographical 'cold spots'

IMPACT

- Increase in teachers' capacity to offer enrichment sessions using Oxplore
- Increase in pupils' development of critical thinking and research skills, confidence and agumentation.
- Widen net of schools who have some engagement with Oxford
- Increase support offer for pupils not supported in schools
- Increase in application, offer & acceptance rates to HE and Oxford

We hope that...

participants engage with the website, take part in Livestream events, write comments and participate in competitions...

So that...

they can build their skills, develop their subject interests and discover new courses and areas of interest...

Ultimately resulting in...

increased applications to Higher Education in general and Oxford in particular, applications to a more diverse range of courses, and more successful applications.



OXpLORE TEACH

THEORY OF CHANGE

Oxpire Teach is a web platform providing teachers with materials to support them in enabling young people from a diverse range of backgrounds to become and remain high attainers.

Situation/Challenge:

To increase the diversity of applicants to Oxford, it is necessary to ensure that teachers and other educators have the resources to ensure pupils from all backgrounds are able to become and remain high attainers. Research* shows the importance of early intervention at Key Stage 3, opportunities for enrichment and supercurricular learning and academic self-concept (beliefs about academic ability, self-efficacy and capacity to build skills) as key factors in ensuring that pupils from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage remain on their attainment trajectories.

Aims:

To create a web platform providing teachers and other educators working in UK state schools with free access to:

1. CPDL materials summarising recent research into factors that can increase the likelihood of young people from backgrounds under-represented at university to become and remain high attainers throughout their secondary school journey
 2. Ready-made enrichment sessions designed to build pupils' academic self-concept by emphasising the "Oxpire Key Skills", a set of thinking skills including critical thinking, self-direction, problem-solving, oracy, creativity, reflection, and "adventurousness" (resilience).
- and to support teachers and other educators in using this platform by providing additional resources such as webinars and face-to-face events.

Rationale and assumptions:

The underlying rationale of Oxpire Teach is that

1. Providing educators with more opportunities to provide enrichment and build academic self-concept with Key Stage 3 pupils will support them in enabling more pupils from a wide range of backgrounds to become and remain high attainers, and that
2. This will translate into a more diverse pool of applicants to Oxford and other high-tariff universities.

* Research underpinning this intervention includes: **Crawford, C, Macmillan, L, and Vignoles, A, Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014).** This study compares the attainment rates of pupils with and without backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage (using free school meal status as a proxy). It found that young people who were high-attaining at Key Stage 2 were significantly more likely to remain high-attaining at GCSE if they were not from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage, and noted that this "attainment gap" persisted up until university admissions. **Sammons, P, Toth, K & Sylva, K, "Subject to Background: What promotes better achievement for bright but disadvantaged students" (2015);** Highlights the importance of enrichment, supercurricular learning and out-of-classroom learning for pupils from backgrounds of disadvantage, particularly those who were high-attaining at Key Stage 2. **Siraj-Blatchford, I., Mayo, A., Melhuish, Edward C., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., Sylva, K. (2011) "Performing against the odds: developmental trajectories of children in the EPPSE 3 to 16 study";** Identifies a number of key 'protective factors' for young people from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage who achieved highly at secondary school. These included a strong sense of academic self-concept, teaching that promoted success and pupils' perception of levels of support available from their teachers.

INPUTS

- Funding
- Staff (Learning Designer x 1.5, Tech Supervisor x .5, Admin support)
- Web platform build
- Web platform design (colours, UX etc)
- Graphic design for web platform (image assets etc)
- CPDL Modules: Research, Content creation work, graphic design work, video production work, testing and feedback.
- ·Oxplore Challenges: Content creation work, video production work, testing and feedback.
- Budget for supporting materials (eg. printing, stickers for schools)
- Comms and marketing (social media, emails, physical mail-outs, media liaison, inreach to College and Departmental Access Officers)
- Educator participation (to deliver sessions)

ACTIVITIES

Direct:

- Educators create accounts on the site
- Educators complete CPDL modules
- Educators deliver Oxplore Challenge sessions in their schools
- Educators attend Oxplore Teach online events
- Educators attend Oxplore Teach regional conference events

Indirect:

- Educators are signposted towards other Oxplore offerings for their pupils (Hackathon, Festival, Home of Big Questions, competitions)
- Educators are signposted towards other Oxford offerings for their pupils (BeUNIQ, UNIQ, Departmental and College offerings)

OUTPUTS

Direct:

- Completion of CPDL modules
- Delivery of Oxplore Challenge sessions
- Evaluation of Oxplore Challenge sessions

Indirect:

- Pupils experience more frequent supercurricular learning
- Pupils build Oxplore Key Skills
- Educators and SLTs become more aware of the importance of Key Stage 3 for attainment throughout the school journey
- Educators and SLTs become more aware of the impact of enrichment and supercurricular learning on attainment
- Educators are empowered to advocate for more enrichment and supercurricular learning for their pupils

OUTCOMES

Direct:

- Number of educator accounts created
- Number of educator accounts connected to target schools (%FSM, geographic cold spots)
- Number of Oxplore Challenge sessions delivered
- Number of CPDL modules completed with pass grade in assessment.
- Improvement in teachers' self-report re: confidence in their skills
- More positive perceptions of Oxford amongst participating teachers and pupils
- Improvement in Oxplore Key Skills in pupils participating in multiple Oxplore Challenges over time.

Indirect:

- Increased uptake of Oxplore, Hackathon, BeUNIQ, UNIQ and other Oxford offerings across engaged schools
- Impact on educators' empowerment to champion supercurricular engagement and enrichment in school.
- Improvement in pupils' academic self concept and attitudes to learning

IMPACT

- Improvement in target schools' enrichment and supercurricular learning offer to all pupils
- Widen net of schools and educators who have some engagement with Oxford
- Educators offer enrichment early in the secondary school journey and have resources to deliver it.
- Decreased drop-off of high-attaining pupils from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
- Increased applications to Oxford from engaged schools

We hope that...

participants will complete Oxplore CPDL modules and deliver Oxplore Challenge sessions to their pupils...

So that...

they will

- 1. Enable pupils to build their academic self-concept, thinking skills and resilience and*
- 2. Become empowered to advocate for activities that support pupils from diverse backgrounds to remain on their attainment trajectories within their schools...*

Ultimately resulting in...

a more diverse group of pupils who have the attainment profile and inclination to make an application to Oxford.



OXpLORE FESTIVAL

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Oxplore Festival is a travelling event providing hands-on enrichment activities for Key Stage 3 pupils in geographical 'cold spot' regions around the UK.

Situation/Challenge:

Research* shows the importance of opportunities for enrichment and supercurricular learning at Key Stage 3 as key factors in ensuring that pupils from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage remain on their attainment trajectories. However, these opportunities may be less available to pupils in some geographical regions. Schools in these regions may also have little direct contact with or experience of Oxford leading to less engagement with other Oxford outreach opportunities and the application process, and may have fewer opportunities to access enrichment across the board due to geographical and logistical factors.

Aims:

To run a one-day enrichment event for 500+ pupils in a geographical 'cold spot' region featuring hands-on workshop sessions led by Oxford researchers and exhibition stands featuring researchers and Student Ambassadors, with a focus on targeting regional with high FSM%. Where possible, schools are provided with practical and financial support to allow them to overcome barriers to do with travel expenses.

Rationale and assumptions:

The underlying rationale of the Oxplore Festival is that 1) providing hands-on activities and the opportunity to meet researchers will demystify higher education and allow pupils to understand the purpose of and feel excited about further study, and that 2) pupils in geographical 'cold spot' regions are less likely to access other opportunities to have these experiences (eg. visits to Oxford). The project assumes (with evidence from local teacher consultations prior to planning events) that there will be interest from schools in the region in 'bringing Oxford to the community', that schools will be willing and able to take up the offer to bring pupils to a venue other than their own school, and that offering these events locally will allow pupils to develop their skills and positive feelings and attitudes towards Oxford/higher education.

* Research underpinning this intervention includes: **Crawford, C, Macmillan, L, and Vignoles, A, Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014).** This study compares the attainment rates of pupils with and without backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage (using free school meal status as a proxy). It found that young people who were high-attaining at Key Stage 2 were significantly more likely to remain high-attaining at GCSE if they were not from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage, and noted that this "attainment gap" persisted up until university admissions. **Sammons, P, Toth, K & Sylva, K, "Subject to Background: What promotes better achievement for bright but disadvantaged students" (2015);** Highlights the importance of enrichment, supercurricular learning and out-of-classroom learning for pupils from backgrounds of disadvantage, particularly those who were high-attaining at Key Stage 2. **Siraj-Blatchford, L., Mayo, A., Melhuish, Edward C., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., Sylva, K. (2011) "Performing against the odds: developmental trajectories of children in the EPPSE 3 to 16 study";** Identifies a number of key 'protective factors' for young people from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage who achieved highly at secondary school. These included a strong sense of academic self-concept, teaching that promoted success and pupils' perception of levels of support available from their teachers.

INPUTS

- Funding 2026+
- Staffing: 1 x Learning Designer, 1 x Assistant, Admin support
- Ongoing interest in engagement from teachers
- Suitable venues in region
- Ongoing engagement from researchers, students and outreach staff across the university
- Suitable venues to test activities, eg. regional 'Roadtrip' prior to event
- Online element – a place to host webpages, support to livestream
- Data cleaning, evaluation and analysis resource
- Marketing and communications support from UAO ICM team and PAD
- Support from IT Services and wider Oxplore team for Livestream events

ACTIVITIES

Workshops

The Festival will provide students with a carousel of live Oxplore activities which look at Big Questions from different subject perspectives – encouraging students to engage with areas of knowledge they may not have encountered before.

Exhibition

The Festival will also include an 'Exhibition zone' which will allow students to explore stands hosted by Oxford students and academics highlighting projects and activities linked to the Festival themes with which students can get involved.

Livestream

A livestream version of the Festival will be available for those students who are not able to attend in person

OUTPUTS

Direct:

500 pupils participate in workshops and Exhibition

Indirect:

Monitoring Sharing Evaluation (MSE) Guide Aims:

- **2b / Strengthen sense of Oxford as a realistic possibility** -- Students & teachers demonstrate more realistic attitudes regarding Oxford before and after festival
- **-3/ Increase awareness of the breadth of university courses and where they lead.** --Students, teachers, and parents demonstrate increased awareness of the breadth of university courses and where they lead post-university before and after festival
- **-6a / Increase academic self confidence** --Students report increased motivation to learn
- -Teachers report increased motivation to learn amongst students
- **7/8/ Increased online take up of Oxplore** by individuals, schools and across the region

OUTCOMES

- Raise aspirations about progressing to HE in support of APP target 6
- Increased uptake of Oxplore Home of Be Questions, Oxplore Hackation, BeUNIQ, UNIQ and other Oxford outreach across engaged schools
- -Improvement in participants' academic self concept and attitudes to learning
- More positive perceptions of Oxford amongst participating students & teachers

IMPACT

- Increase in application, offer & acceptance rates to HE and Oxford from engaged schools/ target region
- APP 1: Reduce participation gap for disadvantaged students
- APP 2: Reduce participation gap for underrepresented students

We hope that...

participants leave the programme with a strengthened sense of Oxford as a realistic possibility and increased motivation to learn...

So that...

they can go on to participate in further Oxford outreach activities and apply themselves academically...

Ultimately resulting in...

increased applications to Higher Education in general, and Oxford in particular.

THINK LIKE A LINGUIST: THEORY OF CHANGE

| CHALLENGE | TARGET AUDIENCE | PROXY METRICS | EVIDENCE BASE | ASSUMPTIONS |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Wider context that makes this programme needed?</i> | <i>Who are we trying to reach?</i> | <i>How will we identify our target audience?</i> | <i>What do we already know about what works?</i> | <i>What do we need to test?</i> |
| <p>Major national decline in numbers opting for languages in Years 10 and 11 and beyond.</p> <p>Negative national discourse around languages – as ‘difficult and unvaluable’</p> | <p>Pupils, teachers and parents/carers in state schools in our target areas:</p> <p>2023-24: Rochdale</p> | <p>Target areas are those with especially low uptake of languages at GCSE.</p> <p>Core participants (30 per course) will be identified because they have capacity to thrive on a languages course but are not motivated to choose for GCSE.</p> | <p>We know from partners’ previous evaluated projects that these kinds of interventions work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Creative and cultural approaches to language learning * Validating Home, Heritage and Community Languages [HHCL] as part of project * Demonstrating broad career prospects for linguists * Demonstrating the breadth of languages in order to appeal to different learners, from code-breaking linguists to creative writers * Self-efficacy and autonomy * Bringing young language learners [LLs] together from multiple schools * Giving young LLs the opportunity to meet and work with HE students and professionals who studied languages | <p>We assume that an overly dry and non-creative non-cultural curriculum is discouraging many pupils from opting for GCSE.</p> <p>We assume that parents’ views are putting children off opting for languages, and that those views are based on incomplete information (e.g. about the career value of languages)</p> |
| <p>SOLUTION <i>What is the proposed programme, and how will it address the challenges noted?</i></p> <p>A programme of 5 in-person interactive sessions, which involves parents at the beginning and end. Sessions will engage pupils in creative, cultural, linguistics, HHCL, career elements in order to change mindsets about nature and value of languages study. It will give participants the opportunity to meet and work with pupils from other schools and with HE students and professionals who studied languages. It will support self-efficacy and autonomy in their approach to learning languages.</p> | | | | |

| INPUTS | ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | IMPACT |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <i>What do you need to make this programme work?</i> | <i>What interactions will the programme include?</i> | <i>What do we hope participants will achieve by the end of the programme?</i> | <i>How will we measure success in the medium term?</i> | <i>What do we hope to accomplish in the long term?</i> |
| <p>Experts to design and deliver sessions</p> <p>A hub school/organisation to host sessions</p> <p>A committed local teacher OR paid local coordinator.</p> <p>Support from leadership of 5 other local schools</p> <p>Transport between schools</p> <p>Resources for teachers to use between sessions</p> <p>Oxbridge colleges to host Graduation days</p> <p>Effective evaluation tools</p> <p>Cameras to capture footage</p> | <p>Launch event for 30 pupils + parents, carers</p> <p>5 in-person sessions for 30 pupils + c. 6 teachers</p> <p>Teacher-led, in-class activities between sessions</p> <p>Graduation Day in Oxford/Cambridge</p> | <p>Resources to encourage school leadership to get involved - free up staff, take pupils off timetable</p> <p>Resources to assist teachers in selecting pupils</p> <p>Templates and resources for launch event for pupils, parents, carers</p> <p>Templates and resources for 5 in-person sessions</p> <p>Resources for teachers to use between sessions</p> <p>Template and resources for Graduation Day in Oxford/Cambridge</p> <p>Certificates</p> <p>Pupils' poster presentations</p> <p>Video testimony, photographs</p> <p>Evaluation tools and resulting feedback</p> | <p>Change/expand pupil, parent and school mindsets re. languages education</p> <p>Change pupils' and parents' perception of the value of learning languages</p> <p>Enable pupils and parents to make informed decisions re. languages at GCSE</p> <p>Create blueprint for roll-out to other regions</p> | <p>Increase uptake of MFL in Years 10 and 11, with knock-on effect on Years 12 and 13 and HE.</p> <p>Locally and then (through accumulation) nationally.</p> |

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Theory of Change outlines how our programme has been designed to equip young people with the belief, knowledge, tools, and skills to make and fulfil more informed decisions about their future.

Universify's Theory of Change was originally designed based on input from the sector to make sure Universify's work complements the existing provision for young people. As part of Universify's

annual strategy, using our annual impact evaluation data and feedback from Universify beneficiaries, we review our Theory of Change to ensure our work and activities continue to best meet the needs of the students we support to maximise our impact.

Universify's theory of change

Background

Students from certain geographical, ethnic, socio-economic, and class backgrounds are less likely to apply successfully to highly-selective universities and high-demand courses. Barriers include low aspirations, limited attainment, understanding of higher education, lack of support and reliable information, and feeling out of place in a university environment.

Problem

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in higher education, particularly at highly-selective universities.

Activities

Residential summer course. Admissions support.
Spring revision residential. Support at university.
Academic coaching.

Intermediate outcomes

Improved understanding of highly-selective university, and how to get there for participants.
Improved subject knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Outcomes

Increased aspiration and attainment.
Increased knowledge of university admissions.
Increased feeling of being 'at home' at university.
Improved confidence and resilience.
Participants are able to make an informed decision about university.

Final goal

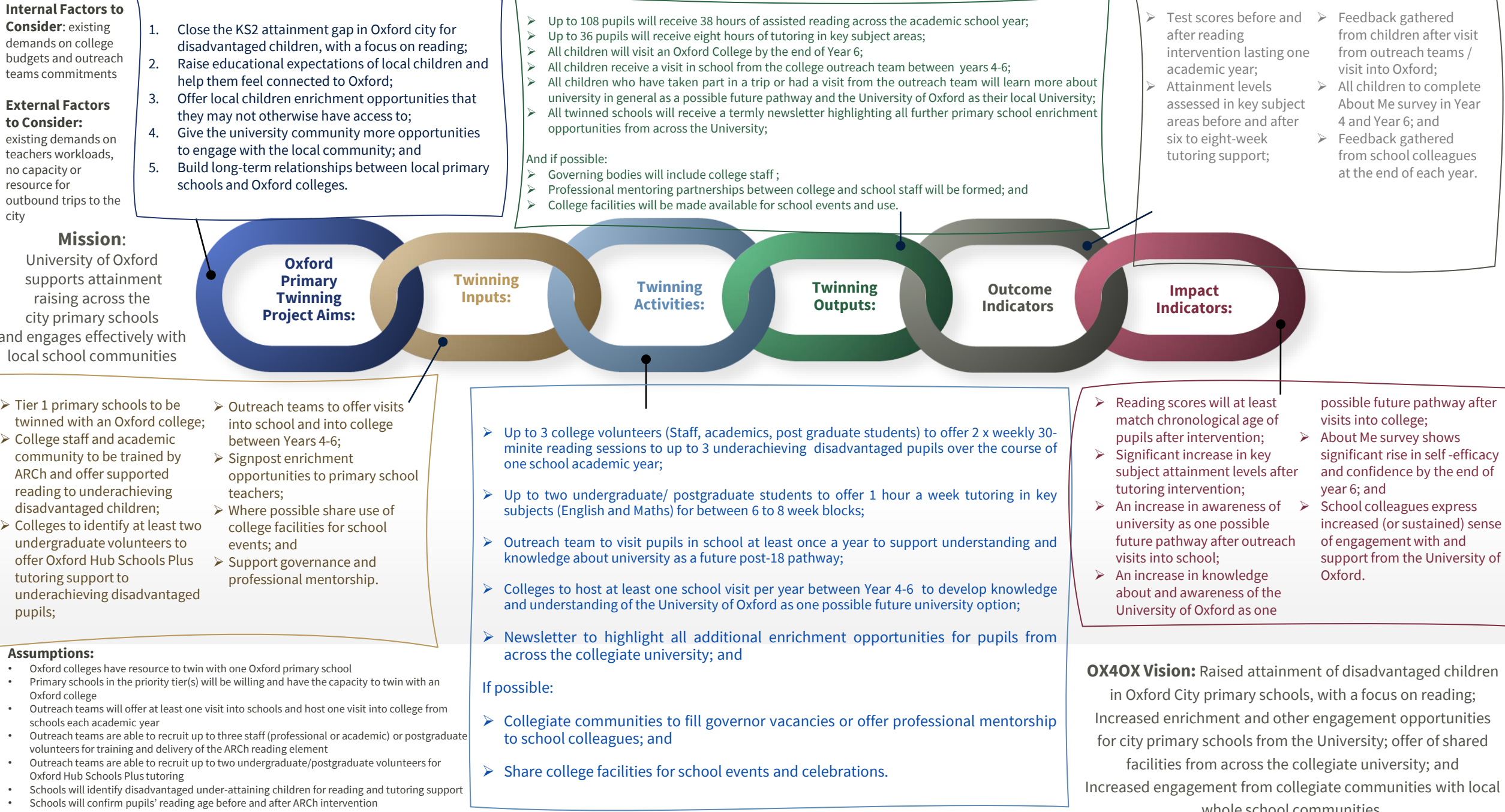
Increase in students from disadvantaged backgrounds making successful applications to universities and highly-selective universities.

Further goal

Higher Education — particularly highly-selective universities — is representative of the UK population.
People are able to make informed decisions about their future.

Enabling factors

Participants form a supportive group and develop cohort expectations of progress.
Participants respond positively to challenge of being 'out of their comfort zone' and in a new environment.
Schools support participants aspirations and decisions through increased understanding of university.



OX40X Twinning - THEORY OF CHANGE

Intervention strategy 2: supporting applicants to Oxford

This intervention strategy supports students through their applications to Oxford by offering in-person residential and online programmes which target students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are under-represented at Oxford and other universities. The strategy includes a sustained-access programme in partnership with a third-sector organisation supporting Black students from disadvantaged backgrounds to secure places at Oxford and Cambridge.

UNIQ

UNIQ is an academic residential and online support programme for Year 12 students. The objective of UNIQ is to increase the number of students from backgrounds currently under-represented at the University to apply and gain admission to Oxford and other leading universities. The UNIQ residential summer school started in 2010 and we continually make changes to improve the support we provide to UNIQ participants. UNIQ continues to build on the success of previous years, offering students both an academic residential in Oxford and a sustained online admissions support programme. UNIQ was delivered entirely online for two years during the pandemic and the programme has built on this experience to enhance its online components.

UNIQ works in an integrated way with other programmes. Students from BeUNIQ and many other Oxford access programmes are encouraged and supported to apply to UNIQ, and many UNIQ participants go on to be offered a place on the University's Opportunity Oxford programme.

Participation in UNIQ aims to give students: an increased sense of belonging with Oxford; to develop friendship groups; improved academic self-confidence, and the insights needed to optimise their application performance. It is not anticipated that all UNIQ participants will apply to Oxford but the programme should improve academic self-confidence enabling them to apply to other highly selective universities if they decide Oxford is not for them.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Target Oxbridge

Target Oxbridge is a sustained contact programme to enable students of black or mixed-black heritage to understand and make competitive applications to Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Run in partnership with Rare Recruitment and the University of Cambridge, it includes:

- Mentoring support from current and former students
- Information, advice and guidance workshops on University courses and admissions
- University experiences to include a three-day residential and a one-day summer visit in Oxford

As a programme supported by the collegiate University, Target Oxbridge provides an opportunity for Oxford to have a unifying voice and take collective action in supporting Black students to access relevant and impactful information, advice and guidance over a sustained period.

Beyond its focus on ethnicity, Target Oxbridge is aimed at students with demonstrated academic potential and who have experienced circumstances of disadvantage, or under-representation in

Higher Education. Measures of disadvantage and under-representation include eligibility for free school meals, IMD, care experience and refugee status. The programme continues to be reviewed in order to increase the targeting, in particular on under-represented regions of the UK.

The expected outcomes for the programme include:

- Increased confidence in participant academic ability
- Increased understanding of the student experience at Oxford and Cambridge
- Understanding of how to make a competitive application
- Submission of competitive applications to Oxford and Cambridge
- Awareness of further avenues of support at Oxford and information on how to access Higher Education

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.



THEORY OF CHANGE



CHALLENGES

What is the wider context that makes UNIQ necessary?

- UK students from disadvantaged & underrepresented backgrounds struggle to access:
- Role models
 - Advice and guidance
 - Experiences with university environments
 - Positive academic reinforcement

TARGET AUDIENCE

Who are we trying to reach?

Year 12 UK students with the potential to apply to Oxford, but who are unlikely to apply, be successful, or accept a place at Oxford

PROXY METRICS

How will we identify them?

- Disadvantaged: ACORN 4 & 5, Free School Meals eligibility
- Underrepresented: POLAR 1
- Educational disruption: care or extenuating circumstances
- Academic ability

EVIDENCE BASE

What works according to existing evidence?

- Residential including academic & social aspects
- Ambassador interactions
- Progressive programmes with multiple interactions
- Personalised AIG and financial guidance
- Personalised feedback

ASSUMPTIONS

What do we need to test?

- Effectiveness of digital engagement vs in-person
- Impact of residential length
- Effectiveness of digital formats
- Importance of visiting Oxford

UNIQ Solution:

Progressive programme utilising multiple digital and in-person formats to connect with participants from Easter break of year 12 through beginning of application cycle

INPUTS

What do we need to make UNIQ work?

- Venues and catering
- Student travel costs
- Academic staff time
- Outreach Ambassadors
- Comprehensive student-facing VLE

ACTIVITIES

What interactions will UNIQ include?

- Summer Residential
- Interactions with ambassadors
- Interactions with academics
- Asynchronous resources
- Academic subject strands
- Application support

AIMS

What do we hope to achieve by the end of UNIQ?

- Increase sense of fit and belonging with Oxford
- Strengthen sense of Oxford as a realistic possibility
- Improve academic self-confidence
- Increase understanding of application process
- Develop practical skills to improve application performance

OUTCOMES

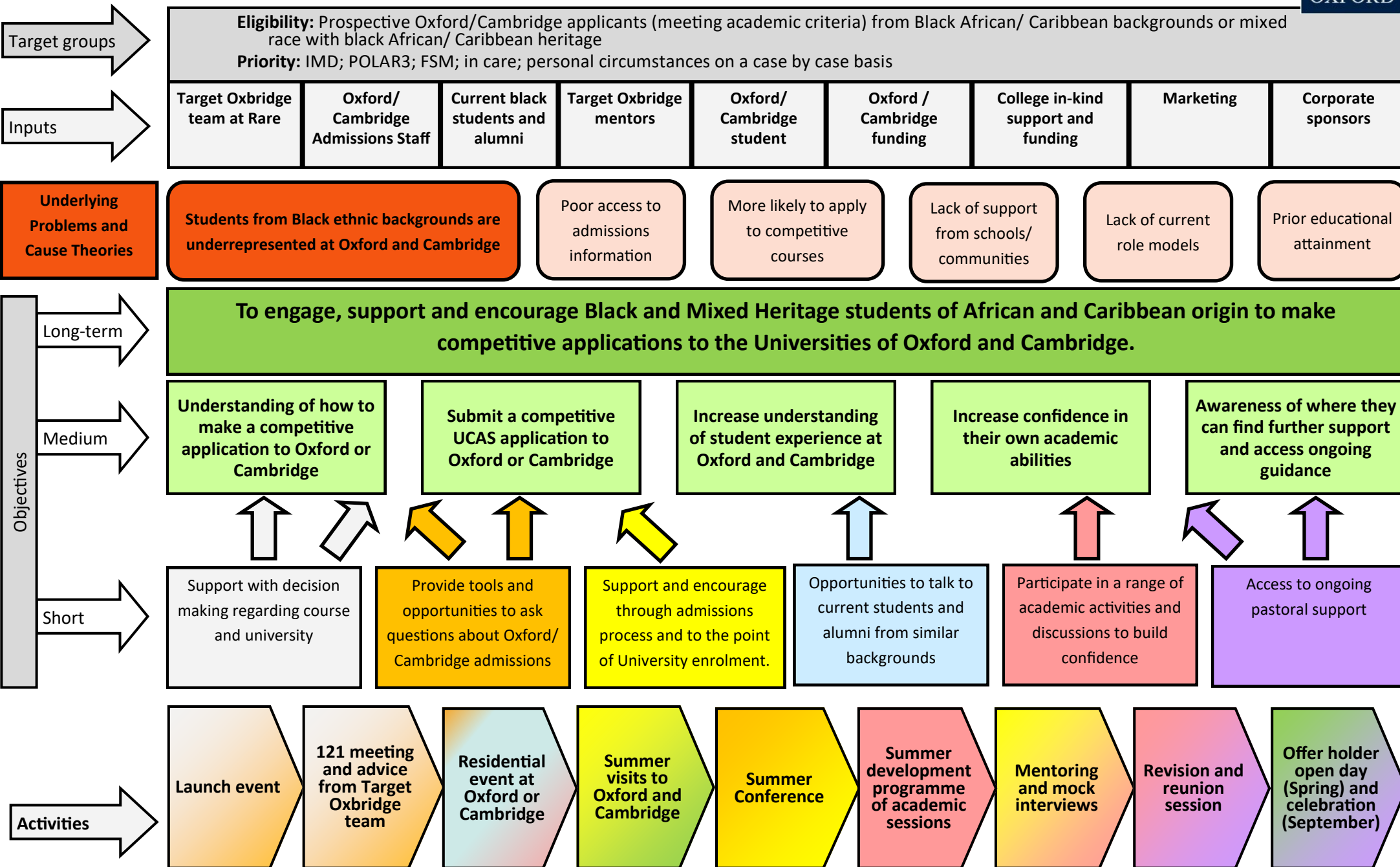
How will we measure success?

- Increase APPLICATION rates for participants
- Increase ACCEPTANCE rates for participants
- Increase OFFER rates for participants

IMPACT

What do we hope to accomplish in the long term?

- Reduce gap in participation rates for disadvantaged students
- Reduce gap in participation rates for under-represented students
- Increase confidence for students from disadvantaged backgrounds starting at Oxford
- Increase diversity of Oxford University undergraduate student population



Intervention strategy 3: providing transition and skills support

This intervention strategy will provide targeted academic transition and skills support to students from backgrounds under-represented at Oxford, so that students from all backgrounds feel welcome at Oxford, know that they belong here, and can develop the appropriate academic skills to thrive.

The strategy also takes a whole-university approach to developing and integrating academic skills provision into support services and teaching, so that all students encounter academic skills development as a normal part of their studies.

Opportunity Oxford academic bridging and transition programme:

Opportunity Oxford is an initiative to increase the number of high-achieving students admitted to Oxford from backgrounds identified as priorities for widening access to Oxford. It is an academic bridging programme that aims to support talented UK offer-holders from under-represented backgrounds in their transition from school or college to Oxford, and prepare them for successful student careers at the university. Students complete a six-week online course over the summer, followed by a two-week residential just before the start of the academic year.

The programme contributes to APP targets by including IMD and FSM eligibility as part of the eligibility criteria, alongside other metrics of disadvantage and under-representation.

Opportunity Oxford activities were developed with reference to our institutional admissions data and our previous evaluation findings for existing activities. Opportunity Oxford is underpinned by a Theory of Change below, which was informed by a comprehensive literature review. Please also see the Opportunity Oxford poster below for a visual summary of the programme.

Astrophoria Foundation Year

The University of Oxford's Astrophoria Foundation Year is a one-year fully-funded foundation programme for UK state school students with significant academic potential, who have experienced severe personal disadvantage and/or disrupted education which has resulted in them being unable to apply directly for an Oxford undergraduate degree programme.

It enables motivated students to reach their academic potential through a supportive and challenging academic course aimed at developing their skills, self-belief and academic confidence.

Like Opportunity Oxford, the Astrophoria programme contributes to the APP targets by using socio-economic indicators as part of the eligibility criteria, alongside other metrics of disadvantage and under-representation.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Opportunity Oxford – Theory of Change

Context

Students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited opportunities to develop a depth and breadth of academic experience beyond the school curriculum which may hinder them from making competitive applications to Oxford and reaching their full academic potential by the point of application.

Aims

Improve equality of opportunity and increase fair opportunities for admission to Oxford. Increase representation of pupils from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds admitted to Oxford University, whilst maintaining academic standards. Provide well-targeted academic support ahead of entry to the university to increase a student's sense of belonging (place and space) and enhance their key academic and study skills.

Beneficiaries

Students from underrepresented, disadvantaged and low-income backgrounds.
Proxy metrics: POLAR Q1, ACORN 4/5, Free School Meals eligible, Care Experienced, and also be in the most disadvantaged 40% of applicants.

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Process

Impact

- Coordinating staff time
- Academic staff time for admissions and teaching
- Undergraduate student ambassadors
- Welfare staff time
- Evaluation staff time
- Virtual event platform
- Student VLE (Canvas)
- College accommodation
- Provision of travel, meals, and social activities
- Teaching venues
- Financial bursaries for students



- Colleges and Subjects earmark offers/places within existing overall numbers for candidates who meet the eligibility criteria and standard offer, but who may narrowly miss out on an offer.
- Metrics to identify eligible students included clearly in admissions training and admissions software.
- Academic bridging transition programme including virtual events, online learning course and two-week residential to provide academic support, community development, scaffolded study strategies and reflexive learning.



- 250+ offers on the programme to eligible students who might have otherwise narrowly missed out on an offer.
- Further circa 400 eligible students with standard offers given online course access.
- Students experience distinctive collegiate environment, university and tutorial style learning, and features of Oxford University study and support.
- Students interact with Oxford tutors, teaching staff and support staff.
- Students interact with other participating students on the residential (approx. 200 students).
- Students interact with current undergraduate student ambassadors throughout the programme.



- Positive impact on participants' academic abilities, study skills, self-regulation, self-confidence and sense-of-belonging as they start on-course.
- Increase in number of eligible applicants shortlisted for interview.
- Increase in number of eligible applicants given an offer.
- Deepen tutor knowledge and increase tutor confidence in making offers to these able applicants who might be less prepared and supported than their more advantaged peers.
- Tutors and teaching staff on the programme share experiences, lessons learned and best practice with peers.



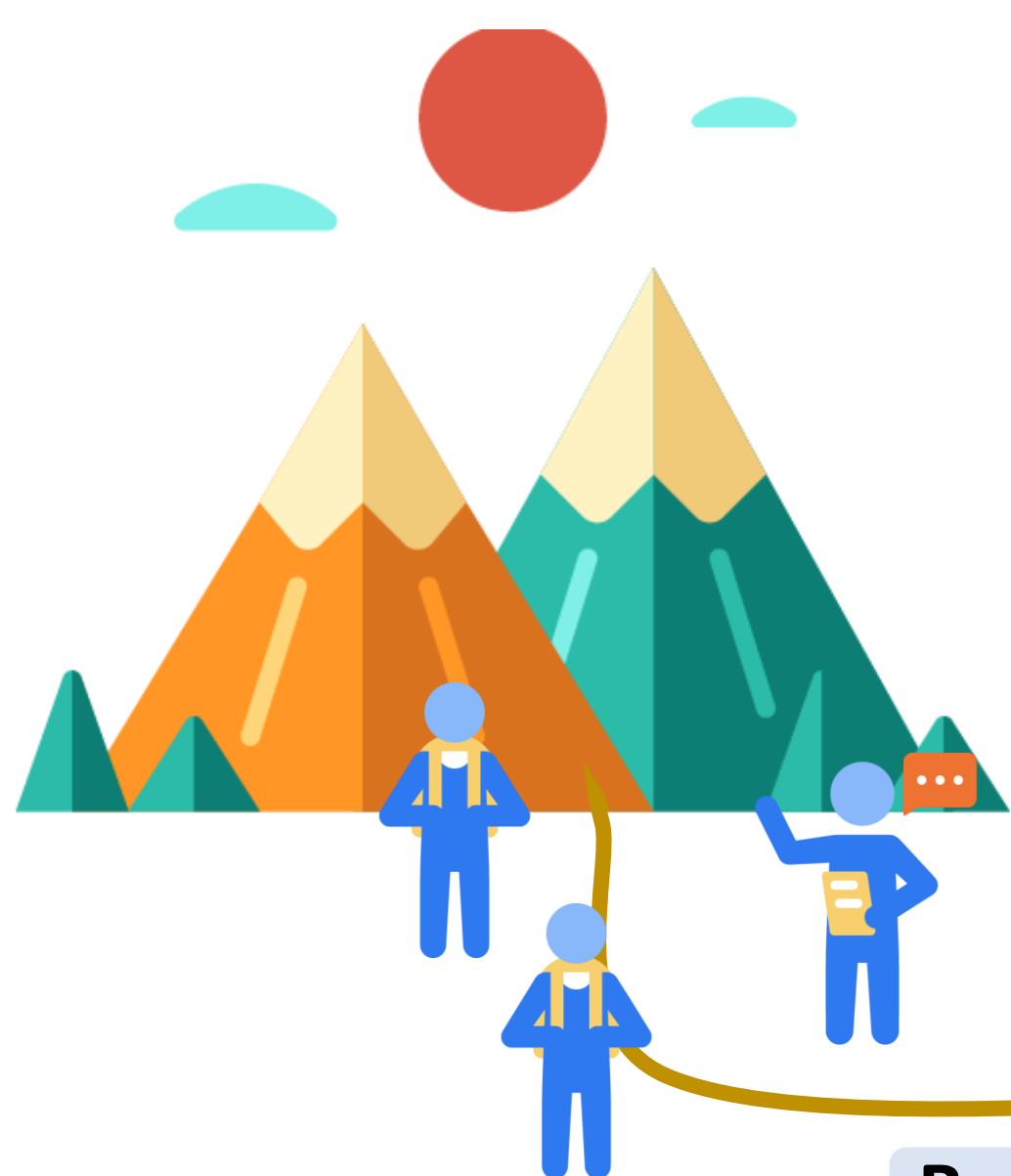
- Increase diversity of Oxford University undergraduate student population.
- Reduce the gap in participation rates for disadvantaged students.
- Reduce the gap in participation rates for under-represented students.
- Participants perform similarly to a matched comparative group for on-course continuation and completion rates.
- Admissions tutors become more confident in making quota offers to those applicants originally targeted by the programme.

Rationale & Assumptions

Each year, many candidates from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds applying to Oxford are not selected but go on to meet or exceed Oxford's standard offer. Limited opportunities to develop a depth and breadth of academic experience beyond the school curriculum may have hindered them from making competitive applications to Oxford and reaching their full academic potential. These students may be more likely to narrowly miss out on an offer from Oxford than their more advantaged peers who may have had greater access to and depth of education experiences.

“Wildly helpful” - inclusive learning for under-represented students

Opportunity Oxford is an ambitious academic bridging programme increasing the number of high-achieving students admitted to Oxford from under-represented backgrounds and supporting their transition to university. Our inclusive teaching environment includes focused academic tasks, reflective learning and sustained tutor contact. Students develop high-level skills and strategies for effective independent learning which underpin their success in their future undergraduate studies.



Admissions

OppOx supports admitting tutors in making more offers to applicants from under-represented backgrounds.

“It is already transforming the way admissions works by drawing attention to disadvantaged candidates.”
- Humanities tutor

Welcome Event

Students and parents/supporters meet ambassadors, tutors and each other at an event which provides clarity, reassures and builds confidence.

“After attending the welcome event, I understand that I will benefit significantly from this experience and that I am no different to any other offer holder because I have a place on this programme.” – Student

Building Student Connections

“It made me realise that there will be many people with very similar experiences to me when we start in October, and that makes me feel significantly more comfortable and confident.” – Student



Navigating the University

Student ambassadors, who have often been on the programme themselves, help shape an inclusive environment at Oxford where all students feel valued and that they belong.

“The ambassadors were one of the best parts of the programmes. It was great being able to speak to students who could reassure me I would fit in and be okay in Oxford.” – Student



Student Support

Collaboration with DAS & Welfare, CTL, Fees & Funding, IT Services and Card Office provides students with the resources and guidance they need to be successful. Lessons learned from the programme are fed back to the university.



Academic Programme

The online course and two-week residential assists students to develop a tool-kit for approaching complex ideas and materials, tutorials, essay writing, and independent learning. Tutors take varied learning needs into account, focusing on study skills as well as exploring discipline-specific content.

“Tutorials were an amazing introduction to the learning style, but also very helpful in getting up to speed with new content.” - Student

Inclusive Teaching Resources

Expertise from Divisional Coordinators, resources developed for the programme, and experience gained from teaching, are fed back into the university.

The Ongoing Journey

Tutors have confidence that students are prepared and understand the expectations of university. Students feel motivated, supported and clear on their next steps as they start their degree.

“Wildly helpful! I have never felt more comfortable or excited about such a huge and unfamiliar experience. This has truly been invaluable to me.”
– Student

“The programme is strong in supporting critical skills... that underpin Oxford learning and so are particularly well-focused for the transition to Oxford.” - Subject Coordinator

OppOx Programme Team

- ▶ Opportunity Oxford staff team based in the **Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach** Department
- ▶ **Academic Divisional Coordinators** for Humanities, Medical Sciences, Mathematical Physical Life Sciences, and Social Sciences

Who we work with


Every undergraduate
course and college

140+

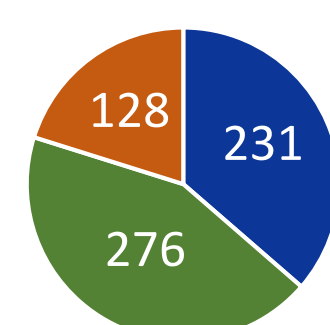
Academics
teach each year

1,600+

Students supported
since 2020

115

Ambassadors applied
to work in 2023



Under-represented
students 2022

- 36% received OppOx offer
- 43% more registered for online course

How to get involved?



Teaching



Meeting



Collaborating



opportunityoxford
@admin.ox.ac.uk

Situation

Students with high academic potential who have experienced severe personal disadvantage or educational disruption are less likely to achieve the Level 2 and 3 grades required to access to high tariff universities. Further, if admitted they are less likely to have reach the same success metrics as their more advantaged counterparts

Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme: Core Theory of Change

Aims

The AFY programme aims to provide a contextualised entry route to highly competitive undergraduate learning environments. It aims to provide an inclusive programme of skills development to help students thrive as undergraduates. It also aims to enable students to develop a sense of belonging to facilitate their transition to and continuation of their studies in the university environment.

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Process

Impact

AFY core team
AFY student welfare lead
AFY teaching delivery team
AFY admissions delivery team

Creation of bespoke content

Student ambassadors
Outreach – programme specific with support from departments, link colleges and regional consortia

Programme marketing and communications

Evaluation strategy and external assessment

Funding from donor

Support from departments and colleges.

ADMISSIONS:

Contextualised admissions

STUDENTS:

Academic self-concept

Academic skills and study strategies

Communications skills

Personal academic mentoring & academic reflective journal

Subject knowledge and skills

Subject specific tuition

SpLD screening

Belonging

Orientation week activities

Freshers' week

Poster presentation

Society and Culture sessions

Personal development

Finance/budgeting guidance

One to one welfare meetings and workshops

FAMILIES/SUPPORTERS/ CARERS:

Offer holder events

Welcome day in orientation week

End of year celebration

COMMUNITY:

Foundation Futures - network

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Cohorts established from target groups (22 students in first cycle increasing to 50 per cycle)

Students complete programme (measured as CertHE awarded)

Students progress to Oxford (measured as entering Year 1 of undergraduate course)

Improved academic self-concept (through change in perception of academic skills, critical thinking, and utilisation of knowledge)

Sense of belonging established (through change in the extent to which individuals feel connected to the university environment, peers, and others, and part of the community)

Increased understanding of support available (through change in understanding, and access to disability advisory services, funding, wellbeing)

Increased network/community (measured as membership of network of alumni)

Students progress to undergraduate studies (at Oxford or elsewhere) increasing diversity of the overall student body.

Students' outcomes as undergraduates are improved (sustained continuation on course, completion of course, reduced attainment gap: in comparison to students from similar background)

Students have developed the learning aptitudes they need to thrive in their subject (able to use study strategies to effectively navigate their undergraduate course)

Students have developed the non-academic skills that they need to achieve academically and are confident to access support when needed (emotional, moral, special learning needs and life skills, i.e. advice incl. budget, careers)

Students feel they are an integral part of a scholarly community (improved confidence to navigate university academic life)

Students have a confident sense of self in Oxford's learning environment (improved confidence to navigate Oxford university's academic and extra-curricular life)

Students have a confident sense of self in their career planning (use of networks and contacts; access to the careers service)

Increased diversity of student body.

Improved outcomes of students who come from a range of underserved backgrounds

On course students from a range of underserved backgrounds are better equipped to engage in their academic course

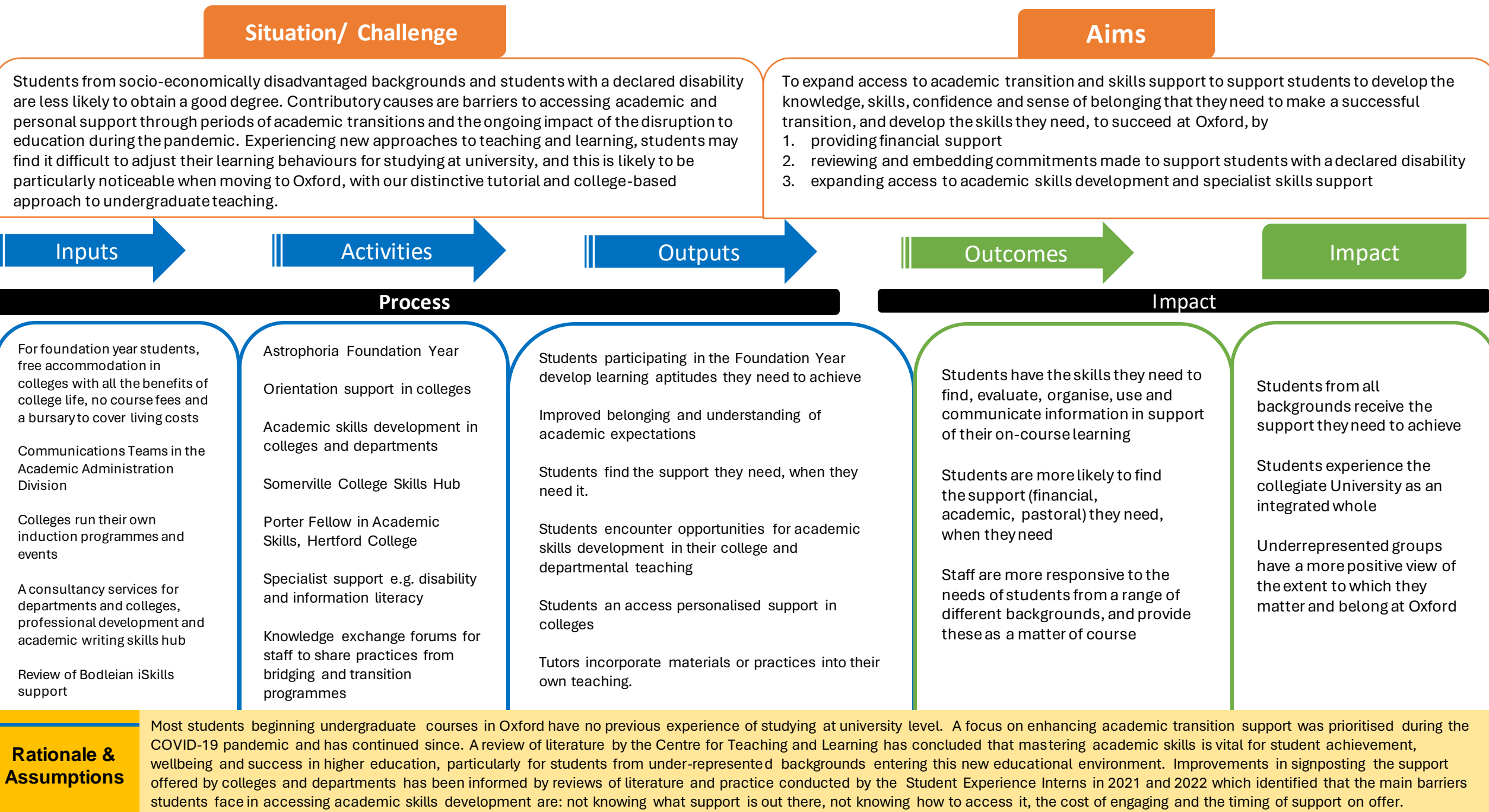
Students from a range of underserved backgrounds experience a greater sense of (academic) belonging

Students from a range of underserved backgrounds experience better opportunity of access to competitive careers

Rationale and assumptions

The AFY programme design draws on existing research that suggests that aspects such as academic engagement, critical thinking, metacognition, study skills, subject knowledge and a sense of belonging are all important contributory components of student on-course success. It makes the assumption that students made this contextual offer do not have a deficit in subject knowledge *per se* but that their experience has not enabled them to develop the multiple skills both academic and personal, required to navigate all aspects of the university learning environment. It also assumes that a holistic approach is necessary to make the required impact for students to subsequently thrive as undergraduates.

Transition and skills support (Core Theory of Change)



Ongoing academic transitions and skills support

Students beginning undergraduate courses may find it difficult to adjust their learning behaviours for studying at Oxford, with our distinctive tutorial and college-based approach to undergraduate teaching. Reviews of literature and practice conducted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and their Student Experience interns concluded that mastering academic skills is vital for student achievement, wellbeing, and success in higher education, particularly for students from under-represented backgrounds entering this new educational environment.

Evidence base

- Mastering academic skills is vital for student achievement, wellbeing, and success in higher education, but students from under-represented backgrounds entering a new educational environment risk losing their sense of belonging, which may lead to less successful outcomes for them in higher education.
- A literature review conducted by the [Academic Skills Development project](#) synthesised the strongest evidence on the benefits of building students' academic abilities and the effects on mental health, closing awarding gaps, and supporting disadvantaged learners, drawing on systematic reviews and meta-analyses. The review concluded that academic skills development interventions incorporated into academic settings significantly improved mental wellbeing and student outcomes
- An approach to embed skills development into teaching is supported by findings that embedding academic skill instruction within course content improves achievement and that academic literacies facilitate disciplinary knowledge, higher-order thinking, and cognitive growth.

Student consultation

- The Centre for Teaching and Learning's [Student Experience Interns](#) in 2021 reviewed and summarised educational research on students' transition to university study, collected examples of current interventions both within and beyond Oxford, interviewed students, consulted with academic and professional services colleagues, and made recommendations for initiatives that could further support students' academic transition to Oxford. Their recommendations covered pre-arrival support, skills development, academic community building, peer support and communication.
- In 2022, the interns reviewed the work of the previous year's interns, gathered information on the awareness and access that students have to transition support, mapped student needs at transition points along the student lifecycle and identified the enablers and barriers that students experience in finding and accessing the support that is available. Drawing on data collected through surveys and interviews, they concluded that the main barriers that students face in accessing support is not knowing what support is available, the support not being subject specific enough, not being practical/actionable enough and being too embarrassed to ask for help

Intervention strategy 4: supporting students' needs on course

This intervention strategy will provide extensive financial support to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as supporting students who face unexpected financial difficulties while on course. It aims to encourage more applications from under-represented and disadvantaged groups, and to support students from lower-income households to remain on course.

The strategy also anticipates students' varied learning needs and proactively makes common reasonable adjustments available in advance. It seeks to embed a broader range of more inclusive teaching and assessment practices into courses, so that all students can access materials, activities and assessments in the format they need.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Inclusive teaching (Core Theory of Change)

Situation/ Challenge

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, students with a declared disability, and black students are all less likely to obtain a good degree. Contributory factors are highly complex, but factors include lower levels of positive feelings of belonging and mattering compared to other student groups at Oxford; inconsistent access to inclusive teaching and assessment approaches; and the growing number of students declaring a disability, and consequent delays in accessing diagnoses and arranging support.

Aims

To improve the likelihood of a good degree outcome for these students, by fostering feelings of mattering and belonging. Underpinned by 4 objectives:

1. Embed inclusive practices by incorporating into course approvals and via extra resource for local implementation
2. Use a more diverse and inclusive range of assessments, via consultancy services and Assessment Centre for Excellence.
3. Update curricula to reflect diversity
4. Improve inclusivity of digital and physical teaching spaces

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Process

Impact

Consultants and Advisors in the Centre for Teaching and Learning

New Disability Inclusion Coordinators in Divisions

Digital Education projects to improve the accessibility of digital and physical teaching Spaces

The Reading and Writing Innovation Lab

Investment by Bodleian libraries

Embed disability inclusion requirements into course approval processes

Communicate and prompt departments to engage with Digitally Supported and Racially Inclusive Teaching Toolkits

Consultancy and support services for departments to support the re-design of summative assessments

Identify and implement changes to improve inclusivity of digital and physical teaching spaces

Revised processes for course approvals and major and minor changes

Disability Inclusion Coordinators work with academic departments to embed inclusive teaching practices

Assessment Centre for Excellence provides specialist solutions for inclusive digital assessments

Inclusive features added to Canvas VLE

Software solutions for individual students

Inclusive features added to library spaces

Inclusive practices are proactively made available cohort by cohort

More consistent implementation of inclusive teaching practices

Undergraduate courses use a more diverse and inclusive range of assessments

Staff and students develop empathy and perspective taking

Uptake of Inclusive Teaching Toolkits

Students can access learning materials in the format and in the environment that they need to facilitate learning

More disabled students have access inclusive practices that mitigate disability impact

All students are more likely to encounter inclusive teaching

Undergraduates more likely to take a diverse and inclusive range of assessments

Underrepresented groups have a more positive view of the extent to which they matter and belong at Oxford

Rationale & Assumptions

The University has a legal duty to promote equality of opportunity for students with protected characteristics (including disability and race) under the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), and to make anticipatory adjustments for disabled people (Equality Act 2010). Inclusive education practices and fostering a sense of belonging are strongly connected in the literature with improved learning experiences for students from traditionally underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds, although direct causal evidence is often elusive. Inclusive practices that aim to address inequalities in learning for disabled students in many instances also benefit all students. We assume, based on the evidence available, that a curriculum that better represents a diversity of perspectives and approaches will foster an enhanced sense of mattering and belonging amongst underrepresented groups. Furthermore, offering a more diverse and inclusive range of assessments will enable more students to demonstrate their true attainment.

Inclusive teaching

The broad range of experiences that a diverse student population brings to Oxford enhances our teaching. Teaching inclusively contributes to students feeling that they matter and belong, and to them being able to identify and communicate their learning needs.

Evidence base

- Inclusive education practices and fostering a sense of belonging are strongly connected in the literature with improved learning experiences for students from traditionally under-represented or minoritised groups, although evidence of direct causal links between inclusive teaching and successfully addressing attainment gaps is often elusive.
- The academic literature cited in [toolkits](#) shows that inclusive teaching practices contribute to students feeling that they matter and belong, and to them being able to identify and communicate their learning needs, motivated to learn, confident that they can participate, and encouraged to do so, clear about what they are expected to do and achieve. Enhancing these feelings among students has been shown to decrease student awarding gaps and ensure that all students can thrive at university.
- Inclusive practices that stem from efforts to address inequalities in learning for disabled students in many instances also benefit all students. For all these reasons, we seek to embed a broader range of inclusive teaching and assessment practices, as set out in our inclusive teaching and assessment toolkits and resources.

Student consultation

- Feedback from Oxford's students during the pandemic, and published on [the Centre for Teaching and Learning webpages](#), revealed how inclusive practices and inclusive use of digital tools can help students succeed in Oxford's demanding academic and social environments.
- Analysis of the recommendations made in Student Support Plans at Oxford in 20-21 and 21-22 (a dataset of over 2,000 Student Support Plans), showed that these five measures were the most commonly recommended individual adjustments to study: 1. teaching materials provided electronically in advance; 2. structured reading lists; 3. access to lecture recordings (or alternative methods for content capture where recordings cannot reasonably be provided); 4. flexibility on occasion with formative work and 5. additional library support. The purpose of the statement is to promote anticipatory approaches to disability support and to provide more straightforward and faster access to these measures for disabled students.

Intervention strategy 5: services for disabled students

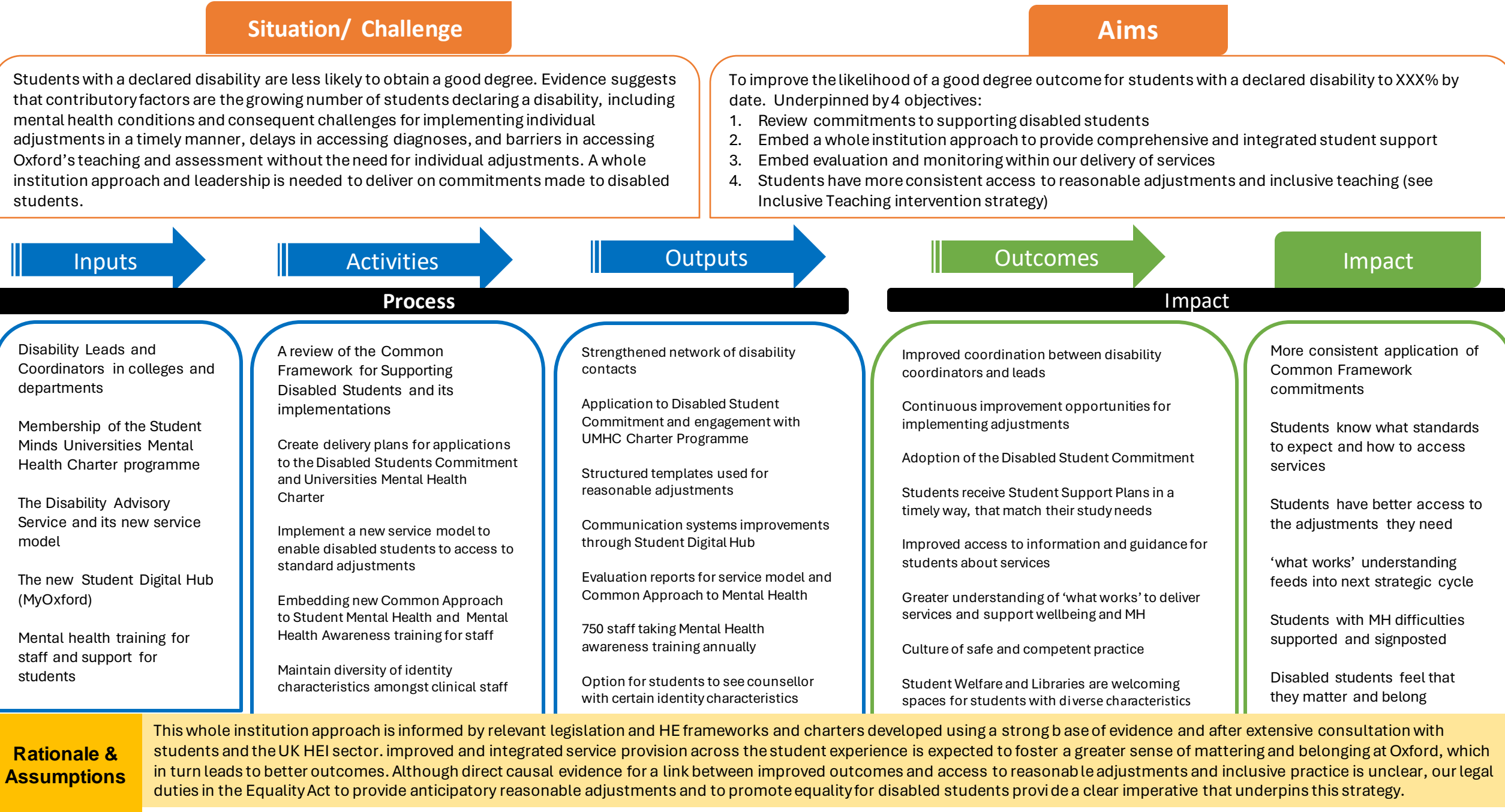
This intervention strategy will deliver joined-up commitments and services for disabled students, including those with mental health and social and communicative conditions, recognising that a whole-University approach is needed to deliver comprehensive and integrated support across the collegiate University. It will implement a new service model so that disabled students receive the support they need in a timely way.

The strategy also includes a review and diversification of mental health and counselling services to meet the range of mental health needs. It aims to offer a more diverse counselling service and a peer support programme which better reflects the diversity of the student population.

Disabled students will have the opportunity to be involved in both the delivery and evaluation of these services and research from university experts in wellbeing will continue to inform plans. Capacity will be expanded to review and evaluate disabled students' experiences and some activities will be disseminated publicly.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

Services for disabled students (Core Theory of Change)



Services for disabled students

Improved and integrated service provision across the student experience is expected to foster a greater sense of mattering and belonging at Oxford, which in turn is expected to lead to better outcomes for disabled students. This whole institution approach is informed by relevant legislation and HE frameworks and charters developed using a strong base of evidence and after extensive consultation with students and the UK HEI sector.

Evidence base

- The academic literature shows that inclusive teaching practices contribute to students feeling that they matter and belong, and to them being able to identify and communicate their learning needs, motivated to learn, confident that they can participate, and encouraged to do so, clear about what they are expected to do and achieve. Enhancing these feelings among students has been shown to decrease student awarding gaps and ensure that all students can thrive at university. [CTL interns](#) continue to build the evidence base for Oxford.
- As we embed and evaluate the Common Approach to Mental Health, we will evaluate the effectiveness of individual services, cross-referencing with the [TASO Mental Health Evidence Hub](#) impact data as more evidence is collected. e.g. evaluation of psychoeducation, groups and workshops, psychological therapies, and mindfulness.
- Inclusive practices that stem from efforts to address inequalities in learning for disabled students in many instances also benefit all students. For all these reasons, we seek to embed a broader range of inclusive teaching and assessment practices, as set out in our [inclusive teaching and assessment](#) toolkits and resources.

Student consultation

- In 2023-4, the Disability Advisory Service piloted a new approach to Student Support Plans. A [Disability Inclusion Statement](#) was introduced as a universal offering for all disabled students newly registering with DAS. The purpose of the statement is to promote anticipatory approaches to disability support and to provide more straightforward and faster access to these measures for disabled students. Analysis of the recommendations made in Student Support Plans at Oxford in 20-21 and 21-22 (a dataset of over 2,000 Student Support Plans), showed that these five measures were the most commonly recommended individual adjustments to study: 1. teaching materials provided electronically in advance; 2. structured reading lists; 3. access to lecture recordings (or alternative methods for content capture where recordings cannot reasonably be provided); 4. flexibility on occasion with formative work and 5. additional library support. CTL interns continue to build our evidence base [this year](#), with students.
- We will partner with disabled students to identify barriers preventing them from accessing the resources and facilities of the Libraries and co-design library services that meet their specific needs, including improvements to physical spaces.

Intervention strategy 6: race equality actions

This intervention strategy aims to deliver a more diverse and inclusive learning environment, that values racial diversity, and promotes a sense of belonging among Black and other racially minoritised students. This will be supported by initiatives to improve reporting of racial harassment and microaggressions, and to diversify curricula and library collections.

The strategy will strengthen partnerships with Black and other racially minoritised students and support student-led initiatives across the collegiate University, so that students feel empowered to contribute to changes across the collegiate University.

Research with students and Education experts at the University has informed the planned actions and the further investigations will be supported, building capacity to undertake participatory research and offering appropriate emotional and advocacy support for staff and students involved, as well as increasing the visibility of the lived experiences of racially minoritised groups.

Please see the Theory of Change below for further information.

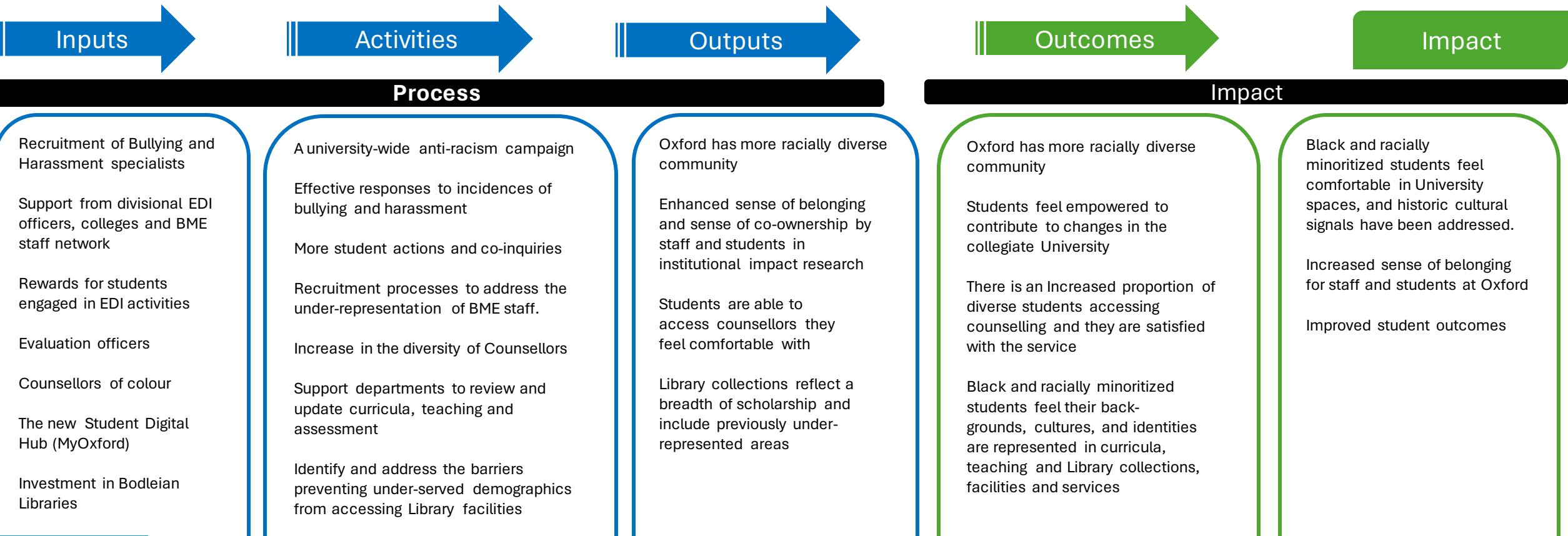
Race equality actions (Core Theory of Change)

Situation/ Challenge

Black students are significantly less likely to be awarded a ‘good’ degree outcome than their white counterparts. The gap may be affected by the intersection with socio-economic disadvantage, but we also believe that Black students face particular risks to equality of opportunity. Preliminary evidence identifies contributory factors including a lack of ethnic diversity in the university community, under representation in curricula and teaching, historic cultural signals associated with the university, racism and microaggressions, as well as the burden of representation in equality and diversity activities.

Aims

These actions will diversify the collegiate university and accompany this with university wide awareness building. It will strengthen and support student-staff partnerships and student-led initiatives. It will support further investigations, building capacity to undertake participatory research and offering appropriate emotional and advocacy support for staff and students, as well as increasing the visibility of the lived experiences of racially minoritised groups.



Rationale & Assumptions

The intervention is based on prior research-informed collegiate university commitments made in the Race Equality Charter application, the Bodleian Libraries Strategy, evidence informed staff development resources and associated literature, and participatory research with students from diverse backgrounds. The Participatory Pedagogic Action Research Group co-designed the activities outlined in this intervention strategy and reflected that 'the strategy assumes that changes can be made without us having to change the entire cultural/systemic basis of the issues and recognises that what we're doing may be considered treating symptoms, not getting rid of causes'.

Race equality actions

The need for belonging is considered one of the most fundamental requirements for all students to thrive academically. However, the evidence indicates this phenomenon is particularly acute for students of colour, for whom a sense of belonging is crucial for overcoming existing barriers and enabling academic engagement and motivation.

Evidence base

- Compelling evidence from a wide range of research studies underscores the critical importance of fostering a sense of academic belonging, especially for students of colour. Conversely, lack of belonging is linked to negative psychological outcomes like anxiety and depression. Ultimately, the research collectively suggests fostering belonging for students of colour leads to increased academic achievement, applications, retention, and better preparation for a diverse world.
- The [Racially Inclusive Teaching Toolkit](#) references literature which demonstrates that an inclusive curriculum that instils belonging has a major positive impact on students' learning, performance, motivation, and overall academic success.
- After an extensive multi-year consultation process, Oxford determined key strategic priority areas to concentrate efforts, which are captured in the [Race Equality Charter](#) program and the [Bodleian Libraries Strategy](#). These commitments are complemented by actions arising from participatory research with black and racially minoritised students which is ongoing.

Student consultation

- The [Diversity of Student Experience](#) research project was in-house enquiry into how Oxford's learning environment is experienced by students from a range of underrepresented backgrounds at the University. Piloting a range of methods, undergraduate students were offered various means of participation and a student advisory group actively piloted and reported back on their experiences of diverse methods (listening rooms, appreciative enquiry, photo-voice, diary, survey). The project also convened a black students advisory group to produce a bespoke Theory of change to feed into the APP.
- The [We Are Our History](#) project was led by Bodleian Libraries to review its collections, its work with audiences, and its staffing through the lens of race and the legacies of the British Empire. The research undertaken with black and racially minoritized students indicated issues that combined to create feelings that they did not belong in the Bodleian Libraries. These included historic cultural signals in physical library spaces (e.g. portraiture, naming); availability of books and information resources reflecting their background; access conditions of non-white western collections (e.g. available open shelf or in offsite storage, library use only or able to be borrowed); and the reflection of their identity in 'showcase' resources (e.g. Digital Bodleian).

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Oxford

Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Fees for students who start on a course in 2025/26 and who continue on the same course for more than one year will usually increase annually, subject to government fee caps. In deciding the annual level of increase the University and colleges will take into account a range of factors, including rises in the costs of delivering the course, and changes in government funding. The increase each year will not exceed whichever is higher from 6% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Fees for Home Undergraduates are set at the maximum level permitted by government.

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

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

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

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

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

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|--|--|------------------------|-------------|
| First degree | | N/A | 4625 |
| Foundation degree | * | N/A | * |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | N/A | * |
| HNC/HND | * | N/A | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | Archaeology, British Archaeology, History of Art | N/A | 3295 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Creative Writing, English Literature, English Social and Local History, History, IT Systems Analysis and Design, Local History | N/A | 3620 |
| CertHE/DipHE | English Local History | N/A | 3175 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Theological Studies | N/A | 4625 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Undergraduate Certificate in Higher Education (2 years). This course charges an annual programme fee of 1,460. In addition students pay fees for each individual course they attend, and these vary slightly depending on module choices. The full-time equivalent course fee shown represents a standard selection. | N/A | 5340 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Undergraduate Certificate in Higher Education (3 years). This course charges an annual programme fee of 1,460. In addition students pay fees for each individual course they attend, and these vary slightly depending on module choices. The full-time equivalent course fee shown represents a standard selection. | N/A | 5340 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Undergraduate Certificate in Higher Education (4 years). This course charges an annual programme fee of 1,460. In addition students pay fees for each individual course they attend, and these vary slightly depending on module choices. The full-time equivalent course fee shown represents a standard selection. | N/A | 5340 |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | N/A | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | N/A | * |
| Sandwich year | * | N/A | * |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | N/A | * |
| Other | * | N/A | * |

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

| Sub-contractual part-time course type: | Sub-contractual provider name and additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|--|---|------------------------|-------------|
| First degree | * | * | * |
| Foundation degree | * | * | * |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * | * |
| HNC/HND | * | * | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * | * |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Sandwich year | * | * | * |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | * | * |
| Other | * | * | * |

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Oxford

Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OIS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Breakdown | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Access activity investment (£) | NA | £6,628,000 | £7,053,000 | £7,374,000 | £7,680,000 |
| Financial support (£) | NA | £11,747,000 | £12,018,000 | £12,308,000 | £12,545,000 |
| Research and evaluation (£) | NA | £1,038,000 | £1,100,000 | £1,138,000 | £1,167,000 |

Table 6d - Investment estimates

| Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000) | Breakdown | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Access activity investment | Pre-16 access activities (£) | £1,728,000 | £1,884,000 | £1,921,000 | £1,959,000 |
| Access activity investment | Post-16 access activities (£) | £4,900,000 | £5,169,000 | £5,453,000 | £5,721,000 |
| Access activity investment | Other access activities (£) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Access activity investment | Total access investment (£) | £6,628,000 | £7,053,000 | £7,374,000 | £7,680,000 |
| Access activity investment | Total access investment (as % of HFI) | 22.2% | 23.7% | 24.9% | 25.9% |
| Access activity investment | Total access investment funded from HFI (£) | £436,000 | £453,000 | £472,000 | £490,000 |
| Access activity investment | Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£) | £6,192,000 | £6,600,000 | £6,902,000 | £7,190,000 |
| Financial support investment | Bursaries and scholarships (£) | £11,667,000 | £11,933,000 | £12,219,000 | £12,452,000 |
| Financial support investment | Fee waivers (£) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Financial support investment | Hardship funds (£) | £80,000 | £85,000 | £89,000 | £93,000 |
| Financial support investment | Total financial support investment (£) | £11,747,000 | £12,018,000 | £12,308,000 | £12,545,000 |
| Financial support investment | Total financial support investment (as % of HFI) | 39.4% | 40.4% | 41.6% | 42.4% |
| Research and evaluation investment | Research and evaluation investment (£) | £1,038,000 | £1,100,000 | £1,138,000 | £1,167,000 |
| Research and evaluation investment | Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI) | 3.5% | 3.7% | 3.8% | 3.9% |

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: University of Oxford

Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary (500 characters maximum) | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------|------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Increase the proportion of entrants to Oxford from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 and Q2. | PTA_1 | Access | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD)) | IMD quintile 1 and 2 | N/A | By using this source of data we have access earlier to our key target metrics, split by the different admissions stages (application, shortlist, offers, accepts). This allows us to have a more nuanced understanding of our progress on the targets and allows for more rapid intervention. We can more easily look at our targets broken down by additional characteristics, including at looking at breakdowns by course of application. The most recent year is used as the baseline. | No | UCAS data (please include details in commentary) | Other (please include details in commentary) | Percentage | 19.5% | 20.9% | 21.6% | 22.3% | 23.0% |
| Increase the proportion of entrants to Oxford with free school meal (FSM) eligibility. | PTA_2 | Access | Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) | Eligible | | We have not used the OfS FSM metric as it is England only and excludes independent schools. UCAS FSM: KS4 FSM6 is sourced from the National Pupil Database (NPD) from the DfE (for England), NI Ireland FSM6 is sourced from the NI School Census, and Wales FSM data is sourced from the Welsh PLASC. As a result, data is slightly different from the FSM proportions calculated by the OfS. No agreement is currently in place with the Scottish Government. The most recent year is used as the baseline. | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | Other (please include details in commentary) | Percentage | 7.6% | 8.9% | 9.5% | 10.1% | 10.7% |
| | PTA_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 5d: Success targets

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary (500 characters maximum) | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|--|------------------|-----------------|---|--------------|------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Increase the awarding rate of good outcomes. | PTS_1 | Attainment | Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) | Eligible | N/A | Increase the proportion of students with FSM eligibility awarded good degrees to 94% by 2028/29. Historic data show variability with little obvious trend. We have therefore defined the baseline using an average across pre- and post-pandemic years, excluding 2019/20 and 2020/21. Annual actual rates over the lifetime of the Plan to be within 95% confidence interval of the annual target. | No | The access and participation dashboard | Other (please include details in commentary) | Percentage | 90.1% | 91.1% | 92.0% | 93.0% | 94.0% |

[illegible]