Nelson College London
Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

1. Introduction and strategic aim

Nelson College London was founded in 2009 as an independent college of higher education. It has two campuses in Ilford, Gants Hill, located in East London and a new campus in Broadstairs, Kent, which started operations in September 2023.

The College commenced its journey by offering its programmes to international students. However, we subsequently decided to focus on the UK and EU markets only as the International student market became unfavourable to independent colleges of higher education.

In 2015, the college entered a partnership with London Metropolitan University to deliver two Foundation Degree courses and two Bachelor Degree top-up courses in Hospitality Management and in Business; from September 2016, the College started delivering these validated courses.

These validated courses provide alternatives to students studying at levels 4 & 5, with progression opportunities for all into one-year BA Top-up courses. In March 2019, this relationship was extended further, and this is due to end in July 2026, with the addition of two MA International Business Degrees, one in Management and the other in Hospitality Management, to provide a progression route for the undergraduate students. All are validated programmes.

The college has entered a partnership arrangement with the University of West London to deliver two Foundation Degree courses and two Bachelor's Degree top-up courses in Hospitality Management and Business, as well as a Postgraduate programme commencing in September 2024.

For the academic year 2022-23, the college had 1615 full-time students. 86% (1385/1615) of the students were enrolled on the level 4/5 courses, while 13% (212/1615) of the students were enrolled on the level 6 BA top-up courses, and 1% were enrolled on the level 7 postgraduate courses. (HESA 2022-23 Student Data)

Nelson College London's strategic plan articulates our overarching aim for access and participation: to provide access to higher education for individuals from the broadest possible spectrum of backgrounds. Building on this foundation, we have established specific goals:

- To transform our students' lives by equipping them with the knowledge and skills essential for success in their chosen careers.

- To ensure that all students enjoy a learning environment that offers equal opportunities and unhindered access to higher education, free from barriers related to gender, ethnicity, religion, age, or disability.

Drawing from the performance assessments, the Access and Participation Plan (APP) is strategically aligned with four fundamental views, each dedicated to promoting student success and ensuring our educational offerings meet the needs and aspirations of our students. These strategic objectives are integral to our overarching college strategy[1]:

- We are committed to supporting mature students who wish to pursue higher education qualifications, recognising the unique challenges and strengths they bring to our academic community.

- We prioritise the continuous monitoring and evaluation of our student body, utilising comprehensive data to enhance their educational experience and ensure our initiatives have a positive impact on their lives.

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[1] https://nelsoncollege.ac.uk/ethos-and-strategic-goals

- We strive to facilitate social mobility by collaborating with employers and other key stakeholders to develop a workforce that contributes positively to the economic and cultural growth of our communities.

- We engage in active partnerships with schools and other educational institutions to equip young people with the necessary skills, attitudes, and aptitudes for equitable access to higher education.

We are dedicated to creating a supportive, challenging, and enriching environment that nurtures an exceptional student journey from all starting points through to progression.

Vision

Nelson College London (NCL) aims to become:

A leading provider of high-quality, career-focused higher education in the Greater London area and an exemplar of alternative university-level provision - well governed, accountable and sustainable.

Mission

Nelson College London offers access to higher education to people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, enabling them to transform their lives and prosper through the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in their chosen careers.

The Nelson College London motto is "**Learning Brought to Life**"

Values

Nelson College London values:

- The quality of the learning experience it provides, offering education that caters for the individual needs of its students.

- Support for students both professionally and personally as they progress with their studies at the College.

- Creatively engaging students and teachers in reflective thinking, innovation, originality and self-expression.

- The development of independent learning skills, making learning enjoyable as well as meaningful, stimulating and challenging.

- The celebration of its achievements through the success of its students.

- Diversity, achieved through inclusiveness.

- The continual professional development of all members of staff.

- The partnership between staff, students, non-executives, directors and shareholders.

2. Risks to equality of opportunity

We have assessed the risks to equality of opportunity using the OfS data dashboard[2], internal surveys, observations from students and staff members, and research on the risks to access, continuation, completion, attainment, and progression in the higher education sector.

The table below shows the 12 risks that may affect a student's opportunity to access, succeed and progress in higher education. We will be referencing these risks throughout our plan as they provide us the context in which affects equality of opportunity for students with certain characteristics.

Risks to Equality of Opportunity	EORRs
Access	Risk 1: Knowledge and skills
	Risk 2: information and guidance
	Risk 3: Perceptions of higher education
	Risk 4: Application success rates
Success	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support
	Risk 7: Insufficient personal support
	Risk 8: Mental health
	Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus
	Risk 10: Cost pressures
	Risk 11: Capacity issues
Progression	Risk 12: Progression from higher education

Risks to Access (to higher education)

Risk 2.1: Upon analysing the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard, the data showed a consistently low number of young students aged under 21 enrolled in the college. In the 2021-22 academic year, only 12.9% were under 21, which is the highest percentage since 2016. Further analysis of our young student population in 2021-22[3] showed that 83% of young students (under 21) were from areas with the highest deprivation, quintiles 1 and 2. Intersectional analysis of IMD and ethnicity showed that White young students made up 73% of the young student population, while those from Asian and Black backgrounds were only 9% of the young student population. Evidence suggests this is a result of insufficient information and guidance and students' perceptions of higher education.

Risk 2.2: The persistently low number of students reporting a disability enrolled in NCL highlights the need for increased transparency in our support for these students. The EORR suggests that the low enrolment of disabled students may be due to their perception of higher education, as they might believe there is not enough support for them in NCL. To address this, the college plans to boost engagement and support for disabled students by increasing outreach and physical accessibility and providing more information and guidance before and after they enrol.

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[2] Office for Students. *Data dashboard - Office for Students*. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/

[3] OfS Individualised data relating to partner providers and the construction of access and participation and student outcomes data version 2024-1 (April 2024).

Risks to Continuation (in the study of higher education qualifications)

Risk 2.3: In the 2020-21 academic year, the ethnicity continuation indicator revealed that students from a Black and Other background had the lowest continuation rates compared to all other ethnic groups. This is consistent with the sector data, with Black students consistently experiencing lower continuation rates over the years. However, looking at the average continuation rates for all ethnicities, both Black and Asian students have the lowest average continuation rates for the period of 2015-16 to 2020-21. This is likely due to receiving insufficient academic, personal and mental health support.

Risk 2.4: Our analysis shows a 20.4% gap in continuation rates between young and mature students in NCL. Since the 2015-16 academic year, the APP data dashboard indicates that young students have consistently lower continuation rates compared to mature students at NCL. This differs from the trend in the sector where young students generally have higher continuation rates than mature students. This highlights the need for more targeted support for young students to help them continue with their courses.

Risks to Completion (of the study of higher education qualifications)

Risk 2.5: Students from IMD quintiles 1 and 4 have the lowest completion rates in 2017-18. However, the overall trend from 2014-15 to 2017-18 shows students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 with the lowest completion rates throughout, while students from quintiles 3 and 4 have better completion rates throughout the period. The average calculations of each quintile over the years confirm that those from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds (IMD quintiles 1 and 2) have the lowest completion rate averages. From our research, we understand that students from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds are likely to be affected by all risks within the equality of risk register and they require extra personal, academic and financial support to complete their studies with good results.

Risk 2.6: In the academic year 2017-18, Black students had a completion rate of 75.9%, the lowest among all ethnicities. In comparison, White students had a completion rate of 85.5%, showing a 9.6% difference. From 2014-15 to 2017-18, Asian students had the lowest average completion rate of 67.3%, which is 12.4% lower than White students' average and 6.5% lower than Black students' average. The Equality of Risk Register (EORR) suggests that these disparities may be due to insufficient knowledge and skills, inadequate academic and personal support, and potentially lower mental health support.

Risks to Attainment (achievement and the awards made to higher education students at the end of their studies)

Risk 2.7: Students from the lowest areas of deprivation, IMD quintile 1, had the lowest attainment rate of 20% in 2021-22, with a 14.1% decline since 2020-21. This is also consistent with the sector data showing IMD Quintile 1 and 2 students with the lowest attainment rates. The EORR explains this to be caused by insufficient support, increased cost pressures, and capacity issues.

Risks to Progression (into the labour market, further study and other destinations after leaving higher education)

Risk 2.8: The data shows that Black and Asian students have the lowest progression rates at 35.9%. This is likely due to a lack of information, guidance, and financial resources to participate in extracurricular and networking activities. Since most NCL students come from IMD quintiles 1 and 2, we have decided to focus our efforts on Black and Asian students, particularly those from IMD quintiles 1 and 2, as they are likely to be significantly impacted by unequal opportunities.

3. Objectives

Access and Outreach Objectives

Objective 3.1: NCL will increase the number of young students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

>**Indication of risk:** low application rates *(see Risk 2.1)*

>**Student characteristics:** Black and Asian young students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2

>***Target PTA_1: to increase Asian and Black young students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 to 20% by 2030.***

Objective 3.2: NCL aims to increase the percentage of disabled students enrolled at the college to 20% by 2030 through improved accessibility across all three campuses and by providing more information and guidance to them.

>**Indication of risk:** low application success rates *(see Risk 2.2)*

>**Student characteristics:** disabled students

>***Target PTA_2: to increase the recruitment of disabled students to 20% by 2030.***

Continuation Objectives

Objective 3.3: NCL will improve its continuation rates for Black and Asian students.

>**Indication of risk:** low continuation rates *(see Risk 2.3)*

>**Student characteristics:** Black and Asian students

>***Target PTS_1: to increase continuation rates for Black students to 90% by 2030.***

>***Target PTS_2: to increase continuation rates for Asian students to 92% by 2030.***

Objective 3.4: NCL will improve its continuation rates for young students aged under 21.

>**Indication of risk:** low continuation rates *(see Risk 2.4)*

>**Student characteristics:** Young students aged under 21

>***Target PTS_3: to increase the continuation rate for young students to 75% by 2030.***

Completion Objectives

Objective 3.5: the college will increase its completion rates for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 areas.

>**Indication of risk:** low completion rates *(see Risk 2.5)*

>**Student characteristics:** students from areas of high deprivation, IMD quintiles 1 and 2

Target PTS_4: to increase completion rates for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 to 85% by 2030.

Objective 3.6: to increase the completion rate of Black and Asian students.

    Indication of risk: low completion rates *(see Risk 2.6)*

    Student characteristics: Black and Asian students

    Target PTS_5: to increase completion rates for Black students to 85% by 2030.

    Target PTS_6 to increase completion rates for Asian students to 85% by 2030.

Attainment Objectives

Objective 3.7: to increase attainment rates for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2.

    Indication of risk: low on-course attainment *(see Risk 2.7)*

    Student characteristics: students from areas of high deprivation, IMD quintile 1 and 2

    Target PTS_7: to increase the average attainment rate for IMD quintile 1 and 2 students to 50% by 2030.

Progression Objectives

Objective 3.8: to reduce the progression gap between White and Black students, as well as between White and Asian students.

    Indication of risk: low progression rates in further study and in high-earning jobs *(see Risk 2.8)*

    Student characteristics: Black and Asian students

    Target PTP_1: to reduce the progression gap between White and Black students to 1% by 2030.

    Target PTP_2: to reduce the progression gap between White and Asian students to 1% by 2030.

4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1 (IS1): Access & Outreach

Objectives and targets

Risks 2.1, 2.2,

Objectives 3.1 and 3.2

To increase access to higher education for disadvantaged groups through the development of attainment-raising and aspiration-raising activities that seek to build positive perceptions and increase knowledge and skills to enter higher education.

To implement long-term and sustainable interventions for the duration of the plan for a better understanding of the results of the activities we run.

EORR Risks: 1, 2, 3, and 4

Evidence base and rationale: see Annex B

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Activity 1: (New activity) Teaching English to mid-phase admission children from non-English speaking countries entering primary schools. This will be a new collaborative activity with a primary school. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, GTRSB, First in family **Cross Intervention: --**	Funding to employ an EAL teacher to teach English to students. In addition, students will be provided with an application called Flash Academy, which can be used remotely to learn English on their own time.	We anticipate significant enhancements in students' English language proficiency and a stronger sense of belonging within the educational setting.
Activity 2: (Existing activity) Raising aspirations for higher education – information, advice and guidance (IAG) We will continue to partner with multiple pre-16 and post-16 schools and colleges to raise awareness of the pathways into higher education and to build their knowledge of the next steps in their educational journey.	Staff members to deliver presentations/workshops on higher education.	Outcomes of this activity include: Increased knowledge of the benefits, course choice, and of their future options. Increased application success rates. Increased participation in higher education.

Target student characteristics: BAME, GTRSB, care experienced, disabled, IMD quintiles 1 and 2 **Cross intervention: --**		
Activity 3: (New activity) NCL is conducting a pilot project in collaboration with a further education school. Prospective students who do not meet the entry requirements for Level 4 qualifications will be supported and funded by NCL to achieve the Level 3 qualification, which will enable them to enter higher education. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, GTRSB, disabled, IMD quintiles 1 and 2 **Cross intervention: --**	Co-design the program delivery with a level 3 provider. Administrative support for enrolling students on a level 3 course. Tuition Fee per student	We expect the following outcomes: Increased application success rates. Increased participation in higher education. Increased confidence to succeed in HE.
Activity 4 (New activity) Collaborating with other higher education institutions to deliver bigger attainment-raising and aspiration-raising projects in schools and in the third sector. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, disabled, low deprivation areas, **Cross intervention: --**	Staff to build a partnership and programme for attainment raising with schools and other higher institutions.	Increased confidence in future success. Increased knowledge on the benefits of HE.
Activity 5 (New activity) Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)	Administrative staff to input and analyse data	Better targeted outreach to schools in areas that are not receiving much funding and opportunities.

Once we have established long-term partnerships with schools and other organisations, we aim to begin implementing HEAT. We will use HEAT to track the progress of students who have participated in our outreach programmes. **Cross intervention: --**		

Evaluation Plan

For the English Language classes, we will be conducting termly reports to monitor the progress of the pupils participating in the intervention. In addition to this, we aim to do surveys with the pupils to understand how frequently they are engaging with the Flash Academy application. This will also help to understand whether pupils with higher engagement with the application are achieving better EAL scores compared to those having little interaction with the Flash Academy application. This will further enhance our research as we will also aim to compare their progress in English to other subjects. If successful, we hope to offer this intervention programme to other schools.

All aspiration-raising activities will involve surveys of participants' aspirations and attitudes before and after taking part in the activity.

Intervention Strategy 2 (IS2): On-Course Attainment

Objectives and targets

Risk 2.7

Objective 3.7

To increase academic and personal support for students struggling to achieve higher degree outcomes.

To increase the attainment rates for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 areas.

EORR Risks: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Evidence base and rationale: see Annex B

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Activity 6: (Existing activity) Academic & technical skills workshops to be delivered at least twice a week. **Target student characteristics:** IMD quintiles 1 and 2, BAME, Mature students, Disabled **Cross intervention: IS3, IS4**	Personal tutors Teacher-led mentoring – teaching students how to reference, write critically, and presentation skills. Teaching technical skills to students to produce analytical work with the use of SPSS and Excel.	Increased research skills Increase in critical writing skills Improved presentation skills Improved IT skills Increased attainment rates
Activity 7: (Existing activity) Remedial programmes – offering extra lessons in areas where students are struggling Provision of extra support for students to achieve higher degree awards (online and in-person). **Target student characteristics:** Disabled students **Cross intervention: --**	Teaching staff for extra classes.	As a result, disabled students are likely to have an increased understanding of their course, which will increase attainment rates.
Activity 8: (New activity) Peer-to-peer mentoring BA Top-up students will mentor their fellow students in year 1 from the same discipline. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, Mature, IMD quintiles 1 and 2 **Cross intervention: IS3, IS4**	Students to participate in the peer-to-peer mentoring programme. Payment to students to encourage participation.	Increased sense of belonging Increased academic knowledge and skills Increase in on-course attainment Increase in continuation rates Increase in progression rates

Evaluation plan:

We will take annual surveys from students for each of the activities in IS2 to see the changes in their confidence about their academic and technical skills as well as their confidence in completing the course.

Intervention Strategy 3 (IS3): Continuation and Completion

Objectives and targets

Risks 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6

Objectives 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6

To increase the continuation and completion rates of students from IMD quintiles 1,2 and 4, and for Black students.

EORR Risks: 8, 10, 11

Evidence base and rationale: see Annex B

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Activity 9: (Existing activity) Counselling is available to all students. Provision of professional online and in-person mental health support for individuals. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, IMD quintiles 1, 2 and 4, Disabled, young (under 21s), care experienced **Cross intervention: IS2 & IS4**	Counsellor—currently, there is only one for each of the three campuses. We aim to have at least one for each campus by 2029. PLUMM Subscription (online) allows students to access mental health support remotely from anywhere on or off campus.	Increased mental health Increase in on-course attainment Increase in continuation rates Increase in progression rates

Evaluation plan:

We will gather anonymous surveys from students participating in counselling sessions using PLUMM to track changes in their attitudes toward learning.

Intervention Strategy 4 (IS4): Progression

Objectives and targets

Risks 2.8

Objectives 3.8

To increase the progression rates of all disadvantaged students.

EORR Risks: 12

Evidence base and rationale: see Annex B

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes
Activity 10: Tailored career advice We aim to provide tailored career counselling sessions to all students. This means we will be able to tailor our career advice according to the specific needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups. **Target student characteristics:** BAME, low-income household, disabled, care experienced, mature **Cross-intervention? --**	Dedicated staff to give tailored career advice to students from various backgrounds and experiences.	Increased confidence in future success. Increased knowledge of future options of employment and further study. Increased capacity to make informed decisions about the future
Activity 11: Work experience **Target student characteristics:** BAME, low-income household, disabled, care experienced, mature **Cross-intervention? --**	Partnerships with employers Dedicated staff responsible for connecting with employers and providing students with details on available work experience opportunities.	Increased knowledge of career options. Increased confidence in future success.

Evaluation plan:

Before using the service, students will complete surveys about their work experience and their confidence in succeeding in the future. After using the service, they will complete another survey to determine whether their expectations for the future have changed and to identify any non-behavioural outcomes that may have resulted from using these career and work experience services.

Evaluation

IS1: Access & Outreach

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Activity 1 – Provision of EAL(*English as an additional language*) classes: long-term outreach programme with primary schools	Improvement in EAL levels.	Type 2 evaluation Assessment data – comparing EAL levels before and after.	Yearly progress reports will be shared annually at the APP-related meetings and with our Board of Governance. We plan to publish the progress reports annually on our Nelson College London website. We will also work towards sharing our findings at external events with organisations such as FACE and other external groups that we partner with.
Activity 2 – IAG	Increased positive perception of higher education. Increased knowledge of higher education and better expectations of higher education.	Type 2 evaluation Pre and post surveys from students	As this will be a recurring activity involving multiple schools, reports will be shared with the relevant meetings as they are completed. College to host dissemination events for participating schools at the end of year 4
Activity 3 – a collaboration with a level 3 qualification provider	Increase in level 3 knowledge. Increased application success rates in higher education	Type 2 evaluation Assessment data – level 3 qualification achievement Progression data – how many went on to study an undergraduate degree or equivalent?	Yearly progress reports will be shared within APP-related meetings and with our Board of Governance. We aim to publish case studies on our website of students who have successfully completed the level 3 qualification and progressed to higher education. We will also review the case studies and statistics to share in external meetings with other organisations and higher education institutions.

IS1: Access & Outreach

IS2: On-Course Attainment

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Activity 6 – Academic & technical workshops	Increased academic self-efficacy Increased attainment rates	Type 2 evaluation Assessment data Pre and post surveys	Termly progress reports of the students attending workshops will be shared internally with relevant committee meetings. An annual progress report will be presented at the Learning, Teaching, Engagement and Enhancement conference (LTEEC) Year four final report to be published on the College website.
Activity 8 – peer-to-peer mentoring	Increased positive attitudes toward learning. Increased attainment rates. Increased academic self-efficacy Increased engagement with information	Type 2 evaluation Assessment data Annual pre and post survey	Yearly reports on their progress and on the survey results. An annual progress report will be presented at the Learning, Teaching, Engagement and Enhancement conference (LTEEC) Year four final report to be published on the College website.

IS3: Continuation and Completion

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Activity 9 – counselling	Increased positive attitudes toward learning Increased resilience	Type 2 evaluation Annual pre and post surveys to see any changes they have observed in their attitude to learning	Yearly reports on the survey results. An annual progress report will be presented at the Learning, Teaching, Engagement and Enhancement conference (LTEEC) Year four final report to be published on the College website.

IS4: Progression

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Activity 10: Tailored career advice	Increased progression rates Increased confidence in future success Increased knowledge of career options	Type 2 evaluation Annual pre and post surveys to see changes in attitudes and confidence before and after using the career service.	Annual reports on the survey results are to be circulated internally to APP-related meetings. Year four final report to be published on the College website.
Activity 11: Work experience	Increased progression rates Increased confidence in future success Increased knowledge of career options	Type 2 evaluation Annual pre and post surveys	Annual reports on the survey results are to be circulated internally to APP-related meetings. Year four final report to be published on the College website.

Whole provider approach

Nelson College London is committed to equality of opportunity throughout the student lifecycle in its latest Access and Participation Plan (APP). Our college aims to remain at the forefront of education and student experience by providing transformative experiences and positive employment outcomes for all students, irrespective of their background. We strive to embed best practices in areas such as access, student attainment, mental health support, and employability.

The development of the APP involved extensive consultation with staff across multiple departments, including Outreach & Widening Participation, Admissions, and the Student Success team. The strategic direction of this plan has been shaped and endorsed by the senior leadership of the college, ensuring that our goals are aligned with broader institutional strategies and supported at the highest levels.

In drafting this APP, we have aligned our efforts with other key strategies and regularly assessed our approaches against the equality and diversity policy to ensure we effectively address and evolve our equality practices.

The APP is implemented through a detailed operational plan, and its implementation and outcomes are rigorously monitored by our governance structures. This comprehensive approach ensures that our commitment to equality is woven into every facet of our institutional fabric.

Furthermore, our commitment to a holistic approach is fully integrated into our business operations, as demonstrated in the previous APP cycle (2020-2025). We have established an APP Steering Group and a Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Advisory Group, along with dedicated widening participation staff. Together with team leaders responsible for each aspect of the APP, they continuously monitor and assess our performance against established targets. This systematic monitoring, alongside the dedicated teams for Access, Success, Progression, and Student Welfare, ensures that our students enjoy a supportive and enriching experience from enrolment to graduation.

Additionally, we are committed to supporting our graduates with career advice to progress into highly skilled employment and further studies. This is facilitated through platforms such as our Student Alumni network and other tailored resources, ensuring our graduates continue to thrive beyond their time at Nelson College London.

Student consultation

Nelson College London has placed significant emphasis on engaging students in the development, implementation, and monitoring of its Access and Participation Plan. This engagement has been conducted through a multi-faceted approach to ensure comprehensive and representative input from the student body.

The Student Representative Committee Forum has served as a primary platform for consulting students, comprising elected representatives from various programmes and campuses who meet regularly to discuss and provide feedback on key institutional initiatives, including the Access and Participation Plan. During these meetings, students were briefed on the objectives and components of the plan and invited to share their perspectives, concerns, and suggestions.

To gather broad-based input, surveys were distributed to all students across all programmes and campuses. These surveys were designed to capture detailed feedback on various aspects of the Access and Participation Plan, focusing on students' awareness of access and participation initiatives, perceived barriers to education, and suggestions for improvement.

The survey responses provided quantitative data that highlighted trends and common themes in student opinions. Additionally, focus groups were conducted with students from all programmes and campuses, offering a more in-depth and qualitative understanding of student experiences and perspectives. Facilitated by trained moderators, these sessions encouraged open dialogue and allowed students to express their views in a supportive environment, covering a wide range of topics, including specific challenges faced by underrepresented groups, the effectiveness of current support services, and potential new initiatives to enhance access and participation.

Based on the feedback gathered through the Student Representative Committee Forum, surveys, and focus groups, Nelson College London has taken several steps to refine and enhance its Access and Participation Plan. Firstly, students identified the need for more robust support services, particularly for those from underrepresented backgrounds. In response, the college has expanded its academic support programmes, including tutoring, mentoring, and study skills workshops.

Secondly, feedback indicated that students were not always aware of the existing access and participation initiatives. The college has implemented a more comprehensive communication strategy, utilising emails, a Virtual Learning Environment, and highlighting qualities of opportunities during student induction to ensure students are informed about available resources and support.

Thirdly, recognising the financial barriers faced by many students, the college has increased the availability of bursaries and scholarships, including targeted financial support for students from low-income families and those with additional financial needs.

Lastly, students suggested that the curriculum should better reflect diverse perspectives and experiences. Consequently, the college will carry out a review process to integrate more inclusive content and teaching practices across all programmes.

Students will continue to be involved in the planning stages of the Access and Participation Plan through their representation on the Student Representative Committee Forum, which will meet regularly to review progress and provide input on new initiatives.

The college has established a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan, in which students play a crucial role. Regular feedback sessions and surveys will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the implemented measures, and student representatives will be involved in the analysis of this data and in recommending adjustments to the plan.

Furthermore, students will be actively engaged in the delivery of access and participation initiatives, including participation in peer mentoring programmes, serving as ambassadors for access initiatives, and contributing to outreach activities aimed at prospective students from underrepresented groups.

Our approach to consulting students for the Access and Participation Plan is comprehensive and ongoing. Through the Student Representative Committee Forum, surveys, and focus groups, students have played a vital role in shaping the plan and will continue to be central to its implementation and evaluation. This collaborative approach ensures that the plan is responsive to student needs and effective in promoting access and participation.

Evaluation of the plan

The College has employed the OfS Self-Evaluation Toolkit to undertake a comprehensive review of our current practices. Through this self-assessment, we have identified specific, measurable objectives and are dedicated to enhancing the student record system and data collection methods. This ensures that data, both accurate and accessible, is available to shape and gauge our ongoing improvements. Our evaluation strategy, as detailed in this Access and Participation Plan (APP), is meticulously designed to ensure equality of opportunity throughout the student lifecycle, supporting our collaborative initiatives with local schools, colleges, employers, and other key stakeholders.

The toolkit has been instrumental in refining the design of our programmes. In support of these initiatives, the APP has specifically allocated budgets and resources for robust evaluation activities. We commit to collecting both empirical and narrative data, integral to our comprehensive quality assurance framework, aiming to provide a detailed view of the student lifecycle.

For the academic year 2025/26, drawing on insights from the OfS Self-Assessment tool, we will launch three internal projects with clearly defined terms and objectives. These projects are structured to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies in achieving the APP's targets.

Our evaluations will cover all phases of the student lifecycle—from application and enrolment to continuation, attainment, and progression—seamlessly integrating qualitative evidence to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

Project designs will merge narrative and empirical data in a mixed-methods approach, employing both primary and secondary research. By utilising qualitative and quantitative methods, we aim to thoroughly assess the impact of our access and participation initiatives, informing our decision-making process regarding potential modifications.

We will persist in refining our data collection methods, which include enhancing performance metrics for different student groups, supported by our NCL One Portal (Student Record System) and the OfS dashboard. This strategic alignment ensures that our evaluations are relevant and reflective of both local and national contexts.

Each project will have clear, measurable, and time-bound objectives. The evaluation process will be internally managed and overseen by the Principal's office. The Principal will rigorously review the outcomes of these internal projects and subsequently report to the Board of Governance. Any external projects will be evaluated using the NERUPI framework.

In our research methodologies, we will prioritise the use of centralised data sources to maintain objectivity and rely on reliable evidence. Our primary tools include the OfS data dashboards, supplemented by our internal data to provide a holistic view.

Furthermore, we will collect qualitative data through student surveys, focus groups, and other engagement activities, enriching our data and adding depth to our evaluations.

The Quality Assurance team will coordinate APP-related student focus groups, ensuring clear student engagement and ownership of the evaluation strategy. Our approach remains straightforward and evidence-based, specifically tailored to our context, given the relatively small number of students in higher education. The impact of financial assistance will be assessed by the Head of Finance and integrated into our governance and operational frameworks.

To enhance our evaluation activities further, the College will appoint an Evaluation Officer who will collaborate closely with the Widening Participation Officer and all teams involved in implementing the APP.

All evaluations and interventions will consider the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). To ensure adherence to the evaluation plan and timelines, an internal spreadsheet of key deadlines for evaluation reports will be maintained.

The APP reports will be discussed in the Academic Board and its subcommittees, including the Access and Participation Steering Group, Student Access and Success Steering Group, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Committee. The Board of Governance has oversight of the college's approach to implementing and evaluating Access and Participation. All committee meetings will feature the active involvement of student representatives, who will provide crucial feedback on the reports. To further boost student participation and strengthen our evaluation activities, we will conduct annual surveys and focus groups, allowing students to voice any concerns related to the Access and Participation Plan implementation and evaluation.

The college will establish a dedicated section on its website to share evaluations of its activities and findings, making these accessible to both internal and external audiences. Additionally, the college hosts an annual Learning, Teaching, Engagement, and Enhancement Conference (LTEEC), attended by students, staff, and other stakeholders, where we will disseminate our findings.

For external publication, we plan to publish summaries of our evaluations on the website within three months of each evaluation's completion. The findings presented at the LTEEC will also be made available publicly on the website immediately following the conference.

Provision of information to students

The College is committed to providing accurate and timely information to its existing and prospective students. The student can view our current Access and Participation Plan on the College website, under, (About us/ Widening Participation page) which can be found on the link https://nelsoncollege.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plans
The College website provides key information to prospective students on course structure, fees, student support and financial support in detail, which is available on the link https://nelsoncollege.ac.uk/admissions
Current students are kept up to date through the Virtual Learning Environment, notice boards, College website, emails and text messages on all aspects of their course and the College environment.

Financial support

The College has established financial support mechanisms to assist students. Depending on individual circumstances, students initiating their studies during this period may benefit from one of the following financial support packages:

1. **NCL Bursary Scheme**

   This scheme offers a bursary award specifically for students from disabled backgrounds or those who are care leavers. Eligible students will receive an annual grant of £1,000. Additionally, students who have experienced care will receive an extra £1,000. Comprehensive details regarding this support can be found in the student support section of the college website. Further information will be provided within our admissions offer, and each bursary will be formally confirmed through an award email once the student's place has been secured.

2. **NCL Hardship Fund**

   The College has allocated resources to the NCL Hardship Fund, designed to support students facing unexpected financial difficulties. The fund aims to alleviate financial pressures for all eligible current students who encounter unforeseen hardship, thus allowing them to concentrate on their studies and successfully complete their courses. Awards for

children can amount to £1,000, increasing to £1,500 for students who are disabled, have dependent children, or are care leavers.

To qualify for the Hardship Fund, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolment in a full-time undergraduate course (HND/FDA or BA Top-up).

- UK residency and eligibility for funding as a Home student.

- Receipt of the maximum statutory funding entitlement, which includes means-tested maintenance loans and grants, Child Tax Credits, Housing Benefits, Parents' Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant, and Council Tax Reduction.

- Receipt of the first instalment of their Student Finance prior to applying.

- Only one application per academic year is permitted.

The College website provides detailed information on the available financial support, including application procedures, eligibility criteria, required supporting documents, and details regarding the assessment process and payment arrangements.

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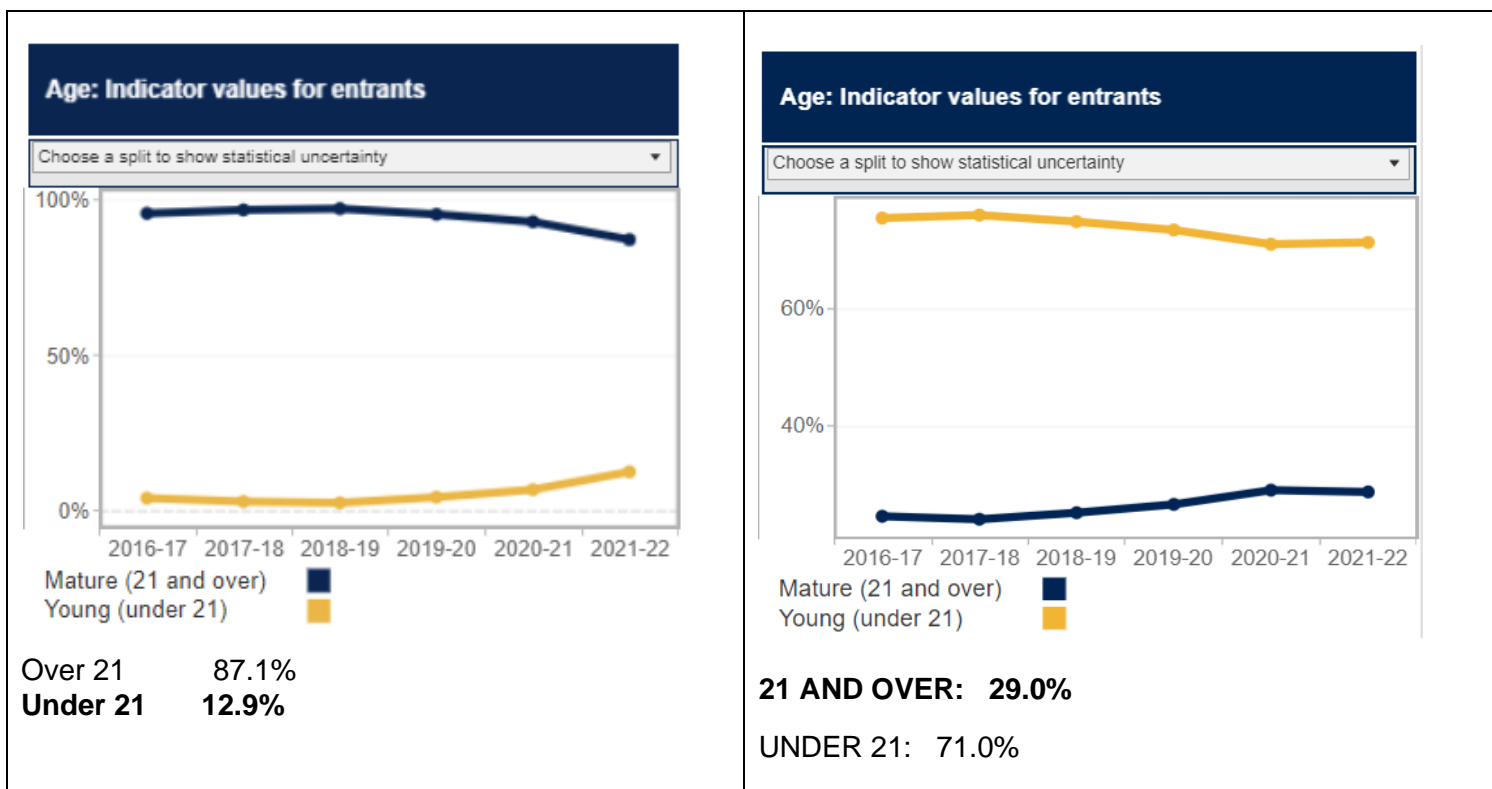
Risks to Access

Nelson College London	Sector

Nelson College London

Q1 – 2021-22:	**50.2%**
Q2 – 2021-22:	**28.8%**
Q3 – 2021-22:	13.7%
Q4 – 2021-22:	4.9%
Q5 – 2021-22:	2.5%

Lowest to highest → Q5 < Q4 < Q3 < Q2 < Q1

Sector

Q1 – 2021-22:	**22.8%**
Q2 – 2021-22:	**21.3%**
Q3 – 2021-22:	18.5%
Q4 – 2021-22:	17.7%
Q5 – 2021-22:	19.6%

Lowest to highest → Q4 < Q3 < Q5 < Q2 < Q1

We have carried out a detailed analysis to understand the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) student proportion at the NCL in comparison to that of the UK Higher Education Sector using the OfS APP Data dashboard. The IMD data for NCL shows that it is successful in attracting students from the most deprived quintile (Q1) with 50.2%, significantly higher than the sector average of 22.8%. This indicates that NCL has a substantial portion of its student body coming from the most challenging socioeconomic backgrounds. As we progress to less deprived quintiles, NCL's percentages decrease: 28.8% in Q2 and 13.7% in Q3, which is lower than the sector averages of 18.5%.

The gaps between NCL and the broader sector are particularly pronounced at both ends of the deprivation scale. NCL has more than double the proportion of students from the most deprived areas compared to the sector and significantly fewer students from the least deprived areas. This disparity could impact several strategic areas for NCL, including resource allocation, where there may be a greater need to invest in support services tailored to students from more deprived backgrounds. Such services could include scholarships, mental health services, tutoring, and career counselling to ensure these students receive adequate support.

Overall, the analysis confirms that NCL is dealing with a considerably more deprived student population than the broader UK higher education sector. Addressing this requires specific strategies aimed at effectively supporting these students and efforts to diversify the socioeconomic backgrounds of future student intakes to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

Age: Indicator values for entrants

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty

Mature (21 and over) ■
Young (under 21) ■

Over 21   87.1%
Under 21   12.9%

Age: Indicator values for entrants

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty

Mature (21 and over) ■
Young (under 21) ■

21 AND OVER: 29.0%

UNDER 21: 71.0%

NCL has demonstrated considerable success in recruiting mature students as compared to the sector averages. Mature students are 87.1% of its student body, compared to the sector average of 29.0%. This highlights NCL's effectiveness in aligning its provision with the needs of mature students, who often seek education for professional and career advancement. The college supports this demographic with tailored services that help them balance education with other life commitments, contributing to high retention and satisfaction rates among mature students.

Despite these strengths, there is a significant gap in the recruitment of younger students. Currently, only 12.9% of NCL's student population is under 21, significantly lower than the sector average of 71.0%. This underrepresentation suggests that NCL's offerings and recruitment strategies may not resonate as well with school leavers seeking a traditional university experience. The predominance of full-time courses, while appealing to mature students, may deter younger students who might prefer more flexible learning options.

The analysis of student application data highlights that young students are most likely to be unable to meet the course entry requirements because they lack relevant qualifications or work experience to gain entry to level 4 qualifications.

To address this and improve its appeal to younger students, NCL needs to diversify its curriculum to include more part-time or modular courses. This could attract students who wish to balance studies with early career experiences. Enhancing campus life through better facilities and more opportunities for young students to make NCL a more attractive option for younger demographics.

Additionally, NCL needs to adjust its marketing strategies to highlight the vibrant aspects of college life that appeal to younger audiences, such as sports, arts, and social impact opportunities. Increasing outreach to schools and sixth-form colleges through more targeted events and workshops may also raise NCL's profile as a desirable choice for prospective students.

While NCL is proficient at attracting and supporting mature students, a strategic approach to also boosting younger student participation is required to enhance demographic diversity and enrich the educational environment for all students at the college.

Disability reported: Indicator values for entrants

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty
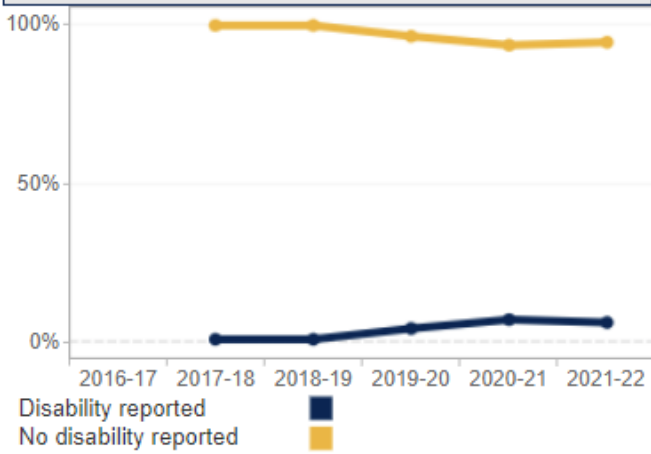
No Disability – 94.1%
Disability Reported – 5.9%

NCL needs to improve on recruiting disabled students as the sector is at 17.4% compared to 5.9% disabled students in NCL.

Disability reported: Indicator values for entrants

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty
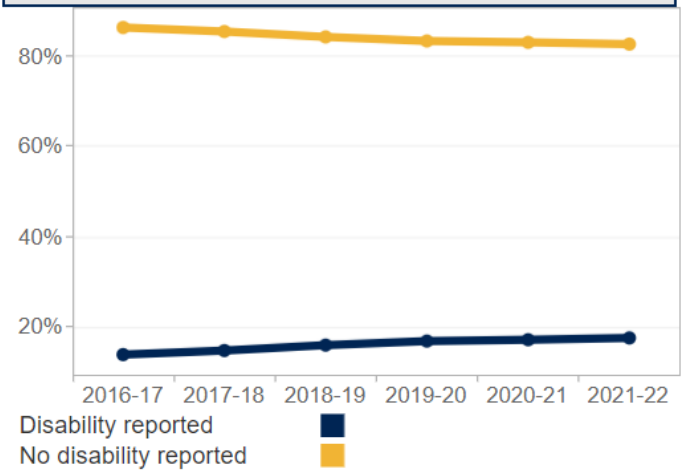
No Disability: 82.6%
Disability reported: 17.4%

Since implementing our first access and participation plan in 2019-20, the college has made significant progress, increasing from 0% of its students reporting a disability to the current 5.9%. However, this figure still falls short when compared to the sector average of 17.4%, underscoring a significant opportunity for further enhancement in NCL's recruitment of disabled students.

This gap suggests existing challenges within the College's recruitment strategies and the accessibility of its facilities and services. A crucial area requiring attention is the physical accessibility of the campus. With two out of three campuses not fully accessible, NCL may be inadvertently discouraging prospective students with physical disabilities.

Additionally, there is a persistent need to refine NCL's marketing and outreach strategies to better engage potential disabled students. Targeted campaigns that effectively communicate NCL's commitment to diversity and inclusion while showcasing success stories of current disabled students and the resources available are essential for strengthening recruitment efforts.

To uphold its reputation as a truly inclusive higher education provider, NCL has to prioritise accessibility enhancements, bolster support services, promote inclusivity through robust awareness campaigns, and refine its targeted recruitment initiatives. These improvements are not merely about increasing numbers; they are vital in cultivating a more diverse student body and enriching the educational landscape for all students, reinforcing NCL's commitment to being an inclusive institution.

Risks to Continuation

NCL	Sector-Wide
Deprivation (IMD 2019): Continuation indicator values Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼ Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ Q1 – 2020-21: 87.7% **Q2 – 2020-21: 85.7%** Q3 – 2020-21: 89.7% Q4 – 2020-21: 86.4% Q5 – 2020-21: -- **Highest to lowest: Q3 > Q1 > Q4 > Q2**	**Deprivation (IMD 2019): Continuation indicator values** Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼ Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ **Q1 – 2020-21: 84.4%** Q2 – 2020-21: 86.3% Q3 – 2020-21: 89.4% Q4 – 2020-21: 91.5% Q5 – 2020-21: 93.5%

The students from IMD Q2 at NCL have the lowest continuation rate, not only internally but also in comparison to the broader sector averages from 2020-21. Unlike the trend in the sector, where continuation rates generally rise from Q1 through Q5, NCL's Q2 rate stands at a mere 85.7%, below the sector average of 86.3% for the same quintile.

This discrepancy indicates that Q2 students at NCL face specific challenges that may not be as prevalent in the broader sector. One significant issue appears to be a potential mismatch in resource allocation that does not adequately meet the needs of Q2 students. While these students are not the most deprived, they still encounter barriers that significantly affect their academic persistence and require targeted support.

In response, NCL will continue to monitor the continuation rates for students from IMD Quintile 2, although it will not specify a target within the access and participation plan. This approach allows for flexibility in addressing the needs as they evolve, ensuring that interventions can be adapted effectively to support these students' success.

Ethnicity: Continuation indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼

Legend: Asian, Mixed, White, Black, Other
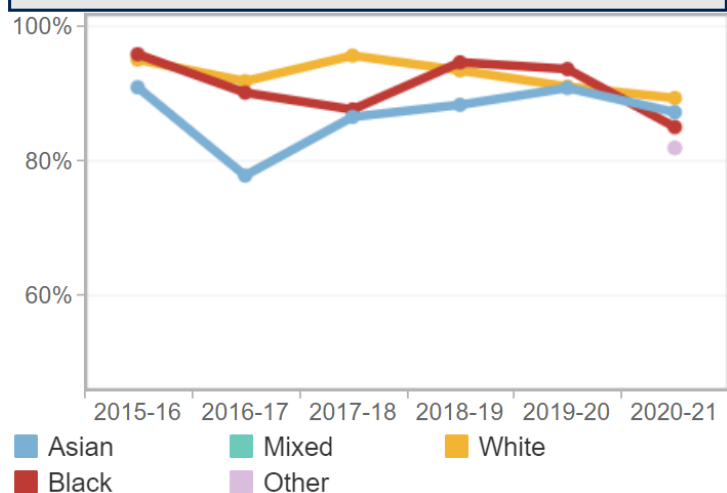
Asian (2020-21) - 87.1% **average over years: 86.8%**
Black (2020-21) - 84.9% **average over years: 91.0%**
Other (2020-21) - 81.8% **average over years: --**
White (2020-21) - 89.2% **average over years:** 92.6%

Ethnicity: Continuation indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼

Legend: Asian, Mixed, White, Black, Other
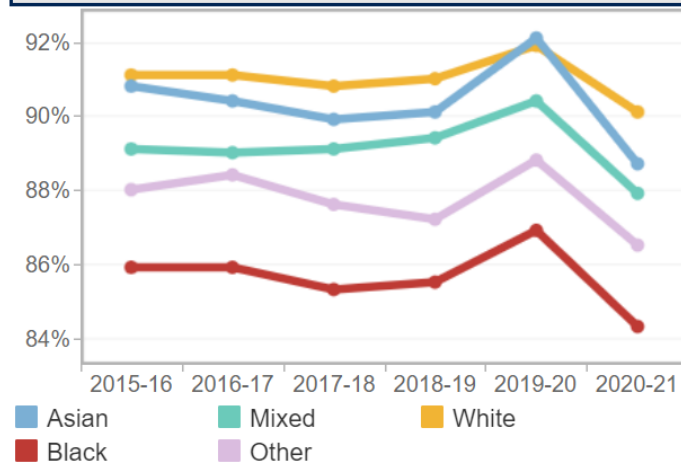
Asian – 88.7%
Black – 84.3%
Other – 86.5%
White –90.1%
Mixed – 87.9%

For the academic year 2020-21, the performance of Asian students at Nelson College London (NCL) was 87.1%, which is 2.1% lower than that of White students at NCL, who had a performance rate of 89.2%. When compared to the sector average for Asian students (88.7%), NCL Asian students performed 1.6% lower. Black students at NCL had a performance rate of 84.9%, which is 4.3% lower than NCL White students. However, they performed 0.6% higher than the sector average for Black students (84.3%).

The most significant gap was observed in the performance of students categorised as Other. Their performance rate at NCL was 81.8%, which is 7.4% lower than NCL White students and 4.7% lower than the sector average for Other students (86.5%). NCL White students performed at 89.2%, slightly below the sector average for White students, which was 90.1%.

In summary, Asian students at NCL are underperforming slightly compared to both NCL White students and the sector average. Black students are performing better than the sector average but still significantly behind White students at NCL. The most substantial performance gap exists for students categorised as Other, both compared to NCL White students and the sector average. White students at NCL have a performance rate that is slightly below the sector average.

Age: Continuation indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▾

Mature (21 and over) ■
Young (under 21) ■
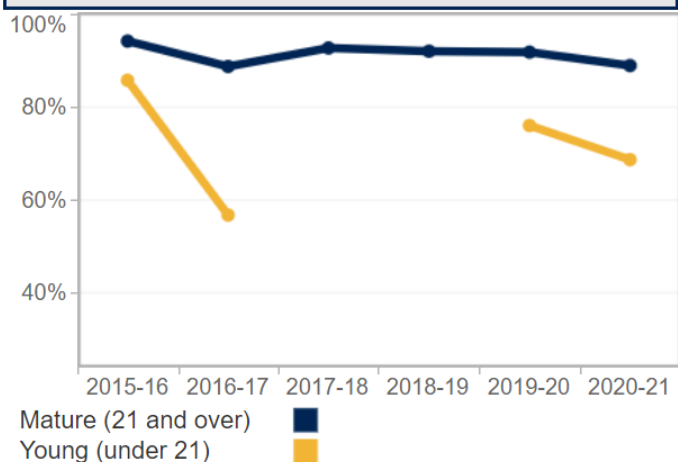
Mature - 88.9%
Young - 68.5%
Gap in 2020-21: 20.4%

Mature students have better continuation rates than young students at NCL with a difference of only 3.6%. whereas the sector shows young students with better continuation rates than mature students with a gap of 9.9%.

Age: Continuation indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▾

Mature (21 and over) ■
Young (under 21) ■
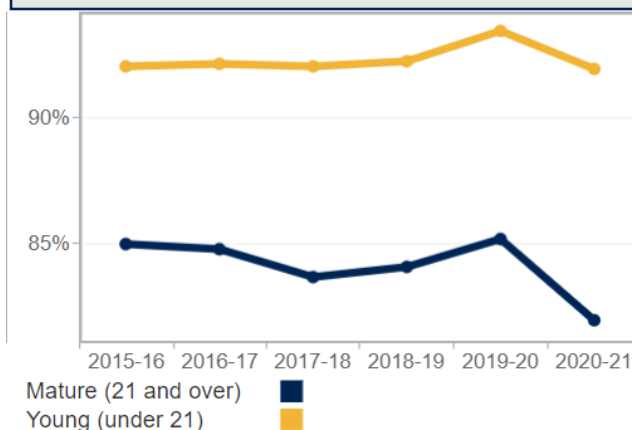
Mature – 82.0%
Young – 91.9%

Gap in 2020-21: 9.9%

In the academic year 2020-21, mature students at NCL have a continuation rate of 88.9%, which is 6.9% higher than the sector average of 82.0%. This indicates that mature students at NCL are performing significantly better than their peers across the sector.

On the other hand, young students at NCL had a performance rate of 68.5%, which is 23.4% lower than the sector average of 91.9%. This substantial gap highlights a critical area of concern, as young students at NCL are underperforming compared to their peers.

In summary, NCL mature students are performing significantly better than the sector average, suggesting effective support and teaching methods. However, young students at NCL are performing significantly below the sector average, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to improve their performance.

Risks to Completion

NCL	Sector-Wide
Deprivation (IMD 2019): Completion indicator values	**Deprivation (IMD 2019): Completion indicator values**
Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼	Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■	Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■
Q1 – 2017-18: 79.3% average over years: 72.6%	**Q1 – 2017-18: 81.5%**
Q2 – 2017-18: 82.8% **average over years: 72.0%**	Q2 – 2017-18: 84.0%
Q3 – 2017-18: 89.2% **average over years: 77.1%**	Q3 – 2017-18: 87.3%
Q4 – 2017-18: 78.9% average over years: 78.8%	Q4 – 2017-18: 90.0%
Q5 – 2017-18: --	**Q5 – 2017-18: 92.2%**

To analyse the risk to student completion using the NCL indicator for the IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) quintiles, we compare the provided data for NCL against the sector averages for the academic year 2017-18. This analysis aims to identify performance gaps and potential risks for student completion.

The completion rate of NCL students in Q1 (most deprived) was 79.3%, which is 2.2% lower than the sector average of 81.5%. This indicates a slightly higher risk for student completion in this quintile at NCL. For Q2, NCL students achieved a performance rate of 82.8%, which is 1.2% lower than the sector average of 84.0%, suggesting a minor risk for student completion. In contrast, Q3 students at NCL performed at 89.2%, which is 1.9% higher than the sector average of 87.3%, indicating a lower risk for student completion in this quintile. However, the performance of Q4 students at NCL was 78.9%, which is 11.1% lower than the sector average of 90.0%, highlighting a significant risk for student completion in this group.

When comparing Q1 and Q5 students, NCL Q1 students performed at 79.3%, while the sector average for Q5 students was 92.2%. This indicates a substantial disparity, with Q1 students at NCL performing 12.9% lower than the sector average for Q5 students. This comparison highlights a significant performance gap between the most and least deprived students, underscoring the need for targeted support for the most deprived students.

Ethnicity: Completion indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
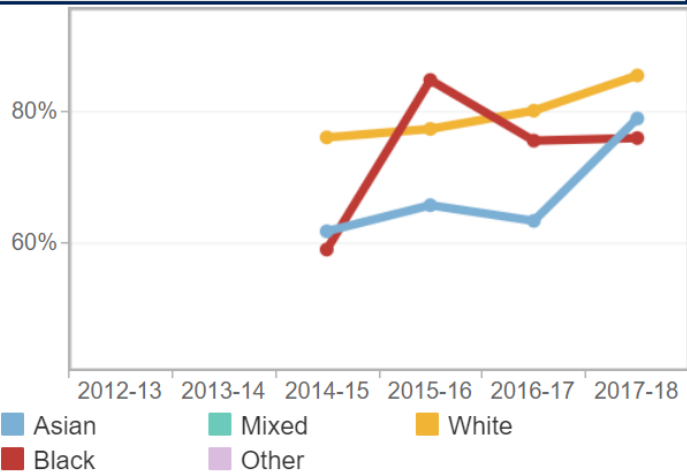
Asian – 78.9%   **average over years: 67.3%**
Black – 75.9% average over years: 73.8%
White – 85.5% **average over years:** 79.7%

Ethnicity: Completion indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty ▼
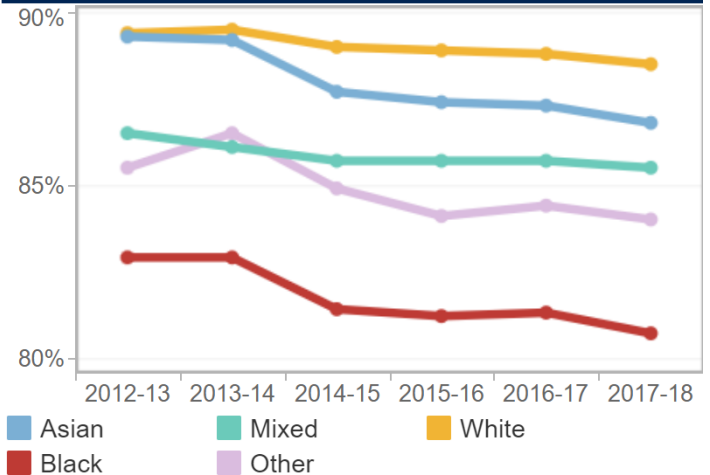
Asian - 86.8%
Black - 80.7%
Other - 84.0%
White - 88.5%
Mixed – 85.5%

In the academic year 2017-18, the completion rate for Asian students at NCL was 78.9%, which is 6.6% lower than White students at NCL, who achieved 85.5%. When compared to the sector average of 86.8% for Asian students, NCL Asian students performed 7.9% lower. Additionally, they performed 9.6% lower than the sector average for White students, highlighting a significant gap.

The completion rate for Black students at NCL was 75.9%, which is 9.6% lower than that for NCL White students. When compared to the sector average of 80.7% for Black students, NCL Black students performed 4.8% lower. Moreover, they performed 12.6% lower than the sector average for White students, indicating a considerable disparity.

White students at NCL achieved a completion rate of 85.5%, which is 3.0% lower than the sector average of 88.5% for White students. While NCL White students are closer in performance to the sector averages compared to Asian and Black students, there is still room for improvement.

Risks to Attainment

NCL	Sector-Wide
Q1 – Declined from 34.1% to 20% in 2021-22 Q2 – Increased from 30.6% to 37.9% in 2021-22	**Q1 – 2021-22: 68.5%** **Q2 – 2021-22: 74.3%** Q3 – 2021-22: 79.8% Q4 – 2021-22: 83.5% Q5 – 2021-22: 86.3%

We examine the available data for quintiles Q1 and Q2 to analyse the first-degree attainment at NCL against the sector averages. For the academic year 2021-22, the attainment rate for Q1 (most deprived) students at NCL significantly declined from 34.1% to 20%. This performance is 48.5% lower than the sector average of 68.5% for Q1 students, indicating severe underperformance and a critical area of concern. In contrast, Q2 students at NCL saw an increase in their attainment rate from 30.6% to 37.9%. However, this is still 36.4% lower than the sector average of 74.3% for Q2 students, highlighting a substantial gap that needs to be addressed.

Age: Attainment
For the academic year 2021-22, the attainment rate for mature students at NCL was 29.3%, which is significantly lower than the sector average of 71.3%. There is no data available for young students due to very small numbers.

Ethnicity
Students from Black ethnic backgrounds performed better than those from Asian and White backgrounds, with attainment rates of 39.4%, 32.5%, and 30.6%, respectively. However, when compared to sector averages, there is a significant gap. The sector average attainment rates are 73.4% for Asian students, 62.4% for Black students, and 82.4% for White students.

Risks to Progression

Due to the very small sample sizes, it was not feasible to conduct a meaningful analysis of the data specific to NCL. The limited number of observations would not provide reliable or statistically significant insights. However, we are aware that Black students at the college progress better compared to their Asian and White peers. White students, on the other hand, show significantly poorer progression. Our internal analysis indicates that this is due to students facing multiple disadvantages, including deprivation and socioeconomic background. As a result, we have opted to utilise the sector data from the data dashboard. This broader dataset allows us to identify and examine the risks to equality of opportunity more effectively.

Deprivation (IMD 2019): Progression indicator values

Q1 – 2020-21: 67.7%

Q2 – 2020-21: 70.7%

Q3 – 2020-21: 74.6%

Q4 – 2020-21: 76.8%

Q5 – 2020-21: 78.5%

Students from IMD quintiles Q1 and Q2 have the lowest progression rates

Ethnicity: Progression indicator values

Asian – 72.0%

Black – 71.3%

Other – 71.2%

White – 74.9%

Mixed – 75.5%
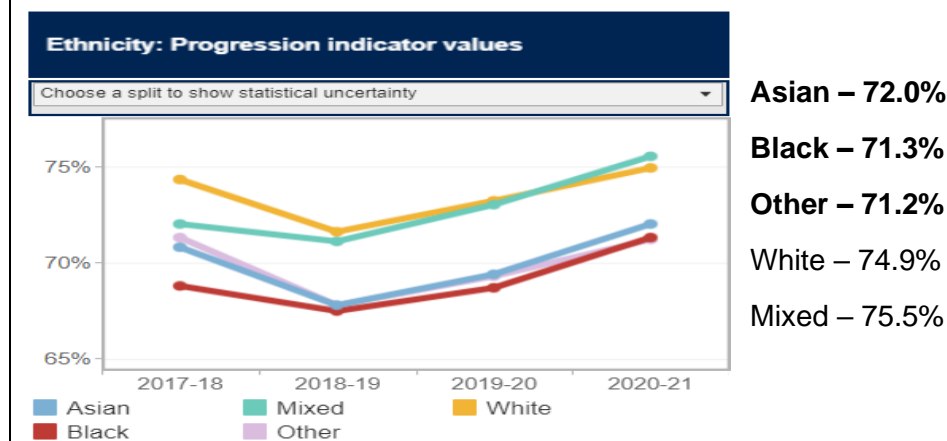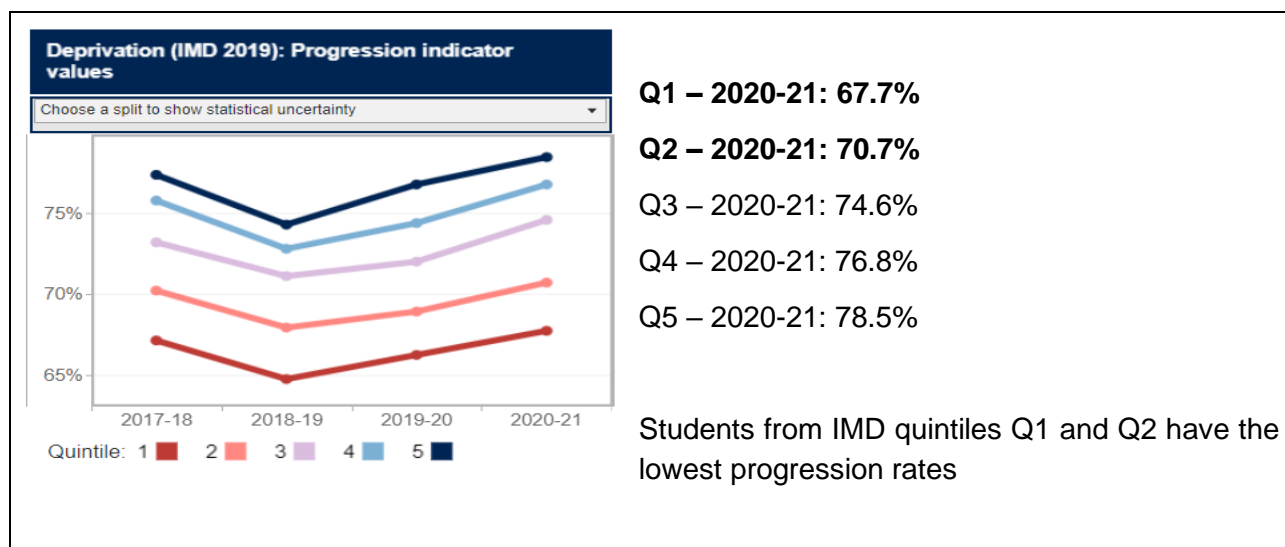
The progression rate for Asian students is 72.0%, which is 2.9% lower than the rate for White students at 74.9%. This indicates that Asian students face some challenges that impact their progression rates compared to their White peers.

Black students have a progression rate of 71.3%, which is 3.6% lower than the rate for White students. This suggests that Black students encounter even more significant barriers to progression.

The progression rate for students categorised as Other is 71.2%, the lowest among the compared groups, and 3.7% lower than the rate for White students. This points to a notable gap and highlights the need for targeted support for these students.

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

Intervention Strategy 1: Access and Outreach

The APP data dashboard indicates that a high number of young students are enrolling in higher education nationwide, compared to mature students. Currently, nearly a quarter of 18-year-old students entering higher education are from disadvantaged backgrounds. This figure is expected to increase to one million in a single year by 2030[4] (UCAS, 2024). This surge in competition may put disadvantaged students at risk of not being accepted into their desired courses or institutions. As a higher education provider, our goal is to provide disadvantaged students with the necessary tools and knowledge about the different pathways into higher education so that they can overcome challenges and reach their full potential in learning. This will help increase their academic achievement and aspirations for higher education.

It has become imperative for higher education institutions such as NCL to tackle attainment issues from the early stages of primary school, as evidence shows that prior attainment reflects how well students will perform when they enter higher education and graduate. The OfS' insight brief's Figure 4 identifies a 23pp difference in degree attainment between those who entered higher education with A*A*A* at A-level and those who entered with below DDD[5]. This has directed our outreach programme to be more collaborative with schools and further education colleges in order to support students' academic progress before they move on to higher education. Activities 1 and 3 aim to enhance academic achievement at different stages and ultimately help create pathways to higher education.

Based on research from the Sutton Trust, it was found that individuals who did not pursue higher education were more likely to be in the lowest income groups by the age of 30, while those with a degree were more likely to secure a job in a higher income bracket[6]. As a result, we have decided to continue implementing activities aimed at boosting access and aspirations for higher education, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds. These activities will involve providing Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to assist students in making well-informed decisions about their education. The overall evidence on IAG interventions indicates a small positive effect on attitudes, aspirations, and participation in higher education (TASO)[7]. As IAG is a low cost activity, it can be integrated into many other outreach projects to achieve a bigger positive effect on students' attitudes and aspirations towards higher education.

Through the use of IAG, we aim to assist unsuccessful applicants who do not meet the entry requirements at NCL in gaining the qualifications and experience necessary to access higher education. At NCL, many applicants are mature individuals from various disadvantaged backgrounds and we have observed a considerable number of unsuccessful applicants who were unable to obtain level 3 qualifications. From our research, we have found that less than half of the adult population in the UK have tertiary education and in 2018, 1.3% of the UK population aged over 25 were enrolled

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[4] UCAS. (2023, June 28). *Journey to a million*. https://www.ucas.com/about-us/journey-million
[5] Office for Students. (2022). OfS Insight 13 Schools, attainment and the role of higher education. In *OfS Insight*. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd782ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief-13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf
[6] The Sutton Trust. (2021). Universities and Social Mobility: Summary report. In *RESEARCH BRIEF*. https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Universities-and-Social-Mobility-Summary.pdf
[7] *Information, advice and guidance (IAG) (pre-entry) - TASO*. (2020, October 5). TASO. https://taso.org.uk/intervention/information-advice-and-guidance/

in a bachelors' degree or higher qualification (OfS)[8]. As a result of this observation, we plan to explore partnerships with level 3 providers to create pathways for unsuccessful applicants to enter higher education, especially for those who are over the age of 25.

Activity 1 is introduced based on feedback from the school contact we have partnered with. Many teachers reported that there is less funding to support mid-phase admission pupils who come from a non-English-speaking country and have little to no prior English language knowledge. This group of students are more likely to have insufficient English language skills, insufficient information and guidance, a negative perception of higher education or no awareness of higher education, and lower application success rates. Evidence on this type of targeted attainment-raising intervention activity suggests a positive impact on pupils' aspirations, attitudes, and attainment (TASO)[9]. A study conducted by Carlana and La Ferrara found positive effects of a tutoring programme on educational attainment, socio-emotional skills, and aspirations. We have used this evidence to inform our intervention programme as it was especially effective in improving the academic performance of pupils from a low socio-economic backgrounds and improving the wellbeing of pupils from immigrant backgrounds[10].

Intervention Strategy 2: On-Course Attainment

The evidence suggests that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who participate in higher education are at a higher risk of dropping out. They are also less likely to graduate with a first or upper second class degree and have lower chances of transitioning into graduate level employment compared to their more advantaged peers[11]. To ensure that disadvantaged students do not lag behind during their time at NCL, the college will implement evidence-based interventions to improve their academic achievement.

Evidence shows that peer-to-peer mentoring has a positive effect on attainment for participants in their first year but not for those in their third year of study (Fox et al, 2010)[12]. In addition to this, the combination of mentoring and counselling is shown to have better outcomes with a positive impact on attainment, retention and completion (Kerrigan and Manktelow, 2021)[13]. Both teacher-led and peer-to-peer mentoring will give students the personal support they need for increased engagement and attainment on their course. Our findings from an internal questionnaire asked students if they require any additional resources and the results showed that one of the most requested resources in the college was IT lessons and any other further support tailored to mature/elder students[14].

Intervention Strategy 3: Continuation and Completion

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[8] Office for Students. *Improving opportunity and choice for mature students - Office for Students.* https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-opportunity-and-choice-for-mature-students/
[9] Tutoring (pre-entry) - TASO. (2023, August 4). TASO. https://taso.org.uk/intervention/tutoring-pre-entry/
[10] Carlana, M., & La Ferrara, E. (2021b). Apart but Connected: Online Tutoring and Student Outcomes during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Social Science Research Network.* https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3777556
[11] Office for Students. (2022b). OfS Insight 13 Schools, attainment and the role of higher education. In *OfS Insight.* https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cd782ede-93d9-4de0-9f50-3c95a49aabf3/ofs-insight-brief-13-updated-10-may-2022.pdf
[12] Fox, A., Stevenson, L., Connelly, P., Duff, A., & Dunlop, A. (2010b). Peer-mentoring undergraduate accounting students: The influence on approaches to learning and academic performance. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *11*(2), 145–156. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787410365650
[13] Kerrigan, M., & Manktelow, A. (2021). Extra-curricular activities in higher education: enhancing the student experience. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, *23*(1), 123–147. https://doi.org/10.5456/wpll.23.1.123
[14] Report on findings from LTEECE&EF questionnaire

The EORR suggests that rising costs, mental health challenges, and capacity issues negatively affect students' ability to continue and complete their courses or achieve a good grade. This includes students' inability to access essential resources like suitable accommodation.

It is reported that in a year, a quarter of university students experience psychological distress, which is associated with an increased risk of anxiety, depression, substance use, personality disorders, academic failure, and job difficulties[15]. This hinders a student's ability to continue and complete their course with good grades. Evidence on online psychological interventions have shown to reduce depression, anxiety and stress in students (Morris et al, 2016)[16] , however, it is not as effective as face-to-face therapy which is why we have decided to provide both face-to-face and online versions of therapy.

Intervention Strategy 4: Progression

Research indicates that although there are numerous advantages to obtaining a degree, not all graduates are reaping the same benefits. It was observed that graduates whose parents had no residual income and black graduates are two groups with a lower-than-average proportion of individuals securing highly skilled jobs or pursuing further studies.

Work experience gives students exposure to the industry they are interested to work in outside of their classrooms, in the real world. Work experience has some strong evidence on the association with better graduate outcomes, i.e., more likely to get an interview, higher salary and lower likelihood of unemployment from at least six months after graduation[17]. Manktelow and Simmons also found sandwich courses to be the most effective at closing gaps in employment outcomes for disadvantaged students. However, the negative effects for students from wealthier backgrounds cannot be ignored as wealthier students were found to be more likely to drop out of university than those from poorer households. Also, the evidence suggests that the longer they are engaged in work during their degree, the likelihood of them withdrawing increased (Choi 2018)[18]. Therefore, we have chosen to engage our students in work experience for a shorter length of time, with the option to engage in another work experience placement at another time. We aim to stay engaged with our students throughout their work experience progress and ensure that we collate their feedback to improve our services and information further.

[15] Gulliver, E., Byrom, N., Student Minds, & NUS. Peer support for student mental health. In *Peer Support Report* (pp. 1–2). https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/peer_support_for_student_mental_health.pdf

[16] *Psychological - TASO*. (2023, October 24). TASO. https://taso.org.uk/intervention-smh/psychological/

[17] *Work experience (post-HE) - TASO*. (2023, April 3). TASO. https://taso.org.uk/intervention/work-experience-post-he/

[18] Choi, Y. (2017). Student Employment and Persistence: Evidence of Effect Heterogeneity of student employment on college dropout. *Research in Higher Education*, *59*(1), 88–107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-017-9458-y

Fees, investments and targets
2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Nelson College London Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10030129

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	BA Topup Courses	N/A	9250
Foundation degree	Business, Hospitality Management	N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	Business, Hospitality Management	N/A	9250
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
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	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
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: Nelson College London Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10030129

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£177,000	£203,000	£263,000	£336,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£244,000	£304,000	£350,000	£404,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£111,000	£152,000	£175,000	£202,000

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 (£)	£53,000	£61,000	£79,000	£101,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£124,000	£142,000	£184,000	£235,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£177,000**	**£203,000**	**£263,000**	**£336,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment (as % of HFI)*	4.0%	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Access activity investment	**Total access investment funded from HFI (£)**	**£177,000**	**£203,000**	**£263,000**	**£336,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)*	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£122,000	£152,000	£175,000	£202,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£122,000	£152,000	£175,000	£202,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£244,000**	**£304,000**	**£350,000**	**£404,000**
Financial support investment	*Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)*	5.5%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£111,000	£152,000	£175,000	£202,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	2.5%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Nelson College London Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10030129

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
To increase Asian and Black young students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2	PTA_1	Access	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)		Asian and Black young students (Under 21) from IMD quintile 1 and 2 backgrounds.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2021-22	Percentage	9%	11%	14%	16%	20%
To increase the proportion of disabled students	PTA_2	Access	Reported disability	Disability reported			No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	5.9%	7%	10%	15%	20%
	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
to increase the continuation rate for Black students	PTS_1	Continuation	Ethnicity	Black	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	84.9%	85.5%	87%	88.5%	90%
to increase the continuation rate for Asian students	PTS_2	Continuation	Ethnicity	Asian	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	87.1%	88%	89%	90%	92%
to increase the continuation rate for young students	PTS_3	Continuation	Age	Young (under 21)	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	68.5%	70%	71%	73%	75%
to increase completion rates for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2	PTS_4	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	81.05%	82%	82.5%	83%	85%
to increase completion rate for Black students	PTS_5	Completion	Ethnicity	Black	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	75.9%	77%	80%	82%	85%
to increase completion rate for Asian students	PTS_6	Completion	Ethnicity	Asian	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	78.9%	80%	81%	83%	85%
to increase the average attainment rate for IMD quintiles 1 and 2 students	PTS_7	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	N/A		No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	29.0%	35%	40%	45%	50%
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression 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
to reduce the progression gap between White and Black students	PTP_1	Progression	Ethnicity	Black	White		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	7.3%	6%	5%	3%	1%
to reduce the progression gap between White and Asian students	PTP_2	Progression	Ethnicity	Asian	White		No	The access and participation dashboard	2020-21	Percentage	7.3%	6%	5%	3%	1%
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														

PTP_9												
PTP_10												
PTP_11												
PTP_12												