

Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

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Introduction

SOAS University of London is one of the world's leading institutions for the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East. SOAS uniquely combines language scholarship, disciplinary expertise and regional focus. We have the largest concentration in Europe of academic staff concerned with Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

We continue to strengthen our importance in the UK and abroad in understanding the world, and excelling in teaching, learning and research. We are committed to diversity and inclusivity and have a continuous commitment to widening access and participation across the student lifecycle. Our assessment of our performance highlights areas of success with diversity at its core; particularly in access. We also face significant challenges in student success where ethnicity and social class appear to unduly affect outcomes. We will put in place measures to address these differentials and increase our investment to meet the challenging targets we have set ourselves.

SOAS has an integrated approach to planning and implementation and this plan is embedded in all institution-wide strategies focused for example on tackling with BAME attainment gap, improving assessment and feedback and academic support. This includes the Learning and Teaching Strategy. In addition, the development of the new institution-wide strategy in Access and Participation will, alongside this Access and Participation Plan 2020-25, set a clear direction to deliver equality of opportunity across all stages of the lifecycle through approaches that are embedded in all functions of SOAS.

1. Assessment of performance

The sector must make radical change in order to close the gaps shown in the OfS Key Performance Measures. SOAS recognises that social background and identity continue to be key drivers for access and success. That is why we are committed to scrutinising all aspects of our practice in order to make lasting change. It is therefore the most substantive section of this Plan.

This section sets the framework for our strategic aims and objectives, measures to achieve implementation, and evaluation.

In this next phase of implementation in our Access and Participation Plan, SOAS intends to take a more nuanced and granular approach with a thorough analysis of the underlying elements in the data, and enable a more focused response to challenges identified.

1. Assessment using OfS dataset

The sections below outline the analysis conducted in access, success and progression using the Office for Students' Access and Participation dataset. It includes reflections on the size of any gaps, analysis of the gaps statistical significance and what this might mean for SOAS' strategic aims and objectives.

Unless otherwise stated, references to the OfS dashboard concern the most recent year with publishable data for SOAS, usually 2017/18.

1.1 Low higher education participation and socioeconomic status

Access

The gap in access between students from the areas with the lowest HE progression (quintile 1) and students from areas with the highest HE progression (quintile 5) is very large, at 44 percentage points, and seems to be increasing. Conversely there is an inverse gap of -5 percentage points in access between students from areas with the highest levels of deprivation (quintile 1) and students from areas with the lowest levels of deprivation (quintile 5) (i.e. we recruit more students from IMD Q1 than Q5).

This gap is statistically significant using the POLAR4 measure, but not statistically significant using the IMD measure. The trend is persistent using POLAR, and fairly persistent for IMD where the "gap" has fluctuated between -10 and -2 over the past five years.

Whilst SOAS recognises that POLAR evidences significant gaps in participation, we are also aware that POLAR is not the most accurate data source to use for an institution like ours which is based in London and which primarily recruits from London. London has areas of extreme socio-economic disadvantage, but also high levels of participation in higher education when compared with other parts of the country. SOAS remains committed to contributing to reducing national gaps and will continue to use this measure when monitoring access. We will also use IMD data as this makes the nuances

of disadvantage in our student population more apparent. Our ambition is to be more representative of the London population split of quintiles¹.

Non-continuation

The gap in non-continuation between students from the areas with the lowest HE progression (quintile 1) and students from areas with the highest HE progression (quintile 5) is large, at 10 percentage points - but there is only 1 instance of published data. Data for the previous 3 years which has not been published due to suppression guidelines demonstrates a typical gap of 3-4pp, but with volatility and very large confidence intervals in general. With these caveats, the gap may be growing. Conversely, when students from the highest areas of participation and socio-economic advantage, and the lowest areas of participation and socio-economic advantage are grouped for comparison, the gap is non-existent (i.e. between POLAR Q1+2 and Q3+4+5, and between IMD Q1 and Q5). The data in fact shows that, when grouped, students from the highest areas of socio-economic disadvantage have better continuation rates (with a gap of -1 percentage points). There are no statistically significant gaps. Given the small population sizes using POLAR, we will be focusing on the Q1+2 and Q3+4+5 measures. For IMD there has been a 'good' inverse gap 4 years out of 5, and for POLAR the gap is on a downward trend. This is a positive finding as it suggests there are few gaps at SOAS in non-continuation by socio-economic status.

Attainment

There is insufficient data for analysing gaps between students from the lowest areas of participation against highest areas of participation (POLAR Q1 and Q5²). We will develop processes over the coming 12 months to monitor this data internally, which is likely to require the combining of a number of yearly cohorts. Overall however students from the areas with the lowest HE participation combined (POLAR quintiles 1 + 2) have better attainment than students from the highest participation areas combined (POLAR quintiles 3 + 4 + 5), with a gap of -5 percentage points in the most recent data (although it was +5 the preceding year). There is however a large and persistent gap of 10 percentage points between students from the highest areas of deprivation and the students from the lowest area of deprivation (IMD Q1 and Q5), even though it is half the size of the sector gap. Similarly when students from the areas of highest deprivation are combined for comparison with students from the lowest areas of deprivation there is a large and persistent gap of 5 percentage points (IMD Q1+2 and Q3+4+5).

The gaps are not statistically significant. When using the POLAR measure on HE participation and comparing students from the lowest areas of HE participation (Q1 + Q2) with the students from the highest areas of HE participation (Q3+4+5) there is a gap in only one year out of four. However, when using the IMD measure the gaps are persistent.

The POLAR data does not present an accurate picture for this measure. However, the gaps split by IMD quintiles are persistent and relatively large. This is an area of concern that SOAS will focus on under student success, particularly as IMD reflects London's patterns of disadvantage and our student body primarily comes from London.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

There is no data for comparing students from areas with the lowest and highest areas of HE participation, whether individually or combined (i.e. POLAR Q1 and Q5 or POLAR Q1+2 and Q3+4+5³). We will develop processes over the coming 12 months to monitor this data internally, which is likely to require the combining of a number of yearly cohorts. The most recent gap, in 2015/16, in progression between students from the highest areas of deprivation and lowest areas of deprivation (IMD Q1 and Q5) was very large and is statistically significant at 20pp, and grew compared to the previous year. However, using TEF4 Subject Pilot individualized data the Progression Gap between IMD quintiles 5 and 1 for DLHE 2016/17 is -3.9pp, a large improvement. Our most recent three years aggregated (as provided in the TEF data) gives a gap of 5.8pp.

When students from higher areas of deprivation are combined against students from lower areas of deprivation (IMD Q1+2 and Q3+4+5) there is no gap in 2015/16 data (and there has been a downward trend).

The POLAR data does not provide us with any evidence on the impact of background on progression. However using IMD we can see there are key gaps which further evidences our rationale for using IMD as a comparative measure throughout the student lifecycle. SOAS have challenges with progression data given our small size with many graduates who work abroad.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

¹ The overall London population is split into quintiles as follows: Q1 = 22.5%, Q2 = 29.6%, Q3 = 20.9%, Q4 = 16.2%, Q5 = 11.2%.

² Due to the small sample size involved the SOAS data has not been published in the OfS Data Dashboard

³ Due to the small sample size involved with the SOAS data, this has not been published in the OfS Data Dashboard

Access

The SOAS intake is very diverse. We have a smaller proportion of White students than the sector as a whole (by 30 pp), and higher for every other ethnicity group. Our institution is exceptionally diverse and we consider this one of our key strengths.

Non-continuation

The analysis of the gap in non-continuation between White & BAME students shows that by 7 percentage points White students are more likely to withdraw (but this is not statistically significant) and analysis of the gap in non-continuation between White & Black students shows that by 2 percentage points White students are more likely to withdraw (though this is not statistically significant). There is no gap in non-continuation for students of Asian, Mixed or Other ethnicities compared to White students.

However, the SOAS continuation rates for students from the mixed ethnicity BAME group are worse than the sector, 85% compared to 88.8%. Whilst SOAS has relatively small gaps compared to the sector, overall continuation rates need to improve. Further analysis using institutional data has been conducted. This is outlined in section 1.9-1.11.

Attainment

The analysis of the gap in attainment between Black & White students shows a gap of 15 pp (compared to 23.1pp for the sector). The gap is reducing after a spike of 30pp in 15/16. The analysis on the gap in attainment between BAME and White students shows a gap of 8pp (compared to 13.2pp for the sector). This gap is on a downward trend.

For Asian students, there is a gap of 7pp, which has been relatively stable. There is a gap of a similar size (8pp) for students of Mixed ethnicity. There is no attainment gap for students of the Other ethnicity group.

Whilst SOAS performs well compared to the sector in relation gaps between Black and White students, we have set ourselves the goal of becoming sector leaders in this area of work and have set ambitious targets to eliminate gaps that exist over the next 5 years.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

SOAS does not have any significant gaps in progression to employment between Black and White students (there is no gap), or between BAME and White students (there is an inverse gap of 2 percentage points). There is a small gap of 2 percentage points between Asian and White students, but no gap for either students of Mixed or Other ethnicity. However with high proportions of BAME students in our student body we want to increase the progression for this group, particularly into high skilled employment. Our success in achieving this will be monitored.

1.3 Mature students

Access

In 2017/18 the proportion of Mature students in our intake was 21%, 6.8pp lower than the sector. The proportion has decreased since 2013/14, but the 2017/18 data shows a small 1pp increase. We wish to increase our absolute numbers of mature students.

Non-continuation

There is a large gap in non-continuation between Young & Mature students. The gap is 13 pp (sector is 7.4pp) It is a large and ongoing gap, which has increased in recent years after a downwards trend, and which we aim to improve.

Attainment

There is a gap in attainment between Young & Mature students. The gap is 11 pp (sector is 10.3pp) Whilst the gap in attainment is not statistically significant, there is a relatively large and stable gap, which we aim to reduce.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

There is no gap in progression between Young & Mature students. The data shows a -3pp (sector is -3.4pp), although it was a +1 percentage point gap previously. The SOAS gap in progression for mature students is not statistically significant, and suggests mature students have better progression rates compared to young students. This is in line with evidence from across the sector. We aim to improve the outcomes for young students, though the sample size is small compared to other institution.

1.4 Students with a declared disability

Access

In 2017/18 the proportion of disabled students in our intake was 14%, in line with the sector, and continuing at a consistent rate of around 14%. –As mentioned, this is broadly in line with the sector as a whole. The splits of types of disability are in line with the sector also.

We will aim to improve non-continuation for students with a declared disability, whilst maintaining efforts to reduce the barriers in access for students with a declared disability in our five-year strategic approach.

Non-continuation

The size of the gap between students not known to have a disability and those with a declared disability is 1pp (the same as the sector), an increase since the previous year. In terms of specific categories of disability, the gap is by far the biggest (10pp) between students with a declared mental health disability and students not known to have a disability. The overall gap is not statistically significant, however this is a persistent gap on a rising trend albeit with some fluctuation. The gap is largest for students with declared mental health conditions and this will be our area of focus.

Attainment

There is a 2pp difference in attainment between students not known to have a disability and those with a declared disability (the sector is 2.8pp). The gap is not statistically significant, and has a very slightly rising trend. Although the gap is small, it is persistent (and an OfS KPM), therefore this will be a focus for our priorities.

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study

There is no statistically significant gap in progression between students not known to have a disability and those with a declared disability though there is a very, very slightly rising trend over the past 5 years. This will be monitored but is currently not an area of concern from the data.

1.5 Care leavers

The SOAS intake for students with a declared care leaver background is very small. In the 2018 intake, for example, there were fewer than five students. Numbers of this magnitude mean that a quantitative analysis of outcomes is unlikely to provide meaningful insight. However, we know from national research⁴ that few care leavers access higher education and of those that do, a disproportionate number withdraw. We commit to collecting and reporting on all stages of the lifecycle for care-leaver students by the end of 2019-20.

During the access stage we will continue to use disclosures through UCAS applications to monitor the number of applications received and will continue with our current practice of considering declared care leaver status as a key factor in our contextual approach to admissions. We will supplement this quantitative data gained in the application stage with qualitative information obtained through interviews with these applicants, undertaken by the dedicated member of staff for care-leavers. During the success stage, we put in place in 2018-19 systems whereby when a student declares they have a care leaver background, SOAS monitors their progression across the lifecycle. The information is held on our student records system, and in due course this will enable more accurate reporting. We will also conduct focus groups on an annual basis to gain greater insight into the student experience for care leavers at SOAS. Our approach to the progression stage will focus on qualitative analysis, proactively contacting care-experienced graduates at key points in the first two years after graduation to gather insights to feedback into the development of our practice in the earlier stages of the student lifecycle. We have outlined above the changes which we put in place in 2018-19 but recognize considerably more needs to be done, and we will report on progress to TeLSOC (Teaching, Learning and Student Outcomes Committee).

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

In access, there is a large gap between IMD Q1+2 BAME (splitting students four ways by White/BAME and IMD Q1+2 / Q3+4+5, this is SOAS' largest group at 35% of our intake, a much higher proportion than the sector), and IMD Q1+2 White (SOAS' smallest group at 9% of our intake, considerably smaller than the sector). Conversely, in success, White students from IMD Q3+4+5 are consistently at least 11pp more likely to get a good degree than BAME students in IMD Q1+2 (although this gap is not statistically significant).

In terms of progression, the gaps for intersectional splits using IMD and ethnicity fluctuate year on year or are not very large. This part of the life cycle has the smallest sample size of all, and an intersectional approach here reduced the sample sizes further, meaning that it is difficult to get a coherent story out of the data. As a result, analysing intersections of disadvantage using the OfS dataset for progression does not reveal additional issues compared to the single factor analyses above.

⁴ NNECL (2017) *Moving On Up*

The gaps are not statistically significant, however they are consistent and persistent. It is vital to note that the data shows that socio-economically advantaged White students have better outcomes, even though the largest proportion of SOAS' intake are BAME and socio-economically disadvantaged. This is a clear issue that will be given priority.

In 2017/18, the WP team employed two student activists to undertake research into the student experience of those who face intersections of disadvantage. The findings of this research were published internally in 2018/19 and form a key starting point in increasing our understanding of how to reduce barriers for those who experience intersections of disadvantage.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

White students from lower socio-economic backgrounds

A report published by the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) in 2019, stated that white young people in receipt of free school meals (FSM) are the least likely, alongside those with Gypsy/Roma backgrounds, of any group to enter HE. The same report also highlighted that the numbers of white children from FSM backgrounds are very small. By contrast, "White students make up the majority of those in areas where HE attendance is the lowest. In over 50% of institutions less than 5% of their students were white and from low HE participation backgrounds."⁵ According to the NEON report, SOAS had zero acceptances (rounded to the nearest five) from white students from low participation neighbourhoods via the UCAS main scheme in 2017. (This excluded clearing and direct applications)⁶.

Acknowledging the challenges in improving access for these specific groups, in 2019/20 SOAS will partner with The Elephant Group, a new social mobility charity led by head-teachers with hubs in London, Sheffield and Northampton. There are 7 secondary schools in the London Hub and another three are looking at joining in 2019-20. University partners include: Oxford, Cambridge, King's College London and the University of Exeter. 180 Year 12 students are selected annually to take part in a two-year programme aimed at increasing progression to selective universities. Partner HEIs either provide priority booking or bespoke activities to Elephant Group students and receive school level data on students' performance and results as well as progression at the end of Year 13. Hubs outside London also have the potential benefit of reaching greater numbers of disadvantaged white students and/or students from POLAR Q1 and Q2.

Students estranged from their families

In 2018 SOAS undertook a project to review the information, advice and guidance provided to our students who are estranged from their families. Starting with a publicity campaign during Estranged Students Solidarity Week, the project culminated in a comprehensive report which reviewed current practice at SOAS in different areas and identified recommendations across the student lifecycle, many based on best practice identified by Stand Alone. We have since implemented a number of these recommendations, such as to prioritise outreach applications from students estranged from their families, and to appoint a designated member of staff for estranged students.

For 2019-20 we have added a question regarding estrangement into the undergraduate enrolment form which will enable systematic collection of data and reporting of performance in each stage of lifecycle as this cohort progresses through their studies (access data from 2019/20, continuation from 2020/21 and so on). In the meantime, we will conduct regular focus groups or interviews with estranged students to respond to issues and improve our practice further. This follows our commitment to researching how intersections of characteristics can affect gaps at all stages of the lifecycle and building the evidence base of these groups which will be conducted in 2019-20 as part of the implementation plan for the 2019-20 access and participation plan.

⁵ NEON, 2019. Understanding access to higher education for white students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

⁶ Ibid, pp 33.

1.8 Summary outcomes in access, continuation, success and progression using OfS dataset

Drawing together the analysis from sections 1.1 - 1.7 we can see that:

- Intersectional analysis is critical to identifying persistent areas of disadvantage and successes e.g. SOAS recruits more BAME students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 than other groups; this is a real success story and shifts our focus onto the success and progression of this group of students
- SOAS has very few White students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2, very few students from POLAR quintile 1, very few care-leavers, and comparatively few mature students. This is a challenging picture especially in relation to how we can contribute to reducing national gaps even if some of the gaps are explained by our London location and small and specialist nature. These gaps are largely long-standing and progress towards reducing them has been limited. SOAS will need to develop innovative approaches (appropriately evaluated) to close these gaps.
- In terms of non-continuation, White students, mature students and students with declared mental health conditions are more likely to withdraw, but generally 'class' as identified either through POLAR or IMD doesn't seem to result in a gap. SOAS needs to conduct tailored qualitative analysis co-created with students to unpick this accurately, and this will continue to be part of the strategic approach.
- When looking through the POLAR lens there is a small gap in attainment. However there is a large gap by IMD, a gap for Black and BAME students (although smaller than the sector), a large and stable gap for mature students, and a small but persistent gap for students with declared disabilities. Given our intake, it's also a concern that White students from IMD quintiles 3-5 are 10 percentage points more likely to get a good degree than BAME students from IMD quintiles 1-2. The consistency and persistence of these gaps justifies these continuing to be a primary focus. SOAS has already undertaken significant work on reducing the BAME attainment gap, which is being led by Dr Deborah Johnston (Pro-Director Learning & Teaching).
- SOAS will be using IMD as the principal criterion for analysis rather than POLAR. This is because few significant gaps are shown when using POLAR, however when using IMD gaps appear at every stage of the student lifecycle after access. Further rationale on this approach is outlined in section 2.2 below.

1.9 Institutional analysis of non-continuation

SOAS has conducted institutional analysis of non-continuation and attainment rates, which has focused on the impact of a student's department, age, disability type, household income, and ethnicity. The analysis evidences a significant challenge which informs our strategic aims, objectives and investment.

Our non-continuation rate overall is high, and there is significant variability across different departments with a number having particularly high rates of non-continuation. This must be factored into future interventions.

In terms of household income, students with a household income of zero have the highest rate of non-continuation. Students with a household income between £25 000 and £42 000 had a 4 percentage point higher rate of non-continuation than those with a household income above zero and below £25 000 (who would generally receive financial support from SOAS). In addition, and of concern, is that mature students show a worse continuation rate within every household income band. An analysis of non-continuation by entry qualification indicates that overall, students who entered SOAS with an Access to HE Diploma or a BTEC qualification have significantly higher non-continuation rates, with some variance where particular departments have good practice in supporting students with these qualifications.

1.10 Institutional analysis of attainment

In terms of attainment analysis, a series of binomial logistic regressions were performed to ascertain the effects of several variables and student characteristics on the likelihood of achieving a 2:1 or higher. Each model included a range of 3 to 9 variables, which included department, ethnicity, tariff, SEC, IMD, term-time accommodation, commuting time, parental education and disability.

The analysis found that tariff points on entry emerged as the strongest predictor of the chances of a student achieving a 2:1 or higher. However, this variable has a strong correlation with ethnicity and therefore on explaining the attainment gap. Other variables which were identified as relevant predictors included department, commuting times, parental education, IMD and term-time accommodation. For example, increasing IMD deciles was associated with an increased likelihood of obtaining a 2:1 or higher, as was decreasing commuting time.

An additional analysis was conducted by entry qualification which identified significant gaps where intersections of disadvantage combined. Noting this, analysis was conducted on the interaction between entry qualification and the indices of multiple deprivation. This demonstrated that 54% of SOAS students came from the five most disadvantaged IMD deciles, and that students from the highest areas of deprivation are most likely to enter SOAS with an Access to HE Diploma or BTEC qualification. This underlines the link between entry qualification, social disadvantage and ethnicity.

It should also be noted that separate analysis of attainment using household income data shows that students from lower household incomes that achieve honours, are less likely to achieve a 1st or 2:1, although there are variations across academic departments. This variation across academic departments is crucial to understanding what is happening at an institutional level. A number of departments have both poor rates of non-continuation and significant gaps in attainment.

1.11 Summary of institutional data analysis

Drawing together the analysis on non-continuation and attainment from sections 1.9-1.10 we can see that:

- Non-continuation rates across the institution require improvement, but that further to this institutional averages do not tell the full story as there is significant variation at a departmental level. Future work must take this departmental variability into account.
- Students with particular circumstances have higher non-continuation rates. These include students who enter with lower tariff points, students with a very low household income, and students who enter with BTECs or Access to HE Diplomas. It should be noted that these characteristics may, and indeed do, intersect with each other and other characteristics that form part of the OfS Access and Participation Dataset. These students are also more likely not to achieve a good honours degree (1st or 2:1).
- Tariff points on entry have been identified as the strongest predictor of the chances of students achieving a good honours degree. However, there are other student circumstances that have been identified as relevant predictors of a good honours degree such as commuting times, IMD decile and the nature of their term-time accommodation.
- It is crucial to conduct fine-grained analysis on non-continuation and attainment to understand the interaction of these two stages of the student lifecycle. Our analysis shows there are challenges at both stages for students with particular characteristics

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Aims and objectives

SOAS' overarching strategic aims in respect of the delivery of equality of opportunity and outcomes for all students are embedded within the SOAS Vision and Strategy 2016-2020. These are:

1. To produce high quality graduates who understand and engage with the world and the regions in which we specialise. This is underpinned by a desire to provide students with an internationalised experience and a global perspective together with an interconnected view of the world. This is fundamental to our widening access and participation approach, which reflects and is strengthened by the School's specialism.
2. To develop well rounded individuals who can make a difference in their communities and in the world. This is facilitated by a unique and fulfilling student experience so that students graduate from SOAS with a sense of purpose and responsibility, openness to new ideas, a thirst for lifelong learning, and transferable skills. These are core considerations in our approach where fulfilling academic and personal potential, and providing equality of opportunity in prospects post-graduation are crucial for students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education.

We have a commitment to increase the participation of students from a variety of underrepresented backgrounds to ensure that the transformative nature of a SOAS education can be experienced by all.

Summary of target groups:

Based on our assessment of performance across the student lifecycle, we will be targeting the following underrepresented groups in our access and participation work:

1. Those living in areas of low HE participation – access, non-continuation and progression
2. Those from lower household income - non-continuation and attainment
3. Those from lower socio-economic status groups - access, attainment, progression
4. Those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups - all stages of lifecycle
5. Mature students - non-continuation and attainment
6. Those with a declared disability - access, non-continuation and attainment
7. Care leavers - all stages of lifecycle
8. Intersectionality (specifically BAME students from IMD Q1+2) - all stages of lifecycle

Measurable objectives:

The objectives below clearly align to our overarching strategic aims and to making progress to improve the outcomes of the student disadvantage outlined in our assessment of performance.

Target Group	Objectives	Context
Students living in areas of low HE participation	To eradicate the gap in access over the next 25 years	This is a key area of focus for the School. Significant efforts have been made over the years to reduce this gap. Our student intake primarily consisting of young people from London, where there are few LPNs. The first 5 years of progress towards this target will follow the trajectory of the OfS key performance measure from our current position to align with a reduction of the gap from our current position. This period will also consist of capacity building, before significantly accelerating the reduction of the gap in the longer term. This objective will be measured using the Access and Participation Dataset.
Students from lower socio-economic status groups (IMD)	To eradicate the gap in degree attainment over the next 7 years To eradicate the gap in progression outcomes over the next 5 years	This is to be achieved in the context of maintaining a considerable proportion of our student intake from lower IMD quintiles. Quicker progress is expected at the student success stage compared to progression as with progression more factors are outside the School's direct control. These objectives will be measured using the Access and Participation Dataset.
Students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups	To eradicate the gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment over the next 5 years	Given our regional specialism and the nature of our intake, we ascribe particular importance to eradicating these gaps and becoming a sector leader over the next decade. SOAS will continue to deliver our action plan in Decolonisation, part of which works with academic and professional service colleagues to supports the success of BAME students.
Mature students	To eradicate the gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment over the next 15 years	Our focus will be on improving outcomes for mature students during the student success phase of the lifecycle. This has been a significant issue across the sector and we recognise we have considerable distance to travel to eradicate gaps, which is why the objective is set over a longer time period. During this time period we will increase our absolute numbers of mature students. These objectives will be measured using the Access and Participation Dataset.
Students with declared disabilities	To eradicate the gaps in non-continuation over the next 5 years	Quicker progress is expected at the student success stage compared to access, since with access more factors are outside the School's direct control. Whilst we have a commitment to support success for this group, we acknowledge that support and advice is crucial, especially where not continuing may be the students' best decision. This objective will be measured using the Access and Participation Dataset.
Care leavers	To put in place mechanisms over the next 5 years that monitor the progression of care leavers at each stage of the student lifecycle.	As a small and specialist institution, we do not expect the numbers of care leavers at SOAS to reach a large enough number to be able to accurately measure gaps in different stages of the life-cycle. As such, our objective is to incorporate sector best practice into the access, student success and progression stages.
Other groups who experience barriers to higher education (estranged students, refugees, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities)	To put in place a series of measures across each stage of the student lifecycle based on sector best practice over the next 5 years	As a small and specialist institution, we do not expect the numbers of students at SOAS from these groups to reach a large enough number to be able to accurately measure gaps in different stages of the life-cycle. As such, our objective is to incorporate sector best practice into the access, student success and progression stages.
BAME students from IMD quintiles 1 & 2	To eradicate the gap in degree attainment over the next 5 years	Given our regional specialism and the nature of our intake - with a large proportion of students from this group, we ascribe particular importance to eradicating this gap. In this instance we have chosen BAME students for the measurable objective to increase the cohort size and reduce the year-on-year variation that may arise from smaller numbers. This objective will be measured using the Access and Participation Dataset.

In addition to the measurable objectives outlined above, our assessment of performance shows areas that we have identified as important to commit to within the scope of this plan. All of the commitments outlined below will be tracked and monitored as part of our process of implementing this plan. The areas are as follows:

- A commitment to eliminating the degree attainment gap for students with known disabilities – this is a key performance measure for the OfS and our aim is to eliminate this gap within 3-4 year period; that is to 0%. The key measure to deliver this commitment will be the embedding of the new Mental Health Strategy in 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- Commitment to increasing the proportion of mature students at SOAS over the next 5 years – whilst our focus will be primarily on improving outcomes for mature students, we will ensure we continue to deliver the measures that are currently in place to support learners from this group into HE. Our aim is to increase the proportion of mature students to 25% to align with the sector. This will be done by increasing our work with partner FE colleges on long term attainment programmes and increasing community outreach from 2020/21 onwards.
- A commitment to increasing the proportions of students with known disabilities – work has already begun on this measure through changes implemented in the Student Advice & Wellbeing department. The measures outlined in the strategy will help support increasing the proportion of this group to 20% over the next 5 years.
- Commitment to eliminating the gap in POLAR Q1 continuation and progression – as part of our aim to improve overall non-continuation rates, and progression rates for target students, we will eliminate the gap (that is to reduce gap to 0%) in outcomes over the next 5 years for students from POLAR Q1 by closely monitoring their engagement in student success measures and implementing targeted measures where appropriate from 2020/21 onwards
- A commitment to increasing the non-continuation rates of black students – over the next 5 years, in line with our focus on improving overall non-continuation rates and on the experience of black students, we will eradicate the non-continuation gap between black students and white students (reduce the gap to 0%) from 2020/21 onwards
- Commitment to improving the attainment rate for students entering SOAS from BTEC qualifications – our institutional analysis evidences significant differences in the percentages of students from BTEC qualifications achieving a good degree compared with other qualifications. Over the next 5 years we will increase the percentage of this group to 62% achieving a good degree by implementing focused academic department interventions from 2020/21 onwards.
- A commitment to systematically collecting data on the access, success and progression of students from other underrepresenting groups over the next 5 years. In order to achieve positive outcomes for this underrepresented group we will conduct research to implement mechanisms that allow for the systematic collection of data on their outcomes and experiences in academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21. From 2021/22 onwards we will be able to identify and report on the outcomes of this which will enable the development of targets and implementation of measures to tackle differential outcomes in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

2.2 Targets

The table below shows the measurable outcome-based targets across the student lifecycle based on our strategic aims and objectives. The ensuing focus on student success (both non-continuation and attainment) is in line with the outcomes of our assessment of performance.

Target number	Outcome-based target
1	To reduce the gap in access for students living in areas of low HE participation to 35pp over 5 year period
2	To eradicate the gap in non-continuation for students of mixed ethnicity over a 5 year period
3	To eradicate the gap in non-continuation for mature students over a 5 year period
4	To eradicate the gap in non-continuation for black students across academic departments in a 5 year period
5	To eradicate the gap in non-continuation for students with mental health disability over a 5 year period
6	To eradicate the gap in degree attainment for students from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5 over a 5 year period
7	To eradicate the attainment gap for black students over a 5 year period
8	To eradicate the attainment gap for students from BAME backgrounds over a 5 year period
9	To improve attainment rates for students from BTEC courses receiving a good degree by 10pp over a 5 year period

10	To reduce the gap in degree attainment for mature students to 7pp over a 5 year period
11	To eradicate the gap in degree attainment for BAME students from IMD quintiles 1+2 compared with white students from quintiles 3+4+5 over a 5 year period
12	To eradicate the gap in progression for students from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5 over a 5 year period

Approach to targets using POLAR & IMD measures

There is an ongoing debate as to the validity of using the POLAR dataset as a key widening participation measure in specific institutional and geographic contexts. We recognise it identifies national gaps across the student lifecycle, and in access to high-tariff institutions. In access, we have a significant gap between students from POLAR quintile 1 and from quintile 5, and consider closing this gap a key priority. However, beyond the access stage of the student lifecycle, analysis of our existing gaps indicates that IMD will be the more appropriate dataset for setting targets. This is because it identifies clear gaps in outcomes within our existing student body - particularly when used as part of an intersectional approach - and furthermore these gaps tally with the story uncovered by previous qualitative research (such as The Access Report, and Degrees of Racism).

3. Strategic measures

The strategic measures outlined below will ensure that we achieve our aims, objectives and targets. They demonstrate continuous improvement in practice and progress towards meeting our outcomes. Our aim is to improve outcomes for students at different stages of the student lifecycle for specific underrepresented groups, whilst maintaining areas where we have a strong track record such as our performance in access for BAME students and students from IMD quintiles 1 + 2.

In the academic year 2019-20 we will develop a whole-School Access and Participation Strategy to build on progress to date and to be cognisant of best practice across the School and the sector, as well as of internal and external drivers at large, including the identified priorities of the Office for Students. The development of the new strategy requires alignment with the new professional services structure which was implemented during 2018-19. With a new structure for professional services now in place, the Access and Participation Strategy will sit within this new framework and connect with the School's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy, the Recruitment Strategy, the Careers Strategy, and International Strategy. It will also and will bring together various strands of existing activity and practice. The Access and Participation Strategy will identify specific aims and objectives and associated measures of success, and will play a key role in shaping future Access and Participation Plans. This work has begun with two specific projects with AdvanceHE. The first is a review of current strategy and practice in non-continuation and attainment, and the second is a review and development of a new high-level 10 year strategy for access and participation. Both will involve wide-spread consultation across the School with the second project including consultation with local, national and international partners.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The School recognises that a whole institution approach will be most effective in reducing gaps in access, student success, and progression. Reducing the gaps which exist during the student success phase has been a priority at institutional level. For this to happen all staff and services must engage to address systemic issues so that equality of opportunity can be achieved. We recognise that to be successful in transforming outcomes, change must come at both an institutional and programme-level.

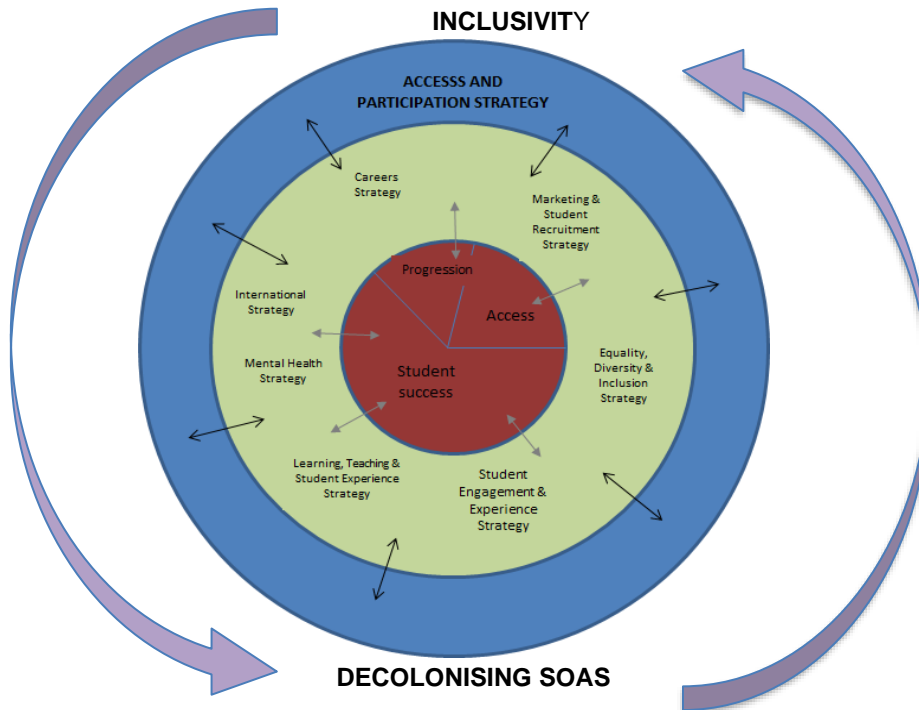
Progress to date has been achieved through initiatives such as bespoke inclusivity training being made available to teaching staff, and an inclusive assessment project with the HEA. Decolonising the curriculum is an additional priority through which we aim to improve outcomes for students from underrepresented backgrounds. The Decolonising SOAS Working Group (comprised of students, academic and professional services staff) has developed a Learning and Teaching toolkit for departments to facilitate making what we teach and how we teach it more responsive to the problems of racialized privilege and discrimination within our teaching practice. Decolonising the curriculum is a key strategic priority for the Students' Union and the School, and we continue to promote this approach and aim to publicise outcomes across the sector.

The existing work relating to improving student outcomes is currently delivered through the Retention Action Plan and the joint SOAS-Students' Union Attainment Action Plan, with their associated working groups, with the Associate Director for Student Outcomes and Welfare as academic lead. Both of these will be updated and brought together during 2019/20 in light of the assessment of performance outlined in this Plan.

In addition, SOAS is currently undergoing a strategic overview of widening participation by implementing a theory of change that is being developed over the next academic year with ImpactEd, a not-for profit organisation working in partnership with the education sector to support high quality evaluation. We will review and develop our access evaluation strategy in 2019-20 to reflect an overarching theory of change as well as sub-theories of change for specific activities. We will use the NERUPI framework to integrate theory and practice to inform the design, delivery and evaluation of Widening Participation interventions and we will feed findings into future plans and initiatives.

3.1.1 Alignment with other strategies

The diagram below evidences the whole institution approach and its linkages with other strategies



Key elements of alignment with SOAS strategies and KPIs:

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience

SOAS takes an innovative approach to the curriculum, pedagogy and student support. We seek to identify the needs of students whilst supporting academic colleagues in the development of practice and inclusivity in learning and teaching. Examples include departmental inclusivity training, the Breaking Barriers Law mentoring project, the Decolonising SOAS programme, Peer Learning and BAME mentoring which support student success for students from BAME backgrounds in particular.

SOAS will be delivering Foundation Year programmes from 2019 onwards. Based in the Centre of Innovation in Learning & Teaching (CILT), these programmes will progressive curriculum design such as problem-based learning, project-based learning and use of alternative assessment which include giving student choice in assessment methods. The delivery of these methods will be best practice for the School which we will seek to embed in the design of the curriculum for all undergraduate programmes.

Under this phase of our Access and Participation Plan we will seek to build accountability within our Department Review processes by identifying programme level challenges in student success (non-continuation and attainment). We will move to a review cycle where departments must meet targets in access, retention or attainment gaps focused on students who face the disadvantage including students with known disabilities and students from lower socio-economic groups.

SOAS acknowledges the impact that the quality of teaching has on retention and the importance of more academics having teaching qualifications. This work is being led by Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching. We are considering how to utilise the staff development process to support excellence across the student lifecycle for academic and professional service colleagues.

Currently work on retention is being led by the Associate Director for Student Outcomes and Welfare where departmental action plans pull together the assessment of performance data at departmental level and set a level of expectation for actions including implementing peer mentoring, tackling academic failure and curriculum review. Good practice will be recognised and shared, with the intention being to create an annual award for the department or member of staff who has been most successful in positively impacting outcomes and the student experience.

Careers and Employability

The SOAS Careers Service engages with students before, during and after their time with SOAS, and measures leading, current and lagging data about career thinking, student engagement and outcomes. The Careers department works strategically to engage students with timely and appropriate support, bearing in mind the differential outcomes for students from disadvantaged groups across the sector.

This includes pre-entry work (a strategic theme within the SOAS Student Careers and Destinations Strategy) embedded into widening participation activities; focused work with finalists from widening participation backgrounds, and supporting the training and career thinking of Outreach Student Ambassadors. These approaches are bolstered by the use of careers registration data, which is being embedded into processes for advice and guidance in 2019/20. This is particularly important in order to benefit the progression of students from lower socio-economic groups. Although top line careers registration figures at an institutional level do not show large gaps in careers thinking between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers, data differs from department to department and this information will be used to tailor future approaches.

In addition, the Careers team is in the final stages of developing, with colleagues from The Careers Group, a dashboard to show student access to Careers activities. This will enable a real time view of the activities that students take part in. Engagement by the most disadvantaged groups will be closely tracked and monitored.

International

The School recognises that making the benefits of outward mobility more accessible for students from underrepresented backgrounds is fundamental to reducing gaps in outcomes. This area of work is particularly targeted at students from BAME backgrounds, from low HE participation neighbourhoods, from lower socio-economic groups and from low income households.

We have partnered with the leadership development organisation Common Purpose to provide an immersive international experience for 25 participants to develop their ability to lead from a truly global perspective. These four-day programmes have previously taken place in Bangalore and Hanoi, and have enabled participants to grow their cultural intelligence, to adapt and thrive in new environments, to build networks locally with students, contributors and leading employers, and to learn and practice the skills required to quickly understand and navigate complexity.

SOAS is partnering with CRCC Asia to provide international internships to students from widening participation backgrounds. Opportunities are disseminated through the Student Union, the VLE and the Careers service. Students are encouraged to indicate what professional sectors they wish to intern on. Internships last two months and are evaluated jointly by SOAS and CRCC Asia.

SOAS is also working with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) to offer students with protected characteristics the opportunity to apply for the Global Summer School Grants scheme. These grants support undergraduate students to attend various summer schools hosted by ACU member universities across the Commonwealth and beyond. The grant contributes to registration fees, travel to and from the summer school, and visa and vaccination costs. Successful applicants will be required to submit a short written report or video on their experiences to the ACU within a month of their return. Two students received grants in 2017-18 and another two in 2018-19.

In addition, SOAS has partnered with the African Leadership University (ALU) in Rwanda. Colleagues from across the school have visited ALU to learn from their innovative pedagogy and Pan-Africanist curriculum. A facet of this partnership is the SOAS-ALU Summer School, which will involve mentees from the SOAS Breaking Barriers mentoring scheme for BAME students and students from ALU, and which is running for the first time in 2019. The programme includes innovative workshops run by SOAS and ALU staff on the theme of "Leadership in Africa and the Diaspora". This will be a key area of work to be further developed in 2019-20 where students from less advantaged backgrounds, and BAME students from the Breaking Barriers mentoring scheme will travel to ALU in Rwanda to work with ALU students in a leadership programme.

Since 2015, SOAS has offered Sanctuary Scholarships to support displaced people to access higher education. It is designed to support those who might otherwise be blocked from embarking on a university degree, especially those with

precarious forms of immigration status or who do not have access to student finance, and people taking their first steps in higher education.

Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions

As part of the activities of the Marketing and Student Recruitment team, target schools with large numbers of learners with widening participation characteristics have been identified and receive information regarding our existing WP outreach offer. This includes students from areas of low HE participation and care leavers. In addition, engagement with UCAS activities and HE fairs has taken place in areas strategically important to widening access and participation, and increasingly closer work is taking place with these schools.

The School believes that a diverse student population contributes to a challenging and stimulating learning environment. We therefore welcome undergraduate applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed, whatever their background and we believe that a contextualised approach to admissions is vital to identify this potential most accurately. As a result, all home applicants to undergraduate programmes are considered eligible for reduced offers dependent on a basket of socio-economic and educational indicators associated with lower than expected attainment at GCSE and/or A-level, comprised of a mix of individual-level, school-level and area-level data. Our approach is reviewed annually to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

SOAS is committed to ensuring that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are embedded in all aspects of the School. This plan has been written to take into account the full scope of our legal obligations under the Equality Act, and evidences best practice in linking access and equality objectives. To this end, for example we work in close collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Manager, particularly on initiatives to reduce the racialised awarding gap where there is a clear area of alignment between the School's approach to equality and diversity, and widening access and participation. SOAS is situated in the heart of Camden and as such is committed to ensuring the diversity of its students reflects the demographics of its local surroundings, including those from non - traditional backgrounds and from BAME groups.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The recently approved Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy seeks to establish SOAS as an inclusive and compassionate learning and working environment where we recognise that good mental health and wellbeing is the cornerstone for student experience, academic success, and staff satisfaction. It includes a number of key objectives which closely align to success in access and participation for students who declare a mental health disability, such as developing clear, accessible, resources so that all staff and students know the policies, procedures and guidance that relate to mental health and wellbeing; establishing a culture in which our students know how to take care of themselves and each other, know how and when to ask for help, and are confident that timely support is available; and designing inclusive programmes of study that help our students develop personally and academically, and welcomes and celebrates difference in learning styles.

Student Engagement & Experience

The Student Engagement and Experience strategy is currently under development for implementation in 2019-20. It will seek to clearly map and articulate the journey for students, and to support academic colleagues in their role as a key point of support for students from a range of backgrounds including those from low household incomes and from lower socio-economic groups. Work currently underway includes the newly approved Academic Advising handbook, the implementation of the academic advising system, and the attendance monitoring action plan. In addition, departmental student lifecycle plans will be produced as a response to some of the key issues made apparent in our assessment of performance, and these will include specific departmental targets to reduce their biggest gaps in student outcomes, whether these are at a departmental or degree programme level.

3.1.2 Implementation of theory of change

SOAS is working with ImpactEd to develop an overarching theory of change that reflects SOAS strategic aims during summer 2019. We will also develop sub-theories of change for specific activities to be nested within the overall Theory of Change. This will be completed during the first term of 2019/20. As part of this work, we will use the NERUPI framework to integrate theory and practice to inform the design, delivery and evaluation of Widening Participation interventions, in order to maximise, capture and demonstrate their impact. The NERUPI framework is informed by theories of social capital, identity and the capability approach. It contains seven levels, from Year 6 (Level 0) through progression to postgraduate study/employment (Level 6). That means it can be applied to the whole of the student lifecycle from 2019-20 onwards and contributes directly to the framework that supports gap elimination.

An evidence based approach will continue to be integral to these further developments of our current practice, with each new activity being developed in line with established evidence of impact, or designed to evaluate the impact of a new approach, with findings to be shared with the sector through TASO, conferences, and publications.

3.1.3 Specific strategic measures

This section outlines some examples of the strategic measures SOAS will take to achieve our aims at different stages of the lifecycle. The School will ensure significant investment by ring fencing funding to support all stages of the lifecycle. This will be articulated in detail in our institutional Student Access and Participation Strategy, which will also cover postgraduate access and access to HE from the disadvantaged communities in the other regions of the world in which SOAS has expertise.

Strategic measures in access

There are several key measures in access which will support the reduction of the gap in participation for students from areas of low participation outlined in our assessment of performance. Over the next 5 years we will continue to monitor our contextual admissions policy and increase the number of outreach activities which improve access for students in areas of deprivation and low HE participation such as summer schools, long-term programmes and masterclasses, particularly by raising of attainment of participants. Contextual admissions is applied consistently to students from underrepresented groups including students with declared care leaver status who are high priority status. In 2019/20 this is further supplemented with training for the Admissions department on identifying priority applications and how to improve the application experience for students from underrepresented groups, especially those from care leaver backgrounds. Quantitative data is gained in the application stage for care leavers using a flagging process and with qualitative information obtained through interviews with these applicants. This is undertaken by the dedicated member of staff for care-leavers. Attainment raising outcomes are achieved in both the content of the activities (incorporating metacognitive approaches, for example, in line with findings from the EEF), and in their structure in terms of long-term sustained partnerships with schools, subject-specific mentoring and tutoring. With our commitment to eradicating the gap over the next 25 years for those from low participation neighbourhoods we will put in place innovative interventions outside London that will be delivered in the next 5 years that will contribute to eradicating the gap in the longer term. Examples include new school-HE partnerships that will be formed in target areas based on the data from IMD and POLAR4 maps such as east London, Cambridge, Dover and Kent. As part of these partnerships, we will build in rigorous mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in terms of raising attainment in particular, and of course in improving progression to higher education. This will be coupled with partnering with national charities and third sector organisations with a proven track record of engaging with the most disadvantaged students. In 2019/20 we will also work more closely with neighbouring local authorities, and with virtual schools to encourage and support successful progression to higher education by care-leavers. Mechanisms for monitoring the impact of these measures will be put in place. The table below provides an example of the approach taken by SOAS to develop measures in improving access for specific groups.

Measure	Outcome of measure based on theory of change	Supporting data	Impact on target	Monitoring mechanism	Investment
Subject-based summer schools and masterclasses	Increased understanding of university study & SOAS disciplines Increased confidence regarding preparedness for HE	Conversion rate for summer schools is 5-10% from participation to enrolment at SOAS. This is consistently the highest across our suite of activities.	Increased recruitment to SOAS of participants from target backgrounds	Activity impact evaluation UCAS data	New post to deliver increased numbers of summer schools & travel/accommodation bursaries
Partnership with the Elephant Group	Increased academic success, increased awareness of opportunities, and increased progression to selective universities	The Elephant Group selects 180 students from each partner school, of which there are 12, including some in Northampton. Each student is expected to attend around 13 activities over 2 years.	Increased recruitment to SOAS of participants from target backgrounds	The Elephant group collects and analyses data at student level, and will share anonymised data with SOAS and other partner universities	New post required to ensure SOAS benefits fully from this partnership.

Strategic measures in student success

Investment will be made in the delivery of activities proven to improve non-continuation such as expanded Bridging Courses, departmental peer mentoring programmes and BAME mentoring to deliver gap elimination in non-continuation and attainment for specific groups of students. The framework for this is SOAS' work on inclusivity and decolonisation, and in the academic department student lifecycle action plans that will be produced in response to targets and identified areas of concern. Additional investment will be provided through the Decolonisation Funding and Teaching Innovation

Fund which will foreground work such as inclusivity training, enabling academics to use content and trigger warnings, and supporting academics in their understanding of the diversity of experience in their classrooms. The Students' Union Engagement Officer post in the WP team will work closely with new central posts in Attainment and Student Success, and the new Black Student Support Coordinator post will work with departments and programme leaders on approaches to improving student outcomes, such as developing pedagogic approaches to support inclusivity. There will be an investigation of part-time study and the potential benefits and implications of offering undergraduate part-time provision, either across the board or in certain disciplines with the highest concentration of mature students. We will consult current care-leaver students on the support they have received and how it could be improved in academic year 2019/20. Also in academic year 2019 we will implement a care-leaver buddy system to ensure students from a care leaver backgrounds develop a strong sense of belonging which is critical to ensuring student success across the lifecycle for students from this group also. The dedicated member of staff for students from a care leaver background also provides personalised support to students from this group. Across all areas in student success we wish to make rapid progress towards eradicating gaps that exist. The table below provides an example of the approach taken by SOAS to develop measures in improving student success for specific groups.

Measure	Outcome of measure based on theory of change	Supporting data	Impact on target	Monitoring mechanism	Investment
Bridging Courses	Improved academic experience of students pre-HE entry and in first term. Increased confidence in academic skills	In previous cohorts, Bridging Course participants have had lower non-continuation rates than other students with similar characteristics	Increased rates of progression from year 1 to year 2	Non-continuation rate of students from target groups Activity impact evaluation	Post to develop and deliver SOAS-wide Bridging Courses with specific sessions for target students
Breaking Barriers Mentoring	Improved academic experience of students during first year Empowering students to challenge systemic barriers	Positive participant evaluation from first two years of project	Reduced non-continuation for BAME students	Non-continuation rate of participants Degree attainment rate of participants Activity impact evaluation	Post to develop and deliver the Breaking Barriers mentoring scheme

Strategic measures in progression

We will further develop and deliver a range of measures to improve progression outcomes. This will include the development of work placements within SOAS, pedagogical-focused work to embed employability skills in our curriculum, and the establishment of a Careers data dashboard for academic staff. The Student Development Fund⁷ is also a relevant measure for improving progression for students. Alongside this we will continue our work to increase the proportion of students from underrepresented backgrounds who experience outward international mobility. We also recognise that our Outreach Student Ambassador Scheme, in which the School employs learners from underrepresented backgrounds, is a transformative programme for those who participate. Whilst the lag between putting measures in place and seeing the impact is particularly pronounced for the progression part of the student lifecycle, we will build in to our evaluation the use of careers registration data and other shorter-term outcomes. The table below provides an example of the approach taken by SOAS to develop measures in improving student progression for specific groups, and towards the elimination of the gap for students from lower socio-economic groups.

⁷ <https://soasunion.org/education/studentdevelopmentlearning/>

Measure	Outcome of measure based on theory of change	Supporting data	Impact on target	Monitoring mechanism	Investment
Increasing outward mobility opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds	Increased cultural intelligence and employability skills	UUKi research demonstrates there is a correlation between outward mobility and improved employment outcomes for students from underrepresented backgrounds	Improved graduate outcomes for participants	DLHE or Graduate Outcomes Activity impact evaluation	Continuing partnerships with relevant third sector organisations Increasing in-house opportunities for short-term outward mobility
Outreach Student Ambassador Scheme	Increased employability skills Increased sense of belonging	Feedback from Ambassadors demonstrates that they feel their employability, public speaking, leadership and people skills improved as a result	Improved graduate outcomes for participants	DLHE/Graduate Outcomes Activity impact evaluation	Continuing provision of training and employment opportunities for Ambassadors

Financial support

In terms of our approach to financial support, we will take a lifecycle approach through incorporating support for graduation costs and reviewing the timing and amount of bursary payments so that they provide the most support to recipients, particularly those such as care-leavers who may have greater needs during the summer period. The table below provides an example of the approach taken by SOAS to develop financial support measures.

Measure	Outcome of measure based on theory of change	Supporting data	Impact on target	Monitoring mechanism	Investment
SOAS Bursary	Reduced need to work part-time or worry about financial challenges	The results of financial support impact evaluation evidence that the bursary enables recipients to worry less about financial challenges and to focus more on their studies than would otherwise be possible. Foundation Year students will also be recipients of this form of financial support.	Reduced non-continuation for recipients (students from target groups)	Non-continuation rates of bursary recipients Annual impact evaluation of financial support	Increased number of bursaries for students from target groups

3.1.4 Collaboration

Collaborative working is a key requirement in meeting needs and delivering widening access and participation activities for schools, colleges, the local community, and university students, across all phases of the student lifecycle. It allows SOAS to combine expertise, reduce duplication and accelerate progress towards our targets at different stages of the student lifecycle.

SOAS will continue to collaborate with partners in working with underrepresented groups, and these partners include schools, colleges, third sector organisations and other universities. A key aspect of our strategic approach to collaborative working is to establish formal partnerships with schools and colleges, based on further developing existing successful models. The nature of all these partnerships and collaboration depends upon the partners involved, but collaborative working collectively enables us to build lasting success, to work with learners at an early stage of their education and to provide them and schools and colleges with sustained engagement. We are currently engaged in the following partnerships:

The Brilliant Club: SOAS is a partner university of The Brilliant Club, collaborating to deliver the launch and graduation trips which are a core feature of the programme, and providing SOAS PhD students to deliver tutorials to groups of high-potential pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5. An evaluation by UCAS of their 2015 Year 12 cohort demonstrated that 58% of pupils eligible for free school meals progressed to a highly-selective university

compared to 11% nationally. In 2016-17, two-thirds of those tutored by SOAS researchers went on to produce work of a standard associated with the next key stage up in development.

Morpeth School: We collaborate with Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets to provide tailored study support for History A-level students there, currently consisting of a masterclass, study skills support from Student Ambassadors, and assisted use of SOAS library resources. The partnership began six years ago, and is framed by the idea of decolonising the curriculum, with the masterclass drawing on cutting-edge research to provide an alternative to the standard Eurocentric narrative of the world between 1850 and 1950.

The Brightside Trust: Brightside exists to help young people from all backgrounds make confident and informed decisions about their future. We collaborate to provide ementoring as part of our outreach offer, and as part of our student success activity. In terms of the latter, the online mentoring linked to our Bridging Courses featured in Brightside's 16-17 Impact Report with over 70% of students feeling their mentor supported them with the social and academic sides of university, and made the transition to university smoother.

Capital L: a London consortium of 7 HEIs who collaborate with schools, colleges and a range of other stakeholders to increase and widen participation in language studies in schools, colleges and universities. Capital L staff sits within the Widening Participation department, and the consortium is jointly directed by the Head of Widening Participation at SOAS and the Professor of French at the University of Westminster.

Linking London: a unique partnership of forty-nine educational organisations that work collaboratively to support recruitment, retention and progression into and through higher education, in all its variety, including full and part time, higher apprenticeships and work based learning and employment. Through Linking London membership partners work both collaboratively, and individually, to maximise their contribution to targeted student engagement and achievement, social mobility and in pursuit of improvements in social justice through education. The long-established network has been in existence since 2006, and is part of the NCOP project.

University of London Outreach, Access and Success Group: a network established in April 2014 through which a number of University of London providers collaborate on four strategic themes including: white working class boys, key stage 3 and 4 outreach, evaluation and research, and student success and progression.

UpReach: a social mobility third sector organisation which supports us to achieve our progression goals for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. We sponsor a cohort of students through upReach's programme of tailored career support. This combines industry insight opportunities, skill development, network building and professional work experience in order to help students to secure and sustain professional graduate employment.

NCOP: As noted above SOAS has been engaged with a number of regional collaborations as part of our engagement with the NCOP programme. As part of our membership of Linking London we have supported their NCOP work with colleges in target wards. With Aimhigher London South we have supported a range of activities, including the Look to the Future programme, targeting Looked After Children. Although funded separately, this important contribution to the national landscape complements the work delivered through our Access & Participation Plan by focusing on young people who are most underrepresented. These learners are hard to reach for SOAS as a small, specialist institution, and the collaborations provide a systematic and measurable environment in which to make a difference in these areas.

Opportunity Areas: We recognise that the 12 Opportunity Areas identified by the government experience significant challenges in social mobility. Given our size, location and unique subject mix, we believe that our best approach to engage with Opportunity Areas will be through collaboration with organisations based in these areas, in conjunction with the development of online, remote and devolved outreach resources reflecting our unique specialism, such as the Languages Challenge.

HEAT: The Higher Education Access Tracker is a key area of collaboration which enables SOAS to evaluate the outcomes of access and student success measures. By working collaboratively, SOAS can critically reflect on our approach to outreach data management which in turn aids in continuous development in the way we monitor, evaluate and build evidence of impact. As part of this organisation we receive reports which allow annual tracking of outreach participants longitudinally from Key Stage 2 data through to entry to HE, postgraduate study and employment.

The Elephant Group: Our collaboration with the Elephant Group will increase our capacity to reach Key Stage 5 students with the potential to progress to selective universities. The programme of activities pan 2 years (Yrs. 12 and 13) and includes a range of activities from university visits to course choice guidance and workshop for parents.

Common Purpose: Common Purpose is a not-for-profit organisation which develops leaders who can cross boundaries. We partner with them to provide international leadership development opportunities for SOAS students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not otherwise be able to access outward mobility opportunities and the associated benefits.

The table below shows the collaborative targets developed for our work:

Partner	Stage of lifecycle	Target	Link to SOAS target
The Brilliant Club	Access	Increase the number of pupils on The Scholars programme taught by SOAS PhD tutors making 5% or more of progress in overall attainment to 110 in 2024-25	Increasing attainment for students with particular characteristics and providing them with a SOAS experience through partnership with The Brilliant Club will contribute to all our Access-related targets
The Elephant Group	Access	Increase the number of KS5 students accessing SOAS' outreach activities. Improve young people's awareness of the courses offered at SOAS.	Increasing recruitment of disadvantaged white students and students from all ethnicities from POLAR Q1 and

3.2 Student consultation

The SOAS Students' Union has worked to ensure that the needs of students from Widening Participation backgrounds are at the heart of the Access & Participation Plan for 2020-25. The Union have been engaged in the development, planning, monitoring and evaluation of access and participation plans. In this plan, this has involved in depth discussions on performance assessment and analysis, and collaboration in the development of targets and measures across all stages of the student lifecycle. The actions taken as part of this consultation process with the Students' Union include an emphasis in our plan on student support (academic and personal) and providing a safety net for students, and the need for financial support that includes recognition of the cost of studying in London. In addition a report from the Students' Union highlighted the need for a support programme for the most disadvantaged students that includes funding, careers engagement, academic/personal skills support, mentoring and an Ambassadorship, and this will be developed over the period of this plan and monitored by TeLSOC.

The Students' Union continues to collaborate with Widening Participation department, especially in campaigns led by the Working Class and People Of Colour officers, where there are renewed efforts to increase engagement with students and maintain accountability and transparency. This collaboration has resulted in the Students' Union and WP department developing two posts focused on collaboration: the Black Student Support Coordinator based in the Union, and the Students' Union and Community Officer based in the WP department.

The School's Widening Participation department meet monthly with members of the Students' Union to discuss issues in access, student success and progression and their alignment with the Students' Union educational priorities. Collaborative activity as a result of these discussions includes delivering WP outreach activities such as the Students' Union Saturday School. In addition the Students' Union are collaborating with WP department on the Student Development Fund⁸ which provides students with funding for personal and professional development opportunities. Applications from students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds will be prioritised. This has resulted in students from less advantaged backgrounds gaining funding to support their academic and personal success.

Two co-Presidents sit on the APP Steering Group as formal members, and student representation has recently been increased and diversified by the addition of the Students' Union's People of Colour Officer and Working Class Students' Officer joining the Steering Group. The Working Class and P.O.C officers have increased student engagement with questions around access to higher education. They have fought for a stronger focus on improving support for Widening Participation students within a structurally racist higher education system, which is increasingly feeling the impacts of marketisation - cuts to funding, end of maintenance grants, increased competition. It is primarily through the Working Class and P.O.C. Officers' campaign that that students have had the opportunity to express their views about the content of the Access & Participation Plan, with the result noted above, as well as to continue being involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Access & Participation Plan.

An important additional opportunity for students to be involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Access & Participation Plan is through our Outreach Student Ambassador Scheme. Outreach Student Ambassadors, all from widening participation backgrounds, play a key role in the delivery of our outreach activity to improve access. In

⁸ <https://soasunion.org/education/studentdevelopmentlearning/>

addition, Ambassadors complete evaluation forms for the activities they work on, and these evaluations are reflected upon as part of the process of continual improvement, providing another way in which the input of students from diverse backgrounds is involved in evaluating the activities underpinned by the Access & Participation Plan.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Monitoring and evaluating impact is core to our approach in widening access and participation. Our strategic approach to evaluation ensures it is designed to be rigorous and to facilitate reflective, responsive and impactful practice. Piloting projects is an integral part of this approach, continuing those which are evaluated to be successful, and taking forward learning from those which are evaluated as being unsuccessful. This demonstrates a commitment to continual improvement over the duration of this plan. Our aim is for our evaluation to generate evidence in order to influence practice in SOAS and the sector over the next 5 years.

Monitoring and evaluation is conducted at both an institutional and activity level; with approaches and processes increasingly refined and complementary across the student lifecycle. Our approach to evaluation design to date has primarily focused on obtaining qualitative data from participants self-reporting attitudinal change and how this changes over time. During 2019/20 we will refine our approach to provide greater differentiation in approaches taken for different activities based on their aims and objectives. We also commission external research as appropriate to work with leading experts, undertake research projects internally, and gather data which is used to continuously improve the impact of our interventions. We are aware that rapid improvements are being made in approaches to evaluating widening access and participation interventions, and it is imperative to identify what works elsewhere in the sector, and to incorporate this into our approach when appropriate for our local context. We believe in putting evidence and evaluation at the heart of our approach, developing our evidence base further and spreading best practice to where it is needed. We believe it is important to make known the findings of our evaluation through conferences and publications, particularly the impact on widening access and participation of approaches to learning and teaching being pioneered at SOAS such as decolonising the curriculum.

SOAS systematically and routinely gathers data from learners and other stakeholders on the impact of our activities across the student lifecycle. Reports are produced against a number of variables which allows the monitoring of results and attitudinal changes amongst different groups. These include measuring increased awareness of HE study and student life, how to progress to HE, costs and the support available, impact on current study, and changes in attitude to HE.

As well as measuring attitudinal change, structures are in place for tracking the destination of learners who engage in our long-term and summer school programmes, and we are putting in place processes to track this for learners participating in our new school partnership activities. SOAS performs very well within the parameters of our current activity evaluation procedure, having decided to focus on a reduced number of key indicators which can be used to evidence top-line impact more clearly. This enables us to reflect upon current practice and impact, and to change our approach and interventions as a result, facilitating continuous improvement. This happens through a range of processes – firstly, individual practitioners complete activity review forms which focus on evaluation data, secondly annual reports are produced which look at a suite of interventions together, and these are reviewed across the team. This, together with research and evidence from the sector more broadly, informs programme design and ensures that we will learn from evaluation and feed this into practice. For example, post-event qualitative evaluation in the form of feedback from Bridging Course participants evidenced feeling energized and confident about starting degree study at SOAS. However, a follow-up survey at the end of the first-term evidenced that a significant minority of participants nevertheless experienced challenges during their first term, particularly to do with feelings of not-belonging. One change we implemented to the programme to combat this has been to add a first term e-mentoring strand, in collaboration with Brightside, which builds belonging through connecting first-years with second- and third-year students. Since the implementation of this additional component, outcomes of Bridging Course participants have improved.

Our approach to evaluation is under regular review to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and continuous improvement. We continue to explore ways to further improve aspects of our evaluation in order to be able to better evidence outcomes and to reflect the access and participation standards of evidence. We have utilised the evaluation self-assessment tool, which was an extremely useful tool for reflection. Taking the decision to be particularly stringent using the tool, we scored ourselves as 'emerging' in all areas, scoring strongest in strategic context, where for example, evaluation activity is coherently maintained across the whole programme of WP activities through common measures of success, and learning, where, for example, the use of activity review forms which explicitly engage with evaluation results and are used for future planning enable us to demonstrate how evaluation findings are used to improve interventions cycle-on-cycle.

We have furthest distance to travel in evaluation design, and this is partly due to a large part of our evaluation design being very similar and focussing on self-reported attitudinal change, although as noted above this is something we are

changing. We have prioritised improvement in evaluation design, and are putting in place for 2019/20 a new shared procedure for the design of evaluation and indeed of programmes to explicitly document the rationale and evidence for choices made. This is partly a response to the recognition that a significant amount of embodied knowledge within the department is implicit in our practice rather than made explicit and documented, and to further evidence continuous improvement in practice. Ensuring that it is documented will also be a focus over the coming year. In addition in 2019/20 we are implementing termly cross-institutional evaluation sharing meetings, a development from having evaluation as a standing item on WP team meetings. A full action plan for improvement will be in place for 2019/20 and we will undertake the self-assessment on a regular basis to track progress on the action plan and to identify areas for continuous improvement.

Further, the central Widening Participation department works closely with colleagues in the Planning department to understand the access, success and progression of students from underrepresented backgrounds, and to reflect on a regular basis in order to inform our practice. This includes the analysis of the make-up of the current student body by certain protected characteristics and widening participation indicators, but also departmental-level analyses which enable us to pinpoint the patterns of outcomes of students from underrepresented backgrounds at a more granular level. The WP and Planning departments continue to work increasingly closely together in order to identify and develop further areas where data is sufficiently robust to provide the evidence for developing and delivering additional interventions.

The work of evaluation is explicit in the role of the central team who primarily deliver work in access and participation at SOAS. During 2019-20, as the new access and participation strategy and departmental success plans are developed, this capacity will be built further through the training of academic and other professional service colleagues in evaluation and research practice. This increasing body of knowledge will be drawn together by a dedicated role to further embed theories of change, and to maintain focus on progress towards the targets outlined in this plan.

We will continue to use the toolkit developed by OFFA to monitor and evaluate the impact of our financial support. This toolkit has most recently been used in the 2018/19 academic year, utilising the survey and statistical tools provided. In terms of the survey tool, a survey was sent to 166 recipients of the SOAS Excellence Bursary, entering in the HE in the 2017/18 academic year. From the 55 responses, a 4.67/5 rating for overall importance of the bursary was provided. Respondents in particular noted impact of the bursary in terms of funding core elements of studies, covering essential costs and feeling less anxious during studies. This tallies with previous findings obtained using the survey tool which also mentioned increasing feelings of being valued by SOAS and to helping recipients to manage family responsibilities.

In addition to the survey tool, the statistical tool was used to undertake a binary logistic regression analysis. This highlighted no statistical significance of financial support provided for 2010/11 and 2011/12 entrants in terms of degree completion, degree result and graduate outcome. Conversely, the tool did illustrate statistical significance for 2014/15 and 2015/16 recipients in terms of degree continuation. We will continue the use of the survey and statistical tools on an annual basis, and will from 2019/20 also use the interview tool to broaden the insight gained and to drill down further into questions such as the ideal value of the bursary, in how many instalments it should be disbursed to be most effective, and so on. This ongoing review will enable us to strengthen our provision of financial support over the duration of the plan.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching) is the senior manager with ultimate responsibility for widening access and participation, supported by the Associate Director of Student Welfare. SOAS' commitment to access is further supported by departments through the planning, implementation and monitoring of various measures, particularly in relation to retention, progression and collaboration.

Performance in widening access and participation are monitored by the Teaching, Learning & Student Outcomes Committee (chaired by the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching)), and its sub-committee the Student Outcomes Panel (chaired by the Associate Director of Student Welfare), and discussed at the highest level by Academic Board, Executive Board and the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will monitor the implementation the plan through annual reports provided by the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching) and the Head of Widening Participation. There is student representation at all of these committees to ensure students are fully able to contribute to and shape approaches and monitoring of the delivery of the plan. In addition, widening access and participation issues are also considered by the Student Experience & Engagement Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, further aligning institutional approaches.

Beyond the formal committee structure, all areas of SOAS have a responsibility to support, promote and embed widening access and participation. In line with best practice identified in OFFA's "*Understanding a whole institution approach to widening participation*" research, we are committed to embedding widening access and participation into all considerations across the institution, with a top-down, bottom-up approach to ensure effective expansion of existing

pockets of excellence towards a fully inclusive institution model. The development of the institutional Access & Participation Strategy will be an integral part of this approach.

The core SOAS Widening Participation department is based in Library & Learning Services Directorate and is an integral part of the Centre of Innovation, Learning and Teaching (CILT). The department works extensively across the whole institution on issues of access, admissions criteria, student success and progression including with all teams in Student & Academic Experience, all academic departments, and the Students' Union. The implementation of this Access & Participation Plan will be supported by all these areas of SOAS.

The body responsible for the drafting and delivery of the Access & Participation Plan is a steering group comprised of the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching), Academic Registrar, Director of Library and Learning Services, Director of CILT, Director of Student and Academic Experience, Head of Widening Participation, Widening Participation Manager (Outreach & Progression), Head of Student Advice and Welfare, Head of Equality and Diversity Committee, Director of Student Recruitment, Marketing and Admissions, the Fees Deputy Manager, and members of the Students' Union Executive: the Co-Presidents (Democracy and Education), and (Welfare and Campaigns), the People of Colour Officer and the Working Class Students' Officer. This group reports to the Director of SOAS who also reports to the Board of Trustees which provides the Board with full engagement and updates on the progress towards meetings the targets outlined in this plan.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have responded to the establishment of the Office for Students by reviewing the process undertaken for the drafting and delivery of our Access & Participation Plan. This review has informed the practice outlined in this plan. It will be further informed by the development of our Access & Participation Strategy and will be based on existing best practice and these underlying principles: that it is imperative to ensure full involvement of students from diverse backgrounds, and that it must involve members of staff involved in all phases of the student lifecycle across the institution. This will include a comprehensive review of the Access and Participation Steering Group which will be reconstituted following the development of the new Access and Participation Strategy.

The new group will oversee the development and monitoring of an action plan for 2019-20 and beyond, in collaboration with the Students' Union, and support the implementation of the Access & Participation Plan. The Head of Widening Participation will be responsible for producing and delivering the action plan, reporting to the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching).

Monitoring of the progress towards meeting the targets outlined in this plan will be done once a term when the group meets to discuss strategic focus, evaluation and levels of investment. The core element of these regular meetings will be to understand progress against targets using institutional data and proxies to estimate what impact measures and activities are having to date. These meetings are critical to identifying areas for concern and what actions might need to be taken to address worsening progress. This would include the establishment of a constituted special intervention task group to intervene with those academic or professional service departments where target students outcomes are worsening. Ultimately areas of concern will be reported to the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching) who chairs TeLSOC as the committee who can impose sanctions to ensure individuals or departments improve in the required areas. The Board of Trustees reports will ensure the School satisfies its ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS.

4. Provision of information to students

SOAS provides clear, accessible and timely information to applicants and potential students on our undergraduate fees and financial support. Information on fees and financial support is provided through our institutional website and the UCAS website in sufficient time and level of detail to enable prospective students to make an informed choice. We will continue to publish this information on these websites.

Regarding the financial support available, we will make clear any eligibility criteria and the application process to be considered for the SOAS Bursary in time for applicants to consider this information when making applications to university. This will also be included in our leaflet on financial support which is distributed to schools and colleges, and which is produced in conjunction with students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Financial support is targeted at students most in financial need. All undergraduate students with a household income under £25,000 entering SOAS from 2020/21 to 2024/25 will receive the SOAS Bursary which totals £4,500. This is distributed as £1,500 per year for three years of study (not including language year abroad).

We have undertaken a student-centered project regarding our bursaries that focuses upon ensuring that information about our financial support is clear and accessible. This has resulted in changes to how information is communicated to prospective students particularly those from low household income and from lower socioeconomic groups. In addition,

our Access and Participation Plan will be available through the SOAS website providing access and information to all students.

5. Variation – 2022.

SOAS annually reviews existing partnerships and assesses and evaluates our APP work using the NERUPI framework to integrate theory and practice to inform the design, delivery and evaluation of Widening Participation interventions, in order to maximise, capture and demonstrate their impact. The NERUPI framework is informed by theories of social capital, identity and the capability approach. It contains seven levels, from Year 6 (Level 0) through progression to postgraduate study/employment (Level 6). That means it can be applied to the whole of the student lifecycle and will contribute to the framework that supports gap elimination identified in our full APP. The NERUPI framework will inform how we develop the Variations submitted here.

Priority A: Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

Review with colleagues to assess current levels of understanding and using exemplar as a guide develop a summary accessible to wider audience with specific thought to prospective, current students and their parents and carers

• Priority B: Partnerships with schools to raise attainment

Develop, enhance and expand their partnerships with schools and other local and national organisations, to help raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented groups across England.

SOAS will focus on developing existing partnerships with which we have developed models of good practice, as well as developing new partnerships. Previously, we have concentrated our schools and college partnerships in London and areas within easy commute of London. We are looking to develop partnerships with schools and colleges across the country in LPN. We want to develop partnerships which support the work of the university but also the work of schools and colleges.

To achieve this, as part of our outreach work, SOAS will continue to work with third sector organisations in partnerships with schools and colleges aimed at raising attainment and addressing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged.

We will look at ways to develop both existing and new SOAS partnerships with schools and colleges that can offer support, advice and guidance which have mutual benefits to all involved. We will achieve this through developing partnership agreements that have clear aims and objectives to the benefit of all parties. In addition, we will consider how APPS partnerships with schools will support schools SIP (School Improvement Plans) and OFSTED recommendations as well as support and relate to the schools' mission and value statements. Evaluation of partnerships should also include the impact events have had on the school's attainment, professional development and relationships with the community.

In order to increase our outreach activity with schools and colleges in LPN areas in regions outside London we will develop two approaches.

Firstly, we will look at developing our third sector partnership with The Brilliant Club, Elephant Group and The Access Projects. Secondly, reflecting on what we have learnt from delivering on-line activities through the pandemic we will identify hybrid ways of working with schools and colleges particularly those outside of London, using examples developed from the lockdown period.

We will take the opportunities to share the good practice we develop at SOAS as well as look at current good practice across the WP sector making a significant contribution to the work of primary and secondary schools.

We have a number of pilot projects which we will review and assess their potential to scale up and offer to more partner schools and colleges. For example, the further benefits in offering continued professional development opportunities, such as our Language work with school teachers. We piloted a CPD with 3 language teachers, developed and delivered in partnership with the University of Roehampton. Three teachers, from St Marylebone, Folkestone School for Girls, and William Morris Sixth Form, attended. Two of these teachers have also requested access to the ready-made worksheets and have plans to implement the resources by the end of the summer term. The other three teachers who registered but did not attend have made contact to access the recording of the live session and have been provided with this access. In addition to this, a teacher at Ricards Lodge High School (Merton) has also requested access to the recorded session. The workshop attracted mostly teachers from schools with lower numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In order to further understand the barriers facing our target groups we want to extend and develop our understanding of current data and use additional widening participation characteristics such as Free School Meals data to inform our partnerships with schools and colleges. We will do this through use of internal and external approved data such as

provided by UCAS. We will also expand our use and knowledge of the HEAT database to enable a wider sharing of this work with colleagues in marketing, recruitment and admissions.

As outlined previously, collaborative working is a key requirement in meeting needs and delivering widening access and participation activities across all phases of the student lifecycle. It is in this spirit that we will develop, enhance and expand our partnerships with schools and other stakeholders to help raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented backgrounds and support partner schools to reduce the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.

In the most recent complete year, 2020-21, we worked with over 900 learners through our outreach programme, ranging from primary upwards. These learners were spread across nearly 200 schools, colleges and community organisations, with over 40% of these institutions engaging with us multiple times. This includes 12 schools who engaged with us 7 times or more across the year. However, we recognise that - in large part due to the impact of COVID - the majority of our work during this period was aimed at post-16 learners, and was based on individuals engaging with our structured programme of activities, rather than direct delivery with individual schools.

Our continuing partnership with The Brilliant Club has a significant impact on raising pre-16 attainment for learners from underrepresented backgrounds, both through the involvement of SOAS PhD students as tutors on The Scholars Programme, and our hosting Launch and Graduation trips as part of the programme. For example, in 2020/21, the average increase from their baseline to final assignments in The Brilliant Club's Intermediate Outcome Framework areas of Written Communication, Subject Knowledge and Critical Thinking for pupils working with PhD tutors from SOAS was 8 percentage points.

In addition, in 2020/21, 3 researchers from SOAS delivered Brilliant Tutoring Programme placements to 52 pupils. This included placements in schools in North Tyneside, North Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Portsmouth and Devon. The Brilliant Tutoring Programme aims to re-engage and rebuild pupils' confidence in core subjects, supported by 15 hours of tutoring delivered by PhD tutors. It is specifically designed to support, stretch and challenge mid-to-high attaining pupils to catch-up, keep aiming high and be able to access a future they deserve.

Since 2020/21 we have partnered with The Access Project, supporting their programme at Wood Green Academy in the West Midlands. As part of our partnership, we regularly attend Steering Committee meetings with the school, as well as being a host for trips, with approximately 140 Year 10 students visiting SOAS virtually. In addition, staff, students and alumni from SOAS have been encouraged to become volunteer tutors at The Access Project, with 20 so far applying in the past year. In this way we support The Access Project's programme which has a strong impact on raising attainment - with participants gaining up to six months of extra progress at GCSE after two years of participation.

SOAS' ongoing partnership with the Elephant Group London and East Midlands hubs includes 18 schools in London and 8 in the East Midlands, where participation in higher education is one of the lowest in the country. In addition to contributing to both hubs' Steering Group, we have deepened our links with school leaders in the East Midlands and London, and will be attending a Year 10 mini conference organised by school pupils themselves, which is expecting between 180 and 200 Year 10 students from across the Northampton area.

Partnership with Community Organisations

Our programme of community outreach activities increased in 2020-21, following recruitment by the Student Union and Community Officer. Our partnerships with Bollo Brook Youth Centre; Active Horizons - "youth-led charitable organisation set up to foster leadership, promote the voice and engagement of BME young people"; Head Start @ Family Action, which aims to inspire and support young people to engage in a positive and meaningful way with people from different backgrounds through volunteering; and Carers Support Merton have produced a series of podcasts by young people, HE talks and public speaking workshops.

Several activities have had to be rescheduled due to Covid. Since March 2022, one campus visit has taken place and a further 4 are planned. We have continued to strengthen our relationships with existing partners, whilst fostering new relationships too with organisations such as Coram's Fields Youth Centre, Sutton Carers Centre and CARAS, a community outreach charity based in Tooting that supports people of refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds in South-West London. Furthermore, building on lessons learned from the pandemic, we are conducting research on community organisations based in areas of low participation out-side-London with a view to develop partnerships aimed at improving outcomes for the young people and adults served by them.

Our annual collaboration with the British Library Family Day for Deaf Families, has not taken place in 2021 nor in 2020, but we have committed to deliver a workshop on the next Family Day scheduled for the 24th of September 2022.

Through swiftly developing and delivering a portfolio of online activities as a result of COVID, we were able to engage with learners and schools from a broader geographical range than was the case previously, and we will continue to offer online and hybrid opportunities to continue engaging outside of greater London and particularly in Low Participation Neighbourhoods, building on the best practice we have developed during the pandemic.

Prior to the impact of COVID, we had also developed significant expertise in impactful subject-specific partnerships with schools, such as our History Partnership with Morpeth School. While these previous partnerships were often at the post-16 age group due to the greater synchronicity between SOAS' areas of expertise and A-level syllabi, the expertise developed in broadening learners' engagement with the curriculum and their skills development will be adapted to similar partnerships with younger learners in schools.

We also note The Brilliant Club's report "Barriers to Access: Five lessons for creating effective school-university partnerships" (2020) and TASO's "Typology of attainment-raising activities conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review" (2022) and will incorporate the findings as we move forward in developing meaningful partnerships directly with schools to complement the existing work outlined above. Over the summer of 2022, we are undertaking a review of existing partnerships and our previous work with schools, and best practice across the sector. This will ensure that these new partnerships we develop are evidence-informed, robustly evaluated, rooted in SOAS' expertise, and focussed on raising attainment and addressing the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils at an early stage.

• Priority C: Access to higher education leads to successful participation

Set out how access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups lead to successful participation on high quality courses and good graduate outcomes.

We will continue working with colleagues across the institution to identify and develop existing good practice to be shared and developed further. As the university establishes its new internal college structure, we aim to further integrate a full lifecycle approach to address areas of need for improvement and develop good practice across the University.

Our assessment of performance across the student lifecycle identified that the areas requiring the greatest progress are in the student success phase, and as such since 2020/21 this has been a key area of focus, recognising that different academic departments have different strengths and areas for development.

As such, the Access, Participation and Student Success team has worked increasingly closely with individual academic departments at SOAS, collaborating on a range of projects which engage with the specificities of the discipline. These have included projects in which student consultants have reviewed course materials, skills-based development, and engagement with early career alumni to further strengthen the link between accessing SOAS, having an excellent student experience, and securing a positive graduate outcome. All of these collaborative projects are evidence-informed, and developed with a theory of change to improve student outcomes for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

The Ebony project is an excellent example of an initiative to enhance the experience of Black students at SOAS. Launched at SOAS in October 2020, the Ebony Initiative (EI) aims to nurture and support Black students from Africa and Afro-diasporic communities (*including students from Africa, Afro-descendants, and mixed-race backgrounds*) to pursue postgraduate education and research careers.

The driving force behind the faculty-initiated programme was two-pronged. First, was the need to create a better environment for Black students and a network which would assist these students to overcome obstacles and achieve success in their academic careers. It is no secret that Black students face racism and exclusion in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Too often, however, conversations never move on from debating how to correctly identify the problems, despite the fact that much has already been written and said about the obstacles for Black academics and students in the UK. The EI arose out of a desire to move beyond these conversations and create an action-oriented programme borne out of the experiences of Black scholars and focused on changing the game for Black students at SOAS. The difficult experiences of the Black faculty involved in the programme and documented by many other Black students and academics in the UK, feed into the design of the programme as a starting point for where change needs to begin.

Second, the EI aimed to specifically address the low number of Black students progressing to postgraduate taught (PGT) degrees, postgraduate research (PGR) programmes and academic positions in UK HEIs, which has been documented by several reports. Recent research has shown that only 1% of university professors in the UK are Black. This is largely due to the documented 'broken pipeline' in UK HEIs, which results in very few Black students from Africa and Afro-diaspora communities continuing onto postgraduate studies. This then in turn affects the diversity of individuals in academic positions and the kind of knowledge produced by universities. The EI was founded to address these structural

inequalities and to increase the pipeline of Black scholars progressing to PGT and PhD degrees and academic positions in UK HE and to promote decolonised knowledge production at SOA

This additional focus at the departmental level has developed hand-in-hand with institutional level work, such as reviews of assessment methods, and we are undertaking a process to rapidly spread existing good practice across the institution. This dovetails with the whole lifecycle approach we have referenced earlier, and we will explore ways in which we can extend the impact of the pre-entry Student Success Conference throughout a student's time at SOAS and beyond. This will involve increasingly close working between the APSS team, the Careers Service, Enterprise and reviewing pathways to postgraduate study to ensure that students are enabled to follow their ambitions after graduation.

SOAS is a member of the University of London Widening Access Leads Network

The University of London is a federation of 17 independent member institutions with a diverse range of universities from larger, to smaller specialised institutions. The breadth of expertise, partnerships and academic standing extends beyond the classroom, deep into its communities such as schools, local authorities, colleges, businesses and charities. Within this is a strong, collaborative and active group of widening access leaders from across the federation who are committed to supporting each other, finding ways to collaborate and to make a continuing and increasing impact on access to higher education for underrepresented groups.

The group has been in existence for some years with a rotating Chair from different member institutions. The emphasis on collaboration between institutions has galvanised the group to formalise this partnership and to implement Terms of Reference going forward. As a formal network we have committed to explore the following:

- Work together to identify collaborative opportunities which complement institutional expertise and practise alongside access and participation plans and aims
- Explore ways to develop a peer-based evaluation process
- Provide a cohesive voice championing the rights and long-term outcomes of non-traditional learners
- Share best practice on an ongoing basis to influence 'live' and future projects/areas of work.

• Priority D: Develop more flexible and diverse provision

Seek to develop more diverse pathways into and through higher education through expansion of flexible Level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships

We are working with departments to provide appropriate Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) for prospective students applying with non-traditional qualifications. Equally providing IAG to the rigours of academic study at SOAS and supporting appropriate study skills workshops and masterclasses. Developing earlier interventions from pre-entry and Foundation year and year 1 students with career teams to provide IAG to subject specific graduate opportunities

Building on the good work and results coming from Foundation College we will look at developing partnerships with schools and colleges providing a route through to the SOAS Foundation College. In addition, we will look at developing partnerships with colleges delivering the Access to HE Diploma. This will support our work to increase the intake and success of mature students at SOAS. To achieve this aim, we will work with further education partners and the university academic departments and admissions to better understand the best degree pathways to meet the learning gained from the successful completion of the Access Diploma. As part of these developments, we will work closely with SOAS Foundation College.

As part of these developments, APPS will work closely with SOAS Foundation College. The primary aim will be to partner with a number of Further Education and 6th Form Colleges that are based in IMD (index of multiple deprivation) quintiles 1 & 2, or POLAR4 quintile 1 & 2 postcode areas: SOAS has a key APP target to increase higher education participation and success among those living in Low Participation Neighbourhoods.

To partner with a number of FE and 6th Form colleges that are based in IMD (index of multiple deprivation) quintiles 1 & 2, or POLAR4 quintiles 1 & 2 area both within Greater London as well as areas across the country.

To designate these colleges as 'SOAS Foundation Partners' (with permission to use a SOAS logo and these words on things like letterheads and their signage).

To offer a progression agreement consisting of a guaranteed interview for the Foundation Year for any applicants, and in some cases expenses to cover visiting the SOAS campus for this interview.

To offer such partners a visit at least once a year from a SOAS FY academic, to offer a lecture / learning experience.

SOAS Access Participation and Student Success (APSS) team to co-organise with the Foundation Year team a half-day conference at SOAS campus for these partners, to showcase the SOAS offer

APSS is working with Learning and Teaching, Academic Development and students in the development of co-curricular approaches to course development. Review what currently has been developed at SOAS and what opportunity do these provide for students from WP target groups. In 2022-2023, further development of co-curricular work to learning which engages, challenges and is relevant to our APSS target groups of students is an important aspect of the cross departmental work at SOAS. The partnerships we develop with schools and colleges will help and inform these co-curricular developments.

6. Appendix

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	BA, BSc, LLB	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	All other Certificates	£4,625
CertHE/DipHE	Graduate Diploma in Economics	£3,845
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The School of Oriental and African Studies

Provider UKPRN: 10007780

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£464,582.12	£475,242.58	£486,367.85	£497,978.18	£510,094.71
Access (pre-16)	£232,291.06	£237,621.29	£243,183.92	£248,989.09	£255,047.36
Access (post-16)	£176,541.20	£180,592.18	£184,819.78	£189,231.71	£193,835.99
Access (adults and the community)	£32,520.75	£33,266.98	£34,045.75	£34,858.47	£35,706.63
Access (other)	£23,229.11	£23,762.13	£24,318.39	£24,898.91	£25,504.74
Financial support (£)	£789,436.25	£885,500.00	£1,005,500.00	£1,103,000.00	£1,164,500.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£42,200.33	£44,040.26	£45,960.42	£47,964.29	£50,055.54

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HF1)	£4,764,395.00	£4,768,410.00	£5,124,070.00	£5,124,070.00	£5,124,070.00
Access investment	8.6%	8.7%	8.3%	8.9%	9.8%
Financial support	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%	16.4%	16.9%
Research and evaluation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total investment (as %HF1)	24.0%	24.1%	23.7%	25.3%	26.7%

