

# **Bedford College**

## **Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29**

### **Introduction and strategic aim**

The purpose of The Bedford College Group is to help individuals, communities and society flourish through education by reducing inequality to create a sustainable future. We are committed to strategies to widen participation in Higher Education courses and enabling and improving progression opportunities to all students. Our vision is to be the best and most authoritative post-16 educator in the South East Midlands, (TBCG Strategic Plan 2022-2027). Through our Higher Skills Strategy we have a core aim to build on opportunities for everyone in the communities we serve. We will do this by ensuring the starting points of partners are understood, give appropriate support to students and have an agile approach to delivery in order to ensure all can access our provision.

Bedford College was established in 1882 as a training college for teachers, it is now a multi-site college group known as The Bedford College Group with over 18,000 students spanning across four counties in the South East Midlands. The Group comprise of Bedford College, Tresham College, Central Bedfordshire College, The National College for Motorsport and Shuttleworth College. In addition to the further education colleges, the Group also boasts two sixth form colleges in the heart of Bedford and Corby town centres. Our higher education student body comprises of approximately 550 students studying HNC, HND and top up degree programmes. We work with three University partners and have both franchised and validated provisions across the Group including top up degree programmes on eight of our pathways. The Group also work with Pearson and as a drive to diversify into higher skills have introduced a number of higher technical qualifications over the last two years.

The Bedford College Group has colleges which serve communities that experience significant levels of deprivation. Levels of deprivation as measured by the most recent Government index of Deprivation (IMD 2019) show that the communities of Corby, Wellingborough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton have 102 areas in decile 1,2 and 3 on the index. The Group's commitment to widening participation for all communities we serve is articulated in our Strategic Plan, Higher Skills Strategy, access and participation plan, admissions policies, progression policies and our equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

We offer a range of courses on a part-time or full-time basis. Approximately 60% of our students study full-time and 40% part-time. The majority of our part-time cohorts are studying engineering, construction and teacher education courses and do so through being sponsored by an employer. They are therefore also working in full time employment alongside their studies. Our land-based provision at Shuttleworth College offers students the opportunity of accommodation on site but this is the only college in the Group that has this facility. Therefore, the majority of our students commute from the local community to College.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

In order to ascertain risks to equality of opportunity we have used the APP data dashboard and local data, as well as collecting qualitative data from internal and external stakeholders. In 2023, we merged with Central Bedfordshire College and, therefore, the current dashboard represents Bedford College while Central Bedfordshire College is shown in separate data sets. We have analysed these separately but have identified the strongest risks to opportunity across all of the data. We have

chosen to focus on the three most definitive risks within the data sets but have analysed all stages of the student lifecycle as part of the process. We have therefore not set targets for attainment and progression but focussed on access and continuation and completion. We feel that by focussing on the three biggest risks to our student body we will have the biggest impact and that these three risks are proportionate to our student body numbers. Due to having low numbers in some areas we have relied upon the four year or two year aggregate data and have also used all of our students both part-time and full-time jointly. Once a risk has been identified in the data we have then linked this to the EORR based upon qualitative evidence from our student survey, admissions teams and local demographic.

### **Risk 2.1**

Lower proportions of students from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds (using the indices of deprivation 2019 measure) access higher education at The Bedford College Group (TBCG). In 2022-2023 data this gap was 8.4 % (APP data dashboard August 2024). Evidence based on the local demographic suggests that students may not have had equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions, cost pressures may have affected a students' decision as to whether they undertake higher education and they may not have had proper information and guidance to make informed choices about their higher education in terms of finance and bursary options. In addition, students' perception of higher education from some of the most deprived areas within our catchment such as Corby and Leighton Buzzard may mean they feel they cannot enter into a course despite being qualified.

### **Risk 2.2**

Students who were in receipt of free school meals at KS4 are less likely to continue their studies at the college. Four year aggregate data shows a 5.2 pp gap between those not eligible compared with eligible and two year aggregate data shows a 5.7 pp gap. Central Bedfordshire campuses have more students who were in receipt of free schools meals (FSM) and the continuation rate for those students is lower. Student feedback suggests that cost pressures may mean that students may not have had equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education. Feedback to teachers and lecturers also suggest that this may also be due to limited course type and delivery models as more students are trying to juggle work and study. In addition, our data gathered from expenditure of bursary funds suggests that students are not accessing the hardship and travel bursaries available to them and therefore they may not have had sufficient personal support alongside their studies to achieve a positive outcome.

### **Risk 2.3**

Completion rates from four year and two-year aggregate data consistently demonstrate that completion for white students is higher than those of black and mixed-race students. Although the data is limited the two-year aggregate data shows completion of white students at 83.8 % whilst Black and Mixed are at 75.6 % and 80.4 % respectively. We have identified the same factors for risk as Risk 2.2 which are cost pressures, limited course type and delivery models, lack of appropriate personal and academic support.

## **Other identified risks**

We have based our objectives and interventions on the three most significant risks with which we can implement strategies for improvement. We will continue to monitor the following groups of students as the data suggests that there are indicators of a risk to opportunity.

### **ABCS**

Students in quintile 1 (ABCS) are less likely to continue or complete their studies than those in Q4+5 with association of characteristics between students. Two-year aggregate continuation data shows an 18.9 pp gap which has grown significantly from four year aggregate data of 9.4 pp. As with risk 2.1, not having equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions is a factor in some students being able to enter onto the next step of their HE journeys and access Level 5 and to up degree programmes. Cost pressures and the appropriate academic and personal support may also play a significant factor in the continuation of students from this cohort of students. Another factor that is highlighted by many students as to why they do not want to continue with their studies is mental health. We are seeing a significant increase in withdrawals due to mental health across our college. Whilst we will not specifically target this group for intervention we will monitor the impact of intervention 2 on this group. This will include the additional personal support we are proposing.

## **Objectives**

### **Objective 3.1 (PTA-01)**

The Bedford College Group will increase the numbers of students from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds and reduce the gap to 0 % by 2029. We aim to achieve this through our awareness campaign and progression support policies which will target the perceptions of higher education and the barriers to entry due to poor academic outcomes at KS4.

### **Objective 3.2 (PTS-01)**

The Bedford College Group will increase the continuation rate of students who were in receipt of FSM at KS4 to within 3% of those who were not in receipt of FSM hence reducing the gap by 2028. We will achieve this through targeted tutorial support, improving communications and guidance on all available bursaries amongst staff and students and better understanding our students at application.

### **Objective 3.3 (PTS-02)**

The Bedford College Group will improve completion rates for non-white students to 82.0% by 2028. This will be achieved by improving academic and personal support throughout the student lifecycle, staff training and our belonging campaign.

## Intervention Strategy 1 Access and Awareness Campaign

### Objectives and Targets

The Bedford College Group will increase the numbers of students from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds and reduce the gap to 0 % by 2029. (PTA-1)

### Links to EORR

**Perception of higher education** - Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

**Knowledge and Skills** - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

**Information and Guidance** - Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options

**Cost pressures** - Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy ?
<b>TBCG progression into HE strategy</b>	Ensure we have a robust progression strategy to increase progression into HE from existing cohorts of students.	Resources for this activity will be shared across our existing teams. Student services, curriculum,	Increase numbers of progressing students to 30% of FE cohorts where a higher course is offered.	IS2, IS3,

	<p>Set robust progression targets for curriculum teams. Write a strategy to support entry into higher and degree apprenticeships and upskilling of staff in local businesses and enterprise.</p> <p>Revise the current progression bursaries to support students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to enter into higher education.</p> <p>Introduce a scholarship scheme to support students with initial costs associated with higher education.</p> <p>Embed a culture within our student and staff body of progression into HE and ensure a progression guarantee is built into all study programs where it is appropriate for the students next steps.</p> <p>All curriculum teams who deliver HE programs should have a clear road map of progression which is shared with all students at the start of their college life. This will support in raising the expectation amongst students that they should be entering onto a higher-level course.</p>	<p>admissions and also marketing will all need to proportion their time to this strategy. We envisage this to form approximately 5% of resource from these teams £77K.</p> <p>Year 1 - Writing and roll out of new policies and procedures. Take baseline progression data levels for all students and report on individual groups.</p> <p>Year 2-3 - Monitor impact of initial roll out by comparing number of progressions against baseline data. Collect narrative evidence from students as to whether the progression guarantee formed part of the reason for enrolling on a HE courses.</p> <p>Year 4 -Measure overall impact by collating progression data against initial baseline. This empirical data alongside the narrative evidence can then be used to support any causal relationship.</p> <p>Bursary for progressing students = 150,000K per year</p>		
--	--	---	--	--

		Scholarships = 36K per year Staff resource costs = 77k		
<b>TBCG school engagement campaign</b>	<p>We currently have liaison with schools across the Group for entry into FE.</p> <p>However, will we relaunch this campaign with a focus on targeting sixth form colleges and schools in Q1 and Q2 postcodes. We will utilise the National Outreach Coverage dataset from HEAT and EMWREP to support our choices for interventions with specific schools.</p> <p>Conduct progression events at each campus each year to promote entry into higher education.</p> <p>Progression events to include local sixth forms and targeted schools in designated postcodes.</p> <p>We can gain quantitative data over the four-year period of this intervention in order to analyse its success.</p>	<p>We will use the staff resource already available at the Group within the events and engagement team but focus this intervention on the selected schools and sixth form colleges.</p> <p>Costs of events and promotion will cost approximately 7K per academic year.</p>	Increased participation in HE from targeted schools.	IS2

<p><b>TBCG enhancer days and summer school</b></p>	<p>In order to raise aspirations and expectations we plan to run enhancer days and summer schools' sessions with targeted schools.</p> <p>We will focus the activity on schools from deprived socio-economic postcodes in our Dunstable and Corby campuses and monitor the impact through narrative and empirical data sets.</p>	<p>These sessions will require a financial commitment from the Group of approximately 8K across the four-year target period.</p> <p>This will be a cross college approach and involve student services, events and engagement and the curriculum teams.</p>	<p>Increased participation in HE from targeted schools.</p>	<p>IS2</p>
<p><b>TBCG pathways to higher education program (adults)</b></p>	<p>We will review our access provision at the Group to ensure that adults from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds have a route into higher education. This will help to support adult attainment at Level 3.</p> <p>This will include pre-access pathways specifically for adults which aim to upskill them in GCSE English, maths and digital skills in order for them to re-enter education.</p>	<p>This is a long-term strategy which will involve a cross group approach to our access provision and also will involve the Vice Principal for Adult Education.</p> <p>We will require funding to support the promotion of the adult pathways we estimate this to cost 5K per year.</p>	<p>Increased numbers of adult students from deprived backgrounds entering onto our higher education programmes.</p>	<p>IS3</p>
<p><b>TBCG pathways to higher education program (16-18)</b></p>	<p>Maths and English attainment at Level 2 is often a barrier to entry into</p>	<p>This will require additional financial resource in terms of</p>	<p>Improved attainment at Level 3 with targeted groups from</p>	<p>IS3</p>

	<p>higher education after Level 3 studies.</p> <p>We will identify students from our level 3 cohorts who are at risk of not meeting entry requirements at L4 and offer additional maths and English support.</p>	<p>maths and English delivery equivalent to 80K per year.</p>	<p>postcodes of deprivation securing a place on Level 4 programs.</p>	
<p><b>TBCG and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) school's partnership-Vision 2050</b></p>	<p>We are working with the NNC on a joint project called vision 2050. This is also in collaboration with a number of local businesses and the University of Northampton.</p> <p>This aims to raise attainment at KS4 and therefore improve access for those at risk of low participation in HE.</p> <p>As part of this project we will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a programme to drive up literacy in educationally deprived communities (starting with Corby).</li> <li>• Undertaking regional education workshops to support transitions and embed a theory for change model</li> </ul>	<p>This is a long-term strategy which aims to target students from KS4. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the various projects will not take place within the term of this APP.</p>	<p>Improved awareness of HE programmes and progression pathways.</p> <p>Increased admissions to HE pathways from students in socio economic deprived postcodes.</p>	<p>IS2</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local schools and organisations on a set of transition standards.</li> </ul>			
<b>TBCG – future learning program</b>	<p>In order to build skills within our communities and bridge the gap for adults re-entering education we plan to develop a number of short accessible taster modules for adults or young people to engage in who do meet entry requirements for courses but feel they can-not enter into or belong on a higher education course.</p> <p>These modules will include some content of the full academic qualification but will focus on building relationships with potential peers/ staff and skills.</p>	<p>These courses will require some financial investment within the curriculum teams.</p> <p>We envisage this costing approximately 45K per annum.</p>	<p>5 engagement programs developed by 2026.</p> <p>Entry into HE from engagement programs.</p>	IS3
<b>TBCG- Staff training</b>	<p>Roll out and update training in the following across the curriculum teams:</p> <p>Black history workshops, LGBTQ+ awareness, Unconscious bias training (selected groups), EDI confidence, Inclusive language</p> <p>Neurodiversity awareness training.</p> <p>The inclusive workplace training.</p>	<p>This intervention will require input from the central staff learning and development team and the Head of EDI.</p>	<p>Increased numbers students from IMD entering into higher education.</p> <p>Improved learner voice.</p> <p>Decrease in reported mental health and an increase in continuation rates.</p> <p>Improved NSS scores for student experience.</p>	IS2, IS3,

## Intervention Strategy 2 The Bedford College group Educational Gains and Support Strategy

### Objectives and Targets

The Bedford College Group will increase the continuation rate of students who were in receipt of FSM at KS4 to within 3% of those who were not in receipt of FSM hence reducing the gap by 2028. (PTS-01)

### Links to EORR

**Limited course type and delivery mode** Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types

**Cost pressures** - Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

**Insufficient personal support**- Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

### Related Objectives and Target

The Bedford College Group will improve continuation rates of students Q1 and Q2 with ABCS to 90% by 2028.

### Related links to EORR

**Knowledge and Skills** - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

**Information and Guidance** - Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p><b>TBCG flexible learning options</b></p>	<p>We plan to review our delivery models in order to offer more flexible/ blended learning options.</p> <p>This is in line with the new LLE reforms which will allow adult students to re-enter into HE and select 30 credit learning bundles.</p>	<p>This will involve curriculum teams to review and remodel their courses. This will be supported by marketing and admissions for re-branding on the college website and changing of admissions windows and policies.</p> <p>We do not anticipate a financial cost to this strategy.</p>	<p>50% of programs to offer an alternative learning option by 2028.</p> <p>Improved continuation rates.</p>	<p>IS1</p>
<p><b>TBCG- higher and degree apprenticeships</b></p>	<p>Develop and run new degree apprenticeships alongside new HEI partners.</p> <p>This will offer clear progression routes into higher paid careers.</p>	<p>The HE office, apprenticeships team and the business development team will all play a significant role in this intervention.</p> <p>Additional financial resource will be required for the additional staff required to deliver and manage the new apprenticeship programs in addition to the new business development required. We anticipate this to be three full time positions costing approximately 120K per annum.</p>	<p>Degree apprenticeship routes offered in engineering and digital pathways by 2028.</p>	<p>IS1, IS3</p>

<p><b>TBCG bursary and guidance reforms</b></p>	<p>Introduce automatic qualification to the travel, progression and hardship bursaries for students who were in receipt of FSM at KS4.</p> <p>An ongoing training plan for admissions, student services and HE curriculum teams on bursary support for students.</p>		<p>Increased uptake of students applying for and receiving the college bursaries.</p>	<p>IS3</p>
<p><b>TBCG- Staff training</b></p>	<p>Roll out and update training in the following across the curriculum teams;</p> <p>Black history workshops</p> <p>LGBTQ+ awareness</p> <p>Unconscious bias training (selected groups)</p> <p>EDI confidence</p> <p>Inclusive language</p> <p>Neurodiversity awareness</p> <p>The inclusive workplace.</p>	<p>This intervention will require input from the central staff learning and development team and the of Head of EDI.</p> <p>We will fund these activities through our current L&amp;D budget and team.</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging. Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.</p>	<p>IS1 IS3</p>

<p><b>TBCG- HEI Partnerships</b></p>	<p>TBCG will review and re-develop partnerships with universities to promote clear progression pathways into top up degrees programs.</p>	<p>The HE office will be the primary drivers of this intervention.</p> <p>Working alongside University partners we can draw upon resources and teaching and learning expertise to further support our students.</p>	<p>Increase in students who progress to our top up degree pathways.</p> <p>Increased number of top up degree pathways available to students.</p>	<p>IS1</p>
<p><b>TBCG educational gains framework – tutorial and induction</b></p>	<p>We are introducing a new Educational Gains framework which maps to the college values.</p> <p>Whilst this will be impactful on all students it will have targeted gains for individuals and selected groups.</p> <p>Within the framework individual gains for those within ABCS groups.</p> <p>The framework will encompass a new tutorial and induction program to support students through their courses. In addition to programs to enhance skills and work readiness.</p>	<p>The educational Gain framework will involve the student services LIVE team and curriculum staff. All HE students will be allocated a designated tutor to support them through the student lifecycle.</p> <p>Staff from our digital experience teams will support with the set-up, Monitoring and tracking of the framework.</p> <p>It will be monitored through students- reflective journals throughout their study programs and tracking engagement with support and enhancement activities.</p>	<p>Positive engagement with the framework from all students studying HE at the college (as measured through our tracking and monitoring system).</p>	<p>IS1, IS3</p>

<p><b>TBCG- Educational gains Framework</b></p> <p><b>Skills development</b></p>	<p>As part of the new educational gains framework we will embed a targeted skills development program, mindset training program and volunteering program.</p> <p>These will benefit all students but we plan to set individualised and targeting gains to sets of students.</p> <p>The aim of these is to improve the confidence of students in addition to building upon their skills in order to prepare them for their next steps.</p>	<p>Curriculum teams will work alongside student services and the digital experience team to produce a program of activity online and in person to improve the skills of our students.</p>	<p>Student surveys will demonstrate an improved learner experience and confidence level.</p>	

**Intervention Strategy 3 Student belonging strategy**

**Objectives and Targets**

The Bedford College Group will improve completion rates for non-white students to 82.0 % by 2028. This will be achieved by improving academic and personal support throughout the student lifecycle. (PTS-02)

**Links to EORR**

**Insufficient academic support-** Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

**Cost pressures -** Increases in cost pressures may affect a student’s ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

**Insufficient personal support-** Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

## Related Objectives and Target

The Bedford College group will improve progression opportunities for black students by 10% by 2028.

## Related links to EORR

**Limited course type and delivery mode** Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<b>TBCG- More like me campaign</b>	<p>To improve the feeling of belonging we will launch a 'more like me' campaign across our campuses for key under-represented courses.</p> <p>This campaign will aim to promote people from diverse backgrounds to students. We will achieve this by.</p> <p>Reviewing course delivery materials to ensure they are inclusive. Ensure all delivery meets the EDI curriculum standards.</p> <p>Actively seeking out guest speakers and role models from</p>	<p>This intervention will involve marketing teams, admission teams, student services teams and curriculum teams.</p> <p>We anticipate this campaign to be embedded within our current practices and therefore not require any additional finance.</p>	<p>Student surveys to demonstrate improved sense of belonging.</p>	<p>IS2,</p>

	<p>diverse backgrounds to present and meet with students.</p> <p>Reviewing marketing materials and ensuring they are reflective of the communities we serve.</p> <p>We aim for this to ensure that students have a sense of belonging at the college and therefore are more likely to continue in their studies.</p>			
<p><b>TBCG-Academic and tutorial mentoring</b></p>	<p>In addition to the educational gains framework we plan to roll out a training program spanning the four-year lifecycle of the APP for all academic and support staff at the college on tailored and targeted support for HE students.</p> <p>This will include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma informed teaching</li> <li>• Bursary and support arrangements</li> <li>• Progress tracking and monitoring</li> <li>• Critical thinking.</li> </ul>	<p>The HE office, learning and development teams and curriculum staff will pay an important role in developing this intervention.</p> <p>We anticipate this occupying at least 10% of time and costing approximately 20K per annum to implement.</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging through student survey data.</p> <p>Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.</p>	<p>IS2,</p>



<b>TBCG- Peer mentoring program</b>	<p>We currently have peer mentoring in place across our sport and digital programs of study.</p> <p>We plan to roll out the peer mentoring scheme across all of the HE programs, this will form a part of the educational gain's framework.</p>	<p>The HE office and curriculum teams will roll out this intervention with the wider staff.</p> <p>We will require approximately £1000 of financial incentives for mentoring activity per annum.</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging through student survey data.</p> <p>Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.</p>	IS2
<b>TBCG- Staff training</b>	<p>Roll out and update training in the following across the curriculum teams:</p> <p>Black history workshops</p> <p>LGBTQ+ awareness</p> <p>Unconscious bias training (selected groups)</p> <p>EDI confidence</p> <p>Inclusive language</p> <p>Neurodiversity awareness</p> <p>The inclusive workplace.</p>	<p>This intervention will require input from the central staff learning and development team and the of Head of EDI.</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging through student survey data. Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.</p>	IS1, IS2
<b>TBCG -LIVE (lifestyle, involvement, voice, enhancement) calendar</b>	<p>To review the college student services LIVE calendar to ensure culturally diverse</p>	<p>The LIVE team form part of our student services teams and are</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging.</p>	IS2

	activities are taking place throughout the academic year.	present across all of the campuses that deliver HE.  Alongside the HE team, academic tutors and curriculum teams they will support in the roll out of HE specific and joint FE initiatives to improve the cultural capital of the colleges.	Reduction in numbers of students withdrawing from courses due to mental health.	
<b>TBCG- Religion and belief policy</b>	To work alongside the EDI strategy group to implement the colleges religion and belief policy to include the addition of multifaith spaces across the group.	Introduce multi-faith advocates across the group to enable students to have support with their spiritual wellbeing.	Improve the sense of belonging. Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.	IS2
<b>TBCG- LGBTQ+ support advocates</b>	To promote and further develop across the college group dedicated LGBTQ+ support advocates.	These students are trained through the Head of Equality and diversity and support through the college student services teams. We plan to ensure these are available across all sites to support HE students.	Improve the sense of belonging. Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.	IS2

## **Intervention Strategies Evidence base and rationale**

In order to determine which intervention strategies would be effective for each of the risks to opportunity we have used a number of sources of type 1 evidence. This includes feedback through student focus groups, staff focus groups and discussions with tutors. For each of the three risks identified we have discussed with a range of stakeholders across the group and gathered feedback on why they think and how this can be tackled as a group.

Type 1 evidence has been gathered from our student focus groups and surveys. This has given us a valuable insight into the student experience and what they value from their course of study.

Within intervention strategy 1 (TBCG access and awareness campaign) we have focussed the individual interventions on raising the expectations of the populations that surround our colleges. We have drawn upon the methodology and ideas within the Uni Connect Attainment raising toolkit. We have therefore chosen interventions that focus on raising expectations rather than aspirations.

For intervention strategy 3 students took part in the Student Commission for Racial Justice program and surveys showed that 9% of culturally minoritised students strongly disagreed that teaching staff are diverse. As part of the TBCG staff training program embedded into the intervention strategy we focus on debiasing staff recruitment processes. As a Group we are also working on the diversity in leadership development program to support entry into leadership roles for our staff from diverse backgrounds.

Survey results have also informed the TBCG be like me campaign in intervention strategies 55% of our culturally minoritised students believe that their course considers the opinions of a variety of cultures compared to 80% of white students. We have therefore put in place the review of curriculum material to ensure that it is culturally diverse and reflects the lived experiences of our minority groups.

Further details and evidence base for our intervention strategies can be seen in Annex B where we have conducted a full literature review of the current evidence to support these campaigns.

## Intervention Strategy 1 Access and Awareness Campaign Evaluation strategies

Total cost £408,000

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
TBCG progression into HE strategy	<p>Increase numbers of progressing students to 30% of FE cohorts.</p> <p>Increased participation of students progressing to HE from IMD Q1 and Q2 to 40% of the student population by 2028.</p>	<p>We plan use type 2 empirical data to evaluate the success of this intervention.</p> <p>2025/2026 - record baseline data the numbers of students from L3 cohorts at the college entering into L4 courses.</p> <p>2025/2026 - record baseline data the numbers of students in our L3 cohorts from IMD Q1 and Q2 who progress onto HE.</p> <p>2025/2026 - work with a consultant to develop the capabilities of our Power-Bi reporting system.</p> <p>We will then monitor this data each year and take the final data set in 2028.</p> <p>Type 1 narrative date will be gathered using student surveys to ask students why they chose to progress to L4 and whether the colleges progression activities supported them in that decision.</p> <p>Both the type 1 and type 2 data will then be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the progression strategy.</p>
TBCG school awareness campaign	Increased applications to college HE programs from schools in IMD Q1 and Q2 postcodes	We plan to use both narrative and empirical data to evaluate these two interventions. Both of these interventions will target the same demographics and

<p>TBCG enhancer days and summer school</p>	<p>Improved student satisfaction scores from applicants.</p>	<p>therefore it will be impossible to distinguish the outcomes from one another and as such they will be evaluated together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2025/2026- collate data of applicants from the targeted schools as a percentage of overall students studying at L4</li> <li>2. 2025/2026- Initiate the campaign</li> <li>3. 2026/2027, 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 repeat the data collection exercise as a percentage of overall students at L4.</li> </ol> <p>On entry to L4 we will also survey students as to why they made the choice to enter into education and ask where they first heard about this. We can use this narrative qualitative data and the empirical data to draw conclusions as to the impact of the intervention.</p>
<p>TBCG pathways to higher education program (adults)</p>	<p>Increased numbers of adult students from deprived backgrounds entering onto our higher education programs.</p>	<p>We can use causal data to evaluate this intervention. We should see a direct correlation between the numbers of students on the access programs and the number of students entering into our HE courses over the time of the intervention.</p> <p>We will then support the evaluation using narrative evidence from student surveys to prove the causal link of the correlation.</p>
<p>TBCG pathways to higher education program (16-18)</p>	<p>Improved attainment at L3 for the targeted groups Increased applications at L4 from the targeted groups</p>	<p>We will use type 3 casual data to monitor this intervention.</p> <p>We will target this extra support to selected groups at the college and monitor the attainment of those students at L3 compared to a control group who did not receive the additional support.</p> <p>We will measure the number of applications to HE from the selected groups of students and compare this to a control group who did not receive the additional support.</p>

<p>TBCG and North Northamptonshire Council school's partnership- Vision 2050</p>	<p>Improved awareness of HE programs and progression pathways.</p> <p>Increased admissions to HE pathways from students in socio-economic deprived postcodes</p>	<p>This is a long-term intervention that will extend past the lifecycle of the APP until 2050.</p>
<p>TBCG – future learning program</p>	<p>5 engagement programs developed by 2026</p> <p>Entry into HE from engagement programs with 90% of participants</p> <p>Continuation rates of students who participate in the program compared to those that do not.</p> <p>Better outcomes for students who have participated in the program compared to those that do not</p>	<p>We will use narrative data to evaluate this intervention. Using student surveys of how they felt the program supported them into HE.</p> <p>We could also use casual data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention on continuation rates on the HE courses. By using the control group as students who enter L4 without the engagement program against those that did complete the program we can evaluate the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for HE.</p> <p>This will then be supported by further qualitative evidence from any potential withdrawals and also high grades whilst on program across the 2 groups of students will be studied.</p>

**Intervention strategy 2 The Bedford College Group Educational Gains and Support Strategy -Evaluation strategies**

**Total Cost- £108,000**

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
----------	----------	-------------------------

<p>TBCG educational gains framework – tutorial and induction</p>	<p>Increased continuation rates for those in receipt of FSM at KS4.</p> <p>Improved student satisfaction results in student surveys</p>	<p>Due to the number of interventions we plan to implement to tackle this we will not be able to gather empirical or casual data to support a direct link between this intervention and the desired outcome.</p> <p>We will however be able to monitor the engagement with the framework through tracking of the learner numbers who engage with each educational gain activity on teams and gather their reflections on its impact on them. This will then allow us to draw a correlation between any increase in participation and improved continuation rates.</p> <p>We will also use narrative evaluation methods to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention. This qualitative information through student surveys and student reflections will help us to gather the evidence of the impact of this strategy.</p> <p>We will collect a baseline figure in year 1 and then collect data at 6 monthly intervals throughout the intervention strategy to monitor its progress.</p>
<p>TBCG bursary and guidance reforms</p>	<p>Increased uptake of students applying for and receiving the college bursaries</p>	<p>To evaluate this intervention, we will compare baseline data of the number of students who were in receipt of FSM at KS4 obtaining the bursary in 2025/2026 compared each successive year after the intervention. This will generate type 2 empirical data but will not give us a causal relationship.</p>
<p>TBCG flexible learning options</p>	<p>100% of HE programs to offer a flexible learning offer by 2028</p>	<p>For this intervention we can evaluate two aspects.</p> <p>Firstly, we can track the development of the flexible delivery options available.</p> <p>Secondly, we can gather casual data to evaluate the effect of flexible learning options on continuation rates. A direct comparison can be made between the continuation rates of cohorts of students who study flexibly compared to those who study face to face and full time.</p>

TBCG- higher and degree apprenticeships	Introduce degree apprenticeship programs in 3 areas including digital, engineering and construction	For this intervention we can evaluate the progress of introducing the degree apprenticeship programs. Secondly, we can measure the uptake of students enrolling on the degree apprenticeship programs. We can gather casual data which compares the continuation rate of students on a degree apprenticeship compared to students studying the degree as a FT course.
TBCG- Higher Education Partnerships	Increase in students who progress to our top up degree pathways.  Increased number of top up degree pathways available to students.	We should be able to demonstrate a causal relationship between our intervention and the number of students who progress onto our top up degree programs.  We can then determine whether offering more programs with university partners increases the opportunity for students and therefore more likely to continue with their studies.
<b>Intervention Strategy 3 The Bedford college group belonging strategy</b>		
<b>Total Cost £21,000</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Method(s) of evaluation</b>
TBCG- More like me campaign	Improved sense of belonging.  Decreased withdrawal rate.  Improved completion rates for non-white students	We will gather narrative data to evaluate this intervention. It will not be possible to determine exact cause and effect as this intervention will contribute to a number of other interventions. However, by using student surveys with targeted questioning on belonging at the start of this APP cycle and at regular intervals we will be able to gather some evidence to evaluate the interventions.  We will also measure the number of students who complete their courses and monitor the withdrawal reasons as a measure to understand whether this intervention helps students to stay and complete their program of study



<p>TBCG-Academic and tutorial mentoring</p>	<p>Staff are well equipped to support and mentor learners both with academic and personal needs.</p> <p>Students feel more supported and therefore less student withdrawals from courses during program</p> <p>Increase in progression opportunities and progression rates</p> <p>Increase completion rates for non-white students</p>	<p>We will evaluate this strategy from both the student and the staff perspective.</p> <p>From a staff perspective we will collect narrative data through staff surveys on the impact of the academic and tutorial mentoring program and how it has informed their practice.</p> <p>From a student perspective will collate both narrative and empirical data on the impact of this intervention. We can track progression rates and withdrawal rates at the start of the APP plan to gather the baseline data and then following from that point at yearly intervals. This alongside of student surveys and focus groups will help us determine whether the intervention is having an impact.</p>
<p>TBCG- Peer mentoring program</p>	<p>Improved sense of belonging.</p> <p>Decreased withdrawal rate.</p> <p>Improved completion rates for non-white students</p>	<p>To evaluate the impact of the peer mentoring program we will use baseline data of completion and continuation rates in year 1. We will track these rates throughout the period of the APP and use narrative data determine the impact of the peer mentoring program on these rates.</p> <p>Student survey and focus groups of those who have taken part in the program will enable us to gather rich data on whether the peer mentoring program has supported learners and supported them in completing their courses.</p>

<p>TBCG- Staff training</p>	<p>Short term outcomes to increase participation of staff in CPD</p> <p>Long term outcomes are that students feel more supported</p> <p>Decrease of student withdrawals and increased completion rates</p>	<p>A key to the evaluation of this strategy is how well we have equipped our staff to support their students and as such help to reduce withdrawal rates and increase completion rates.</p> <p>We will therefore evaluate this strategy by using the same methods as the academic and tutorial program.</p> <p>From a staff perspective we will collect narrative data through staff feedback on the impact of training and how it has informed their practice.</p> <p>From a student perspective we will collate both narrative and empirical data on the impact of this intervention. We can track progression rates and withdrawal rates at the start of the APP plan to gather the baseline data and then following from that point at yearly intervals. This alongside of student surveys and focus groups will help us determine whether the intervention is having an impact.</p>
<p>TBCG- Religion and belief policy, TBCG- LGBTQ+ support advocates</p>	<p>Improve the sense of belonging.</p> <p>Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college due to mental health problems.</p>	<p>We will evaluate both of these interventions using narrative data. Both of the strategies will be contributing to the overall be like me and belonging campaign and therefore it will be difficult to gather casual data of their impact alone on the withdrawal and completion rates for our non-white students.</p> <p>We will therefore use case studies and student satisfaction surveys to determine how often the spaces are being used and how often students are engaging with the support advocates. The direct learner number data will help us gather some empirical data on the intervention strategy and help us to evaluate whether it is effective and used.</p>

<p>TBCG -LIVE (lifestyle, involvement, voice, enhancement) calendar</p>	<p>Improve student sense of belonging</p> <p>Reduce numbers of students withdrawing from the college and improve completion rates</p>	<p>As with the other interventions that form part of the belonging intervention it will be difficult to gather casual data on the direct impact of the LIVE calendar on withdrawal and completion rates. However, we can measure the engagement of students with the events on the LIVE calendar empirically. For each year of the APP we can therefore monitor how many students engage and correlate this to the completion rates.</p> <p>For each of the component parts of this intervention strategy we would therefore gather enough narrative data so support a conclusion that the interventions as a whole have improved students belonging and enabled ALL students completion rates to be even across our diverse cohorts.</p>
---	---	---

### Publication Plan

This publication plan will cover all of our intervention strategies.

Publication type	Publication timings
<p><b>Paper report.</b> We will publish updates on a termly basis to our Access and Opportunities Committee. These will focus on the operational implementation on the intervention plans. The access and opportunities committee are attended by all stakeholders within the college who have a significant role in the implementation of the intervention strategies and therefore the termly updates will allow for progress to be shared.</p>	<p>Termly</p>
<p><b>Annual summary report</b> The annual summary report will be presented to our Academic Standards Committee which is chaired by the Deputy CEO of the college. This will then be shared with the executive and the board of governors.</p> <p>The annual summary will report on progress towards outcomes, highlight strengths and weaknesses of intervention strategies and recommend changes or further investment if required.</p>	<p>Annually</p>

<p>This report will include evaluations where possible of the current status of interventions in order to make sound judgements on their effectiveness.</p>	
<p><b>End of Project Report</b> This report will be presented to the executive and the board of governors and will summarise the outcomes of the intervention strategies over the four-year lifecycle of the APP.</p>	2029
<p><b>Contribution to workshops/meetings</b> We will contribute our findings throughout the duration of the APP to our networks where requested or required to do so. For example, we are part of the Meg-Net research network and the Research College Group where we contribute to valuable discussions on the APP plans.</p> <p>We will also publish findings on our intervention strategies at any opportunity that becomes available or for other calls for evidence such as TASO.</p>	Ongoing

## Whole provider approach

We have worked in collaboration across the group to develop this access and participation plan ensuring that we have collated opinions and evidence from across a wide and diverse group of people. This has included lecturers, students, senior leaders, student services, pastoral staff, finance teams, marketing and the executive. As such the joint approach to developing the plan has meant that we have buy in across the organisation into the interventions and evaluation strategies proposed. We have also worked alongside one of our University partners to develop theory for change model and received training on this approach to support our intervention planning.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 we aim to ensure that across the college group we are not disadvantaging any person/persons from a disadvantaged group or with a protected characteristic. We as a public sector organisation have a duty to reduce any potential socio-economic inequalities and hope that this plan will contribute to closing the gaps identified within our regions. As a college group we monitor our commitment to equality diversity and inclusion through our equality, diversity and inclusion committee and related policies which can be found here [EDI](#) .

Our EDI team monitor and deliver equal opportunity for all through the following policies

- Single Equality Scheme Action plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equality Impact Assessment Guidance
- LGBTQ+ Action Plan
- Race Equality Action Plan
- Religion and Belief Policy

Through our Higher Skills Strategy we have introduced a new meeting structure which will monitor the progress of the access and participation plan and evaluation strategies. Held half termly the access and opportunities committee involves membership from across the organisation and includes representatives from admissions, marketing student services, curriculum, head of EDI, Head of ALS/SEND, Quality managers, adult and apprenticeships. This will ensure a robust monitoring system is in place from across the organisation to meet the needs of our students and the identified risks.

There are a number of cross college functions and policies that are key to the success of this strategy which include;

- Pro-monitor- for monitoring and tracking of diverse groups
- Bursary systems- to provide feedback on the groups of students accessing our bursaries
- Pro-observe- to monitor and track quality interventions in teaching and learning (educational gain)
- TBCG Annual Accountability Statement
- TBCG Complaints policy and Fitness to study policy

## Student consultation

Our primary method of consulting with students was through focus groups held with students and members of our higher education team. Students were familiarised with the purpose of an access and participation plan and were asked open ended questions regarding the student lifecycle. We ensured that a diverse range of students were involved in the focus group meetings.

We have also considered the student voice feedback that has come through academic tutors and through some of our more deliberate structures such as analysis of withdrawal reasons and also discussions through exam boards or extenuating circumstances. These have helped to build a picture of the reasons why students may leave a course, may struggle to complete courses and make choices regarding continuing in higher education.

Another avenue we have considered is an analysis of how many students have accessed our bursaries which include progression, travel and hardship. It was surprising to us that although students were reporting hardship and were concerned with course fees that they had not applied for bursary. This has informed our intervention strategies as we have ensured that personal support for students is improved. Primarily identification of students who need support and improved information to students regarding the help that is available to them. This is a reason why we have also included a review of the progression policy and the progression bursaries to ensure that awareness is present, it is more inclusive and that students have the appropriate personal support programs in place to improve continuation on courses. In our access intervention strategy, we have added progression events as one of the activities. These progression events will help to support the promotion of that financial support.

We have summarised some of the key points from the student feedback which has helped to inform our intervention strategies. From the information gathered we have tried to categorise them into key themes.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Concerns</b>
<b>Financial Concerns</b>	High expenses and difficulties with securing and repaying student loans were frequently mentioned.  Limited information about loan repayment adds to the financial anxiety.
<b>Personal Barriers</b>	Lack of self-belief and feeling unprepared for the academic level of HE courses were noted.  Managing work and study simultaneously is a challenge for some
<b>Application Process</b>	The paperwork and administrative tasks, such as applications and securing student loans, can be overwhelming
<b>Perception of Bedford College</b>	Some students feel that Bedford College isn't considered as prestigious compared to universities like Oxford or Cambridge, which may deter potential applicants
<b>Perception of Course and Expectations</b>	A lack of clarity about what to expect from the courses and how they are structured can create hesitation.  Some students are unsure if they are well prepared for the coursework.

	Students hadn't realised the commitment required from them outside of timetabled session in terms of personal study.
<b>Mental health</b>	Students who left course reported feeling anxious and not being able to cope with the workload

We also asked students some targeted questions regarding access to our courses and how they felt that could be improved. These responses have informed our intervention strategy 1.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Improve Course Promotion:</b>	<p>Increase visibility of courses through various channels, such as school talks, posters, and community engagement, especially in areas with limited access. This will help ensure that students from deprived backgrounds are aware of the opportunities available to them.</p> <p>Participate in Local Clubs and Activities: Encourage the college to get involved in local clubs or community events, which can help build relationships and raise awareness among prospective students.</p>
<b>Expand and Publicise Financial Support:</b>	<p>Increase Bursaries and Financial Aid: Consider increasing bursary amounts (e.g., from £500 to £800) to provide more financial relief to students from deprived backgrounds. Ensure that these financial support options are widely advertised and that students understand how to access them.</p>
<b>Manage Expectations</b>	<p>Clarify Work-Study Balance: Promote the flexibility of courses, highlighting that students can work while studying, even if courses are labeled as "Full Time." This can make education more accessible to those who need to work to support themselves.</p> <p>Be really clear on the work required to complete a higher education course and offer support and classes on how to manage workload.</p> <p>Look after the personal side of a students life as well with study support and financial support.</p>
<b>Provide Personalised Support and Reduce Practical Barriers:</b>	<p>Focus on encouraging students from deprived backgrounds by showing enthusiasm and confidence in their abilities. Offer tailored support to address their specific needs, such as assistance with applications and preparation for higher education.</p> <p>Address Commuting and Accessibility Challenges: Recognise and mitigate practical barriers, such as commuting difficulties, that students from deprived areas may face. Provide</p>

	solutions or alternatives to make it easier for them to attend college.
--	---

Over the duration of the previous APP plan we have made some foundations for students to be fully involved in the delivery and evaluation of our work. This has included introducing student representatives for every course team. The course representatives are key to relaying the student voice to heads of department and also the wider executive. We will be continuing to build upon this with students attending every program committee and academic board. Students will be key to evaluating our strategies throughout this access and participation plan. The student representatives will attend our access committee and our academic board and hold us to account on the targets we have set within this plan through that structure.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

### **Strategic Context**

We have based our approach to evaluation on the theory of change model. We have self-evaluated ourselves at the college as 'emerging' using the Office for Students evaluation toolkit. We have strong foundations across the college group for but these need to be strengthened throughout the lifespan of our plan.

Our deliberative structures for higher skills help to support a cross college culture for monitoring and evaluating the intervention strategies we are proposing. With colleagues from across our college functions involved in these meetings we will work together to accurately monitor our plans. For example, utilising the Power Bi software we can accurately monitor by demographic each part of the student lifecycle.

One of the key aspects to our evaluation processes will be the involvement of our students. Type 1 narrative data is key to the evaluation of many of the interventions planned and therefore having a strong student voice is vital. We will be strengthening this student voice through a re-launch and expansion of our Higher Education student representatives' program across the group.

### **Program Design**

For each of the intervention strategies and the integrated parts we have used direct feedback from students and research to inform their design. Using the theory of change model, we have considered the outcomes and evaluation methodology at the outset and when considering each intervention to ensure that we have a method by which we can evaluate each intervention. We have taken a full lifecycle approach to this.



## Implementation

Timeline	Activities
2025/2026	<p>'Theory of Change' training all higher skills staff</p> <p>Roll out of intervention plans to all staff</p> <p>Ethical approval sought for all survey and baseline data collated each intervention strategy</p> <p>Student surveys reviewed in line with APP plan</p> <p>Data collection strategies reviewed to ensure all data capture is sufficient for evaluation strategies</p> <p>Collate baseline data using Power Bi and data collection through our admissions cycle</p>
2026/2027	<p>Initiate the three intervention strategies with targeted groups of students.</p> <p>Focus groups and student data gathered and measured for baseline data from these groups.</p> <p>Review of year 1 interventions and modifications in place where required.</p>
2027/2028	<p>Review of admissions data- analyse data to see if direct correlation of interventions with student admissions.</p> <p>Review of continuations and progression data from targeted groups.</p> <p>Report to Program committees and academic board to review intervention strategies and amend where required.</p>
2028/2029	<p>Collate admissions data, continuation and completion data for all at risk groups.</p> <p>Final report to the board to disseminate impact of each intervention.</p>

## Evaluation Design

When designing our evaluation strategies, we have drawn upon the research and methodology from TASO and the OFS toolkit. Many of our intervention strategies will have a positive impact on one another and therefore the generation of casual data will require some further development as it will be unclear which intervention has had the positive effect.

Most of our strategies will focus on type 1 and type 2 evidence. Type 1 evidence will be generated through student surveys and satisfaction evidence. We will therefore need to collect a strong set of baseline data in year 1 in order to be able to make any tangible assumptions that the specific interventions have had a positive impact on the student lifecycle.

Empirical data on lifecycle stages will be gathered through our data systems and there will be some requirement to ensure that we are gathering the required data at application to accurately draw conclusions. The type 2 data will be able to draw correlations between the intervention and its outcome. For example, we should see a positive correlation between an increase in applicants from students living in areas of deprivation after the onset of the outreach programs. However, as these are long term strategies some evaluation may take time and may not be seen until year 4 and beyond.

## **Learning from the Evaluations**

As per the implementation timeline we will review and reflect on the interventions yearly. Whilst we anticipate some of the interventions to take time for the impact to be seen some may have more of an immediate impact. For example, we would expect to see outcomes from our English and maths interventions within the year that they are implemented. Regular reviews of the interventions from focus groups and data collection will allow us to understand the effectiveness of them and share that good practice with other providers.

## **Provision of information to students**

Outlined below are the methods by which we provide information to students on our fees and financial support options,

- Publish fees in prospectus and on college website
- Fees updated on HEP portal for student finance
- Fees published through UCAS
- Student services, admissions and course leaders receive training on student finance and how to guide students through the process
- HE information events- give verbal presentations to students on the bursary and financial support options
- All students receive information when they apply through email detailing the process of applying for student finance
- College website has section on college bursaries and support available to students with direct links to apply for bursaries. Bursaries include hardship, travel and progression.
- The progression bursary is a one-off payment in year 1 of a students' course of £500. The eligibility criteria include the student being
  - a) A UK or EU national and studying either at Bedford College, Shuttleworth College, Tresham College, National College for Motorsport or The Bedford Sixth Form, The Corby Sixth Form or Central Bedfordshire College who has successfully completed a full-time Level 3 programme, or Level 3 apprenticeship.
  - b) Must be enrolled on a full-time or part-time higher education course at the Bedford college group
  - c) Apply before 31<sup>st</sup> December of the academic year
  - d) Have a student loan approved or agreed, an agreed direct debit or have paid their fees in full
  - e) Not have been awarded the progression bursary in any previous academic year.
- The travel bursary can be up to £500 per academic year. The eligibility criteria for the travel bursary includes a student to have
  - a) Achievement of a level 3 qualification at The Bedford college group and has progressed to a University centre course at a different campus where not available at their original campus
  - b) Lives in excess of 15.5 miles walking distance from their new campus
  - c) Enrolled on a Bedford College Group University courseThe travel bursary is also dependent on attendance to the course.

- The hardship fund has a maximum funding level grant of £500 per application and is subject to available funding at the time of the application. The grant is limited to once per academic year  
Eligibility criteria for the hardship bursary include the following criteria
  - a) The student is enrolled and attending as a student on a Higher Level Skills courses at Bedford College Group at the time of payment.
  - b) The student has received a full tuition fee loan from Student Finance England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland that covers your tuition.
  - c) The student has received a full entitlement of maintenance loans from Student Finance England
  - d) Full-time students and students with children, lone parents, mature students, students with low-income families, students who have been in care, students who are homeless, final-year students, disabled students and students that were eligible for Free School Meals at KS4 are also eligible to apply to this fund.
- ALS staff will support eligible students with their DSA applications, including those on L3 courses progressing onto HE
- Students whilst on program are supported with tutorial and 1:1 session where they can discuss financial support with their academic tutor or can visit student services at any time for advice and guidance.

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

We have identified a number of areas of risks to opportunity using the data from the APP data dashboard. However, we have focussed our objectives and interventions on those risks that we feel we can make the biggest impact on with our intervention strategies. We have also focussed the objectives on risks which will affect a greater number of our students.

We looked at every stage of the lifecycle and searched for gaps between the at-risk groups. We then RAG rated each of the risks.

The table below summarises those greatest risks that were identified, we have used the following criteria for assessing risk.

- Green- In line with national- and improving picture or gap of less than 2pp
- Amber- Changing picture or gap of less than 5pp
- Red- 2year aggregate data demonstrates a growing gap compared to 4 year or a gap of more than 5pp.

Table 1.

	TUNDRA	IMD (2019)	Disability	Ethnicity	Age	ABCS	FSM
Access		Figure 1					
Continuation		Figure 2					Figure 3
Completion				Figure 4			Figure 5
Attainment	Not Enough Data						
Progression				Not Enough Data		Not Enough Data	Not Enough Data

We have set our objectives based on Access for IMD (2019) using the data from the APP data dashboard from June 2024 and also our own data to set this target (Fig 1a and 1b). The data accessed from the APP data dashboard in August 2024 indicates a gap in 2022/2023 data of 8.9%. This is because it includes historical data prior to our merger with Central Bedfordshire College. At merger the student population from Central Bedfordshire college had reduced to less than 40 students and therefore we do not feel that the data dashboard (august 2024) containing these students is truly reflective of our current cohort and therefore we have relied upon our data and that from the dashboard pre-merger inclusion. This seems to have only affected the Access data.

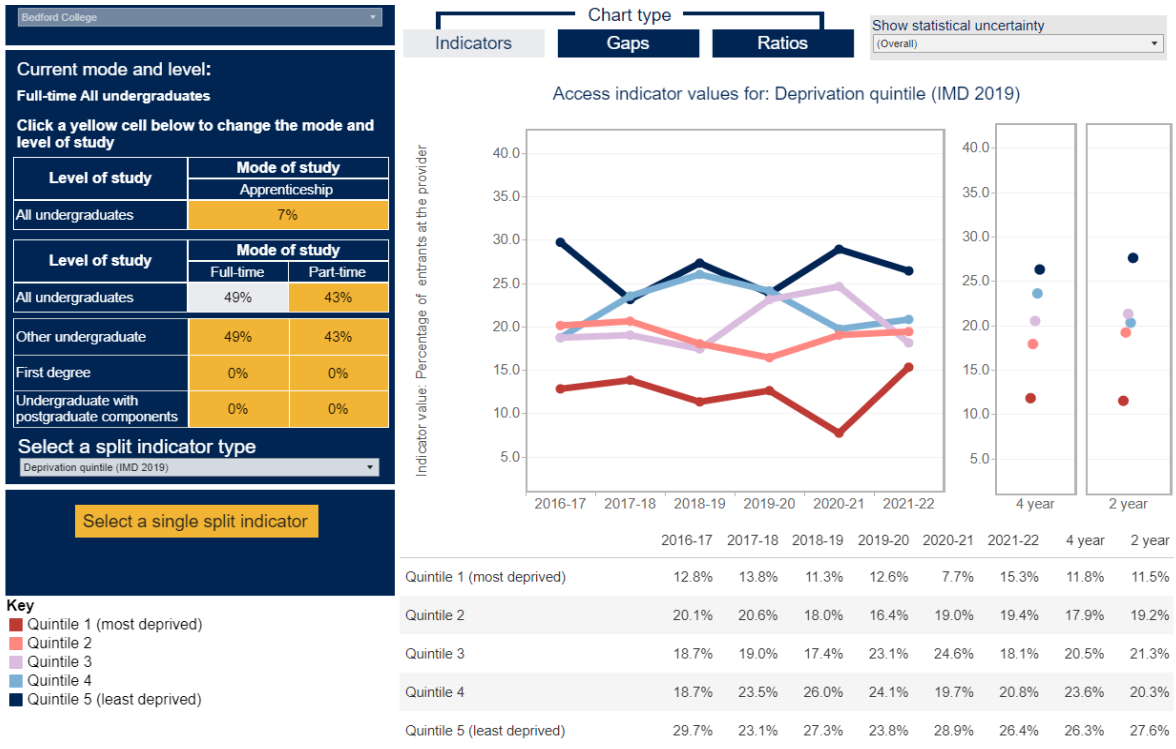
Continuation rates for students who were in receipt of free school meals at KS4 (Figure 3) and Completion rates for students who were in receipt of free school meals (Figure 5) both show gaps. We have focussed our intervention strategy on continuation strategies as we believe these will in turn support improvements in the completion rates for these students,

We feel it is important to note that as well a risk in opportunity in access for students from underrepresented groups we have also noted a gap for continuation rates for this group of students (Figure 2). We did not set specific interventions here due to some gaps and low numbers in the data and we also felt that the interventions set in intervention strategy 2 to address the EORR and intervention strategy 1 would also support closing the gaps in this cohort of students.

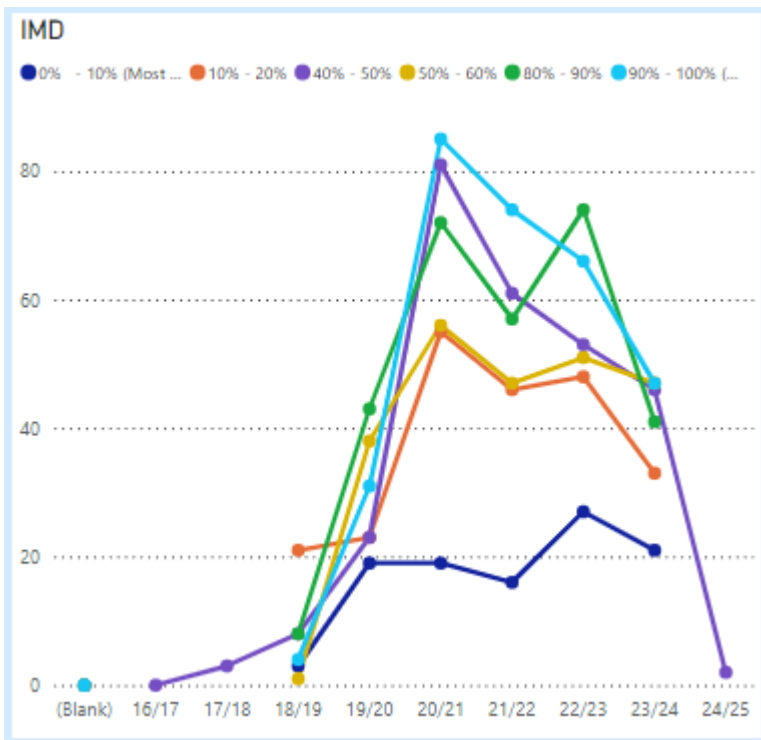
As discussed in the body of the APP we have identified some gaps in progression rates in respect to, ethnicity. Whilst we recognise these we have decided not to set specific objectives in these areas because we feel that the main risk to opportunity of progression is students belief in themselves to be able to progress to higher paid jobs and the interventions we are setting for access, completion and continuation should impact on these. In addition, as a small provider we do not feel we can influence the external jobs market to such a degree to be able to evaluate the impact of any intervention.

Figure 1

a) Access Indicator Values: Deprivation quintile (IMD 2019). (APP data dashboard (01.06.24) data up to (2021-2022)



b) TBCG data Access IMD2019.



c) APP Data Dashboard (29.8.24) Access data

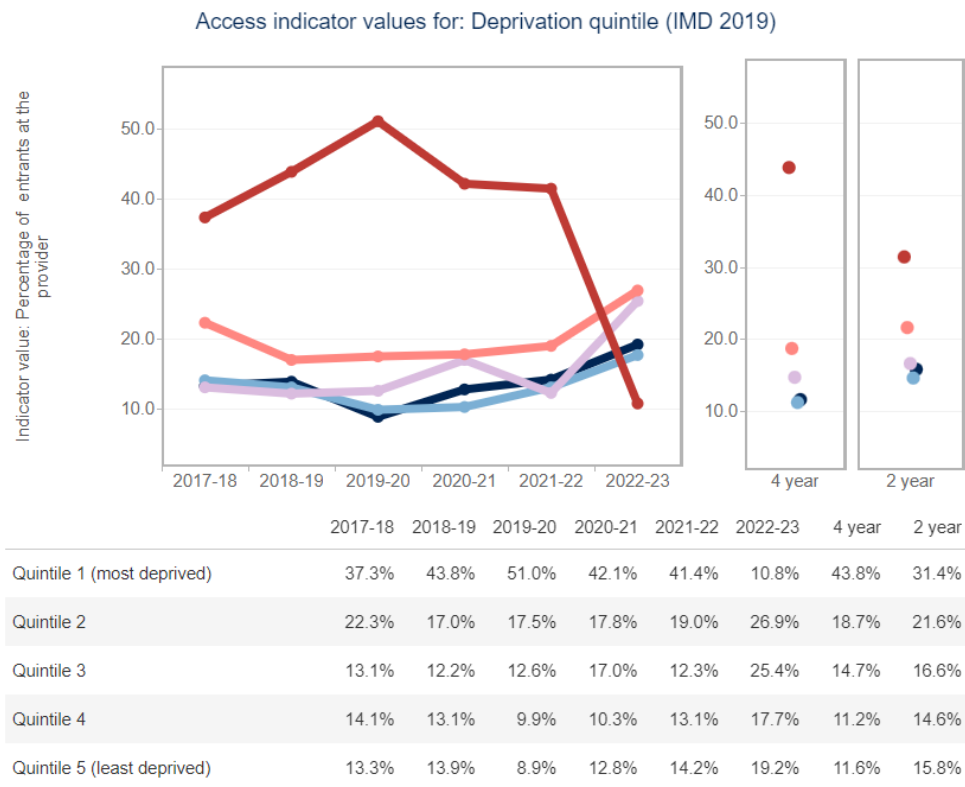


Figure 2 Continuation indicator values for: Deprivation quintile (IMD 2019) (APP data dashboard August 2024)

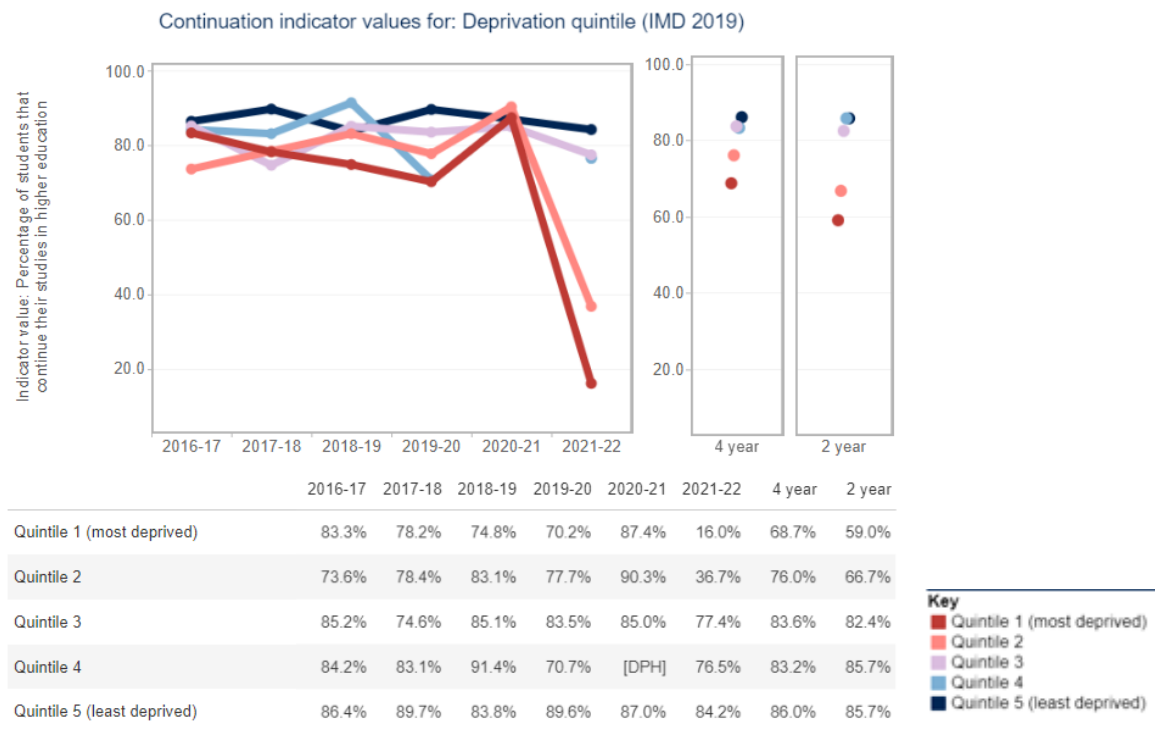


Figure 3: APP data dashboard (August 2024)

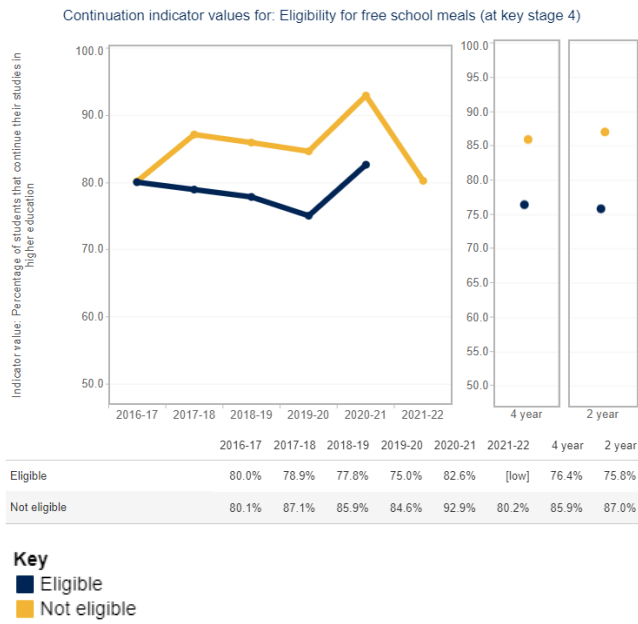


Figure 4 Completion indicator values for ethnicity (APP data dashboard 20/8/24)

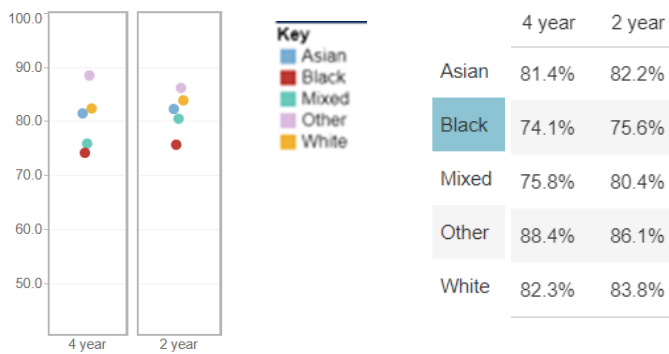
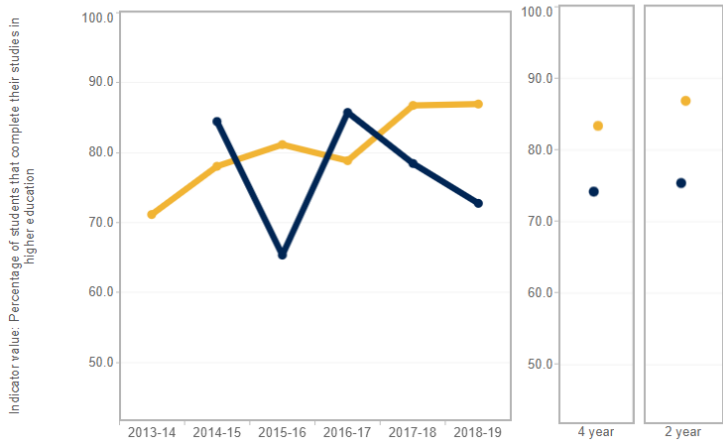


Figure 5 Completion indicator values for: Eligibility for free school meals (at key stage 4) APP data dashboard (20.8.24)

Completion indicator values for: Eligibility for free school meals (at key stage 4)



	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	4 year	2 year
Eligible	[low]	84.4%	65.3%	85.7%	78.4%	72.7%	74.1%	75.3%
Not eligible		71.1%	78.0%	81.1%	78.8%	86.7%	83.3%	86.8%

**Key**  
■ Eligible  
■ Not eligible



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

In designing our intervention strategies, we have utilised the Theory of Change model as guided by TASO and received specialised training from our university partners. This training has equipped us with the knowledge to plan resource, execute, and evaluate each intervention comprehensively. Given the multi-faceted nature of our strategies, we employed the Theory of Change planning tool to plan each component. Where possible, we have based our interventions on previously explored and evaluated methods to ensure effectiveness.

Our first intervention strategy focuses on engaging with schools to support students' progression into our higher education courses. The Office for Students (2020) report, "Strategic Relationships with Schools and Raising Attainment," highlights that long-term strategic relationships between schools and higher education providers can aid under-represented groups in developing the knowledge and skills needed for success. The report also emphasises the importance of raising GCSE attainment to support higher education entry. Consequently, our interventions include working with schools, organising taster days, and supporting internal students in improving their English and maths skills, as these are supported by the report's findings.

The University of Exeter's "Transforming Transitions" project, as cited in Office for Students (2019) "Addressing Barriers to Student Success," examined the transition of BTEC students to university degree programs. This project reviewed transitions and students' sense of belonging. Although their evaluations were inconclusive, they introduced a more robust academic tutoring model and a pre-induction module similar to those we propose in intervention strategies 1 and 2. We have drawn insights from various Office for Students' projects to inform our intervention strategies.

To improve learner support, confidence, and consequently, continuation and completion rates, we propose interventions through our Educational Gain, academic mentoring, and student services 'LIVE' teams. New College Durham's project on HE Academic Support Tutors supports our strategy by reporting improvements in student work and confidence following the introduction of a dedicated HE support service. We have based several interventions on such projects, establishing a strong evidence base for our strategies.

Intervention strategy 3 emphasises fostering a sense of belonging and support for students by creating an inclusive culture. There is substantial evidence in the literature supporting the introduction of peer mentoring across higher education cohorts. A literature review by Hayman et al. (2022) underscores the benefits of peer mentoring, including enhancements to cultural capital for both mentors and mentees. Consequently, we have integrated mentoring programs into our strategies to boost completion rates within our learner cohorts.

The 2015 report by King's College London, ARC Network, and The University of Manchester for HEFCE on "Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes" reviewed literature and suggested interventions to address differential outcomes. They emphasized approaches to enhancing cultural capital and inclusive practices, which we have incorporated into our belonging interventions.

Both intervention strategies 2 and 3 focus on key themes such as campus climate, student involvement, and engagement. The Educational Gains Framework we plan to introduce aims to improve students' sense of belonging. The term "Educational Gain" has gained importance since Dame Shirley Pearce's independent review (Pearce, 2019). Following the 2023 TEF submissions, Professor Dilly Fung's review of gold-rated higher education institutions in "Educational Gains Explored 2024" provides insights into how these institutions measure educational gains across various dimensions. Outstanding providers demonstrate clear links between institutional intent and program-level practice and evaluation. We also drew upon Astin's theory of student involvement, which highlights the importance of a holistic teaching model.

By drawing on these comprehensive sources and implementing well-researched strategies, we aim to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that enhances student success and well-being.

Sources:

- Office for Students (2020). "Strategic Relationships with Schools and Raising Attainment."
- Office for Students (2019). "Addressing Barriers to Student Success."
- Office for Students - [whole-institution-approach-implementation-and-evaluation-toolkit.pdf \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/resources-and-research/whole-institution-approach-implementation-and-evaluation-toolkit.pdf)
- Hayman, et al. (2022). Benefits and motives for peer mentoring in higher education: an exploration through the lens of cultural capital Pages 256-273 | Published online: 27 Mar 2022
- King's College London, ARC Network, and The University of Manchester (2015). "Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes."
- Pearce, S. (2019). [Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcome Framework 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424812/independent-review-of-the-teaching-excellence-and-student-outcome-framework-2020.pdf)
- Fung, D. (2024). [Educational gains explored: approaches to educational gains in TEF 2023 \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/resources-and-research/educational-gains-explored-approaches-to-educational-gains-in-tef-2023.pdf)
- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. **Journal of College Student Development**, 40(5), 518–529.
- [Theory of Change - TASO](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/resources-and-research/theory-of-change-taso)
- Causes of differences in student outcomes Report to HEFCE by King's College London, ARC Network and The University of Manchester July 2015 Anna Mountford-Zimdars, Duna Sabri, Joanne Moore, John Sanders, Steven Jones, and Louise Higham [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/cause-of-differences-in-student-outcomes-report-to-hefce-by-kings-college-london-arc-network-and-the-university-of-manchester-july-2015/)

## **Annex C: Targets, investment and fees**

The OfS will append the information from the fees, investment and targets document when an access and participation plan is published.



# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Bedford College

Provider UKPRN: 10000610

## Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

### Inflation statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Top up degree (UOB) (moving from franchised to validated)	N/A	9250
First degree	Top up degree (UON)	N/A	9000
Foundation degree	Univeristy of Bedfordshire, Animal and Social Studies degrees moving from franchised to validated arrangements in the period of the APP (per year)	N/A	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND		N/A	7500
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	7000
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	UOB top up degree	N/A	4625
First degree	UON top up degree	N/A	4500
Foundation degree		N/A	6165
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND		N/A	3750
CertHE/DipHE	PGCE	N/A	3750
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Bedford College

Provider UKPRN: 1000610

## Investment summary

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

### Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£222,000	£222,000	£222,000	£222,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£184,000	£196,000	£209,000	£220,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£95,000	£95,000	£95,000	£95,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£127,000	£127,000	£127,000	£127,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>	<b>£222,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£136,000	£148,000	£161,000	£172,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£18,000	£18,000	£18,000	£18,000
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£184,000</b>	<b>£196,000</b>	<b>£209,000</b>	<b>£220,000</b>
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%

