

Newman University

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Newman University is committed to a Mission of Service integral to which is 'making higher education accessible to the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it' (Newman University Strategic Plan [SP] 2014-2020 p. 7). We fully support the OfS in its ambition 'to make sure we deliver on the promise of HE as an engine for social mobility, and a gateway to a better life for those who undertake it' (OfS, 2018 Regulatory Framework, p.11). *The Economist's* analysis of '[Which British Universities do most to boost graduate earnings?](#)' (12/8/2017) placed Newman University third overall in its national ranking of the value added to median salary five years after graduation demonstrating that we 'deliver successful outcomes for all of our students, which are recognised and valued by employers' (OfS, 2018 Regulatory Framework, p.140).

Newman is a small Catholic university, with 2,900 students, situated on the south-western edge of Birmingham. We see our small size as a benefit, combined with our significant investment in academic staffing, in allowing us to support each student personally within our learning community. In this way we seek to deliver on the teaching of our patron, the soon to be Canonised John Henry Newman, that effective Higher Education is reliant on personal relationships between tutor and taught in a small community. Our undergraduate and postgraduate students are overwhelmingly drawn from the local area, with a very high proportion of commuter students. We consistently exceed sector averages for recruitment from under-represented and disadvantaged groups including mature students, disabled students, students from low-participation neighbourhoods and first generation HE students. In fact people from under-represented groups make up the large majority of our student population. For example, over 80% of our current students are either BAME, mature or disabled. Our success in widening participation has implications for the challenges faced by many of our students as they progress through university; for example social and economic pressures, family and other on-going commitments, and lack of family experience of HE or traditional social capital. However our students also bring a diverse wealth of lived experience with them and this all has implications for the nature and ethos of Newman's teaching, learning environment and student support provision. Our [pedagogy of partnership](#) seeks to ensure we teach and learn *with* our students, working together to make a difference for our students and community.

As our 2017 TEF return stated: 'All our activities are guided by the values of respect for others, social justice and equity. The University has a stated ambition to be a learning community in which "we strongly encourage the full participation of our students in our community; working in partnership with academics and professional staff in a spirit of mutual trust and respect" (SP p. 13). The pedagogy of partnership is fundamental to the work of the University, and essential to our Strategic Plan objectives of student formation and staff formation.' In this way we seek to promote holistic education, informed by the ideas of another great Catholic educationalist, Paulo Freire, where we are 'jointly responsible for a process in which all grow' (Freire, 1996 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.60).

1. Assessment of performance

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

Newman University is particularly successful in providing Access to HE for under-represented groups and this success is demonstrated across POLAR4 and deprivation quintile measures. This is an important part of our educational mission and we would wish to continue to ensure access to HE for those from lower socio-economic groups.

In contrast to the sector, for full-time students our proportion of POLAR4 quintile1 has remained higher than quintile 5, currently by 5%. The limited data for part-time students shows a sharp increase of 10% for quintile 1 in 2015-16, the last year for which data is available.

Access: makeup of students entering higher education

Explore comparisons with the population

Explore access proportions

Explore statistically significant differences

Select a provider:

Newman University

Explore the data:

Select a level of study:

All undergraduates

Select a characteristic:

Deprivation quintile

Quintile 1

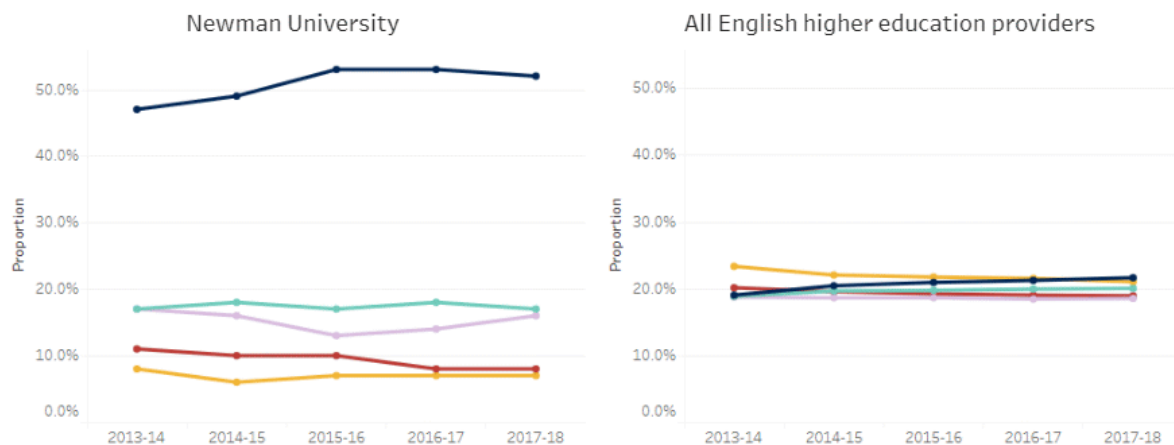
Quintile 2

Quintile 3

Quintile 4

Quintile 5

Access proportions for: full-time or apprenticeship



For both full-time and part-time students the proportion of entrants from deprivation quintile 1 is considerably higher than that in the sector (by 30.4% for full-time and by 16.6% for part-time in 2017-18) and has been so across the full range of dates considered. Newman's provision of access for students from deprivation quintile 1 is striking, dwarfing representation of other quintiles in our student population and operating in stark contrast to the general HE sector. This clearly delivers on our mission of providing HE for social mobility for deprived groups though it raises challenges for continuation, success and progression because of the limited social capital, more precarious finances and additional hurdles faced by this group of students.

Consequently, we believe that Newman University already meets the Key Performance Measures 1 and 2 related to the participation of most and least represented groups.

Success: Non-continuation

The gap between POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and 1 or 2 for full-time students has remained constant at 4% and is above the sector average by 1.3%. This indicates that more students from higher participation areas continue than do those from lower participation areas.

The continuation rate for deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 for part-time students has been constant in the last 2 years. It indicates that 3% fewer students from these quintiles continue with their studies than do those from deprivation quintiles 3, 4 and 5. These figures suggest continuation generally, and closing the continuation gap for these students, needs to be a focus for enhancement action in this plan. This will help us to address Key Performance Measure 3 related to the gap in continuation between most and least represented groups.

Success: Attainment

Attainment for under-represented socio-economic groups is good at Newman. The largest increase for full-time students is for POLAR4 quintile 1, where the change in rate from 2013-14 to 2017-18 is 21.0%. This compares well with a decrease of 2% for all other quintiles.

The difference between deprivation quintiles 2, 3, 4 and 5 compared to quintile 1 is now falling towards zero and has a current value of 4%. Deprivation quintiles 1, 2, 3 and 4 compared to quintile 5 has increased to a positive value of 10% at Newman, **This shows that 10% more students from the most deprived quintiles achieve a first or upper second class degree than do students from the least deprived quintile at Newman University.**

Progression to employment or further study

The gap between POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 compared with 1 or 2 has declined for the past 4 years and is now negative at -10%. **This indicates that 10% more of our students from lower participation areas proceed to employment or further study than do our students from higher participation areas.**

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

We have a diverse student body, according to HESA figures used by the [UK Progressive University](#) rankings the second most diverse student body in the country. The proportion of full-time white students at Newman has reduced from 57% to 50% from 2013-14 to 2017-18, with the proportion of Asian students simultaneously rising from 26% to 30%, 'mixed' rising from 5% to 7%, with the Black full-time student population remaining relatively stable at 11%.

Success: Non-continuation

For full-time students the difference in continuation between white and BAME students is 1%, which is the same as in 2012-13. For part-time students the value is -10%, showing that 10% more part-time BAME students continue than do white students. This positive gap has increased by 10% in the last year, corresponding to the continuation rate of part-time non-white students seeing a significant increase of 15% in 2015-16. There has been a sustained increase of 6% in the continuation of full-time black students in the last two years to take the value to 81%. The gap in continuation between full-time students of all ethnicities with the exception of black students and black students has decreased since 2014-15 from 14% to 5%. This is a positive achievement for Newman but not grounds for complacency in terms of doing further work in the area. The gap in continuation between Asian students and their comparator groups is positive, being 5% compared to students of other ethnicities and 4% compared to white students. There is, however, a gap in continuation between the comparator groups and students of mixed ethnicity; this is 9% between students of all ethnicities except mixed and mixed, and 8% between white students and those of mixed ethnicity. The targets we have set in this area will help us to address Key Performance Measure 3 related to the gap in continuation between most and least represented groups.

Success: Attainment

A large fall of 10% between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 in the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white students and black students has reduced a consistent increase since 2013-14 to a value of 20% at Newman, which is . The gap between the attainment of non-black and black students is also currently 20%. While we are pleased that the gap has decreased we recognise the need to decrease it further. This is relevant to Key Performance Measure 4 to address the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white students and black students. The attainment of Asian students is lower than that of white students (by 11%) and students of all other ethnicities (by 7%). In both cases the gap has been decreasing since 2015-16, by 18% and 16% respectively. Limited data is available for students of mixed ethnicity, but the solitary figure available for full-time students in 2017-18 shows a gap of 10% for attainment of white students and those of mixed ethnicity.

Progression to employment or further study

The gap between full-time white students compared with students of all ethnicities except white has shown a consistent increase over the last four years and is now 13%. This is not a statistically significant increase and the confidence interval on this figure runs from +35% to -9% however we would still make this an area for enhancement in this plan. More detailed analysis shows that 13% more white students progress to employment or further study than do Asian students; this gap reduces to 12% between students of all ethnicities except Asian and Asian. In both cases the current trend is downwards showing that the gap is closing. The gap in progression between white and black students was 15% in 2015-16 and rising; the corresponding gap between students of all ethnicities except black and black students is currently 10% and has remained at this value for the past three years.

1.3 Mature students

Access

Again the picture for access for this group is good at Newman; the proportion of both full-time and part-time mature students is rising. In the case of full-time students the proportion has risen by 8% at Newman since 2013-14 and is now 34%. For part-time students the corresponding increase at Newman is 11% to 91%, which is 3.6% higher than the sector.

Success: Non-continuation

For full-time students the gap in continuation between young and mature students has remained constant at 9% for the last two years, following a fall of 4% between 2014-15 and 2015-16. For part-time mature students the gap has remained constant at 20% for the last three years. This again raises continuation, particularly for part-time students, as a focus for attention in this Plan. This will help us to address Key Performance Measure 3 related to the gap in continuation between most and least represented groups.

Success: Attainment

Attainment for mature students at Newman is excellent. The difference between young and mature students is consistently below the sector value. It is currently -3% at Newman compared to 10.3% in the sector. This indicates that 3% more of our mature students gain a 1st or 2:1 than do our young students.

Progression to employment or further study

In 2016-17, 66% of full-time mature students progressed to employment or further study. This represents a 6% increase on the previous year. The gap between mature and young students is 5%. For part-time mature students the progression rate was 57%, a fall from 64% the previous year.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

The proportion of full-time disabled students at Newman University continues to be above the national average, at 15%. The proportion of part-time disabled students increased sharply in 2017-18 and is now 19%. The difference is due to an increased number of part-time students who declare a cognitive or learning difficulty (8% versus 5%), a mental health condition (5% versus 4%) or sensory, medical or physical impairment (6% versus 3%).

Success: Non-continuation

Between 2012-13 and 2016-2017 there was a fall of 11% in the continuation rate of full-time disabled students to 79%. The continuation gap between full-time students who are not known to be disabled and those who are disabled is increasing and is currently 7%. There was a fall of 30% in the continuation rate of part-time disabled students between 2011-12 and 2015-16 to 60%. The continuation rate gap in the case of part-time disabled students is 5%. This identifies continuation and the continuation gap for disabled students as areas for further work. This will help us to address Key Performance Measure 3 related to the gap in continuation between most and least represented groups.

Little data is available on the continuation gap between students with no known disability and those declaring various types of disability. However, we are pleased to note that we have closed the gap between students with no known disability and those with cognitive or learning difficulties. The gap between students with no known disability and a mental health condition was 15% in 2015-16, but further data is needed to assess the significance of this.

Success: Attainment

The attainment gap between students not known to be disabled compared to those who are disabled has shown a consistent fall (11% for full-time students between 2013-14 and 2017-18) and has been negative for the last four years. It is currently -9%. **This indicates that 9% more of our disabled students achieve a first or upper-second class degree than do non-disabled students at Newman University. This demonstrates that Newman University already meets Key Performance Measure 5 to address the gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students. The only data available on disability type shows that 10% more students with cognitive or learning difficulties gain a first or upper-second class degree than do students with no known disability. This positive gap has increased by 10% since 2013-14.**

Progression to employment or further study

The progression rate for full-time disabled students showed a steady increase until 2015-16, but in the most recent year fell back by 11% to 51%. In this most recent year there is a gap of 15% between students not known to be disabled and those who are disabled further analysis shows that this is entirely attributable to the difference in progression between students not known to be disabled and those with cognitive or learning disabilities.. However, in the previous year the gap was -2%, indicating that 2% more of our disabled students progressed to employment or further study than did our non-disabled students. Again the contrast between good attainment for this group and less impressive progression to employment or further study needs investigation.

1.5 Care leavers

We do collect data on care leavers' access, success and progression but the small numbers, within a relatively small overall cohort size, make reporting of these figures problematic. This includes issues of student disclosure or incorrect self-identification. These issues mean that a key step for this group is to improve our statistical data to help identify any possible targeted enhancement to our existing provision in this area. This data will be reviewed by the Retention and Success Task Group, with a view to ensuring that sufficient data for appropriate monitoring is being provided by 2020-21. The data that we have indicates that 39 care leavers enrolled at Newman University between 2011/12 and 2018/19. 51% of these were mature students. Overall retention for this group of students has been 85%, improving to 100% in the last 2 years. 57% of these students, who have completed, attained a first or upper-second class degree, which is well within the confidence interval for our overall student population. The proportion who progressed to employment or further study is 82%.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Access

Again, in terms of access, the figures confirm Newman University's success in providing HE opportunities to sections of the population poorly served by other HE providers. For full-time students we see a high value of 44% for deprivation quintiles 1 or 2 and all ethnicities except white. This is also apparent for part-time students where the value is 23%. In the case of students from deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and white, Newman's access proportions are relatively low at 24% for full-time students and by 38% for part-time students. In other words we recruit a relatively small proportion of students from non-deprived backgrounds.

The University has a high proportion of female students from deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 at 53%. For the combination of POLAR4 quintile and sex, female students from quintiles 1 and 2 are relatively high

at 32%. The figure for quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and male is correspondingly low at 14%. These figures represent the balance of our successful access work for deprived groups and the general gender balance of our student population.

Success: Non-continuation

A decrease in continuation of 20% between 2012-13 and 2016-17 was seen for full-time male students in POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2, to 70%. 11% of this decrease occurred between 2015-16 and 2016-17. This is a decrease which needs to be halted and turned round.

The gap between the continuation of full-time white students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and 3, 4 or 5 increased by 9% between 2012-13 and 2016-17 and is currently 1%. So our continuation rates for students from low participation areas are higher than those from high participation areas.

The difference in continuation between full-time students from all ethnicities except white from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and 3, 4 or 5 decreased by 9% between 2012-13 and 2016-17 to -7%. Fewer non-white students from low participation areas continue than those from higher participation areas. This is an example of intersectionality in practice and will need to be addressed. This will help us to address Key Performance Measure 3 related to the gap in continuation between most and least represented groups.

Success: Attainment

Attainment figures for intersectional characteristics demonstrate strong performance from under-represented groups at Newman. Between 2016-17 and 2017-18 the attainment of full-time students in POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and from all ethnicities except white increased by 15% and is now 69%.

Within POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 the gap between white students compared with all ethnicities except white has fallen to 3.0%. This represents a fall of 17% between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

For white students the gap between POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and quintiles 3, 4 or 5 is now positive with a value of 10.0% at Newman, above a negative sector value of -6.5%. More white students at Newman from lower participation areas attain a first or upper-second class degree than those from higher participation areas. We want to explore and better identify the good practice that is producing this result.

The gap between white students in POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and students from all ethnicities except white in quintiles 1 or 2 fell to below zero (-7%) for the first time in 2017-2018. This indicates that more non-white students at Newman from lower participation areas attain a first or upper second-class degree than do white students from higher participation areas.

Progression to employment or further study

There was an increase in the progression rate between 2012-13 to 2016-17 for full-time students from POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and all ethnicities except white of 20% to a value of 56%. For male students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 the corresponding increase was also 20% to take the progression rate to 70%.

The gap between deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and white compared with quintiles 1 or 2 and all ethnicities except white has increased by 4% between 2015-16 and 2016-17 and is now 15%. This indicates that more white students from higher participation progress to employment or further study than do non-white students from lower participation areas.

The gap between males in deprivation quintiles 1 or 2 and quintiles 3, 4 or 5 has increased by 20% since 2014-15 and now has a relatively high positive value of 5%.

We have closed the gap in progression between male students in deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and female students in quintiles 1 and 2 following a fall of 5% between 2015-16 and 2016-17. The gap between white students in deprivation quintiles 1 or 2 and deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5 has also been closed to zero.

The difference between the progression rate of males in POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and females in quintiles 1 or 2 has fallen by 25% since 2014-15. It is now negative (-10%). This indicates that more female students from lower participation neighbourhoods progress to employment or further study than do male students from higher participation areas.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Gender

The Newman University student population is predominantly female. This is demonstrated by the Office for Students annual average student numbers which show that 76% of our students are female. The University's gender balance reflects that of its subject mix, with our emphasis on Education, social sciences and humanities. The rate for female part-time student continuation is 65% in the most recent year of data following a fall of 11% between 2014-15 and 2015-16. This is 10% above the corresponding value for male students. A similar gap of 11% exists for full-time students. The progression gap between male and female has declined by 7% since 2014-15 and is now -4.0%. This indicates that more female students progress into employment or further study than do male students. We therefore need to learn the lessons from how we have raised attainment and outcomes for women to see if they can be applied to white quintile 1 and 2 men.

Mode of Study

Across the assessment of performance, the success and progression of part-time students has been identified as an area requiring enhanced monitoring. More full-time students continue (12%) and proceed (4.5%) to employment or further study than do their part-time counterparts.

Commuter Students

There is no formally agreed definition of commuter students but, given that 91% of Newman students are commuter students by the measure we use, this could be an important aspect of intersectional disadvantage. A staggering 96.5% of our students either commute and/or are disabled and/or are BAME and/ or are mature. 74.8% of our students have more than one of the following characteristics; commuter student, BAME, disabled or mature. Newman University came top in the recent Higher Education Policy Institute survey for the proportion of its students who commute to University. The [HEPI report](#) stated there has been 'neglect of commuter students in policymaking, a lack of appreciation of their impact on widely-used metrics and an undervaluing of those higher-education institutions that specialise in educating them.' (p.7) A recent [Sutton Trust report](#) highlighted that: 'Student mobility ... is a major dimension of inequality within higher education choice and experience. Staying at home and studying locally is strongly differentiated by ethnicity and social background with students from disadvantaged groups much more likely to be living at home.' (p.4) This is therefore an area in need of enhanced monitoring and action planning to ensure that Newman University provision, which has proven accessible for commuter students, provides for commuter student continuation, progression and success.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

Newman University is proud of its record in terms of supporting student access to HE and is committed to continuing to make an important contribution in this area. As our assessment of performance demonstrates, we serve a section of the national population that is often overlooked or unsupported by other providers and, as such, we make an important contribution to the national picture of accessible HE. We intend to grow this further.

This success in supporting access means that the vast majority of our students belong to an under-represented group and that many face intersectional disadvantage, particularly when the additional challenges of being commuter students are fully considered. It is important, therefore, that we support our whole student body in achieving successful outcomes as a means of making our positive contribution to addressing shortfalls for under-represented groups across the sector.

Student success as measured by continuation will need to be the key focus of our plans for the coming five-year period. We intend to improve our overall continuation rates and to address gaps in continuation rates for key target groups. These include:

- Eliminating the continuation gap between full-time students in POLAR4 quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and 1 or 2.
- Arresting the decline of the continuation rate for part-time students in deprivation quintiles 1 or 2 and closing the continuation gap.
- Increasing the continuation rate of full-time disabled students to close the continuation gap.
- Arresting the decline in the continuation rate of part-time disabled students and closing the continuation gap.
- Arresting the decline in the continuation rate of full-time male students in POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and closing the continuation gap.
- Eliminating the continuation gap between full-time students from all ethnicities except white in POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2 and 3, 4 or 5.

In terms of the attainment of students from under-represented groups upon completion, student success at Newman is strong - with many target groups out-performing the general population. The clear exception is around ethnicity and Black student attainment, which, though in line with national figures, clearly needs addressing as part of national efforts to close the Black student awarding gap.

Student progression to employment and further study from Newman University for under-represented groups is generally good. However a few areas identified by the assessment of performance will benefit from ongoing monitoring to assess the impact of general measures to enhance overall progression to employment and further study and to expand the current strong performance for some groups to all groups:

- The gap between full-time white students compared with all ethnicities except white in progression to employment or further study.
- The gap between full-time students from deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5 and white compared with quintiles 1 or 2 and all ethnicities except white for progression to employment or further study.
- The progression rate of mature students should be addressed, including a particular emphasis on part-time students.

Overall, then, our targets across the student-life-cycle aim to:

- Continue and enhance current strong performance providing access to HE for under-represented groups.
- Significantly improve continuation rates for all students.
- Close the continuation gaps for the following target groups:

- Students from low participation and high deprivation areas
- BAME students
- Disabled students
- Mature students
- Commuter students
- Part time students

- Close the attainment gap for Black students
- Expand current strong performance for progression of certain under-represented groups into employment and further study to all under-represented groups.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Our targets over the long term are to ensure positive and equitable outcomes for all students across our diverse population. In the first five years we intend to enhance our already strong access work; first halt and then reverse some current downward trends in continuation rates for all students, as well as specific under-represented groups; make significant progress in closing the Black awarding gap; and ensure lessons are learned from our successful work with some under-represented groups in terms of progression to work or further study so enhancements can be made for the progression of all under-represented groups.

<i>Targets over the student lifecycle</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Current value</i>	<i>Year 3 objective</i>	<i>Year 5 objective</i>
Attainment: Black students	Close the attainment gap for Black students.	Difference between white and Black students 20%	Difference between white and Black students 16%	Difference between white and Black students 10%
Continuation	Close the continuation gap for various groups of students ¹	Full-time students 84%	Full-time students 87%	Full-time students 89%
		Part-time students 72%	Part-time students 78%	Part-time students 84%
		BAME students 84%	BAME students 87%	BAME students 89%
		Disabled students 77%	Disabled students 82%	Disabled students 86%
		Mature students 74%	Mature students 78%	Mature students 84%
		POLAR4 quintile 1 students 84%	POLAR4 quintile 1 students 87%	POLAR4 quintile 1 students 89%
Progression	Expand current strong performance for progression of certain under-represented groups into employment and further study to all groups	Overall 64%	Overall 68%	Overall 73%

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

'Newman University is a values-driven University informed by a Catholic ethos. This includes a strong commitment to inclusivity, social justice and transformative education for the benefit of our students and community. We are committed to 'making HE accessible to the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it.' [SP, p.7] Once at Newman University:

'Our students are members, alongside our staff, of a diverse and inclusive learning community in which we respect individuals and promote their growth into valuable members of society, able to make a positive contribution wherever they find themselves. We strongly encourage the full

¹ A full breakdown of targets for BAME students is given in the Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25.

participation of our students in our community; working in partnership with academics and professional staff in a spirit of mutual trust and respect.' [SP, p.13]

Thus our commitment to inclusivity is not an anticipated outcome of our institutional strategies but is engrained in our institutional ethos and values, it underpins all our strategies and directly informs our approach to change management. It is part of what defines Newman University as a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002), learning organisation (Senge, 1990) and learning community (Shapiro and Levine, 1999). Based on the oft-quoted adage that 'culture eats strategy for breakfast', our strategic approach is to work with, and further develop, the values of our institutional culture to achieve a culture in which inequality is unacceptable and, hence, the gaps identified above are proactively addressed by the whole community.

Alignment with other strategies

Newman University believes 'that being mindful of our values, thoughtful in our scholarship and reflexive in our practice is the best way to provide excellent, responsive service and outcomes to our students and partners. Newman University commits itself to being a learning organisation; a community of scholarly and professional practice, which never settles but constantly grows and prospers. ... To achieve this, we will promote a culture of collegiality and co-operation, open and honest dialogue, responsiveness and reflexivity, learning and continual professional development at all levels within the institution.' [SP, p.16]

Our commitment to being a learning organisation with a Catholic ethos means we expect each member of our community – students, academics, professional and support staff - to contribute to the construction of the common good. Our theory of change rests on this belief in achieving a shared sense of what matters as a basis for collective actions to achieve our co-constructed strategic objectives. This document, and our wider strategy, has therefore been shaped by open discussion with students and staff through 'open space' events at Learning and Teaching conference and 'Big Conversation' events.

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy enshrines our commitment to inclusivity, the valuing of diversity, social justice and equality in our educational practices. We commit to 'empower students to progress throughout their learning journey, achieve their desired outcome and fulfil their potential.' [objective 3.1] Our Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy has to be addressed by all programmes going through the [re]validation process, ensuring that inclusivity is designed into programmes from the outset. This includes the involvement of students in the design process and validation process, as well as promoting student engagement and active learning through the use of collaborative learning processes within programmes. An inclusive practice audit checklist forms part of programme validation to ensure that accessibility is considered across teaching, timetabling, use of materials, assessment and support. Our Employability Task Group has developed a new employability strategy and will develop actions to address that strategy in line with our values and the commitments in this Plan.

Our People Strategy, 2015-2020, supports our Strategic Plan in placing emphasis on the importance of staff formation as the basis for student formation:

At its heart our University consists of its staff and students; staff formation is therefore central to its mission, not least because staff formation serves to support the formation of students. It is the staff of our University that will deliver its strategic aims and objectives." (SP, p.15).

It provides a commitment to advancing equality of opportunity while embracing and celebrating diversity in line with our values and principles (People Strategy p.3). Again the emphasis is on achieving this through nurturing 'a learning community, with shared values and goals that promote a sense of mutual ownership, belonging and fulfilment' and fostering 'a supportive and facilitative culture which embraces equality of opportunity for all and celebrates diversity' (People Strategy 1.1 & 1.4, p.3-4). Our Equality and Diversity Committee is chaired by our Vice-Chancellor and advises the wider University on equality and diversity matters, informed by the Equalities Act, as they affect staff, students and the wider community. This is further strengthened by a published

'Commitment to Equality and Diversity' emphasising the linkages between our values, our community and inclusivity:

Newman University is committed to building and supporting a diverse and inclusive community. Our aim is to ensure that anyone who studies or works at Newman University will be empowered to achieve their full potential by fostering an environment of openness in which everyone is valued equally and can participate with confidence. We value the widest possible range of cultural inputs from students and staff alike as we recognise that this will improve and strengthen our institution. The synergy of a diverse community will bring new ideas, exchanges and interrelationships which will enrich Newman University for the benefit of all. [Newman University, Commitment to Equality and Diversity, 2016]

Strategic measures

Ultimate responsibility for the educational character and mission of the University rests with Council, our governing body, who were actively involved in discussion of emerging drafts of this Plan and gave it final approval on 20th June 2019. Strategic leadership of the University is devolved to the Vice-Chancellor and senior leadership team and they will also take strategic oversight of this Plan. Led by the Vice-Chancellor the University has undertaken a significant restructuring of its strategic leadership, in 2018-19, so as to better achieve its mission and address the requirements of OfS regulation. A review of the committee structure identified the need for more timely monitoring, action planning and intervention to ensure continuous improvement of provision across the student life cycle. Consequently a number of task groups were established to meet monthly, much more regularly than usual University committees, to undertake monitoring and drive enhancements activity. A Recruitment Task Group, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, oversees student recruitment and access. A Retention and Success Task Group, chaired by the Director of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, oversees continuation and attainment, while an Employability Task Group oversees progression into employment or further study. All these groups, like all University committees, have student members.

The establishment of these three task groups marks a step change in the University's approach to student access, success and progression. Each group is empowered to require monitoring reports, set subject level targets in relation to relevant KPIs, develop institutional strategies and action plans, require departmental plans, and thus drive and effect change within its remit. These task groups therefore pull together and enhance existing University work across the student lifecycle whilst boosting the ambition and urgency of further effective interventions. The work of the task groups will ensure enhanced monitoring and evaluation of internal and externally available data related to this Plan. Such enhanced monitoring will allow better identification of programme, subject or departmental specific effective practice or issues as a basis for planning and development work. Departments will be regularly required to report on their action plans and progress with regards to this plan.

The intention, then, is to establish a three tiered approach; with strategic direction developed through consultation and collaboration in line with University values; carrying through university-wide provision and projects addressing key over-arching issues; and encouraging and facilitating departments to develop their own situated practices through student-staff partnership work, in response to the particular targets they need to meet. This combination of establishing values-based strategic direction, implementing cross-institutional support mechanisms, and promoting grass-roots action to address situated issues, is aligned with our *theory of change* (Rogers, 2014). Robust monitoring, evaluation and review of the impact of these plans, projects and interventions will ensure the iterative enhancement of access, progression and success for all students and target groups.

A newly reformulated Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship has also been established and given responsibility for the preparation, monitoring and implementation of this Plan. The Directorate will particularly work to co-ordinate institution-wide activity to support student success, dovetailing that work with situated and focused initiatives undertaken within academic and professional and support departments. The Directorate is recruiting a senior lecturer in student engagement to work alongside the existing tutor for transition and retention and the transition and retention programme co-ordinator. Funding will be provided from the Directorate to support student-staff partnership work across the academic departments and professional and support services of the University, which acts to deliver on

the targets set in this Plan. A wide range of provision, projects and targeted interventions are already underway or proposed below as the basis for delivering on our ambitious Access and Participation Plan.

Access

Newman University has traditionally made an important contribution to meeting the access targets for the Higher Education sector, serving a sector of the wider population often overlooked by other providers. We intend to build on existing work in this area to enhance already strong performance, through a range of initiatives:

- **National Collaborative Outreach Programme.** Newman University are partners in the NCOP project under the AimHigher Plus consortium, alongside the other Birmingham Universities and Worcester University. This has achieved phase 2 funding for 2019-2021.
- **Sustained Progressive Programmes.** Provided as part of the consortium, Newman specifically has engaged with 1771 learners on an Sustained Progressive Programme from a target of 1014.
- **AimHigher Progression Ambassador.** A key focus of NCOP work is to provide an APA to six partner schools who have a large proportion of NCOP target learners. The APA leads on interventions, mentoring, workshops and assemblies in school for learners in years 9-13.
- **Learning Days.** A range of learning days, covering 14 subject areas are run each academic year, and many local school-pupils attend. The number of pupils on campus between January-June 2019 was 832. Additionally a Clearing workshop for parents is being run on campus so that parents and carers, particularly for those that have not attended a university themselves, can understand how to support their children during the Clearing process.
- **Outreach work.** The outreach team work with local schools and colleges informing pupils of the opportunities of HE and raising aspirations around achievement. From September 2018 – June 2019 there have been 360 interactions with schools and colleges, either on or off campus.
- **Reach Out Project.** This provides intense support work with a group of young people from Bartley Green who have visited the University each half term since November 2018. It uses detached youth work principles and we intend to expand the reach of this programme into other low-participation neighbourhoods in south Birmingham.
- **Off Campus Enrichment Activities.** These support students with Gatsby benchmarks for the schools' careers initiatives and reached 360 students in 2018-19.
- **AimHigher Unifest.** This summer school brings 50 students to stay on University campus for a residential event during July.
- **Foundation Year.** Our Foundation Year programme is the fastest growing in the University. It is projected to recruit over 200 students in 2019-20. The great strength of the programme is its pedagogic approach which allows students, who may well have had poor educational experiences in the past, to take ownership of the course and shape it to address their needs. In line with John Henry Newman's teachings, the collaborative work done by students, particularly in small tutor groups where the students decide the content, helps build a confident sense of belonging in HE and at Newman,.
- **Contextualised Admissions for Foundation Year.** These ensure that the lived experience of the student is taken into account alongside formal qualifications in gaining access to HE study.
- **Citizens UK.** Newman University is a founding member of Citizens UK Birmingham and this provides an important opportunity to further develop our relationships with local schools, community groups and faith groups, bringing them onto campus for hosted events.

Continuation

In response to the intersectional nature of the Newman student body and the particular challenges that we have long recognised our student body face in sustaining their commitment to HE, the University has long had a strong student engagement offer. Given that the vast majority of our students are from underrepresented groups, we believe in the importance of developing students' sense of belonging to, and at, Newman as part of our inclusive HE learning community. The elements of our student engagement offer described here are fully inclusive, in that they work to support *all* students in reaching their full potential, but also, crucially, underpin the more focused initiatives and interventions for particular target groups. They contribute to a culture where accessing support services is not a mark of disadvantage or difference but integral to the elimination of inequality.

- **Induction.** Since 2009 Newman University has offered the HE Academic Development [HEADs] suite of programmes; an enhanced induction fortnight that focuses on belonging, academic and social identity, and the development of skills and aptitudes conducive to study. Our data shows

that 5% more students who have completed the programme continue in their studies and attain at a higher rate. Our Welcome Week, for those who choose not undertake HEADs is now undergoing review and development to include elements of HEADs alongside a greater focus on subject led induction activity. This will give students early opportunities to engage with teaching staff and form cohort identity. In the early stages of this Plan, pilot subject areas will deliver an enhanced induction offer. While, by the mid-stage of the Plan, all subject areas will deliver an enhanced induction offer for all new Level 4, 6 and 7 students.

- **Personal Development Planning [PDP].** Student Support Services routinely survey all new students as to their development needs through the use of an online survey, this allows students to identify aspects of university life that they may find challenging or need support with and signposts them to sources of assistance. This enables the team to focus delivery of services according to need. Renewed emphasis will be placed on students making full use of the PDP as the profile of the document is raised during Welcome Week and processes for responding to students will be strengthened.
- **Academic skills development within the curriculum.** Through programme revalidation we ensure that every course has a study skills provision embedded within the first semester of the first year. This provision is key to the students understanding how to make use of the full range of academic skills development support across the institution, exposing students to a range of sessions often delivered by members of the Learning Development and Library teams. In the early stages of this Plan we will provide an enhanced academic skills development offer for Level 7.
- **Personal tutoring.** In January 2019 the Vice Chancellor and Students' Union President signed a ten point charter that confirmed the provision of personal tutoring for all students as an institutional priority. Running alongside a piloted roll-out of data analytics to capture the picture of student attendance and engagement, we are now moving towards the adoption of an analytics-informed personal tutoring scheme. Development work has been done with departments on specific approaches to personal tutoring and training for personal tutors will be delivered during 2019-20. In the early stages of this Plan all programmes will have personal tutors. By the mid-point of the Plan whole institution roll out of engagement data analytics will allow data-informed personal tutoring.
- **Engagement Data Analytics.** Newman University achieved HEFCE catalyst funding between 2016 and 2018 for its project work on *using student engagement data to drive pedagogic innovation*. This project worked with a number of student-staff partnership teams to establish subject-level interventions students felt were important and effective in addressing any signs of student dis-engagement identified by data analytics. The project established a set of university principles for values-based use of data analytics and has now become a University-wide data analytics implementation project, based on the use of SEAtS software piloted in 2018-19. In the early stages of this Plan the use of data analytics will be available for all programmes and piloted interventions will be in place in each department. By the mid-point of the Plan data analytics will be used across all programmes with supporting student-informed interventions in place.
- **Peer mentoring.** There are numerous examples of effective peer mentoring across the institution; some centrally delivered via Student Support Services, others offered at subject level. Given the substantial body of scholarship that attests to the value of this approach, we will initially map out a whole institution approach. By the mid-point of this Plan there will be peer-mentoring provision in each academic department and by the final stage of this Plan there will be an institution-level peer mentoring scheme to support all Level 4 students.
- **Learning and Skills Development.** Our central services at Newman offer the student body substantial support in the development of their academic skills through a variety of forums. A full programme of workshops is provided across a range of issues, together with access to 1:1 support appointments with the Learning Development team, and with the Academic Service Librarians.
- **Student Support Services.** The Newman Student Support Services has been repeatedly nominated for *Times Higher Education Awards* for the quality of its careers information, advice and guidance, academic study skills development and the transition support it offers to our students. The team promotes a holistic and pro-active approach to support and development of our students around personal welfare issues, disability, specific learning difficulties and mental health, as well as actively encouraging development opportunities such as overseas study via Erasmus+. As part of this plan we will complete an evaluation of internal support funding to inform closer financial targeting of those most in need.

- **Library Services.** Our Library encourages teaching staff to define an explicit reading strategy for their programmes, thinking about not just what students can read but what information literacy skills they will need and how they will access the material. Information skills workshops are offered and embedded at request into taught programmes. Loanable lap-tops are provided to students and student-bookable study pods and booths are provided for individual and group study. Library support is advertised pro-actively through social media, newsletters and email to engage students with the breadth of provision.
- **Student Engagement and Success Co-ordination.** We are appointing a Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement who will develop strategic oversight of all engagement initiatives throughout the student life cycle including induction, transition, student voice and student partnership working, and monitoring of withdrawals. The Senior Lecturer will be appointed and programme of activities developed in response to strategic agenda as informed by Retention and Success Task Group in the early stages of the Plan. By the mid-point of the Plan we will develop and appoint students to the role of engagement officer within each academic department.
- **Regulations Review.** A Regulations Review Task Group was established in 2018-19 as part of the new University committee structure. It is undertaking a review of the regulations generally - and particularly those regarding extensions, mitigating circumstances and suspension – with the aim of streamlined communication in clear English, ensuring they support all students to achieve their potential, and ensuring they do not provide any unforeseen barriers to student success, particularly in the case of under-represented groups.
- **Campus Facilities Review.** We seek to ensure the accessibility of campus for all our students. Work to achieve this includes the basic installation of lifts, automatic doors and ramps but extends to the provision of free student parking, kitchen facilities for commuter students, large and small social and study spaces, etc. We will review our provision in the light of the developing needs of our student population and the concerns of commuter students.
- **Transition Support.** Induction at Newman is part of a wider picture of supporting students throughout their time with the institution. A range of transition events at the end of Level 4 and Level 5 are offered. We will develop and extend the offer of transition support events throughout Semester one. By the mid-point of this Plan we will establish resit winter and summer schools.
- **Learning and Teaching Conference.** Our annual learning and teaching conference is perhaps unusual in the emphasis it places on collaborative working between academics, student and professional and support staff on the day. It provides both a chance to think ideas through together and a celebration of our evolving learning community. We will continue to develop the interactive engagement of our whole community in sharing of evaluated, innovative effective practice.
- **Student-staff partnership projects.** We see student-staff partnership work as the pinnacle of student engagement. The project scheme we run allows students to propose projects and bid for funding on an annual basis. They put together teams of students, academics and professional support staff to take forward research or interventions that will enhance the student experience at Newman. The University has now funded over 80 of these projects across our provision and many of the ideas in this Plan emerged from these small-scale, situated projects. We run an open student-staff partnership celebration day each June where all the projects come together and work on commonalities they identify, so as to make further recommendations to the University. These projects are integral to this Plan's ambition to build grass-roots insurgency against inequality.

Continuation for under-represented groups

As well as extensive work to enhance the continuation of all students, we will undertake a range of targeted interventions to address the specific needs of under-represented groups. While these individually help address specific issues, collectively they contribute to a shift in culture, re-emphasising social justice and equality:

- **Newman University Support Fund [NUSF].** This has been partially de-centralised in its approach in order to target smaller sums of financial support to students requiring immediate intervention. Changes have included allowing the Welfare Adviser to make small awards of travel tickets, short-term loans and food vouchers, whilst advising on larger applications to the NUSF, which are means-tested and take longer to process. While this fund is available to all students, it is overwhelmingly accessed by students from underrepresented groups.
- **Mature Student Experience Panel.** Newman Students' Union established this panel to explore the experiences of this particular group of students, with a view to identifying and removing

barriers to their engagement and continuation. It has provided regular reports, insights and recommendations into the University committee structure for further action.

- **BAME Panel.** Newman Students' Union will establish a BAME Panel to function in the same way as the successful Mature Student Experience Panel. It will help the University identify and remove barriers to engagement, continuation and achievement for this group by generating reports and recommendations for the development of University policy and practice.
- **BAME peer mentoring.** We will establish a targeted BAME student peer mentoring scheme, informed by the success of our current peer mentoring provision and similar work at other institutions in our region. Such mentors provide both role models and informal communication routes between BAME students and University systems as a means of addressing unintended barriers to progression and success.
- **Muslim Student Experience Research.** Student partnership projects have already been funded to explore and make recommendations on the Muslim student experience at Newman. The outcomes have changed practice at graduation and developed our provision. We have also taken part in collaborative research with the University of Winchester to identify and address the challenges faced by Muslim students at GuildHE institutions.
- **Muslim Chaplain.** Newman University has a thriving Islamic Society and provides a Muslim prayer room but we wish to expand our provision for this growing proportion of our student population. In 2019/20 we intend to appoint a Muslim Chaplain
- **University of Sanctuary.** We are working towards gaining [University of Sanctuary](#) status during 2019-2020. We will ensure that our systems, processes and curriculum create a culture of hospitality for an under-represented group and benefit the whole institution in terms of community engagement, widening participation access, and the employability of our graduates.
- **Sanctuary Scholarship.** The University has operated a [Sanctuary Scholarship](#) for enforced migrants since 2014, offering a full tuition fee waiver and annual bursary to one student each year, for the duration of their undergraduate degree course.
- **EAL for academic purposes.** A growing number of our home-domiciled students have required support around their English language skills, where this is not the language commonly spoken in their family homes. We will be investing in further development and extension of this service, with initial targeted promotion to the subject areas where we have seen most demand (Foundation Year, Early Childhood Education and Care, Business). We believe this may also have a positive impact on further tackling barriers to learning for some of our BAME students.
- **Support for students accessing Disabled Students' Allowances.** We continue to provide dedicated staff support for disabled students in accessing DSA funding and fund the full cost of dyslexia diagnostic reports for current students.
- **Individual support processes.** We provide individual support for students to establish Reasonable Adjustment Plans [RAPs] for disabled students and Individual Learning Plans [ILPs] for those with long term conditions as a means of helping these groups to manage and complete their studies at a suitable pace for them.
- **Stand Alone Pledge.** Students who have been forced to leave their family homes through relationship breakdowns, or domestic violence or abuse now account for a growing part of Student Services' casework. We will sign the [Stand Alone Pledge](#) and enhance our existing information, support and guidance for students from estranged backgrounds.
- **Support for Care Leavers.** Newman University already provides a designated point of contact for care leavers in student services and a nominated academic, as well as 365 day accommodation and direct referral into our mental health support. We will further enhance care leaver website information, advertising and linking to the different support approaches by Midland Local Authorities, to develop a pipeline into HE study for care leavers, as part of a commitment to the [Care Leaver Covenant](#).
- **Library Services.** We are systematically encouraging the use of e-books and e-journals to ensure resources are accessible for commuter students and screen-readable for disabled students. Scanned journal articles are provided via Moodle, our VLE, making resources available from off-campus, something also supported by our postal loan service. Our library allows access for children, as a valuable means of supporting mature student parents.
- **Inclusive learning resources.** In 2019 we will establish an inclusive learning resources working group to promote the use of lecture capture across the University and develop practice to ensure all University-generated digital learning materials or resources have inclusivity designed into them.

- **Mental Health Advisor.** We have initiated a professional network of mental health advisers in Birmingham HEIs in order to share best practice, but also to help influence cross-city Mental Health Commissioners to target their limited resources to the student population in a more joined-up, informed approach.
- **Mental Health First Aiders.** We have a network of trained mental health first aiders drawn from academic and professional support staff across the University. We are currently investigating the extension of this service to include MHFA training to First Aiders in order to extend its availability.
- **Counselling Service.** We have a dedicated counselling service and recently offered trainee placements to neighbouring professional counselling training providers in order to extend the number of available sessions we offer students though the summer months. We also offer evening sessions to students using associate counsellors.
- **Wellbeing Events.** The Students' Union, Student Support Services and Human Resources work together to offer wellbeing events twice a year. Though aimed at the whole community, the issues addressed mean these are of particular value to underrepresented groups and, again, help to enhance a culture of addressing inequality.
- **Commuter Student research and provision.** Given our exceptionally high proportion of commuter students, we have taken part in [national research](#) on their needs and will continue to do so. We have recently undertaken a campus review to address commuter student needs and provided enhanced social meeting space, lockers and kitchen facilities for day student use. Estate refurbishments include working spaces for students.
- **Targeted Student-Staff partnership projects.** We will fund thematically targeted student-staff partnership projects to address continuation for under-represented groups. These will allow students to shape enhancements in our provision for them. This grass-roots activism will collectively contribute to culture change.

Black Student Attainment

The Black student attainment gap is a challenge for all of UK HE. We take cognisance of research conducted at the Universities of Wolverhampton and Coventry which urged the importance of avoiding deficit models and suggested the use of the term awarding gap rather than attainment gap. We will seek to apply the five steps proposed by the recent UUK/NUS work on [#Closing the gap](#).

- **Providing strong leadership.** We are committed to removing the BAME awarding gap. Achieving the [Race Equality Charter](#) in the lifecycle of this plan will help us raise and address key management and leadership issues. We are in the top twenty institutions in the UK for the diversity of our staff, according to HESA data, and we wish to increase the proportion of BAME staff working at the University to provide visible role models and so that our staff better represents our student population.
- **Having conversations about race and changing culture.** We are fortunate in our subject mix that discussion of race and changing culture is part of the curriculum of many of our subjects. Building on a student-staff partnership project in Education Studies, and using materials and guidance developed by that project, we intend to pursue the decolonisation of the curriculum through our [re]validation process.
- **Developing racially diverse and inclusive environments.** Decolonising the curriculum will help here however it is not just about what we teach but how we teach. Our pedagogy of partnership is important in driving teaching approaches which build on and value student lived experience and encourage them to see other students' lived experiences as a source for learning and greater understanding.
- **Getting the evidence and analysing the data.** Equality and Diversity Committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, has institutional oversight of data in this area and undertakes annual monitoring. The Retention and Success Task Group will monitor data regarding students throughout the year. Data beyond the statistics is important and we will work closely with the Students' Union to learn from our BAME student experience panel. We also promote student-staff partnership projects that gather evidence and make recommendations on BAME student experiences.
- **Understanding what works.** Student-staff partnership projects within Newman have already helped to identify positive actions to take. We are taking part in research led by the University of Winchester on Muslim student experience. We are developing BAME student mentoring based on learning from other institutions in our region. We will, of course, be evaluating the impact of

enhancement interventions as part of the monitoring and evaluation of this Plan and also seeking to learn from advancing practice in the wider sector as all HEIs work to close this gap.

Progression to work or further study

Progression to work and further study for under-represented groups at Newman is good, though we do need to expand the current strong performance for some groups to all groups. The actions outlined here will therefore require particular monitoring to assess impact in spreading effective practice and ensuring good progression for all students. They collectively contribute to a University culture that expects and enables all students to actively contribute to the common good and, in the process, develop their employability.

- **Embedded Work Placement.** All undergraduate programmes include a mandatory work placement module in the second year, with preparatory support work in the final semester of the first year. Our dedicated senior lecturer in work related learning supports placements and provides further support to programme teams on embedding employability in their programmes.
- **Volunteering.** All students are given the opportunity to take part in a variety of volunteering opportunities and many chose to do so, either through the University or within their own communities. Their hours can be accredited through the Newman Volunteering Award or recognised on their HE Achievement Record.
- **Careers Service.** Our careers service provides a wide range of education, information, advice and guidance activities to help students - and graduates of up to three years - enhance their employability and develop effective career management skills to make informed decisions. The careers team have implemented *My Career*, an online system which gives all students and recent graduates access to book one-to-one personalised guidance sessions, workshops and events such as the careers summer schools, fairs, and access to opportunities from employers and organisations. Alongside enhanced integration into the curriculum and the development of an employability award, it is expanding the opportunity for final year students and new graduates to access progression coaches, and will be moving to a new dedicated careers and employability hub.
- **Enterprise Unit.** Our Enterprise Unit encourages student interest in establishing their own businesses. They run a series of events throughout the year, inviting business ideas, promoting entry into enterprise competitions and bring social enterprises and entrepreneurs onto campus to share their experiences and ideas. Given our social justice mission, we will seek to develop particular support for the development of social and co-operative enterprises in our communities.
- **Transformation West Midlands Project.** Newman University, in collaboration with the University of Birmingham and University College Birmingham, is delivering the three-year 'Transformation West Midlands' OfS project. The project is funding a number of progression coaches to support students who have chosen to study and work in the West Midlands. 'Local' students in their final year of a degree and recent graduates of the three universities will receive tailored support from the designated progression coaches. Our aim is to raise aspirations, improve work-readiness and strengthen recruitment pipelines and practices, working closely with employers. At Newman we are focusing on the 92% of our students and graduates who are locally domiciled and are either BAME, Disabled or first time HE participants from their families.
- **Reverse mentoring.** As part of the TWM project, we will provide opportunities for students to reverse mentor local and regional employers on how they can break down barriers to inclusivity. This is designed to help employers overcome unintended biases within their recruitment processes, while developing students' confidence and building up their leadership and teamwork skills.

3.2 Student consultation

Students have been consulted in all aspects of the development and production of this Plan. We work closely with Newman Students' Union, involving them in all key decision-making bodies of the University. More than this, working in partnership with student members of our learning community is central to the ethos of the University and this Plan has been shaped by this ethos. We agree with the National Union of Students that the highest form of student engagement is partnership (NUS, *Manifesto for Partnership*, 2012). We therefore promote a pedagogy of partnership across our provision. This places an emphasis on interactive teaching in small groups, drawing on students lived experience where possible and appropriate. Student-staff partnership projects are funded across the institution each year, establishing teams of students, professional support staff and academics to develop enhancements to our provision. As part of this Plan we will seek to embed student partnership working to enhance student success within all our academic departments. Through these collaborative

project teams, students are therefore integral to the identification, implementation and evaluation of these situated interventions.

This activity, in line with the learning community approach adopted across this plan, is shaped by the six principles of our, Paulo Freire inspired, *pedagogy of partnership*. The first principle emphasises the importance of **shared hope**, coming together informed by our values and intent that we can improve our understanding, actions and practices. **Co-investigation** and shared reflection on current practices, with the intention of challenging assumptions and surfacing issues, is informed by a need to ensure we engage in **respectful dialogue** and hear under-represented voices in our community. From this open, inclusive conversation we are constantly establishing and refreshing a **shared vision** of how our learning community can grow and flourish. Within that we then encourage the **co-construction of solutions** aimed at better ways of being and commit to an **on-going process of transformation** ([Peters and Mathias, 2018](#)).

We have Students' Union representation on all University committees and task groups involved in the development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of this Plan. Their active engagement makes an important contribution to practices and proposals to support the success of under-represented and disadvantaged students. Students' Union promotion of student-staff partnership working across the institution helps deliver our ethos of all members of the community working together for the common good. The Students' Union Teaching Excellence Awards, which take place every year, provide the opportunity for students to draw attention to, and celebrate, effective practice they see across the University's provision. A new Student Charter has been developed in 2018/19, signed by the Vice Chancellor and President of the Students' Union. It clarifies the expectations students can have of the University in terms of support and involvement as well as the obligations students have in relation to attendance and engagement.

Many of the initiatives presented in this Plan were developed as a result of working with Newman Students' Union. These ideas often come from the SU's active pursuit of student consultation and student voice. The SU produces a Student Voice Report annually which is discussed at Learning, Teaching and Academic Quality Committee, Student Experience Committee and relevant task group meetings. Interim reports provide up-dates on actions to address student raised issues and a final end-of-year report draws together progress on each recommendation. The Students' Union Representation Officer has strengthened the course representative system in 2018/19 with enhanced training and the further development of our Student Academic Reps [StAR] system of experienced senior departmental representatives. These ensure greater engagement and feedback in programmes, departments and support areas.

Our investment in student-staff partnership working has developed, since its initial introduction in 2014, to establish an ethos of working together to undertake enhancement activity and address student concerns. There has now been a partnership project in every subject area of the University and many more than that in most subjects. Our pedagogy of partnership values the lived experience of our students, the contribution they make to our learning and the sense of affiliation and belonging this engenders. Funded student partnership projects provide students with a greater sense of belonging to, and even ownership of, the University. Students have the chance to target developments they want to see, earn as they learn and contribute to the University's research, scholarship and publication. Projects have and will continue to engage many students from disadvantaged and under-represented groups and have addressed issues of direct relevance to them including themes of inclusion; decolonising the curriculum; community engagement; the student experiences of under-represented groups include Black, Muslim and mature students; support systems for disabled students; the impact or regulations for mitigation and extensions; as well as specific teaching, communication and assessment approaches.

Statement of Support from Newman Students' Union

As the president-elect of Newman Students' Union at the time of writing (2019), I offer my full support to Newman University's Access and Participation Plan for 2020-21 to 2024-25. The contributions of the Students' Union have been clearly considered in the writing of this plan and

the plan commendably demonstrates the continuous effective partnership between Newman University and Newman Students' Union in improving access and participation for all students. We look forward to contributing to the successful delivery of this plan through ensuring student scrutiny of progress at committee, representation in programme development, continuing student voice work and participation in partnership working.

Newman Students' Union, President-Elect 2019-20

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

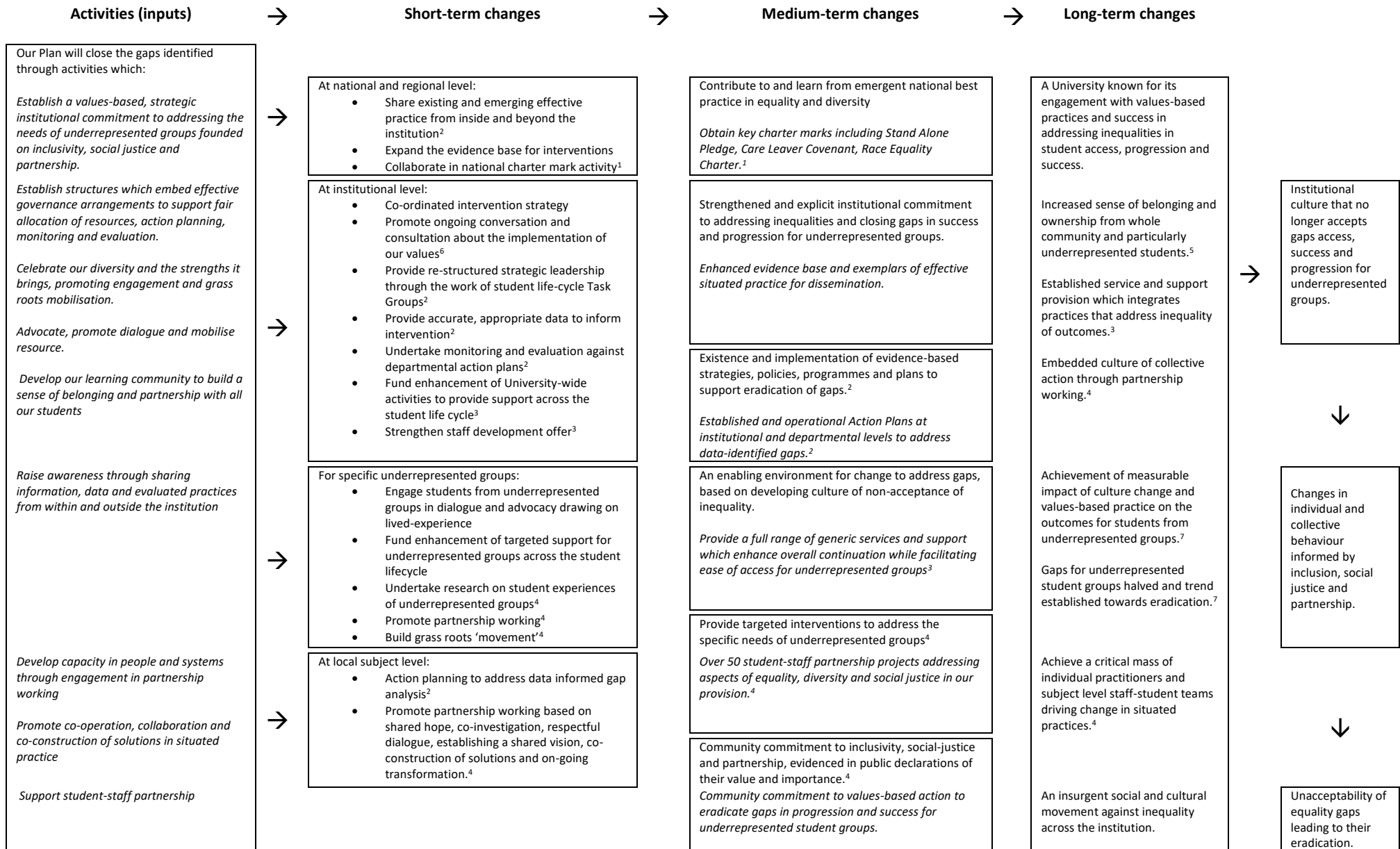
The evaluation strategy for this plan is framed by the strategic development of our values-based approach to student access, progression and success set out in University strategies and policies, as these operate within the newly focused structure of University Committees and Task Groups (set out earlier in this document). Key here is our institutional commitment to social justice and the provision of HE to all those who can benefit from it, regardless of background. Because over 80% of our student's are from under-represented groups we have an established whole institution approach to widening participation, student success and progression. Our small size means we can and do consult regularly with students and staff on the strategic direction of the University and the development of key commitments, including this Plan, ensuring honest reflection on the effectiveness of our activities. This helps us to arrive at a University Strategy which is based on our shared values, owned by all members of the University and revised in the light of evaluation.

Having established a strategic direction and KPIs in relation to access, progression and success, academic departments and key central services will be monitored and evaluated on their achievement of these KPIs through the University committee and Task Group structure. The three key student lifecycle Task Groups will set specific departmental targets, taking account of data analysis data analysed by our Planning and Systems Development unit and provided down to programme level. Departments will produce annual plans, and reports against those plans, setting-out proposed actions through student-staff partnership project work to address identified targets. The Task Groups include academic staff with expertise in evaluation of HE interventions to provide input and support for evaluation activity.

Programme design

Given our commitment to a culture change model which emphasises shared values, collaborative action and situated practice within a learning community, the implementation strategy and evaluation programme are iteratively linked. There will therefore be meta-level, mezzo-level and micro-levels of iterative implementation and evaluation. At meta-level it will involve establishment of institution-wide KPIs, broken down into more situated departmental targets, which will be revisited throughout the year and revised on an annual basis in the light of learning from evaluation. At mezzo-level, institutional projects will be implemented by central departments - primarily the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship and Student Support Services - and monitored through task groups, with annual evaluation reports against the objectives provided through the committee structure. At micro-level, student-staff project teams within departments will be able to bid for funding to carry forward strategic enhancements at a local level, addressing targeted issues and taking account of situated practices. These partnership projects will operate as participant action research projects ([Reason & Bradbury 2008](#)) on an annual cycle of funding, implementation and evaluation. These projects will be expected to collaboratively implement and evaluate a change, communicating the learning from both the change process and judging the projects outcomes against its proposed objectives. All these partnership projects will report back to a University-wide annual event, subjecting them to collaborative qualitative analysis which will draw out thematic learning from across all the projects to inform the call and guidance for the following annual round.

Newman University Access and Participation Plan *Theory of Change* (After Rogers, 2014)



Context assumptions for the *Theory of Change*:

- That this is about culture change and collective transformative learning to move from acceptance of inequalities as structurally inevitable towards a culture that sees educational inequalities as unacceptable. ‘Culture eats strategy for breakfast.’
- That signalling the importance of our values of inclusivity, social justice and partnership to the whole University, through for example ‘big conversations’ and engagement in national charter marks, will support culture change through consciousness-raising, dialogue and transformational learning.
- That basing action on our shared values - of inclusivity, social justice and partnership - will improve our understanding, actions and practices.
- That institutional development, through the establishment of new committee and task group structures, will embed effective and stable governance arrangements that support fair and appropriate allocation of resources, monitoring of performance and action planning.
- That celebrating and building on our success in providing access for underrepresented student groups will strengthen our community commitment to student success for underrepresented groups.
- That culture change and transformative learning cannot be achieved by top-down approaches alone but must have an equally strong element of bottom-up community action.
- That student continuation and success is built on a sense of belonging and partnership in the University learning community.
- That involving students from underrepresented groups directly in work to enhance the University learning community will encourage grass roots mobilisation and develop healthy relationships and connections, building a sense of belonging and partnership.
- That enhancing the sense of belonging and partnership for underrepresented groups will help close success and progression gaps.
- That a combination of targeted and generic support activities can address the needs of underrepresented student groups and hence also contribute to closing the success and progression gaps.

Implications of *Theory of Change* for Evaluation design

The theory of change model suggests a number of sources of data on progress of the Plan. While [Kirkpatrick’s four level evaluation model](#) clearly establishes that the fundamental measure of the success of this Plan will be the impact on OfS students success and progression data, the theory of change does help establish other sources of evaluation data which can be used iteratively to develop and enhance actions over the life of the Plan.

1. Achievement of national charter marks provides measurable quantitative outcomes as evidence of commitment to culture change.
2. Records of Task Group meetings and activity will generate minutes, data reports, action plans and monitoring reports.
3. Annual reports by the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship and Student Support Services will provide evaluation evidence on progress of institutional projects and provision.
4. The take –up numbers, chosen focus and reports of Student-Staff Partnership projects will provide rich qualitative and quantitative data on grass-roots engagement and action.
5. The Learning Community questions of the NSS will provide quantitative data on whether students feel part of a community, and these responses can be broken down and analysed by protected characteristic to identify changing perceptions of certain under-represented groups.
6. Large-scale dialogic activities like the ‘big conversation’ take place and provide records of collective commitment to equality, inclusion and social justice.
7. OfS data sets on success and progression gaps for under-represented student groups.

Evaluation design

Culture change is challenging, often slow and uneven and consequently notoriously difficult to evaluate. To address this, our evaluation design is informed by our *theory of change* model and the various measures this suggests. We have used the OfS evaluation self-evaluation assessment tool in outline for the development of our evaluation design and we are committed to completing the full tool, as a basis for finalising our evaluation design before September 2020. In line with Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation – moving through reaction, learning and behaviour change to results - the fundamental measures of the success of this Plan will be provided by its results in terms of closing the gaps in student success and progression identified by OfS data sets. However, while these will provide some indication of the ultimate impact of culture change over the period of the Plan there are clearly other key sources of quantitative and qualitative data which either provide proxy measures of culture change or indicate shifts in perceptions, learning and behaviour which should ultimately result in achievement of the Plan's targets. These include minutes, data and reports generated by the newly created governance structure of the key life-cycle Task Groups; NSS data on student perceptions of belonging to our learning community; progress in obtaining national charter marks; annual reports of key central services; engagement with large-scale dialogic activity to develop shared values and action through 'big conversations'; and, fundamentally, the numbers, activities, reports and outcomes of Student-Staff partnership projects. All this data will be examined on an annual cycle to inform developing practice iteratively and repeatedly through the five years of this Plan.

This data is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, with some material generating very rich-situated evidence of changing cultures. For example, the achievement of charter marks, NSS scores, number of partnership projects, usage statistics for key central services, engagement statistics for staff development and 'big conversations' are all quantifiable, some providing simple and others more complex data on the take-up of activities identified in the Plan. Full evaluation when looking for culture change, however, requires the triangulation of this qualitative data with evidence of qualitative shifts in learning and behaviour. This will come through the more nuanced reports of partnership projects, evaluation reports on particular initiatives and themes in institutional conversations.

The *theory of change* helped to identify the importance of NSS data on 'learning community' as a key measure of the culture change we are intending to achieve. Previous engagement in the *What Works?* project and research on commuter student engagement, established the importance of a sense of belonging for student success. The two NSS 'learning community' questions establish whether student feel they are part of a community and have had the right opportunities to work with others on their course. As such they provide key data on whether students feel part of the Newman culture. It is possible to analyse this data by protected characteristic and this will allow us to explore the impact of activities outlined in this Plan on the sense of belonging of key under-represented student groups.

Evaluation implementation and Learning to shape improvements

The structures necessary for the implementation of this iterative and collaborative evaluation approach have already been put in place; from the new University task group structure, through the student engagement work of the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, to an established culture of student-staff partnership working. What our new structures and evaluation strategy will do is to pull together the learning from across the meta-, mezzo- and micro- levels to hone our enhancement practices and improve our provision. This will identify enhancements in our working principles to help improve the impact of partnership working and, in particular, to help us strengthen processes to ensure the sharing of identified effective practice from specific programmes and projects across the wider University.

For example, we already have evaluation evidence of the efficacy of the pedagogy of partnership and Student-Staff Partnership Project in terms of building a sense of belonging and community, which has informed our project design for this Plan. Recent NSS scores for 'learning community' have risen from 78.2% in 2017, to 80.3% in 2018 and 82.5% for 2019. Large-scale evaluation of student-staff partnerships has helped us to clarify the purposes of such work, improve the impact of specific projects and develop practices to draw wider institutional benefits from the synergies between projects. Engagement of students from under-represented groups has been a feature of our student partnership projects to date. We also monitor the comparative retention levels of students who receive support and the wider student population and this suggests the hardship fund has a positive impact on student progression. Similarly we have qualitative evidence from large-scale dialogue sessions through 'big

conversations' and learning and teaching conference discussion using open space technology that colleagues felt it promoted a sense of community and shared purpose.

We expect to add to this evidence base as the work outlined in this Plan is implemented and to use this evidence base to hone our practices. So, for example, we will draw together the results of student–staff partnership and targeted institutional research into the experiences of under-represented groups to help us define the call for proposals for projects the following year. We expect this annual iteration to continually shape the emphasis of our practice and interventions.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

University Council will have oversight of the monitoring of this Plan through regular discussion of the action plan and associated RAG report. Monitoring of specific progress against the aims, objectives and targets of this Plan at the meta-level across the University will be undertaken primarily by the three student lifecycle Task Groups. Primary responsibility will fall to the Retention and Success Task Group with its focus on continuation, attainment and success. The Recruitment Task Group will monitor access data and the Employability Task Group will monitor progression. All three groups meet on a monthly basis and will have as a standing agenda item reports on the actions taken and measurements of their success, including up-to-date statistical analysis. Each will include an annual detailed report on the work undertaken and recommendations for any changes to action plans and implementation.

The impact of cross institutional projects and small-scale partnership projects will also be monitored through the task groups, as well as being reported annually as part of the celebration of partnership working and through annual departmental reporting. While the monitoring process will inevitably place emphasis on improvements against metrics, we are also constantly aware that this is part of an organic change process seeking, as Paulo Freire says, to create a learning community where we are 'jointly responsible for a process in which all grow' (Freire, 1970, 61). Monitoring the development of this is both harder and more nuanced, requiring collaborative qualitative analysis and ongoing developmental dialogue. Engagement with evaluative student-staff partnership working and continuing constructive dialogue with Newman Students' Union will be key to ensuring a culture that ensures progress and enhancement as a learning community in delivery of the Plan.

4. Provision of information to students

Work on providing applicants and potential applicants with the information they need to make an informed decision starts with the student liaison team leading sessions in schools and colleges which help prospective students to investigate the opportunities available to them and how they can access a university education. Sessions are created around a wide range of topics including, an introduction to higher education, personal statements, UCAS application process, student finance, interview preparation, student life and preparing for university. These sessions are developed to meet the requirements and needs of the school and learners and to support the pre-entry transition stage.

Newman University makes use of all the expected platforms for providing information on fees (including UCAS, the University website and Student Loan Company Website), extensive use is also made of other forms of communication including social media platforms (including the University's Facebook page, twitter and Instagram). Information is kept up to date and accurate by a section of the University Marketing and Communications team. The website also includes a section on [living costs](#) which provides applicants with a breakdown of what they can expect to have to budget for whilst studying. On open days and applicant visit days - as well as staff available, who provide advice on finance, student loans, any additional costs and disability support - Student Ambassadors provide the student view on life University life and specific courses.

For current students, we provide access to key information via our intranet and internal communications managed by our Marketing and Communications team. Student Support Services also use a wide variety of communication platforms to remind all students about their services and to advertise events. These include social media, leaflets, intranet resources, web pages, electronic screens, emails, regular awareness raising, events such as Careers Fairs, Student Money Advice Week, University Mental Health and Wellbeing Day, workshops and embedded skills sessions within the

curriculum. In order to pre-empt difficulties, students are reminded in any letter from Registry about the support the University offers and who to contact.

The Student Welfare Adviser provides financial support for students both pre-registration and for the duration of their course via face to face appointments and finance clinics as well as email and telephone advice. Advice and support is provided on all aspects of money management including; Income maximisation / entitlement checks, student finance applications, hardship funds (promotion and support to complete forms), debt management, budgeting, targeted finance clinics and access to short term crisis support. The [website](#) includes information on financial assistance, welfare support and living costs. Financial support is available to all registered students throughout their time at the University and is subject to a needs assessment and availability of funds.

Welfare and finance support is promoted in a variety of ways including;

- Pre-registration finance clinics
- Welfare Adviser attendance at Open Days / Applicant visit days
- Course Inductions
- Fresher's fayre
- Student events, including National Student Money Week
- Targeted sessions i.e. presentation at foundation year students welcome event.
- Website and intranet pages / Online money management resources
- Attendance of programme team meetings
- Partnership work with Student Union

Student Support Services also train each newly elected Students' Union executive, Security staff members and Halls Tutor about the range of services on offer in order to embed knowledge and promote confident signposting. We also raise awareness amongst staff by presenting at all corporate staff inductions, offering bespoke workshops and training in aspects of student support, including a detailed signposting guide used as a resource for personal tutors when faced with challenging issues presented by their tutees, i.e. homelessness, forced marriage, mental health crisis, etc.

5. Appendix

**Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: Newman University

Provider UKPRN: 10007832

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
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		£6,935
Foundation degree		£6,935
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
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: Newman University

Provider UKPRN: 10007832

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 (£)	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (post-16)	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00	£220,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£107,000.00	£107,000.00	£107,000.00	£107,000.00	£107,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£51,000.00	£51,000.00	£51,000.00	£51,000.00	£51,000.00

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)	£5,861,500.00	£5,861,500.00	£5,861,500.00	£5,861,500.00	£5,861,500.00
Access investment	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Financial support	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Research and evaluation	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Total investment (as %HF1)	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

