
Access and Participation Plan 2020-25

Provider Name: **Backstage Academy**
Provider UKPRN: **10036456**

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Introduction

Backstage Academy is part of a collection of companies that sit under the umbrella of Production Park in the City of Wakefield, Yorkshire. Production Park is a dynamic, entertainment-focused commercial entity supporting all aspects of the national and international live events sector. Backstage Academy was born out of the commercial activities within the live events sector.

The education provider operates under a franchise agreement with the University of Bolton, which recently achieved a TEF rating of Silver. This relationship has given Backstage Academy the ability to develop and deliver a number of higher education courses under license. This relationship has been in place since 2009, and the first course was open to students in September 2011.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of our application to join the OfS Register of HE Providers; following the successful completion of which we have agreed with the University of Bolton to move to a validation arrangement. It is anticipated that this will be from 2020-21 onwards. It is our ambition to eventually pursue Degree Awarding Powers, and charge fees above the basic tuition fee cap.

The basis of our assessment of performance is the University of Bolton's OfS dataset – filtered to show only Backstage Academy students. Backstage Academy has recently invested in its own student records system in order to facilitate the generation of its own datasets and more detailed analysis of the student life cycle. It should also be noted that as a small and specialist provider, the student numbers are often too small to provide statistically significant analysis, therefore we have been unable to provide detailed analysis of disaggregated student groups. In order to provide a robust review of our gaps in equality, the assessment of current performance draws on internal figures, national data and academic sources to supplement the OfS data. All data is presented as anonymised percentages.

Self-Evaluation Toolkit

Before developing this plan, we completed the OfS self-evaluation toolkit. The self-reflection exercise has identified that the implementation of our evaluation strategy is our weakest area. Specifically, staff development is required to equip our small team with further skills and knowledge to implement high quality evaluation practice. To address this we have budgeted to appoint a Widening Participation Officer in Summer 2020 and are also exploring alternatives such as outsourcing to a third party organisation such as HEAT. A further action will be to embed robust data collection and analysis methods at activity level across all programmes. This will be overseen by SLT and delegated to the ED&I committee or specific staff across the institution as appropriate. Similarly, resource is allocated at a programme level but will need a further layer of detail to be added for individual interventions.

Conversely, learning from evaluation is a section where Backstage Academy performs strongly, with opportunities for learning and continuous improvement embedded by our Institutional Evaluation Framework. There is more scope for sharing our findings on a wider platform to inform HE sector decision making. Historically, our engagement with external partners has been focused on businesses in the live events sector in order to grow and develop our offering to students, rather than other HEPs or HE associations. This is changing, however, as we have recently developed new partnerships with local institutions and our region's NCOP. As these partnerships mature, new collaboration opportunities materialise and our body of programme results increases, we will be increasingly able to contribute to solving the challenges that the sector as a whole faces.

You will note that our plan does not include consideration of flexible provision such as degree level apprenticeships as part of our whole provider approach. This will be an area we hope to investigate in the future when the institution is more established; however, that time frame places this activity outside of the scope of this plan.

Throughout the plan we have included yellow boxes to provide relevant contextual information about the institution in relation to that section. The document has also been presented in an accessible format with learners in mind.

Rachel Nicholson

Vice-Principal and Head of the Institution

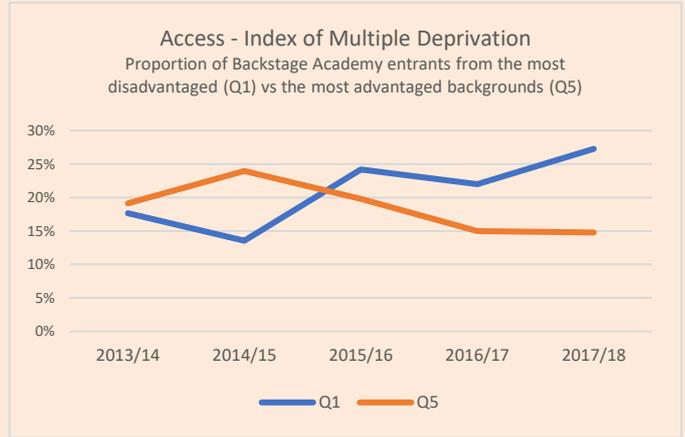
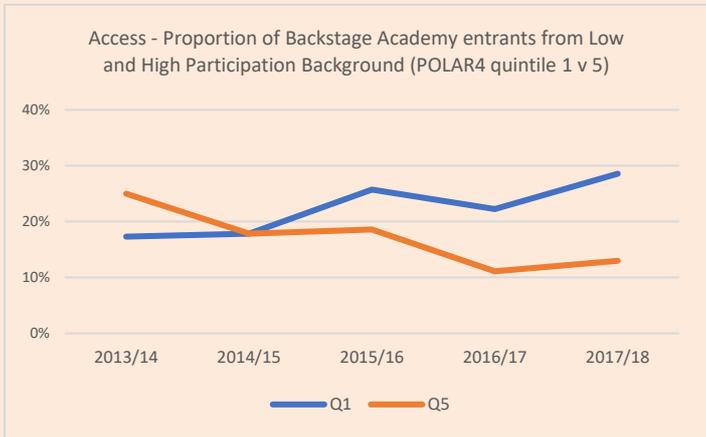
1. Assessment of current performance

Contextual note on Assessment of Performance definitions:

For the purposes of this assessment, when the participation of an underrepresented group is better at Backstage Academy than the national average (for access) or when the group is performing better than their peers (for success or progression), this shall be classified as **no gap** rather than indicating a major or minor positive gap. In this way, the negative gaps in equality can be given greater focus.

1.1 Higher Education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

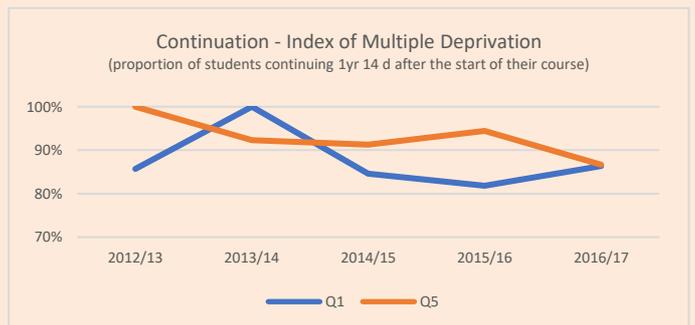
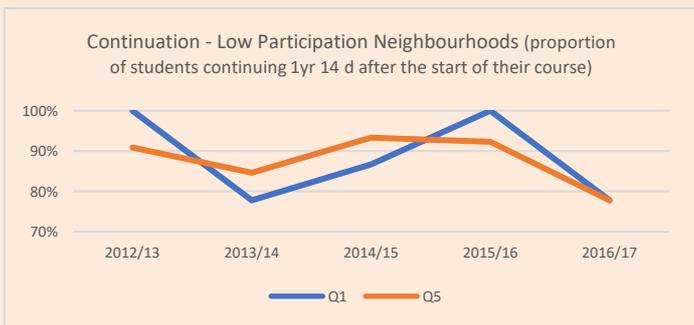
1.1.1 Access



Backstage Academy performs well in this area, with 22% of entrants in 2016/17 and 29% entrants in 2017/18 coming from areas of low participation in HE (POLAR4 quintile 1). This compares well to the national average of 12% in both these years and is 16 percentage points (pp) higher than the BA proportion of Q5 entrants in 2017/18. For the 2017/18 cohort, 37% of entrants from Q1 areas also fell under the region covered by the West Yorkshire LEP, compared to 9% for Q5. This may be linked to previous collaborative activity such as the Access All Areas event and the outreach activity undertaken by Backstage Academy in local schools and colleges.

The proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD Q1) has risen steadily since 2014/15 to 27% in 2017/18, comparing well to the national average of 22% and being 12pp higher than the proportion of BA Q5 entrants. From both indicators above, it can be concluded that Backstage Academy currently has **no gap** in equality for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or low participation areas.

1.1.2 Success (non-continuation)



The rate of continuation at Backstage Academy for students in IMD Q1 (86%), compared to 87% for students in IMD Q5. This figure for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is similar to the national average of 87%, although the rate for the institution has remained broadly level over the last 3 years compared to a gradually declining trend nationally. Therefore, there is **no gap**.

There is a no gap in equality for continuation of studies in 2016/17 between students from low participation neighbourhoods (Q1) and those from areas of highest participation (Q5). There is an annual fluctuation between a minor gap and no gap over the last

five years but the overall assessment for this period is that there is a **no gap** in equality. This compares favourably with the national gap in non-continuation between Q1 and Q5 that is addressed by the OfS' Key Performance Measure 3. ¹

1.1.3 Success (attainment)



The charts above clearly demonstrate that there is a **major gap** in the proportion of students at Backstage Academy from Q1 low participation (POLAR) or disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD) obtaining a good honours degree compared to those from Q5. The gap of 32pp between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 in 2017/18 is substantially above the national average attainment gap for this characteristic of 5pp. For Backstage Academy, this narrowed from a gap of 50pp in 2016/17 but this was due to decreasing attainment in POLAR4 Q5; with a steady decline in attainment for Q1 since 2014/15. For IMD, the major gap has grown significantly over the last two years, from 11pp in 2016/17 to 77pp in 2017/18.

1.1.4 Progression



There is a **major gap** in equality of progression to highly skilled employment when compared against POLAR4 quintile over the last two years. The gap also widened slightly from 23pp in 2015/16 to 25pp in 2016/17, well above the average for English HEPs of 3.4pp and 3.2pp in each year respectively. It should be noted that the sample size of the raw data (annual DLHE survey) is relatively small, leading to fluctuations in the dataset, and some of the work undertaken in the live events sector directly after graduation may not be deemed as highly skilled by this survey method. We undertake to monitor this gap annually throughout the duration of the plan and submit a variation to targets if this becomes established. The results for progression when filtered by Index of Multiple Deprivation Q1 showed a similar trend to POLAR4 in 2012/13 and 2013/14. However, the gap in 2015/16 was much smaller (4pp) and there was **no gap** between IMD Q1 and Q5 in 2016/17.

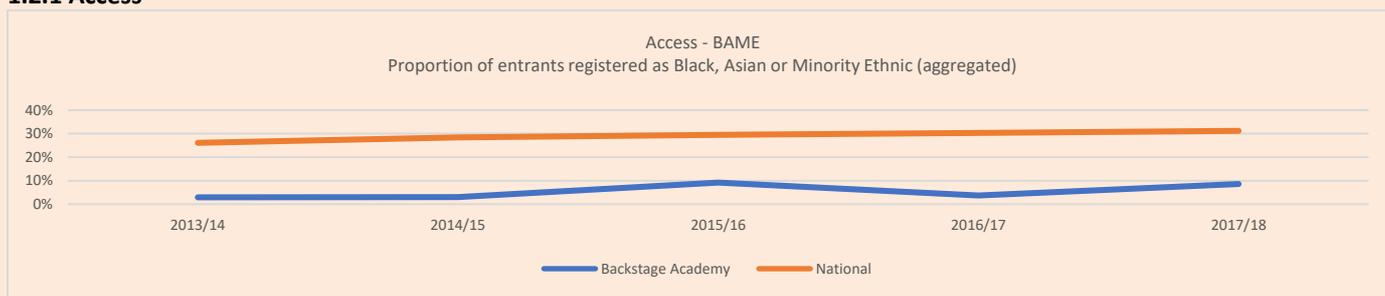
Contextual note on Backstage Academy progression data:

The move from the DHLE survey to the Graduate Outcome survey as the progression data source from the 2017/18 cohort onwards is likely to provide datasets which better reflect the type and employment status of our students, who are often self-employed. The absolute figures and trends discussed in the progression elements of our current performance may vary considerably from the future dataset, which will be considered when setting institutional targets.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-non-continuation-between-most-and-least-represented-groups/>

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students

1.2.1 Access



In 2017/18, 9% of Backstage Academy's entrants were Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, which is significantly lower than the national average for all English HEPs of 31% and represents a **major gap** of 22pp. Whilst our proportion of BAME students has gradually increased from 3% over the preceding 5 years, the gap compared to the national average has remained largely static. This may be in part due to Backstage Academy's strong local recruitment from its location on the border of three predominantly white districts, thus indicating that the gap above may be largely structural. Out of 174 local authorities in England and Wales, Barnsley has the 22nd highest proportion of white residents (97.9%), with Wakefield 67th (95.4%) and Doncaster 68th (95.3%).²

1.2.2 Success (non-continuation)

Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White
2012/13		100%		90%
2013/14			100%	85%
2014/15				100%
2015/16		50%	100%	60%
2016/17		100%	100%	100%

With the exception of 2015/16, BAME students at Backstage Academy have a higher rate of continuation than white students. It should be noted that the sample size for the data is relatively small and has been shown as a table rather than graph for better clarity. However, when Backstage Academy's internal data from 2014/15 to 2016/17 is combined and the sub-groups are aggregated, the result is the same – with BAME students showing a continuation rate of 91% and white students 86%. We therefore conclude that there is **no gap** in equality between BAME students and their peers.

1.2.3 Success (attainment)

Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White
2014/15				83%
2015/16			100%	70%
2016/17		100%		77%
2017/18				100%

The proportion of Level 6 BAME students obtaining good honours are consistently very strong, against a backdrop of declining success rates amongst white students. The sample sizes for Backstage Academy's undergraduate attainment rate vs ethnicity in the OfS APP dataset are even smaller than for continuation. This is because the metric only considers level 6 qualifications, and most of these graduates prior to 2017/18 were enrolled on the 1-year BA Top-Up, rather than our increasingly popular 3-year BA (Hons.) route. Some of the small pool of BAME students referred to in 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 would have left the institution after level 5. Overall, it appears that there is **no gap** in attainment between BAME students and other students, but we are currently unable to prove this.

The OfS' Key Performance Measure 4 highlights BAME student attainment as a key unexplained gap to reduce³ so Backstage Academy will closely monitor this once access rates have improved and introduce aims and targets to address any gaps in equality.

² <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest#ethnic-diversity-by-area>

³ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-degree-outcomes-1sts-or-21s-between-white-students-and-black-students/>

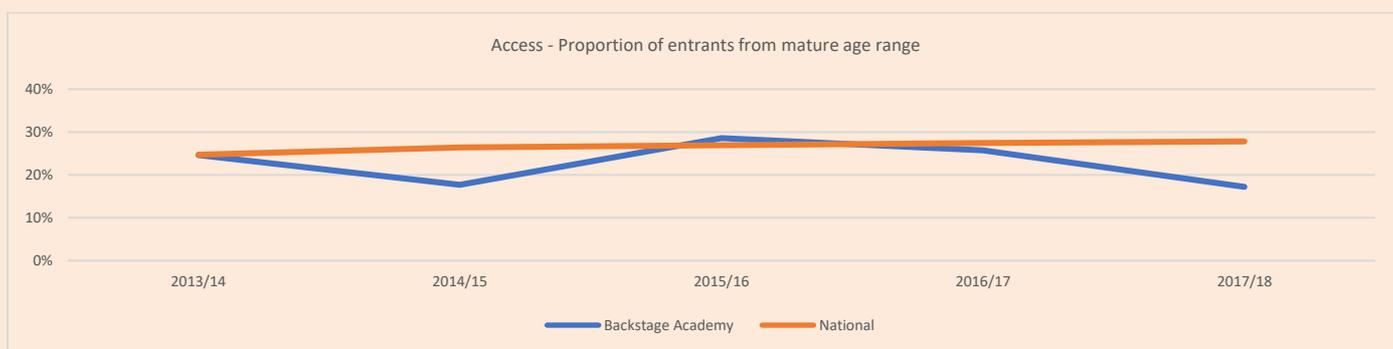
1.2.4 Progression

Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White
2012/13				89%
2013/14	100%			75%
2014/15		100%		76%
2015/16		100%	67%	88%
2016/17	100%		100%	78%

Other than a slight dip in 2015/16, the level of BAME progression after leaving the institution is consistently very strong, against fluctuating progression rates amongst white students. Overall, it appears that there is **no gap** in progression to highly skilled employment or higher study between BAME students and other students but given the small sample sizes referred to in 1.2.3, we are currently unable to prove this.

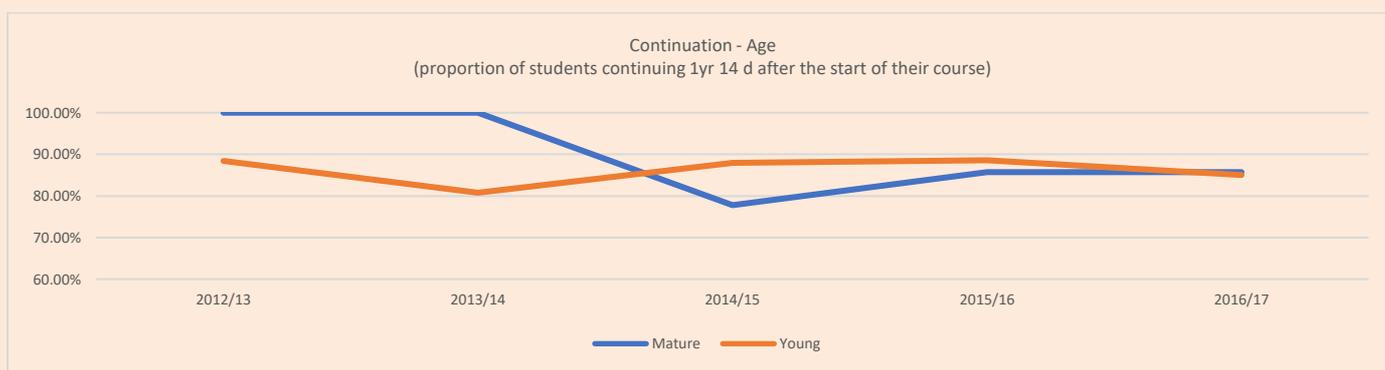
1.3 Mature students

1.3.1 Access



The proportion of Backstage Academy entrants registered as mature (21+) has fluctuated when viewed over 5 years, with the last 3 years seeing a steady decline to 17% in 2017/18. This figure presents a **major gap** of 11pp when compared to the average proportion at all English HEPs. It should also be noted that future years may see an extended structural gap due to the shift in applicant choice towards 3-year BA (Hons.) degrees and away from the FdA + 1-year BA (Top-Up) route. Prior to 2018/19, the figures include a large cohort that is two years older enrolling onto a new course at Level 6, which will gradually disappear as current level 4 & 5 BA (Hons) students work their way through the system.

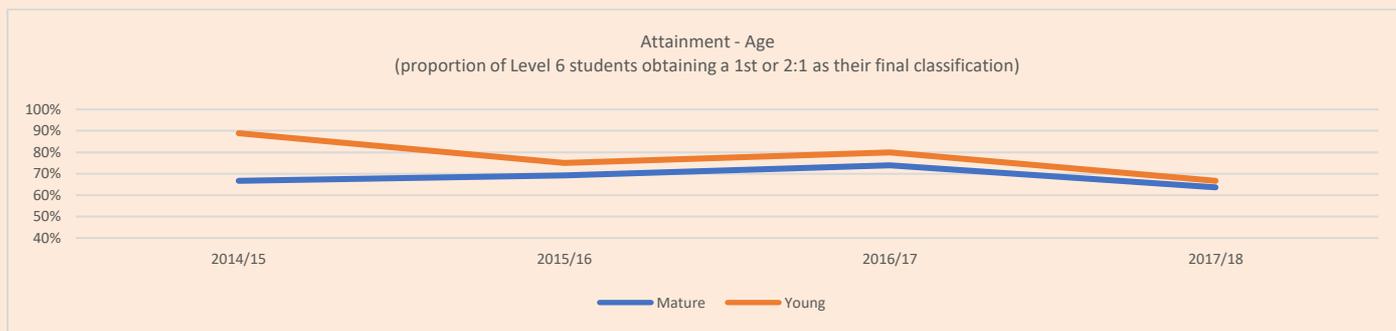
1.3.2 Success (non-continuation)



The gap in equality between mature and young students continuing fluctuated between 2012/13 and 2014/15 but has since narrowed. There is now **no gap** with 87% of mature and 85% of young students continuing their studies in 2016/17. Backstage Academy performs better than the national average for mature students (84%) and below the national average for young students (92%) in 2016/17, so overall student attainment should be monitored going forward to ensure it does not fall behind compared to the sector overall.⁴

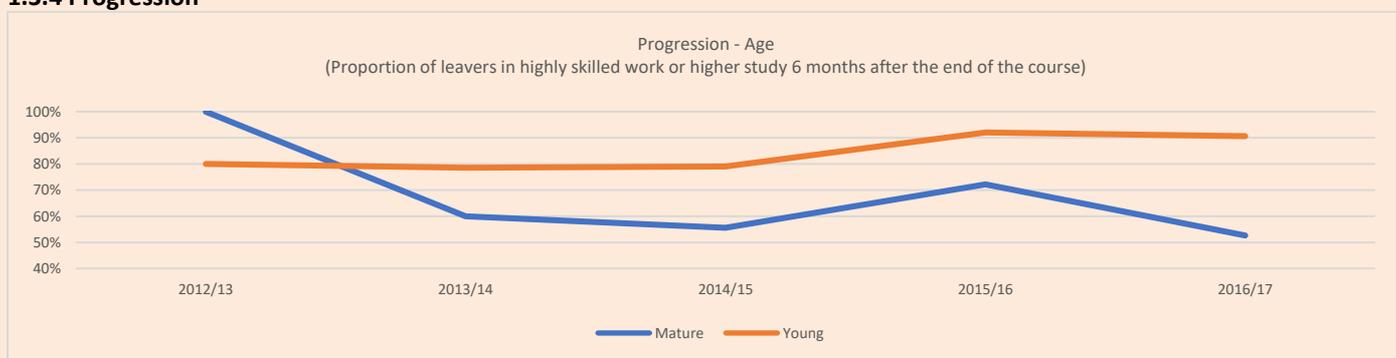
⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/continuation-and-transfer-rates/>

1.3.3 Success (attainment)



Since 2014/15, there has been a significant narrowing of the attainment gap between mature and young students, with 21pp difference in 2014/15 and only 3pp difference in 2017/18. It is evident that this is due to falling standards amongst young students rather than raised attainment for mature students, so a whole-institution strategy would be warranted to prevent the overall proportion of good honours declining further. Given the narrowing trend, however, and marginal pp difference in 2017/18, the overall conclusion for this area of performance is that there is **no gap**.

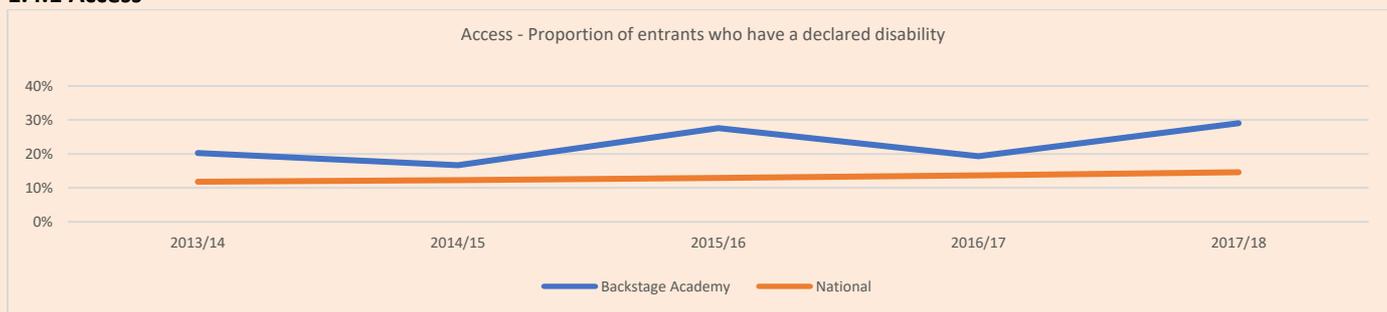
1.3.4 Progression



With 91% of young students in highly skilled employment or higher study compared with 53% of mature students in 2016/17, it is clear that there is a **major gap** in equality of progression for this group. The gap has also widened gradually since 2013/14, with a 19pp difference than compared to 36pp in 2016/17. This is corroborated by internal data showing progression to any level of employment or further study after leaving, where 100% of young students showed positive progression compared to 73% of mature students.

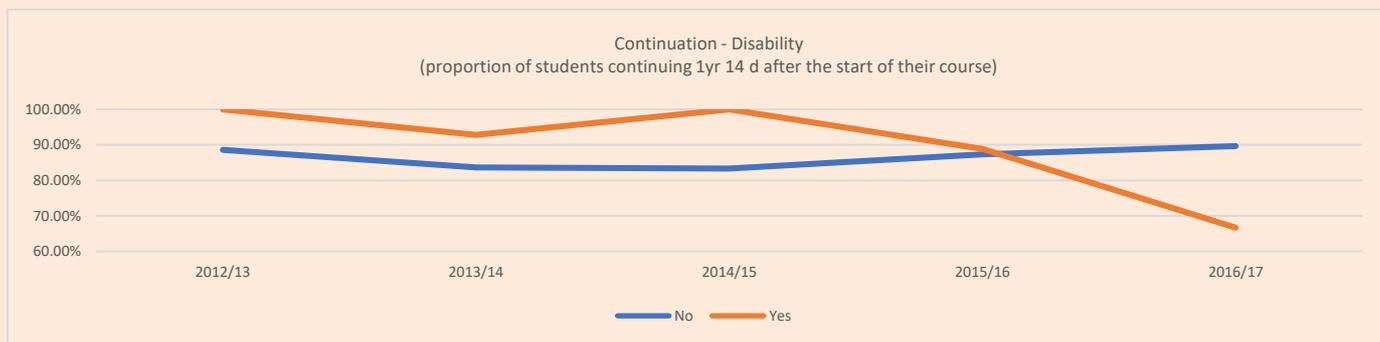
1.4 Disabled students

1.4.1 Access



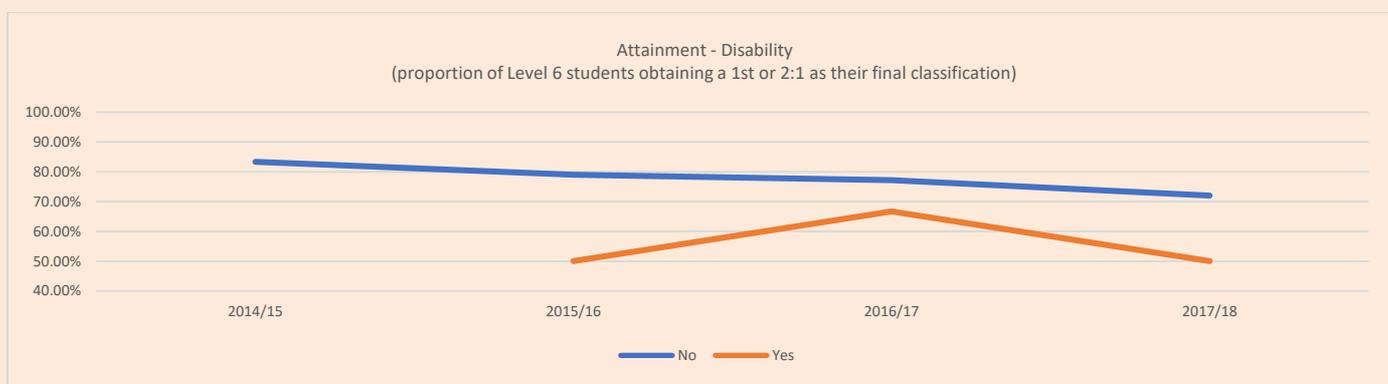
Backstage Academy has consistently performed well in this measure, with the proportion of students declaring a disability being a minimum of 5pp higher than the national average across the last 5 years. As such, there is **no gap** in disabled students being able to access courses at Backstage Academy and no trend indicating that this may change in the immediate future. The largest proportion of disabled students are those with cognitive or learning difficulties, although this proportion has decreased steadily from 93% in 2013/14 to 48% in 2017/18. This change appears to have arisen from an increase in students in 2017/18 declaring a mental health condition (22%), sensory medical and physical impairment (11%) or multiple impairments (11%).

1.4.2 Success (non-continuation)



From 2012/13 through to 2015/16, disabled students at Backstage Academy have a higher rate of continuation than their peers, recording 100% continuation in 2012/13 and 2014/15. The latest figure in 2016/17 shows a steep decline in disabled continuation and a small rise in the continuation of other students, resulting in a gap of 22pp. This could be a 1-year anomaly but because the continuation rate of disabled students has shown a downward trend since 2014/15, this will be classed as a **major gap** in equality.

1.4.3 Success (attainment)



Despite the limited dataset in 2014/15, it is evident that there is a fluctuating but **major gap** in attainment of disabled students compared to their peers. The gap of 22pp in 2017/18 is also set against a backdrop of declining attainment annually since 2014/15 amongst students not declaring any disability. This area is recognised as one of the key challenges to solve nationally, with OfS' Key Performance Measure 5 seeking to address the gap in positive degree outcomes between the two groups.⁵

It is difficult to assess sub-group performance within our OfS dataset as there are limited data points in some years. However, internal data aggregated from all entrants from 2014/15 to 2016/17 shows that students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) have lower module results in credit bearing years than all other sub-groups. Indeed, students declaring a mental health condition or physical impairment performed better on average than students with no declared disability.

	Average HE5 module results	Average HE6 module results
None	60%	58%
Physical	72%	67%
Mental Health	66%	71%
SpLD	58%	54%
Grand Total	60%	58%

⁵ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-degree-outcomes-1sts-or-21s-between-disabled-students-and-non-disabled-students-hesa/>

1.4.4 Progression



Students at Backstage Academy with known disabilities have shown better progression into highly skilled employment or higher study than their peers in most years since 2012/13. There was a reverse fluctuation in 2015/16 but this appears to be an anomaly, with 87% disabled students showing positive progression in 2016/17, compared to 77% amongst other Backstage Academy students. Consequently, we deem that there is **no gap** in equality between disabled students and their peers for progression.

Analysis of sub-groups has not been possible from the OfS dataset and but internal DLHE data aggregated across all years highlighted a tentative gap for students with disclosed mental health conditions. Whilst this correlates with the findings nationally (MH equality gap: ~6pp compared to the aggregated disabled equality gap of ~1.5pp between 2012/13 and 2016/17) the sample size was so small that this was not a reliable finding.

We intend to revisit our progression targets if the Graduate Outcomes Survey causes changes to the data as indicated in the assessment of performance.

1.5 Care Leavers

We have insufficient quantitative data to be able to analyse our performance. We will address this by the end of 2019/20 following the introduction of an independent student records system in October 2019. In the interim, we have referred to the work carried out by West Yorkshire Go Higher and its partner HEPs. Their 2018-19 Care Leavers Covenant has identified a pan-lifecycle approach to supporting care leavers in HE.

Academic evidence has also been used to assess the key gaps nationally, which will help inform our aims and objectives for this group. A report by the National Network for Education of Care Leavers⁶ in November 2017 found that more care leavers between 2007 and 2015 were accessing HE than had previously been anticipated but the following gaps were present:

- Care leavers remained 11% less likely to enter HE than other young people in similar circumstances.
- There were 2 significant intersections with other characteristics for access, with disabled and white care leavers showing particularly low participation rates.
- There was a major gap in success (continuation) overall with care leavers being 38% more likely to withdraw. This widened further for male students from deprived areas.
- There was no gap in student success (attainment).

We have been unable to find further qualitative evidence from external regional or national data to make observations about potential progression gaps for care leavers, including in 2020-25 APPs that have now been published. However, we will seek to understand gaps at this stage of the lifecycle over the duration of this Access and Participation Plan (2020-25) and revisit our targets if further qualitative evidence becomes available.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

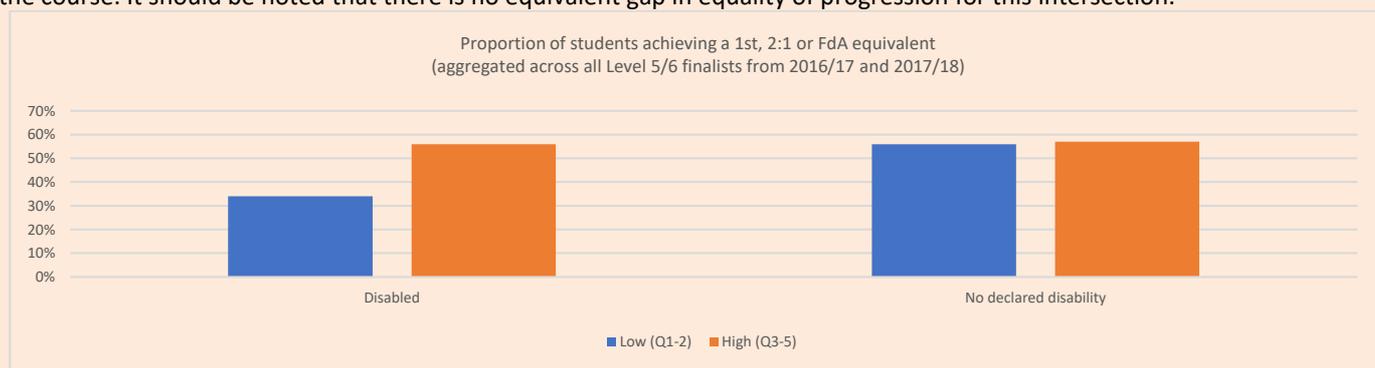
There were no intersections identifiable from the OfS dataset given the size of the sample, so Backstage Academy's internal data has been further interrogated. Three cohorts were aggregated by analysing the data of all students registered at the institution in 2016/17 (including against gender) and the following gap was identified.

1.6.1 Success (attainment): Disability + Low Participation

The largest gap in equality is seen in student attainment when disability status is cross-referenced with low participation Quintiles 1-2. In 2016/17, there was no gap between disabled and other students when both came from areas of high HE

⁶ Harrison, N., 2017, Moving on Up: Pathways of care leavers and care-experienced students into and through higher education. <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits>

participation (aggregated across Q3-5 due to sample size), but a **major gap** of 22pp when both groups came from low participation neighbourhoods (aggregated across Q1-2 due to sample size). This suggests that the overall gap in attainment between disabled students and their peers at Backstage Academy is strongly influenced by their background prior to attending the course. It should be noted that there is no equivalent gap in equality of progression for this intersection.



There is little qualitative evidence available online to assess the causes of this intersectional gap, which warrants further investigation in regional or national data - to be completed within 1 year of registration with the OfS. Factors could include financial pressure and part-time work having a disproportionate effect on attainment for students with learning difficulties if they need to spend more time on their academic work than their peers. Alternatively, students who are the first in their family to attend higher education may not have the same level of encouragement to access support such as DSA, or it could be the case that schools in low participation areas have less resources to be able to assist the transition to HE and encourage students to apply for support pre-arrival.

1.7 Summary of current performance

Group	Low participation backgrounds (POLAR4 Q1)		Disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD Q1)		BAME		Mature students		Disabled students	
	Gaps in equality	Trend	Gaps in equality	Trend	Gaps in equality	Trend	Gaps in equality	Trend	Gaps in equality	Trend
Access	No gap	Level	No gap	Level	Major gap	Level	Major gap	Widening	No gap	Fluctuating
Success (non-continuation)	No gap	Fluctuating	No gap	Fluctuating	No gap	Fluctuating	No gap	Narrowing	Major gap	Fluctuating or widening
Success (attainment)	Major gap	Widening	Major gap	Widening	No gap	N/A	No gap	Narrowing	Major gap	Widening
Progression	Major gap	Fluctuating	No gap	Fluctuating	No gap	N/A	Major gap	Widening	No gap	Fluctuating

Major gaps identified by intersections of disadvantage:

Success (Attainment):	Disability + POLAR4
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2. Strategic Aims and Objectives

2.1 Target groups

Contextual note on Backstage Academy Target Groups: Given the lack of internal data, we have not identified Care Leavers as an independent target group, but we aim to join West Yorkshire Go Highers Care Leavers Covenant within one year of our registration with the OfS being confirmed. We have been unable to find further qualitative evidence from external regional or national data to make observations about potential progression gaps for care leavers, including in 2020-25 APPs that have now been published. However, we will seek to understand gaps at this stage of the lifecycle over the duration of this Access and Participation Plan (2020-25) and revisit our targets if further qualitative evidence becomes available

Contextual note on Access targets

National data has been used as a comparative measure throughout the assessment of current performance for Access, in order to identify where gaps in equality exist. However, to protect against external trends impacting on the evaluation of our performance throughout the duration of the plan, we will set Access targets as an increase in percentage of the target group enrolled at Backstage Academy, compared to a benchmark year of Backstage Academy enrolments.

In response to the major gaps in equality summarised above, Backstage Academy has identified the following as Target Groups at each stage of the student life cycle over the five-year period of our Access and Participation plan and in some cases beyond it. These relate to our analyses of access, success and progression in relation to the target groups and the OfS's national key performance measures.

Lifecycle Stage	Group	Gap to address
Access:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> BAME students Mature students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the proportion of enrolled students who identify as BAME. Increase the proportion of enrolled students who are classified as mature.
Success (non-continuation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Disabled students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor non-continuation gap to assess trend
Success (attainment):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Low Participation (POLAR4) Disadvantaged (IMD) Backgrounds Disabled students Disabled students from low participation backgrounds (POLAR4) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate attainment gap by 2030-31 Eliminate attainment gap by 2030-31 Eliminate attainment gap by 2024-25 Eliminate attainment gap by 2030-31
Progression:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Low Participation Background (POLAR4) Mature students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progression gap to assess trend Eliminate attainment gap by 2035-36

2.2 Aims and Objectives

As a small and specialist provider, with limited financial and personnel resources, the following strategic aims have been agreed, in order to effectively tackle the largest gaps in equality.

2.2.1 Strategic Aim 1 (Access) - Reduce gaps in participation between most and least represented groups

Strategic Objective	Inputs (Activities)	Measurements	Outcomes		
			Short term	Medium Term	Longer Term
(PTA_1) To increase the proportion of BAME students enrolled at Backstage Academy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local NCOP Financial Support – Sabir Bursary Formal progression agreements with schools/colleges in areas of high ethnic diversity Collaboration with Leeds College of Music on outreach programmes Improve diversity within the staff team 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> OFS APP Data set Impact review of financial support (feedback surveys) Impact review of formal progression agreements (HESA data & feedback surveys) 	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Improved understanding of the impact and effectiveness of financial support on BAME enrolment % entrants BAME: 17%	Increase the proportion of enrolled students who identify as BAME % entrants BAME: 25%	Increase the proportion of enrolled students who identify as BAME to a level above the benchmark figure of the 2017-18 national average. % entrants BAME: 32%
(PTA_2) To increase the proportion of Mature students enrolled at Backstage Academy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local NCOP Financial Support – Brooks Bursary 	1.OFS APP Data set	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Improved understanding of the impact of more students choosing the 3-year BA (Hons) route % entrants Mature: 22%	Increase the proportion of enrolled students who are categorised as Mature to a level above the benchmark figure of the 2017-18 national average. % entrants Mature: 29%	(Maintain and monitor access standards)

2.2.2 Strategic Aim 2 (Success: Attainment) - Reduce Gap in attainment of good degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students

Strategic Objective	Inputs (Activities)	Measurements	Outcomes		
			Short term	Medium Term	Longer Term
(PTS_1) Reduce the Attainment Gap: No Known Disability and those with a disability.	1. Collaboration with Leeds College of Music on outreach programmes 2. Join the live events sector-wide Mental Health Charter and increase the number of staff who are Mental Health First Aiders. 3. Invest in specialist staff development for the Student Services team in supporting specific learning difficulties.	1. OfS APP Data set 2. Annual internal review of Counselling Provision and Student Services provision (Internal feedback survey) 3. Feedback from NSS Survey 4. Graduate Outcome Survey	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Reduce attainment gap to 10pp	Eliminate attainment gap	(Maintain and monitor attainments standards)
(PTS_3) Reduce the attainment gap between students from POLAR4 Q1&2 who are disabled and students from POLAR4 Q1&2 who have no known disability.	1. Introduce tailored programme of induction to assist transition to HE 2. Backstage buddies peer to peer mentoring scheme 3. Increased Student Hardship Fund 4. Invest in specialist staff development for the student services team in supporting specific learning difficulties. 5. Join the live events sector-wide Mental Health Charter and increase the number of staff who are Mental Health First Aiders. 6. Financial support – Production Park Bursary	1. EBS data 2. Impact review of financial support (feedback surveys) 3. Annual internal review of Counselling Provision and Student Services provision (Internal feedback survey)	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Reduce attainment gap to 16pp	Reduce attainment gap to 12pp	Eliminate attainment Gap

2.2.3 Strategic Aim 3 (Success: Attainment) – Reduce Gap in attainment of good degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between students of the lowest (1) and highest (5) POLAR 4 quintile groups.

Strategic Objective	Inputs (Activities)	Measurements	Outcomes		
			Short term	Medium Term	Longer Term
(PTS_2) Reduce the attainment gap between students from POLAR 4 Q1 backgrounds and those from Q5.	1. Introduce tailored programme of induction to assist transition to HE 2. Backstage Buddies peer-to-peer mentoring scheme 3. Increased Student Hardship Fund	1. OfS APP Data set 2. EBS data 3. Impact review of Financial support (feedback surveys)	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Reduce attainment gap to 26pp	Reduce attainment gap to 18pp	Eliminate attainment gap

2.2.4 Strategic Aim 4 (Success: Attainment) - Reduce Gap in attainment of good degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between students of the lowest (1) and highest (5) IMD quintile groups.

Strategic Objective	Inputs (Activities)	Measurements	Outcomes		
			Short term	Medium Term	Longer Term
(PTS_4) Reduce the attainment gap between students from IMD Q1 and those from Q5	1. Introduce tailored programme of induction to assist transition to HE 2. Backstage Buddies peer-to-peer mentoring scheme 3. Increased Student Hardship Fund	1. OfS APP Data set 2. EBS data 3. Impact review of Financial support (feedback surveys)	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2030-31
			Reduce attainment gap to 50pp	Reduce attainment gap to 25pp	Eliminate attainment gap

2.2.5 Strategic Aim 5 (Progression) - Reduce the gaps in equality of progression into highly skilled employment or higher study for mature students.

Strategic Objective	Inputs (Activities)	Measurements	Outcomes		
			Short term	Medium Term	Longer Term
(PTP_1) Reduce the gaps in equality of progression for mature students	1. Enhanced coaching and mentoring for employment during and after graduation 2. Creating an industry professional mentoring scheme 3. Providing guidance & coaching for students who wish to pursue further study and/or professional training. 4. Develop more accurate internal data sets for graduate success	1. OfS APP Data set 2. Graduate Outcomes Survey 3. Internal surveys of graduate achievement	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2035-36
			Reduce progression gap to 25pp	Reduce progression gap to 20pp	Eliminate progression gap

3. Strategic Measures

Contextual note on Backstage Academy Strategic Approach:

Backstage Academy is currently ineligible to receive Higher Education Innovation Funding and the institution is not currently able to invest in developing different types of provision (such as Degree Apprenticeships) within this APP Cycle.

3.1 Whole Provider Approach

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee will embed inclusivity across Backstage Academy and advise the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board on matters relating to Access and Participation. It is anticipated that membership will also include an external/independent member to offer insight and experience of organisational equality. Where the institution does not hold the expertise internally, we will seek to collaborate with one of our identified partners or commission an external service provider to support us. Widening participation will be a key element of any future course design.

3.1.1 Alignment with other strategies

Backstage Academy has considered its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and makes every provision to assure the learning experience of those with protected characteristics as defined by the Act, including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. As indicated previously, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee will lead on and monitor EDI matters on behalf of SLT and Academic Board and ensure alignment with other strategic planning.

The access and participation plan is fully aligned to the vision and mission of the institution, institutional policies and strategies together with a self-critical review and assessment of current performance. It is driven by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The learning, teaching and assessment strategies embed the principles of fair access and participation. These are scrutinised annually to ensure that they are inclusive and allow for the diversity of our student population. We are currently in the process of reviewing and re-drafting our equality, diversity and inclusion, and learning, teaching and assessment strategies as part of the development of our new strategic plan which covers planning around our disaggregation from the University of Bolton and their own policy documents, which we currently follow. We estimate that these will be complete and approved in early 2020. Our Access and Participation Plan and stakeholder participation is central to the development of these documents.

3.1.2 Applying a Theory of Change

High Level Theory of Change for Backstage Academy

		Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	
Key Institutional Enablers	Strategy and Leadership	Effective strategy & leadership leads to effective stakeholder engagement	Diverse input into polity making and strategic planning – ensuring greater representation	Application of an effective impact assessment	The institutional approach is a whole provider approach.	All students have an equal opportunity to study at Backstage Academy, achieve a good degree and progress into graduate employment
	Enhancing Data Capability	Improve institutional data management ability to track, monitor & evaluate the student lifecycle	Greater ability to monitor support requirements and identify the need to make changes to the institutional approach	Improved data management enables the evaluation of practices to be informed by evidence and continuous monitoring	Ensures effectiveness in planning future activities and enables institutional success to be assessed in comparison to national trends.	
	Staff Development & Enhancement	Staff undergo inclusivity & diversity, and mental health awareness training	Sharing of good practice and improved standards of student support	Improved course design and delivery Improved levels of student support	The institutional approach is a whole provider approach.	
	Student Engagement	Develop strategies with students through effective student engagement	Effective student engagement leads to students being more engaged and informing change within the institution	Improved input from stakeholders in course design and delivery as well as the student experience	The institutional approach is a whole provider approach.	
		Underpinning research and evidence base <ol style="list-style-type: none"> HEFCE and OFFA (2014) National strategy for access and student success in higher education Department for Business Innovation and Skills https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf (Accessed: June 2019) OfS Insight 5 Mental health: Are all students being properly supported? https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/b3e6669e-5337-4caa-9553-049b3e8e7803/insight-brief-mental-health-are-all-students-being-properly-supported.pdf (Accessed Nov 2019) OfS, 'University of the West of England: Implementing a strategic approach to mental wellbeing in higher education' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/university-of-the-west-of-england/). 				

Access Strategies	Partnerships and Collaborations	Increase outreach activities with schools & Colleges with high proportion of students from under-represented groups Increase Partnerships with other organisations and educational institutions (including early years providers)	Develop links with NCOP Develop links with colleges	A greater applicant awareness of higher education options and routes.	Increase in successful applications from students from under-represented groups and a higher percentage of students from under-represented backgrounds in the student population	All students have an equal opportunity to study at Backstage Academy, achieve a good degree and progress into graduate
	Student Engagement	Develop a peer to peer support programme and develop a programme to support transition into HE	Detailed feedback in course reviews, surveys and on the student experience	Engaging students in the development of student-led programmes and student informed initiatives to improve representation	Increase the proportion of enrolments from students in target groups	
	Supporting Students through the admissions process	Dedicated Admissions Officer Student Ambassadors Introduce tailored programme of induction to assist transition to HE	Detailed feedback from outreach activities and through surveys	Review our admissions procedure annually to ensure that it meets our equality, inclusivity and diversity standards	Increase the proportion of enrolments from students in target groups	
	Diversifying our offer & broadening our appeal	Increasing our portfolio of courses, including courses at a range of levels Delivering highly experiential, inclusive and industry-linked curriculum in an attractive and growing sector	Developing inclusivity through changes to curriculum, pedagogy & assessment	A broader range of opportunities appeals to a more diverse range of applicants	Increase the proportion of enrolments from students in target groups	
		Access Strategies- Underpinning research and evidence base <ol style="list-style-type: none"> HEFCE and OFFA (2014) National strategy for access and student success in higher education Department for Business Innovation and Skills https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf (Accessed: June 2019) Hoare, T. and Mann, R. (2011) The impact of the Sutton Trust's Summer Schools on subsequent higher education participation: a report to the Sutton Trust. Bristol, UK: University of Bristol, Widening Participation Research Cluster. Available at: http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/fullsummer-school-report-final-draft.pdf (Accessed: June 2019). Morris, K. and Atherton, G. (2013) Student Opportunity Funding: Why it Counts London, UK: million+. Connor, H. Tyers, C. Modood, T. and Hillage, J. (2004) Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates London, UK: Department for Education and Skills. Available at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/ethnicity/documents/educationreport.pdf (Accessed: June 2019). Diane Reay, Stephen Ball & Miriam David (2002) 'It's Taking Me a Long Time but I'll Get There in the End': Mature students on access courses and higher education choice, British Educational Research Journal, 28:1, 5-19 Arthur Baxter & Carolyn Britton (2001) Risk, identity and change: Becoming a mature student, International Studies in Sociology of Education, 11:1, 87-104 				

High Level Theory of Change for Backstage Academy

		Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	
Success Strategies	Achieving excellence in student support	Invest in specialist staff development for the Student Services team in supporting specific learning difficulties Introduce a tailored programme of induction to assist transition to HE, promoting awareness of SpLD diagnostic testing and DSA.	Join the live events sector-wide Mental Health Charter and increase the number of staff who are Mental Health First Aiders.	Improved student experience and increased continuation and attainment	Reduce the attainment gap between students from Low Participation Backgrounds (POLAR 4 Q1) with no known disability and those with a disability. Evidenced by OfS dataset.	All students have an equal opportunity to study at Backstage Academy, achieve a good degree and progress into graduate
	Inclusive curriculum	Review the inclusivity of the current curriculum through internal analysis and collaboration with stakeholders	Developing inclusivity through changes to curriculum, pedagogy & assessment	Improved student experience and increased continuation and attainment	Reduce the attainment gap between students from POLAR4 Q1 and those from Q5	
	Provision of a diverse range of work-based learning opportunities	Ensure students are equipped with an appropriate skill base and have clearly identified learning goals for their WBL opportunity	Work with industry partners to identify opportunities to make reasonable adjustment to ensure students can access WBL opportunities.	Identify and implement additional support requirements for learners during WBL	Reduce attainment gap between No known disability and those with a disability	
	Hardship Fund	Establish a student Hardship Fund to provide students with emergency funding	Distribute funding to eligible students who apply for the fund	Reduce pressure on students with limited financial support from parents	Reduce the attainment gap between students from IMD Q1 and those from Q5	
Success Strategies - Underpinning research and evidence base <ol style="list-style-type: none"> HEFCE and OFFA (2014) National strategy for access and student success in higher education Department for Business Innovation and Skills https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf (Accessed: June 2019) Morris, K. and Atherton, G. (2013) Student Opportunity Funding: Why it Counts London, UK: million+. Mountford-Zimdars, A, Sabri, D, Sanders, J, Jones, S, & Higham, L (2015) Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes, HEFCE Richardson, J. (2009) The academic attainment of students with disabilities in UK higher education, <i>Studies in Higher Education</i>, 34:2, 123-137 Tamara Thiele, Alexander Singleton, Daniel Pope & Debbi Stanistreet (2016) Predicting students' academic performance based on school and socio-demographic characteristics, <i>Studies in Higher Education</i>, 41:8 OfS, 'University of the West of England: Implementing a strategic approach to mental wellbeing in higher education' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/university-of-the-west-of-england/). NUS (2018) Poverty Commission Report Pollard et al. (2019) Impact of the student finance system on participation, experience and outcomes of disadvantaged young people, DfE 						

Progression Strategies	Industry mentoring schemes	Provide graduates with a network of industry partners who can advise and support	Graduates have a clear understanding of the developing markets within the sector and can adapt their skills development to meet the requirements of their preferred employment destination	Increased and improved employment outcomes	Reduce the gaps in equality of progression for mature students	All students have an equal opportunity to study at Backstage Academy, achieve a good degree and progress into graduate
	Progression strategies- Underpinning research and evidence base <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Burton, Mary Golding Lloyd & Colin Griffiths (2011) Barriers to learning for mature students studying HE in an FE college, <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i>, 35:1, 25-36, Arthur Baxter & Carolyn Britton (2001) Risk, identity and change: Becoming a mature student, <i>International Studies in Sociology of Education</i>, 11:1, 87-104 Blaxter, L. and Tight, M. 1994. Juggling with Time: how adults manage their time for lifelong education. <i>Studies in the Education of Adults</i>, 24: 162-179. Tamara Thiele, Alexander Singleton, Daniel Pope & Debbi Stanistreet (2016) Predicting students' academic performance based on school and socio-demographic characteristics, <i>Studies in Higher Education</i>, 41:8 (2018) Differences in student outcomes: The effect of student characteristics Report, HEFCE BECTU Mentorship Scheme - https://www.bectu.org.uk/trainingdevelopment/courses/156?jessionid=79CC13460A91DBA4877A077C1BEA262B&session_id= 					

3.1.2.1 Data Enhancement

As a franchise partner, we are reliant on the University of Bolton to provide the OfS Access and Participation dataset, as they are the institution that students are registered with. They have then filtered this by delivery partner, to allow the data to be analysed for Backstage Academy only. Whilst this data has been the basis of our assessment of performance, we recognise that the richness of our internal data will be significantly improved if we are able to collect and analyse more information directly. With this in mind, we have selected a new student records system that will integrate with that utilised by the University of Bolton. In due course, we intend to operate and gather our own data independently following a successful new DAP application. This system is currently being implemented and is expected to be in full operation by Feb-Mar 2020. This development will enable us to provide datasets for our annual reviews where OfS datasets are not available.

This will support our desire to develop additional support for our target groups throughout the student life cycle and allow us to provide a more detailed and evidence-based assessment of the impact of our access and participation activities.

The new record system will also allow us to explore and compare student groups across a range of additional characteristics. For example, in considering the gender gap for students who achieve a good degree it will allow us to include additional factors (such as disability or learning difficulty) to see if these are having a direct impact on the outcomes for male students.

Backstage Academy will monitor its entrants to identify any significant changes in applications and enrolments. The uptake of the Care Leavers, BAME, Mature Students bursaries, the hardship, and fee waiver funds will also be monitored and distributed fairly according to the criteria outlined in their design, and awards are conferred by the Bursaries and Student Support/Hardship Committee.

3.1.2.2 Employability and skills development

As already indicated, Backstage Academy has excellent links with the live events industries. Our Industry Partnerships Director and Marketing and Commercial Director are in the process of formalising an Industry Partnerships Strategy that builds on and develops our existing practice and focuses on the student experience, industry exposure and future employment. This aims to supplement and enhance the course-based placement and work-based learning opportunities and provide students and live events companies with:

- Opportunities to recruit Backstage Academy students for both casual and full-time employment
- Opportunities to offer summer placements for students
- Opportunities to set project-based initiatives for students to deliver both in the UK & overseas
- Delivery of enrichment sessions for students to understand the live events business and potential career opportunities
- Access to Backstage Academy and Production Park studio space/lecture rooms and other facilities, as agreed for the purpose of seminars, workshops and product demonstrations

The strategy aims to challenge industry stereotypes in terms of expectations about gender disability and ethnicity in particular, but is also relevant for the other protected characteristics.

3.1.2.3 Collaboration with other bodies across the student lifecycle - developing regional strategic partnerships for collaboration/activity & output targets

As part of our strategic development, we aim to develop and implement a range of strategic partnerships within the Wakefield and West Yorkshire regions. Wakefield is the largest city within the UK without its own university and the level of participation from young people in the district is one of the lowest in the country, however UCAS end of cycle reports indicate a year on year increase in the number of applicants to higher education since 2011. Short, medium and long-term strategies have already been discussed between Backstage Academy, The Hepworth Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield College and Wakefield Council as a joint commitment for future prosperity of the region. These are felt to be important partnerships that will help enhance local provision for Backstage Academy students and support our access and participation agenda.

In addition to these:

- We will work with Leeds College of Music to collaboratively support students from under-represented backgrounds to access music and performing arts at HE level, and to develop programmes to support the mental health of our students;
- We will work with the Enquire Learning Trust to create intervention programmes for primary school aged children;
- We will work with Eureka Children's Museum to create outreach programmes for primary school aged children;

- We will work with the Ahead Partnership (which connects employers with education, public and private sector partners to widen their social impact) to take part in some of their regional workshop and careers fair/panel activities which are particularly targeted at female learners and areas of high BAME population.

3.1.2.4 Alignment with other work and funding sources such as the NCOP, outreach hubs, and local graduates where applicable

Contextual note BSA Membership with NCOP (Go Higher West Yorkshire):

Over the past two years we have collaborated with GHWY and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership to produce and host the annual Access All Areas event. This event promotes careers in the live entertainment industries and attracts over 400 attendees from across the region. However, BSA is unable to apply to be a member, as our application to join the OfS Register of HE Providers is still pending.

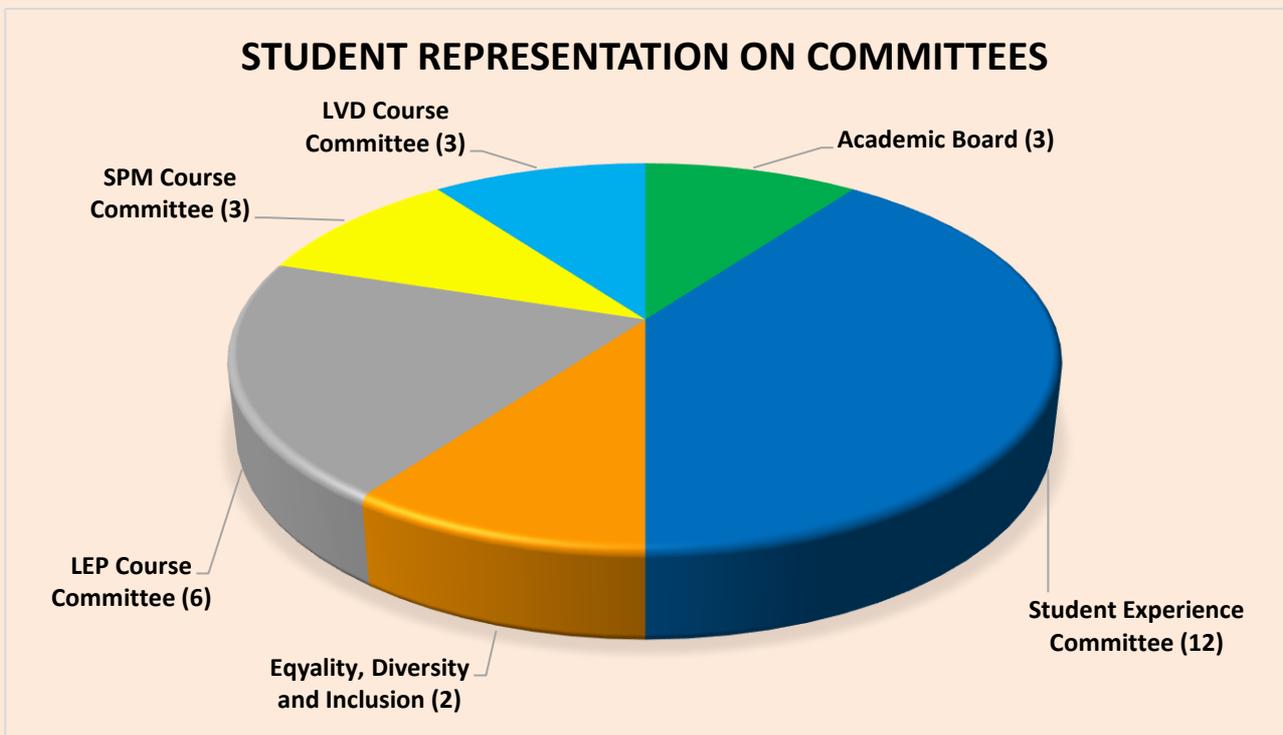
Therefore, we are unable to access the outreach support and funding provided by this organisation.

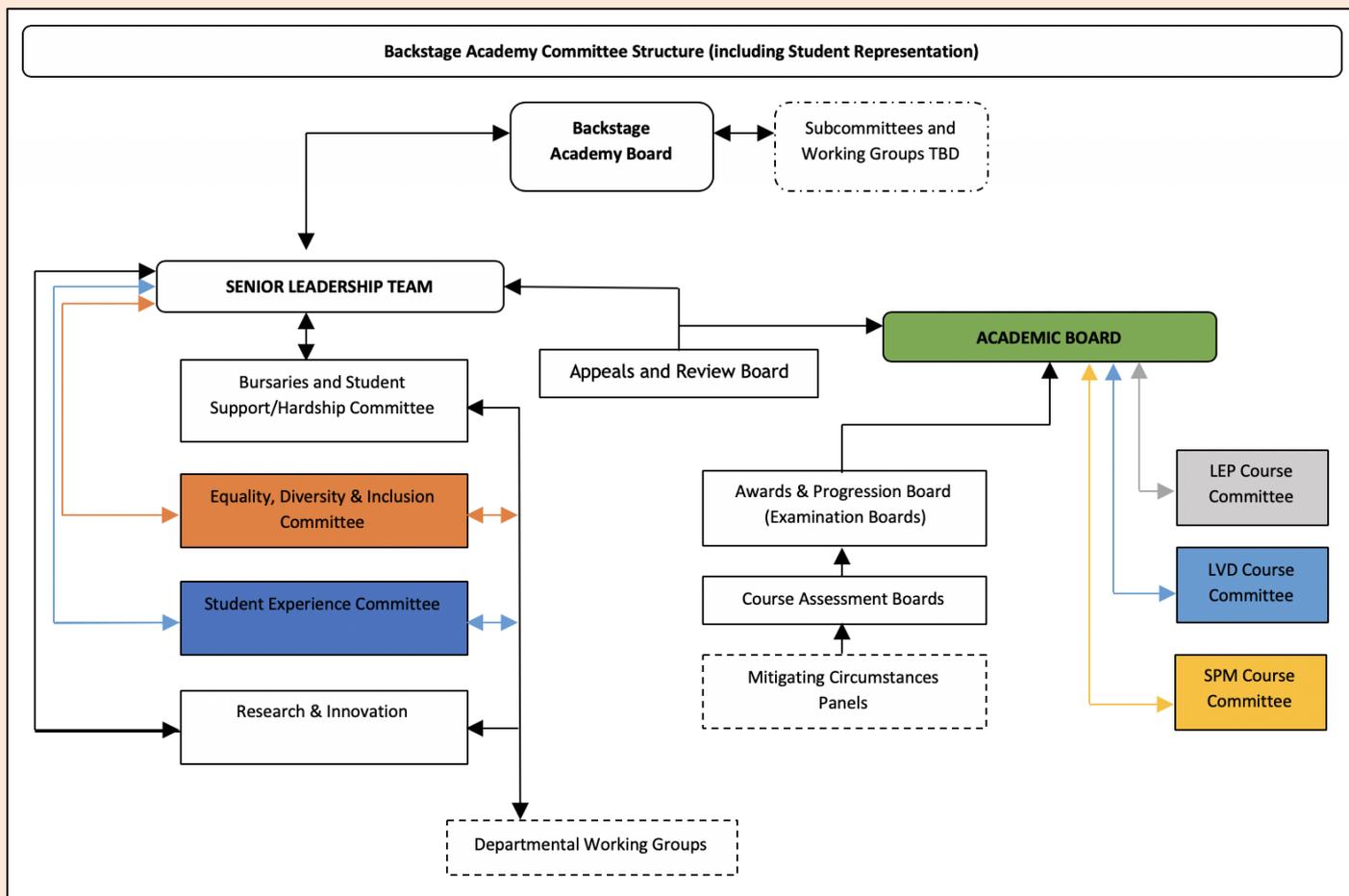
On successful admission to the OfS Register we intend to become a full partner in GHWY and adopt their recently published Care Leaver Covenant.

3.2 Student consultation

Contextual note on Backstage Academy Student Consultation:

As a small specialist institution of under 300 students, we recognise that a risk to effective student consultation is low participation and /or self-selection or highly engaged students being more likely to participate in consultation activities. This risk is compounded by the absence of a Students' Union or association within the institution. Therefore, we rely heavily on student input and feedback coming through our committees and student representation on decision making panels.





In order to ensure that student engagement is meaningful, we support the students in making informed contributions by providing appropriate training at the start of the academic year, providing materials for meetings in an accessible format and ensuring that any additional specific training is provided. As part of our whole provider strategic approach, students will have the opportunity to review and comment upon the implementation and evaluation of the access and participation plan during its life cycle.

We do not have a formally constituted students' union although we do have a system of student representation. Working with the limitations of time and student availability, our approach to ensure that students were properly consulted as part of this plan was as follows:

In the development of this Access and Participation Plan students from the following underrepresented groups were invited to give their feedback on the draft plans:

- Students with disabilities or learning difficulties
- Mature students
- Students from minority ethnic groups
- Care leavers
- Students from POLAR4 regions of low participation
- Students from a category 4-7 IMD background

We provided students with a summary of the data analysis, the gaps we had identified and the proposed steps to address these gaps and then asked for their views about the approaches, suggestions for other measures, and ran a session to explain the data to them. Their comments have been integrated into this updated version of the document, along with those from the student submission. The feedback from students placed emphasis on the provision of disability support – in particular for mental health support. As a result of this consultation, we have introduced plans to increase the range of support for students with mental health issues including plans to increase the number of mental health first aiders amongst the staff team, creating links with mental health organisations such as Music Support and investing in further staff development to increase provision for disability support.

In future before each annual Access and Participation Plan Monitoring report is submitted, it will be presented to elected student representatives at the appropriate Student Experience Committee meeting and be considered by the EDI committee. The Access and Participation Plan will also be highlighted at Open Days and national careers events attended by Backstage Academy. Any stakeholders involved in widening participation will be provided with up-to-date information with regards to this and future Access and Participation Plans. Once approved the plan will be made publicly available on the institution website.

3.3 Evaluation Strategy

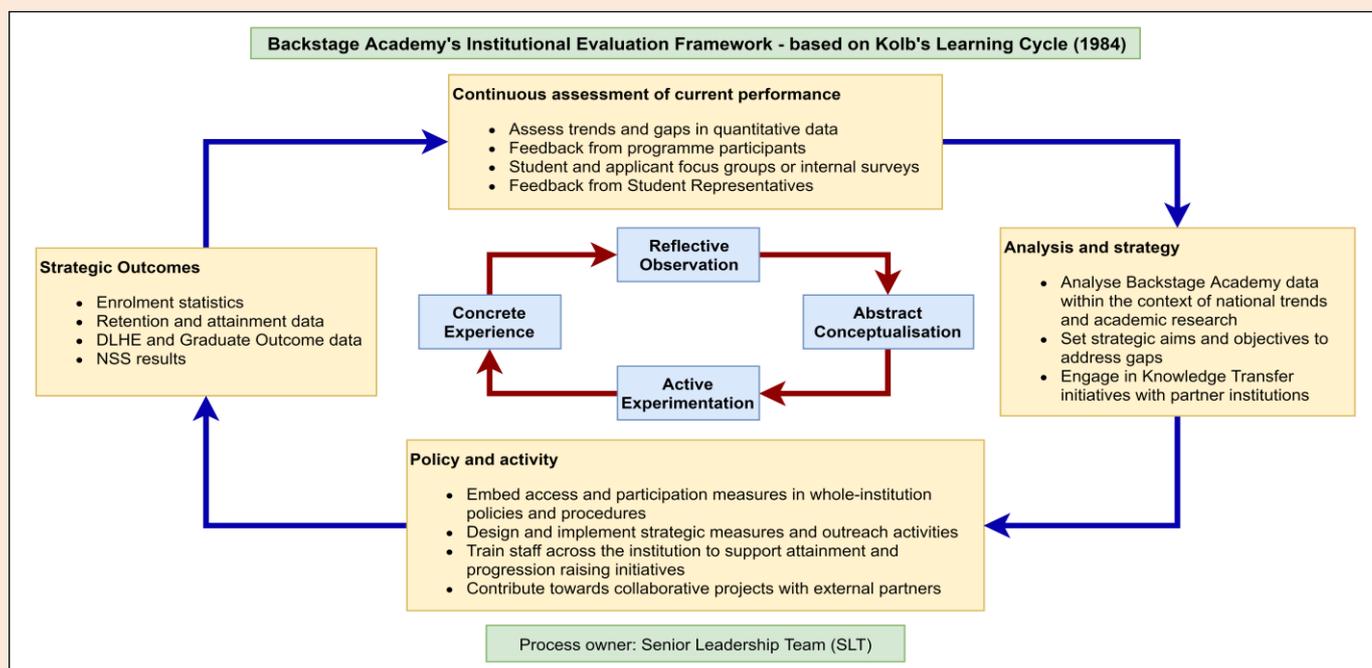
Contextual note on Backstage Academy Evaluation Strategy:
 Backstage Academy has an emerging evaluation strategy which we intend to develop fully over 2019-2020 academic year, to be in place and operational by 2020-2021. Due to student numbers all evaluations are likely to be Type 1 – Narrative or Type 2 -Empirical. We recognise that this does not provide evidence of the causal effect of an intervention, however our scale of operation does not enable us to undertake quantitative research design or provide us with an appropriate control group to establish the causes of an effective intervention. In addition to this, our size of institution prohibits us from using a longitudinal tracking service such as HEAT for the period covered by this plan. We will review this when developing the next APP.

Backstage Academy takes a dual approach to evaluation, using Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle as a strategic basis for reviewing, analysing and delivering continuous improvement in Access and Participation across the institution and Kirkpatrick’s Training Evaluation Model for assessing individual activities. On completion of the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Toolkit, it was also identified that all staff involved in implementing evaluation need further training in the limitations of each evaluative method and risk assessment of interventions.

3.3.1 Institution Evaluation Strategy

The Institutional Evaluation Framework below is owned by the Senior Leadership Team; with input from the Academic Board in policy approval and the Backstage Academy Board in approving our strategic aims and target groups. SLT delegates responsibility for the continuous assessment of current performance to the ED&I committee, which will convene focus groups and distribute surveys to supplement the review of strategic outcomes such as graduate progression. Analysis and strategy are led directly by SLT at present, but the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Toolkit has identified the need to employ an additional member of staff to drive this area (appointment planned for April 2020). With prior knowledge and experience in HE widening-participation, they would allow the institution to draw in further academic research to its data analysis and contribute to external knowledge transfer schemes. SLT delegates responsibility for the delivery of access and participation activities to members of the Academic, Operations or Marketing departments as appropriate.

SLT ensures that all evaluation activities are undertaken in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and that the ED&I Committee assesses any ethical considerations arising from supplementary data collection.



3.3.2 Data collection

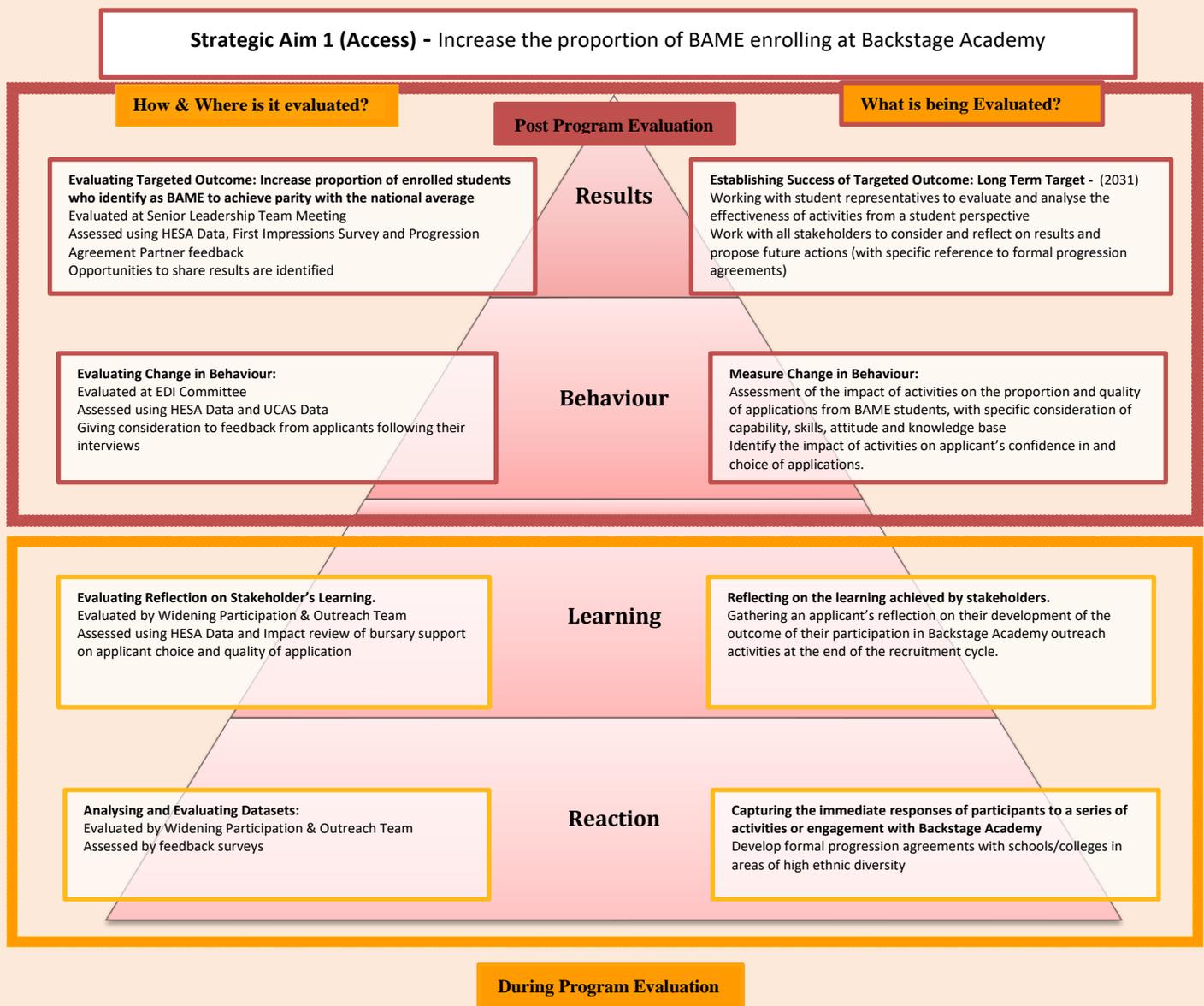
Contextual note on Backstage Academy Data Collection:

Backstage Academy has an emerging evaluation strategy which we intend to develop fully over 2019-2020 academic year, to be in place and operational by 2020-2021. During this time, we intend to identify a range of data collection tools, suitable for answering the questions posed by the strategic aims. We are aware of the requirement to consider and address the issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality, data linkage, transparency, storage and security and other ethical responsibilities towards participants, and we will respond to each of these areas before undertaking any programmed activity.

SLT ensures that all evaluation activities are undertaken in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and that the ED&I Committee assesses any ethical considerations arising from supplementary data collection.

3.3.3 An evaluation and impact framework for the assessment of individual strategic aims & objectives

Backstage Academy intends to assess the outcomes of outreach activities over time using the Kirkpatrick Model in order to ensure sufficient scope for reflection and analysis of the sustainability of an intervention. We will review the use of this model annually and adjust our evaluation approach if alternative models prove more effective following sector peer review. Following our evaluation analysis, we will disseminate our findings to stake holders⁷. Below is an example of this approach:



⁷ In line with the outcomes of our OfS Self Evaluation tool (refer to comment in Introduction)

3.3.4 Sharing findings

The results of widening participation and outreach activity will be documented in reports by the EDI committee and made available internally to staff and students through our virtual learning environment. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to evaluate and reflect on findings through staff development meetings, committees and (where appropriate) cross institutional, the OfS Evidence and impact exchange and/or national conferences⁸.

3.3.4.1 Outcomes of evaluation influencing programme design and practice

As indicated in the Evaluation Self-Assessment tool, we intend to disseminate the evaluation reports by the EDI committee to stakeholders and through our internal committee structure. This will then be a point of reference for programme design and practice. This will become particularly relevant once we have disaggregated from the University of Bolton and we are validating, modifying and proposing programmes under our own processes.

3.4 Evaluating financial support

Contextual Note on Backstage Academy Evaluation of Financial Support:

Due to student numbers Backstage Academy will be limited to two of the three possible evaluation tools (Survey Tools and Interview Tools) as we will not support over 300 students within this cycle and therefore cannot undertake statistical analysis.

Backstage Academy will demonstrate its commitment to access and widening participation by offering a range of bursaries and additional financial support for prospective and current students. As a new provider we do not have a history of providing financial support to students and subsequently we do not have a pre-existing evaluation method. Our current offer is based upon our analysis of our widening participation gaps and the OfS target areas. We will draw upon our evaluation of our financial support for 2019-20 to provide a baseline for future analysis.

We recognize that the investment in financial support may need to increase substantially across the 5-year period, however without previous evaluation data to draw upon it is impossible to confidently ascertain if this is the case and if so, which areas will require additional investment and by how much. Therefore, we are intending to review this annually and submit variation requests once we have had the opportunity to run the funding cycle and evaluated it.

Financial support in the form of bursaries or fee-waivers will be made available for students from the following targeted groups:

- Care leavers (priority group for fee waiver)
- BAME students (Sabir Bursary)
- Mature students (Brooks Bursary)
- Students from areas of low participation who also have a disability (Production Park Bursary)

We will evaluate the impact of this programme on student recruitment, retention and student success. In addition to our internal research methodology we will adopt the use of the self-assessment Tool Kit resources that were developed by the OfS to ensure that that we are collecting a range of evidence (including student tracking and feedback) to assess the impact of each bursary scheme between 2019-2024.

Details of all awards/funds and their application criteria and process will be detailed on the Backstage Academy website, in our prospectus and through direct targeting of potential candidates. Awards are conferred by the Bursaries and Student Support/Hardship Committee, unless indicated otherwise below.

Backstage Academy has considered its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and makes every provision to assure the learning experience of those with protected characteristics as defined by the Act, including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. As indicated previously, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee will lead on and monitor EDI matters on behalf of the SLT and the Academic Board. Backstage Academy will monitor its entrants to identify any significant changes in applications and enrolments. The uptake of bursaries, the hardship fund, and fee waivers will also be monitored and distributed fairly, according to the criteria for each. We will make use of interview and/or survey tools to evaluate the effectiveness of each intervention.

⁸ In line with the outcomes of our OfS Self Evaluation tool (see introduction)

3.4.1 Backstage Academy financial support allocation

As a small institution, Backstage Academy financial support will be administrated internally rather than through a third-party organisation. Backstage Academy is committed to breaking down barriers to education and the live events industry. This financial support aims to enable students from under-represented groups to access and succeed in higher education, and encourage a diverse student body.

The cash awards are designed to support students with their living and learning costs. Students must apply to receive the financial support and meet all the eligibility criteria. All students meeting the criteria will be awarded financial support, with the exception of the Production Park Scholarship (full fee waiver) where there is one new award each year - decided upon by the Bursaries and Hardship Committee.

The figures provided are anticipated expenditure which will need to be reviewed annually. Access focused bursaries have increased funding each year in directly proportional to the annual targets included in the plan, whereas success targets have a more gradual rise in-line with the projected increase to the whole student population. If applications overwhelm the resources available, we will review the forecast and may submit a variation to change our approach.

The duration of funding will be made clear to students as part of the associated published information for each fund. To ensure that the available resources are targeted effectively, we have taken different approaches for bursaries focused at improving Access and Success measures. For the two Access focused funds, students will receive one payment at the start of their studies only, as our data does not show a gap in continuation for Mature and BAME students. This is also informed by research which suggests that institutions should focus their funding schemes on what is most likely to reduce gaps in equality rather than spread too thinly to assist students who are also from low-income backgrounds, given the increased governmental support for this group already.

The duration of funding will be made clear to students as part of the associated published information for each fund. To ensure that the available resources are targeted effectively, we have taken different approaches for bursaries focused at improving Access and Success measures:

- For the two Access focused funds, students will receive one payment at the start of their studies only, as our data does not show a gap in continuation for Mature and BAME students. This is also informed by research⁹ which suggests that institutions should focus their funding schemes on what is most likely to reduce gaps in equality rather than spread too thinly to assist students who are also from low-income backgrounds, given the increased governmental support for this group already.
- For the Production Park Bursary, which is focused on attainment, the funds are awarded to eligible students each year for the remainder of the course. This is to ensure that students are sustainably supported throughout their course and can help students with costs in the DSA application process (such as travel to Needs Assessments) that may otherwise be a barrier to accessing support, and ultimately attainment.

3.4.2 Financial support and hardship funding forecast

Bursary Name	Target Group	Amount awarded to each student annually	Investment Forecast					Funding application submission deadline	Funding Duration
			2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		
The Sabir Bursary	BAME Students	£400	£4,000	£5,200	£6,800	£8,400	£10,000	October of the relevant Academic year	Awarded in first year of study only
The Brooks Bursary	Mature Students	£300	£5,100	£5,700	£6,600	£7,500	£8,700	(to ensure that students coming through Clearing have an equal opportunity to apply)	Awarded in first year of study only
The Production Park Bursary	Students from POLAR Q1-2 areas who also have a disability	£300	£6,600	£6,900	£7,200	£7,800	£8,400		Awarded in each year remaining of the course (up to a maximum of three years)
Production Park Scholarship	Priority Group: Care Leavers	Full Fee Waiver	£27,000	£27,000	£27,000	£27,000	£27,000		Awarded in each year remaining of the course (up to a maximum of three years)
Hardship Fund	N/A	Variable	£6,000	£7,000	£8,000	£9,000	£10,000	Before the end of the academic year	Maximum of 1 award per academic year

⁹ Pollard et al. (2019), DfE, https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/33474/1/Impact_of_the_student_finance_system_on_disadvantaged_young_people.pdf

3.4.3 Financial support and Fee-Waiver eligibility

Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria
The Sabir Bursary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student is a home (UK) student, paying tuition fees to University of Bolton via tuition fee loan or self-funding Studying a full-time undergraduate course which is delivered on campus at Backstage Academy The student is from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background This is the student's first degree of study The student will commence their course at the start of that year's funding cycle (e.g Sept 2020) The student has submitted their application by the deadline The student is not in receipt of any other Backstage Academy Financial Award
The Brooks Bursary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student is a home (UK) student, paying tuition fees to the University of Bolton via tuition fee loan or self-funding Studying a full-time undergraduate course which is delivered on campus at Backstage Academy The student is 22 or over prior to the first day of the academic year This is the student's first degree of study The student will commence their course at the start of that year's funding cycle (e.g Sept 2020) The student has submitted their application by the deadline The student is not in receipt of any other Backstage Academy Financial Award
The Production Park Bursary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student is a home (UK) student, paying tuition fees to University of Bolton via tuition fee loan or self-funding Studying a full-time undergraduate course which is delivered on campus at Backstage Academy The student has a diagnosed disability, whether that be physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties (including specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia), mental health problems or long-term illnesses The student is from an area of low participation (POLAR 4 Q1+2 postcode) This is the student's first degree of study The student will commence their course at the start of that year's funding cycle (e.g Sept 2020) The student has submitted their application by the deadline The student is not in receipt of any other Backstage Academy Financial Award
Production Park Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student is a home (UK) student, paying tuition fees to University of Bolton via tuition fee loan or self-funding Studying a full-time undergraduate course which is delivered on campus at Backstage Academy The student is a Care Leaver who has lived in a care setting for a period of a minimum of 6 months prior to their 16th Birthday This is the student's first degree of study The student will commence their course at the start of that year's funding cycle (e.g Sept 2020) The student has submitted their application by the deadline The student is not in receipt of any other Backstage Academy Financial Award

3.5 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

As described in 3.3.1, SLT is responsible for the Institution Evaluation Framework and will ensure that strategic outcomes and supplementary metrics are monitored at regular intervals. SLT will delegate operational oversight of monitoring to the ED&I Committee and be kept informed of progress against APP targets through the minutes of this group. The ED&I Committee will work with academic and professional services colleagues across the institution to assist with their research and measures. Should progress against the plan worsen, SLT will instruct the ED&I Committee to create an action plan to i) conduct further research to establish a cause ii) set out response measures and a iii) set (and work to) a date when the relevant strategic outcome metrics will be reassessed.

The Backstage Academy Board will be kept well informed on progress against the plan through the institution's annual monitoring report and as a standing agenda item at the governing body's quarterly meetings. Students will have sight of, and an opportunity to comment on, the annual monitoring report when it is presented to the Academic Board and are also engaged in the continuous assessment of performance through representation on the ED&I Committee.

4. Provision of information to students

All relevant information will be published in full to current and prospective students, parents, advisors and employers. This will also extend to information pertaining to fees, aggregated fees, bursaries and support funds, optional additional costs and any prizes that may be offered. The information will be available on all media platforms in the public domain as well as internal information systems. The information will be regularly reviewed in accordance with all regulatory requirements and guidance. National financial forecasts and key performance indicators as well as UCAS and other educational databases will be used to inform any subsequent adjustments where appropriate in order that current and prospective students are provided with accurate information to enable them to plan and make informed financial decisions.

The proposed tuition fees within this plan for Backstage Academy undergraduate programmes are £9,000 per year fixed for the duration of the entrant’s course from the point of entry. This recognises the specialist nature of the courses that provide high-quality within and professional environment with high ratio of scheduled learning activity and contact. Undergraduate course fees will be fixed for the period of study at the point of entry, although may be subject to change for future prospective students. Any changes will be clearly published on all media platforms and promotional materials.

The approved Backstage Academy Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025 that results from the due process will be published in full on all the media platforms (internal and external) currently in use by the institution. This will place the information within easy access of both current and prospective students, as well as the wider public at large.

5. Appendix 1 – Student Submission (See additional document below)

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Author:	Widening Participation Working Group
Submitted to OfS:	November 2019

Appendix 1: Student Submission

Mechanisms for enabling student feedback and enabling change

At Backstage Academy, there are many routes for students to comment and discuss areas of improvement with staff. We do not have a stand-alone students' union currently due to the small size of the university, so the student voice is heard and acted on through:

- Student Experience Committee (12 reps)
- Academic Board (3 student board members)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (3 student committee members)
- Course Committees (3 reps)
- Module surveys
- Additional surveys (e.g. Freshers Week feedback)
- Focus groups
- 1-2-1 feedback meetings with Director of Operations and Student Services

The impact of student feedback on access and participation

Over the last couple of years, Student Reps have initiated, and worked with staff to put in place, the following changes at Backstage Academy:

- Improvements to site accessibility for students with physical disabilities – such as the installation of railings on access routes.
- Major structural improvements to the Live Events Production course, to provide optional pathways which better suit students' career ambitions. This is particularly helpful for students with learning disabilities, who struggled with the previous focus on theory in third year.
- The date of Graduation 2019 was brought forward from December as students from families working in the retail sector would struggle to have guests attend. Staff sent out a survey to all graduating students to gain a wider input on the new date, which was moved forward to October.
- Roles and responsibilities for student support was unclear so the new website has been developed to feature a student intranet, with useful information and a Student Jobs Portal. This was lobbied for by the Student Experience Committee to ensure that there is transparency, parity of pay and ease of access to all job opportunities promoted through Backstage Academy.

Co-creation of access and participation activities

There are regular opportunities for students to deliver events and access activities for Backstage Academy. Student Ambassadors travel out to schools, careers events and trade shows (such as PLASA and ABTT) to promote the courses. Students also run key events such as Open Days, Graduation and Freshers' Week (under the mentorship of academic tutors), allowing us to shape the programme to be inclusive and accessible to all student groups, and in delivering the Access All Areas outreach event for West Yorkshire Go Higher.

Specific points arising from the first draft of the 2020-25 Access & Participation Plan:

Target groups (Lifecycle Stage)	Comments
Students with a MH condition (Success)	As there is only one Student Wellbeing Officer, 2.5 days a week, some students have found that it is at times difficult to seek advice immediately; to ensure that this is not an issue in future other areas of support such as the local GP or Turning Point in Wakefield, they will be actively advertised and their contact information made accessible for all students. This will ensure that any student who may be in crisis knows about different places where they can easily seek help.
BAME students (Access)	The job role for Student Ambassadors is advertised at the beginning of the year for students to apply to and then undertake training. It can be hard to ensure that there is a wide variety of students in this role, including women and BAME students. Over the next few years, there should be an emphasis on ensuring that there is diversity in the students who are representing Backstage Academy, whilst maintaining that all students still get a fair opportunity.
Mature students (Access)	Trade shows are recruitment events with a high chance of attracting mature students. However, this only advertises to those who are interested in the industry already. To improve awareness and to increase the percentage of mature students, Backstage should look at forming partnerships with adult education centres and actively advertise to service leavers, where their skill set is very similar to that which is required by the live events industry.
BAME/Mature students (Access)	The college careers fairs cover various colleges across the country, however, they tend to target colleges with relevant feeder courses which are relevant to the industry, such as, game development, drama, and theatre. Research could be undertaken into the diversity amongst feeder colleges/courses compared to the wider population to see if this is skewing access proportions.
Mature students (Progression)	Over the past year, student feedback has changed the way jobs are advertised for students. A jobs portal has been created where students can apply before the closing date, submit their CVs and cover letter where necessary. This portal has made applying for jobs fairer and unbiased: it ensures all students can apply for any job and jobs are not on a first come, first served basis.
BAME / Mature students (Access)	There are many different types of short courses at Backstage, which are often attended by those who are already in or interested in the industry looking to learn a different skill or increase their skill set. This is an area which can be utilized to encourage mature and BAME students, running short taster courses over summer to prospective students who may be unsure about joining or nervous about coming on to the course with no previous knowledge.

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Lead author:	Kira O'Brien (LVD Year 2 Rep and Academic Board member)
Received by:	Widening Participation Working Group
Date received:	02/07/2019

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,000
Foundation degree		£9,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
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: Backstage Academy (training) Ltd

Provider UKPRN: 10036456

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 (£)	£44,000.00	£47,000.00	£55,000.00	£61,000.00	£66,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£5,000.00	£6,000.00	£9,000.00	£11,000.00	£12,000.00
Access (post-16)	£25,000.00	£26,000.00	£28,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£5,000.00	£6,000.00	£9,000.00	£10,000.00	£12,000.00
Access (other)	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£10,000.00	£12,000.00
Financial support (£)	£48,700.00	£51,800.00	£55,600.00	£59,700.00	£64,100.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£34,000.00	£36,000.00	£43,000.00	£47,000.00	£51,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£705,000.00	£753,000.00	£888,000.00	£978,000.00	£1,068,000.00
Access investment	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%
Financial support	6.9%	6.9%	6.3%	6.1%	6.0%
Research and evaluation	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Total investment (as %HFI)	18.0%	17.9%	17.3%	17.1%	17.0%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Backstage Academy (training) Ltd

Provider UKPRN: 10036456

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To increase the proportion of BAME students enrolled at Backstage Academy	PTA_1	Ethnicity	Percentage of Backstage Academy entrants who identify as BAME. We have used the access and participation data set provided by the University of Bolton.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	9%	10%	13%	17%	21%	25%	Targets have been included as %s when the target concerns a proportion of students and percentage points (pp) when it concerns closing a gap in equality. The UK live events industry has a predominantly white male workforce. Backstage Academy aims to promote careers within the sector and has a policy of inclusion and equal opportunities. Targets are set to create a better ethnicity balance and encourage applications from learners from minority backgrounds.
To increase the proportion of Mature students enrolled at Backstage Academy	PTA_2	Mature	Percentage of Backstage Academy entrants who are categorised as Mature. We have used the access and participation data set provided by the University of Bolton.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	17%	17%	19%	22%	25%	29%	Backstage Academy has a low intake of mature students. Targets are set to increase this significantly and reflect our strategic ambition to provide opportunities for individuals to reskill or return to the industry after a career gap. Note that the annual target increase is slow initially as we assess the affect of more students completing three years of study as one BA(Hons) rather than an FDA and Top-Up.
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Reduce the attainment gap: No Known Disability and those with a disability	PTS_1	Disabled	Percentage difference in attainment rates between disabled and non disabled Students. We have used the Access and Participation dataset provided by the University of Bolton	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	22pp	20pp	15pp	10pp	5pp	0pp	We have shown an incremental increase in line with the OFS KPMS target setting. Actual performance is likely to vary as we are working with very small numbers of individuals and therefore anticipate significant variation in the statistical figures year on year until we have grown in sufficient student numbers to provide more consistent figures.
Reduce the attainment gap between students from POLAR 4 Q1 backgrounds and those from Q5.	PTS_2	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Percentage difference in attainment rates between the lowest and highest POLAR 4 quintiles. We have used the Access and Participation dataset provided by the University of Bolton	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	32pp	31pp	28pp	26pp	22pp	18pp	Working with very small numbers, we anticipate some fluctuation to these figures and will review our targets annually as a result.
Reduce the attainment gap between students from POLAR4 Q1&2 who are disabled and students from POLAR4 Q1&2 who have no known disability.	PTS_3	Multiple	Percentage difference in attainment rates between Q1-2 disabled and Q1-2 non disabled students. Data sources currently used are raw SITS data from the University of Bolton (however in time this will migrate over to our new internal Ebs system), with the POLAR 4 quintile data generated using the OfS's POLAR 4 calculator.	No	Other data source	2017-18	22pp	20pp	18pp	16pp	14pp	12pp	Actual performance is likely to vary as we are working with very small numbers of individuals and therefore anticipate significant variation in the statistical figures year on year until we have grown in sufficient student numbers to provide more consistent figures.
Reduce the attainment gap between students from IMD Q1 and those from IMD Q5	PTS_4	Socio-economic	Percentage difference in attainment rates between the lowest and highest IMD quintiles - which categorise areas of deprivation. We have used the Access and Participation dataset provided by the University of Bolton	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	77pp	70pp	60pp	50pp	36pp	25pp	Working with very small numbers, we anticipate some fluctuation to these figures and will review our targets annually as a result.
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	

