

# **ANNEX C: Lincoln Bishop University**

## **APP 2025-26 to 2028-29**

### **Introduction**

Lincoln Bishop University is a small, vibrant institution committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and research. With a strong focus on providing a supportive and inclusive environment, the University serves a diverse student body and is dedicated to fostering each student's personal and academic growth. The University's mission is to inspire excellence, promote social mobility, and create opportunities for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University's overarching strategic aim is to advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that Higher Education (HE) is accessible to everyone, regardless of their background. Through innovative programmes and targeted support initiatives, the University strives to remove barriers and empower students to achieve their full potential, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

Lincoln Bishop University is entering a new phase of institutional development, marked by the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor and the launch of its new strategy. 'Strategy 2030' articulates BGU's vision as a confident, person-centred university, rooted in place and practice, and united by a strong sense of social purpose. Central to this strategy is the University's commitment to widening access, supporting student success, and advancing equality of opportunity across the full student lifecycle. This Access and Participation Plan (APP) is a key mechanism through which those strategic ambitions are realised, with a renewed and ambitious commitment to social purpose, inclusive growth, and the delivery of high-quality higher education that transforms lives and communities.

Partnership delivery plays an important role within 'Strategy 2030' in extending access to higher education and meeting diverse learner needs. The University has developed partnerships to provide locally accessible and flexible routes into higher education. These partners include The Language Gallery, delivering programmes in Birmingham and Nottingham; Grantham College, based in Lincolnshire; and LETTA (London East Teacher Training Alliance), in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Through these partnerships, the University delivers programmes in areas including Business, Teacher Education, Health, and Professional Practice, supporting learners within their locality, who are returning to study, or who are seeking vocational pathways to employment.

All partnership provision is underpinned by strong academic leadership in academic standards, quality assurance, curriculum design, assessment, and the student experience, ensuring that learners studying through partner organisations receive an experience that is fully aligned with the University's academic values and social purpose. This model enables the University to develop opportunities to extend its commitment to quality provision within communities which would not otherwise be reached by a small HE provider.

The University's approach to access and participation is rooted in its commitment to social purpose. As a civic-minded university with a long tradition of serving under-represented communities, Lincoln Bishop University is committed to promoting social mobility, supporting regional and national skills needs, and enabling students to thrive in life and work. This commitment is reflected in consistently strong outcomes and sector-leading performance, including outstanding results in the National Student Survey 2025 (ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in four categories: Teaching, Student Voice, Learning Opportunities, and Assessment and Feedback) and national recognition in 2025 in the Daily Mail University Guide (1<sup>st</sup> for Student Support) and the WhatUni Student Choice Awards (1<sup>st</sup> for Accommodation).

This Access and Participation Plan builds on these strengths, setting out how the University will continue to tackle inequality, expand opportunity, and deliver excellent outcomes for students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds, and to achieve the mission set out in 'Strategy 2030'.

## **History and Mission**

Established in 1862 as an Anglican teacher training college for women, Lincoln Bishop University gained Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2006 and full university status in 2012. The last decade has seen significant transformation, driven by the goals and priorities of the current Strategy 2030. The University's mission highlights its role in enabling students to achieve the highest standards in their fields of study, providing life-enriching opportunities, recognising students' aspirations and achievements, and fostering a culture where individuals are valued and diversity is celebrated. Lincoln Bishop is committed to widening participation, aligning with its Strategy 2030. This commitment is reflected in the University's approach to learning gain and developing Graduate Attributes (GAs), particularly employability skills. This approach aims to achieve positive outcomes for students from all backgrounds, including continuation, completion, and progression into graduate employment or further study.

Lincoln Bishop's commitment to widening participation is reflected in its efforts to support under-represented groups, including mature students, those with disabilities, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University's approach ensures positive outcomes for students, including continuation, completion, and progression into graduate employment or further study.

Lincoln Bishop aims to enhance learning, teaching, and student experiences by widening access and participation. The University continues to provide educational and transformative opportunities for under-represented learners. The Times and The Sunday Times ranked Lincoln Bishop 9th for social inclusion in its 2025 University Guide, highlighting the proportion of students from state schools, first-generation students, and those with known disabilities. This recognition stems from Lincoln Bishop's consistent outreach activities, mainly through the LiNCHigher consortium, which aims to increase aspirations among young people in areas of low HE participation.

## **Academic Portfolio**

Lincoln Bishop University's academic portfolio primarily focuses on teacher development, humanities, and social sciences, building on its traditional strengths in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The University equips graduates for the workplace through additional arts, humanities, and social sciences programmes and education, health, and lifelong learning. The portfolio of programmes has expanded with the introduction and development of new undergraduate single honours subjects, such as Business and Management, Health and Social Care, Counselling, Sport, and Sociology. Consequently, the proportion of students enrolled in programs other than Education and Teaching increased from 30.1% in 2017/18 to 39.9% in 2022/23.

## **Staff Numbers**

At the time of writing, Lincoln Bishop University has 310 employees, of which 130 (41%) are on academic contracts. There are 261 permanent employees and 49 fixed-term employees. The total staff FTE is 261.5.

## **Local and Regional Context**

Lincolnshire, the county in which the University is located, has some of the most socio-economically deprived districts in the country. The East Midlands and East of England regions also show significant inequality in qualification levels. For example, the East of England is home to the ninth most-qualified area (Cambridge) and the 330th (Fenland). This disparity could be attributed to the mix of deprived coastal areas and regions within commuting distance of London. This

inequality in the southern half of England may partly explain the absence of a clear north-south divide on a regional level. Boston in Lincolnshire scored lowest in England and Wales, with only 23% of the resident workforce holding HE qualifications. Although this is the most common qualification level among workers and job seekers, it is still significantly below the national average. According to the 2021 Census by the ONS, only 31% of the working-age population in Boston are qualified at NVQ Level 4 or higher, compared to 43% nationally. Despite improvements, the gap is not closing. Within Greater Lincolnshire, there is notable geographic disparity. The Greater Lincolnshire Area Review, 2017, indicates only 20% of the Lincolnshire population is qualified to Level 4 or above, compared with 27% nationally.

Just under half of local graduates stay in the East Midlands after graduation, reflecting lower overall levels of degree-educated residents in parts of Greater Lincolnshire, which are considered graduate cold spots. The 2021 Census also reveals that a smaller proportion of Lincolnshire's residents (4%) identify as part of a minority ethnic group compared to England (19%) and the East Midlands (14.3%). Specifically, 1.6% identify as Asian or Asian British, 0.6% as Black, 1.3% as mixed ethnic, and 0.6% as other.

Within this context of high levels of multiple deprivation, poor social mobility prospects, and low-skilled employment across the county, Lincoln Bishop plays a crucial role in raising aspirations and supporting students to achieve and secure employment and further study. The University has led widening participation and outreach activities across Greater Lincolnshire by heading the county's Uni Connect consortium of HE providers, LiNCHigher.

## **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Collaboration and partnerships are central to Lincoln Bishop's strategy, influencing research and knowledge exchange activities that support local and regional stakeholders. Notable projects include the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership Community Grants Project and the Lincolnshire Open Research and Innovation Centre's initiatives like Dance Free and GoGro CIC.

## **Governance and Performance Monitoring**

Lincoln Bishop University's strategic aim to provide equality of opportunity is monitored through frequent performance reviews by the University Executive Group and reported to the University Council. This includes representation from students, staff, and the Diocese of Lincoln, ensuring diverse stakeholder input. The University also considers the impact of the cost of living on its community and supports continuing professional development for its staff. The University's performance is frequently monitored and reported to the University Council through KPIs, Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), and risk assessments. The University's commitment to collaboration, inclusivity, and high teaching and learning standards ensures it continues delivering value to students and stakeholders, maintaining its strong reputation.

## **Our Student Population**

Lincoln Bishop University attracts a diverse student population, with over 2,300 students primarily from Greater Lincolnshire and the East Midlands region. These students are distributed across various programs: 125 in Foundation Degrees, 285 in the Foundation Year, 1,244 in Honours Undergraduate awards, 254 in PGCE teacher education and training, 246 in Masters degrees, and 66 in Doctorates. The undergraduate student population in the 2019/20 academic year reflected the socio-economic characteristics of the county, with 62% from Lincolnshire and an additional 18% from surrounding counties. According to the OfS TEF dashboard, in 2019/20, 47% of Lincoln Bishop students were from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2 (19.1% above sector), 37.2% were from IMD Quintile 1 and 2 (2.1% below sector), and 97% identified as 'White'. The enrolment of mature students was notably high at 34.6% (12.7% above sector), with significant opportunities provided by Foundation Degrees (75%) and Integrated Foundation Year programmes (52%).

Lincoln Bishop's subject mix attracts mostly female students (76.3% at undergraduate level in 2022/23), though new program areas such as Business and Sport have begun to recruit more male students. In 2021/22, 33% of Lincoln Bishop students studying for a first degree with honours declared a disability, almost double the sector average for the same period (17.4%).

Typically, more than three-quarters of the undergraduate population at the University has identified with one or more of the characteristics covered within this APP. In 2022/23:

- 18% of the undergraduate population did not identify with any of the APP characteristics
- 42% identified with one characteristic
- 22% with two characteristics
- 10% with three characteristics
- 6% with four characteristics
- 1% with five characteristics
- 1% with six characteristics

Since 2018/19, the proportion of all undergraduate and PGCE students identifying with at least one under-represented learner group (POLAR4 Q1, ABMO, mature, and students with a known disability) has fluctuated between 25% and 31%. The number of PGCE students has slightly decreased over the last three years, from 397 in 2020/21 to 246 in 2022/23. The proportion of Lincoln Bishop graduates has remained relatively stable, ranging from 86.9% in 2019/20 to 88.5% in 2021/22.

## **Evaluation of Lincoln Bishop University's performance over the lifespan of previous APP**

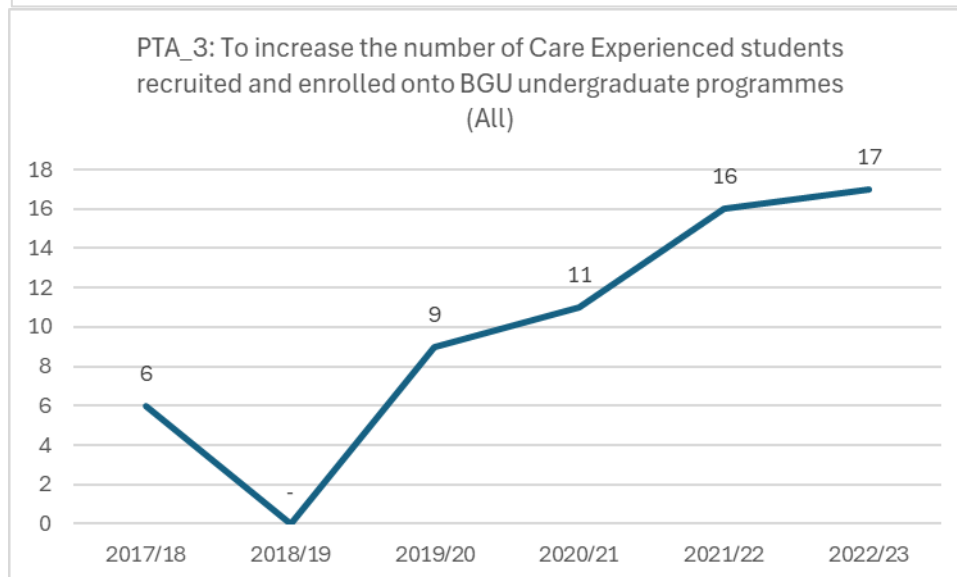
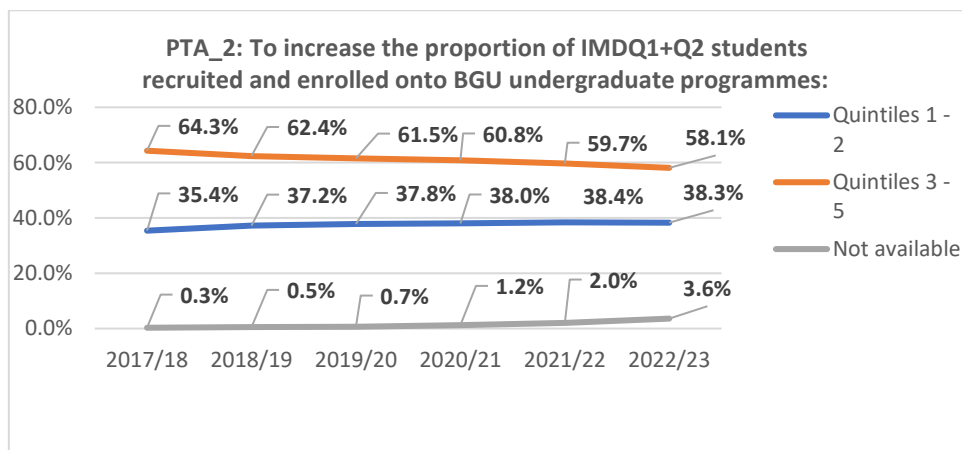
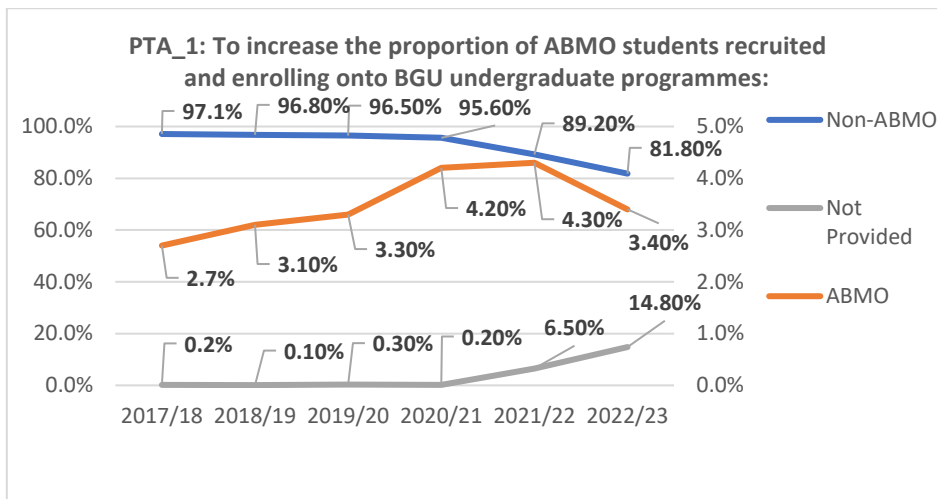
The following section provides a detailed evaluation of the University's performance over the lifespan of the last APP.

Lincoln Bishop University's 2020-21 to 2024 APP outlined the University's commitment to increasing access and widening participation, particularly among under-represented groups. It indicated the University's strong record of supporting under-represented groups, with 57% to 64% of students identifying with at least one such group during the previous APP lifespan. Key performance metrics outlined in the last APP included a 94% continuation rate, 69% attainment of upper degrees, and 72% progression to skilled employment or further study. The strategic aims of the plan included increasing ABMO undergraduate recruitment to 3.5% and raising the proportion of students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds to 40%. Success targets aimed to reduce attainment gaps for ABMO, mature, disabled, and IMD Q1 students to minimal levels. Progression targets sought to improve rates for mature, disabled, and IMD Q1 students, aiming to halve current gaps by 2024-25. Additionally, the University aimed to enhance recruitment and retention rates for care leavers.

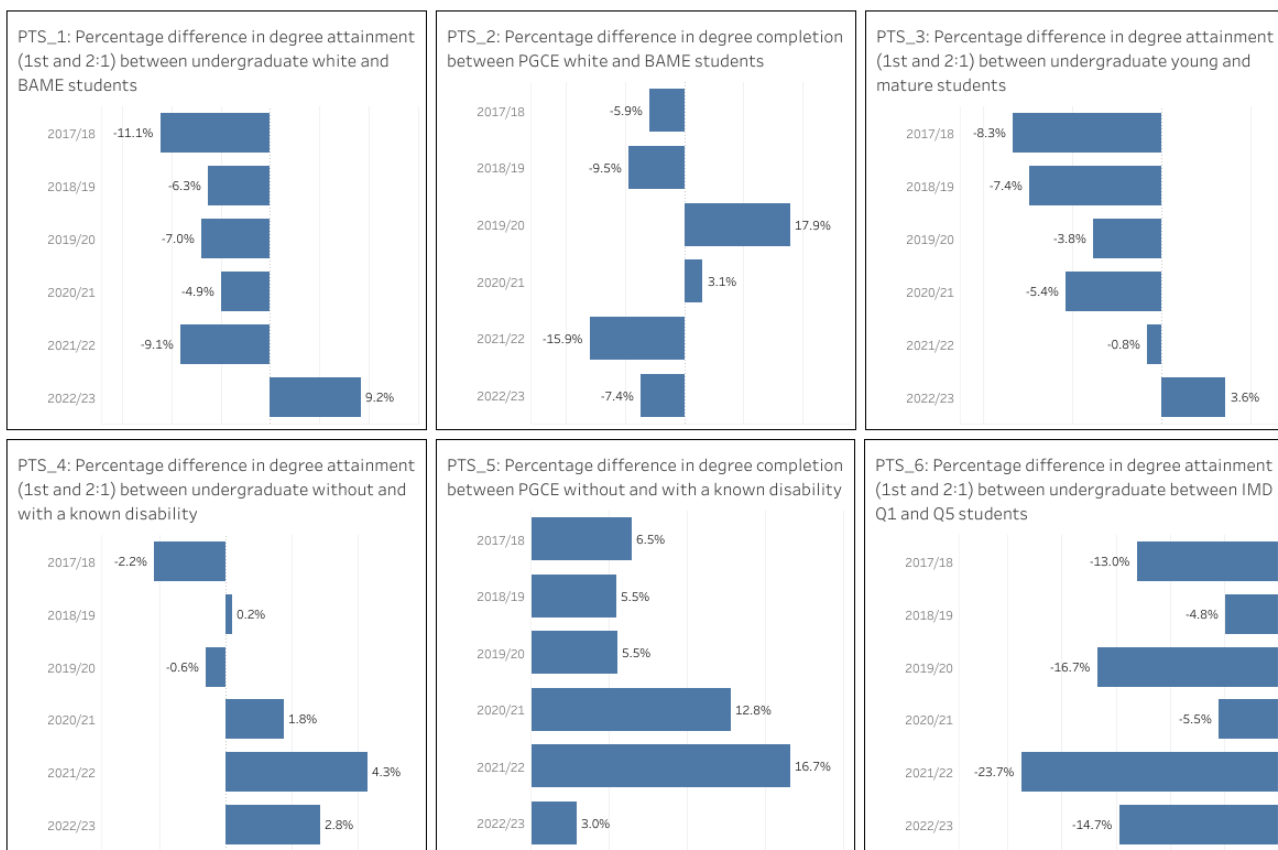
In terms of current performance, according to the latest data, overall undergraduate continuation has dropped slightly to 87.7% (2022/23), which still exceeds the benchmark of 80%. Attainment of upper (good) degrees (2.1 and 1st class honours) is now at 63.5% (2022/23), progression to employment/further study is at 92.1% (2021/22), and progression to highly skilled employment is at 76.5% (2021/22).

Progress against the previous plan: individual measures:

Access



Success



The analysis of underrepresented undergraduate learner groups throughout the student journey at Lincoln Bishop that follows this introduction draws upon individualised student data provided by OfS to determine the University's detailed performance. Comparative sector benchmarks from the provider-level dataset also provided by OfS are referenced.

## **ACCESS**

### **Student Characteristics and Access Risks**

#### **Students from Low-Income Households & First in Family**

Lincoln Bishop University primarily recruits from Greater Lincolnshire, a region with persistently low participation in HE. The proportion of undergraduate students recruited from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 has remained stable at around 49% over the last five years, significantly higher than the sector average of 28%. In 2022/23, 23.4% of students were from POLAR Q1, while 9.8% were from POLAR Q5, resulting in a Q5 ratio of 1:2.3. This is notably better than the sector's ratio of 1:0.41 and surpasses the OfS KPM1 2038-39 target for high-tariff institutions.

IMD data for 2022/23 shows that 15.1% of the University's undergraduate cohort came from IMD Q1, with a cumulative 37% from Q1+Q2. These figures align with the geographical recruitment area, predominantly falling into IMD Q1 to Q3. The sector ratio of IMD Q5 in 2021/22 was 1:1.07, slightly higher than Lincoln Bishop's 1:0.8 ratio in 2022/23. ABCs data indicates that 16.7% of the student body falls into Q1 compared to 9.9% in Q5, whereas sector-wide, 7.1% of students fall into Q1 and 34.9% into Q5.

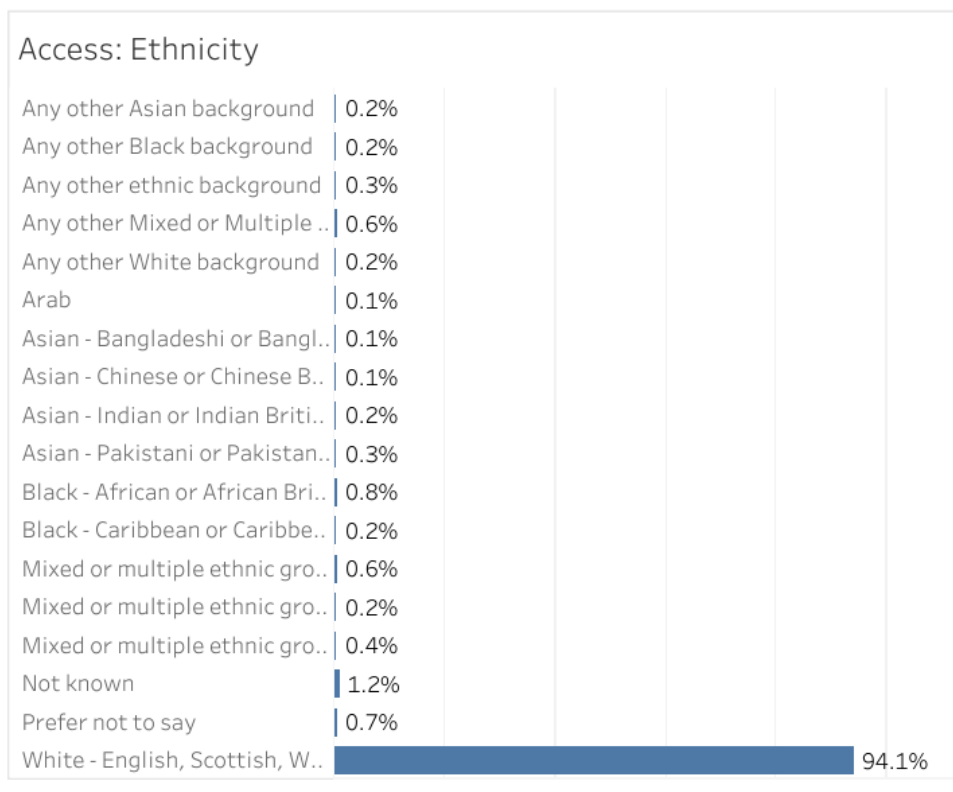
TUNDRA data for 2022/23 shows that 23.2% of Lincoln Bishop students came from TUNDRA Q1 areas compared to 8.5% from Q5 areas, yielding a Q5 ratio of 1:2.76. Sector-wide, students from TUNDRA Q1 areas make up 12.3%, and those from Q5 areas constitute 30.2%, with a Q5 ratio of 1:0.4.

## Ethnicity

Despite its widening participation mission, Lincoln Bishop University continues to recruit a small proportion of ABMO at its Lincoln campus. In 2021/22, only 6.1% of undergraduate students identified as ABMO, a slight increase from 4% in 2018/19. However, these figures remain significantly below the sector average, where the proportion of ABMO students increased from 27.4% in 2017/18 to 34.2% in 2021/22. The development of partner sites in more diverse geographical locations is expected to improve the representation of a wider ethnicity within the University's community.

Lincoln Bishop mainly recruits from Lincolnshire and surrounding areas, where the ABMO population is only 4.2%.

The graph below shows the student population by each ethnic group for 2022/23:



Source: HESA student return 2022/23

The proportion of Black students at the University has remained stable at around 1-1.2%, slightly above the 0.2% in Lincolnshire. The proportion of students identifying as 'other' has also remained around 0.2%, which aligns with regional averages. However, the proportion of Asian students declined from 2% in 2021/22 to 1% in 2022/23, and Mixed ethnic students varied from 1.2% to 1.5% in the same period. These trends indicate a need for improvement in recruiting ABMO students, mainly Asian and Mixed ethnic groups.

## Mature Students

The proportion of mature undergraduate students at Lincoln Bishop has increased from 45% in 2018/19 to 49% in 2022/23, surpassing the sector average, which rose from 24.4% in 2017/18 to 29% in 2021/22. Foundation Degree (FdA) programmes have been particularly effective in attracting mature learners, with 89% of mature students enrolling in these programmes in 2022/23, compared to a sector average of 59%.

## Disabled Students

The proportion of undergraduate students with a known disability at the University has increased from 27% to 33% over the last five years, consistently higher than the sector average, which rose from 14.6% to 17.4%. In 2022/23, the proportion of students with disabilities accessing HE at Lincoln Bishop exceeded sector averages at all levels of study. Foundation-year cohorts have consistently included over 46% of disabled students over the past three years. Foundation Degree programmes averaged just under 27%, still significantly above the sector peak of 8.1% in 2021/22.

Since 2020/21, the number of students declaring a 'cognitive and learning' disability has decreased from 8% to 6.9%, while those declaring 'multiple impairments' increased from 7.2% in 2021/22 to 11% in 2022/23 a real-term increase of 76 students.

## **Care Leavers**

Lincoln Bishop University has recruited a small number of care leavers (45 over the last five years) but continues to support them through the admissions process, providing access to 365-day accommodation, a guarantor scheme, enhanced counselling support, and an improved bursary of £3,600 per year. Information for care leavers is available via the Propel website for Local Authority Leaving Care Services.

## **CONTINUATION**

The University's undergraduate student continuation rates after the first year of study have improved, with only 1.3% of students failing to continue in 2022/23, following a peak of 5.49% in 2021/22.

## **Student Characteristics and Continuation Risks**

### **Students from Low-Income Households & First in Family**

The POLAR4 Q5 continuation gap decreased from 3.5% in 2021/22 to 0.85% in 2022/23, primarily due to increased non-continuation among POLAR4 Q5 students. The gap between Q5 and Q1 for all undergraduates decreased from 2.75% in 2021/22 to 0.64% in 2022/23. For POLAR4 Q1+Q2 and Q3-Q5 students, the gap decreased from 0.98% in 2021/22 to 0% in 2022/23. IMD data shows a slight improvement in the Q1 to Q5 non-continuation gap, from 2.1% in 2021/22 to 0.7% in 2022/23. However, TUNDRA data indicates a negative Q5 to Q1 continuation gap increase from 2.2% to 3.28%.

## **Ethnicity**

The continuation rate for White students at the University has fluctuated between 8.6% and 5.5% over the last five years, while for ABMO students, it rose from 2% to 15% over the past two years, reflecting small cohort sizes.

## **Mature Students**

Continuation rates for mature students have been consistently better than those for younger students, with a positive gap peaking at 4% in 2021/22 and reaching 0% in 2022/23.

## **Disabled Students**

The continuation rates for students with and without disabilities at Lincoln Bishop have improved, from 90% to 93% for those with disabilities and from 92% to 95.3% for those without over the last five years. The gap has never been statistically significant.

## **Care Leavers**



Aggregated data for care leavers over five years shows an 82% continuation rate, significantly lower than the undergraduate population.

## **ATTAINMENT**

### **Student Characteristics and Attainment Risks**

The proportion of undergraduates achieving a first or 2:1 degree increased from 59.6% in 2021/22 to 63.5% in 2022/23, although there are variations among different groups.

#### **Students from Low-Income Households & First in Family**

In 2022/23, 73.3% of POLAR4 Q5 graduates received a Good Degree, compared to 54.4% of POLAR4 Q1 graduates. The gap increased from 3.2 percentage points in 2019/20 to 18.9 in 2022/23. The IMD Q5 to Q1 gap narrowed slightly in 2022/23 but remained substantial. The TUNDRA Q5 to Q1 gap increased steadily over three years, reaching 18.8 percentage points in 2022/23.

#### **Sex**

Female graduates have consistently achieved better degree outcomes than males, with the gap reaching 21.9 percentage points in 2022/23. In 2020/21, the gap was ten percentage points (64.3% versus 54.1%), growing to 16 percentage points the following year (62.3% compared to 46.2%).

#### **Ethnicity**

While ABMO graduates saw an increase in Good Degrees from 35.1% in 2021/22 to 43.2% in 2022/23, this remains significantly below the outcomes for White graduates. The gap between White and ABMO graduates has persisted over recent years.

#### **Mature Students**

Attainment rates for mature students have fluctuated more than for younger students. The attainment rate for students under 21 decreased from 74.7% in 2019/20 to 62.1% in 2022/23, whereas the attainment rate for mature graduates, despite some fluctuations, slightly exceeded that of younger students in 2022/23 at 65.7%.

#### **Disabled Students**

Attainment rates for students with no known disability decreased from 72.8% to 64.9% between 2019/20 and 2022/23, while for students declaring a disability, the rate decreased from 64.4% to 61.3%. The resultant gap narrowed from 8.4 to 3.7 percentage points over this period.

#### **Care Leavers**

While specific data on the degree attainment of care leavers is limited, the University continues to recognise the importance of supporting these students to achieve their highest potential. Data from the last five years highlights the need for further tailored interventions to ensure care leavers' academic success.

## **PROGRESSION**

The overall progression rate at Lincoln Bishop was 88.3% in 2020/21, with a higher rate of 97.7% for Foundation Degree students.

## **Student Characteristics and Progression Risks**

### **Students from Low-Income Households & First in Family**

Progression rates for POLAR4 Q3-Q5 students have fluctuated, with a notable gap of 2.2 percentage points in 2020/21. IMD data for 2020/21 shows a progression gap between Q1 and Q5 students of 8.7 percentage points. ABCs data indicates an improvement for Q1 students, while Q5 rates have declined, narrowing the gap. TUNDRA data shows that Q1 progression rates improved to 69.5% in 2020/21, but Q5 progression rates were unavailable, with Q4 data showing a decline to 69.5%.

### **Ethnicity**

Due to low response rates and small cohorts, comparative progression data for ABMO students is limited. However, the progression rate for White students has slightly declined. Over the last five years, the progression rate for ABMO students has decreased more sharply, from 93% in 2017/18 to 76.7% in 2020/21.

### **Mature Students**

Progression rates for mature students have fluctuated. In 2020/21, progression rates for mature students reached 70.9%, slightly trailing those for younger students (70.7%). The gap in progression rates was negligible (-0.3 percentage points). Mature students on FdA programmes saw higher progression rates, at 97.2% than their younger counterparts, but these numbers were based on a much smaller sample size (8 versus 35 students).

### **Disabled Students**

Progression rates for students with no known disability remained stable, from 72% in 2018/19 to 71.6% in 2020/21. However, progression rates for students with a known disability fluctuated more, dropping from 62.2% in 2018/19 to 54.9% in 2019/20, before rising to 69.3% in 2020/21. The progression gap between these two groups narrowed to 2.4 percentage points in 2020/21, down from 16.7 in 2019/20.

### **Care Leavers**

Due to small cohort sizes and response rates, measuring care leaver progression rates accurately over recent years has not been possible. However, the available data shows that care leavers continue to face barriers to employment or further study.

## **Intersections of Disadvantage**

Since 2013/14, the proportion of undergraduates identifying with at least one under-represented learner group increased from 58.4% to 64.4% in 2017/18. Students identifying with multiple characteristics also increased from 15.5% to 18.2%.

Data shows no significant difference in performance gaps for males from low participation areas (POLAR4 Q1) compared to the overall cohort. Continuation, attainment, and progression rates for POLAR4 Q1 males have been comparable to those of females from the same quintile.

## **Other Groups Experiencing Barriers in HE**

### **Commuter Students**

The University recognises commuter students' specific challenges and has implemented support measures to ensure their success. This group is an essential focus for the University's access and participation efforts.

### **Student Carers/Students with Parental Responsibility**

A support package for student carers has been in place since 2017/18, offering financial support and in-course adjustments. Although the number of students disclosing carer status remains low, those who have disclosed have successfully reached their final year of study. The University encourages more students in this group to disclose their status to ensure they receive adequate support.

### **Estranged Students**

Lincoln Bishop signed up for the Stand Alone Pledge in 2017/18, providing financial support, accommodation (including a guarantor scheme), mental health support, and outreach services. Despite the demise of the Pledge, the University remains committed to supporting estranged students through these measures. Those currently enrolled have made successful progress to date.

### **Children from Military Families**

The University remains committed to the Armed Forces Covenant and has identified children from military families as a group requiring additional interventions. Work is underway to establish a Service Children's Progression Alliance for Lincolnshire, ensuring targeted support for these students.

### **Interim conclusion**

The above analysis highlights the University's strengths in supporting underrepresented groups and the areas requiring further focus to ensure all students succeed. Despite commendable efforts to widen participation and improve continuation and attainment, several persistent gaps remain in access, continuation, attainment, completion, and progression.

For Access, students from low-income households and those who are the first in their families to attend university continue to face significant barriers. The ratio of students from IMD Q5 compared to IMD Q1 remains slightly lower than the sector average. This indicates that further work is required to achieve equity in recruiting students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of ABMO students at Lincoln Bishop also remains significantly lower than the sector average, and targeted recruitment efforts are needed to address the imbalance, particularly among Asian and Mixed ethnic groups.

For Continuation, although there have been improvements in reducing gaps for students from low-income households, concerns still need to be addressed regarding increased non-continuation rates among students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds. Additionally, continuation rates for ABMO students have fluctuated significantly, necessitating a targeted support strategy to stabilise and improve outcomes.

In terms of Attainment, the gap between students from IMD Q5 and Q1 backgrounds is widening, and ABMO students continue to achieve lower attainment rates than their White peers. Interventions are needed to reduce these disparities.

For Progression, students with known disabilities have shown improvement, with the gap between disabled and non-disabled students narrowing. However, this gap remains a critical area for ongoing intervention, as disabled students face additional barriers when progressing into highly skilled employment or further study.

## Risks to equality of opportunities & objectives

Based on the comprehensive assessment of performance and referencing the OfS APP dashboard, our Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), and a review of data from UCAS and HESA, we have identified our indications of risk to equality of opportunity. This detailed analysis allowed us to identify common sector-wide risks associated with the various phases of the student lifecycle and pinpoint significant areas where disparities exist between different student groups. These will be addressed through targeted interventions detailed later in the plan.

To prioritise the most significant indications of risk, we evaluated the magnitude of disparities between students in affected groups and their comparators, paying particular attention to any widening gaps since the implementation of our previous plan. We also considered the number of students impacted in each group, ensuring that no student characteristic was disregarded due to a smaller population size. This approach is crucial, especially for groups facing multiple barriers to equality of opportunity, including those most deeply disadvantaged.

Our internal performance evaluations are based on precise data; however, we adopted the HESA Standard Rounding Methodology for the data reported in this document to minimise the risk of identifying individuals within our published figures. Consequently, some data has been suppressed in cases of small student populations with specific characteristics, and exact figures have not been disclosed. Despite some statistical uncertainty associated with certain student groups identified as most at risk, we remain confident in our internal data and the challenges recognised at the national level that demonstrate consistent disparities in outcomes for these students.

We have set objectives for the most significant indications of risk, each linked to measurable targets. For student groups not prioritised for formal objectives or targets, mitigating actions are in place. Given the size and shape of the University and the whole institution approach advocated in this new plan, it is anticipated that all students at Lincoln Bishop will benefit from these interventions and achieve more positive outcomes. This holistic approach ensures that, while specific objectives target the most pressing disparities, the overall institutional strategies will support all students in achieving better results.

## Objectives & Target Groups

The following table outlines the University's key objectives, associated target groups, and intervention strategies to address the identified risks to equality of opportunity. Each strategy is designed to ensure that the needs of underrepresented student groups are addressed at various stages of the student lifecycle, from access and continuation to attainment and progression. This holistic approach is guided by Lincoln Bishop's commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

| Target Group | Indication of Risk                                                 | Objective                                                                                  | Target                                                                                      | Intervention Strategy                   |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| IMD Q1 & Q2  | Disparity in access to HE for students from low-income households. | To raise aspirations and increase the proportion of students from IMD Q1 & Q2 entering HE. | Increase the enrolment rate of IMD Q1 & Q2 students from 40% to a higher target by 2028/29. | Aspiration Raising & Contextual offers. |

| Target Group                            | Indication of Risk                                                                                       | Objective                                                                                                               | Target                                                                                                                                    | Intervention Strategy                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ABMO Students</b>                    | Underrepresentation of ABMO students in enrolment and retention.                                         | To increase the proportion of ABMO students entering HE and successfully completing their courses.                      | Raise ABMO student enrolment from 4% to 11% by 2028/29.                                                                                   | Aspiration Raising & Contextual offers.                                            |
| <b>IMD Q1 &amp; Q2</b>                  | Continuation gap for students from low-income households.                                                | To reduce the continuation gap for IMD Q1 & Q2 students.                                                                | Increase the continuation rate for IMD Q1 & Q2 students by 2028/29.                                                                       | Enhanced personal tutoring intervention.<br><br>Continuation & Retention Strategy. |
| <b>ABMO Students</b>                    | Disproportionate continuation rates for ABMO students.                                                   | To address the fluctuations in continuation rates and eliminate the gaps between ABMO and White students.               | Ensure the continuation rate for ABMO students matches their peers by 2028/29.                                                            | Personal Tutoring & Continuation & Retention Strategy.                             |
| <b>IMD Q1 &amp; Q2</b>                  | Attainment gap for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.                                | To reduce the attainment gap between students from IMD Q1 & Q2 and their peers, aiming for more good honours degrees.   | Close the attainment gap for IMD Q1 & Q2 students, achieving parity by 2028/29.                                                           | Personal Tutoring                                                                  |
| <b>ABMO Students</b>                    | Attainment gap between ABMO students and White students in terms of achieving good honours degrees.      | To eliminate the attainment gap for ABMO students by increasing the proportion of those achieving good honours degrees. | Raise ABMO student attainment so that it matches White students by 2028/29.                                                               | Personal Tutoring                                                                  |
| <b>Students with a known disability</b> | Students with disabilities face lower progression rates into highly skilled employment or further study. | To improve the progression rates into highly skilled employment or further study for disabled students.                 | Increase the proportion of disabled graduates entering high-level employment or further study from 77% to a higher percentage by 2028/29. | Graduate Attributes Framework (GAF) enhanced for students with a known disability. |

## **Intervention strategies and expected outcomes**

The University has identified six key intervention strategies within its APP, each designed to address specific barriers to equality of opportunity and to promote social mobility and student success. These strategies are focused on improving access, continuation, attainment, and progression for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, including those from IMD Q1 and Q2, ABMO groups, and students with known disabilities. The six intervention strategies are:

1. Aspiration Raising Intervention
2. Contextual Offers Intervention
3. Continuation and Retention Strategy
4. Enhanced Personal Tutoring Intervention
5. Graduate Attributes Framework (GAF) Enhancement
6. Partnerships and Strategic Purpose

Each intervention strategy will incorporate comprehensive details of the evaluation activities and the methods for assessing impact. The FIT document outlines information on the cost of these activities.

### **Intervention strategy 1: ASPIRATION RAISING**

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.

Lincoln Bishop University is deeply committed to enhancing social mobility and addressing the systemic social inequalities that persist in the educational landscape, particularly within its local context.

In designing the Aspiration Raising intervention, the University has drawn on a robust body of national and regional evidence that highlights the persistent barriers faced by students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds in accessing HE. Research from the OfS and other national studies consistently demonstrates that students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds, particularly those in rural and low-participation areas like Greater Lincolnshire, are less likely to apply for, be accepted to, and succeed in HE. Evidence from widening participation literature emphasizes the importance of early intervention programmes that focus on raising aspirations, developing study skills, and providing comprehensive information about HE options. Additionally, Lincoln Bishop's own internal data on the success of previous outreach activities, as tracked through the HE Access Tracker (HEAT) system, underscores the positive impact that structured, targeted interventions can have on students from disadvantaged backgrounds. By leveraging both national research and its own evaluation of previous initiatives, The University has shaped its First Steps to Study (FS2S) and Next Steps for Study (NS4S) programmes to effectively mitigate the specific risks identified in its local context, ensuring that students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds are better prepared to access and succeed in HE.

Lincoln Bishop is located within a socio-economically deprived county where participation rates in HE are notably low. Recognising these challenges, the University is consolidating several established outreach activities into a new Aspiration Raising intervention. This intervention is a strategic response to the under-representation of students from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds, especially those in the IMD Q1 and Q2 quintiles, who face significant barriers to HE.

Central to this intervention is the development and enhancement of the University's First Steps to Study (FS2S) and Next Steps for Study (NS4S) programmes. These programmes target students

from Years 9 to 13 across Greater Lincolnshire, specifically those from low socio-economic backgrounds and other groups encountering barriers to HE. The FS2S programme currently engages 15 schools and focuses on students in Years 9 to 11, providing a widening participation intervention that is delivered free of charge. Schools throughout Lincolnshire and on the border of surrounding counties can select 30 students from each year group to participate in the programme. Eligible students must meet one or more criteria, including being in or having been in public care, having parents who have served in the forces, being young carers, identifying as black, Asian, or minority ethnic, having a physical, mental, or learning disability, being identified as a UniConnect student, or living in a low participation postcode as measured by POLAR4 Q1&2 and IMD Q1&2.

The FS2S programme is designed to develop students' study skills and increase their awareness of HE opportunities, thereby aiding their progression to university. It involves both in-school sessions and visits to Lincoln Bishop, incorporating integrated activities that promote university as an accessible option for all students. By enhancing study skills and providing insights into university life, the programme aims to raise aspirations and encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider HE.

Similarly, the NS4S programme targets students in Year 12 with the goal of raising aspirations and encouraging participation in HE. Like FS2S, NS4S is a WP programme that focuses on developing study skills and providing crucial information about university life. This programme is also offered free of charge and is available to schools and colleges throughout Lincolnshire and those on the border of surrounding counties. By providing these resources, Lincoln Bishop aims to increase the proportion of students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds who access HE.

These programmes are integral components of the University's broader Aspiration Raising intervention, designed to address the risks to equality of opportunity identified in the region. The intervention is a comprehensive effort to mitigate the barriers disadvantaged students face and reduce socio-economic disparities in HE participation and success. Lincoln Bishop's commitment to social justice and equality drives this intervention, with the ultimate goal of levelling the playing field for all students, regardless of their socio-economic status.

To implement this intervention, the University is leveraging several essential resources and activities. Adequate staffing is crucial for delivering aspiration-raising and outreach initiatives, including the FS2S and NS4S programmes. Staff time is allocated for preparing and delivering these programmes, ensuring students receive the support they need to succeed. The development and implementation of pre- and post-participation surveys are critical to evaluating the impact of the programmes on student aspirations and preparedness. Additionally, robust data tracking systems and processes have been established to monitor participant progress and refine support mechanisms.

The activities under this intervention, including the delivery of FS2S and NS4S, are expected to yield several immediate outputs. These include a measurable increase in the number of students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds participating in the programmes and enhanced student aspirations towards HE. The pre-and post-participation surveys will capture qualitative feedback on student preparedness, confidence, and aspirations towards HE. Quantitative data on participation rates, demographics, and progression will be captured via the HEAT system to track medium- and long-term student outcomes. This mixed-method approach will provide both descriptive evidence and empirical data to inform further intervention refinements.

These programmes aim to foster a supportive environment where students from disadvantaged backgrounds can thrive and aspire to HE by providing targeted support and guidance.

In the medium term, participants in the FS2S programme are expected to exhibit greater preparedness and confidence in applying for HE. By the final stage of the NS4S programme, students should demonstrate a marked improvement in their readiness and commitment to pursuing HE. These outcomes will be evaluated through the HE Access Tracker (HEAT) system,

which will monitor participant progress and assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Continuous data collection and analysis will allow for ongoing assessment and enable necessary adjustments to the programme. This evaluation will primarily focus on Type 1 evaluations, gathering narrative and descriptive evidence from participants while also incorporating some Type 2 evaluations through the analysis of empirical data collected via the HEAT system and internal Student Record System (SRS) to monitor the long-term impact of the intervention.

Evaluation findings will be shared annually through internal reports submitted to senior leadership teams, the OfS, and key stakeholders. Additionally, the evaluation results, including qualitative and quantitative insights, will be published in the University's annual widening participation report and disseminated to partner schools and colleges.

The long-term impact of this intervention is expected to result in a significant increase in the number of students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds entering HE, both locally and regionally. Improved retention rates and academic performance among these students will contribute to their long-term success in HE. Moreover, the intervention aims to sustain a reduction in the gap between students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds and those from more advantaged backgrounds regarding access to and success within HE.

Internal tracking systems will be implemented to evaluate the long-term impact of monitoring students' progress from the programmes into HE. Quantitative analyses using Student Record System (SRS) data, primarily HEAT data, will also be conducted to measure the effectiveness of the intervention.

The underlying rationale for this intervention is grounded in the evidence that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds face significant barriers to accessing HE. The assumptions guiding this intervention include the belief that targeted aspiration-raising activities will positively affect the attitudes and intentions of students from IMD Q1+Q2 backgrounds. It is also assumed that schools and colleges will actively engage with the programmes, ensuring consistent participation from the target group. The availability of sufficient resources, including staffing and funding, is essential for effectively implementing these activities. Finally, it is anticipated that ongoing data collection and analysis will allow for timely and effective adjustments to the intervention, ensuring it remains responsive to the needs of the participants.

By establishing the FS2S and NS4S programmes as critical components of this new Aspiration Raising intervention, Lincoln Bishop seeks to build on emerging evidence of success and further support students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds in their journey into HE. This comprehensive approach underscores the University's commitment to fostering equality of opportunity and addressing the significant challenges disadvantaged students face in the region.

| Activity               | Outcomes                                              | Method(s) of evaluation                                                    | Summary of publication plan                                                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FS2S & NS4S Programmes | Increased aspirations and participation in HE         | Pre/post surveys (Type 1), HEAT data analysis (Type 2)                     | Annual report to senior leadership, dissemination to partner schools and colleges |
| Aspiration Raising     | Greater preparedness and confidence in applying to HE | Qualitative feedback, tracking student progress via HEAT (Type 1 & Type 2) | Inclusion in annual widening participation report, internal evaluations           |

## Intervention strategy 2: CONTEXTUAL OFFERS

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.



Lincoln Bishop University is deeply committed to advancing social mobility and fostering social justice within HE.

This intervention is grounded in a well-established body of evidence that contextual admissions practices can effectively address disparities in HE access. Research conducted by the OfS and other national bodies highlights that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from IMD Q1 and Q2 and ABMO groups, face systemic barriers to accessing HE, including lower academic attainment, limited guidance, and lower application success rates. Studies have shown that lowering entry requirements through contextualised admissions improves access for underrepresented groups without compromising academic outcomes. Additionally, data from previous outreach efforts and sector-wide trends indicate that targeted interventions such as contextual offers can significantly increase application and enrolment rates among disadvantaged student groups. By basing its strategy on national research and internal data, Lincoln Bishop aims to close the gap between IMD Q1/Q2 and IMD Q5 students and increase enrolment among ABMO students.

The contextual offers intervention is a crucial part of this commitment, designed to address persistent inequalities in access to university education, particularly for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. The core objective of this intervention is to ensure that all qualified learners have equal opportunities to access HE, thereby contributing to a more diverse and representative society.

Despite ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity, disparities in HE access persist at the University. For example, during the 2022/23 academic year, the proportion of entrants from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) was 3.2 percentage points lower than that of entrants from the least deprived areas (IMD Q5). Similarly, the proportion of entrants from ABMO (Asian, Black, and Minority Ethnic) backgrounds was 91 percentage points lower than that of white students. Additionally, there remains a significant gender gap, with a 48.3 percentage point difference between male and female students enrolling at Lincoln Bishop. This plan aims to narrow these gaps by focusing on specific targets, such as reducing the gender gap by 1.2% by the end of the specified period.

Over the past five years (2017/18 to 2021/22), the proportion of students from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas studying at Lincoln Bishop has been slightly below sector averages. For instance, while the sector average for IMD Q1 & Q2 students increased from 40.4% to 44.1%, Lincoln Bishop's corresponding figures remained slightly lower, ranging from 38.8% to 41%. To address this gap, the University is implementing the contextual offers intervention, which aims to decrease the number of conditional offers and increase the number of firm offers to students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds.

| Access                              | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Sector IMD Q1 &amp; Q2</b>       | 40.4%   | 41.2%   | 42.5%   | 43.3%   | 44.1%   |
| <b>BGU IMD Q1 &amp; Q2 (All UG)</b> | 38.8%   | 39%     | 40%     | 40%     | 41%     |

Baseline data on enrolment rates, retention, and continuation for IMD Q1/Q2 and ABMO students will be established at the outset of the intervention. These baselines will provide a comparison point to assess the intervention's short-, medium-, and long-term effectiveness, with annual data reviews conducted to monitor progress against these benchmarks.

The contextual offers intervention seeks to address these inequalities through a structured, data-driven approach. The primary objectives are to increase enrolment from disadvantaged backgrounds, with specific targets to raise the proportion of students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds from 40% to 44.5% by 2028/29, increase the proportion of ABMO students from 4% to 11% by 2028/29, and elevate the proportion of male students from 25.8% to 30% by 2028/29.

Additionally, the intervention will develop and implement data tracking systems to monitor contextual offer entrants throughout their academic lifecycle. This includes integrating contextual offer entrants into enhanced personal tutoring systems to track their progress and outcomes..

Promotion and awareness of contextual offers will be critical components of the intervention. Lincoln Bishop plans to promote the programme through its outreach activities, explicitly targeting underrepresented groups via the Next Steps for Study (NS4S) programme. Marketing materials, such as a standard contextual offers slide for presentations and promotional flyers for distribution during Open Days, will be developed to support these efforts.

Implementing the contextual offers intervention will be phased to ensure sustainability and efficacy. In the pilot phase, the University offers contextual offers to students participating in the NS4S programme. Students who complete the entire programme and apply for a Lincoln Bishop undergraduate course may receive offers at a lower UCAS tariff than standard applications, depending on other course requirements being met. Schools are asked to select around 30 students for the programme, with the flexibility to include more if space allows. Schools and colleges are encouraged to choose students who benefit most from the programme based on public care experience, military family background, young carers, ethnic minority status, disability, and independent living without family support. At least 25% of the enrolled students must meet at least one of these criteria. As the pilot progresses, Lincoln Bishop will extend contextual offers to all applicants from an IMD Q1 and Q2 background in the first year of the new APP, not just those participating in the NS4S programme.

In the expansion phase, the University anticipates that as its attainment and aspiration-raising interventions take root, the number of IMD Q1 and Q2 students progressing through the admissions funnel will increase. The contextual offers intervention is designed to ensure these students secure a place at Lincoln Bishop. By the second year of implementation, the University plans to extend contextual offers to ABMO applicants, recognising the anticipated increase in applicants from these groups. Currently, Lincoln Bishop tends to recruit primarily from within Lincolnshire, where the proportion of ABMO students is among the lowest in England. However, as BGU's partnerships develop and marketing efforts expand beyond the county, more ABMO students are expected to apply, and from year two, they will also be eligible for contextual offers.

To support this expansion, the University will enhance its CRM system to capture IMD data or explore alternative processes if necessary. The application process will be adjusted to provide reduced tariff offers. Applicants meeting one contextual criterion will receive a reduction of at least 16 points, while those meeting two or more criteria will receive a reduction of at least 32 points.

The University will systematically track contextual offer students to monitor their continuation, outcomes, and progression. The tracking system will include quantitative methods (e.g., student performance data, attendance logs, and retention statistics) and qualitative methods (e.g., student satisfaction surveys, feedback sessions, and participant interviews). Data from the Student Record System (SRS) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will be used to monitor students' academic journey, with specific attention to students from IMD Q1/Q2 and ABMO backgrounds. The effectiveness of the contextual offer intervention will be assessed through ongoing evaluations, which will involve tracking student data, enrolment figures, and engagement levels.

This intervention will employ **Type 1** (narrative and descriptive) and **Type 2** (empirical and correlative) evaluations. Type 1 evaluations will collect qualitative feedback from participants, while Type 2 evaluations will focus on tracking quantitative data such as enrolment figures, continuation rates, and academic performance. Over time, as data availability and resources improve, more advanced evaluation techniques (Type 3) will be considered.

This intervention will undergo annual reviews to refine processes and ensure alignment with broader institutional goals. The findings from these evaluations will be shared through annual reports, which will be presented to senior leadership teams, the OfS, and relevant stakeholders. A

summary of critical insights and improvements will also be shared with partner schools and made available to prospective students and the public through the University's website and marketing materials. Insights will be used to refine contextual offer processes and inform future strategies.

The rationale behind the contextual offers intervention is grounded in Lincoln Bishop's commitment to inclusivity and creating a community that values diversity. Research indicates that contextualised admissions practices can positively impact disadvantaged students' retention and academic success. By leveraging data-led and evidence-based approaches, the University aims to enhance its recruitment strategies and contribute to the broader discourse on widening participation in HE. The contextual offers intervention is also designed to mitigate several key risks identified on the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including ensuring that students have equal opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted into HE, receive the necessary information and guidance to make informed choices and feel empowered to apply to HE.

The anticipated outcomes of the contextual offers intervention are categorised into short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts. In the short term, The University expects to improve its data maturity regarding student tracking and cohort analysis, fully integrate the contextual offer system within its admissions process, and establish initial benchmarks to assess the impact of contextual offers on increasing offer acceptance rates among target groups. In the medium term, the intervention aims to improve application and enrolment rates from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas and ABMO backgrounds and narrow the gap between IMD Q5 and Q1/Q2 regarding application to enrolment ratios. There is also an expectation of increased male applicant enrolment rates. In the long term, the intervention is designed to sustain increased enrolment rates from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas and ABMO backgrounds, improve retention and academic performance among contextual offer students compared to traditional offer students, and achieve a long-term narrowing of the gap in access and continuation for IMD Q1/Q2 students.

The effectiveness of this intervention will be evaluated through a combination of quantitative analyses and longitudinal studies. Key metrics will include retention rates, academic performance, and enrolment figures, focusing on the impact of contextual offers on disadvantaged student groups. Overall, the contextual offers intervention represents Lincoln Bishop's proactive approach to addressing structural inequalities in HE. By systematically implementing this intervention, the University aims to create a more inclusive academic environment that supports the success of all students, regardless of their background.

| Activity                        | Outcomes                                                                | Method(s) of evaluation                                                 | Summary of publication plan                                                          |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contextual Offers (Pilot Phase) | Increased application and enrolment rates for IMD Q1/Q2 and ABMO groups | Pre/post surveys (Type 1), tracking through SRS and VLE (Type 2)        | Annual reports, dissemination to OfS, public-facing reports for stakeholders         |
| Contextual Offers (Expansion)   | Reduction of enrolment gaps for target groups                           | Quantitative data analysis (Type 2), longitudinal tracking (Type 2)     | Annual reports, case studies published online, internal feedback to university teams |
| Tracking Student Progress       | Improved retention and academic outcomes                                | Ongoing tracking using CRM and HEAT data (Type 2), feedback from tutors | Internal reports to leadership, key metrics in student satisfaction surveys          |

### Intervention Strategy 3: CONTINUATION & RETENTION STRATEGY

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.

Lincoln Bishop University is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to succeed in their academic journey.

As part of its commitment to social mobility and social justice, Lincoln Bishop has developed a comprehensive Continuation and Retention Strategy to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from IMD Q1 and Q2 and ABMO groups. This strategy addresses persistent gaps in continuation and retention rates, ensuring all students have the necessary support to thrive in HE.

This strategy is grounded in evidence from internal and sector-wide research that highlights the challenges faced by students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO groups, in continuing and succeeding in HE. National studies conducted by the OfS and other bodies consistently show that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to withdraw from their studies due to financial pressures, lack of academic support, and mental health challenges. Additionally, internal data at Lincoln Bishop, including findings from the NSS and longitudinal retention data, indicates that specific student groups, such as those enrolled in Foundation Year programmes, students with caring responsibilities, and those with mental health concerns, are particularly at risk of non-continuation. The revalidation of Foundation Year modules and the implementation of data-informed support mechanisms are designed to directly address these risks, building on a growing body of evidence suggesting that early interventions, targeted academic support, and a focus on personal well-being are critical to improving retention rates.

Lincoln Bishop's commitment to student success is reflected in the 2023 NSS results, where the University performed exceptionally well. The University achieved an average positivity score of 88%, nearly 8% above the sector average, and ranked first among the 157 HE institutions surveyed in Learning and Opportunities, Assessment and Feedback, and Learning Resources. Additionally, 87% of Lincoln Bishop students reported that they would recommend the University to others, underscoring the institution's strong student satisfaction.

In October 2022, Lincoln Bishop underwent an Ofsted Apprenticeship Early Provision Monitoring inspection, which judged that the University was making 'Reasonable Progress' in critical areas of apprenticeship provision. Furthermore, in January 2023, the University and the Students' Union submitted to the TEF. Lincoln Bishop was awarded a silver rating, meeting the University's key performance indicators in this area. Despite these achievements, Lincoln Bishop has faced challenges in student continuation, with a noticeable decline since 2018-19. This decline has been particularly pronounced in the Foundation Year (Integrated Level 0) programmes. Initially, there were no entry requirements for the Foundation Year, resulting in many students enrolling who had returned to study after a significant break. These students, alongside those with caring responsibilities and those with physical and mental health issues, faced considerable challenges in maintaining their studies.

To address these issues, the University is revalidating and realigning its Foundation Year modules to reduce the number of points of failure for students. The revalidation includes decreasing the number of assessment points and embedding academic skills support into the curriculum to help students build resilience, coping strategies, and confidence. A comprehensive portfolio review is underway to remove pathways with the lowest continuation rates. The revalidated Foundation Year will be launched in 2026, and improvements in continuation rates will be closely tracked as part of the University's broader institutional strategy.

Several courses need to meet the 80% continuation threshold regarding continuation data. At Level 4, these courses include BA Business (with Foundation Year) at 62.5%, BA Business Leadership & Management at 72.2%, BA Early Childhood Studies at 76.2%, BA Education Studies & SENDI at 58.3%, BA Psychology at 57.1%, PGCE Secondary English at 63.2%, and BSc Sport Coaching & Physical Education at 61.5%. At Level 5, BA Business Leadership & Management has

a continuation rate of 61.5%, and at Level 6, it drops significantly to 30.8%. These programmes will be the focus of targeted interventions within Lincoln Bishop's Continuation and Retention Strategy to ensure that students in these programmes, particularly those from IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO backgrounds, receive the necessary support to improve their continuation rates.

Data showing that the overall continuation rates for full-time, first-degree students at Lincoln Bishop are 87.8%, 2.9 percentage points lower than the sector average of 90.5%, underscore the rationale for this intervention. Further analysis reveals a persistent gap between students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds.

Baseline data for key metrics such as retention and continuation rates will be established based on the 2023-24 academic year as a comparison point for tracking progress over time. This baseline will allow for assessing the year-on-year impact of the interventions on IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO students.

Although IMD Q1 students show a continuation rate of 85.3%, slightly above the sector average of 84.4%, and IMD Q2 students perform better with a continuation rate of 90.2%, exceeding the sector average of 86.3%, these figures highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the disparity between disadvantaged students and their peers. The Continuation and Retention Strategy focuses on stabilising continuation rates for IMD Q1 and Q2 students at 87% throughout this plan, alongside a similar target for ABMO students, in line with the University's commitment to equal opportunity for all students.

Lincoln Bishop developed this Continuation and Retention Strategy in February 2024 to achieve year-on-year improvements in student retention across all levels of study and all programmes. The strategy seeks to ensure that the continuation and completion rates of widening participation (WP) students compare favourably with the wider student population by adopting data-informed processes throughout the student journey, from pre-arrival to graduation. This strategy also addresses risks identified by the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including insufficient academic and personal support, lack of access to extracurricular activities, and cost pressures that may hinder a student's ability to complete their studies.

Several key activities to improve academic and non-academic support systems support the strategy. Lincoln Bishop's leadership, in collaboration with the Enrolment Planning Group, Registry and Faculty Administration Offices, and the Academic Enhancement Committee, will oversee the implementation of the strategy. Quarterly meetings with Faculty Heads of Programme (HoPs) will ensure the University's retention goals are met. The Students' Union (SU) and The Hub, which provides a comprehensive single point of contact for student support services, will also consider all stakeholder perspectives.

Improving pre-arrival and induction activities is a core component of the strategy. The University is focused on enhancing pre-arrival information and guidance, improving Welcome Week, and implementing a year-long retention-focused plan. To reduce early withdrawals, the University will pilot interventions such as summer schools and a Welcome Fortnight with the BA Business Leadership & Management programme in 2025-26. If successful, these interventions will be expanded to other programmes with challenging retention rates. Real-time data monitoring and health indicator dashboards will track student engagement and retention trends, focusing on students from IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO backgrounds. These dashboards will be reviewed quarterly with programme heads and incorporated into annual programme reviews.

In addition to data monitoring, the University will enhance student support and engagement through improved communications and the development of action plans for programmes experiencing retention challenges. Tools such as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) analytics and Blackboard logs will be employed to monitor engagement and identify students at risk of underperforming. These tools will also support improvements in curriculum design, creating more inclusive learning environments that encourage student engagement and foster a sense of

belonging. Formative assessments, academic integrity, and digital fluency will be embedded into programmes, with personalised support for students identified as at risk. Feedback from module evaluations, the SU's Representative Feedback Scheme (RFS), and the Lincoln Bishop Feedback on Campus University Study (FoCUS) will help refine these interventions.

Staff development is another critical component of the Continuation and Retention Strategy. The University will provide tutors with training on how to support non-engaged or failing students from target groups. Enhancements to the Personal Tutor system will ensure that students receive consistent, high-quality guidance throughout their academic journey. Staff induction and development programmes will be expanded to focus on retention, with increased uptake of training monitored to ensure that all subject areas are aligned with Lincoln Bishop's retention goals.

The strategy's short-term outcomes will include improved student engagement with learning platforms and resources, particularly among students from IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO backgrounds. These outcomes will be measured through metrics such as Blackboard logins, attendance at induction and summer schools, and usage of library resources. Real-time data dashboards will provide timely insights into student engagement, allowing the University to intervene early when students are identified as at risk of non-continuation.

Evaluation methods will include surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather qualitative insights from students and staff. Quantitative data will be collected from VLE analytics, Student Record System (SRS) data and HESA returns to assess student retention, continuation, and academic performance changes. Feedback mechanisms such as the FoCUS and module evaluations will provide additional narrative evidence on the effectiveness of pre-arrival and induction activities, staff training, and academic support interventions.

In the medium term, the University aims to achieve year-on-year improvements in retention rates for IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO students, as well as improved student well-being and a stronger sense of belonging. These outcomes will be tracked through student feedback in FoCUS, module evaluations, and VLE analytics. By continuously monitoring student engagement with academic programmes and support services, Lincoln Bishop can more effectively target resources.

Long-term outcomes will focus on sustained increases in retention and continuation rates for the identified programmes, particularly for IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO students. These improvements will contribute to higher rates of on-time degree completion. Longitudinal studies, SRS, and HESA student return data will be analysed to track these outcomes. Additionally, retention and continuation rate improvements are expected to impact the University's league table rankings and TEF metrics positively.

The effectiveness of the Continuation and Retention Strategy will be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative data. Key metrics include year-on-year retention rates, student feedback on pre-arrival and induction activities, attendance records, and participation data. Long-term success will be assessed through graduation rates and comparative analysis of league table rankings and TEF data. This evaluation will incorporate **Type 1 evaluations** (narrative and descriptive) to gather qualitative feedback from students, tutors, and staff, and **Type 2 evaluations** (empirical and correlative) to assess the impact of interventions through quantitative data, such as retention rates, attendance records, and student engagement metrics. While Type 3 evaluations are not feasible at this stage, the University aims to build its capacity for more rigorous evaluations in the future.

The evaluation's findings will be shared annually with internal stakeholders, including senior leadership, the Enrolment Planning Group, and Faculty Heads of Programme (HoPs). Evaluation outcomes will also be disseminated externally to the OfS, and a summary of key findings will be made publicly available on the University's website. An annual impact report will be developed and shared with schools and partner organisations, highlighting key insights and successful strategies.

Through this comprehensive approach, Lincoln Bishop is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students can succeed regardless of their background. By implementing targeted interventions, leveraging data-driven insights, and continuously monitoring progress, the University aims to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive the support they need to overcome barriers and achieve their full academic potential.

| <b>Activity</b>                      | <b>Outcomes</b>                                                                | <b>Method(s) of evaluation</b>                                                                 | <b>Summary of publication plan</b>                                              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-arrival & Induction Enhancements | Increased student engagement, reduced early withdrawals                        | <b>Surveys</b> (Type 1), <b>Blackboard analytics</b> (Type 2), participation tracking (Type 2) | Annual report to senior leadership, external publication through impact reports |
| Staff Development (Personal Tutors)  | Improved academic support, increased retention for IMD Q1/Q2 and ABMO students | <b>Focus groups</b> with staff and students (Type 1), retention data analysis (Type 2)         | Findings included in staff training materials and annual APP update             |
| Foundation Year Revalidation         | Improved continuation rates, reduced assessment points of failure              | <b>SRS and VLE analytics</b> (Type 2), longitudinal tracking (Type 2)                          | Findings reported annually to OfS and shared with students through newsletters  |

#### **Intervention strategy 4: PERSONAL TUTORING**

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.

Lincoln Bishop is committed to fostering social mobility and justice, ensuring that all qualified learners, regardless of their identity characteristics, demographic, or social background, have equal opportunities to access and succeed in HE. Central to this commitment is the Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention, which aims to improve student retention, continuation, and attainment levels, focusing on those from disadvantaged backgrounds, specifically in IMDQ1, Q2, and TUNDRAQ1.

Historically, Lincoln Bishop has provided personal tutoring across its academic portfolio, but its effectiveness needs to be more systematically implemented and monitored at the institutional level. The Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention seeks to address this by refreshing the approach to personal tutoring for all students, with additional emphasis on target groups identified in the APP.

This intervention is informed by a robust body of evidence from internal institutional data and broader sector research on the effectiveness of personal tutoring in improving student outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged groups. Research consistently shows that structured personal tutoring systems provide targeted academic and individual support and can positively impact student retention, continuation, and attainment rates. National findings from the OfS highlight that students from low-income backgrounds, particularly those in IMD Q1 and Q2 and students from minority ethnic backgrounds, often face additional challenges in navigating HE due to lower levels of academic preparedness, social capital, and confidence. Internal data at Lincoln Bishop reflects these national trends, revealing significant continuation and attainment gaps for students from these target groups. By implementing an enhanced personal tutoring system, the University aims to address these disparities and provide a supportive framework that empowers students to succeed.

Recent data highlights the need for this intervention. For the 2021-22 academic year, the overall continuation rate for full-time first-degree students at Lincoln Bishop was 87.8%, 2.9 percentage points lower than the sector average of 90.5%. There are also persistent gaps in continuation rates between IMDQ1 and IMDQ2 students. IMDQ1 students have a continuation rate of 85.3%, slightly above the sector average of 84.4%, while IMDQ2 students have a continuation rate of 90.2%, higher than the sector average of 86.3%. Although there is no continuation gap at IMDQ2, the small numbers at Lincoln Bishop mean that interventions targeted at both Q1 and Q2 students will likely have a more significant impact.

Additionally, the latest data shows that the University's overall completion rate is 88.2%, slightly higher than the sector average of 87.46%. However, a gap remains between the completion rates of IMDQ5 students and those in IMDQ1 and Q2, with a 3-percentage point difference. Furthermore, the attainment rates for IMDQ1 and Q2 students in achieving Good Honours are lower than their peers, with a current average of 60.2%, which Lincoln Bishop aims to increase to 61.5% by 2028/29, narrowing the gap between IMDQ1 and Q5 by at least 2.6 percentage points.

To address these challenges, the Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention will focus on several key areas. The University will deliver enhanced training and development to staff, updating them on revised priorities for personal tutoring. This includes administrative changes, identifying key target groups within personal tutor lists (such as IMDQ1/Q2 and TUNDRAQ1 students) and introducing guidance on critical questions during tutorials with these groups. A new Evaluation Toolkit will be introduced for staff and students to assess the effectiveness of personal tutorials, with collaboration from data analysts. This intervention will also involve a concerted effort to engage programme and course leaders, faculty business managers, and programme heads.

Student engagement in the personal tutoring process will be monitored and vary by programme, based on minimum guidance and expectations outlined in the Personal Development Planning Policy. The intervention aims to improve levels of student engagement through various activities, such as the introduction of systematic monitoring overseen by Heads of Programmes and Faculty, new induction sessions at the start of the academic year, and refresher sessions during staff development meetings. Additionally, 1:1 support for academic staff acting as personal tutors will be available through The Hub or on a programme-by-programme basis.

Training will be integrated into the induction process for new academic staff, focusing on the latest priorities and supporting target groups. This includes educating academic staff on the APP target groups and the enhanced personal tutoring approach, emphasising career readiness and the development of graduate attributes, particularly at Level 5. A toolkit approach will be developed to support these efforts, incorporating additional input from academic staff and tailored training for Programme Leads, Heads of Programmes, and personal tutors. The Personal Tutoring Handbook and associated VLE content will also be reviewed to ensure they reflect the updated priorities.

The intervention will pilot these enhancements in specific programmes, selecting one course from each Faculty portfolio area for a focused review of the effectiveness of training, personal tutoring, and awareness of APP groups. A new approach to Personal Tutor allocation will be implemented, ensuring that tutors are identified and tutees are allocated before enrolment for all Level 4 students, with subsequent refreshment at Levels 5 and 6. Student engagement with personal tutorials will be closely monitored, and this data will be cross-referenced with changes in continuation and completion rates for APP groups. Qualitative feedback will be gathered through student and staff surveys, focus groups, and interviews to assess the impact of personal tutoring on student confidence, academic preparedness, and sense of belonging. Additionally, quantitative data from VLE analytics, attendance records, and student feedback surveys (e.g., FoCUS) will be analysed to measure student engagement with personal tutoring resources.

Personal Tutors will be required to deliver at least two tutorial sessions per academic year to each student, with the structure varying between small group sessions or individual tutorials depending on the year of study and cohort size. The new resources will guide these sessions and focus on



APP target groups' needs. An emphasis will be placed on meeting with tutees early in the academic year, particularly for Level 4 students, to establish robust support systems from the outset.

To promote the importance of personal tutoring, the intervention will incorporate student vignettes and case studies into briefings and promotional materials, highlighting the benefits of engaging with personal tutorials. This will be reinforced during induction and transition sessions and within the guidance provided to students.

A Graduate Attributes Enhancement Module focused on Career Readiness will be developed to further support students' academic and career confidence. This module will aim to increase the likelihood of timely completion and success in securing graduate-level roles, particularly for IMDQ1 and Q2 students.

The rationale for this intervention builds on Lincoln Bishop's established ethos of personal tutoring, recognising that disadvantaged students often face more significant challenges in their studies and are at higher risk of non-completion. The Enhanced Personal Tutoring programme aims to support these students, particularly in assessment literacy at Level 5. The programme acknowledges that disadvantaged learners may lack the same academic, cultural, and social capital as their more advantaged peers and may also struggle with a sense of belonging and mattering at university. By drawing on sector-wide good practice, the programme seeks to address these barriers and promote success for all students through a cross-departmental model of personal tutoring.

The intervention is underpinned by several key assumptions: that differences in academic experience and outcomes are linked to the inclusivity of learning, teaching, and assessment practices; that relationships between staff and students, and among students themselves, play a crucial role; that varying levels of cultural and social capital influence student success; and that the support students receive in their daily university interactions is vital. Personal tutoring is particularly effective in increasing academic confidence and understanding. It is essential for disadvantaged learners who may have differing levels of academic preparedness from their peers. While it is acknowledged that personal tutoring cannot be causally linked to student outcomes, evidence suggests a positive impact on attainment, retention, and completion, even when controlling for student demographics, subject of study, and pre-entry qualifications.

The Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention addresses several critical risks to equality of opportunity at Lincoln Bishop. These include lower continuation rates among IMDQ1 students compared to their peers in higher quintiles, disparities in completion rates between students in IMDQ1 and Q2 versus IMDQ5, and significant attainment gaps where IMDQ1 and Q2 students are less likely to achieve Good Honours. Additionally, the previous lack of systematic implementation and monitoring of personal tutoring has led to inconsistent support for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which could negatively impact their academic success and continuation. The intervention also seeks to mitigate the challenges faced by underprivileged students who may enter university with lower academic, cultural, and social capital levels, placing them at a disadvantage compared to their peers. Inconsistent engagement with personal tutoring across different subjects and programmes further exacerbates these risks, underscoring the need for a more structured and targeted approach to support at-risk groups.

The University's Enhanced Personal Tutoring programme will ensure that all students receive personal tutoring, with specific enhancements for target groups such as IMDQ1 and Q2 students. For these groups, an additional session per semester will be provided at each level of study. The effectiveness of these enhancements will be measured by tracking student engagement, confidence levels, continuation rates, and overall satisfaction with the personal tutoring system. This evaluation will incorporate Type 1 evaluations (narrative and descriptive) to gather feedback on staff and student experiences and Type 2 evaluations (empirical and correlative) to track student engagement, retention, and completion rates. Lincoln Bishop aims to build toward more comprehensive evaluation types in the next APP cycle.

The outputs of this intervention will include a register of academic staff who have completed the updated training, systematic delivery of personal tutoring sessions across the academic portfolio, and visible signposting for staff to access 1:1 support. The staff induction process updates will include personal tutoring guidance, with attendance tracked through an audit. The FoCUS results will be reported annually to course teams and critical stakeholders, with granular data specific to APP characteristics. Baseline data on student continuation, completion, and satisfaction will be established based on the 2023-24 academic year to serve as a benchmark for future evaluations. This will allow the University to measure improvements in these metrics over time and assess the impact of the Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention.

Additionally, the dissemination of feedback through the Student Union's Representative Feedback Scheme will be enhanced to ensure that APP target group data is included in quarterly Faculty Executive Group meetings.

Engagement analytics, such as VLE documentation, will track student interaction with personal tutoring resources. Changes in continuation and completion rates will be monitored year-on-year, focusing on APP groups. Central records will provide clear notifications to personal tutors and tutees, with a tracker to monitor engagement.

In the short term, the intervention aims to increase staff awareness of enhancements to the Personal Tutoring programme, as evidenced by engagement with training events and student feedback statistics. In the medium term, the intervention seeks to improve continuation and completion rates, particularly for IMDQ1/Q2 and TUNDRAQ1 students, while also increasing academic confidence and self-efficacy related to career readiness. The long-term goal is to achieve sustained improvements in continuation, completion, and progression rates for these target groups, reducing the gaps between APP and non-APP cohorts.

Evaluation of the intervention will include quarterly analysis of student retention rates, staff engagement with personal tutoring, and updates to the FoCUS to include questions specifically about personal tutoring. Annual reviews of student continuation, completion, and progression data will be conducted, comparing outcomes for students who engaged with enhanced personal tutoring to those who did not, as well as to previous years and non-APP cohorts. The ultimate aim is to determine whether this intervention positively impacts continuation rates, closes gaps between target and non-target groups, and enhances overall student satisfaction with personal tutoring.

Findings from the evaluation will be shared quarterly with internal stakeholders, including senior leadership, Faculty Business Managers, and Heads of Programme. An annual evaluation report will be produced and shared with external stakeholders, including the OfS, and a summary of the key findings will be publicly available on the University's website.

The success of the Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention will depend on several external factors, including student engagement, which may be affected by time constraints, the cost-of-living crisis, employment pressures and staff buy-in to the new system. Despite these challenges, Lincoln Bishop is committed to creating an inclusive academic environment that supports the success of all students.

| <b>Activity</b>                     | <b>Outcomes</b>                                                   | <b>Method(s) of evaluation</b>                                          | <b>Summary of publication plan</b>                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enhanced Personal Tutor Training    | Improved staff awareness and engagement with target group support | <b>Surveys</b> (Type 1), engagement tracking (Type 2)                   | Annual report to stakeholders, summary published in Lincoln Bishop's impact report |
| Systematic Monitoring of Engagement | Increased student engagement and academic confidence              | <b>VLE analytics</b> (Type 2), <b>surveys and focus groups</b> (Type 1) | Results shared with course teams in quarterly reviews, annual impact report        |

| Activity                            | Outcomes                                           | Method(s) of evaluation                       | Summary of publication plan                                                       |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Career Readiness Enhancement Module | Improved career readiness and progression outcomes | <b>Surveys, progression tracking (Type 2)</b> | Findings included in annual report to OfS and published on the University website |

## Intervention strategy 5: GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES FRAMEWORK

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.

Lincoln Bishop University is deeply committed to advancing social mobility and justice by ensuring all students graduate with the strongest possible outcomes. The Graduate Attributes Framework (GAF) has been a cornerstone of the University's efforts to equip students with the skills and competencies required for success in the modern workforce. However, recognising the persistent inequalities in progression to highly skilled employment, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with known disabilities, Lincoln Bishop is now introducing significant enhancements to the GAF as part of its ongoing strategy to close these gaps and improve student outcomes.

This intervention is grounded in both institutional data and external research that highlight persistent inequalities in student outcomes, particularly in the progression to highly skilled employment for students with known disabilities. National datasets, including from the OfS, consistently show that disabled students are less likely to secure graduate-level employment compared to their peers. Research has demonstrated that tailored support, such as mentoring and structured employability frameworks, can significantly improve the employability outcomes for students with disabilities. At Lincoln Bishop, internal analysis has revealed that students with known disabilities face a progression gap when it comes to securing highly skilled roles. This gap, combined with feedback from student surveys, has informed the enhancement of the Graduate Attributes Framework to provide targeted support through mentoring, personal tutoring, and employability development. The introduction of these enhancements is further supported by sector-wide evidence, which underscores the importance of one-on-one guidance and skills development in improving the outcomes for disabled students.

### Existing GAF Initiatives

Lincoln Bishop's GAF has been meticulously structured to support students' development across three core strands, with six key attributes represented by the GA petals: Information Literacy, Academic Literacies, Digital Fluencies, Global Citizenship, Employability, and Being Enterprising. These petals are mapped against module learning outcomes (LO) within each academic programme, ensuring that students who complete their degrees automatically achieve the GA Award. This comprehensive mapping guarantees that the development of these attributes is deeply embedded in the academic curriculum, making them an integral part of the student's educational experience.

The effectiveness of the GAF is reflected in high levels of student satisfaction. According to the FoCUS conducted in the 2021/22 academic year, 83.1% of students expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for personal growth and development provided by the University. Furthermore, 80.6% of students felt that their experience at Lincoln Bishop effectively prepared them for further study or employment, and 69.7% were satisfied with how the Graduate Attributes were embedded within their programmes.

In addition to the GA Award, Lincoln Bishop has also implemented the GA Excellence Award, which is presented to students who actively engage in extracurricular activities related to the Graduate Attributes or through volunteering. Examples of such engagement include serving as an

SU Student Representative, participating in extracurricular activities provided by Careers, Learning Development, or Digital Learning, and volunteering at the Ermine Library.

The outcomes of the Graduate Attributes Framework have been further validated by the 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey, which revealed that 76.7% of the 2019/20 graduates felt their current work or studies utilised the skills acquired during their degree programmes. Additionally, the survey indicated that over 91% of the 2020/21 graduates were in employment or further study, with 77% of those employed being in high-skilled roles. These outcomes underscore the practical impact and relevance of the GA framework in real-world settings.

The University introduced the Target Connect software to support these initiatives in the 2021/22 academic year. This software has significantly improved the monitoring and support of students' development pathways, particularly for those pursuing the GA Excellence Award. As the primary PDP e-portfolio tool, Target Connect facilitates better personal tutoring and developmental tracking, ensuring students receive the guidance and support they need to succeed.

### **Enhancements to the GAF**

Despite the success of the GAF, Lincoln Bishop's data has identified persistent attainment gaps among students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds, who are more likely to perform less well in terms of achieving a good honours degree (2:1 or first) compared to their peers. These students face significant challenges that hinder their academic achievements, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to close these gaps.

Baseline data on student engagement, continuation rates, and employment progression for students with known disabilities will be established from the 2022/23 academic year. This data will serve as a benchmark for assessing the impact of the Enhanced GAF in subsequent years.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the University will implement the Personal Tutoring intervention strategy specifically at Levels 5 (L5) and 6 (L6). This enhanced strategy will focus on providing tailored support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, emphasising improving their academic performance and overall success. The personal tutoring system will be refined to offer additional guidance and mentoring, helping students navigate their academic challenges more effectively and achieve higher academic outcomes.

Moreover, the University will introduce a new GA Enhancement module at Level 5 to further develop students' skills and competencies. This module will allow students to explore specialised areas such as environmental sustainability, leadership in the workplace, business enterprise, and introduction to teaching. Although the GA Enhancement modules will be advertised starting in the 2024/25 academic year, they will not be available to Level 5 students until 2025/26. The implementation details for these modules will be finalised and communicated to students in due course.

Recognising that students with known disabilities are most at risk of not securing highly skilled employment, Lincoln Bishop will introduce specific interventions under the Enhanced GAF to support these students. These interventions include a comprehensive mentoring scheme to provide proactive links to bespoke support services such as learning support, welfare advice, career guidance, and library skills. This tailored support will help students with disabilities overcome challenges and fully engage with their studies, enhancing their post-graduation career prospects.

In addition to mentoring, the University will provide enhanced personal tutorial support to build confidence and career aspirations among students with known disabilities. Tutors will offer personalized guidance through the University's Personal Development Planning (PDP) e-portfolio system, ensuring that students receive the targeted support they need. Lincoln Bishop will also facilitate additional extracurricular activities as part of the GA Excellence Award, focusing on creating opportunities for students with disabilities to develop their employability skills.

Peer-to-peer support and networking opportunities will be crucial to the Enhanced GAF. The University will promote these opportunities, bringing together current students and alumni with known disabilities to share experiences and strategies for success. An annual career readiness survey will be conducted across all levels of study, with data analysed by student characteristics, including disability status, to inform continuous improvement efforts.

The evaluation will employ surveys, focus groups, and interviews to collect qualitative feedback on students' confidence and career readiness. Quantitative data will be gathered from Target Connect, PDP e-portfolios, and Graduate Outcomes surveys. Additionally, case studies will provide in-depth qualitative insights into students' experiences with known disabilities.

## **Evaluation and Outcomes**

The Enhanced GAF will be subject to rigorous evaluation to assess its impact on student outcomes. The evaluation will include a combination of Type 1 (narrative and descriptive) evaluations to gather feedback on student engagement and experiences and Type 2 (empirical and correlative) evaluations to track the correlation between GAF engagement and progression outcomes for students with disabilities. Over time, Lincoln Bishop aims to move towards more complex evaluations.

In the short term, Lincoln Bishop expects increased engagement with the GAF among students with disabilities, as evidenced by Target Connect data. There will also be a rise in the number of GA Certificates of Award and GA Excellence Awards earned by these students. Enhanced career readiness and confidence at Level 6, as reflected in career readiness surveys, and improved student feedback on personal growth and preparation for future employment will be critical indicators of success.

In the medium term, the University aims to achieve sustained increases in engagement with the GAF, particularly among students with disabilities. The University also seeks to enhance career readiness and confidence at Level 5 and above, with successful transitions into employment documented through case studies. These case studies will provide qualitative evidence of the GAF's impact on student outcomes and will be used to refine and improve the framework.

Long-term outcomes will focus on increasing the rates at which Lincoln Bishop graduates with known disabilities secure high-level jobs, as defined by the Graduate Outcomes survey. The University aims to reduce the employment progression gap for these graduates from 9% to 2.1% or less. The effectiveness of the Enhanced GAF will be evaluated through ongoing analysis of various datasets, including HESA, OfS and internal surveys, as well as qualitative data from focus groups with successful graduates.

Evaluation findings will be shared annually with the University's leadership team, course teams, and external stakeholders such as the OfS. A summary of findings will be published in Lincoln Bishop's annual impact report and made available to students and staff through the University's website and internal communication channels.

Lincoln Bishop's commitment to continuous improvement is further evidenced by the introduction of GA Enhancement (GAE) modules within the new undergraduate curriculum framework, starting from the 2023/24 academic year. These modules, which include topics such as environmental sustainability practice, leadership in the workplace, business enterprise, and introduction to teaching, allow students to tailor their educational experience to their specific needs and aspirations. The University's proactive approach to refining and expanding the GAF ensures that it remains a cornerstone of the student experience and a catalyst for personal and professional growth.

External reviews, such as the QAA (2016) HE Review (HER) report, have acknowledged the alignment of the GA programme with employer needs and personal development. The University's proactive approach to supporting graduates, mainly through the efforts of BG Futures, highlights its

ongoing commitment to enhancing employability. By providing targeted support and resources, BG Futures ensures that graduates are well-equipped to transition into their careers, further demonstrating the value and adaptability of the GA programme in meeting the needs of students, employers, and the broader community.

Through these enhancements, the University continues to demonstrate its commitment to social mobility, social justice, and the success of all its students. The Graduate Attributes Framework, with its newly introduced enhancements, will play a crucial role in ensuring that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with known disabilities, are equipped with the skills, confidence, and support necessary to succeed in the competitive graduate labour market.

| <b>Activity</b>                                 | <b>Outcomes</b>                                                                 | <b>Method(s) of evaluation</b>                                                      | <b>Summary of publication plan</b>                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GA Enhancement Module Implementation            | Improved career readiness and academic confidence at Level 5 and Level 6        | <b>Surveys</b> (Type 1), <b>case studies</b> , <b>progression tracking</b> (Type 2) | Annual impact report, internal communication to students and staff                      |
| Mentoring Scheme for Students with Disabilities | Increased employability and progression outcomes for students with disabilities | <b>Target Connect data</b> (Type 2), <b>focus groups</b> (Type 1)                   | Annual evaluation shared with stakeholders, summary in the University's impact report   |
| GA Excellence Award Participation               | Enhanced student engagement and employability skills                            | <b>Engagement analytics</b> , <b>Target Connect tracking</b> (Type 2)               | Results shared in annual report to leadership and published on the University's website |

## **Intervention strategy 6: PARTNERSHIPS AND STRATEGIC PURPOSE**

See ANNEX B for ToC details set out in detailed tabular form.

Lincoln Bishop University is committed to realising its strategic social purpose through the implementation of its Strategy 2030 aims and objectives. The University's leadership in delivery partnerships is a key component of driving Lincoln Bishop's ethos and culture beyond its home campus.

The development of delivery partnerships will require the University to understand gaps in recruitment patterns at partner sites, as well as gaps in the institutional profile that can be filled. The analysis of data at delivery partners, in terms of student characteristics and geographical demographics, can be harnessed together with key attributes of Lincoln Bishop's ethos (e.g. small class sizes and high staff student ratios) in order to realise the aims of achieving sector leading results and an overall commitment to social purpose.

Lincoln Bishop University's approach to access and participation is underpinned by a strong commitment to social purpose and to widening access to higher education for learners who are underrepresented within the sector. Central to this commitment is the University's partnership-based delivery model, through which programmes are delivered in collaboration with trusted partner institutions. These partnerships play a vital role in extending the University's reach beyond Lincolnshire and into communities where structural, socio-economic and educational barriers to higher education remain significant.

During 2024 and 2025, the University developed new partnerships fundamental to the new strategic direction forged by our new Vice Chancellor. Lincoln Bishop programmes are now being delivered via The Language Gallery (Birmingham and Nottingham) and London East Teacher Training Alliance (LETTA) in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The current portfolio at each location is as follows:

**The Language Gallery (Birmingham and Nottingham):**

Level 4 CERTHE in Business Management

**London East Teacher Training Alliance:**

FdA Education in Practice

FdA Early Childhood Education Practitioner

Additional partnerships for validation arrangements are also being expanded in order to broaden the University's influence within the sector.

The programmes delivered through TLG and LETTA primarily serve learners who are more likely to experience risks to equality of opportunity across the student lifecycle. These include students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds, ABMO students, mature learners, career changers, and those balancing study with employment or caring responsibilities. In the case of LETTA, provision is concentrated within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, an area characterised by high levels of deprivation alongside a diverse population and acute demand for qualified teachers. Similarly, The Language Gallery operates within urban centres that attract learners who may not otherwise engage with campus-based higher education due to geographical, financial or personal constraints.

While partnership delivery creates significant opportunity to widen access, the University recognises that students studying through partner institutions may face additional risks to continuation, attainment and progression if provision is not intentionally aligned with the objectives of the Access and Participation Plan. These risks align with those identified within the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, particularly risks associated with prior knowledge and skills, access to information and guidance, perceptions of higher education, insufficient academic and personal support, and limited access to graduate networks and progression opportunities. This intervention therefore seeks to ensure that partnership delivery is not peripheral, but instead is embedded as a core mechanism through which equality of opportunity is realised.

The primary aim of this intervention is to ensure that programme delivery at TLG and LETTA contributes directly to objectives on access, continuation, attainment and progression, while maintaining parity of academic standards, student experience and outcomes with Lincoln Bishop's provision delivered on the main campus. In doing so, the University seeks to use partnership delivery as a strategic lever to increase participation among underrepresented groups, support student success throughout the academic journey, and improve progression into skilled employment and further study.

In relation to access, partnership delivery enables the University to offer locally accessible and professionally relevant routes into higher education for students who may otherwise be excluded from traditional entry pathways. Programmes delivered at partner institutions are designed to be flexible and responsive to learner circumstances, supporting mature students, commuter learners and those returning to education after periods of interruption. Through these partnerships, the University is able to engage more effectively with communities that are underrepresented within its Lincoln-based student population, particularly ABMO students and learners from areas of high deprivation. This contributes directly to APP objectives focused on increasing participation from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds and improving ethnic diversity within the student body.

In relation to continuation and attainment, the University recognises the importance of ensuring that students studying through partner institutions have access to equivalent levels of academic, pastoral and wellbeing support as those studying on campus. This intervention therefore places a strong emphasis on alignment between partner delivery and the University's Continuation and Retention Strategy and Enhanced Personal Tutoring model. Academic oversight, staff development, curriculum design and assessment practices are centrally coordinated to ensure inclusive pedagogic approaches that support student confidence, belonging and academic progression. Particular attention is given to the needs of mature students and those with caring responsibilities, who may face heightened risk of non-continuation without flexible and responsive support structures.

Progression outcomes form a critical component of this intervention, particularly given the vocational and professional focus of programmes delivered at TLG and LETTA. Many students studying through these partnerships are seeking clear routes into employment or professional practice, including teaching, business and related sectors. Through partnership delivery, the University works to embed employability, professional identity and progression planning within the curriculum, while also ensuring that students are able to access University-wide careers, employability and graduate attributes support. This aligns with APP objectives focused on improving progression into skilled employment and further study, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who may lack access to professional networks.

The University will monitor the effectiveness of this intervention through a combination of narrative and empirical evaluation approaches. Student feedback, partner staff insight and qualitative engagement data will be used to understand student experience, sense of belonging and perceived barriers to success. In parallel, continuation, attainment and progression outcomes for partner-delivered cohorts will be tracked annually, disaggregated by APP characteristics and compared to on-campus benchmarks. This approach reflects the University's proportionate evaluation model and supports continuous improvement in partnership delivery.

The rationale underpinning this intervention is grounded in both sector evidence and institutional experience, which demonstrate that locally delivered, flexible and contextually relevant higher education provision can play a significant role in widening participation and supporting social mobility. By embedding partnership delivery explicitly within the APP framework, Lincoln Bishop University ensures that students studying through TLG and LETTA are fully included within its strategic commitment to equality of opportunity and are supported to achieve outcomes that reflect their academic potential.

In the short term, this intervention is expected to contribute to increased access to higher education among underrepresented learners in partner regions, alongside improved confidence, engagement and academic preparedness. In the medium term, the University anticipates improved continuation and attainment outcomes for partner cohorts, with reduced gaps between partner and campus-based provision. In the longer term, sustained progression into skilled employment and further study will support both individual social mobility and the University's broader civic and social purpose mission.

## **Whole provider approach**

As a widening participation HE institution, access and participation at Lincoln Bishop University are not isolated initiatives but fundamental aspects that inform and underpin everything we do across the University. As detailed in the introduction, the commitment to widening participation reaches all areas of the institution, ensuring the University's mission of inclusion and diversity is embedded in strategic decision-making and operational practices. This whole-provider approach is critical in addressing equality of opportunity and ensuring that students from underrepresented groups are supported across all stages of their academic journey.



In line with this commitment, the University's Access and Participation Working Group has thoroughly reviewed its performance over the last six months. This process has included evaluating the coherence and effectiveness of potential interventions throughout the entire student lifecycle—access, continuation, success, and progression—to ensure that these efforts have maximum impact. This has been done with a clear focus on ensuring that the University's widening participation strategies align with the institutional commitments outlined under the Equality Act 2010. In doing so, the University is taking proactive steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations among students from all backgrounds.

### **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Alignment.**

Lincoln Bishop University has focused on ensuring its participation strategies align with broader institutional goals around equality, diversity, and inclusion. The University's EDI strategies and published equality objectives are centred on ensuring that all students, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics, have equitable access to opportunities and the support needed to succeed in HE. For example, the University has taken targeted steps to address attainment gaps for students with disabilities, students from ABMO backgrounds, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (IMD Q1 and Q2), ensuring that these strategies align with the access and participation interventions.

The University recognises its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires it to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To meet these obligations, the University ensures that all access and participation initiatives are designed and implemented with equality considerations at the forefront. For example, the University's work to integrate its Student Services into a comprehensive single point of contact is designed to streamline access to support for all students, particularly those from underrepresented groups. This integration will launch in September 2024 and includes student-facing services such as the Library, Learning Development, Student Advice, and Careers and Employability. The co-location of these services aims to ensure that students, particularly those who face additional challenges, have seamless access to the full range of support available, helping to reduce barriers to engagement and improve retention and success outcomes.

### **Integrated Student Services**

Integrating student services forms a crucial part of the University's whole-provider approach, contributing to an enhanced student experience and improved outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The recent restructuring prioritises coordinating student support services to optimise student experience, leveraging the University's strengths as demonstrated by its successes in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards for Student Support and Accommodation in 2023, 2024 and 2025. This restructured support network will offer a single point of contact for students, including digital services, which will improve access to essential support functions and academic resources.

In addition to streamlining services, the University will introduce a new range of transition and induction activities, focusing on retention and progression. These activities will establish a new baseline for retention rates from the 2024/25 academic year onwards. An ongoing Student Journey project, launching in early 2025, will focus on building resilience and preparedness for university life, ensuring that students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, are supported as they navigate the challenges of HE.

### **Annual Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

Annual monitoring is central to the University's strategy for maintaining and improving the quality of its programmes and ensuring that all students can meet their intended learning outcomes. This process, which adheres to the principles of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for HE, allows for a systematic evaluation of academic standards and student success. Regular review and continuous improvement form the backbone of the University's commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The University's Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are critical in ensuring that all subject teams and professional support service areas reflect on student outcomes and highlight areas where interventions are needed. AMRs are reviewed by the Academic Enhancement Committee and inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Academic Health of the Institution Report, which the Senate and University Council subsequently discuss. This level of scrutiny ensures that access and participation priorities are embedded in the broader quality assurance framework, ensuring alignment with institutional and sector-level expectations.

Deliberative committees and team management meetings across academic and support service teams regularly review metrics such as retention data, student engagement data, and progression outcomes. This systematic monitoring ensures that interventions to improve outcomes for underrepresented students are effective and aligned with the University's overall equality objectives.

### **Commitment to a Holistic, Inclusive Environment**

Lincoln Bishop University's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive academic environment is further reflected in its alignment of widening participation efforts with the broader equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. This whole-provider approach ensures that every student, regardless of background, benefits from the support structures and can thrive at university. The University's participation strategies, aligned with its EDI goals, aim to remove barriers and create a learning environment that promotes equal opportunity for all students.

By embedding these strategies within the institution's fabric and maintaining rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluation, the University ensures that its approach to widening participation is comprehensive and sustainable. This commitment is central to achieving the University's broader strategic objectives and delivering on its mission to provide inclusive, high-quality HE for all.

### **Student consultation**

At Lincoln Bishop University, student engagement has been central to developing, planning, and monitoring the APP. The SU, particularly through the active involvement of the Vice President (VP) and President, has played a crucial role in ensuring that student voices are integrated at every stage of the APP process.

The SUVP has been a key member of the APP Committee and has taken the lead in representing the student perspective. Throughout the APP's development, the VP has ensured that students' views, concerns, and needs have been reflected in the strategies and interventions outlined in the plan. This engagement has provided a platform for student representation at every level of decision-making, ensuring that the plan is aligned with the interests and aspirations of the student community.

During the preparation of the APP, members of the University's leadership team engaged directly with the SU and the broader student body through various forums. One such engagement was a presentation by the Executive Dean of Teaching, Learning and Student Success at the SU Council, where the significance of the APP and the University's approach to widening participation were outlined. This meeting facilitated direct feedback from SU Council members, allowing student representatives to influence the direction of the plan.

Additionally, the APP was discussed at the Student Engagement Forum, an event held three times a year and jointly chaired by the SU and the Executive Dean of Teaching, Learning and Student Success. The Head of Student Success presented the key elements of the APP, sparking discussions about the plan's relevance to the student experience. These forums allowed a broad spectrum of students to engage with the APP process, ensuring their views were considered in shaping the final submission. Moreover, the SUVP worked closely with the SU Executive and Student Representatives to draft student responses to the APP. These drafts were shared with the wider SU Executive and student representatives to ensure that the final response accurately reflected the priorities of the University's students. This level of collaboration ensured that the student voice was incorporated into the APP meaningfully and representatively.

Throughout the APP's development and approval stages, the SU President and/or VP have been members of all deliberative committees, allowing continuous student input at every phase of the process. This representation has been crucial in shaping critical decisions, such as identifying targeted student groups and introducing innovative strategies to improve access and participation for all students.

Looking ahead, student involvement will continue to be embedded in the monitoring and evaluation of the APP. The SU VP and/or President will maintain their roles on deliberative committees, ensuring that student voices are included in the regular review of the plan's progress. Additionally, SU representatives will participate in task and finish groups that will oversee the specific interventions detailed in the APP. These groups will monitor the impact of the interventions, with student feedback playing a vital role in evaluating their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

Overall, Lincoln Bishop University is committed to ensuring students are at the heart of the APP. By involving students in both the strategic planning and the ongoing evaluation of the plan, we aim to create an inclusive and impactful approach to widening participation and improving student outcomes.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

Lincoln Bishop University recognises the importance of robust evaluation in assessing the effectiveness of its APP interventions. The evaluation strategy outlined here is designed to align with the OfS requirements while acknowledging the size and shape of the University. At this stage, the University will focus primarily on Type 1 evaluations, which rely on narrative and descriptive evidence, with some integration of Type 2 evaluations to assess empirical outcomes where data availability and resources allow. Type 3 evaluations, which seek to establish causal links through rigorous methods, are currently beyond the scope of this plan. However, the University is committed to building its capacity and resources to conduct such evaluations in the future, aiming towards a more comprehensive evaluation strategy in the next APP.

### **1. Purpose and approach**

The primary purpose of the University's evaluation strategy is to assess the impact of its interventions on improving access, continuation, success, and progression outcomes for disadvantaged student groups, including those from IMD Q1 and Q2, ABMO groups, disabled students, and care leavers. This evaluation framework will support institutional learning, enabling the continuous refinement of initiatives based on the evidence gathered. The University's approach is based on a realistic understanding of its current capacity, focusing on gathering meaningful insights while laying the groundwork for more rigorous evaluations in future years.

The University will adopt a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the effectiveness of its interventions. The evaluation strategy will be embedded across the student lifecycle, from pre-entry to progression into employment or further study, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of student outcomes. Given the current scope of the

APP, the focus will be on understanding trends, collecting descriptive evidence, and beginning to build a more robust empirical base to inform future evaluations.

## **2. Evaluation Framework**

### **Type 1 Evaluation (Narrative and Descriptive)**

The University's primary mode of evaluation will be Type 1 evaluations, which focus on collecting narrative evidence and providing descriptive insights into interventions' implementation and initial outcomes. This approach will be applied across most of the University's key initiatives, particularly those newly introduced or in the early stages of development. The emphasis will be gathering participant feedback, monitoring engagement levels, and identifying early indications of success or areas for improvement.

For example, the Aspiration Raising Intervention, which includes the First Steps to Study (FS2S) and Next Steps for Study (NS4S) programmes, will be evaluated using Type 1 methods. The evaluation will focus on gathering qualitative feedback from students, school representatives, and programme staff to understand how these interventions are being received and the extent to which they are helping to raise aspirations and awareness of HE. Data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and participation records, providing a rich narrative of the impact of these programmes.

Similarly, the Personal Tutoring Intervention, designed to offer enhanced support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, will also undergo a Type 1 evaluation. This evaluation will track student engagement with personal tutoring sessions, focusing on gathering qualitative feedback about the effectiveness of the support provided. This evidence will help the University make informed decisions about further developing and refining the tutoring system to meet the needs of target student groups better.

### **Type 2 Evaluation (Empirical and Correlative)**

While Type 1 evaluations will form the foundation of the University's evaluation strategy, the University will incorporate Type 2 evaluations where feasible. These evaluations will allow for the analysis of empirical data to identify correlations between interventions and student outcomes. They will be employed in areas where sufficient data and the maturity of the intervention allow for more in-depth analysis.

For instance, the Continuation and Retention Strategy will be evaluated using Type 2 methods to assess the impact of targeted interventions on continuation rates for IMD Q1, Q2, and ABMO students. The evaluation will involve tracking enrolment, retention, and continuation rates over time, comparing these outcomes with internal benchmarks and sector averages. Data from the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and attendance logs will be analysed to identify patterns in student engagement and academic performance. By employing Type 2 evaluations in this context, the University aims to understand better how specific interventions—such as enhanced pre-arrival activities and targeted retention support—influence student success.

### **Type 3 Evaluation (Causal and Experimental)**

At present, Type 3 evaluations, which seek to establish causal relationships through experimental or quasi-experimental designs, are beyond the scope of the University's current APP. The University acknowledges that these evaluations require significant resources, expertise, and capacity, which are not yet available. However, the University is committed to building its capacity to conduct more rigorous evaluations in future APP cycles, aiming to introduce Type 3 evaluations in the next iteration of the plan. This long-term vision will include enhancing the University's data

infrastructure and developing the necessary skills among staff to support the implementation of more complex evaluation designs.

### **3. Strengthening Evaluation Capacity**

#### **Building Staff Expertise and Capacity**

Lincoln Bishop University is committed to strengthening its evaluation activity by investing in staff training and development. This will include upskilling academic and professional services staff in essential evaluation methods, such as data analysis, qualitative research, and the practical application of Type 1 and Type 2 evaluations. The University will provide targeted professional development opportunities to ensure that staff involved in delivering and evaluating widening participation interventions have the necessary skills and knowledge to engage effectively with evaluation processes. This commitment will enable the University to provide more rigorous and insightful evaluations, gradually building the University's internal capacity for more complex evaluative practices.

#### **Collaborative Networks and External Expertise**

Lincoln Bishop University will also seek to strengthen its evaluation capacity through collaboration with external experts and networks. By engaging with evaluation specialists and external organisations and widening participation networks, the University will stay informed about sector-wide best practices and innovations in evaluation. These partnerships will provide valuable insights and guidance, supporting the University in improving its evaluation approaches. Additionally, the University will explore opportunities for external partnerships with institutions with established expertise in conducting Type 3 evaluations, providing a pathway for the University to build its capability in this area gradually.

### **4. Data Infrastructure and Systems Enhancement**

Lincoln Bishop University will enhance its data infrastructure to support more rigorous evaluation practices. Improving data collection mechanisms across student records, engagement metrics, and progression outcomes will enable more sophisticated analysis of student outcomes. The University will also seek to integrate data from various platforms (e.g., student records systems, VLE, HEAT) to track student journeys and outcomes over time comprehensively.

The development of real-time evaluation dashboards will provide staff and university leaders with accessible, up-to-date insights into student engagement and the impact of interventions. These dashboards will enable continuous monitoring and allow the University to identify areas where interventions may need adjustment or improvement. By enhancing its data infrastructure, the University will create the foundation for more robust evaluations and data-driven decision-making.

### **5. Long-Term Vision for Type 3 Evaluations**

Although Type 3 evaluations are beyond the scope of this APP, the University will work towards building the necessary capacity and expertise to implement these more complex evaluation designs in the future. This long-term vision includes setting milestones for developing staff expertise, improving data capabilities, and identifying interventions that could be evaluated using more rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental methods. The University will also explore external funding opportunities to support the development of Type 3 evaluations, including research grants and partnerships allowing the University to invest in the necessary resources for more advanced evaluations.

### **6. Enhancing Student and Stakeholder Feedback Mechanisms**

Lincoln Bishop University will place a strong emphasis on enhancing feedback mechanisms to ensure that the perspectives of students and stakeholders are incorporated into the evaluation processes. The University will formalise processes for gathering feedback from students who

participate in widening participation interventions, using focus groups, student panels, and online surveys to capture their experiences. This feedback will inform continuous improvements in programme design and delivery, ensuring that interventions are responsive to student needs.

Additionally, the University will strengthen stakeholder engagement by involving external partners, such as schools and employers, in the evaluation process. This will provide a broader perspective on the impact of interventions and help the University identify areas where external collaborations can enhance the effectiveness of its widening participation strategy.

## **7. Learning and Continuous Improvement**

The University's evaluation strategy is designed to inform continuous improvement across all areas of the student lifecycle. Annual reviews will assess progress against key performance indicators and identify opportunities to refine and enhance existing interventions. Evaluation findings will be shared with relevant stakeholders, including university leadership, academic staff, and external partners, ensuring that the lessons learned are integrated into future programme design and delivery. By prioritising learning and continuous improvement, the University will ensure that its interventions remain responsive to the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, contributing to long-term success in widening participation.

## **Provision of information to students**

### **Information on Tuition Fees and Financial Support**

The University will set, publish, and charge annual tuition fee rates subject to the maximum fee set by the Office for Students.

We will increase fees each year using the inflationary uplift subject to the OfS maximum fee (£9,535 in 2025/26). This applies to new and continuing students, and where students transfer between programmes if this results in a continuous period of study and no change in mode of study (e.g. from full-time to part-time). Tuition fees for BA/BSc (Hons) and PGCE/PGDE programmes are charged at the annual rate equivalent to the maximum OfS fee for that year (£9,535 in 2025/26). Foundation degree programmes are charged annually at 75% of the OfS maximum fee (£7,150 in 2025/26).

For 4-year Honours degree courses with an integrated Foundation Year, the fee for the Foundation Year element is charged at a rate of £5,760 (subject to inflationary increases in the OfS maximum fee for Foundation Years). Each subsequent year at Honours level will be charged at the applicable fee rate as set out in the above paragraph.

Lincoln Bishop University offers a comprehensive bursary scheme that has been intentionally designed to support students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds throughout their studies.

Our structured bursary scheme provides targeted financial support at the following rates:

For BA/BSc Honours and Level 4 to 6 programmes charging the maximum fee:

- Mature students (over 21 on entry) £800 per academic year
- POLAR Q1 students (young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods) £800 per academic year
- Student Parents: £1,000 per academic year
- Student Carers: £1,000 per academic year
- Estranged Students: £1,000 per academic year
- Care Leavers: £3,600 per academic year

For Foundation Degree (FdA) programmes:

- Mature students (over 21 on entry) £600 per academic year

- POLAR Q1 students (young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods) £600 per academic year
- Student Parents: £750 per academic year
- Student Carers: £750 per academic year
- Estranged Students: £750 per academic year
- Care Leavers: £3,600 per academic year

All bursary payments are made in three instalments throughout the academic year: 25% in October, 25% in January and 50% in April, aligned with the receipt of tuition fee income. Students are eligible for only one bursary category and receive support at the highest applicable rate if they qualify for multiple categories.

### **Additional support through the Learning Fund**

Complementing our bursary scheme, the University operates a Learning Fund accessible to all registered students (undergraduate and postgraduate).

This discretionary fund provides awards ranging from £100 to £2,600 per academic year, based on individual circumstances and needs. Priority consideration is given to:

- Students with disabilities
- Student parents
- Mature students
- Students from low-income backgrounds
- Final year students
- Estranged students
- Care experienced students

Learning Fund awards exceeding £500 are distributed in three instalments across the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Priority groups may receive lump sum payments, with award values determined through individual circumstance assessment.

### **Eligibility, application process and support**

Lincoln Bishop University's undergraduate students can access the Bursary scheme on the basis of the following eligibility criteria:

1. They are paying an annual tuition fee of at least £6,165.00 for courses starting on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.
2. They have a household income of £30,000 or less (as determined by Student Finance England or equivalent funding bodies)
3. They identify with one or more of the following target groups:
  - a. Mature students (over 21 on entry)
  - b. POLAR Q1 students (young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods)
  - c. Student Parents
  - d. Student Carers
  - e. Estranged Students
  - f. Care Experienced Students

Students whose circumstances cover more than one of the above groups will receive the highest value bursary applicable to them. Only one bursary is available per individual each academic year.

Lincoln Bishop University has designed its financial support application processes to be as accessible and barrier-free as possible, recognising that complex application procedures can discourage students from disadvantaged backgrounds from accessing available support. Our Student Advice & Wellbeing team provides proactive guidance throughout the application process,

offering one-to-one support sessions for students who may need additional assistance in working their way through the financial support system.

For standard bursary awards, we have streamlined the process to minimise the administrative burden on students. Most eligibility checks are conducted automatically through data-sharing agreements with Student Finance England. This approach ensures eligible students receive their entitled support without facing additional bureaucratic barriers where possible.

We operate a supportive evidence-gathering process for enhanced bursaries targeting our most vulnerable students (Care Experienced, Estranged students, Student Parents, and Student Carers). Our Student Advice & Wellbeing team works flexibly with students to accept various forms of evidence, recognising that standard documentation may not always be available or accessible. This approach ensures that students' circumstances, rather than their ability to navigate complex systems, determine their access to support.

### **An indicator of our commitment to Access and Participation**

This comprehensive financial support package is crucial to the University's broader strategy to eliminate economic barriers to HE access and success. Our approach aligns with OfS priorities for reducing gaps in access, continuation, and attainment for underrepresented groups. Regular evaluation of our financial support measures, through both quantitative analysis and qualitative feedback from recipients, ensures that our provision remains responsive to student needs and effectively supports successful outcomes. This evaluation informs annual reviews of our support packages, enabling us to adapt and enhance our provision in response to emerging student needs and changes in the broader economic context.

Through this structured yet flexible approach to financial support, the University demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that financial circumstances allow talented individuals to access HE or achieve their full potential while studying with us. Our financial support framework works alongside our other access and participation interventions detailed in our new plan to create a comprehensive support system that promotes access to and success within HE for all our students, no matter their backgrounds.

### **Publication of the Approved APP**

Lincoln Bishop's approved APP will be publicly available on the University's website and accessible via the list of Policies and Procedures. This ensures transparency and allows all stakeholders to review the University's commitments and actions in widening participation and supporting underrepresented student groups.



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

Based on our performance assessment and consideration of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), several risks have been identified across the student journey at Lincoln Bishop University, from access to progression, which impact the equality of opportunity for underrepresented undergraduate learner groups. The identified risks pertain to students from low-income households, first in family to attend university, ABMO students, and students with disabilities, among others. These risks highlight areas that require focused interventions to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have equitable opportunities to succeed at the University.

### **Access Risks**

Several risks affect the access stage for students from underrepresented groups. One of the key risks is knowledge and skills (OfS Risk 1). Students from low-income households, first in family to attend university, and ABMO students may have had different preparatory opportunities than their peers, leading to gaps in the knowledge and skills required to apply successfully to HE. This is particularly evident in the low participation rates in HE within the Greater Lincolnshire region, which highlights a systemic disadvantage for these groups. Additionally, IMD Q1+Q2 data reflects that these students may face particular challenges in acquiring the skills necessary to enter HE.

A second risk relates to information and guidance (OfS Risk 2). The low recruitment of ABMO students, alongside a stable but high proportion of POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 students, suggests that there may need to be more information and guidance available to these groups regarding HE options and the long-term benefits of pursuing further education. Targeted outreach and guidance are necessary for these underrepresented groups to understand how HE can benefit them. This gap is particularly significant in ABMO and IMD Q1 and Q2 students, whose limited information access affects their decision-making process.

A third risk involves the perception of HE (OfS Risk 3). Despite the University's widening participation mission, the low proportion of ABMO students at the University suggests that some students might perceive HE, or the University specifically, as inaccessible or unwelcoming. Sociocultural factors or perceived barriers may prevent these students from feeling that HE is viable, particularly in a predominantly White region such as Lincolnshire. Targeted interventions, including aspiration-raising programs and contextual offers, are necessary to combat these perceptions and enhance the appeal of HE to underrepresented groups.

Another notable risk is the limited choice of course type and delivery mode (OfS Risk 5). The University's recruitment data suggests that there may be insufficient course options or flexible delivery modes that appeal to or are accessible for specific student demographics, particularly those from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas or ABMO backgrounds. To increase access, the University may need to explore how course offerings and delivery methods can be better tailored to meet the diverse needs of underrepresented groups, particularly as the recruitment gap between IMD Q5 and Q1 remains a concern.

### **Continuation Risks**

Several risks are evident in the continuation phase, where certain groups are at higher risk of withdrawing or not completing their studies. One of these risks is insufficient academic support (OfS Risk 6). The data shows a decline in continuation rates among specific groups, such as POLAR4 Q5 students and care leavers, indicating that these students may need more personalised academic support to help them succeed and remain in HE. Tailored academic interventions, including personal tutoring and enhanced academic support, are required to improve retention and ensure students from underrepresented groups can thrive at the University.

There is also a risk related to insufficient personal support (OfS Risk 7). Care leavers, for example, have a continuation rate of 82%, significantly lower than the overall undergraduate population. This suggests that care leavers and other vulnerable students require more comprehensive personal support systems, including access to non-academic support and extracurricular activities, to improve their retention rates and overall experience at the University.

Another significant risk is the mental health of underrepresented students (OfS Risk 8). Groups such as students with known disabilities and care leavers are likely to face higher levels of stress and mental health challenges, which can negatively impact their ability to continue their studies. The fluctuation in continuation rates for these groups highlights the need for robust mental health support mechanisms to ensure students' well-being throughout their academic journey.

Lastly, cost pressures significantly risk students' continuation (OfS Risk 10). Financial pressures, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds, can severely impact their ability to remain enrolled in HE. The University's data shows that students from these groups are particularly vulnerable to cost pressures, necessitating targeted financial support, especially given the increase in non-continuation among IMD Q1 and Q2 students.

### **Attainment Risks**

Several attainment risks that impact underrepresented groups' ability to achieve high degree classifications have been identified. The most notable risk is insufficient academic support (OfS Risk 6). The significant attainment gaps between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students and between ABMO and White students suggest that these students require more tailored academic support to help them achieve upper-degree classifications. These students are less likely to reach their full educational potential without this support.

Insufficient personal support is another crucial risk in this phase (OfS Risk 7). The varying attainment rates for mature students and those with disabilities indicate that non-academic factors, including personal support, can significantly influence academic performance. Students facing personal or emotional challenges may struggle to perform academically, highlighting the need for comprehensive support services. Financial pressures also play a role, as students from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds face increasing challenges, potentially exacerbating the attainment gaps.

Mental health is also a crucial risk in the attainment phase (OfS Risk 8). Mental health challenges can affect students' ability to focus, complete coursework, and perform well on assessments. The decline in attainment rates for students with disabilities suggests that the University needs to provide more support in addressing mental health issues that impact students' academic outcomes.

### **Completion Risks**

Completion risks are closely linked to academic and personal support needs. One critical risk is insufficient academic support (OfS Risk 6). Attainment gaps and issues with continuation for underrepresented groups also affect overall completion rates. With adequate academic support, students may be able to finish their degrees.

Similarly, insufficient personal support (OfS Risk 7) is a risk that can affect completion rates, particularly for care leavers and students with disabilities, who often face unique challenges that can impede their ability to complete their studies. These students require more extensive support services to help them overcome the obstacles they face and successfully graduate.

Cost pressures are another significant risk in the completion phase (OfS Risk 10). Financial difficulties can pose a significant barrier to completion, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds. These students may face increased financial burdens that make it difficult to focus on their studies and complete their degrees.

### **Progression Risks**

Finally, progression to employment or further study presents its own set of risks for underrepresented groups. One of the key risks in this phase is knowledge and skills (OfS Risk 1). Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may need more skills and knowledge to pursue postgraduate opportunities or secure skilled employment, impacting their progression rates. This is particularly evident in the progression gaps for students from low-income backgrounds and ABMO students.

Another progression risk involves insufficient information and guidance (OfS Risk 2). The data suggests that some students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, may need more advice on leveraging their education for career progression. This highlights the need for targeted

career guidance and graduate attributes frameworks to help students from underrepresented groups navigate their future careers effectively.

Another significant risk in the progression phase is the need for ongoing academic support (OfS Risk 6). Continued academic support is essential to prepare students for postgraduate studies or highly skilled employment. Without it, students may struggle to transition successfully into their next steps after graduation.

Lastly, progression from HE (OfS Risk 12) is a notable risk. The lower progression rates for certain groups, such as ABMO students and those from low-income households, indicate that these students may need equal opportunities to secure positive post-graduation outcomes. Ensuring all students can access career development resources and networks will be vital to addressing this risk.

## Annex B: The detailed ToCs

### Intervention Strategy 1: Aspiration Raising ToC

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| Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity) | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to advancing social mobility and social justice. We believe education is a common good, and to foster a diverse and representative society, it is essential to provide equal opportunities for all qualified learners to access university education, regardless of their identity characteristics, demographics, or social background. Moreover, we must ensure that all learners have the potential to succeed once they arrive at university. At Lincoln Bishop, we value inclusion and the creation of community and belonging through thoughtful actions designed to support individuals, benefiting both them and our communities. Our goal is to help students develop the skills necessary for a life of impact, while providing them with the guidance and community needed to realise that goal.</p> <p>The University is located in a region where some districts rank among the most socio-economically deprived in the country. Only 29% of the working-age population in Greater Lincolnshire are qualified at NVQ Level 4 or above, which is 11% below the national average. The gap widens further for those aged 25-29, with 13% below the national average. Additionally, just under half of local graduates stay in the East Midlands after graduation. This reflects the fact that parts of Greater Lincolnshire are particularly affected by the "graduate cold spot" phenomenon, characterised by lower overall levels of degree-educated residents.</p> <p>Amid high levels of multiple deprivation, poor social mobility prospects, and low-skilled employment across the county, Lincoln Bishop plays a critical role in raising aspirations, supporting student achievement, and helping students secure employment and further study opportunities. The University has been at the forefront of widening participation and outreach activity in Greater Lincolnshire by leading the county's Uni Connect consortium of higher education providers (LiNCHigher).</p> <p>Our regional schools' aspiration-raising intervention will address the risks identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>OfS Risk 1 - Knowledge and Skills:</b> Students may not have equal opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that align with their expectations and ambitions.</li><li>• <b>OfS Risk 2 - Information and Guidance:</b> Students may not have equal access to information and guidance that would enable them to develop their ambitions, expectations, and make informed choices about higher education options.</li><li>• <b>OfS Risk 3 - Perception of Higher Education:</b> Some students may not feel confident in applying to higher education or to certain types of institutions, despite being qualified, due to perceived barriers.</li><li>• <b>OfS Risk 4 - Application Success Rates:</b> Students may face difficulties being accepted to higher education courses, or to particular institutions, even when qualified.</li></ul> |
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| Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)                                                                                                                           | To increase the proportion of IMD Q1 and Q2 students with the ambition to study on undergraduate programmes from 40% to 44.5% by the academic year 2028/29. |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Inputs                                                                                                                                                                   | Activities                                                                                                                                                  | Outputs | Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Process                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                             |         | Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                             |         | Short Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Medium Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Long term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Staffing of Aspiration-Raising and Outreach Activity</b><br>Allocating sufficient staff resources to effectively deliver aspiration-raising and outreach initiatives. |                                                                                                                                                             |         | <b>First Steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased understanding of what university is like.</li> <li>Enhanced awareness of how to find out more about university options.</li> <li>Improved confidence in study skills, as demonstrated via the pre/post participant survey.</li> </ul> | <b>First Steps:</b><br>Programme participants will be stored in the HEAT database, allowing for tracking of student participation across different activities and years. This will enable us to identify students who participate in multiple year groups of the First Steps Programme (e.g., if a student is on the Year 9 programme, we can track if they participate again in Year 10 and/or 11). Post-16, we will use these records to identify progression onto the Next Steps Programme for Year 12 students. | <b>For Both Programmes:</b><br>Participants will apply to Lincoln Bishop(tracked through the internal system) and other HEIs (tracked through HESA data via the HEAT database). |

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| <p><b>First Steps Programme</b><br/>Includes staff time, student ambassadors' time, printing of materials, travel expenses, and administrative support for evaluation purposes.</p> | <p><b>First Steps &amp; Next Steps Programmes</b><br/><b>First Steps Programme</b><br/>(30 students per school group, max 20 school groups)<br/><b>Year 9:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 1:</b> Introduction to Higher Education – April (one-hour session delivered in school).</li> <li>• <b>Step 2:</b> Sessions on budgeting, student life, and decision-making – May (campus visit to Lincoln Bishop).</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 10:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 1:</b> Revision skills – December (one-hour session delivered in school).</li> <li>• <b>Step 2:</b> Sessions on note-taking, critical thinking, and time management – January/February (campus visit to Lincoln Bishop).</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 11:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 1:</b> Decision making – October (one-hour session delivered in school).</li> <li>• <b>Step 2:</b> Research skills, transferable skills, and presentation skills – December (campus visit to Lincoln Bishop).</li> </ul> | <p><b>First Steps Programme: Data Collection and Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Groups on the Programme:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 9, Year 10, and Year 11 school groups from different schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Number of Students on Each Programme:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 students per school group, up to a maximum of 20 school groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Data Forms Collected:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Data forms from participating students will be collected and processed. All data will be stored securely in the HEAT (Higher Education Access Tracker) database for tracking and evaluation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Evaluation Forms Collected:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-programme and post-programme surveys will be collected to assess the impact of the programme</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased confidence in making post-18 educational decisions.</li> <li>• Enhanced knowledge of higher education options.</li> <li>• Reduced concerns about the transition to higher education.</li> <li>• Improved confidence in study skills, as demonstrated via the pre/post participant survey.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Next Steps:</b><br/>At Step 4 (final step) of the Next Steps Programme, we will promote UniBuddy as an online platform for students to continue interacting with student ambassadors and/or staff throughout Year 13. This platform will allow students to ask further questions about higher education, applications, and progression. We will use UniBuddy data (with identifiable data such as county and names) and cross-check it with registers in the HEAT database to identify students who have participated in the Next Steps Programme and continue to engage throughout Year 13.</p> | <p><b>Increased Entrants to HE Locally and Regionally:</b><br/>A measurable increase in the number of participants entering higher education, both locally and regionally.</p> |
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|                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | on student aspirations, knowledge of higher education, and confidence in pursuing university education.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Next Steps Programme</b><br>Staff time, student ambassadors' time, printing of materials, travel expenses, and administrative support for evaluation. | <b>Next Steps Programme</b><br>(30 students per school/college, max 12 groups)<br>Next Steps is delivered in four linked sessions, occurring at regular intervals throughout Year 12. The focus is on developing independent learning skills required for progression to university. Students receive information, advice, and guidance from professional support staff, academic staff, and Lincoln Bishop student ambassadors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 1:</b> Introduction to higher education and methods of learning. (one hour, November – in school).</li> <li>• <b>Step 2:</b> Exploring learning approaches at university. (January – campus visit to Lincoln Bishop).</li> </ul> | <b>Next Steps Programme: Data Collection and Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School/College Groups on the Programme:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 12 and first-year FE groups from participating schools and colleges.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Number of Students on Each Programme:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 students per school/college group, up to a maximum of 12 groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Data Forms Collected:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Data forms will be processed and stored on the HEAT (Higher Education Access Tracker) database, ensuring accurate tracking of</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |  | <b>Increased Rates of IMDQ1 and Q2 Students at Lincoln Bishop:</b><br>A higher volume and proportion of students from IMDQ1 and Q2 backgrounds enrolling and studying at the University. |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 3:</b> Research skills, linked to students' own research into higher education. (one hour, March – in school).</li> <li>• <b>Step 4:</b> Final questions and preparing for university applications. (July – campus visit to Lincoln Bishop).</li> </ul> | <p>participants' progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluation Forms Collected:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-programme and post-programme surveys will be administered to evaluate changes in aspirations, knowledge, and confidence in progressing to higher education.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                      |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Pre- and Post-Participant Survey</b></p> <p>Development of a survey to assess students' appetite for and confidence in entering higher education, administered before and after participation in the programmes.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Tracking of Lincoln Bishop Entrants and APP Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Process for Identifying Lincoln Bishop Entrants:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The number of Lincoln Bishop entrants tracked from the First Steps and Next Steps programmes who are part of IMDQ1 and IMDQ2 groups will be monitored to assess access, continuation, attainment, and progression outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |  | <p><b>Improved Student Retention and Performance:</b></p> <p>Programme participants demonstrate better retention and academic performance compared to other entrants, indicating the effectiveness of the interventions.</p> |



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| <b>Development of Data Tracking Systems</b><br>Creation of data tracking systems integrated with HEAT data to monitor participants' progress through their educational journey, both at a) Lincoln Bishop and b) in higher education more generally. | <b>Tracking Participants</b><br>Ensure that participants of both programmes who enrol at Lincoln Bishop can be tracked as a subset of IMDQ1 and Q2 students in terms of access, continuation, outcomes, and progression.   | <b>Increase in IMDQ1 and Q2 Entrants at Lincoln Bishop</b><br>The number of IMDQ1 and Q2 students who participated in the programmes and enrolled at Lincoln Bishop will be recorded. This data will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Aspiration Raising Intervention.                                                                                                                               |  |  | <b>Sustained Narrowing of Gap in Access and Continuation for IMDQ1/Q2 Students:</b><br>A continued reduction in the gap in access and continuation rates between IMDQ1/Q2 students and their peers.                                                       |
| <b>Promotion of Lincoln Bishop's 'Contextual Offers' Intervention</b><br>Promotion of the 'Contextual Offers' intervention at Stage 4 of the evaluation for the Next Steps programme.                                                                | <b>Promotion of Contextual Offers</b><br>Promote the contextual offer programme to potential applicants during Widening Participation activities, specifically at Step 4 (evaluation process) of the Next Steps programme. | <b>Participation Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Programme Participation Tracking:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of participants in both the First Steps and Next Steps programmes will be recorded. The proportion of students from IMDQ1 and Q2 will be specifically monitored to assess the reach and impact of these interventions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |  | <b>Narrowing of the Application-to-Enrolment Gap Between IMDQ5 and Q1/Q2:</b><br>A closing of the gap between IMDQ5 and IMDQ1/Q2 students in terms of application-to-enrolment ratios, showing more equitable outcomes in higher education participation. |
| <b>Collection and Analysis of Participant Postcodes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Contextual Offer for Next Steps Participants</b><br>The number of students who complete the Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| Collection and analysis of participant postcode data to determine IMD Q1 and Q2 status. |  | Programme and receive a contextual offer of 16 UCAS tariff points, giving them an enhanced opportunity to access higher education at the University. |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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|                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluation to assess the outcomes                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                      | Short Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                | Medium Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                                                   | Long Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                      | Pre and Post Programme Evaluation Survey Results: Surveys will measure immediate changes in participants' understanding of university, study skills, and confidence. | FIRST STEPS - HEAT Tracking. Tracking students who participate in multiple years (e.g., from Year 9 to Year 11 in First Steps). Monitoring if students continue into the Next Steps Programme.           | HEAT: Use HEAT data to track if participants apply to and enrol in Lincoln Bishop or other HE institutions. Track their academic performance and retention through the student lifecycle. |
|                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                      | Data Collected in HEAT Database: Number of participants who complete the programmes. Participation data processed into HEAT database for immediate tracking.         | NEXT STEPS - UNIBUDDY engagement: Use UniBuddy to track ongoing student engagement in Year 13. Cross-check UniBuddy data with HEAT database to identify students who continue to engage and apply to HE. | Monitor long-term outcomes using HESA and HEAT data. Track applications and enrolments of IMD Q1/Q2 students who participated in the programmes.                                          |
|                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                      | Completion rates: Number of                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Compare retention and                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                           | participants who complete each stage of the First Steps and Next Steps Programmes will be recorded.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | academic performance of programme participants with other entrants at Lincoln Bishop, monitoring differences by IMD quintile. |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | Assess whether gaps between IMD Q1/Q2 and IMD Q5 students in terms of access, continuation, and performance narrow over time. |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                               |
| Rationale and Assumptions | <p><b>Rationale:</b> The activities within this intervention strategy have been designed to address prior academic results, which impact school or further education (FE) college pupils' equality of opportunity to have the knowledge and skills needed to access higher education (HE) (i.e., factors that may affect being awarded the grades required to enter HE). Education is a key driver of social mobility (The Sutton Trust, 2021), and it is important that interventions are designed to encourage educational engagement, raise academic results, and begin as early as possible in a student's educational life cycle (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). Gaps in academic results between student groups who are underrepresented in HE and their peers emerge as early as primary school and persist throughout their later education and employment (Office for Students, 2022). Research highlights the importance of targeting interventions at secondary-aged pupils and younger, as the effects of deprivation on equality of opportunity in educational experiences are evident by this stage (Harrison et al., 2018).</p> <p>The activities within this intervention strategy have been designed to address these disparities by increasing knowledge and skills, providing information and guidance, and working on changing perceptions of higher education (HE), including addressing limited choices of course type and delivery mode, to encourage certain student groups to access HE. There is a disparity between students who are disadvantaged or from the most deprived areas progressing into HE compared to their peers (TASO, 2022a). Research notes that this may be due to students from more disadvantaged backgrounds being uncertain about their post-school pathways and choices (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). Following the impact of COVID-19, pupils were less likely to access information and guidance on post-school pathways, leaving them feeling less confident and more uncertain about their options and career choices (Huband-Thompson et al., 2021).</p> |  |                                                                                                                               |

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|  | <p>Recommendations for interventions come from research on disadvantaged school pupils (those from the most deprived areas or receiving free school meals) or white British working-class males. The recommendations emphasize the need to ensure that disadvantaged students, regardless of gender, gain the information, advice, knowledge, and skills to understand career pathways, including subject choices that lead to HE (Sammons et al., 2015). Interventions should also focus on helping pupils make well-informed decisions about their futures by working to remove barriers, such as low aspirations and low confidence, which may prevent them from aspiring to and accessing HE (Aimhigher Plus, 2019).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|  | <p><b>Assumptions:</b> If we raise aspirations in school, those pupils are more likely to progress into higher education. The Next Steps Programme was established after consultation with regional post-16 education providers, who helped us identify students lacking confidence in their ability to progress into higher education. Certain groups of students in schools are particularly likely to lack confidence, such as those who would be the first in their family to attend university. Through discussions with schools, we also identified that students may lack confidence in their study skills and in understanding which skills are necessary for success in higher education. Furthermore, some students may lack general aspirations for future study.</p> <p>The First Steps Programme was developed to meet the needs of students in lower year groups (Years 9–11), aiming to support students' aspirations and confidence earlier in their educational journey. This programme was designed to fill a gap left by the conclusion of Aimhigher, which previously offered similar opportunities for these students in the local area.</p> |

## Intervention Strategy 2: Contextual Offers ToC

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| <p>Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity)</p> | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to social mobility and social justice. Education is a common good. As such, we believe that to create a diverse and representative society, we must ensure equal opportunities for all qualified learners to access university education, irrespective of their identity characteristics, demographic, or social background. Once they arrive at university, we must ensure that all learners have the potential to succeed. Lincoln Bishop values inclusion and the creation of community and belonging through thoughtful action to support individuals, both for their benefit and for the benefit of our communities. Lincoln Bishop aims to support students in developing the skills needed for a life of impact, with the guidance and community to help them realise that aim.</p> <p>In the 2022/23 academic year, our proportion of entrants from IMD Q1 (most deprived) areas was 3.2 percentage points lower than that of IMD Q5 entrants. This is a persistent issue that has been observed over the past five years. Similarly, in the same year, the proportion of entrants from ABMO backgrounds was 91 percentage points lower than that of white students at Lincoln Bishop. Additionally, there is an ongoing and persistent gap between male and female students enrolling at the University. In 2022/23, this gap was 48.3 percentage points; our aim is to narrow this gap by 1.2% by the end of this plan.</p> <p>Our contextual admissions process aims to address persistent inequalities in access to higher education. We will make reduced tariff offers that consider systemic barriers to exclusion by intentionally taking positive action to provide access to higher education for students who are most disadvantaged and underserved. We will do this in a staged approach to build capacity and ensure sustainability of the activity. Prior to the start of this new APP in 2025-26, the University will test the intervention by piloting it with POLAR4 Q1 &amp; Q2 applicants. Directly following this pilot, the Contextual Offers intervention will initially focus on applicants from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas. The inclusion of IMD Q1 and Q2 will enhance the intervention, which already includes care-experienced learners, disabled learners, young carers, refugees, GRT communities, military families, and estranged learners.</p> <p>Following the initial focus on IMD Q1&amp;2, this intervention will integrate an additional focus on ABMO students in its third year of full operation, starting in 2027-28.</p> <p>The Contextual Offers Intervention will address risks identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OfS Risk 1 - Knowledge and Skills: Students may not have equal opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.</li> <li>• OfS Risk 2 - Information and Guidance: Students may not have equal opportunities to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations or to make informed choices about their higher education options.</li> <li>• OfS Risk 3 - Perception of HE: Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.</li> <li>• OfS Risk 4 - Application Success Rates: Students may not be accepted onto a higher education course or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.</li> </ul> |
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| Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the proportion of IMD Q1+Q2 students recruited and enrolled in Lincoln Bishop undergraduate programmes from 40% to 44.5% by 2028/29.</li> <li>To increase the proportion of ABMO students recruited and enrolled in Lincoln Bishop undergraduate programmes from 4% to 11% by 2028/29.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Inputs                                                                                                      | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Outcomes                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                       |
| Process                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Impact                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Short Term Outcomes                                                                                        | Medium Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                  | Long term Outcomes                                                                                                                                    |
| Development of data tracking systems and processes to track CO entrants throughout their student lifecycle. | Create/enhance university infrastructure to facilitate the contextual offers programme. Progress work to understand if and how IMD can be captured by the CRM or explore alternative processes if scoping of the CRM shows that this cannot be done.                                                                                                 | <p>A streamlined process is in place, allowing the admissions team to easily access all relevant student characteristic data (e.g., IMD, ethnicity).</p> <p>Contextual offers made: An increase in the number of contextual offers recorded.</p> | Contributes to Lincoln Bishop's data maturity by improving data collection, tracking, and cohort analysis. | Higher rates (volume and proportion) of applicants from IMD Q1 and Q2 applying to the University.                                                                                     | Increased rates (volume and proportion) of students from IMD Q1 and Q2 (most deprived) areas enrolling in Higher Education courses at the University. |
| Applicant's time to complete UCAS applications and submit them.                                             | Applicants apply for a university place with a reduced tariff offer. Typically, if an applicant meets one criterion, the standard tariff will be reduced by a minimum of 16 points. If an applicant meets two or more criteria, the standard tariff will be reduced by a minimum of 32 points.                                                       | Contextual applicants enrolled: Increased enrolment numbers recorded, with IMDQ1/Q2 enrollers reported and added to the Personal Tutoring spreadsheet by the Data team.                                                                          | Moves Lincoln Bishop from the pilot phase to a fully integrated contextual offers system.                  | Greater conversion rates from IMD Q1 and Q2 (application to enrolment), supporting the offer-making strategy and aligning Lincoln Bishop with sector standards, facilitating a return | Increased rates (volume and proportion) of students from ABMO backgrounds enrolling in Higher Education courses at the University.                    |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                     | to conditional offer making.                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Development of a system to integrate CO entrants into enhanced personal tutoring and track progress and outcomes. The data team will add the IMDQ1/Q2 CO cohort to the Personal Tutoring spreadsheet as early as possible in Semester 1 to ensure the cohort is included in success phase interventions through personal tutoring and DCP activity. |                                                                                                                       |                                                                  | Lincoln Bishop identifies which applicants have enrolled with a contextual offer.                   | Higher rates (volume and proportion) of applicants from ABMO backgrounds applying to Lincoln Bishop.                                                                                                                 | Increased rates (volume and proportion) of male students enrolling in Higher Education courses at the University.                                                             |
| Design a process to track students who received a contextual offer throughout their student journey. Once this is established, the aim is to include these outcomes in reporting to wider Lincoln Bishop teams.                                                                                                                                     | Ensure that CO students can be tracked in terms of their continuation, outcomes, and progression.                     |                                                                  |                                                                                                     | Greater conversion rates from ABMO applicants (application to enrolment), supporting the offer-making strategy and aligning Lincoln Bishop with sector standards, facilitating a return to conditional offer making. | Improved student retention and performance: Higher retention and better academic performance among targeted contextual offer students compared to traditional offer students. |
| Promotion of Contextual Offers within Outreach activities, specifically the NS4S programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Promote the contextual offer programme to potential applicants during widening participation activities, i.e., step 4 | Increased stakeholder engagement: The number of pupils receiving | Initial benchmarking and monitoring of contextual offers show their effect in increasing the number | Narrowing of the gap between IMD Q5 and Q1/Q2 in terms of application to enrolment.                                                                                                                                  | Sustained narrowing of the gap in access and continuation for IMD Q1/Q2 students.                                                                                             |

| (see Aspiration Raising ToC).                                                                                                                                  | (evaluation process) of NS4S. For outreach activities, including presentations, a standard CO slide has been designed by Marketing and will be used in presentations. For Open Day activities, a promotional CO flyer with a QR link to the webpage has been created for distribution to attendees. | contextual offer information at step 4 of NS4S is recorded, along with attendance at information sessions. | of offers accepted by the target group.                                                                                        |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                |
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| Lincoln Bishop staff time to administer (UCAS process – process contextual offers against the declaration received from the applicant), monitor, and evaluate. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                | Increased rates (volume and proportion) of male applicants, and higher rates of male enrolment at Lincoln Bishop. |                                                                                                                                                |
| Quantitative analyses of student data, including reviewing participant postcodes and meeting contextual criteria.                                              | Undertake qualitative analyses to form part of the Annual Monitoring process already in place at Lincoln Bishop(due for review in 2025).                                                                                                                                                            | Clarity of cohort demographics and domicile is achieved for each programme.                                |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                |
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|                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                            | Evaluation to assess the outcomes                                                                                              |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                            | Short Term Evaluation                                                                                                          | Medium Term Evaluation                                                                                            | Long Term Evaluation                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                            | The introduction of suitable reporting processes ensures that IMD quintile data is easily accessible for all key stakeholders. | Quantitative analyses using SRS data (mainly HESA student return) to measure any increase in IMD Q1 & Q2          | Quantitative analysis of Access and Participation Data from the OfS Dashboard indicating long-term, sustained narrowing of the gap between IMD |



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|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | applicants who go on to enrol in studies.                                                                                | Q5 entrants and IMD Q1 & Q2 entrants.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                           | Tracking and analysis of the number of students in receipt of a contextual offer, along with their relevant APP criteria (IMD quintile, ethnicity, etc.), enabling comparison of data with previous years (with the possibility of comparing data at points within the recruitment cycle).                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Quantitative analysis of internal data to ascertain the number of applicants who go on to enrol with a contextual offer. | Retention and performance metrics: Track retention rates and academic performance of contextual offer students using the SNOS report from the SRS.                                                                                                                                                       |
|                           | Tracking and analysis of the impact on acceptance to enrolment for key cohorts using Application reports and SNOS reports (both from SRS).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          | Use of SRS data (mainly HESA student return) to track attrition rates from offer to acceptance to enrolment for those in receipt of a contextual offer (CO) and those not in receipt of a CO (as well as by all APP characteristics) to gauge the impact and influence that COs have on decision-making. |
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| Rationale and Assumptions | <b>Rationale:</b> The use of contextualised admissions practices is well established in the UK HE sector (SPA and HEDIIP, 2015), yet evidence of their impact remains relatively sparse. Research suggests that applicants with prior participation in institutional widening participation activities are more likely to accept an offer and perform better than average on retention and course performance measures (Boliver, 2019). Despite this, contextualised admissions practices vary |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

considerably between and within institutions (Boliver et al., 2017; Crawford et al., 2017). Consequently, there is little transferability in approaches to contextual offers outside of their specific context, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the evidence. Ongoing debates about the suitability of intersecting contextual indicators, historical changes to measures of disadvantage, lack of comparator groups, and other data quality issues add further layers of ambiguity and complexity to measuring effectiveness (Gorard et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the Centre for Social Mobility at the University of Exeter concluded that contextualised offers have a positive impact on diversifying the student body and encouraging disadvantaged applicants to apply. However, evidence of their impact on mature and part-time learner recruitment is less conclusive. We present our approach to providing contextual offers at Lincoln Bishop as an opportunity to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the use of contextual offers as a strategic approach to addressing structural inequalities in access to higher education in British universities.

**Assumptions:** The use of data-led and evidence-based approaches to enhance decision-making, understanding, and awareness of contextual offers among students and educators in schools and colleges has proven effective in supporting recruitment teams in universities and colleges to meet their strategic objectives for widening access to higher education (University of Exeter, 2018). This finding has underscored our holistic approach to embedding contextual offers within widening participation and outreach activities at Lincoln Bishop. While it is recognised that more systematic work is needed to determine how different contextual indicators (or combinations thereof) impact degree outcomes for disadvantaged students, existing studies suggest that contextual admissions can increase academic success in some contexts (see, for example, Rowbottom, 2017; Taylor et al., 2013; Hoare and Johnston, 2010). With this in mind, we have developed our contextual offers intervention to improve access to higher education for disadvantaged students (IMD Q1 & Q2) and those from ABMO backgrounds. Once enrolled, we will longitudinally track the academic success and progression of students from our target groups to explore their educational outcomes.

### Intervention Strategy 3: Continuation and Retention Strategy ToC

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| <p>Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity)</p> | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to social mobility and social justice. Education is a common good. As such, we believe that to have a diverse and representative society, we must ensure that we provide equal opportunities for all qualified learners to access university education, irrespective of their identity characteristics, demographic, or social background. Once they arrive at university, we must ensure all learners have the potential to succeed. Lincoln Bishop values inclusion and the creation of community and belonging through thoughtful action to support individuals for their benefit and the benefit of our communities. Lincoln Bishop aims to support students in developing the skills needed for a life of impact, with the guidance and community to help them realise that aim.</p> <p>Data shows that the courses with the highest number of students and those furthest from meeting the 80% continuation threshold are:</p> <p>At Level 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Business (with FY) – 62.5%</li> <li>• BA Business Leadership &amp; Management – 72.2%</li> <li>• BA Early Childhood Studies – 76.2%</li> <li>• BA Education Studies &amp; SENDI – 58.3%</li> <li>• BA Psychology – 57.1%</li> <li>• PGCE Secondary English – 63.2%</li> <li>• BSc Sport Coaching &amp; Physical Education – 61.5%</li> </ul> <p>At Level 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Business Leadership &amp; Management – 61.5%</li> </ul> <p>At Level 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Business Leadership &amp; Management – 30.8%</li> </ul> <p><b>Continuation:</b> The most recent data (2021-22 entrants) shows that overall continuation rates for full-time first-degree students at Lincoln Bishop are 87.8%, which is 2.9 percentage points lower than the sector average of 90.5% for first-degree students (OfS data). Additionally, we have identified persistent continuation gaps between IMDQ1 and IMDQ2. The IMDQ1 continuation average is 85.3%, which is slightly higher than the sector average of 84.4%. The IMDQ2 continuation average is 90.2%, which is higher than the sector average of 86.3%.</p> <p>Although there is no continuation gap at Q2, Lincoln Bishop's small numbers mean that its interventions are likely to have a greater impact when targeted at scale, hence our decision to combine Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>The Contextual Offers Intervention will address risks identified on the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OfS Risk 6 - Insufficient academic support:</b> Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.</li> <li>• <b>OfS Risk 7 - Insufficient personal support:</b> Students may not receive sufficient non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.</li> <li>• <b>OfS Risk 10 - Cost pressures:</b> Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.</li> </ul> |
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| Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To stabilise the proportion of IMD Q1+Q2 students continuing from Level 0 to Level 4, and from Level 4 to Level 5, at 87% throughout the period covered by the plan.</li> <li>To stabilise the proportion of ABMO students continuing from Level 0 to Level 4, and from Level 4 to Level 5, at 87% in 2028/29.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                           |
| Inputs                                                                                                                                           | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Outcomes                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                           |
| Process                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Impact                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Short Term Outcomes                                                                                                                             | Medium Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                          | Long term Outcomes                                                                                                                        |
| Confirm the target programmes for the intervention, focusing on those with continuation and retention data that do not meet expected thresholds. | Pre-Arrival and Induction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve student pre-arrival information and guidance to ensure a smooth transition to university life.</li> <li>Enhance Welcome Week to reduce early withdrawals by fostering a sense of belonging from the outset.</li> <li>Implement a seamless year-long retention-focused plan, including Summer Schools and a Welcome Fortnight, to support students throughout their first year.</li> <li>For 2025-26, BA Business Leadership &amp; Management has been identified as a</li> </ul> | Improved Student Engagement of IMDQ1, IMDQ2, and ABMO Students with Their Learning: Measured by tracking Blackboard log-ins, attendance at induction, summer school participation, class registers, and library resource usage. Analysis will focus on engagement and usage by target groups (IMDQ1, IMDQ2, and ABMO students) to assess the effectiveness of interventions. | Improved student engagement and early identification of IMD Q1&2 and ABMO students from the point of application (via UCAS, Hubspot, SRS feed). | Trend analysis of year-on-year improvement in retention rates for IMDQ1/2 and ABMO students becomes available, allowing for the targeting of resources to areas of most need for improvement. | A sustained increase in retention and continuation rates for the targeted programmes. Monitored through SRS and HESA student return data. |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | target programme for a pilot of this intervention. The intervention will then be rolled out to other identified programmes from 2026 onwards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                            |
| <p>Oversight by relevant University Leadership &amp; Committee structure, with stakeholder participation in meetings and development of the intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment Planning Group</li> <li>• Registry and Faculty Administration Office</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings with Faculty Heads of Programme</li> <li>• Academic Enhancement Committee</li> <li>• Data Team to review live retention data and assess emerging trends, with a focus on APP cohorts</li> <li>• Students' Union (SU)</li> <li>• The Hub</li> <li>• Lincoln Bishop Senior Leaders</li> </ul> | <p>Data Monitoring &amp; Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that key milestones within the Retention and Continuation Strategy are met for the target programmes identified (see B2 above), including improved data gathering and management.</li> <li>• Review historic retention data to identify trends across targeted groups (IMD Q1+Q2 and ABMO students) and establish real-time data monitoring processes.</li> <li>• Develop health indicator dashboards to track key metrics (e.g., retention, continuation, and outcomes).</li> </ul> | <p>Robust Data Systems to Identify and Monitor IMDQ1, IMDQ2, and ABMO Students:</p> <p>Improved business intelligence through the development of a health indicator dashboard, leveraging high-quality, real-time data on student engagement. This will specifically focus on target programmes (as listed in B2 above) and cohorts, with performance measured by a decrease in student withdrawals. Data will be derived from student record systems, including (but not limited to) HESA student return data.</p> | <p>Improved student engagement with pre-arrival and induction processes.</p> | <p>Engagement statistics on academic programmes are monitored via VLE analytics. Professional services metrics are used to analyse engagement trends for professional support services.</p> | <p>Positive impact on league tables, B3, and TEF metrics (all derived from HESA data).</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health indicator dashboards will be reviewed at quarterly meetings with Heads of Programmes (HoPs) and incorporated into the annual monitoring processes relating to the targeted student groups and programmes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                               |
| Devise and implement an action plan involving the stakeholders listed above as necessary, to ensure cohesive development and execution of the intervention. | <p>Student Support and Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and enhance student-facing communications to improve clarity and accessibility.</li> <li>Develop targeted action plans for programmes with challenging retention rates, with a specific focus on IMD Q1 &amp; Q2 and ABMO students in the identified target programmes.</li> </ul> | <p>Curriculum and Assessment:</p> <p>Engagement will be measured through VLE interaction data, FoCUS results, the SU's Representative Feedback Scheme (RFS), and module evaluations. Additionally, Blackboard journal tool pilots will be implemented. Personal tutors will play a key role in identifying and supporting at-risk students, contributing to improved student engagement and outcomes.</p> | Use of SRS data to track retention of IMD Q1&2 and ABMO students by targeted programmes (see B2 above) with HoPs. | Stronger student well-being and a sense of belonging, as indicated by increased positive responses to relevant questions in the FoCUS, the Representative Feedback Scheme, and module evaluations. | Higher rates of IMDQ1/2 and ABMO students completing their degrees on time. Monitored using SRS and HESA student return data. |
| Develop and coordinate historic retention data                                                                                                              | Curriculum and Assessment:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Staff Engagement in Training and CPD:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Improvements in retention and                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Improved academic outcomes                                                                                                    |

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| <p>processes and real-time data monitoring systems. Use this data to create an annual 'health indicator dashboard' for each programme to identify and address issues related to continuation and retention.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve curriculum and assessment design in the identified target programmes (B2 above) to provide inclusive and supportive learning environments that encourage strong student engagement and a sense of belonging, aligned with EDI principles.</li> <li>• Embed formative assessments and key skills development (e.g., academic integrity, digital fluency) to better support student learning.</li> <li>• Provide effective support systems for at-risk students and monitor the progress of students with key characteristics (IMD Q1 &amp; Q2 and ABMO) through module evaluations, the SU's Representative Feedback Scheme (RFS), and FoCUS results.</li> </ul> | <p>Increased identification of at-risk students will lead to enhanced support for IMDQ1, IMDQ2, and ABMO students. This will result in improved engagement and academic performance, facilitated through staff participation in training and CPD programs focused on supporting these key cohorts.</p> | <p>continuation rates for IMDQ1/Q2 and ABMO students.</p> |  | <p>(completion rates and good degrees) for all students, particularly those from IMDQ1/2 and ABMO groups.</p> |
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| Develop and utilise Student Engagement Analytics (VLE, Engagement and Analytics Tools, Communication Platforms such as Blackboard and MyDay). Roll out these analytical tools to academic staff, integrating them into personal tutorial and programme-level interventions. | <p>Staff and Faculty Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training for tutors on how to support non-engaged or failing students within the IMD Q1 &amp; Q2 and ABMO groups.</li> <li>• Enhance the Personal Tutor system and monitor its effectiveness in supporting these key student cohorts.</li> <li>• Include a focus on student retention in staff induction and development programmes.</li> <li>• Regularly review and enhance teaching practices and establish formal processes to identify at-risk students and ensure consistent support packages are provided.</li> <li>• Monitor the increased uptake of training to ensure all subject areas have a consistent approach to supporting key cohorts. This will, in part, be tracked through the data</li> </ul> | <p>Healthy and Inclusive Community:</p> <p>Increased participation in student societies and extracurricular activities will be monitored through SU Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR). Data on harassment and discrimination will be reviewed to identify any emerging themes or recurring issues, ensuring timely and effective intervention to foster an inclusive and supportive environment.</p> |  |  |  |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | captured by the personal tutoring intervention of our APP. |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Develop and review Student and Staff Guidance Documents, emphasizing the importance of early interventions with students. Ensure guidance is clear and accessible for the target programmes, particularly those with continuation and retention data that do not meet expected thresholds. |                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                            |  | Evaluation to assess the outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                            |  | Short Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Medium Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Long Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                            |  | <b>Quantitative analysis of data</b><br><br><b>Metrics:</b> Year-on-year improvement in retention rates (percentage of students continuing after the first year); Number and percentage of students identified as IMD Q1&2 and ABMO who are successfully | <b>Metrics:</b><br>Continuation rates for students in target groups (IMDQ1/2 and ABMO) on programs selected for focused improvement.<br><br><b>Evaluation methods:</b><br>Comparative analysis of annual continuation data for target student | <b>Metrics:</b> Graduation and on-time completion rates for all programs. Long-term retention rates tracked from the first year through to graduation.<br><br><b>Evaluation methods:</b><br>Longitudinal studies following cohorts from enrolment to graduation; Analysis |

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|  | <p>retained through interventions.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> Analysis of retention data from the student record system. Tracking the success rates of early intervention programs through VLE engagement analytics.</p>                                                                                                                                                         | <p>groups on identified programs; Longitudinal studies tracking retention trends for target groups over multiple years, using SRS data and HESA student return data.</p>                                                                            | <p>of graduation and completion data.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  | <p><b>Quantitative analysis of data</b></p> <p><b>Metrics:</b> Student feedback scores on pre-arrival and induction events, indicating satisfaction with these events. Attendance rates at pre-arrival and induction events.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> Surveys administered to new students post-induction. Analysis of attendance logs and participation data, focusing on</p> | <p><b>Metrics:</b> Student satisfaction scores on inclusivity and support services.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> FoCUS/NSS surveys and targeted focus groups of IMDQ1/2 and ABMO students to gather qualitative data on their experiences.</p> | <p><b>Metrics:</b> Institutional ranking in national and international league tables; TEF ranking and related data.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> Comparative analysis of league table rankings before and after strategy implementation; Review of TEF reports and scores to assess improvements.</p> <p>□</p> |

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|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | uptake and reviews of target cohorts. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                       | <p><b>Metrics:</b><br/>Participation rates of IMDQ1/2 and ABMO students in student societies, extracurricular activities, and support services.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> Analysis of student well-being scores from relevant surveys (NSS, FoCUS, and SU's Representative Feedback Scheme (RFS); Tracking attendance and participation data in extracurricular and support activities.</p> | <p><b>Metrics:</b> Financial health indicators such as revenue from student fees and budget allocations for student support services. Stakeholder (students, staff, alumni) perceptions of institutional reputation.</p> <p><b>Evaluation methods:</b> Financial performance reports correlating retention rates with revenue; Surveys and interviews with stakeholders to gauge changes in institutional reputation.</p> |
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| Rationale and Assumptions | <p><b>Rationale:</b> The OfS (Office for Students) has identified student continuation* as a key indicator in monitoring provider performance. The focus on quality, reliable standards, and positive outcomes for all aligns with other OfS drivers, including the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Access and Participation Plans (APP). This focus is supported by research such as the TASO report, <i>Understanding the Impact of Interventions to Address Inequality in the Student Experience</i> (November 2020), which highlights the importance of targeted measures in addressing disparities in student outcomes.</p> |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|  | <p>Improving retention and success is a key strategic driver for Lincoln Bishop University. The Student Retention and Continuation Strategy outlines how the University will address student retention and drive improvements in our 'Continuation' and 'Completion' metrics.</p> <p>*The following definitions, terminology, and approaches apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OfS does not use the term 'retention' per se, instead referring to: 'continuation' – the percentage of students still in HE study 12 months after starting their programme, and</li> <li>• 'Completion' – the percentage of students completing their degree within the expected timeframe based on the duration of their programme.</li> </ul> <p>The University uses 'continuation' interchangeably with first-year retention, although technically, if a student transfers from Lincoln Bishop to another HE provider during/after their first year of study, the OfS will track the transfer, and the student would still be classed as continuing for the University's metrics.</p> <p>Completion is strongly correlated with cumulative retention but also requires students to complete their studies on time. For instance, a student successfully repeating a level of undergraduate study would still be retained, but the completion rate would be lowered, just as it would be if another student failed or withdrew.</p> <p><b>Assumptions:</b> High retention and continuation rates are critical for student success, not only in terms of academic achievement but also in fostering long-term career and personal development. Students who remain engaged and complete their studies are far more likely to achieve their academic qualifications, which, in turn, enhances their employability and career prospects. Retaining students through to completion ensures that they acquire the full spectrum of skills, knowledge, and competencies that higher education is designed to provide, all of which are essential in today's competitive job market.</p> <p>Moreover, high retention rates are indicative of a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students, particularly those from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds. Students who continue and succeed are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction with their overall university experience, contributing positively to institutional reputation through mechanisms such as the NSS and the TEF.</p> <p>From an institutional perspective, high retention and continuation rates are also linked to financial stability. Institutions invest considerable resources in recruitment, teaching, and student support services. When students drop out, this represents not only a missed opportunity for the student but also a loss of return on these investments for the University. Thus, improving retention aligns with broader strategic goals, including enhancing student success, closing attainment gaps, and ensuring financial sustainability.</p> <p>Furthermore, retention rates are increasingly used as a key performance indicator by regulators such as the Office for Students (OfS). Institutions with strong retention and continuation rates are more likely to meet regulatory expectations and maintain their standing in higher education rankings. As such, improving retention is not just a matter of student</p> |
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success—it is integral to meeting national benchmarks and supporting the long-term growth and success of the institution itself.

Finally, research underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve retention among specific groups, particularly those from IMD Q1/Q2 backgrounds, students with disabilities, and ABMO groups, who may face additional barriers in higher education. By addressing these challenges through evidence-based interventions, institutions can not only improve retention rates but also contribute to broader societal goals of social mobility and equity.

## Intervention Strategy 4: Enhanced Personal Tutoring

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| <p>Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity)</p> | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to social mobility and social justice. Education is a common good. As such, we believe that to have a diverse and representative society, we must ensure equal opportunities for all qualified learners to access university education, irrespective of their identity characteristics, demographic, or social background. Once students arrive at university, we must ensure that all learners have the potential to succeed. Lincoln Bishop values inclusion and the creation of community and belonging through thoughtful action to support individuals for their benefit and the benefit of our communities. The University aims to support students in developing the skills needed for a life of impact, with the guidance and community to help them realise that aim.</p> <p>Personal Tutoring: Lincoln Bishop has offered personal tutoring across its portfolio in previous academic years, but the systemic implementation and monitoring of its effectiveness have not been achieved at an institutional level. Lincoln Bishop plans to refresh its approach to personal tutoring for all students, with the aim of improving retention, continuation, and attainment levels. Particular emphasis will be placed on students with Access and Participation Plan (APP) characteristics, primarily those from IMD Q1 and Q2, as well as TUNDRA Q1 students. The proposed intervention will introduce revised guidance and training for personal tutors, explicitly addressing APP target groups. Monitoring and evaluation measures will also be introduced, where they were previously absent.</p> <p>Continuation: The most recent data (2021-22 entrants) shows that the overall continuation rate for full-time, first-degree students at Lincoln Bishop is 87.8%, which is 2.9 percentage points lower than the sector average of 90.5% (OfS data). Additionally, we have identified persistent continuation gaps between IMD Q1 and IMD Q2 students. The continuation rate for IMD Q1 students is 85.3%, which is slightly higher than the sector average of 84.4%. IMD Q2 students have a continuation rate of 90.2%, higher than the sector average of 86.3%. Although there is no continuation gap at Q2, Lincoln Bishop's small cohort size means that interventions are likely to have a greater impact when targeted at scale, hence our decision to combine Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>Completion: The latest data shows that our overall completion rate is 88.2%, slightly higher than the sector average of 87.46%. Similarly, completion rates for IMD Q1 and Q2 students are slightly higher than the sector average (sector average = 83.15%, Lincoln Bishop = 88%). However, there remains a gap of 3 percentage points between IMD Q5 students and IMD Q1/Q2 students according to the latest data (<a href="https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/">https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/</a> Full-time First Degree students).</p> <p>The Enhanced Personal Tutoring intervention will address risks identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OfS Risk 6 - Insufficient academic support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.</li> <li>• OfS Risk 7 - Insufficient personal support: Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.</li> <li>• OfS Risk 8 - Mental health: Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.</li> </ul> |
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| Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase attainment rates of IMD Q1 and Q2 students achieving Good Honours from an average of 60.2% to 61.5% by 2028/29, narrowing the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 by at least 2.6 percentage points.</li> <li>• Increase attainment rates of TUNDRA Q1 students achieving Good Honours from a baseline of 53.4% to 62% by 2028/29.</li> <li>• Improve the confidence of IMD Q1 and Q2 students and create opportunities for them to learn in a safe and supportive environment.</li> <li>• Build career and academic confidence for IMD Q1 and Q2 students, thereby increasing the likelihood of on-time completion and securing a graduate-level role.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Inputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Impact                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Short Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                  | Medium Term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Long term Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Enhanced training and development to update staff on revised key priorities for Personal Tutoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative changes</li> <li>• Identification of key target groups in personal tutor lists (IMDQ1/2 and TUNDRAQ1)</li> <li>• Guidance to include key questions for students in target groups during personal tutorials</li> </ul> | <p>Systematic Monitoring and Oversight: Academic staff from each course/programme to attend systematic monitoring sessions, overseen by Heads of Programmes/Faculty.</p> <p>Introduction of Annual Introductory Session: A new introductory session at the start of each academic year to build engagement, e.g., through whole portfolio meetings. This session will be repeated annually.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Register of Academic Staff: A register will be maintained of academic staff who have undertaken the updated training on personal tutoring.</p> <p>Introduction to Personal Tutoring Updates: Systematic delivery of updates on personal tutoring sessions across the portfolio, ensuring all relevant staff are informed of changes.</p> | <p>Increased staff awareness of enhancements to Personal Tutoring programme: Monitored via engagement with events.</p> <p>Student engagement statistics: Monitored via VLE data.</p> | <p>Increased continuation and completion rates: Opportunity to review processes if improvement is not evident.</p> <p>Audit trail established: To monitor student engagement levels and interactions with personal tutoring.</p> <p>Student survey outcomes: Reflect</p> | <p>Increased progression rates: Greater proportion of graduates moving into highly skilled employment or further study, specifically for IMDQ1/Q2 and TUNDRAQ1.</p> <p>Improved continuation rates: For IMDQ1/Q2 and</p> |

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|                                                           | <p>Refresher Sessions for Staff Development: Refresher sessions providing updates on enhancements to the personal tutorial system, delivered via the Staff Development Session.</p> <p>1:1 Support for Academic Personal Tutors: 1:1 support for academic staff acting as personal tutors will be bookable via The Hub (or on a programme-by-programme basis).</p> <p>Training in New Academic Staff Inductions: Incorporate training for new academic staff in their induction to reflect changes and key emphases on supporting target groups (e.g., IMDQ1/2, TUNDRAQ1).</p> <p>Training on Key Characteristic Information: Train staff on where to access key characteristic information to enable Personal Tutors (PTs) to better target support for their tutees.</p> | <p>Updated Staff Training Sessions Delivered: Updated training sessions on personal tutoring, with a focus on new priorities and APP target groups, will be delivered to all relevant staff.</p> <p>Signposting for Academic Support: Clear and visible signposting will be provided on the staff portal, enabling academic staff acting as personal tutors to access 1:1 support as needed.</p> <p>Personal Tutorial Guidance in Staff Induction: Personal tutorial guidance will be included in staff induction agendas, and an audit of attendees will be conducted to ensure compliance.</p> |                                             | <p>improved awareness and use of personal tutoring services.</p> | <p>TUNDRAQ1 students.</p> <p>Improved attainment outcomes: For IMDQ1/Q2 and TUNDRAQ1 students.</p> |
| Introduction and development of an Evaluation Toolkit for | Development of a Toolkit Approach and Resources:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | FoCUS Results Reporting: FoCUSresults will be                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Maintaining student survey feedback levels: | Improved students' self-efficacy: Enhanced ability to            | Reduced gap in progression rates: Between                                                          |



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| Personal Tutorials (involving both staff and students), supported by Data Analyst time. | <p>Introduce and develop a toolkit approach that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating academic staff on APP target groups and the Personal Tutoring approach, with additional emphasis on career readiness and graduate attributes at Level 5.</li> <li>• Co-creating an enhanced structure with input from academics for students in target groups (where relevant).</li> <li>• Training for Programme Leads and Heads of Programmes on the management of Personal Tutoring within their courses/programmes.</li> <li>• Training for Personal Tutors on key elements of their role.</li> <li>• Review of the Personal Tutoring Handbook and VLE content to include references to APP priorities and target groups.</li> </ul> | <p>reported annually to course teams and key stakeholders, with granular data on APP characteristics.</p> <p>FoCUS and SU's Representative Feedback Scheme (RFS): Dissemination of feedback from Heads of Programmes (HoPs) to Programme Leaders (PLs) in quarterly data review meetings, including APP target group data.</p> <p>Faculty Data Sharing: Whole Faculty data, with a focus on APP targets, will be shared as a quarterly standing item in Faculty Executive Group (FEG) meetings. Outcomes will be captured in FEG meeting notes and agendas.</p> | Ensuring continued awareness of personal tutoring.       | achieve academic and career goals, particularly in terms of career readiness. | graduates from IMDQ1 vs IMDQ5.                                         |
| Collaboration with Programme/Course Leaders.                                            | Pilot Project for Key Programmes: A pilot project will focus on one course from each Faculty portfolio area for a focused review of the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Quarterly Meetings with Heads of Programmes: Quarterly meetings with Heads of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Improved levels of Student Engagement: increased student |                                                                               | Reduced gap in progression rates: Between graduates from ABMO vs White |

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|  | effectiveness of training, personal tutoring, and awareness of APP groups. | <p>Programmes will be a standing item in PL meetings, to monitor engagement and review data. Outcomes will be reported in meeting notes and fed into quarterly Faculty meetings.</p> <p>Annual Reporting of FoCUS results, including data on APP groups, will be reported annually to course teams and key stakeholders through Tableau, with reports shared via the Academic Enhancement Committee (AEC), Senate, and Council.</p> <p>Engagement Analytics: Engagement analytics, such as VLE personal tutor documentation, will be used to monitor student engagement, with data shared through FoCUS and the SU's Representative</p> | participation and interaction. |  | ethnic backgrounds. |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Feedback Scheme (RFS).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |  |                                                                                                           |
| Collaboration with Faculty, including Faculty Business Managers and Heads of Programme.                                                                                                       | <p>New Approach to Personal Tutor Allocation: Personal Tutors to be identified, and tutees allocated prior to enrolment for all Level 4 students, with refreshment of this process at Levels 5 and 6.</p> <p>Monitoring of Student Engagement with Tutorials: Introduce monitoring of student engagement with personal tutorials, cross-referencing this data with changes in continuation and completion rates for APP groups.</p> | <p>Tracking Continuation and Completion Rates: Changes in continuation and completion rates, with specific reference to APP groups, will be tracked and measured year on year.</p> <p>Central Records for Personal Tutors and Tutees: Central records will provide clear notifications to personal tutors and tutees, ensuring that key characteristics and engagement are tracked effectively.</p> |  |  | Increased academic confidence: Among IMDQ1/Q2 and ABMO students, leading to better success at university. |
| Student engagement in the tutoring approach will vary from programme to programme, based on the minimum guidance and expectations outlined in the Personal Development Planning Policy (PDP). | <p>Delivery of Minimum Tutorial Sessions: Personal Tutors to deliver a minimum of two tutorial sessions per academic year to students (either in small groups or individually, depending on the year of study/cohort size), with guidance to include key questions for APP target groups.</p> <p>Early Engagement at the Start of the Academic Year: Personal Tutors to meet with tutees near the start of the</p>                  | <p>Engagement Tracker: A tracker will be implemented to record and monitor engagement with personal tutoring.</p> <p>Student-Facing Promotional Resources: Student-facing promotional resources for personal tutoring will be monitored via VLE</p>                                                                                                                                                 |  |  |                                                                                                           |

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|                                                                                                                | <p>academic year, particularly for Level 4 students.</p> <p>Pilot Examples of Good Practice:<br/>Potential pilot projects to capture examples of good practice, e.g., from Early Childhood Studies.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>analytics to assess engagement levels.</p> <p>Career Readiness Module (GAEM): The Career Readiness Graduate Attributes Enhancement Module (GAEM) will be validated, promoted, and monitored to ensure student engagement.</p> |  |  |  |
| <p>Update FoCUS questions: Include personal tutoring question(s) to better capture feedback from students.</p> | <p>Promotion of Personal Tutoring and Student Engagement: Brief and promote the importance of Personal Tutors and engagement with PT tutorials for students, using positive reflections, case studies, and student vignettes to share with academic staff.</p> <p>Inclusion in Induction and Transition Sessions: Emphasize the importance of Personal Tutors and engagement in personal tutorials during student induction and transition sessions, as well as within student guidance.</p> <p>Encouragement of Greater Student Engagement: Encourage greater student engagement with the guidance provided on personal tutoring.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |  |  |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Development of Graduate Attributes Enhancement Module: Develop a Graduate Attributes Enhancement Module focused on Career Readiness to further support student development. |  |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                |
| Create dedicated survey for personal tutoring: Monitor/track outcomes, with target groups identifiable as a subset of all student responses.                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                |
| Development and Career Plan (hosted on Target Connect): Provides scale scores of academic confidence reflecting students' perceptions over time. This is more of a process to support career readiness rather than an evaluation method itself. |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                             |  | Evaluation to assess the outcomes                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                             |  | Short Term Evaluation                                                                                                           | Medium Term Evaluation                                                                                                                                    | Long Term Evaluation                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                             |  | Quarterly evaluation of SRS data: Gauge retention rates of target groups for comparison with prior years and non-target groups. | Annual analysis of student continuation, completion, outcomes, and progression: Focus on target groups and compare the outcomes for those who took up the | HESA student returns: Based on SRS data, which will feed into OfS APP dashboards for analysis. |

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|  |                                                                                                                                                                                    | offer of enhanced personal tutoring to those who did not. Also, compare results to prior years and non-APP cohorts.  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|  | Quarterly evaluation of staff uptake of enhanced personal tutoring: Track patterns in engagement in the short-term, undertaken by Heads of Programme (HoPs) and Faculty Executive. | Quarterly reports from VLE: Provide evidence of staff and student engagement with personal tutorials.                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                    | Annual review of FoCUS data: Assess student perception of personal tutoring and evaluate strategies for improvement. | Long-term impact of personal tutoring: Evaluate whether the intervention leads to: Positive responses to personal tutoring questions in FoCUS, Increased continuation rates among target groups, Closing the gap between APP |

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|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Grade Profile assessment:<br>Regular review of progress as part of personal tutorials (using SRS data).                                                                |                      |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Career Readiness survey: Conducted at Levels 4, 5, and 6 to build a profile of self-efficacy, comparing results for target groups with the general student population. |                      |
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| Rationale and Assumptions | <p><b>Rationale:</b> Building on Lincoln Bishop's well-established ethos of Personal Tutoring, we are enhancing the personal tutoring system to better support student achievement and success, particularly at Level 5. Recognizing that disadvantaged students are often at greater risk of underperformance and non-completion compared to their more advantaged peers (Office for Students, 2020), Lincoln Bishop's enhanced Personal Tutoring programme aims to address these disparities by focusing on key areas of academic support, with a particular emphasis on assessment literacy.</p> <p>At Level 5, students face increased academic demands and often require more structured guidance on how to navigate assessments successfully. Many disadvantaged learners—especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds (IMDQ1/2), first-generation students, and students from underrepresented ethnic groups—do not enter university with the same levels of academic preparedness, cultural knowledge, and social capital as their peers (Archer &amp; Hutchings, 2000; Bourdieu, 1986). These disparities often translate into challenges in adjusting to academic expectations, developing effective study habits, and understanding assessment criteria, all of which are crucial for success at university.</p> <p>Moreover, research shows that a lack of belonging and a sense of “mattering” at university can exacerbate these academic challenges (Thomas, 2012). Disadvantaged students are more likely to feel alienated in academic environments, which impacts their confidence and ability to succeed. This lack of belonging is often tied to social</p> |                                                                                                                                                                        |                      |

integration challenges, cultural dissonance, and the perception that university spaces are not designed for students "like them" (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015).

Lincoln Bishop's enhanced Personal Tutoring programme aims to address these barriers by providing targeted support tailored to the needs of disadvantaged learners. Our approach draws on sector-wide good practice, including guidance from the *National Association of Personal Tutors* (NACADA, 2021) and best practices outlined in *Universities UK's* (2020) recommendations on academic and pastoral care for students at risk. The programme seeks to integrate academic and personal support across departments, ensuring that personal tutoring is not just a standalone service, but a cross-departmental initiative involving academic staff, professional support services, and key institutional stakeholders.

By creating a more structured, data-informed, and empathetic personal tutoring framework, the University aims to ensure that every student, regardless of background, receives the support they need to succeed academically and personally. This model will particularly focus on fostering a sense of belonging, improving assessment literacy, and developing the resilience and confidence needed for long-term success, particularly at critical transition points like Level 5.

**Assumptions:** Differentials in academic experience and outcomes are empirically linked to:

1. the inclusivity of learning, teaching, and assessment practices,
2. relationships between staff and students, and between students themselves,
3. varying levels of cultural and social capital among learners, and
4. the extent to which students feel supported in their daily interactions at university (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015).

Supporting students in navigating the curriculum is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged learners, who may not share the same level of academic preparedness as their more advantaged peers. Personal Tutoring has been shown to be especially effective in this regard, with studies reporting increased academic confidence and understanding cultivated through Personal Tutoring relationships (ref).

While it is recognised that Personal Tutoring cannot be causally linked to student outcomes (as the most motivated students tend to engage), several UK and international studies do suggest a positive impact on attainment, retention, and completion, even when controlling for student demographics, subject of study, and pre-entry qualifications in statistical models (REFS). These effects vary across institutional contexts and according to different models of tutoring, in terms of delivery, focus, intensity, duration, and target population.

For this reason, TASO (ref) recommends that higher education providers measure the impact of personal tutoring programmes and identify the most effective features at a local level. Our intervention at Lincoln Bishop will respond to this recommendation and contribute to the developing knowledge base on the effectiveness of personal tutoring in providing assessment support for level 5 learners across our distinct portfolio of subjects. In doing so, we will explore what works (which specific activities are most effective), for whom (how this varies for different students), and in what context (how department/school/Faculty shapes the personal tutoring relationship).





## Intervention Strategy 5: Enhanced Graduate Attributes Framework ToC

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| <p>Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity)</p> | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to social mobility, social justice, and ensuring that all students graduate with the strongest possible outcomes. Education is a common good. As such, we believe that to have a diverse and representative society, we must ensure that we provide equal opportunities for all qualified learners to not only progress to employment but also to highly-skilled employment.</p> <p>The University values inclusion and the creation of community and belonging through thoughtful actions to support individuals, for their benefit and the benefit of our communities. The University aims to support students in developing the skills needed for a life of impact, with the guidance and community to help them realise that aim.</p> <p>Bowden et al. (2000) defined employability as a set of graduate attributes: "the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should desirably develop during their time at the institution and, consequently, shape the contribution they are able to make to their profession and as a citizen."</p> <p>In the 2020/21 academic year, our progression data showed progression to employment/further study at 91.5%, and progression to highly-skilled employment at 77%.</p> <p>The sector figure for 2020/21 for students with a known disability (undergraduate first degree) was 72.2%, compared to 74.3% for those with no known disability—a 2.1% gap. In 2021/22, Lincoln Bishop reported a 9% gap. Our aim is to reduce this gap to at least the sector benchmark over the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>Our Enhanced Graduate Attributes Framework (GAF) aims to address persistent inequalities in progression from higher education into highly-skilled employment. We will introduce a programme of enhanced support for students with a known disability, including a mentoring scheme during their studies, and proactive links to bespoke support (via learning support, welfare advice, careers guidance, and library skills) to help graduates overcome barriers they may encounter as they embark upon their careers.</p> <p>The Graduate Attributes Framework Intervention will address risks identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including:<br/> OfS Risk 12: Progression from higher education. Students may not have equal opportunities to progress to an outcome they consider a positive reflection of their higher education experience. Some students may not have equal access to certain outcomes from higher education, such as further study or progression into employment reflective of their qualification levels. This can be due to factors such as financial position, access and time to undertake extracurricular or supra-curricular activities, and lack of information and guidance. Differences in equality of opportunity related to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with certain characteristics. It may also lead to</p> |
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|                                                                                                                                                       | low diversity in specific areas of the labour market, lower earnings for students with certain characteristics, and lower levels of job satisfaction.                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)                                                                                                        | To increase the proportion of Lincoln Bishop graduates with a known disability securing highly-skilled employment to at least 74.3% by 2028/29.                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       | To reduce the employment progression gap for graduates with a known disability to 2.1% or less by 2028/29.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Inputs                                                                                                                                                | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Outputs                                                                                                          | Outcomes                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Process                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  | Impact                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  | Short Term Outcomes                                                                                                                         | Medium Term Outcomes                                                                                | Long term Outcomes                                                                                                                                |
| Lincoln Bishop staff time to further develop, maintain, administrate, promote/market, deliver linked activities, monitor, and evaluate the programme. | Create/enhance University infrastructure to facilitate the GAF (including administration), including further implementation and development of the GA Framework and full implementation of GA Certificates of Award - Standard Award, and the enhanced implementation of GA Excellence Awards with supporting documentation. | Increase in the number of Graduate Attribute Enhancement modules offered at Lincoln Bishop.                      | Increased engagement of students with known disabilities with the GAF, as measured by Target Connect data.                                  | Sustained increases in GAF engagement and satisfaction for students with known disabilities.        | Higher rates of Lincoln Bishop graduates with known disabilities entering high-level employment, as defined by the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey. |
| Students' time to attend webinars and information-sharing events.                                                                                     | Promote the GAF to students with known disabilities through the creation and dissemination of promotional materials and mini-videos about the GA Framework.                                                                                                                                                                  | Increase in the number of students with known disabilities accessing the Graduate Attribute Enhancement modules. | Increase in the number of GA Certificates of Award and GA Excellence Awards earned by students with known disabilities (annual statistics). | Enhanced career readiness and confidence for students with known disabilities at Level 5 and above. | Reduction of the progression gap for graduates with known disabilities from 9% to 2.1% or less.                                                   |
| A dedicated Graduate Attribute Framework (GAF) Steering Group                                                                                         | Consolidate the embedding of Graduate Attributes (GAs) in all undergraduate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Increase in the annual number of Graduate                                                                        | Enhanced career readiness and confidence for                                                                                                | Case studies of successful transitions into                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--|
| with participation from key stakeholders, such as programme leaders and representatives of professional support teams.                                                                                                            | programmes and enhance the mapping of GAs to relevant modules.                                                                                                             | Attribute Awards made.                                                                                                                                                                      | students with known disabilities, as indicated by the career readiness survey at Level 6.                                                                                              | employment for students with known disabilities. |  |
| Students' time to complete evaluation surveys (Career Readiness, FoCUS, NSS).                                                                                                                                                     | Conduct induction sessions and Matriculation ceremonies to introduce students to the GAF.                                                                                  | Increase in the number of students with known disabilities attending dedicated workshop sessions.                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                  |  |
| Collaboration with local employers, industry, and community partners by the Career Readiness Team, with a specific focus on addressing barriers faced by graduates with known disabilities through focus group-style discussions. | Use VLE and BG Futures webpages to provide resources and support for GA development, including a refresh of the resources on Target Connect.                               | Increase in the frequency with which relevant documents and guidance are accessed by students with a known disability (usage monitored by Target Connect based on student characteristics). | Increased positive student feedback (internal satisfaction surveys such as FoCUS and NSS) on opportunities for personal growth and preparation for future employment or further study. |                                                  |  |
| Data analysis and sharing of findings with the data team via Target Connect.                                                                                                                                                      | Offer personal tutorial support and PDP e-portfolio support to build ongoing student confidence and career aspirations, particularly for students with known disabilities. |                                                                                                                                                                                             | Increased number of students with known disabilities engaging with the mapping and articulation of their skill development through e-portfolios.                                       |                                                  |  |
| Technology infrastructure for the VLE and e-portfolio system, supported through Target Connect.                                                                                                                                   | Facilitate additional extracurricular activities for the GA Excellence Award, with a specific focus on opportunities for students with known disabilities.                 |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                  |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Develop resources and materials to support the                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                  |  |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|  | transition of students with known disabilities, such as promoting awareness of the Access to Work scheme and dispelling myths.                                        |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  | Introduce opportunities for students to access bespoke mentoring to address perceived or actual barriers to graduate employment for students with known disabilities. |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  | Facilitate seamless access across service areas to ensure an effective response to issues identified for individual students with known disabilities.                 |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  | Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer support and networking between current students and alumni with known disabilities to promote successful outcomes.             |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  | Conduct an annual career readiness survey for all levels of study, with results analysed by student characteristics, including students with known disabilities.      |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                   |                        |                      |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Evaluation to assess the outcomes |                        |                      |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Short Term Evaluation             | Medium Term Evaluation | Long Term Evaluation |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Target Connect data – engagement with the GAF, reporting on students with known disabilities.                                                                                    | Trend analysis of Target Connect data and FoCUS/NSS engagement and satisfaction data.                                                                        | Analysis and reporting of relevant data sets, such as Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOs).                            |
|  | Analysis of SRS data and Target Connect data – assess the number of GA Certificates of Award and GA Excellence Awards earned by students with known disabilities.                | Trend analysis of feedback from student responses to the annual career readiness survey, focusing on career readiness and confidence at each level of study. | Analysis and reporting of internal and external datasets, including HESA, OfS, and the Graduate Outcomes Survey. |
|  | Pre- and post-activity survey – feedback from student responses to the annual career readiness survey, focusing on their career readiness and confidence at each level of study. | Qualitative data from focus groups or individual students with known disabilities who have successfully gained high-level employment.                        |                                                                                                                  |
|  | Analysis of annual NSS & FoCUS results – student satisfaction on career and personal growth opportunities.                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  |
|  | Quantitative analyses (engagement numbers) – student engagement metrics                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                  |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
|                           | with VLE, Graduate Attributes Framework, Personal Tutorials, and e-portfolios, specifically for students with known disabilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |  |
| Rationale and Assumptions | <p><b>Rationale:</b> This intervention is based on the existing evidence, which shows that even when entry qualifications, degree attainment, subject of study, and institution are controlled for, disadvantaged students (as defined by OfS, 2020) are less likely to secure and succeed in graduate employment than their more advantaged counterparts (TASO, 2022). Studies point to the complex interplay of indirect factors impacting a student's transition to the labour market. Social, cultural, and imagined capital deficits emerge as research explanations for why such graduates fare less well in the labour market compared to their peers.</p> <p>Nolan and Gleeson (2016) identified a differential in the disclosure of needs for individuals with visible disabilities compared to those with hidden disabilities, such as mental health conditions. While graduates with visible disabilities were more likely to disclose their needs to an employer, those with mental health conditions were less likely to do so due to fear of stigma and discrimination.</p> <p>Employability and how graduates fare in the job market is of increasing interest for educators and educational leaders, especially as future employability is a major consideration for students choosing to attend university (Neves and Hewitt, 2020). Consequently, higher education providers invest considerable effort in designing activities, pedagogies, and learning environments that enable their students to graduate with the attributes and skills needed to succeed in their future careers (Hill et al., 2016).</p> <p>Within this context, persistent and stark inequalities exist for disadvantaged groups in British higher education (UUK, 2022); these inequalities persist throughout the student lifecycle and into the labour market (TASO, 2022), where White graduates are more likely to secure higher-paying graduate employment than their counterparts. Existing equality gaps in employment are substantial and patterned in non-random ways. For disadvantaged groups who graduate from British universities, earning gaps emerge immediately after graduation and widen over time.</p> <p>Students' employability development needs are more diverse than ever (Muhammad et al., 2021), and universities must take reasonable steps to identify and address structural inequalities that may hinder students from developing the skills and abilities necessary to be competitive in the labour market. According to Daubney (2022), strategies for embedding employability are particularly effective when they focus on extracting the knowledge, attributes, and skills from higher</p> |  |  |

education curricula that employers value most, allowing educators to highlight the distinctive employability value of what they teach across the curriculum.

**Assumptions:** Research shows that graduates from disadvantaged groups are more likely to experience periods of unemployment following graduation, be employed in non-graduate positions for longer, and receive lower salaries than their advantaged counterparts (Britton et al., 2016; TASO, 2022). While subject and institutional effects provide a partial explanation for differentials in graduate outcomes, gaps persist even when institution attended, subject studied, and degree classification are accounted for. These gaps are attributable to other factors such as differences in parenting responsibilities, working hours, career advancement opportunities, and discrimination within the labour market (Ramiah and Robinson, 2022, p.5).

Research suggests that disadvantaged students are not always equipped with the cultural and social capital required for success in the graduate labour market (Brown et al., 2003; Coulson et al., 2018). They often lack insider knowledge of the professional world, have not engaged in activities favoured by employers (e.g., voluntary work, internships, and extracurricular activities), and do not have the means to 'socially negotiate their employability' (Brown et al., 2004, p.205). Given these barriers, it is not surprising that disadvantaged graduates report less confidence in applying for professional careers (Hills, 2003; Coulson et al., 2018). This lack of confidence is compounded by graduate recruitment practices that perpetuate disadvantage by favouring already self-confident and highly articulate individuals (De Vries and Rentfrow, 2016; Jacob et al., 2015).

Lincoln Bishop's enhanced GAF aims to counteract these barriers by providing students with opportunities to develop their career confidence and readiness in a supportive environment before they graduate. Drawing on good practice identified by TASO (2022), which notes that the most impactful interventions addressing inequalities in graduate employability are those that provide students with subject-specific employer exposure as part of their degrees, we will implement the GAF with a bespoke mentoring package focused on the actual and perceived barriers faced by each individual.

The GAF goes beyond the development of generic employability skills by giving students the opportunity to self-manage their career-building process, marking the beginning of a lifelong career-building mindset (Bridgstock, 2009). It also has the potential to drive motivation in students to transfer their learning (Bredenkamp et al., 2023). Additionally, it allows educators to use learning outcomes as a resource for student-centred learning and for the purpose of accountability (Dobbins et al., 2016).



## Intervention Strategy 6: Partnerships and Strategic Purpose ToC

|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                           |                                                                    |                                                   |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Situation (Risk to Equality of Opportunity)</p>            | <p>Lincoln Bishop University is committed to advancing social mobility and social justice through its civic mission and Strategy 2030. Partnership delivery is a critical mechanism through which the University extends access to higher education, with a focus on high staff/student ratios and small class sizes.</p> <p>Students studying through partner institutions are more likely to experience risks to equality of opportunity across the student lifecycle, including: prior knowledge and skills gaps, limited access to information and guidance, competing work and caring responsibilities, reduced access to academic and pastoral support, and weaker connections to graduate networks and progression opportunities.</p> <p>This intervention strengthens alignment of partnership delivery with the core aims of the Access and Participation Plan, acknowledging that students studying via delivery partners could be exposed to risks of poorer continuation, attainment, and progression outcomes. This intervention addresses OfS risks including:</p> <p>OfS Risk 1 – Knowledge and skills<br/> OfS Risk 2 – Information and guidance<br/> OfS Risk 6 – Insufficient academic support<br/> OfS Risk 7 – Insufficient personal support<br/> OfS Risk 12 – Progression from higher education</p> |                                                           |                                                                    |                                                   |                                                      |
| <p>Aim(s) (and associated Objectives and Targets)</p>         | <p>To use partnership delivery as a strategic lever to widen access to higher education for underrepresented groups, particularly IMD Q1 and Q2, ABMO students, mature learners, and career changers.</p> <p>To ensure parity of academic standards, student experience, continuation, attainment, and progression outcomes between partner-delivered and campus-based provision.</p> <p>To improve progression into skilled employment and further study for students studying through partner institutions by embedding employability and graduate attributes support.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                           |                                                                    |                                                   |                                                      |
| <p>Inputs</p>                                                 | <p>Activities</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Outputs</p>                                            | <p>Outcomes</p>                                                    |                                                   |                                                      |
| <p>Process</p>                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                           | <p>Impact</p>                                                      |                                                   |                                                      |
|                                                               | <p>Short Term Outcomes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                           | <p>Medium Term Outcomes</p>                                        | <p>Long term Outcomes</p>                         |                                                      |
| <p>Academic leadership and liaison with partner provision</p> | <p>Delivery of Lincoln Bishop programmes through approved</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Increased number of learners from IMD Q1/Q2, ABMO,</p> | <p>Increased access to higher education for learners who would</p> | <p>Improved continuation and attainment rates</p> | <p>Sustained progression into skilled employment</p> |

|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                          | partners (e.g. The Language Gallery, LETTA, Grantham College) in areas of high deprivation and diversity         | and mature learner backgrounds accessing HE through partnership routes                                                   | not otherwise engage with campus-based provision                                                 | for partner-delivered cohorts                                                                   | and further study for partner students                                                                             |
| Partnership team and quality assurance team staff time                                                   | Alignment of partner provision with the Continuation and Retention Strategy and Enhanced Personal Tutoring model | Consistent academic standards and assessment practices across partner and home campus provision                          | Improved confidence, sense of belonging, academic preparedness, and ethos among partner students | Reduced gaps between partner and campus-based provision in continuation and attainment outcomes | Narrowing of progression gaps for students from IMD Q1/Q2, ABMO, and mature learner backgrounds                    |
| Data and analytical capacity to disaggregate partner outcomes by APP characteristics                     | Embedding employability, professional identity, and progression planning within partner-delivered programmes     | Clear data on access, continuation, attainment, and progression for partner cohorts disaggregated by APP characteristics | Improved awareness of progression pathways and graduate opportunities                            | Stronger engagement with employability and graduate attributes support                          | Partnership delivery embedded as a core mechanism for achieving the University's social purpose and APP objectives |
| Access to central student support services (personal tutoring, careers, learning development, wellbeing) | Staff development, moderation, and academic oversight to ensure inclusive pedagogy and assessment parity         | Improved engagement of partner students with academic, pastoral, and employability support                               |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                    |
| Staff development and alignment activities with partner teaching teams                                   | Integration of partner students into University-wide careers, graduate attributes, and progression support       | Integration of partner students into University-wide careers, graduate attributes, and progression support               |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                    |
| Evaluation to assess the outcomes                                                                        |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                    |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Short Term Evaluation                                                                               | Medium Term Evaluation                                                                                             | Long Term Evaluation                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Qualitative feedback from partner students and staff on experience, belonging, and support (Type 1) | Annual analysis of continuation and attainment outcomes for partner cohorts compared to campus benchmarks (Type 2) | Longitudinal tracking of progression outcomes into skilled employment or further study using SRS, HESA, and Graduate Outcomes data |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Monitoring of engagement with academic and support services                                         | Disaggregation of outcomes by APP characteristics                                                                  | Comparison of partner and campus progression outcomes over time                                                                    |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                    |
| Rationale and Assumptions | <p><b>Rationale:</b> Sector and institutional evidence indicates that locally delivered, flexible, and professionally relevant HE provision can play a significant role in widening participation and supporting social mobility. Partnership delivery enables Lincoln Bishop to reach learners in communities facing structural barriers to HE, while maintaining academic standards and student outcomes through strong oversight and alignment with institutional strategies.</p>               |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                    |
|                           | <p><b>Assumptions:</b> If partnership delivery is intentionally aligned with the University's APP objectives, Continuation and Retention Strategy, Enhanced Personal Tutoring, and Graduate Attributes Framework, then students studying through partners will achieve outcomes comparable to campus-based cohorts. It is assumed that robust academic oversight, data-driven monitoring, and inclusive pedagogic practices are critical to mitigating risks associated with partner delivery.</p> |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                    |

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Lincoln Bishop University

Provider UKPRN: 10007811

### Investment summary

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

#### Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Breakdown | 2025-26  | 2026-27  | 2027-28  | 2028-29  |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Access activity investment (£)                       | NA        | £65,000  | £65,000  | £66,000  | £69,000  |
| Financial support (£)                                | NA        | £940,000 | £950,000 | £962,000 | £973,000 |
| Research and evaluation (£)                          | NA        | £11,000  | £11,000  | £11,000  | £11,000  |

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

| Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000) | Breakdown                                                            | 2025-26         | 2026-27         | 2027-28         | 2028-29         |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Access activity investment                  | Pre-16 access activities (£)                                         | £16,000         | £17,000         | £17,000         | £18,000         |
| Access activity investment                  | Post-16 access activities (£)                                        | £46,000         | £45,000         | £46,000         | £48,000         |
| Access activity investment                  | Other access activities (£)                                          | £3,000          | £3,000          | £3,000          | £3,000          |
| <b>Access activity investment</b>           | <b>Total access investment (£)</b>                                   | <b>£65,000</b>  | <b>£65,000</b>  | <b>£66,000</b>  | <b>£69,000</b>  |
| <b>Access activity investment</b>           | <b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>                         | <b>1.5%</b>     | <b>1.5%</b>     | <b>1.5%</b>     | <b>1.5%</b>     |
| <b>Access activity investment</b>           | <b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>                   | <b>£65,000</b>  | <b>£65,000</b>  | <b>£66,000</b>  | <b>£69,000</b>  |
| <b>Access activity investment</b>           | <b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b> | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£0</b>       |
| Financial support investment                | Bursaries and scholarships (£)                                       | £740,000        | £750,000        | £762,000        | £773,000        |
| Financial support investment                | Fee waivers (£)                                                      | £0              | £0              | £0              | £0              |
| Financial support investment                | Hardship funds (£)                                                   | £200,000        | £200,000        | £200,000        | £200,000        |
| <b>Financial support investment</b>         | <b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>                        | <b>£940,000</b> | <b>£950,000</b> | <b>£962,000</b> | <b>£973,000</b> |
| <b>Financial support investment</b>         | <b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>              | <b>21.8%</b>    | <b>21.7%</b>    | <b>21.8%</b>    | <b>21.6%</b>    |
| Research and evaluation investment          | Research and evaluation investment (£)                               | £11,000         | £11,000         | £11,000         | £11,000         |
| Research and evaluation investment          | Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)                     | 0.3%            | 0.3%            | 0.2%            | 0.2%            |

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Lincoln Bishop University

Provider UKPRN: 10007811

### Targets

**Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets**

| Aim [500 characters maximum]                                                                           | Reference number | Lifecycle stage    | Characteristic                                     | Target group         | Comparator group        | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]                                                         | Is this target collaborative? | Data source                                              | Baseline year | Units      | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Increase proportion of IMDQ1 and IMDQ2 students wanting to go to HE                                    | PTA_1            | Raising attainment | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 and 2 | IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5 | Aspiration raising activity by Student Recruitment in partnership with LinHigher and local schools/colleges | Yes                           | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 40%           | 41%               | 42.5%             | 44.5%             | 44.5%             |
| Increase proportion of IMDQ1 and IMDQ2 students recruited and enrolled on BGU undergraduate programmes | PTA_2            | Access             | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 and 2 | IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5 | Contextual offers initiative at BGU                                                                         | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 40%           | 41%               | 42.5%             | 44.5%             | 44.5%             |
| Increase proportion of ABMO students recruited and enrolled on BGU undergraduate programmes            | PTA_3            | Access             | Ethnicity                                          | Asian                |                         | Contextual offers initiative at BGU                                                                         | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 1%            | 1%                | 1%                | 1.4%              | 2.4%              |
| Increase proportion of ABMO students recruited and enrolled on BGU undergraduate programmes            | PTA_4            | Access             | Ethnicity                                          | Black                |                         | Contextual offers initiative at BGU                                                                         | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 1%            | 1%                | 1%                | 1.4%              | 2.4%              |
| Increase proportion of ABMO students recruited and enrolled on BGU undergraduate programmes            | PTA_5            | Access             | Ethnicity                                          | Mixed                |                         | Contextual offers initiative at BGU                                                                         | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 2%            | 2%                | 2%                | 2.75%             | 4.75%             |
| Increase proportion of male students recruited and enrolled on BGU undergraduate programmes            | PTA_6            | Access             | Sex                                                | Male                 | Female                  | Contextual offers initiative at BGU                                                                         | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 25.8%         | 25.8%             | 26.8%             | 28%               | 30%               |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_7            |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_8            |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_9            |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_10           |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_11           |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                                                                        | PTA_12           |                    |                                                    |                      |                         |                                                                                                             |                               |                                                          |               |            |               |                   |                   |                   |                   |

**Table 5d: Success targets**

| Aim (500 characters maximum)                                                        | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic                                     | Target group         | Comparator group        | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]                                           | Is this target collaborative? | Data source                                              | Baseline year | Units      | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Increase attainment rates for IMDQ1 and IMDQ2 for Good Honours outcomes             | PTS_6            | Attainment      | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 and 2 | IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5 | Baseline and milestone data to be based on institutional date used for the annual HESA return | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2021-22       | Percentage | 60.2%         | 60.2%             | 60.2%             | 60.7%             | 61.7%             |
| Increase attainment rates for TUNDRAQ1 for Good Honours outcomes                    | PTS_7            | Attainment      | Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)      | TUNDRA quintile 1    | TUNDRA quintile 5       | Baseline and milestone data to be based on institutional date used for the annual HESA return | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23       | Percentage | 53.4%         | 54.4%             | 56.4%             | 59.4%             | 62.4%             |
| Increased male completions in year 4 of plan due to successful Access interventions | PTS_8            | Completion      | Sex                                                | Male                 | Female                  | Baseline and milestone data to be based on institutional date used for the annual HESA return | No                            | HESA publications (please include details in commentary) | 2021-22       | Percentage | 53.8%         | 55.8%             | 58.8%             | 61.8%             | 65.8%             |

[illegible]

[illegible]