



University of Oxford

Access and participation plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

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Preface

Oxford University is a world-leading institution that offers rigorous, intensive and intellectually stretching degree courses, equipping our graduates with the skills to make outstanding contributions to society. Oxford offers considerable social mobility to its students, with graduates from all backgrounds having excellent career destinations.

The education we offer is highly sought after and is suited to students with intellectual agility and a strong foundation of basic knowledge and skills. While our selection criteria for undergraduate study are demanding, we are committed to making Oxford accessible and attractive to students with high academic potential from all backgrounds.

We are determined to improve equality of opportunity at each stage of the student journey, from school through higher education into employment or further study. Our key challenge is to improve the opportunities for admission for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who fail to receive an offer, or who, because of prior academic attainment, are not able to make competitive applications.

We have developed important new initiatives to address this challenge. All are fully funded by the University, with no additional cost to students or schools.

- In 2020 we introduced a University wide bridging programme (**Opportunity Oxford**). This programme enables additional places, within our existing overall numbers, to be provided to candidates from under-represented backgrounds who meet our standard offer, to help prepare them for study at Oxford. We aim to offer 200 places a year from 2022 entry onwards.
- We will introduce a foundation year programme (**Astrophoria Foundation Year**) from 2023 entry for state school candidates from under-represented backgrounds who, because of severe personal disadvantage or disrupted education, are not able to meet our standard offer but who would benefit from a one year intensive programme and support to bring their attainment to the level required to start an undergraduate degree at Oxford. We aim to offer up to 50 places a year, with the first students being admitted for entry in September 2023.
- We have developed a new collaborative scheme in partnership with schools (**Explore-Raising Attainment in Schools**) to help raise attainment in schools among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University has co-designed the programme and is working in collaboration with an academy trust in the North-West of England to improve learner and teacher outcomes in modern foreign languages and STEM subjects.

1. Assessment of performance¹

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

1. The gap in participation rates between most and least represented groups at Oxford has narrowed slightly in the past three years, but remains significant: ratios of 15.3:1² between POLAR4 Quintiles 5 and 1, 10.5:1³ between ACORN⁴ Categories 1 and 5⁵, and 6:1 between IMD Quintiles 5 and 1. This gap reflects acknowledged inequalities in the education system in the UK⁶, which contribute to large differences in prior school attainment.
2. Oxford is a highly selective university. Our lowest conditional offer is AAA. The majority of our intake achieve higher grades; in 2018, 68% achieved A*A*A or higher, with 42% achieving A*A*A* or higher. A very small number of POLAR4 Q1 school leavers meet the University's minimum entry requirements of AAA+ (4% in 2016-17)⁷. Of these, about 30% currently apply to Oxford.
3. Oxford's courses are academically demanding, fast moving and intensive. We believe this is essential in order to challenge and stimulate some of the brightest minds in the country, and to produce graduates equipped with the high level skills and intellectual dexterity that society and the economy needs. All our courses set standard entry grades of AAA or higher. Subjects that make higher standard offers than AAA, mostly in the mathematical and physical sciences, have introduced them in response to evidence that students, from all backgrounds, who achieve AAA grades can often struggle on those courses. While our standard offers are demanding, they are not, in many subjects, the highest in the sector. For all these reasons, it is appropriate to compare our admissions to the eligible pool of candidates who achieve AAA or better at A-level.

¹ Sources of evidence used in the assessment include, in addition to the OfS dataset, HESA student records, UCAS undergraduate reports, DLHE data and the University's own undergraduate admissions statistics and careers statistics. The assessment of performance was conducted in 2019 when the plan was first developed and the targets in the plan are based on the assessment of performance as carried out at that time.

² In 2018, using the University's dataset, 56.8% of the undergraduate intake came from POLAR4 Quintile 5, and 3.7% from Quintile 1, producing a ratio of 15.3 (compared with a ratio of 15.5 in previous years).

³ In 2018, 5% of the undergraduate intake came from ACORN Category 5, and 57% from Category 1.

⁴ The University has used both POLAR4 and ACORN for the purpose of measuring under-representation and socio-economic disadvantage. ACORN is widely regarded as being one of the most effective proxy measure for disadvantage, in the absence of readily available data on individual applicants' circumstances. It is particularly strong in helping to identify candidates in some target groups, e.g. BAME and Asian applicants, who may live in urban areas where individual disadvantage can be masked by area-based high levels of participation in Higher Education. It has been used at Oxford since 2012-13, and is embedded in our admissions and outreach processes and systems (including HEAT). Its continued use will enable us to measure our own progress longitudinally. We have not used IMD as a measure of socio-economic disadvantage, as the 2011 census data do not reflect latest assessments of disadvantage.

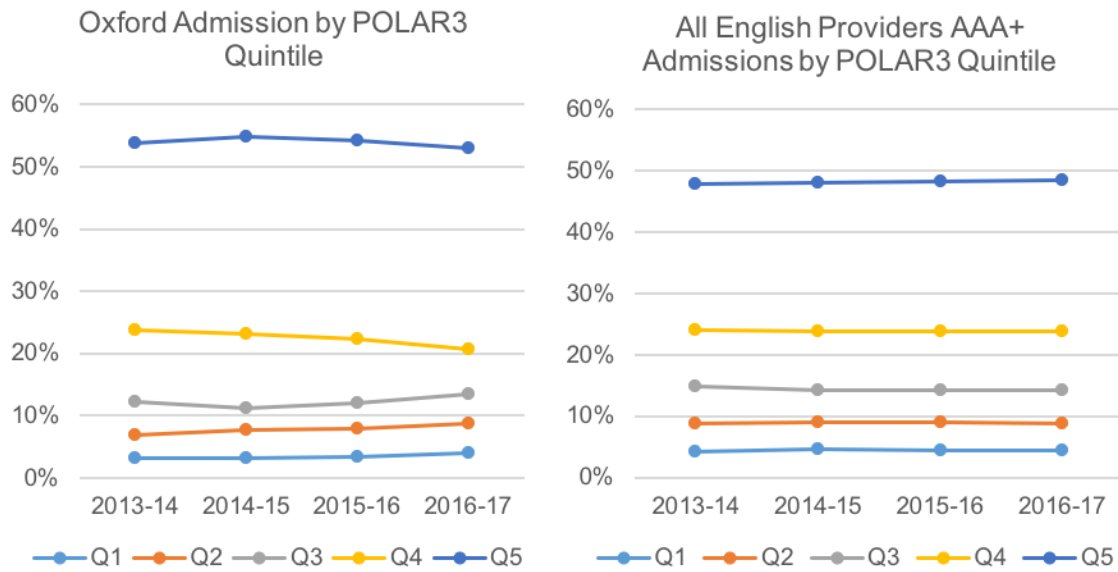
⁵ The University has adopted the OfS' definition of 'under-represented groups'. However, where necessary and appropriate, we distinguish between under-representation, measured by POLAR4, and socio-economic disadvantage, measured by ACORN.

⁶ Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain, November 2017

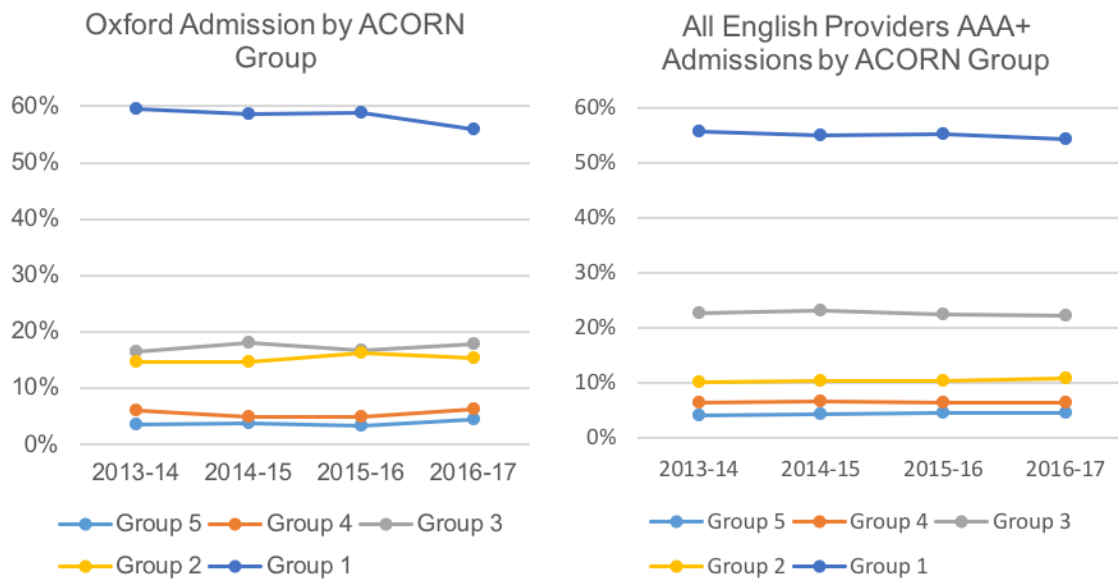
⁷ The 2017-18 figures are not yet available.

4. Controlling for prior academic attainment, participation rates at Oxford broadly mirror the profile of the national pool of AAA+ candidates, measured in relation to POLAR3⁸ (graph 1) ACORN (graph 2) and IMD (graph 3).

Graph 1

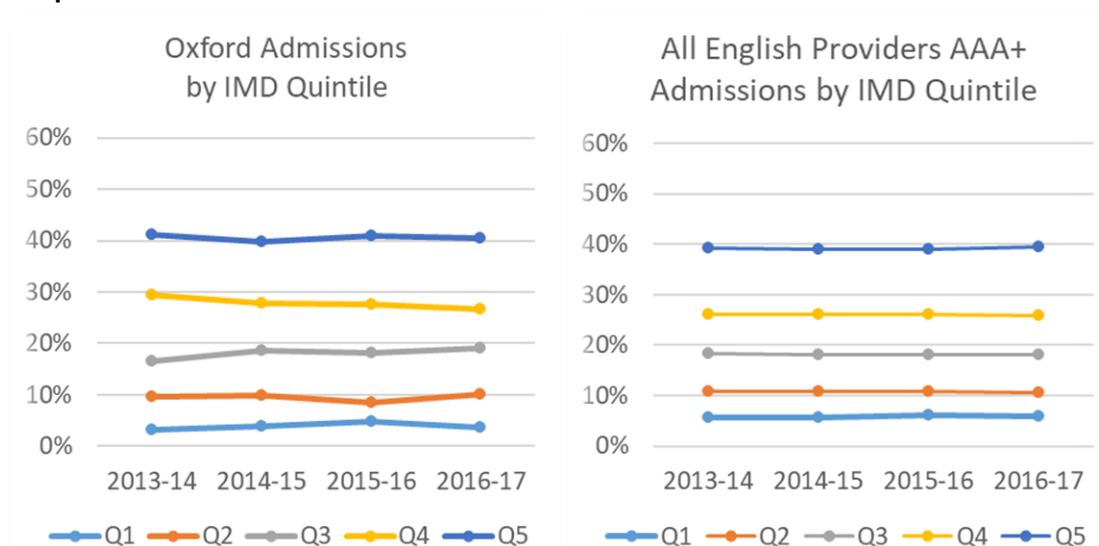


Graph 2



⁸ The HESA dataset for POLAR4 is not yet available

Graph 3



Continuation

- Continuation rates at Oxford, at over 98% (5 year average), are among the highest in the sector. There is no significant⁹ gap in continuation rates, measured by POLAR4, ACORN or IMD.

Attainment

- Degree outcomes for Oxford students are very high. 94% (5-year average) achieve a good degree outcome¹⁰, against an average for all English higher education providers of 77%.
- There is a small gap (4%) in attainment rates between POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 5. This gap is much smaller than for the whole sector (10%), and is narrowing. Moreover, Oxford students from the most under-represented groups (Quintiles 1 and 2) are more likely to achieve a good degree outcome (91%) than those from similar (74%) or higher participation areas (82%) across the sector. Analysis by IMD quintile provides similar results: there is a small gap in attainment rates between IMD Quintiles 1 and 5 (4.7%, based on a 5-year average), compared with 18.5% for the sector as a whole.

Progression to employment or further study

- There are no significant gaps in progression rates at Oxford, measured in relation to POLAR4 or ACORN.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

- Nationally, BAME students make up 21% of the AAA+ population; of these, 13% are Asian, 1.9% black African and Caribbean, and 6% of mixed ethnicity. The proportion of BAME students at Oxford (18%) has grown steadily over the past five years. About 8% of the total student intake is Asian students, 2.6% black students and 6% of mixed ethnicity.

⁹ Throughout the plan, the term 'significant' is used to mean 'statistically significant', as defined by OfS. Where numbers are not statistically significant, they are not necessarily given.

¹⁰ For the purpose of this plan, a good degree outcome is defined as a 1st or 2:1.

10. Oxford's intake of BAME students is broadly in line with the proportion of the 18-25 population as a whole, and a little below the proportion (21%) of the AAA+ pool, this latter difference being explained in large part by subject choice (with a disproportionately large number of BAME applicants applying for the most competitive subjects such as Law, Medicine and PPE). The independent analysis by UCAS of Oxford's ethnicity and admissions data indicates that there are no gaps in the offer rate for black applicants to Oxford and an unexplained gap of 4% in the offer rate for Asian applicants, compared with other ethnicities in the AAA+ pool, after adjusting for course choice and prior attainment.

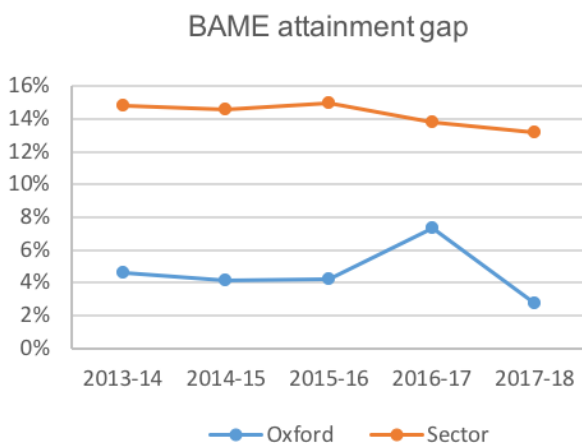
Continuation

11. There are no significant gaps in continuation rates between different ethnic groups at Oxford.

Attainment

12. The gap in attainment rates between white and BAME students at Oxford (3% in 2018) is smaller than that for the sector (13%) and is narrowing (graph 4).

Graph 4

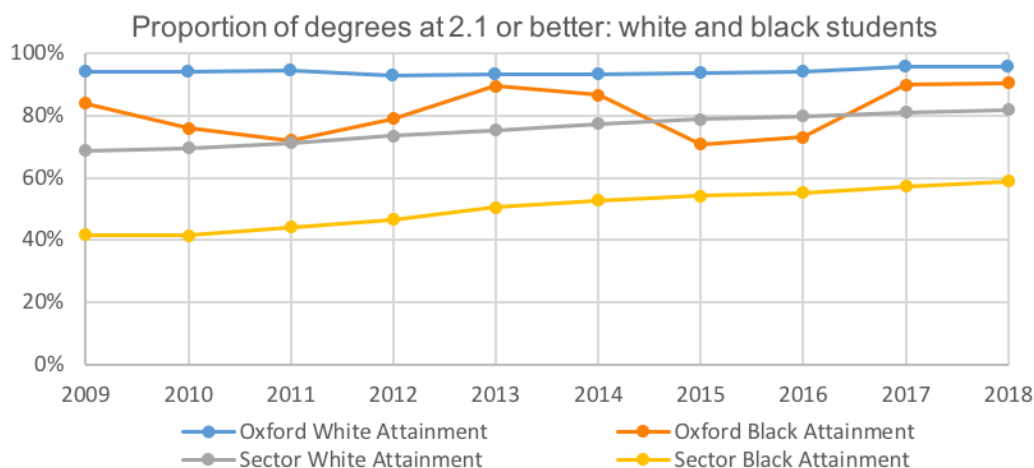


13. The gap in attainment rates between white and black students at Oxford varies considerably from year to year, because of the small number of black students on course and small number of students who do not achieve a good degree outcome. Black and Asian students at Oxford achieve higher degree outcomes than most white students in the sector as a whole (graph 5).
14. The gap of 12% for black students (5 year average¹¹) is smaller than that for the sector as a whole (24%). Similarly, the gap of 6% for Asian students (5 year average) is smaller than that for the sector as a whole (11%).
15. Our analysis of attainment rates at Oxford between white and BAME students, using final average marks, rather than degree classification, examined absolute and unexplained gaps in attainment rates, once structural factors (including prior attainment, school-type and performance, POLAR3, ACORN, and care leavers) were controlled for. The study found that the largest absolute gap applied to black male students, and that after controlling for structural factors, there remained a significant unexplained gap¹².

¹¹ Given the small numbers involved, we have used 5 year averages to show stable trends.

¹² There is an unexplained gap of -0.83 standard deviation on the marks per final paper taken for black males vs. white males.

Graph 5



Progression to employment or further study

16. There is no significant gap in progression rates between white and BAME students leaving Oxford.

1.3 Mature students

Access

17. Oxford admits few mature students (3% in 2017-18), compared with 28% across the sector. Unlike many other universities, Oxford does not offer part-time undergraduate degrees. However, through its Department for Continuing Education, it offers a wide range of part-time, sub-degree level awards (undergraduate certificates, undergraduate diplomas and foundation certificates) that are taken by about 450 mature students each year.
18. The majority of our mature applicants are aged between 21 and 25, with over 80% being under 30. Mature applicants are able to apply to any college admitting undergraduates, or to Harris Manchester College, which admits only students aged over 21 at the point of enrolment.

Continuation

19. The continuation rate for mature students at Oxford, at 94% (5 year average), is higher than for the sector as a whole (86%). However, it is lower than for younger students at Oxford (98%).

Attainment

20. The gap in the attainment rates between younger and mature students at Oxford, at 6% (5 year average), is smaller than that for the sector (10%) and is narrowing.

Progression to employment or further study

21. Mature students at Oxford, who tend to be concentrated in a small number of undergraduate courses, show similar progression rates to those for the Oxford student population as a whole.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

22. Over the past five years there has been an increase in the number of students admitted who declared a disability on application, proportionately from 6% in 2013 to 8% in 2018. There is no significant gap in offer rates between disabled applicants and non-disabled applicants.
23. In recent years, the number of students who declare a disability at any point has increased. Over the past five years, the proportion has increased from 12% to 20% at Oxford, compared with 14% to 19% for the sector. Of the 8% increase at Oxford, mental health disabilities account for 4%, compared with 3% in the sector, and cognitive and learning disabilities for 3%, compared with no rise in the sector.

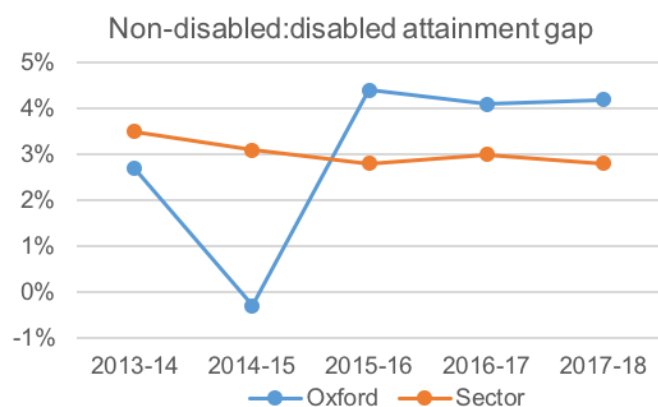
Continuation

24. There is no significant gap in continuation rates between disabled and non-disabled students at Oxford. The continuation rate for disabled students at Oxford, at 97% (5-year average) is higher than that for non-disabled students in the sector as a whole (91%).

Attainment

25. There is a significant gap in attainment rates between disabled and non-disabled students, at Oxford and in the sector as a whole. The proportion of disabled students at Oxford achieving good degree outcomes, at 91% (5 year average), is higher than that for the sector as a whole (73%). However, the gap in attainment rates at Oxford (3% on a 5 year average) has been above the sector average in recent years (graph 6).

Graph 6



26. There is no significant gap in attainment rates for students at Oxford with cognitive or learning disabilities. However, there is a gap averaging 6% for those with mental health disabilities. The number of students with mental health disabilities has been growing rapidly and now forms the largest share of the student population with declared disabilities at Oxford (4%).

Progression to employment or further study

27. There is no significant gap in progression rates between disabled and non-disabled students, at Oxford.

1.5 Care leavers

28. Oxford admits very few students (up to five a year, or 35 since 2009-10) who identify as care leavers on application. National research¹³, and research conducted by Oxford and the University of Bristol¹⁴, indicates that care leavers have a substantially lower participation rate in higher education than the general age equivalent population: about 12% will have entered higher education by the age of 23, compared with 43% of their peers. Compared with other young people with similar demographic profiles and qualification levels, care leavers are 11% less likely to enter higher education and are more likely to withdraw from their course. However, attainment of good degree outcomes for care leavers is comparable with students of similar backgrounds and levels of prior attainment.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Access

29. Recent studies¹⁵ have shown that school context has a significant impact on students' prior attainment, with those from more disadvantaged backgrounds (measured by POLAR4 and ACORN) who attend poorly performing schools likely to be most adversely affected. We have used three indicators to assess school context: the proportion of the school cohort eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the previous six years, school attainment data at Key Stage 4, and school attainment data at Key Stage 5. Our analysis shows that the University's current intake is drawn strongly from the more advantaged quintiles for each indicator (80% from the top two quintiles in 2018).
30. The OfS dataset shows that recent growth in Oxford's BAME intake has mostly come from POLAR4 Quintiles 3, 4 and 5, with numbers of BAME students recruited from Quintiles 1 and 2 remaining low (8.5%). We believe this is because a large proportion of our BAME students come from large cities, where the POLAR4 measure is known to work less well, with very few areas identified as Quintiles 1 and 2. Our analysis of the intersection of BAME with ACORN and IMD shows that 22.2% of our BAME students come from ACORN Categories 4 or 5, and 26.5% from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, suggesting that we are achieving reasonable levels of success in reaching BAME students from disadvantaged areas.

Continuation

31. Intersectional analysis has been undertaken for continuation rates by POLAR4 and ethnicity, POLAR4 and gender, IMD and ethnicity, and IMD and gender. No significant gaps were identified for any intersection.

Attainment

32. Our analysis of gaps in attainment rates between white and BAME students also explored the intersection of ethnicity and gender. All ethnic group and gender combinations showed

¹³ Moving on up: Pathways of care leavers and care-experienced students into and through higher education, Neil Harrison (2017).

¹⁴ Educational Attainment and Progress of Children in Need and Children in Care, David Berridge, Eleanor Staples, Nikki Luke, Judy Sebba, Steve Strand, Louise McGrath-Lone, 2019, Nuffield Foundation

¹⁵ State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain, Social Mobility Commission

an attainment gap (most of which were significant). There were also differences in attainment between men and women of the same ethnic group; in some cases the differences were in favour of men, and in others in favour of women.

33. For the intersection of gender and disadvantage, Oxford follows the sector pattern for the gap in attainment rates between males and females from areas of low and high participation in higher education: women outperform men, for both POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 and Quintiles 3-5. We plan to explore further aspects of intersection, in particular, the intersection of gender and ethnicity with disability.
34. There is a gap of 5% in attainment rates between BAME and white students in POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2, compared with 9.4% (5-year average) for the sector as a whole. The gap is less pronounced between BAME and white students in POLAR4 Quintiles 3-5. Analysis of IMD shows a similar pattern.
35. Oxford follows the sector pattern for gaps in attainment rates between male and female students from areas of low and high participation in higher education: female students outperform male students in POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2, and 3-5.

Progression to employment or further study

36. An analysis of the intersection between gender and disadvantage (using POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2) shows a considerable variation from year to year in the size of the gap in progression rates between male and female graduates, owing to the small numbers involved. The gaps are not significant.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

37. Other groups that may experience barriers in higher education include those with caring responsibilities, those who are estranged from their families, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, those from military families, refugees and asylum seekers. The University does not have significant data to indicate disadvantage as the declared numbers involved are very small. Students who fall into any of these groups are encouraged to declare their personal circumstances before or at application, and while on course, so that tailored support, including financial, academic and pastoral support, can be offered.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

38. Oxford is a highly selective university that provides a rigorous, intensive and personalised education for all its undergraduates. Our aim is to provide fair opportunities for all to benefit from an Oxford education. We are determined to improve equality of opportunity at each stage of the student journey, from school through higher education into employment or further study. We have identified target groups and set ambitious targets to improve both access and attainment of those groups over the period of the current plan. We aim to continue these improvements beyond the period of the plan, while recognising that we are part of a much larger education system and cannot achieve complete equality on our own. Our longer term objective, therefore, is to work with government and the schools sector to deliver continuous improvement in participation and attainment rates for under-represented groups at Oxford, taking into account both our performance and our assessment of the impact of measures introduced to improve equality of opportunity.

2.1 Target groups

39. Based on our assessment of our performance, we have identified particular target groups for increased focus and attention. We will continue to monitor our performance across all under-represented groups at all stages of the student journey, and will take necessary action to remedy any under-performance if and when it arises.
40. We recognise the considerable gap in participation rates between the most and least represented groups. This reflects inequalities in the education system in the UK which contribute to lower prior school attainment among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We believe that the University's selection criteria are right for successful study at Oxford. We also believe that a vibrant higher education sector should contain a variety of providers, including high tariff institutions.
41. Our objective, set out in the Strategic Plan (2018-23), is to attract and admit students from all backgrounds with outstanding potential and the ability to benefit from an Oxford education. Within the period of this plan, we aim to admit students from groups currently under-represented at Oxford at least in proportion to their representation in the pool of candidates achieving AAA or better at A-level. We have set targets to reduce the gap in participation rates for students from under-represented groups and disadvantaged backgrounds for the period of the plan (Targets 1 -3).
42. We have not set a target to increase participation among mature students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We do not offer part-time undergraduate degrees, which are a key vehicle for participation in higher education by mature students in general. However, we will explore the scope to increase participation by mature students from disadvantaged backgrounds, both through the work of the Department for Continuing Education, and the future development of our new access measures.
43. Our continuation, attainment and progression rates are very good. There are no substantial gaps for any particular group, in relation either to other groups at Oxford or to similar groups across the sector. We have not set targets to improve gaps in continuation or progression rates, though we will continue to monitor performance. But we do see room for improvement in attainment rates to enable all students to demonstrate their full academic potential on course.
44. Our objective is to eliminate all gaps in attainment that are not explainable by gaps in prior attainment or by differences in course choice, by 2029-30. We have set targets to reduce the gap in attainment rates for black and disabled students for the period of the plan (Targets 4 and 5).
45. We will also work to improve access to postgraduate study for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. A newly established working group is developing a graduate access strategy to encourage and support applications by disadvantaged students at other universities, both UK and international. We have recently launched a graduate access programme called UNIQ+, building on our successful undergraduate UNIQ scheme. We also aim, as part of the Strategic Plan 2018-23, to create an additional 300 graduate scholarships by 2023.

2.2 Aims and objectives

46. We have set six outcomes-focused targets to address these challenges:

- Target 1: to reduce the gap in participation rates for disadvantaged students (ACORN) to 3:1 by 2024-25.
- Target 2: to reduce the gap in participation rates for under-represented students (POLAR4) to 8:1 by 2024-25.
- Target 3: to eliminate the gap in offer rates for Asian applicants by 2021-22.
- Target 4: to halve the gap in attainment rates for black students to 6% by 2024-25.
- Target 5: to eliminate the gap in attainment rates for disabled students by 2024-25.
- Target 6: to help raise attainment in schools through a programme of student and teacher focused activities¹⁶.

Target 1: to reduce the gap in participation rates of disadvantaged students (ACORN) to 3:1 by 2024-25

47. We aim to narrow the gap in participation rates between ACORN Category 1 and combined Categories 4 ('financially stretched') and 5 ('urban adversity'), to a ratio of 3:1 by 2024-25 (table 1).

Table 1

Ratio between ACORN Category 1 and Groups 4+5						
	Baseline (2018-19)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Ratio	4.9:1	4.7:1	4.3:1	3.7:1	3.3:1	3:1

48. This will require an increase in students admitted from ACORN Categories 4 and 5 of about 150 over the next five years (the exact number depending on the recruitment profile across the five groups). This will increase the proportion of our students who come from ACORN Categories 4 and 5 from 11.3% to 17.1% (compared with an increase from 9.3% to 11.3% over the past five years). This increase represents 75% of the students to be admitted under the new bridging programme.

Target 2: to reduce the gap in participation rates of under-represented students (POLAR4) to 8:1 by 2024-25

49. We aim to narrow the gap in participation rates between POLAR4 Quintile 5 and Quintile 1, to a ratio of 8:1 by 2024-25 (table 2).

Table 2

Ratio between POLAR4 Quintile 5 and Quintile 1						
	Baseline (2018-19)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Ratio	15.3:1	14.5:1	13.1:1	10.8:1	9.4:1	8:1

50. This will require an increase in students admitted from POLAR4 Quintile 1 of about 80 over the next five years, taking the proportion of our students who come from POLAR4 Quintile 1 from 3.7% to 7.0% (compared with an increase from 3.2% to 3.7% over the past five years).

¹⁶ This target was updated from an activity-based to outcome-based target in March 2022.

This increase represents 40% of the students to be admitted under the new bridging programme.

Target 3: to eliminate the gap in offer rates for Asian applicants by 2021-22

51. We aim to eliminate the unexplained (i.e. after adjusting for subject choice and prior attainment) gap of 4% in offer rates for Asian applicants, compared with applicants from other ethnicities, by 2021-22 (table 3).

Table 3

Gap in offer rates for Asian applicants			
	Baseline (2018-19)	2020-21	2021-22
Gap	4%	2%	0%

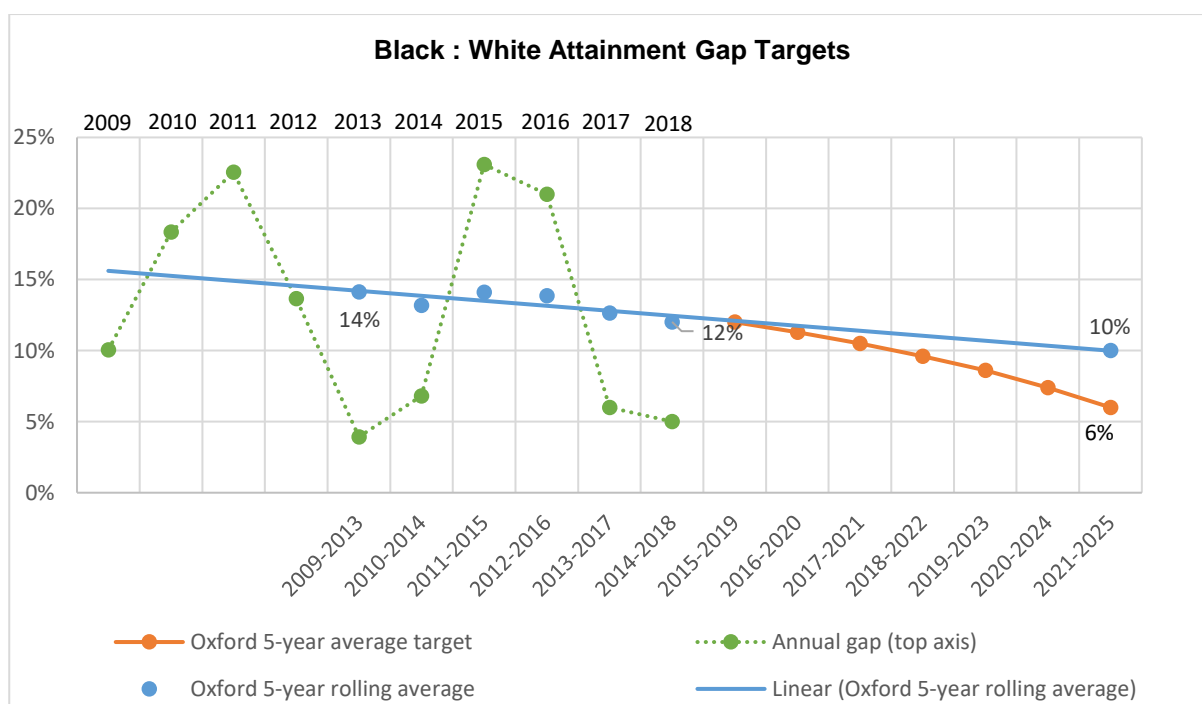
Target 4: to halve the gap in attainment rates for black students to 6% by 2024-25

52. We aim to narrow the gap in the proportions of black and white students who achieve good degree outcomes to 6%, using a 5 year rolling average, by 2024-25 (table 5). This represents a reduction of 50%, from 12% to 6%, over the period of the plan (graph 7).

Table 5

Gap in good degree outcomes for Black students at Oxford (5 year rolling average)								
	Baseline							
	2014-2018	2015-2019	2016-2020	2017-2021	2018-2022	2019-2023	2020-2024	2021-2025
Target gap	12%	12%	11.3%	10.5%	9.6%	8.6%	7.4%	6%

Graph 7



53. As is clear from graph 7, our annual data are volatile, due both to small numbers of black students in recent graduating cohorts, and to the smaller number of degrees of 2.2 or lower that we award. Thus projections of annual gaps have very wide confidence intervals and a five-year rolling average is needed in order to obtain stable trends and meaningful future predictions. We expect the confidence intervals to narrow slightly in the near future as the larger cohorts of black students we have recently admitted reach graduation. In achieving the rolling average targets in table 5, it is expected that the bounds (95% confidence intervals) of the annual data will be as in table 6¹⁷ (rounded to the nearest percentage point).

Table 6

Expected upper and lower bounds of the annual Black: White attainment gap					
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upper bound	16%	15%	13%	12%	11%
Lower bound	-2%	-2%	-2%	-3%	-3%

Target 5: to eliminate the gap in attainment rates for disabled students by 2024-25

54. We aim to eliminate the gap in the proportions of disabled and non-disabled students who achieve good degree outcomes by 2024-25. Reducing the gap to zero by the year 2024-25 translates into a target of 1.3%, using a 3 year rolling average, by 2024-25 (table 7). This represents an improvement of 70% over the period.

Table 7

Gap in good degree outcomes for disabled students at Oxford (3 year rolling average)								
	Baseline							
	2016-2018	2017-2019	2018-2020	2019-2021	2020-2022	2021-2023	2022-2024	2023-2025
Gap	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.3%	2.8%	2.3%	1.8%	1.3%

55. Similar to the black: white attainment gap, there is considerable volatility in the annual data, though the larger numbers in the dataset mean a three-year rolling average can be used. In achieving the rolling average targets in table 7, it is expected that the bounds (95% confidence intervals) of the annual data will be as in table 8¹⁸.

Table 8

Expected upper and lower bounds of the annual Disabled: Non-Disabled attainment gap					
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upper bound	5.2%	4.5%	3.9%	3.2%	1.8%
Lower bound	0.5%	0.1%	-0.3%	-0.6%	-1.8%

¹⁷ Table 6 is intended to give an illustration of how the underlying annual data might be expected to look. It is indicative only, and not an alternative to the targets and milestones in Table 5.

¹⁸ Table 8 is intended to give an illustration of how the underlying data might be expected to look. It is indicative only, and not an alternative to the targets and milestones in Table 7.

Target 6: to support raising attainment in schools through a programme of student and teacher focused activities

56. The collegiate University works with schools through its regional link scheme. Our flagship programme, Oxplore-Raising Attainment in Schools (Oxplore-RAIS), aims to support schools to close the attainment gaps between different student groups. We intend to expand this programme across the collegiate University.
57. The project encompasses teachers and learners across all phases of school education but the outcomes focus in particular on phases where students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be left behind regarding academic self-concept and self-efficacy. The success of the Oxplore-RAIS programme will be demonstrated by annual increases in *both* the percentage of teachers reporting the positive impact of Oxplore-RAIS on student attainment, motivation and aspiration *and* significant increases in learners' self-assessment ratings in relation to key constructs. These outcomes are co-dependent and both are required for success. The size of the programme will increase each year, making the targets more demanding and their potential impact greater.
58. The University has co-designed the programme and is working in collaboration with an academy trust in the North West of England – The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) in Warrington, Cheshire. The programme explores strategies for raising achievement in two areas of facilitating subjects (MFL – modern foreign languages, and STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics) with a focus on learner and teacher outcomes – using an 'enrichment for all' approach. The collaboration consists of three streams:
- *Teachers' CPDL (continuous professional development and learning)*: Teachers are supported in developing ideas for effective classroom practice, curriculum design and pedagogical support in STEM and MFL, challenging common notions around 'aspiration' while looking more at student expectations, and their relationship with attainment.
 - *Learner delivery days*: Anchored by Oxplore¹⁹ Big Questions, these days focus on enabling opportunities for higher order questioning, reasoning, and elements of inquiry-based learning. Teachers and Oxford's early career researchers work together to co-design delivery and resources.
 - *Embedding enrichment in the classroom*: Working closely with TCAT teachers and learners, this stream aims to co-create resources that enable higher order questioning, and provide opportunities for reasoning, extended writing and assessment.
59. Alongside an online platform for teachers (and by extension, learners, outreach professionals and early career researchers who support access programmes), further opportunities for propagation of the programme will include:
- regional dissemination and knowledge exchange facilitated by Oxford University's network.
 - collaborating with other higher education providers – particularly to make available with no charge the digital resources for all to use and to scale up the pool of early career researchers available to co-deliver enrichment sessions with teachers.

¹⁹ Oxplore is a digital resource that aims to challenge learners aged 11-18 years with ideas and debates that go beyond the curriculum.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

60. We take a whole student life cycle approach, seeking to improve equality of opportunity at each stage of the student journey. Under the overall responsibility of the University's Education Committee²⁰, we have in place governance arrangements²¹ to ensure that these efforts are effectively joined up across the collegiate University, with colleges, academic departments and central services working in partnership to deliver our collective aims and targets.

Alignment with other strategies

61. The University's **Strategic Plan (2018-23)** sets out our commitment to equality of opportunity, engendering inclusivity, and ensuring that all students and staff can flourish at Oxford. Two key education priorities are to increase substantially the number of undergraduate places offered to students from under-represented groups at Oxford, and to reduce gaps in attainment rates by gender, ethnic origin and socio-economic background.
62. The **Common Framework on Admissions** sets out the agreed college-wide requirements for the admissions process. It draws on the five principles set out in the independent review of admission to higher education led by Professor Schwartz in 2004²². This document, supplemented by the recommendations of the **Access Targets working group** and the **University policy on contextual data** seeks to ensure consistency of practice, so that candidates' chances of admission are not affected by college choice. It emphasises that flagged candidates who meet the required standard, should be invited for interview and will normally be offered interviews at two different colleges. All students eligible for free school meals or with other evidence of hardship, have travelling expenses to in-person interviews paid up front.
63. The University's **Equality Policy**, sets out the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected. The strategic aim of the current plan to improve equality of opportunity for all to benefit from an Oxford education is fully aligned with the University's Equality Policy²³.
64. The University received a **Race Equality Charter Bronze** award in 2018. The action plan sets out commitments to ensure that Oxford provides an environment where students of all ethnicities feel at home and can thrive. It supports recruitment, retention, training, support

²⁰ Education Committee, chaired by the PVC Education, is one of four main committees of Council, the University's governing body. It has overarching responsibility for the strategic direction and management of education across the collegiate University.

²¹ Joint committees of the University and colleges oversee the operation of common frameworks governing access and admissions.

²² <https://www.spa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Admissions-review-Schwartz-2004.pdf>

²³ The University's Advocate and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Equality and Diversity is a member of Education Committee.

and promotion of BAME staff, and has led to the introduction of implicit bias training across the University and initiatives such as the Diversifying Portraiture project.

65. The University is developing a new **Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy**, to be launched in 2019-20. The strategy will focus on interventions relating to life skills, learning, community, inclusion and support.

Strategic measures

Widening access to Oxford

66. The University takes a holistic approach in seeking to increase participation of students from under-represented groups at Oxford. Our aim is to:

- Raise attainment in schools and encourage applications to higher education, especially to selective universities,
- Encourage and support applications to Oxford from students from under-represented groups, and
- Ensure fair opportunities for admission.

67. Our annual spend on access measures in the current plan in support of our access targets is projected to be slightly over £4 million. This is a little lower than the equivalent figure in last year's plan for 2019-20 because we have revised our programmes to ensure that expenditure is better targeted and more effectively used²⁴.

Raising attainment in schools and encourage applications to selective universities

68. The proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the AAA+ pool did not grow in the period 2013-2017. The University's aim is both to increase the number of applications it receives from eligible candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds but also to help increase the size of the pool of eligible candidates.

69. The University runs a range of programmes, involving collaborations between schools, education experts at the University, and public sector organisations tackling social mobility and social justice, to help raise academic self-confidence and self-reliance as these are strong predictors of higher attainment in schools.

- The University continues to re-shape its outreach activity to concentrate its efforts more effectively in particular regions. As outlined above, the **Oxplore-RAIS collaboration** aims to embed an evidence-informed approach in school communities to support raising achievement through school-wide enrichment. Working with an academy trust in the North West – The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) in Warrington, Cheshire – teams in the University of Oxford's Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach department co-lead on a programme to reduce 'leaks' in the attainment pipeline from primary through to the end of secondary education, and ultimately diversify the pool of potential applicants at university entry. TCAT is made up of four primary and five secondary schools, and one sixth form college. The programme incorporates strategies to work with teachers and learners at primary and secondary to support raising attainment for bigger, mixed prior-

²⁴ The 2019-20 plan also reported expenditure of around £2 million on activity that is not directly targeted at under-represented groups, but supports all students to engage with learning and aspire to higher education. We are no longer asked to report this expenditure in the current plan, but will be maintaining it at the current level.

attainment groups and to address disadvantage that begins earlier in young people's educational journeys. Our intention is to expand the Oxplore-RAIS programme more widely after this initial project has been fully evaluated.

- We have radically re-structured our regional outreach work by establishing **College Outreach Consortia**. Each consortium, comprising 3-5 colleges, offers focused, coordinated and meaningful engagement with schools and students across a UK region. Central oversight and scrutiny of the consortia is provided by a newly established Access and Outreach Sub-Group of our main Admissions Committee. Consortia work with local schools to encourage and help realise aspirations to higher education and selective universities, and offer comprehensive information and guidance on applying to Oxford. Consortia have been established across all English regions with further provision in place for London, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Colleges (Keble, St John's, Wadham and Worcester) collaborate with schools in Birmingham, Harrow, Bedfordshire and Bradford. Their work is designed to encourage progression to other Oxford-wide access initiatives such as the UNIQ programme and to higher education in general. All these initiatives have clear aims and objectives and many of them are being subjected to independent external evaluation.
- We are addressing the barrier of access to good quality teaching and learning materials by making super-curricular material available for free to schools through our flagship digital learning resources, **Oxplore**²⁵. As the 'Home of Big Questions', the materials aims to challenge those aged 11 to 18 with debates and ideas that go beyond what is covered in the classroom. Oxford supports teachers to use the big questions to tackle complex ideas across a wide range of subjects and to reflect the kind of critical thinking that students will undertake at university. Our goal is to realise aspirations, promote broader thinking, academic confidence, and encourage intellectual curiosity to help support raising attainment.
- The collegiate University is involved in the running of two **IntoUniversity** centres, and at an advanced stage in the planning of a third, which work to raise attainment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Oxford South East centre in Blackbird Leys, a partnership between Christ Church, the University and the Queen's Trust, opened in 2014, and works with some 900 pupils every year to offer academic support. The North Islington centre, a partnership between Wadham and others, opened in 2016.
- The University will continue to work with school teachers, recognising the vital role they play in influencing choices made by pupils from under-represented groups²⁶. The evaluation²⁷ of the **Oxford Teachers** programmes has informed the ongoing review of Oxford's collaboration with teachers (Oxford Teachers' Summer School Teachers' Regional Conferences). In the future, the main programmes for teachers will be closely linked to the regional College Outreach consortia. We will also work with students on the University's PGCE courses to ensure that knowledge of the University's policies and practice on access and admissions can be disseminated in the regions in which they are to be employed.

²⁵ <https://explore.org/>

²⁶ The Sutton Trust conducted research into teachers' perceptions of Oxford in October 2016. The published data is available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Oxbridge-polling-1.pdf>

²⁷ 'Independent evaluation of UAO outreach work', Institute for Employment Studies, November 2016.

- The University supports teacher and adviser CPD through its involvement in the **Advancing Access** programme, an initiative funded by the Russell Group of universities. The programme enables teachers and advisers to engage with a range of CPD activities both online and in-person, leading to an upskilling of teachers that enables them to better support their students to progress to high-tariff universities. A recent independent evaluation of the programme found that schools that engaged with the programme between 2017 and 2020 saw greater increases in application rates to Russell Group universities than schools with similar characteristics that had not engaged²⁸.
- The **Study Higher Uni Connect** is a key part of Oxford's local and regional strategy to support our communities. The University is committed to delivering the aims of Study Higher in collaboration with its key partners: Buckinghamshire New University, Oxford Brookes University and the University of Reading. Study Higher has been successfully delivering the Uni Connect aims by working with young people from underrepresented groups and low participation areas to minimise the barriers they face to progression as well as providing impartial advice and guidance about the variety of higher education opportunities on offer. The Study Higher partners are committed to working collaboratively to develop evidence-based approaches to raising attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and to put in place associated evaluation plans from 2023-24.

70. The University will also maintain and build on its extensive engagement with **mature students** through the Department for Continuing Education. The department, which has one of the largest portfolios of lifelong learning programmes in the UK, offers a wide range of sub-degree level courses (undergraduate diplomas and certificates) on a part-time or distance learning basis. These are taken by about 450 students each year. The department also offers two-year, part-time foundation certificates in English and History, which allow direct entry to the second year of an undergraduate degree course, either at Oxford or other leading universities. Each course has an annual intake of around 20. We are currently introducing more flexible pathways through these courses to cater for the diverse personal circumstances of mature learners, and considering options for other subjects.

Encouraging and supporting applications to Oxford

71. The University runs a flagship access programme, **UNIQ**, to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in making competitive applications to Oxford. The programme, which offers both an academic residential in Oxford and a sustained online support programme, has played a key role in widening participation at Oxford. Offer rates for UNIQ participants (33% in 2016 and 35% in 2017) are higher than for the average UK applicant (20%).
72. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, in 2019 UNIQ hosted 1,350 students, a 50% increase on 2018. In 2022 UNIQ will host around 1500 students. Schools that the University has worked with to raise attainment and widen Oxford's applicant pool, are invited to apply to UNIQ. The digital platform offers continuous support to UNIQ students who apply to Oxford.

²⁸ <https://www.advancingaccess.ac.uk/about/content/evaluation-of-advancing-access>

73. Through collaborative programmes, such as **Target Oxbridge**²⁹, we will continue to seek to attract applications from BAME students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
74. The University has also adopted a new **financial support package for UK undergraduate students**, starting in 2020. The new package is intended to encourage more applications from students from disadvantaged backgrounds. By shifting the focus of support from fee reductions to enhanced bursaries, it reduces on course financial pressures and removes one of the key obstacles to greater participation from students from the lowest income households. It also removes one of the most common causes for non-continuation.

Increasing fair opportunities for admission to Oxford (Targets 1-3)

75. Oxford has been successful in attracting applications from students from under-represented groups who meet our entry requirements. About one third of the POLAR4 Quintile 1 AAA+ pool of school leavers already apply to Oxford. We will continue to encourage applications to Oxford from this pool of students. But we will also address the issue that there are a large number of eligible candidates in this pool who are not selected but who then go on to meet or exceed our standard offer. For some of these candidates, the lack of opportunities at school to develop a depth and breadth of academic experience beyond the school curriculum can hinder them from making competitive applications to Oxford and reaching their full academic potential³⁰.
76. To address this challenge, we launched in 2020 a new scheme, **Opportunity Oxford**. This scheme provides additional places, within existing overall numbers, to candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds (measured in relation to POLAR4 and ACORN, and other indicators of disadvantage) who meet our standard offer but who may not otherwise be offered a place and need support to make a successful transition to undergraduate study at Oxford. These candidates, as a condition of their offer, take part in a bridging programme, in the period between offer and arrival, which provides tailored academic support to help prepare them for entry to Oxford. The full costs of course delivery, accommodation and living expenses are met by the University, with no cost to students. The number of places offered has increased from an initial 100 places in 2020 to some 200 places for 2022 entry.
77. This scheme improves the opportunities for those who meet our standard offer. But we also wish to create new opportunities for academically able students from very disadvantaged backgrounds who, because of a lack of educational opportunities, are not able to achieve our standard offer, but who would benefit from a one year intensive programme and support to bring their attainment to the level required to start an undergraduate degree at Oxford.
78. To address this challenge, we are developing **Astrophoria Foundation Year**, to provide a year of intensive tuition and support for students with high academic potential from disadvantaged backgrounds to bring their level of attainment to that required for entry to undergraduate study at Oxford. The cost of developing and running the foundation year will be fully met by the University: successful entrants will not be required to pay tuition fees, and their accommodation and living costs will be met in full. Offers for the foundation year, which will apply to selected subjects only, will be lower than the standard offers in each A-level (or

²⁹ Target Oxbridge is a bespoke programme for British students from African and Caribbean heritage and is delivered in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and Target Oxbridge.

³⁰ Claire Crawford, Lindsey Macmillan and Anna Vignoles: *Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds*, Social Mobility Commission 2014; Lee Elliot Major and Stephen Machin: *Social Mobility and its Enemies*, Pelican Books 2018

equivalent qualification), e.g. BBB instead of AAA. Up to 50 places will be offered on the programme each year, with the first students being admitted for entry in September 2023.

79. The foundation year is aimed at candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds in general. It will provide new opportunities for participation among particular under-represented groups, such as care-leavers and those with caring responsibilities. Applicants who fall into any of these groups will be encouraged to declare their personal circumstances before or at application, and while on course, so that tailored support, including financial, academic and pastoral support, can be offered.
80. Following introduction of the new foundation year and an evaluation of its impact, we will consider, drawing on the expertise and experience of the Department for Continuing Education, the scope for introducing a part-time 'blended distance learning' version of the programme, targeted in particular at mature students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Under **Opportunity Oxford**, we will provide, within existing overall numbers, an additional 200 places a year by 2022-23 entry for disadvantaged students who meet our standard A-level offer.

Under **Astrophoria Foundation Year**, we will provide from 2023-24 entry up to 50 places a year for disadvantaged students who have shown the academic potential to benefit from an Oxford education and who meet a contextual A-level offer.

81. The scale of these two programmes will be sufficient to enable us to meet targets 1 and 2, and to recruit some students who have other indicators of disadvantage (e.g. care leavers or those with severe school disadvantage). Filling the places will require us both to admit a higher proportion of the POLAR4 Quintile 1 and ACORN Categories 4 and 5 students from our existing applicant pool, and to enlarge the size of the applicant pool. We expect the recent large expansion of the UNIQ programme to result in an increase in the number of applications from candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds. We also expect Astrophoria Foundation Year to lead to a further increase in the applicant pool, since it will make an Oxford education accessible to students not able to meet our standard course requirements.
82. As part of our efforts to widen participation, Oxford is committed to ensuring that the admissions process is open, fair and robust. We will continue to strengthen the admissions process to ensure greater consistency and transparency of admissions decisions, and make better use of contextual information to make admissions decisions.
83. We already make extensive **use of contextual information**. We will further strengthen this to support decisions about admissions in general and offers under the bridging programme in particular. Admissions coordinators and tutors are provided with comprehensive contextualised data about applicants to assist in assessing academic potential in the context of the applicant's education experience, and in making decisions about shortlisting and offers.
84. Oxford uses a range of indicators of disadvantage including Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility, school performance at KS4 and/or KS5, home postcodes (ACORN and POLAR4) and periods in care. The University also produces a contextualised GCSE score for all

applicants with at least five GCSE results, comparing the candidate's performance within the profile of attainment within their school or college. Since the 2019-20 admissions round, we have used a composite measure of advantage and disadvantage which incorporates different aspects of disadvantage and provides information on individual students' level of disadvantage within their cohort.

85. Candidates who have been identified to be under-represented at Oxford must be given full and proper consideration at all stages of the admissions process. Candidates who are under-represented at Oxford and shortlisted for interview are normally offered interviews at two colleges. Shortlisted candidates from under-represented backgrounds receive travel bursaries to attend their in-person interview.
86. We are committed to ensuring that admissions decisions are made in a fair and consistent manner across all subjects. **Admissions process reviews** are compulsory for all courses and will move to a five year review cycle. These subject-level reviews analyse the impact of all aspects of the admissions process (admissions tests, shortlisting processes, interviews, and decision-making), particularly on under-represented groups, and provide recommendations to improve the process. Revised admissions and interview training, including implicit bias awareness training, is offered to all academics involved in undergraduate admissions.
87. Our analysis of application and offer rates among BAME candidates has highlighted a gap in offer rates for Asian candidates in particular. To eliminate this gap (Target 3), we will review the admissions processes for those subjects most popular among Asian candidates (e.g. Law and Medicine) to ensure that there are no structural barriers to fair admissions, and monitor closely offer rates.
88. We are also committed to ensuring that the admissions process is open and transparent. The University provides **detailed information for applicants** on our website on the admissions process, including information about different courses, admissions tests and interviews. We will review the information available to provide greater support and guidance to candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Raising attainment on course – targets 4 and 5

89. Through the tutorial model of teaching, the University offers a rigorous and personalised undergraduate education. Students are given close academic and pastoral support in their colleges, and have access to professional support services for counselling and disability advice.
90. The University aims to foster an inclusive environment, both academic and social, to enable all students to demonstrate their full academic ability. This approach is designed to benefit all, but is intended in particular to help reduce the attainment gaps for black and disabled students, and to provide assurance and continuing support, as needed, to students admitted via the new bridging programme and foundation year schemes³¹.
91. We will continue to promote greater diversity in teaching, assessment and the curriculum. We have produced guidance on addressing differential attainment. We will develop new

³¹ The University has also signed up to the recommendations of the recent UUK/NUS report to address the BAME attainment gap.

resources to support teaching staff in delivering an inclusive teaching and learning experience with a new online course available for individual tutors in 2020-21. We have encouraged local initiatives to diversify the curriculum, through academic workshops and seminars.

92. The new Centre for Teaching and Learning, established in August 2019, brings together all education development and learning technology support staff into a single unit that coordinates all learning and teaching enhancement activity across the institution. The centre has published guidance on inclusive teaching for staff who teach, including guidance on supporting disabled students and a toolkit to support racially inclusive teaching.
93. We published a handbook for all academic and support staff in 2019-20 to underpin the Common Framework for Disabled Students. We also intend to examine how we record, communicate and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled students as well as exploring how to avoid the need for individual adjustments through general provision for all e.g. lecture capture.
94. The responsibility to provide study skills support is currently shared between colleges, departments and central services. We will continue to explore ways to strengthen this support, both to help all students to succeed on course and to build on the bridging programmes introduced to support targeted groups in transition to university. We will build on the arrangements successfully introduced in response to the pandemic to support new and continuing students on course to gain better, more coordinated access to necessary academic support advice and resources.
95. The University carries the Buttle UK Quality Mark³² in recognition of the excellent support we have in place to support care leavers. We have also signed the 'StandAlone pledge' to ensure that estranged students also have access to the additional support they may need to thrive at Oxford.

Financial support for undergraduate students

96. Following a comprehensive review in 2018-19 of Oxford's undergraduate financial support package, which drew on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data, new funding arrangements were introduced in 2020 for eligible UK and EU students³³The findings were informed by discussions with the Oxford SU and representatives from across the collegiate university, as well as feedback gathered through student surveys. The review was submitted to the OfS in February 2019 and is publicly available³⁴.
97. The new package is targeted at students from low income households. This was shown, through the analyses, to particularly benefit groups of students from under-represented backgrounds including those in target POLAR4 and ACORN areas, care-leavers, estranged students, and mature undergraduates. Funding will shift from fee reductions to enhanced support for living costs, to reflect student feedback about the importance of bursary levels in their choice of university and for their on-course experience. The package aims to encourage more applications from under-represented and disadvantaged groups by minimising the financial concerns that might otherwise act as a deterrent. The package is also intended to

³² Discontinued from July 2019.

³³ These funding arrangements have since been revised to reflect the new status of European Union students, following the UK's decision to leave European Union membership

³⁴ <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/app>

enhance the on-course experience of students from low income households as well as the participation and career progression of underrepresented undergraduates.

98. A comprehensive communications plan has been adopted to make the new arrangements as visible as possible to target groups. The 2020 financial support package was first launched in February 2019 using social media platforms, new web content (including a downloadable leaflet), presentations across the collegiate University, and delivery of new standard material for inclusion in outreach presentations and activities. Working with the University's admissions team, the package is also being promoted through Oxford and Cambridge regional conferences, the UNIQ access programme, and communications to teachers and pupils, with additional materials sent to 300 target schools.
99. Staff from the fees and funding team will attend University undergraduate Open Days to assist with applicant and parent queries. Promotional packs setting out student funding resources has been produced in different formats that can be adapted for a range of access work. Briefing sessions are also being provided to University and college outreach colleagues and student ambassadors to raise awareness of the new financial support package. A new website and material, launched in September 2019, highlights the range of benefits of the Crankstart Scholarships³⁵, with a greater emphasis on attracting students from underrepresented groups. The new Student Support Fund and travel bursaries for students from low income households will also be launched.

Financial support provision and eligibility

100. Oxford's bursary provision is funded by the University and the colleges, from their own funds and through philanthropy. Starting in 2020-21, the University provides the non-repayable Crankstart Scholarships to eligible first-degree, UK resident undergraduates whose annual household income is £27,500 or less (£5,500 for incomes less than £5,000, and £4,200 for incomes less than £27,500).
101. Crankstart Scholars are also able to access funded internships to develop employability skills and activities that build a scholar community. Scholars are encouraged to participate in voluntary work, including outreach, with the aim of further developing their transferable skills and inspiring those from similar backgrounds to aspire to higher education.
102. Since 2020-21, the University provides non-repayable Oxford Bursaries³⁶ to eligible students who are not in receipt of Crankstart Scholarships, ranging from £3,700 for those with annual household incomes of less than £16,000 to £800 for those with incomes of less than under £42,875³⁷.
103. Students following the six-year Medicine course and the four-year accelerated Medicine graduate course who started in 2020-21 are eligible for a bursary in all years of their course, according to their household income³⁸.

³⁵ Formerly known as the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship scheme, the name has been changed to the Crankstart Scholarship scheme, under the Crankstart Foundation, established by Michael Moritz.

³⁶ The maintenance bursaries will be available to students settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and, up to 2020-21 entry, to EU nationals ordinarily resident in the EEA or Switzerland. From 2021-22 entry, Republic of Ireland nationals living in the UK or Ireland, and students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland who have been granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme may be eligible for an Oxford Bursary if they meet the residence requirements.

³⁷ The upper threshold is fixed at the maximum level at which there is no assessed contribution applied to government maintenance support for students from England.

³⁸ These arrangements assume that the current NHS funding practices will continue each year from 2020-21 entry for Medicine students.

104. The University will take into account all forms of government support available for PGCE students, including the Department for Education's Teacher Training Bursaries. If a PGCE student has a household income of c. £42,875 or less and is not eligible for a Teacher Training Bursary, it is expected that Oxford will provide a bursary according to the rates for undergraduate students³⁹.
105. Full-time UK students following the certificate and diploma courses in Theological Studies starting their course in 2020-21 will be eligible for an Oxford Bursary.

Additional financial support for on-course students

106. Supplementary targeted support funded jointly by colleges and the University will be available to specific groups of UK students facing additional costs. Students who have been in care will be eligible for an annual supplementary bursary of up to £3,000 to provide assistance with costs during the vacations. As part of Oxford's commitment to helping students without family support (StandAlone pledge), a non-repayable annual bursary of up to £3,000 will also be available to estranged students to help with vacation costs.
107. Colleges and departments also provide financial assistance, e.g. hardship/book grants, which supplement centrally administered funds and further ensure that financial concerns do not detract from student success. A considerable benefit of the collegiate system is that welfare provision can be targeted in this personalised manner.
108. In addition to this provision, funding will be used to create a new central Student Support Fund and to assist with the cost of travel for underrepresented/disadvantaged students. Payments will take account of individuals' particular circumstances. Funds will be used flexibly so that students from lower income households are also able to engage fully in student life.
109. The University will continue to provide an Oxford Bursary or Crankstart Scholarship to students who commenced their studies in 2019 or before, at the rates published on our website and in previous Access Agreements/Access and Participation Plans. The University will maintain bursary support at current levels for these cohorts for the remainder of their course. (These cohorts will also benefit from increased bursary levels to be introduced in 2022-23 and 2023-24⁴⁰.)

3.2 Student consultation

110. Student consultation has been undertaken through student representation on University committees and relevant working groups, and through a series of open meetings.
- Student representatives are members of the University's Education Committee which is responsible for the development and delivery of the Access and Participation Plan.
 - Student representatives have played an important role in developing the access targets and initiatives, through their full membership of the University's task and finish group,

³⁹ Subject to confirmation of the Department for Education's funding arrangements annually from 2020-21.

⁴⁰To help with the rising cost of living experienced in 2022, Oxford will increase bursary levels by between £300 and £500 for all students who are eligible for an Oxford Bursary or Crankstart Scholarship in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

comprising representatives of colleges, academic departments, and central services. The Vice-Chancellor hosted a well-attended open meeting on access at the start of the development process for the access and participation plan, and a further open meeting on the bridging programme and foundation year proposals was hosted by senior staff. Consultation on the proposals involved college student representatives in most colleges.

- Student representatives are members of the University's working group to advise on student attainment gaps, and of the Taught Degrees Panel, to which the group reports. A student panel, comprising representatives of different student associations, has been formed to provide feedback on the attainment targets and measures to achieve them, and to help monitor progress in implementation.
- Students' views, through surveys and discussions, were significant in informing the design of the new undergraduate financial support package.

111. The University has placed considerable emphasis on student consultation and engagement in the development of the Access and Participation Plan from the very start of the process⁴¹. Student views, expressed in committee and in meetings with student groups, and in the Student Union's own vision for the plan, have been fundamental to the setting of access and attainment targets and the development of the major access initiatives (*Opportunity Oxford* and *Astrophoria Foundation Year*).

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Access and admissions

112. Evaluation of admissions and outreach is essential and we work with the wider sector to promote good practice in this area. In 2016 the University commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to carry out an in-depth evaluation of its UNIQ (2010-2016) and teacher engagement programmes. The evaluation's main finding indicated that UNIQ had had a beneficial impact on the application behaviours and higher education outcomes of UNIQ participants in comparison with those who applied to UNIQ but did not gain a place, and the wider pool of applicants to the University from different schools. The evaluation also highlighted areas where the University could strengthen and widen its positive impact beyond the current remit of the summer school. The University has implemented the recommendations in the report, and in particular has expanded the UNIQ programme to offer an additional 500 places.
113. Following the evaluation of UNIQ, a University-wide access evaluation framework was launched in January 2019. The Monitoring, Sharing and Evaluation Guide provides guidance on outreach programme targets, monitoring and evaluation, planning and design of interventions, ethical implications of data collection, specific data sources, and data analysis and reporting. It is supported by a series of training sessions and workshops for outreach officers, and reviews of educational research evidence.
114. The MSE Guide enables evaluation to be tailored to each access programme's aims and objectives, reflecting the intended outcomes, expected results and assumptions held by different stakeholders.

⁴¹ The University's commitment to student involvement and engagement is acknowledged and welcomed in the student submission.

115. New opportunities are being developed to allow key stakeholders in outreach teams across the collegiate University to discuss relevant research literature and share experiences in the design and operation of programmes being developed, both across the University and in partnership with schools.
116. An evaluation framework is being built into the detailed design of the two major new access initiatives currently being developed. Initial evaluation of the bridging programme is being carried out by an externally appointed organization, AlphaPlus, with future evaluation conducted by the University's admissions and outreach team. Evaluation of the foundation year will be conducted by an external assessor and supported by the evaluation unit in the University's admissions and outreach team. Following the initial evaluation, there will be an annual review of both programmes.
117. Implementation of the two new major access schemes will be overseen by a joint steering committee of the University and colleges. This committee will closely monitor both progress towards meeting our defined targets (Targets 1 and 2) and the impact of the new schemes on student attainment following the transition to the first year of study. The committee will ensure that any necessary and appropriate adjustments are made in a timely fashion during the first years of operation of the new schemes.

Attainment

118. The Centre for Teaching and Learning will provide support for the design of evaluation instruments for all attainment projects. The Centre will produce a guide for the use of departments, faculties and course teams. It will also continue to provide a consultancy service to support academic project teams and ensure that learning from previous work in another area of the institution is transferred to the new context.
119. An academic advisory group, reporting to the Taught Degrees Panel, was set up in 2019-20 to evaluate measures to narrow gaps in attainment rates, including the new inclusive teaching practice initiatives. The Centre for Teaching and Learning will provide support for all attainment gap interventions, to ensure that clear process and impact evaluation plans are built into the initial project design.

Financial support

120. The University conducted a major review of its financial support prior to the adoption of the new support package from 2020, drawing on a range of quantitative and qualitative data and informed by applicant and undergraduate surveys. It will continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of its undergraduate financial support. Use will be made of selected elements of the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit, with appropriate adjustments for Oxford's context. Analyses of the impact of bursaries on progression to the second year and on obtaining a 1st class degree (the significant outcomes from recent use of the Toolkit) will be repeated biennially, with the Toolkit being used in full at least every four years.
121. To elicit applicants' views about the impact of financial support arrangements on their university choice, a number of questions will continue to be included in open day attendee surveys. Oxford will also continue to carry out a financial survey of all UK domiciled means-tested students whose household income is below the upper threshold for the means-tested element of the government maintenance loan. This will be sent twice to undergraduates over the course of their degree, including during the first year, to capture awareness of financial support arrangements prior to starting university and the influence these had on their

choices. The survey will be based on the OfS Evaluation Toolkit, with supplementary Oxford-specific questions included.

122. To ensure our bursary provision remains at an appropriate level, Oxford's living costs are reviewed annually, with a detailed student expenditure survey carried out every three years in conjunction with the Student Union. The University publishes a range of living costs to inform applicants and students of the likely amounts needed for subsistence, based on the latest Oxford survey results and existing data from a variety of sources including the government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey, and the National Union of Students (NUS). Regular reviews of national household income patterns will also be used to inform bursary levels.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

123. The University's Education Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against delivery of all aspects of the access and participation plan, and reports on a regular basis to Council, the University's governing body. It oversees the work of joint committees of the University and colleges in the delivery of access and admissions policy. It also oversees the work of relevant professional services⁴² in the delivery of targets to reduce attainment gaps. Student representatives sit on all the University's main committees.
124. The University will continue to publish details of progress against our targets and milestones in the annual Undergraduate Admissions Statistical Report, released in May.
125. Progress in achieving the attainment targets is monitored by the Taught Degrees Panel of Education Committee. Attainment data and progress on implementing an inclusive practice policy and targeted interventions will be monitored on a regular basis by the Panel. The development of a differential attainment dashboard will support monitoring of progress locally within departments.

4. Provision of information to students

126. The University aims to make readily available all necessary information about applying to and studying at Oxford for prospective and current students.
- We publish detailed information, in the undergraduate prospectus and on the website, for **applicants and offer holders** on student life and courses, as well as on fees, financial support and living costs. A search tool is available to help applicants understand their proposed course costs and eligibility for bursary and government financial support, based on household income. Information on fees and funding information includes guidance specifically aimed at parents and carers, mature students, international students and disabled students..
 - The University runs an annual email and online communication campaign that provides **offer holders** with a full introduction to collegiate University support services and key information and guidance from the point that they receive an offer. The campaign covers the most vital and time-sensitive information (e.g. government support application deadlines) in a brief monthly newsletter format. In conjunction, offer holders receive an

⁴² Student welfare and support services (counselling, mental health and disability advice), and the Centre for Teaching and Learning

undergraduate fees and funding guide confirming the fee arrangements in place and outlining the funding available.

- A fees and funding website contains comprehensive information for **current students** about fees charged for current and previous years of study, latest information on the costs of studying, and deadline reminders for accessing government and Oxford funding. It is continually updated with tailored information about on-course financial support, including additional funding opportunities and hardship funding. A fortnightly student news bulletin highlights essential fees and financial support information, new funding opportunities and forthcoming deadlines.

127. We are committed to ensuring that the admissions process is open and transparent, and are looking at ways to provide better support and guidance for applicants and prospective applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- We are developing a web interface that will enable prospective candidates to enter basic details (e.g. postcode, school, household income) which will allow them to be informed of the way that contextual information might be used to support them in the admissions process, access to the bridging programme, and the bursary support they would be likely to receive.
- We provide detailed guidance on admissions test preparation including past papers, where possible with worked solutions and any curriculum information, as well as running admissions test preparation courses in some subjects, e.g. Mathematics and Physics. Demonstration interview videos are available on the website to provide subject-specific support for prospective applicants and shortlisted candidates.

Provider fee information 2021-22

Provider name: University of Oxford
 Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Summary of 2021-22 course fees

*course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2021-22. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2021-22 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	Home/EU students who started their course in the 2015/16 academic year or earlier.	Fee applies to continuing students only	£9,000
First degree	Home/EU students who started their course in the 2016/17 academic year or later.	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation degree	*		*
Foundation year/Year 0	*		*
HNC/HND	*		*
CertHE/DipHE		Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT		Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Accelerated degree	*		*
Sandwich year		Fee applies to entrants/all students	£1,385
Erasmus and overseas study years		Fee applies to entrants/all students	£1,385
Other	*		*

Table 1b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

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

Table 1c - Part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

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

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

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

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*Course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2020-21. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2020-21 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Inflationary statement:

Fees for home/EU undergraduates are set at the maximum level permitted by government. Course fees for those starting programmes in 2020/21, and continuing for more than one year, usually increase annually, subject to government fee caps: details are published at www.ox.ac.uk/ffchanges-fees. Fee arrangements for EU student entrants remain uncertain, but information about the implications of the UK leaving the EU are provided at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/oxford-and-the-eu>.

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE		£9,250
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,385
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Oxford

Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£4,041,767.60	£4,623,112.95	£5,126,325.21	£5,399,431.72	£5,283,960.35
Access (pre-16)	£360,000.00	£367,200.00	£374,544.00	£382,034.88	£389,675.58
Access (post-16)	£3,556,767.60	£4,130,912.95	£4,626,781.21	£4,892,396.84	£4,894,284.77
Access (adults and the community)	£125,000.00	£125,000.00	£125,000.00	£125,000.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£7,476,000.00	£7,524,000.00	£7,490,000.00	£7,471,000.00	£7,471,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£504,036.44	£514,347.17	£524,344.11	£535,030.99	£545,911.61

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£29,661,620.00	£29,700,110.00	£29,912,370.00	£29,927,795.00	£29,927,795.00
Access investment	5.6%	6.3%	6.9%	7.2%	7.0%
Financial support	7.1%	6.5%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%
Research and evaluation	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
Total investment (as %HFI)	14.0%	14.2%	14.4%	14.7%	14.5%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Oxford

Provider UKPRN: 10007774

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation rates between ACORN Group 1 and Groups 4 and 5 from 4.9:1 to 3:1	PTA_1	Socio-economic	Target will measure change in ratio between entry rates for ACORN Groups 1 and Groups 4 and 5	No	Other data source	2018-19	4.9:1	4.7:1	4.3:1	3.7:1	3.3:1	3:1	The target is based on a combination of HESA data and our own application cycle data.
To reduce the gap in participation rates of under-represented students (POLAR4) between Quintile 5 and Quintile 1 from 15.3:1 to 8:1 by 2024-25	PTA_2	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Target will measure change in ratio between entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students	No	Other data source	2018-19	15.3:1	14.5:1	13.1:1	10.8:1	9.4:1	8:1	The target is based on a combination of HESA data and our own application cycle data.
To eliminate the gap in offer rates for Asian applicants by 2021-22	PTA_3	Ethnicity	Target will close the unexplained gap in offer rates for Asian students, compared with applicants from other ethnicities by 2021-22	No	Other data source	2018-19	Offer gap of -4%	Gap of no more than -2%	Gap closed	-	-	-	The target is based on a combination of UCAS data and our own application cycle data.
To support raising attainment in schools through a programme of student and teacher focused activities	PTA_4	Attainment raising	In collaboration with an Academy in the North West of England, the project is a long-term sustained programme which encompasses teachers and learners across all phases of school education. The success of the Oxplore-RAIS programme will be demonstrated by annual increases in two co-dependent targets: both (1) the percentage of teachers reporting the positive impact of Oxplore-RAIS on student attainment, motivation and aspiration; and (2) significant increases in learners' self-assessment ratings in relation to key constructs.	Yes	Other data source	Other (please include details in commentary)	Learners: Measurement of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with = 425 learners. Teachers: Measurement of the percentage of teachers who indicate that the TCAT-Oxplore programme supports raising attainment/educational motivation/learner expectations towards HE	Learners: Significant increases of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with 275 new learners (= 700 in total). Teachers: Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate that the	Learners: Significant increases of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with 275 new learners (= 925 in total). Teachers: Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate that the	Learners: Significant increases of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with 75 new learners (= 1000 in total). Teachers: Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate that the	Learners: Significant increases of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with 75 new learners (= 1075 in total). Teachers: Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate that the	Learners: Significant increases of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' ratings in learner constructs. Engagement with 75 new learners (= 1075 in total). Teachers: Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate that the	Oxford's access ambitions are limited by the low numbers of school students from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve three grade As or above at A level or equivalent. The Oxplore-RAIS project aims to reduce 'leaks' in the attainment pipeline from primary through to the end of secondary education, and ultimately diversify the pool of potential applicants at university entry. Baseline year: 2020-21
PTA_5													
PTA_6													
PTA_7													
PTA_8													
PTA_9													
PTA_10													
PTA_11													
PTA_12													
PTA_13													
PTA_14													
PTA_15													
PTA_16													
PTA_17													
PTA_18													

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in attainment rates for black students to 6% by 2024-25	PTS_1	Ethnicity	Percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between black and white students (5 year rolling average).	No	The access and participation dataset	Other (please include details in commentary)	12%	10.5%	9.6%	8.6%	7.4%	6%	Baseline data is the 5 year average 2014-2018

