

## London Metropolitan University Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 Narrative Submission

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## 1. Introduction

The London Metropolitan University of 2022 is very different from the London Met of 2017. With the arrival of a new Vice-Chancellor in October 2018 and the development of our new Strategy (2019/20-2024/25), we have continued to build on our many strengths and have focused on creating a learning community which has a distinctive ethos and is values driven. This aspirational institutional strategic plan has laid the foundations for London Met to accelerate progress towards delivering a high-quality student experience and excellent student outcomes.

With over 11,000 students enrolled on campus across five Schools, we provide undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across a broad range of disciplines. We are deeply committed to social equality, justice, race equity, which connect to our strategic approach.

As a result, the majority of our students come from the most socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The majority are Black or minoritised and balance their studies with work and caring responsibilities. 97% of our students fall into one or more widening participation categories, 64% of our students are BAME (above sector average of 24.7%), and 69% of our student cohort are mature students (above the sector average of 43%). Based on the latest HESA data, from 2021/22, 86% of our UG students were living at home. We have a high proportion of students with declared disability, care leavers and estranged students, and those from economically deprived areas.

Students come to us because they identify with an institution that can change their lives and prepare them to not settle for the life and opportunities that were determined by circumstances beyond their control. As one of the most socially inclusive universities in the UK, we are helping to drive real social change and transformation nationally and globally, for example, through our collaborative partners and most recently our partnership with USA Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Lessons learnt from the pandemic had a significant impact on learning and teaching and our approach to improving student outcomes. Student support services were strengthened, with the learning and insights gained informing our quality processes, teaching, and assessment approaches along with improving standards. The impact was seen in the positive feedback received from staff and students along with high student progression metrics. These efforts allowed us to return to effective face-to-face teaching in 2022 whilst simultaneously enhancing our digital offer and continuing to improve student satisfaction.

We are making significant progress in quality and standards and are confident that in the near future our metrics and narrative submission will point clearly and unambiguously to the same evidence of our success. Our narrative tells the story of a collaborative, targeted, and risk-based approach to managing change. This approach has transformed the University and the lives of its students, delivering an excellent student experience, and ensuring we follow a steady and considered trajectory towards a Gold award. The sections below focus on specific aspects of our story whilst illustrating a coherent and consistent

approach to everything we do. We outline the strategic approaches that were needed to bring about a high-quality experience and the compelling evidence that our approach is having positive impact.

## **1.1 The context of this submission**

This submission refers to two key areas of context:

1. A data context; that indicates progression from a relatively mixed and rather low base in the TEF 2017. The submission highlights the steps that have led and are leading to improvements and considerable change in student outcomes and experience.
2. A partnership context; both with the SU and the wider student body. We recognise that the students in our community can come from backgrounds where they have felt a lack of agency to engage with policy, processes and practices that directly affect their lives. Therefore, we have worked with the SU to produce briefing documents and provide training and workshops all linked to supporting their understanding and engagement with the TEF 2023 exercise. The former SU President is a member of the institutional TEF Working Group, and we are proud that our former SU President is a member of the TEF panel.

## **1.2 Our educational mission and ethos - delivering a principles and values-driven education and experience**

The core values outlined in our strategy define us and provide a framework for the way we work to deliver our vision. We are Ambitious; Inclusive; Collaborative and Creative. Our outstanding academics and professional service staff are at the heart of our strategy, with students as the fabric of our University. We are committed to improving every aspect of their university experience and to working together to ensure our whole institution is built for student success, especially for those who are facing barriers. Our research, and the impact that it has, is fundamental to our social mission. It is also key to supporting our high-quality teaching portfolio. We are one of London's vital civic institutions, united with other key organisations in our localities and the wider capital in driving opportunity and prosperity for all.

In 2020/21, we worked closely with the Students' Union (SU) and other stakeholders to develop a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), to replace the previous Student Charter. The SPA is a commitment between the University, SU and students. It clearly lays down the values and principles that define everything we do as a university to ensure students have the best possible experience with us, outlining the approaches we take when engaging in activities with students. The following account is just one example of an academic department building the vision outlined in the strategic plans of both the University and SU and exemplifies best practice at London Met.

London Met's lynchpin learning and teaching strategy is the Education for Social Justice Framework (ESJF) which was designed in partnership with students, the Students' Union and staff during 2019/20. Our ESJ Framework (see section 5.2 below) has strengthened our ethos in evidence-based, values-driven practice. It has challenged our own principles and decisions to ensure we foster a student centred and risk-based culture, with a focus on continuous enhancement, the pursuit of impact and a "what works" philosophy in support of improving both the student experience and student outcomes.

## Student Partnership Agreement: an interview

Date: 1 September 2022

**Can you summarise what the issue/concern/project was you wanted to work in partnership with students?**

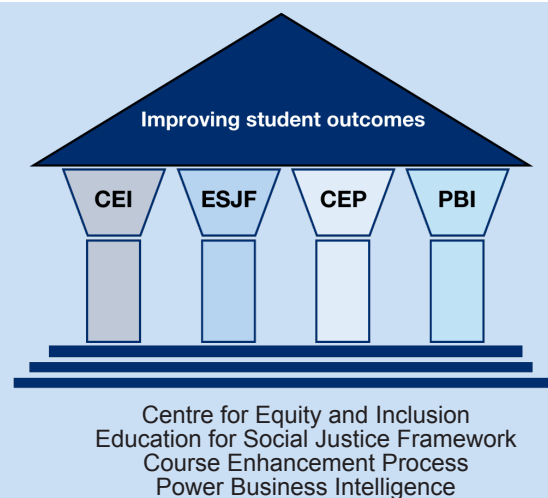
My approach to education is to push against traditional ways of teaching, and develop an arts-based, relational approach. London Met is definitely the place to do that! My team is dismantling the traditional power hierarchies that can exist between academic staff and students, both in the classroom and within formal decision-making spaces and this approach underpins everything I do both personally and politically. This work has informed the redesign of our BSc and MSc courses with it also aligning with the Education for Social Justice Framework.

## 2. Improving student outcomes

As an institution we are committed to eradicating disparities in student outcomes as well as inviting our students to be part of positive change. We recognise that we have work to do to exceed all of our outcomes benchmarks but we are making good progress. Our response has been to put in place focused, strategic pillars which are already having a positive impact (see 2.1-2.3 below).

Alongside these pillars we have:

- implemented our Transitions and Careers Education Frameworks;
- addressed the degree awarding gap through our inclusive pedagogy;
- reviewed our academic regulations and assessment practices in support of student progression;
- monitoring impact through student engagement data overseen by a senior level Engagement Panel which targets outreach as part of their activity.



The Engagement Panel represents an important institutional cultural shift to address continuation. We recognise that due to the complex backgrounds of our students, many do not have their student loan confirmed at the start of term, and are unable to start effectively (47% in 2021/22).

The approach outlined in the graphic above provide a holistic and interconnected approach to improving success and progression indicators in the student life cycle.

### 2.1 Continuation

How do we know we are succeeding? 2pp improvement in continuation since 2021/22

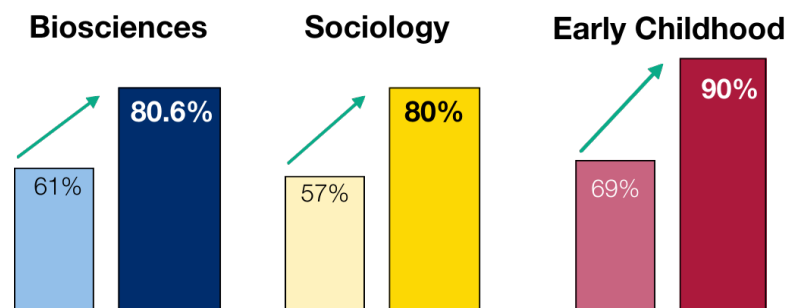
We recognise we are below the threshold for continuation however the improvement of 2pp in 2021/22 reflects the successful impact of the strategic programmes we have put in place. Lead indicators provide confidence that improvements will continue.

In addition to the 2pp increase we are pleased to note that:

No difference between students with a known disability & students with no known disability	No difference between students from IMD quintiles Q1 or Q2, & Q3, Q4 or Q5	Mature students over the age of 31 closest to benchmark for continuation	Students of 'Other' ethnicity, closest to benchmark threshold, & students from largest ethnicity ('Black'), with continuation rate second closest to benchmark threshold
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The subject area with the second largest number of students (Sociology, Social Policy and Anthropology) is 0.7% away from threshold parameters.

At a local level, we have seen positive continuation outcomes across the University, with large courses like Biosciences increasing from 61% to 80.6%, Sociology improving from 57% to 80%, and Early Childhood Studies from 69% to 90%. There are other areas we have identified through our risk-based approach and are expecting to see improvements in continuation (Criminology 67%, Education 72% and Accounting & Finance 66%), as



these areas are now in full engagement with our strategic change programmes, including the sharing of effective practice from successful courses within their subject areas to improve their outcomes. Based on our evidence, we expect to see improvements this academic year, for example our institutional Course Dashboard shows Education with an improved continuation rate of 80% in 2019. Monitoring of Course Action Plans for all RAG rated red and amber courses and progress against objectives is carried out through the Course Enhancement Process (see section 5.4 below).

We have also seen a positive impact on the BAME continuation gap at course level, with significant reductions in differential outcomes seen for large courses such as Business and Management (20.8pp down to 12.1pp), Health and Social Care (38.7pp to 11.4pp) and Law (20pp to 2.5pp).

## 2.2 Completion

**How do we know we are succeeding? Above 75% threshold for the past two years**

The completion data shows a very positive improvement over the last four years and shows that we have been above the 75% threshold for the last two years.

Moreover, subject level analysis shows eight areas (Performing Arts, Engineering, Language and Area Studies, Law, General, Applied and Forensic Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Allied Health, and Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacy) out of twenty five are within or above the benchmark parameters, demonstrating strategic programmes to improve continuation and the degree awarding gap are having a positive impact on completion rates.

This positive impact is also replicated in our Good Degree outcomes, which have increased from 65% to 80% in recent years.

Courses which are below threshold have been identified as RAG red or amber rated in the Course Enhancement Process (see 5.4 below) and teams are fully engaged in tackling the changes required with target monitoring at individual and School level.

## 2.3 Progression

How do we know we are succeeding? Currently above 60% threshold

Our FT UG students are above the B3 thresholds for progression. Subject level analysis shows eight areas are within or above the benchmark parameters providing assurances that our strategic approach to improving student progression has been having a positive impact across the institution, and in subject areas that have been targeted for improvements. Nine out of 18 subject areas show improvements, three remain at previous levels and six declined compared to the previous AY 18/19. Analysis as part of our portfolio strategy planning in 2020 indicated that the University performed incredibly well in terms of portfolio mix with 142 employer-focused courses. In addition, in academic year 2023/24, we will launch new career focused degrees including Nursing and Built Environment.

Career building opportunities are aligned to and embedded within curricula at local level and institutional level. Examples at local level include: the School of Computing Digital Media's Code-It challenge and Maths Arcade; the School of Business & Law's Virtual work placements via online platform Riipen and Passport Initiative School of Social Sciences & Professions' Future Leaders Club and Achievement summer School.

Our students progress to roles and industries where they apply their degree learning to make an impact on the economy and communities. We have graduates that are working in financial services, education and teaching, local and national government, HR, accountancy, cyber security, architecture, science to name a few.

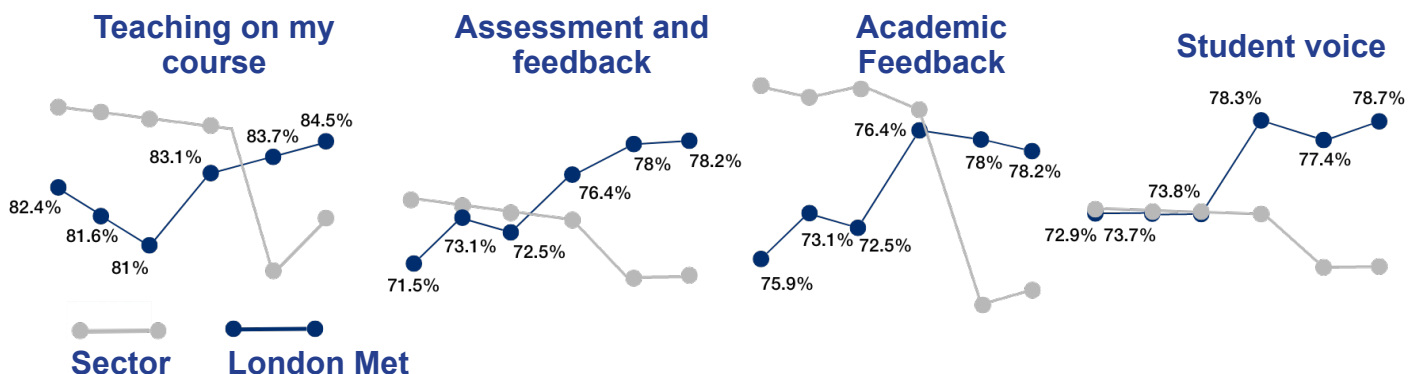
Our graduates go on to large employers

Much of our course portfolio are vocational courses that are focused on practical work, preparing students for a particular profession which are not coded as managers, directors or senior officials, professional or associate professional occupations and where our graduates use the knowledge, skills and experience gained in their degree to work in areas such as teaching assistants and in the health and social care sector where they have previously worked but are now able to progress in their chosen profession.

## 3. Enhancing the student experience

Our recent NSS scores, some of the best in London and above benchmark, are testament to our intense focus on the student experience. Against falls across the sector and well reported drops in satisfaction in HEIs in London, our scores have risen.

Our overall satisfaction of 82% is up from 78% in 2018. A total of 25 out of 39 courses that met the reporting threshold had satisfaction of 80% and above. The sections below, and section 5, outline how we deliver excellence for our mix of students and across our course. For example, courses that did not meet the threshold and courses with below 80% satisfaction are reviewed as part of our Course Enhancement Process (see 5.4 below). We have also made significant progress in the following areas – Teaching on my course, Assessment and feedback, Academic support and Student voice.





Amongst the HEIs which took part in the NSS 2022, we ranked 22nd for Overall Satisfaction, 21st for Teaching, 13th for Assessment and Feedback and 27th for Academic Support.

This progress is shown in improvements across the totality of our student body:

No difference between young & mature students in any student experience measure except young students who are 7% less satisfied than mature students (who are above the sector) with learning resources.	No difference between students with a known disability & students with no known disability in any student experience measure, except in learning resources where students with a known disability are 2% less satisfied.	No difference between students by ethnicity in any student experience measure except where BAME students 3% less satisfied than white students with learning resources.	No difference between male & female students in any student experience measure except female students who are 2% less satisfied than male students with learning resources.
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These significant improvements demonstrate the impact of the projects and targeted interventions we have put in place as outlined sections 5 and 6 below.

We understand the NSS does not tell us the totality of the student experience, and in keeping with our strategic approach, we have taken a multi pronged and continuous approach to understand the student experience at module, course and institutional level, and have used data from internal surveys to compliment and add nuance to NSS data.

### 3.1 The teaching quality for our home UG students

How do we know we are succeeding? 84% of students satisfied with teaching quality.

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide for 2022 ranked us best in London and sixth in the UK for our teaching quality. Student satisfaction with teaching on their course has steadily increased in the last four years and across subject areas, rising to a high of 84% of our students are satisfied with the teaching on their course in NSS 2022. With a student response rate of 84%, 8% above the sector average, this demonstrates a high level of student engagement across our whole student body. The quotes below typify the fantastic feedback received from students in the NSS results 2022 on teaching quality.

Student and lecturer expectations are very clear. All module specifications are outlined from day one. Lecturers are willing to adjust teaching to suit students, where possible. Extra tutorial time for individual students is arranged at time available by both students and lecturers. The lecturers are always willing to support with our concerns. They show interest and care towards our well-being and not only our education. They keep us informed on upcoming events, jobs and internship opportunities. They are very positive and encouraging which I think empowers us in our learning. **Comment from Computer Technology & Design Student, NSS 2022**

High levels of student satisfaction with teaching quality are mirrored in our Student Experience Survey results in 2021, and again demonstrate continuous improvements in teaching quality:

#### Q1. The teaching on my module is engaging and supports my learning

2019	2020 - T1	2020 - T2	2021 - T1
81.62%	83.36%	85.43%	87.71%

### 3.2 Assessment and feedback

#### How do we know we are succeeding? Year on year increase for student satisfaction.

We believe that intrinsic to building inclusive and engaging curricular is designing assessments which reflect the experiences of our students and the quality of our courses and teaching. This ensures our students meet the standards expected by employers and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. For assessments to be inclusive, authentic, relevant and reliable, we have defined a set of principles and updated guide through our Assessment Compendium, that makes transparent our policies, procedures and practices. To ensure course and module alignment with our University strategy, these principles also serve as an important evaluative framework feature of our quality enhancement and review processes. We have analysed our module data to identify trends in performance and student outcomes including by split metrics. The data shows the impact of different aspects of assessment (such as weighting, frequency, type and time) on non-submission, pass rate and average grade for our mix of students. Schools are provided with summary reports in order to act in areas of concern as well as sharing best practice. We have also reviewed our assessment regulations clarifying routes through courses for students and staff and making the systems for mitigation more supportive.

The most significant difference within the NSS assessment and feedback questions is in question 11, "I have received helpful comments on my work", with a 81.8% satisfaction score compared to the sector at 69.1%, alongside levels of satisfaction which are 10pp above the sector for questions relating to marking criteria clarity, fairness and timeliness. The steady increase in satisfaction rates for this area is a result of specific actions to ensure our assessment processes and practices at School through to module level, support a focus on assessment as tools 'for' learning, providing timely, diverse and clear feedback to students that ensures we feed forward with robust constructive alignment checks.

We see the effects of these examples through feedback from students:

"Great being able to contact lecturers at whatever time and getting a prompt reply. Good balance between coursework and exams. Never felt under prepared for an assessment."

"Gets you ready with experience for the outside world. Creating blogs, bulletins, and podcasts as assessments is a great way for us to get real-life practice in this sort of industry."

Noting our student mix, we are proud that there are no differences in satisfaction rates for students by characteristic in assessment and feedback within the NSS. Again, high levels of student satisfaction with assessment and feedback are mirrored in our Student Experience Survey results for 2021/22.

#### Q.2 The assessment criteria on this module have been made clear in advance

2019	2020 - T1	2020 - T2	2021 - T1
81.69%	81.84%	83.69%	85.40%

We have prioritised ensuring academic integrity is at the forefront of learning and assessments. We signed up to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter and launched our Academic Integrity Campaign, as well as reviewing our process and systems to allow a more transparent and robust reporting. Since then, we have seen an improvement in cases of academic misconduct. There has been a significant decrease of 19% in cases submitted since November 2021 to now, compared with the previous academic year. Similarly, the number of unique students reported for cases has dropped by 21%.

	2020/21	2021/22	% Decrease
<b>Allegations</b>	270	219	19%
<b>Unique students</b>	240	190	21%

Table above shows the percentage difference since launching the 3 work streams focusing on Academic misconduct and integrity.

### 3.3 Academic Support

#### How do we know we are succeeding? Student satisfaction steadily increasing over four years

We recognise that in order to ensure our mix of students succeed at London Met, we must provide academic support that transcends bolt on provision that is not integrated into classroom and academic experience.

Our NSS results show this approach is working with student satisfaction for academic support steadily increasing over the last four years from 76% in 2019 to 78.4% in 2022.

This progress is shown in improvements across the totality of our student body:

No difference between young & mature students, with satisfaction above benchmark	No difference between students eligible for free school meals & those not eligible, with satisfaction above benchmark	Students from IMD Q1 & Q2 are more satisfied than students from IMD Q3, Q4 & Q5, with both above benchmark
No difference between male & female students, with satisfaction above benchmark	Students of Asian, Black, Mixed & Other ethnicities have satisfaction levels above benchmark	Students with a known disability & students with no known disability are within benchmark parameters

Our academic support focuses on meeting students at the point of need and delivery. For example, Academic Mentors provide School-based support to students with assessments to enable them to understand what is required, find the right resources, develop confidence and skills and receive feedback. These roles work closely with Subject Heads and Course Leaders to review teaching and assessment, drawing upon the close relationship and understanding these roles have with students.

In addition, we have delivered comprehensive support through work led by our Academic Communities team. These include peer assisted learning and Student Curriculum Partners.

### 3.4 High quality resources to enhance learning

We are 2.1% below the benchmark, in line with falls for this area across the sector. However, satisfaction is rising sharply, and our Student Experience Survey results for 2020/21 onwards show a steady increase in satisfaction with resources to support learning:

#### Q.6 I have been able to access library resources in support of my learning

2019	2020 - T1	2020 - T2	2021 - T1
N/A	70.26%	78.23%	85.52%

We have addressed this in the short term and long term. We have invested significantly in the last four years to improve our physical learning environment and have committed to further investment through a new Estates Strategy which was approved in 2022 with a £150 million investment over ten years to create vibrant campuses with cutting-edge facilities and resources, with sustainability at its heart. Recent investments include a mock courtroom, purpose-built art, design and recording studios to a £100,000 journalism newsroom and our £30 million Science Centre, which is one of the largest science teaching labs in Europe. More recently we have been successful in receiving the maximum award from the OfS of £5.8m to create courses that address critical nursing shortages in London. Receiving the maximum possible for funding will enable us to achieve our vision of creating state-of-the-art teaching spaces which harness the latest diagnostic simulation systems to ensure our students have the best possible learning experience.



We responded quickly to feedback from our students during the pandemic in relation to access to online learning resources. Monthly forums were held where students were able to ask questions to members of the Senior Leadership and Management team and raise any concerns, and through more formal student survey mechanisms in order to identify what was important to them. This led to a significant investment in online Library resources and creativity in the assessment requirements of course-specific resources which required specific equipment and software. Underpinning these improvements are the development and implementation of a multi pronged strategic approach to enhancing the academic experience.

The new Digital First Strategy, a multi-million-pound long-term transformation approved in March 2021 with input from our students, seeks to ensure every course has digital learning at its core, that we create an outstanding digital environment for students from awareness to enrolment to lecture theatre, and that personalised learning via multi location and multi device access will be standard. Learning resources form a core part of the Student Success strand of the strategy where we will; Digitise our curriculum in line with the aspirations set out in our ESJF; Develop a London Met blended delivery model that delivers outstanding outcomes for all of our students; and support our students who face digital poverty.

Our commitment to this is demonstrated by the Classroom Capture initiative, a significant investment in digitally transforming and upgrading the University's teaching spaces over a two-year period starting in the 21/22 academic year, alongside rolling out a new sector-leading lecture capture and video platform, Panopto. This will ensure an excellent learning and teaching experience, with the flexibility to develop our in-classroom vs. remote delivery in the future.

We have also developed content in the VLE "Library Matters" which offers information literacy, digital literacy and basic study skills help to students. Library Matters enables students to work through the content or dip into the specific areas that they need help with e.g. avoiding plagiarism and how to reference. Library Matters has been designed so that students can pick and choose the content most relevant to their needs. During 2020/21 we had 65,125 visits to Library Matters - much higher than usual due to the reduced access to staff in person due to the pandemic.

### 3.5 Student voice in improving student experience

How do we know we are succeeding? Four out of five Schools had a 5% + increase in their overall satisfaction rates.

A golden thread running throughout our strategic approach is creating democratic and equalising spaces where the student voice can inform policy and practice. The impact is shown in our Welcome Week and internal Student Experience Survey results for 2021/22.

*"The feedback given from students to lecturers and course leaders has been taken really well and changes have been made accordingly. The communication between staff and students is brilliant too."*

**Social Work Student**

*"Overall, my experience at London Met has been great, I really feel like I have become a part of an academic family. Over my 3-year journey, I have seen the course get better overtime mostly based upon the feedback of the current students ....we have helped make the course even better for the students to come."*

**Computing, Technology and Design Student**

Our Welcome Week Survey results for 2021/22 show improved satisfaction in almost every category, including academic experience and induction (2%-8% increase), communications and the support provided by teams like Employability and Student Services (3%-9% increase). For example, when 28.2% of students strongly agreed that "they are confident they know how to contact the careers and employability service", the Careers and Employability Services used the feedback from student comments to refine their offering which was fed back to students. This resulted in a 5% increase in response to this question the following year.

Our Student Experience Survey (SES) runs in both semesters to ensure a key quality process is able to identify issues and to respond to student feedback during the academic year. Our survey results for academic year 2021/22 demonstrate a clear trajectory of improvement. Our overall institutional satisfaction rate is 84% with a 34% response rate.

The Student Experience Survey is used to identify areas of improvement for our student experience. This allows us to action any student feedback in the early first semester and second semester. The findings of our internal surveys in the last few years have reflected the results of the NSS which reinforces our focus in key areas.

*"The module overall is really helpful and the information is well organised. The teacher is kind and open for questions."*

*"The lecture and the seminar at this module are interesting and is nothing I would change"*

Across all Schools there was an increase for the question "I feel part of a learning community with staff and students". This had been an area of concern following the impact of the pandemic in SES 2021 on our students' learning and had been noted in our NSS 2021 results in some subject areas. We recognised a sense of belonging was important to our student body, especially during challenging times. We took action in response, returning to campus and face to face teaching as soon as possible. Another significant area of improvement was in relation to an increase in students knowing who their Student Representative is, for the effectiveness of the Student Union, and for how feedback is acted upon – all highlighting the impact of our commitment to increased partnership working.

All staff assigned to modules in Evasys+ received their module reports 24 hours after the survey closes. Since 2021 A "Closing the Loop" exercise is carried out utilising the Evasys+ instructor portal whereby staff are required to respond to feedback and publish this to students by the end of Week 9 of term. The instructor portal has enabled more timely, targeted interventions by staff at a local level complimenting the rigorous review of the institutional level data. This has improved oversight, transparency and accountability, providing staff with the data they need in a timely manner to make necessary changes to teaching based on student feedback.

Another example of excellence in improving the student experience through collaboration is the 'The Loop' Social Work newsletter initiative which was introduced in 2020. The termly newsletter is a vehicle to highlight student priorities, share good practice in the social work department and wider teaching partnership as well as to gain the views and feedback of students on the course. The innovative approach means that this publication is entirely co-produced with student co-editors who work alongside the Head of Social Work to decide, gather and edit the content. Through centring the voices of students, 'The Loop' focusses on 3 main themes.

1. Dismantling traditional hierarchies between students and academic staff.
2. Building confidence in student's abilities to enter intellectual spaces with senior university staff.
3. Developing key employability skills such as interviewing, working to copy deadlines and synthesising and making information creative and accessible.

'The Loop' has been very successful, attracting advertising from social work publishers (Sage and Routledge) and is featured on the North East London Teaching Partnership website of 6 local authorities. It has also attracted very positive feedback and contribution from the Social Work England, the profession's regulatory body as an example of good practice.

### 3.6 Academic staff development

We recognise that an institution cannot bring about sustainable transformational change without supporting and engaging its staff. To this end we have put our outstanding academics and professional services staff at the heart of our strategy. We have created opportunities to ensure that all staff are appropriately developed, mentored and deployed to deliver our strategic priorities, and support their career aspirations. Our Academic Promotions Scheme provides recognition of outstanding achievements and leadership in

the domain of teaching and learning, as well as in the domains of research and enterprise. Excellence in teaching is therefore both supported and rewarded. The requirement to show “an upward trajectory which would continue to be maintained”, means that successful applicants are positioned to make sustained contributions to promoting teaching quality through their leadership roles across the institution and at all levels.

Our well attended annual Learning and Teaching conferences involved  
staff from across Schools and Professional Service Departments (PSDs), and students as co-presenters. Staff regularly describe such events as inspiring, energising and well-organised, offering opportunities for exchange of ideas whilst making pedagogical and professional connections.

members of staff enrol on our PGCert/MA LTHE annually and we see evidence of their engagement impacting on curriculum development, student experience and achievement. Projects undertaken by staff-participants on our MALTHE contribute directly to innovations in learning and teaching. Recent examples (2020 to 2022) include affirming the study experiences of high-achieving black male students, and Disrupt the Discourse, an anti-racism toolkit for promoting social justice pedagogy, developed by School of Social Sciences and Professions that is being rolled out across all Schools.

“Overall, the work from this course is of a very high standard in comparison to other work I have seen in other universities .... with an embedded concern for diversity and equality and social justice  
**(MALTHE External Examiner, Report 2021/22)**

Our in-house, peer-reviewed, officially registered journal “Investigations in university teaching and learning” [ISSN 1740-5105] is a key vehicle for raising the profile of SoTL and disseminating pedagogical innovation, development, and research. In the two most recent volumes (2019 and 2022) three-quarters (27/37 articles = 73%) of the articles were authored by current or former course participants.

In 2019/20 a revised University Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) Framework was adopted, providing a set of guiding principles for School-based schemes. The distinctive character of the renovated PRT Framework is that while retaining a staff peer-owned process and developmental ethos, it promotes the inclusion of the student voice in the development of quality teaching, through reflection on student feedback and opportunities for learning dialogue between teachers (being reviewed) and their students

### **3.7 External Examiners have noted the excellent quality of feedback**

Externality plays a fundamental role in our quality assurance of our assessment and marking practices. External Examiners are a key element in this. London Met is reviewing its work with External Examiners in light of the recent QAA/UUK/Guild HE review on external examining.

The University appoints independent External Advisors (both academic and professional/industry-linked) to contribute to and attend course validation and periodic review events. External Advisors receive detailed guidance, which includes information on institutional priorities and the ESJ Framework and the Race Equity Strategy. This is received as part of course validation and review documentation.

Analysis of the External Examiner reports shows positive commentary on the following key themes: staff to be supportive, communicative and helpful; the quality of the feedback and feed forward was impressive; there was rigorous oversight and standards are high.

“The standard of the marking is high. Feedback was consistent and used meaningfully towards student progression, and it was clear to me that the work I was looking at had been graded by a functional team of scholars who employed proper internal moderation standards” **External Examiner SSSP, November 2022**

“...there has always been a consistently caring but fair approach towards students and their assessments. The students benefit from an integrated and dedicated teaching team that always try to provide a positive learning experience. I have always been made to feel very welcome and have enjoyed the role of external examiner. **External Examiner SCDM, November 2022**

### 3.8 Research-informed teaching

We have introduced an integrated approach to academic practice which impacts positively on students. This has been done by strengthening our research centres, our research support and broadened our interdisciplinary opportunities providing students opportunity to be involved in research through for example, supporting primary research, final year projects and involvement in London Labs in particular.

Our students work in research that makes a difference to some of the most pressing problems at local, national and international level. For example, students studying Sociology and Computing related undergraduate degrees were involved in a research project with the London Borough of Islington to identify the levels of unemployment in different ethnic groups living in the Borough and the extent to which existing support services support BAME communities. Students shadowed research leads in conducting focus groups, assisted in transcribing interviews, and identify the key themes. Key recommendations of the project were implemented by the Council. Research conducted by members of our world-leading Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU), resulted in an ICS that illustrates the limitations of short-term risk reduction responses to domestic violence. Advocacy, ensured that economic abuse was included in the draft Domestic Abuse Bill which received Royal Assent in April 2022. The research informed the UG social work curriculum with a number of CWASU research projects are threaded through them.

As part of London Met Labs, students are able to undertake projects which take them out into the local community to work with local charities, councils, NHS, social enterprises or small businesses. Students explore different skills and roles, and find they thrive in them leaving their studies driven by values they've cultivated through their engagement and exposed them to careers they previously hadn't considered. This is evidenced in the following quotes:

“The London Met Lab really sets a new standard for the Civic contribution that higher education providers can make across key areas of the capital...Embedding and integrating its civic activity as a core part of the student experience through their empowering London module.”

Planning, Regeneration and Skills

“Working

allowed me to develop my communication and networking skills and provided me with valuable contacts and advice to take forward in my career. Looking into the future, the skills and knowledge gained here can be applied across multiple disciplines and whilst my final career path is not yet set in stone, I am looking to continue my Law studies.”

BA

student at London Met

## 4. Our London Met - provider context

### 4.1 Our provision

Along with our UG and PG students studying across three sites in Holloway, Aldgate and Shoreditch we also collaborate with 29 partners, six in the UK and 23 overseas. For example, we offer Business Management and Health and Social Care programmes for students in partnership with QA Higher Education (QAHE) taught at one of the centres in London, Birmingham and Manchester with daytime, evening or weekend timetables and multiple intakes per year for students balancing their studies with work or personal commitments. 142 of our courses are accredited by Professional or Statutory regulatory



Bodies (PSRBs) that lead to a professional or vocational qualification or exemption from a professional examination in keeping with our employer focus.

Our Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who joined us in January 2022, has undertaken a subject area and portfolio futures reviews for each of our twenty subject areas. These have looked at four-year historical performance as well as identifying opportunities for future developments. This builds on previous portfolio reviews including one in 2018/19 which mapped provision and titles against student and employment sector demand nationally and for London. This led to the phased development of new courses in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Physiotherapy, Nursing and Construction Project Management within a new School of the Built Environment. These initiatives also increase the postgraduate progression opportunities for the institution's undergraduate students.

We have worked hard to establish excellent relationships with industry and links with professional bodies. Course teams are committed to widening participation and one such example is at the re-accreditation of Social Work courses in March 2022. It was noted by the panel that this was the only course in the country which had both Chartered Institute of Housing and Social Work England accreditation which gave the course a unique selling point. It was explained that housing and issues surrounding it were pivotal within Social Work.

Our new subject specialisms are intended to be a driving force for social mobility, and we understand the importance of aligning our diverse provision to our diverse student body.

## **4.2 Our community**

At London Met we recognise that change cannot be achieved by a single team or by EDI strategies that are superimposed onto existing institutional activity. All members of the University are united by the ambition to achieve lasting, holistic transformation of our community.

This is reflected in our strategy as shown in our encouraging all stakeholders contribute to the design and delivery of change. One example of this is ensuring our governing body reflects the diversity of our student population in contrast to much of the sector. It plays an important role in our community

We have invested £15 million over five years to make effective, tangible change through our Race Equity Strategic Plan which has been highlighted as an example of best practice in higher education in the July 2022 report from Universities UK (UUK) focussing on the degree awarding gap - the whole institutional approach implemented by London Met affects our community.

## **4.3 Our students - London Met's distinctive and celebrated student profile**

We are exceptionally proud of our student body and recognise their diversity as a key strength in shaping our institutional strategy. We are proud of their cultural diversity and their high resilience overcoming multiple physical, mental and socio-economic barriers to reach higher education. It is recognised that many of our students have complex lives, and it is necessary our policies and practices address these. Acting on research which highlights the experience and outcomes of students, and responding from a distinctly London-based perspective, are critical to informing our approach, such as the significant gaps in secondary school attainments for Black and FSM-eligible white boys, loss of learning through the pandemic and London institutions having the highest non-continuation rates within England. The majority of our students are commuter students, living at home in London during their studies and we are committed to increasing their graduate job opportunities.

We are recognised as one of the most socially inclusive universities in the country, consistently featuring in the top quartile of the Times Good University Guide's social inclusion ranking for England and Wales. We are also one of the Top 10 universities in England for social mobility as outlined in the Universities and Social Mobility ranking by the Institute of Fiscal Studies.



The data provided by the OfS on our mix of students and their characteristics align with our own institutional data. London Met has one of the highest proportions of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds (13th in the sector), and more than half (64%) of London Met's home-domiciled undergraduate learners are from BAME backgrounds which is 7th highest among its London peers and further increases to the third highest proportion at the postgraduate level (4th most diverse in the sector). Internal data indicates a number of important subject areas with high proportions of students from backgrounds under-represented in HE. For example, courses delivered within the Social Sciences subject area show one of the highest numbers and proportion of students from BAME backgrounds enrolled compared to all London-based HEIs, providing students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to pursue courses in International Relations, Education and Criminology.

- London Met has a high number of students who report a disability with 14% for 2020/21 and 14.9% for 2021/22, against a sector average of 12%.
- In 2020/21, 43% of our student body were originally from London, with 21% from 7 local London boroughs, reinforcing we have a high proportion of commuter students.

These are examples of our mix of students and their complex needs, which are the critical lens that impacts on the support services and experience we offer, and the outcomes our students deserve. To give our students the same chance of success, we offer to 'do more'.

### Learning skills that will last a lifetime

Date: 27 July 2023

"On my course I found myself doing things I never thought I could do. I'm working alongside academics, advising fellow students, representing the university on different platforms, and even sitting on expert panels. I came in sad, disappointed and broken but I'm leaving in victory, more knowledgeable, confident and with a first-class honours degree."

#### 4.4 Our Students' Union

A further example of a strategic approach that is genuinely committed to strengthening the student voice is interventions that highlight the positive influence of the Students' Union.

We were particularly proud of our NSS, with a score of 65% agreement in the NSS 2022 for the question "the Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests". This was an increase of 5% on the previous year, the joint highest rise in London and our total of 65% put us in the top 5 SU's within traditional HE providers nationally. Our SU had the second highest score in London in the NSS 2022, with a 65% satisfaction rate, 12% above the sector average score.

We believe this is the result of the SU' mission to ensure that every single member gets the most out of their time at London Met. In 2021, the SU undertook a large piece of research, to find out from students what they want the SU to do, what they wanted the SU to focus on and the areas for improvement. This resulted in the London Met SU Strategy, which focused ensuring the SU is at the heart of London Met. Good progress is being made with meeting the specific targets outlined in the strategy identified as having the most impact.

In the last academic year and the first year of the SU's new strategy, 15 out of our 21 targets were achieved. Nearly 5,000 student engagements with the union were recorded, nearly 700 student leaders were actively taking part in leadership roles at the SU, students were part of University and School level committees ensuring that the student voice is heard at all levels.

We believe it is not just "providing a seat at table" for the SU, but ensuring their voice carries weight in all decisions concerning enhancing learning and teaching. An example of this are the Student Panel Members

(SPMs) who are a key part of ensuring appropriate student voice is present in our course validation and review processes. In the academic year 2020/21, our Academic Quality Department trained a pool of 28 SPMs, who had satisfaction rates over 90% from a recent survey into their experiences with the project. Training continues to be delivered with the Student Union, and in 2020/21 the University co-delivered an advanced training programme based on feedback from Student Representatives which focussed on upskilling in key areas. There has also been excellent attendance at Student Representative Forums in each of the schools to further build strategic links between the University's quality assurance processes and student engagement.

#### 4.5 Our staff

Our strategic approach has introduced and supported a distributed model of educational leadership that empowers staff at all levels to take ownership of change. The rationale for this is that both central and School leadership facilitate and encourage continuous reflection and improvement across functions and roles. An example of this approach are the ESJ Framework School Leads and Heads of Student Experience and Academic Outcomes. These are based in Schools, who work with School-level leadership and the Senior Leadership team. These are based in Schools, who work with School-level leadership and the Senior Leadership team to provide cross-institutional accountability and ensure impact in delivering against the institutional pillars outlined in the graphic in section 2.

We want to ensure that our staff reflect the diverse mix of our students and our local communities. We understand that 'who' delivers our academic provision is as important as 'what' and 'how' they deliver. That is why we are aiming for at least 55% of all early career academic staff and senior managers to come from Black and Minoritised backgrounds by January 2025 to reflect the London population benchmark, and we are well on our way. In the past two rounds (2019 and 2021), on the L&T track, 13 staff have gained promotion as Associate Professors and two as Professors. Demographic breakdown is female (60%); male (40%); BAME (33%); white (67%). As part of our exciting £10 million investment in equity and diversity we are currently recruiting academic staff at all career stages who reflect our students' lived experience and who are leaders in equity and inclusion

We can see that our mission for enhancing internal staff career progression is strongly supported by our promotion strategy, together with promotions for females. Additional significant numbers of minoritised staff are being recruited externally as part of our 'levelling up' strategy. We are accredited at Bronze level for Athena Swan and are working towards Silver accreditation by the end of 2024/25. We have also been awarded a Bronze award by Stonewall, and we are ranked 33 in the Education sector, thus enhancing our commitment to equality in all dimensions.

Our 2022 Staff survey results saw increases in participation and improvements in all measures. Our Vice-Chancellor believes "happy staff = happy students". 63% of respondents, more than double the 2017 rate, stated that they would recommend the University as a good place to work. Our results compare well with available sector benchmarks and are above those for London HEIs. We included a new theme this year to measure how satisfied staff were with how we have managed during the pandemic and responses received were 81% positive.

"This leadership has offered unprecedented levels of support for staff and for students in every aspect of their university life. I have not seen such a positive outlook from the university in general in the 16 years I have been a staff member".

#### 4.6 Our civic partners

"I hear from residents and businesses all the time about the challenges facing the capital as we emerge from the Covid pandemic and deal with the fallout of Brexit. Universities like London Met have an important role to play in the recovery by helping to address skills shortages and supporting businesses and the local community through their research and expertise."

| October 2022

We believe that London is the greatest city in the world, but while Londoners enjoy some of the highest standards of living anywhere in the country and the world, for many others in the capital it is a different story. Through our civic network and our London Met Lab activities we are on a mission to tackle the inequalities facing London, to improve people's lives and to deliver social justice. Our staff students and partners are bringing our academic expertise to co-design solutions to the social challenges which disproportionately affect the communities we serve. The table at the top of the next page demonstrates some the Lab's activities.

## London Met Lab in numbers



## 5. Foundations of change - strategic approach in the last four years

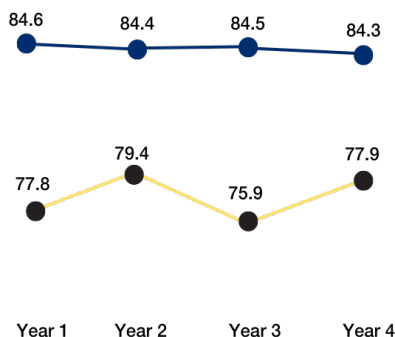
"The strategic approach committed to by London Met has provided absolute clarity on how and where to enhance the student experience, and facilitated the true embedding of an inclusive curriculum."

School of Health Science

We are now halfway through the period of our 2019/20-2024/25 strategic plan and have made significant progress as outlined in this submission (as illustrated below).

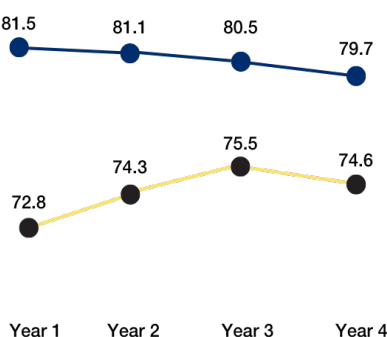
### Continuation

Indicator Sum of benchmark



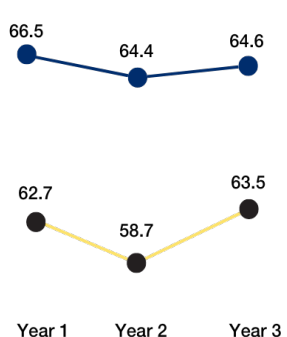
### Completion

Indicator Benchmark



### Progression

Indicator Benchmark



The successes are the evidence of a strategic programme of change which seeks to ensure we make institutional, school, course and module progress that impact positively on our student experience and outcomes. Below we highlight the four strategic pillar programmes that have built the foundations for our success.

## **5.1 The Centre for Equity and Inclusion**

Our sector leading Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEI) which formally launched in 2020 sits at the heart of London Met as the ideological driving force behind our pedagogy, the student experience and workplace culture. It is embedding the principles of fairness in every facet of the University; reviewing our curricula; tackling the injustice and discrimination facing minoritised students and focusing on fair outcomes for our mix of students. Outside of our University, we are making this happen by building links between us and the local community, providing students with opportunities to engage in projects and placements focused on addressing inequities around progression rates into professional employment.

Key strands of work which have come out of the Centre which impact on student experience and outcomes include the Race Equity Strategic Plan and its £15 million investment of funding to race-related research, student projects, staff development programmes and to ensuring diversity in the academic pipeline, and Fair Outcomes to ensure our teaching and learning strategies translate our aspiration into a set of pedagogic and curriculum frameworks which centre on an ethos of delivering fair outcomes for all students.

Other examples include the Equity Assurance Scheme to encourage the creation and maintenance of a more equitable and ethical organisation. The process is supported by our new equity dashboard, developed by our Planning and Insights department, which provides a single source of truth revealing the ecosystem of our University departments – illustrating staff pipeline, pay gaps and precariat characteristics alongside student metrics.

## **5.2 Education for Social Justice Framework**

Driving pedagogic change across learning, teaching and student outcomes is the sector recognised ESJ Framework which was developed in November 2019 and launched in July 2020 by our Centre for Educational and Professional Development together with CEI.

This flagship strategy to deliver on the learning and teaching ambitions set out in our Strategic Plan was designed and developed by students, staff and the Students' Union, and inspired by the successes of inclusive curriculum frameworks at other diverse institutions. The Framework ensures the curriculum is delivered through a kaleidoscope of emancipatory pedagogic approaches so that the 64% of our student cohort that identify as Black and minoritised ethnic see themselves reflected, and the contributions of wider diasporic communities. The values-led framework combines principles of inclusive pedagogy and critical pedagogy with a values-based vision of a curriculum which reflects our mission.

We have provided an immersive programme of staff development aligned to our distinctive ESJF Framework with seven courses followed by wider roll-out in 2021/22. 95% of substantive academic staff have completed the ESJF training (September 2022), evidencing a real commitment of our staff to these values. The collaboratively designed and facilitated ESJ Pedagogy workshops have provided opportunities to explore key principles and ideas for educational practice from different disciplines and focused on challenges around student outcomes and institutional culture change (see section 5.3). This works alongside training to enhance academic staff data literacy with our new dashboards and Inclusive Behaviours training that explores the key concepts of diversity, equity and justice.

Our Schools are challenging deficit-based interventions of the past and replacing them with innovative, targeted outcome-focused and academic activities at pinch points across the student life cycle, with the ESJF viewed by course leaders as means to actualise “fundamental change” - “a chance to do and really question” – in order to ensure “equal opportunities” provided by HE, “making sure that there are no barriers put up... That education remains relevant” and students have “the opportunity to achieve what they wish and how they wish”. Linked to that endeavour is also the need “to think about decolonising the curriculum”.

The ESJF seeks to re-imagine education as a vehicle for social change and the means through which we can accelerate improvements to our student experience and student outcome metrics. In this approach, the curriculum content and process aim to develop students' critical consciousness and empower them, in turn, to stand against inequalities in the world and become agents of social change.

“We all share the same or similar values: wanting to improve our teaching practice for our students, putting our students at the forefront of our teaching, wanting to enable and facilitate those from disadvantaged minority backgrounds so that they reach their maximum innate potential...it guides us forward in terms of how we approach ... curriculum design, how we deliver our sessions, how we communicate, and our relationship with our students ... how we view assessment and the value of assessment within the context of teaching within a multicultural environment.”

#### **Anonymised interviews with Course Leaders**

As a result of this strategic pillar, we are beginning to increasingly see students recognise our distinctive, values-based offer:

<p>“...The culture of London Metropolitan University includes equality, diversity, and inclusion that encourages team-building, participation and engaging positively with students, staff, and the community.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Law Student</b> [redacted]</p>	<p>I see my module includes leadership and innovation theories especially transformational and authentic leadership as well as; conceptual framework”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Sociology student</b> [redacted]</p>
<p>“...lecturers display social justice and inclusivity in their teaching.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Education Student</b> [redacted]</p>	

### **5.3 Power Bi Dashboards**

“The investment London Met has made in staff is substantive, and provides the critical resources and tools to enable staff to deliver on changing student outcomes, especially in data insights which was previously lacking”

[redacted]  
[redacted] School of Social Sciences and Professions [redacted]

As part of the Digital First strategy launched in 2021, the University has developed an Enterprise Data Platform to deliver key strategic insights using Power BI. Power Bi is a powerful self-service data tool which has been used by our academic community to directly improve the student experience and outcomes. The dashboards are critical to the implementation and monitoring of the University’s strategic plan. Power Bi provides Module leaders, Course teams, Heads of Subject and Deans of Schools the ability to contextualise and interrogate the data at school, course and module level to understand how this performance feeds into the University’s overall objectives, student experience and outcomes and track progress over time, allowing fluidity in decision making in areas such as non-submission, assessment components and student experience.

Staff engagement has increased year on year

In addition, individuals and groups have received 1-2-1 sessions on request. Below are some examples of the feedback from academics attending our internal training sessions:

“I have found the dashboards in Power BI invaluable. The Engagement Monitoring dashboard has been particularly useful as this provides real time data on the numbers of students in the School by Subject area/Course and Module. This has helped us to allocate students to the new Personal Academic Tutors and plan how many workshops we need for modules with high numbers of students.”

**Head of School**

“Arriving at the University some months ago, the data platform ensured I had a clear and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses here and could engage in strategic planning with confidence.”

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor,**



## 5.4 The Course Enhancement Process - working across all Schools with a risk-based approach

2021/22 saw the third cycle of the University-wide Course Enhancement Process (CEP). The CEP is designed to link course delivery to key University-wide policies and initiatives and the Action Plan Cycle involves all objectives and actions being reviewed at key points across the academic year. The process uses live data generated from Power Bi data dashboards, made available to all academic staff.

The CEP is key to identifying where there is room for improvement in the quality of our provision. It provides a single integrated source of vision, planning and review. A risk-based approach is used to identify and target undergraduate and postgraduate courses and modules where performance is below target in keeping with OfS and sector developments as well as a desire to streamline our internal quality review processes. Actions identified to feed into School strategy planning allowing for a more holistic approach to continual improvement. Action Plans to enhance and strengthen courses are produced for all at risk courses, as well as summaries celebrating and sharing best practice in the best performing courses.

## 6. Our commitment to transforming student outcomes

We recognise that we have work to do to exceed all our outcome benchmarks and we are making good progress. Our focused activities outlined below work alongside our strategic pillars and are already having a positive impact, and further evidence a commitment to transforming student outcomes

### 6.1 Learning Gain

We are now actively measuring distance travelled for our diverse population of students to better understand our students' voices. The introduction of the Value-Added score to London Met in 2018/19 has enabled a more detailed analysis of differential outcomes between student groups and has particularly highlighted the significance disparity between BAME and White students' degree classifications which has informed our projects and targeted activities. Although historically the entry qualification, subject of study and social class of BAME students has been used to explain away the existence and persistence of the awarding gap, it is clear from our VA data that these explanations do not hold true. Any difference in these measures for BAME students accounted for only 1.8 percentage points of our 20-percentage point awarding gap in 2018/19.

We have therefore targeted our activities to address the 18.2 percentage point gap which is in the control of the University as a whole through the learning and teaching environment that we have created in the last few years.

As part of our developing approach to measuring learning gain, our Careers and Employability Service implemented a pilot project, informed by national best practice, to collect information from students at enrolment on their stage of career readiness to provide student support. From 2022/23, all students now must complete this process which provides rich data to inform employability provision. The data feeds into our systems and students can change their stage in real time.

The Careers Registration data supports the development and implementation of the Careers Education Framework, informs targeted student interventions and is used in discussion with academics as part of the Course Enhancement Process.

One way of demonstrating learning gain is to collect baseline data about pre course experience. In 2022/23, at the start of the academic year, 44% of undergraduate students had no full-time work experience prior to starting their course, 23% had less than two years' experience and 33% had over two years full time experience. We are using Bright Network and other online internship experiences as a way of developing exposure for our foundation and first years to working environments. With our accredited work-based learning, students are supported in gaining essential experience before they leave university along with the array of opportunities to develop inclusive leadership and other graduate attributes.

## **6.2 Transitions Framework**

We recognise that the first few weeks of the university experience for our diverse student body can define a student's journey, their progression and outcomes. Our Transitions Framework is the product of a collaboration between our professional and academic teams with support from the Students' Union to ensure that key operational processes and start of the year events are presented as a cohesive picture and experience for new students. The framework aims to support successful onboarding of new students by creating standards and expectations across London Met, and by ensuring staff have the right information from a single source at busy times of the year. Our institutional intervention work to support students at risk of non-continuation is also included under the framework. Other aspects of the framework include - Pre-Arrival "Get Ahead" for all offer holders offering a range of personal, social and academic support; Pre-enrolment which helps identify students having difficulties with the enrolment system; a School focused Welcome Week; and for late starters- Start Well, a series of workshops to provide timely support to help students get on track with their studies.

## **6.3 Employment and our Careers Education Framework**

Our institution-wide Careers Education Framework achieved through strong partnerships and delivery between teaching teams, Careers and Employability, Work Based Learning, Student Enterprise, alumni and employers is based upon an ethos of social justice to improve graduate outcomes for all students. The Framework is fully embedded across the student lifecycle and provides careers education and accredited work based learning placements, internships and live projects, adaptable across any discipline. These elements together with targeted employability support enable students to reflect on their development as values-driven individuals, and identify goals for employment, further study or entrepreneurship to aid progression to become inclusive employees and leaders in their careers. This work led to being shortlisted for TARGET jobs National Graduate Recruitment Awards for "The best university employability strategy award 2021" and shortlisted for the UK Social Mobility Awards where we achieved a Silver award.

Students' life circumstances often disrupt their career planning and embedding careers education at all levels including careers sessions, ensuring students are supported in a timely way pre and post-placement to build their career confidence. Careers education, post WBL module can further enable reflection on the WBL experience, in addition to wider life experiences, to action plan for next steps after graduation. Almost 2,500 students undertook placements with local employers as part of their WBL modules, in the academic year 2021/22. Out of a sample of employers, providing feedback on undergraduate student placements for 2021/22, 90% were very happy with the students' performance and/or would be willing to recruit students from London Met in future.

We focus on employer engagement throughout the curriculum and also have diversity focussed employers, co-deliver sessions to support underrepresented students into graduate level jobs. Alumni return to inspire our students through Spotlight Panels on different Careers.

In 2021/22, panellists through the Panels supported students to develop their confidence. Our Careers Mentoring Scheme also supports social mobility in increasing confidence and motivation in chosen career areas, in collaboration with our civic partners. This is important as students from underrepresented backgrounds do not generally have the same access to networks. Mentors come from London Met Alumni and business collaborations eg East London Business Alliance and Government Legal profession. Our Graduate Support Career Package has been developed in a much more uniform way of addressing progression once a student leaves university. Consisting of graduate communication, opportunities and careers coaching, we have seen a 490% increase in graduate engagement. Feedback has been positive from graduates "without the intense interactions to action plan, produce an application for a NHS vacancy, interview practice, wouldn't have got the job."

The University's focus on entrepreneurship contributes to successful outcomes for students. HE-BCI survey data shows that newly registered graduate start-up numbers have increased from 9 in 17/18 to 37 in 20/21. The number of businesses surviving for 3+ years increased from 22 to 55 over the same period and the total number of active firms increased from 149 to 287. Between 18/19 and 22/23 the percentage of level 6

students declaring themselves as running their own business has increased from 1.3% to 4%

## 6.4 Monitoring student engagement

Our targeted approach to improving student outcomes and monitoring the impact of our activities has been developed through our engagement monitoring system and the use of Power Bi dashboards (see above). This has led to significant change as the examples described below show.

An Engagement Panel, \_\_\_\_\_ meets weekly to review student engagement along with their financial status and to ensure targeted support is provided. By combining this focus on engagement along with financial status we can provide targeted support most effectively and efficiently as financial status is known to have a significant impact on continuation of our students.

We recognise the importance of monitoring student engagement as students who are engaged are more likely to succeed in their studies and have an improved student experience. We review a range of data footprints to monitor engagement. Our School Offices reach out to students identified from these data footprints as being at risk with their engagement. The School Offices work in conjunction with our academics, Student Services and other staff to ensure that students have all the support, information, advice and guidance to re-engage and get back on track with their studies. Our Engagement Monitoring Policy outlines a clear approach to supporting continuation of those students deemed “at risk” of non-continuation. The policy articulates a programme of coordinated activity of “right time, right activity” for interventions and support. It clearly outlines time lines, key leads, inputs and outputs.

In 2021/22 there were 6218 interventions from the School Offices to \_\_\_\_\_ students identified as having low engagement with their studies. This included, low in-person attendance, low VLE activity, non-submission of work, non-engagement with the assessment periods or financial issues.

## 6.5 Tackling the Degree Awarding Gap

How we know we are succeeding? degree awarding gap closed from 32pp to 9.5pp in 5 years

And finally, of all the disparities that exist within higher education, the degree awarding gap is the starkest and has proven to be both persistent over time and virtually universal across the sector. Although our degree awarding gap has been rapidly reducing in the last few years, we believe the gap is unacceptable, and as such we have taken radical steps to eliminate it, to change the culture of the University and to improve the learning experience of our diverse student body.

“At London Met, tackling the awarding gap is everyone’s responsibility. The focus of our attention and effort must be on improving our practice, enhancing our provision and eliminating structural disadvantage within our processes. We will only achieve our goals by taking a whole institution approach to enhancing our inclusive culture and learning environment.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Learning and Teaching \_\_\_\_\_

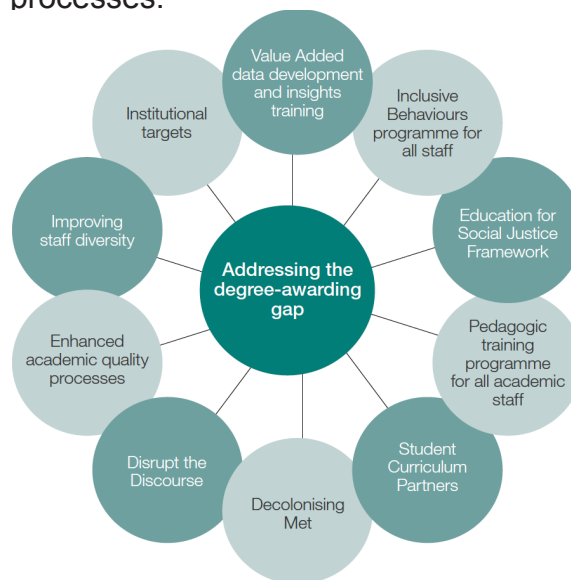
Since 2015/16, the degree awarding gap for our UK domiciled, first-degree undergraduate students closed steadily from 32 percentage points to 9.5 percentage points in 2021/22. The gap for the Accounting, Banking & Finance; Biosciences; Chemical & Pharmaceutical Sciences; Communications Technology & Mathematics; Creative Technologies & Digital Media; Education; Health, Social Care & Early Childhood; Languages; Law; Psychology; Social Work, and Community & Youth subject areas are below 5pp or closed.

Analysis of the awards data indicates that on average our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students are either meeting or exceeding their expected degree outcomes when benchmarked against the sector for entry qualifications and subjects of study, but we still want to eliminate any gaps. As described above, we have rolled out the ESJF supported by a programme of Inclusive Behaviours training for all staff in order to help address disparities in award outcomes for different student groups.

“For me it is important for everybody to realise there is a problem. There is a situation, and even if those conversations are very uncomfortable, you have to face them, because without facing them, you’re ignoring them, and there’s no change.”

Students’ Union

London Met holds itself accountable to an agenda of meaningful pedagogic and systemic change, ensuring that success for our students is not dependent on assimilation and homogeneity. This is demonstrated clearly in our approach to addressing the wicked problem of differential degree outcomes for students of colour. The focus of our multipronged strategic approach is on improving our practice, enhancing our provision and eliminating structural disadvantages within our processes.



Our work to tackle the awarding gap is organised around the following holistic approach:

- The establishment of an institutional KPI for the degree awarding gap at Board level as part of the Vice-Chancellor’s corporate plan 2019/20 - 2024/5.
- An overhaul of academic quality review processes and learning and teaching committees to review progress on the degree awarding gap on a continual basis throughout the academic quality calendar at course and school level.
- The introduction of the Value-Added score (VA) to accurately measure differential attainment of student groups, drive engagement of academic and professional teams, and identify contributing factors towards the awarding gap.
- The development and adoption of the ESJ Framework, which combines the principles of inclusive pedagogy with a progressive, values-based vision of a curriculum that reflects the mission of London Met.
- A comprehensive and mandatory Inclusive Behaviours training programme to enhance knowledge and practice in relation to anti-racism, harassment, discrimination, inclusive pedagogy and our equality duties. All student-facing staff and the Senior Management Team have completed the Inclusive Behaviours programme with remaining professional service staff completing training during 2022/23. New staff must complete the training within six months of joining the University.

We have also introduced a Student Curriculum Partner programme to enhance the voice of our diverse student cohort in the creation, delivery and evaluation of our academic offer. Our Student Curriculum Partners work collaboratively alongside members of staff as equal partners, to help them reflect on their practice and to advise how course materials and activities can be made more engaging, inclusive and accessible to all students on the course.

Our whole institutional approach has been highlighted as an example of best practice in higher education in the Closing the gap: three years on report from Universities UK (UUK, July 2022) focussing on the degree awarding gap.

## 7. Conclusion

We believe our levels of support, resources and student engagement are meeting the silver criteria. Educational gain and our student partnership work are already silver with many outstanding features. Significant work over the last four years to ensure the employability of our graduates has resulted in an increase to 62.6% of graduates in highly skilled employment or further study in 2021/22, compared with 58.4% in 2020/21 (OfS APP data).

We know we are succeeding based on evidence showing a significant improvement in quality and standards and an excellent student experience. The opportunities provided to our students, regardless of background, have led to high levels of engagement as illustrated by a range of case studies and examples.

Over the past 4 years, we have accelerated our commitment to change across learning, teaching, student outcomes and experience driven by building key strategic pillars to enable greater progress for our institution, and most importantly, for the benefit of all our students. The pandemic, followed by the cost-of-living crisis has put additional pressure on our students' wellbeing, their financial circumstances and worsened the outlook for the graduate labour market – we are responding to these challenges to ensure our students stay on track and are well prepared for their chosen graduate pathway.

We believe that every person that comes to us deserves a chance to transform their own life and the lives of others through our education. As an institution we are committed to our goal of bringing about social equality, justice and change amongst our students and our wider community. Our submission demonstrates our understanding and appreciation of where we are, our progress and impact to date and importantly, how we will ensure improvement. We have evidence that our strategic approach (now we are halfway through our strategic plan) to learning and teaching is having real and measurable impact on student experience and outcomes, delivering equitable education for a highly diverse mix of students, with very significant improvement since the TEF 2017. The impact we are having goes beyond the raw metrics of our overall students' outcomes, to their individual transformations from applicants to graduates and agents of social change.

University has been a huge and important time in my life. I chose a subject I was totally unfamiliar with and now it's my career.

I can honestly say I don't believe I would have flourished and became the developer and leader I am today if I didn't stay with London Met. **Computer Science and Applied Computing Student**

The best University ever, great support from my course leaders and lecturers. made me feel proud of myself 'learning for life'. I couldn't get there somewhere else. Thanks London Met. **Health and Social Care Student**



"My time at London Metropolitan University has been a life-changing experience academically, socially, and in my personal growth. Going to the University was daunting and intimidating, London Met has prepared me for life, and I am more confident about the future now than I was before starting University. I've gradually improved on my academic writing skills, developed an informed curiosity, and a lasting passion for learning. I've also acquired valuable skills that will enable me to compete in the job market....I have benefited from the high quality of teaching and support at London Met. My tutors are amazing and passionate about their job, and always available to support me...Well-designed course modules that are interesting and engaging.... modules provided placement opportunities, through which I was able to gain transferrable skills that I could apply later in my career... A very inclusive, friendly, and welcoming community with students from all over the world and from different backgrounds." **Education Student**

I came in thinking I wouldn't have anything in common with the students...in the three years that I have studied here, I have progressed mentally, socially, and my confidence has grown as well as my academic knowledge...I came with the intention to further my field of social work. However, I have now broadened my horizons and been exposed to so many other subjects that I am happy I took this leap of faith....Even if you feel overwhelmed, there are so many contact points as to where you can get help, be it academic, financial, or personal issues that you may be struggling with.

**Psychology student**

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