Provider name: Kingston University
UKPRN: 10003678

PROVIDER CONTEXT

1.   **At Kingston University our mission is "to enhance students' life chances, support staff ambitions and strengthen Kingston University's impact on industry, policy and the professions to enable a sustainable future socially, economically and environmentally."** Incorporated as a University in 1992, we trace our origins back to the foundation of the Kingston Technical Institute in 1899. Today we are a medium-sized university, situated on four campuses in southwest London. In 2020/21 we engaged with a community of 13,210 undergraduate and 6,100 postgraduate students, and the size of our student population has remained relatively stable over this TEF assessment period.[1] The majority of our undergraduate students (12,190) study full-time and are enrolled on First Degree courses (10,900), and this provision is the primary focus of our submission. We have also elected to include our growing Apprenticeship provision in our TEF submission, as this is an important part of how we are developing and expanding our educational offer to meet the needs of our community, employers, and industry.

2.   **In the period since TEF 2017, we have made substantial further improvements in student experience and outcomes, and provide an excellent education for all our students, as evidenced in our TEF2023 metrics, this submission, and the submission prepared by our students**. Our progress has been driven through successive strategic frameworks which pursued our consistent vision to develop graduates who are "sought after for their ability to shape society and contribute to the economy". Our Plan 2020 (2017-2020) strategy implemented a programme to bring the University together around our common goals of enhancing student experience and success. This framework delivered significant improvements to academic provision through centrally supported programme improvement plans, the reform of academic divisions, and a restructure of professional services to better support the student experience. It introduced our 'domains' framework for academic staff, to support career progression and reward, and to further develop targeted professional development for learning, teaching, and HE pedagogy. The introduction of our Kingston Continuous Enhancement Programme (KCEP) was supported by the development of data dashboards, enabling us to interrogate student experience and outcomes data at a granular level, and to address any areas of under-performance, while also identifying and promoting good practice across the institution. Our KU22 Strategy (2020-22) built upon these successes, ensuring that we remained resilient throughout the period of the COVID pandemic. Alongside this we developed our ambitious Town House Strategy which continues this trajectory, moving us from a course-level enhancement programme to an ambitious plan for the comprehensive delivery of a new institution-wide pedagogy.

3.   **Kingston University currently consists of four Faculties, which house ten academic schools.** We deliver courses across 29 subject areas, with Creative Arts and Design, Business and Management, and Nursing and Midwifery accounting for 13.1%, 12.2%, and 9.4% of full-time students respectively in 2021/22. Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a rich diversity of knowledge and experience to their studies. Many are from social groups that have been underrepresented in higher education and continue to face multiple barriers to their success. In 2020/21, 41.5% of our full-time undergraduate students were from IMD quintiles 1 or 2 (sector average 32.4%) and 33.9% were eligible for free school meals (sector average 18.6%). In terms of ethnicity, 31.3% of our full-time undergraduate students identify as White, 22% as Asian, 21.2% as Black, and 6.3% as Mixed Ethnicity. International students accounted for 12.7% of our full-time undergraduate population in the period of assessment with the largest numbers from the EU, China, and India. Using term time addresses and travel time calculations, we estimate that

57.6% of our undergraduate population are commuter students.[2] We also recognise that there are significant demographic variations between different parts of our university population. While 66.8% of undergraduate students in our School of Education, Midwifery and Social Work are mature, the proportion is just 21.7% in our School of Design. In terms of qualification on entry, whereas 51.4% of undergraduate students in our School of Life Sciences, Pharmacy and Chemistry have A/AS levels as their main qualification, the proportion in our School of Nursing is 11.0%, with a high proportion of these having undertaken previous higher education study. We also recognise that the profile of our students is not static and has continued to change over the period of the TEF assessment. In 2021/22 34.7% of our undergraduate students held a BTEC, with the proportion with a combination of A levels and BTEC having increased from 4.5% in 2018/19 to 23.3% in 2021/22. As outlined in this submission, we have tailored our provision to the needs of our diverse and changing student body, to provide an excellent academic experience and successful outcomes.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Academic Experience and Assessment

4. **We provide our students with an excellent academic experience through which they develop their knowledge and skills**. The TEF dashboard reports that 80.8% of our full-time students were satisfied with the Teaching on their Course and 72.8% were satisfied with their Assessment and Feedback. The first of these indicators is broadly in line with our benchmark, while the data on Assessment and Feedback provides compelling statistical evidence that our performance is materially above our TEF benchmark (over 99% probability).

5. **At the heart of our practice is a systematic approach to supporting course teams in designing excellent teaching, feedback and assessment which provides an outstanding academic experience.** Our Education Strategy to 2020 identified our key objective "to provide a variety of high quality learning experiences designed to allow students to flourish, to promote the development of lifelong learners and produce graduates that are sought after for their employability and social responsibility attributes".[3] Key to our delivery of this are our Academic Framework, Course and Inclusive Curriculum Design Principles, and Graduate Attributes which set out core requirements for teaching, learning, assessment, and support, for all undergraduate courses. These enable us to translate our educational strategy into clear course level expectations to ensure that all students receive a coherent and well-structured academic experience. Our academic strategy and framework are subject to continuous review to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose and effective tools for driving improvements in academic experience and outcomes. In 2020/21 we used a mixed-methods approach to engage with 362 students and 74 staff through focus groups and surveys to gather feedback on the operation of our Academic Framework. The review concluded the Framework remained fit-for-purpose but identified the scope to further develop opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, which is explicitly addressed as a core feature in our new Town House Strategy and Future Skills Project (para. 68-70).[4]

6. **We have consistently applied our pedagogic approach and framework to both new and existing provision**. All new courses are subject to our rigorous validation and approval processes to ensure that they will provide excellent learning experiences and outcomes. Existing courses are evaluated through our Annual Monitoring and Enhancement (AME) process to ensure that they continue to provide exceptional academic experiences and outcomes for our students.

The AME process systematically engages staff teams in reviewing, reflecting, and evaluating the delivery of academic provision at module, course, department, school, and university level. It also provides a platform to highlight and disseminate good practice and ensure currency. The evaluation draws from a range of evidence including student performance, student views, feedback from external examiners and observations by the course team, which feed into Module and Course Enhancement Plans. Closely aligned to the AME process is our Kingston Continuous Enhancement Programme (KCEP). Introduced in 2017/18, KCEP uses a RAG rating methodology to identify courses on which student experience and outcomes could be significantly enhanced through a programme of tailored support and intervention. This on-going annual process resulted in significant programme level improvements in NSS indicators relating to academic experience for Economics, Politics, Computer Science, and Adult Nursing in 2018/19, and for Quantity Surveying, Mechanical Engineering, Mental Health Nursing, and Architecture in 2019/20.[5]

7.   **Our pedagogical focus on active and research-led learning and teaching is core to the student experience on all our courses and tailored to meet the needs of students studying different subjects**. The NSS/TEF metric for Teaching on My Course provides strong statistical evidence that students in Creative Arts and Sports and Exercise Sciences have an outstanding experience, and it is probable that the majority of Subjects are at least in line with benchmark. In Creative Arts and Design, we use student-centred practice-based pedagogy ('thinking through making') which fosters a vibrant 'studio culture' in which students can develop their learning and excel. Our Sports and Exercise courses combine academic and practical learning, in a research rich environment, which challenges students to apply and develop their knowledge and skills. Our Business and Management courses challenge students to critically apply their learning through engaging with global challenges (such as building sustainable futures), which run through their curriculum at each level. Problem-based learning is at the core of our Engineering courses, to develop students' high level and transferable skills such as critical thinking and team working, while across our Health provision, students engage in simulations, drama workshops, and role play, which develop their knowledge and skills in authentic replications of community and ward environments.

8.   **We have high expectations for our learners and have developed effective teaching practices tailored to the needs of our students, which support them to succeed and challenge them to excel.** For example, recognising the challenges facing first generation students, in 2019 we introduced guidance in every module on the use of independent study hours to provide consistent advice and demystify academic processes and requirements. This advice is tailored to academic level, reflecting the development of students as self-directed learners. It is supported through a shared commitment to creating a learning culture in which all learners can flourish. For each year in this TEF period of assessment, over 80% of students responding to our Module level questionnaires have reported that staff are approachable (all levels, and all years).[6]

9.   **Our placement and international mobility programmes provide students with opportunities to enrich their academic experience through engaging in work or study outside the university as part of their course**. Around 2,500 students undertake work placements each year. These provide excellent opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and skills in an applied setting, often in the profession which they plan to enter as graduates, as well as to develop their confidence and wider social capital. Each faculty has a specialised placement team which guides students through the process of applying for placements, including advice on writing an effective CV, completing application forms and letters, and attending

interviews. Prior to the COVID pandemic, around 800 students per year engaged in our international mobility programmes, which include short or extended work or study abroad opportunities. With the easing of travel restrictions, around 200 students engaged in our international mobility programmes in 2021/22. Our analysis of students engaging in long-term mobility demonstrated a significant association with the achievement of a 1st or 2:1 (outcomes for 432 students between 2015/16 and 2017/18 compared to those of the wider student population).[7] Through this evaluation and a SADRAS (para. 15) project (which engaged with 349 students), we identified that our Black students experienced significant barriers to engaging in international mobility.[8] In response, we launched our International Black Scholars Programme, which ran for the first time in 2021, and funded   students from Black and Black mixed heritage backgrounds with additional disadvantages, to travel to the US. The study tour, led by a majority Black staff team, was designed to engage with Black role models, and provide the opportunity for Scholars to grow their network and social capital, while exploring their identity and aspirations, in a safe space.

10.   **Assessment is a key element of the learning process and our Academic Framework sets out core principles to ensure that students are provided with the right balance of challenge and support to achieve their best work**. Our TEF metrics for Assessment and Feedback are outstanding. Our Overall Indicator is materially above benchmark. There is very strong statistical evidence that Creative Art and Design, General, Applied and Forensic Science, Sports and Exercise Sciences, Allied Health, Medical Sciences, Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacy, and Psychology are materially above benchmark. Assessment strategies are managed at course level, to ensure a coherent approach to assessing learning outcomes, developing students' assessment literacies, and to reduce the risk of overassessment. The sequencing of assessments, and the scheduling of assessment deadlines, is carefully managed to ensure that students can manage their study commitments and use the feedback they receive to develop their performance. To support their transition to higher education, all students undertake a low stakes assessment near the start of their course, which provides an early opportunity to demonstrate their learning, become familiar with university processes, and receive feedback. Portfolios of small stakes in-class assessments are widely used in our science provision to give students rapid feedback on their learning in workshop and laboratory settings. This assessment practice was recognised by a LearnSci Innovation Award in 2020/1, which commended our "innovative work that gives students confidence to perform and to feel like they belong".[9]

11.   **Providing timely, useful, and accessible feedback and feedforward has been an institutional focus during this TEF period**. All modules provide students with detailed guidance on when and how they will receive feedback on both formative and summative assessment. We have set an expectation that all coursework is returned to students within 20 days of submission accompanied by clear feedback which identifies how students have performed against the published marking criteria and indicates what they can do to improve their work. We audited our practice in 2018/19 to ensure that we were delivering this level of service to our students and found that 97% of modules met the 20-day turnaround.[10] An analysis of external examiner reports that year identified that the quality of feedback to students was the most frequently cited element of good practice, with numerous positive comments by external examiners noting the personalised and constructive approach that facilitated students' academic development.[11]

12.   **In common with most other universities, in March 2020 we had to rapidly transform our teaching, learning and assessment practices in response to the COVID pandemic and the first national lockdown**. During lockdown, we were able to move most of our teaching online

facilitated by our rapid deployment of Microsoft Teams. In 2020/2021, despite on-going restrictions, we were able to deliver around half of our timetabled hours on campus, with the balance taught online.[12] We provided extensive training to staff in 'the art of the possible' in blended delivery through a series of webinars and we developed innovative and effective teaching practices to support student learning and achievement. For example, when we could not bring students together in science laboratories on our campus, we successfully introduced virtual lab classes using video and interactive simulations previously used as pre-lab activities. We also adjusted delivery patterns of courses where necessary. For example, Nursing and Midwifery courses changed the order in which modules were delivered so that students could complete their mandatory work placements once lockdown had eased. These students were also supported through online simulations that supported students to develop their core knowledge of surgical and other medical procedures. The success of our COVID delivery response (which was applied to all taught courses) was recognised in a 2021 Ofsted report of our Art Foundation and Apprenticeship provision. This concluded that: "Managers have supported teachers to develop skills in the delivery of blended and online teaching, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This enabled all programmes to move to online delivery during the height of the pandemic. This, in turn, minimised disruption to learners and ensured a high level of continuity on all programmes."[13]

13.   **During the pandemic, we also adjusted our assessment practices to ensure that these supported students to demonstrate their learning while maintaining our robust academic standards and ensuring the value of their award**. The first national lockdown coincided with our most intensive period of assessment. We put in place robust processes of approving alternative assessments where these were necessary. Where alternative assessments were not possible due to PSRB requirements, positive action was taken such as moving the timing of assessments and/or modules so students could continue their studies and then, when possible, return to complete the missed assessment. For example, some exams were moved from May to July/August when lockdown was predicted to have been eased and, through this process, we ensured the disruption to students' learning and achievement was minimised as far as possible. When it became clear in 2020 that we would not be able to run a traditional Degree Show for our Creative Arts courses, we worked with our students to design and produce an online degree show, which was shortlisted for the prestigious design industry D&AD Awards. Post-pandemic, we have retained and upgraded the online show to complement the physical show and facilitate international access to student work and the ease of sharing portfolios with potential employers. The COVID pandemic also challenged us to rethink our assessment design and trial new, innovative practices to promote a more inclusive student experience. For example, in Drama the course team shifted the emphasis of assessments from a focus on the 'product' to one of 'process'. Students developed portfolios which included recorded performances and other audio-visual elements, through which we could assess the development of the work students had completed. Student outcomes were positively impacted and the learning from these new assessment designs are being embedded in the course post-COVID.

14.   **In making these adjustments, we were very conscious of the profile of our learners, and the extent to which the pandemic had different impacts across different groups.** We conducted an Equality Impact Assessment in September 2020 to identify and mitigate the challenges different groups of students might experience.[14] The analysis was based on focus groups in which 75 learners participated and an online survey of students on taught courses with 2,653 responses, 81.1% of which were from undergraduates. We identified digital poverty as a key challenge facing students. In response, during 2020/21 we provided digital support (including

laptop loans and small grants to help students pay for internet connections) to 673 students and financial support to a further 1,070 students. These interventions were successful with students who received this support being more likely to complete their academic year at first sit attempt.[15] We also recognised the spatial poverty experienced by many of our students who did not have access to adequate study spaces at their homes. In response our campus Libraries and information centre support services were prioritised in our "return to campus". Additionally, to ensure students experiencing spatial poverty were not disadvantaged, we implemented a policy that a dedicated space must be provided on campus for students to complete time limited online assessments, ensuring students had a safe space to complete the assessments and avoiding the need to defer. During the pandemic we also provided an Isolation Line which offered support and advice to students who were required to isolate.

15. **We use research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for our students.** Our teaching is enriched by research in two ways. Firstly, research-led teaching is a core component to all our courses, ensuring that students' learning is enriched by knowledge at the cutting edge of their discipline. This is built on a strong research base, demonstrated in REF 2021 in which 70% of the research submitted by the university was rated as either world-leading or internationally excellent. Of the 414 academic staff whose work was submitted, more than 96% were either actively involved in teaching or members of our central teams supporting learning development at the university, ensuring that students benefit directly from their expertise. Secondly, pedagogic and educational research undertaken at Kingston has directly improved our students' academic experience and outcomes. Research has helped us to improve our understanding of educational gain for different groups within our student population (para. 64-65) and improve how we can most effectively engage students in the process of curriculum design (para. 40). The sector wide impact of our research on degree awarding gaps and inclusive curricula was submitted as an Impact case study for REF 2021. The sub-panel feedback stated that the "reach and significance was judged to be mainly very considerable, with some outstanding impact" and recognised "the importance of the underpinning research and well evidenced application in the areas of equality in higher education".[16] Our on-going support for institutional research is demonstrated through our Student Academic Development Research Associates Scheme (SADRAS) which provides funds for students to participate as co-researchers with academic staff in educational research projects aimed at improving student retention, attainment, employability, well-being, or access to higher education, with specific relevance to under-represented or disadvantaged populations. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, we have supported 44 projects (with 155 student co-researchers) exploring issues including the development of 'soft skills' across diverse student populations, personal tutoring in online environments, and factors influencing students' engagement in formative assessment.[17] Students undertaking paid work as research associates through the scheme were more likely to progress their year of study at first attempt, with Black students recording the biggest gain (outcomes for 43 students in 2018/19 compared to those of the wider student population).[18]

16. **Our commitment to working with industry, employers, and professional bodies is central to our commitment to provide excellent educational experiences for our students, which equip them for success.** We currently work with 50 PSRBs and in 2021/22, 56.9% of our undergraduate students were studying on accredited courses.[19] We recognise accreditation of academic programmes by PSRBs as an important dimension of academic standards, providing an external reference point, and adding value in terms of employability. We have received

commendations from PSRBs for the excellent learning experiences that our courses provide to students. For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business review of our Business School in 2022 commended the "exceptionally thorough set of practices for assessing and continuously enhancing its academic programs…. [which] help keep its curricula relevant, forward looking, and mission aligned" and a Royal Society of Chemistry review in 2022, commended our courses for providing a "balance of breadth and depth of content, a variety of teaching and assessment methods, and good support for students".[20]

17.   **We work with employers more broadly to ensure our courses have professional credibility, currency, and provide outstanding learning to students to equip them with the knowledge and skills that they need to progress to graduate employment.** All validation and substantive review panels are required to include an external member with expertise from industry or the professions. We have developed a network of employer advisory boards, often operating at a subject level, to ensure on-going input to course development and currency with industry standards. In our Business School, for example, we have nine subject-based advisory boards, providing expert input into the curriculum and advising on the development of our curriculum and assessments to ensure currency and authenticity. Our School of Life Sciences, Pharmacy and Chemistry has Industry Advisory Boards covering each of its constituent subjects, which support us with the development of our curriculum in the light of new industrial/professional practices or priorities. Both Journalism and Creative Writing have Industry Boards, which have helped ensure that we have been successful in developing highly employable graduates in these fields. In Nursing, Social Work, Midwifery and Education employer forums help us to ensure that our provision matches local needs and that our students can access excellent placement learning.

18.   **External Examiners play an important role in assuring the quality of our courses and enhancing learning and assessment.** External Examiners are supported in their role through a detailed induction session when they start their term and then on an ongoing basis through the annual planning meeting with course teams. They have access to a dedicated website with key information and with direct faculty and university level contacts. In 2021/22 we implemented a new single tier assessment board system which provided more time for External Examiners to engage in subject specific conversations with course teams, enhancing the quality of their feedback. In addition to taking account of external examiner feedback in the management and enhancement of learning at course level, we monitor their feedback at university level to ensure that we consider any serious issues that they raise and identify thematic or systematic points (including positive identification of good practice) that arise from considering the body of reports as a whole. For example, in 2022 our review of external examiner reports identified a significant number of positive comments relating to the standard of student work, the quality of our course design, and our support for student learning.[21]

19.   **While full-time taught and registered students on first degree courses form a significant majority of our undergraduate population, we work to ensure that all our students receive an excellent education**. Like many providers, we experienced a significant downturn in part-time student numbers following the reforms of student finance in 2011. Our part-time student population is now relatively small (denominator 80 students for the Overall Indicator), and for Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 student numbers are below reportable levels. Part-time students are now concentrated on courses in two Subject areas (Engineering, and Architecture, Building and Planning), and through our annual monitoring process course level action plans are in place to enhance students' academic experience of teaching and assessment.

20.   **There is strong evidence that our growing apprenticeship provision is delivering an excellent academic experience to our students.** Our Apprenticeship provision has growing undergraduate student numbers, rising from 50 in 2017/18 to 390 in 2020/21. Although none of the student experience indicators are reported at a high level of statistical confidence, for Teaching on my Course (95.2%) and Assessment and Feedback (91.5%), a very high proportion of the statistical distribution is either above or in-line with our benchmark. Our apprenticeship provision was subject to an Ofsted inspection in October 2021 and was awarded 'good' or 'outstanding' for all categories. The report noted that learners "appreciate the high standards set by staff and the quality of the teaching, resources and accommodation at the university" noting in particular the "state of the art hospital ward simulation suite." Learners also reported finding their courses "challenging and rewarding" and appreciated that staff "set high expectations of learners" and provided "the valuable opportunity they have to pick up new knowledge, skills and behaviours that directly relate to their jobs and careers".[22] Our commitment to developing the pedagogy of apprenticeship delivery is demonstrated in our current participation in a QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project investigating the challenges, motivations, lessons learnt and good practice within degree apprenticeship delivery.

21.   **Students in our sub-contracted partnership provision also receive an excellent academic experience.** We work with our 14 partner institutions to ensure that students receive a very high-quality learning experience and use the same rigorous validation and annual monitoring review processes that we have for all our courses. Students studying on a sub-contracted course at a partner institution have access to the full range of support and services available at the University. This is actively promoted to them as they are included in all our student communications. We appoint at least one dedicated University Liaison Officer for each partner institution to ensure on-going support. Customised staff development sessions are offered to staff from partner institutions covering essential topics, such as annual monitoring and enhancement processes. Most of the internal staff development offerings are available to staff from partner institutions, especially those which are delivered online. We invest in the development of staff delivering our awards, whether they are at Kingston or at one of our collaborative partner institutions, to benefit and enrich our students' learning experience. The success of this approach in securing very high-quality academic experiences for our learners is reflected in the TEF NSS dataset which shows data for sub-contracted students for Teaching on my Course and Assessment and Feedback materially in line with our benchmark (denominator 720 students).

Resources, Support and Student Engagement

22.   **The excellent student academic experience that we provide is built upon the foundation of our outstanding continuing professional development for our staff**. We support both early career and experienced staff to gain professional recognition in learning and teaching through our Advance HE accredited Kingston Academic Practice Standard (KAPS) framework. The scheme has extensive reach with 397 fellowships awarded within this TEF cycle (103 AFHEA, 203 FHEA, 88 SFHEA and 3 PFHEA) and overall 88.6% of our academic staff have fellowship, which is significantly above the sector average.[23] KAPS is embedded in our academic probation and promotion processes and requires engagement with authentic institutional evidence, demonstrating how institutional data is used to adjust practice to enable a better student learning experience and improved student outcomes. The scheme has two 'taught' pathways which support our less experienced staff to think creatively about their teaching practices and student support,

through the lens of our diverse student body. One pathway focuses on the needs of our academic staff and the other pathway develops the practice of professional staff who support students' learning (e.g., learning technologists, librarians, technicians), as well as our doctoral students. There is also a non-taught experiential (self-directed) pathway which we encourage our existing staff to join, and which is compulsory for our newly appointed Senior Lecturers who have more than 3 years of teaching in higher education (as part of their probation). Staff on this pathway are supported to collect and present their practice through developmental workshops and asynchronous resources curated in our Canvas VLE. The value of Learning and Teaching is a key element of our reward and recognition structures. All academic staff must achieve FHEA status before they can transition to a Senior Lectureship, and our Academic Domains Framework supports career pathways for those who choose to specialise in this aspect of their practice. Staff whose major domain is Learning and Teaching must hold SFHEA status to progress to Associate Professorship, and those seeking promotion to Professorship must at least be working towards PFHEA status. We celebrate excellence in teaching through our Provost Award which is a prestigious award open to all staff who teach and/or support student learning including professional services. Winners are awarded up to £3k to spend on enhancing their learning and teaching practices. Provost Award winners are supported to further develop their effective and innovative pedagogic practice and are considered as institutional nominees for the Advance HE National Teaching Fellowship scheme.

23. **Encouraging staff to share their practice through our Festivals of Learning and our communities of practice is invaluable in capacity-building in our academic staff.** We celebrate our learning and teaching practices in three Festivals of Learning events each year which attract between 400 and 500 attendees. Staff share their great practice and pedagogic research, and we invite external experts to ensure the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Supporting course leaders and empowering them to make the changes that are needed to improve student outcomes and enhance the student experience is an important aspect of our enhancement strategy. We run a dedicated programme to support course leaders which they report is highly effective as a "networking opportunity", a space to find "motivation and great ideas", an opportunity to "brainstorm solutions to wicked problems" and "reflect on the role and future priorities." Discussions on the programme led to actions to improve the layout of our course data dashboards to better support Course Leaders in their review of student performance data. We have also run sessions to support staff in addressing a range of emerging questions, such as how to best support the transition to higher education for cohorts with a greater diversity of prior qualifications.

24. **Our support for staff professional development aligns with our mission, values, and commitment to inclusivity**. We source external expertise to build our capacity, supporting our staff to learn from sector-leading good practice. We have organised staff development on racial trauma and strategies to support Black students, on decolonising academic practices and on creating Anti-Racist Classrooms, with all sessions attracting between 70 and 156 attendees. Building on these sessions, and working with graduate student interns, we have developed four pedagogic toolkits ('Learning and Teaching: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion'; 'Anti-racist Learning and Teaching'; 'Culturally Responsive Learning and Teaching'; and 'Mental Health Learning and Teaching') to disseminate this learning and embed it in our practice.

25. **As a university committed to extending excellent learning opportunities, we work to ensure that all our students learn within a supportive academic environment that provides tailored support to help them to succeed.** The success of our strategies is reflected in our TEF

NSS metrics for Academic Support for full-time students (76.9%) which is materially in line with our benchmark. Although smaller populations of students, while satisfaction with Academic Support is below benchmark for our Part-time students, we are in line with benchmark for registered only students (84.0%) and 91.7% of the statistical distribution for our Apprenticeship students is above or in-line with our benchmark. The effectiveness of this academic support is also evidenced in our high rates for Continuation and Completion for each of these groups of students (para. 47-51).

26. **A key element of our infrastructure of academic support is our Personal Tutor Scheme.** The Personal Tutor Scheme forms part of our Academic Framework and is a key element of how we ensure a personalised academic experience, through providing academic advice and guidance, monitoring progress, identifying individual needs, and referring students to our specialist university services if appropriate. The scheme aims to develop students' ability to make the most from feedback, develop as independent learners, and succeed in their studies. All students are allocated a personal tutor during their induction and generally keep the same tutor throughout their course. The role of the Personal Tutor is differentiated by level, with support at Level 4 focused on settling in and building confidence, support at level 5 on developing independence and broadening horizons, and Level 6 support focused on maximising success and progression through to graduate outcomes. The value of our Personal Tutor scheme in supporting students was successfully maintained during the move to greater use of online interactions during the period of the pandemic. An evaluation of our Personal Tutor Scheme undertaken in 2020/21 through our SADRAS scheme surveyed 249 students (83% of whom were undergraduate) and found that the majority agreed that their Personal tutor provided useful support in understanding their assessments and feedback (68%), time planning (64%) and careers support (69%).[24]

27. **Our Academic Success Centres provide tailored support for student learning and achievement**. The centres are operated at Faculty level ensuring that the academic advice students receive is appropriately contextualised to their subject of study. Support for developing the use of English for academic and professional development can also be accessed through each centre and combines generic and subject specific support. Support for students to develop their numeracy skills is provided through our MathsAid drop-in clinics. In addition, our Writing and Oral Skills workshops provided further support to students, through a combination of bespoke and generic sessions. Students attending both types of workshops were more likely to successfully complete their year of study, than those who did not (outcomes for 452 students in 2019/20 compared to the wider student population).[25]

28. **Our Academic Mentoring programme builds networks through which students engage in peer mentoring, providing development and benefit to both the mentor and the mentee**. The programme includes both timetabled sessions embedded in students' courses and extra-curricular sessions. An evaluation during the 2019/20 academic year found that 13.9% of our students took part in the programme, with higher rates of participation as mentees by students from deprived areas (IMDQ1/2), BAME students, and Commuter Students.[26] Statistical analysis demonstrated that both mentors and mentees had significantly higher rates of successfully completing their year of study or gaining a first or 2:1 (outcomes for 2,591 mentees and 234 mentors in 2019/20 to compared to those of the wider student population).

29. **We have put in place tailored academic support to meet the needs of different parts of our student population.** Our Beyond Barriers Student Mentoring Scheme provides additional mentoring from successful executives and entrepreneurs to students from groups

underrepresented in higher education. The scheme has been in operation since 2015/16, and when we evaluated it in 2021, we found that it had grown to reach almost 200 students each year, with those who participated achieving higher rates of successfully completing their year of study (outcomes for 151 students in 2018/19 compared to those of the wider student population).[27] Our KU Cares Scheme supports care leavers, estranged students, young carers, refugees and asylum seekers, who all face multiple challenges to access and success in higher education. Our package includes financial support, access to year-round accommodation, paid work opportunities, mentoring schemes, and social and networking events. We have a dedicated KU Cares team who support students from the point of application through to graduation. Through taking proactive steps to identify and remove barriers, we have helped hundreds of students stay on course, reach their potential and progress to successful graduate careers. We also provide tailored support to our international students, to ensure that their transition into life and study in the UK is successful. Courses with high numbers of international students have also put in place dedicated support for learning. For example, our Illustration Animation course produced a glossary of discipline specific terminology to support students whose first language was not English, and Accounting and Finance provided dedicated sessions explaining UK higher education contexts and expectations.

30.   **We have invested in our physical and virtual resources to ensure that students receive excellent access to facilities that support their learning, whether they are on-campus or on-line.** Our TEF NSS satisfaction rate for Learning Resources stands at 79.9% for full-time students and is in line with our benchmark. For sub-contracted students, our performance is also materially in-line with our benchmark. While there is less statistical certainty for our part-time students and apprenticeship students, the majority of the statistical distribution is at least in-line with our benchmark.

31.   **Our library facilities provide excellent learning spaces and resources that support students to achieve and succeed.** We provide a library at each of our four campuses with learning resources tailored to the balance of subject provision in each location. Each library provides students with a combination of access to learning resources (books and journals) and study spaces (for both individual study and group work). Our extensive collection includes more than 330,000 books, 275,000 e-books, and 78,000 journals, as well as access to online subscription services. Students are supported in navigating these resources through library induction sessions during their Welcome Week and on-going help and support from our team of specialist librarians.

32.   **We provide IT services to support excellent teaching and learning for our students, whether on or off campus**. This includes a wide variety of IT services to students ranging from email, file storage, state-of-the-art software, high performance computing facilities, student laptop loans and pervasive Wi-Fi available across all campuses including on our free inter-campus bus service. We support more than 3,000 open access computing devices across our campuses through a mixture of traditional desktops, laptop loans, and Apple Macs. This includes over 50 computer labs with high-end specialist computers to support disciplines such as gaming, graphic design, and engineering, many of which are open 24/7. Our extensive computing provision is complimented by our bespoke 'Find a PC' service which is available via the KU mobile app and My Kingston intranet, providing live information to students as to where they can find and use a free computing device across all our campuses. Significant investment in our digital infrastructure services totalling over £1.9m since 2020 has modernised and improved both coverage and capacity within and outside campus buildings. Over a dozen projects have successfully completed

and delivered new and replacement services to support students since 2020, with an approximate total spend of £1.35m. Our network infrastructure (including Wi-Fi) is supported 24/7 throughout the year and has recorded a 99.99% up time over the past four years.

33.   **Our IT support is designed to take account of the needs of our students, wherever they are studying.** Many of our IT facilities are accessible remotely, directly from vendors via the internet, through our Apps Anywhere solution, or our virtual desktop service My Desktop Anywhere (which averages 2,000 unique users per month accessing specialist software remotely and has an uptime of 99.99%). Since 2020 we have invested over £500k in student Enterprise Licensing agreements to avoid disruption to teaching during the pandemic, and this investment continues to date to support mobility in student teaching and learning. We also provided additional licences for the Adobe suite to enable 5,000 students to access these applications from their own devices. A comprehensive support model is provided for students, giving advice and guidance on using IT services through welcome and induction sessions when students first start, followed by continuous support throughout the student lifecycle via our IT Service Desk, My Kingston intranet, and in person workshops. Our IT Service Desk is open throughout the year (8am-6pm) and offers both telephony and live chat options. In addition, we also provide a 24/7 chatbot service and the ability for students to log and raise a request directly to our service desk management system.

34.   **We have invested in our physical estate to ensure that we have facilities that support an excellent academic experience for our students**. Our flagship Town House Building that opened in 2020 is the focal point of our Penrhyn Road campus and encapsulates our identity as a vibrant and diverse learning community. The building houses a new library, a range of group study rooms for independent, collaborative group learning, areas for quiet individual independent study, informal learning space, a Student Information Centre, seven dance studios, cafés, and a performance space. In the words of the RIBA jury which named the Town House Britain's best new building in 2021, it is a place in which "quiet reading, loud performance, research and learning can delightfully coexist" and which "seamlessly brings together student and town communities, creating a progressive new model for higher education, well deserving of international acclaim and attention". We upgraded our five-storey Mill Street Building at our Knights Park campus in 2020, further enhancing our specialist arts facilities including technical workshops and studios for Filmmaking, Photography, Product and Furniture Design, Interior Design, Graphic Design, Illustration Animation, and Architecture. In addition, we have upgraded the learning spaces dedicated to Computer Science and Engineering at our Penrhyn Road Campus, developing a new 64-seat computer lab and an informal breakout room for student group work, co-creation, collaborative learning, and social interaction, to support delivery of problem-based learning. We include students in the process through which we design and improve our estate and learning spaces to ensure that we create spaces that meet their needs. As a result of this, we have increased the use and distribution of power points in rooms to allow for more convenient charging of devices and developed more informal learning spaces on our campuses.

35.   **Our Pilot Teaching Room project is a ten-year programme to create learning spaces and facilities that support innovative teaching, learning and assessment practices**. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 we have upgraded 21 rooms, including: 3 'flexi-spaces' that are designed to support effective hybrid delivery; 3 'Black Box' collaborative teaching rooms with enhanced technology for sharing content within and between groups; 2 rooms that can be used as full function clinical simulation wards; and a Behavioural Science Laboratory, with survey booths and eye-tracking technology. It is often through the effective combination of infrastructural

developments, staffing investments, and pedagogical changes, that significant impacts are made in students' academic experience. For example, the adoption of "studio culture" teaching in Computer Games Programming was made possible through the development of a dedicated Games Lab workshop space, investment in games-specification PCs and dedicated technician posts, and a partnership with Sony, which gives students hands-on access to an industry-standard development environment in a simulated workplace in which they develop authentic assessment artefacts.

36.   **Student engagement is an essential element in developing the academic experience of students on our courses and we have highly effective mechanisms to hear and respond to student voice.** There is compelling statistical evidence that at 74.3%, our TEF NSS metric for Student Voice for full-time students is materially above our benchmark. Not only is the Overall Indicator performance outstanding, but there is a strong likelihood that our performance is materially above benchmark for 22 of the split metrics for this indicator and in no cases are we likely to perform materially below benchmark. Student Voice is materially in-line with benchmark for sub-contracted students, and while there is less statistical certainty for this indicator for part-time and apprenticeship students, in both cases the majority of the statistical distribution is at least in line with our benchmark.

37.   **We have created multiple routes through which our students provide us with feedback on their learning and teaching experience.** We encourage all academic and professional services staff to engage in an open, on-going dialogue with our students to identify areas in which we can enhance practice and resolve any emerging issues. This informal, first-response approach ensures that we can meet the evolving needs of different cohorts in a timely and responsive manner. We also gather student feedback through surveys. Our annual Kingston Student Survey (KSS) surveys undergraduate students in the penultimate year of their studies, with a question set based on the National Student Survey. Prior to the COVID pandemic, the response rate had risen to 48% of eligible students, although it subsequently fell back to 28.1% in 2020/21 and 32.3% in 2021/22.[28] KSS provides a consistent and robust source of data on student academic experience at a course level which we use to enhance our practice. The National Student Survey also provides a key source of data that we use to enhance our student learning experience. Of particular value are comparisons that we can make to sector benchmarks and trends, which provide a valuable opportunity to critically reflect on our own performance and situate it within a national context. In 2019 we identified 23 courses that exceeded benchmark and worked with the course team to identify good practice that we shared with other courses. These included a focus on forming positive relationships with students; maintaining high levels of staff accessibility; ensuring systematic and structured assessment; and providing timely feedback.[29]

38.   **Alongside this focus on the student learning experience at course level, we operate a system of module evaluation surveys to ensure a more granular approach to gaining student feedback and driving improvement**. To ensure a consistent and robust approach, this has been administered through a central online system since 2018/19, giving greater confidence to all stakeholders in the security and validity of the system and data. We also make use of locally managed Early Module Review (EMR) across our provision to ensure that any issues are identified and can be tackled in a timely manner, directly benefitting the students providing the feedback. EMR asks students three core questions 'what is going well?', 'what isn't working well?' and 'are there any issues or areas that need further explanation?', as well as any additional questions chosen by staff to gain insights into new developments or innovations.

39.   **We also engage with our student body and gather feedback through our Course Representative system.** To ensure consistent good practice, we have a Course Representative role description, and students undertaking the role receive training and on-going support from our Student Voice team. This system provides students and staff with an opportunity to engage in dialogue and explore the scope for enhancement in greater depth. We have worked hard to ensure that the system is open to a wide range of students, with around 500 to 600 active as course representatives each year. At Faculty level, Course Representatives meet with their Faculty Dean at least twice a year, providing an opportunity to identify and act on cross-cutting issues. Examples of interventions delivered through this mechanism include improvements in printing facilities for students in our School of Arts and the School of Nursing actively including students in the process when redeveloping assessment criteria and learning outcomes.

40.   **We work to ensure that our systems for feedback hear the diversity of student voice at Kingston and engage students from different demographics and with diverse experiences.** For example, we identified that Black, male, mature, and non-commuter students were underrepresented in responses to our 2020/21 KSS survey and took targeted action which reduced these response rate gaps in 2021/22. Our student Inclusive Curriculum Consultants are central to our work to develop an inclusive academic experience and partner with staff to co-create their curriculum and curriculum-related activities to ensure that they are relevant, meaningful, and culturally responsive to our diverse student body. Student Consultants are recruited through an open process of application and receive training and development to ensure that they are supported in their role and can be effective agents for change. Activities include reviewing course materials to identify how these might be made more inclusive and accessible, analysing student feedback and helping with the interpretation of student voice data, and participating in staff development workshops. The Consultants are paid for their work and supported in using this as evidence for the Kingston Award (para. 67). In 2020/21, our Student Consultants were engaged in 25 projects and 12 validation/re-validation panels, with a potential impact on the learning experiences of 3,000 students. The Scheme won the Pearson HE Innovate 2022 Award for 'Most innovative approach to bringing inclusivity and sustainability into the classroom', with the judging panel commenting that it is an "inclusive initiative which demonstrates clear impact on student outcomes, including experience of organisational decision-making… Builds student confidence for next steps including job applications [and] proactively supports real-world skills acquisition".[30]

41.   **We continue to explore different ways through which we can engage students in enhancing their academic experience.** Since 2021, Student Equality Consultants, who work with our Student Services team, have supported us in developing our academic and general regulations to ensure that these are accessible, written in plain English, and as student focused as possible. We have prioritised key student-facing regulations updating our Mitigating Circumstances Procedure, Student Complaints Procedure and Student Conduct and Behaviour Procedure, including our Student Code of Conduct. In response to feedback received from students we initiated a review of our examination scheduling policy in 2021/22. As a result of the review and to respect and celebrate our diverse student body, we agreed that where possible exams would be scheduled to avoid major religious festivals.[31]

Provider name: Kingston University
UKPRN: 10003678

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Positive Outcomes

42.   **We have a strong track record of delivering excellent outcomes for our students.** The TEF dashboard shows that for our full-time students Continuation (91.3%), Completion (88.6%), and Progression (69.7%) are all materially in line with our benchmark. As a university we have a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion and we have put in place a range of measures and initiatives to tailor our provision to the needs of our diverse student body. While we have further to go in eliminating all outcome gaps, our TEF data on student outcomes demonstrates that no group of full-time students by characteristics (age, disability, ethnicity, sex, ABCS quintile, Deprivation quintile, place of domicile, or eligibility for free school meals) are likely to be materially below benchmark for either Continuation or Completion. For Progression, only one group of students by characteristic (male students) have outcomes for which there is a strong possibility (>90%) that they are materially below the benchmark.

43.   **Recognising the characteristics of our learners we have put in place tailored and highly effective actions to support students to succeed in and beyond their studies**. We have significant numbers of students from groups underrepresented in higher education and a high number of students are the first generation in their family to engage in higher education. To ensure that we meet the needs of our students, we have developed a comprehensive life-cycle approach beginning with our outreach work with schools, colleges, and our local community, extending through their studies, and supporting progression to graduate employment or further study. While the core of this support is focused on developing students' academic performance, we recognise that fostering a sense of belonging and cohort identity is essential in successfully extending opportunity to learners from historically underrepresented groups in higher education. We also work to identify and reduce day-to-day barriers that they may experience. For example, we operate a regular free bus service for our students that connects our campuses, halls of residence, and key local transport hubs.

44.   **We have put in place strategy to reach, engage, and support those who can benefit from higher education, which builds a firm foundation for students' success in their studies**. In addition to our core outreach work, which provides opportunities for all potential applicants to visit our campus and find out about our offer, we also put in place targeted programmes to support successful engagement in higher education. These include our partnership with the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames and Kingston College to establish the Kingston Education Trust which provides two fully inclusive schools, one primary and one secondary (Fern Hill and The Kingston Academy), in our local area. Our pre-arrival support and induction process for new students plays a key role in helping students to 'find their feet'. Our Head Start programme provides targeted support to applicants who are first generation to higher education, mature, care experienced, estranged, disabled, young carers, have a low household income or are entering with a BTEC as their main qualification. Applicants are given access to an online platform that facilitates communication with current students from similar backgrounds and are invited to attend a pre-entry orientation event (either a 3-day residential option, or a 1-day 'express' event). The programme is designed to prepare attendees for their transition into higher education through increased confidence and building a sense of belonging as it provides opportunities for applicants to connect with each other and become familiar with their campus, the support services, and enrichment opportunities available to them. The Head Start Impact Evaluation 2019/20 showed that students attending Head Start were 1.6 times more likely to progress at first attempt and 1.8 times more

likely to progress overall (outcomes for 406 students in 2019/20 compared to those of the wider student population). Attending Head Start was also significantly associated with higher continuation rates.[32] Our annual 'Big Read' initiative, which provides a copy of a selected novel to every new student to provide a common talking point, received a Times Higher Education Award which commended it for creating "a greater sense of belonging right from the start".

45. **Our Academic Framework and systematic approach to course design ensures that all our students are supported to succeed through inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment practices**. Our Annual Monitoring and Enhancement process is a key mechanism through which we evaluate the effectiveness of our practice and drive continuous improvement. All course teams are required to report on differential rates of continuation, award, classification, and value added by student characteristic. This is supported through our extensive Data Insight dashboards. Through an easily navigable interactive Tableau interface, these provide all academic and professional service staff with access to data on student performance and experience at module and course level and above, which can be filtered based on student characteristics. This enables us to identify potential issues as they emerge and take immediate actions, rather than acting solely on historical data to make improvements for future students. Our 'pass at first attempt' data, for example, allows us to identify where students, or groups of students, are struggling, as a result of individual circumstances, unclear assessment processes, or other factors. This 'early warning' data allows us to make timely interventions and to ensure that we maintain excellent provision.

46. **As part of our KU22 Strategy, we prioritised university-wide actions to analyse patterns of continuation and non-continuation and take action to improve these.** This detailed review provided useful insight into how better to support students at higher risk of non-continuation. As a result of this we put in place a range of actions including: early identification and engagement with students who had disengaged; reaching out to students who were repeating more than one module; inviting students repeating a year to a reinduction session to reduce any anxieties about joining a new cohort; reaching out to direct-entrant students (those students entering a higher year than the normal entry year); buddying up new level 3 and level 4 students with students from a higher level; keeping in touch with students if they are taking a break from their studies and providing information about the range of support available to them, and making contact with students when they return from a break in study.

47. **As a result of these actions, our courses deliver excellent rates of Continuation and Completion for our students.** For both Continuation and Completion**,** the Overall Indictor, all Years in the time series, all Types of Partnership, all Course Types, and all Levels of Study, for Full-time students the proportion of the statistical distribution that is materially below the benchmark is 0%, demonstrating our consistently strong and sustained record of delivering excellent support to students across all these aspects of our full-time provision.

48. **For Continuation, we have areas of exceptionally high performance for split metrics relating to significant parts of our Full-time student population.** The outcomes for our students on Other Undergraduate Courses (1,490), both Overall and splits at both Level 4 and level 5, are outstanding, with 100% of the statistical distribution above our benchmark. There is very strong or compelling statistical evidence that Students over the Age of 31 (1,350 students), students studying Engineering (1,880 students), and students studying Education and Training (960 students), have continuation outcomes materially above benchmark. There is also strong evidence

that the outcomes of Students Eligible for Free School Meals (2,930) and students studying Computing (1,080) are materially above benchmark.

49. **The Overall Indicator for Completion increased in each of the years reported in the time-series**, **as our strategic framework was embedded across our provision, rising from 87.1% to 91.5% for full-time students, providing very strong or compelling statistical evidence that for Year 3 and Year 4 our outcomes are materially above benchmark**. Again, there are significant parts of our student population for whom we have delivered outstanding outcomes. The 2,440 students reported for our Other Undergraduate provision and the splits for Course types at Level 4, Level 5 and for First Degrees with an Integrated Foundation year all have 99.9% or higher of their statistical distribution materially above benchmark. In relation to ABCS quintiles, there is compelling statistical evidence that the outcomes for those from Quintile 2 or 3 (8,630 students) and strong evidence that those from Quintile 1 (3,160) are materially above benchmark. There is very strong statistical evidence that outcomes for those Eligible for Free School Meals (2,450 students) and compelling evidence that learners 31 Years and Over (1,720) are materially above benchmark. There is also compelling statistical evidence that Engineering (2,880 students) and Computing (950 students) outcomes are materially above benchmark.

50. **Continuation and Completion rates are also excellent for other parts of our student population.** For part-time students, our Continuation indicator is 86.7% and there is strong statistical evidence that it is materially above benchmark and, while the degree of statistical certainty relating to the Completion indicator is lower, it is probable that this is at least in line with our benchmark. While no data is currently available for the Completion rates for our Apprenticeships students, their Continuation outcomes are excellent and materially in-line with our benchmark.

51. **We recognise that there are some pockets within our provision where Continuation or Completion outcomes are not as strong**. Within our Full-time provision, continuation rates for Sport and Exercise Sciences (250 students) and Allied Health (190 students) are both at least probable to be materially below benchmark, and there is strong evidence that Completion rates for Performing Arts students are below benchmark (670 students). We had identified these issues through our internal processes and took action to improve student outcomes in these subjects. A SADRAS research project in 2020/21 explored the challenges faced by Sport and Exercise science students in their transition to university and we are currently undertaking an intensive review of this provision through our KCEP process.[33] Our internal processes for monitoring course outcomes also identified a number of courses within the Performing Arts subject group for review, leading to the revalidation of our Dance course in 2020/21 and Music Technology and Drama courses in 2021/22.

52. **The very high-quality of our provision is demonstrated through the excellent progression outcomes of our students**. For full-time students (4,980) our Overall Indicator for Progression (69.7%) is materially in line with our benchmark. For Part-time students (70) the indicator is 83.3% with low statistical certainty (less than 80%) in relation to our benchmark, and for our Apprenticeships the number of students is too low to be reported in the TEF dashboard.

53. **We have taken systematic and sustained actions to enhance the progression outcomes of our students.** In 2018/19 we restructured our employability support, creating a new

Careers and Employability Service (CES). This change was based on an analysis of our graduate outcomes, feedback from staff and students, and a renewed focus on the importance of providing targeted support to our students to support their progression outcomes.[34] Three key priorities were identified for CES: improving career preparation and professional experience opportunities for students; enhancing career readiness support through the curriculum; and working with employers to increase the opportunities for students to develop professional experience. We also introduced the Career Registration survey. This is a self-reported career student survey that derives from the HEFCE-funded Learning Gain pilots and provides students with an opportunity to track their developing readiness for employability. To evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, we commissioned an external review of our support for employability from Gradcore in 2021.[35] A Gradcore survey designed to map our existing employability provision and gather feedback from across the university, elicited responses covering 48% of our courses. While the report praised many aspects of our provision, describing the CES as "progressive and forward thinking" it highlighted that there was more work to do in embedding employability into the curriculum as "whilst around 90% of responses stated that the employability content was embedded, only around 40% of this was compulsory, and only around 30% was assessed". The report found that there was an "inconsistent delivery of employability in the curriculum" and recommended a more systematic and joined-up approach.

54.   **We carefully considered the outcomes of this report within the context of our institutional mission and the needs of our student population, and as a result of this, renewed our focus to further enhance the support we provide to students to develop high level skills and to progress to graduate employment**. From 2022, we put in place a new central placements team to ensure a more joined-up experience for students, extend our engagement with business, and further grow placement opportunities. In addition, we created new Faculty Employability Partner roles, to enhance the delivery of our core employability offer across all subject areas and improve student access to support tailored to their subject. We also established a Graduate Success team to further develop support for underrepresented demographic groups, and a Personal Development team which co-creates and delivers, with module leaders, skills based Navigate workshops in the curriculum. These developments are aligned to the development of our Town House Strategy and the significant additional investment in posts, supported by a grant of £1.7m from the Mohn Westlake Foundation.

55.   **Reflecting the diversity of our subject portfolio, we have tailored provision at course or school level to engage students in contextualised support to progress to graduate outcomes**. This tailored approach ensures alignment to the subject of study, ambitions of the students, and the career opportunities available in each area. For example, all our Level 5 Business students are provided with a choice of three career focused modules: an internship module that provides the opportunity to work in a business for 3 months; a group consultancy project working to a brief provided by a local enterprise; or an entrepreneurship module in which they work either on their own or in a small group to establish a start-up business. Many of our courses, through PSRB accreditation, are aligned to graduate professions and all courses equip students with a broad range of specialist and transferable skills that will enable them to take up further study in either a related field or a new subject area. Our Careers and Employability Service provides support to graduates who wish to apply for further study and we offer a 10% fee discount to our alumni who are progressing to study on a Kingston postgraduate degree course.

56.   **We have tailored our approach to take account of the characteristics of our student population to ensure that all students receive support to progress to graduate outcomes**. Our ELEVATE programme offers targeted support to our Black students to address some of the structural barriers they face in progression to graduate employment or further study and was co-created with Black students and staff. It provides students with insights into the experiences of Black professionals and entrepreneurs through a calendar of events throughout the year and works with employers to develop more equitable attraction and recruitment processes. Now in its third year, ELEVATE has supported over 700 students and established meaningful partnerships including internship and graduate opportunities with over 30 employers such as Coca-Cola, GSK and Marsh McLennan. The programme was recognised in 2021 when it received the Global Careers Services Summit award for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, and again in 2022 as Best Widening Participation Initiative at the National Undergraduate Employability Awards, where the judging panel praised the programme for its success in "empowering and upskilling Black students, providing holistic employability support through student careers coordinators and developing students both personally and professionally."[36]

57.   **There are no split metrics for our part-time students where there is a strong likelihood that performance is materially below benchmark, while progression outcomes data for our Apprenticeship provision at this point is too small to be reported.** There are five split metrics for full-time students which highlight areas of our provision where there is a strong likelihood (more than 90%) that performance is below benchmark. Our Allied Health provision is primarily students graduating with degrees in Nutrition, with the TEF data reporting outcomes for a cohort of 50 students. Our analysis of year-by-year progression outcomes for these students demonstrates a significant drop in graduate outcomes for students graduating in 2019 (from 70% or above in the two preceding years, to 47% in 2019). The reasons for this have not been fully established and are being explore through our KCEP process, but we believe they relate to hiring practices in the sector during the COVID pandemic. There is an overlap in the underlying populations represented in our split metrics for Engineering (540 students) and Undergraduate with Postgraduate Components (270 students), both of which are below benchmark. A full review of our Engineering undergraduate provision is currently underway, focused on enhancing the design and delivery of programmes to improve student outcomes. There is also a strong likelihood that outcomes for Politics (70 students) are materially below benchmark. Due to declining enrolments, we ceased to offer Politics courses from 2021 and we are providing additional resources to support student's progression to graduate outcomes as we teach out this provision. Our below benchmark performance for male students speaks to a wider challenge that relates to students across our provision. While our overall indicator for Progression is materially within the benchmark, we are committed to enhancing the progression outcome for all our students. Our Future Skills programme (para. 68-70) and the changes that we have put in place in our employability support for students over the past few years demonstrate our commitment as an institution to further enhance our practice.

58.   **We have worked to develop effective programmes to support our students to develop exceptional entrepreneurial skills and the confidence to turn their ideas into successful businesses**. The impact of our work to develop students' entrepreneurial skills is demonstrated in the exceptionally high number of Graduate start-ups. In the three years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, we reported 777 Graduate start-ups, more than any other UK higher education provider in 2020/21 and ranking second in 2018/19 and 2019/20.[37]

59.   **At the core of our outstanding record of success is the support provided to students to become capable and self-confident learners.** We have dedicated programmes designed to enable students to explore and develop products, services, enterprises, and campaigns on their own or in teams. Bright Ideas is an annual competition designed to give our students the opportunity to develop an idea, have it evaluated and win a prize of up to £1,000. The programme helps students to bring their ideas to life and develop the commercial awareness that they will need to succeed.

60.   **The outstanding entrepreneurial drive demonstrated by our students is also developed through our Hackathon methodology, developed since 2017, which engages students in using design thinking to solve authentic real-life problems.** Our Hackathons bring together experts from inside and outside the university to work with students to create a collaborative environment for problem-solving. Hackathons are embedded in our academic curricula with a significant and growing reach, with 3,721 students engaging across 145 Hackathons in 2021/22. Problems are identified by employers and other external partners which have a mutual benefit both for the organisations who tap into our students as a resource for innovation and for our students who get an opportunity to develop skills including team building, collaborative working, creative and critical thinking and problem-solving in the context of real-world problems. For example, our Health Automation Hackathon event in 2019 challenged 200 students, working in multi-disciplinary teams, from our Nursing, Computer Science, Maths and Cyber Security programmes to explore how Robotic Process Automation can be applied to save healthcare professionals valuable time on hospital wards. Students were supported by NHS professionals from several Trusts to develop innovative and effective solutions.

Educational Gain

61.   **At Kingston, we are committed to developing graduates who will be sought after for their skills, knowledge, and ability to innovate**. During the last four years, we have developed and implemented this through a suite of strategies that have aimed to articulate, develop, and assess both academic educational gain and the wider development of skills and attributes developed through extra-curricular activity. Building on our evaluation of these approaches, and through extensive engagement with leading national employers and our staff and students to explore how we can best equip our students to be highly skilled graduates able to succeed, we launched our Future Skills Strategy in 2022. This provides a comprehensive programme of development for all students on all courses, built around our refreshed graduate attributes.

62.   **Our educational strategy has identified two different forms of educational gain.** The first is the academic educational gain which is primarily secured and assessed through the courses in which students are enrolled. Our Graduate Attributes (Creative Problem Solving, Digital Competency, Enterprise, Questioning Mindset, Adaptability, Empathy, Collaboration, Resilience, and Self-awareness) are a key part of our Academic Framework and set clear expectations for the high-level capabilities that all our students are expected and supported to achieve. The way that these are developed and assessed is a key element in the validation for all our courses and articulated in the Programme Specification. Students are supported in developing these attributes

with provision tailored to help them to contextualise these within their own learning, reflecting their subject of study and personal development profile. For example, since 2019, all courses in our Schools of Art, Creative Industries, and Design have included a module at each level of study, focused on professional skills and personal development, with Personal Tutoring sessions embedded as scheduled learning hours and, from 2021/22 assessment of graduate attributes through Personal Development Plans. In our Business School, a focus on 'grand challenges' has provided a curriculum focus for the development of graduate attributes, while in Computing, the integration of Hackathons into courses has proved effective.

63. **The learning outcomes and levels of achievement that graduates need to achieve for each award are set out in our Programme Specification**. Programme Learning Outcomes are identified relating to three areas: Knowledge and Understanding, Intellectual Skills, and Subject Practical Skills. They are aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and, where appropriate, to the requirements set by PSRBs and industry standards. Courses are designed to support learners in developing their knowledge, skills, and attributes through carefully constructed programmes of learning, assessment, and feedback. We monitor the year-on-year variations in our pattern of degree awarding to ensure that we maintain the standard of our awards and our 2021/22 awarding rate of 70.7% is broadly in line with our pre-COVID awarding rate of 71.7% in 2016/17.[39]

64. **The delivery of educational gain within programme frameworks has been monitored through the development of an institutional Value Added (VA) metric.** This metric was developed at Kingston University and has since been adopted by other higher education providers as a result of OFS Catalyst Funding (2017-19) and other dissemination initiatives.[40] At its core, Value Added is a conceptualisation of Educational Gain as the distance travelled between the qualification with which a student entered our university, and the classification of their award when they graduate. Using data for all UK domiciled graduates over a three-year period, the VA metric gives the probability that any given student, with known entry tariff, will achieve a 1st or 2:1 in a given subject. Expected rates of classification can then be calculated for groups of students differentiated by course or personal characteristics.

65. **Value Added provides a powerful tool to allow us to identify and monitor the relative rates of educational gain.** Through our Data Insight Dashboards we make Value Added data available to all staff and Course Leaders are required to analyse their Course level data, report differential rates of Value Added and identify actions to address this, as part of the Course Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Process. In addition, trends in Value Added are reported to our Education Committee on an annual basis. This approach has played a key role in mobilising a shared institutional focus on educational gains and provided course teams with the data they need to design effective actions. As a result of this, our analysis of our data shows a fall in the Value-Added gap between White and Asian students (from 12 to 8 index points) and between White and Black students (from 29 to 17 index points) between 2017/18 and 2020/21. In the same period, the gap between Commuter and non-commuter students fell from 15 to 10 index points and between IMD quintile 1 and 5 students from 17 to 11 index points.[41] Our consistent use of this metric has provided a tool through which we can track and monitor our progress in delivering value added. While this data demonstrates improvements in securing educational gain for all our students against their different starting points, Value Added gaps continue and actions to close them remain a priority for us.

66.   **The second form of educational gain that has been part of our educational strategy, is the expansion of activities outside the curriculum framework that contribute effectively to students' future ambitions.** To support our students to develop the skills, confidence, experience, and social capital they need to succeed, we have developed a range of co- and extra-curricular activities that students can engage with through our KUExtra platform. These include opportunities for students to develop their skills while undertaking paid work as Curriculum Consultants or as Research Associates through our SADRAS scheme. In addition, activities such as our Hackathons and Bright Ideas Competition have proved highly effective in supporting students to develop their entrepreneurial talents and establish business start-ups. Until 2018/19, we also ran our SPARKS Personal Development Programme as 3-day extra-curricular workshops designed to support students to develop their confidence, resilience, and leadership skills. From 2019/20 SPARKS was revised, becoming a one-day workshop delivered as a core part of the curriculum for courses in Midwifery, Nursing, Primary Education, Social Work, Business, Politics, Engineering, Fashion. As outlined below, from 2021/22, the SPARKS programme was further revised to become a key element of our new Future Skills delivery.

67.   **While all students have an opportunity to gain from engagement in each of these extra-curricular schemes, our Kingston Award provides an overarching framework through which they can bring these and other experiences together and gain formal recognition for their achievements which is included on their Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).** The structure of the Kingston Award was enhanced from September 2020, moving away from rewarding students for participating in activities, towards a requirement for evidence of critical reflection relating to the graduate attributes developed through taking part in activities alongside their course. Students now receive feedback on these reflections, enabling them to build a bank of examples for job applications and interviews. Based on their engagement in this process of critical reflection, students receive an award at bronze, silver or gold level. There has been a steady increase in the number of students engaging with the Award, reflections submitted, and Awards achieved. In 2021/22 over 946 competency reflections were submitted by students, resulting in 84 students completing a Kingston Award. There is a strong association between engagement in the Kingston Award and academic success. Students who engaged in the Kingston Award were 3.6 times more likely to complete their year of study than those who did not.[42]

68.   **In 2022 we launched our new Town House Strategy for the University, a key part of which is our Future Skills programme**. Future Skills is a progressive model of education that aims to prepare graduates for the challenges of life and work in the twenty-first century through equipping them with the higher cognitive skills to be independent learners able to adapt their knowledge and capabilities in fast changing and often uncertain circumstances. It is designed as a core part of the curriculum for all our courses, ensuring that all students at all levels benefit from the programme as an essential part of their studies.

69.   **Our Future Skills model has emerged through critical reflection on our educational model and the changing needs of students and society, our evaluations of previous projects and initiatives, and extensive engagement with employers and stakeholders**. At the core of this is our mission to enhance the life chances of our students through the provision of an excellent education that will equip them to succeed. In 2021 and 2022, we worked with YouGov to ask a representative sample of 2000 businesses about the key challenges they expected to face in the next 10 to 20 years.[43] The 2022 survey found that the greatest challenge was that of attracting and retaining talented people in their business, with 45% of respondents citing this. Both the 2021

and 2022 survey identified the top ten Future Skills that businesses defined as the most important for the UK economy to remain globally competitive in the coming decades. The findings of these reports fed directly into our strategy, helping us to define the current skills challenges facing both our graduates and wider society, and the educational gains that will be the foundation of their success as graduates.

70.   **We have already made significant progress in defining and implementing our Future Skills programme for a significant proportion of our students**. We have refreshed our Graduate Attributes to realign these to the priority areas identified through our Future Skills surveys. We have taken key steps to develop our Future Skills model for new students joining our university. Students' engagement in the Future Skills programme begins in their first term of study through engagement in our Navigate workshops. Navigate builds on our successful SPARKS programme and extends what was a high value extra-curricular programme accessed by some students, to a core element of our educational model for all students. Navigate consists of six hours of developmental workshops scheduled in a core module, which introduces students to our Graduate Attributes, contextualizing these in their area of study, and engaging them in a process of diagnostic self-assessment. The workshops are delivered by a team from our Careers and Employability Service and supported by course based personal tutoring. We have already embedded Navigate across a significant number of courses, with 42% of our Level 4 students participating in 2021/22. The proportion is higher in the current year and Navigate will be delivered to all Level 4 students from September 2023.

REFERENCES

[1] Office for Students Size and Shape of provision Data Dashboard. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/size-and-shape-of-provision-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/

[2] Kingston University Student Demographics data dashboard. Available internally via Data Insight

[3] SEN8 14/15 'KU Education Strategy 2013-20', submitted to Senate 29 October 2014. Published internally within the Senate StaffSpace committee site

[4] EC23 21/22 'Academic Framework Review Final Report', submitted to the Education Committee, 13 October 2021. Published internally within the Education Committee StaffSpace committee site

[5] EC03 19/20 'Annual Report KCEP 2018/19', page 3, submitted to the Education Committee, 2 October 2019 and EC05 20/21 'Annual Report KCEP 2019/20', page 3, submitted to the Education Committee, 30 September 2020. Published internally within the Education Committee StaffSpace committee site

[6] Kingston University MEQ Data Dashboard. Available internally via Data Insight

[7] 'Student Mobility and Attainment 14/15 to 16/17'. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[8] Exploring the relevance of international experiences in Higher Education to a diverse student body: understanding the barriers (perceived and real). Unpublished. Held by LTEC.

[9] LearnSci Teaching Innovation Awards. Details available at: https://www.learnsci.com/tia-winners/kingston-university

[10] EC093 18/19 'Return of assessed work TB1 18/19', submitted to the Education Committee, 23 January 2019. Published internally within the Education Committee StaffSpace site

[11] EC107 19/20 'Annual Report: Undergraduate External Examiners 2018/19', page 8, submitted to the Education Committee, 15 January 2020. Published internally within the Education Committee StaffSpace site

[12] Kingston University Timetabling KPI 2020/21 Data Dashboard. Available internally via Data Insight

[13] Ofsted Inspection of Kingston University, 12-15 October 2021, page 3. Report available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50173016

[14] Equality Impact Assessment – Campus Re-enablement: Students. 15 September 2020. Unpublished. Held by Student Wellbeing & Inclusion

[15] Digital Support Scheme 2020-21 Impact Report, produced November 2021. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[16] REF 2021 Impact Case Study: 'Improving equality in UK Higher Education through an inclusive curriculum framework and value added metric.' Available at: https://results2021.ref.ac.uk/impact/75d5084f-42d0-4df9-b1da-a4ad31ab9b61?page=1 and REF 2021 'Feedback for Unit of Assessment 23 – Education'. Unpublished. Held by The Research, Business and Innovation Directorate

[17] SADRAS Project titles and final reports published internally on MyKingston

[18] 2018/19 Activity Impact Evaluation: SADRAS Project. Produced February 2020. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[19] EC04 22/3 'Annual Report: Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)', submitted to the Education Committee, 28 September 2022. Published internally within the Education Committee StaffSpace site and data on PSRBs. Unpublished. Held by Academic Registry

[20] AACSB Continuous Improvement Review Peer Team Report – 2020 for Business Accreditation, page 6 and Royal Society of Chemistry Accreditation Report April 2022, page 3. Unpublished. Held by Quality Assurance and Enhancement

[21] EC163 21/22 'Annual Report UG and PG External Examining 2020/21', page 13, submitted to the Education Committee, 4 April 2022. Published internally within Education Committee StaffSpace site

[22] Ofsted Inspection of Kingston University, 12-15 October 2021, page 2. Report available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50173016

[23] Advance HE accreditation submission template 2021-22. Unpublished. Held by Learning and Teaching Enhancement Centre (LTEC) and KU KAPS records. Unpublished. Heald by LTEC.

[24] 'The value of the Personal Tutor Scheme (PTS) as a mechanism of supporting belonging in an online world'. Final report published internally on the SADRAS MyKingston site, and Project Data. Unpublished. Held by Quality Assurance and Enhancement

[25] '2019/20 Activity Impact Evaluation: Writing and Oral Skills (Bespoke and Generic)', produced June 2021. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[26] '2019/20 Activity Impact Evaluation: Academic Mentoring Programme', produced April 2021. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[27] '2019/20 Activity Impact Evaluation: Beyond Barriers', produced April 2021. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[28] Kingston University KSS Response Rates Data Dashboard. Available internally via Data Insight

[29] EC091 18/29 'NSS 2018: High Performing Courses – Common Themes and Good Practice', submitted to the Education Committee, 23 January 2019. Published internally within Education Committee StaffSpace site

[30] 2022 Pearson HE Innovate Awards – results. Available at: https://heinnovate.co.uk/2022-he-innovate-awards-results/

[31] RFC50 21/22 'Exam Scheduling Policy', submitted to the Regulatory Framework Committee, 4 April 2022. Published internally with the Regulatory Framework Committee StaffSpace site

[32] 'Head Start Impact Evaluation 2019/20', produced March 2021. Unpublished. Held by Planning and Data Insight

[33] 'The transition to university: belonging and retention in sport and exercise science students', final report published internally on the SADRAS MyKingston site

[34] EC006 18/19 'Graduate Outcomes – Priorities for 2018/19', submitted to the Education Committee, 17 October 2018. Published internally within Education Committee StaffSpace site

[35] 'Kingston University Employability Health check', Gradcore Report 2021. Unpublished. Held by the Careers and Employability Service

[36] Global Career Services Summit Awards 2021. Available at: https://gcssummit.org/past-events/2021-virtual-summit/gcs-summit-awards-2021/ and National Undergraduate Employability Awards. Available at: https://www.kingston.ac.uk/news/article/2643/15-mar-2022-kingston-universitys-elevate-programme-to-empower-and-support-black-students-on-career-journeys-scoops-accolade/

[37] HESA Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) Survey. Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/business-community/ip-and-startups

[39] Degree outcomes statement. Available at: https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/howtheuniversityworks/degree-outcomes-statement/

[40] Using the Value Added Score to challenge the BME attainment gap. Available at: https://closingtheattainmentgap.co.uk/value-added/ and 'Use of a value added metric and an inclusive curriculum framework to address the black and minority ethnic attainment gap', report to the OfS. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/c8484f11-ef3f-4c59-9fdb-f9c201b54205/abss-final-project-report-kingston-university.pdf

[41] Kingston University Value Added Demographic Data Dashboard. Available internally via Data Insight.

[42] 'Kingston Award Impact Evaluation 2019/20', produced March 2021. Unpublished, held by Planning and Data Insight

[43] Future Skills Report 2021 and Future Skills Report 2022. Available at: https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/