

The University of Derby Provider Submission - TEF 2023

1. Provider Context

1.1 Introduction

The University of Derby is an anchor institution providing high quality education through an engaging and flexible delivery model excelling in professional and industry-focussed programmes that afford opportunity to diverse student cohorts through different modes of study. The University's mission and strategic purpose as '*an applied university of today and for tomorrow*' is manifest through its dedication to tackling the embedded social and educational inequalities in Derby and its region and embracing a diverse student community. Delivering on this central commitment to social mobility, the University achieves above benchmark performance for its students through innovation and excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, underpinned by research-led pedagogic practice.

Table 1: Student Experience Indicators – indicator (difference to benchmark)

| Metric | Full-Time | Part-Time | Apprentice | Combined |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Teaching on my Course | 84.1% (+2.8pp) | 80.7% (-1.7pp) | 87.2% (+5.7pp) | 83.9% (+2.5pp) |
| Assessment & Feedback | 76.1% (+4.9pp) | 75.2% (-4.3pp) | 80.2% (+3.6pp) | 76.2% (+4.0pp) |
| Academic Support | 78.4% (+2.4pp) | 76.4% (-2.4pp) | 79.9% (+3.3pp) | 78.3% (+2.0pp) |
| Learning Resources | 83.1% (+1.7pp) | 81.2% (-0.1pp) | 79.6% (+0.1pp) | 82.7% (+1.5pp) |
| Student Voice | 75.3% (+5.0pp) | 67.9% (+4.7pp) | 75.4% (+5.5pp) | 74.6% (+5.0pp) |

Table 2: Student Outcome Indicators– indicator (difference to benchmark)

| Metric | Full-Time | Part-Time | Apprentice | Combined |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Continuation | 87.9% (-0.7pp) | 68.8% (+3.4pp) | 91.3% (+3.2pp) | 84.7% (+0.3pp) |
| Completion | 85.1% (-0.5pp) | 60.7% (+1.0pp) | 91.9% (+14.8pp) | 79.3% (0pp) |
| Progression | 66.9% (-2.7pp) | 87.1% (+4.5pp) | 88.3% (-0.3pp) | 70.9% (-1.4pp) |

Located in the heart of England, the University of Derby is steeped in the region's heritage of industry, innovation and inclusion. Derby is a city of contrasting social and economic fortunes. Despite reporting average earnings above the national mean, more than one third of households fall within the most deprived in England when ranked according to the index of multiple deprivation.¹ The regional growth plan² recognises that while Derby is home to many highly skilled and specialist roles, especially in engineering, there is a substantial gap in the availability of entry-level graduate, management and skilled posts. There are also notable inequalities in education³ and health outcomes. Against this socio-economic and demographic backdrop, the University provides excellent applied, industry-relevant learning opportunities to its varied student community in a supportive, aspirational environment in which they can equip themselves for their futures. With Buxton & Leek Further Education College embedded as an integral part of the University, the

Provider name: The University of Derby
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University offers a seamless transition from Levels 1 to 7 and 8. At the same time, our extensive online learning courses, provide a flexible means for learners globally to develop and enhance their skills, further their careers, or change direction without having to return to full-time study.

The University has taken great strides to develop an inclusive and progressive learning and teaching framework which assures that learners from some of the most disadvantaged communities within the East Midlands region and nationally, benefit from applied curricula on educational programmes with currency for '*today and tomorrow*'. Our data demonstrates that the University has continued to enhance the outcomes of our learners since the previous TEF submission in 2017. The University has been deliberate in assuring that all students accessing our programmes have the opportunity to excel through continued investment in both high-quality staff and facilities. For example, investment in inclusive and digital accessibility, invaluable during the pandemic years (2020-21), has been critical to our success in enabling equality of opportunity for all students and most notably in eroding attainment gaps for our disabled student cohorts.

A core principle of the University's strategy is '*creating the right experience*'. A diverse student community and a commitment to social mobility have driven the University to develop personalised approaches to learner engagement and led to successful performance in student experience and student outcomes. Our data highlights, and in the forthcoming sections, this submission explains and evaluates the successful delivery of these strategic aims:

- We are a Top 10 widening access Higher Education Institution⁴, delivering improved academic achievement for all our students. Impressively this improvement is of most significance for those who arrive with greatest disadvantage.
- We are delivering outstanding student experience with a strong focus on the quality of teaching and the impact of student voice, especially in co-creation of our learning and teaching models.
- We have improved student outcomes across our diverse student communities with strong continuation and completion, as well as excelling in progression for our part-time and apprenticeship cohorts.
- Our apprenticeship delivery, meeting the needs of our regional economy, is delivering outstanding experience and outcomes for both our students and our industry partners.
- Our students formally recognise and acknowledge their Educational Gain, reporting the value of their qualification against enhanced opportunities and personal gain in their self-confidence and self-belief.

For its wider community, the University of Derby is proactive in its civic engagement through its education offer, a key example of which is the University's partnership with Derby Theatre, a Learning Theatre where education and the civic combine. Recognising that social inequality starts from the earliest stages of primary education and continues into employment, the University has adopted a whole system approach to address the challenges faced by those who have most to gain from a university education. The University therefore tackles the inequality in the region's schools during the transition into and through the University, and then entry into the regional and national labour markets. As a result, the University of Derby delivers civic value aligned to the higher skills that are required for educational, health, cultural and economic wellbeing.

1.2 Size and Shape of the Institution

Table 3: Size and shape of the student body (number and percentage) 2017-18 to 2020-21⁵

| Cohort | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | Average |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Undergraduates (full-time) | 11,350 (61%) | 11,435 (60%) | 11,710 (59%) | 12,315 (58%) | 11,700 (60%) |
| Undergraduates (part-time) | 1,545 (8%) | 1,380 (7%) | 1,060 (5%) | 770 (4%) | 1,190 (6%) |
| Postgraduates | 2,890 (16%) | 3,210 (17%) | 3,010 (15%) | 3,480 (16%) | 3,150 (16%) |
| Online learning (all levels) | 2,345 (13%) | 2,430 (13%) | 2,835 (14%) | 3,385 (16%) | 2,750 (14%) |
| Apprenticeships (all levels) | 355 (2%) | 690 (4%) | 1,070 (5%) | 1,340 (6%) | 865 (4%) |
| Total UK based | 18,485 (100%) | 19,145 (100%) | 19,685 (100%) | 21,290 (100%) | 19,655 (100%) |
| Transnational education (TNE) | 4,700 | 4,705 | 5,065 | 5,315 | 4,945 |

Table 3 reflects the University's growth in total student population over the TEF period. This expansion has largely been achieved through a strategic drive to increase the number of degree apprenticeship and online programmes alongside the fostering of deeper relations with employers thereby supporting more industry-led opportunities for all learners. For example, in partnership with Rolls-Royce, the University recently opened a Nuclear Skills Academy delivering engineering and business leadership programmes for 200 apprentices per annum from Levels 3 to 6.

Our commitment to partnership working with industry, including global partners such as Toyota and Rolls-Royce, is also reflected in the University's engagement with professional bodies, employers and industry advisory boards. This engagement ensures curricula are industry led and meet the higher skills need of the students and local and global economies. More than 300 programmes confer professional accreditation alongside the University degree award, with an increasing number offering industry recognised certification of co-curricular learning. In 2021-22, 60% (>11,885) of students were studying on a programme that conferred such professional recognition or accreditation.

The changes to the size and shape of the University since the last TEF have supported access to Higher Education for a broader demographic of students. Table 4 demonstrates the University's position as a Top 10 institution in England⁴ for supporting underrepresented groups to succeed in Higher Education:

- 46.2% of undergraduate entrants (UK domiciled, young, full-time, first degree) were from low participation TUNDRA Quintiles 1 & 2 in 2020-21, 6th in the UK for widening access.⁴
- 39% of new, full-time undergraduate entrants were over the age of 21 in 2021-22.
- The undergraduate full-time student population is more ethnically diverse than the local area with 26.3% of UK-domiciled students declaring as BAME in 2021-22 compared to 18.8% for Derby City at the 2011 census point.⁶

Table 4: Selected demographic characteristics of undergraduate full-time cohort⁵

| Split | 2017-18 | | 2018-19 | | 2019-20 | | 2020-21 | |
|------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | UoD | UK | UoD | UK | UoD | UK | UoD | UK |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| Under 21 | 66.7% | 74.3% | 63.1% | 73.5% | 63.6% | 72.0% | 60.9% | 70.3% |
| 21+ | 33.3% | 25.7% | 36.9% | 26.5% | 36.4% | 28.0% | 39.1% | 29.7% |
| Disability | | | | | | | | |
| No disability reported | 83.9% | 87.1% | 82.7% | 86.1% | 80.1% | 85.6% | 81.0% | 85.1% |
| Disabled | 16.1% | 12.8% | 17.4% | 13.9% | 19.9% | 14.3% | 19.0% | 14.9% |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | |
| White | 65.7% | 57.3% | 64.4% | 55.9% | 62.9% | 53.1% | 61.6% | 54.0% |
| BAME | 21.3% | 25.2% | 23.2% | 25.4% | 21.7% | 26.4% | 26.3% | 26.5% |
| Sex | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 56.7% | 55.6% | 57.3% | 55.9% | 56.6% | 55.7% | 57.7% | 56.0% |
| Male | 43.3% | 44.4% | 42.7% | 43.9% | 42.9% | 44.3% | 41.2% | 43.0% |
| IMD | | | | | | | | |
| Q1 or Q2 | 38.1% | 32.7% | 39.1% | 32.9% | 37.0% | 33.4% | 41.5% | 34.5% |
| Q5 | 16.7% | 17.1% | 16.7% | 16.6% | 16.1% | 15.6% | 15.5% | 15.6% |
| TUNDRA | | | | | | | | |
| Q1 or Q2 | 44.3% | 23.4% | 44.6% | 23.0% | 43.5% | 22.6% | 46.2% | 23.2% |
| Q5 | 10.4% | 23.3% | 11.8% | 23.2% | 10.7% | 22.7% | 10.1% | 23.1% |

This diversity and the University's commitment to, and delivery of, increased social mobility has been recognised through several national awards, including:

- University of the Year at the UK Social Mobility Awards, 2020.⁷
- Higher Education Institution of the Year at the NEON (National Education Opportunities Network) Awards, 2020.⁸
- Guardian University Award, 2020, for Social and Community Impact.⁹

The success of our approach is purposeful and evidenced. In addition, the University has signed the 'Stand Alone' Pledge and the Armed Forces Covenant while it is Stonewall Gold and committed to the Race Equality Charter.

1.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment Pedagogy

Across the TEF assessment cycle, the University of Derby has further enhanced its learning, teaching and assessment pedagogy to ensure even greater impact as a university delivering high levels of social mobility through outstanding experience and outcomes. These innovations in pedagogy are informed by, and aligned to, the University's overarching Strategic Framework, 2018-2030¹⁰ which was co-designed with students.

The University's approach to pedagogic development was exemplified by its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with the Union of Students, the University designed a Blended Applied

Learning Model (BALM) for academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22 which, with its staff development training programme 'The Best of Blends', won the Training & Development category in the 2021 Blackboard Catalyst Awards.¹¹ The BALM maximised face-to-face teaching with the ability to flex and modify the ratio of in-person and off-campus digital learning as required by Government and Office for Students' guidance. Delivering a high quality, rich applied learning experience across physical and digital environments, BALM was aligned to the University's Technology-Enhanced Learning Strategy and became the subject of a Jisc good practice case study.¹² BALM was underpinned by an extensive academic staff digital development programme, 'The Best of Blends'. Delivered weekly for 15 weeks by experts in pedagogic practice, the programme resulted in the award of more than 700 certificates of completion.

Drawing upon the success of BALM and the University's ongoing pedagogic research, the Curriculum Design Framework and Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework¹³ have been introduced. The two Frameworks contain core principles and are outcomes-based to underpin a whole system approach to learning, teaching and assessment. The Curriculum Design Framework requires each programme of study to be led by subject specific innovation and research, embed Education for Sustainable Development in its curriculum, be inclusive through design and ensure, across the levels of study, a scaffold for student personal development. The principles of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework are expressed as five Factors of Success, namely Sense of Belonging, Sense of Purpose, Self-Efficacy, Resilience, and Engagement and are reflected in the core experiences provided by each programme of study.

In all provision, the University emphasises that the learning experience is accessible to all. To address the challenge faced by many students with a disability when accessing digital learning resources, the University included, as a core element in its Learning and Teaching development programme, completion of 'Accessibility and Me' - a 90-minute online course exploring the creation of accessible content for users with specific impairments or requirements. Over 1200 staff completed the course during the summer of 2021, including 92% of academic staff. As a result of this systematic approach, the University's rating against the AbilityNet Digital Accessibility Maturity model¹⁴ improved from Bronze to Gold and the Blackboard Ally institutional score improved to 77.3%.

1.4 Educational Gain

The University of Derby's socially mobile Educational Gain underpins the Curriculum Design principles and the experiential five Factors of Success of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework. A tripartite commitment to subject knowledge, applied skills and life changing, lifelong experiences, Educational Gain at the University of Derby is not constrained by a student's start point, rather it is outcomes-based and confers an educational selfhood which affords all students the continual renewal of their potential while at university and beyond. The intellectual challenge posed by subject knowledge and expressed through an innovative assessment regime combines with the acquisition of graduate-level applied skills and extra- and co-curricular opportunities to provide inclusive and equitable learner journeys and modes of study (undergraduate, postgraduate, on-campus, online, apprenticeship, sandwich programmes, full-time or part-time). As the data throughout this Provider Submission demonstrate, Educational Gain for a University of Derby student ensures successful outcomes in attainment and graduate and interpersonal readiness for their futures while instilling an ingrained and renewing sense of self, a selfhood founded on a transformational, experiential, educational journey.

The impact of the University's definition of Educational Gain was most recently demonstrated by a November 2022 survey of continuing students (those in their second year or later of study) who were asked to reflect upon their development over the preceding 12 months. Of ~1600 respondents:

- 95.5% reported they had developed their academic knowledge and skills over that period.
- 93.5% said they felt these would be useful for their future careers.
- 91.9% reported they had developed a clearer sense of their future aspirations.

Evidence of progressive growth and Educational Gain can also be seen in assessment outcomes and the narrowing of the differential between the most and least socially disadvantaged students. For the undergraduate cohort who entered the University in 2019 and graduated in 2022, all learners saw an improvement in module pass rates as they progressed through their studies from Level 4 to Level 6. The degree of improvement was greater for BAME students (+22pp) compared to White (+13pp), demonstrating a 9pp reduction in the gap between groups. Similar positive trends in Educational Gain are shown (Table 5) for students with a disability and from the most deprived areas.

Table 5: Educational Gain as demonstrated through module first attempt pass rates L4 – L6

| Split | L4 (2019/20) | L6 (2020/21) | Educational Gain % | Change in outcome gap |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Disability | 68% | 91% | +23pp | 9pp |
| No Disability | 75% | 89% | +14pp | |
| IMD 1 | 68% | 86% | +18pp | 7pp |
| IMD 5 | 82% | 93% | +11pp | |
| BAME | 64% | 86% | +22pp | 9pp |
| White | 79% | 92% | +13pp | |

These outcomes demonstrate that, through their academic journey, students are developing the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed academically and to prepare for their chosen futures. All students demonstrate Educational Gain, but those who begin their journey from the most disadvantaged backgrounds achieve the greatest gains, significantly reducing the outcomes gap between groups in line with the University's commitment to social mobility.

Over the course of this TEF cycle, delivery of the University of Derby's Educational Gain and the impacts on learning, teaching and assessment from BALM and the embedding of the two new Frameworks are evidenced in Student Experience and Student Outcomes (Tables 1 and 2). Given the diversity of our student intake, the institutional commitment to social mobility and the regional economic environment, the base TEF Data Indicators do not fully demonstrate the level of achievement of the University vision.

1.5 Conclusion

This section has provided a contextual overview of the University of Derby, its mission, its diverse student demographic, its Strategic Framework approach to learning, teaching and assessment, and its delivery of Educational Gain. The University is firmly grounded in its civic sense of place and community and is committed to facilitating social mobility to enable those who come to the University to develop the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to realise their chosen future. In the following two sections of this Provider Submission, evidence and examples will explain how the

Outstanding Quality ratings of the University's TEF Data Indicators have been achieved while evidence of excellence is also provided for those Indicators that do not provide a complete picture with respect to the level of achievement and student success.

2. Student Experience

Outstanding student outcomes are a consequence of an outstanding student experience. The University of Derby has invested in the pedagogic rigour of its educational approach to deliver Educational Gain for all students. This has resulted in consistently outstanding results in the National Student Survey (NSS), particularly with regards to teaching and assessment. Student satisfaction at the University of Derby has been routinely ranked in the top 40 for all institutions across *The Guardian*, *The Times* & *The Sunday Times* and *Complete University Guide* league tables.

2.1 Satisfaction with Learning, Teaching & Assessment

The impact of the University of Derby's learning, teaching and assessment pedagogy is evidenced by the Student Experience indicators which show a level of satisfaction that is consistently outstanding for the majority of student cohorts. Full-time (FT) learners return satisfaction levels materially above benchmark in three (Teaching on my Course, Assessment & Feedback and Student Voice) of the five question areas in each of the four years of the current TEF period and in all five for the two most recent periods, with performance especially strong for Teaching on my Course and Assessment & Feedback. Success in these domains reflects the effective implementation of the University's approaches to learning and teaching manifest during the COVID-19 pandemic in the BALM and thereafter in the Curriculum Design and Learning Teaching & Assessment Frameworks. In addition, an active feature of our approach is a consistent focus on continuous development of outstanding teaching and assessment practice underpinned by pedagogic research as demonstrated by our staff development programme. It has not just been FT undergraduates who have felt the impact of the excellence in learning, teaching and assessment. The data indicators evidence a similarly outstanding experience for apprenticeship students with satisfaction materially above the benchmark in four of the five question sets. Similarly, post-graduate taught (PGT) students enjoy outstanding levels of satisfaction with their programmes of study: the most recent (2022) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) revealed that Overall Satisfaction for University of Derby PGT students (809 respondents) was 86%, 6pp above the sector average and the satisfaction with Assessment & Feedback was 7pp above the sector average.

Approximately 90% of our undergraduate part-time student population included in the NSS population are studying via online learning and have a markedly different learning experience to either full-time campus-based students or apprentices. In response, a distinctive pedagogic model for online learning, underpinned by an Online Academic Framework¹⁵, has been created to ensure a consistent and tailored experience for all online learners. The principles of the Online Academic Framework ensure that online programmes are designed with a clear focus upon learner experience and draw upon best practice in the domain. The principles also provide assurance of accessible learning materials that anticipate the needs of all students.

A programme of staff training and induction is in place for all academic colleagues new to the authoring and delivery of online learning materials, ensuring adherence to the principles of the Framework. Academic colleagues are supported by an expert team of Learning Designers and Content Developers. Governance and quality assurance of the Online Academic Framework is

provided by the University's Online Hub, part of the Provost (Learning & Teaching) portfolio. It ensures all programmes are designed in accordance with the principles of the Framework and, through monitoring by the Online Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee, provides assurance of quality and student outcomes to the University's Academic Development & Quality Committee. This has resulted in satisfaction with online programmes rising such that for the majority of students, using the probable statistical certainty data from the TEF dashboard, satisfaction falls in-line with or materially above benchmark for the two more recent years of the TEF period.

2.2 Satisfaction with Student Voice

Student Voice embraces the way we engage with individual students to harness feedback on their experience, the co-creation of learning and assessment at a programme level, as well as the engagement with the Union of Students as strategic partners. Satisfaction with Student Voice, as measured via the NSS, is materially above benchmark overall for all student groups (+5pp for full-time, +4.7pp for part-time and +5.5pp for apprenticeships) and in nine of the twelve possible instances over the four-year period (three modes of study x four time points) including all years for our largest student population (full-time students). These scores reflect the importance the University places on working in meaningful partnership with the student body and the beneficial impact which results from such partnership working, examples of which are expanded below.

Students are members of all the University's academic deliberative committees as well as being involved in quality assurance and the appointment of leadership positions. The Learning & Teaching Committee and the Governing Council's Student Affairs Committee are co-chaired between the University and the Union of Students to ensure that the student voice is not just present but is fully empowered and co-creative. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were core members of the institutional response committees which met weekly. Each meeting contained a substantive item responding to the Union of Students' 'Thursday Thoughts', a weekly pulse survey of matters of importance to the lived experience of students. This approach ensured that issues were identified at the earliest possible stage and responses shared with students in a timely manner. The success of this student-led approach resulted in the adoption of a standing item at the Learning & Teaching Committee, namely consideration of the Union of Students' 'Real Time Issues' which addresses student experience issues requiring immediate attention and resolution. For example, in response to a request from the Union of Student's Ethnic Minorities Officer for 'listening spaces for students' a student-led forum was created in the College of Health, Psychology & Social Care for students to raise issues. This has been adopted as a model of good practice and extended to other Colleges.

In partnership with the Union of Students, the Student Voice has been enhanced at a programme level. Student representatives are elected for each cohort of students across all undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship programmes, including online and for students studying at the University's academic partners. In addition to attending formal Programme Committee meetings each term, an online student voice portal was launched in 2021-22 to increase the visibility of student issues and to allow these to be responded to in real time outside of the cycle of staff-student committees. There have been in excess of 1000 postings to the portal to date this academic year. The average response time for issues raised in the portal is now 12 days, which offers a timelier resolution of concerns than when raised via termly Programme Committees. At a module level, student experience and satisfaction are monitored through module evaluation surveys run towards the end of each module. The most recent data for module evaluations, completed over November and December 2022, produced 10,775 responses and revealed:

- 84.4% satisfaction with assessment.
- 88.5% reported modules were interesting and challenging.
- 91.4% reported that they could apply what they had learnt.
- 89.7% satisfaction with learning resources.
- 90% reported that staff valued student views and opinions.
- 88.9% considered that their identity, culture and values were respected.

These results confirm that the outstanding experiences evident in the NSS and PTES data have been consolidated and enhanced for current students and follow as a positive impact of the Curriculum Design and Learning, Teaching & Assessment Frameworks delivered by teams at the programme level.

2.3 Excellence in Teaching Practice

The outstanding student experience represented by the NSS data, reflects the University's commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. To ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are of the highest standard, all new staff who do not already hold a relevant teaching qualification engage with the PG Certificate in Academic Practice or the Apprenticeship in Academic Practice and, upon successful completion, receive Fellowship of Advance HE. Led by experts in pedagogic practice, the University's Academic Apprenticeship Programme seeks to develop first class professionals who inspire and lead in pedagogic practice. The impact of the programme is the development of effective, autonomous, reflective practitioners who can use academic study and professional practice to help them achieve the best possible outcomes for students.

At all levels, colleagues engage with the Advance HE Fellowship schemes, with the 2021-22 HESA staff return showing over 120 staff holding Senior Fellowship or higher and over 600 Fellows. Since 2019, 30% of the 151 successful participants in the Pathfinder programme have been non-lecturing staff, in particular technicians, who have gained Fellowship or Associate Fellowship reflecting the important student facing role these colleagues play.

The impact of the Pathfinder and Fellowship recognition pathways is being evaluated through an ongoing pedagogic research project with data collected through semi-structured interviews of successful Pathfinder participants. The emerging findings have highlighted how the Fellowship process, and gaining professional recognition, have shaped individuals' perception and attitudes towards their role, achievements, identity and aspirations, and the direct or indirect implications for student success. Interviewees have said:

"...fellowship has given me that thirst for knowledge of learning about academia, but also how you then relate that to the outside world and how you prepare your students to enter that world and be successful."

"...it's made me reflect on what I'm doing and put a lot, not necessarily more, effort in but make it more meaningful for the students that I'm working with."

A comprehensive programme of staff development is in place in the form of an annually refreshed mandatory Academic & Digital Practice Development Programme to enable the continuous renewal and improvement in academic practice. The past three iterations of this development programme have related to digital practice through programmes entitled, 'Best of Blends' (2020), 'Digital

Accessibility & Digital Learning Baselines' (2021) and 'Academic & Digital Practice' (2022). The emphasises of this annual training is determined based on a range of inputs including Student Voice, programme and module evaluation reports, student performance metrics, sector drivers and institutional priorities. Another example of the development programme is the 'Let's Talk About Race', a mandatory module supporting staff to understand the racial inequality and how to make teaching more inclusive. This training is augmented by an annual Learning & Teaching Conference, seed-corn funding to support pedagogic research and a number of self-serve online development courses available through a staff training portal. The impact of this staff development corresponds to the overwhelming positive feedback students report with their modules of study according to the outcomes of the module evaluation questionnaires referred to above.

The co-creation of research by students and staff, including research into pedagogic practice, has been supported through the Undergraduate Research Scholarship Scheme (URSS). This is an innovative institutional scheme in which staff and students work together as partners to design, develop, review, undertake and disseminate research projects. Since the inception of the scheme in 2012, the University has committed approximately £400k in support of 264 collaborative projects, involving 348 students and over 150 staff. The projects carry full scholarships and are available to all students between the end of Level Five and the start of Level Six. In the last four years, projects have been specifically designed to align to institutional research themes and global priorities. Outputs from URSS projects have been shared by students beyond the scheme. For example, via a wide range of national conferences and research publications including peer reviewed articles in *The Journal of Forensic Science*, *Personality and Individual Difference*, *Career Matters*, *International Journal of the Arts and Sciences* and *Electronic Notes in Discrete Mathematics*. The scheme was recognised as institutional good practice in the QAA Higher Education Review (2016)¹⁶. Student feedback on the scheme demonstrates the positive impact of engaging in the research process for students' academic and personal development:

"...The constant support and experience gained with URSS is, in my opinion, unrivalled and is a great stepping-stone to professional life, and sets you apart from the competition."

"The URSS gave me an insight into what it felt like to be solely responsible for a unique piece of research that I felt like [I] actually contributed to our wider society. Quite frankly, it left me wanting more. I genuinely want to take my research and continue to craft it into something that can be respected and used by my peers and anyone looking to study in a relevant field of academia."

The University of Derby has a well-established track-record of research in learning and teaching. To co-ordinate this activity and ensure that research activity translates into impact on the learning experience of students, the Pedagogic Innovation & Enhancement Research (PIER) team has been created. PIER acts as a catalyst for the creation and evaluation of teaching and assessment practice across the University informing the creation of learning and teaching baselines, staff development and where appropriate regulation and quality assurance processes. At its core, this team comprises three full Professors and six Associate Professors of Learning & Teaching who work with colleagues across the institution to ensure an evidence-driven approach to learning, teaching and assessment.

Over the period of the TEF, there have been six successful applications for National Teaching Fellowships (NTF) and colleagues are supported in their application process by the PIER team. NTF

projects have included a focus upon simulation and moulage (stage make up) in clinical education, research informed curricula, creative teaching and lecture theatre pantomime, transition to clinical placement and online learning with a focus on the art of social online learning. The outputs of these projects are shared across the institution through the annual Learning & Teaching Conference as well as, where appropriate, inclusion in the online learning and teaching training resources. Examples of the impacts of this activity are described in more detail below, demonstrating how they have contributed to the outstanding student experience and outcomes captured in Tables 1 and 2. In both 2017 and 2018 the University was a finalist in the Advance HE Global Teaching Excellence Awards^{17,18} demonstrating that our innovative practice remains at the cutting edge in the sector.

2.4 Innovation in Learning and Teaching

The University of Derby resides at the leading edge when it comes to innovation and excellence in learning and teaching. In 2018, the University was the UK's first Higher Education institution to embed the Advanced HE best practice framework into all its programmes. By adopting the Student Success Framework, the University embraced a more consistent, integrated and inclusive approach to curriculum design as well as enhancing its digital environment. The impact of the integrated and inclusive curriculum design was deepened through the establishment of the Curriculum Design Framework and its four design principles against which all programmes of study are set.

The University has positioned itself as a thought leader in pedagogic practice, a reputation evidenced through the range of collaborative projects undertaken in this domain. To address the differential experience and outcomes for Black students, the University of Derby led, in partnership with Solent University and the University of West London, a Student Attainment Project¹⁹. The project created, evaluated and disseminated resources to support the reduction in Awarding Gaps between Black and White students. This research theme has been continued in partnership with the University of Hull in the evaluation of an Inclusive Education Framework²⁰. Outputs from these projects have been included in the University's Access and Participation Plan, and staff development programme, as well as informing the implementation of the Curriculum Design and Learning, Teaching & Assessment Frameworks. In 2021-22, Satisfaction expressed in the NSS was on average 1.6pp higher for Black than for White students which compares to an average 0.9pp lower for the sector as whole; this differential is reflected across all the TEF Student Experience question sets.

Another example of impactful approaches to pedagogy to address the BAME Awarding Gap is the implementation of a Culturally Sensitive Curricula (CSC) in the College of Science & Engineering. Module level curricula were evaluated, and the CSC Scale used to drive modifications to delivery and assessment strategies. As a result, the Awarding Gap on these programmes was reduced to 8pp between White and BAME students, a significant indicator of success.

The University has addressed the needs of the increasing proportion of students with a mental health condition. The University was lead partner on the development of the Advanced HE Mental Health Tool-kit which enables academics to embed appropriate strategies to support healthier student wellbeing and address the needs of those with a disability. Outputs from this project have been adopted into programme design and delivery: for example, across Psychology (CAH1 Level) materials from the Mental Health Tool Kit along with staff research on compassion in education [e.g. Hughes and Spanner, (2019)²¹] supported the achievement in 2021 of student satisfaction on average 9.5pp above the subject average for the sector in the five TEF question areas (Table 6).

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The adoption of an inclusive approach to supporting students through all aspects of their learning journey has resulted in an outstanding level of satisfaction for students with a declared disability. Over the TEF, period NSS outcomes for this group show:

- Teaching on my Course: 84.2% - materially above benchmark.
- Assessment & Feedback: 75.8% - materially above benchmark.
- Academic Support: 76.4% - materially above benchmark.
- Student Voice: 73.9% - materially above benchmark.
- Learning Resources: 80.2% - broadly in line with benchmark.

Table 6: Psychology CAH 1 subject area NSS Results (% Agree) 2021 (n=162)

| Provider | Teaching on my Course | Assessment & Feedback | Academic Support | Learning Resources | Student Voice |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| University of Derby | 86.7% | 81.0% | 79.6% | 85.0% | 81.2% |
| Sector average | 80.3% | 67.3% | 71.8% | 82.5% | 64.2% |

2.5 Learning Environment

Over the course of the TEF assessment period, the University of Derby's learning environment has been enhanced to enable the delivery of applied learning in partnership with industry while simultaneously affording the resources to students to personalise their learning experience thereby underpinning the institutional commitment to scholarship, research and professional practice.

Developing and sustaining communities is a key element of the University Library's strategy for student experience and an important component is the physical and digital environments offered in support of learning, teaching and research for our diverse student body. As a result, over the past year, 2021-22, the University has invested £344k in the Library estate and facilities which has contributed to a 511% increase in usage of the physical library space compared with the year earlier. There has been complementary investment in the Library's digital environment through a further £300k investment to improve the student experience with regard to discovery, access and utilisation of digital scholarly content. A tenet of this work was implementing an integrated experience that enhances usability, particularly for those students who have accessibility requirements. The University is committed to ensuring its digital technologies are in accordance with accessibility regulations. Following implementation there was a 78% increase in engagement with the search and discovery platform, when compared with the same period in the prior year.

The University's focus on equity of opportunity addresses the gap associated with digital poverty. Digital poverty is known to have had a disproportionate impact upon those from the most socially and economically disadvantaged groups. To address these impacts, the University has implemented two schemes, introduced initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been adopted into business as usual. Data from the 2021-22 Jisc Digital Insights Survey (1162 respondents) highlighted that 14% of the University of Derby students surveyed reported barriers to learning due to not having access to a suitable device. In response, the University introduced a long-term laptop loan scheme, benefitting over 900 students each year, which was supplemented by a well-established short-term laptop loan offer. These loan initiatives enhanced accessibility of

resources for students who may otherwise have had to rely upon a shared device or who were accessing materials via an unsuitable hand-held device.

Access to scholarly content is a primary function for the Library in support of the student experience. The University has continued to invest in this area and has seen a 61% increase in operational budget for content provision in 2022-23 when compared with the previous year. The University's strategy for content provision is driven by academic reading lists and thus remains current with programme learning and teaching requirements. Supplementing this approach, the Library supports student access to additional resources through a 'Books For You' scheme (facilitating individual student requests for items), 'Demand Driven Acquisitions' (enabling seamless and instant access to digital books not currently part of the Library collection), an Inter-Library Loan service (offering an alternative mechanism to secure a copy of a book or journal article that is not held by the University) and a 'Scan and Deliver' service that provides copyright-cleared digitised extracts of materials in support of learning and teaching. These services are complemented by access to a range of scholarly databases and periodical titles, as well as a digital textbook provision. Notably, the University's digital textbook scheme provides each first-year undergraduate student with access to two core textbooks within their discipline. Importantly, the accessibility capabilities offered through the service supports the institution's strong focus on inclusion.

The University's drive to break down barriers to participation and inclusion, is reflected by the Library's strategic initiatives on more inclusive readings lists, which supports the development of an inclusive curriculum. As Schucan, Bird and Pitman (2019)²² articulate, reading lists are representation devices serving to reflect perspectives and knowledge. The Library works with academic colleagues to increase awareness of the importance of reflecting a range of perspectives within reading lists. The impact of this work and approach has been conveyed nationally by a colleague within the Library's academic librarian team presenting at conferences including in particular, *Decolonising HE Academic Practice*²³. The University also recognises that the accessibility of resources in support of an inclusive curriculum is fundamental to the University's broader mission and delivery of Educational Gain. To that end, within the TEF period, the institution has invested in technology that supports student discovery and access to resources in aid of their learning. This includes the implementation of a modern reading list platform, a sophisticated discovery platform and an innovative tool which immediately authenticates and provides full-text access to library content through the open-web. The intent here is that the University integrates access to library materials into our students' personal workflows, acknowledging and embracing individuality and preference in how our students conduct academic research in support of their learning. The University's data from the most-recent Jisc Digital Experience Insights survey, 2022-23, demonstrated that 64% of those surveyed (1,369 respondents) agreed that library systems (for example, search functionality to discover print and digital resources) have supported learning well (+5pp from those surveyed during the 2021-22 Jisc Digital Experience Insights survey). This is also evidenced by a 69% increase in use of the Library's full-text services since the new platform was implemented. Qualitative feedback from students has also been positive, for example:

I was apprehensive about the change to the library system; however, I have been really happy with [it]. The improvements include the search function, which is much easier to use and the ease at which you can generate references in style required is highly beneficial and time saving. The addition of showing basic library details on the UDO tile such as, loans, and due back, again saves time. Finally, the reading lists on each module are simpler to navigate, making

them a much better resource. All in all, the new library system has been a great improvement allowing better access to all the library has to offer.”

In addition to the digital learning environment, partnership with industry affords the students access to industry standard facilities which embed applied learning and offer an innovative learning environment. For example, the recently-opened Nuclear Skills Academy was co-designed with industry partner Rolls-Royce, where the learning environment offers world-class, inclusive, industry standard, teaching facilities, including engineering workshops, radiological laboratory, and classrooms, all specified to precise industry requirements. This ensures a highly work-relevant environment, and nurtures the knowledge, skills and nuclear behaviours that Rolls-Royce requires to grasp the once-in-a-generation opportunity it has in both the ‘Continuous at Sea Deterrent’ and expanding the business into novel and micro-nuclear applications. Similarly, within Derby city centre, the University’s ownership of Derby Theatre means that creative and performing arts students are an integral part of this Learning Theatre. Studying and working with the Theatre professionals and touring companies, students have access to all areas of both the 500-seat auditorium and studio theatre.

Fusing both the physical and digital resource, simulation pedagogy has, over the period since the last TEF, been a focus for University investment. Over £2.5m has been afforded to enhance simulation activity in support of authentic and accessible learning activities for students working towards qualifications which enable them to practise as registered health or social care professionals. Investment has been targeted on equipment and staff training to allow the reproduction of realistic clinical scenarios within the University learning environment. The increased availability of simulation activity has resulted in a reduction in placement-related attrition from programmes and increased placement capacity. During the COVID-19 lockdowns of Spring / Summer 2020, when student placements in the NHS were severely disrupted, simulation activity provided a vital alternative to clinical placements and assessments. Small groups of students from programmes such as adult nursing, mental health nursing, midwifery, and diagnostic radiography, were brought into the University, adhering to strict social distancing guidance, and able to undertake clinical skills sessions. This continued throughout Autumn 2020 / Winter 2021 and enabled our health and social care students to keep on track with their studies, despite ongoing challenges with access to clinical placement.

Staff development has gone hand in hand with this investment, with academic staff being trained in the use of moulage (stage make up) to create, for example, authentic looking burns, wounds, bruises used on volunteers/actors, and technical staff being trained to create authentic looking medication boxes/bottles, blood transfusion kits, urine bags and so on. Several academic staff have undertaken research to measure the impact of simulation on student learning, demonstrating the positive impact this has on preparing students for their transitions to placements²⁴.

2.6 Conclusion

Overall, Student Experience Data Indicators evidence the impact of the University of Derby’s strategic and innovative approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Across all student groups the University’s commitment to excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, alongside a co-creative engagement with students, ensures an outstanding student experience. This enables

students to succeed in developing the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to secure their chosen future and serves as an essential precursor to the fulfilment of the three elements of the University's Educational Gain (commitment to excellence in subject knowledge, applied skills and life changing, lifelong experiences) expressed through the Student Outcomes to which this Submission now turns.

3. Student Outcomes

Successful outcomes in academic attainment and the development of graduate skills are two of the three elements of the Educational Gain embedded across all University of Derby's programmes. Every one of our students is enabled to succeed and achieve outstanding outcomes but our data shows that these outcomes are influenced by the composition of the student body. As noted in the Provider Context section above, and detailed in Table 4, the University has proactively addressed the inequalities in access to Higher Education evident across the sector. Specific steps have been taken to improve the outcomes for the most socially disadvantaged students and to eliminate the outcome gaps between these students and others traditionally more successful in Higher Education. It is notable that this improvement in outcomes has been achieved in parallel with an increase in the number and proportion of students from these backgrounds.

- 41.5% of full-time undergraduate students came from the most deprived areas (IMD Quintiles 1 & 2) 7pp above the sector average.
- Young, full-time, entrants from low HE participation neighbourhoods (TUNDRA Quintile 1) increased to 46.2% in 2020-21 – almost double the sector average 23.2%.
- Undergraduate students with a declared disability increased across the period to 19.0% - 4.1pp above the sector average.
- The proportion of BAME students increased by 5pp over the period.

3.1 Eliminating the Continuation Gap

Table 7: Continuation gaps between full-time undergraduate students for disability, IMD and ethnicity between 2017-18 and 2019-20.

| Split | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | Change in outcome gap |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| Disabled v Non-Disabled | -3.0pp | 0 | -3.0pp |
| Least v Most Deprived | -3.8pp | -2.9pp | -0.9pp |
| BAME v White | -5.1pp | -2.6pp | -2.5pp |

Continuation for all students has improved across the TEF assessment period (+1.3pp), with improvements greatest for those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (Table 7). The substantial reduction in continuation gaps and the realisation of Educational Gain has been achieved through the University's inclusive learning, teaching and assessment pedagogy expressed and applied through the Curriculum Design and Learning, Teaching & Assessment Frameworks. As the data demonstrate, reduction in these inequalities has been achieved by outstanding improvements in the outcomes for those groups traditionally disadvantaged.

The continuation gap for students with a disability has been totally eliminated across the TEF period. This has been achieved in parallel with an increase in the number and proportion of students in this group. Improved Continuation for students with a disability is mirrored in degree outcomes: in 2021-22 the 2:1/1st class awarding rate was 1.5pp higher than for those with no disability. Continuation

for BAME students has improved by 2.5pp, bringing it line with sector average (2.5%). Students from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD Quintile 1) have seen a more modest 0.9pp reduction in their continuation gap to those from IMD Quintile 5, however, the outcome gap is substantially (2.1pp) better than the sector average of -5pp. Creating an effect and inclusive learning environment has required the University to adopt a whole system approach, as outlined in the following sections.

3.2 Pre-university Educational Attainment

Through leadership of the Opportunity Area, the University has cultivated partnerships with local school leaders, in particular the 15 secondary schools (offering disadvantaged students the opportunity, for example, to experience visits such as to the House of Lords in 2016), and associated networks including hosting strategic school networks, a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) activity for teachers, staff serving as governors in local schools, research activity, widening access outreach programmes and leadership of the Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Collaborative Outreach Partnership (DANCOP), one of the Office for Students' UniConnect programmes.

The University's Widening Access team works closely with schools within Derby City and Derbyshire to provide activities designed to improve attainment, support achievement, and raise awareness of Higher Education and alternative progression opportunities. It aims to support young people to achieve their full potential and make well-informed decisions regarding their future. 'Progress to Success' is an evidence-based framework of progressive and sustained activity for Year 7 through to Year 11 students from specific areas of Derby and Derbyshire. This multi-intervention approach includes experience days, summer schools and mindfulness workshops. Where available, data on the socio-economic and demographic background of participants shows:

- 84% were from low progression areas (POLAR 4 Quintiles 1 & 2).
- 72% of participants' parents had no experience of Higher Education.
- 68% were from the 40% most deprived areas (IMD Quintiles 1 & 2).
- 39% were eligible for free school meals.

Additional activity strands focus on acutely under-represented groups including looked-after children and white working-class boys. For example, 'University Explorers' is specifically designed for disadvantaged / under-represented students in Years 5 and 6 to introduce them to the concept and language of university and how it fits into their learning journey through several 'drip-feed' touchpoints. In 2021-22 the University's team delivered 262 activities and engaged with 10,500 learners using a blended approach of virtual and face-to-face delivery. Participants' progress is tracked and a clear link between the number of activities completed and rate of progression to Higher Education has been identified. Of 9,025 trackable learners who had engaged in the University's outreach activity and became eligible to progress, 48% have entered Higher Education. The rate of progression into Higher Education was 46% for those from the lowest participation neighbourhoods, ~10pp higher than for those who did not participate in the programme and thereby aligning to our increased recruitment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.3 Supporting Transition to University

The programmes outlined above support the preparation of potential future students for entry into Higher Education whether at the University of Derby or elsewhere. This investment in the pre-university experience ensures future cohorts of students have a more successful Higher Education journey, improving Continuation and Completion. In addition, the University has placed emphasis upon enhancing the transition into university through induction. Co-designed by students, academics and professional services staff, a new University induction programme was launched in 2020 to provide an accessible suite of resources for students detailing key information ahead of arriving on campus. Students access the University Induction materials via the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), building their familiarity with this critical learning environment. Knowledge and understanding are reviewed during the Induction through quizzes and students gain digital badges for their engagement. Academic teams use the materials during their on-campus programme induction activities to reinforce learning and create distinct cohort identities and a sense of belonging for their students, which aligns to the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework's Sense of Belonging Factor for Success. The University's Induction programme won the Blackboard Catalyst Award for Optimizing Student Experience in 2021²⁵. The Induction has been positively received by students, with 83.6% of all new starters in 2022 engaging with the materials prior to commencing their studies. An evaluation of the Induction (203 respondents) revealed that:

- 91% reported feeling more confident understanding how to access University services.
- 92% reported that through the Induction they had developed a better understanding of what is expected of them as a student.
- 93% reported that the Induction had equipped them with the knowledge of how to access support if required.
- 94% reported that they knew more about opportunities to boost their development.

The University introduced a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Scheme in partnership with the Union of Students as additional assistance targeted at Foundation and Year 1 students. Students are trained to fulfil the paid role of PAL Leader and to provide student-to-student support for transition and progression through academic study. PAL sessions offer a safe, friendly place to help students adjust to university life, improve their study habits, gain a clear view of course direction and expectations and enhance their understanding of subject matter through group discussion. In an evaluation run by the Union of Students at the end of 2020-21 (50 respondents):

- 70% of students reported their engagement with the PAL scheme as having been useful.
- 80% of students reported that the scheme had made their transition to university more enjoyable.
- 97% of students said they would recommend the PAL scheme to others.
- 95% of PAL leader reported that the role had enhanced their own learning.

3.4 Personalised Support

Drawing upon the University's expertise in pedagogic practice, the outcomes of the National Teaching Fellow projects led by the University's six NTFs and in consultation with the Union of Students and the University's Wellbeing team, the Personal Academic Tutoring scheme was updated in 2020 with the intention to:

- locate tutoring in an academic rather than pastoral context.

- ensure students have a space to articulate and explore their future goals.
- ensure that the emphasis of the scheme was on students' personal development and educational gain.
- ensure a consistent offer for every student on every undergraduate programme.

All undergraduate students have access to at least one group and two individual tutorials per semester. Tutors proactively set up the meetings, emphasising the academic focus which supports a clear purpose for attendance by students. Staff engaged in personal academic tutoring have all engaged in face-to-face training and an active Teams group exists with staff members sharing ideas and experiences.

An evaluation of impact undertaken in 2020-21 (196 respondents) reported to the University Learning & Teaching Committee²⁶ demonstrated:

- Personal academic tutoring was pivotal in supporting students to achieve their academic potential, and in retention. The interpersonal nature of personal academic tutoring had a big impact on students and was highly significant in their experience.
- 69% of respondents to the evaluation survey reported that tutorials had a positive impact on assessment performance.
- The individual support which tutors provide has been commented on by students, who indicated that it has been positive and encouraging and they have been 'pushed' to do well in assessments and developed confidence in their ability.
- Students recognised the coaching approach used by tutors, and said it impacted positively on their learning, helped them to identify their strengths and think about their studies and aspirations in new ways, and that the students themselves were leading the discussions.

3.5 Supporting Student Wellbeing

An increasing proportion of University's students report as having a disability, a 2.9pp increase between 2017-18 and 2020-21 with much of the growth accounted for by an increased number of students with a mental health condition (+2.1pp). The University has implemented a range of interventions to mitigate any potential detrimental impact of poor mental health upon the student experience, continuation and completion. The increase in mental health difficulties experienced by students has increased the pressure on and demand for wellbeing resources, with a 48% increase in demand for counselling and mental health appointments between 2017 and 2022. The University have been actively engaged with the work of the Government's Higher Education Student Support Champion, Professor Edward Peck, both to share experiences from our practice and also to learn from the examples of best practice elsewhere.

To address this growth in demand, a whole university response has been established which emphasises a holistic, non-deficit approach to wellbeing, creating a healthy campus culture with early intervention and support where this is needed. A peer-to-peer mental health support App has been launched for students, available 24/7 with professional support in over 26 languages. Extended peer support has also been facilitated through a collaborative student counselling placement scheme working in partnership with Psychology and Counselling students from the College of Health, Psychology & Social Care. Placement students work with trained clinicians to provide support to other students. This has both expanded our capacity to offer primary support to students in need whilst also providing valuable clinical experience for students. The student placement scheme has also made the support team more age and ethnically diverse. Workshops for students focusing on

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a range of areas such as mental health and wellbeing, money management, awareness raising have been launched to help build student self-efficacy and resilience in the face of the every-day challenges that might impact upon their learning experience. These sessions are complemented by staff training and workshops to increase colleagues' confidence and knowledge with respect to health and wellbeing.

These activities to support student wellbeing have contributed both to improved continuation for all students and also specifically enhanced continuation for those with a disability, largely eliminating the gap between groups. for the full-time,

undergraduate first-degree students Continuation improved:

- Overall by 3.9pp from 85.9% to 89.8%.
- For those with a disability by 6.4pp from 83.4% to 89.8%.
- For those with a specific learning disability by 5.1pp from 89.0% to 94.1%.
- For those with a mental health condition by 6.5pp from 81.0% to 87.5%.

Apprentices and online learners are proffered a range of personal and academic support and guidance to help them remain on track with their studies and to complete their programme in a timely manner. Progress of apprentices is actively monitored through a combination of academic and work-based tri-partite reviews. These ensure that students are not only keeping up to date with the off-the job learning and associated assessment activity, but also, they have the opportunity to gain appropriate professional experiences to complement their learning.

For online part-time learners an Online Hub provides expert support for every stage of the learning journey. The Hub's focus on the online student experience is critical to providing a purposefully designed one-stop service for all learners. The Online Hub also ensures that the needs of online students are anticipated by the University's central services, such as Careers, Wellbeing and the Library. A bespoke induction package ensures that online students are familiar with their virtual campus, helping them to navigate systems and processes. This is reinforced by specific induction at programme and module level, helping to build a sense of belonging.

A team of Online Learner Advisors are available to support students with general queries, as well as providing a link through to support from academic colleagues and specialist support teams. The impact of the Online Learner Advisor Model has ensured that the support needs of online students are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner, which has been an important factor in ensuring their outstanding levels of continuation (91.6% materially above benchmark) and completion (99.2% in line with benchmark). The success of the Online Learning Advisor model led to the creation of Personal College Advisors for campus-based students to act as an equivalent point of contact and co-ordinated support with engagement. The upwards trajectory in the NSS Overall Satisfaction for the online programmes referred to in Section 2.1 above demonstrates the positive impact of the student offered through the Online Hub.

3.6 Regional Employment Context

Data in Table 8 highlight the outstanding improvement in eliminating the Progression gap between students from the least and most deprived neighbourhood and between BAME and White students. The Progression gap for BAME students has been reduced by over 11pp and now lies at only 0.5pp, 3pp better than sector average of -3.5pp. The differential in outcomes between students from IMD Quintiles 1 & 5 has improved by 7.9pp to 1.2pp and is now 5.6pp better than sector average of 6.8pp.

This progress further evidences the success of the University's approach to inclusive practice, social mobility and delivery on its Educational Gain.

The equivalence in continuation and degree outcomes between students with and without a disability, evidenced earlier, is not yet fully realised in progression to employment. The Progression gap has reduced by 2.8pp and is now in-line with sector average (-2.2pp).

The Commission's report *Arriving and Thriving*²⁷, published in October 2020, highlighted the significant challenges faced by students with a disability entering the workplace, factors which have affected progress with this measure. *Arriving and Thriving* demonstrates that structural inequalities shape both the pre-university experience of students and their prospects post-qualification.

Table 8: Progression gaps between full-time undergraduate students for disability, IMD and ethnicity between 2017-18 and 2019-20.

| Split | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | Change in outcome gap |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| Disabled v Non-Disabled | -5.2pp | -2.4pp | -2.8pp |
| Least v Most Deprived | -9.1pp | -1.2pp | -7.9pp |
| BAME v White | -11.6pp | -0.5pp | -11.1pp |

The progression of graduates into employment is strongly influenced by the socio-economic characteristics of the local area. A growing proportion (29%) of Derby graduates come from within the City of Derby or Derbyshire of whom 69% remain within area after graduation. Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey demonstrated that the proportion of Derby graduates employed in the East Midlands increased from 51% to 54%. This increase has had a positive impact on the region and aligns well with University's civic agenda. An evaluation by Prospect Research in 2018²⁸, estimated the GVA of the University to the regional economy at £286m. Table 9 demonstrates the impact of economic mobility on the employment outcomes for Derby graduates.

Table 9: Positive employment outcomes rates (% in SOC1-3) based on student origin and location of employment 2017-18 to 2019-20.²⁹

| Area | Home grown | Retained | Bouncers | Lost |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|----------|------|
| East Midlands | 67% | 68% | 63% | 72% |
| D2N2 | 69% | 66% | 63% | 74% |
| City of Derby or Derbyshire | 67% | 65% | 64% | 76% |
| City of Derby | 60% | 72% | 65% | 75% |

Home grown - employed graduates who were recruited from and are now employed in the area

Retained - employed graduates who were recruited from elsewhere and now employed in the area

Bouncers - employed graduates who were recruited from elsewhere and also employed elsewhere

Lost - employed graduates who were recruited from the area but moved elsewhere to work

Annual graduate wages in manufacturing in Derby (£29,800) are almost 20% (£4,800) higher than the rest of the UK resulting in a highly competitive market for these jobs. However, outside of the

manufacturing industries graduate employment opportunities in other Knowledge Intensive Business Services and other private services in the city are not nearly as attractive, with wages being over £2,000 below the national average; the Derby regional growth strategy has therefore identified a 'missing middle' in the Derby economy.² Whilst attracting and retaining students within the region is a positive outcome for the University, it does mean that graduates enter a challenging labour market with fewer graduate opportunities.

The profile of work in Derby has polarised since 2011 with the number of skilled jobs in the city shrinking by 5,900 (-18%). Compared to 2011, more Derby-based jobs are in higher-order managerial, professional and technical roles (+3,800; 7% growth), with a significant number also in lower-order unskilled service (+10%) and manual work (+20%). Consequently, graduates from the University who wish or need to remain in the region are taking up lower skilled jobs in order to enter the labour market and then progress to positions that more fully utilise their skills over time. Data on long-term educational outcomes³⁰ (LEO) demonstrates that, in the longer-term, Derby graduates progress into more highly paid graduate roles. LEO data demonstrate that earnings for Derby graduates improved by 9.1% (3 years after graduation tax year 2017-18 to 2019-20) and 10.6% (5 years after graduation tax year 2017-18 to 2019-20). This rate of increase is the highest for graduates from any East Midlands university. This demonstrates that University of Derby students are enabled to make meaningful and sustained career progress. The supplementary Graduate Reflections questions from the 2019-20 GO survey²⁹ also demonstrate that graduates are being well prepared for their career futures (1250 and 1000 responses respectively for the following questions):

- 85% report that their current activity is meaningful (84% sector average).
- 68% report that they are utilising what they learned in their course (66% sector average).

3.7 Apprenticeship Growth

As a core element of the whole system approach to improving student outcomes and delivering Educational Gain, the University has established a programme of engagement with key regional employers to grow graduate opportunities. This has led to a systematic increase in apprenticeship provision with student numbers rising from 2017-18 to 2022-23. Apprenticeship programmes are co-created with employers and the University has used this approach as a means to help key sectors locally and nationally to address important skills gaps and enhance opportunities.

In 2022, in recognition of the University's outstanding apprenticeship and skills provision, Rolls-Royce partnered with the University to establish a Nuclear Skills Academy in Derby to train 200 plus apprentices per year for at least the next ten years, with successful apprentices able to progress into substantive posts at the end of the programme. Working in partnership with the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre and the National College for Nuclear, the University has created a unique offer bringing together students on awards from Level 3, 4 and degree apprentices to address a wide range of skills needs underpinned by a strong learning and development culture. The Academy is the first of its kind in the UK offering a foundation of education and skills in Nuclear across all its apprenticeship schemes. There are already plans to extend the range of programmes to include mid-career re-training for adults from a wide variety of backgrounds. Working with local schools, the Academy has a strong focus on social mobility to ensure all talent is involved in the future opportunities arising from the growth of the Nuclear industry locally and nationally and which includes working with focus groups commissioned by government to drive levelling-up.

Rolls-Royce Submarines, said:

“Rolls-Royce Submarines Ltd was delighted to work with its local university, given the University of Derby’s reputation for enabling diverse learners, from educationally or socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to thrive and achieve their best. It was particularly crucial for us to partner with a University that had a track record of delivering world-class training, co-designed and delivered in close collaboration with ourselves.”

3.8 Part-time Progression

For those already in work and looking to advance or change their careers, the University offers a range of part-time programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Progression is outstanding for our part-time learners (4.5pp above benchmark). The University’s part-time provision has substantial roots with employers and industry bodies with whom curricula are co-designed to meet specific knowledge and skills needs.

The University has a sustained track record of engagement with Health Education England, working in partnership to advance workforce development and practitioner and continuing professional development (CPD). These opportunities enable existing professionals to access learning and development opportunities on a flexible, demand led basis. Programmes support practitioner and professional engagement through face-to-face campus-based activities as well as online and hybrid learning. Most notably this includes the development of commissioned programmes and projects such as an Imaging Academy which seeks to enhance radiography and sonography workforce transformation. The University’s commitment has ensured a leading role in the development of diverse projects such as the Stoke and Staffordshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan for improving organisational culture and person-centred approaches to care. Furthermore, the University has developed and delivered several modules to enhance workforce development within the East Midlands Ambulance Service; this initiative was targeted at the paramedic workforce, enabling key staff to undertake a ‘negotiated module’ which in partnership with the ambulance service developed and assessed core organisational leadership capacity.

Utilising the University’s research expertise in special educational needs and disability (SEND), a number of bespoke programmes have been developed to meet the needs of education providers locally and nationally. For example, the University has, in partnership with the Children and Family Service’s Early Years team at Leicester County Council, developed a specialist programme to support the rollout of the free childcare initiative. This programme trains local authority staff to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children who have SEND. Similar programmes are made available to a range of schools across the region. Furthermore, the University’s Centre of Excellence in Guidance Studies has been successful in winning a contract from the Careers & Enterprise Company to deliver accredited training for Careers Leaders.

The programmes described above, and others across the institution, demonstrate how the University has worked with employers and industry bodies to co-create curricular and accessible delivery models to facilitate career progression and transition. Not only do these programmes provide an effective channel for disseminating best practice and research to support key employers, but also help ensure that programme teams are immersed in the needs of relevant sectors informing the design and content of other programmes within the portfolio.

3.9 Embedded Personal Development

75% of students at the University come from families without a management or professional occupation background and ~40% from families from IMD Quintiles 1 & 2 and face barriers associated with their social mobility and capital in progressing into employment. To understand more fully the needs of the student population, and specifically the lived experience of BAME students, the University's Access & Participation, Policy, Research & Evaluation team developed a comparative study to explore the lived experiences of students. The data generated as part of the study illustrated that students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (compared to the least disadvantaged) were more likely to be the first in their family to enter higher education (+7.6pp) to have caring responsibilities (+26.3pp) mostly for children, have a longer journey time (31+ minutes) to campus (+20.0pp), to need to access financial support (+9.4pp) and undertake paid employment during term-time (+12.3pp) and holiday periods (+29.8pp).³¹

A range of strategies have been employed to address these barriers to students gaining relevant additional experiences both within and alongside their studies. The success of these interventions in enabling social mobility can be seen in the 12.2pp improvement in progression rates for graduates from IMD Quintile 1, from 59.7% in 2017-18 to 71.9% in 2019-20, more or less eliminating the gap to those from more advantaged backgrounds.

Learning from the experience of working with employers to design and deliver part-time and apprenticeship programmes, the University has established Industrial Advisory Boards to support programme development and to identify opportunities to embed professional experiences within the taught curriculum. The University also has over 20 strategic partners, predominantly in the local region, supporting mentoring, internship, placement, and graduate opportunities, including enterprise and entrepreneurship.

All second year students undertake work experience projects (30 hours+), predominantly in local businesses / charities / schools. An Employer mentoring scheme³² pairs students and local employers with over 600 volunteering opportunities advertised each year. In addition, students have the opportunity to complete a placement year as part of their degree programme. To support students in gaining work experience, several interventions and opportunities have been established with the Careers & Employment Service, in partnership with the Colleges and Division for Innovation and Research. In partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, D2N2, the University has established the DRIVEN project. Since 2018, this scheme has enabled 291 students to complete a paid 80-hour student internship opportunity in partnership with SMEs in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and 168 students a 400-hour internship. The DRIVEN team has recruited a further 196 graduates into full-time graduate roles. DRIVEN has also assisted 459 local SMEs with an Organisational Needs Analysis to support them in attracting graduates to their vacancies. Feedback has been extremely positive, for example a student from the first cohort said:

"It was a life-changing experience, as it was my first official tech and cybersecurity job. This led me to now have a great career in cybersecurity. I believe it would have taken me longer or been harder for me to reach the level I have now in tech and security if it weren't for my Driven internship! The internship was a total game changer for my career."

Across the same period, an on-campus internship scheme has provided opportunities for over 300 first- and second-year students, with limited previous work experience, to engage in an 80-hour internship within one of the University departments. Students are supported with information, advice and guidance from the Careers & Employability team to help make an informed decision about their

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career aspiration, articulate their experiences via their CV and cover letters, build their confidence, work on their growth mindset and gain interview practice to progress into highly skilled employment or further study.

In 2021, the University created a Placement Academy to promote and facilitate engagement in year-long student placements and to provide tailored support to those students to complete the necessary steps to make this possible. The academy provides coaching, workshops, advice, and guidance working with Career Coaches, Career Advisors and Alumni. Overall, there has been a significant increase year-on-year in the total number of students committed to undertaking a year placement. In 2021-22 there were 75 such placements approved rising to 134 for the current academic session, an increase of 79%.

Also in 2021, Careers Registration was introduced to assess the career readiness of students. This enables the University to identify key groups who fall into 'planning, deciding, or competing' stages to react to the needs of the students to progress into highly skilled graduate outcomes. Over 19,000 students have completed Careers Registration so far in 2022-23. The Careers & Employment Service has developed operational priority plans with each of the University's four academic Colleges to reflect the needs of their students and the Service is working with academics to embed relevant activities into the curricula. The Finalist Futures team, established in 2021, support finalists to gain highly skilled employment and/or further study opportunities. Using careers registration data, a mid-term census and final census at graduation, the team is supporting students and recent graduates who have not yet progressed into highly skilled employment. 1777 responded to the interventions of which 598 (34%) have subsequently progressed to employment or postgraduate study.

The University's employability award (the Futures Award) recognises extra and co-curricular activities undertaken by students, encouraging them to reflect and review their experiences and to use this to enhance their cv and job application skills. Over 1000 students have completed the award. The University's Skills Team has continued to evolve its approach to increase the effectiveness of the award and to reach a significantly larger audience. The service delivers academic skills support through YouTube, Podcasts and Skills Guides now curated under the Develop@Derby brand to make identification and navigation easier. This offer is very popular, with significant numbers of viewing and listening figures: for example, there have been over 70,000 impressions for the Skills Guides. In 2020-21, the University launched StudyFest, a calendar of online events, freely accessible to our students and stakeholders, aimed at boosting academic resilience. The first and second StudyFests were delivered online due to the pandemic.

3.10 Conclusion

Overall, Student Outcomes Data Indicators evidence that apprentice and part-time learners have outstanding outcomes. Outcomes for full-time students show a positive trajectory and a very high quality. What the overall indicators fail to show is the outstanding impact of the University's strategic approach to Educational Gain which has seen substantial improvements in outcomes for those students from the most socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. By adopting a whole system approach, impacting all points of the student journey from school to employment the University is enabling all students to succeed and realise their chosen future.

4. Concluding Summary

The data and narrative contained within this Provider Submission demonstrate how the University of Derby has delivered outstanding experiences and outcomes for an increasingly diverse student population. Educational Gain, manifest in academic and personal growth, has been achieved by all

students across all modes of study. We have illustrated how, through a purposeful, research led strategy and investment in both the human and physical resources of the institution, the University of Derby has excelled in enabling social mobility and achieved significant reductions in the outcome gaps between the most and least disadvantaged students. These reductions in outcome gaps have contributed to overall improvements on all measures, a trajectory that our internal data demonstrates is being maintained for existing and future cohorts.

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