

TEF 2023 submission – Newman University Birmingham

Part A - Provider Context

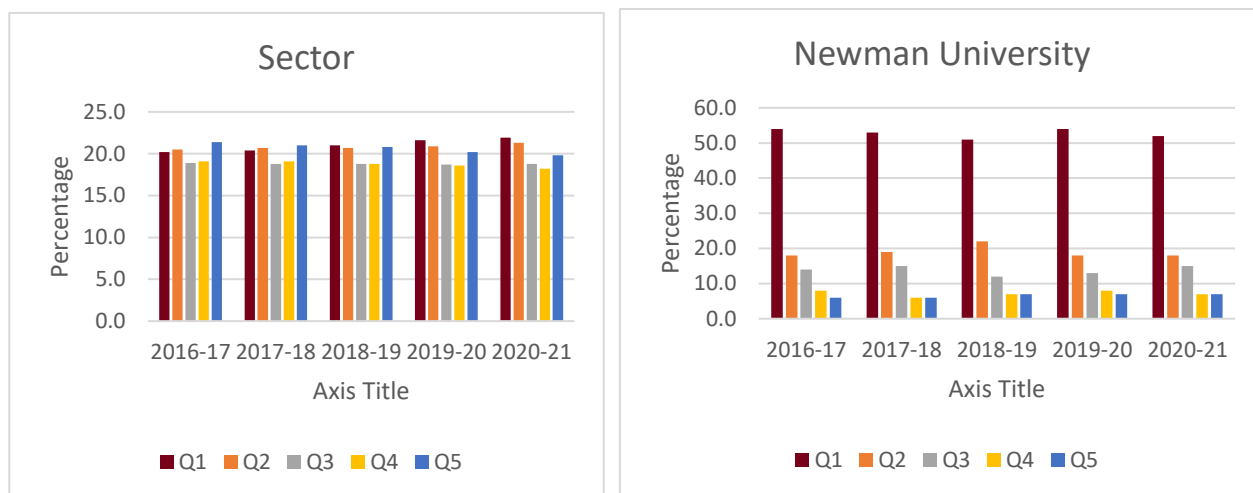
1. Newman University is a vibrant community of approximately 2,800 staff and students, learning in partnership on a single campus in Birmingham. As indicated by our metrics for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Newman provides an excellent experience and outcomes for our students. Our overall National Student Survey (NSS) metrics are very high quality or outstanding quality, standing on or above benchmark. Our metrics for student continuation, completion and progression show two aggregate overall indicators placing student outcomes as very high quality (full-time continuation, full-time progression), and two aggregate overall indicators placing student outcomes as outstanding (part-time continuation and part-time completion).
2. Our mission is to provide inclusive, high-quality higher education to all who can benefit, and our success in this has been recognised by our students. In addition to excellent NSS scores during the TEF period, in 2020 Newman was shortlisted for the WhatUni? University of the Year award, based on reviews from current university students.¹
3. We are a place-based institution, meeting the needs of the local workforce and the priorities for skills development in the region. Our primary purpose is to provide a transformative experience through a first-class higher education for local students who go on to work and live regionally, making a positive impact on the social and economic life of the West Midlands area. The University was founded in 1968 as Newman College in order to train teachers for Catholic schools, which had been established in the nineteenth century in the poorest areas of major cities to meet the needs of the marginalised and disadvantaged. The mission of the University as a broad-based inclusive institution continues this focus on social mobility, personal development, and public service.
4. The institution has grown from a single-discipline College to a multi-disciplinary University offering a broad range of undergraduate, taught postgraduate, and research degrees. This is reflected in our programmes and graduate employment destinations. The subject portfolio continues to grow; since our last TEF submission in 2017 we have introduced courses in Computer Science, Law, Mathematics and Policing. Next year, we will welcome our first Nursing and Physiotherapy students as part of a five-year plan to grow our health provision.
5. While the University is organised academically into two faculties, we recognise that students identify with their course, and we continue to evolve the campus along the lines of student study spaces and home buildings for subjects. The Faculty of Education reflects the history of the institution as a teacher training college and is divided into subject areas of Early Childhood Education and Care, Education Studies and Teacher Training. The Faculty of Arts, Society and Professional Studies comprises departments of Arts, Humanities and Human Sciences (Drama, English Studies, History, Theology and Religious Studies) and Sport, Social Science and Business (Business and Management, Counselling Studies, Criminology and Law, Psychology, Sport Sciences and Youth Work). To this is now added the new School of Nursing and Allied Health.

6. We are currently half-way through the lifespan of our 2020-2025 Strategic Framework which places an emphasis on student access and success. We will reference the Framework throughout where relevant, particularly in instances where they relate to student experience and outcomes. Our student body is diverse and representative of our region; our Strategic Framework references this, acknowledging the *'diverse wealth of lived experiences'* amongst our students and the *'implications for the nature and ethos of Newman's teaching approach, learning environment and student support provision'*. We are proud of our distinctive student profile which does not match the national student picture in many ways. We have accordingly designed our university around what we know about them and their lives. Nearly 40% of students at Newman University are mature and a great many have both caring and employment responsibilities in addition to their full-time studies. Overall, our students either commute and/or are disabled and/or are Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and/or are mature; and three quarters of our students have *more than one* of the following characteristics: commuter student, BAME, disabled or mature.
7. Our data for the last four years show that 22.5% of our students are male and 77.5% are female, which is very much in line with the subjects that feature in the distinctive portfolio we offer. In terms of ethnicity, 53% are White, 23% Asian, 14% Black and 9% of Other or Mixed Ethnicity, against a national picture of 83% White.² This demonstrates our success in providing access to higher education for underrepresented student groups by ethnicity.
8. The number of students declaring a disability at Newman has steadily increased since 2018-19 from 18% to approximately 25%, which is higher than the national average for working-age adults.³ The largest groups of disabled students are those with specific learning difficulties and those with mental health issues, both representing 7% of our student body. Mobility issues have been declared by 6% of our students
As an inclusive university, we are always conscious of the requirements of our disabled students and in our Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020-25 we noted that currently 9% more of our disabled students achieve a first or upper-second class degree than do non-disabled students at Newman University, again demonstrating our outstanding success in providing not just access to excellent higher education but also in providing the necessary specialist support to enable underrepresented students to achieve excellent outcomes.
9. The majority of our students are local, from the southwest margins of Birmingham and the West Midlands. Our data shows that 91% of our students are 'commuter students' using the Newman definition of having the same term-time address as their permanent address. In a survey of commuter students that we undertook in 2019, just under 40% of 232 students responding reported that their commute was longer than an hour and nearly 4% that it was longer than two hours.⁴ We therefore arrange the timetable and events to maximise the benefit of students' time on campus as very many have significant travel times as well as commitments, such as caring and part-time employment, outside of their studies. We provide free car parking on campus and work with local bus companies to ensure more than 100 buses a day come to the campus on weekdays. As mentioned above, the vast majority of our students would also be regarded as commuter students with only 8% living in our own halls of residence. Indeed, Newman University came top in the 2018 Higher Education Policy Institute survey for the proportion of its students who commute to University. The HEPI report 'Homeward Bound' stated there has *been 'neglect of commuter students in policymaking, a*

lack of appreciation of their impact on widely-used metrics and an undervaluing of those higher-education institutions that specialise in educating them.' (p.7)⁵ Newman specialises in providing for its commuter students via facilities such as lockers, quiet rooms and kitchens.

10. The University places equal importance on personal wellbeing and high academic achievement. Our support offer resulted in Newman being shortlisted in the Student Support category of the WhatUni? Awards in both 2020 and 2022.⁶ Through our values and ethos encapsulated in the Strategic Framework, we aim to help our students become resourceful and caring citizens who are independent thinkers able to make a unique contribution to society when they enter the world of work or further study. Our students want to study locally and join the regional workforce to support society and the public sector, including social enterprises, education, health and care services.
11. Our core aim at Newman is to provide a university opportunity for all those who have the ability and commitment to benefit, regardless of family background, financial circumstances and previous educational experiences. In 2020-21, 75% of our *young* students came from POLAR4 quintiles 1-3 with the lowest participation rate in higher education, compared to 47% nationally. Consistently over the period of review, over 50% of our students have come from the most deprived Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile; this is over double the national figure. In 2020-21, 85% of *all* students were from the more deprived quintiles 1-3 compared to a national figure of 62%. In the most recent four years, between 65% and 70% have been the first generation in their family to attend higher education, and 35% had been eligible for free school meals. Access and Participation data shows that the latter figure is the highest of the five universities in Birmingham, illustrating again how we make an outstanding contribution to the government levelling up agenda. Our outstanding contribution to access and excellent provision is recognised nationally by ranking 8th and 7th respectively across the country in the last two iterations of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) English Social Mobility Index⁷.
12. To better understand our students, we have undertaken internal surveys (referenced below) which indicate over 20% were undertaking more than 20 hours' paid work each week during semester-time. Caring responsibilities for children were reported by 27% and for adults by 6%. Similar figures were reported for the previous two years. The University's response is to adjust how we work (timetabling, assessment, support services, office hours, and so on) in order to improve the effectiveness of student time on campus. It is also to make a benefit of the tremendous lived experience our students bring with them and to use and value this in our learning, teaching and assessment practices. The approach to teaching we take is informed by this; our *Pedagogy of Partnership*, is embedded in our University strategies and practices, ensuring that we learn from our students and with our students. This participatory approach values diversity and builds student confidence, helping to deliver outstanding student success.
13. We believe that the demographic profile of learners has implications for the way in which they are best taught and supported and have designed our programmes, services, policies and estate with our student body in mind. This includes our approach to pedagogy to best celebrate their diversity and our approach to how we design the timetable to best utilise their time,

operate assessment principles that protect equity, and provide integrated services for all, such as a centrally located student helpdesk. A simple illustration of our atypical intake is given below in a bar chart of Newman recruitment from IMD Quintiles 1 to 5 compared to the Sector.



14. As a university with a Catholic foundation, we pride ourselves on the inclusivity and openness of our institution and the consequent diversity of our students. We know that our campus is perceived as a safe space for study and attracts students from all faiths and beliefs, with 77% of 140 student responses to an estates survey confirming that the campus had a positive or very positive impact on their wellbeing⁹. In 2021-22 10% of our student intake identified with the Catholic faith while 26% were “other Christian” and 32% did not identify with any faith. Of the remaining students from many faiths, we also note that 21% of this intake identified with Islam; these figures have remained relatively constant during the period covered by this submission. The figure for Islam is remarkably similar to the figure for Birmingham as a whole, as measured in the 2011 census¹⁰, while the total Christian population in the University is somewhat lower. Feedback from students has shown that many Muslim students are attracted to study with us by the mission and foundation of the institution.

15. We pride ourselves in being a truly student centred University where all decisions come back to an assessment of what is best for our students. Our outstanding NSS outcomes are testament to the importance we place on the student journey and our recognition of the complex lives of our students. To further build on this culture in 2022 we appointed to a new post
and have since invested in brand new Students' Union (SU) offices. We are proud of the partnership that exists between the University and the Union and welcome their contribution to this assessment in facilitating the student video and written submission.

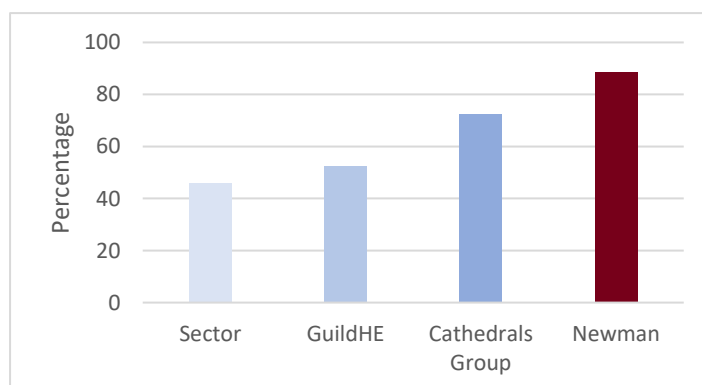
Part B - Student Experience

Teaching

16. Newman is ranked 28th in the country for Teaching Quality in the 2023 *Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide*. Our teaching is shaped by our students and encapsulated in declared ‘Newman Learning and Teaching Principles’, including our pedagogy of partnership.¹¹

The Principles are in line with the expectations of the UPP Student Futures Manifesto initiative to provide “A clear outline of the teaching students will receive and the necessary tools to access it” (see paragraph 43). All teaching takes place on a single campus situated six miles southwest of Birmingham city centre. A major campus redevelopment in 2017-19 saw multi-million-pound investment in additional teaching rooms with a capacity of 30 students each, and a learner-centred teaching space with a larger capacity (up to 100). This modern, participatory theatre is arranged in “bays”, each with space for four-to-six students, and is custom-designed to maximise the benefits of group work and the flipped-classroom approach. Our commitment to small classes is further evidenced by the fact that this is one of only two teaching spaces of such capacity, with all others seating 50 or fewer students. The small class sizes facilitate the interactive learning and teaching approach that best supports our diverse student body.

17. The campus redevelopment and subsequent multi-million-pound investment in student study spaces has allowed us to provide more dedicated and specialist spaces for subjects such as Law (in the form of a courtroom), Computer Science, and Psychology, alongside the provision of laboratory spaces for the teaching of science subjects within the Faculty of Education. Throughout the campus there are popular informal study spaces designed for students to undertake collaborative work between timetabled sessions.
18. As experienced practitioners qualified in their own subject areas, our teaching and learning-related staff are our most valuable resource to educate and support our students. We invest just under two-thirds of our University budget on staffing, considerably above the national average. All permanent teaching staff are on academic contracts which require them to engage in scholarship. The University does not employ staff on teaching only or research only contracts. The number of staff holding Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy is approximately 90% (115 out of 130 academic staff), considerably higher than the sector average of 46.1% (see below), plus 25 of these have also gained Senior Fellowship.¹² The University runs a CPD scheme and is recognised by Advance HE for the award of Fellowships, while less experienced staff are able to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice. This course has also been successfully completed by support staff, indicating, again, the holistic approach we take to supporting student learning across our provision.



19. We invest in our staff base in order to operate a low SSR and give students high levels of engagement with lecturers. The average number of students per module is currently 22, which represents a decrease of five compared to our previous TEF submission in 2017 and is an indication of our commitment to small class sizes that facilitate greater student interaction.

Given the nature of our student body, this is a crucial part of our strategy for valuing diversity, promoting belonging, building confidence, and achieving student success. These all link to our research-informed focus on aspects to a holistic and successful student experience that are not easy to quantify: student belonging, engagement, wellbeing, and building relationships to achieve a transformational impact on students¹³.

20. Research-informed teaching is the first pillar of the Newman University Research Plan 2022-3 to 2025-6, which affirms our belief that *'research, professional practice, and scholarly activity underpin excellent learning and teaching, helping to produce skilled, intellectually adept, and highly employable Newman graduates. We will develop enhancements to learning, teaching and assessment through ongoing engagement in research, scholarship, and innovation in educational practices and experiences.'* We practise a range of research-related teaching, including: research methods and processes embedded in all courses; action-based learning to enable students to research through 'doing' and co-creation; research-informed research into our own practices to promote enhancements and innovation. We incorporate the insights of scholarship, as well as innovations in technology and practice, into our learning, teaching, and assessment practices. Our students have the opportunity to engage with real-world problems through the process of experiential and applied learning and to undertake research, either of their own direction or in partnership with staff.¹⁴
21. University teaching staff have also been successful in achieving national teaching awards, with an Advance HE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence being awarded for a project on how student data can best be used to enhance support for student engagement in 2019¹⁵, and a member of this team receiving a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) in 2020¹⁶. The project has directly informed and improved our practices across the University, both in terms of the use of learner analytics and the consistent interventions to promote student engagement and success. We are proud to have a growing number of PFHEAs at Newman as well as NTFs, a relatively high number for an institution with 130 FTE academics. Their expertise and national profile helps inform our strategies for learning and our CPD offer to staff. Our teaching and learning scores are uniformly high. Students consistently rate their modules as excellent with overall satisfaction levels across all modules in evaluation questionnaires being 86%, 82% and 87% in the last three years respectively.
22. The University introduced the Foundation Year in 2018 to provide an alternative route for those unable to meet the traditional entry requirements for a three-year degree. The year builds confidence and academic skills in a supportive and stimulating learning environment. The use of embedded regular tutor groups is a particular innovation on the programme that has demonstrated positive impact on student success.¹⁷ Currently the University offers 22 courses with a Foundation Year and enrolments have grown strongly over recent years¹⁸.
23. In 2020, 168 students enrolled on specially structured and resourced courses with a Foundation Year, which have successfully led to the positive outcomes described below. Of students who graduated in 2022 having undertaken the Foundation Year in the first year of operation, 86% achieved a good degree, a figure above the national sector average. We have also seen the retention rate of this group of students increase. It currently stands at 80.4%; although this is 2.2% below that for the University as a whole, we are aware that many

Foundation Year students continue to study subjects elsewhere, usually because their preferred course is not currently part of our portfolio. We are not able to account for these in our statistics. One way in which the University is addressing this is through expanding the course portfolio to include subjects which we know to be popular with our Foundation Year students.

24. We also wish to highlight our innovative BA Applied Humanities (Accelerated Degree) programme as we believe that it is indicative of the Newman approach to provide programmes of relevance and value to our target students. In particular, it is intended to be attractive to those who may be debt averse and have other work or caring responsibilities. This is an accelerated degree which offers a flexible, supportive but intensive option of study for students looking to complete an undergraduate degree in just two years.

Students study core academic subjects such as history, literature and philosophy, reaching a high academic level within two years. It is more intensive than other courses but is tailored to each student with individualised assessment. A particular feature that is welcomed by students with external work and caring commitments is that the two days of the week on which sessions are timetabled is guaranteed in advance, a timetabling commitment to specifying on-campus days well in advance that we are rolling out across the University so students can more easily plan around their studies. Our data indicates that this innovative approach is highly successful. Our first cohort graduated in 2022, with 85% of students achieving good degrees. In the 2022 National Student Survey, 87% of the students on this course agreed that the timetable worked efficiently for them, and the overall satisfaction was 93%.

25. Another example of innovative practice at Newman is the structured Writing Retreats for student assignments that have been developed within our 'Working with Children, Young People and Families' programme. Students have extended time on campus and bring their materials to work on their assignment. They have to give themselves a target beforehand and set three goals at the end of the session. An evaluation of the activity showed that the retreats were received very positively¹⁹ - they are also now carried out elsewhere within the University. Students receive immediate feedback on tackling the assignment if they have a question while in full flow of their work.

26. Similarly innovative is the 'Jigsaw technique' developed on our Psychology programmes whereby students in groups will be asked to learn something and then have to teach it to other groups. It has been found to initiate in-and-out group cohesion and increase student engagement, self-esteem and enjoyment.

27. Finally, we note that the latest *Sunday Times* Good University Guide placed Newman in the Top 25% of universities in England and Wales for teaching quality, and first in Birmingham.²⁰ This provides triangulation and national recognition of the outstanding quality of our teaching.

Assessment and feedback

28. Principles of Assessment²¹ were developed by the University in 2020 to promote and enhance fair and equitable cross-institutional practice, while ensuring assessment supports student

learning through promoting time on appropriate tasks and effective feedforward. As in teaching, we aim for positive and progressive innovation in assessment practices and respond proactively to student feedback. We bring these principles to life through our curriculum design and validation activities, through Programme Leader and Subject Leader forums, through our annual learning and teaching conference and our student-staff partnership projects (see paragraph 49). One example of an effective assessment practice is the use of an online quiz with randomly ordered questions which forms part of a portfolio assessment on the BSc Accounting and Finance and BA Business Management courses. On both courses, 100% of students agreed that marking and assessment had been fair in the 2022 NSS. Another example is the provision on our Education courses of audio (in addition to written) feedback which we find students are often more likely to digest and act upon than written comments. A third innovative example appears in Applied Humanities who operate an entirely negotiated assessment strategy in all modules of the programme, ranging from the first-year portfolio assessment to the final project, negotiated both in regard to form (assessment type) and function (content, audience, purpose and topic).

29. The University has been keen to extend the role played by external examiners in the assessment process, holding an annual external examiners' conference²². It provides external examiners with the opportunity to:
- discuss and be notified of any changes to University policies and regulatory procedures
 - discuss external requirements and national issues/trends
 - meet with external examiners from other programme areas and share experiences
 - meet with representatives of their subject or programme team to discuss various issues including the aims and learning outcomes, as well as the curriculum, learning and teaching, and assessment strategies of the programme
 - meet with representatives of the Quality Office to discuss actions taken, and progress made, in response to comments raised in the previous external examiners' reports
 - attend workshops and appropriate development opportunities
30. All external examiners are invited to the annual conference, with attendance a requirement for all new appointments. External Examiner reports are scrutinised at local and University level and all comments addressed. Examiners' comments have been consistently supportive and complimentary, with the Chief Examiner's Report in 2021/22 commending teaching good practice and assessment consistency while stating *'The working relationship between tutors and students is supported by high quality resources and assessments which are current and strongly linked to practice.'*²³
31. In 2021 and 2022, we ran the AdvanceHE Online Professional Development Course for External Examiners. This was made available to our own staff who act as externals elsewhere, or aspire to, and our current external examiners from other institutions.

The course is of benefit to all our staff who are involved in assessment, as an external examiner, but also in relation to daily practice.

32. In terms of timely feedback, the University has long operated and communicated to students a three-week assessment turnaround, which is monitored and acted upon when issues arise. We note that Assessment and Feedback is broadly above benchmark overall in the NSS metrics for this TEF, and nearly a third of students at Newman are studying on courses where Assessment and Feedback was rated as Outstanding (materially above benchmark).

Academic support

33. Students are at the heart of everything we do at Newman. One way in which are able to demonstrate this is that we have centred our campus around a student-focused atrium. This houses the SU, Student Helpdesk, Student Services and the Library. It also has refreshment facilities and an informal study space and is used for student and careers events.

34. The University recognises the need to provide extensive student support services. At Newman, student support enhances and transcends the academic personal tutoring provision (in subject areas and Faculties) as well as providing a central team of dedicated and qualified staff. Academic and personal support is provided by Learning Development Tutors who assist with study skills, organisation and time management strategies, and Academic Support Advisers, who offer more general guidance and who can refer students to other support services.

The University also supports students undertaking dyslexia assessments by paying for the cost of assessment. Our recent in-house survey of 93 students using Student Services produced excellent levels of agreement: 72% (very satisfied), 23.7% (satisfied), neutral, . 96.8% said they would recommend the service to friends,

35. While the University created quiet study spaces for students to access on campus in line with COVID-19 regulations, it quickly became apparent during the pandemic that a significant number of our students were, for economic reasons, experiencing difficulty in accessing the University's online provision and needed further help. One way in which we responded to this was by instigating an additional long-term laptop loan scheme. Previously students had been able to borrow a laptop for use in the library, but this scheme allows them to take this offsite for an extended period of time. This has continued beyond the pandemic²⁵, with 40 laptops in the scheme. During the pandemic, the University also offered Digital Learning and Support grants. A total of 264 awards were made during the 2020/21 academic year. In order to be eligible, students needed to be in receipt of an income assessed student loan and have a household income that of under £12k or be a care leaver. It was possible for a student to be awarded:

- £100 to help improve WIFI/4G arrangements so that they are adequate for study
- £250 to help buy, refurbish or repair a laptop suitable for study
- £350 to both help improve WIFI/4G arrangements and buy, refurbish or repair a laptop suitable for study

36. Both of these schemes are in addition to the Newman University Support Fund which assists with the cost of studying such as childcare, living costs, travel and books. We have undertaken

a detailed analysis of the outcomes of those students who received financial support during the 2020-21 financial year²⁶. A total of 377 students (18%) received financial support during 2020/21. The total sum of support given was £167,049. Of this, in addition to those receiving funding as a result of digital poverty as noted above, 38 students were supported with dyslexia assessments and 75 students successfully applied for an award from the Hardship Fund. A total of 93% of recipients within the scheme progressed to their next level of study (compared with just under 90% of those who did not need support). Further analysis showed that all ethnic groups have a better outcome when they have received financial support of some kind.

37. In 2017 we reviewed the scheme whereby all undergraduate students are allocated an Academic Personal Tutor (APT). The current system was introduced in 2018, based on existing practice in the Faculty of Education, and reviewed in 2021. The review included input from students in both faculties, staff groups and individual staff from both faculties, SU representatives, staff from the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship and staff from Student Support Services. The question 'Do you know your personal tutor?' was included in the Student Survey of all first- and second-year students in 2021 and nearly three-quarters of students responded affirmatively.
38. At Newman, APTs reflect the practices and traditions of their own disciplines and professions while working within a set of universally applicable principles and practices²⁷. The system provides individual academic support but also helps students access other support systems such as counselling and welfare as part of supporting the holistic student not just the academic. To better aid student engagement, since the COVID-19 pandemic in-person office hours have been supplemented by online ones, which students can choose as best suits their lives.
39. Newman University believes that successful transitions into and through higher education are critical to the retention and success of students, based on the substantial body of scholarship that now attests this.²⁸ In recognition that best practice suggests activities are not concentrated into a short period of time after arrival at university, we have developed an induction period elongated over the entire first term. was
appointed to oversee the development of this and the interaction with subject areas. As part of this work we have developed an Interventions Calendar²⁹ which profiles a range of transition activities undertaken across the academic year.
40. The cycle begins with online induction activity from A-Level results to the start of Welcome Week, including e-mentoring and engagement with subject areas. The Welcome Week is now focused on belonging to Newman and cohort identity, rather than on delivery of information. Our HEADstart programme provides transition events for students going into Level 3 or 4, with HEADspace for Level 5 and HEADlight for Level 6. In addition, regular ReNewman events offer further reinduction support to returning students, with students encouraged to reconnect to their personal tutor, mentoring and other sources of support.
41. Evaluation has run alongside each iteration of welcome and induction since 2019 in the form of formal surveying of staff and students in each year, a First Semester Working Group in 2019 and Student-Staff Partnership Projects (SSPP) focused on aspects of our offer and delivery in each year. Evaluation with student participants (in both welcome to campus events and

HEADstart) indicated that their biggest concerns were navigating our IT systems, organising finance, adapting to a new environment, making friends and navigating the campus. This data is supported by feedback from professional service areas. 100% of students who provided feedback on their HEADstart participation in 2022-23 agreed with the statement that they feel more confident about starting their degree as a result of taking part. Newman staff are also invited to provide evaluation feedback, with responses received from academic subjects and professional services areas. This whole-university approach also means we respond better to any formal requests for pre-course information and engage more fully with students informally during August and September to promote the availability of induction information.

42. We particularly recognise the value and power of peer support at Newman, and operate a range of peer mentoring offers within the University. Newly arrived students are supported by a substantial team of Welcome Mentors throughout the first semester. Via the Student Support Services team, student can access Writing Mentors, Maths Mentors and IT Mentors.
43. In partnership with Newman SU, the University has committed to co-producing in 2022-23 a Student Futures Manifesto (aligned to the UPP Foundation project of the same name), with an emphasis on student support and remediating any learning, skills or confidence gaps which have emerged over the pandemic³⁰. We are one of 22 universities so far who have committed to resourcing and supporting transitions throughout the student lifecycle and feel this will enhance our Academic Support work.
44. Lastly, the University provides excellent library services and extensive learning resources for our students. The library is open seven days a week from 7.30am until midnight. Alongside access to copious e-materials, it contains around 100,000 printed books, journals and artefacts for student use. The latter includes materials for use in school settings. The library contains silent, quiet and also collaborative study zones alongside bookable spaces for group work and practising presentations. Subject librarians liaise directly with academic colleagues to ensure programmes are well supported and the library scores markedly above the sector average in the NSS, with students rating it the highest among all universities in Birmingham in each of the last five years.
45. Overall, while operating a central helpdesk triage system, the University offers a full range of academic services, from personal tutors and academic support advisors to placement coordinators and academic peer mentors. We note that these are recognised by students as of very high quality through our NSS metrics for the TEF.

Student voice

46. Newman University regard the usual conceptualisation of 'student voice' to be too passive; just gathering and reacting to student feedback is not enough. We see working in partnership with our students across all aspects of University life as both the pinnacle of student voice work and the embodiment of outstanding student engagement. We aim to achieve our strategic objective of working in partnership with students by fostering a learning environment which proactively supports them through their studies. We do this by involving them in co-design and decision-making and ensuring our educational provision is aligned with their needs and aspirations³¹.

This includes careful curation of our estate and our commitment to small class sizes and use of the flipped classroom, promoting interaction and engagement.³²

47. Working in partnership with our students is a fundamental part of our ethos. It is the second objective of our Strategic Framework 2020-25, which documents our process of co-creation:
- Nurturing a strong sense of partnership with our students, by involving them in co-design and decision-making and ensuring our educational provision is aligned with their needs and aspirations
 - Collaboratively developing our portfolio of programmes to address the needs of wider society, help students develop their capabilities, and build on the expertise of our staff
 - Growing a learning environment which proactively supports all our students through the challenges they face
 - Emphasising equality of opportunity and outcome, working with underrepresented student groups to close continuation, attainment and progression gaps
48. The first pillar of our Student Success Sub-strategy 2021-2025 is to work with our students as individuals and partners in a values-based learning community. In this Sub-strategy we note that: *'We promote a pedagogy of partnership to ensure that we are working with students in shaping the University. ... We expect to see students taking ownership of their learning, and we will build capacity and confidence in our staff in how best to engage with our students in support of their success.'*
49. Partnership with students begins, fundamentally, in the classroom with our interactive approach to teaching. This ensures individual sessions are shaped by student input, co-design, co-enquiry and co-creation. Staff respond in real time to issues introduced or raised by students in sessions. This, for example, is a specific feature of Foundation Year tutor groups where much of the taught content is shaped by ideas and issues brought by students. We are also able to demonstrate how this strategy is being applied in practice in that the University's Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship typically advertises for up to 18 funded Student-Staff Partnership Project annually across the three project strands:
- Academic partnership projects – looking to enhance an aspect of the broad student learning experience
 - Research partnership projects – integrating students as researchers in their subject discipline
 - Community partnership projects – engaging with the wider community
50. Applications are made by _____ students with the support of the staff member with whom they are intending to work. A Student-Staff Partnership Project Celebration Day is held each year to share learnings from these wide-ranging projects³⁴.
51. There is a growing body of research and publication building on partnership-working at Newman.³⁵ Over the past 10 years we have invested in over 100 partnership projects – a

significant investment for a small university -- many of which have had long-lasting cross-university impact and have informed practice and policy across Newman: e.g. an early SSPP on the Muslim student experience at Newman led to changes to graduation day practices, and the process of appointing a Muslim Chaplain; projects on decolonising the curriculum have shaped the new applied humanities pathway and led to the adoption of questions about decolonisation as part of the validation process; SSPPs have shaped all our welcome mentoring, peer mentoring and learning analytics practices and policies.

52. At Newman, Student Union Officers as well as other student reps, sit on all strategic committees. For example, both students and the SU were not just consulted but actively engaged during the development of the Strategic Framework and assessment principles in 2019 and 2020. The University has a well-developed system of Staff Student Consultative Committees in each subject. These discuss feedback collected through Mid- and End-Point Module Evaluation Questionnaires³⁶ and the National Student Survey. An analysis of the meetings is presented to the Learning, Teaching and Academic Quality Committee, which allows themes from across the University to be identified and acted upon.
53. In 2022, the University replaced the Internal Student Satisfaction Survey (ISSS), that replicated NSS questions, with a more focused Student Summer Survey³⁷ consisting of 10 questions issued to first and second-year students. Overall satisfaction rates were 89.1% and 92.7% in 2019 and 2020 respectively, with the figure falling to 75% in the pandemic year 2021. In the 2022 Student Summer Survey, the following results were obtained across first and second-year undergraduates, demonstrating high levels of satisfaction:
- All my course information is clearly available on Moodle (89%)
 - The library provides me with the services I need (88%)
 - I know my Academic Personal Tutor (81%)
 - The timetable works well for me (79%)
 - Student Support Services provide clear advice when I need it (75%)
 - My course is helping to prepare me for graduate employment (76%)
54. The SU also produces an annual Student Voice report, derived from the minutes of the Staff Student Consultative Committee meetings and one-to-one meetings with students. It also contains statistics on the SU's services and details of ongoing projects. The Voice report provides an update on actions taken, including those that have been recommended to the University. The SU makes the reports available to students and the Voice reports are also considered for further action by the University's Student Experience Committee. Issues raised in the past year that have been enacted range from core learning issues (changes to assessment practices) to accessibility (the increase in teaching rooms with hearing loops) and extra-curricular matters (the introduction of gender-neutral toilets). The first example, from the 2020-2021 report³⁸ included the intention to understand and improve how the University oversees feedback, leading to the following initiative: *"weekly reports are provided to Associate Deans to enable them to follow up on any assignment briefs that have not been received."*

Commentary on Student Experience Metrics

55. All of our aggregate student experience measures are above benchmark for full-time and part-time students. We also note that when we consider the splits for each indicator we are often dealing with small cohorts, so that even taking data over four years can lead to greater variations than will be seen in larger institutions.

56. In terms of outstanding provision, a significant proportion of our subject areas have scores which are materially above benchmark for a number of the student experience indicators:

- Business and Management: The teaching on my course (by 12.7%), assessment and feedback (by 19.3%), academic support (by 7.0%), learning resources (by 10.8%), student voice (15.8%)
- English Studies: assessment and feedback (by 8.4%), academic support (6.6%), student voice (by 7.2%)
- Health and Social Care: learning resources (by 6.0%)
- History and Archaeology: The teaching on my course (by 6.0%), assessment and feedback (by 15.3%), academic support (by 13.8%, scoring 100%), learning resources (by 6.9%), student voice (by 19.8%)
- Performing arts: assessment and feedback (by 8.5%), academic support (6.4%).
- Philosophy and Religious Studies: The teaching on my course (by 5.7%), assessment and feedback (by 12.4%), academic support (by 13.0%), student voice (by 15.4%)
- Sociology, Social Policy and Anthropology: The teaching on my course (by 7.4%), assessment and feedback (by 7.9%), academic support (by 8.0%), student voice (by 14.2%)

57. Following publication and analysis of the NSS results, discusses their performance
This is followed
by production of an action plan at both subject and University level to identify transferable practice and address areas of underperformance, such as where full-time students in Allied Health have scores materially below benchmark for the teaching on my course, academic support and student voice, and part-time students in Education and Teaching have such scores for the teaching on my course, academic support and student voice indicators. Such actions plans are monitored centrally and often benefit from the good practice identified in other areas (e.g. the same students have scores materially above benchmark by 7.0% in Learning Resources, indicating the impact of identifiable customer-oriented subject librarians, a model we look to replicate at the level of academic services support). In this way, we seek to ensure, and find, that areas rarely repeat poor indicators from one year to the next.

which is why we have outlined our approach to and rationale for the Foundation Year above, where we note that continuation rates and student performance have improved as it has become established.

58. Full-time male students score materially above benchmark in the indicators for the teaching on my course (by 4.3%), assessment and feedback (by 6.0%), academic support (by 4.1%) and student voice (by 5.2%). Full-time students age under 21 years have scores which are materially above benchmark in assessment and feedback and student voice, both by 3.8%.

Both full-time and part-time students aged 31 years and over score materially above benchmark in learning resources, by 5.1% and 6.9% respectively.

59. score materially above benchmark for assessment and feedback (by 7.4%) and for student voice (by 8.1%). The student voice indicator for full-time students who are eligible for free school meals is above benchmark by 6.2%, while that for full-time disabled students is materially above benchmark by 4.6%.
60. Given the large number of students of different ethnicities at Newman, we are pleased that the student experience indicators for the different groups are overwhelmingly positive. For full-time students whose ethnicity is 'Other' the assessment and feedback indicator is hugely above benchmark by 15.6%. Part-time White students are materially above benchmark by 5.9% and materially above benchmark by 5.7% for learning resources. Full-time Asian students are similarly above benchmark by 4.6% for academic support, and above benchmark by 3.8% for learning resources and by 5.3% for student voice. On this last measure full-time students of 'Other' ethnicity are very greatly above benchmark by 10.6%. We do, however, note that full-time Mixed Ethnicity students score materially below benchmark (by 6.2%) for the teaching on my course and we have in 2021-22 introduced a reverse mentoring (students mentoring senior staff) scheme to improve awareness of ethnic minority students' experiences.
61. For full-time students the overall teaching on my course indicator is broadly in line with the benchmark (1.2% above), while that for part-time students is 0.7% above the benchmark. For assessment and feedback, the full-time indicator is 2.7% above benchmark and for part-time 2.6% above benchmark. The full-time overall indicator for academic support is broadly in line with benchmark (1.6% above) while that for part-time students is 0.6% above the benchmark. The learning resources overall indicator is 2.2% above benchmark for full-time students and 4.0% for part-time students. The student voice indicator is 3.0% above benchmark for full-time and 2.0% above for part-time students.
62. There are relatively few differences between the four years of data under consideration. students are materially above benchmark by 7.1% on the assessment and feedback indicator while full-time Year 2 is materially above its benchmark by 6.3%. Full-time Year 3 is also above benchmark by 6.3% on the learning resources indicator. The student voice indicator in Year 2 is materially above benchmark by 5.5% for full-time students, again showing student recognition of outstanding experience in this area.
63. We value the experience of our students extremely highly, which we believe is reflected by our overall NSS metrics in scope for the student experience element of the TEF all being rated either very high quality or outstanding quality.

Additional Student Experience Metrics

64. Our small class sizes, combined with the staff time commitment involved, furnish students with unique opportunities to discuss, debate and develop critical thinking skills as well as providing the University with the opportunity to deliver truly meaningful inter-professional education.

65. However, small class sizes mean that student satisfaction data is not always reportable at this level. Our own analysis has shown that the overall satisfaction in the 2022 NSS from the total of 33 students on the following small courses was 89.7% (with the overall satisfaction ranging from 75% to 100% on individual courses): BA Single Honours Drama, Theatre and Applied Performance; BSc Single Honours Mathematics; BSc Single Honours Accounting and Finance; Foundation Degree Early Years; LLB Law.

Part C - Student Outcomes

66. A focus on student outcomes has primacy in all of our decision making. We invest resources carefully, prioritising our SSRs (which have a direct impact on student outcomes) whilst also investing in student-facing support services. Our approach ensures that students succeed in their studies, and progress well, beyond their degrees.

Continuation

67. We routinely monitor trends in student behaviours and engagement and have several cross-institutional mechanisms through which we construct policies and share practices relating to student outcomes. Regarding continuation, the Retention and Continuation Task Group oversees such activities, and in doing so receives regular reporting of withdrawals across the University. The group reports into our Student Success Strategy Group and has representation from both academic and support departments, as well as students, ensuring that these statistics are communicated widely throughout the University so appropriate support can be given. Reporting is routinely broken down by Faculty and subject area, but our relatively low student numbers means that the withdrawal of a single student can have a disproportionate effect on overall continuation rates at the programme level. We also note that our data does not distinguish between withdrawals from different years of a course, so the discussion here is relevant to both continuation and completion.

68.

Given the complex nature of our students' lives, it is no surprise that many students identify multiple reasons for withdrawing. Overall, during this period 16% of the reasons given were transfer to another institution and 8% for gaining employment. Health reasons accounted for 12% of those given and financial reasons for 6%. Other reasons were given in 58.5% of cases, of which 39.5% were for personal reasons (that lie outside of the control of the University). We do note that taken together, personal reasons (financial, health and other) account for well over half of those given for withdrawal, requiring considerable non-academic support from across the University. We are pleased to note that our continuation metric is broadly within benchmark. We consider this a very strong outcome given the diversity of our student body, the complexity of their lives, and the limitations of benchmarking in addressing intersectional disadvantages and specific challenges such as commuting and care responsibilities.

69. We know that active participation and engagement is an indicator of students who are likely to succeed and progress. To support our monitoring of engagement patterns we have invested in

an analytics platform (SEAtS education success software) which is now used across the University and is intimately linked to our APT and student support activities.

70. Analysis has explored the relationship between continuation and attendance as measured by SEAtS, interaction with Moodle and borrowing of physical library books³⁹. The principal finding was that there was a much higher proportion of student withdrawals and suspensions for students meeting the following criteria in contrast to the rest of the student population and these differences were statistically significant in each case:

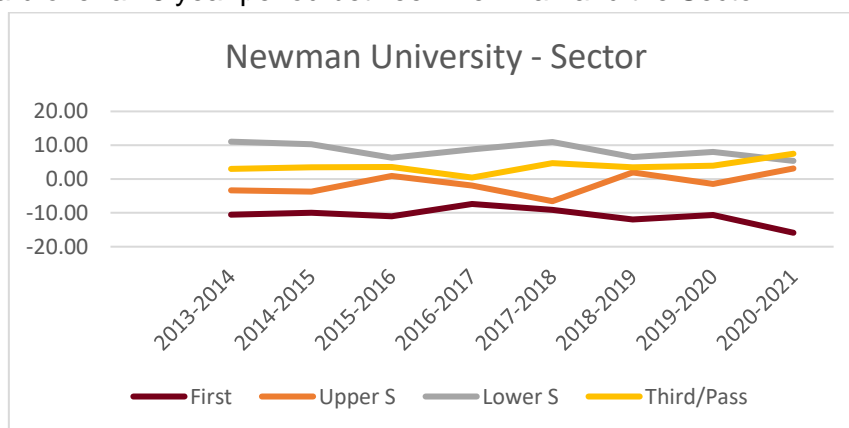
- <10% cumulative attendance for the year
- Fewer than 100 clicks on Moodle pages for the year
- Minimal loans of physical books from the library for the year

71. These findings have led us to increase support through the mechanisms outlined in the student experience section. Our greatest focus is on positively building partnerships with students - enhancing belonging, confidence, capability and engagement - and it is important to use such data to provide targeted support for those who are disengaging or in danger of disengagement.

Completion

72. Completion is also overseen by the Retention and Continuation Task Group. The reasons why students withdraw from the University have been discussed in the section on Continuation, where the data has been collected across all years of study so is also relevant to Completion. We repeat here that the reasons are varied and often unrelated to the course of study or University environment. We attribute the higher completion rate of our part-time students to the fact that they will have more time free to deal with any of the complex factors that may arise in their lives.

73. The University monitors the proportion of degrees awarded at all levels, an OfS sector concern.⁴⁰ This is reported annually in our 'Degree Outcomes Statement'.⁴¹ While the number of Firsts at Newman has increased during the COVID period (when we operated our No Disadvantage policy), the number of Upper Seconds has fallen and there is no evidence of systematic grade inflation over this period, as shown in this chart of the percentage difference for each award over an 8 year period between Newman and the Sector.⁴²



74. We have also analysed the percentage of good degrees awarded in terms of the tariff points on entry. Analysis by tercile shows that degree outcome is not dependent on entry tariff:

	Low tariff	Medium tariff	High tariff
Range	1-95	96-127	128+
Number of students	462	501	469
Number of good degrees	321	369	320
Percentage of good degrees	69.5	73.6	68.2

75. The absence of a systematic trend shows that students with lower tariff points are as likely to receive as good a degree as those with higher tariff points, which we believe is testament to our mission of providing a rewarding higher education opportunity to all those who may benefit.

Progression

76. We recognise that progression into graduate level employment is one of the primary motivating factors for students enrolling on a course at Newman and have embedded a strategic cross-university approach to the way we view employability. As well as our centralised careers-hub facility (created in the past five years as a capital investment), we have also developed an institutional employability strategy. This provides a set of principles that characterise a consistent student experience (from an academic lens), but also permits subject-specific variations to recognise the importance of the programme identity and future profession. These activities are co-ordinated by our Employability and Progression Task Group which features representation from across the University.

77. Progression data shows that graduate level employment or further study is broadly on benchmark for full-time students but below benchmark for part-time students. As noted in the Provider Context, 50% of our students come from the most deprived Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile, 45% are from ethnic minorities and 91% are commuter students. As 33% of them have caring responsibilities and 20% work for more than 20 hours per week we also conclude that a significant number of our students are not able to move to take advantage of favourable labour market conditions. We thus fit the profile of a university which teaches students which Universities UK note⁴³ as being “*from demographics that are less likely to be hired in professional roles because of systemic challenges that aren’t to do with their employability. This includes students who: are from a deprived neighbourhood; are from minority ethnic backgrounds; commute to university; aren’t able to move to parts of the country where there are more opportunities.*” The extent to which the last point applies to our students was reinforced by our
which indicated that 95% of our graduates gained employment within the West Midlands⁴⁴, against the backdrop of regional employment inequalities⁴⁵.

78. We are aware of the challenges facing our graduates and alumni and have deliberately developed our strategy considering the motivations and professions of our students. One example is the commitment to a compulsory work placement on all our programmes. Our work-related learning programme enables students to develop and articulate key employability skills; students are supported to source their own work-experience opportunities to prepare them for the labour market. Students who engage effectively in the programme can complete work-related learning activities to enhance their post-graduation labour market position.

79. To share best existing practice across disciplines we have also developed a 'Good Practice Guide for Employability' which identifies activities from several subject areas and is published on the University's intranet⁴⁶:
- Our Youth and Community Work students benefit from strong links with previous graduates who are now providing employment and placement opportunities in the region as a result of their own career progression.
 - Suitably experienced Counselling Studies and Counselling, Mental Health and Wellbeing students can undertake a work placement at Newman's Health and Wellbeing Clinic, with opportunities to be involved with service evaluation research.
 - History has embedded careers in its curriculum, encouraging students to create job specifications for leading historic figures. Personal tutors discuss careers every semester and regular careers mailshots are posted on the History Metapage on Moodle.
 - There are volunteering opportunities and extracurricular activities in Law which prepare the students for the challenges and expectations of the profession.
 - The Applied Humanities programme was developed and designed to help students make connections between traditional subject areas and real-world applications.
80. A feature across all programmes is input from the Careers Service, while courses embed other subject-related aspects of employability they deem most beneficial to students. To improve student progression, we introduced a new award scheme in 2020. The Award for Careers and Employability (ACE)⁴⁷ provides a foundation for students to cover the key skills in career management as well as make and implement personal, realistic and informed career choices.
81. There are three levels to the ACE - bronze, silver and gold - aligning to three key stages of career development. Students can self-enrol on the portal and complete the ACE in their own time. In addition to this activity, students can also develop their own personalised employability options through Newman's bespoke 'My Career' system.⁴⁸
82. The Careers Service provides an update of activity to each meeting of the Employability and Progression Task Group. Examples of statistics reported are:
- Between 3rd September 2018 and 9th January 2019 there were 550 registrants on My Career and 203 individual employers and organisations had registered and posted vacancies.
 - A careers registration pilot for all level 5 and level 6 non Initial Teacher Education students was completed in May 2019. There were responses from 60 individual level 5 students and 99 individual level 6 students. When the scheme was rolled out in the 2019-20 academic year there were registrations from 464 level 4 students, 456 level 5 students and 616 level 6 students.
 - A virtual careers fare in autumn 2020 attracted 221 unique users.
 - One-to-one appointments continued over Zoom during the pandemic.
83. Given the challenges faced by our graduates in achieving appropriate employment, we have grasped the opportunity to work with other local universities to help students overcome these

hurdles. In collaboration with the University of Birmingham and University College Birmingham we were successful in gaining funds of £500,000 from the Office for Students for the Transformation West Midlands Project⁴⁹. This has sought to target locally domiciled students and graduates seeking work close to home, particularly those from an ethnic minority heritage, students and recent graduates with disabilities, or students who are the first in their family to attend university. These groups have historically faced greater challenges to securing graduate level employment, for example, a lack of professional networks and limited access to appropriate social capital including high-quality work experience opportunities. This project sought to redress the imbalance by offering a tailored coaching approach and supporting students and recent graduates to access relevant opportunities. Access to progression coaches was available to all our level 6 students alongside skills workshops, online development and work-based learning.

84. Reverse Mentoring is a strand of the project and Newman students had engaged with companies such as Birmingham City Council, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Air Liquide, Deloitte, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust and SOTI by the time that the mid-project evaluation was undertaken. During the TWM Project, Newman University engaged with 344 final year students and recent graduates in one-to-one progression coaching. Of these, 77% (264) went into a positive outcome (employment or study) and 60% (208) went into postgraduate study or higher-level graduate roles SOC 1-3. If we removed those with no confirmed destination, which is comparable to the HESA GOS return, we have confirmed outcomes for 270 graduates. Of these, 77% (208) progressed into postgraduate study or higher-level graduate roles SOC 1-3, and 98% (264) moved into a positive outcome. As part of the legacy from the project, progression coaching will form part of the new 'unique personalised career offer' to students and graduates.
85. In addition to progression coaching, 92 additional students and graduates attended TWM badged events or activities between 2109 and 2022. These included central activities such as Reverse Mentoring, Impact Challenge and Get Hired! Newman University also developed new activities to address challenges our students and graduates face e.g. Step up to Level 7 and Group Coaching Career Pathways in Teaching. These steps are helping us to improve trends in more recent graduate employment beyond those reported in the TEF.

Educational gain

86. Newman University defines educational gain as the change in life opportunities given to students who might not normally be able to access higher education. It transcends everything that we do and is multidimensional, resting on a goal to boost social mobility through education.
87. The University's Strategic Framework 2020-2025⁵⁰ has its first strategic objective to "*transform students' lives*". This reflects our approach to educational gain in the context of Newman students, and we can point to two external measures that indicate we are successful in this.
88. The *Economist's* last analysis of 'Which British Universities do most to boost graduate earnings?' placed Newman University third overall in its national ranking of the value added to median salary five years after graduation, demonstrating that we *'deliver successful outcomes*

for all of our students, which are recognised and valued by employers’ (OfS, 2018 Regulatory Framework, p.140).⁵¹ To reach this conclusion, The *Economist*⁵² analysed the LEO data in 2017 and created a ranking that compared graduates’ wages with how much they would have been expected to earn regardless of their university. Its estimate of expected earnings is built from a statistical model that predicts wages based on the subjects people study, their exam results at school, age, family income, whether they went to private or state school and where the university was located. The difference between the predicted and actual amounts that students earn reflects a university’s impact on graduate wages.

89. More recently, Newman has been ranked 8th and 7th in 2021 and 2022 respectively in the HEPI English Social Mobility Index⁵³. This combines the social distance travelled by graduates from an institution with the number of graduates so transported. The data is based on student background, student continuation and graduate salaries taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), OfS APPs and LEO data⁵⁴. Similarly, Newman was in the Top 10 in the UK for social inclusion rankings in the latest *Sunday Times Good University Guide*.⁵⁵ Newman is justly proud of what these rankings say about how we achieve our mission by contributing to the Government’s levelling up agenda, widening access to high quality higher education, and delivering outstanding outcomes for our students.

Commentary on Student Outcomes Metrics

90. For full-time students, our continuation indicator is broadly in line with benchmark, while for part-time students, it is materially above benchmark. Our metrics are also all materially above benchmark for: part-time students on ‘other’ undergraduate courses, on ‘other’ undergraduate level 4 courses, students 31 years and over, students of mixed ethnicity, female students, students in ABS quintiles 2 or 3 and students in deprivation quintiles 3, 4 or 5. Results for full-time students in deprivation quintiles 3, 4 and 5 and for male students are materially below benchmark, as are those for part-time students on other undergraduate level 5+ courses, which we are addressing through actions coordinated by the Retention and Continuation Task Group and the University’s APP. Our most recent in-year retention figures for 2022-23 show a 30% reduction in full-time student withdrawals this academic year⁵⁶.

91. We believe that this reflects the success of the actions taken as part of our APP⁵⁷. The APP groups our activities to support continuation into those which “*support all students in reaching their full potential, but also, crucially, underpin the more focused initiatives and interventions for particular target groups. They contribute to a culture where accessing support services is not a mark of disadvantage or difference but integral to the elimination of inequality*”.

92. Within subjects, we are working on the fact that Business and Management, Sociology, Social Policy and Anthropology, and Sport and Exercise Sciences are materially below benchmark for continuation of full-time students, as well as Philosophy and Religious Studies and Health and Social Care for part-time students. Subject areas that have not reached the University’s target

continuation rate of 92% are required to produce an action plan to redress the shortfall in future years. As an example, that for Sport⁵⁸ includes the actions:

- Embedding the personal tutor system into programmes
- Developing informal support networks (including prior to welcome week)
- Identifying and monitoring student engagement (to help identify those at risk).
- Formalising and normalising peer mentoring at level 4
- Developing students' academic confidence and competence in navigating their learning

93. Our overall completion indicator for part-time students is materially above benchmark, but that for full-time students is materially below benchmark. For full-time students our indicator (which is for entrants between 2012-13 and 2015-16) was broadly in line with benchmark in Year1 but has subsequently fallen materially below benchmark in Year2-Year4, though all years remain above the OfS full-time first degree baseline threshold of 75%⁵⁹. In terms of split indicators showing the reason for this, the clearest area of difference across all cohorts is in the full-time completion rates for ABCS Quintile 1 students (66.5%) compared to the completion rates for those across ABCS Quintiles 2-5 (80%-91%), with the discrepancy similarly evident in the difference between IMD Quintiles 1&2 (78.5%) compared to IMD Quintiles 3-5 (85.7%). As noted in our provider context (paragraph 13), the proportion of our entrants from deprivation quintile 1 is considerably higher than that in the sector (by 30.4% for full-time students and by 16.6% for part-time in 2017-18) and has been so across the full range of dates considered by the TEF. Newman's provision of access for students from deprivation quintile 1 is striking, greatly exceeding representation of other quintiles in our student population and operating in stark contrast to the general Higher Education sector. This clearly delivers on our mission of providing HE for social mobility for deprived groups but it also raises challenges for continuation and completion because of life challenges, more precarious finances, and additional hurdles faced by this group of students. We do not feel at present the benchmark calculations sufficiently take account of the challenges faced by students in these quintiles recruited locally to Newman but if these students were to have the completion rates of those in Quintile 4 or 5 our completion rates would be on benchmark (as they are with regard to Continuation for full-time students in Deprivation quintiles 1&2). We continue to address lower than benchmark outcomes through our APP and through assessment measures introduced in recent years to promote equity. Lastly, we believe full-time completion rates will also be improved by changing the timing of our re-assessment boards, which has worked against timely completions for full-time students who have added a year to their programmes, measured by the census point (four years and 15 days after the date on which they commenced their studies).⁶⁰ Significant numbers of reassessment boards had historically taken place in the autumn for dozens of students with mitigating circumstances and we have now moved these to late summer.

94. Our progression indicator is broadly in line with benchmark for our full-time students but materially below benchmark for part-time students. Expectedly, the split indicators for full-time students are materially below benchmark for subjects where routes to employment are often less direct, such as Performing Arts, Health and Social Care, Allied Health and Psychology but above for those with clearer routes such as Education and Teaching and Sociology & Social Policy.

that were often for those already in employment (we note the low 'Survey response rate' of 50.9%). Across all the TEF metrics these are the least current cohorts (2010-11 and 2013-14) and the University has since changed this provision, in one case making it non-accredited (a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies).

95. These metrics demonstrate a complex picture relating to the graduate level employment of our students, making it difficult to draw any further conclusions at the level of an individual indicator. In terms of particularity, Newman is on the outskirts of Birmingham next to the Worcestershire border. We have explained that, usually due to family circumstances, our students stay local, and we note that according to the OfS Worcestershire & Kidderminster is in the lowest quintile for the proportion of graduates in highly skilled jobs, while Birmingham is in the second lowest quintile for graduates in such jobs.⁶¹ Also, when running the Transformation West Midlands project, aimed at those from an ethnic minority heritage, students and recent graduates with disabilities or who are the first in their family to attend university, we found that the majority of our students fell into one or more of these categories. The benchmark does not fully account for such intersectional disadvantage. We additionally note that our full-time students are more likely to have achieved graduate-level employment within the timeframe of the GOS. We believe that as our part-time students are likely to already be in what is effectively full-time employment, they may not change to a graduate level job until an opportunity arises, which may be some time after graduation and thus not captured in the GOS data.
96. We finally observe that the data from LEO shows our students have a high level of sustained employment or further study. In the 2017-18 tax year this was below the sector average for students one and three years after graduation, but in all other years since 2016-17 the value has been higher than the national average one, three and five years after graduation.

Summary

97. We would like to conclude our provider submission by emphasising what we believe are key points that underpin the excellent experience and outcomes we provide for our students, which we believe are also evidenced in the accompanying standalone submission from Newman students:
- We recruit those we believe will benefit from higher education, regardless of background, and provide a transformative experience to improve lives and help to level up society
 - Metrics indicate our provision is predominantly of at least very high quality
 - We stage targeted enhancement activity to address pockets of less high-quality outcomes
 - We provide first-class support to our students to enable them to succeed and were shortlisted in the WhatUni? Awards Student Support category in both 2020 and 2022⁶³

- Our data shows that our student attainment is not dependent on their entry qualifications, while we support our students into employment or further study through integrating a work placement into each undergraduate programme
- We have designed our university around our students. We provide personal support leading to very high-quality student outcomes amid complex lives & challenges outside university
- Our performance in national metrics in terms of student social mobility is consistently high

98. We believe Newman University very successfully transforms the lives of its students, many of whom have fewer options than most in the sector, and that Newman achieves this by working in partnership with our students in a first-rate learning & teaching environment.

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- ⁴⁷ [The Award for Careers and Employability](#) 29/6/2020
- ⁴⁸ Newman University [careers pages](#)
- ⁴⁹ Newman University [Transformation West Midlands pages](#)
- ⁵⁰ Newman University [Strategic Framework](#) 2020-2025
- ⁵¹ [OfS regulatory framework](#) (2018)
- ⁵² [Which British universities do most to boost graduate salaries?](#) *The Economist*, 12/8/17.
- ⁵³ [HEPI blog](#) 24/6/22
- ⁵⁴ HEPI research paper explaining [social mobility index](#)
- ⁵⁵ The *Times* and *Sunday Times* [Good University Guide](#)
- ⁵⁶ Student Withdrawals and Retention report 2022.23, unpublished paper presented to Retention and Success Task Group, 12th January 2023
- ⁵⁷ Newman University [Access and Participation Plan](#) 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- ⁵⁸ Faculty (FASPS) Retention Action Plan for Sport, unpublished paper presented to Retention and Continuation Task Group meeting of 23rd November 2022
- ⁵⁹ OfS '[B3 Baselines](#)', November 2022
- ⁶⁰ OfS '[Exploring Student Outcomes](#)' January 2022
- ⁶¹ OfS, '[A Geography of Employment](#)', June 2021
- ⁶³ See note 5.