

## Optional provider submission template for TEF 2023

### 1. Provider context

1.1 Keele University has a strong and enduring reputation for teaching excellence. We are recognised by our students as one of the top universities in England for student experience, with excellent rankings in the National Student Survey (NSS) over the past 15 years, and in 2022 were judged by our students to be best in the UK in the [Student Crowd Awards](#). We were rated Gold in the 2017 TEF exercise and since then have been recognised nationally for the quality of our teaching and student experience, with highlights including: first in England for student course satisfaction in the Guardian University Guide 2019, UK top 10 for student experience in The Times Good University Guide 2020, shortlisted for the Times Higher Education University of the Year 2020 and top 10 in England for student satisfaction with course in the Guardian University Guide 2021. Our performance in the current TEF indicators is excellent, with all our student experience and outcome indicators at institutional level either at or above benchmark.

1.2 Teaching excellence is at the heart of our approach, from our founding principles through to the everyday experiences of our students and staff. Our ethos of excellence for all stems from our deeply held commitment, embedded in our mission, to *“make a difference in society by providing innovative, high-quality education for students from all backgrounds”*. Through a transformative educational experience at Keele across all subjects and course types, our students graduate with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to contribute to society as professionals, practitioners and as individuals.

1.3 Our distinctive educational approach can be traced back to our founding principles. A pioneering institution with a new vision for education, Keele University was founded as a campus-based university in 1949 with a commitment to meet the needs of a new kind of society, economy and world. Keele was ground-breaking from its inception, the first new university of the 20th Century, receiving its Royal Charter in 1962. The guiding principles for Keele’s establishment were a commitment to educational breadth, an openness to intellectual curiosity that transcends disciplinary boundaries and a responsiveness to the needs of society. Keele’s founding vision is based on strong partnership with local communities and providing a research-led higher education experience that is accessible to everyone, with the ethos of a community of scholarship focused on *‘the pursuit of truth in the company of friends’*. The five pillars of our current [‘Our Future’](#) strategy – ‘purpose’, ‘performance’, ‘place’, ‘people’ and ‘partnerships’ - frame our institutional approach to education and guide our ambition for continuing success.

1.4 We are a strong anchor institution within our region. Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire include some of the most economically deprived areas of the UK, with levels of business research development amongst the lowest nationally. We make an outstanding contribution to our region’s growth and economic regeneration through our leadership of major strategic projects with civic partners via our [‘Keele Deals’](#). Collectively, these have attracted more than £70m of external investment to realise the benefits from research and innovation, generate green, economic growth, improve healthcare and put our region at the heart of the transition to a low carbon economy. Our Keele Deals were cited at the launch of the UPP Foundation Civic University [Commission’s report](#) as an outstanding contributor to our region. Our impact on local growth was also recognised in the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) 2021 and 2022, where Keele was in the top 10% of universities contributing to local growth and regeneration.

1.5 A clear and tangible commitment to [equality, diversity and inclusion](#) is fundamental to our core values. All our eligible Academic Schools have Athena Swan Silver or Bronze awards, and in 2019 we were one of the first institutions to secure the Race Equality Charter. We have also received a gold award for our work advancing LGBTQ+ equality in the Workplace Equality Index 2022. The University is proud to be a Disability Confident Level 2 employer.

1.6 We are truly sector-leading in our approach to Education for Sustainable Development, with a ground-breaking portfolio and innovative curriculum innovation building on world-leading

research in environmental sustainability. In the 2021 Green Gown Awards we were named [Global and UK Sustainability Institution of the Year 2021](#) recognising our whole-institution embedded approach. Our excellence in student and staff engagement with sustainability was further rewarded through our [ranking as "First Class"](#) in the People and Planet University (Green) League 2022/23. We were one of the first UK universities to declare a [climate emergency](#), and our campus acts as a living laboratory, home to Europe's largest [Smart Energy Network Demonstrator](#). We have recently become a [Nature Positive University](#), an initiative led by Oxford University and the United Nations Environment Programme. Taken together, Keele's lived commitment to sustainability shapes our students' educational and wider experiences through and beyond the curriculum. We encourage our students to develop as socially and ethically aware, responsible citizens, committed to fostering sustainability competencies through our curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences.

1.7 We are immensely proud of our [alumni](#) and their successes and achievements. We have a global community of over 100,000 alumni in 150 countries, including leaders in an array of sectors, professions, and careers, from CEOs, political leaders, and TV presenters, to entrepreneurs, fashion designers and diplomats. Our alumni are outstanding ambassadors for Keele, and they play a valuable role in supporting our current students in preparing for their own careers through active involvement in advisory boards, visiting speaker programmes and networking events, and schemes such as the [Keele Connect programme](#). Our alumni also contribute significantly to our [Key Fund](#) which enables a range of education and student experience-focussed projects, with over £150k of donations funding 90 projects between 2018-19 and 2021-22.

1.8 As of 2022-23, Keele's student body comprises approximately 13,000 students (12,000 in 2021/22), 70% of whom are undergraduate and 30% postgraduate. The overwhelming majority of our students (90%) are UK domiciled. 39% of our UK intake is from the West Midlands, with 15.5% from Stoke on Trent and 14.2% from Staffordshire, a part of the country where progression rates from school to higher education are exceptionally low. Stoke-on-Trent has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest level of deprivation in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), with approximately a third of postcodes within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Only 15% of the Stoke-on-Trent population obtain Level 4 qualifications or above, significantly below the national average of 27%.

1.9 Our commitment to equality of opportunity, demonstrated through our approach to widening access and participation, is exceptional, with over 19% of our students recruited from POLAR quintile 1 (compared to an average of 12.7% across the English HE sector). Over 20% of our students report having a disability. Our undergraduate student population is diverse, with approximately 19% coming from an Asian ethnic background, 7% black ethnic and 4% from a mixed ethnic background.

1.10 Keele is a comprehensive, broad-based University; our 14 academic Schools are organised into three Faculties: Medicine and Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition to our range of professionally and non-professionally focussed undergraduate programmes, we offer postgraduate taught and research programmes, a growing portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate [apprenticeships](#) (expanding from 71 students in 2018-19 to 285 in 2021-22) and, since 2020, online distance learning postgraduate programmes, now with over 450 enrolled students. We have a very small number of part-time students, with 160 part-time undergraduates in 2020-21 accounting for just 2.4 % of the population. The majority of these students are studying on post-registration Nursing programmes. In 2020 we established a joint Veterinary Sciences programme with Harper Adams University, with the first student cohort now in their third year of studies, amounting to 364 students overall. We also have a long-established and thriving fully integrated [Foundation Year](#), with approximately 500 students joining us through this route annually. In 2022 we launched a new international partnership college with Navitas, [Keele University International College \(KUIC\)](#), to support our strategic ambitions as a high-quality destination of choice for international students. Given the balance of our student body, we will be focussing this submission on our predominant course type, full-time undergraduate, taught in Keele, which includes our integrated Foundation Year students.

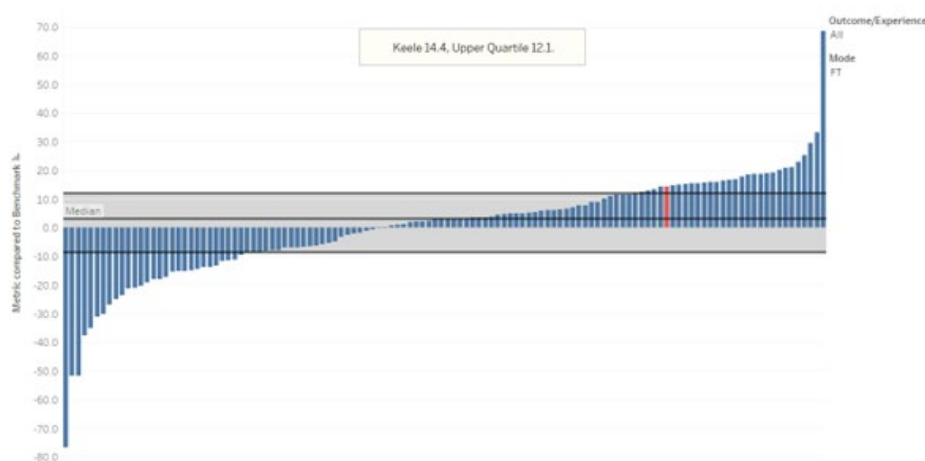
1.11 Effective and meaningful partnership working with students is a defining principle of our approach to education, and this manifests itself in a strong collaborative approach to enhancement. Students are an integral part of our governance structures, core members of deliberative committees and project groups, and equal partners in a range of shared initiatives, from the co-design of surveys to the reimagining of key educational frameworks. Our TEF submission has been drafted in partnership with our students and we have worked closely with our Students' Union elected officers to gather student feedback on all aspects of the educational experience at Keele, which have been used to inform our submission.

1.12 The Covid-19 pandemic provided us with the opportunity to accelerate our already well-established plans to embed digital learning and capabilities within our education delivery model. From the start of the pandemic, we responded with timely and effective academic and welfare support for our students to engage with the necessary changes in mode of delivery, enabling them to continue and succeed. We worked closely with our NHS partners to ensure that our health students and clinical staff could engage in national efforts to tackle the virus. We also put in place appropriate measures to amend our assessments to account for the impact of the disruption to study. These included amendments to assessment design, an additional reassessment opportunity and appropriate safety net procedures for the calculation of outcomes. Our External Examiners unanimously commended the University's response to teaching assessment, support and the determination of awards in light of Covid-19.

1.13 For many of our staff and students the pandemic was a challenging period which inevitably impacted their academic experience; however, throughout this time we focussed on continuing to provide an environment which supported the highest quality student learning, efforts which were strongly endorsed in student feedback. In addition to our positive overall rankings, evidence from the NSS optional B9 questions on welfare, resources and facilities highlighted top quartile performance on all questions in 2020 (41% response rate), and in 2021, the first NSS to fully reflect the experience during the pandemic, all B12 questions on learning community (42% response rate) were at the upper end of the top quartile.

1.14 We are delighted with our performance in the TEF indicators. With respect to both student experience and outcomes, all our overall indicators are above benchmark, with low levels of statistical uncertainty. When comparing our performance against universities in the sector, Keele is in the upper quartile for 6 of the 8 individual measures, and in the upper quartile of the university sector overall, when all measures are summed together. Our data firmly establishes us as a TEF Gold institution, and this submission will support that outcome by illustrating our outstanding approaches to student experience and student outcomes.

Sum of Metric Compared to Benchmark for all 8 metrics (Full-time, University Sector, excluding FE Colleges; 122 institutions)



## 2. Student experience

2.1 We have received sector-wide recognition for the quality of our student experience. Our NSS outcomes have been consistently excellent for well over a decade. In 2021, Keele was ranked in the top 10 in England for student satisfaction and in 2019 was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> of all broad-based English universities. Our TEF data on student experience are excellent. Of particular note is our performance in relation to Learning Resources and Student Voice, both of which are materially above benchmark (+2.6 percentage points (ppt) and +2.7ppt respectively). Reinforcing our reputation for excellence, in 2022, we were awarded the Student Crowd Award of Best University, as voted by students, based on 15,871 student reviews 'for going above and beyond to ensure a fantastic student experience'. This feedback covered the period from June 2020 to May 2022, a particularly challenging time for all as the sector responded to the pandemic and recovery.

2.2 In relation to our mix of subjects and students, we have outstanding performances in Media, Journalism and Communication, Medicine, Nursing & Midwifery, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Geography (collectively equating to 30% of our student body), with all presenting indicators significantly above benchmark across a range of measures. In a small group of disciplines our performance is disappointing. These include Music and Social Work both very small cohorts (collectively 2% of our total student numbers over the four-year period with a wide spread of statistical uncertainty), which within the recent period have undergone organisational change and significant curriculum refresh, resulting now in much improved morale and satisfaction. The recent inspection (May 2022) by Social Work England, for example, approved the provision with a range of commendations and the following feedback noting: *"many areas of good/excellent practice, including the unique location of Social Work within the School of Medicine, excellent partnerships with stakeholders, and a cohesive and strong team, committed to developing knowledgeable and skilful social workers."* In all subjects where there are lower performances, specific actions are in place and delivery is being monitored closely at School, Faculty and University level. This includes Education and Forensic Science (collectively 4% of our total student numbers). Key areas of action include ensuring the visibility and uptake of academic support, the redesign of assessment, focus on assessment literacy and improving the effectiveness of the student voice, which are further discussed below. Our recent portfolio transformation project has also driven the increased vocational relevance of our offer aligned to sectors feeding the regional and national economy. In the case of our significantly expanded suite of Computing and Data Science provision, for example, we are building strongly on our regional and national partnership with employers through the Keele Deals and our new Digital Society Institute, offering increased placement and internship opportunities.

2.3 We provide an excellent academic experience across the breadth of our student body confirming our commitment to an inclusive learning environment which supports all learners. We have outstanding data in relation to the experience of our students from black ethnic backgrounds, with values predominantly materially above benchmark. Data for our learners between 21 and 30 are materially above benchmark for all measures, and for learners from IMD Q1 and Q2, materially above benchmark for learning resources and student voice. Our internal analysis of NSS 2022 responses demonstrates a positive gap of 2.7 percentage points for POLAR Q1 versus Q5 students, while our students with a declared disability tell us that their experience is broadly in line with or above benchmark.

2.4 Keele's [Student Experience Strategy](#) articulates the importance, among other things, of community and values, and as a campus-based university with a strong emphasis on belonging, the challenges of the pandemic were significant for us. Our student feedback tells us that the university responded very well to the circumstances, surpassing the benchmark on every question in NSS 2021 with particularly positive responses to question 15 (smooth running and organisation of the course), which was 6 percentage points higher than benchmark, and question 18 (IT resources and facilities) and 27 (Overall Satisfaction), both of which are 5 points above benchmark.

2.5 In NSS 2022 ten of our subjects were ranked in the Top 20, with sector-leading performances in Radiography, Medicine, Physics and Astronomy, Environmental Science and



Human Biology. However, we were disappointed with our overall performance, which reflected a combination of factors as we emerged from the pandemic, including frustration about a slower than hoped for full return to campus activity, industrial action, staff and student fatigue and significant organisational change. In response we have acted promptly, with a combination of institutional and School actions to address all issues, and, in particular, to re-engage students on campus. For example, we have revamped our university-wide approach to induction and transition, placing an even greater emphasis on academic support and the importance of student engagement within and outside of taught sessions. There are promising indications through our cross-institutional internal survey of undergraduate year groups conducted in Autumn 2022 (referred to as the Autumn survey) that this is having a positive impact. From 1472 responses from across all undergraduate cohorts, 87% of returning students felt that their experiences of Keele community were excellent/good or satisfactory, and 84% of new students reported a sense of belonging at Keele.

## **Academic experience and assessment**

### **3. Institutional frameworks for learning teaching and assessment**

3.1 Our teaching excellence is underpinned by our high-quality curriculum and a commitment to innovative learning design, delivered by inspiring academics. As set out in our [Vision for Education](#), four tenets define our approach: (1) students are active participants engaged in social learning; (2) our teaching is informed by excellent research, practice and knowledge creation; (3) digital technology underpins all educational activities; (4) deliberate design, including through partnership with students, and innovation, ensures we provide an excellent academic experience to enable all our students to fulfil their potential. Through the process of validation and revalidation, we ensure our courses are tested against sector-leading standards and best practice, aligned to the expectations set out in our [Keele Curriculum Design Framework](#), enabling our students to gain the academic knowledge, skills and personal attributes for them to succeed in the future.

3.2 Active social learning sits at the heart of our teaching across all modes of learning, promoting engagement, collaboration, problem solving and knowledge co-production through project-based, problem-based, case-based, collaborative and team-based learning. Our students consistently tell us they benefit from excellent opportunities to work with each other as part of their learning (NSS Q22): from 2019 to 2021 agreement levels ranging from 80 to 88%, impressively above sector and benchmark average, with response rates of 72%, 71% and 77% respectively.

3.3 In the context of the transition to online provision during the pandemic, we launched the [Flexible Digital Education Framework](#) which articulates the design of learning, teaching and assessment across different contexts, from online-only to different types of blended provision. This framework, supported by a range of digital solutions, tools and practices, enabled us to respond very quickly to the challenges of the pandemic, and continues now to serve as a general set of guidelines for education at Keele. Our excellent NSS responses reflect how learning materials enhance student learning (Q.B7 2021 78% agree), and the effectiveness of our approach in supporting learning during the pandemic is further evidenced by the positive response to a Digital Experience Insights survey (DEIS) carried out in late 2020, with 79% of the 213 students surveyed rating the quality of the online teaching environment as either excellent or good.

3.4 The latest iteration of our institutional framework, the [Keele Learning Principles](#), builds on the successes of our delivery over recent years, informed by our agile, flexible digital approach, and frames the ongoing development of our blended model. We continually monitor our performance against these principles, drawing on the experiences of students and staff. In our most recent Autumn survey of undergraduates for example, 84% of respondents felt they were receiving an appropriate balance of face-to-face and on-line teaching and learning. The principles also articulate our strategic approach to assessment (see section 5), emphasising the importance of diverse and authentic forms of assessment to reflect our focus on applied learning.

3.5 The outstanding quality of our provision is recognised by our external reviewers and examiners, and reflected in positive endorsements, such as the following comments from one sample year:

- *“Staff responded brilliantly to the challenges of blended learning, using creative methods to keep students engaged and supported across all their modules, and going the extra mile to ensure that students understood what they needed to do and were helped to achieve their best in a carefully structured way”* (English Literature, 2021)
- *“The quality of teaching and learning are reflected within the success of the students. I have had the opportunity to review teaching material and have found them to be creative and embracing of excellent pedagogy.”* (Nursing, 2021)
- *“The teaching and learning environment is outstanding in its quality, not just because of the delivery but also the support offered by way of feedback via various routes to the students. I also note the variety (across all modules) of means of delivery – including mixtures of (i) extended assignments (ii) regular weekly ‘work programmes’ uploaded to the module page on KLE (iii) high-quality pre-recorded lectures – in addition to more standard means of delivery, making the cross-section of learning activity very varied and interesting for any individual student.”* (Mathematics, 2021)

3.6 Through our robust quality assurance mechanisms, we ensure that high standards are set and maintained across all our programmes. Our standards and processes are benchmarked, and we are confident that our programmes provide appropriate levels of rigour and stretch. 75 of our programmes are externally accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). In addition to internal stakeholder involvement, including students, in the development and validation of our programmes, we benefit from external input and critique from a range of industry experts, employers and professionals to ensure the currency, relevance and rigour. We also use a variety of data and feedback from students to enhance our practice, including formal and informal module evaluation, programme and cohort surveys and feedback sessions (see section 7), which feed into module and programme review. We operate an Annual Programme Review process (APR), through which Schools identify and reflect on key findings from information relevant to their programmes including; external examiner reports; student, staff and stakeholder feedback; and data commentaries on areas such as recruitment, student progression and withdrawal, degree classification, employment and student experience (NSS). These are used by Schools to assess the health of their programmes and to drive their enhancement plans in collaboration with their students.

## **4. Inspiring Learning and Teaching**

4.1 Our students tell us that their learning benefits from opportunities to explore ideas and concepts in depth (NSS Q5) and to bring information and ideas together from different topics (Q6). In both those areas, students consistently respond extremely positively, with above benchmark responses and institution-wide performance levels averaging at 82% and 86% respectively over the four years 2018-2022. Subjects of particular strength include Medicine, Radiography, Environmental Science and Midwifery. Our Autumn survey of returning undergraduate students confirms a high level of engagement in learning (85%), engaging with diverse perspectives in discussions (86%), and applying learning to wider global issues and challenges (83%).

4.2 Providing the opportunity for our students to personalise their learning experience has been a core principle of Keele since its formation. Our programmes are naturally broad in their design, 22% of our students take dual honours and a fifth of all our eligible students choose an elective module based outside their primary discipline. We offer a comprehensive set of electives to choose from, with on average 400 elective modules available annually. Elective options include the opportunity for students to develop a language specialism alongside core degree programmes, and to have this recognised in their degree qualification. Some 3051 students chose to take this opportunity between 2018-19 and 2021-22.

4.3 Our long tradition of fostering knowledge across disciplinary boundaries through elective and combined honours has recently entered a new phase, through the introduction of a ground-

breaking new curricular offer, [Global Challenge Pathways](#) (GCP). Under this scheme, undergraduates elect to study a cross-university themed pathway, linked to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), alongside their chosen undergraduate programme. Through themed interdisciplinary modules studied over three years of undergraduate study, students work with staff and fellow students across discipline boundaries, building knowledge and skills in relation to the biggest challenges affecting our society and world: Global Health, Social Justice, Climate Change and Sustainability, Digital Futures, Enterprise and the Future of Work. Uptake of this form of elective study has been very promising in its first year of operation, with over 500 (40% of eligible students) opting to undertake this interdisciplinary learning opportunity, with many of the remaining students continuing to study optional modules beyond their discipline.

4.4 We have embedded environmental sustainability in the design of all our undergraduate programmes, offering dedicated interdisciplinary study routes, including a sustainability theme in induction activity, and encouraging [extra-curricular engagement](#) in sustainability projects, programmes and initiatives, with some of those bringing together students with our Science Park companies. Our NSS data indicates the effectiveness of our approach, with 83% of respondents in 2021 agreeing that the institution encourages good environmental practice.

4.5 Inclusive learning, teaching and assessment is a core component of our [Curriculum Design Framework](#) and underpins all our practice. During 2018-19, a suite of resources and training for staff were developed arising from a project to improve the inclusivity of our delivery of teaching and learning, and this is now being carried forward through a university-wide Task Force on Inclusive Education. We have also provided institutional funding to support projects specifically targeted at improving inclusivity in teaching and assessment. Examples of such projects include development of a [tool for educators to enhance BAME students' in-class participation](#), development of [culturally appropriate resources for transnational and international education](#) and a project to support [underrepresented students' engagement with undergraduate research](#). All our assessments are designed to be inclusive, with the learning needs and preferences of our diverse student body in mind.

4.6 Aligned to our values of inclusivity and diversity and our commitment to equality of opportunity, Keele has been at the forefront of embedding [Decolonising the Curriculum](#) (DtC) within our practice. This work has been taken forward through joint staff-student working, with the launch of a Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum in 2018, and the establishment of the [Decolonise Keele Network](#) (DKN), a consortium of staff and students working at the grass-roots level to embed DTC within Schools. All Schools have regularly monitored Decolonising the Curriculum Action Plans which stimulate a range of initiatives, including projects on topics such as [Decolonising the Curriculum and Developing Inclusive Teaching: Staff and Student perspectives](#). Related projects include collaborative work with an [external consultant](#), which considered factors relating to the academic and wider student experience of BAME students, and a small-scale project on Faith and Beliefs in the Curriculum. In our recent Autumn survey, 85% of our returning students agreed that they have experienced a curriculum that relates to their own identity; with 85% also stating that they have engaged with diverse perspectives in their course.

4.7 We value innovation in teaching design and delivery, nurtured through an environment of creative and reflective practice. Innovation is supported within Schools and Faculties by Deans and Directors of Education, and centrally through [The Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence \(KIITE\)](#). KIITE fosters a community of innovation in a variety of ways, including through the [Teaching Innovation Projects Scheme \(TIPS\)](#), which provides funding to develop and evaluate learning and teaching innovations. During the period 2018-2022, £64k was invested in 25 teaching innovation projects across the university, with each receiving funding of up to £5000.

4.8 KIITE organises an annual [Education Conference](#) and a programme of events and workshops, which provide opportunities to share best practice and showcase innovative approaches to education at Keele, with over 700 staff participating in these events over the period 2018-2022. Our achievements in innovative learning design are exemplified by prestigious external awards, such as Advance HE's Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE).

4.9 Excellence in education within specific subject areas is evidenced through a range of esteem indicators, including journal and book publication, prizes and awards, engagement in national and international associations and educational conferences.

## 5. Innovative and Inclusive Assessment

5.1 Our institutional strategy for assessment and feedback, as set out in our [Keele Learning Principles](#), defines assessment as integral to learning. Our purposeful design and careful management of assessment is reflected in strong NSS performance overall, with consistently outstanding subject performances materially above benchmark in seven subject areas across the university: in Media, Chemistry, Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy, and Geography and Environmental Sciences, positively impacting over 1800 students (30% of our total population). Our NSS responses (2018-2021) for helpful feedback (Q11) are consistently above benchmark, and in 2019 were 5 percentage points above benchmark.

5.2 Our assessment strategy clearly reflects our commitment to applied learning and the development of knowledge and skills for the future. A key component is our emphasis on authentic assessment. Across all our programmes, assessment is deliberately designed to ensure a balance of authentic assessments, linked to applied learning, disciplinary practice, and the development of skills for future employability. While this approach has been in place for many years, we have taken the opportunity presented by the pandemic to drive a step change in practice involving digital assessment. There has been a very substantial decline in 'in-person' exams from 337 in 2018-19 to 56 in 2021-22, with the development of principles-led open book assessment and an increase in coursework as an alternative to traditional exams. Responses in NSS over recent years confirm the quality of our assessment, with 79% of students in NSS 2022 agreeing that the "*Assessment methods employed on their course required an in-depth understanding of course content*" (Question B11.2).

5.3 Examples of innovative authentic assessment practice include active engagement with employer and external briefs, such as [Client-led Collaborative Design in Foundation Year Computer Science](#), published in the Journal of the Foundation Year Network, and [Embedding Transformative Social Learning and Community Engagement in Film-making Pedagogy](#). This has led to direct benefits for student outcomes. For example, the introduction of authentic assessment



designed in partnership with employers which focussed on developing professional skills in a real-life environment led to a 9% uplift in student outcomes across a cohort of 113 Pharmacy students. Our external examiners consistently comment on the creativity of our assessments, with some examples as follows:

- *"Digital assessments (such as podcasts) .... seems like best practice in terms of effectively creating authentic assessment"* (English Literature, 2019-20)
- *"Brain Disease, the PBL component is very interesting and a challenging exercise for the students. Behavioural Neuroscience, the involvement of the students in delivering teaching and assessment questions is really innovative, and there is some very high level and high-quality work produced by these undergraduates."* (Neuroscience, 2019-20)
- *"The range of assessments is varied and innovative. A notable example is found in LSC30051 where students are asked to write a "News and Views" article. The assessment instructions are very good (given that it is not a literature review but requires the students to decipher a scientific publication and target their report to a non-expert audience) "* (Biochemistry 2019/20)
- *"The variety of assessments and, even within a specific assessment, the choice of questions or mode of responding (e.g., audio or written blog) allows students to play to their strengths and interests. The feedback is sensitively given and looks to be extremely helpful in allowing students to learn from weaker aspects of their submission and improve subsequent work"* (Psychology, 2021/22)

5.4 Our strategic drive to innovate in assessment and feedback policy and practice is being led through an Assessment Task Force, which brings together staff and students in working partnership. We have undertaken a number of enhancement projects within and across subjects. In Law for example, the School participated in a recent Advance HE collaborative project involving the use of diagnostic surveys, online collaboration events and bespoke workshops to address key challenges in assessment and feedback post-Covid-19. This has formed part of an institutional initiative to implement [TESTA](#) (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) methodology to enhance assessment and feedback practice. In Computing (109 students) lower than expected NSS satisfaction rates have led to the introduction of a mandatory template for assessment briefs. In Allied Health (230 students), informed by student feedback, a range of actions have been implemented to better prepare students for assessment and to develop feedback literacy. A further example of our innovative projects to improve feedback literacy is a TIPS project on developing student and staff assessment feedback literacies through the use of electronic reflective feedback diaries in Chemistry, a discipline which has outstanding indicators for assessment and feedback. Our [Annual Education Conference](#) in January 2022 '*Putting assessment practices to the test*' showcased a number of innovative projects and initiatives related to assessment from across the university and had contributions from national and international participants, attracting over 150 Keele staff attendees.

## 6. Research, Scholarship and Practice Informed Education

6.1 We have 740 FPE of academic staff with responsibility for teaching, of whom 56% are on Education and Research contracts, 30% on Education and Scholarship contracts, and the remaining 14% on Teaching only contracts, with the majority of those being practitioners. This balance of educators with a research, scholarship and practice background is a distinctive strength at Keele, providing a stimulating environment for learning led by professional staff with a mix of expertise.

6.2 Our research excellence provides the frame for a rich and intellectually stretching academic experience. Keele's REF 2021 return saw a 75% increase in the volume of [world-leading research](#) at Keele compared to REF 2014, with 80% of Keele's research being classified as either world-leading or internationally excellent set against a 25% increase in the number of staff submitted compared to 2014, reflecting our continued growth as a research-led university. Our curriculum is enriched by the research expertise these colleagues bring, and this is reflected in student feedback

which indicated that 78% of our students in NSS 2021 and 74% in NSS 2022 (optional question B7.4) agreed that their learning had benefitted from modules that are informed by current research.

6.3 Enquiry-based pedagogies linked to our principle of active social learning, including problem, project and team-based learning, provide opportunities for our students to engage with evidence-based practice and current research relevant to their discipline, participate in discussions about research, develop critical analysis and research skills and to undertake research themselves. Independent research projects are undertaken by students across the University. We offer our students an opportunity to showcase their independent research within their programmes, and also cross-institutionally, through the [Keele Conference of Undergraduate Research \(KCUR\)](#), which attracts participation from all faculties, with over 100 students participating in the event in the years 2018 and 2019. We have also supported **nine** students to go on to present their research at external conferences, such as the British Conference of Undergraduate Research and the World Congress on Undergraduate Research.

6.4 Several of our students have gone on to gain external recognition for their research.

We also provide access to funded opportunities for our students to gain research experience. For example, [ASPIRE Studentships](#) are offered to medical undergraduates in Years 1–3, to undertake a four-to-eight-week summer research project. Since 2018-19 some 29 substantial projects have been delivered, culminating in an annual showcase event. In addition, a range of externally funded summer studentships/bursaries from various agencies

have been made available to our students to support vacation projects.

6.5 Keele is renowned for the excellence of its practice-based education in several areas across the university. Our School of Medicine, which was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in England in the most recent NSS, boasts both a national and international reputation for applying research to tackle the most challenging problems facing healthcare professions education, with Keele contributing to the advancement of medical education in areas such as assessment and feedback (skills assessment, feedback dialogue and reflection, assessor cognition), preparation for practice, scholarship in the use of digital media and education in general practice.

6.6 Our long-standing Interprofessional Education (IPE) [programme](#) enables interprofessional learning throughout the undergraduate curriculum across a wide range of subjects in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and in collaboration with local NHS trusts. The programme involves a wide range of health care students, with 972 students enrolled for the Spring 2022 programme from Biomedical Science, Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Paramedic Science, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Radiography, Rehabilitation Science and trainee Nurse Associates. Feedback from participants (34% response rate) indicated overwhelming positive impact on professional knowledge by problem-solving (93.6%) and the opportunity to explore inter-professional working (93.9%). Responses from previous years (2020 and 2021) echo these findings: 85% of students (of 231 students in 2021) stated that they knew more about the role of other healthcare professions in patient care after the activities. A range of IPE projects provide opportunities for genuine multi-professional team working. In addition, IPE has been successfully extended to Foundation Year students with results of the end of module evaluation (from 21 out of 134 students) indicating between 80% and 95% agreement that the activities were very useful or useful. The excellent practice relating to IPE has been disseminated as peer reviewed outputs and a conference presentation.

6.7 Other examples of practice-based innovation, such as the use of simulation, feed directly into the educational experience of our students. In the School of Nursing and Midwifery, for example, where academic experience indicators for teaching, assessment and support are all

consistently outstanding, innovative pedagogic practice is integral to the educational experience. From the early days of developing simulation-based education using manikins, simulation has been incrementally integrated into the pre- and post-registration nursing curricula. Simulation provides 'a near representation of an actual life event', enabling students to develop competence, confidence and personal preparedness for clinical practice in a place of safety, supported by peers, and to acquire clinical decision-making skills essential for competence in practice. The impact of this is evidenced by the exceptionally high (+8.3ppt) NSS results for Learning Resources in Nursing and Midwifery. In Pharmacy, virtual patient (VP) technology allows healthcare students to practise a variety of clinical skills, shared clinical decision making and consultation. Beyond Keele, the VP avatars have been adapted in conjunction with a team at the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), to accompany the launch of the NICE Clinical Guidelines on Shared Decision Making (April 2021). This on-line learning has been accessed by over 1500 healthcare professionals within the UK alone. Ongoing work to develop a simulated Emergency Department, triage and admissions ward at the Clinical Education Centre, University Hospitals of North Midlands, further supports IPE immersive learning.

## 7. Effective Student Voice

7.1 Our outstanding TEF indicators for student voice, the majority of which are materially above benchmark, are testament to our commitment to high-quality and meaningful engagement with our students, which in turn, feeds directly into the continuous enhancement of the academic experience. Our NSS data on student voice are excellent, with 80% of our students consistently agreeing during the TEF period that they have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on their course. We are particularly proud of our indicators that are significantly above benchmark for our students in IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 (1990 students), mature students (830 students) and black students (370). It is particularly noteworthy that many of our largest cohorts such as Nursing and Midwifery (580), Medicine (380), Biosciences (320), Mathematics (210), Geography, Geology and Environmental Sciences (310) and Allied Health (230) have the most impressive indicators for student voice, all of which are materially above benchmark.

7.2 We embed and critically reflect on student voice in all that we do. Our students are engaged in our governance structure at all levels, are represented in all our key committees related to education and student experience and are active members of education-related institution-wide projects and working groups. All our committee business requires consideration of student consultation, noting how student feedback has been sought and utilised. In addition to a University Student Voice Committee, in 2018 we established a [University & Students' Unions Partnership Group](#), chaired on a cyclical basis by the Vice-Chancellor and the two SU Presidents and including senior staff from the university and our two Students' Unions. This group is tasked with bringing our shared vision and principles to life, as established in our [partnership agreement](#). We have a network of 290 [Student Voice Representatives](#) (SVRs), a rise of 12% from 260 in 2018-19. These SVRs represent students on their programme by gathering opinions and presenting views in relevant forums, in particular at [Student Staff Voice Committees](#). Representatives are appointed and trained by our Students' Union, and positively reflect the composition of our student body, particularly with respect to ethnicity and disability. We also have 14 Lead School Voice Reps who provide a valuable link between schools, the SVRs and the wider student body.

7.3 In order to extend and diversify the student voice, in 2019, the Keele100 was established to act as a consultative group of 100 students giving insight into key strategic initiatives such as student induction, student health and wellbeing, careers and employability, engagement monitoring, and sustainability. We regularly organise student focus groups led by staff and by student sabbatical facilitators, to inform the design and implementation of policies, processes and services. Over 1000 students have participated in focus groups between 2018-19 and 2021-22, which have informed a series of policy and regulation changes, including the shift from personal tutoring to academic mentoring, changes to the Exceptional Circumstances process and the improvement of library and digital resources. Schools are adopting diverse means to engage with their student body. For example, Pharmacy (340 students), which had a disappointing NSS 2022 outcome for student voice, has now introduced whole cohort listening sessions, led by students to

act as an informal forum for discussion. Student feedback events are part of the regular mechanisms in place to ensure open dialogue and partnership with our students to identify what works and what needs to change. This is in addition, of course, to our use of formal feedback means such as student surveys, including the NSS, internal student surveys and module evaluation.

## Resources support and engagement

### 8. Learning resources

8.1 Our TEF indicators for learning resources are consistently outstanding, and overall are 2.6ppt above benchmark, reflecting our excellent physical facilities and digital resources, which enhance learning and support our graduates with the skills to enter the workforce.

8.2 Investing in our students and our campus is of prime importance to us, and we have leveraged significant external and internal investment to further improve our physical learning resources during the TEF period. Major investments in recent years include £32m investment in a state-of-the-art [Central Science Laboratory \(CSL\)](#), which provides facilities to support our students in subjects across our faculties (43 % of our student body); £12m investment in the David Attenborough Laboratories for Life Sciences; £16.4m investment in a new flagship building to house [Keele Business School](#); £580k investment in facilities for a major new £19.6m building for the Harper and Keele Vet School; and significant other investment (c£1.5m) to create two large informal student learning spaces; prosthetics and orthotics facilities; and a new diagnostic imaging diagnostic imaging suite.

8.3 Our track-record of investment of over £1.2m in simulation facilities supports the excellent academic experience of students across a wide mix of our subjects. Resources include two community “health houses” at Keele to facilitate simulation activities for multi-disciplinary use including Paramedic Science, Radiography and Nursing, high-fidelity SIM family manikins and a training ambulance and Road Traffic Accident vehicle which provide students with real-time immersive learning experiences. A further successful bid to Health Education England has resulted in £300k investment in the development of a theatre environment to enable expansion of our virtual simulation opportunities for multi-professional use.

8.4 Our digital resources are an integral element of our educational offer, providing an excellent learning environment for students in all disciplines. Our outstanding NSS outcomes for learning resources in 2021 bear testament to our achievements in providing a flexible and responsive study environment. For example, responses to the optional NSS B7 question relating to course delivery, indicate 80% of students in 2022 and 79% in 2021 agreeing that the learning materials on their course enhanced their learning.

8.5 Over recent years we have invested significantly both in the underpinning infrastructure and those services that directly touch the academic experience. We have integrated existing core systems, such as the [Keele Learning Environment \(KLE\)](#), with new solutions such as Microsoft Teams and Sway. We have invested a further £119k into Lecture Capture (Panopto), £400k on new hardware, and are mid-way through a £7M investment into network transformation. In order to improve service, scalability and functionality for on-campus and off-campus students, we moved our VLE, Blackboard, to Software as a Service and have commenced piloting a new version of Blackboard, with a number of specific courses to further develop the digital opportunities within our education provision.

8.6 During the pandemic we successfully transitioned to on-line delivery over a period of 6 weeks, with ongoing support, training and virtual drop-in workshops in place for the next 12 months to ensure smooth operations. We also provided our students with remote access to PCs in the Central Science Laboratories and Library IT suites which enabled them to access a wide range of software, including some specialist software, whilst working off campus, and invested in additional loan laptops. This supported remote access has continued post-pandemic, giving students



additional flexibility in their learning. On campus all timetabled teaching spaces have been adapted to provide high quality AV equipment and lecture capture software, allowing the use of technologies that facilitate in-class engagement.

8.7 We have an outstanding library service, with an 85% satisfaction score in NSS 2022 which is consistent with performance above benchmark during the TEF period. During the 2021/22 academic year alone, over 3500 students interacted with our Library-led sessions, which include subject-specific induction and welcome events, [Digital Library Escape Room](#) and themed information literacy sessions, offering students support beyond their discipline, with their academic skills development. In addition to enquiry services, information skills training and research support, Academic Services Librarians offer digitisation services and manage the online reading lists system, [Aspire](#), enabling our students to access resources when it works for them. During comparable January to March periods in 2022 and 2021, student engagement with on-line reading lists doubled from 60k interactions to 119k. Feedback from our students on the library includes:

- *"Your support has increased my confidence to search for literature myself to drive service development and make sure that articles I've found are supported by other research and that I'm not missing potentially useful sources of evidence. This has translated directly into plans to improve patient care after finding a well written and evidenced protocol to improve management of patients in post-traumatic amnesia."*
- *"I just want to say a massive thank you to all the team of Librarians you helped me with literature search and formulating my dissertation topic. I came to you last year around October / November with my dissertation. I really appreciate the sessions I had were helpful and supported me to do my dissertation and I have passed."*

## 9 Staff Excellence

9.1 As outlined in our [Strategic Vision](#) and [People Strategy](#), we believe our people are our greatest asset. We value excellent teaching and scholarship as a core pillar in our strategy for success and in 2019 created an Education & Scholarship (E&S) career pathway for our staff, which can lead to promotion at all levels, including professor. 30% of our teaching staff are on this pathway. Alongside establishment of the E&S pathway we have also developed a set of role expectations, which provide a clear and sector-benchmarked framework for staff at each career stage within the pathway to support their professional development. Since the establishment of the pathway, a third of staff have been promoted. We also have a suite of reward mechanisms in place to celebrate excellence in education, and these include the [Keele Excellence Awards](#), which incorporate a range of awards focused on teaching and student support.

9.2 Nurturing excellent teaching is a key focus of Keele's academic staff development. Our students benefit from the professionalism of our teaching staff, 75% of whom have a recognised teaching qualification. We offer a programme of accredited staff development, tailored to suit staff at all levels, including the PGCert in Higher Education Teaching which is accredited by Advance HE and can also be completed as part of an Academic Professional Apprenticeship. The PGCert is compulsory for all early-career lecturers and can be extended to a [Masters in Higher Education Practice](#). We also offer an Advance HE accredited [PGCert in Clinical Education](#). Our [Introduction to Teaching and Demonstrating \(ITAD\)](#) course is a teaching-related professional development course open to all staff and postgraduate researchers who teach or support teaching. It has recently been updated to include those in teaching support roles, and includes an Advance HE accredited pathway, allowing participants to achieve Associate Fellowship (AFHEA). During the TEF period, 148 participants have completed, and a further 53 participants are currently undertaking the course. Over the period 325 of our staff have gained a HEA Fellowship with AdvanceHE: 25 Associate Fellows; 287 Fellows; and 60 Senior Fellows.

9.3 In addition to our accredited courses, we offer an extensive programme of staff development to support teaching. We have a scheme to enable up to twelve academics to take on the role of [Curriculum Design and Development Fellows](#), supporting curriculum-related initiatives such as education for sustainability, employability and assessment with school- and university wide



reach. We operate a [Peer Review of Teaching](#) scheme across the University, an important mechanism to ensure the delivery of excellent teaching. In recent years the excellence of our teaching staff at Keele has been recognised by a range of prestigious external awards, including a track record of nine successful National Teaching Fellowships awarded during the period and Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence in 2019 and 2022. We support our staff to develop their profile towards national awards and recognition through a new competitive [Scholarship Award](#), offering a range of support including access to conference funds and mentoring opportunities. We invest significant resources in supporting our staff to develop their digital skills; for example, all staff and students were provided with access to LinkedIn Learning during 2022, and during the period between July and October 2022 approximately 3000 individuals have engaged with the video resources available.

9.4 Our [Teaching Innovation Project Scheme \(TIPS\)](#) has been in place for almost 20 years and provides funding and support for academic colleagues to develop and evaluate their learning and teaching innovations through scholarship. TIPS provides funding for 6-12 projects annually through a competitive grant process (see section 4.7). All project leads report to colleagues on their work at the annual Education Conference and/or by writing an article for [JADE \(Journal of Academic Development and Education\)](#). A valuable opportunity for staff to disseminate their scholarship and engage in cross-disciplinary debate, JADE has enabled the publication of 10 editions since January 2018, with a readership of over 5000 views during the period.

## 10. Academic support

10.1 We offer outstanding academic support for all students across our subject mix. This is reflected in our excellent indicators across all splits, the vast majority of which are at or above benchmark. In three of the four years from 2018 to 2022, our NSS measures for academic support were above the materiality threshold: of the 57 metrics (overall and splits), 35% (20) are above the positive materiality threshold +2.5ppt.

10.2 We take an institutional approach to the provision of support to all students, while recognising and tailoring support for those with greatest need. Our outstanding indicators in subjects such as Nursing and Midwifery, Medicine, Mathematics, and Media, to name but a few, are complemented by excellent performance across the university in relation to our mature students (650 students), our non-UK students (430 students), and black students (370 students). The design of our curricula and assessment, inclusive environment, and student-centred teaching model offer the foundations for a positive and supportive learning experience, complemented by key institutional mechanisms, which aim to provide tailored support for individuals.

10.3 All students have access to an [Academic Mentor](#) (prior to 2021-22, a Personal Tutor), who works with them to review their personal, academic and career development goals and progress. Students have access to their allocated Academic Mentor at key points throughout the year and are encouraged outside those periods to contact them as the need arises. An important aspect of the mentor role is to signpost students to appropriate sources of specialist advice and support. In addition, professional courses, such as Medicine, offer additional support, often from experienced practitioners, with a focus on the student's professional development in preparation for practice. This support is tracked through mechanisms such as portfolio development and review.

10.4 During 2020-21, informed by feedback from students and our own understanding of student need, we created a [Student Experience & Support Team](#). This team provides all students, including online and apprentice learners, with the opportunity to access advice, guidance, and one-to-one support on any matter related to their studies or wellbeing, from a team of specialist, trained staff. The creation of this team has enabled us to redefine the Personal Tutor role to focus much more strongly on academic support. During 2022 we formalised this through the retitling of the role as [Academic Mentor](#), supported by a revised [Code of Practice](#).

10.5 The effectiveness of the new academic mentoring approach is supported by the introduction of an online student-facing dashboard, [My Keele Journey](#), which has been developed

in partnership with an external software provider. This dashboard brings together student engagement information from a range of sources, including access to the VLE, library activity, MS Teams usage, attendance, and assessment data, enabling students to self-monitor and self-regulate and in dialogue with their Academic Mentor to benefit from tailored support and personalised guidance for learning. Shared access to the dashboard by Senior Academic Mentors, Academic Mentors and Student Experience & Support Officers (SESOs) enables informed interventions, proactive advice and guidance and support to be put in place for students who are not engaging.

10.6 The dashboard was initially developed in 2020/21 as part of the university's [Start to Success project](#) to support the mental health and wellbeing of HE and FE students and was funded by an Office for Students and Research England project, prioritising disadvantaged students, community engaged learning and digital delivery. An initial pilot with students in the Foundation Year was followed by a larger pilot during the 2021-22 academic year involving 675 students across four schools. This pilot confirmed the usefulness of the dashboard to highlight the association between engagement and student outcomes and to tailor appropriate interventions. The dashboard has been introduced university-wide from September 2022 to all taught students linked to the academic mentoring system. In the three months since launch, 4597 undergraduates (50% of the total undergraduate population) have had at least one intervention logged, and in the Foundation Year, there is a 79% uptake among the 625 students.

10.7 Our [academic skills](#) support teams provide tailored support for students at all stages of their educational journey. Students are able to access a broad range of online resources aimed at improving engagement, skills development and ultimately, student outcomes, including guides to help with academic reading, writing and research. We provide a [Study Matters Podcast](#), which helps students to develop a wide range of academic skills to succeed in their studies. The podcast was accessed by over 1000 students during the last 2 years and our academic skills website has been accessed over 24,000 times during the period 2018-2022. We offer a series of [academic skills workshops](#), retreats and programmes open to all students that provide an opportunity to develop approaches to university learning in an informal group setting, exploring strategies with students in-situ from across Keele's community. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, 960 students registered for a workshop, evaluating the experience very positively. Our ['In a Nutshell'](#) series provides students with support in using library resources to prepare assignments. During the four-year period, 193 events were delivered and attended by 3507 students. Our most popular service is [Write Direction](#), which provides 1-to-1 coaching which encourages students to commit to their studies and take responsibility for their own learning and development in collaboration with tutors and Academic Mentors. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, 1,268 appointments were made with Write Direction, with a 100% recommendation rate and 100% positive feedback on the impact students perceived the session had on their academic performance. In the most recent academic year 2021-2022, consistent with previous years, 40% of the students taking up Write Direction were from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 backgrounds, 40% BAME, and 28% with a declared disability. We are now implementing an ambitious plan to expand the reach of our excellent services through enhanced digital provision.

10.8 We recognise the importance of supporting our students to gain the essential digital skills to succeed both in university and beyond. We have developed a series of interventions to support this, including embedding the JISC Digital Capabilities tool within our induction process. Through a self-survey (My Skills Progress), students are prompted to reflect annually on their digital capabilities and to identify current strengths and areas for development. Since its first use in 2021, 3942 students have engaged with the tool. Building on this, we have created a Keele-specific tool to capture and track a range of capabilities and gains, aligned with the IEEE 3527.1-2020 Standard for Digital Intelligence (DQ) Framework for Digital Literacy, Skills, and Readiness. This is now in pilot phase for full roll-out during 2023. Starting in 2021, we have offered all our students' free access to LinkedIn Learning, with 3025 students setting up profiles, we plan to roll this out as a core element of induction across all students from 2023.

10.9 We have significantly enhanced our approach to student induction and transition in response to students' needs post-pandemic. Support for our students begins before arrival with a robust induction package to students, which comprises an [online pre-arrival induction](#), principally for new students, also available to returners. The levels of engagement with this package are very positive: with 83% of new undergraduate home domiciled students having engaged by the census date in early October and 76% having completed all components of the module. 67% of returning students had also engaged with this resource by the same point, with a 59% completion rate. Completion of the module will now be a required element of our enhanced Welcome activities.

10.10 Induction comprises a range of academic and social activities organised into themes, which include resilience, behaviour, support & expectations, academic, skills & careers, social, networks, peer support, key information & orientation. Our Autumn survey, which reflected on the return to in-situ induction, indicated a high level of satisfaction with the preparation induction had provided: 92% (426 students) of new undergraduates reported no gaps in their induction. All our students with a disability and international students are strongly encouraged to engage or arrive the week before the start of term, to ensure that those who may need longer to orientate and settle in have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the environment and support before the main induction events start. Informed by analysis of our data and feedback from our students, we are piloting an inter-semester 'bridge' during 2022-23, to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on semester one and prepare for semester two.

10.11 We recognise that wellbeing can have a strong impact on students' academic achievement. Our [Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#) sets out our whole-university approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Over recent years we have undertaken significant work to develop our student support offer. This includes establishment of the Student Experience and Support Team and introduction of the My Keele Journey dashboard, as described above (section 10.5). Our [Student Assistance Programme](#) enables all students to access a 24/7 confidential helpline and digital resources for support with any issues they may be experiencing, and since this was established in July 2021, 668 students have used this scheme. We have also brought our Student Experience and Support, Counselling & Mental Health, Disability & Dyslexia Support, Financial Support, Residence Life, Careers & Global Opportunities teams together into a single Directorate of [Student Services & Success](#), enabling a joined-up and holistic support offer for our students. We design our support offer in collaboration with our students, working closely with the SU on numerous projects and campaigns including induction, [#neverok](#), Spiking, Sexual Violence prevention, Drug and Alcohol impact.

10.12 The growth of our Student Services team has facilitated the institutional-level development of creative and varied methods of embedding engagement, including centrally managed [Peer Mentor Schemes](#), with 200 students from across all three Faculties participating in these schemes during 2021-22. We have also undertaken specific student facing campaigns, programmes and events that cater to a wider range of student needs. Through a new [Support to Study Policy](#) we have strengthened our support for students and staff when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours are having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically, aiming to ensure that wherever possible students can participate effectively in their academic studies and other aspects of their student experience. During the 2021-22 academic year, 371 students engaged in 'Support to Study', with 71% continuing with, or successfully completing, their studies.

## 11. Student Outcomes

11.1 Our key strategic aim is that all our students fulfil their potential and achieve the best possible outcomes. Whilst degree outcome and employment are not the only measures that define a successful graduate, we recognise that they are fundamentally important to our students, their families and sponsors. Our Student Outcomes data for our full-time undergraduates are consistently impressive across all three overall indicators: Continuation (+1.4ppt), Completion (+0.3ppt) and Progression (+1.9ppt) compared to benchmark. We demonstrate outstanding performance materially above benchmark across all three Faculties of the university, including; for continuation, in Music and Computing; for completion, in Education, Computing and Languages;

and for progression, across a wide range of our subject mix in Humanities and Social Sciences (Music, Education, History, Economics, Law, Politics), Natural Sciences (Biosciences, Computing, Geography) as well as in Medicine and Health Sciences (Allied Health and Pharmacy, Health & Social Care). Given the breadth of our subject range, this is particularly impressive. For our very small number of part-time undergraduates (principally studying on post-registration Nursing), our overall indicators for Continuation and Completion are materially above benchmark (+10ppt and +10.8ppt respectively), and our Continuation indicators for Apprenticeships (denominator is 90) are also exceptional (+5.1 ppt). For part-time Progression, there is only one year of data from Year 2 (denominator is 20), reflecting a bespoke course in Business which is no longer running.

11.2 Where our continuation performance is comparatively lower, notably Media and Social Work, this is isolated to very small cohorts (140 and 110 students respectively over the four years, representing 2% of our population) and subject to local factors, including structural reorganisation. Our internal monitoring, as reflected through annual programme review, indicates a range of actions to address continuation, the benefits of which are not yet visible in the current indicators. Examples include additional in-situ skills teaching at the beginning of the academic year and enhanced preparation for Year 1 Social Work students in readiness for practice, whilst Media has taken steps to enhance the first-year experience through revised modules and active support for engagement, which will continue to be monitored. In the latest Continuation figures (2018-19 starters) which saw a dip for our 110 part-time students, we are aware that the circumstances of the pandemic were particularly challenging with a specific impact on NHS placements.

11.3 With respect to completion, while Geography and Chemistry are below benchmark, with respective populations of 650 and 270 students over the four years, we note that these are still high completion rates, with Geography at 91.4% (against a very high subject benchmark of 94.1%) and Chemistry at 89.1% (benchmark 91.7%). Students in both these subjects were negatively impacted by more limited opportunities during the pandemic to benefit from the highly interactive formats of delivery (team-based learning and workshops and experiential learning through labs and fieldtrips). However, with the return to campus in 2021-22 significant additional effort has been put into re-engaging students in experiential activities. We are seeing excellent levels of satisfaction in relation to learning opportunities, as exemplified by NSS (2022) Q7 (for Chemistry 93%, and for Earth Sciences and Geography 87%), which we anticipate will enhance completion rates further. In addition, extremely high scores for access to resources (Q20) also reflect very positively the environment, supporting student learning and outcomes.

11.4 Areas where progression is below benchmark are Philosophy (50 students), Chemistry (110 students) and Forensic Science (50 students), all of which have relatively small numbers of students and a large degree of statistical uncertainty. In the case of Philosophy, progression to further study is similar to the sector but progression to highly skilled employment is lower. Graduate median earnings after 5 years, however, place Philosophy at Keele second in the sector. In addition to actions to increase authentic, industry-based assessment, Chemistry has taken strides to enhance opportunities for placements through the extension of links with industrial partners, including some based on campus. The introduction of a suite of relevant postgraduate programmes within the School is also providing an attractive route to further study for students in Chemistry and Forensic Science, with a positive impact on progression.

11.5 In-keeping with our commitment to equality of opportunity and supporting success for all, our progression indicators are exceptional in relation to our diverse student groups: in particular, ABCS Quintile 1, Deprivation Quintile 1, students reporting a disability, students from Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds and students eligible for free school meals, for whom all indicators are materially above benchmark. In relation to Geography of Employment, our metrics indicate 84% in Quintile 1, which is 4 percentage points above benchmark.

11.6 We are mindful of lower than benchmark progression for our students from black ethnic backgrounds (210 students). As outlined in section 4, we take an inclusive approach to our practice, through initiatives such as decolonising the curriculum, inclusive assessment and the availability of high-quality opportunities through our Careers and Employability programme which

benefit our diverse student population. However, a range of initiatives, both centrally and within schools are of particular relevance to our black students. For example, in Pharmacy, where there is a larger proportion of students from a black ethnic background (73 individuals in 2021-22), students benefit from excellent School-level support including with pre-registration application and tailored careers fair and sponsored attendance at the Black and Ethnic Minority Early Career Research Conference. In Law, a range of careers mentoring, and work experience opportunities are in place, including the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship programme and targeted networking activities, such as a recent networking event for black students, which 25 of our black students attended.

## 12. Ensuring all students succeed

12.1 Keele's community of students is very diverse. We have a well-established commitment to, and documented success in, supporting continuation, completion and progression for students falling within the remit of our [Access & Participation Plan](#) (APP). During 2020-2021 we have made significant progress in closing gaps identified in our APP, with our BAME-White awarding gap reducing by 9 percentage points from -13.9% to -5.0%; the gap between our disabled and non-disabled students reducing from -5.1% to -1.0%; and the gap between POLAR4 Q1-Q5 reducing from -4.9% to -4.0%. We approach this work through the implementation of our inclusive model of learning, teaching and assessment, and the provision of excellent academic support and learning environment, tailored to support all students to succeed (see sections 4-5).

12.2 We are particularly proud of our established and integrated Foundation Year (FY) programme, which enables students with lower entry tariff and fewer traditional qualifications than required for our main-entry undergraduate courses to develop academic knowledge and skills prior to joining the main cohort. For 2022-23, 19.7% of new entrants joined Keele through FY, with 18.6% of our total undergraduate body made up of current and former FY students. Recruitment to our Foundation Year is very diverse: between 2016/17 and 2020/21 approximately one in four of our Foundation Year students had a declared disability and almost 50% were from POLAR quintile 1 or 2. The percentage of BAME FY students during the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 has increased from 40.9% to 49.5%, compared to 28.6% and 32.8% for the wider student population. This programme has been central to Keele's core aims since the university's establishment and has evolved over time in response to need. What has remained constant is the outstanding outcomes for students entering through the FY. Outcomes data for FY students are truly excellent, with continuation (1730 students at 90.5% against a benchmark of 87.5%) and progression (310 students, 75.9% against a benchmark of 72.2%), materially above benchmark, with continuation and progression in line with benchmark and completion data also significantly above benchmark (960 students, 82.5% against a benchmark of 80.4%).

12.3 Financial hardship can be a key factor impacting student continuation and completion. We offer an extensive and tailored range of [financial support](#) for our students. This includes a [Keele University Bursary](#) of £1,000 per year for each year of study for students from households with an income of up to £15,000. A suite of other [bursaries](#) targeted at specific minority student groups include Sanctuary Scholarships, targeted at students from asylum seeker and forced migrant backgrounds, and our Care Leavers and Estranged Students Bursary, which offers all eligible students a cash award of £1,000 per year of study and £500 upon graduation. We are piloting an innovative [Support Fund](#), developed in consultation with our students during the TEF period, that provides targeted, needs-based support, addressing not only financial difficulties but also referrals to appropriate pastoral care; to provide financial support where a student is not in 'traditional' hardship, but still has a financial need. During 2021-22, 560 students received support from the Support Fund, amounting to a total spend of c£534k. Feedback from recipients indicated that the majority felt that accessing these funds had a positive impact on their ability to continue their studies. We have an established [Hardship Fund](#) available to students experiencing severe financial hardship during their time at university. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis; successful applicants could be awarded up to £2,500 annually. Alongside our bursaries and hardship funds we also offer an extensive package of financial information, advice and guidance through our Student Financial Support team and were delighted that the quality of this support was



recognised through us being awarded the [Student Money Advice Award 2022](#) by the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA).

12.4 Wellbeing can have a strong impact on continuation and completion. Section 10 sets out our high-level approach to providing sector-leading student support. We provide tailored support for key student groups, which includes specialist services for disability and dyslexia support, counselling and mental health support; a well-developed student induction programme including tailored events for target groups, and a programme of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at targets groups such as Carers Week, the Estranged Student Solidarity Campaign and Refugee Week. We work hard to foster an inclusive campus community and through our novel [Keele Communities Together Group](#) have invested over £100k in community-based projects and events that celebrate our diversity and bring staff and student groups together.

12.5 We also work closely with our Students' Union in sustaining and developing the [ASK independent advice service](#) which provides free, confidential and impartial advice to our students on a range of issues, such as academic topics, health, family, wellbeing, accommodation, finance, legal, international, employment. This advice supplements our student support and assists our students in navigating and resolving issues that may impact continuation. Over 4000 students have accessed this service during the period 2018-2022. Further information on ASK is provided in our student submission.

12.6 Sector-wide there has been an exponential rise in recent years in the number of students declaring a mental health condition to their university, with notable gaps for continuation, completion and attainment compared with students with no reported disability. Keele has a higher proportion of students with a declared mental health condition (5.7% in 2020-21) compared to the sector average (4.8%) and has put in place an extensive programme of support for these students. This includes leading and delivering an ambitious [OfS funded programme of regional activity centred on student mental health](#), with a particular focus on student transitions into, through and beyond higher education. Over the last four years we have reviewed our structure and enhanced resourcing for disability support, in order to positively impact the quality and consistency of support across our student community. We provide a tailored package of activities to support students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including a dedicated welcome and orientation programme and provision of work experience opportunities targeted at ASD students. Analysis of our own data indicates that as of 2021-22, Keele has a continuation gap of 2% for students with a mental health condition compared to students without a disability, this has reduced from 6.4% in 2016-17 and indicates the success of our interventions in this area to date.

12.7 A key component in supporting completion of our students is our approach to assessment. As noted in section 5, our reform of assessment has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of in-situ exams. We note that there is more work to do to embed best practice in assessment literacy, and to address challenges such as academic misconduct and poor practice; we are actively pursuing these priorities overseen by our University Education Committee.

### 13 Student future success

13.1 A key component of our students' success is the integration of professional engagement and personal development in all students' academic experience. Our [Employability, Employer Engagement and Enterprise Strategy](#) 2018-2021, refreshed for 2022-2025, sets the strategic imperative to embed employability and external engagement in all our programmes, through an outward-facing curriculum which includes experiential learning opportunities, placements, and the application of learning to authentic tasks and contexts.

13.2 Evidence that we are effectively delivering on these priorities comes from a variety of sources, and principally, our excellent Student Outcomes data. We have gained recognition for our approach at a national level, with the University winning in two categories and shortlisted in a further three in the [2021 National Undergraduate Employability \(NUE\) Awards](#), which celebrate the outstanding achievements of employers, students and universities in undergraduate work

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UKPRN: 10007767

experience across the UK: Keele was named winner of the 'Best Collaboration Between a University and Employer' award.

and in 2021-22, Keele came top in the UK in the General Medical Council F1 Preparedness Survey for the skills our medical students felt they received through their studies at Keele.

13.3 Feedback from our students enables us to develop and implement targeted interventions, mapped through School and Faculty plans. Our NSS optional questions, for example, indicate that between 2019 and 2022 between 86% and 89% of students (based on a 34-41% response rate) felt confident that the skills they had developed during the time at Keele would be useful in their future work. Between 72% and 87% of students between 2019 and 2022 also reported that as a result of their studies they believe they have improved their career prospects. The accounts of our graduates through the Graduate Outcomes survey confirm the alignment of our educational offer with future needs. For example, in the most recent 2019-20 survey, Keele ranks 25<sup>th</sup> out of 155 institutions (well ahead of the sector overall and all benchmarking comparator groups) for graduates' reflections on the usefulness for their current activity of their previous learning, and 18<sup>th</sup> in relation to meaningfulness of their current activity. Our Graduate Outcomes response rate (61%) is also ahead of both sector and benchmark groups.

13.4 All our programmes (except for a small number of professional programmes which already have significant embedded placement activity) provide students with the opportunity to undertake a year studying abroad or on an industrial or work placement. The proportion of students engaged on a work placement has increased from 50.9% in 2017/18 to 65.3% during 2020/21. This is a particular achievement given the challenges that the pandemic presented in establishing and delivering placement activity, alongside the growth of our undergraduate student population during this period. In expanding our provision beyond our clinical and regulated programmes, we have taken a creative approach to placement and internship design, providing more flexibility for our students through the inclusion of project and consultancy-based placements, sometimes conducted virtually. These activities typically involve students delivering solutions for employers in an alternative format to the week-on-week block style of delivery. Feedback from our students indicates that this approach particularly benefits students who need to work part-time, have caring responsibilities and those that require greater flexibility.

13.5 Examples of innovative placement models which also address our civic mission include the [Keele Research and Innovation Support Programme \(KRISP\)](#), a £10.5m ERDF funded programme which successfully delivered over 160 student associate placements between 2019 and 2022, providing students with the opportunity to work on projects in collaboration with local businesses. We also have a long-established track record of delivering internships funded by [Santander](#). Building on this success, our next generation of externally funded internships and placements will be underpinned by funding from our successful bid for UK Shared Prosperity Funding, amounting to £900k. This is designed to support student placement activity across six thematic areas: digital society and economy, sustainability, business innovation, access to justice, culture and creativity, and entrepreneurship, areas which map directly on to Keele's areas of strength and the Keele Deal initiatives we have established as part of our contribution to local and regional growth and regeneration.

13.6 Alongside the above, Schools support their students' progression through learning activities and authentic assessment design, the involvement of external experts and alumni as guest speakers and contributors to networking events, and the delivery of placement modules co-designed and delivered with Careers and Employability. In the period from 2018/19 to 2021/22, 1398 students have engaged in a range of internship and entrepreneurship opportunities with employers and civic organisations. Examples of these include placements with a sustainability

focus (in Geography, Geology and Environment), in Computing and Mathematics teaching-focused modules which provide students with an experience of classroom teaching in local secondary schools, and in Law, the [Community Legal Outreach Collaboration \(CLOCK\)](#), which provides students with the opportunity to assist, monitor and promote justice within disadvantaged communities. With respect to the latter, 269 students contributed 13,072 hours of such community-based engagement during the period, complementing a range of other external engagement initiatives with employers and alumni.

13.7 Feedback from our external examiners on embedding of employability in the curriculum is consistently positive, with examples of this as follows:

- *"The module, "Literature and Society" is an excellent and timely module that is both practice-based and theoretically inflected. It encourages students to think about employability and relevant skills ahead of finishing their degree and I think works really well for second year students." (English, 2019-20)*
- *"Employability was a theme that emerged in our discussions with final year students. I was struck by the assessment for GEG 30023/40010 Geographies of Health and Illness, which builds students' understanding very well – they prepare a concept map and a research proposal. Being able to write an effective funding proposal is an important employability skill beyond the university sector. " (Human Geography, 2020-21)*

13.8 Alongside activity embedded within our academic delivery, our award-winning careers and employability offer includes a range of co- and extra-curricular initiatives designed to support our students' career readiness. These include provision of advice, guidance and support on careers and employability, delivered through bookable appointments with careers advisers (7640 during the period 2018-2022); opportunities to meet and network with employers (with 554 events organised and attended by 5222 students during the period); access to [Keele Careers Online](#), a sector-leading digital platform enabling access to content-rich career development resources and vacancy information, CV review (CV360) and opportunities for digital interview practice. During 2018-2022, 12,594 students used this platform.

13.9 During 2019 we launched our innovative [Keele Connect](#) platform which enables career mentoring relationships between students and our alumni community to be brokered using an online platform. This is open to all students but targeted particularly towards students from lower participation backgrounds and other target groups needing to support to build networks and employability skills. Data on usage indicates that since the platform was established 1668 alumni and 169 students have used the system. We are implementing our ambitious plan to increase awareness of and engagement with these opportunities by embedding referral to careers into the My Keele Journey dashboard.

13.10 We have a suite of initiatives targeted at students from our Access and Participation priority groups. Examples include the [Keele Connector Programme](#) which allocates participating students two 'Connectors', a career consultant and an alumnus, and provides them with access to micro-internships and supporting workshops, including continued support for two years beyond graduation. The programme attracts practical and financial support from Santander. 768 students have participated in the programme between 2013 and 2022. In addition, our [summer business start-up programme](#) aims to nurture student enterprise and skills development, supported by bursary payments for living costs and wrap-around support. Since introducing the summer grants scheme in 2019, 69 students have participated.

13.11 Other tailored careers and employability interventions include our [Career Accelerator Programme](#), a 3-day intensive career bootcamp designed for finalist students. This was initially established in response to the pandemic and the challenges students were facing with employment. Since its inception in 2020, over 60 students have taken part in the programme, with positive outcomes for those involved. During this period, we also extended our LinkedIn Learning licences to include our alumni, enabling recent graduates to gain additional skills following graduation to better equip them for the post-pandemic labour market. Recognising that under-represented students can find it difficult to engage with, and transition into, employment with elite

corporate employers, we have partnered with [upReach](#) to deliver a tailored programme of career development for a small but important subset of our students. These students have access to employer mentors, masterclasses, internships and other forms of experiential learning.

13.12 We were successful in gaining funding by OfS/UKRI to develop best practice in the delivery of knowledge exchange activity for students. The [Student Knowledge Exchange \(SKE\)](#) project was delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham during 2020-21 and 2021-22 and offered civic internships, student consultancies, virtual placements, international opportunities, enterprise challenges, and curriculum design that embeds student knowledge exchange. The project also involved the development of an evaluative framework tool to analyse the impact of student-led knowledge exchanges, as well as a toolkit to help embed enterprise in the curriculum. The evaluation indicated that of the 1398 Keele students engaged in the project, 70% were from under-represented groups. Feedback from questionnaires and reflective logs indicated that the vast majority of students reported a change of behaviour or aspirations based on experience of participating in the project.

#### **14. Educational Gains**

14.1 Keele's ethos remains true to its founding vision and mission: to provide a higher education experience that is accessible to all and enables all our students, regardless of background, to acquire the skills, knowledge and drive to make a genuine impact on the world. Our Vision and articulation of educational gain are one and the same: we recruit students with potential from all backgrounds and through a broad-based, research-informed educational experience, support them to develop academically, professionally and personally, and to graduate as socially and globally responsible citizens.

14.2 Our outstanding Student Outcomes data demonstrate how well we achieve this aim. Given the diversity of our student body, we are particularly proud that our progression data are materially above benchmark for the vast majority of our students from the least represented groups, including Quintiles 1 and 2 IMD and ABCS Quintile 1, disclosed disability, eligibility for free school meals, of mixed ethnic background and with a disclosed disability, and from across our subject base, including our integrated Foundation Year. Our approach to supporting equality of opportunity and success and our outstanding track-record in supporting social mobility has been recognised nationally, with Keele ranked in the top 20 in the [English Higher Education Social Mobility Index](#) for 2022. This index brings together Access & Participation (APP) data, longitudinal outcomes data and the index of multiple deprivation to give an insight into the social mobility of a provider's students.

14.3 We set clear expectations that all our students will develop the following highly valued skills and attributes: professional competency, social and ethical awareness (including sustainability), personal effectiveness and global citizenship, in addition to academic expertise. These graduate attributes, which complement subject-specific competencies, underpin our course design and the wider student experience and are made meaningful to students through a variety of means: through their articulation in module and programme specifications and handbooks, as principles framing learning opportunities presented on [student-facing webpages](#), as reference points for key interventions throughout the student journey from induction to graduation and beyond, including those tailored interventions facilitated by academic mentors.

14.4 Our robust design and approval processes ensure that all our programmes of study embed the development of skills and attributes that help prepare our students to succeed. Through regular performance review (including module review boards, post-assessment reviews and annual programme reports) we monitor the achievement of cohorts, student groups and individuals



throughout their academic studies, and the experiences they report in their feedback. Our academically rigorous programmes are designed to stimulate and stretch. As students advance through their studies, they build knowledge, progressively synthesised and applied to increasingly complex situations, and are required to demonstrate advanced critical thinking and reasoning. Feedback from our students confirms the effectiveness of our design, with 82% of students agreeing in response to the NSS optional question in 2021 that their course has provided them with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics and 81% agreeing that their course has provided them with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth.

14.5 Our students learn to work as part of a team, communicating effectively with expert and non-expert audiences both in writing and orally, problem-solving, managing time and workload and building their personal resilience. Through their feedback our students tell us how well their studies have helped them gain vital skills: in the NSS optional questions on personal development (2019) our students reported that 'as a result of their course their confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems had improved' (80%); their 'communication skills had improved' (85%); and their 'course has helped to present (themselves) with confidence' (78%).

14.6 As part of our commitment to widening horizons, all undergraduates have the option to study from a wide range of modern foreign languages (French, Japanese, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian), either for credit or as an extra-curricular offer. Those students who complete at least 4 modules in a chosen language to a required level will have this competency recognised in the title of their award. Uptake of language study is consistently impressive at a time when, nationally, language learning is in serious decline: since 2018/19 the average number of students studying a language module annually is 543 across all Schools of the university, including the Foundation Year. The uptake by student characteristic shows a favourable spread across less well represented groups: BAME 39%, Disability 23%, Mature 17%; and the ratio of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 to Q5 is 1.01. Further opportunities are also provided for globally minded students from across the university to gain an internationally recognised teaching qualification, the Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), as part of the Language Centre offer.

14.7 International experience and internationalisation are important aspects of our educational offer. Opportunities including short visits and summer mobility are embedded into modules and programmes with the support of our Global Opportunities Team. The uptake over the last three academic years, which included the pandemic period, amounted to 350 students. Although outbound mobility is not considered of interest or an option for many, the benefits of such an experience are well documented: not only in relation to academic outcomes, but also the development of their own competencies such as global awareness, resilience, self-management and self-efficacy. 42% of all outbound students meet one or more of Keele's APP groups.

14.8 The measurement of the impact of student mobility experiences (2019-21) showed, for example, that 98% of students reported 'more confidence and convinced of their abilities', 95% 'knowing better their strengths and weaknesses', 93% 'more able to adapt and act in new situations', 93% 'more open-minded and curious about new challenges', 86% noting gains in 'finding solutions in difficult or challenging contexts – problem solving', 86% reporting improved 'planning and carrying out learning independently'. Other initiatives such as the [Caribbean Elective](#) initiative, funded through the SKE scheme, provide opportunities for over 50 students to engage in an international community-based project. The personal development opportunity provided by this experience is summarised by one participant as follows: "*I would recommend this to other students as it not only gives a great insight into the communities in St Lucia, but it develops our key life skills. i.e., group work, negotiations, presenting, creative thinking.*"

14.9 In addition to the opportunities for students to engage in community-based activity through their studies (see section 13.4, 13.5 and 13.9 above), through collaboration with our Students' Union Keele students have extracurricular opportunities to take part in [volunteering](#) in their local community, and within the Students' Union leading clubs and societies. Volunteering provides a variety of benefits, including development of skills and attributes such as communication, empathy,



time management, and teamwork, which further support employability. As the Keele Student submission testifies, some 1021 students are currently registered as volunteers engaging in opportunities within and beyond the immediate Keele community. Such activities are reportable through the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

14.10 We understand and track our students' development beyond their academic performance at various points in their time with us through a range of data sources. For many of our students studying professionally oriented courses the development of competencies and preparation for employment is integral to the course design. Complementing this, since 2017 all undergraduate students have engaged with our career registration survey. This requires all enrolling and re-enrolling undergraduates to self-report on their relevant experience (part time roles, internships, volunteering and work experience) and their level of readiness with respect to career planning. Students' stage of development is then identified as: Decide, Plan, Compete, or Sorted, and associated with each of these stages are sets of valuable resources and information available from [Keele Careers Online](#). These include self-assessment tools on personal attributes, such as strengths, learning styles, resilience, motivation, decision making and resources including a CV builder, employer videos, assessment centre tools, aptitude builder, and an elevator pitch builder. This highly structured framework for personal and careers-focussed development provides an intuitive and accessible means for students to identify and work through the support available at their stage in development. Our data tells us that 77% of students at enrolment are in the 'Decide' category, and by graduation, these figures reduce to 47%. The careers registration data are also shared with the Careers and Employability Team and with Schools, providing academic colleagues with a better understanding of their students' current position, work-related experiences to date, to facilitate effective targeting of support.

14.11 Since 2021 Keele has used the Jisc Discovery Tool to enable students to understand their own current digital capabilities, and to actively engage with opportunities to grow their skills by engaging with resources mapped to the Jisc framework (see section 10.8). We have embedded this tool within our induction process, providing a consistent means of capturing students' self-reported data on their digital capabilities which in turn, feeds into development planning and progress reporting. Data for 2021 and 2022 (1876 and 668 records respectively) provide us with information about the levels of our students' capabilities and confidence across areas such as digital communication, digital skills for work, preparing for digital learning and data literacy. We know from these data that our students demonstrate particular strengths in communication and wellbeing, with development needs in relation to digital participation and creativity. We use this information to support students' own personal development planning, but also to inform the design of our induction and key skills support offered within Schools and centrally.

14.12 As reported in section 10.8, we are building on the digital capabilities initiative through the development of our own Keele solution, My Skills Progress, to be fully launched in 2023. Mapped to the global Digital Intelligence Framework, My Skills Progress allows students not only to understand their progress with respect to digital capabilities, but also a range of other skills mapped to our graduate attributes. Via My Skills Progress students can link learning outcomes and additional industry certifications, producing a digital portfolio to present to future employers. The personalised, user-focused nature of My Skills Progress makes this an ideal platform for tracking and reporting on educational gain for the future.

14.13 To provide a broader context for understanding educational gain, we draw on information from a range of surveys, both externally benchmarked and internal, providing insights into students' interests, behaviours and experiences at key points in their journey. An example of this is our Autumn survey, designed in partnership with the Students' Union, which captures the needs, aspirations and reflections of students across all undergraduate year groups, shedding light on their levels of preparedness, confidence and expectations at the start of the academic year. This data forms part of a suite of information that we use in our review, evaluation and enhancement processes to understand and act upon student feedback. As the dataset grows in size from year to year, it will provide an important means of tracking and evaluating educational gains across cohorts. Other complementary insights come from externally benchmarked surveys, such as the

International Student Barometer which provides rich data on the experience and developing skills of our growing international population. Furthermore, from 2022-23 we will be participating in Advance HE's UK Engagement Survey to gain detailed insights into student behaviours, engagement and needs.

14.14 Through our regular monitoring processes we gather, review and act upon the information about our students' educational gains, as cohorts and as individuals, to enhance our provision. We believe firmly in the value of students engaging with their own development in an active and data-informed way. We do this through our personalised system of academic mentoring which provides the context for shared staff and student discussions about academic and personal development based on student engagement and performance data. The introduction of our student-facing My Keele Journey dashboard enables students and staff together to consider best approaches to success, set objectives, put in place interventions, and track progress. Appropriate information on the progress of students is also accessible to a broader set of staff including Programme Directors, Directors and Deans of Education, and SESOs. Through robust reporting mechanisms at School, Faculty and University level committees, we have oversight institutionally of the progress of our students, are able to evaluate the impact of interventions, and use this to further enhance the range of responses we make to support students' success.

14.15 With equality of opportunity at the heart of our mission, we are an institution with an excellent reputation for, and commitment to, improving the life chances of all our students through education. Our data confirms that we do this exceptionally well. We have every reason to be proud of the transformative impact of a Keele education, which enables all to thrive, whatever their starting point, context and chosen study path.

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