

SECTION ONE: UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

1.1 Our University

Our **mission** is to transform lives. Our **vision** is to be a world-leading applied university. ¹Many universities claim a commitment to transforming lives; however, at Hallam the commitment is our core institutional mission and drives all our activities. ²We educate more students from underrepresented backgrounds than any other UK university — and have done so for the past five years. We enable marginalised and disadvantaged communities to access higher education. We are a university of place, committed to making our region more highly skilled, more successful, and more innovative through our engagement. Our focus on transformation underpins our civic commitment, supporting people, community groups and businesses to thrive.

Our claims to outstanding quality flow from our mission, and we want all our students to succeed whatever their starting point. Our student outcomes, which at institutional level are securely in line with benchmark with many split characteristics materially above benchmark, suggest we achieve this goal. In the TEF data, Hallam performs well: notably on completion (+2.4% against benchmark) continuation (+1.9% against benchmark), and progression (+1.8% against benchmark) for our full-time, undergraduate provision. At Hallam, students in the lowest ABCD quintile on full-time and part-time provision have outcomes materially above benchmark (for full-time students, on all outcomes, for part-time students, completion, and progression). In our indices of multiple deprivation data, part-time students from quintile 1 and 2 backgrounds are materially above benchmark for completion, full-time students from quintiles 1 and 2 are in line with benchmarks for all three outcomes measures, and for apprenticeships we are materially above benchmark for completion. Whilst our ³internal data shows our BAME degree awarding gap has narrowed over time (from 20.5% in 2017/18 to 12.7% in 2021/22), further work on ensuring parity of outcomes for all students remains a key Hallam focus (see Section Three).

We deliver consistently impressive graduate outcomes, higher than most similar institutions. We know that a rewarding career in a graduate-level job is itself a tool for transformation. Over the last three years, Hallam has had ⁴one of the highest proportions of graduates in highly skilled employment of any modern university, in large part thanks to our deliberative strategic focus on innovative work placements: 1,930 graduates reported they are in highly skilled employment within 15 months of graduating, with 94% in employment or further study. All our 24,000 undergraduate students experience real-world learning, leading to Hallam being named ⁵“Outstanding Entrepreneurial University of the year” at the Times Higher Education (THE) 2021 Awards — just one of numerous awards recognising our successes and those of our students.

Our commitment to securing outstanding outcomes is built on a distinctive approach. The ⁶Hallam Model provides a common curriculum design framework for undergraduate education across the whole university, embedding coherence and clarity into student experience and contributing to exceptional student outcomes. The Hallam Model has been used in course design, validation, and evaluation to ensure that all our courses engage with the world beyond the university, challenge students, enable them to collaborate with each other, with professionals and with practitioners, and support students to thrive intellectually and personally.

We are proud to be materially above benchmark in many subjects for student satisfaction and particularly for some underrepresented student groups, and we are highly focussed on achieving high levels of satisfaction for all by understanding more about the practices that lead to those high levels and addressing specific areas for improvement particularly in large subjects that have been significantly affected by the pandemic, detailed in Section Two.

1.2 Our Provision and Portfolio

We are one of the UK’s largest and most socially diverse universities, ² with over 35,000 students in 2020/21, and more than 300,000 alumni in 177 different countries. ⁷Students on full-time undergraduate courses account for 76% of our overall numbers, although our size means there are also significant numbers undertaking full-time and part-time postgraduate study, including PGCEs,

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and studying through Transnational Education: ⁸our global community of international students, staff and partnerships spans 120 countries.

Undergraduate students in scope of the TEF are predominantly full-time (around 92%), with 6% apprenticeships, and 2% other part-time (as at 2020/21). Most students are taught and registered at Hallam; our validation-only relationships accounted for around 1,500 students in 2020/21, with small numbers of courses franchised through collaborative partnerships. Our broad disciplinary course portfolio offers ⁹professionally accredited, vocationally oriented, as well as more traditional subjects, within three Colleges: Business, Technology and Engineering (BTE), Social Sciences and Arts (SSA), Health, Well-being, and Life Sciences (HWLS).

Hallam's vision to be a world-leading applied university has led us to invest heavily in work-based courses, and we have developed one of the largest and most comprehensive degree apprenticeship portfolios in the country. We currently have 2,127 enrolled learners across 33 standards in 13 academic departments, in partnership with 554 employers. The quality of our provision has been judged by ¹⁰Ofsted as "Good", alongside a successful full ¹¹ESFA financial audit. As well as playing a vital role in tackling the skills gap, our ¹²data shows that our degree apprenticeships enable a route into higher education which is a powerful vehicle for transforming lives. For example, ¹³in 2021, 44% of our apprentices were from geographical areas with the lowest number of young people participating in higher education, almost 10% higher than the national average. More than half are over the age of 21 on entry, with around 15% over the age of 35 seeking to upskill or reskill. Although apprenticeships are still a relatively new part of Hallam's portfolio, we are confident that, given the excellent outcomes achieved to date, this is an area for successful growth in line with our mission.

1.3 Our students

The diversity of our student body presents us with a huge opportunity and responsibility to make a significant difference to students' lives. We are very proud to attract ¹⁴more students from Tundra quintile 1 (in 2020/21, 5,120 out of 23,830 UG students = 21%) and more working-class students (from socio-economic backgrounds in routine and manual occupations) than any other university (2,910 new entrants in 2020/21 (35% of total), with the next highest at 2,190); more students from ABCS quintiles 1 and 2 than all but two other universities (3,110 new entrants in 2020/21; 38% of total); and more students reporting a disability than all but one other University (1,790 new entrants in 2020/21= 22% of total). Our student outcomes data shows we are succeeding with the vast majority of student groups, as noted above and detailed in Section Three. We were ¹⁴University of the Year at the Social Mobility Awards in 2021. During the pandemic, our tailored and comprehensive support for estranged students as well as care leavers was recognised by the ⁵Stand-Alone Pledge Award and by our early adoption of a ¹⁵new sector quality benchmark, and we are a ¹⁶University of Sanctuary in recognition of outstanding support for refugees.

1.4 A University of Place

Hallam is proudly a university of its place, rooted in the region, committed to enhancing opportunity, quality of life and the economy through the impact of our students, research, and collaborations. We aspire to be a beacon for what a university can do for and with its communities. We do this through our core activities and our leadership of the ¹⁷Civic University Network, supporting 120 universities across the UK to embed civic aspirations. We recently secured a £3.7m Research England grant for the National Civic Impact Accelerator to generate further engagement, impact and understanding across the sector.

Our educational transformation programme South Yorkshire Futures, launched in 2017, brings together regional partners to focus on supporting those from disadvantaged backgrounds during different educational stages. Our unique Early Years Community Research Centre, opened in May 2021 in collaboration with Watercliffe Meadow School, Save the Children, and Sheffield City Council, provides early years education in a disadvantaged area of Sheffield; the Centre functions as a beacon of best practice that can be shared across the region and beyond. Our commitment to these initiatives directly impacts on our future and current Hallam students, playing a significant role in their recruitment, experiences, and outcomes. We support disadvantaged students to benefit from graduate internships within SMEs across South Yorkshire, with 140 face-to-face and virtual

internships in 2020, increasing to 240 in 2021 and with further growth planned. With a 90% conversion rate of longer internships into full-time employment, this model is an effective enabler for graduate employment. Our “Class of 2022” internship campaign saw 117 SMEs offer internships supported by a Hallam £1,000 bursary. Our engagement won the ⁵2022 THE award for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community.

1.5 Engaging with students as partners in producing the TEF submission

Understanding the expectations, experience and motivations of our students is key, and that is why our Students’ Union (SU) and our broad range of student engagement activities have been central to this submission, building on well-established collaboration forums such as the “Representation Working Together Group”. A key reference point has been the ¹⁸Annual Student Voice Report (ASVR) produced for the last 10 years, evidencing the established integration of student voice in Hallam’s improvement cycle. The SU President has both led the Student Submission and been a full member of the institution’s submission group. We have shared all background information contributing to the institutional submission with the SU President and all Student Submission group members; drafts and final submissions have been shared; and we elaborate on key points within the Student Submission in Sections Two and Three.

In summary, we have enormous pride in Hallam students’ very high levels of achievement: these demonstrate the success of our distinctive mission, our exceptional commitment to embed applied learning, and our excellent tailored support for students. Hallam’s performance against the TEF measures is evidence of the consistently very high and often outstanding quality of our provision; but given the distinctive nature of our students, their starting points, and challenges and that of the communities we serve, Sheffield Hallam University is outstanding in delivering our mission to transform lives.

SECTION TWO: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 Introduction

This section considers our student experience metrics overall, with section 2.4 describing Hallam’s response to the NSS in more detail. Our institutional data and split metrics demonstrate how we successfully meet the needs of our diverse student population, and how we engage with students to improve their experience. Hallam’s TEF NSS data is at or above our benchmark on all five indicators of satisfaction for full-time undergraduate students, indicating very high-quality provision. Twelve of our subject areas are materially above benchmark on at least three of the five satisfaction measures, indicative of outstanding provision. Based on our 2020/21 FT UG numbers, these subjects account for 8,710 students, (or 40% of the total). 19 of our subjects (15,570 students or 71%) are materially above benchmark on at least one of the five satisfaction indicators. In only two subject areas (Nursing and Engineering) are we materially below benchmark on more than one satisfaction indicator; these account for 3,110 students, or 14% of the total. We acknowledge some decline in student satisfaction from our recent materially above benchmark performance; this is discussed in more detail below. We approach all shifts in student satisfaction with forensic analyses and interventions to address issues, and there are clear indications that this approach is leading to improvements which are expanded upon below (Section 2.4).

2.2 TEF Academic Experience and Assessment (SE1, SE2, SE3)

Student satisfaction with both teaching and assessment in Hallam’s TEF data is in line with benchmark (+0.8% and +0.4% respectively). For teaching, 10 of our subjects have materially above benchmark satisfaction, 15 are securely in line with benchmark and 3 are below benchmark, indicating very high quality overall. For assessment, 13 of our subjects have materially above benchmark satisfaction, 12 are securely in line with benchmark and 3 are below benchmark, again indicating very high quality.

2.2.1 Effective Teaching and Assessment Practices (SE1)

The Hallam Model

As outlined in Section One, Hallam's mission is to transform lives. We have a proven record of preparing students for life and employment, through our applied curriculum which combines outstanding research-informed teaching, academic rigour, and real-world engagement to ensure students are actively engaged in their learning. The Hallam Model was designed in 2019 in consultation with staff and students building on our existing approach to develop graduate level attributes for highly skilled employment. Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) (subject and industry experts, alumni, students, and Hallam staff) are also key to curriculum design in the Hallam Model, with every course aligned to at least one EAB. For example, Law and Criminology's EAB supports the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, including local, national, and international placement and employment opportunities for students and graduates. We note comments in the Student Submission indicating students have good understanding of the Hallam Model, confirming our view that we are well on the way to fully embedding the model so that all students understand its purpose and benefits. Every course is designed in accordance with the Hallam Model's four principles:

- **Engage** (Learning engages with the world beyond the University)
- **Challenge** (Learning is intellectually stretching in applied contexts)
- **Collaborate** (Learning with, from and alongside others)
- **Thrive** (Learning enables students to thrive personally, culturally, and professionally)

These principles inform and underpin not only course design, but also our learning, teaching and assessment practices with students and are expanded upon in the following sub-sections, in the light of student experience metrics. The year-on-year NSS outcomes which are indicative of very high quality and outstanding provision confirm our view that the adoption and ongoing development of the Hallam Model as a coherent framework across all courses is key to achieving a highly positive academic experience for our students.

Our students are taught by highly qualified and experienced academics, 77% of whom hold a ¹⁹recognised Higher Education teaching qualification, enabling them to stretch and challenge students and support their learning and attainment. We were named University of the Year for Teaching Quality in the 2020 Sunday Times Good University Guide, informed by our high levels of student satisfaction with teaching. Aligned to the Hallam Model, our ²⁰Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Framework sets out a range of principles, and features — reference points for all subject disciplines and their approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment. The LTA framework builds upon previous university initiatives such as the ²¹"Assessment Journey Programme", which ensures all students gain early formative feedback on their work, to support an effective university transition and continuation. Common assessment criteria and revised policies on marking times have also been implemented; during the TEF period, these have become "business as usual" and been further enhanced and embedded, ensuring high quality practices.

Support for both students and staff in relation to assessment and feedback has also contributed to high levels of student satisfaction. For example, during the pandemic, concerns regarding assessments were dramatically heightened. As noted in the Student Submission, some students took part in a national campaign for an assessment "SafetyNet" based on previous average marks. We developed inclusive ²²"No Detriment Measures". However, the campaign continued to call for a "SafetyNet", so senior staff, student campaigners and the SU met to agree a way forward. The No Detriment Measures were agreed and jointly promoted by Hallam, the SU and the SafetyNet campaign. Analysis of student outcomes confirmed that our measures effectively addressed anxieties prior to assessment and ensured no detriment was experienced. For example, although 11,331 repeat requests were submitted in advance of assessments, only 300 (3%) were necessary once students received their results.

Staff were also supported to adapt assessments during the pandemic through the ²³Assessment for Applied Learning Forum. Sessions included using and assessing digital and social media to develop

students' leadership, teamwork, and communication skills, led by one of our National Teaching Fellows (NTFs) and informed by her research. Additionally, the Digital Learning Team (DLT) led a workshop on "Assessments that work well online" for Course Leaders to adapt from campus-based examinations.

2.2.2 Excellence in Applied Learning (SE2)

We have worked with students and employers to define our applied learning approach that combines teaching and learning on campus with excellent digital learning and support, to inspire and engage students, contributing to the outstanding student outcomes described in Section Three. Since 2019 every UG student has undertaken a mandatory Highly Skilled Employment module in each level of study, including work experience or a placement. Informed by our "Extended Campus" vision (see Section 2.3.3), on-campus course delivery involves academics, industry leaders and technical experts providing practical sessions, lectures, seminars, demonstrations, and tutorials in our inclusive campus environment within highly equipped labs, studios, workshops, and simulation environments, or externally on field trips. On courses with required placements such as Initial Teacher Education, Nursing and Allied Health Professions, students are effectively supported by mentors (employed in the setting) through formal partnership agreements. Cross-disciplinary learning, for example as noted in the Student Submission for nursing and midwifery students, enables students to extend their subject expertise and prepare for future employment. In apprenticeships, effective co-teaching and work-based learning coaches ensure apprentices experience highly contextualised learning.

Digital platforms enhance the students' experience through live-streamed sessions, engaging with online learning activities alongside recorded materials. Independent learning, individually or with other students, is supported through open access to varied and specialised learning spaces. Students take on real-world projects with industry leaders through placements, internships, and volunteering activities. For example, Venture Matrix/ Applied Projects enables students from different courses to collaborate with private, public, and third-sector organisations to tackle real life challenges through practical work experience. In the last four years 16,778 students have participated, with module leaders reporting engagement, attendance, and attainment have all increased. Venture Matrix won an ⁵Advance HE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence in 2020.

Applied learning at Hallam also makes a strong link between challenging course content and workplace skills. For example, the Formula Student and SHU Racing project involves around 80 Engineering and Mathematics MEng (integrated Masters) students and combines practical engineering experience with skills described over decades by the ²⁴OECD as in demand by employers across all sectors including business planning and project management. The motorsport industry views this as the standard for engineering graduates transitioning from university to employment. Students become part of a community of practice with a keen sense of belonging to both the team and the University.

Our approach to applied learning has benefits for both students and communities. For example, our ⁵award-winning 'SHU Law' is a not-for-profit, fully regulated teaching law firm with a wide client base, enabling 900 Law and Criminology students to gain work-based learning each year. The clinic has provided the equivalent of £103,000 of legal services for clients who would otherwise be unable to access them and has secured over £50,000 in compensation.

The examples provided above are typical of students' experiences across Hallam's portfolio.

2.2.3 Research-informed teaching (SE3)

The power of research-informed teaching to inspire and challenge students, and the imperative for learning to be enriched by research and innovation, are embedded in our ²⁰LTA Framework and within our Research and Innovation Framework. ²⁵In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), Hallam significantly increased its sector share of ²⁶Quality Related income by 45% compared to 2014. We richly demonstrated the multitude of ways our research transforms lives through our focus on delivering real world impact: we have doubled our world leading (4*) impact- 43% (up from 22%), 78% of our impact is world leading or internationally excellent (4*+3*) (up from 72%), we are

top 10 in the UK for impact in Planning, Sport, and Art and Design and we grew our research significantly, whilst also increasing quality (24% of our research is world leading (4*) (up from 18%)) and 72% of our research is world leading or internationally excellent (4*+3*) (up from 65%). In the latest ²⁷QS Stars International Ratings System, we were awarded five stars in seven out of the eight categories including teaching, student employability, academic development, innovation, and inclusiveness. Our Institutional Research Strategy makes available £100K per year to enable and incentivise innovative 2-way connections between learning and research. Over the last five years cross-disciplinary academic teams have developed a ²⁸research-informed teaching toolkit for staff, informed by examining student and staff perceptions of research-informed teaching and embedding it in the curriculum. The examples below typify the ways that research is used in teaching across the portfolio to enhance student learning and outcomes with notable impact on student experience.

Most Level 6 students (100% in HWLS, 75% in BTE and 65% in SSA) undertake a major project with a strong link between both research-informed and applied learning, also contributing to high levels of student satisfaction. For example, the National Centre of Excellence for Food Engineering (NCEFE) offers students state-of-the-art facilities and extensive links with the Food and Drink industry through live projects, participation in advanced-level research, supported by experts to develop creative solutions to industry challenges using cutting edge technologies. All projects are aligned with NCEFE's research themes informed by current industry trends: plant-based protein, healthier foods, automation, robotics, advanced process control, AI, Industrial 4.0, Net-zero solutions, and thermodynamics modelling and analysis. TEF data for student satisfaction is materially above benchmark for all five measures in this subject area; in the most recent NSS levels of satisfaction with teaching, learning opportunities and assessment and feedback remain very high (for example BSc Nutrition, Diet and Well-Being has 97%, 93% and 78% respectively) evidencing excellence.

Research-related enrichment activities also develop students' subject knowledge and contribute to high levels of student satisfaction. For example, TEF satisfaction subject data for Chemistry is materially above benchmark in all measures and for Biosciences above benchmark for academic support and at benchmark for all others. In last year's NSS, BSc Biochemistry satisfaction with teaching was 97%, for Biology it was 90% and for BSc Chemistry it was 93%. Biosciences and Chemistry students have for three years led a public engagement project in soil chemistry and microbiology as student researchers. Trained in laboratory and field work methods, students visit schools to support pupils to participate in scientific research. Students develop project management, communication, and leadership skills with technical skills in chemistry and microbiology using high-end equipment. The project is funded by UK Research and Innovation, National Environment Research Council, and The Royal Society of Chemistry, which enables payment to students for participation.

In summary, the Hallam Model and LTA framework are well established across the University and have embedded very high-quality teaching and assessment practices, with a strong emphasis on applied learning and research-informed teaching which engages and challenges students to fulfil their potential, supporting their learning and attainment.

2.3 TEF Resources, Support and Student Engagement (SE4, 5, 6, 7)

2.3.1 Academic professional development linked to "Transforming Lives" (SE4)

Excellent academic practice is central to our mission to transform lives. We support and recognise staff development through distinctive initiatives and approaches. For example, our ²⁹Academic Careers Framework (for which we received the 2022 ⁵Universities Human Resources Award for Business Effectiveness and Organisational Performance) translates our strategy into measurable indicators associated with different posts and levels of responsibilities (in teaching and learning, external and professional engagement, research and innovation, and academic citizenship and leadership) all contributing to an excellent, applied student experience. The ³⁰UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) is embedded in our PGCert in HE which has had significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning across Hallam, contributing to ³¹external recognition. The

PgCert was re-validated in 2018 to become the Hallam Academic Award, leading to a PgDip in Academic Practice and a Level 7 Apprenticeship. The University supports staff to develop outstanding practice through this award, and 108 participants have completed it over the last three years.

Co-ordinated through Academic Development and Diversity (AD and D), additional support for excellent practice is delivered through a multi-stakeholder approach, drawing on expertise in Colleges and Professional Services with external input as needed. Alongside this, Student Experience, Teaching and Learning (SETL) teams support further staff development. For example, the DLT enables excellent digital practice through setting threshold standards and producing online guides and exemplars. Principal Learning Technologists provide subject-specific support to every department for digital learning, teaching, assessment and feedback, student engagement, collaboration, accessibility, and wellbeing. The DLT took the lead in supporting all staff to move to synchronous online teaching during the pandemic, as well as developing asynchronous materials and approaches that successfully maintained ³²student engagement with learning, ²⁰evaluated and monitored monthly (for example, use of collaboration and discussion tools in our VLE). The team introduced a “digital drop in” to support staff which is now embedded practice with over 7000 visits since its introduction during the pandemic.

Our professional recognition scheme accredited by Advance HE provides a practice-based framework to develop outstanding academic practice. In the TEF period the proportion of staff recognised by Advance HE has increased from 49.9% to 52.4%. Over 1000 staff are Advance HE Fellows. The number of Associate Fellows has increased from 60 to 91 and numerous Fellows have progressed to Senior Fellowship (increasing from 117 to 150), with 11 Principal Fellows. We actively support applications for National Teaching Fellowships (NTF) and the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE). We currently have 1 CATE award, and 13 NTFs who play an important role in enhancing teaching and learning, both within the University and externally. For example, one of our NTFs was a founding member of #DryLabsRealScience, involving Hallam and other universities during the pandemic. The #DryLabsRealScience network shared lectures and “How To” guides via open access platforms with a wide reach. YouTube videos have received over 3,000 views. The project has been nominated for a ⁵CATE award and for a Pearson Innovation award, and colleagues have produced several related publications. Whilst a causal link cannot be certain, in last year’s NSS the percentage of Biochemistry, Biology and Chemistry students satisfied with Learning Resources was 88, 85 and 89 respectively, indicating evidence of excellence alongside the high levels of satisfaction with teaching, noted above.

Disseminating, sharing, and celebrating excellent practice (SE4)

We use different methods to share good practice. For example, our well-established annual LTA two-day conference enables staff to report findings of ³³funded research projects to enhance teaching, learning and the student experience more widely. External speakers, and especially student keynotes, are key features of the conference. Since 2020 the conference has incorporated our student-nominated inspirational awards to staff for teaching, research supervision, academic advising, and student support, with recipients also recognised at our graduation ceremonies. In 2021/22 over 2,662 students nominated 915 staff and 49 awards were made. Staff receiving awards are encouraged to continue their academic development through our professional recognition scheme. One-off events also disseminate ideas on specific issues. For example, in Spring 2022, SETL ran a ³⁴three-part symposium on student retention, considered what works well, and where further improvements can be made; this example contributes to our above benchmark continuation at institutional level, alongside other activity outlined in this section and in Section Three. At College and subject levels, academic and professional services staff events enable further focused opportunities to share and discuss practice developments.

2.3.2 Hallam’s highly supportive learning environment: personalised academic support (SE5)

Our TEF data at institutional level, shows that student satisfaction with academic support is securely in line with benchmark (0.2% above). However, we note that there has been a dip in satisfaction over the recent TEF timeline, falling below benchmark in year 4. We have been taking steps to address

this, which we describe in the following sub-sections. At Subject level, for academic support, 13 out of 28 are materially above benchmark, 10 are securely in line and 5 are below benchmark. In the recent NSS there are signs of improvement — for example Psychology's score of 69% for academic support is 13% higher than the previous year but there is much more to do in two of our largest areas, Nursing and Midwifery and Engineering, as noted below in Section 2.4.

Student Wellbeing Programme (SE5)

Aligned to the “Thrive” principle of the Hallam Model, in 2019 we launched our Student Wellbeing Programme (based on an innovative framework developed at the University of Melbourne called ³⁵Enhancing Student Wellbeing), which provides supportive social, physical, and digital environments. The Programme includes a one university approach through ³⁶“Hallam Welcome” to ensure a consistent, positive, welcome experience, building an early sense of belonging, critical to supporting student success, as noted within the Student Submission. An online hub provides key information on support services and a Welcome “festival” in September 2022 included both social and skills-based sessions. 93.4% of students were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their welcome and pre-arrival experience and said it provided opportunities to make friends and transition to university. 82% of students found the welcome pages very useful and helped them feel prepared; these are comparable levels of satisfaction to previous years. We want students to engage with support offered and find it beneficial, so we ³⁷evaluate services annually, and information provided later within this section is drawn from these reports.

At subject and course level academic teams also ensure new students adapt successfully to university and build a strong sense of community early on. Effective induction is not an event, but a process which takes place over time, contributing to our above benchmark continuation at institutional level and explored in more detail in Section Three. For example, in Criminology, skills students need for their first core Graduate Research and Development module are embedded within the teaching by an experienced Academic Adviser, who also looks for early signs of support needs. New students receive e-mails for their first six weeks, from a senior member of the teaching team. Any response indicating further support is needed is followed by an immediate referral to the relevant Student Support or Academic Adviser for intervention. A further example of understanding how the early stages of a student's journey affects their success is our ³⁸research in 2021 which explored how the foundation year (FY) prepares students to succeed in their chosen degree pathways. Interviews with FY students now in levels four and five of their degree showed that they viewed their FY study as a “second chance” to achieve their educational ambitions and develop confidence in their academic ability. Participants felt that the FY gave them an advantage when entering undergraduate courses compared to their peers (Pickering, 2022). FY students' continuation in the TEF data is materially above benchmark, 91.8% against a benchmark of 83.9%, suggesting our approaches to supporting them, informed by our research above, are of very high quality.

Hallam's Student Support Triangle (SE5)

In 2018/19, Hallam introduced the Student Support Triangle, which provides designated advisers for academic, support and careers matters, for every student, from enrolment to graduation and beyond. Academic Advisers support students' engagement, and performance (assisted by Learner Analytics as detailed in Section Three). Student Support Advisers help students access specialist services. Employability Advisers help students develop career aspirations during and beyond their studies. There is evidence that the Student Support Triangle is highly visible to students, providing very high-quality support with areas of excellent practice within the University. For example, our annual ³⁷surveys of new and returning students, completed by 4,882 undergraduate students between 2020 and 2022, show consistently high awareness (84.2% - 89.8%) of Academic Advisers and very high satisfaction with the quality of support provided (93.7% - 95.9%). However, we note comments in the Student Submission about some students' lack of awareness of their support advisers, and inconsistent practice, based upon the SU Pulse Survey completed by 1,386 students across all levels (including PG and international students outside the scope of the TEF).

We actively promote the support triangle and evaluate student awareness and satisfaction through Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs), optional NSS questions, and surveys as noted above.

Our MEQ data shows that satisfaction with academic support has increased by 3.5% following a similar decrease during the pandemic. Student satisfaction with their personal development, employability skills and career skills, which also decreased in line with overall satisfaction during the pandemic, has begun to increase in NSS2022 (³⁹optional banks B1, B3, B15), indicating that our Student Support Triangle fosters a supportive learning environment, tailored to students' needs.

Support for Disabled Students (SE5, SE7)

Hallam provides tailored support for disabled students through specialist services and by making reasonable adjustments via learning contracts. We collect demographic data during enrolment to proactively understand all students' needs and encourage them to access support. In 2021/22, 7,908 students (26% of enrolments) declared a disability and 4,608 (58%) received tailored support through a learning contract. We have ¹⁴one of the largest numbers of university students with disabilities in the country, and our success in supporting them is evidenced by student satisfaction in line with benchmark for full time students. There has been an increase in the numbers of students reporting a need for mental health support, which peaked during 2020/21 (2,505, 32.1%), while the number disclosing multiple disabilities has increased year-on-year from 799 (11%) in 2018/19 to 1087 (13.7%) in 2021/22. To address this increase, we have adopted an inclusive support strategy and delivery model, which includes transition support and easily accessible assistive technology provision of both software and training as well as access to the broad range of academic skills support outlined below.

The effectiveness of our disabled student support is assessed through our ⁴⁰ and ³⁷ annual surveys. Our 2021/22 surveys showed that 92% of students who used Disabled Student Support were satisfied with the service (n=263), and 90% understood the purpose of their learning contract, with 76.9% stating it was easy to obtain. 80% of respondents felt that their learning contract adequately detailed their needs and commented on its value and clarity in helping them engage with their studies and remove anxieties. The survey identified clear actions based on student feedback, including improved accessibility of learning contracts to staff and reasonable adjustments while on placement, which are being implemented by the Head of Disabled Student Support.

2.3.3 Physical and virtual learning resources tailored effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning (SE6)

We believe Hallam offers an exceptionally supportive learning environment, evidenced by our very high levels of our student satisfaction with learning resources, which at 82.8% is securely in line with benchmark (81.2%) for the TEF period and was over 90% in 2019 (in top 10 of the sector). It is clear from the improvement in student satisfaction (+9%, Q19 NSS 2022) after the libraries reopened following lifting of pandemic restrictions that the physical environment and learning spaces alongside the availability of electronic resources are highly valued. In the TEF Subject level data 12 out of 28 subjects have materially above benchmark levels of satisfaction with learning resources, 14 have satisfaction in line with benchmark and 2 have levels below benchmark, indicating very high quality of provision overall.

Hallam Libraries (SE5, SE6, SE7)

Our two campus libraries provide students with access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality support and resources. The libraries provide over 2,450 learning spaces, including quiet and silent study areas and space for collaborative work. The libraries provide a focal point for students and are open 24/7/365 days a year. To improve access to learning and to enable students to tailor how they learn, as well as to respond to challenges of digital poverty and increased living costs, the libraries provide online and on-demand access to the most essential course textbooks using the BibliU platform (<https://bibliu.com>). In 2020/21, the library responded to the pandemic by reallocating resources to a £250,000 strategic investment in e-textbooks, as reflected in the Student Submission. This investment was then continued in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Data from 1st August 2021 – 31st July 2022 shows 5,909 students accessed the library's offer of 95 key e-textbooks, undertaking 37,755 reading sessions at a cost saving for students of £327,346 over purchasing personal copies. This level of reading activity significantly exceeds what has been

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delivered historically through borrowing print copies (10% - 35 % in comparison to e-textbooks, depending on title). On average over 1.2 million downloads are made annually from our collection of over 900,000 eBooks.

Alongside the investment in e-textbooks, the library also provides further resources to enable digital education, for example, online multimedia and primary source collections such as BFI Player (the British Film Institute's video on-demand streaming service) and Box of Broadcasts (BoB: on-demand TV and radio which allows self-selected content, creating playlists, and embedding within teaching materials). Our usage monitoring shows high levels of student engagement with these resources (for example, BoB has 49,221 click throughs) and many are embedded in module reading lists.

Hallam Skills Centre (SE5, SE6)

Hallam Skills Centre in the library offers a comprehensive range of inclusive academic support, tailored to students' needs. Student engagement is high and increasing, promoting both positive outcomes and wellbeing. Expert practitioners provide individual and group sessions on academic English, mathematics and statistics, digital skills, and specialist study skills for students with additional needs. In 2020/21 over 6,000 students attended Skills Centre workshops and appointments, almost double the number in 2018/19, and a 35.7% growth in attendance on the previous academic year. 1,009 students took part in one-to-one sessions, and 5,022 students participated in group sessions. 96% of students who responded to follow-up feedback reported feeling more confident, and 97% felt sessions were relevant to studies. Our analysis of student engagement with the Skills centre demonstrates positive correlation with continuation. Students who engage with the Skills Centre Advisers in individual or group sessions are less likely (3.5% vs 6.2%) to withdraw compared to non-users.

The Skills Centre also provides extensive asynchronous self-help resources available 24/7, including triaged access to the online academic writing feedback service Studiosity. During 2020/21 3,269 students used the service, submitting 14,936 extracts of work, and 94% of students reported they were satisfied with the service.⁴¹ Withdrawals are on average 4% lower amongst Studiosity users compared to non-users, and the former also achieve good honours at a higher rate than latter (on average, over the last four years, achievement of good honours is 9.9% higher). Additionally, 588 students participated in our online "Bootcamps" to improve writing skills, and 341 students attended weekly Virtual Drop-ins. This year our "Introduction to Essential Academic Skills" e-module was offered asynchronously, and 731 students accessed it. 2,353 students took the Skills Check, a 65% increase on the previous year. Satisfaction rates are high: at the ⁴²in-session poll of the final Bootcamp session 98% of students reported that their confidence had increased because of their participation, and 99% reported the content was relevant to their studies. Demographic data for all services indicates above average use by all groups of students, except males, for both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Our Writing Gym had 53% attendance by BAME students, and disabled students represent 41% of one-to-one appointments. However, male student attendance at our Bootcamps was 19%, 26% for Studiosity and 23% for the e-module. Having identified male students as accessing fewer services, we are focused on engaging them more effectively, through our ⁴³Library Services NSS Improvement Plan.

Resources and Virtual and Physical Learning Environments (SE5, SE6)

In our MEQs students consistently rate access to resources, ease of navigation of sites and learning materials highly, and in the 2021/22 data these three areas received the highest student satisfaction of 88.2%, 84.5% and 82.3% respectively. Blackboard, our VLE, uses a module site template, designed with students, and ensures threshold standards for a consistent and accessible user experience. Assessment criteria, submission details and personalised feedback are also provided on the VLE. All core digital platforms and learning resources are embedded within Blackboard, providing an integrated student experience, including library module resource lists, access to taught session recordings, Turnitin supporting academic integrity and our online portfolio. We have increased the availability of our application streaming and remote desktop services for all students, further integrating physical and digital learning environments.

Our aim is to ensure all students have the appropriate learning spaces for their disciplinary needs. For example, there are small numbers of students studying languages across a wide range of courses, with the potential for them to become lost among larger student cohorts within the Department of Management. To remedy this, languages have their own dedicated teaching space, which provides students with a connection to the department, the subject and other students. In the latest ⁴⁴Guardian rankings, Languages achieved 4th place, with a value-added score of 10, showing how far the students have progressed during their time with us.

Our students value contact time with academic staff for teaching and related technical support: the positive example of Art and Design referenced in the Student Submission is typical of students' appreciation of the support offered. Technical Operations Resources and Services (TORS) provide specialist technical support for a range of subject disciplines. During the pandemic, students of practice-based disciplines suffered disproportionately as they worked without access to specialist equipment and materials. Working with TORS academics developed an innovative bureaux service for students to engage with making. In addition to loans of equipment such as small sewing machines, hand tools and cameras, support was provided via the emailing of digitally fabricated prototypes and test ideas to academic and technical staff, for feedback and guidance. This service has remained part of our support offer, and whilst satisfaction with learning resources dipped in the pandemic, for Art and Design in all other NSS questions satisfaction has remained constant during the same period, and for learning resources has recovered to pre-pandemic levels of 85% in the most recent survey, indicating our approach has been successful.

Extended Campus (SE6)

We continue to develop, invest in, and integrate digital and physical environments to enhance learning and teaching and further embed outstanding academic practices through our Extended Campus vision. For example, the Computing Department is part of Sony's PlayStation Partners programme which allows the institution to teach students how to develop applications using Sony's PlayStation gaming hardware, which students would not otherwise have access to. Building on this relationship the department created Steel Minions, a games studio that has a commercial relationship with Sony allowing students and researchers to work with Sony as a publisher and release software for sale to the public.

Existing, well established simulated learning has opened-up increased opportunities for innovative practice learning in different disciplines. For example, level 4 Nursing students have recently engaged in a safeguarding simulation exposing them to sensitive and complex learning opportunities, in a secure environment with supervisors and peers. In Physiotherapy, level 4 students very positively evaluated their first "live" simulated placement: 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that the experience had been valuable for their development, and that they felt their confidence to go on clinical placement had increased, while 71% either agreed or strongly agreed that their communication skills had improved.

In summary, we ensure students experience highly supportive physical and virtual learning environments and resources, and that they have access to outstanding and readily available very high-quality academic support tailored to their needs, relevant to their discipline.

2.3.4 The Student Voice: listening, understanding, and responding to student feedback (SE7)

At Hallam we listen to students' views, and we do not make assumptions about what works for them and why, or about how things can be enhanced. We are highly focused upon improving students' experience because that is the right thing to do, not because of external surveys. Our student voice scores are in line with benchmark at institutional level and are materially above benchmark in 16 out of 28 subject areas, suggesting students feel that they can express their views and that their feedback is acted upon. However, we can always do more, which is why we engage with students at institutional, subject and course levels and through our ⁴⁵governance structures. Co-designed by students and staff to map and promote student voice across the institution, our student voice principles (developed in 2018/19 and implemented in 2019/20) are derived from analysis of institutional best practice and aligned to benchmarking models used by University College London

and Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland. The principles state that opportunities to be heard should be regular, responsive, accessible, ethical, and inclusive; our enactment of these principles is both formal and informal, strengthening collaboration between Hallam and the SU.

Students participate at all levels of decision making, from course staff-student committees, through departmental and College forums, to cross-institutional groups such as the Student Representative Steering Group and the Student Voice Group, whose membership includes students, SU members, and staff from across Hallam. Course validation panels normally include student representatives, ensuring that the learner voice is incorporated within curriculum design. The channels through which we gather and respond to student feedback allow triangulation of themes which inform actions and ensure we are confident we understand students' concerns. For example, this year we identified similar issues in both the NSS and the Annual Student Voice Report (ASVR), which informed the NSS improvement planning approach outlined below. In response to the ASVR, every year we produce a detailed action plan shared with the SU as we collectively address recommendations. The ASVR and accompanying action plan are also shared widely with Colleges and professional services through formal committees (for example Academic Assurance Committee) and operational groups to ensure matters are addressed appropriately. Responses to the ASVR have led to the provision of 'heat and eat' spaces for student use on campuses (2018/19), access to low-cost sport and physical fitness opportunities (2019/20), the introduction of 'lecture capture' (2020/21) and the University and the Students' Union working together to provide targeted mental wellbeing initiatives to enhance LGBTQ+ student mental health (2021/22). We are also currently (2022/23) reviewing the effectiveness of our communications in collaboration with the SU in response to the most recent (2021/22) ASVR.

Our MEQs, across all taught modules, provide regular and systematic student perspectives on teaching, assessment and feedback, support, and student voice opportunities. Student satisfaction reported in MEQs declined in line with the NSS between 2018/19 and 2020/21. However, our 2021/22 MEQ satisfaction data has shown an increase in satisfaction with teaching from 62.8% in 2020/21 to 74.8%, with similar increases in assessment and feedback (70% to 73.2%), academic support (67.8% to 71.1%) and student voice (64.2% to 68.1%) across all courses. Current MEQ data from semester 1 of the 2022/23 academic year continues this upward trend, with satisfaction increasing further to 81.4% for teaching, 78.0% for assessment, 78.3% for academic support and 69.1% for student voice. Given the established correlation between MEQ data trends and subsequent NSS, we are confident that the next NSS will show higher levels of satisfaction.

We also gather and respond to student feedback through specific projects. For example, ⁴⁶"Listening Rooms" have been used widely at Hallam for six years with different groups, including minoritised students, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and neuro-diverse students. We have listened to over 400 students' experiences and worked with over 170 stakeholders to create positive change, including increasing collaboration between the University and the SU. For example, Physics staff used the Listening Room to gather data from their new Level 4 students; changes were made as a result of insights into what students had found useful in induction. Physics is materially above benchmark for continuation, suggesting a positive link between this improvement and outcomes. The Listening Rooms project won ⁵The Guardian University student experience award (2020) and was nominated for the ⁵Pearson HE Innovate Award (2022). In 2020 we created the Student Voice Repository to gather student's perspectives about their experience and identify any gaps in our knowledge of their experiences. A monthly bulletin gives the University and the SU access to recent student views, allowing timely decisions and interventions to be undertaken. Recently this identified student concerns about the reintroduction of in-person examinations for subjects where this was a requirement from external bodies, and the University responded by actively promoting and providing tailored examination support sessions via the Library Skills team.

In addition to research informing teaching outlined in Section 2.2.3, our research also influences how we support students, involving them as active participants. An example of this is the 'Hear My Voice' project, which recognised that students with disabilities were not necessarily having their views heard and that staff felt additional efforts were needed. The work built on research by academics in AD and D (⁴⁷Baker-Green and McCamley, 2021), and on staff training on autism, dyslexia, and mental health.

Student researchers used institutional data to understand that students with a declared disability but without a formal learning contract are likely to be less successful and noted the number of students with disabilities was increasing, while the percentage with a learning contract was reducing. Participants praised departmental efforts, but they also identified specific barriers to learning. Students noted that good online teaching provision developed during the pandemic had particularly benefited disabled students and that they wished for online access to be retained. This work has strengthened our commitment to record all teaching sessions in line with our ⁴⁸existing policy and provide excellent online teaching resources; we have more to do in this area as we develop our ⁴⁹Digital Learning strategy, alongside our existing LTA Framework.

Training students as researchers to collaborate with peers and staff is evidence of our outstanding engagement with students to continuously improve their experience. Outputs from projects involving student researchers include institutional reports, analysis of student feedback, blogs, conference papers, involvement with varied ⁵⁰College-based Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience and Educational Research projects and publications, including presentations at our Learning and Teaching Conference 2022. There are additional educational gains for our student researchers. Our ⁵¹impact dashboard (see Section 3.2 below for more details) 2021/22 data bears out wider sector evidence that involvement in activities such as research is associated with success for all student demographics. Compared to our student body, a higher proportion of student researchers were female, had a declared a disability and were in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance, had a learning contract and a lower average entry tariff. The student researchers achieved a higher proportion of good honours (88% vs 70%) and 1st Class degrees (56% vs 31%) and demonstrated higher module marks at every level of study. We continue to involve students as researchers in evaluating key areas and seek to understand more about the positive impact of their experience on their outcomes.

2.4 Our response to student feedback in the National Student Survey (SE7)

We are proud that many students are very satisfied with their experiences at Hallam, and, as noted, it matters to us that we maintain a strong focus on how to make improvements. In all student experience measures, (teaching; assessment; academic support; learning resources; student voice) at institutional level Hallam is in line with the expected benchmark (most measures show significance above 95%). Our NSS response rate is higher than "all providers" (74.4%/70.4%), which demonstrates good student engagement. Six of our subjects are materially above benchmark in all student satisfaction measures and a further four have materially above benchmark satisfaction in four out of the five measures, indicative of outstanding quality. Subject splits that are materially above benchmark show we have excellence in all measures across our subjects, for example, Maths (teaching) Performing Arts (assessment), Politics (academic support), Chemistry (learning resources) and English (student voice). We have materially above benchmark indicators for: 10 subjects in teaching, 14 subjects in assessment, 13 subjects in academic support, 12 subjects in learning resources, and 15 subjects in student voice. The outstanding practice within these subjects has been analysed to drive higher performance in all subjects, for example through our engagement with Course Leaders, described in more detail below.

We recognise that over the course of the pandemic student satisfaction fell from a highpoint of 86% overall satisfaction in 2019. There are several explanatory factors for this, related to our demographic, our location, and our subject mix, and we are energetically addressing the challenge. Sector data ^{52,53 and 54} shows that large, applied universities like Hallam have faced significant challenges since 2020 because of the pandemic, and the lack of access to specialist applied learning facilities and external placement settings, resulting in decreased satisfaction in some applied subjects. At Hallam this, coupled with the large numbers of students on courses such as Nursing and Midwifery, Allied Health subjects, and Engineering (which in total represent 24.5% of our NSS respondents), partly explains the overall decrease in satisfaction. The pandemic also had a proportionally higher impact on the most deprived areas in England, some ethnic minorities, and disabled students. As Hallam has the largest number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds this impact was felt especially acutely by our students. We responded rapidly and robustly, engaging with our students to understand their needs and provide the necessary support. For example, in March 2020 we conducted a text survey to identify student welfare and learning needs. 18%

(n=1,521) reported challenges related to digital poverty and were provided with the necessary IT equipment and support, via an additional £550K in hardship funds. 89.6% of students responding (n=3,301) to our follow up pulse survey in April 2020 reported they had access to online learning.

To address the recent fall in the NSS, a ⁵⁵whole-university improvement approach was designed; this has been implemented for the last two years. In-depth analysis and triangulation of student satisfaction data from NSS, MEQs, surveys and research into courses with high satisfaction have identified key themes for improvement (for example, effective communication and organisation, as noted in the Student Submission (and the most recent ASVR) for all courses to focus upon through their Course Improvement Plans, with actions delivered or supported by professional services and monitored through College, Department and University leadership groups and the Academic Assurance Committee.

This whole-university approach had a very positive impact on student satisfaction in NSS 2022 by comparison with NSS 2021 in some courses and subjects. For example, at subject (CAH 3) level, 12 of our 70 subjects were within the top quartile nationally and 29 subject areas had an improved Overall Satisfaction score compared to the previous year, while the number of courses with >80% satisfaction increased from 30 to 56 (out of 140 courses reportable in the NSS 2022). At University level, increases were seen in all responses to the learning resources and some of the assessment and feedback questions. Where student satisfaction improved last year, or was sustained at a high level, we engaged with relevant Course Leaders to understand what they believed contributed to good student satisfaction, to disseminate ideas widely for staff and students and build them into current and future Course Leader training and guidance. Course Leaders' responses included: teaching staff who are adaptable and flexible, course and module structures that ensure students' ownership of their work, a strong focus on collaborative learning to foster a sense of community, shared learning and lively debate, expert teaching staff who keep up to date with new knowledge and research in their field and are enthusiastic and passionate in their teaching.

However, we recognise that in Nursing and Midwifery and Engineering, the decline in student satisfaction in the NSS takes us below benchmark for student experience. That said, outcomes for Nursing and Midwifery are more positive, evidencing very high-quality and outstanding provision (continuation: +1.9%, completion: +3.9% (materially above benchmark) and progression: + 2.6% (also materially above benchmark). Outcomes for Engineering are securely in line with benchmark, evidencing very high quality (continuation: +2.2%, completion: +1.5% and progression: +1.9%).

NSS: Nursing and Midwifery

Our Nursing and Midwifery courses account for 8% of our FT UG provision (7,060 students across the TEF period and between 1,700 and 2,000 in any given year). We are exceptionally proud that during the pandemic over 600 of our final-year Nursing and Allied Health Profession students volunteered to join the NHS workforce early, providing frontline care in one of the biggest deployments in the UK. However, we know the pandemic has had a significant effect on students, specifically on their ability to complete placements (in terms of type and length) stipulated by the professional body. We aimed to mitigate this through a professional body-approved increase in simulated placement hours on campus; however, we acknowledge, as does the Student Submission, that this was problematic for some students, since they felt simulated experiences did not prepare them to meet their professional competencies as well as a "live" placement. Placement capacity began to increase from December 2021, but challenges in securing placements on a highly competitive circuit, changes to pre-placement requirements, including occupational health checks, the reconfiguration of external clinical areas and loss of staff within our placement team led to delays to allocation and completion of placements in a timely manner.

These issues have received the University's full attention. A 'Silver' incident management group was formed, chaired by the Dean of the College of HWLS, and a ⁵⁶three-part recovery plan implemented. Additional resources to address the issue were identified and, in collaboration with Health Education England and practice partners, the required placements were secured with a dedicated Nursing team working with student representatives from each affected cohort to co-design and implement placement recovery options, which provide tailored support for each student's circumstances. An enhanced wellbeing offer to suit students' availability is also in place, and financial support was

agreed with each cohort to address specific needs; for example, September 2020 entrants were allocated £300 for additional travel or other costs incurred. Additionally, £291K was provided for 204 students in the September 2019 cohort, and £82K for 51 students in the January 2021 cohort. Alongside placement recovery, we recognise also that not all Nursing and Midwifery students' dissatisfaction can be ascribed directly to placements, as in other areas (e.g.: teaching, student voice, assessment and feedback, and academic support) satisfaction is also below benchmark, and these areas are being considered and addressed alongside placement recovery plans to ensure we take a holistic approach to improving students' satisfaction. More positively, we note that in the TEF data set, satisfaction with learning resources is in line with benchmark, and in last year's NSS it was 74%, an increase of 3% from 2021.

Hallam is highly committed to supporting all affected students, and our thorough and detailed approaches will ensure that September 2021 entrants will be the last cohort requiring a recovery plan. Throughout our recovery planning and implementation, we have worked closely with the relevant professional bodies. A full evaluation with student focus groups, including minoritised student groups, parents, and commuter students, will be facilitated by the SU in early 2023; issues covered by the groups will include assessment of the impact of the financial support outlined above.

NSS: Engineering

In Engineering, which represents 4.8% of our FT UG provision, student outcomes are securely in line with benchmark, indicating the very high quality of the provision; disappointingly, however, NSS satisfaction has fallen below benchmark. Given the applied nature of this subject and the potential impact on our region, our ambition is to improve both student experience and outcomes. The recently appointed Head of Department has undertaken a full review and moved to addressing underlying issues. For example, to improve the decline in satisfaction with assessment and feedback (55% vs sector average of 61% in the most recent NSS for Engineering), the current teaching model of long thin modules is being changed by Course teams, and additional formative assessment and feedback has been introduced to ensure students receive early indication of their progress, can respond to feedback, and can improve performance in their final assessment. Additional interventions include enhanced staff support to meet published timescales for marks release and feedback. Significant levels of student concern last year related to time-constrained online examinations (for example, late submissions and challenges regarding academic integrity). Engineering has a high proportion of examinations because of accreditation requirements, and so was more affected than other subjects. The move back to on-campus exams this year is expected to mitigate some of the previous issues, alongside the department's commitment to sending out clear communications and guidance to students at module level together with a programme of revision sessions and exams skills sessions.

NSS: Student Groups

Student satisfaction is very high across different ethnic minority groups, particularly Black students, where four of five experience measures are materially above benchmark, as already noted. We believe this reflects our focus on inclusion and the considerable amount of work taking place to promote BAME student belonging; for example, encouraging students to talk about their study experiences has had a positive impact on how BAME students feel about their time at Hallam. Our development of racial literacy among staff, through a university-wide programme that focuses on the key theme of equity rather than equality, is also likely to be a contributory factor in BAME students reporting a positive experience. That the BAME awarding gap has narrowed from 20.5% (2017/18) to 12.7% (2021/2022) strengthens our evidence of impact in this area, although we remain firmly committed to decreasing that gap further, as explored further in Section Three. Satisfaction of full-time students with disabilities is also in line with benchmark on all student experience measures. From the TEF split metrics we recognise there are some differences between different ethnic groups within the BAME grouping; while all ethnic groups are securely in line with benchmark, indicating very high quality, FT black students' satisfaction performs better and is above benchmark on four out of the five measures.

Alongside specific issues in subjects outlined above, we also recognise that we have some student groups, particularly part-time, Foundation Year and apprenticeships, that have below benchmark satisfaction. Though the numbers are small, nevertheless, in line with our mission we are focusing on improvement, drawing on the many examples of our outstanding performance with other student groups to identify action. Based on our recent positive ¹⁰Ofsted inspection of the apprenticeships, we are confident we have the capability and capacity for improved student satisfaction. For FY students we are closely monitoring feedback on their early experiences (and their outcomes), building upon previous research referenced above, as they form a particularly key element of our ongoing commitment to increasing access to higher education.

Summary: Our Case for Excellence in Academic Experience

Our student experience data indicates very high-quality provision, with outstanding features. The Hallam Model has enabled the successful embedding of research-informed teaching and consistent assessment practices, strongly oriented to applied learning in all courses, which challenges and engages students. Our outstanding academic practice by highly qualified subject staff, our excellent provision of resources, specialist spaces and online environments support different student groups on a wide range of courses to have a positive experience. We are very clear about where improvements need to be made and are highly focused on implementing actions and monitoring their effectiveness. In collaboration with our students, our intention is to quickly return to the higher levels of student satisfaction in place pre-pandemic.

SECTION THREE: STUDENT OUTCOMES

3.1 TEF Positive Outcomes (SO1, SO2, SO3)

3.1.1 Introduction

We are proud of our students' outcomes and the impact they have in transforming their lives and those of the communities they live and work in. Our data shows that we deliver consistently impressive outcomes. Sector data shows it is difficult to be materially above benchmark on these outcomes and we are proud to be 2.0%, 2.4% and 1.8% ahead of benchmark on the three measures, with a score that is higher than benchmark on all three measures in all four years. We achieve this through the Hallam Model, and through excellent support *tailored* to meet our students' needs as noted above. To transform lives through a rigorous focus on student outcomes, we also take strategic approaches, at different levels, to understanding the needs of different student and staff groups, evaluating the success of those approaches, and adapting our work accordingly. We do this through, *inter alia*, our ⁵⁷Access and Participation Plan (APP), our ⁵⁸Equality Objectives, and related ⁵⁹Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activities, and our ⁶⁰Race Equity Corporate Action Plan (RECAP). Our strategic approach across all academic areas and professional services, and the outcomes our students achieve in the context of their educational starting point, is evidence of our outstanding provision.

3.1.2 Excellence in continuation, completion, and progression (SO1)

Continuation and completion outcomes alike are indicative of very high quality at university level, and across a number of full-time student characteristic splits they are indicative of outstanding quality. Continuation and completion are materially above benchmark for disabled students (+2.8% and +3.1% respectively), students from ABCS quintile 1 (+4.2% and +6.0% respectively), students with IMD 1 or 2 scores (+2.5% and +3.4% respectively), and across all ethnic splits (by +2.5% to +6.8%). Continuation is also indicative of very high quality in 16 subjects and indicative of outstanding in all 11 remaining subjects except Geography (see below for more detail), demonstrating our Hallam Model is highly effective in supporting all student groups in all subjects. We are ambitious to improve upon our remaining indicators which are close to being materially above benchmark. We are materially above benchmark for our students' progression in 15 subjects, evidencing outstanding provision. TEF outcomes for our part-time students are also indicative of outstanding: materially above benchmark for continuation and progression and strong for completion (Hallam 88.6%, benchmark 86.5%). Outcomes from our apprenticeship provision are all securely in

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line with benchmark, with strong completion (Hallam 91.5%, above benchmark 89.2%) and progression (Hallam 90.9%, above benchmark 89.6%).

Our approaches to ensuring students succeed in and progress beyond their studies are nationally recognised by several high-profile awards referenced throughout our submission. Further evidence of Hallam's excellence in preparing students for their careers can be found in the ⁶¹Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data. Based on tax year 2019/20, 88.1% of our graduates were in employment five years after graduation, the 5th highest rate of all 158 HEIs in the UK. Over 15% of this cohort came from a POLAR quintile 1 area, the 15th highest percentage amongst all HEIs. This employment is in relatively well-paid jobs, particularly when factoring in location of employment. After three years, the median earnings of Hallam graduates were £24,500. This places Hallam 58th out of the 131 English HEIs, but when the median salary is adjusted for the location of graduates, the ranking is 36th out of 131.

3.1.3 Excellence in continuation and completion (SO2)

We are committed to our region and to social mobility for all our students. The data tells a challenging story about the context in which we operate. According to the ⁶²Sutton Trust, 10 of the 14 South Yorkshire constituencies have very low or low social mobility. Through our ⁵⁸APP and accompanying analysis of outcomes by different student groups over time, we understand that across the student lifecycle, in the sector and at Hallam, there are persistent and sometimes large gaps between the outcomes of most underrepresented student groups in higher education. We have analysed our performance from outreach to graduation and beyond, focusing on different groups (mature, BAME, Disabled, areas of low participation, with reference to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Care Leavers) and exploring intersectionality between groups. Continuation rates of students within the APP groups have consistently been identified as an area of strength generally but specifically for students with a disability. However, we know we have more to do with white male students from areas of low participation in HE and are currently reviewing our approaches to engagement and support, drawing on findings of the Listening Rooms project, and through NSS Improvement Planning referenced in Section Two.

We have embedded consistent support for continuation and completion across the University through the Thrive theme of our Hallam Model. Academic 'touchpoints' between students and their Academic Advisers review progress within three weeks of start of studies and in each semester as a minimum. Touchpoints utilise materials and resources to guide and stretch students, as well as assessment outcomes and information from learning analytics on engagement (described below) to effectively support students' continuation and completion. Our 'Next Steps' online tool enables students at each level to prioritise their development needs and access tailored resources. As detailed in 2.3.2 above, Academic Advisers are core to our Student Support Triangle, which ensures an effective holistic approach to supporting students' success, evidenced by our high quality and outstanding continuation and completion outcomes detailed in Section 3.1.2 above.

Although part time student numbers are low compared to full-time, continuation and progression are materially above benchmark, indicative of outstanding performance. We note there are subjects where part-time students perform even more strongly than full-time students. For example, continuation for Nursing and Midwifery full-time students is securely in-line with benchmark, but part-time students' continuation is materially above benchmark, indicating outstanding outcomes. We continue to analyse module and course level data and engage with students in these subjects through a specific project to understand "what works" and ensure good practice is shared across all modes of study.

As noted above, Geography is our only subject materially below benchmark for continuation. Our most recent internal ⁶³ data shows that the three undergraduate courses in the Geography subject group (Geography, Environmental Science and Human Geography) are all above B3 continuation thresholds (although there is some decline in the last year) and performing very well in the context of a high benchmark of 94.5%. Our internal continuation data is as follows: Geography 98%

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(2019/20) and 94% (2020/21); Environmental Science 100% (2019/20) and 92% (2020/21); Human Geography 100% (2019/20) and 89% (2020/21).

3.1.4 Excellence in Progression (SO3)

In line with our strategic commitment to be a world-leading applied university, in 2018 Hallam implemented the ⁶⁴“Highly Skilled Employment” (HSE) project to embed employability within the core curriculum of all courses. This innovative programme was developed in collaboration with employers, industry partners, our students, and staff. The initiative was awarded the ⁵Strategic Innovation Award by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service. The judging panel commented:

“This is a bold and ambitious initiative. By including every level of study and every faculty, this is clearly a cross-university strategic initiative, showing innovation, depth, and impact. At Hallam, careers and employability engagement is not optional. This project is at the heart of the university’s strategy, and the range of initiatives is very impressive.”

HSE has evolved into our embedded ⁶⁵Curriculum-Integrated Employability (CIE) Framework which supports the consistent implementation of employability in the Hallam Model. It is designed to be flexible, allowing curriculum design to adapt and respond to emerging demands; this was critical in enabling us to continue to provide work experience online throughout the pandemic. Applied learning undertaken by every student since 2019, as detailed in Section 2.2.2, has been supported by a “transition toolkit”, completed by over 3,500 students, that introduces employability in their course context, and by delivery of 2,653 in-curriculum short placement/work-integrated learning sessions. Over the past four years 16,778 students have undertaken applied projects and student enterprise interactions have totalled 3,206, with 158 new student and graduate businesses registered across different sectors utilising our start-up service.

Working with over 1,000 organisations such as Adidas, Airbus, the BBC, Disney, the NHS, Rolls Royce, and Sony, we deliver 24,000 placements and real-world projects every year. Since 2019, 3,145 students have completed a sandwich placement. Our most recent ⁶⁶Graduate Outcomes data (2022) shows those who completed a sandwich placement are more likely to achieve Good Honours (97%, vs 82%), to be in Highly Skilled Employment (82%, vs 60%), and to secure a Higher Salary (£24,905 vs £20,000) than those who did not. In addition, completion of a sandwich placement appears to ⁶⁷markedly reduce the BAME degree awarding gap from 14 percentage points to 3 percentage points (2020/21 completion data). Sandwich placements with an Applied Professional Diploma are an essential component of our employability strategy. As such, we have committed to offering Sandwich Placement degrees as students’ default qualification (unless specific exemptions apply). To meet our increased target of 805 (20% of eligible students) for sandwich placements in 2023/24 we are implementing plans to enhance student engagement and support. The benefits of sandwich placements are seen at subject as well as institutional level: for example, around 25% of Biosciences and Chemistry students undertake a sandwich placement each year, contributing to their positive progression outcomes (Hallam 73.1%, 4.1% above benchmark 69.0% for Biosciences).

Students can also participate in our Go Global programme (GGP), which aims to provide a global experience to all students and create world-ready graduates. ⁶⁸Evaluation of the GGP 2020 cohort found it improved students’ acquisition of intercultural competencies. Our innovative Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project, developed with La Trobe University in Melbourne Australia, has provided digital international placements for students from both universities. La Trobe MBA students and sixteen Hallam level 5 design students were assigned to one of eight SMEs (four in the UK, four in Australia) to develop and pitch a brief, which was acclaimed to be professional standard. Subsequently, students have been engaged as consultants. As a result, we plan to embed COIL within the Hallam Model and extend opportunities to a much wider student group.

We complement our curriculum offer with ⁶⁵an impactful co-curricular programme enabling students and graduates to enhance their employability. This involves Employability Advisers (part of our Student Support Triangle as noted above) enabling targeted curriculum development and, personal 1:1 graduate employment preparation, access to mentoring from alumni (753 alumni supporting 1,302 students towards individual success) and careers fairs. Since 2019 16,130 students have benefited from this support, and satisfaction with employability services is high, averaging 81% over the past four years (NSS Optional Question Bank B3). Our ³⁷Welcome Survey 2022 showed 96% satisfaction with our careers and employability services. Students can also evidence their development through the Hallam Award (HA). 1,027 students have completed the HA which is jointly recognised by and delivered in consultation with the SU. All awardees are less likely to withdraw from study (2.4% vs 6.7%), and they achieve higher marks at all levels, including good honours (93.8% vs 69.1%) with a higher proportion of these being First Class degrees (59.9% vs 30.8%). Re-launched in September 2022 on a more interactive online platform, the HA has engaged a further 200 students in the first two months of the 2022/23 academic year.

Internships, employment, volunteering and supporting enterprise and innovation within Hallam also offer wide-ranging opportunities for students to become “career ready”. For example, student ambassadors provide prospective applicants with valuable insights at open days and offer extra support at graduation and clearing; over 1,800 students are currently employed in differing roles. Additionally, the strength and depth of our enterprise and innovation provision is evident in our ⁵THE Entrepreneurial University of the year 2021 award and our partnership with Santander, who support Enterprise Awards to enable students to showcase their start-up businesses and compete for financial and mentoring support. ⁶⁹Hallam Freelancers (set up in March 2022), provides a platform enabling connections between clients and student/graduate freelancers at the point of need. With 90 freelancers providing over 50 projects across 14 creative sectors generating over £25,000 of freelancers’ income, this is a further demonstration of Hallam’s sustained success in providing real-world opportunities for the application of knowledge. In the last academic year, co-ordinated by the SU, 1,114 Hallam students volunteered for an average of four hours per month, totalling over 53,000 hours for more than 50 charities. We ensure that all students have opportunities to develop the skills and attributes to be career-ready and progress to graduate employment.

3.1.5 A focus on excellent outcomes for specific groups and subjects

We are materially above benchmark for BAME student continuation and completion and securely in line with benchmark for progression. Notwithstanding this evidence that we provide strong support to our students for their academic and overall experience, we have clear ambitions to further decrease and eventually eradicate degree awarding gaps (our BAME awarding gap is currently 12.7% as noted in section 1.1) and differences in gaining graduate level jobs. Cross-institutional work is under way, shaped by the Equality Objectives: Cultural Competence, and Equality of Access, Outcome and Experience. Our APP is central here, as is our ⁶⁰Race Equality Corporate Equity Plan (RECAP), produced following the publication of the ⁷⁰NUS/UUK *#closingthegaps* report. RECAP has committed to five key areas of intervention: strong leadership; understanding what works; gaining evidence and analysing data; developing racially diverse and inclusive environments; having conversations about race and changing culture.

In this context, subject teams are taking steps to eradicate differences in outcomes between student groups. For example, in 2021 in the Department of Management, the Teaching and Learning Lead led a coaching campaign with leaders of modules in which there was an awarding gap for some student groups. Coaching included interventions to support all students, not just those from minoritised groups. Module leaders chose one aspect to change for the following delivery: all targeted modules reduced the awarding gap by between 2 and 21 percentage points. These successes were developed into case studies to share with other module leaders in the Department and College, and approaches are formally embedded within the Department’s EDI Plan.

The College of SSA has seen sustained narrowing of the awarding gap, reducing it from 21 percentage points in 2017/18 to 10 percentage points in 2021/2022. A significant contribution to this has been made by the Department of Law and Criminology taking a holistic approach, recognising

there is no single contributory factor to the awarding gap. There has been a root-and-branch review of curriculum content, removing colonial legacy and ensuring all students are able to see themselves in the revised content. This project has been supported by a co-created approach to curriculum development with the SU and AD and D creating a valuable ⁷¹ institutional resource. Law and Criminology's work has been accompanied by achieving greater diversity in the academic team, enabling the staff profile to be representative of Sheffield's population. While it is difficult to claim direct causality between these actions and student outcomes, we believe the approaches taken by Law and Criminology have helped to narrow the degree awarding gap, with a year-on-year reduction from 22 percentage points in 2017/18 to 2 percentage points in 2021/22.

Alongside placements, embedding career readiness in-curriculum guarantees all students benefit from the thinking, application and learning associated with preparing for employment. For example, all final-year Finance Accounting and Business Systems (FABS) students participate in an innovative consultancy module that utilises business partnerships to develop team working and employability skills through a "real-life" business challenge. 320 FABS students work in small mixed groups as consultants to collectively develop a solution to a problem using academic and practice-based methodologies. The module culminates with students presenting solutions to their client and an all-stakeholders collaborative networking event. The module won the British Academy of Management 2019 Education Practice Award for Innovation and Inspiration as an exemplar of genuine applied learning using leading organisations rather than theoretical case studies. Some students have been offered graduate positions because of the module, and progression outcomes for FABS students increased 3 percentage points in the most recent GO data.

Art and Design offers a short placement to level 5 students providing targeted support to those who plan to develop a portfolio career in the creative industries; this contributes to progression of 3.3% higher than benchmark. In Media, Arts and Communication students from Screenwriting, Film and TV Production and Acting and Performance work with industry mentors e.g., Screen Yorkshire, to commission, write and produce short films with a prize for the winning film; this contributes to progression of 4.4% higher than benchmark. Students undertake experiential and work-integrated learning activities that develop graduate attributes, notably confidence, creativity, and resilience, as well as knowledge of industry practice.

At a subject level, we have outstanding progression in nine subject areas, including Nursing and Midwifery, as noted (Hallam 97.8%, +2.6% materially above benchmark) and Engineering (Hallam 75.5%, +2.0% above benchmark), but six subjects stand out as below benchmark. All are taking proactive steps to improve progression rates with careers and employability activities such as careers fairs and employer events tailored to their disciplines.

Summary – Our Case for Outstanding Student Outcomes

At Hallam, overall, our students achieve levels of continuation, completion, and progression that are indicative of very high and outstanding quality provision. This is a result of our university-wide approach focused on transforming lives and delivered through the Hallam Model. Applied learning is embedded in all courses and tailored support for all students integrated into the academic experience, as detailed in Section Two, driving the very high and outstanding quality of outcomes for all student groups.

3.2 Educational Gains (SO4, SO5, SO6)

Our approach to educational gain is driven by our commitment as an applied university to transforming lives. Our definition of educational gain has been influenced by the evaluation of the ⁷²National Mixed Methods Learning Gain Project that we completed for the Office for Students (OfS), but also informed by a comprehensive, data-informed understanding of the relationship between students' engagement with different kinds of support and their outcomes.

In recruiting students from diverse backgrounds, we are aware of systemic barriers to their progress, so we develop not only their knowledge and skills but also their confidence. Therefore, we define

educational gain as the change in knowledge, skills, work-readiness, and personal development (⁷³Kandiko-Howson 2017) achieved by the individual in their subject discipline context. In defining educational gain in this way, we recognise students' different starting points (e.g., entry tariff) and their journey to achieve positive outcomes. Engagement with the Hallam Model, whereby students develop graduate attributes, is key to their success and to the achievement of very strong outcomes data by diverse student groups.

Educational gain is typically measured in terms of student outcomes at the points of continuation, completion, or progression, with few in-year indicators of progress when compared to the individual starting point. At Hallam our analysis shows that student engagement with learning and development opportunities provides an intermediate measure towards educational gain, and when combined with the use of learning analytics can provide real-time measures that inform interventions to support or enhance educational gain.

Hallam implemented the Jisc Learning Analytics software in 2019/20 to provide a consolidated view of students' biographical and engagement data, allowing Academic Advisers to understand students' engagement and predicted academic outcomes and enabling targeted personal support. Students are also able to see their engagement data, as are Student Support Advisers, who signpost to specialist services, as noted. During 2020/22 3,785 students with low engagement were contacted by Student Support to provide personalised advice on their study options, including additional support, break in study or withdrawal. The peak in students (2,891) contacted for poor engagement coincided with the tightest pandemic restrictions, and the initial withdrawal rate of 19% was three times higher than the previous University average of 6.6%. Although it is difficult to demonstrate causality, subsequent interventions have seen the withdrawal rate fall to 6% in this group of students.

Following our 2020/21 student support interventions, 85% of students contacted continued their studies. However, despite the successful impact of interventions on continuation and completion our data shows that they are less likely to achieve good honours (38.7% vs 69.8%) and 1st class degrees (9.7% vs 31.5%). Further work to understand this difference is currently under way, informed by an ⁷⁴evaluation of the impact of interventions on student outcomes, in partnership with The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO). This work draws upon our ⁷⁵Theory of Change which interrogates the link between institutional activities and assumed student outcomes. Work to date has developed our understanding of the importance of intermediate student outcomes, such as student engagement, the development of confidence and belonging as precursors to changes in longer-term outcomes. We continue to develop analytics with Jisc, adding new datasets, for example attendance monitoring, to improve engagement, continuation, and completion, and addressing differential outcomes.

To measure educational gain, we also utilise optional NSS question banks B1: personal development, B3: careers, B5: work placements and B15: employability and skills, and our internal MEQ (described in Section 2.3.4) includes questions on work-readiness and personal development. The most recent NSS data shows that students' satisfaction with their personal, career and employability skills development has stabilised following a decline similar to satisfaction with teaching reported above, while semester 1 MEQ data for 2022/23 shows increased satisfaction with personal and career development. Notably, the value of placements and work experience in developing course related skills was a source of consistently high satisfaction (89-90%) in NSS bank B5 from 2019/22.

Our ⁵¹"impact dashboard" tracks demographic and outcomes data for student groups to assist evaluation of our ⁵⁷APP. This approach has been extended to compare outcomes for student groups not targeted by the APP, e.g., student representatives, student researchers and those receiving specific interventions such as financial support. The impact dashboard shows that students who engage with learning and development opportunities achieve more positive outcomes. For example, over the past two years fewer course representatives withdrew from their studies (4.7% vs 6.8%) and they achieved a higher proportion of good honours (83% vs 70%), First Class degrees (46.9% vs 31%) and demonstrated higher module marks at every level of study. As noted above in Section 2, with student researchers, we continue to seek to understand the links between this kind of activity

and positive student outcomes. In addition, in 2020/21 the impact of Hallam's support for students underrepresented in higher education or who are facing hardship was evaluated using the validated financial support evaluation toolkit, developed at Hallam (⁷⁶McCaig et al., 2016) and recommended by the OfS. 5,299 students received financial support the role of the hardship fund in helping students to continue with their studies has been highlighted, along with its impact on easing recipients' anxieties and supporting their positive mental health⁷⁷.

The combination of learner analytics with tracking outcomes during study through our 'impact dashboard' provides Hallam with confidence that students are engaging with their studies and achieving measurable educational gain. We have a substantial record of supporting our least engaged students to continue and complete their studies and our evaluation of several interventions demonstrates that engagement with learning activities, support services and extracurricular activities all lead to students achieving increased educational gain and positive outcomes.

Overall Summary

At Hallam we are highly committed to our students' success, to our city and to our region. We are extremely proud to attract, retain and support a highly diverse student body. We take pride in our successes, and in this submission we confidently evidence very high-quality provision with outstanding and distinctive features. We also acknowledge and understand where we need to do more to fulfil our strategic mission to transform lives and are unwavering in our focus on enhancing our offer and support to students in terms of their experience, satisfaction, and outcomes.

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