

# **University Centre Sparsholt**

## **Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 - 2028/29**

### **1. Introduction and strategic aim**

University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) is a specialist provider of land-based higher education. Based in Hampshire in the South of England, UCS is part of the wider Sparsholt College Group (incorporating Sparsholt College and Andover College). UCS has been offering higher education since the 1970s, and is validated by the University of Portsmouth.

UCS currently offers 18 courses at FdSc, BSc and MSc level, delivered across six subject areas: Agriculture, Animal and Zoo, Equine, Fish and Marine, Veterinary Nursing, and Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. In addition, UCS offers an Access to Higher Education Land Based course at Level 3, a Diploma in Veterinary Nursing at Level 3, and a Countryside Ranger Apprenticeship at Level 4.

UCS is a small provider. In 2023-24, there were 420 students enrolled across the FdSc, BSc and MSc courses, with similar cohort sizes in previous years. The size of the student body is key to the offer and success of UCS. There is a real community that exists between students, and between staff and students, whereby individuals are known and supported on a personal basis. Student feedback on this learning environment is consistently positive, with appreciation of the personalised teaching, practical learning opportunities, their relationships with other students, staff and industry, and the facilities that are central to their education.

As described in section 2, UCS recognise that certain groups are underrepresented when accessing land-based HE, and that there is inequality of opportunity in student success (on course, and when progressing into employment). UCS is committed to ensuring that the understanding of these areas of inequality is embedded throughout UCS, at both a strategic and operational level, so that all staff are conscious of the goals of this new Plan and how they will actively contribute to them. New APP working groups will be established for staff and students, and our equality goals will be a regular and meaningful focus of staff CPD days, all-staff meetings, and management and governance groups.

UCS is excited to be delivering this Plan, and will ensure that there is ongoing review, learning, and development throughout the duration of its implementation, so that the efforts and activities to ensure equality of opportunity remain relevant and at the forefront of our mission.

### **2. Risks to equality of opportunity**

OfS guidance states that: *"Where a provider does not have sufficient data to undertake a credible assessment of its performance, it can use the national groups identified in the EORR to identify potential risks to equality of opportunity that its students may be facing, and inform intervention strategies that address these risks"*.

Considering the small student cohort size at UCS (approx 420 students across all cohorts and year groups), this is the approach that UCS has taken when identifying risks to equality of opportunity.

The national risks identified through the EORR have been used as a starting point for identifying areas of inequality of opportunity. Analysis of internal data has then provided further understanding of specific student groups requiring particular focus within these risk areas. Taking both our internal and external risk data into consideration, the UCS Plan will focus on the following four areas of risk:

- **UCS risk 1: Access to land-based higher education opportunities**

UCAS data from the 2023 cycle shows that only 0.5% of applications to higher education were to land-based providers. This recruitment challenge for the sector is reflected in an ongoing [parliamentary inquiry](#) into the relationship between education and the land-based industries, including the effectiveness of higher education in embedding awareness of land based careers.

Analysis of internal data shows that in particular, UCS has very low rates of applications from **applicants of ethnic minority**, and **male applicants**.

UCS perceive that there is a risk of insufficient knowledge and understanding of land-based opportunities within higher education, in particular among males and those of ethnic minority. UCS believes that this is a result of insufficient prior knowledge of land-based opportunities, and limited access to good information and guidance.

This area of risk will address the following national risks:

**EORR risk 2: Information and guidance**  
**EORR risk 3: Perception of higher education**

Please see **Annex A** for more information and analysis regarding the selection of the risk (section **AA1**)

- **UCS risk 2: Insufficient academic support**

Internal data shows that **male** students, students of **ethnic minority**, and student disclosing an **LDD**, all have lower rates of continuation, completion, and attainment.

UCS perceive that this is due to insufficient academic support, and that these three cohorts would have a higher chance of better on-course success through increased targeted individual and group support. It is believed that insufficient support is result of three factors:

- UCS's student cohort: Over the last five years, 39% of UCS students have declared a learning difficulty or disability and this figure is increasing annually. Students declaring LDD typically require higher levels of academic support.

- Staff resource: Increased requirements for academic support has been a recurring theme in student and staff feedback. UCS's NSS score for 'Academic support' is lower than sector averages.
- Staff training: With an increasing number and range of student support needs, staff training may not be at the level required, particularly for those students declaring more complex LDDs with support for neurodiversity a very common challenge.

This area of risk will address the following national risk:

### **EORR risk 6: Insufficient academic support**

Please see **Annex A** for more information and analysis regarding the selection of the risk (**section AA2**)

- **UCS risk 3: Mental health**

UCS has seen an increase over recent years in students disclosing mental health as their primary learning difficulty and / or disability. Mental health now accounts for over a third of all primary LDDs among UCS students. Mental health difficulties have also been a theme in reasons for student withdrawals.

Those students disclosing mental health as their primary LDD have **lower attainment** and **lower progression to highly skilled employment**.

UCS perceive that students disclosing mental health are at risk of lower on-course success, and are likely to require additional support in order to have an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing (which is known to impact performance whilst studying and when securing employment).

UCS believe that the coronavirus pandemic contributed to an increase in mental health difficulties: The numbers of students disclosing mental health as their primary LDD rose sharply in 20-21 (the years that Covid-19 had the biggest impact) and has remained high since. Adapting to higher education and engaging with others in this setting would appear to be an ongoing challenge for those students who studied A-levels or GCSEs during these years, and who could not access traditional classroom-based education.

This area of risk will address the following national risks:

### **EORR risk 6: Mental health**

### **EORR risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus**

Please see **Annex A** for more information and analysis regarding the selection of the risk (**section AA3**)

- **UCS risk area 4: Progression from higher education**

UCS rates of progression to highly skilled employment are low relative to the sector. Please see section AA3 for information on how land-based providers are disadvantaged in the classification of highly skilled employment.

Internal analysis has shown that rates are particularly low for **male** students, students with specific **learning difficulties and / or disabilities**, and those who were in receipt of **free school meals**.

Scores from the 'Graduate reflections' questions within the Graduate Outcomes survey are also lower for **male** students and those who had been in receipt of **free school meals**. UCS believe that this is due to low confidence levels in relation to career readiness in these groups, and this will be addressed in interventions.

This area of risk will address the following national risk:

**EORR risk 12: Progression from higher education**

Please see **Annex A** for more information and analysis regarding the selection of the risk (**section AA4**)

### **3. Objectives**

University Centre Sparsholt's APP objectives are listed in table 1 below.

**Table 1:** UCS APP objectives

	<b>UCS risk area</b>	<b>EORR risk area</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Metric to measure success</b>
<b>Ob1</b>	UCS Risk 1: Access to higher education land-based opportunities	Risk 3: Perception of higher education	Increase applications from male applicants from 28% to <b>35%</b>	Application rates
<b>Ob2</b>	UCS Risk 1: Access to higher education land-based opportunities	Risk 3: Perception of higher education	Increase applications from applicants of ethnic minority from 5% to <b>8%</b>	Application rates
<b>Ob3</b>	UCS risk area 2: Insufficient academic support	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support	For male students: Increase continuation from 81% to <b>85%</b> ; Increase completion from 71% to <b>76%</b> ; Increase attainment to <b>64%</b> (note erratic rates in previous years due to low student numbers)	Rates of continuation, completion, attainment
<b>Ob4</b>	UCS risk area 2: Insufficient academic support	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support	For students of ethnic minority: Increase continuation from 60% to <b>84%</b> , Increase completion from 57% to <b>72%</b> , Increase attainment from 40% to <b>63%</b>	Rates of continuation, completion, attainment
<b>Ob5</b>	UCS risk area 2: Insufficient academic support	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support	For students declaring LDD: Increase completion from 71% to <b>76%</b> , Increase attainment from 54% to <b>63%</b>	Rates of completion and attainment
<b>Ob6</b>	UCS risk area 3: Mental health	Risk 8: Mental health	For students disclosing mental health as their primary LDD, increase attainment from 50% to <b>62%</b>	Rates of attainment

<b>Ob7</b>	UCS risk area 3: Mental health	Risk 8: Mental health	For students disclosing mental health as their primary LDD, increase progression to highly skilled employment from 39% to <b>43%</b>	Rates of highly skilled employment
<b>Ob8</b>	UCS risk area 4: Progression from higher education	Risk 12: Progression from highly skilled employment	For male leavers, increase the scores on all three graduate reflections questions by <b>5pp</b>	The three 'Graduate reflections' questions within the Graduate Outcomes survey
<b>Ob9</b>	UCS risk area 4: Progression from higher education	Risk 12: Progression from highly skilled employment	For leavers who had been in receipt of free school meals, increase the scores on all three graduate reflections questions by <b>5pp</b>	The three 'Graduate reflections' questions within the Graduate Outcomes survey

**Yearly milestones** are shown in table 2 below.

These milestones and targets relate to the more detailed data and analysis presented in Annex A.

**Please note:** Yearly targets for Ob7, Ob8 and Ob9 have not been set for years 1 and 2 of the plan due to the timeframes associated with Graduate Outcomes metrics. The interventions proposed in this plan will not start until 25/26. The first cohort of students who will have had chance to be positively impacted by these interventions will not be surveyed until 26/27, and the results will not be published until 27/28. This cohort will have experienced one year of the new interventions (their final year). It will be two more years (29/30) until the results represent the first cohort who will have experienced three years of the new interventions.

**Table 2:** Yearly milestones and targets.

		Previous year 3	Previous year 2	Previous year 1	Upcoming year	Milestone year 1	Milestone year 2	Milestone year 3	Milestone year 4	Target year 5	
Ob1	Male application rates	24.7%	27.2%	28.2%	TBC	30%	31%	32%	33%	35%	
Ob2	EM application rates	3.1%	1.5%	5.0%	TBC	5%	6%	7%	7%	8%	
Ob3	Male continuation	79.5%	80.0%	81.1%	TBC	82%	82%	83%	84%	85%	
	Male completion	69.6%	72.4%	71.4%	TBC	72%	73%	74%	75%	76%	
	Male attainment	71.4%	48.6%	63.6%	TBC	61%	62%	63%	63%	64%	
Ob4	EM continuation	85.7%	87.5%	60.0%	TBC	80%	81%	82%	83%	84%	
	EM completion	66.7%	50.0%	57.1%	TBC	62%	64%	66%	68%	72%	
	EM attainment	0.0%	25.0%	40.0%	TBC	50%	55%	60%	62%	63%	
Ob5	LDD completion	74.5%	68.2%	71.4%	TBC	72%	73%	74%	75%	76%	
	LDD attainment	58.6%	50.0%	54.3%	TBC	55%	58%	60%	61%	63%	
Ob6	Mental health attainment	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	TBC	52%	54%	58%	60%	62%	
Ob7	Mental health HSE (4 yr average)			38.5%	TBC	-	-	41%	42%	43%	
Ob8	Graduate reflections male	Q1	82.4%	93.8%	70.6%	TBC	-	-	83%	85%	88%
	Graduate reflections male	Q2	70.6%	75.0%	64.7%	TBC	-	-	71%	73%	76%
	Graduate reflections male	Q3	54.5%	75.0%	70.6%	TBC	-	-	71%	73%	76%
Ob9	Graduate reflections FSM	Q1	85.4%	76.9%	73.3%	TBC	-	-	75%	77%	80%
	Graduate reflections FSM	Q2	68.3%	65.4%	65.2%	TBC	-	-	67%	69%	72%
	Graduate reflections FSM	Q3	67.5%	80.8%	66.7%	TBC	-	-	68%	70%	73%

#### 4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

##### **Intervention strategy 1: Increasing access to land-based studies in higher education**

###### **Objectives and targets:**

To reduce gaps in applications that are seen by gender and ethnicity, we would aim to increase applications from male applicants to 35% (**Ob1**), and applicants of ethnic minority to 8% (see **Ob2**).

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** EORR Risk 2: Information and guidance; EORR Risk 3: Perception of higher education

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
<p>IS1.1</p> <p>Provide bursaries:</p> <p>UCS will commit to four bursaries per year for each year of the plan. These bursaries are flexible in terms of their use but will be the financial equivalent of half of the yearly tuition fee for each year of a FdSc or BSc. Payment for the following year will be linked to expectations for attendance and engagement. How the student uses the funds will be flexible, reflecting that barriers to education are not the same for all individual students.</p> <p>Applications for the scheme will be promoted through IS1.4, and priority will be given to applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of ethnic minority</li> <li>- Who are male</li> <li>- From TUNDRA1</li> </ul>	<p>Financial:</p> <p>£18,000 each new year (4 * £4,500 per year)</p> <p>After three years this will reach a steady state of £54,000 in total each year (£18,000 * each of the three years)</p> <p>Additional £30,000 hardship fund</p> <p>Please note that financial support offered as part of the existing APP will remain while the new scheme is phased in.</p>	<p>Decreased financial concerns for applicants from underrepresented groups. Increased financial security.</p>	<p>IS1.4</p>

<p>- Those with a low household income Applications will be assessed against a framework of suitability, and will be means tested</p> <p>Additionally, UCS will provide a £30,000 hardship fund for students to access at times of financial difficulty.</p>	<p>Administrative costs.</p>		
<p>IS1.2</p> <p>UCS already offer an 'Access to HE land based' course.</p> <p>The provision of a new level 3 'Access to Vet Science' course will be a new activity. This will be brought in for the 25/26 year.</p>	<p>Repositioning the time of existing academic staff.</p> <p>Staff administrative costs.</p>	<p>This will help students who may not meet the standard requirements for entry into Vet Nursing degree to develop skills and subject-specific knowledge, with the aim of increasing access to undergraduate studies. Vet Nursing is particularly underrepresented by male students.</p>	
<p>IS1.3</p> <p>Information, advice and guidance (IAG) as part of UCS outreach activities.</p> <p>UCS will host a yearly 'UCS futures event' where local colleges are invited to subject-specific taster sessions on campus.</p> <p>UCS will also continue existing outreach to provide IAG to local schools and colleges, giving priority to those colleges that have higher proportions of underrepresented students, with an emphasis on career choices and academic and financial support.</p>	<p>Staff time and resources to provide taster sessions and attend outreach events.</p> <p>Administrative costs.</p>	<p>Help students make informed choices about education options and particularly the benefits of land based HE; raising aspirations.</p>	<p>IS1.1 IS1.2 IS1.4</p>

<p>IS1.4</p> <p>In collaboration with the British Ethnic Riders Foundation (BERF), host a yearly event at UCS to promote the options within equine at higher education.</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Administrative costs</p>	<p>Help those interested in equine make informed choices about education options, with a particular focus on ethnic minorities; raising aspirations.</p>	<p>IS1.3</p> <p>IS1.6</p>
<p>IS1.5</p> <p>Host a yearly event for the Hampshire Federation of Young Farmers (a male dominated organisation), promoting the options within agriculture at higher education level.</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Administrative costs</p>	<p>Help those interested in agriculture make informed choices about education options, with a particular focus on ethnic minority; raising aspirations.</p>	<p>IS1.3</p> <p>IS1.6</p>
<p>IS1.6</p> <p>Promote the successes of our current male students, and students of ethnic minority, through social media, advertising and publicity.</p> <p>Offer mentoring for those from underrepresented groups. UCS will create and lead a mentoring group for underrepresented student groups across Landex members (numbers of students in some underrepresented groups are low in individual institutions, but have greater numbers and a clearer voice across Leandex HE members).</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Administrative costs</p>	<p>Provide role models; raising aspirations</p> <p>Create and lead a group for mentoring and a voice for underrepresented groups across Landex members.</p>	<p>IS1.3</p>

**Summary of evidence base and rationale:** We have taken inspiration from the TASO Evidence Toolkit, which demonstrates the benefit of AIG, financial support, foundation year programmes, aspiration raising, and mentoring counselling and coaching (pre entry). Full details of evidence and rationale are provided in Annex B.

**Evaluation:** We will examine the extent to which each activity contributes towards meeting the overall objective through internal data analysis of our applicants. We also intend to evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy to establish whether or not they lead to the intended outcomes. We will start the strategy in the 2025-26 academic year, and we intend to disseminate interim findings every year. More detailed information on how we will be evaluating each activity can be found below.

Activity	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
IS1.1  Bursaries	Increased number of male applicants, and applicants of ethnic minority.  Decreased financial concerns for applicants from underrepresented groups. Increased financial security	Analysis of number of male applicants and applicants of ethnic minority.  Questionnaire targeted at those who apply to the scholarship, to understand the impact the scholarships have on applicant willingness to apply, their financial concerns, and financial security.  (Narrative enquiry)
IS1.2  Access to HE for Vet Nursing	Help students who may not meet the standard requirements for entry into university to develop skills and subject-specific knowledge, with the aim of increasing access to undergraduate studies.	Questionnaire targeted at those who enrol on the new Access course, at the start of the course and at the end of the course, to assess their subject specific knowledge and skills, and attitude / readiness towards starting an HE level course  Scales / questions will be taken from TASO's Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)  (Empirical enquiry).
IS1.3  AIG and outreach	Help students make informed choices about education options and particularly the benefits of land based HE; raising aspirations.	Questionnaire to those attending the outreach events to understand their attitude towards HE and their understanding of land-based opportunities within HE  Scales / questions will be taken from TASO's Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)

	Highlight support (academic and financial) on offer and to highlight and identify role models, mentors to offer inspiration.	(Narrative enquiry)
IS1.4 BERF events and outreach	Help those interested in equine make informed choices about education options, with a particular focus on ethnic minority; raising aspirations.	Questionnaire to those attending the events to understand their attitude towards HE and their understanding of equine opportunities within HE Scales / questions will be taken from TASO's Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)  (Narrative enquiry)  Analysis of number of applicants of ethnic minority to equine courses at UCS, matching data from known event attendees to subsequent applications / enrolments
IS1.5 Young farmers events and outreach	Help those interested in agriculture make informed choices about education options, with a particular focus on ethnic minority; raising aspirations.	Questionnaire to those attending the events to understand their attitude towards HE and their understanding of agriculture opportunities within HE  Scales / questions will be taken from TASO's Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)  (Narrative enquiry)  Analysis of number of male applicants to agriculture courses at UCS, matching data from known event attendees to subsequent applications / enrolments

### **Intervention strategy 2: Increasing student support**

**Objectives and targets:** To reduce gaps in continuation, completion and attainment seen by gender, we would aim to increase continuation among male students to 85%, improve completion among male students to 76%, and improve attainment among male students to 64% (**Ob3**).

To reduce gaps in continuation, completion and attainment seen by ethnicity, we would aim to increase continuation among students of ethnic minority to 84%, increase completion to 72%, and increase attainment to 63% (**Ob4**).

To reduce gaps in completion and attainment seen by learning difficulty or disability (LDD), we would aim to increase completion for students declaring LDD to 76%, and attainment to 63% (**Ob5**).

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** EORR Risk 6: Insufficient academic support

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
<p>IS2.1</p> <p>To offer all new students an on-entry diagnostic tool to enable students and staff to understand their learning strengths and needs. This tool will enable us to put in place individualised academic support for the students.</p> <p>All students will be offered a one-to-one with new academic support staff (IS2.2) in their first month if LDD is identified, with regular follow up support as appropriate.</p>	<p>Purchase of licence for software: £80 x 170 students = £13,600</p> <p>Academic and specialist support staff time to meet with students to support their findings of the diagnostic reports.</p> <p>Dedicated learning support staff time to support and advise throughout the year.</p>	<p>All students will receive a personalised support package to support their HE journey.</p> <p>Increased academic confidence and feelings of support among UCS student cohort, leading to improved on-course success</p>	<p>IS2.2</p>
<p>IS2.2</p> <p>To establish two new staff positions within UCS.</p> <p>These positions will provide academic and study support to all students through mentoring, coaching and study support.</p>	<p>Recruitment and ongoing annual salary of two new members of staff to provide academic and study support to students.</p> <p>Circa £76k annually.</p>	<p>Dedicated members of staff to provide support with academic support, assessments, learning and attainment.</p> <p>Reduced demand on academic staff time to provide enhanced academic and pastoral support.</p>	<p>IS2.1 IS3.4</p>

<p>One-to-one coaching sessions will be available to all students, but will be targeted and heavily encouraged for male students, students of ethnic minority, and those with LDD support needs diagnosed by IS2.1 (in each year of study).</p>		<p>Improved retention and attainment amongst target groups</p>	
<p>IS2.3</p> <p>To replace the current year-tutor system with a personal tutor system.</p> <p>Students will be assigned a named academic member of staff for support (academic, pastoral and employability) that will remain constant throughout their studies at UCS, moving through the course with the student.</p>	<p>An increased number of one to one and small group tutorials (with minimum service levels set) requiring increased time from academic staff.</p>	<p>Increased understanding of individual student needs.</p> <p>Student perception that they are adequately prepared for study in a way that works for them, and for final year students being aware of opportunities for employment relevant to their studies leading to students engaging in employment relevant to the course.</p> <p>Improved retention and attainment amongst target groups</p>	
<p>IS2.4</p> <p>Mandatory training for all UCS staff on neurodiversity, neurodiverse student needs, and how to support these students academically.</p> <p>This training will begin with academic and support staff, but over the course of the plan, we will aim to roll out this training to every member of student facing staff including wardens, premises staff, catering staff etc.</p>	<p>External sourced CPD event for staff, to be run annually.</p> <p>Cost between £600 - £1,500 annually</p>	<p>UCS staff have the knowledge and confidence to deliver academic support to students with neurodiversity.</p>	<p>IS2.3</p>

<p>IS2.5</p> <p>To trial the introduction a choice of assessment types to promote inclusion and to reward diverse students' ability. This will provide assessment options that are more inclusive to varying student needs.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that a dedicated session to explain the different assignment types and very clear marking scheme are an integral part of the success.</p> <p>This will be trialled on a small number of modules initially, but UCS may scale up and roll out across courses depending on the outcomes of the evaluation.</p>	<p>Time and resources are required to develop the material to support the students in the planning and execution of this non-traditional, authentic mode of assessment. Time to simplify all marking schemes to a rubric approach to add greater clarity to marking criteria.</p> <p>Staff training/CPD around promoting choice in assessment.</p>	<p>Students being assessed in ways that are suited to their neurodiversity and learning styles, leading to increased on-course success, helping to close the attainment gap between students with LDD and those without.</p> <p>Improved NSS and internal survey scores in relation to assessment.</p>	
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**Summary of evidence base and rationale:**

Annex B provides full information on the evidence and rationale supporting these initiatives, which is a mix of TASO supported evidence, approved external technology, and research from within the HE sector.

**Evaluation:** We will examine the extent to which each activity contributes towards meeting the overall objective through internal data analysis of our continuation, completion and attainment rates. We also intend to evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy to establish whether or not they lead to the intended outcomes. We will start the strategy in the 2025-26 academic year, and we intend to disseminate interim findings every year. More detailed information on how we will be evaluating each activity can be found below.

Activity	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
<p>IS2.1</p> <p>New support diagnosis technology</p>	<p>All students will receive a personalised support package to support their HE journey.</p>	<p>Focus group with academic staff to understand their views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How easy the technology was to use</li> <li>- How clear and understandable the results were to use</li> <li>- How useful the results were in setting individual support plans</li> </ul>

		(Narrative enquiry)
IS2.2 New members of academic support staff	<p>Dedicated members of staff to provide support with academic support, assessments, learning and attainment.</p> <p>Reduced demand on academic staff time to provide academic and pastoral support.</p>	<p>UCS will collect data on who has been engaging with the new academic support staff, and categorise this data by the nature of their interaction (e.g. study skills session, mentoring, specific assignment help etc.).</p> <p>All students who engage with the staff will be sent a questionnaire at the end of each academic year to measure the level of support that they received from these staff members, and their opinions on how it benefitted them.</p> <p>(Narrative enquiry)</p> <p>Continuation, completion and attainment rates will be compared between those who engaged with the staff (and at what level) and those who didn't.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
IS2.3 New personal tutor system	<p>Increased understanding of individual student needs.</p> <p>Student perception that they are adequately prepared for study in a way that works for them, and for final year students being aware of opportunities for employment relevant to their studies.</p>	<p>UCS will run two focus groups with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The first will be in September 2024, with final year students who have completed two years of their course, and who have used the previous tutor system where tutors change each year.</li> <li>- The second will be in September 2027, with final year students who have completed two years of their course, and who have used the new tutor system where tutors remain the same between years.</li> </ul> <p>The same questions will be asked, measuring feelings towards the tutor system and the support that is provided, looking for any differences in these metrics as a result of the change.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>

<p>IS2. 4</p> <p>Staff training for neurodiverse student support.</p>	<p>Student-facing staff have the knowledge and confidence to deliver academic support to students with neurodiversity.</p>	<p>Staff who attend the training will be given a questionnaire at two stages: Prior to the training, and after the training. The questionnaire will explore knowledge of neurodiversity and confidence in delivering academic support to neurodiverse students, looking for any differences in these metrics because of the training.</p> <p>Where possible the questionnaire will be informed by the questions asked in the existing research project led by the University of Bristol, referenced in Annex B.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
<p>IS2.5</p> <p>Trialling assessment options</p>	<p>Students being assessed in ways that are suited to their neurodiversity.</p> <p>An improvement in student success and attainment.</p>	<p>Average marks from the modules included in the trial will be compared to average marks from the same module in previous years.</p> <p>Students who are studying on the modules included within the trial will have qualitative data collected (either through a focus group or a questionnaire) to understand their thoughts on having assessment options and how it may have benefitted them.</p> <p>(Narrative enquiry)</p>

**Intervention strategy 3: Improving mental health**

**Objectives and targets:** Ensure an environment that is conducive to good mental health for all students. Specifically, provide improved support for students who declare mental health as their primary LDD, with the aim of increasing attainment to 62% for those students (**Ob6**), and increase progression to highly skilled employment to 43% (**Ob7**).

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** EORR Risk 8: Mental Health; EORR 9: Ongoing impact of the Coronavirus

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
IS3.1			

<p>To put in place a series of interventions to support the transition to HE, including the introduction of networking events online and in person, and a series of transition days for those students with anxiety and other mental health challenges to better prepare for starting University.</p> <p>This would also include a residential taster for those wishing to become residents at UCS.</p> <p>This is in addition to existing student events to promote wellbeing and sense of belonging, including rounders, sports day, student BBQ etc to help transition to university life</p>	<p>Staff time to coordinate and run the transition days.</p> <p>Accommodation and facilities cost for these events.</p>	<p>Enable students declaring mental health as an LDD to experience the campus and university life in a calmer environment before the term started. It is hoped that this would lead to students experiencing less anxiety during their first weeks of study, and therefore better able to focus on academic and social elements.</p>	
<p>IS3.2</p> <p>For all staff to undertake mental health first aid training on an annual basis, and maintain currency in this area.</p> <p>This will also include suicide prevention training through Papyrus.</p>	<p>External sourced CPD events for staff, to be run annually.</p> <p>£3k-5k annually</p>	<p>UCS staff (academic and support) are able to understand mental health and recognise signs of deterioration, so that mental health is better understood and supported by those staff members who are in daily contact with students.</p>	
<p>IS3.3</p> <p>To offer mental health training to all student representatives.</p> <p>As part of induction for course reps, training will be provided to enable them to identify and seek support when</p>	<p>One half-day, in-person training course.</p> <p>£1,000 - £2,000 annually</p>	<p>UCS students are able to understand mental health among their peers, so that the support network for mental health runs right through UCS.</p> <p>An increase in reporting of mental health concerns, and a decrease in the number</p>	

<p>identifying mental health risks from within their peers</p>		<p>of students withdrawing from UCS because of mental health</p> <p><i>Note: this is an additional form of support, and it is not intended that this places an obligation of support on to the student body</i></p>	
<p>IS3.4</p> <p>To establish two new staff positions within UCS.</p> <p>These positions will provide academic and study support to all students through mentoring, coaching and study support.</p> <p>One-to-one coaching sessions will be available to all students, but will be targeted and heavily encouraged for male students, students of ethnic minority, and those declaring mental health as their primary with LDD (in each year of study).</p> <p>These staff will also coordinate a student buddy system targeted at the students within the target groups.</p>	<p>Recruitment and ongoing annual salary of two new members of staff to provide academic and study support to students.</p> <p>Circa £76k annually</p>	<p>Dedicated members of staff to provide support with academic support, assessments, learning and attainment.</p> <p>Reduced demand on academic staff time to provide academic and learning support.</p>	<p>IS2.1 IS2.2</p>
<p>IS3.5</p> <p>To provide additional targeted careers support for those reporting with mental health concerns, including for two years after graduation.</p>	<p>Additional time from UCS staff to provide one-to-one support sessions for students declaring mental health as their primary LDD.</p> <p>Training for academic staff on employability support (IS4.6)</p>	<p>Increased employability confidence for students and graduates declaring mental health as their primary LDD. Improved post-HE success.</p>	<p>IS4.6</p>

IS3.6			
To request exit interviews for all students who are suspending or withdraw from their studies due to mental health.	Staff time to conduct the interviews.	UCS will use the qualitative data to better understand how mental health impacts student life. This will be collated and reported and will feed into continuous improvement.	

**Summary of evidence base and rationale:** Annex B provides full information on the evidence and rationale supporting these initiatives, which is a mix of TASO supported evidence and research from within the HE sector.

**Evaluation:** We will examine the extent to which each activity contributes towards meeting the overall objective through internal data analysis of attainment and progression rates for students declaring mental health as their primary LDD. We also intend to evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy to establish whether or not they lead to the intended outcomes. We will start the strategy in the 2025-26 academic year, and we intend to disseminate interim findings every year. More detailed information on how we will be evaluating each activity can be found below.

Activity	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
IS3.1 Transition days	Students experiencing less anxiety during their first weeks of study, and therefore better able to focus on academic and social elements.	Questionnaire to those students who engage with the transition days, to measure their perceived level of support, sense of belonging, and anxiety. This would be administered at the end of the transition days.  Follow-up focus group three months into the academic term to further explore their sense of belonging and how they have settled in.  (Narrative enquiry) Use internal data to monitor withdrawal rates due to mental health, loneliness, difficulty adapting etc. during the first six weeks of term.
IS3.2	UCS staff are able to understand mental health and recognise signs of deterioration, so that mental	Questionnaire to all staff who attend the training at two stages:  - Prior to the training

Mental health training for staff	health is better understood and supported among academic staff who are in daily contact with students.	<p>- After the training</p> <p>To understand knowledge of mental health, and confidence in supporting students with mental health issues, looking for any changes in these metrics as a result of the training.</p> <p>A follow up after one year to see if staff have put their new knowledge and skills into practice.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
IS3.3 Mental health training for students	UCS students are able to understand mental health among their peers, so that the support network for mental health runs right through UCS.	<p>Questionnaire to all students who attend the training at two stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prior to the training</li> <li>- After the training</li> </ul> <p>To understand knowledge of mental health, and confidence in supporting other students with mental health issues, looking for any changes in these metrics as a result of the training.</p> <p>A follow up after one year to see if staff have put their new knowledge and skills into practice.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
IS3.5 Targeted careers support	Increased employability confidence for students and graduates declaring mental health as their primary LDD. Improved post-HE success.	See IS4.2 below
IS3.6 Exit interviews with those withdrawing	UCS will use the qualitative data to better understand how mental health impacts student life. This will be collated and reported and	It is not felt that evaluation of this intervention is required. The data collected from the interviews will be collated and fed into continuous improvement. This method of gathering feedback and using it for improvement is well established

through mental health issues.  Targeted communications with any student suspending due to mental health reasons to offer support and help for them to return to study.	will feed into continuous improvement.	
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**Intervention strategy 4: Improving graduate prospects**

**Objectives and targets:** General improvement of graduate prospects for UCS leavers, but with a specific focus on improving the scores on all three graduate reflections questions by +5pp for male leavers (**Ob8**), and +5pp for leavers who had been in receipt of free school meals (**Ob9**).

**Risks to equality of opportunity:** Risk 12: Progression from higher education

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention
IS4.1  Create three new employability modules (one at each level of study) as vehicles for embedding employability skills and the University of Portsmouth graduate attributes  These new modules will include:	Two weeks work for two academic staff to develop scheme (£5,400).  Remaining input is already allocated within delivery time for academic staff.	Relevant employability modules that reflect and deliver UCS / University of Portsmouth graduate attributes (an agreed set of qualities, skills and competencies that can underpin learning and curriculum within subject areas).	IS4.3 IS4.4

<p>- <b>IS4.2:</b> Create an employability passport that will map the employability elements, industry focussed learning opportunities and industry competencies that are part of their course.</p> <p>- <b>IS4.3:</b> Create a Sparsholt Employability Award.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to opt in to the Award. Elements will include the creation of a LinkedIn profile and professional photographer, interview practice, aptitude testing, CV workshops, careers conversation, community outreach, volunteering etc. Although optional, this will be targeted and encouraged towards the disadvantaged groups (male students and students in receipt of free school meals). This will link to a personal reference from Dean of HE, with an awards evening with employers.</p>	<p>Academic staff time to map employability elements within existing courses.</p> <p>Management staff time to formalise these mappings into a passport.</p> <p>Academic staff time to identify and map aspects of the award.</p> <p>Management staff time to formalise these mappings into an award.</p>	<p>Formalised passport to explicitly identify employability skills and competencies. These will increase employability confidence and careers readiness.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to experience extra-curricula activities that will be beneficial to their general employability skills, improving their chances of employment within industry.</p>	
<p>IS4.4</p> <p>To create an alumni association with social media elements as a tool by which to link up alumni in positions seeking new talent with</p>	<p>£1,000 initial set up costs, including staffing.</p>	<p>Students developing contacts and networking capabilities with alumni and other professionals, thereby cultivating social capital to enhance employability.</p>	

our recent and current graduates.	Ongoing management cost £1,000 per year.  £3,000 alumni launch event on campus.		
IS4. 5  Academic staff training.  UCS will work with Gradcore (an HE employability specialist) to deliver training to academic staff on embedding employability, developing and assessing graduate attributes, how to harness meaningful employer and industry input.	£850 per participant, 8 participants.  £6,800  Recurring expenditure	Equipping academic staff with the knowledge to embed and assess employability attributes	IS4.1 IS4.6
IS4.6  Tailored careers advice from academic members of staff to the two target groups (male students, students in receipt of free school meals) at an early stage, through mandatory employability and career focussed tutorials.  Students from these two groups to be offered access to a specialist professional mentoring scheme, linking them to professionals working in industry.	Staff time to deliver sessions.  Staff training to enable them to have the skills required to deliver the employability tutorials  Management time to monitor uptake.  Staff time to coordinate mentoring with industry professionals.	Students from the target groups will have personal employability and career support, mentoring and networking, thereby increasing employability confidence and readiness.	IS4.5

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**Summary of evidence base and rationale:** Annex B provides full information on the evidence and rationale supporting these initiatives, which is a mix of TASO supported evidence and research from within the HE sector.

**Evaluation:** We will examine the extent to which each activity contributes towards meeting the overall objective through internal data analysis of our scores on the 'graduate reflections' questions within the Graduate Outcomes Survey . We also intend to evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy to establish whether or not they lead to the intended outcomes. We will start the strategy in the 2025-26 academic year, and we intend to disseminate interim findings every year. More detailed information on how we will be evaluating each activity can be found below.

Activity	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
<p>IS4.1</p> <p>Three new employability modules as vehicles for embedding employability skills and graduate attributes</p>	<p>Relevant employability modules that reflect and deliver UCS / University of Portsmouth graduate attributes (an agreed set of qualities, skills and competencies that can underpin learning and curriculum within subject areas).</p>	<p>A series of focus groups, to take place two years following the launch of the modules, with students from each subject area, to understand their thoughts on how relevant and impactful the modules are, and their recognition of the attributes. These would include students specifically from the two disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>These focus groups will be repeated every two years, with findings feeding into a biennial review of the modules and attributes.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
<p><b>IS4.2:</b> Create an employability passport that will map the employability elements, industry focussed learning opportunities and industry competencies that are part of their course.</p>	<p>Formalised passport to explicitly identify employability skills and competencies. These will increase employability confidence and careers readiness</p>	<p>Both of these three interventions will be evaluated by a yearly 'Career readiness' survey. This survey will be repeated for each student, each year of study. It will aim to measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition and understanding of learned employability skills</li> <li>- Understanding of specific industries</li> <li>- Career plans</li> <li>- Employability confidence.</li> </ul>

<p><b>IS4.3:</b> Create a Sparsholt Employability Award.</p>	<p>Students will have the opportunity to experience extra-curricula activities that will be beneficial to their general employability skills, improving their chances of employment within industry.</p>	<p>- Professional networks and connectedness</p> <p>Results will be used to see whether career readiness improves as the student moves through their studies, and will provide data that can highlight any particular student groups who have low readiness scores.</p> <p>The data will also provide insight into whether those who engage with the Employability Award are showing increases career readiness.</p> <p>(Empirical enquiry)</p>
<p>IS4.4 To create an alumni association</p>	<p>Students developing contacts and networking capabilities with alumni and other professionals, thereby cultivating social capital to enhance employability.</p>	<p>This will also be measured by the career readiness survey in IS4.2/3 with questions on professional networks and connectedness</p>
<p>IS4.5 Academic staff training with Gradcore</p>	<p>Equipping academic staff with the knowledge to embed and assess employability attributes</p>	<p>Questionnaire to measure staff understanding and confidence with embedding graduate attributes, pre and post training, to see any impact that the training has.</p> <p>Empirical enquiry</p>
<p>IS4.6 Tailored careers advice to the two target groups and access to a specialist mentoring scheme.</p>	<p>Students from the target groups will have personal employability and career support, increasing employability confidence and readiness.</p>	<p>This will also be measured by the career readiness survey in IS4.2/3/4.</p>

## **5. Whole provider approach**

The following points highlight how UCS is taking a whole provider approach to addressing the risks to equality of opportunity:

- At UCS, the APP is managed by the Vice Principal & Dean of HE, and the Assistant Principal of HE. These two roles are the two most senior within the University Centre. The VP & Dean sits on the senior leadership team (SLT) for wider Sparsholt College Group. By having direct oversight of the APP at this level, it will ensure that the APP is embedded within strategy, and everyday operations and decision making. The Dean will present termly update reports to the HE Strategy Group. The membership of this group includes both the Principal and Deputy Principal of Sparsholt College Group, as well as reporting to Governors via termly committee meetings and an annual report to board.
- APP progress will become a fixed agenda item at fortnightly Subject Lead meetings. At UCS, the subject leads coordinate the curriculum, and act as a conduit between students, staff and university management. Subject Leads will be integral to delivery of the APP, and monitoring student feedback in response to key interventions.
- UCS is a small provider that values each and every student, often with classes around 15-20 students, and it wishes all students to be successful. To support this aim, several of the interventions that will be put in place through this plan will benefit **all** students at UCS, and not just those disadvantaged groups. Interventions such as training academic staff to effectively deliver employability support will benefit students across UCS regardless of their characteristics, whilst priority will be given to those target groups who have been identified as requiring additional support (e.g. males and those in receipt of FSM), and will maximise chances of improving outcomes for those students. For these unrepresented groups, staff will work with them so that engagement with optional extra-curricular support sessions become firm expectations, with clear safeguards to allow an opt-out in exceptional circumstances.
- UCS will establish a new 'APP Student Association' group, where student representatives will be invited to meet as a group once per term to discuss and evaluate APP progress, provide ongoing student input into the APP, and any emerging EDI issues. Similarly our scheduled employer engagement meetings will have APP as a standing agenda item.
- As demonstrated within this plan, UCS's approach covers all stages of the student lifecycle: This APP has objectives for improving access and perception of HE, improving support that will enable student success, and progressing into employment following higher education.
- UCS is already putting interventions in place to improve sense of belonging for all students as a result of student feedback. Since 24/25 there has been a programme of extra-curricular events offered to the whole student body, including sports days, annual all-campus Pride event, staff and student rounders match, end of term bbq, Christmas quiz. In addition, UCS had its first ever Freshers Fayre in 2023, and introduced student-led clubs and societies for the first time. These activities are all designed to develop a sense of belonging,

and feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive. The aim is for UCS to capitalise on our uniqueness as a small land-based provider to use that community for students to encourage and support each other in addition to the measures we propose in this ambitious plan.

- UCS has regard to the Equality Act 2010, and works hard to support students who require additional support. In 2024, UCS put reasonable adjustments in place for 49 students during their exams. This demonstrates both our commitment to individual student needs, and how UCS provides an environment that gives all students the opportunity to succeed. This also provides some context as to the type of students that UCS support and the important role UCS plays within the sector as a small specialist provider.
- The wider Sparsholt College Group has begun a programme of mental health training with all senior managers. This training will be further rolled out to all UCS staff in 2024/25. The training provides understanding of mental health, and provides information and strategies for managing staff's own mental health, and supporting mental health among colleagues. Ensuring that staff across the organisation have this training is a further commitment to a learning environment that is conducive to good mental health. At a wider Sparsholt College Group level, there are at least termly all manager meetings where all senior and middle managers come together to update on matters relevant to the student body, undertake training and also to share ideas. This is typical of the whole provider approach the organisation takes to providing relevant education to its students.
- UCS operate a digital poverty scheme, where the University Centre will provide students with IT infrastructure, such as a laptop, for duration of their studies when they are in hardship. The Board of Governors has reviewed and approved the plan as its commitment to access and participation and has incorporated strategic objectives and performance measures for the target groups in the overarching Sparsholt College Group strategic plan 2024-27. The allocation of related resources informs the College Group annual budget proposals which are approved by the Board. The leadership commitment to equality of opportunity is also reinforced in the College Group's equality, diversity and inclusion policy and published equality objectives. To enable timely and comprehensive oversight, the Board has delegated specific duties for termly monitoring of delivery of the plan to a committee of the Board and the Board will review an annual progress and assurance report on key performance measures.

## **6. Student consultation**

Student representatives from all courses were invited to an APP discussion in May 2024. The proposed risks and interventions were presented by the Assistant Principal, with feedback invited from those present. There was overall agreement with the direction and proposals in the plan. In particular it was agreed that academic support and mental health as areas of risk that should be targeted. There were proposals for staff training on neurodiversity and the needs of neurodiverse students, which has been included within the plan as a result of this feedback. There was also a suggestion that the University should have an ambassador that represents ethnic minority students. As detailed above,

UCS will establish a new 'APP Student Association' group, where student representatives will be invited to meet as a group once per term to discuss and evaluate APP progress, provide ongoing student input into the APP, and any emerging EDI issues.

## **7. Evaluation of the plan**

UCS is committed to undertaking evaluation activities, and systematic data collection, that will help understand whether the planned interventions are effectively addressing the risks to equality of opportunity that have been identified. UCS are confident that these evaluations will bring internal understanding of impact that will help us review and adapt the Plan, and also contribute to sector wide knowledge of what works in improving equality of opportunity. Please see the tables in section 4 for full details of planned evaluation of each intervention strategy.

UCS has previously not undertaken systematic and detailed evaluation of interventions that have been put in place to benefit students, and as such this represents a positive change in strategic approach. UCS will establish an APP Evaluation Working Group that will meet every two months and oversee the programme of evaluation. This group will consist of the Vice Principal and Dean, Assistant Principal, Senior Curriculum Lead, and Subject Leads. Having both UCS and Sparsholt College Group senior management and academic leads on the group will ensure that evaluation is embedded and understood across the organisation. This group will also report at every meeting of the HE Strategy Group. Having this programme of evaluation in place will allow UCS to monitor the impact of interventions, learn from this evaluation, and adapt the Plan where necessary over the five years that it is in place. As such, the current interventions are those that we are committing to at the start of the Plan, but UCS may make changes to these, if evaluations suggest that new approaches are required.

UCS has undertaken the OfS-approved 'Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool'. The findings from the tool show that UCS '*Demonstrates good practices against all the minimum expectations for the dimension (i.e. yes recorded for expected evaluation practices)*' in all five dimensions. This outcome is reassuring and supports the UCS evaluation proposals, but there is still acknowledgement that some further planning is required to ensure that UCS put a successful programme of evaluation in place that have the intended impact of helping the University deliver this APP. The APP evaluation working group will continue to develop the APP and challenge thinking as appropriate.

**Publication of evaluation:** UCS will publish an evaluation report on its website once per year in the summer. This report will provide information on all evaluation activities that have been carried out in that academic year, and the findings and impact. In cases where our evaluation has shown particularly interesting findings from interventions that we feel will progress the sector's APP understanding, we will explore opportunities to publish the research wider. We will also have regular internal reporting and monitoring by SLT and Governors, which will feed into ongoing developments of UCS strategic and operations planning.

## **8. Provision of information to students (including fees)**

The APP is a large and detailed document and we recognise that for it to be robust and likely to succeed, this level of information is required. It is unlikely, however, that target

groups would engage with the full written Plan. As such, UCS will commit to a clearer communication plan to engage stakeholders including students at various stages of their journey, employers of UCS graduates, and the wider community. UCS would like all to understand the firm commitment being made to support all students to succeed on course, and who have the confidence and skills to meet the needs of employers.

We therefore commit to:

- Provide a short two page summary of the APP for public engagement
- To create a series of short summaries for students, staff, and employers outlining what the APP might mean for these groups.
- To promote APP at all opportunities across the wider Sparsholt College Group and especially on web pages, social media, open days, prospectus etc.
- To create a clear bursary and support guide with targeted support with the application from those identified as being from underrepresented groups.
- An annual summary, alongside a lay summary, of the activities and successes to date, along with proposed changes to be published on our website along with more regular updates shared with students via the student association.

UCS fees are set each October and approved by Governors before the next UCAS recruitment cycle is open. Our institutional policy is that the students pay the fee that is advertised on our web site. They will pay this for the whole duration of their course. Our [website](#) states that the advertised fees are for those starting in a certain year. We recognise that this could be clearer, and should state that these fees will be fixed for the duration of the course.

We will also ensure that our bursary information is clear and prominent, along with any additional course costs.

We will therefore commit to making course fees and financial support clearer on our website, and to bring all of this together in a single document. For UCS this would not require any changes in policy or practice, however we will work to ensure that the commitment from the student and the institution in relation to this matter is clearer.

## **Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks**

The following four sections provide data to support our identification of the risks that UCS will focus on within this plan.

In most cases, the last five years of data has been combined and used to create aggregate measures. This is because student numbers at UCS are small (420 across 18 courses), particularly when narrowing down to specific student groups, so five-year aggregate measures provide more reliable numbers to use for analysis. Breakdowns for individual years are provided where possible.

The OfS APP dashboard was considered when identifying risks, but in many cases the student numbers were too small and data was suppressed or not available. Instead, our analysis has been based on the data held within our internal student records, supplemented with external available data (e.g. NSS, Graduate Outcomes Survey, UCAS etc.). Attempts were made to intersect student characteristics, but low numbers of students in specific student groups made this difficult.

- **Section AA1 - Analysis relating to Risk 3: Perception of HE**

UCS identify that there is a risk of insufficient knowledge and understanding of land based opportunities within higher education.

Looking at the most recent [UCAS data](#) for main scheme applications to higher education, there were 2,977,020 applications through UCAS in the 2023 cycle. Only 14,755 of these applications were to land based providers (i.e. those providers who are members of Landex, an organisation representing land-based education), which represents just **0.5%** of all applications to higher education.

This low level of application to land based studies at HE level is reflected in a current [parliamentary inquiry](#) into education in land-based sectors. The inquiry is asking questions such as how the understanding and awareness of career opportunities in land-based sectors be improved, and reviewing the roles and effectiveness of education in promoting land-based careers.

UCS have identified specific risks to perception of HE in relation to **gender** and **ethnicity**.

- Gender:** Over the most recent five-year period, only **25.0% of applications to UCS were from male applicants**. This rate has increased for three consecutive years, but remains over 40pp lower than the rate of applications from female applicants. This is not uncommon within land based higher education - UCAS data shows that in the 2023 cycle, only 34% of main scheme applications to land based higher education providers were from male applicants.
- Ethnicity:** Over the most recent five year period, **only 3.1%** of applications to UCS were from **applicants of ethnic minority**. To some extent this reflects the ethnic profile of Hampshire (92.6% of residents describe themselves as belonging to White ethnic groups compared to the national average of 81%). It is also typical of land-based providers: UCAS data shows that in the 2023 cycle, only 6.8% of main scheme applications to land based higher education providers were from applicants of ethnic minority. It represents a clear inequality that UCS will commit to addressing.

Fig 1. - UCS applications by gender

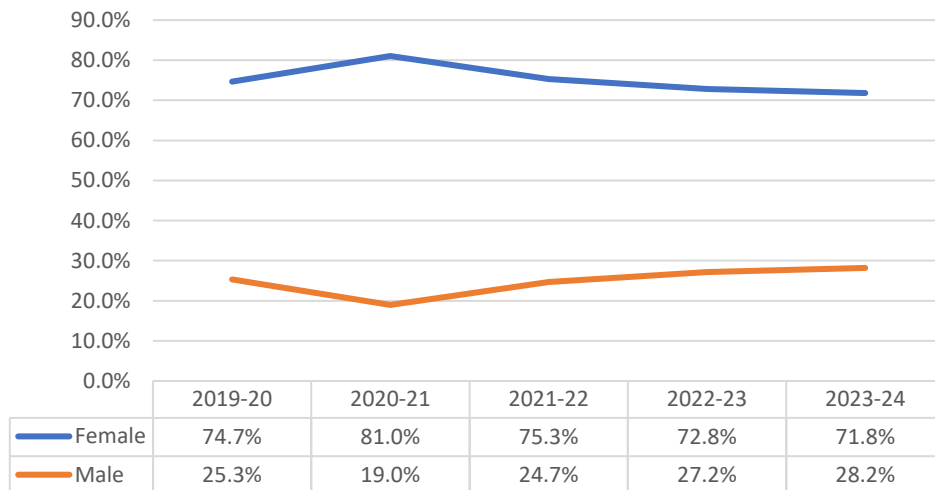
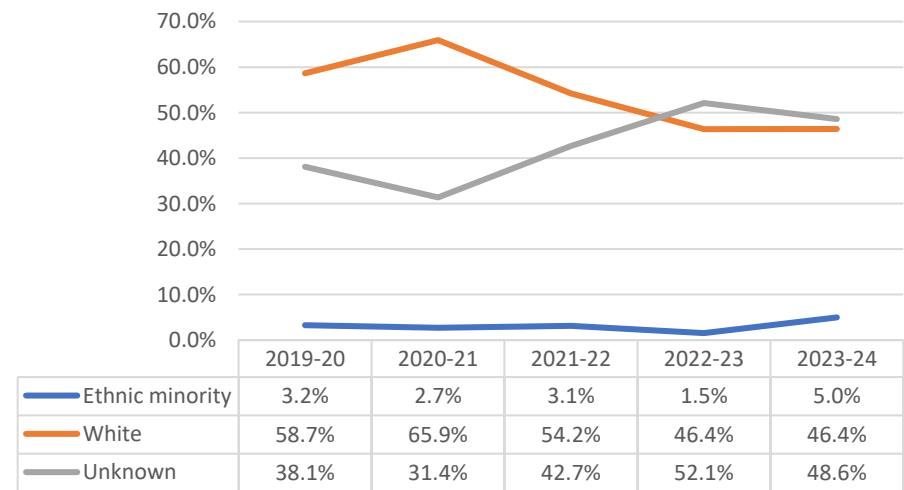


Fig 2. - UCS applications by ethnicity



- **Section AA2 - Analysis relating to Risk 6: Insufficient academic support**

UCS perceive there to be a risk of insufficient support to meet the specific needs of our students during their studies.

Staff have reported that there has been an increasing demand on their time to provide individual academic and pastoral support to students, over and above regular teaching and tutorials. 2023 NSS results show that the Academic support scores at UCS are lower than the sector (78.1% compared to 83.5%, a difference of -5.4pp).

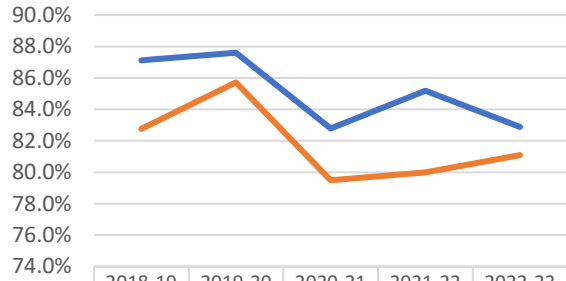
Over the last five years, around 39% of UCS students declare learning difficulty or disability (LDD), and typically students with LDD require a higher level of academic support.

More detailed analysis has shown that there are some student groups who will require particular support going forward in order to maximise their chances of positive outcomes, as indicated by rates of continuation, completion and attainment.

- **Male students:** Over the most recent five years of data:
  - **Continuation** has been **-3.2pp** lower for male students (85.0% for female students, and 81.8% for male students)
  - **Completion** has been **-3.1pp** lower for male students (73.7% for female students, and 70.6% for male students)
  - **Attainment** of good honours has been **-3.3pp** lower for male students (57.8% for female students, and 61.1% for male)
- **Students of ethnic minority:** over the most recent five years of data:
  - **Continuation** has been **-10.4pp** lower for students of ethnic minority (74.2% for EM students, 84.6% for white students);
  - **Completion** has been **-19.8pp** lower for students of ethnic minority (53.3% for EM students, 73.1% for white students)
  - **Attainment** has been **-22.3%** lower for students of ethnic minority (38.5% for EM students, 60.8% for white students)
- **Students declaring a learning difficulty or disability (LDD):** Over the most recent five years of data:
  - **Continuation** is broadly similar between students who do declare an LDD (85.1%), and those who do not (83.8%), but it is noticeably lower among those who declare **autism spectrum disorder** or **Aspergers syndrome**, with a continuation rate of **74.2%** (31 students over five years).
  - **Completion** has been **-4.8%** lower for students who have declared an LDD (69.2% for students declaring LDD, 74.0% for those who don't)
  - **Attainment** has been **-8.8%** lower for students who have declared an LDD (62.9 for students declaring LDD, 54.1% for those who don't). The numbers of students in specific LDD categories are often too small for meaningful analysis, but two

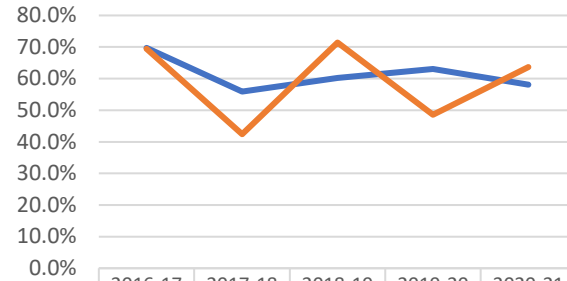
student groups have numbers >10 and particularly low rates: Students declaring **dyslexia** (43 students over five years, attainment rate of 44.2%) and students declaring **mental health** (37 students over five years, attainment rate of 54.1%)

Fig 3. Continuation by gender



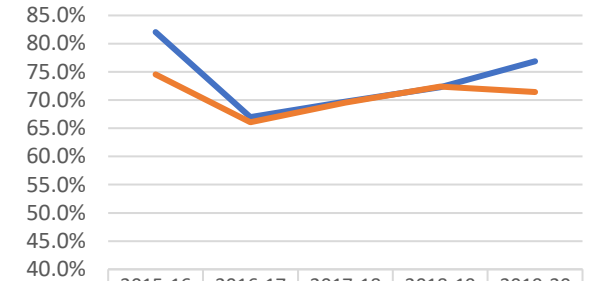
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Female	87.1%	87.6%	82.8%	85.2%	82.9%
Male	82.8%	85.7%	79.5%	80.0%	81.1%

Fig 4. Attainment by gender



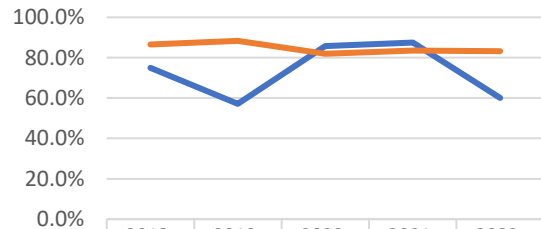
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Female	69.7%	55.9%	60.3%	63.0%	58.1%
Male	69.4%	42.4%	71.4%	48.6%	63.6%

Fig 5. Completion by gender



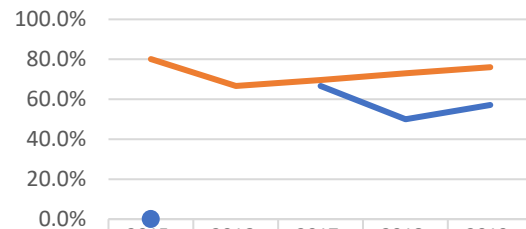
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Female	82.1%	67.0%	69.7%	72.3%	76.9%
Male	74.5%	66.1%	69.6%	72.4%	71.4%

Fig 6. Continuation by ethnicity



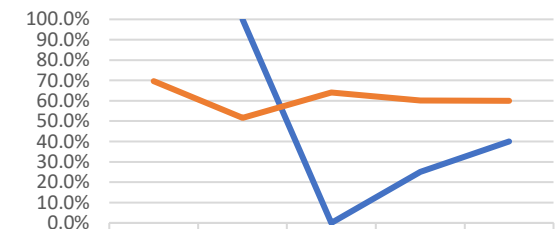
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Ethnic min.	75.0%	57.1%	85.7%	87.5%	60.0%
White	86.5%	88.3%	82.0%	83.5%	83.2%

Fig 7. Completion by ethnicity



	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Ethnic min.	0.0%		66.7%	50.0%	57.1%
White	80.1%	66.7%	69.7%	73.0%	76.1%

Fig 8. Attainment by ethnicity



	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Ethnic min.		100.0%	0.0%	25.0%	40.0%
White	69.6%	51.6%	64.1%	60.2%	60.0%

Fig 9. Attainment by LDD

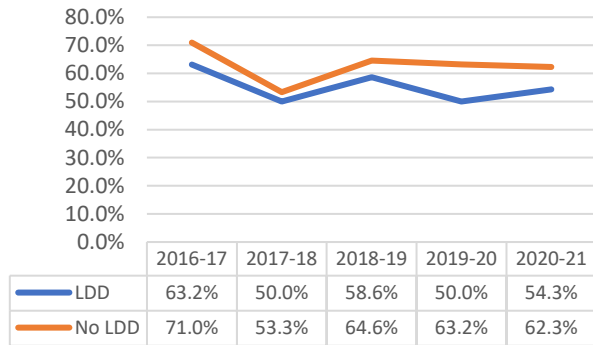
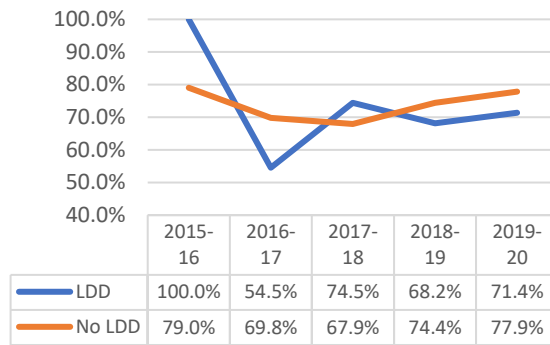
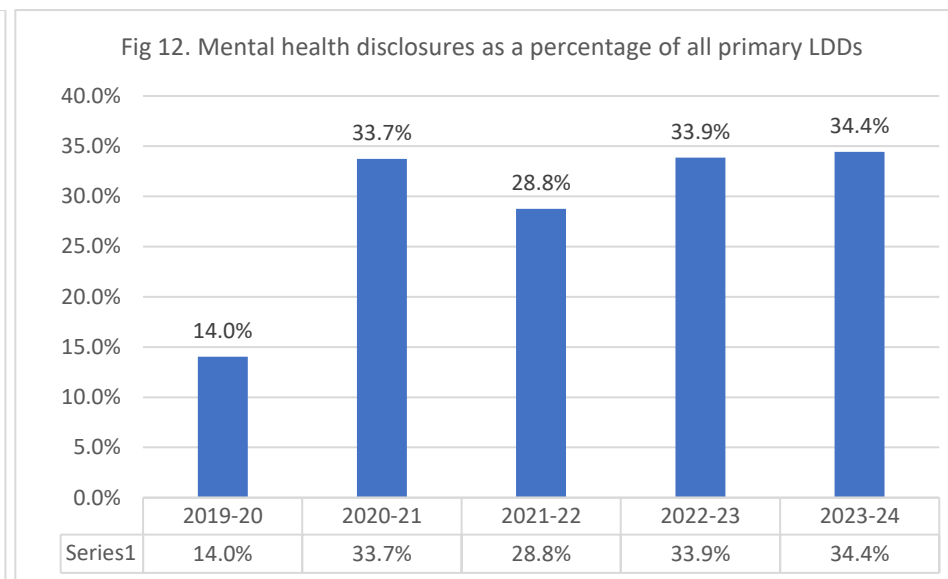
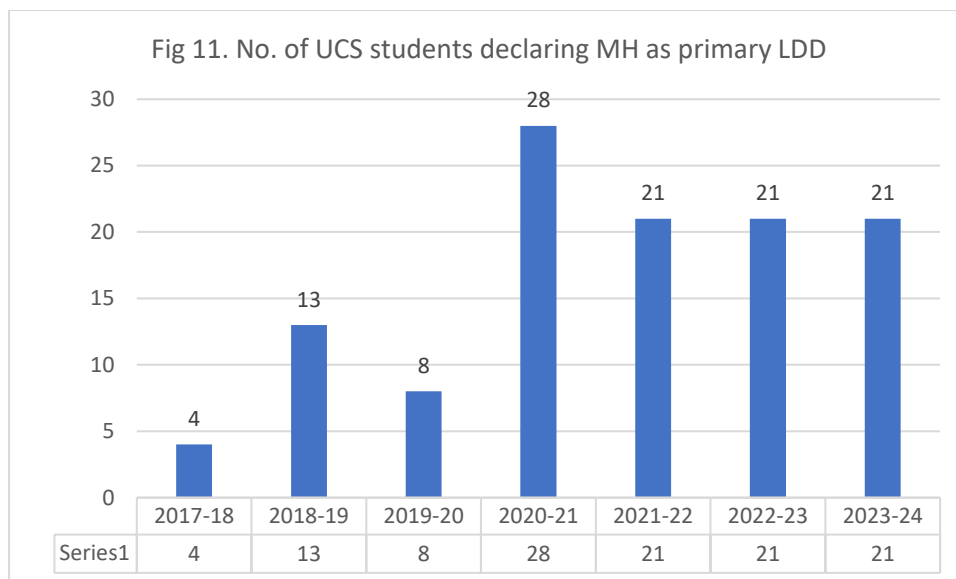


Fig 10. Completion by LLD



- **Section AA3 - Analysis relating to risk 8: Mental health**

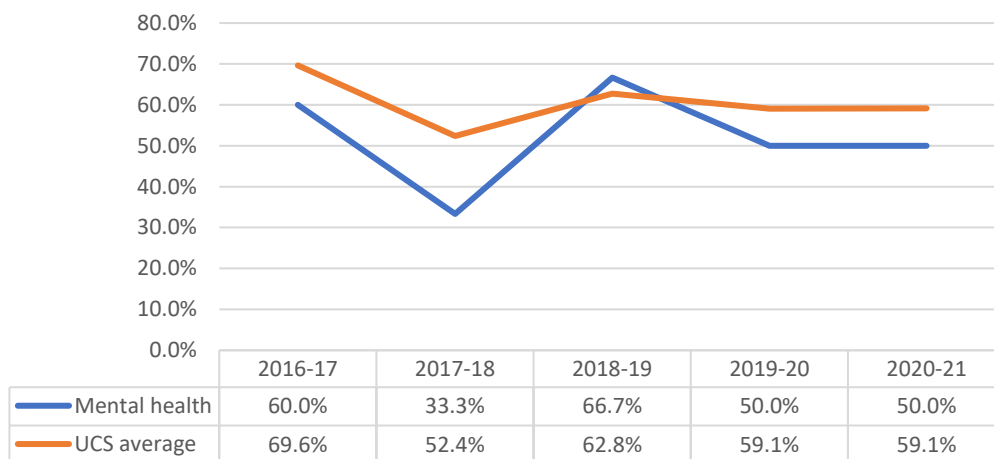
UCS perceive that there is a risk to students being negatively impacted by mental health. Figure 11 shows the number of students declaring mental health as their primary LDD over the last seven years. There was a clear increase in 2020/21 and the number has since remained consistently high. Over the last five years, mental health has accounted for 29.5% of all LDDs that are being disclosed by UCS students. Figure 12 shows a breakdown by year. In the last two years, mental health has accounted for over a third of all LDDs that are being disclosed.



Data shows that students who declare mental health as their primary LDD are at risk of success whilst on the course and when progressing from HE:

- Attainment:** Over the last five years, the rate of good honours for students declaring mental health as their primary LDD was 54.1%. This is **-8.8pp** lower than the rate of attainment for students who do not declare an LDD (62.9%) and the same as the aggregate attainment rate for students declaring any LDD (54.1%) which has been identified in section AA2 as a risk.
- Progression to highly skilled employment:** Over the last four years of Graduate Outcomes survey data, leavers who had declared mental health as their primary LDD whilst studying at UCS had a rate of highly skilled employment of 38.5%. The numbers of leavers that had declared mental health as their primary LDD and who had responded to the survey has so far been low (13 over four years), so a yearly breakdown is not possible. Instead, UCS will monitor and report a **rolling four year average** highly skilled employment rate for this cohort.

Fig 13. Attainment: Rates of attainment for students declaring mental health as their primary LDD

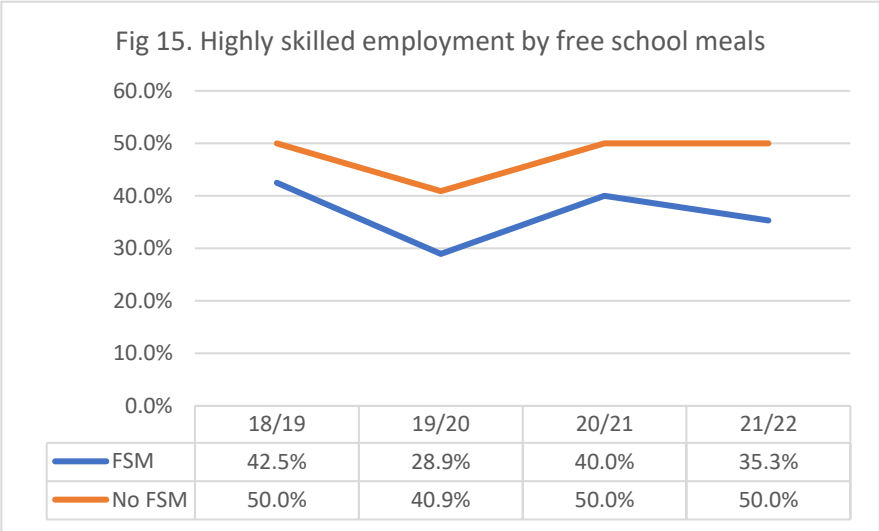
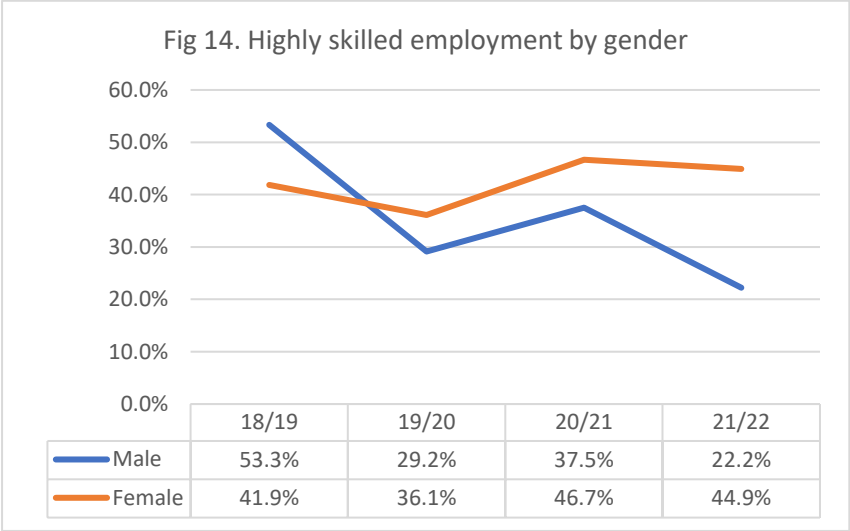


- **Section AA3 - Analysis relating to risk 12: Progression to employment**

UCS perceive that there is a risk to students progression into employment following higher education. Over the most recent five years of data, risks have been identified for the following student groups:

- **Male leavers:** The rate of highly skilled employment is **-13.3pp lower** for male leavers than for female leavers (32.4%, 45.7%)
- **Leavers who had received free school meals:** The rate of highly skilled employment is **-11.2pp lower** for leavers who had been in receipt of free school meals, compared to those who didn't (36.4%, 47.6%).
- **Students declaring Dyslexia and Mental health:** The rate of highly skilled employment is actually **+5.8pp higher** for students who declared an LDD whilst studying at UCS (45.1%, 39.3%). Although the numbers of leavers in specific LDD categories are small, two student groups have >10 students and noticeably low rates: Students with **Dyslexia (36.8%, 19**

students over five years) and students declaring **mental health (38.5%**, 13 students over five years). These two student groups will not be reported through this APP because of the small cohort numbers by year, but will remain a focus of employment focussed interventions.



Rates of highly skilled employment are low for leavers of ethnic minority, but the numbers of ethnic minority leavers who respond to the Graduate Outcomes survey are so low (four graduates over five years) that analysis is not meaningful. Students of ethnic minority will be considered in all employment-focussed interventions, but targets will not be set and performance will not be reported through this APP.

**Please note:** UCS is a land-based university. After 15 months, many graduates are in entry level occupations within land-based industries that are considered to be positive and successful reflections of their higher education experience by the graduates and by UCS, but that are not recognised as highly skilled employment by the Standard Occupational Classification.

Because of the disadvantage to land based providers in the current classification of graduate success, the rate of highly skilled employment will be measured, but it will not be the primary objective for improvement. Instead, UCS will measure future success through the **Graduate Reflections** questions within the Graduate Outcomes survey. For land-based graduates, we believe that these three questions are a truer measure of whether graduates are progressing to an 'activity that they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience'.

The data from these questions supports the assumptions that there is a risk for **male leavers**, and leavers who had been in **receipt of free school meals**. The data in the table below shows the average score for the last three years of data.

		<b>My current activity is meaningful</b>	<b>My current activity fits with my future plans</b>	<b>I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	84.9%	73.2%	73.7%
	Male	82.1%	70.1%	63.6%
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>-2.8%</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>
<b>Free school meals</b>	In receipt	78.6%	66.4%	70.3%
	Not in receipt	88.8%	77.5%	67.4%
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>-10.2%</b>	<b>-11.2%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

Please note: UCS currently offers eight BSc and eight FdSc programmes. To increase the data available for analysis, both the BSc and FdSc have been included in attainment data. Students have been counted within positive attainment figures if they achieved a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 at the end of a BSc, or a Distinction or Merit at the end of FdSc.

## **Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.**

### **IS1.1 - Scholarships**

Offering **financial support** at the pre-entry stage has been identified within the TASO Evidence Toolkit as an [effective intervention](#) that will *'help overcome the perceived or actual cost of applying and/or going to higher education'*. TASO states that there is a *'small but high-quality body of evidence that finds financial support can have a positive, albeit small, impact on HE participation'*. Learning from the TASO suggestions on how to make this intervention most effective, UCS will prioritise scholarship applications from those from low income households, and will combine it with IS1.4 (AIG) to ensure that there is information available to prospective students to help them understand and access what financial support is available to them.

### **IS1.2 - Access to Vet Science**

Offering **foundation year courses** has been identified within the TASO Evidence Toolkit as an [effective intervention](#) that is *'designed to help students who may not meet the standard requirements for entry into university to develop skills and subject-specific knowledge, with the aim of increasing access to undergraduate studies, increasing course completion and raising attainment'*. UCS note that current evidence on the effectiveness of this intervention is limited (although anecdotal evidence does exist), and that evaluation of its effectiveness is crucial. It is intended that this intervention increases access to HE in a general sense, but the Vet Nursing subject area is particularly underrepresented by male students (the 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Nurse Profession revealed that only 2.7% of the UK's VNs are male), who are one of the target groups for the UCS APP. As such we would have a particular focus on promoting this to male applicants through IS1.4 (IAG). It is our hope that the access to veterinary science course will offer options for those wishing to enter the vet profession to use this year to consolidate their learning, to gain in confidence offered by the smaller class sizes, and to be guided with support as to their next steps.

### **IS1.3 - Information Advice and Guidance through outreach**

Offering **information, advice and guidance (IAG)** at the pre-entry stage has been identified within the TASO evidence toolkit as an [effective intervention](#) that has a *'small positive effect on attitudes/aspirations and on HE participation'*. UCS note that *'there*

is evidence that IAG should be accompanied by personalised support to be truly effective'. As such, IS1.2 (application support and mentoring) will be used in conjunction with this intervention in order to maximise its impact.

### **IS1.4 and IS1.5 - Yearly events for British Ethnic Riders Foundation (BERF) and Hampshire Federation of Young Farmers**

The [BERF](#) aims to 'support, encourage, inspire, educate and progress members of ethnically diverse communities in all disciplines and in all areas of the equine industry, as well as in all rural activities'. By collaborating with the BERF through annual events and activity days, UCS can contribute to BERF's mission by educating and promoting opportunities within equine and rural higher education to one of our target underrepresented groups - applicants of ethnic minority. This intervention will be an **aspiration-raising activity**, which has been [evidenced](#) within the TASO Evidence Toolkit as having a small positive impact, by 'developing pupils' knowledge of HE, aspirations to attend, awareness of the subjects taught and confidence that they will succeed post-entry'. The same rationale will be used for events with the [Hampshire Federation of Young Farmers](#), a group that consists predominantly of male members, which is another of UCS's target groups within this risk area. We also anticipate that a further outcome of our interventions will be to encourage more people to enter into farming and to gain skills and experience to enter relevant graduate occupations in the industry. An ongoing challenge for many agriculture courses at higher education level is the relatively high levels of non-completion, owing to the perceived high salary levels farm workers can attract without the students perhaps paying due consideration to this decision potentially limiting their onwards career progression.

### **IS1.6 - Promoting success of underrepresented groups**

UCS consider that the promotion of the academic successes of students from underrepresented groups would be **aspiration raising** and would act as a form of **role modelling**, in that anyone from the two underrepresented groups targeted by this plan (male, and ethnic minority) who saw current students with the same student characteristic would recognise that students were studying in land based HE, and succeeding. [Aspiration raising](#) interventions and [role model](#) interventions are both identified within the TASO Evidence Toolkit as effective interventions that increase positive feelings towards higher education, as explained in sections IS1.5 and IS1.2 above.

### **IS2.1 - Using diagnostic technology to understand support needs**

Cognassist is an [evidence-based](#) neuro-inclusion platform. The company is a member of The International Test Commission, a global association of national psychological associations, test commissions, publishers and other organisations committed to promoting effective development and use of educational and psychological assessments. The assessment tool has been through five stages of validity and research piloting. The company is currently in partnership with Newcastle University to explore how cognitive differences can impact learner retention and success. UCS would use this tool to understand student learning styles in order to put individual support plans in place.

### **IS2.2 - New staff members dedicated to academic and study skills support**

The TASO evidence toolkit includes two intervention types that are relevant to this proposal: '[Offering programmes of student support](#)' (the new staff roles will help the development study skills), and '[Mentoring, counselling and coaching](#)' (the new staff roles will offer academic skills support). Although TASO state that the evidence isn't strong in either case, there is non-causal evidence that they lead to better outcomes for students in terms of attainment, continuation and completion.

UCS will offer the one-to-one support that will be provided by these new staff roles to all students, but by targeting the support sessions to male students and students of ethnic minority, the aim is that there will be focussed benefits for these two disadvantaged groups. We will also create new mentoring/buddy roles from within the existing student population to support not only current but also potential applicants in their transition to HE.

Furthermore, a WonkHE / Pearson [report](#) on building belonging in HE highlighted an issue that is relevant to UCS: "*Staff admitted that competing priorities and/or lack of time and space to develop practice was the ... second most significant barrier to supporting the development of students' academic confidence*". Feedback from UCS staff has shown that there has been increasing demand for academic support from students, and finding the time to provide this additional support for all students is difficult. By having these dedicated staff, it should relieve the pressure on academic staff and provide students with better opportunities for the higher levels of support they require to flourish.

### **IS2.3 - To replace the current year-tutor system with a personal tutor system.**

Students will be assigned a named individual for support (academic, pastoral and employability) who will remain constant throughout their studies at UCS, moving through the course with the student. This will replace the current year tutor system, and result in increased levels of contact for every student, allowing more opportunities to target specific and a better understanding of the needs of individual tutees..

In the findings from the WonkHE / Pearson [report](#) on building belonging in HE, it was clear from the qualitative student research that when a relationship between tutor and tutee works well, it is seen to be very valuable. In the student diaries that were central to the research, personal tutors were cited as providing vital extra guidance, and always on hand to help. Another finding of the report was that when asked what makes the most significant difference to a student's ability to develop their academic confidence during their course of study, the most popular answer was 'the quality of the student's relationship with academics teaching on the course'. UCS believe that changing to a personal tutor system will strengthen the students' relationship with academic staff as they will have contact with them throughout their studies, which should increase the level of support provided. Increase support should improve student continuation, completion and attainment.

#### **IS2.4 - Mandatory training for student-facing staff with regards to supporting students with neurodiversity.**

A [collaboration](#) between the University of Bristol, University of the West of England (UWE), University of York, Spectrum First, and the National Autistic Society looked at the impact of short training courses for university staff around autism, mental health, and higher education. The study found the training to be successful, because it had an impact on improving the support that staff could offer to students. Post-training interviews revealed meaningful improvements in trainee knowledge and changes in attitudes towards autistic people. Trainees gained more nuanced knowledge about autism and autistic people, losing some of the stereotypes they previously held. Although this study was specific to autism, UCS believe that the same positive impact will apply to wider neurodiversity training in benefitting the support that UCS staff can offer.

#### **IS2.5 - Trialling a choice of assessments within modules**

Providing a choice of assessment types within a single module will allow students to have some autonomy in how they will be assessed. The aim is that this will allow different student learning styles to be assessed and improve inclusivity.

UCS will trial this with a small number of modules to begin with. There is evidence of the benefits of inclusive assessment in studies promoted by [AdvanceHE](#), the University of [Oxford](#), and most recently in a [WonkHE / Pearson](#) report on Building Belonging in Higher Education. Students saw autonomy and ownership over their assessment as highly indicative of an inclusive course. Students explained that having different assessment modes presented to them, even within one module, really enabled them to deliver their best possible performance. Students said that their academic confidence increased when they could select modules based both on their academic interests and on their preferred assessment style.

### **IS3.1 - Transition days for students with anxiety and other mental health challenges**

Training from the UK student mental health charity 'Student Minds' explains how *'Research has identified that, during this period of transition [into university], many students experience psychological distress, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, a reduction in self-esteem and isolation'*. To counteract this, *'good transition experiences, can ensure that students feel supported and that they develop a sense of belonging, confidence and motivation that can lead to increased persistence, achievement and wellbeing'*. The Student Minds training cites research showing how *'students who have had the opportunity to acquire the necessary social and navigational capital are more likely to settle quickly into their new environment'*, and how *'pre-entry interventions help to build belonging, academic self-efficacy, familiarisation and wellbeing'*. This includes putting support in place for those who experienced mental illness, prior to the beginning of term. The specific actions adopted within this intervention will be influenced by the models of student transition outlined in this [report](#) from higher education researchers,

### **IS3.2 - Mental health training for academic staff**

Student Minds and Kings College London partnered to undertake [research](#) into the roles of academic staff in supporting mental health among students. This research identified how academic staff were often the preferred, most trusted and first point of contact for students experiencing mental health difficulties, but are often unprepared for the demands of this which creates variability in the support that students get.

Recommendations from the research include how *'Universities must recognise the unavoidable role academics are now playing in responding to student mental health, create open spaces for discussion and learning'; 'Academics should receive more comprehensive support and training to appropriately and effectively signpost students to relevant services'; 'Academics need*

*adequate preparation for their role, including training specifically designed for the role academics play'; and 'Academic managers must be equipped with the skills and resources to be able to support their team to respond to student mental health appropriately'.*

### **IS3.3 - Mental health training for students**

The general benefits of training are well known, improving knowledge and confidence in an area. A [study](#) in Switzerland looked at the effectiveness of mental health first aid training on undergraduate students. The study found that a group of students who received 12 hour mental health first aid training course showed significantly increased basic knowledge and confidence helping others with mental illness, and reduced stigmatization, compared to their baseline scores and a control group. Inspired by this evidence, UCS hope that through training, students will be able to support their peers, so that mental health support exists across all of UCS, and allowing students to be identified for support more rapidly and equally for students to elect how and when they can, with confidence, seek support..

### **IS3.4 - New staff members dedicated to academic and study skills support**

Please see the evidence and rationale explained in IS2.2

### **IS3.5 - Additional targeted careers support for those reporting with mental health concerns**

The benefits of targeted careers support for higher education students are well known, and have been in place at universities across the sector for many years.

### **IS3.6 - Exit interviews for all students who suspend or withdraw for mental health reasons**

Reasons for withdrawal are currently self reported using a standard proforma. This proforma is not detailed enough to allow learning from the rationale behind a student leaving education. UCS will introduce exit interviews and use the qualitative data from interviews to better understand how mental health impacts student life. Findings from these interviews will be collated and

reviewed, and will feed into continuous improvement of student support, student experience, and student and staff training on mental health. The use of exit interviews is common within higher education.

#### **IS4.1 - Create three new employability modules as vehicles for embedding employability skills and the University of Portsmouth graduate attributes**

UCS degrees already have an expectation of students undertaking work placement in each year of study. The TASO evidence toolkit includes **work experience** as an effective intervention. We will create a suite of new employability modules, introduced sequentially across academic years, with mandatory work placements as part of the learning outcomes. The modules will be linked and build on the skills from the previous year and be relevant to what the student need and what they should be expected to develop at each stage of the course. These new modules (first to enter from 2025-26) will reflect industry requirements, and also ensure that UCS's focus on graduate attributes can be embedded within the modules.

Within the new modules, there will be a focus on how to embed additional support for the two primary disadvantaged groups (male leavers, and leavers who had been in receipt of FSM).

Graduate attributes are defined as the 'qualities, skills and understanding a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution'. UCS currently subscribes to the graduate attributes established by the University of Portsmouth. In a review of the role that graduate attributes play in higher education, Mahon (2002) concludes that although graduate attributes have the potential to communicate a university's mission and what distinguishes that institution from others, often this potential is not achieved. The review recommends that universities would benefit from revisiting their graduate attributes, with particular consideration of how they will be measured. Part of this intervention will involve revisiting the UCS / UoP attributes to ensure they are reflected across the courses and within the employability modules.

#### **IS4.2 - Create an employability passport that will map employability elements within their course**

UCS is proud of the employability skills that are taught on our courses, and the opportunities that students are provided with to put these into practice through practical learning. It is felt, however, that students do not always explicitly recognise the

employability skills that they are learning and capabilities that they are building. This can reduce confidence in their employability prospects and career readiness.

To address this, UCS will explicitly map the skills, capabilities, opportunities and experiences that are part of our courses, so that students achieve 'employability passports' which state what they have achieved. The rationale is that by knowing what skills they have developed, their confidence and career readiness will improve.

In the Universities UK 2023 [report](#) on improving graduate confidence, one of the key findings was that it's not graduates' skillsets that prevents them from entering graduate roles, it's their confidence in their skillsets. [Beaumont et al](#) (2016) found that career confidence would be improved if students had opportunity for reflection on what skills they had, and this could be provided by guidance and scaffolding, which is the aim of this intervention.

### **IS4.3: Create a Sparsholt Employability Award.**

UCS courses deliver excellent subject specific employability skills and learning. But it is recognised that broader employability skills such as using LinkedIn, CVs, interview practice, volunteering etc. are not consistently present across all courses. To improve this, UCS will create an optional employability award where students are invited to engage in training and extracurricular activities that will improve their employability.

Although optional, this award will be targeted at the two groups showing disadvantage: male students, and students in receipt of free school meals with clear benefits on offer to those that engage..

[Research](#) by the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Council for Research Education estimated that around 40 UK universities had an employability award scheme such as this (note that this research was in 2011; the number is likely to be higher now). The same research found that graduates tended to value the extra-curricular experiences at university and work experience more highly than their degree's content (except in specialist areas), seeing these as adding to their CVs and helping to secure employment. Teaching employability skills is also included as an [effective intervention](#) within the TASO Evidence Toolkit.

### **IS4.4 - To create an alumni association**

Research published in 2021 highlighted the positive impact that alumni networks have on graduate employability. The research found that universities should offer activities through which “students develop contacts and networking capabilities with alumni and other professionals using various platforms”, and showed the “importance of developing a professional network by cultivating social capital while at university”. “Connectedness through social media” was one of the “concrete ways to develop a professional network and enhance employability”.

UCS know that its graduates are prevalent throughout land based industries, but without a managed alumni network there is a risk that the benefit of this is not being felt by current students. This intervention will include arranging sessions from those in industry to talk to classes about their experiences and routes into employment. Focus will be put on finding graduates in industry who can act as role models to underrepresented groups.

#### **IS4.5 - Staff training with Gradcore**

Gradcore are a social enterprise who link universities, graduates and industry. Their purpose is to ensure that ‘every graduate, no matter their background, has the opportunity to find their calling and make the most of their talent’. They are experts in higher education employability and the aim is that by working with them, UCS can increase the employability knowledge of academic staff so that they are better placed to deliver employability skills to students. Evidence of Gradcore’s previous work within HE and the impact that of this work can be found [here](#).

#### **IS4.6 - Targeted employability tutorials and professional mentoring**

These are approaches that are suggested by the OfS in Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare an access and participation plan, paragraph 114. Additionally, [mentoring and coaching](#) have been identified within the TASO Evidence Toolkit as leading to better outcomes for students.

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Sparsholt College

Provider UKPRN: 10006050

## Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

### Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

Table 3a - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	All subjects	N/A	9000
Foundation degree	All courses other than veterinary nursing	N/A	9000
Foundation degree	Veterinary nursing	N/A	6800
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4a - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	4625
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Sparsholt College

Provider UKPRN: 10006050

### Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

#### Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OFS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£48,000	£86,000	£84,000	£84,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£113,000</b>	<b>£113,000</b>	<b>£113,000</b>	<b>£113,000</b>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	3.8%	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000	£113,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£18,000	£36,000	£54,000	£54,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Financial support investment	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£48,000</b>	<b>£66,000</b>	<b>£84,000</b>	<b>£84,000</b>
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	1.6%	2.1%	2.6%	2.5%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Sparsholt College

Provider UKPRN: 10006050

## Targets

**Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets**

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase percentage of applications from male applicants	PTA_1	Access	Sex	Male	Female	See APP main document Annex A section AA1. Baseline year is 23/34	No	UCAS data (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	28.2	30	31	32	33
Increase percentage of applications from applicants of ethnic minority	PTA_2	Access	Ethnicity	Other ethnicity		Increase percentage of applications from applicants of ethnic minority - See APP main document Annex A section AA1. Baseline year is 23/24	No	UCAS data (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	5	5	6	7	7
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

**Table 5d: Success targets**

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
For male students: Increase continuation	PTS_1	Continuation	Sex	Male	Other (please specify in description)	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage	81.1	82	82	83	84
For male students: Increase completion	PTS_2	Completion	Sex	Male	Other (please specify in description)	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2020-21	Percentage	71.4	72	73	74	75
For male students: Increase attainment	PTS_3	Attainment	Sex	Male	Other (please specify in description)	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2019-20	Percentage	63.6	61	62	63	63
For students of ethnic minority: Increase continuation	PTS_4	Continuation	Ethnicity	Other ethnicity	N/A	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage	60	80	81	82	83
For students of ethnic minority: Increase completion	PTS_5	Completion	Ethnicity	Other ethnicity	N/A	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2020-21	Percentage	57.1	62	64	66	68
For students of ethnic minority: Increase attainment	PTS_6	Attainment	Ethnicity	Other ethnicity	N/A	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2019-20	Percentage	40	50	55	60	62
For students declaring a Learning difficulty or disability (LDD) : Increase completion	PTS_7	Completion	Reported disability	Cognitive or learning disabilities	N/A	See main APP document Annex A section AA2. Internal data.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage	71.4	72	73	74	75

