Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework: Year 4 Provider Submission

Chukwuemeka Chika Obinna Goodluck Nwagu, Roehampton Students' Union (RSU) President

From the day I arrived at Roehampton, I remember feeling like this was home. The day I started my degree was tough: new people, in a new place, studying a new subject. I remember the mix of excitement and apprehension. Then I heard about the colleges and how my flat rep would support me, about the students' union and how to join a society and how to get help finding a part time job. I realised I could succeed regardless of where I started, that when I was worried about a problem someone would always help, and that opportunities I didn't know existed were there for the taking.

Three years on I'm RSU President, a role I never thought I would have. I was elected on 'One Voice, One Union, One Roehampton', pledging to build on our strong relationship with the university. In developing this submission, the sabbatical officers and I have been involved throughout, as well as my fellow students on Student Senate. To me, teaching excellence is just this: the university, students' union and our students working in partnership to create positive change and celebrate our success.

Professor Paul O'Prey CBE, Vice-Chancellor

The University of Roehampton recently celebrated its 175th anniversary. Through Whitelands, one of our four constituent colleges, we have been providing higher education to women since 1841.There is a strong sense of tradition in the university which finds expression today in our dedication to widening participation and achieving equality of attainment. Our students come from all walks of life and many different backgrounds. Roehampton's purpose is to change lives by helping our students to develop the confidence, knowledge and adaptability they need for a successful graduate career and fulfilling life. Our Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022 places this commitment to students at the heart of everything we do.

Over the last three years we have invested significant resources to ensure we offer consistently excellent teaching and learning. Many of the examples of what we are doing, such as curriculum design, innovations in assessment and feedback, and enhanced work experience opportunities, are set out in this document. Our curriculum is informed by world-leading and internationally excellent research. In 2017 we opened an inspiring new University Library, encouraging a tangible atmosphere of study and achievement on campus. This is an exciting time at Roehampton, and we welcome the opportunity to engage again with the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

Our context

The University of Roehampton is a thriving community of around 6,500 undergraduate and 1,700 postgraduate students studying courses in education, business, psychology, the humanities, the design, media and performance arts and the social and life sciences across ten academic departments. Over 720 of our undergraduates and over 370 of our postgraduates are EU/international. Most students study full-time. 22% of all students live on our campus in south-west London, including a third of first year students. In addition, we have over 6,000 registered students with collaborative partners in the UK and internationally and a further 3,400 students studying online. Working with partners helps us to broaden our provision to students who are unable to commit to full-time study.

At the heart of university life at Roehampton are our **four colleges**, Digby Stuart, Froebel, Southlands and Whitelands, all founded in the nineteenth century and led by a Head of College and elected Student President. All students are members of a college. The colleges are an embodiment of Roehampton's values, integral to its social fabric, and to student life at Roehampton. They provide enhanced levels of pastoral support and play a pivotal role in the transition to university for all new students. Wellbeing officers, chaplains and wardens are there when students need help. The colleges sustain a flourishing culture of co-curricular voluntary and community activity. Colleges provide students with opportunities to get involved, in music, sport and projects working with local communities. Through these opportunities our students have the chance to work together, to take a lead and to make a difference. The experience

of college life supports students throughout their studies and stands them in good stead when they graduate.

Alongside our colleges, **Roehampton Students' Union** plays a major role in student life. RSU has 60 clubs and societies that support students to build friendships, gain confidence and develop skills. Nearly half of all undergraduate students are a member of at least one club or society. RSU offers volunteering opportunities on campus, in the local community and abroad, supporting students to develop skills in work-based settings. Over 400 students have volunteered this year across 71 activities with 40 providers, up from 328 in 2017/18. RSU offers independent advice, a service which over 600 students accessed in 2017/18, and organises flagship leadership conferences for underrepresented groups.

Our teaching and learning strategy over the past three years has been guided by the increasing **diversity of our students.** As shown in figure 1, 88% of our new students belong to at least one underrepresented group – and over 60% to more than one group. Over half our students are first in the family to go to university. A great many of our students juggle academic study with paid employment and/or caring responsibilities. Our UK Engagement Survey (UKES) results show that 62% of respondents were in paid employment alongside their studies and 26% were caring for dependants. Our underrepresented students are also more likely to be commuting students.

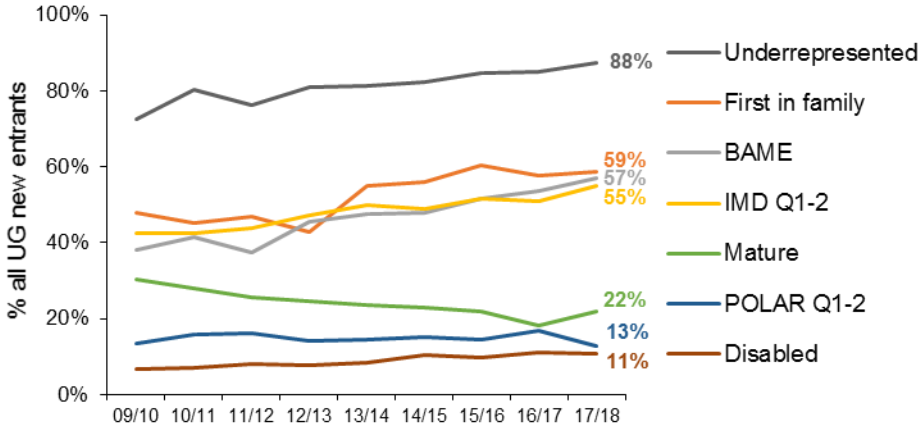

Figure 1. Students from groups less likely to enter higher education as a percentage of all University of Roehampton undergraduate new entrants between 2009/10 and 2017/18.

We have made substantial progress on ensuring **consistency in the excellence of teaching and positive student outcomes for all** since TEF 2017. Our plans to achieve and sustain excellence have focused on building on a strong sense of community by ensuring that students are partners in all our work; strengthening the academic leadership of teaching and learning; and by embarking on an ambitious programme of continuous improvement of teaching and learning across the university. This has fed into all aspects of our activity, ranging from the design of academic programmes to the physical, digital and social infrastructure of the learning environment. Our success has been dependent upon engaging staff across the university, developing a culture where ideas for improvement and innovation are valued, and on embracing the idea that there is always the opportunity to enhance our practices. Just as we seek to involve staff and students in this work, we also look to evaluate our initiatives to measure their impact on the quality of teaching and student outcomes.

Improvements in our core metrics and the positive outcomes for all our students [SO3] are evidence of the progress we are making. Investments in student engagement, student support, and in careers and work experience opportunities are having an impact on our student outcomes. Our continuation rate has increased by 2 percentage points since TEF 2017. The proportion of students in employment and further study continues to be close to benchmark; and the proportion in highly skilled employment or further study has increased by 8 percentage points over the past three years and receives a double positive flag [SO1]. Our Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data shows our graduates earn above the sector average. At 82.8% we are 2 percentage points from benchmark on the

teaching on my course. We have two negative flags, both metrics related to the NSS, but our actions have closed the gap significantly to our benchmarks. In 2018, satisfaction with assessment and feedback was up 5.2 percentage points and with academic support, 3.2 percentage points [TQ4].

These improvements to our core continuation and student outcomes metrics are being driven by our work to **close attainment gaps** [SO3]. As we show later in the submission, continuation and student outcomes data for students underrepresented in higher education has been rapidly improving over the three TEF years, in particular, for students with multiple disadvantages. For example, the continuation rates of our students who are Black, mature and from deprived communities (IMD Q1-2) have increased by 12 percentage points over the three TEF years; and the proportion of deprived, Black, female graduates going on to highly skilled employment or further study has increased by 20 percentage points. This success is reflected in our split metrics data: our BAME and POLAR Q1-2 (lower participation) split metric on continuation is within benchmark. At 90.4%, the continuation rate of our POLAR Q3-5 higher participation students is just 0.1% away from our core benchmark of 90.5% - and a significant proportion of these students come from IMD 1-2 deprived communities. On highly skilled employment and further study, we have positive flags for students from underrepresented (POLAR 4) and deprived (National IMD) communities and a performance of 1.8 percentage points above benchmark for our BAME students [SO3].

Students are genuine partners in improving teaching quality and student outcomes. Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Student Senate was established nine years ago as a joint committee of Council and Senate. Its members are elected representatives of the students' union, colleges and academic departments. Student Senate formally consults on major strategy, policies and issues and the student members decide how to spend an annual £50,000 budget. Recent projects include work on mental health and reducing the attainment gap. Students are represented on Council, Senate and all sub-committees related to learning, teaching and the wider student experience. Students are also full members of all approval and validation panels, programme and department boards with over 400 trained student programme representatives across all departments supported by the students' union.

In 2016 we appointed a learning and teaching professor to a new high-level role of **Director of Student Engagement**, who co-chairs the student engagement group with the RSU Vice-President Education. Our new student engagement strategy is having a tangible impact detailed in this submission: the student engagement team is working with students at risk of non-continuation [LE3, SO3]; students co-lead our Catalyst-funded project on tackling attainment gaps [SO3]; and students are leading projects on peer support and the multi-cultural curriculum. Student voice as measured by the NSS increased by 1.7 percentage points in 2018 to 69.9% (sector 69.2%), with responses to opportunities to provide feedback on courses and how feedback was acted upon up 2.5 and 3.6 percentage points respectively [TQ4].

The Student Experience and Outcomes Panel chaired by the Vice-Chancellor was established in 2017 to strengthen the leadership of learning and teaching. The panel reviews all teaching excellence data and approves all enhancement plans at institutional, subject, programme and module levels. The Deputy Provost Learning and Teaching, who chairs the university's Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC) is responsible for teaching excellence, academic quality, standards and enhancement. Each academic department has a Learning and Teaching Quality Group chaired by a senior academic who sits on LTQC and who is responsible for leading academic enhancement locally. This ensures that institutional initiatives are embedded at pace, that good practice is transferred quickly and that any specific local resource requirements or challenges are addressed institutionally, where appropriate. As detailed in the next section, at an operational level, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LTEU), staffed by professional academic developers, supports activity to improve the quality of teaching and student outcomes.

Curriculum design and enhancement

Putting **personal skill development [SO2]** at the centre of the student experience at Roehampton has encouraged a more dynamic, and ambitious, approach to curriculum design and new programme development. In 2015/16 we engaged staff and students in an extensive consultation on defining a set of Roehampton graduate attributes to inform curriculum design, to boost student engagement and to ensure our courses stretch our students academically, supporting students to develop the transferable skills required in the graduate job market [TQ1, TQ3].

These graduate attributes underpin a university-wide curriculum review launched in 2016. The aim of the review is to ensure all our courses are academically rigorous, externally benchmarked and career-focused, that students are stretched in their studies and challenged to do their best work, and that they reflect the needs of our diverse study body [TQ1, TQ3, SO3]. All major programmes have been reviewed except Law and Psychology: these will follow in 2020 to coincide with professional body accreditations. In the latest NSS, 81% of students said that their course provided an opportunity to explore ideas or concepts in depth and 77% that it challenged them to do their best work. UKES provides an important lead indicator for evaluating our reviews: in 2018, 84% of students said their course challenged them to do their best work; and we are above the sector on the 'learning skills' and 'creative and social skills' themes, including over 2 percentage points above on 'thinking critically and analytically' and 2.4 percentage points above for 'being innovative and creative' [TQ3].

Students are consulted during every curriculum review, students sit on the revalidation panels, and a student focus group is integral to each panel. Every review involves employers, professional bodies where appropriate, and external academics at the design and revalidation stages. There are encouraging early indicators of the impact of curriculum review. The first programmes reviewed were in the Business School, with the revalidated programmes launching on a rolling basis in 2016/17. Following the review, the continuation rate for Business students increased from 72% for 2014 entrants to 90% for 2016 entrants. We continue to monitor the impact of each review through programme annual review.

Roehampton Graduate Attributes. *At the University of Roehampton, we inspire curiosity and creativity in our students and lifelong passion for knowledge. Our graduates are open to new ideas, adaptable to change and able to work well with people from all walks of life. Roehampton graduates can communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in all kinds of ways. A Roehampton degree builds confidence and resilience, enabling our students to take the lead and make a difference.*

At Roehampton, our academic programmes support students to:

- *Tackle real world problems with research-informed approaches and solutions*
- *Collect and critically analyse complex information and data from a wide variety of sources*
- *Communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in writing, in speech and through the creative and performing arts*
- *Look for ways to improve their performance*
- *Network effectively and present themselves professionally*
- *Navigate the digital world*
- *Develop hands-on experience of the working environment*
- *Make decisions to high ethical standards*
- *Recognise commitments to social responsibility.*

Professional accreditation is a vital part of our curriculum development strategy, ensuring structured engagement between our programmes and employers, and that employers are inputting into curricula [TQ3, SO2]. We launched new professionally-accredited programmes in Accounting and Law in 2014 and 2015 joining other professionally-accredited courses in Initial Teaching Training (DfE), Biomedical Sciences (IBMS), Nutrition and Health (AfN), Sports and Exercise Sciences (BASES), Psychology (BPS), Marketing (CIM), Human Resource Management (CIPD) and Business (CMI). We are currently

working on the NMC accreditation of our new Nursing programme for 2019/20, as well as new accredited computing programmes for 2020/21.

The validation and accreditation of our programmes embeds external academic subject and professional standards and benchmarks to ensure our courses are stretching and challenging for students [TQ3]. External examiners provide an important reference point for confirming standards. In 2017/18, 97% of external examiners for undergraduate programmes confirmed that the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme; and that academic standards and the achievements of students were comparable with those in other UK HE institutions. Every external examiner of programmes taught by the university confirmed that the academic standards set for the award were in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education and the relevant subject benchmark statements. Our foundation level programmes provide a level 3 'year 0' for students who have missed the minimum entry requirement for level 4 entry and ensure students are studying at the appropriate level. External examiners are supporting our work on assessment literacy detailed below by driving improvements in the quality of feedback to students and in our work to develop a categorical marking scheme. In 2018 we made academic integrity a key theme of our quality assurance work to combat the threat from 'essay mills', including strengthening deterrence, detection and disciplinary policies and processes regarding contract cheating.

Robust and independent quality assurance, and clear assessment and marking criteria, are critical for maintaining academic standards and the value of our degrees. Our supplementary grade inflation metrics shows that the proportion of Firsts and 2:1s we award has increased by 8 and 9 percentage points respectively between 2008/09 and 2016/17. As figure 2 shows, during this nine-year period we have seen an increase in the prior attainment of our students, from a low of 229 tariff points for students graduating in 2008/09 to a high of 293 for students graduating in 2015/16, the year we also saw our highest proportions of Firsts and 2:1s (70%). Over the past three years, the distribution of degree results has been stable.

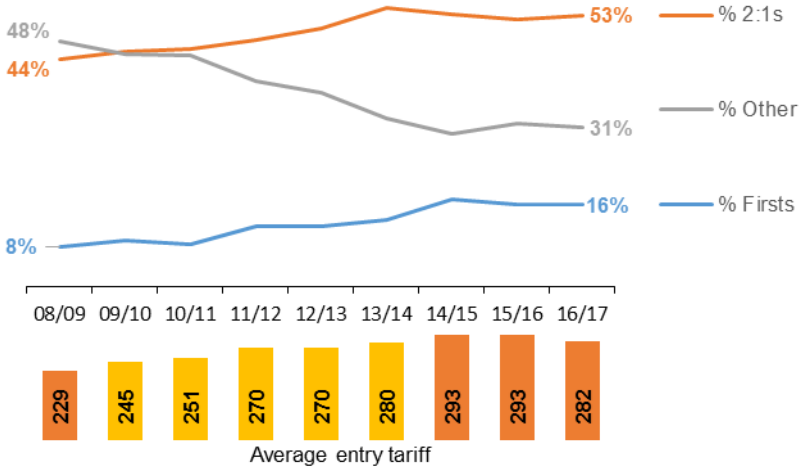

Figure 2. Degree class and average entry tariff of graduates between 2008/09 and 2016/17.

Continuous enhancement

Our partnership with our students and strong leadership in teaching and learning is key to the **continuous enhancement of our courses and ensuring positive outcomes for all**. The university's module evaluation survey (MES) scheme has been in place for eight years. We recently made a step-change in how we use feedback from students on their courses. Although the results feed into annual programme review and course enhancement plans, students told us they sometimes didn't know what happened as a result of their feedback. So, in 2016/17 we launched a 'closing the feedback loop' project. All module evaluation results and programme team action plans [LE3] are now available to students via the Student Portal. Student satisfaction that their feedback had been acted upon was up 3 percentage points in 2018 and now equals our benchmark.

Module evaluation and NSS questions are aligned. Last year, 80.5% of modules scored 4.0 or above on the average of all questions. For modules with an average of below 4.0, there is an institutional requirement for a robust action plan, supported by professional academic developers in the LTEU. These feed into programme annual reviews and are monitored closely. In 2017/18 we launched a module performance dashboard integrating data on student feedback, engagement (attendance and digital) and outcomes (module average scores and failure rates). This tool provides programme teams with information to identify strengths and weaknesses and to take appropriate action. The Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Awards are given to academic colleagues who have received high module evaluation scores. These awards are made alongside the RSU's annual 'You Are Amazing' awards. These awards give recognition to excellent teachers and teaching [TQ2].

Assessment and feedback and academic support

The impact of the institutional focus on improving the effectiveness of assessment and feedback and academic guidance [TQ4] is evident in the 2018 NSS: satisfaction with assessment and feedback was up 5.2 percentage points; 'feedback on my work has been timely' up 12 percentage points – the fourth year running it has risen; and 'I have been able to contact staff when I needed to' up 3.2 percentage points. These improvements are in part down to getting the essential things right, including listening to and acting on the student voice, ensuring marks and feedback are released on time, and making sure academic staff are available to students at published times [TQ4].

Improvements are also the result of longer-term strategic planning. In 2012, we participated in a sector e-learning initiative to promote **online assessment and feedback.** This was the focus of our annual learning and teaching conference the following year. In 2015 we made a university-wide commitment to online assessment and feedback via Turnitin. Today all coursework, where practicable, is submitted online with feedback to students also online, including audio feedback [LE1]. Student voice helped drive the shift online and the response from students has been encouraging. Our students and pedagogic research made us aware of the importance of dialogic feedback, so online written and audio feedback is complemented by face-to-face tutorials with module tutors [LE3]. Between 2010 and 2014, satisfaction with assessment and feedback as measured by the NSS rose from 60% to 74%. Student feedback continued to be positive on the timeliness of feedback. Our current score of 78% is 4 percentage points above benchmark [TQ4].

Using Turnitin to provide coursework feedback has not been without challenges. For example, students raised concerns with the generic quality of some feedback, as well as the consistency of guidance on assessments. In response we launched a series of '**assessment literacy**' initiatives to improve the effectiveness of feedback [TQ4]. These are aimed at: bridging the gap between student and staff understanding of assessment criteria; ensuring feedback is effective for learning and student outcomes; promoting transparency and fairness; and creating an environment where students can do their best [SO3]. Over the past two years, we have: standardised assessment briefs on each Moodle site; created an online bank of past papers; put in place standardised referencing; introduced coordinated assessment scheduling to address concerns with bunching; enforced a university-wide commitment to anonymous marking; promoted peer assessment; and made it a requirement for all modules to include at least one piece of formative feedback. Through programme annual review, course teams are working with students on developing clear assessment criteria and marking briefs to promote assessment literacy. We have been piloting **categorical marking** in Psychology since 2016/17. Satisfaction with the clarity of marking criteria on psychology courses, as measured by the NSS increased by 16 percentage points in 2018 and following a positive evaluation, LTQC has approved the rollout of the scheme across all departments from 2019/20.

Assessment literacy is having an impact across the university. In 2018, the NSS score for 'The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance' was up 4 percentage points and is now just 1percentage point below benchmark; and on 'I have received helpful comments on my work', satisfaction was up 3 percentage points reducing the gap to benchmark to 2 percentage points. 'Marking and assessment has been fair' was up 1 percentage point, but it remains outside our benchmark range by 4 percentage

points. The work on assessment literacy will, we believe, close this further. Module evaluations show that satisfaction with assessment and feedback has been rising over a three-year period, with notable increases in first and second year modules on the clarity of marking criteria (year 1, up 6 percentage points) and the timeliness and helpfulness of feedback (years 1 and 2, up between 3 and 10 percentage points). Our 2018 UKES score on 'Made significant changes to your work based on feedback' was up 2.8 percentage points, 4.5 percentage points above the sector [TQ4].

Projects to improve assessment literacy have also been central to our strategy to ensure positive outcomes for all [SO3]. Our involvement in the 2009 HEA/Equality Challenge Unit National Summit Programme on BAME attainment (*Journeys to Success)* had shown that students need better guidance with understanding just what is needed to be successful in an assessment. Building on this work, and funded by the HEA, *Reimagining Attainment for All* (*RAFA 1*) (2013) was a student-led project to close the attainment gap for BAME students. We recruited student consultants from academic departments to work with the LTEU to design training materials for workshops around problematic areas of assessment [LE3]. In the departments that took part in the project, the attainment gap measured by the proportion of Firsts and 2.1s narrowed. The Catalyst-funded *Reimagining Attainment for All* (*RAFA 2*) project, completing in 2019, is embedding these approaches across the university and sharing good practice with sector partners. This work has helped to narrow the gaps in continuation and student outcomes for our underrepresented students.

On **academic support**, feedback from students highlighted inconsistency in practice. To address this, we launched a major cross-university initiative in 2017. We refocused the personal tutor role as academic guidance tutor and new guidelines, training and expectations were set. Each department has an academic guidance plan to establish high engagement approaches to academic support from induction through to graduation. Lower student engagement in the Business School has led to an initiative to introduce coaching-based academic support to boost study skills and support the transition to university [TQ1, LE3]. Business students are more likely to be from an underrepresented group in higher education, live off campus and work part-time. The Business School is using a real-time feedback platform, Unitu, to engage in conversations with students on their experience. On the Business Management course, satisfaction with academic support increased by 7.1 percentage points in the 2018 NSS.

Academic guidance is being supported by a learner analytics project integrating data on attendance, library and Moodle activity, and submissions. This has enabled tutors to provide personalised support on student progress and achievement and underpinned cross-university retention work [TQ4, LE3]. Satisfaction with academic support increased by 5.3 percentage points in 2018. Across all NSS academic support questions, we are closing the gap to benchmark: on contacting staff (from 6 to 2 percentage points below); on advice and guidance on my course (6 to 1 percentage point below); and on advice on study choices (4 to 2 percentage points below). Module evaluations provide a lead indication of satisfaction with academic support and recent results are promising, up over 3 percentage points to 82% in 2018. Our 2018 UKES score for 'discussed your academic performance and/or feedback with teaching staff' was 4.8 percentage points above sector [TQ4, LE3].

Valuing teaching

Roehampton has an institutional culture that **recognises and rewards excellent teaching [TQ2]**. NSS data on satisfaction with the teaching on my course currently stands at 87% (2 percentage points from benchmark), staff have made the subject interesting at 80% (2 percentage points from benchmark) and my course is intellectually stimulating at 82% (1 point from benchmark). We have an on-going strategic commitment to the parity of esteem between teaching and research and to driving improvements in the quality of teaching through investing in staff and staff development. All staff on a standard academic contract, including professors, teach. Our student: staff ratio at 14:1 is better than the sector average. Across the university, contact time varies between programmes with higher levels in performance and practice-focused subjects, psychology and the life sciences. As a minimum, all programmes must deliver nine hours of scheduled teaching sessions per week plus tutorials, supervisions, inductions and

employability and study skills activity. We have a clearly defined promotion route for academic staff aligned to UKPSF, and all academic staff appointments and progressions require applicants to demonstrate that they are high-performing teachers and reflective practitioners. Colleagues can apply for promotion to professor based on excellence in teaching and learning and in professional practice. Over the past three years, four colleagues have been promoted to professor along this route [TQ2]. We have a principal teaching fellow (PTF) role equivalent to a reader and currently have twelve PTFs leading academic enhancement activity across the university.

Academic staff development is enhanced by active staff communities, including our LGBT+, BAME, EU Staff and Early Career networks. We have an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award and are working towards the Race Equality Charter. The university has recently achieved a substantial increase in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Academic staff development is led by the LTEU which works with every academic department to ensure that teaching excellence is embedded in practice, and encourages staff to share innovative ideas, best practice, and pedagogies with demonstrable impact. LTEU members have sector-wide profiles, working as advisors and assessors on other pedagogic CPD frameworks, including Bath Spa, Brighton, Suffolk and UEL. The Head of Educational Development is co-chair of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), is a council member of the International Consortium of Educational Developers and co-chairs the South-East Academic Development network. The LTEU has a track record of funding from national and European learning and teaching initiatives including the HEA, HEFCE/OfS (RAFA 2 and Learning Gain) and the EU (PICASA, E-Taleb and E+ Inclusion) [LE2]. This project work supports pedagogic innovation at Roehampton and other UK and international institutions. RAFA is closing the attainment gap, PICASA on the internationalisation of the curriculum, and E+ Inclusion on inclusive learning.

Professional recognition is at the heart of our probation process and our institutional pedagogic CPD. Our staff development programme, ENHANCE, provides continuous professional development for academic and professional service staff including routes to external recognition from Advance HE and SEDA. We run a robust experiential route for experienced colleagues to gain professional recognition against the UKPSF. All early career academics must participate in a taught programme leading to recognition at D2 of the UKPSF and HEA fellowship. We run a SEDA-accredited programme for doctoral students and technicians who teach, and a further programme for doctoral supervisors. These CPD activities ensure that those working with students, no matter the level, have opportunities to enhance, enrich and progress their practice in a supportive and stimulating environment. In 2017/18, departments received on average £750 per academic staff member to spend on development.

HEA fellowship rose from 62% in 2014 to 93% of all academic staff in 2018, reflecting our commitment to the recognition of excellent teaching [TQ2]. We have 63 senior fellows and 15 principal fellows, and ten current and former colleagues have gained a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF). These colleagues, along with our principal and senior fellows, are actively engaged in supporting other academics in gaining recognition for their teaching and in leading our annual Learning and Teaching Festival and our Teaching and Learning Conversations [LE2].

Peer feedback is a valuable feature of our CPD framework, through our 'Sharing of Good Practice' scheme [TQ2]. All those who teach take part in this annually as part of their pedagogic CPD. New and established colleagues who need to enhance their teaching work directly with the LTEU, and undertake more frequent supportive and developmental observation. Colleagues who take part in our taught programme leading to recognition at D2 of UKPSF and fellowship of the HEA engage in up to five observations during the programme.

Our **research-engaged learning environment** ensures our students are engaged in courses taught by academics at the forefront of their disciplines; and that students develop as self-managed learners, engaged in their own supervised research, for example, in level 6 projects, dissertations and placements [LE2]. Our latest UKES data shows that 85% of students agreed that their studies supported them to become an independent learner (0.7 percentage points above sector); and 93% of students agreed that their course emphasised taking responsibility for their own learning (2.5 percentage points above

sector). We are 0.5 percentage points above sector on the 'research and inquiry' theme, including exposure to current research and the opportunities to formulate and explore research questions [LE2]. A third of our students go on to postgraduate study [SO1]. Our curriculum is informed by world-leading or internationally excellent research. In REF 2014, 67% of staff were submitted and 66% of their work was ranked 3* or 4*. We have invested strategically in strengthening our research performance since then, with world-leading research being achieved in every subject area. Students are taught by research-engaged and professional practice academics with 62% holding a PhD and 21% a professional qualification [LE2]. Research-engaged teaching offers students a broad range of specialist modules and supports pathways to postgraduate study. These provide students with access to the infrastructure for research, both digital and physical. All programmes of study support the progressive development of students to become independent learners through, for example, research methods training and final-year dissertations or cap-stone projects or performances. Student research is presented in a range of department-based student research conferences, exhibitions and graduation shows and screenings in all departments including Science Week, Dance's 'Footprint' show and Drama's Performance Festival. Final year Photography students exhibit at Free Range in Brick Lane, East London. These provide valuable opportunities for students to develop their professional skills and create pathways into graduate employment and postgraduate study.

The *Psychology Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Scheme* (PURAS) is an opportunity for talented second-year Psychology students to participate in original research with staff. The scheme provides students with hands-on research experience, developing their potential and interest in research. As partners in the research, students actively engage with and shape the project, and then present their work at the department's student research conference. The PURAS programme has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both staff and students; and one member of the PURAS development team was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2018.

Learning environment

Students often talk to us about their wider experience at Roehampton. The central role of the four colleges in student life; the clubs, societies and sports teams that thrive on campus; the vibrant elections for college and students' union roles; the opportunities for the student voice to be heard; and the professional well-being services and Chaplaincy support that are there for when times are tough. At Student Senate and beyond, students have also highlighted the importance of ensuring all our students share in the opportunities we offer, especially students who have never lived on campus, bringing into sharp focus the intersectionalities of our student population. The continuation rates for our students who do not live on campus was 82% in the three TEF years, compared to 91% for those who have, and their degree outcomes are lower. We know that 65% of our commuting students are BAME. Our student engagement data shows a clear link between distance travelled and on-campus attendance. Further, BAME students, students with mental health conditions and students from more deprived areas have lower than average attendance. Students living off campus visit the library less frequently and borrow fewer items. Perhaps not surprisingly, this same group of students tends to use Moodle more often than those who live on campus.

Our aim is to ensure an **inclusive learning environment** that maximises retention and positive student outcomes [LE3, SO3]. Our strategy is to make the campus an effective place to study, so students use it and 'stick around'; and to enable students to study 'anywhere, anytime', allowing them to fit academic work around paid work and caring responsibilities. The strategy has four main elements outlined below.

First, **learner analytics** and a student engagement team underpins our student support and retention strategy. This enables us to identify and support students at risk of dropping out and to track and promote high attainment [LE3, SO3]. In 2015/16, we implemented a new digital attendance monitoring system and launched a learner analytics project to build a student engagement dashboard integrating data on attendance with engagement data on the virtual learning environment (VLE), library use and

coursework submissions. Launched in 2017/18, the dashboard is key to our retention strategy by providing timely information on individual level student engagement, allowing for targeted, personalised and integrated academic and wellbeing support for students. In 2018, we established a student engagement team reporting to the Director of Student Engagement to work alongside the Registry team responsible for student records, the wellbeing team and academic teams in departments. Together they identify and engage with at-risk students and this allows us to take a 'whole university' approach to student success and wellbeing.

The second part of our strategy has been to **invest in the physical campus** to provide spaces where students can live and study effectively [LE1]. We have built new on-campus accommodation increasing the number of rooms by 568. This has enabled a greater number of continuing students to live on campus, up from 200 in 2016 to 482 in 2018. The centre-piece of a £100m investment is our new RIBA-award winning library which opened in 2017. It provides an inspirational space in which our students can study and learn. The new library has created 1,200 study spaces, improving the desk to student ratio from 1:11 to 1:8, and has added 200 specialist computing desks and 14 bookable group study rooms [LE3]. This investment has already increased footfall by over 45% compared to the former library. Significantly, usage data shows the new library has become more a place of study, rather than a place where students borrow items and leave. Students are making far more use of learning resources in the library. High occupancy and high use suggest our aim to create a 'stickier campus' is working. The most recent library usage data suggests that commuting students are working in the library more, but we acknowledge these are early days. In response to student feedback we have invested in 60 laptops available to loan to students to support flexible working [LE3]. Laptop loans in September/October 2018 almost doubled compared with the same period in 2017.

To create a more **flexible and personalised university-wide academic support network [LE3]**, in 2016/17 we refocused the work of our academic achievement advisors to build a stronger online presence and integrated the team with a new role of academic achievement librarians. Based in the library, the advisors offer academic skills support, including in statistics and data analysis, online and through workshops, one-to-one drop-ins and sessions embedded in the curriculum. This academic year to date, over a third of students (2,979) have accessed the Moodle pages of the Learning Hub, home to a wide range of interactive tutorials and resources available anytime, on or off campus. If students are submitting and getting feedback on coursework online, they should be able to access academic support online as well. During semester one, 2019/20, the team has delivered 86 workshops with an average attendance of 16 students; and offered 54 drop-in sessions for students per week [LE1]. Internal data shows over 80% of students are satisfied with these support services.

We have carried out a **major refurbishment of teaching spaces** over the past three years. In 2017/18 we invested over £820,000 on learning and teaching facilities and digital resources for students, including improving audio-visual facilities in all classrooms to support lecture capture and podcasting. Responding to student feedback, investments across campus have been aimed at making it a more effective place to study [LE1] by increasing study space capacity for commuting students. We have created 80 additional PC lab study spaces, including a new facility at our Whitelands campus where the need was greatest. Opening later in 2019 will be the new Sir David Bell Media Centre with cutting edge film, television, photographic and sound studios, editing suites, teaching and social spaces.

To **reduce the costs for our students of commuting to campus** we have introduced personalised timetables designed around student needs [LE3]. Students told us that they were asked to travel too often to campus for short periods of time, costing them money and impacting on their learning, and their family, caring and working responsibilities. To address this, we now build timetables with blocks of activity over several days rather than every day. Our new entrants' survey shows 80% of students over the past two years have been satisfied with their timetables, up 8 percentage points since 2013. Induction timetables are embedded in a welcome week app; and personalised academic timetables are accessed by students via the student portal. We have also introduced a SMS lecture cancellation service

[LE3]. In addition, we have recently invested significantly in a free bus service for students which performs on average 10,000 passenger journeys per month, connecting the campus with transport hubs.

The third element of our strategy has been to **invest in the digital learning environment** to create a more flexible and personalised student experience [LE1, LE3]. It is supported by a team of digital learning experts. Our '*Library Anywhere'* project focuses on universally accessible content and a 'digital first' acquisitions policy. In 2017/18, 83% of the acquisitions budget was spent on digital learning resources, with e-books making up half of all new book purchases. Student-led acquisitions make up 25% of purchases and is driving digital learning, complementing reading list and research-led acquisitions.

We have improved **access to digital learning resources [LE1]** through creating clear, standardised Moodle course templates; by setting minimum requirements on the information provided to students on module Moodle sites; by establishing a digital database of past examination papers; by standardising online submissions; and by embedding Talis Aspire plug-ins on module Moodle sites to improve access for students to the library catalogue. These plug-ins have gone from only 15% of undergraduate module sites in 2017 to 51% in 2018. In 2018 JISC carried out a digital accessibility audit to improve access to learning resources. As a result, our 2018/19 Moodle upgrade has improved the user interface and experience through changes to the appearance, layout and navigation. Students can now customise the dashboard, set 'favourite' modules to receive information easily, receive module overviews and directly access activities and assessments. We have optimised the 'support' block that appears in every course, providing links to the most frequently used services and resources [LE3].

Our **Digital Roehampton strategy** supports pedagogic innovation using digital learning to promote student engagement, flexible and personalised learning, and positive outcomes for all [TQ1, LE1, LE3, SO3]. We have made investments in infrastructure and applications to create an effective learning environment for our students and to support excellence in our student outcomes. Our digital learning team supports colleagues across the university to create online learning communities, assessment literacy, promote student engagement (e.g. flipped models of learning and using animation to teach complex concepts) and enable more flexible learning. We share this work though our Learning and Teaching Festival and CPD workshops. Our Moodle development is supporting this innovation with evidence of a wider shift in teaching and learning as the VLE moves from a repository of learning resources to an active learning tool. Moodle is increasingly being used for forums (up 6.3% in 2018), questionnaires and surveys (up 21.5% and 33%) and Blackboard Collaborate (up 25%). We launched lecture capture in 2017 on an opt-in basis. Six out of ten departments have led on this initiative with over 9000 minutes of delivered content in 2018 compared to 5,400 in 2017. We invested in polling software to engage students in large group settings, and its usage is widespread. We have been using TurningPoint clickers over the past ten years and are expanding the use of technologies such as Poll Everywhere and Meetoo. The popularity of Nearpod has grown since 2014 with the total number of sessions increasing by 130%. The use of e-portfolios (CampusPress) has also grown, allowing students to engage with a multimedia rich environment and to showcase their academic achievements in the professional world. There are currently 1,193 active e-portfolio sites, an increase of 39% since 2016. We are currently working on a blended learning project in the Business School that will see hybrid online/in-class modules launched as pilots in September 2019 before looking to adopt university-wide.

The student voice has shaped Digital Roehampton and the response has been positive: satisfaction with learning resources, as measured by the NSS was up 3.2 percentage points in 2018, and the IT resources and facilities up 3 percentage points and is now within benchmark. Agreement that 'library resources have supported my needs' increased by 3 percentage points and is now within 1 percentage point of benchmark. Module evaluations show that satisfaction with the VLE has gone up by 5 percentage points over the past three years and 10 percentage points over the past eight years.

The final element of our inclusive learning environment strategy has been to invest in the **social and student engagement support networks** that help students stick with us and succeed academically [TQ1, LE3, SO3]. This work to foster a strong community and enhance co-curricular activity is led by

the university's Student Life Committee and is shared by the academic departments, colleges, students' union and professional services. The aim is to support the transition to university, raise student engagement, promote participation and enhance the skills and confidence of students. Our UKES results show that 33.5% of Roehampton respondents volunteer, 8% above sector average, and 56% participate in extra or co-curricular activities, 4% above sector. Our sport and active communities programme supports 30 different sports and in 2017/18 over 780 students participated in competitive activity.

The **four colleges** are integral to these student networks. Each college has a full-time College Life Development Officer working with college chaplains and wardens. Together, they promote physical and mental health, offer spiritual and faith provision, and provide student induction and out-of-hours support (led by a senior warden). Last year we refurbished all prayer rooms for our Muslim students, who make up 23% of our student population, and invested in a full time female Muslim chaplain. Colleges promote community through the College Cup, a multi-activity event across the year which engages with students to represent their college through sport, music and the arts. Over 400 students took part last year. Supporting college teams are 183 student flat reps who live across campus and who play a major role in student life, particularly induction. Flat rep training includes mental health, dealing with conflict, signposting to wellbeing services and helping students to make friends.

Roehampton Students' Union delivers support services and promotes activities integral to the student experience. Almost half of the undergraduate student body are a member of a club or society, providing opportunities for students to build friendships, gain confidence and nurture skills. RSU offers volunteering placements on campus, in the local community and abroad, supporting students to develop skills and confidence in work-based settings. RSU leads our Growhampton project that supplies our student-led café, The Hive, with fresh produce. When coursework deadlines and exams are looming, feeding the chickens, playing with the rabbits and weeding vegetable patches are antidotes to stress for many students. To address the lower levels of engagement of commuting students, this year we launched ROCs (Reps for Off-Campus Students) with the students' union. We will be monitoring the success of the network to engage commuting students. A student-led Roe Buddies Mentoring and Befriending programme to support students in the transition to higher education is being piloted this year in Social Sciences. To date, 48 students have been trained as mentors and 37 mentoring matches have been made. We will evaluate the impact of the scheme on levels of student engagement and retention and look to adopt a university-wide scheme.

Our **professional wellbeing team** works with our academic departments, the colleges and the RSU to support students in making the successful transition to university and to support students to be successful in their studies [LE3]. The 24-strong team includes mental health practitioners, counsellors and disability and dyslexia advisors and offers support for students on any issue through our Access Centre. Our support for disabled students is well established and student outcomes for our disabled students meet or exceed their benchmark and the outcomes of our non-disabled students in five of the six TEF metrics [SO3]. The core team is supported by volunteers and external specialists, notably, to run a student-led mental health network. The wellbeing team is networked with external organisations to provide additional specialist support. These links have proved invaluable including the introduction of the *Bystander Project*, a student-led initiative to tackle sexual harassment. The team also offers stress-management and exam-anxiety workshops to students. To raise awareness of our student support services, the university makes use of a range of channels including social media, where we have the third highest number of likes on Facebook and are in the top 10 for followers on Twitter and Instagram by student FTE, compared to all other universities in London.

Student outcomes and learning gain

Enabling our students to be successful when they graduate is central to our strategic ambitions. At 73.5%, our most recent highly skilled employment and further study data is well above benchmark (66.1%) for the second year running. Our LEO data shows our graduates earn above the sector average

by 3 percentage points one year after graduating and 2 percentage points three years after. Graduates in subjects including education, humanities, english, biological sciences, creative arts and law perform particularly well, featuring in the top 20 institutions in the UK. Our students are successfully embarking on careers and further study when they graduate, but we recognise we must continue to develop our academic courses and careers support to maintain this position and to ensure positive outcomes for all [SO1]. Led by the university's employability group, our employability strategy promotes careers-focused curriculum development; creating flexible and personalised careers support to drive take-up; and work experience in the curriculum and co-curriculum to maximise participation. This strategy is driven by an ambition to close attainment gaps and to create opportunities and connections for our students to achieve their educational and professional goals [SO1, SO3].

As we saw earlier, putting **graduate attributes and personal skill development** at the centre of the student experience has enabled us to take an ambitious approach to curriculum design and programme development [TQ3, SO1, SO2]. We have redesigned existing courses and launched new ones around the skills, capabilities and professional competencies that graduate employers are looking for.

Employability is at the core of new programme development. Law was launched in 2015 designed around a problem-solving learning model, professional development and links with employers [TQ1, SO1, SO2]. The Law School has a dedicated careers advisor supporting students to find internships, training contacts and other employment opportunities. The Law School has set up a Law Professional Practice Panel including recent alumni to foster links with the sector. In December 2018, Wandsworth Citizen's Advice Bureau opened a new Roehampton office on campus, serving the local community and creating work experience opportunities for our law students. In 2018, we recruited to a careers-focused Digital Media programme and a four-year degree in Business, designed with an extended professional placement in industry. Our new media centre opening in 2019 will allow us to develop further programmes that address skills shortages in the creative industries. We are also currently developing Nursing and Computing, subjects with identified skills shortages locally and nationally and which are priority growth areas in the London and south-east economy.

Over the past three years we have refocused the work of the careers team to support our students to be career-ready and to build connections with graduate employers [SO1, SO2]. To enhance the reach of this work and to drive the take-up of services, we are building online tools and embedding activity in department and programme events promoted through social media. Based in the Hub, these services provide advice and guidance to students and alumni on future employment prospects. All students and alumni have access to our online employability portal CareerLink. This provides support with job applications, CV writing and interview preparation and has an extensive job search engine. 7,393 students are currently registered on the CareerLink site with 55,588 individual logins recorded and 167,640 online activities completed. In the last year 1,222 jobs, internships and graduate schemes were accessed, and 944 students downloaded the CareerLink App.

A great many of our students lack professional and social capital when they join the university. We look to connect our students with employers through our external partnerships enabling them to build their careers and routes to employment as they learn. Our career mentoring scheme, Roehampton Connect, is now in its fourth year and helps our students develop their professional networks. The scheme has increased its membership to 1,400, with just under 200 mentoring relationships, offering advice and guidance, support with CVs, work shadowing and work experience. In 2018, we established a Young Chamber of Commerce with Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce enabling students to build social capital and develop networking skills. So far, 70 students have attended Young Chamber events. The Chancellor's Career Award is an online career development programme we are piloting on an opt-in basis that supports students to develop their employability skills, recognises their extracurricular achievements and prepares them for their graduate job search. In 2017/18, 257 students achieved the award. Our next step in 2019 is to embed the programme within the curriculum to widen its reach across the university. Supporting this is an online self-assessment employability tool**,** 'Career Pulse', designed for students to understand and address their development needs. In 2018 we established a new

entrepreneurship programme and ideas fund, Launchpad, which received a £50,000 grant from the Santander Bank Enterprise and Entrepreneurship project fund. In its first year the Launchpad competition celebrated 12 innovative business ideas from Roehampton students. One award recipient, who now acts as an entrepreneurial ambassador for Roehampton, set up his own coaching company operating across London, employing 10 staff.

The careers team runs CareerFest, our annual careers fair with a week of events, workshops, employer visits and careers advice supporting students to plan their next steps to graduate employment. The fair provides advice on graduate jobs, internships, study abroad opportunities, summer experiences and advice from industry experts. Across the year the team run a range of events including on volunteering, postgraduate study, careers in teaching and leadership (with our UR Leaders programme now in its sixth year). They also support department-focused career and employability events and workshops. In total 5,206 students attended a careers event in 2017/18, an increase of 947 from 2016/17.

BAME success in graduate employment [SO3]. In October 2018, as part of CareerFest, the RAFA 2 Project delivered the first of a series of events designed for students from underrepresented groups. Targeted at BAME students, the focus was on the 'Journey to Success' and supporting students to find graduate roles. Workshops designed to raise aspirations, develop resilience, personal branding and interview techniques were delivered by BAME professionals including senior executives from the 100 Power List, entrepreneurs, recent graduates and alumni from Roehampton academic departments. Over 70 students attended.

In 2017 we set up a new **placements and work experience team** with the aim of expanding placements and work experience opportunities for all students [SO1, SO2]. To meet the needs of our diverse student body, the team has successfully developed a programme of work experience activities. The team worked with the Business School on its extended professional placement including a comprehensive programme of pre-application and pre-placement activities; and developed an extra-curricular micro-placement programme targeted at first year students or those with little work experience, offering three to 10-day experiences for students within a professional work environment. The Roehampton Internships Scheme, funded by Santander Bank, builds relationships with local SMEs providing paid professional level opportunities to students and alumni. In the last 12 months, 35 students have taken up an internship with over 60% leading to further work at the same organisation. The university has also built up a wide range of partnerships and relationships with external organisations to create opportunities for our students to gain work experience, including on work-based learning modules.

Participation and engagement data indicates that this work to support our students gain the skills and attributes valued by employers is having an impact. Responses to the UKES question 'Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or advisors' was up 3.9 percentage points and is 0.7% above sector. The 'learning skills' area as well as the 'creative and social skill' area questions are both equal to the sector; and our students scored higher than the sector and London in 'being innovative and creative'. UKES also shows that our students score 5.3 percentage points higher than the sector in 'understanding people of other backgrounds'.

Positive outcomes for all [SO3] are integral to Roehampton's mission. Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Their needs have shaped our learning and teaching strategy. The rapid progress we have made on our student outcomes has been driven by our success in closing attainment gaps. The proportion of Firsts and 2:1s we have awarded has remained stable over this period, but we are seeing the gaps in attainment close. Our most recent data on degree classifications shows a 10 percentage point increase in the proportion of Black students from deprived communities achieving Firsts and 2:1s. Our learning gain data suggests the work we are doing to improve the quality of teaching is having the biggest impact on students whose prior attainment is lowest. Figure 3 shows that gap between the proportions of Firsts and 2:1s achieved by students entering with high (300+), medium (240-299) and low (1-249) tariff has narrowed over the last ten years. Moreover, as figure 4 shows

continuation rates have improved by 12 percentage points for our students who are Black, mature and from deprived communities (IMD Q1-2) over the three TEF years, and by 22 percentage points for our students who are male, white and from deprived communities. Over the same period, the proportions of Black, female graduates from deprived communities going on to highly skilled employment or further study has increased by 20 percentage points. We are proud of these figures, but we are not in any way complacent. Attainment gaps remain, and we must continue the work we have outlined in this submission and in our Access and Participation Plan to close them.

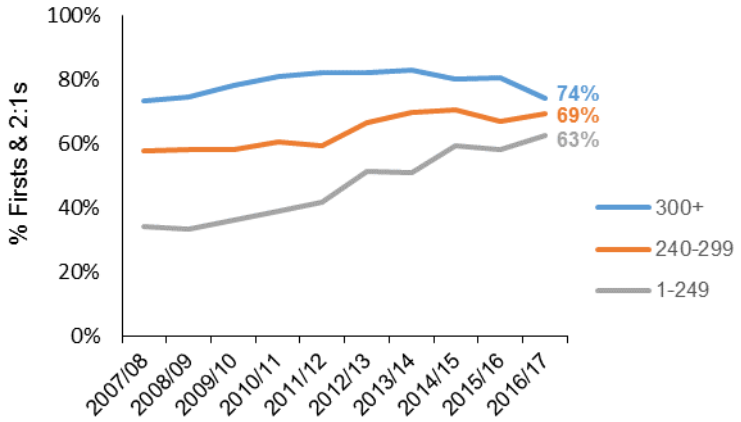

Figure 3. First and 2:1s achieved within different entry tariff bands between 2007/08 and 2016/17.

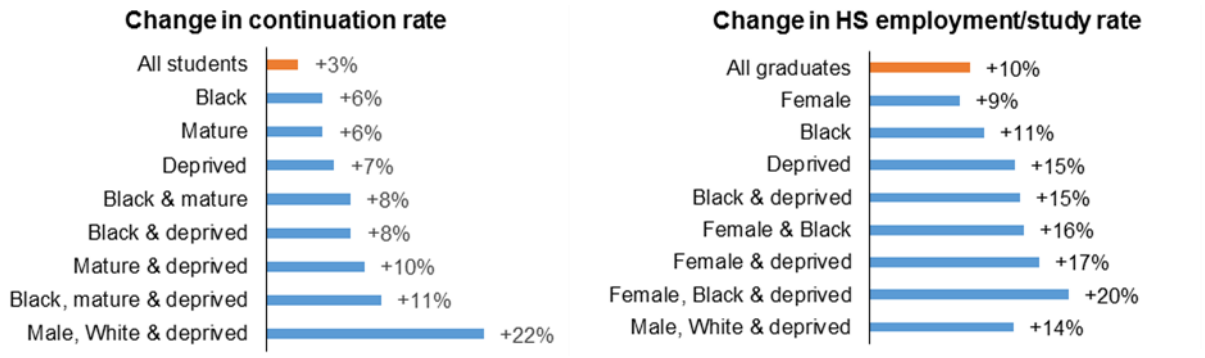

Figure 4. Change in rates of continuation and highly skilled employment/ further study for disadvantaged groups over the three TEF years (continuation rate of new entrants in 2013/14 to 2015/16 and employment rate of graduates in 2014/15 to 2016/17).

Conclusion

Roehampton has been providing higher education since the nineteenth century. Our teaching and learning strategy today is driven by the commitment to ensure all our students thrive in the twenty-first century. We remain true to the mission shaped by our four constituent colleges, that education is for all and that it changes lives, and to sustaining a social fabric that enriches the experience for all our students. Our work to reshape the curriculum, to offer a quality of teaching for our students that is challenging and supports their best endeavours, and to create a physical and digital campus where students can find their own way of learning is showing results. We have made rapid improvements in our core TEF metrics over the past three years; our split metrics show how far we have come to realise the hopes and ambitions of those of our students underrepresented in higher education. There is work to be done to close the attainment gap still further. In partnership with our students and staff, underpinned by clear leadership and strategies embedded across the university, we have the momentum going forward to continue to enhance the quality of teaching and positive outcomes for all our students.