

Office for
Students



Analysis of access and participation plan targets in relation to OfS key performance measures

2022 update

Reference OfS 2022.06

Enquiries to dfa@officeforstudents.org.uk

Publication date 15 March 2022

Contents

Introduction	3
Methodology	4
Contextualising targets	5
Recalculating the OfS KPMs	6
Assessing potential impact	8
Assumptions	8
Analysis	9
Findings	10
KPM2: The gap in participation at high-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups	10
KPM3: The gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups	12
KPM4: The gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between white and black students	15
KPM5: The gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students	17
Summary of findings	20
Annex A: Technical annex	21
Assumptions	21
All KPMs	21
KPM2	21
KPM3	21
KPM4	22
KPM5	22

Introduction

1. In January 2020, we published the results of our sector level analysis of access and participation plans submitted by higher education providers to the Office for Students (OfS).¹ Our analysis sought to understand whether the targets that higher education providers set in their access and participation plans were sufficiently ambitious to make satisfactory progress at a sector level in addressing OfS long-term targets and broader objectives around equality.
2. We have now updated this analysis to incorporate an additional 75 higher education providers with access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 (approved after 31 October 2019), 246 in total, and an additional two years of available historical student data.
3. Our analysis explores how the targets in these additional access and participation plans and the additional historical student data affected the ambition and likely progress at a sector level in addressing four of the OfS key performance measures (KPMs):
 - a. KPM2 – the gap in participation at high-tariff providers² between the most and least represented groups³
 - b. KPM3 – the gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups⁴
 - c. KPM4 – the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between white students and black students
 - d. KPM5 – the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students.
4. Most providers' access and participation plans refer to one or more of our KPMs in relation to their year-on-year targets. In our analysis we have attempted to identify which of these providers' targets contributed to the achievement of our KPMs. At a sector level, we can use these targets to help understand whether our vision for the sector is being realised. This report presents the findings of our updated analysis.

¹ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/.

² Higher education providers in the top third of the ranking by average tariff score.

³ Based on the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) classification, which groups areas across the UK based on the proportion of the 18- to 30-year-old population that participates in higher education, where quintile 1 is the least represented and quintile 5 the most represented group.

⁴ Based on POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5.

Methodology

5. We followed the same methodology as set out in our 2020 technical report ‘Analysis of access and participation plan targets in relation to OfS key performance measures’⁵ to identify relevant targets from providers’ access and participation plans relating to OfS KPMs 2 to 5.
6. Table 1 shows the number of higher education providers with approved access and participation plans that our analysis identified as having targets relating to OfS KPMs 2 to 5. The table also shows the number of providers with approved access and participation plans where our analysis did not identify any targets relating to the OfS KPMs. The number of providers that we identified with targets relating to KPM2 appears low, but this is a consequence of the restriction of the KPM population to high-tariff providers.

Table 1: Number of providers with an approved access and participation (A&P) plan with and without targets relating to the OfS KPMs

	KPM2	KPM3	KPM4	KPM5
Number of providers with targets relating to KPMs in A&P plans	30	92	131	91
Number of providers with no targets relating to KPMs in A&P plans	1	154	115	155
Total	31	246	246	246

Note: The number of providers identified under KPM2 is small because of the restriction of the KPM population to high-tariff providers.

7. Our 2020 report explained how we selected targets where providers submitted multiple targets relating to each of the KPMs in their access and participation plans. We followed the same methodology to identify and refine these to the most relevant target per provider for each KPM.
8. For KPM3, however, we made a slight change in our methodology in identifying and refining relevant targets. In 2020, we only identified targets that focused on reducing the gap in non-continuation rates between POLAR4⁶ quintile 1 and quintile 5. In updating our analysis, we widened this to include targets that focused on reducing the gap in non-continuation rates between index of multiple deprivation (IMD) quintiles 1 and 5 in addition to POLAR4 quintiles.
9. Because of the close correlation between POLAR4 and IMD, those providers with targets focused on reducing the gap in non-continuation rates between IMD quintiles 1 and 5 in their access and participation plans, will, by default, also reduce the gap between POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5. By including relevant IMD targets in our analysis, we have therefore accounted for the contribution of these targets at a sector level to the likely progress in addressing KPM3.
10. For KPM2, our eventual ambition is to eliminate the gap in 18- to 30-year-old participation at high-tariff providers between the most represented (POLAR4 quintile 5) and least represented

⁵ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/.

⁶ For more details on POLAR (Participation of Local Areas), see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/about-polar-and-adult-he/.

(POLAR4 quintile 1) groups. However, since there is a time lag inherent in this measure (i.e. the behaviour of current 18-year-olds will continue to influence 18- to 30-year-old participation for the next 12 years), we have focused on a more immediate measure of our ambition: to eliminate the gap in young participation (18- to 20-year-olds) at high-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups.

Contextualising targets

11. We contextualised the targets set by each provider to ensure that we could apply them to a consistent student population across all of the providers used in our analysis. To do this, we used the historical student data from 2018-19 (for KPM3) and 2019-20 (for KPMs 2, 4 and 5) from the published access and participation plan database.⁷
12. Because KPM3 is based on the continuation of students into the second year of their course, we need data from the start of their second year to determine whether they have continued or not. At the time of our analysis, we did not have the 2020-21 student data available so were unable to use the 2019-20 student data from the published access and participation plan database in our analysis for this KPM.
13. Table 2 shows the number of providers with an approved access and participation plan and historical student data that we were able to use in our analysis, separated out into those that had targets of relevance to the OfS KPMs and those that did not.
14. The table also shows the number of providers that we were unable to use in our analysis because they did not have historical data in the access and participation plan database relevant to these KPMs, or a student population of a sufficient size to use in our analysis. Most of these providers are small institutions or providers new to the sector.
15. Table 2 shows that by updating our analysis to include providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21, and an additional two years of historical student data, we were able to include an additional 91 providers for KPM3, an additional 81 for KPM4, and an additional 84 for KPM5, compared to our original analysis in January 2020.
16. The table also shows that there were no additional providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 of relevance to our analysis for KPM2. As in our original analysis, we were able to use all 31 high tariff providers with an approved access and participation plan as at 31 October 2019 in our analysis for OfS KPM2.
17. Having identified the providers that we could use in our analysis, we contextualised the targets that each provider had set for the five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 by applying them to the historical student data from 2018-19 or 2019-20 (see paragraphs 11 and 12).
18. Contextualising the targets in this way gave us an indication of the year-on-year impact that providers' targets would have at a sector level on the relevant student populations for each KPM.

⁷ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/about-the-dashboard-data/get-the-dashboard-data/.

Table 2: Number of providers with an approved access and participation plan starting in 2020-21, with or without historical student data, and with or without targets relating to OfS KPMs

	KPM2	KPM3	KPM4	KPM5	KPM2	KPM3	KPM4	KPM5
Providers with historical student data	Original analysis (Jan 2020)				Updated analysis (2021)			
Number of providers with targets	30	62	96	62	30	113	121	87
Number of providers without targets	1	71	5	76	1	111	61	135
Total used in our analysis	31	133	101	138	31	224	182	222
Providers without relevant historical student data	Original analysis (Jan 2020)				Updated analysis (2021)			
Number of providers with targets	0	11	16	7	0	6	10	4
Number of providers without targets	0	27	54	26	0	16	54	20
Total excluded from our analysis	0	38	70	33	0	22	64	24
Total number of providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21	31	171	171	171	31	246	246	246

Recalculating the OfS KPMs

19. To assess the progress of targets at a sector level in relation to our KPMs, we compared the impact that the targets would have by the end of 2024-25 for each KPM – demonstrated by the size of the gap in participation, non-continuation or attainment that remained at the end of five years – with the OfS KPM baseline position.

20. The published OfS KPMs⁸, however, are calculated using different populations⁹ of students and providers from those available in the access and participation plan data used in our analysis.

⁸ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/.

⁹ KPM2: 18- to 30-year-old students domiciled in England who have participated in higher education at higher tariff providers in England.

KPM3: UK-domiciled entrants (aged 18-30) to full-time (or apprenticeship) undergraduate courses at English higher education providers

KPM4: Full-time (or apprenticeship) undergraduate degree (first degree and degrees including a postgraduate component) graduates domiciled in the UK, obtaining classified honours degrees from higher education providers in England whose ethnicity is recorded as black or white.

KPM5: Full-time (or apprenticeship) undergraduate degree (first degree and degrees including a postgraduate component) graduates domiciled in the UK obtaining classified honours degrees from higher education providers in England.

Therefore, to align the KPMs with the data used in our analysis, we recalculated them restricting the population to the one for which we have relevant historical access and participation plan student data. This resulted in a revised KPM against which we could assess the progress of providers' targets at a sector level.

21. All of the re-based KPMs used in our analysis are set out in Table 3. The table shows the 2017-18 and 2019-20 published KPM, the re-based KPMs used in our 2020 analysis and the re-based KPMs used in our updated 2021 analysis.

Table 3: Re-based OfS KPMs using access and participation plan student data

	KPM2 (pp)	KPM2 (ratio)	KPM3 (pp)	KPM4 (pp)	KPM5 (pp)
2017-18 published KPM (as shown in 2020 analysis)	19.8	4.81	4.4	23.1	2.8
Re-based KPM using restricted population (from 2020 analysis)	36.2	6.24	4.6	22.0	2.8
2019-20 published KPM	19.2	3.39	4.5	18.3	1.3
Re-based KPM incorporating additional historical student data and approved access and participation plans (updated 2021 analysis)	35.2	5.8	4.7	18.2	1.4

Note: 'pp' = 'percentage point'.

22. KPM2 is displayed as both a percentage point gap and a ratio. A ratio expresses the chances of something occurring in one group compared with another. In this case it is the likelihood of quintile 5 students entering higher education at a high-tariff provider compared with quintile 1 students.

23. The large difference between the published and re-based KPM2 shown in Table 3 is because the published KPM was based on 18- to 30-year-old entrants to high-tariff providers in England, whereas we have restricted our current analysis to young entrants, as explained in paragraph 10.

24. As we do not yet have historical student non-continuation data for 2019-20, the re-based KPM for KPM3 used in our updated analysis includes a transition year reflecting the 2018-19 historical gap.

25. The relevant historical student data for 2019-20 used to calculate the re-based KPM4 and 5 is likely to show evidence of the 'no detriment' policy introduced by some providers due to the coronavirus pandemic. Some providers made changes to assessments and classification arrangements to ensure students were not disadvantaged by the impact of the pandemic when it came to assessment in 2019-20. The impact of this policy is reflected in a lower percentage point gap for these KPMs.

Assessing potential impact

26. Our findings about the likely progress of providers' targets at the sector level by 2024-25 in relation to our KPMs are presented in paragraphs 36 to 75 of this report.
27. To further evaluate the potential impact of providers' targets at the sector level, we updated our original analysis for KPMs 3 to 5 to identify what would happen to the gaps in participation, non-continuation and attainment if all providers that had set targets in their access and participation plans aimed to close the gaps to zero by 2024-25. We did this by recalibrating the 2024-25 percentage point gap to zero for each target and applied this to providers' historical student data. Where applying providers' targets to the historical data resulted in a positive percentage point gap in 2024-25, we retained this gap rather than reducing it to zero.
28. To provide us with an indication of the scale of work still to be done in the sector to close the gaps for KPMs 3 to 5, we also updated our analysis to examine the potential impact of all providers with approved access and participation plans closing the residual gaps to zero by 2024-25. Where applying providers' targets to the historical data resulted in a positive percentage point gap in 2024-25, we retained this gap rather than reducing it to zero.
29. For KPMs 3 and 4 there are persistent gaps in non-continuation and degree attainment between different groups of students at a sector level. Some of the factors that contribute to these sector-wide gaps are due to the way in which students are distributed either:
- within student groups at higher education providers (such as by entry qualification, subject of study, age of students)
 - across the sector (how student groups are distributed between providers).
30. These observed distributional issues at either a provider or sector level are sometimes referred to as structural factors. However, once we have taken account of the structural factors, significant unexplained differences remain, which we refer to as the unexplained gap. Our analysis does not seek to, or need to, identify how much of the provider gap is associated with each of these elements. It is solely focused on the resulting absolute gap seen at each provider in 2024-25. Further information about how we have treated unexplained gaps within our analysis can be found in our 2020 report.¹⁰

Assumptions

31. The assumptions we made in our updated analysis about the five-year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are the same as those used in our original analysis and for ease of reference are set out in Annex A at the end of this report.

¹⁰ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/.

Analysis

32. We have presented the output of our analysis for each KPM in a line chart and table. Each line chart shows the historical trajectory for the appropriate population of providers in order to provide additional context when assessing the relative ambition of the targets. The figures also show the projected year-on-year gap in participation at high-tariff providers (KPM2), continuation rates (KPM3), or attainment rates (KPMs 4 and 5) resulting from the application of targets at a sector level to the relevant re-based KPM.
33. The impact of incorporating additional providers into the revised analysis can sometimes result in the projected gaps at a sector level increasing from those seen in the original analysis, depending on the number of providers with targets and the ambition of those targets.
34. To evaluate the potential impact of providers' targets at the sector level for KPMs 3-5, the charts also show the estimated gap that remains if all targets in the relevant approved access and participation plans aimed to close the higher education provider gap to zero by 2024-25.
35. To provide us with an indication of the scale of work still to be done in the sector to close the KPM 3-5 gaps, the charts also show the potential impact of all providers with approved access and participation plans closing the residual gaps to zero by 2024-25.

Findings

36. This section discusses the findings from our analysis, looking at each KPM separately.

KPM2: The gap in participation at high-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups

37. Our findings for KPM2 are displayed as both a percentage point gap and a ratio. A ratio expresses the chances of something occurring in one group compared with another. In this case it is the likelihood of quintile 5 students entering higher education at a high-tariff provider compared with quintile 1 students.

38. Table 4 shows the impact on the re-based KPM of the additional two years of historical student data – there were no additional providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 of relevance to this KPM. Using the 2019-20 historical baseline data, the re-based KPM decreases from a 36.2 percentage point gap in participation between the most and least represented groups in our original analysis to a 35.2 percentage point gap, and from a ratio of 6.24 to 5.81. The ratio of 5.81 for 2019-20 means that quintile 5 students are 5.81 times more likely to enter higher education at a high-tariff provider than quintile 1 students.

Table 4: KPM2 participation rate and remaining gap between most and least represented groups in 2024-25 for high-tariff providers with approved access and participation plans as at 31 October 2019: revised analysis using additional historical data

Scenario	Proportion of entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas (per cent) in 2024-25	Remaining gap (pp)	Ratio
Re-based KPM2 used in original analysis from January 2020	6.9	36.2	6.24
Re-based KPM2 and ratio using the historical baseline (2019-20) for high-tariff providers with approved access and participation plans	7.3	35.2	5.81
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25	11.7	28.8	3.45
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met and the one high-tariff provider without a target reduces its ratio to the same as the provider with the lowest ratio in 2024-25	12.6	27.6	3.19

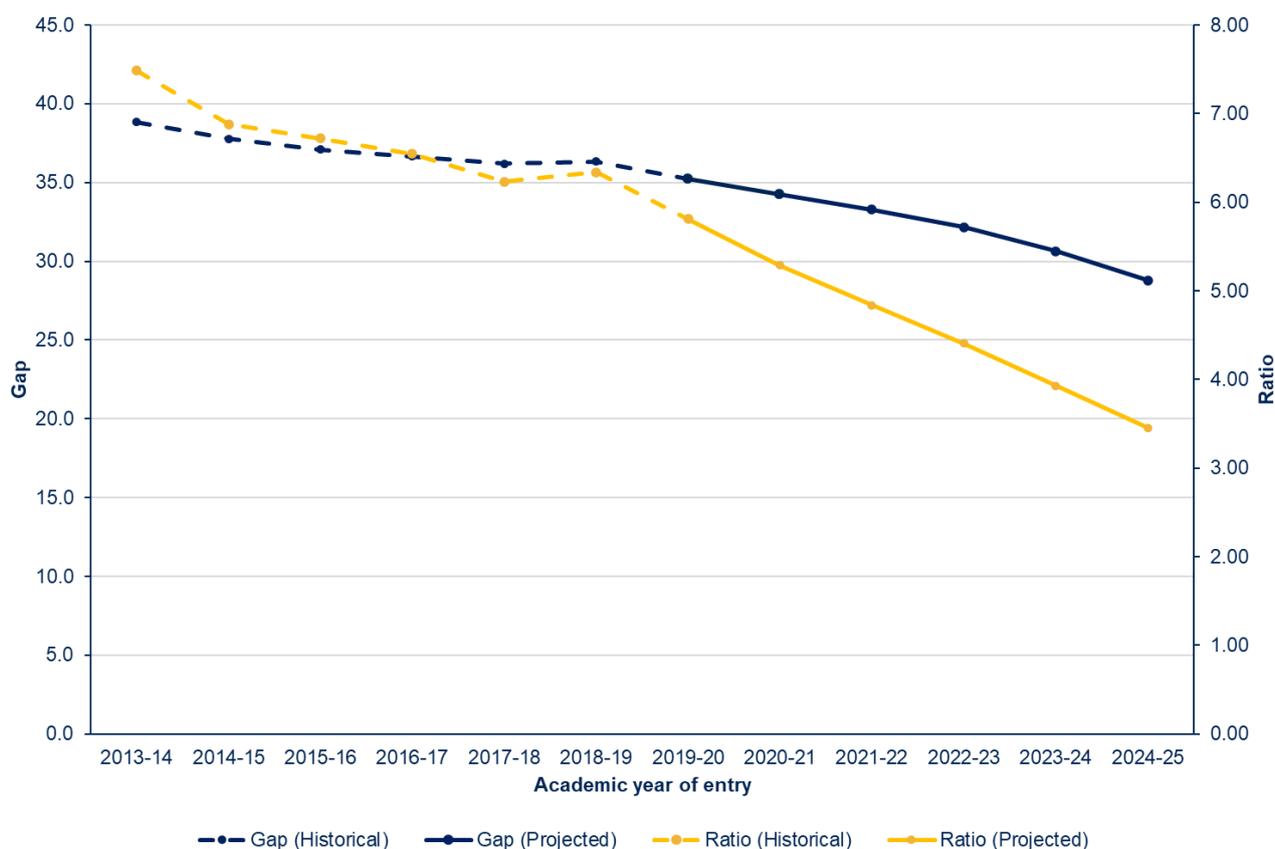
Note: 'pp' = 'percentage point'.

39. Table 4 and Figure 1 show the impact of including the additional two years of historical student data on the projected KPM2 gap for those high-tariff providers with approved access and participation plans as at 31 October 2019 (31 providers). If all providers achieved their targets by 2024-25, the sector gap decreases from 35.2 percentage points (KPM2 baseline rate) to

28.8 percentage points in 2024-25, and the ratio decreases from 5.81 to 3.45.¹¹ We have assumed that the number of quintile 5 entrants will remain constant, and so closing the gap will have been achieved by increasing the proportion of quintile 1 entrants from 7.3 per cent to 11.7 per cent.

40. Assuming a small growth in the size of the quintile 1 population and no change in the rest of the sector, this would represent an increase of around 5,000 quintile 1 entrants admitted to high-tariff providers in the 2024-25 cohort compared with 2019-20.¹²

Figure 1: Historical and projected gap in participation at high-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups (KPM2) for access and participation plans approved by 31 October 2019: revised analysis using additional historical data



41. Figure 1 shows the projected year-on-year gap in participation rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 entrants. It also shows the historical trajectory for the same population of providers between 2013-14 and 2019-20, to provide additional context when assessing the relative ambition of the targets. If we compare the projected sector gap in 2024-25 with the

¹¹ This compares to a residual gap of 29.7 percentage points and a ratio of 3.72 in the original analysis.

¹² UCAS data indicates that there has been some growth in the period for quintile 5 entrants. Incorporating the growth in quintile 5 entrants seen recently, and assuming there is no more growth in quintile 5 entrants, closing the gap between quintile 1 and quintile 5 entrants will require an increase of around 7,000 quintile 1 entrants at high-tariff providers in 2024-25 compared to 2019-20.

historical trajectory, the targets appear to continue to reduce the slowly decreasing gap in access to high-tariff providers between quintile 1 and 5 students.

42. Table 4 also shows the impact if all targets identified in access and participation plans are met and the one high-tariff provider without a target reduces its ratio to the same as the provider with the lowest ratio in 2024-25. In this scenario, the sector gap decreases from 35.2 percentage points (KPM2 baseline rate) to 27.6 percentage points in 2024-25, and the ratio decreases from 5.81 to 3.19. Closing the gap will have been achieved by increasing the proportion of quintile 1 entrants from 7.3 per cent to 12.6 per cent. Assuming a small growth in the size of the quintile 1 population and no change in the rest of the sector, this would represent an increase of around 6,000 quintile 1 entrants admitted to high-tariff providers in the 2024-25 cohort compared with 2019-20.
43. We have also modelled the longer-term trajectory based on the current rate of progress. This suggests that the ratio will be much closer to 1:1 by the early-2040s.

KPM3: The gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups

44. As explained in paragraphs 8 and 9, for KPM3 we widened our textual analysis search terms to search for targets in providers' access and participation plans that were based on reducing the gap in non-continuation rates between index of multiple deprivation (IMD) quintiles 1 and 5 in addition to POLAR4 quintiles. By doing so, we identified an additional 27 relevant targets: 19 from providers with approved access and participation plans as at 31 October 2019 where historical data was also available, and eight from providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21.
45. Table 5 shows the different continuation rates for POLAR4 quintile 1 students at the sector level, and the residual gap in non-continuation between most and least represented groups at 2024-25, for each of the scenarios used in our analysis. Table 5 also shows how incorporating providers' targets focused on IMD quintiles in addition to POLAR4 quintiles affects the remaining gap in non-continuation.
46. The table shows the re-based KPM of 4.7 percentage points using the 2018-19 historical baseline data for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 and available historical student data (224 providers).

Table 5: KPM3 continuation rate and remaining gap between most and least represented groups in 2024-25 for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21

Scenario	POLAR4 quintile 1 continuation rate (per cent) in 2024-25	Remaining gap (pp)
Re-based KPM3 used in original analysis from January 2020	90.2	4.6
Re-based KPM3 using the historical baseline (2018-19) for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21	89.8	4.7
If all POLAR4 targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (86 providers)	91.2	3.3
If all POLAR4 and IMD targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (113 providers)	91.5	3.0
If all POLAR4 targets in access and participation plans aimed to close the higher education provider gap to zero by 2024-25 (86 providers)	91.6	2.9
If all POLAR4 and IMD targets in access and participation plans aimed to close the higher education provider gap to zero by 2024-25 (113 providers)	92.1	2.4
If all 224 higher education providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 (regardless of whether they have set a target) closed the gap by 2024-25	93.0	1.5

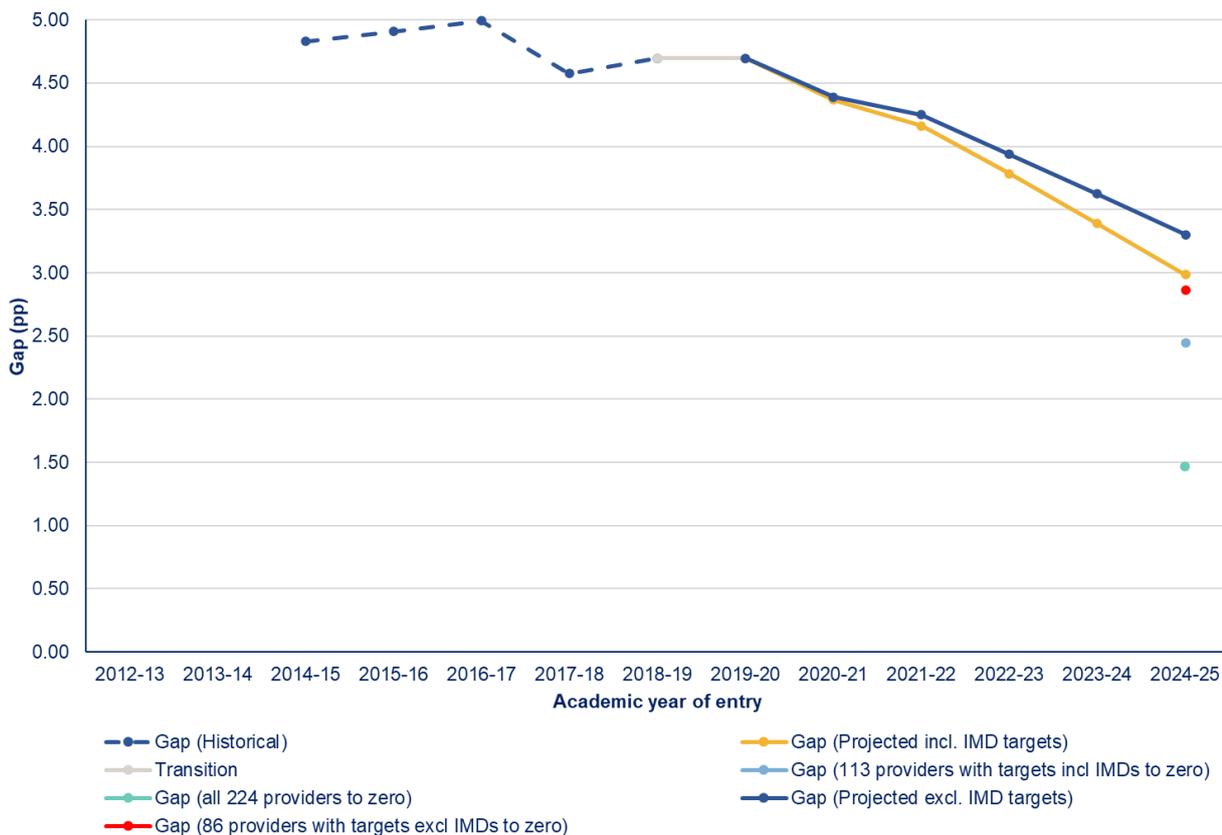
Notes: 'pp' = 'percentage point'. Assumption that POLAR4 quintile 5 remains the same (94.5 per cent) in all scenarios. Any differences in remaining gap are due to rounding.

47. Figure 2 shows the impact of including the additional providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 and the additional two years of historical student data on the projected year-on-year gap in continuation rates between the most and least represented groups. We have included two trajectories on the chart, one which shows the impact on the gap as a result of projecting only those targets that focus on POLAR4 quintiles (dark blue line) and one that shows the impact on the gap of projecting targets that include IMD quintiles as well as POLAR4 (yellow line). Figure 2 also shows the historical trajectory for the same population of providers between 2014-15 and 2018-19, to provide additional context when assessing the relative ambition of the targets.

48. Table 5 and Figure 2 show that if all 113 providers that set POLAR4 or IMD targets relating to KPM3, and for which we have historical data, met their targets, the projected gap in continuation rates between the most and least represented groups at a sector level decreases from 4.7 percentage points (KPM3 baseline rate) to 3.0 percentage points in 2024-25.¹³

¹³ This represents a slight increase from 2.9 percentage points in our original 2020 analysis.

Figure 2: Historical and projected gap in non-continuation between most and least represented groups (KPM3) for approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21



49. We have assumed that the proportion of quintile 5 students will remain constant, and so closing the gap will have been achieved by increasing the continuation rate of quintile 1 students from 89.8 per cent to 91.5 per cent. Assuming no change in the size of the sector, these projections represent an additional 600 quintile 1 entrants continuing in the 2024-25 cohort compared with 2018-19 levels.

50. If all 113 providers with relevant targets were to close the gap to zero by 2024-25, the residual gap between the most and least represented groups in 2024-25 is 2.4 percentage points.¹⁴ The difference between the residual gaps of 3.0 percentage points and 2.4 percentage points gives an indication of the distance between the sector-level gaps resulting from the targets set out in providers' access and participation plans and those resulting from closing these providers' gaps to zero.

51. A residual gap of 1.5 percentage points in continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 and 5 would still remain by 2024-25 if all 224 higher education providers with approved access and participation plans and historical data were to close the gap in continuation rates to zero by 2024-25.¹⁵

¹⁴ This represents a slight increase from 2.5 percentage points in the original analysis, although our original analysis did not retain positive gaps if there were any, so is not directly comparable.

¹⁵ This is a slight increase from our original analysis of 1.8 percentage points but is subject to the same caveat as the footnote above.

52. The fact that this gap is not zero is a result of how POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 5 students are distributed across higher education providers in the sector (structural differences in the student populations), and the variation in underlying continuation rates of higher education providers.
53. If the current rate of progress is maintained longer-term, our analysis projects that the continuation gap between POLAR4 quintile 1 and 5 students will not close until around 2040. This represents an increase of approximately seven years from the original analysis, as the ambition in the targets set out in providers' approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 is applied to a larger number of providers.

KPM4: The gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between white and black students

54. Table 6 shows the different attainment rates for black students at the sector level and the residual gap in degree outcomes between white and black students at 2024-25 for each of the scenarios used in our analysis. It also shows the impact of including providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 on the re-based KPM which decreases from 22.0 percentage points in our original analysis to 18.2 percentage points.¹⁶
55. This decrease is likely to reflect improvements in degree outcomes for students in 2019-20 as a result of the 'no detriment' policy, introduced by some providers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, where some providers made changes to assessments and classification arrangements to ensure students were not disadvantaged by the impact of the pandemic when it came to assessment in 2019-20.

Table 6: KPM4 gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between white and black students in 2024-25 for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21

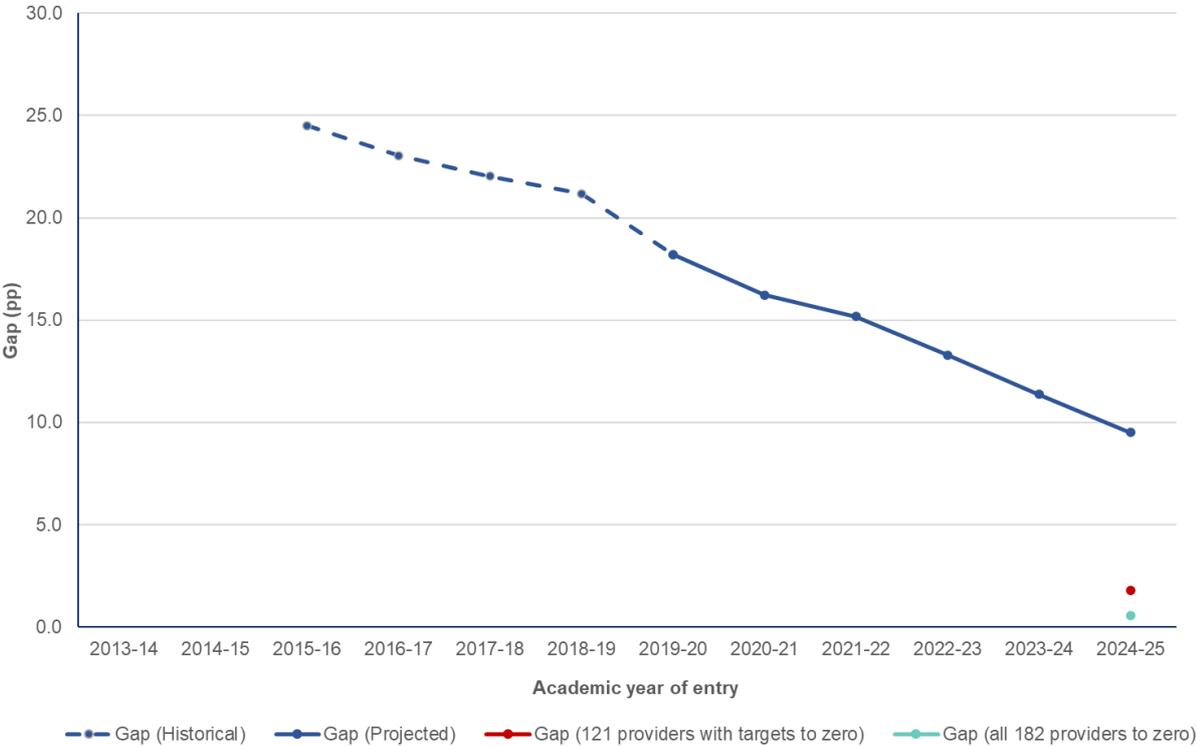
Scenario	Black students' attainment rate (per cent) in 2024-25	Remaining gap (pp)
Re-based KPM4 used in original analysis from January 2020	61.0	22.0
Re-based KPM4 using the historical baseline (2019-20) for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21	68.6	18.2
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (121 providers)	77.3	9.5
If all targets in access and participation plans aimed to close the higher education provider gap by 2024-25	85.0	1.8
If all 182 higher education providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 (regardless of whether they have set a target) closed the gap by 2024-25	86.2	0.6

¹⁶ Using the 2019-20 historical baseline data for providers with approved access and participation plans and available historical data (182 providers).

Notes: 'pp' = 'percentage point'. Assumption that attainment rate for white students remains the same (86.8 per cent) in all scenarios. Any differences in remaining gap are due to rounding.

- 56. Figure 3 shows the impact of including providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21, and updated historical student data, on the trajectory of the projected year-on-year gap in attainment rates between black and white students at a sector level. It also shows the historical trajectory for the same population of providers between 2015-16 and 2019-20, to provide additional context when assessing the relative ambition of the targets.
- 57. As a result of the 'no detriment' policy, some providers' ambitions might have changed due to a reduction in their KPM4 gap. For the purposes of this analysis, however, we have only attempted to translate the original ambition in providers' approved access and participation plans onto the revised historical gap.

Figure 3: Historical and projected gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between white and black students (KPM4) for approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21



- 58. Table 6 and Figure 3 show that if all 121 providers that set targets relating to KPM4 in their access and participation plans, and for which we have historical data, met their targets by 2024-25, the remaining gap in attainment rates between black and white students at a sector level would decrease from 18.2 percentage points (KPM4 baseline rate) to 9.5 percentage points in 2024-25.¹⁷ If we compare this with the historical trajectory shown in Figure 3, the targets appear to continue to reduce the steadily decreasing gap seen between 2015-16 and 2019-20.

¹⁷ This compares to a residual gap in 2024-25 of 11.2 percentage points in the original analysis.

59. We have assumed that the proportion of white students will remain constant, and so closing the gap will have been achieved by increasing the attainment rate of black students from 68.6 per cent to 77.3 per cent. Assuming no change in the size of the graduating cohorts, these projections represent an additional 1,800 black students being awarded a 1st or 2:1 in the 2024-25 cohort compared with 2019-20 levels.
60. If all 121 providers with relevant targets in their access and participation plans were to close the gap to zero by 2024-25, a residual gap of 1.8 percentage points would remain between black and white students in 2024-25.¹⁸
61. The difference between the residual gaps of 9.5 percentage points and 1.8 percentage points gives an indication of the distance between the sector-level gaps resulting from the targets set in providers' access and participation plans and those resulting from closing these providers' gaps to zero.
62. Table 6 and Figure 3 also show that if all 182 providers with approved access and participation plans were to close the gap to zero by 2024-25, a residual gap in attainment rates between black and white students of 0.6 percentage points would still remain by 2024-25.¹⁹
63. The fact that this gap is not zero is a result of how black and white students are distributed across higher education providers in the sector (structural differences in the student populations) and of student attainment rates at different higher education providers. For example, if black students disproportionately study at higher education providers with low attainment rates, closing the gap between black and white students at these providers will still result in an overall gap in the attainment rate at sector level.
64. If the current rate of progress is maintained longer-term, our analysis projects that there will be equality in award rates between white and black students by the mid-2030s. This represents an increase of approximately three years from the original analysis, as the ambition in the targets set out in providers' approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 is applied to a larger number of providers.

KPM5: The gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students

65. Table 7 shows the different attainment rates for disabled students at the sector level and the residual gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non-disabled students at 2024-25 for each of the scenarios used in our analysis. It also shows the impact of including providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 on the re-based KPM which decreases from 2.8 percentage points in our original analysis to 1.4 percentage points.
66. This decrease is likely to reflect improvements in degree outcomes for students in 2019-20 as a result of the 'no detriment' policy, introduced by some providers due to the COVID-19

¹⁸ This compares to 1.1 percentage points in the original 2020 analysis, although our original analysis did not retain positive gaps if there were any, so is not directly comparable.

¹⁹ This compares to 1.0 percentage points in the original 2020 analysis but is subject to the same caveat as in the footnote above.

pandemic, where some providers made changes to assessments and classification arrangements to ensure students were not disadvantaged by the impact of the pandemic when it came to assessment in 2019-20.

67. As a result of the no detriment policy, some providers' ambitions might have changed due to a reduction in their KPM5 gap. For the purposes of this analysis, however, we have only attempted to translate the original ambition in providers' approved access and participation plans onto the revised historical gap.
68. The historical data shows that the KPM5 gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students has almost closed even before the targets in providers' access and participation plans are applied.

Table 7: KPM5 gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non-disabled students in 2024-25 with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21

Scenario	Disabled students' attainment rate (per cent) in 2024-25	Remaining gap (pp)
Re-based KPM5 used in original analysis from January 2020	76.6	2.8
Re-based KPM5 using the historical baseline (2019-20) for providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21	82.4	1.4
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (87 providers)	83.4	0.4
If all targets in access and participation plans aimed to close the higher education provider gap by 2024-25	83.5	0.2
If all 222 higher education providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 (regardless of whether they have set a target) closed the gap by 2024-25	84.5	-0.7

Notes: 'pp' = percentage point. Assumption that attainment rate for non-disabled students remains the same (83.8 per cent) in all scenarios. Any differences in remaining gap are due to rounding.

69. Figure 4 shows the impact of including providers with approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21 and the updated historical student data on the trajectory of the projected year-on-year gap in attainment rates between disabled and non-disabled students at a sector level. It also shows the historical trajectory for the same population of providers between 2015-16 and 2019-20, to provide additional context when assessing the relative ambition of the targets.
70. Table 7 and Figure 4 show that if all 87 providers that set targets relating to KPM5 in their access and participation plans, and for which we have historical data, met their targets by 2024-25, the remaining gap in attainment rates between disabled and non-disabled students at a sector level would decrease from 1.4 percentage points (KPM5 baseline rate) to 0.4 percentage points in 2024-25.²⁰ If we compare this with the historical trajectory shown in Figure

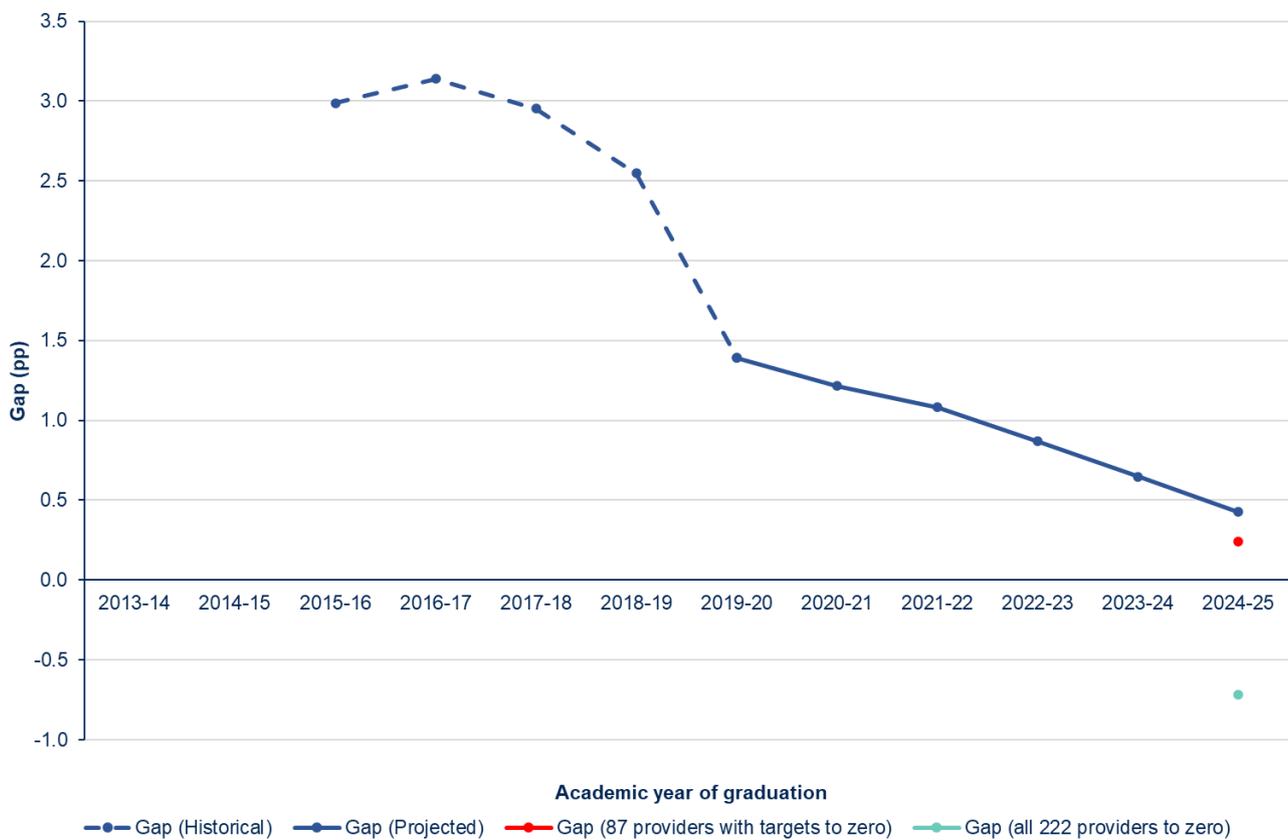
²⁰ This compares to a residual gap in 2024-25 of 1.0 percentage point in the original analysis.

4, the targets appear to continue to reduce the decreasing gap seen between 2016-17 and 2019-20.

71. We have assumed that the proportion of non-disabled students will remain constant, and so closing the gap will have been achieved by increasing the attainment rate of disabled students from 82.4 per cent to 83.4 per cent.

72. Assuming no change in the size of the graduating cohorts, these projections represent an additional 450 disabled students being awarded a 1st or 2:1 in the 2024-25 cohort compared with 2019-20 levels.

Figure 4: Revised historical and projected gap in degree outcomes (1sts and 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students (KPM5) for approved access and participation plans starting in 2020-21



73. Table 7 and Figure 4 also show that a residual sector-level gap of 0.2 percentage points would remain between disabled and non-disabled students in 2024-25 if all 87 providers with targets relating to KPM5 in their access and participation plans were to close the attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students to zero by 2024-25.

74. If all 222 higher education providers with approved access and participation plans and relevant historical student data were to close the attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students to zero by 2024-25, the residual gap decreases to -0.7 percentage points. The fact that this gap is negative, reflects the fact that disabled students outperform non-disabled students in some providers.

Summary of findings

75. Table 8 provides a summary of findings from our analysis for KPMs 2-5. It shows the re-based KPMs and remaining percentage point gaps in 2024-25 if all relevant targets in approved access and participation plans are met.

Table 8: Summary of findings

	KPM2 (pp gap)	KPM2 (ratio)	KPM3 (pp gap)	KPM4 (pp gap)	KPM5 (pp gap)
Re-based KPM using restricted population (original analysis 2020)	36.2	6.24	4.6	22.0	2.8
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (original analysis 2020)*	29.7	3.72	2.9	11.2	1.0
Re-based KPM incorporating additional two years' historical data and approved A&P plans starting in 2020-21	35.2	5.81	4.7	18.2	1.4
If all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (additional two years' historical data and additional providers with approved plans)**	28.8	3.45	3.0	9.5	0.4
Number of providers used in our analysis					
*Total number of providers used in our original analysis (with approved A&P plans at 31 October 2019)	31	31	133	101	138
**Total number of providers used in our revised analysis (with approved A&P plans starting in 2020-21)	31	31	224	182	222

Notes:

1. The total number of providers used in our analysis relates to those providers with both approved access and participation (A&P) plans and available historical student data.
2. The data shown in the row 'if all targets identified in access and participation plans are met by 2024-25 (additional two years' historical data and additional providers with approved plans)' reflects the revised trajectory for each KPM based on the additional student data and the additional providers with access and participation plans starting in 2020-21.
3. The analysis uses historical student data from 2018-19 (for KPM3) and 2019-20 (for KPMs 2, 4 and 5) from the published A&P plan database²¹, reflecting students registered at providers. It does not include data on UCAS-placed applicants.

²¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-plan-data/data-from-access-and-participation-plans/.

Annex A: Technical annex

Assumptions

1. We made several assumptions about the five-year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in our analysis.

All KPMs

2. For all key performance measures (KPMs) examined, we assumed that the targets in providers' access and participation plans are fully met year-on-year between 2020-21 and 2024-25.
3. To help classify a higher education provider target, we generally assumed that if numeric values appeared to increase year-on-year, this indicated an increase in participation, retention or attainment rates for the lower performing group of students. Where numeric values appeared to decrease year on year, we assumed this indicated a closing of the gap in participation, retention or attainment rates, or a decrease in the relative ratio, between different groups of students.

KPM2

4. For KPM2, we assumed that the number of entrants from POLAR4 quintile 5 areas would remain the same year-on-year using the historical 2017-18 data as a baseline, and that the number of entrants from quintile 1 areas would change. For projection purposes, the size of the population grows only by the numerical increase in the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) quintile 1 students.
5. Some targets related to multiple POLAR4 quintiles – for example, closing the gap in participation between quintiles 1 and 2 and quintiles 3, 4 and 5. In these cases we scaled the reported gap in participation to the one seen between quintile 1 and quintile 5 in the historical data for 2017-18, as we were only interested in the difference between the most and least represented quintiles, rather than what might happen to the gap between quintiles 2 and 3.

KPM3

6. For KPMs 3 to 5, when applying the targets to the historical student data, we assumed that the student population remains constant.
7. We assumed that the continuation rate of students from POLAR4 quintile 5 areas would remain the same year-on-year using the historical 2016-17 data as a baseline, and that only the quintile 1 continuation rate would change. In reality this might not strictly be the case – higher education providers may be working towards improving the continuation rate for all students, including those in quintile 5 – but the assumption provides us with a reasonable baseline to observe what might happen to the gap in continuation rates between quintile 1 and quintile 5 students.
8. Some targets related to multiple quintiles – for example closing the gap in non-continuation between quintiles 1 and 2 and quintiles 3, 4 and 5. In these cases we scaled the reported gap in continuation rates to the one seen between quintiles 1 and 5 in the historical data for 2016-

17, as we were only interested in the difference between the most and least represented quintiles, rather than what might happen to the gap between quintiles 2 and 3.

KPM4

9. We assumed that the proportion of white students gaining 2:1s or 1sts would remain the same year-on-year using the historical 2017-18 data as a baseline, and that only the attainment rate of black students would change.
10. Some targets related to multiple ethnic groups – for example closing the gap in degree attainment between black and minority ethnic students and white students. In these cases, we scaled the reported gap in degree attainment rates to the one seen between black students and white students in the historical data for 2017-18.

KPM5

11. We assumed that the proportion of non-disabled students gaining 2:1s or 1sts would remain the same year-on-year using the historical 2017-18 data as a baseline, and that only the attainment rate of disabled students would change.



© The Office for Students copyright 2022

This publication is available under the Open Government Licence 3.0 except where it indicates that the copyright for images or text is owned elsewhere.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/