

# The Northern School of Art

## Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

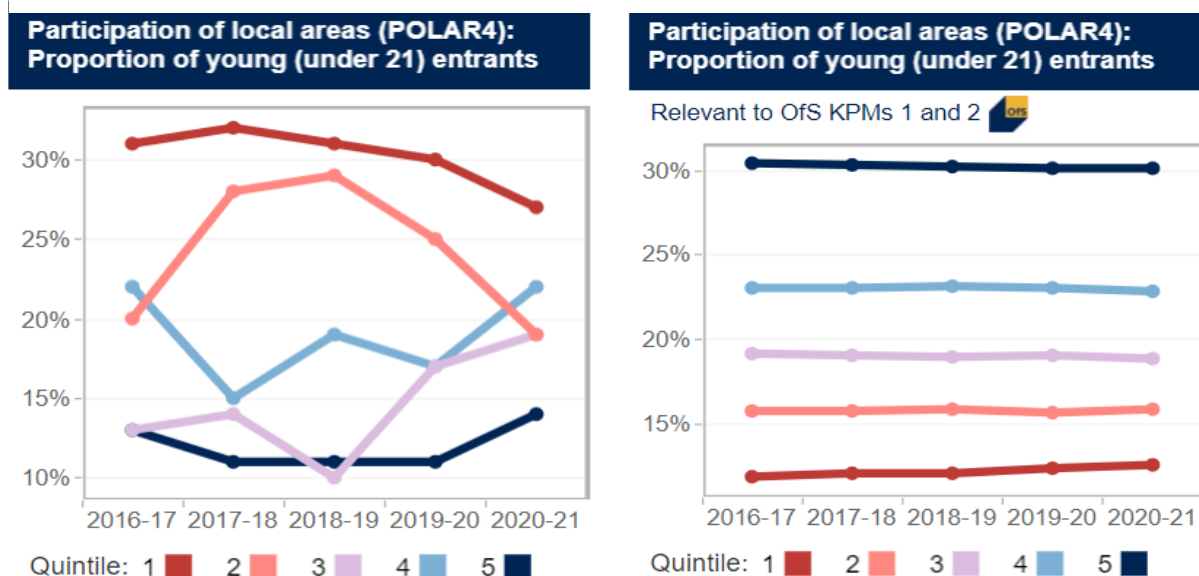
### Introduction and strategic aim

The Northern School of Art [the School] is a specialist higher education provider, situated in the Tees Valley, with a history of providing exceptional art and design education in the region since 1870. Higher education [HE] has been central to its ethos and portfolio of provision for over 40 years.

In 2023-2024, the School had approximately 500 students registered on undergraduate programmes and 44 registered on postgraduate programmes<sup>1</sup>.

Through its high-quality provision, the School aims to provide an outstanding student experience and outstanding outcomes for its students and aims to capture its strategies in its Access and Participation Plan 2025-2029 [APP]. The School recognises that many of its students come from non-traditional HE backgrounds, demonstrated by the School's POLAR4 Data – 52.1% of Level 4 entrants came from POLAR4 Quintiles 1&2 in 2022-2023 – the least likely to enter higher education. With regards to POLAR4 data, the profile of students is largely reversed for students at the School when compared to national figures, as shown in Figure 1<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 1: Participation of local area (POLAR4): Proportion of young (under 21) entrants at The Northern School of Art (Left) and All English Higher Education Providers (Right)**



A high number of these students also present with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – 39.6% of the undergraduate student body in 2022-2023. Internal analysis has shown that the majority of the

<sup>1</sup> Taken from HESES23 Return, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Data accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

School's HE population in 2022-2023 was categorised as underrepresented, of which 79.6% have two or more intersections of disadvantage.

The School also recognises its geography. Hartlepool, the location of the School's HE campus, is the 5<sup>th</sup> most income-deprived local authority in England<sup>3</sup>. Of the 58 neighbourhoods in Hartlepool, 32 were among the 20% most income-deprived in England. In the most deprived neighbourhood in Hartlepool, 47.5% of people are estimated to be income-deprived. Middlesbrough, the location of the School's Further Education [FE] campus, is the most deprived local authority in England. In 2023-2024, 36.6% of undergraduate students came from Teesside<sup>4</sup>. It is this context in which the School operates, supporting students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Recognising and supporting students to access and succeed in higher education is a central part of the School's culture and strategic aims.

The School's mission statement is: Exceptional education for creative careers.

The School's core values are:

- Creativity and Excellence
- Professional Practice, Employability and Enterprise
- Student Engagement, Support, Collaboration and Community

Support for all students is documented throughout the Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and Strategic Plan 2025-2028<sup>5</sup>. Largely, the School succeeds in its aims. Evidence of this can be seen in the School's Gold Award in the Teaching Excellence Framework [TEF] 2023. In their review of the School's TEF submission in 2023, the Office for Students' review panel commended:

*an additional significant feature of excellence in the student experience regarding [the School's] focus and ability to deliver excellence tailored to a mix of students containing a significant proportion of students who have multiple attributes of intersectional disadvantage. The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature<sup>6</sup>.*

The School strives to be inclusive, differentiating its approach and providing a nurturing creative arts community where students have their own space, identity and sense of belonging. The School is proud of its creative community and recognises that each individual contributes to that community in terms of their diverse background, allowing them to truly be themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> [Exploring local income deprivation \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/inequality/articles/exploring-local-income-deprivation/2019-03-28)

<sup>4</sup> Using TS postcode as proxy.

<sup>5</sup> Add links

<sup>6</sup> Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 – TEF Panel Statement, p.11.

## Risks to equality of opportunity

Whilst the School is proud of the progress it has made in supporting students to access, succeed in and progress from higher education, it acknowledges that this work is ongoing. The School undertook a thorough assessment and reflection of performance across multiple stages of the student lifecycle, from access to progression, through its Access and Participation Working Group [APWG]<sup>7</sup>. Further information on the data sources, both internal and external, is available in Annex A.

Using the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register alongside this assessment, the School has considered intersectionality and believes that students may be impacted by the following risks:

- *Risk 1: Knowledge and skills - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.*
  - As highlighted above, 36.6% of undergraduate students at the School in 2023-2024 came from Teesside, one of the most economically deprived regions in the UK. When considering this, there are lower proportions of male students accessing higher education and achieving a 'high grade' (2:1 or above) when compared to female students.
- *Risk 2: Information and guidance - Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.*
  - A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression. Linking to this, whilst female students at the School achieve higher grades than male students, they are less likely to progress into graduate outcomes.
- *Risk 6: Insufficient academic support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.*
  - Whatever the grades that a student has when they enter higher education, different students may require different levels of academic support. This may be due to individual circumstances, such as home difficulties, that impact a student's ability to engage to the fullest extent with their academic studies. Experiencing this risk is likely to impact a student through their studies and progressing into graduate outcomes. The School sees lower proportions of students from economically deprived areas progressing into graduate study or employment than compared with the wider sector.

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<sup>7</sup> Further information on the constitution of the APWG is available under Section: Whole Provider Approach

- *Risk 7: Insufficient personal support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.*
  - Students who do not receive sufficient personal support through their courses, including, but not limited to, mentoring, advice, counselling and access to extracurricular activities, are more likely to report lower wellbeing, poor mental health, achieve lower grades. At the School, there are lower proportions of male students accessing higher education and achieving a 'high grade' (2:1 or above) when compared to female students.
  - Similarly, the School also sees lower proportions of students from economically deprived areas, particularly female students, progressing into graduate study or employment than compared with the wider sector.
- *Risk 8: Mental health - Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.*
  - Students may suffer from mental health conditions that make it hard to cope with daily life, including studying. These difficulties may be pre-existing or may develop during higher education study. Some students may have difficulties that are not formally diagnosed or treated and may experience delays in receiving a diagnosis, treatment or support. The School sees lower scores for NSS questions relating to mental health and wellbeing when compared to other questions. At the School, there are lower proportions of male students accessing higher education and achieving a 'high grade' (2:1 or above) when compared to female students. Linking to Risk 7, this may be a result of a lack of personal support. Similarly, the School also sees lower proportions of students from economically deprived areas, particularly female students, progressing into graduate study or employment than compared with the wider sector
- *Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus - Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.*
  - Access to school for students varied a lot during the coronavirus pandemic. This may result in differential knowledge and skills, and the ability to adapt to a higher education environment. The School sees a number of similarities between Risk 8 and Risk 9, linked to male attainment, and progression for female students and those from low income backgrounds.
- *Risk 10: Cost pressures - Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.*
  - The School sees lower proportions of students from economically deprived areas progressing into graduate study or employment than compared with the wider sector.

- *Risk 12: Progression from higher education - Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.*
  - Some students do not have equal opportunity to access certain outcomes from higher education, such as further study or progressing into employment that is reflective of their qualification levels.
  - Differences in the equality of opportunity relating to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with particular characteristics – the School sees lower proportions of students from economically deprived areas progressing into graduate study or employment than compared with the wider sector.

## Objectives

The School undertook a thorough assessment and reflection of performance across multiple stages of the student lifecycle, from access to progression, through its APWG. Further information on the data sources, both internal and external, is available in Annex A. Further information on Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes is available in the following sections.

## Intervention Strategies and expected outcomes

### Intervention Strategy 1: Improving Male Attainment

#### Objectives and targets

Male students are not attaining academic success at the same level as their female counterparts at the School, despite comparable access to resources and support. This disparity prompts the need to identify and address the underlying factors contributing to the underperformance of male students to ensure equitable opportunities for all.

**Objective 1:** The School will reduce the attainment gap between male and female students. Male students are not attaining academic success at the same level as their female counterparts at the School, despite comparable access to resources and support. Currently, when reflecting upon the two-year average, this gap is 9.6% (see Annex A), with an actual baseline gap of 8.8% in academic year 2021-22. Nationally, the gap is approximately 3.1%. The School aims to reduce its gap to 3.0% by 2028-2029.

This intervention strategy has three key aims:

1. Identify and address specific academic and non-academic needs of male students to enhance their engagement and success;

2. Provide mentorship and support systems tailored to the unique challenges and aspirations of male students; and
3. Implement strategies to promote a culture of inclusivity and equity within the School environment, where male students feel valued, supported and empowered to excel in their creative work.

In implementing this intervention strategy, and associated activities, the School expects to see the following outcomes:

1. Interventions and support services that are designed with an evidence base;
2. Early identification of issues and the implementation of bespoke interventions tailored to individual needs;
3. Successful academic integration during FE/HE transition;
4. Additional personalised guidance, support and encouragement for male students throughout their academic journey;
5. Male students equipped with the essential tools for academic success; and
6. Better engagement with male students, contributing to their overall wellbeing and academic motivation.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

This intervention strategy, and associated activities, aim to address the following risks highlighted in the EORR:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and skills - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.
- Risk 8: Mental health - Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus - Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<b>A short descriptive name</b>	<p>A high-level description of each activity that will contribute towards reaching the objective of the intervention strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• target student groups;</li> <li>• numbers of participants/schools (if applicable);</li> <li>• if this is a new or already existing activity;</li> <li>• if this is collaborative.</li> </ul>	An estimate of the resources (human and financial) that will be needed to deliver the activity over the four years of the plan. Where resources are shared across departments or intervention strategies, make an estimate of the proportion that will go into this activity.	A high-level overview of the expected outcomes of the activity. These can be used to track progress and understand the impact of each activity on the overall intervention strategy objective.	Indicate if the activity will contribute to other intervention strategies.
<b>1.1 Research (new activity)</b>	Research and data analysis to better understand the specific barriers and challenges faced by male students with different intersectionality.	<p>Resources and staff provided for research and data analysis.</p> <p>Staff resource for the development of quality systems.</p>	1,2	

<b>1.2 Monitoring and Tracking</b>  <b>(new activity)</b>	<p>Establish a comprehensive system for monitoring and tracking the academic progress of male students.</p>	<p>Resources and staff provided for research and data analysis.</p> <p>Staff resource for development of quality systems.</p>	1,2	
<b>1.3 FE/HE Transition Events</b>  <b>(new activity)</b>	<p>Providing guidance, resources and support for a smooth transition from FE.</p> <p>Collaboration with The Northern College of Art (FE Campus).</p>	Staff time funded through APP.	3,4,5	
<b>1.4 Academic Mentorship Programme</b>  <b>(new activity)</b>	<p>A target academic mentorship programme pairing male students with experienced mentors.</p> <p>Collaboration with external industry experts.</p>	Staff time funded through APP.	4,5,6	



<b>1.5</b> <b>Academic Skills Workshops</b>  <b>(Ongoing activity)</b>	Academic skills workshops focusing on study skills, time management and academic writing – tailored to the needs of male students.	Staff time funded through APP.	4,5,6	
<b>1.6</b> <b>Extra curricular activity</b>  <b>(Ongoing activity)</b>	Extracurricular activities and School/community initiatives to promote a sense of belonging, connection and social support.	Staff time funded through APP.	4,6	

## **Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The evidence bases considered can be found in Annex A and B respectively.

The School believes improving male attainment is essential to address disparities and ensure equitable opportunities for all students, promoting a supportive environment where every aspiring creative can thrive.

## **Evaluation**

The School does not intend to formally evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy. Activities 1.4 and 1.5 will be evaluated to OfS type 2 standard (empirical enquiry) to establish whether they lead to their intended outcomes. The School will use its Student Perception Survey [SPS] to evaluate impact.

The Student Perception Survey [SPS] is an annual internal survey for all students at Levels 4, 5 and 7. The SPS consists of 42 multiple-choice questions across multiple themes, largely mirroring the NSS:

- Teaching on my programme (Q1-5)
- Learning Opportunities (Q6-10)
- Assessment and Feedback (Q11-15)
- Academic Support (Q16-17)
- Programme Organisation and Management (Q18-20)
- Learning Resources (Q21-25)
- Personal Development (Q26-28)
- Employability and Skills (Q29-31)
- Student Voice (Q32-35)
- Learning Community (Q36-41)
- Overall Satisfaction (Q42)

The School will introduce branching questions in 2024-2025 on the theme of academic support. This will not only allow the School to measure engagement with these activities in 1.4 and 1.5 but also measure their impact on students. The responses in 2024-2025 will provide a baseline to measure future cohorts against. The SPS results will continue to be reported to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, Planning & Partnership Group, Principalship, Academic Board and Corporation Board. It is hoped that, as scores in the SPS improve at Levels 4 and 5, male students attain higher classifications at Level 6.

## **Intervention Strategy 2: Improving Female Progression**

### **Objectives and targets**

Despite consistently achieving higher academic success, female students at the School face barriers in transitioning to graduate employment. These obstacles may stem from systemic gender biases in the creative industries and workplaces, limited access to female students for networking opportunities, and/or a lack of mentorship tailored to their career aspirations. A large proportion of the School's female students also come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They face obstacles in securing graduate employment, compounded by confidence in engaging with professional networks, limited resources for portfolio development, a lack of mentorship opportunities, inadequate digital skills, and a deficit in cultural capital. This disparity underscores the need for tailored support and resources to empower these students to compete effectively in the diverse landscapes of the creative industries.

**Objective 2:** The School will reduce the gap in progression rates between male and female students at the School. Despite consistently achieving higher academic success than male students, female students at the School face barriers in transitioning to graduate employment. Currently, when reflecting on four years of aggregated data, this gap is 13.8%, with the actual baseline gap of 18.1% in academic year 2020-21. The School plans to reduce this gap to 2% by 2028-2029.

This intervention strategy has four key aims:

1. Meet the needs and aspirations of female students, helping them navigate the challenges of entering the creative industries;
2. Expand the career prospects and access to job opportunities for female students
3. Support female students to build confidence, negotiation skills, and resilience to overcome gender biases and stereotypes in the workplace; and
4. Bridge the gap between education and employment for female graduates.

In implementing this intervention strategy, and associated activities, the School expects to see the following outcomes:

1. Increased rates of successful transition into graduate employment;
2. Greater confidence and assertiveness in navigating career paths;
3. Expanded professional networks and connections with mentors and peers, enhancing access to job opportunities, collaborations, and ongoing support;
4. Improved retention rates in the creative industries, with female graduates feeling empowered to pursue long-term careers and leadership positions; and
5. Enhanced recognition of and representation of female talent and perspectives within the creative community.

## **Risks to equality of opportunity**

This intervention strategy, and associated activities, aim to address the following risks highlighted in the EORR:

- Risk 1: Knowledge and skills - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.
- Risk 2: Information and guidance - Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.
- Risk 6: Insufficient academic support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome
- Risk 7: Insufficient personal support - Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome;
- Risk 8: Mental health - Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing;
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus - Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic;
- Risk 10: Cost pressures - Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.
- Risk 12: Progression from higher education - Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<b>A short descriptive name</b>	<p>A high-level description of each activity that will contribute towards reaching the objective of the intervention strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• target student groups;</li> <li>• numbers of participants/schools (if applicable);</li> <li>• if this is a new or already existing activity;</li> <li>• if this is collaborative.</li> </ul>	An estimate of the resources (human and financial) that will be needed to deliver the activity over the four years of the plan. Where resources are shared across departments or intervention strategies, make an estimate of the proportion that will go into this activity.	A high-level overview of the expected outcomes of the activity. These can be used to track progress and understand the impact of each activity on the overall intervention strategy objective.	Indicate if the activity will contribute to other intervention strategies.
<b>2.1 Creative Industry Network Events (New Activity)</b>	<p>Female students and alumni to attend Creative Industry Network Events.</p> <p>Collaboration with external industry experts.</p>	<p>Resources and staff provided for various workshops and events.</p> <p>Staff time funded through APP.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	

<b>2.2 Employability Programme (New Activity)</b>	<p>Female students and alumni to engage in Employability Programme</p> <p>Collaboration with external industry experts.</p>	<p>Resources and staff provided for various workshops and events</p> <p>Staff time funded through APP.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	
<b>2.3 Creative Industry Mentorship (New Activity)</b>	<p>Female students and alumni actively working with Creative Industry Mentors.</p> <p>Collaboration with external industry experts.</p>	<p>Female industry mentors funded through APP.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	
<b>2.4 Module X (New Activity piloted in 2024- 2025)</b>	<p>A. female students engaging in creative industry-based projects.</p> <p>B. Implementation and delivery of an Employability module using a 'Module X' model.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>Collaboration with external academic and industry experts to create Module X.</p>	<p>Investment in writing, development, validation and delivery of Module X (Employability).</p> <p>Resources and staff provided for various workshops and events</p> <p>Staff time funded through APP.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	

<sup>8</sup> Module X – descriptor in Annex B.

<b>2.5 Digital Skills Audit (ongoing activity)</b>	Economically disadvantaged students engaging with skills audit and intervention sessions.	Resources and staffing for audit and workshop delivery.	1,2	
<b>2.6 Enrichment</b>	Economically disadvantaged students engaging with creative industry-based projects and enrichment opportunities (creative industry visits).	Funding for trips and visits  Staff time funded through APP.	1,2,3	

## **Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The evidence bases considered can be found in Annex A and B respectively.

The School believes that raising aspirations and improving industry connections will improve graduate outcomes for female students.

## **Evaluation**

The School does not intend to formally evaluate each activity within this intervention strategy. Informal feedback will be gathered from activities 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4 – particularly as 2.4 is piloted in 2024-2025.

Similar to the evaluation of activities 1.4 and 1.5, the School will introduce branching questions in its SPS in 2024-2025 in the theme of academic support to measure the engagement and impact of activity 2.2. The responses in 2024-2025 will provide a baseline to measure future cohorts against. The SPS results will continue to be reported to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, Planning & Partnership Group, Principalship, Academic Board and Corporation Board.

Using the NSS optional question banks as a proxy, the School will also be able to measure the impact of activity 2.2 on the Level 6 cohorts.

## **Whole provider approach**

The School undertook a thorough assessment and reflection of performance across multiple stages of the student lifecycle, from access to progression, through its APWG. The APWG is chaired by the Vice Principal (HE Quality and Planning) and includes representation at a senior level from across the School:

- Principal
- Vice Principal (HE Quality and Planning)
- Vice Principal (Higher Education)
- HE Quality Manager
- Employability & Creative Industry Liaison Manager
- Recruitment Manager
- Student Engagement Manager
- Academic Services Manager
- Student Services Manager

Various committees receive updates on the APP and progress towards targets throughout the academic year:



- Planning and Partnership Group
- Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
- Academic Board
- Academic Committee
- Corporation Board

Of the four committees listed above, three include student representation. All four committees include representation from members of academic staff of different levels. The following committees have reviewed, debated, shaped and approved this APP:

- Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
- Academic Board
- Corporation Board

Equality, diversity and inclusion form key cornerstones of wider School strategies. This can be seen in the School's objectives in its Academic Strategy 2019-2024:

*An inclusive curriculum where all students are supported to access, participate and achieve. This will include playing an integral part, regionally and nationally, as a specialist arts school that supports individual needs and promotes access and participation for students from all cultures and backgrounds.*

Similarly, in its Strategic Plan 2019-2024, the School recognised a need for a 'wider recognition of and support for students with additional needs'.

## **The Student Journey**

The School provides outstanding support to individual student journeys, considering all backgrounds and starting points, providing an outstanding academic experience, and succeeding in its aim of progressing students into the creative industries or further study. Educational gains are at the heart of the academic curriculum, ensuring that learners are nurtured, stretched to their full potential, and ultimately emerge successful in meeting their individual aspirations. The development of these skills, alongside the School's outstanding record as a 'making' institution, supports the artistry of future creative practitioners and creative educators.

## **Pre- Entry**

The School is committed to fostering a diverse range of prospective students, ensuring they are well-prepared and motivated to succeed in higher education and beyond.

### Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy aims to create a student body that reflects a wide range of cultural backgrounds and experiences; designed to identify and recruit students who show potential, regardless of their background. Each application is assessed on an individual basis, considering portfolio work and interviews to determine suitability. This contextualized approach increases the chances of students from disadvantaged backgrounds progressing to higher education.

### Data-Informed Recruitment

The School uses insights and data from UCAS, YouthSight, Local Authority, and Government data to inform and refine recruitment strategies, ensuring efforts are targeted and effective. Specialised targeting software helps us identify and reach out to potential students who would benefit from our provision, focusing our outreach on individuals most likely to thrive at the School, including those from underrepresented backgrounds.

### Marketing

The marketing and promotional efforts are guided by data on target segments, ensuring outreach activities are effective and resonate with potential students. This includes using case studies, ambassadors, and targeted imagery in marketing materials.

### Access to Higher Education

The School offers an Access to Higher Education course at its Middlesbrough FE campus, providing a pathway for individuals who may not have traditional qualifications. This course is designed to equip mature learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to progress to higher education.

### Outreach Provision

The School's outreach provision is broad and targets individuals from primary to post-16. For example, The Saturday Club provides a structured environment for young participants to develop creative skills, engage in art projects, and receive guidance from artists and educators. This initiative supports the development of a pipeline of prospective students by fostering early interest and skills in the arts<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> National Saturday Club - National Saturday Club ([saturday-club.org](https://saturday-club.org))

The School conducts interactive sessions and workshops in local schools and colleges to inspire and inform students about careers in the creative industries. These sessions cover topics such as portfolio development, creative thinking, and the benefits of pursuing higher education in the arts, providing practical advice and feedback to maximize students' chances of being accepted into HE.

The School remains an active participant in the North East Uni Connect Programme (NEUCP), a collaborative partnership involving five universities and fifteen colleges in the region dedicated to supporting targeted students in their progression to HE. NEUCP's analysis highlights the North East region consistently having the lowest progression rate to HE in England at age 18. Their research indicates a direct correlation between students' engagement in outreach activities and their likelihood of progressing to HE.

### Professional Development for Educators

The School maintains a well-established institution-led network of creative educators and IAG professionals across the country, vital for disseminating information about our school's offerings and opportunities. In addition, ties to key cultural organisations such as NSEAD, UKADIA, Schools North East, and NESIP will further enrich our network. The School provides continuous professional development sessions for key influencers, ensuring they are well-informed and equipped to guide students toward The Northern School of Art.

### **On Course**

In their Institutional Review 2022, Arts University Bournemouth reported that the School is a 'very caring and thoughtful organisation with students' best interests genuinely at the heart of all their activity'. Survey data shows that students agree with this statement. The School has achieved consistently outstanding scores in all areas of 'Academic Support' in the National Student Survey [NSS] survey. In this theme, in 2022-2023, the School scored 95.2%, 11.7pp above the Higher Education sector average. Similarly, in 2021-2022, the School scored 91.5%, 17.6pp above the sector average. The School promotes learning and teaching through a community of collaborative practice that creates confident, independent practitioners, through striving to be inclusive, differentiating its approach and providing a nurturing creative arts community where students have their own space, identity and sense of belonging.

### Enrolment and Induction

In evaluating the support students receive, the School recognises that an effective induction process is essential for all HE programmes, establishing routines for students, and helping them succeed in achieving their educational gains. This is particularly important for students with additional needs and those students classed as underrepresented in HE.

## Tutorials

Upon enrolling, student details are shared with the programme team. This includes POLAR4, IMD, Disability, Ethnicity and other characteristics considered underrepresented within the HE sector. Throughout their studies, students are taught by the same academic teams, allowing staff to build relationships with their students, helping them to tailor their taught material, teaching approach and tutorials to the needs of their cohort(s).

## Interim Examination Boards

Previously, the mean overall module pass rate for all undergraduate students from 2014 to 2017 was 92.1% across the School – below the School target. Following an extensive review, the School introduced Interim Examination Boards – usually twice per academic year. Attended by representatives from student support, academic teams and management, these enable the examination of all grade profiles, referral (re-submission) issues and identify individual support needs, and the tailoring of interventions. The student support and academic teams note areas of concern, and issues around differentiation, and arrange further tutorials. This dialogue highlights individual students requiring additional support, enabling a more proactive approach to engaging struggling students. As a result of these tailored interventions, the average module pass rate for all undergraduate students has increased to 95.9% as of 2021-2022. From 2022-2023, the consideration of grade profiles at Interim Examination Boards has also included student characteristics data (such as POLAR4, IMD and ethnicity information).

## Academic Services

The Academic Support Tutors carefully assess and individualise their approach to HE learner support. Staff have a wealth of experience in learning support needs, teaching and learning strategies, and neurodiversity training and can design targeted interventions to break down barriers to learning. In addition to this, they are Art and Design Graduates, holding Master's and PGCE teacher training qualifications. They are well-versed with the transition needs of learners as they also work across the School's FE campus. They offer induction activities, one-to-one interventions, drop-in sessions, group work activities, online referrals, and also a series of workshops which enhance and work with academic staff requests. Their sole focus is to break down barriers to learning and therefore they are well-tuned in the intersectionality of the student's and staff's needs regarding curriculum content.

The HE Dyslexia Support Services Tutor follows a similar tailored and targeted approach – their educational background is also in Creative Arts. The School offers Dyslexia screening to all students and then those diagnosed receive one-to-one targeted interventions.

The Library also sits within the Academic Services Team, which offers a collaborative approach to hosting the services offered, hosting events and interventions within the third space offered as a learning hub. Library Assistants offer research clinics, drop-in sessions and support staff in research delivery and interventions. The Library environment is currently being updated to include learning zones and a safe space for learners to migrate to within the school. The Library Development Manager works across both sites and works closely with academic staff and library assistants to ensure the space is fit for purpose and offering enrichment activities tailored for our students.

### Careers

FOLIO is The Northern School of Arts specialist careers advisory and enterprise service for undergraduates and postgraduates. As a specialist school, FOLIO has been developed to deliver specialist careers and progression guidance that supports learners to prepare for the early stages of their creative careers. FOLIO aims to get students where they want to be and prepares them for working in the industry, it offers help with,

- Gaining work experience
- Finding the right postgraduate course and initial teacher training
- Setting up and running a business
- Building networks that support the student community
- Identifying studio space

Across the year students have access to a range of opportunities that develop professional skills and provide an opportunity to network with industry professionals, helping build a contact base for future employment. Recent initiatives include,

- The development of The Northern Talent Pool, a directory exclusively for students to gain work experience on any project at The Northern Film & TV Studios
- A new creative network established in partnership with the Arts Council that supports students and alumni to build their networks whilst hearing from industry speakers who share opportunities

FOLIO works closely with academic teams and the development of curriculum to provide guidance on a range of topics such as grant fund writing skills, marketing & advertising and business planning. Activities and support are delivered to suit a variety of learner needs and students benefit from the opportunity to have ongoing 1:1 career guidance sessions to suit their specific aspirations. There are key points in the academic year where FOLIO delivers whole School activities engaging

a range of partners that can support learners to identify their next steps and gain a better understanding of the creative jobs market.

The Northern School of Art is committed to the continued support of emerging creatives graduating from the school and continues to offer FOLIOs support to the alumni community. Alongside developing this service FOLIO works with the local creative industry and stakeholders such as the Arts Council and Tees Valley Local Authorities to contribute to the development of opportunities for progression within the geographical area.

### Student Feedback

The Student Perception Survey [SPS] is an annual internal survey for all students at Levels 4, 5 and 7. The SPS consists of 42 multiple-choice questions across multiple themes, largely mirroring the NSS:

- Teaching on my programme (Q1-5)
- Learning Opportunities (Q6-10)
- Assessment and Feedback (Q11-15)
- Academic Support (Q16-17)
- Programme Organisation and Management (Q18-20)
- Learning Resources (Q21-25)
- Personal Development (Q26-28)
- Employability and Skills (Q29-31)
- Student Voice (Q32-35)
- Learning Community (Q36-41)
- Overall Satisfaction (Q42)

The School uses the SPS to critically assess its higher education provision and professional services (such as its careers and wellbeing support offers). Following a discussion with the Student Union [SU] in 2023-2024, through the Planning & Partnership group [P&P], the workings of the survey have been amended slightly to capture student characteristic data. Previously, all responses had been anonymous. In 2023-2024, the survey asked for students to provide their ID numbers. This allows for a breakdown of satisfaction rates by characteristic, similar to the NSS. In 2023-2024, this highlighted areas for development around collaboration – some students from deprived areas (POLAR4 Q1) felt that there could be more opportunities to ‘work with other students’ during their studies. Moving forward, this will allow the School to identify trends over time in an aim to improve, and better tailor, academic and professional services areas for all students.

## **Post Qual**

### Careers support

The broad remit of the School's career support is set out above in (careers) but is enhanced at a postgraduate level with additional alumni network support. Examples include:

- The creation of a female network that provides specific opportunities for alumni to meet more well-established female artists. Activities within these meetings include opportunities to promote their practice, seek professional feedback and hear about local and accessible work opportunities;
- FOLIO offers 1:1 business development and career support to alumni at any stage in their career.

## **Student consultation**

The School recognises the importance of student engagement and the advantages that it can bring to those who participate in formal and informal feedback structures. In considering student engagement, and the student voice, the School routinely provides opportunities for all students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their HE programmes across the deliberative structure.

The student voice is encouraged and enhanced by the Student Assemblies and Programme Boards of Study. Student Assemblies are attended by the full cohort of students and the programme team. Programme Boards are attended by wider academic teams, including the Faculty Leader, and pastoral and academic support teams. These mechanisms allow the School, in partnership with its student body, to define, promote, monitor and evaluate the student experience, and enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes. The School will continue to use these mechanisms to monitor and evaluate its intervention strategies. For further information on the monitoring and evaluation of intervention strategies, see Intervention Strategies.

The School values engagement with the student body and uses the NSS and SPS as feedback mechanisms for evaluating the students' voice. In 2022-2023 NSS, the School received a score of 83.0% in the theme of 'Student Voice', 11.1pp higher than the Higher Education sector average. Likewise, in the 2023-2024 SPS, the School received a score of 88.0% in this theme.

Through 2022-2023, as part of the P&P, the transition to a new APP was discussed regularly following updated guidance and structures from the Office for Students [OfS].

As of 2023-2024, the School's SU has eleven officers, responsible for students from different backgrounds, who have been involved at all stages. Early in 2023-2024, the SU Executive were informally briefed on the EORR and the wider direction of the OfS in its aims to improve access and

participation. Informal Q&A sessions were hosted by the HE Quality Manager and Student Engagement Manager. Information considered by the APWG (see Appendix A) was also shared with the SU executive for discussion. Through the P&P, discussions with the SU executive have shaped the areas of focus and intervention strategies proposed to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity.

As highlighted in the 'Whole Provider Approach', students have also been consulted through other areas of the School's deliberative structure. The School's Academic Board includes two Student Representatives and a HE Student Governor. The School's Academic Board recommended the APP for approval by the School's Corporation Board on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Similarly, the School's Corporation Board includes one student representative (the Student Union President). The School's Corporation Board approved the APP for submission to the OfS on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

For further information on student involvement in monitoring and evaluation of activity, see Intervention Strategies.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

As part of its APP, the School recognises that further research and data analysis is needed to better understand the barriers students face in attaining higher grades and/or progressing into graduate employment. These are key activities and outputs within the two intervention strategies.

The School is committed to sharing the progress of its APP internally, with staff and students, to continually evaluate and enhance understanding. This APP, as with previous APPs, is rooted within the School's deliberative structure, as highlighted in the 'Whole Provider Approach'. The School will continue to use Interim Examination Boards to monitor academic attainment by student characteristics. The School's Learning, Teaching and Quality [LTQ] committee will continue to monitor progress against APP outcomes, in line with its Terms of Reference<sup>10</sup>. Through the LTQ committee, the School produces an Annual Report in relation to teaching, learning and assessment for consideration and endorsement by the Academic Board, prior to submission to the Corporation Board. A section of the Annual Report considers progress against APP targets, which will be continued throughout the lifecycle of this APP. Including the APP at multiple levels of the deliberative structure ensures that all relevant stakeholders are included in the evaluation and enhancement of the APP, and ensures that equality and diversity remain key drivers at the School.

The School will disseminate and publish the evaluation of findings on the School's website and social media platforms and explore opportunities to present findings at a national level through conferences and sector network groups, including the GuildHE, CHEAD, UKADIA, AHEP, and AoC. At a local

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<sup>10</sup> i. To oversee on behalf of Academic Board all matters relating to learning, teaching and assessment activity associated with all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including quality assurance.  
vi. To develop a School-wide culture of excellence in teaching and learning and assessment, and to recognise and disseminate examples of good practice from both internal and external sources.



level, the School is involved in providing CPD activities with local schools and colleges which would provide an opportunity to disseminate findings and share good practices. The timelines for sharing the evaluation of findings will include the initial launch of the APP in Autumn 2024 on the School's website and social media platforms. From Autumn 2025, an annual impact report will be published on the school's website and social media platforms, and findings will be presented through CPD activities with local schools and colleges. From Autumn 2026, opportunities to present research findings will be explored through delivering papers at conferences and publishing peer-reviewed journal articles.

## **Provision of information to students**

The School aims to support prospective students to the best of its ability, from initial enquiry and through the application process. Programme and financial information are provided via a number of mediums, including online. Where a prospective student requires more specialist support, they are referred to a dedicated Student Services team, who can advise on various financial and wellbeing issues. The School's SU also plays an active part in open days and the initial induction of new students.

### Fees

At the beginning of the application cycle, the School will provide details of the tuition fee charges for the duration of their studies to applicants through the School's website and UCAS portal. Information about tuition fee charges will be signposted through the School's prospectus, information during open days, and printed or electronic information in response to an enquiry and when making an offer to an applicant.

At enrolment, students will be provided with a printed copy of the 'Student Finance Handbook' which confirms the tuition fee charges for the duration of their studies, along with details of payment terms. The School has committed not to increase tuition fees for the duration of a student's programme of study; this includes any periods in which students defer their studies due to mitigating factors.

### Financial Support

At the beginning of the applicant cycle, the School's website will have information about the financial support that is available to students along with details about eligibility, any conditions, i.e. minimum attendance requirements, and the duration of the financial support. The School will signpost information about financial support to applicants through the prospectus, at UCAS events, school visits, FE progression talks, career talks, open days, and through social media.

Upon enrolment, the School offers a range of financial supports, in the form of bursaries and grants, to students from different underrepresented backgrounds:

- Maintenance Grant - Students in receipt of the maximum maintenance loan will be eligible for a grant for the duration of their studies, the first year's payment will be £500, followed by payments in the second and third years of £300.
- Tees Valley Progression Award - Young students, under the age of 21 years from the Tees Valley who live in areas with low participation in higher education POLAR4 (Q1) will be eligible for a one-off award of £500 in their first year of study.
- Mature Students Award - Students aged 21 years or over who have not previously undertaken a higher education programme of study will be eligible for a one-off award of £500 in their first year of study. This is to provide initial support to students re-entering education.
- Care Experienced Bursary - Students who have spent time in care will be eligible for a payment of £500 per annum for the duration of their programme.
- Alumni Discount – From 2025, undergraduate alumni will be eligible for a 20% discount on postgraduate programmes at the School, to improve progression outcomes for students from areas of deprivation.

The School's approved APP and the above financial information will be made available through the School's website to current and prospective students, alongside the shorter summary document, which will be available in alternative accessible formats. As highlighted in the 'Whole Provider Approach', members of the SU will play an active role in interrogating the interim APP reports through the deliberative structure.

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

The School undertook a thorough assessment and reflection of performance across multiple stages of the student lifecycle, from access to progression, through its APWG. The APWG considered the following external sources:

- 'Student characteristics data: student outcomes – key findings – *Students at English higher education providers between 2010-11 and 2021-22*'- Office for Students
- 'Student outcomes data dashboard' – Office for Students
- 'Entry qualification and subject data dashboard' – Office for Students
- 'Access and participation data dashboard' – Office for Students

Aggregated data in the below sections is taken from the 'Access and participation data dashboard' unless stated otherwise.

### **Access**

In some measures, The Northern School of Arts outperforms the sector in attracting students from backgrounds underrepresented in English higher education. For example, as shown in *Introduction and Strategic Aim*, the School recruits a higher percentage of students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 than the national average. Using a four-year aggregate (up to 2021-2022), the national average level is 12.3%, whilst the School's performance is 28.4%. With regards to TUNDRA Quintile 1, the School also outperforms the sector, with a four-year aggregated (up to 2021-2022) rate of 21.9% against a national average of 12.0%. Similarly, using 'eligibility for free school meals (at key stage 4) as a proxy measure for deprivation, the School also outperforms the national average. Using a four-year aggregate (up to 2021-2022), the national average level is 19.2%, whilst the School's performance is 21.9%.

With regards to disabled students accessing higher education, the School also performs strongly against sector averages. Using a four-year aggregate (up to 2021-2022), the national average access rate is 16.7%. Over the same period, the School's access rate is 40.6%.

The School notes that, with regards to mature students, its four-year aggregated (up to 2021-2022) access rate is 17.6%. Over the same period, the sector average is 27.7%. However, the School's access rates have increased over the period from 15.5% in 2018-2019 to 20.0% in 2021-2022 and aims to continue this increase in access.

The School also notes that its undergraduate student population is less ethnically diverse than the sector averages. Across the sector, the four-year aggregated (up to 2021-2022) access rate of White students is 65.2%. Across the same period, 95.9% of the undergraduate population at the School

identified as White. External data sources suppress data for Asian, Black and Other ethnicities for the School due to low numbers. The School acknowledges that this is an area that could be improved. However, as a higher education provider that recruits strongly from the local region, it is in keeping with the ethnic diversity of its locality. In 2021, 96.5% of people in Hartlepool identified their ethnic group within the 'White' category (compared with 97.7% in 2011), while 1.7% identified their ethnic group within the 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh' category (compared with 1.4% the previous decade)<sup>11</sup>. Similarly, in Middlesbrough in 2021, 82.4% of people identified their ethnic group within the 'White' category (compared with 88.2% in 2011), while 2.7% identified their ethnic group within the 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African' category (compared with 1.3% the previous decade)<sup>12</sup>. More generally, across the North East of England, 93.0% of people identified their ethnic group as within the 'White' category<sup>13</sup>.

The School also acknowledges that students who have experienced the care system and/or are estranged from their families may face barriers to accessing higher education at the School. However, it is difficult to analyse this given small data sets, and the School has therefore not chosen to have a specific objective related to this.

The School hopes that, as it undergoes key strategic changes in the next five years, such as the potential of introducing 'University' into its name, it will attract future students from more diverse geographies.

## Continuation

The School is proud of its high continuation rates when considering student characteristics and did not identify any areas of significant risk. As a specialist art and design institution, in an area of economic deprivation, the School places a great emphasis on the experience of students and monitoring continuation data of students. In spite of these challenges, and the lasting challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the School has outstanding rates of continuation. According to the Student Outcomes Data Dashboard, the School's indicator value for Continuation is 91.3%, against a sector average of 90.5% (first degree). Using Table 1 below, it is clear that the School is effective in supporting students from a variety of underrepresented backgrounds to continue through their undergraduate studies.

**Table 1: Continuation Rates - The Northern School of Art vs HE Sector (four-year aggregated)**

<i>Continuation Rates (four-year aggregated)</i>			
<i>Student Group</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>

<sup>11</sup> [How life has changed in Hartlepool: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/ethnicityandnationality/bulletins/howlifehaschangedin2021/hartlepool)

<sup>12</sup> [How life has changed in Middlesbrough: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/ethnicityandnationality/bulletins/howlifehaschangedin2021/middlesbrough)

<sup>13</sup> [North East England Demographics | Age, Ethnicity, Religion, Wellbeing \(varbes.com\)](https://www.varbes.com/north-east-england-demographics)

Overall	90.9%	90.0%	+0.9pp
Mature (over 21)	84.1%	83.7%	+0.4pp
IMD Quintile 1 (2019)	89.8%	85.9%	+3.9pp
Disability	90.5%	89.4%	+1.1pp
Eligibility for Free School Meals (KS4)	91.2%	88.0%	+3.2pp
POLAR4 Quintile 1	93.2%	89.7%	+3.5pp
ABCS Quintile 1	86.1%	81.6%	+4.5pp

Due to low numbers, information on continuation rates by ethnicity is unavailable. In its APP, the School has targeted improvements aimed at both sexes. Table 2 shows a consideration of aggregated continuation data by sex.

**Table 2: Continuation Rates by Sex - The Northern School of Arts vs HE Sector (four-year aggregated)**

<i>Continuation Rates (four-year aggregated)</i>			
<i>Student Group</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Overall	90.9%	90.0%	+0.9pp
Male	87.8%	88.3%	-0.5pp
Female	92.1%	91.3%	+0.8pp

Whilst the School acknowledges there is a small gap (4.3pp) between the continuation rates of male and female students of a four-year aggregated period, continuation rates for both sexes are in keeping with sector averages. In 2019-2020, the gap was approximately 0.8pp. The two-year aggregated rates (up to 2021-2022) show a gap of approximately 2.0pp. The School hopes that, in targeting male attainment rates, a secondary positive indicator will be the increase in male continuation rates and the further closing of this small gap.

## Completion

Similarly, the School is also proud of its high completion rates when considering student characteristics and did not identify any areas of significant risk. As a specialist art and design institution, in an area of economic deprivation, the School places a great emphasis on the experience of students and monitoring completion data of students. In spite of these challenges, and the lasting challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the School has high rates of completion. The four-year aggregated completion rate (up to 2017-2018) for the School is 83.5%, marginally lower than the sector (87.6%). However, this increases to 85.4% when considering a two-year aggregated rate, compared to the sector rate of 87.4%. Using Table 3 below, it is clear that the School is effective in

supporting students from a variety of underrepresented backgrounds to successfully complete their undergraduate studies.

**Table 3: Completion Rates - The Northern School of Art vs HE Sector (four-year aggregated)**

<i>Completion Rates (four-year aggregated)</i>			
<i>Student Group</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Overall	83.5%	87.6%	-4.1pp
Mature (over 21)	78.9%	80.2%	-1.3pp
IMD Quintile 1 (2019)	82.6%	81.8%	+0.8pp
Disability	80.8%	85.7%	-4.9pp
Eligibility for Free School Meals (KS4)	78.0%	83.1%	-5.1pp
POLAR4 Quintile 1	85.3%	86.0%	-0.7pp
ABCS Quintile 1	75.6%	72.8%	+2.8pp

## Attainment

The School has embedded consistently outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning and attainment. Evidence for this can be seen in the 2022-2023 NSS feedback in Table 4.

**Table 4: National Student Survey 2022-2023 - The Northern School of Art vs HE Sector**

<i>National Student Survey 2022-2023</i>			
<i>Category</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Response Rate	89.0%	71.0%	+18.0pp
Core Question Score (Q1-27)	89.1%	79.9%	+9.2pp
Teaching on my course	90.6%	84.9%	+5.7pp
Learning opportunities	93.0%	81.4%	+11.6pp
Assessment and feedback	92.1%	77.8%	+14.3pp
Academic support	95.2%	83.5%	+11.7pp
Organisation and management	83.0%	73.6%	+9.4pp
Learning resources	91.4%	86.2%	+5.2pp
Student voice	83.0%	71.9%	+11.1pp

The School monitors its attainment rates for all students annually. Previously, the mean overall module pass rate for all undergraduate students from 2014 to 2017 was 92.1% across the School – below the School target. Following an extensive review, the School introduced Interim Examination Boards. Attended by representatives from student support, academic teams and management, these enable the examination of all grade profiles, referral (re-submission) issues and identify individual support needs, and the tailoring of interventions. The student support and academic teams note areas of concern, and issues around differentiation, and arrange further tutorials. This dialogue highlights individual students requiring additional support, enabling a more proactive approach to engaging struggling students. As a result of these tailored interventions, the average module pass rate for all undergraduate students has increased to 95.2% (three-year average).

The School also considers attainment rates by student characteristics. Table 5 shows a consideration of aggregated attainment data for some student characteristics compared to the sector averages.

**Table 5: Attainment Rates (two-year aggregate)**

<i>Attainment Rates (two-year aggregate)</i>		
<i>Student Group</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>
Young (under 21)	71.5%	83.1%
Mature (over 21)	70.0%	73.0%
Male	64.4%	79.3%
Female	74.0%	82.4%
IMD Quintile 1 (2019)	64.7%	71.2%
IMD Quintile 2 (2019)	80.3%	76.6%
IMD Quintile 3 (2019)	71.2%	81.8%
IMD Quintile 4 (2019)	74.0%	85.1%
IMD Quintile 5 (2019)	69.8%	87.8%
Disability declared	67.8%	80.9%
No disability declared	73.7%	81.2%
Eligibility for Free School Meals (KS4)	61.5%	72.8%
Not eligible for Free School Meals (KS4)	73.4%	84.2%
POLAR4 Quintile 1	67.8%	77.6%
POLAR 4 Quintile 2	73.9%	80.2%
POLAR4 Quintile 3	76.1%	81.7%
POLAR4 Quintile 4	70.0%	82.9%
POLAR4 Quintile 5	71.9%	87.2%

Whilst the School does not directly target improvement in its attainment rates in direct relation to the sector averages, it does consider the 'gaps' between different groups when compared to the sector. Over the duration of the last APP, the School has improved on its attainment rates when considering different student characteristics:

- The gap between young and mature students is smaller than the sector average;
- The gap between IMD Quintile 1 (2019) and IMD Quintile 5 is smaller than the sector average gap;
- Whilst there is a gap of 5.9pp in attainment rates when considering disability, this gap has consistently decreased over time. In 2017-2018, this gap was 17.3pp;



- Whilst there is a gap of 11.9pp in attainment rates when considering eligibility for free school meals at key stage 4, this is improving and is similar to the sector average. When considering four years of aggregated data, the gap is 13.7pp; and
- The gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 is smaller than the sector average gap.

Whilst the School will continue to support students from these underrepresented backgrounds, it was determined that improving the attainment rates of male students should be a priority. Over the last four years, the gap in attainment rates between male and female students has increased. Nationally, male students are 3.1pp less likely to attain a high grade compared to female students. At the School, this gap is 9.6pp.

The APWG also considered the intersectionality between deprivation and sex, exploring POLAR4 data. Table 6 demonstrates the attainment rates nationally and at the School when considering this.

**Table 6: Intersection of deprivation quintile (POLAR4) and sex**

<i>Intersectionality and Attainment Rates (two-year aggregate)</i>		
<i>Student Group</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>
Quintiles 1 or 2 and female	69.0%	80.3%
Quintiles 1 or 2 and male	55.2%	76.2%
Quintiles 3,4 or 5 and female	73.2%	85.9%
Quintiles 3,4 or 5 and male	67.7%	81.2%

External data on male students in IMD Quintiles 3,4 or 5 at the School is largely suppressed due to low numbers. However, the data shows that male students at the School from areas of deprivation are less likely to attain when compared to female students at the School.

The APWG considered a number of internal data sets including extenuating circumstances applications (mitigation), attendance and engagement data, and average module grades by sex. The APWG also considered internal data based on applicants and interviews for 2023-2024, collated by programme staff and the Student Recruitment Team<sup>14</sup>. Programme teams, and those responsible for interviewing, were asked to score applicants (out of 100) on a number of categories, including but not limited to 'appropriate skills and techniques' and 'written work'. Limited analysis of this data, Table 7 showed that, on average, male applicants were more likely to score 49 or less (the lowest bracket) in most areas when compared to female students.

<sup>14</sup> This data had not been collected previously, limiting the strength of analysis possible.

**Table 7: Assessment at Interview - Scores of 49 or less**

<i>Scores of 49 or less at interview</i>			
<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage of Male Applicants (%)</i>	<i>Percentage of Female Applicants (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Ability to think logically, sequentially and conceptually	9.8	8.6	+1.2pp
Ability to articulate intentions	11.8	6.7	+4.1pp
Personal awareness of the subject	12.8	12.1	+0.7pp
Attitude and commitment towards subject	11.8	7.4	+4.4pp
Knowledge of related influences	11.8	12.1	-0.3pp
Example of written work	17.7	13.7	+4.0pp
Creative processes and practice	15.7	9.6	+6.1pp
Appropriate skills and techniques	14.7	9.6	+5.1pp
Observational work, e.g. drawing	12.8	11.2	+1.6pp
Application using a range of media	13.7	11.8	+1.9pp
Conduct research both visually and in written form	20.6	13.7	+6.9pp
Initiate personal concepts and developments	14.7	12.1	+2.6pp
Ability to experiment and take risks	15.7	12.1	+3.6pp

Male applicants were, based on data found at interview and application, weaker in their academic writing, research skills and communication skills. This links to Risk 1: Knowledge and Skills. Whilst limited, this internal data demonstrates that applicants:

- may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions; and
- may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills.

The gap in attainment data between male and female students also demonstrates the impact of this - where students are accepted into higher education courses, it may also have a detrimental impact on their on-course success. With the gap in attainment data between male and female students, the high percentage of students that enrol at the School from areas of deprivation, and the predominance of white students, the School feels that Intervention strategy 1 will impact positively.

## Progression

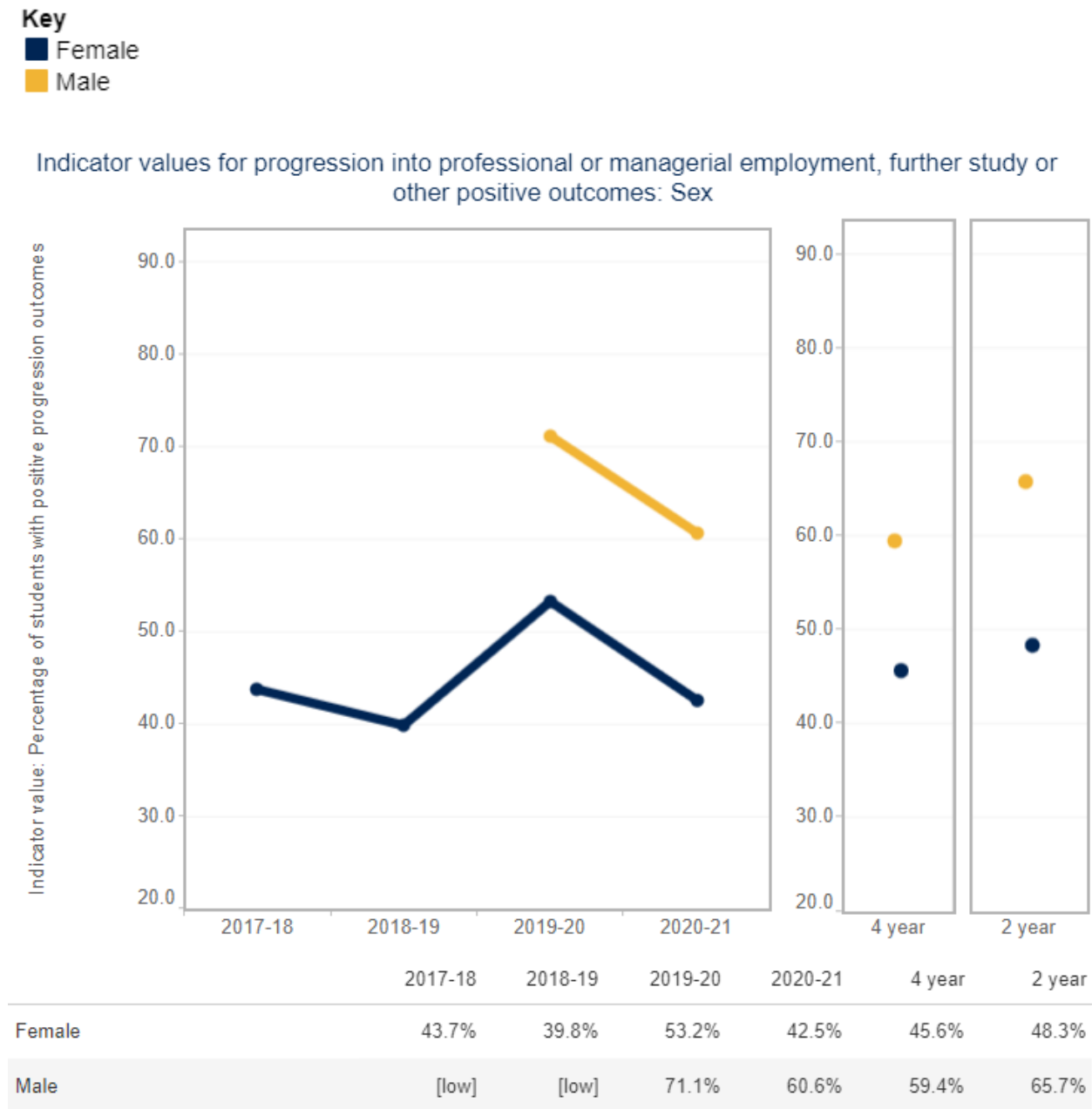
The School is proud of the depth of engagement with the creative sector and aims to successfully progress students into the creative industries. As a specialist art and design institution, unique in the north east of England, the School faces a number of challenges in supporting its students. Progression rates at the School are demonstrated in Table 8 in comparison with the sector averages.

*Table 8: Progression Rates - The Northern School of Art vs HE Sector (four-year aggregated)*

<i>Progression Rates (four-year aggregated)</i>			
<i>Category</i>	<i>The Northern School of Art (%)</i>	<i>Sector Average (%)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<b>Overall</b>	49.0%	72.6%	-23.6pp
<b>Young (under 21)</b>	46.4%	72.5%	-26.1pp
<b>Mature (over 21)</b>	60.9%	72.8%	-11.9pp
<b>Male</b>	59.4%	73.8%	-14.4pp
<b>Female</b>	45.6%	71.8%	-26.2pp
<b>IMD Quintile 1 (2019)</b>	50.3%	66.4%	-16.1pp
<b>IMD Quintile 2 (2019)</b>	39.4%	69.4%	-30.0pp
<b>IMD Quintile 3 (2019)</b>	53.3%	72.7%	-19.4pp
<b>IMD Quintile 4 (2019)</b>	46.9%	74.9%	-28.0pp
<b>IMD Quintile 5 (2019)</b>	58.5%	76.7%	-18.2pp
<b>Disability declared</b>	55.2%	70.9%	-15.7pp
<b>No disability declared</b>	45.4%	73.0%	-27.6pp
<b>Eligibility for Free School Meals (KS4)</b>	41.4%	65.4%	-24.0pp
<b>Not eligible for Free School Meals (KS4)</b>	46.6%	72.3%	-25.7pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 1</b>	44.9%	67.5%	-22.6pp
<b>POLAR 4 Quintile 2</b>	48.8%	70.0%	-21.2pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 3</b>	40.2%	71.2%	-31.0pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 4</b>	43.6%	72.4%	-28.8pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 5</b>	56.4%	76.2%	-19.8pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 1 or 2 and female</b>	41.9%	68.0%	-26.1pp
<b>POLAR 4 Quintile 1 or 2 and male</b>	65.8%	70.5%	-4.7pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 3,4 or 5 and female</b>	43.7%	72.4%	-28.7pp
<b>POLAR4 Quintile 3,4 or 5 and male</b>	52.5%	75.5%	-23.0pp

Figure 2 highlights the rates of progression, by sex, between 2017-18 and 2020-2021.

**Figure 2: Indicator values for progression by sex - The Northern School of Art**



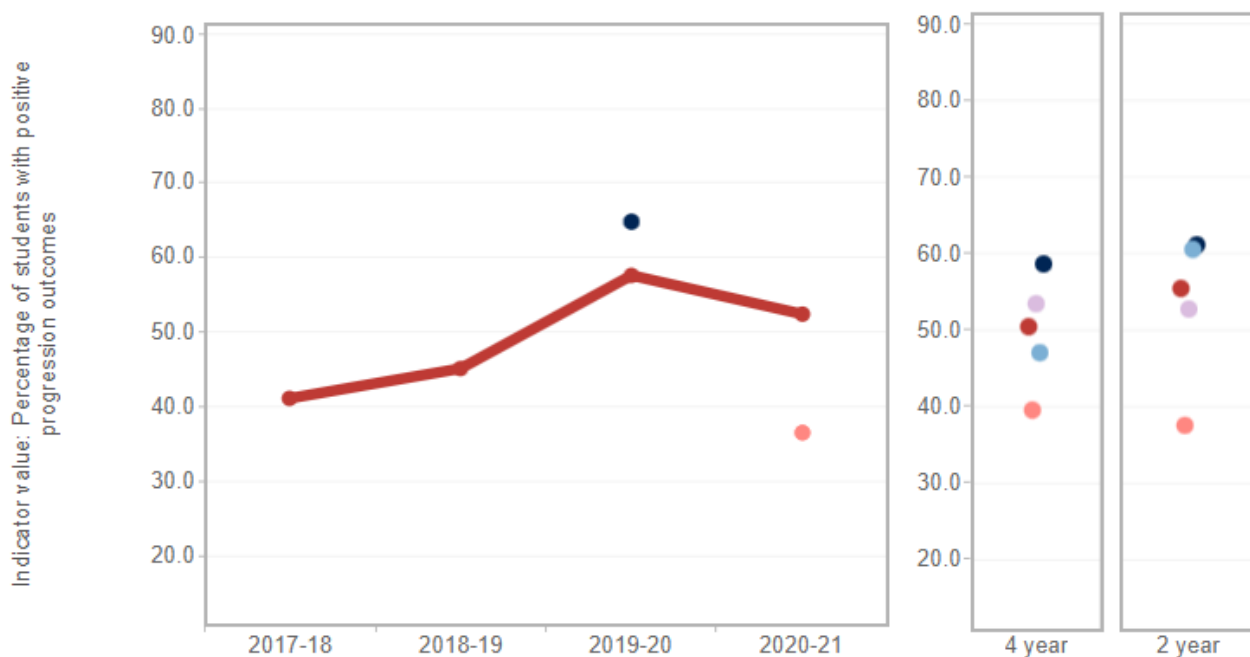
Similarly, Figure 3 highlights progression rates by deprivation quintile (IMD 2019).

**Figure 3: Indicator values for progression by deprivation quintile - The Northern School of Art**

**Key**

- Quintile 1 (most deprived)
- Quintile 2
- Quintile 3
- Quintile 4
- Quintile 5 (least deprived)

Indicator values for progression into professional or managerial employment, further study or other positive outcomes: Deprivation quintile (IMD 2019)



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	4 year	2 year
Quintile 1 (most deprived)	41.0%	45.0%	57.5%	52.3%	50.3%	55.3%
Quintile 2	[low]	[low]	[low]	36.4%	39.4%	37.4%
Quintile 3	[low]	[low]	[low]	[low]	53.3%	52.6%
Quintile 4	[low]	[low]	[low]	[low]	46.9%	60.4%
Quintile 5 (least deprived)	[low]	[low]	64.7%	[low]	58.5%	61.0%

- The Northern School of Art - Combined Quintile 1+2: Indicator value = 46.67%, Denominator = 210
- The Northern School of Art - Combined Quintile 3+4+5: Indicator value = 52.90%, Denominator = 180
- Combined Quintile 1+2: Indicator value = 67.95%, Denominator = 236,250
- Combined Quintile 3+4+5: Indicator value = 74.91%, Denominator = 437,810

Progression rates, regardless of student characteristics, are low and need to be addressed. The relationship between sex and deprivation is of particular interest. As highlighted earlier, male students from areas of economic deprivation (POLAR4), enrolled at the School, tend to have lower attainment rates, yet, have higher progression rates (13.9pp+) than female students from the same POLAR4 quintiles. As highlighted in the *Introduction and Strategic Aim*, the School recruits a higher percentage of students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in higher education than the sector averages:

- 28.4% of students came from POLAR4 Quintile 1 in the four-years up to 2021-2022;
- 21.9% of students came from TUNDRA Quintile 1 in the four-years up to 2021-2022;
- 40.6% of students declared a disability upon enrolment in the four-years up to 2021-2022; and
- 72.3% of students enrolled in the four-years up to 2021-2022 were female.

In targeting improvements to progression rates for female students, specifically those from areas of economic deprivation, two of its largest recruitment bases, the School hopes to have the strongest positive impact in its strategies outlined in Intervention strategy 2. The School hopes that this will impact positively on other characteristics such as age and disability.

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

### **Module X**

Module X 24-25 intends to run as an optional brief 'open-call' and collaborative project, alongside all current programme-specific modules. The project is proposed as a 'once weekly' afternoon session to be timetabled during facilitated learning sessions/afternoons and run for 4-6 weeks, ideally situated for the level 5 students 'Negotiated Projects' in which the learning agreement is introduced. The involvement in the project could be used against the learning outcomes in the Visual Arts faculty for level 5 in which students choose and negotiate their own project. It would be intended that the programme staff can discuss their contribution to Module X in their learning agreement and determine what other programme specific project work they will work towards in addition to fully meet the learning outcomes. In this way, the project can be used against module criteria, or as an enhancement opportunity.

Intended as a highly collaborative project, the brief would intentionally bring together students to explore, experiment and develop new projects and new technologies. Working across year groups (ideally 5 & 7) and programmes, students will be given the opportunity to engage with creative learning in new ways. The collaborative learning model would intend to simulate a real-world setting. All Module X projects would value critical and creative thinking about important issues facing our present and future, with scope to work externally with the community and professional organisations, with the ambition to prepare them for the creative world beyond their studies.

Collaboration is the key skill and Module X would promote interdisciplinary collaboration in a fail-safe environment in which students could have the opportunity to explore new perspectives, ideas and approaches to making and designing. The project would contribute to student research and the module could be run by multiple staff members as part of their own SAR for the purpose to discover new knowledge or in the development of integrating new technologies, methods and materials.

### **Intervention Strategy 1: Improving Male Attainment**

Following the APWG's assessment of performance, the School identified that its male students may be facing risks to their equality of opportunity. The School's assessment of performance (Annex A) provides a clear rationale for targeting male students, particularly those from areas of economic deprivation, in improving their attainment.

In order to further understand this, and effectively shape activities and interventions to mitigate these risks, the APWG considered a number of external datasets and case studies. These case studies included, but are not limited to:

- Hillman, N., & Robinson, N. (2016), Boys to Men: The underachievement of young men in higher education – and how to start tackling it
- Arts University Bournemouth (2022), Being a Boy
- Unite Group (2024), 'Improving the Transition to Higher Education: Responding to the needs of a post-Covid generation of students'
- Maggs, Z. & Student Minds (2021), 'Supporting Male Student Mental Health in Higher Education'

As highlighted above, in the *Introduction and strategic aim*, the School also considered its local geography. In 2022, the Government published data that show that students in London and the south east received a higher percentage of A and A\* grades at A-Level than those in other regions. Students in the north east of England received the lowest percentage<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, at a GCSE Level,

*students in London and the south east received a higher percentage of the top grades (7/A and above) than their counterparts in the rest of the country. The north east of England and Yorkshire and the Humber received the lowest percentage<sup>16</sup>.*

Writing for Schools Week, Chris Zarraga, director of Schools North East (a school-led regional network) stated that education policy should be evidence based, and avoid 'one size fits all' solutions<sup>17</sup>.

The activities in Intervention strategy 1 have been designed and shaped in partnership with **its students**, in order to most positively affect **its students**.

Datasets in Annex A, such as *Table 7 on p34: Assessment at Interview - Scores of 49 or less*, highlight the need to work with local and regional partners in hosting transitional FE/HE events, whilst continuing to provide bespoke interventions tailored to individual needs.

Following discussions at the APWG, identifying likely risks and areas of focus, alongside the further literature review, members of the APWG participated in a series of Theory of Change webinars hosted by TASO. Informal workshops with staff informed the construction of the intervention strategy (see page 5).

## **Intervention Strategy 2: Female Progression**

Following the APWG's assessment of performance, the School identified that its female students may be facing risks to their equality of opportunity. The School's assessment of performance (Annex A) provides a clear rationale for targeting female students, particularly those from areas of economic deprivation, in improving their progression outcomes. Despite consistently achieving higher

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<sup>15</sup> [Infographics for A level results, 2022 \(accessible\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-results-2022) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

<sup>16</sup> [Educational attainment gap: Regional disparities](https://www.parliament.uk/library/research-and-briefings/2022/educational-attainment-gap-regional-disparities) - House of Lords Library ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk))

<sup>17</sup> [Exam results: Regional disparities show we need new policies](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/exam-results-regional-disparities-show-we-need-new-policies) ([schoolsweek.co.uk](https://schoolsweek.co.uk))



academic success than their male counterparts, female students at the School face barriers in transitioning to graduate employment.

In order to further understand this, and effectively shape activities and interventions to mitigate these risks, the APWG considered a number of external datasets and case studies. These case studies included, but are not limited to:

- Crawford, C., Macmillan, L. & Vignoles, A. (2014) 'Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds'. Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission.
- Cooper, O. (2019). Where and what are the barriers to progression for female students and academics in UK Higher Education? Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 23(2–3), 93–100
- Bhopal, K. (2020). Gender, ethnicity and career progression in UK higher education: a case study analysis. Research Papers in Education, 35(6), 706–721
- Crawford, C., Macmillan, L. & Vignoles, A. (2014) 'Progress made by high-attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds'. Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission.
- Reay, D., Crozier, G. & Clayton, J., (2010) 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. British Educational Research Journal. 36(1), 107–124.
- London School of Economics (2021): 'Journeys into higher education and employment: The impact of covid-19 on young people'.

In 'Mind the Gap: Women and Health Inequalities' (2022), Gateshead Council highlight that,

*Nationally, 19% of small and medium enterprises (SME) employers are women-led and this is an increase of 3% points on 2020 figures. However, 19% is still much lower than the 44% of entirely male-led SMEs. There are fewer women-led medium-sized businesses compared with small and micro businesses. As described by Katty Kay: "Under qualified and under prepared men don't think about leaning in. Overqualified and over prepared, too many women still hold back. Women feel confident only when they are perfect"<sup>18</sup>.*

Figures from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport showed:

*that in the year to September 2022, there were 3.1mn filled job roles in the creative and cultural industries. These sectors included film, television, radio, computer gaming, publishing and the performing arts. Of those jobs, 989,000 were self-employed (32%). This was more than double the rate of self-employment in the wider UK economy (14%)<sup>19</sup>*

Adele Redmond highlights that:

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<sup>18</sup> [The impact of gender on employment - Gateshead Council](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Freelancers in the arts and creative sectors - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

*Between 2010 and 2018, employment in the creative industries grew fastest “perhaps surprisingly [...] in the North East of England, albeit from a small base” of 31,000 to 46,400 workers (up by 49.6%)<sup>20</sup>.*

This, combined with the economic challenges in the region provides a strong rationale for targeting female students at the School, in improving the progression outcomes<sup>21</sup>. The activities in Intervention Strategy 2 have been designed and shaped in partnership with **its students**, in order to most positively affect **its students**. Working with local and regional partners, providing female creative industry mentors to female students, expanding their networks and connections, and empowering them to succeed in the creative community is a key strategic cornerstone moving forward.

Following discussions at the APWG, identifying likely risks and areas of focus, alongside the further literature review, members of the APWG participated in a series of Theory of Change webinars hosted by TASO. Informal workshops with staff informed the construction of the intervention strategy (see page 11).

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<sup>20</sup> [North/South divide widens in creative industries employment | News | ArtsProfessional](#)

<sup>21</sup> 'Hull, Durham and Hartlepool among youth unemployment hotspots', Children & Young People Now, April 2021, available at <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/hull-durham-and-hartlepoolamong-youth-unemployment-hotspots>

Figure 3: The School's Theory of Change model for Intervention strategy 1

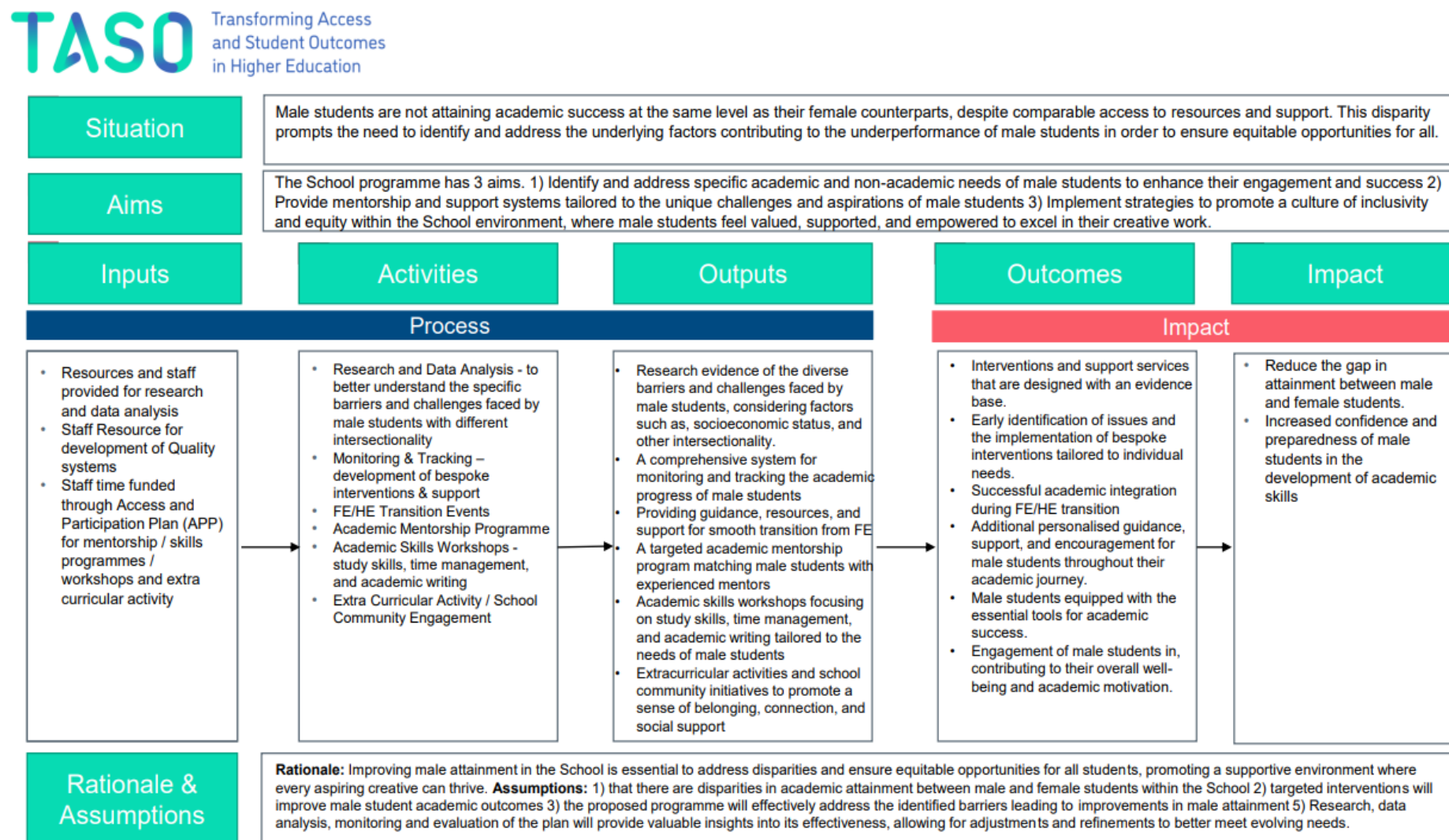
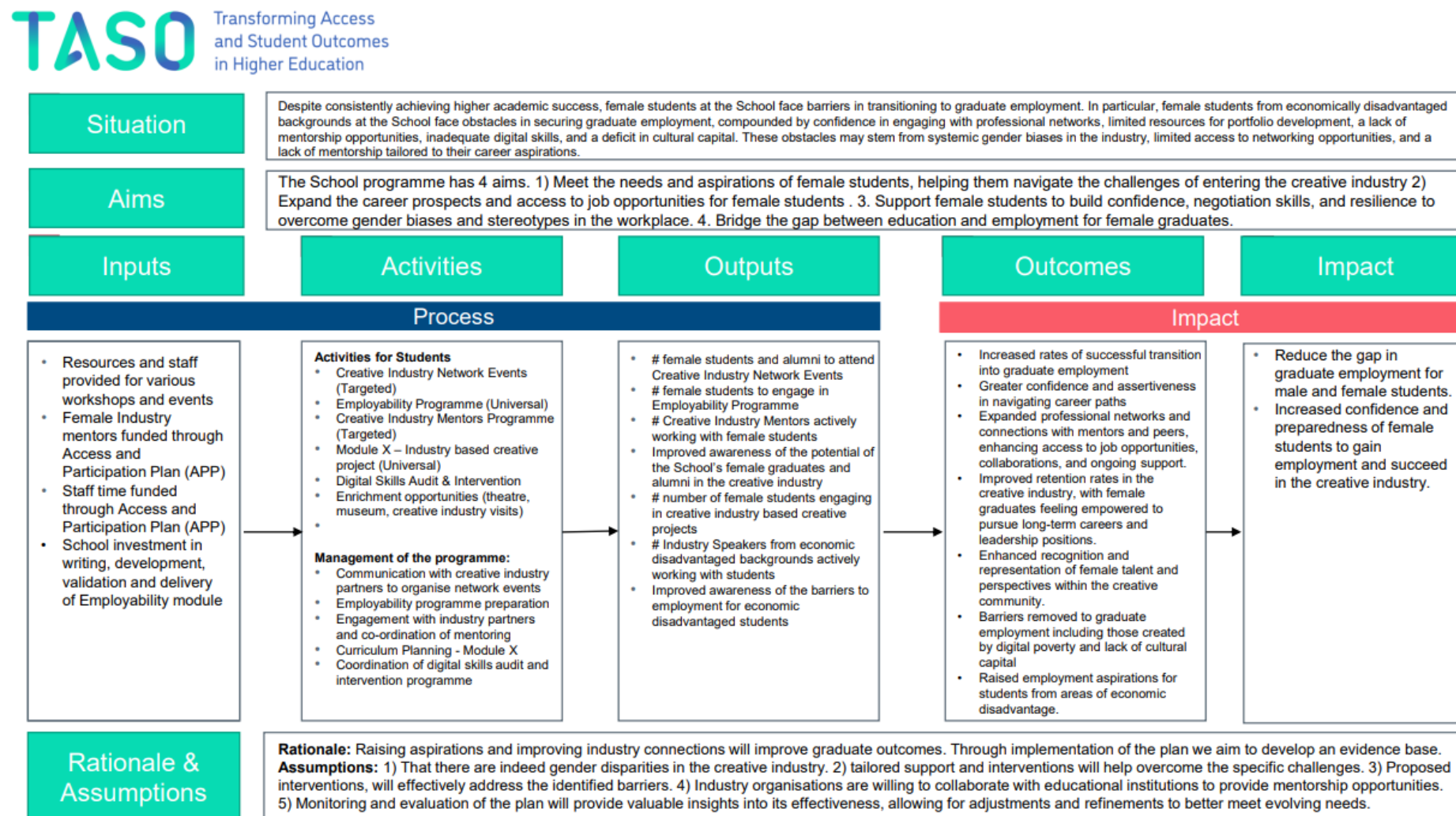


Figure 4: The School's Theory of Change model for Intervention strategy 2



# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Northern School of Art

Provider UKPRN: 10001503

### Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

#### Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for new entrants

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Northern School of Art

Provider UKPRN: 10001503

### Investment summary

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

#### Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£128,000	£130,000	£132,000	£136,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£107,000	£119,000	£127,000	£130,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£24,000	£24,000	£25,000	£25,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£69,000	£70,000	£71,000	£73,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£11,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£49,000	£50,000	£51,000	£52,000
Access activity investment	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£128,000</b>	<b>£130,000</b>	<b>£132,000</b>	<b>£136,000</b>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	7.3%	6.4%	5.8%	5.8%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£128,000	£130,000	£132,000	£136,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£107,000	£119,000	£127,000	£130,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£107,000</b>	<b>£119,000</b>	<b>£127,000</b>	<b>£130,000</b>
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	6.1%	5.9%	5.6%	5.6%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£24,000	£24,000	£25,000	£25,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Northern School of Art

Provider UKPRN: 10001503

## Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
	PTA_1					Male students are not attaining academic success at the same level as their female counterparts at the School, despite comparable access to resources and support. This disparity prompts the need to identify and address the underlying factors contributing to the underperformance of male students in order to ensure equitable opportunities for all.									
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Improving attainment rates for male students	PTS_1	Attainment	Sex	Male	Female	Male students are not attaining academic success at the same level as their female counterparts at the School, despite comparable access to resources and support. This disparity prompts the need to identify and address the underlying factors contributing to the underperformance of male students in order to ensure equitable opportunities for all.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage points	8.8	6.0	8.5	5.0	3.0
	PTS_2														
	PTS_3														
	PTS_4														
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
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[illegible]