

# Access and Participation Plan 2020/21– 2024/25

# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Executive summary</b>	1
<b>2.</b>	<b>Performance assessment</b>	4
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Students from disadvantaged backgrounds</b>	4
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students</b>	8
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Mature students</b>	10
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Students with disabilities</b>	11
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Care leavers</b>	12
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Intersections of disadvantage</b>	13
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Other groups who experience barriers in higher education</b>	13
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Continued assessment of our performance</b>	13
<b>3.</b>	<b>Strategic aims and objectives</b>	14
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	14
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Aims and objectives</b>	14
<b>4.</b>	<b>Strategic Measures</b>	16
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Whole provider strategic approach</b>	16
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Whole provider Theory of Change</b>	18
	<b>Strategic Measures</b>	
<b>One</b>	<b>Access – implementation of a progressive outreach programme</b>	20
<b>Two</b>	<b>Access – collaboration and partnerships</b>	23
<b>Three</b>	<b>New academic programmes to widen access</b>	25
<b>Four</b>	<b>Positive transition and ongoing student success</b>	26
<b>Five</b>	<b>Progression – Integrated employability outcomes</b>	29
<b>Six</b>	<b>Improving data, monitoring and evaluation</b>	29
<b>Seven</b>	<b>Increasing awareness, understanding and capacity</b>	30
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Student consultation</b>	32
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Evaluation strategy</b>	33
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Monitoring progress</b>	35
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Provision of information to students</b>	36
	<b>Endnotes</b>	36

# Executive summary



**Will Hunter**  
**Founder/  
Chief Executive**

Founded in 2015, the London School of Architecture has two fundamental charitable objectives – to widen access and participation into a career in built environment; and to deploy design as a transformative force to generate innovations that will deliver more sustainable lives.

These two aims are interlinked. We see design as the way humans participate in evolution: we therefore wish to attract and remove barriers for the next generation of visionaries to address the world's challenges and opportunities. Ultimately, we believe this will lead to the greatest advances.

The development of this Access and Participation Plan – the school's first – has provided a welcome opportunity for us to take stock, to reflect upon our first five years and to chart a course for the next five years. We have had many successes in our short history, and this plan will ensure that we set a course for continuous improvement, building pace towards our key priority of widening access and participation.

It is very pleasing to note that our assessment of performance highlights no significant issues in continuation, attainment or progression. The area identified as requiring most focus is access in respect of two key target groups: students from areas where participation in higher education is lowest, and students from an ethnic minority background. These two groups are underrepresented across the architecture sector, and the LSA is committed to becoming an exemplar in changing this.

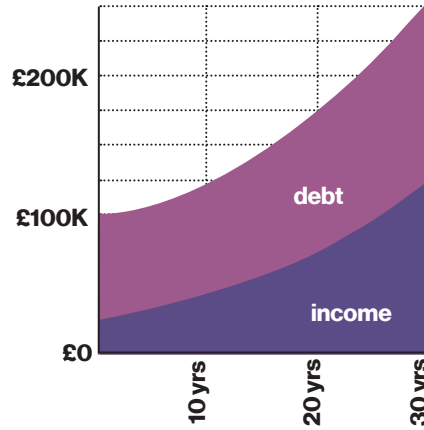
## **Issues with access to architectural education**

There are widespread issues with access in architectural education. The Student Survey 2018<sup>1</sup> in the Architects' Journal was headlined 'Only the rich need apply to study architecture'. It reported that for 'each academic year, students are shelling out more than ever before, an average of £24,000, including tuition fees – a staggering total when multiplied by the five years students must study to complete Parts 1 and 2.' The report highlighted: 'architecture students spend around £2,000 a year on hidden extras such as model-making, printing and study trips, as well as computers and books'. Nearly half of respondents said that cost is the single biggest issue facing them and their peers.

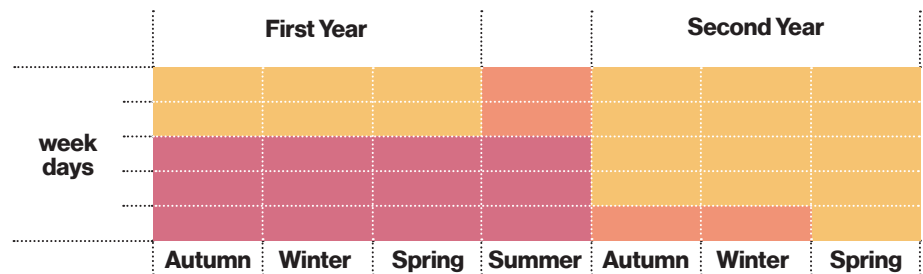
The RIBA Students Destination Survey for the last three years reported that the proportion of graduate's fathers last employment

Right Architecture students can accrue £100,000 debt while training and start with a £25,000 salary. Over a 30-year career, the debt grows faster than the salary increases (Alex Wright, SCHOSA).

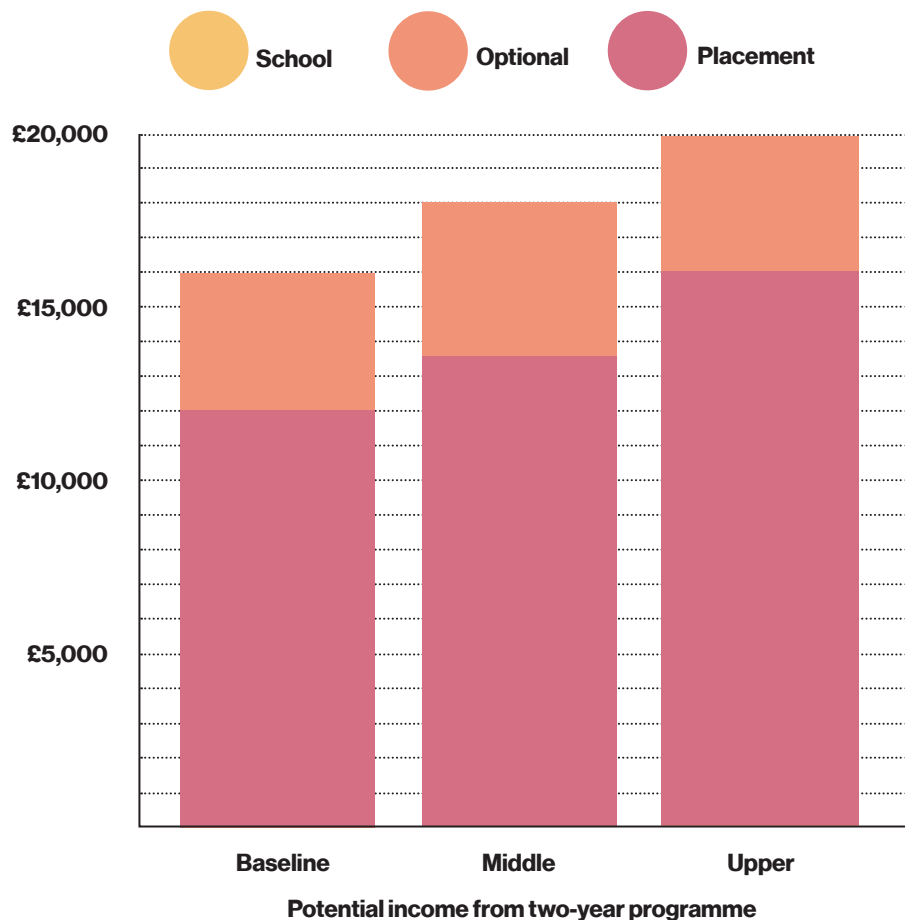
Far right: The LSA operates as a set of nested relationships, with its connections to industry at its core.



Right: The LSA works with our Practice Network to enable students to earn while they learn. In First Year, students must undertake a 3-day/week integrated work placement, and spend 2-days/week at school. Additionally, the course is structured so that students have the option to work a further 2-days/week in the summer, and 1-day/week in the first two terms of Second Year.



Right: The baseline salary of £20,000/annum enables a student to earn £12,000 in their placement, and up to £16,000 if they work the additional optional days. Many are paid more, and if they earn an upper salary of £25,000/annum, they could earn up to £20,000 over the two-year programme (figures are indicative).



was in 'Intermediate managerial, administrative, professional e.g. bank manager, teacher' or 'Higher managerial, administrative, professional e.g. chief executive, senior civil servant, surgeon' was 74 per cent in both 2015<sup>2</sup> and 2016<sup>3</sup> and 47 per cent in 2017.<sup>4</sup>

The section on widening participation in the most recent RIBA Student Finances Survey (2015) raised the issues of parental dependence and course costs. A post-Part 1 student from London states: 'I am from a working-class family, upon completing Part 1 I would not recommend the course to anyone unless they are from a middle/upper class background, no matter how talented they are. I will never pay off the ridiculous sums of money I have had to pay for my degree.'

### **Being the change**

When we opened in 2015/16, we set our tuition fees at £6,000/year and offset these with a minimum practice placement salary of £12,000/year. We therefore sought to widen access with a cost-neutral model of architectural education. In subsequent years, our model has evolved. In 2018/19, our students could access up to £6,000 state funding for tuition fees; and in 2018/19 and 2019/20 our tuition fees have risen to fund the additional costs of maturation that the school has needed to meet the requirements of government recognition. For 2020/21, we propose to put our fees up to £9,000/year which will ensure we can meet the requirements of being on a level playing field with universities and deliver this Access and Participation Plan.

Our strategic measures focus on widening access by implementing a progressive outreach programme and developing our collaboration and partnerships. As we currently only offer Part 2 of architectural education, we are also seeking to launch a Part 1 programme by 2021/22 so that we can recruit our target underrepresented groups directly from schools and colleges and offer the whole learning pathway from further education to professional accreditation and career outcomes in architecture.

As our intake diversifies, we will ensure that we continue to offer excellent results for students in positive transition, ongoing success and progression into employability. To provide the capabilities to measure this over the life of this plan, we will invest in improving data, monitoring and evaluation capabilities, and increasing our school understanding and capacity.

The LSA offers a professional network model of education. We currently work with over 100 London-based practices, which contain some 20,000 employees globally. The commitment of this network to provide support has empowered the school over its first five years, and we look forward to harnessing its resolve to widen access and participation in alignment with our own aims.

Innate ability populates the whole of society, and as an institution we are committed to ensuring that the architectural community benefits from the most talented candidates rather than just the most privileged. We look forward to delivering the measures set out in our inaugural Access and Participation Plan from 2020-21.

# 2

# Performance assessment

The London School of Architecture (LSA) enrolled its first students in 2015. We submit our first data to the Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) in 2019-20, following registration with the Office for Students (OfS) in the same year.

We therefore have limited data to assess, identify trends and set targets. However, we have nevertheless sought to set appropriate targets, based on our assessment, to achieve the performance improvement outcomes required.

The LSA remains a micro-provider with a total student body under 90 students. We currently offer a single HE qualification – the Professional Diploma in Designing Architecture (ARB/RIBA Part 2) – which is validated by London Metropolitan University.

With no previous HESA returns, all our performance analysis is based on internal data (which is for the previous two years – 2017-18 and 2018-19 – is now being processed by HESA).

We have drawn on comparator datasets where possible, but this is very limited in respect of our school. As a micro-provider, some of our data deals with very small cohorts of students, which leads to volatility in percentage data and makes it challenging to assess trends and determine targets. Where possible and appropriate, we have applied multi-year aggregates and cohort groupings to mitigate the effect of small cohorts.

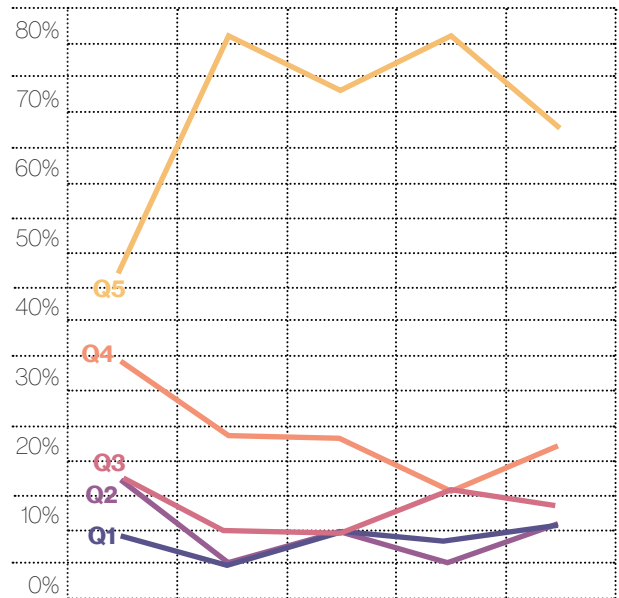
We have not been able to provide some data where there are data protection concerns. Analysis of internal data has followed the OfS methodology to allow comparison to sector and OfS datasets. Therefore, EU student data has been omitted from the performance assessment. The assessment has been made based on all available data, and total counted students with data.

In the attainment assessments below, data uses diploma classification at exit, and we have considered “good attainment” to mean achievement of a Distinction or Merit outcome.

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## 2.1 Students from disadvantaged backgrounds

We use two measures to assess our performance in respect of disadvantaged students: Adult HE and IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation). Adult HE measures the proportion of adults who have a HE qualification in each area, and is the relevant measure given the LSA’s current student demographic, which is 100% mature learners (over 21 years).



Entrants	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>Adult HE Quintile 1</b>	4.2%	0.0%	4.5%	3.4%	5.7%
<b>Adult HE Quintile 2</b>	12.5%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	5.7%
<b>Adult HE Quintile 3</b>	12.5%	4.8%	4.5%	10.3%	8.6%
<b>Adult HE Quintile 4</b>	29.2%	19.0%	18.2%	10.3%	17.1%
<b>Adult HE Quintile 5</b>	41.7%	76.2%	68.2%	75.9%	62.9%

Adult HE	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
3-year aggregate (Q1)			30%	28%	4.7%
3-year aggregate (Q1+Q2)			90%	42%	8.1%
3-year aggregate (Q3,4+5)			910%	958%	91.9%
Gap Q5 - Q1	375%	762%	636%	72.4%	57.1%

Entrants	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>3-year aggregate (Q1)</b>			3.0%	2.8%	4.7%
<b>3-year aggregate (Q1+Q2)</b>			9.0%	4.2%	8.1%
<b>3-year aggregate (Q3, 4+5)</b>			91.0%	95.8%	91.9%

IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for neighbourhoods in England. Both measures are divided into quintiles, with quintile 5 having the highest HE progression levels / least deprivation, and quintile 1 having lowest progression levels / most deprivation.

In the future as the Part 1 course, which is expected to attract young (under 21 years) learners, is introduced (from 2021-22, see later), the LSA will also consider the POLAR4 measure, which looks at the proportion of 18- and 19-year-olds in a particular geographic area who progress to university. The LSA wishes to ensure equality of opportunity for young POLAR4 Q1&2 students as the makeup of our student body changes from 2021-22. We therefore commit to undertaking performance assessment using the POLAR4 measure from 2021-22 in the access area; from 2022-23 onwards for continuation and attainment measures; and from 2024-25 onwards for progression measures. The POLAR4 measure will apply to our growing cohort of under-21 learners, whilst we will maintain the Adult HE measure for our mature learners.

Should the LSA identify any gaps in updates to its performance assessment in any year from 2021-22 onwards, we will submit variations to our plan which may include setting new targets and amendments to our strategy and activity measures.

### **Access**

We consistently attract more students from Adult HE Quintiles 3, 4 and 5, with lower proportions of students from Quintiles 1 and 2. Given the small cohorts, groupings and averages have been applied, although this process does not go very far in helping to mitigate volatility of percentage data.

Participation of Adult HE Quintile 1 students has seen a small general increase from 2015-16 to 2018-19, with three-year aggregates running from 4.2 per cent to 5.7 per cent. This compares to a decreasing trend percentage intake for Adult HE Quintile 5, which has declined from a high point in 2016-17 of 76.2 per cent, to 62.9 per cent in 2019-20. The gap between intake of Adult HE Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 therefore closes in 2019-20 to 57.1 per cent, compared to the previous year at 72.4 per cent.

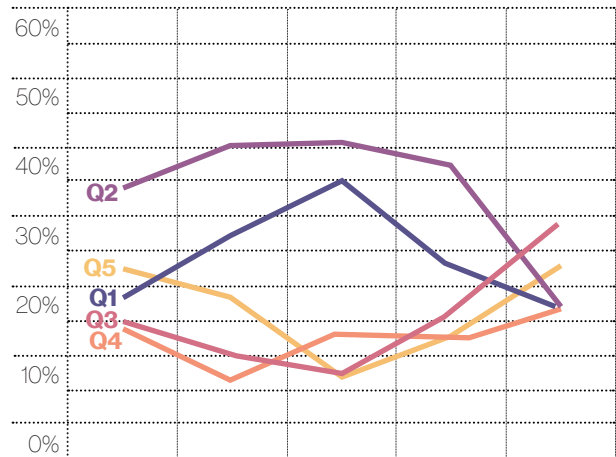
However, this is still a significant gap. In 2019-20, the school's three-year aggregate (2017-18 to 2019-20) performance for Adult HE Q1 access was 4.7 per cent.

One challenge is that we currently only offer the second part (Part 2) of the compulsory three-part programme of study required to become an architect. Our students must already have completed an undergraduate degree (Part 1) elsewhere before they can enrol with us. We can therefore currently only recruit from other architecture schools, which limits our intake.

While this goes some way to situating our performance in context, the LSA is passionately committed to improving access and participation; particularly in terms of contributing to the national Key Performance Measure (KPM) of reducing the gap in participation between students from the most and least represented groups at high-tariff providers. This is an area that we are addressing within this plan.

In London, IMD is a good measure of performance. The school's results for IMD represent a consistent positive gap in participation





Entrants	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
IMD Quintile 1	17.4%	27.3%	35.3%	23.1%	16.1%
IMD Quintile 2	34.8%	40.9%	41.2%	38.5%	16.1%
IMD Quintile 3	13.0%	9.1%	5.9%	15.4%	29.0%
IMD Quintile 4	13.0%	4.5%	11.8%	11.5%	16.1%
IMD Quintile 5	21.7%	18.2%	5.9%	11.5%	22.6%

IMD	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
3-year aggregate (Q1)			25.8%	27.7%	23.0%
3-year aggregate (Q1 + Q2)			64.5%	67.7%	52.7%
3-year aggregate (Q3, 4 + 5)			35.5%	32.3%	47.3%
Gap Q5 – Q1	4.3%	-9.1%	-29.4%	11.5%	6.5%

between IMD Q1 and Q5 students, showing that we recruit a higher percentage of student from IMD Q1 and Q2 backgrounds than IMD Q5 backgrounds.

Participation of IMD Q1 is relatively high (23 per cent aggregate 2017-18 to 2019-20). This compares well to the sector average, at 21.6 per cent (2017-18). Again, while the impact of small cohorts makes analysis difficult, the positive gap in participation between IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 (using 3-year aggregate) is observed from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

That said, data for individual years does show a decreasing positive gap, as intake of students from IMD Quintiles 3-5 is steadily rising and Q1-2 falling. We note a particularly big spike in the percentage intake of IMD Quintiles 3 and 5 in 2019-20. While this annual percentage data is subject to much volatility due to the small cohort sizes, we will continue to closely monitor these results and seek to submit variations to our plan in subsequent years, should gaps emerge. Given the annual data is fluctuating significantly year by year, we will however maintain our three-year aggregate analysis to determine the emergence of any gaps.

#### Continuation

It is particularly difficult to make assessment here due to the size of cohort and data available. Even when analysed using a three-year aggregates, and with aggregate groups of Q1+Q2 for each target group, the percentage data remains susceptible to very small base cohorts.

While specific data is too small to report in relation to Adult HE, we note a general trend across three-year aggregate (2015-16 to 2017-18 and 2016-17 to 2018-19) that shows students from Adult HE Q1 and Q2 backgrounds continue at a similar (and latterly slightly higher) rates to students from POLAR4 Q3-Q5 backgrounds.

For IMD data, performance averages across three-years also show no material gaps in performance.

<b>Continuation</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
ADULT HE 3-year aggregate Q1+Q2			87.5%	100.0%
ADULT HE 3-year aggregate Q3+4+5			88.1%	90.8%
IMD 3-year aggregate Q1+Q2			92.5%	90.9%
IMD 3-year aggregate Q3+4+5			77.3%	90.5%

### **Attainment**

Again, due to small datasets for both Adult HE and IMD, rigorous analysis to determine trends and performance is difficult. In relation to Adult HE, while specific datasets are too small to report, we have identified no gaps between attainment outcomes for Adult HE Q1 and Q5 learners. The three-year aggregates (2016-17 to 2018-19) are at 100 per cent and 97.1 per cent respectively.

IMD data also reveals no gaps in attainment for IMD Quintile 1 students in comparison to Quintile 5, with a three-year aggregate (2016-17 to 2018-19) at 81.3 per cent and 70 per cent respectively.

### **Progression**

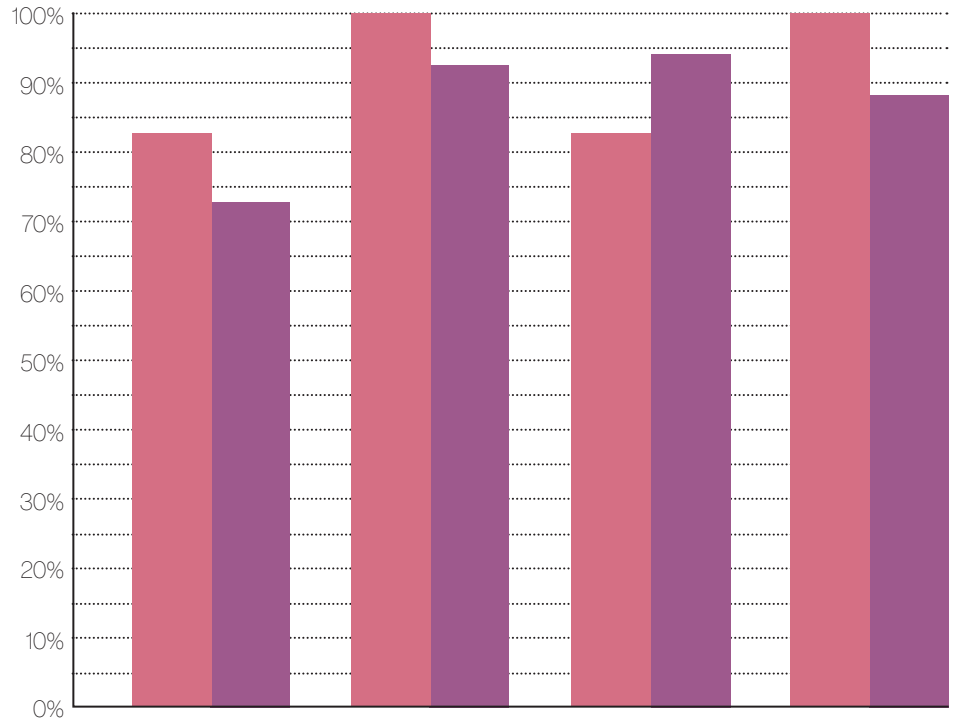
Internal data has been used to explore the proportion of graduates progressing to further study or highly skilled employment. Although specific data cannot be reported here due to cohort sizes, the current available data (2016-17 to 2018-19) shows no identified gaps in progression outcomes for Adult HE Q1 and Q2, or IMD Q1 or Q2 students.

## **2.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students**

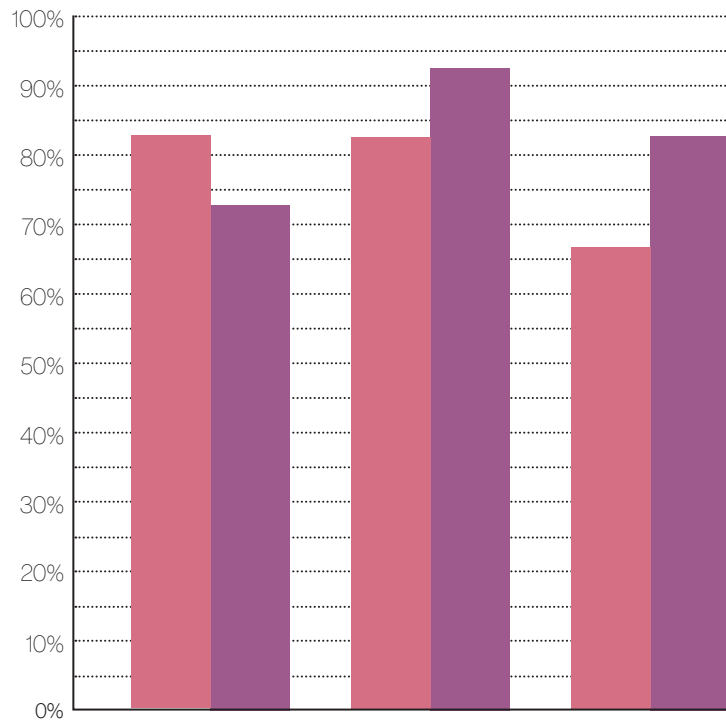
### **Access**

We perform relatively well in attracting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, with a steady performance across three-year aggregates. While data is too small to report, disaggregated ethnicity groups are generally represented, with the exception of the 'other' category. We are close to the sector average for BAME participation at 27.3 per cent. However, our three-year aggregate is 20.9 per cent (2017-18 to 2019-20) and therefore this is an area the school wishes to prioritise.

<b>Enrolments</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>
%BAME	25.0%	28.6%	25.0%	16.7%	21.9%
%White	75.0%	71.4%	75.0%	83.3%	78.1%
3-year aggregate BAME			26.1%	22.7%	20.9%



Continuation	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>BAME</b>	83.3%	100.0%	83.3%	100.0%
<b>White</b>	77.8%	93.3%	94.4%	88.0%



Attainment	2016/17	2017/18	2018/9
<b>BAME</b>	83.3%	83.3%	66.7%
<b>White</b>	77.8%	93.3%	83.3%

### Continuation

The BAME continuation rate is consistently and broadly in line with white continuation levels and in 2018-19 BAME continuation was 100%. These are comparable to wider sector performance. Non-continuation data for disaggregated ethnicity is too small to make any further assessment; however, even small datasets do not illustrate any issues.

### Attainment

Due to extremely small datasets (n=6), rigorous analysis to determine trends and performance is difficult. While data shows small gaps between attainment in the percentage data, these are therefore not statistically significant and data for BAME attainment is too small to make any meaningful assessment. Internal records and understanding currently show no trends for concern. Therefore we do not propose to set a target in this area at this time. That said, we remain cognisant of the national data particularly on Black attainment gaps, particularly as we seek to increase our BAME intake and also offer a Part 1 (undergraduate) programme. We will therefore ensure this area is closely monitored and our curriculum and support is inclusive, based on best practice and student-informed. If gaps do materialise in the future, we will seek to set targets in an amendment to this, or revision of subsequent, plans.

### Progression

Specific data cannot be reported here due to cohort sizes. The current available data (2016-17 to 2018-19) show no identified gaps in progression outcomes for BAME students.

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## 2.3 Mature students

### Access

As we currently only offer a Part 2 programme, our student base is 100 per cent mature. This is intended to be a changing picture over the life of this plan, as we intend to launch a Part 1 programme to enable young participation. See further in strategic measures.

With the introduction of a Part 1 programme, we will also assess our performance in relation to mature learners entering onto our Part 1 programmes, and will look to address any identified gaps through our access activities.

### Continuation

Given the 100 per cent mature learner base, continuation for mature learners represents our overall continuation rate. The LSA performs well in mature learner continuation and outperforms the sector where continuation rates for mature learners are 7.4% below young continuation (2016-17). Annual performance, and our three-year aggregate performance, is consistent at around 90 per cent.

With the introduction of a Part 1 programme, we will assess our

Mature	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
% Continuation	83.3%	90.9%	91.7%	90.9%
3-year aggregate			88.6%	90.8%
% Attainment		83.3%	86.4%	79.2%
3-year aggregate (Mature)				82.9%

performance in relation to mature learners studying on our Part 1 and Part 2 programmes, and will look to address any identified gaps in continuation rates between mature learners and their younger peers.

**Attainment**

In the absence of any young students, there is no comparable data. However, we note that mature learners perform consistently well in achieving high level diploma outcomes at the LSA. This is in comparison to the sector, where there is an observed attainment gap between young and mature attainment, of 10.3% in 2017-18. Annual performance, and our three-year aggregate performance, is relatively consistent.

With the introduction of a Part 1 programme, we will assess our performance in relation to mature learners studying on our Part 1 and Part 2 programmes, and will look to address any identified gaps in attainment rates between mature learners and their younger peers.

**Progression**

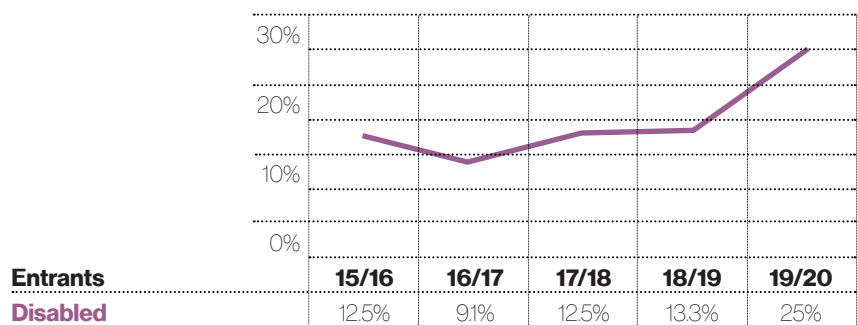
Given our 100 per cent mature learner cohort, no identified gaps in progression outcomes for mature learners are present. We will monitor outcomes as we diversify our intake, although we note excellent performance in the progression area, maintaining a very high level of outcomes into highly skilled, professional employment. Of known data, our 3-year aggregate (2016-17 to 2018-19) into the professions is 98.3%.

With the introduction of a Part 1 programme, we will assess our performance in relation to mature learners studying on our Part 1 and Part 2 programmes, and will look to address any identified gaps in progression rates between mature learners and their younger peers.

**2.4 Students with disabilities**

**Access**

The data suggests a strong continuous positive trend in participation of disabled students, increasing from 12.5 to 25 per cent between 2015-16 and 2019-20. We outperform the sector average in recruitment of disabled students. The majority of disabled students at have cognitive or learning difficulties, although there is a small proportion of students with mental health conditions in later years.



**Continuation**

The average continuation for disabled students (three-years averages, 2015-16 to 2017-18) is broadly in line with continuation for non-disabled students. This is also comparable to the sector average of 89.4 per cent (2016-17). Annual data, whilst subject to small numbers, shows a positive trajectory with 100% disabled student continuation

for 2017-18 and 2018-19. Continuation data for disaggregated disability is too small to make any further assessment. We will continue to monitor this data closely and will seek to engage students in providing advice and feedback in supporting disabled students throughout their study with us, and to identify any potential issues or barriers proactively.

<b>Continuation</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
% Disabled	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Non-disabled	81.0%	95.0%	90.5%	88.5%
3-year aggregate (disabled)				87.5%
3-year aggregate (non-disabled)				82.3%

### **Attainment**

While specific data cannot be reported due to data protection concerns, average data shows no concerns, with attainment for disabled and non-disabled being broadly comparable.

<b>Attainment</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
3-year aggregate (disabled)	87.5%	100.0%
3-year aggregate (non-disabled)	88.1%	90.8%

### **Progression**

Specific data cannot be reported here due to cohort sizes. Current available data (2016-17 to 2018-19) shows no identified gaps in progression outcomes for disabled students. We will monitor outcomes.

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## **2.5 Care leavers**

### **Access**

Data for care leaver participation is not available, as we have not traditionally collected this information. As part of our developing data capacity, we intend to capture this data from 2020-21 and build our dataset over and beyond this Plan. Nationally, young participation rates are approximately only 6 per cent (2017-18), while this figure doubles by the age of 23.<sup>6</sup> This is low when compared to a broader young participation rate of 42 per cent. We will build capacity to monitor its performance. In particular, the LSA's salaried work-based learning provision and financial support packages would provide support for care leaver participation, as one of the main barriers is financial stability, particularly relating to living costs in London.

### **Continuation, attainment and progression**

Continuation, attainment and progression data is not available for care leavers. We will explore and develop capacity in this area in 2019-20, including early use of UCAS data in the application process to identify care leavers before they enrol. Should gaps appear as emerging data is analysed, we will seek to agree appropriate targets, taking a lifecycle approach.

We are aware of national data and research indicating that the disadvantage that care leavers experience often impacts their life chances and careers.<sup>7</sup> Reasons for attrition are often multi-faceted,

including complex mental health and special educational needs (Harrison, 2017). Due to care leavers also often facing additional academic difficulties due to disrupted schooling attainment levels for this group are also generally lower (Flynn, Tessier and Coulombe, 2013). The support and work-based learning opportunities we provide in relation to employability and careers, in partnership with our Practice Network are well-placed to enable care leaver students to develop the skills, experience and confidence they need to be successful in their studies and gain, stay and progress in work. We will ensure this is key to the lifecycle approach for this group.

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**2.6 Intersections of  
of disadvantage**

The LSA's data and cohort size is too small to conduct any meaningful assessment of intersections of disadvantage. It is impossible to interpret trends from intersecting data from our small cohort, however we are committed to monitoring performance for groups that have national priority and concern over and beyond the life of this plan. For example, white boys from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

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**2.7 Other groups  
who experience barriers  
in higher education**

The LSA does not currently propose to consider any further groups at this time. Over the next five years, we will continue to build our understanding and data in relation to other emerging target groups and consider particular barriers and opportunities to address these in context. We will reflect particularly on intersections of disadvantage identified at the national level, and ensure we monitor these areas in our context. For example, our outreach work and introduction of the Part 1 programme would enable us to contribute to targets for young, disadvantaged males. We will develop our understanding and evaluation of intersections of disadvantage in our context over the next five years, and this will further inform our target groups.

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**2.8 Continued assessment of  
our performance**

With the launch of a Part 1 programme by 2021/22 we expect the demographics of our student population to change and diversify. The Part 1 programme will attract a younger cohort of students and enable us to recruit students directly from schools and colleges. In line with our charitable objective – to widen access and participation into a career in built environment – we hope to attract more underrepresented students into the study at LSA through our professional network model of education.

We will closely monitor the student intake onto our Part 1 programme to understand the diversity of our new student population, and this will help to shape and target our broader access strategy going forward.

We will continue to closely monitor our performance across the student lifecycle for all the groups set out above in order to identify any emerging patterns, or signs of developing gaps in performance between groups of students so that we can proactively seek to address these at the earliest point.

# 3

## Strategic aims and objectives

3.1 Target groups	Access	Success (continuation)	Success (attainment)	Progression
ADULT HE Q1 & Q2	X			
BAME learners	X			

The strategic aims and objectives in this plan respond to gaps in performance identified in our assessment, which are concentrated solely in the access area. The above table provides key target groups across the lifecycle.

### 3.2 Aims and objectives

The LSA is committed to equality of opportunity for all learners to participate and succeed at the institution, regardless of background. We support and facilitate access and success for all learners who meet admissions criteria, doing so in ways that promote equality and overcome potential barriers caused by disadvantage.

#### Access Targets

The LSA is preparing for growth and development. This context of development, along with the limited data relating to access and participation, makes it particularly difficult to determine targets over the longer term, as we are in a state of change, with already limited baselines and trend data.

Therefore, in the short term, we are using proportional increase targets for its identified gap areas. While gap targets are not formally being set, we will remain vigilant of the gaps between target groups (Adult HE Quintiles 1 v. Quintile 5) to ensure gaps in equality of opportunity do not emerge.

The LSA commits to exploring emerging data with a view to setting gap targets from 2023-24 where appropriate. This timeframe will allow a three-year trend to emerge over the life of this plan (covering 2020-21 to 2022-23), which will allow more robust assessment of performance and trajectories, allowing us to set and manage more appropriate gap targets.



	<b>Baseline average</b>	<b>17/18-18/19</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>
ADULT HE Q1 & Q2		8.4%	9.2%	10.5%	13%	15%	18.4%
BAME learners		20.9%	21.5%	23.0%	25.0%	27.5%	30.0%

Reflecting our performance assessment, we've two access targets:

## Target One

**Aim:** To double the proportion of students who are from lowest Adult HE participation neighbourhoods.

**Objective:** Increase the percentage of Adult HE Quintiles 1 and 2 (aggregate) students by 10 per cent (from baseline of 8.1 per cent (the three-year aggregate of 2017-18 to 2019-20), to reach 18 per cent by 2024-25.

Longer term, by 2038-39, we would expect to achieve full equality of opportunity in our mature learner cohort, where the percentage of Adult HE Quintile 1 and 2 learners represent approximately 40% of our total mature learner cohort.

## Target Two

**Aim:** To increase the proportion of BAME students.

**Objective:** increase the percentage BAME students (from baseline of 20.9 per cent; the three-year aggregate of 2017-18 to 2019-20), to 30 per cent by 2024-25.

### Success and progression targets

No material gaps in performance in the areas of continuation, attainment or progression have been identified in the performance assessment. Therefore, the LSA is not setting targets in these areas. While recognising this current picture, we are also committed to monitoring performance and enhancing data capture and capability over the next five years and should other gaps emerge we will seek to set additional targets with the OfS.

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## 4.1 Whole provider strategic approach and Theory of Change

The founding principles of the LSA are now widely recognised within the architectural sector of higher education as unique. From its inception, the LSA has reflected on and attempted to address the most urgent issues for those delivering higher education in architecture; it has, as a result, built in access principles that are designed to proactively address the soft and hard barriers to the profession and industry, taking a core focus on diversifying participation and ensuring affordability. This approach has been driven and enacted by the founder, governing body and executive.

Senior management and governance have therefore responded to the relatively recent opportunities for alternative providers to establish themselves in the HE sector and committed itself to providing a route into the architectural profession for those with the greatest talents and from the widest possible range of backgrounds. The LSA registered with the OfS and published its first Access and Participation Statement in 2019-20, allowing its students to access tuition fee loans and thus starting to address the cost barrier to study at the Part 2 stage of architectural education.

Fees and the costs of study are also partially offset by the salary students earn during their first year from an integrated 12-month work placement within our Practice Network. In this model, students can expect to earn a minimum of £12,000, with salaries being generally significantly higher than this. These integrated employability outcomes are coupled with highly personalised teaching and learning, due to our very small size. The level of engagement between students and staff, students and their peers, and students and industry, are key attributes of the student experience.

Alongside this financial imperative, in our teaching and learning approach we have developed an educational model that supports access and participation by focusing on work-based learning and embedded mentoring for students throughout their studies. As well as addressing the issue of employability and progression at the outset of study and ensuring excellent access to professional networks particularly for those underrepresented students who are less likely to have ready access to such professional and employer networks and experiences.

So far during our short history, we have managed to secure a placement for every student to whom we have offered a conditional place, and there have been no obvious gaps in performance between

how students have performed at this stage. We have close contact with employers, all of whom subscribe to the LSA's mission of widening access by joining our Practice Network.

Each practice must appoint a Practice Mentor to oversee the development of their employee/student. Practice Mentors are invited to an induction at the start of the academic year to explain their role and are invited to provide feedback on their student at key stages. The pastoral care of students is overseen at the LSA by the Programme Coordinator, who is alerted to any issues with employers. This system triangulates feedback between school, student and employer, ensuring any issues that arise are addressed in a timely manner.

We plan to grow over the next decade including expansion into undergraduate provision, which will specifically target more diverse markets, with focus on POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 and BAME students. We anticipate that these students will come from across the country. Research shows that more students study Part 1 close to their home than at Part 2, and it is likely we will recruit extensively from Greater London by developing close relationships with networks of schools within the capital. However, we are keen to address the north/south divide and to be a UK centre of excellence, and we will seek to take a national approach to recruitment, working with partners such as IntoUniversity and the Social Mobility Foundation to identify target students.

This sets a trajectory of continuous improvement in access and participation outcomes, which are integral to and fully aligned with the LSA's institutional mission and ambitions.

From the performance assessment, we've identified seven strategic measures to improve performance and achieve the targets set out in this plan overleaf

The LSA is committed to improving access and maintaining excellent standards in success and progression outcomes for an increasingly diverse student body. Work will focus on increasing access for students from the most underrepresented backgrounds (Adult HE and POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2) and for BAME students. Engagement with these target groups is proposed to be through continued development of HE and FE provider, school, community and other key stakeholder relationships and partnerships.

In conducting this work, we will not lose our focus on success and progression outcomes, ensuring that excellent outcomes across the whole student journey continue. We will continue to provide support and guidance in study methods, presentation skills and portfolio development, together with wellbeing support.

We recognise that continuous improvements in and development of strategy, leadership and governance; data and evaluation capacity; and systems, people and resource developments are critical to this journey.

### **Alignment with Equal Opportunities Policy**

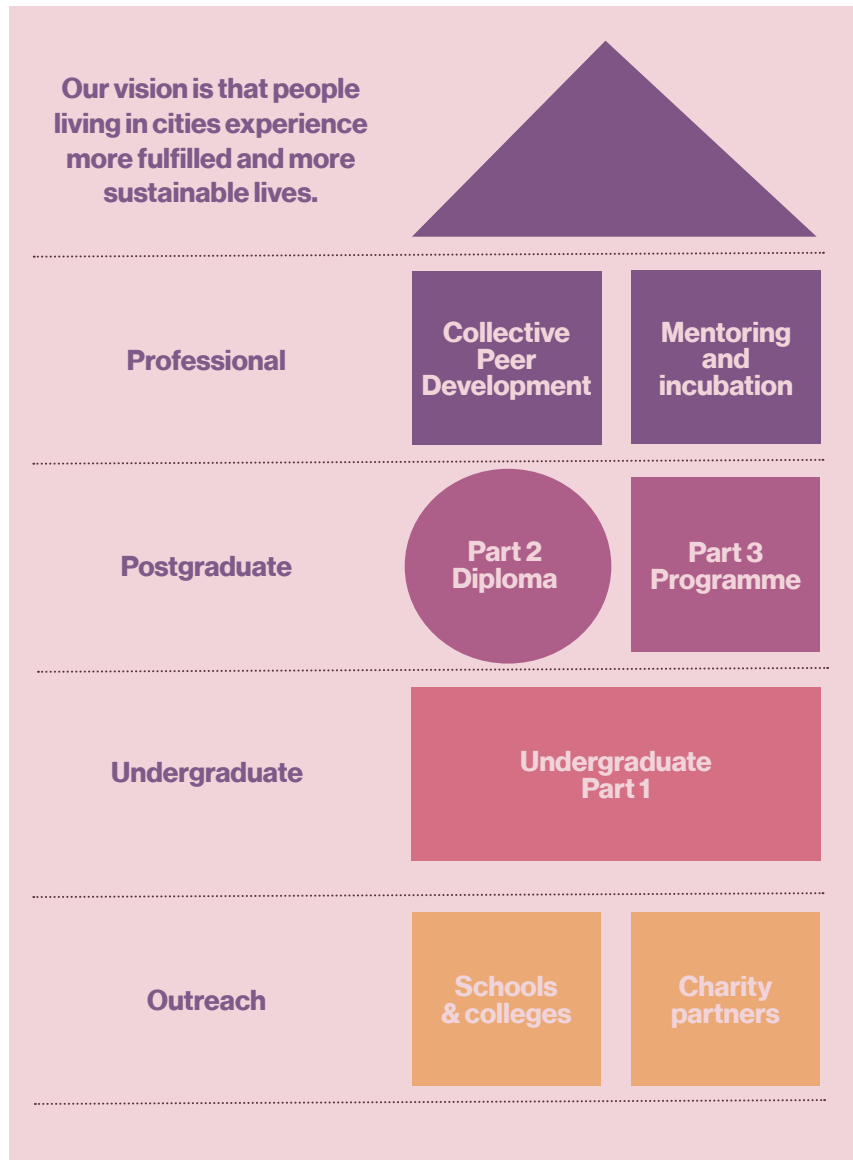
The aim of the LSA's Equal Opportunities Policy is to, "make education as accessible and responsive as possible to all existing and potential students, and to provide education to them which recognises and respects their differences". This aim is completely in line with both our Access and Participation Plan and our broader LSA mission. Further, in the Policy the LSA explicitly recognises that its ability to meet this aim is improved by having a diverse

workforce that generally reflects its student base. The LSA views this interplay between diverse student body and diverse academic and management / professional support workforce as highly relevant to its approach to access.

The Policy sets two key objectives which are integrated with our access and participation agenda:

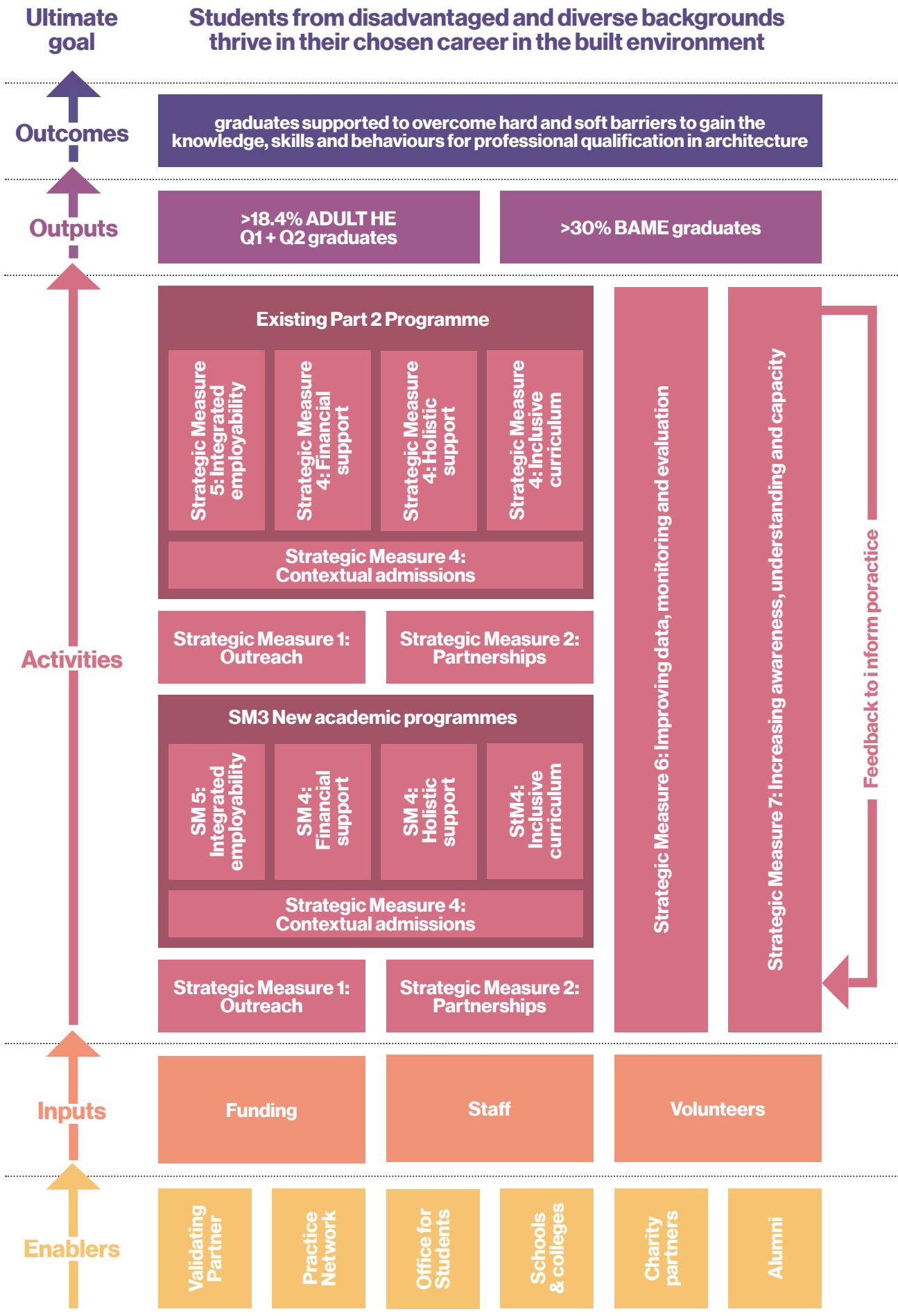
- understand how diversity can improve our ability to deliver better services
- provide services that are responsive to our students' needs

## 4.2 Whole provider Theory of Change



*Right: The architecture programme already includes a successful Part 2 diploma. To achieve the LSA's overall vision, we will add further activities for the different stages of an architect's career; we intend to introduce a Part 1 programme from 2021/22.*

*Next page: To achieve the targets set for widening access and participation, the whole provider Theory of Change encompasses the full lifecycle of this plan and includes the seven Strategic Measures (outlined overleaf).*



# Strategic Measure One

## **Access – Implementation of a progressive outreach programme**

The LSA is committed to attracting students from a wider range of backgrounds, particularly students from Adult HE and POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 areas and BAME learners.

Outreach to attract mature learners, and in particular those from low participation areas (Adult HE Q1 and Q2), to our current Part 2 course, is somewhat restricted as participation relies on completion of the Part 1 course via other providers. However, the LSA have successful channels of communication and promotion that we have identified can be leveraged. Our outreach strategy to progress our Adult HE Q1 and Q2 target also includes better targeting of communications and utilisation of our professional and student / alumni networks. For example, the LSA will:

- Review social media channel communications and promotion, introducing a targeting mechanism into Adult HE Quintiles 1 and 2; and, developing content that further promotes inclusive entry and opportunity
- Ensure media scanning (LinkedIn, Instagram, twitter, etc.) and subsequent communications to prospective target students is done with target groups in mind, recognising the particular barriers they are more likely to face and ensuring equality of opportunity
- Work with our Practice network, and other relevant employers such as local authorities, to reach potential students from underrepresented groups, who have completed their Part 1 and are now in the workplace.
- Further target advertising, press and communications
- Review our current pipeline from feeder institutions, identifying providers with more target students and seeking to increase recruitment from these providers. This may include additional collaboration with Part 1 providers, where possible.

These activities are complemented by our financial support provision (see later), which is particularly effective for under-represented mature learners who may be sacrificing salary and/or have dependents, etc. The fact that students earn at minimum £12k salary in their Practice Placement also contributes to improving access for this target group.

The LSA has already launched some outreach events to promote access and raise awareness of the advantages of study at HE level. In line with sector good practice, and anticipating our young cohort for the Part 1 course from 2021-22, this has been done in partnership with schools with disadvantage characteristics. Current activity provides a developing foundation from which to expand outreach over the life of this plan.

In previous years we have worked with the Social Mobility Foundation to offer career days that included visits to the school and our Practice Network for students who have expressed an interest in architecture. We have also worked with IntoUniversity to facilitate work placements within our Practice Network. In 2019/20, we are piloting a tailored outreach package for the local Mossbourne Academy, which includes current students and ambassadors mentoring target students and teaching/reviewing design projects.

In 2019-20 the LSA will continue to develop a new progressively intense framework of outreach activity to increase participation from targeted groups, which will lay foundations of delivery with a view to

being implemented from 2020-21 and continue over the life of this plan. This includes earlier provision (anticipated from Y9 upwards); increased outreach activity in target areas and with target groups; and activity with collaborative partners (see Strategic Measure 2).

We have considered a range of evidence-based practice in order to formulate the initial framework, for example from the recent NCOP progressive learning frameworks and from OfS good practice materials and 'What Works' publications.

The following key principles underpin our developing outreach practices:

**1. The '5 As'.** The framework is structured around activity themes based on raising and supporting Aspiration, Awareness, Access, Affordability and Achievement to higher education. Inputs by activity types are underpinned by evidence.

**2. Aspiration and Awareness.** Raising awareness of the architecture profession will increase interest and participation from more diverse markets. Broader awareness of the pathways in architecture, leading to an array of career opportunities, needs to be provided. Experiences of the profession and opportunities to hear from HE and industry role models will increase awareness and understanding. Architecture is not specifically aligned to school curriculum, which means its visibility is limited and often only emerges at later stages of the learning journey. A progressive journey of awareness raising that starts earlier and can influence at key decision points (e.g. FE options), throughout the career journey and adult education, is required. Addressing perceived barriers relating to cost and socio-economic concerns is particularly relevant for Adult HE and POLAR4 Q1&2 and BAME target groups.

As well as targeting schools, we will also look to work with colleges and community centre to reach potential mature learners, and those looking to re-engage with education. We will continue to look for other opportunities to work with existing networks and community groups that support potential mature learners.

**3. Achievement.** Supporting achievement in school curriculum areas aligned to the skills required for pathways in architecture. Architecture is a competitive discipline. It is crucial that target groups build the necessary skills and qualification profile to continue educational pathways and enter the profession. A key element of this is increasing understanding of the expectations and required skillsets. Supporting attainment, particularly through curriculum linked projects working with schools, colleges and community centres where possible.

We will provide pre-application support in the form of workshops and one to one support for target students. This will be advertised to the schools and colleges we work with, as well as through community groups and practice networks.

### **Outcomes sought**

**1.** Successful completion of recruitment targets for students from Adult HE, POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 areas and BAME learners.

**2.** Enhanced communications and provision of information effective for all target groups.

**3.** Greater learner confidence and heightened awareness about higher education, the LSA offer and opportunities available in the architecture profession.

**4.** Heightened learner ability to make informed choices about their HE pathway in architecture, with a secure understanding of academic study programmes and outcomes, entry requirements, progression criteria and industry expectations.

## **Strategy**

### **Information**

- 1.** Integrate outreach activity with marketing and recruitment activity, which currently primarily takes a word-of-mouth, networks and social media approach.
- 2.** Integrate feedback from stakeholders and partners into information and materials updates (see Strategic Measure 1), including feedback from students (see Student Collaboration section).
- 3.** Include social and other communications campaigns, particularly at the latter stages of outreach, which is a contextual consideration for the LSA given that we only currently offer Part 2 of the architectural education and therefore require ongoing progressive outreach work to span into HE Part 1 provision (years 1-3 of undergraduate education).
- 4.** Develop and review outreach information on an annual basis, and where practicable throughout the recruitment cycle.

### **Activities 2020-21 to 2023-24**

- 1.** During 2019-20 and over this plan, identify and develop new activity in response to targeted performance gaps, an increased understanding of good practice and what works in context.
- 2.** Deliver more regular outreach activities to an increased number of targeted FE/HE providers and schools with students from target groups (see Strategic Measure 1). Activity is informed by partner input and the results from evaluation practices.
- 3.** Increase the range of activities offered in outreach, developing appropriate formats for target underrepresented groups across different year levels, working towards the development of an enhanced, evidence-based activity menu.
- 4.** Work with target schools and colleges with target learners to deliver sessions for primarily Years 9 to 13 that will include a full range of relevant topics including architectural education pathways, the cost of study and financial support available and the skills required.
- 5.** Particularly for Year 10 to HE learners, deliver a range of on-campus architecture education tasters (Church and Kerrigan, 2011) and practice experiences for employment tasters.
- 6.** Provide opportunities for target learners (young and mature) to engage with current students, alumni ambassadors, staff and the Practice Network.
- 7.** Leverage connections with the architectural profession to provide specialist outreach activity that showcases the value of higher education in architecture pathways.
- 8.** Deliver discipline-specific enrichment with teachers and schools, and other relevant stakeholders, aligned to school learning outcomes and targeted at learners with interests related to architecture. To address target groups under this plan we will focus areas for support around career outcomes, employer experiences and prior educational disadvantage.
- 9.** Develop in 2019-20 a series of architecture-specific, skills-based workshops for delivery. These activities will also provide targeted



support for relevant subjects in schools, and seek to develop teachers' curriculum practice, knowledge about HE and the Part 2 course, the general LSA offer and experience, and the value of a degree and related career opportunities.

**10.** Provide intensive experiences and outreach with target learners. As a specialist provider, the LSA will align broader sessions and messages with specific focus on its offer and experience. This will provide the best chance of progress towards access milestones in this plan. Delivery will be provided by academic and practice experts to stimulate interest and support learning that develops confidence to consider otherwise unconsidered pathways of study (Action on Access, 2006).

### **Long-term/ongoing 2023-24 onwards**

**11.** Provide long-term, sustained engagement with target pupils. Activity is underpinned by partnerships (see Strategic Measure 1), building understanding of target learner barriers and disadvantage at the partner level (Banerjee 2018).

**12.** Monitor targets annually. This includes local schools and communities as well as national targeting for existing activity and the new outreach framework (spanning Y9 to HE learners). This will include targeting for online outreach campaigning.

**13.** In the longer term (from 2022-23), seek to increase engagement with a range of key influencers including teachers, parents and carers. The role of key influencers is particularly important, and best practice provides that they should be engaged in activity. Evidence suggests the biggest driver of student aspiration and achievement is parental expectation and support.

**14.** Over the longer-term, from 2023-24, use learning and experiences from our developing outreach practices to consider the further impact it might make on supporting and raising attainment in schools and colleges.

### **Evaluation measures**

- 1.** Measurement against targets for recruitment of students from Adult HE and POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 areas and BAME learners
- 2.** Student and partner staff surveys and feedback on activities
- 3.** Focus groups with students and school staff
- 4.** Evaluation feedback from student ambassadors, role models, staff and other stakeholders such as the Practice Network
- 5.** Progress tracking (where possible, in relation to more intensive/repeated activity)

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## **Strategic Measure Two**

### **Access – collaboration and partnerships**

Building on initial work in 2019-20, the LSA will seek to deepen existing and create new relevant partnerships with target schools, colleges, employers, communities and other organisations. These partnerships are critical in establishing early, sustained and impactful outreach programmes (OfS, 2018; OFFA, 2015; Moore, 2013). This measure relates to all the aims and targets in this plan as partners will be targeted for engagement with underrepresented groups.

We have been particularly inspired by the Greater London Authority's Good Growth by Design programme (Supporting Diversity Handbook, Mayor of London) which, 'recognises the need

for specific and practical guidance to address the lack of diversity in the built environment sector.’ This handbook provides research to show ‘a fairer, more inclusive built environment requires both a more diverse built environment workforce and better practices of inclusive design.’

The LSA will specifically seek to build a partnership with the Good Growth by Design programme and to align our access work with the calls to action in the handbook, which includes:

- A need to examine and act on barriers to greater diversity at every stage of a potential architect’s career
- Recognising that schools and careers services still lack an awareness of the career opportunities in the built environment, there is a need to provide professional development and raise awareness
- BAME communities report a low awareness of the range of career opportunities in built environment. This emphasises the vital role schools can play in introducing young people to the opportunities and possibilities of working in architecture and related professions, and the need for education providers to work together.
- Practices and practitioners should support mentoring initiatives and educational outreach programmes. They should become positive role models and provide insight into the profession.
- Work placement opportunities should be made accessible to harder to reach groups through both broad and targeted advertisement. The experience should be meaningful and lead to genuine development of relevant and varied skills.
- Opportunities should be created for schools local to projects to be involved as part of the design and delivery process.

Outcomes sought:

- Increased opportunities for networking and sharing good practice.
- Dissemination of LSA information and increased visibility and network to wider audiences.
- Provision of activity to harder-to-reach groups.
- Increased access to target learners for engagement through collaborative events.
- Ultimately, improvement in performance in target access areas, as identified under this plan.

## **Strategy**

### **Partnerships with schools and colleges**

- 1.** In 2020-21, target up to 5 schools and colleges for collaboration, using information about the numbers and proportions of students from underrepresented groups (using POLAR4, Pupil Premium, ESL data and other relevant targeting criteria).
- 2.** Develop effective partnerships with targeted schools and colleges, underpinned by process guidance provided by the Department for Education,<sup>8</sup> which highlights teaching, curriculum and leadership as key areas for collaboration.
- 3.** Establish links and knowledge exchange between school/college teachers and the LSA’s academic staff, supporting and enhancing the curriculum and teaching.
- 4.** Develop targeted activity responding to the target groups under this plan, aligned to school/college priorities for supporting learners from all backgrounds.

5. Develop communications, partnership process and activity model for rollout to target partners.
6. By 2020-21, select two schools/colleges for formal and more intensive partnership and activity; and up to 10 partner schools/colleges by 2024-25.

#### Partnerships with other stakeholders

1. In 2019-20, explore potential partnership arrangements with the City Hall's Regeneration Team and the Mayor's Design Advocates (MDAs), under the Good Growth by Design programme.
2. In 2019-20, consider a variety of organisations for potential collaborative activity, particularly those which are a good 'fit' with the LSA, for example London Higher, NCOP (Linking London), the Brilliant Club or Brightside. Some practice has already commenced, for example with IntoUniversity and the Social Mobility Foundation.
3. Ensure collaborative activity will be taking place on a regular basis with one or more organisations (by 2020-21) and further build collaborative partnership activity over the first three years of this plan.
4. Leverage our focus on industry and practice linkages to explore how the strategic development of employer partnerships can further contribute and be leveraged for outcomes in the outreach agenda.
5. Consider on an ongoing basis further potential partners and additional activity.

#### Evaluation measures

1. Number of collaborators and the strength of partnerships.
2. Engagements and activity accessed and delivered as a result of partnerships.
3. Learner, teacher and other stakeholder surveys and feedback.
4. Applications and enrolments from target learners who have been involved in collaborative activity (long-term goal due to current offer at Part 2 education).

## Strategic Measure Three

#### New academic programmes to widen access

The LSA recognises that a key component of widening access is developing undergraduate provision. We are currently actively investigating an accelerated degree programme for Part 1 architectural education with a view to launching for the 2021/22 intake (pending successful progression with a validating partner and the Architects Registration Board). We hope to recruit at least 20 students for the first year.

We are also interested in launching a foundation course for the built environment, which we hope to achieve within the life of this plan. This should actively recruit students from our target groups, building any skills gaps.

Meanwhile, other strategic measures in access as part of this plan, particularly working with schools, communities and partners, will start to build awareness and interest among target learners down the pipeline (from Y9). Market intelligence from these activities will inform the development of the course and its recruitment activity.

#### Evaluation measures

1. Course validation and implementation
2. Recruitment (applications, offers, enrolments) of target learners
3. Partner feedback and collaboration on process / design

# Strategic Measure Four

## **Positive transition and ongoing student success**

As determined by the performance assessment, while the LSA has found no material gaps and therefore is not setting targets in the success area, it is nevertheless committed that quality and outcomes are maintained across the life of this plan and beyond.

Considering the target groups in access and their potential barriers, the LSA has identified five change areas of practice in this measure, which will support ongoing excellence in performance outcomes and seek to ensure gaps do not emerge for target cohorts.

### **Admissions**

Fair and contextual approaches to admissions helps to reduce prior attainment as a potential barrier to admission, which is more likely experienced by target learners due to prior disadvantage. The LSA entry currently relies on successful completion of Part 1 architecture education, which limits the ability to implement full contextual processes. Expansion of course provision into undergraduate Part 1 architecture will mitigate this issue.

There are other demonstrated sector practices<sup>9</sup> that may be considered in ensuring LSA's admissions processes are otherwise formed by applicant context, such as consideration of additional information post qualification assessment. As a selecting institution the LSA can apply contextual practice at this stage based on assessment of prior disadvantage.

### **Transition**

Supporting transition is a critical part of effective practice, given that the transition-in-to-end-of-first-year phase of the lifecycle may be more challenging for target learners, who some research suggests may find it more difficult to establish a sense of belonging and/or confidence in participation (Kift, 2014; Leese, M., 2010).

The LSA recognises the potential challenges that its offer and entry requirements provide for target learners, particularly in terms of relative lack of understanding in schools and colleges about architecture as a discipline and accessibility of the profession.

These challenges are more likely to present for target learners from Adult HE Quintiles 1 and 2, POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 and BAME, given they are most likely to be in areas of educational or economic disadvantage, or have limited existing role models and professional networks. These challenges can follow target learners along their pathway, affecting transition and success.

As part of this measure, the LSA has therefore considered the transition-in area, identifying improvement and activity in the areas of admissions practices and building belonging and confidence.

### **Financial support**

We have previously offered financial support in the form of bursaries, with an annual pot of approximately £20,000p/a available. Bursaries have been provided through means-tested process via our bursaries committee, allocated to students who are in most financial need and who are achieving academically.

While we have not formally evaluated our financial support package (this will be undertaken from 2020-21, see below), anecdotal evidence from student feedback suggests that financial support is critical to target students effectively engaging with, and completing, their programme:

- *‘The bursary ensured that I could finish my studies, without it there was no way I could have been able to support myself to the end of the course. During the critical point of my studies, I could focus on my work.’* (LSA bursary recipient, 2016-2017)
- *‘The bursary allowed me to be part of a culture that will continue to shape me as a practitioner far beyond my two years of part 2 study at the LSA.’* (LSA bursary recipient, 2016-2017)
- *‘I come from a low-income, single-parent family. The bursary was critical in allowing me to focus on the academic pressures and ultimately to graduate with confidence.’* (LSA bursary recipient, 2016-2017)
- *‘I am enormously grateful for the difference this bursary has made, allowing me to continue my studies despite difficult circumstances and to fully engage with the exciting education opportunities offered by the LSA’s unique programme.’* (LSA second-year student)

Regular feedback from students (via student forums, for example) confirms the need for financial support. The LSA has also conducted ad hoc decliner follow-up calls, where some declining students have cited financial reasons for this.

We also consider broader sector research, which indicates that financial support helps students from lower-income and disadvantaged backgrounds to afford the costs of university, and particularly students moving to London and supports with costs related to travel and course materials, etc.

It also supports participation in the range of activities that promote belonging and mitigates students needing excessive part-time work which could impact attainment.

As we seek to diversify our intake, having targets for BAME and Adult HE, we consider that the provision of financial support will provide target students, who are more likely to be from lower-income backgrounds and have other commitments (mature learners), with the confidence and resources to consider and make the decision to enrol at the LSA, knowing that financial support is available to ensure affordability of, for example, moving into London or travel to campus costs or additional course materials costs. Financial resource also facilitates engagement with a range of social and transition activity, which helps to foster the critical sense of belonging, particularly relevant for under-represented groups. Provision of this support also reflects broader sector activity, putting the LSA on a more level playing field to attract target learners:

- *‘My bursary was instrumental in my place at the school – without which I would have turned down this offer for another London university which had awarded me a scholarship.’* (LSA bursary recipient, 2016-2017)

The LSA will provide a package of financial support to target students. A per-annum bursary of £1,000 will be available to students who are from Adult HE Quintiles 1 and 2 with a household income under £16,000. We have allocated the bursary pot based on our Adult HE target milestones, 2020-21 to 2024-25. However the following processes are also in place:

- We may use available money from the Hardship Fund (see below) to award additional bursaries, where deemed necessary.
- Should demand be less than then number of bursaries available,

any unallocated bursary funds can be reallocated into the Hardship Fund (see below).

We will provide additional funding as part of our Hardship Fund, to which students can apply for support (whether or not they have received a bursary). Hardship Fund allocations will be made on an individual basis, based on demonstrated financial need. These funds can supplement bursary allocations or provide financial support to students who do not meet the bursary criteria. Funds can be used to cover additional costs associated with an architecture course, such as model making and printing, to ensure successful participation in learning.

In 2020-21, we will design and implement a relevant evaluation process to assess the impact of its financial support package. The evaluation process will consider and apply relevant parts (e.g. the survey and/or interview elements) of OfS's Assessing the Impact of Financial Support toolkit. We will subsequently review our financial support package based on emerging evidence and anticipated changes to our intake as the new Part 1 course is delivered from 2021-22. For example, it is likely that the bursary model will need to include provision based on the POLAR4 measure. It is expected that this can be achieved by reallocating funding from the Hardship Fund, as well as allocation from additional higher fee income.

### **Holistic support**

Providing holistic support to ensure student wellbeing and development is critical to the student experience and helps to ensure students are retained and achieve well. Students from target backgrounds may present with particular barriers which require targeted support and development, and we will monitor data to ensure gaps in retention and attainment do not occur for target groups as intake diversifies.

We will continue to provide responsive support to ensure students succeed. Students are notified at the start of term about how to access support, and this information is duplicated in the student handbook. In 2019/20, we have appointed a wellbeing coach who provides ongoing support, both for individuals and groups working collaboratively. Support for disabled students is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The LSA pedagogy also encourages and facilitates peer support and teamwork, in open collaborative learning space where a supportive environment is part of the culture. Students also benefit and draw support from Practice Mentors in the Practice Network.

### **Inclusive curriculum**

The curriculum is inclusive and considers diverse learner perspectives and attributes. As part of our revalidation of the Part 2 programme with London Met, we assessed the curriculum against 32 questions to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive. Students have significant scope at this level for their interests to motivate self-directed study. As we develop our Part 1 programme, which will educate younger students, we will work to ensure that this curriculum is inclusive by conducting research such as focus groups. An alumni group has already been appointed and met to discuss the content of the Part 1.

Inclusive practice contributes to building a sense of belonging and engagement with the learning experience. We will ensure

developments to curriculum, courses, teaching, learning and assessment consider and integrate inclusive practice and principles. This area will be explored over 2019-20.

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## Strategic Measure Five

### **Progression – Integrated employability outcomes**

The LSA has an integrated employment model for current students, which naturally addresses a key concern of target groups regarding the value of a degree in terms of career outcomes<sup>10</sup> and has positive impact on attainment and retention outcomes.<sup>11</sup>

As previously noted, currently the LSA's Practice Network provides work-based learning and embedded mentoring for students throughout their studies. As well as addressing the issue of employability and progression at the outset of study, and ensuring excellence access to professional networks particularly for our target students who are less likely to have ready access to such professional and employer networks and experiences.

Fees and the costs of study are also offset by the salary students earn during their first year from an integrated 12-month work placement within the LSA's Practice Network.

Over 2019-20, the LSA will consider how practice in the employability and careers (progression) area maps into intended new course provision at Part 1 undergraduate. Existing networks of employers will be collaborative partners in designing a plan to ensure students on new courses are fully supported.

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## Strategic Measure Six

### **Improving data, monitoring and evaluation**

As a new provider the LSA has a range of current data limitations and commits to ensuring its capacity in data capture, collation, monitoring, analysis and application to practice is continually improved throughout the life of this plan and beyond. By December 2020, it is envisaged that key data gaps will be identified and processes for building capacity will be in place.

This strategic measure spans the whole lifecycle, and relates to all aims, objectives and targets in this plan.

### **Outcomes sought**

- 1.** Improved understanding of performance/gaps for underrepresented groups, including target student markets, experiences, barriers, and effective support and development measures
- 2.** Stronger data and evidence base in relation to nationally available datasets and the analyses of other providers
- 3.** Improved understanding of performance in context – what happens for our students?
- 4.** More effective targeting of activity, at individual learner and whole community/cohort level, to improve performance outcomes and ensure return on investment
- 5.** Greater ability to collate larger datasets to mitigate the limitations of small cohorts
- 6.** Enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity<sup>12</sup> across the lifecycle (see Evaluation Strategy section)
- 7.** Increased understanding of effective internal practices (success and progression measures) and external practices with partners (access measures).

### **Strategy**

- 1.** Alongside the identified gaps in data and capacity in the performance assessment in this plan, identify any further gaps and create a plan of action for improvement.
- 2.** Source and implement a data system to support enhanced data capability over the long-term.
- 3.** Collect qualitative data about the impact of the activity through student interviews and focus groups, as well as structured reflections from teaching staff.
- 4.** Standardise guides and data collection templates for consistency, quality control and efficiency.
- 5.** Build evaluation practice into new outreach activities from the outset.
- 6.** Integrate more data-driven and evaluation approaches into access and participation activities to support monitoring on and reflection of effectiveness of practice and return on investment.

### **Evaluation measures**

- 1.** Evidence of building data sets, used by our staff to inform practice
- 2.** Decisions are increasingly made on the basis of consistent, detailed and up-to-date data
- 3.** Staff feedback and participation in development of data across collection, collation, analysis and implementation.

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## **Strategic Measure Seven**

### **Increasing awareness, understanding and capacity**

As a very young provider, the LSA seeks to expand its understanding, capacity and awareness of the complex landscape of access and participation, and experience in contextualising sector data, knowledge, and best practices for LSA-specific development.

We have already made progress by involving the Board of Trustees, the Senate and the Executive Committee in the development of our access and participation direction, development, implementation and monitoring.

The development and implementation of the 2019-20 Access and Participation Statement and the production of this plan have started to increase awareness and understanding. This has required broad contribution from across the LSA, including staff, students and professional representatives.

We have engaged an advisor to help build immediate capacity and understanding. Already we have held a range of meetings with staff and students, as well as disseminating information through wider channels. The Board of Trustees has received a briefing on access and participation, which covered regulation, best practice and alignment to LSA strategic priorities.

This strategic measure relates to all aims, objectives and targets in this plan, as part of a whole-provider approach.

### **Outcomes sought**

- 1.** Raising understanding of the access and participation agenda internally with staff, students and the Practice Network
- 2.** Understanding performance gaps.
- 3.** Increased awareness of what is required at the LSA based on current performance, Theory of Change and good practice/research.
- 4.** Improved understanding of the LSA market in relation to increasing access for target groups, particularly as the LSA seeks to



develop its offer into the undergraduate space.

**5.** Contribution to the broader sector knowledge by sharing our experiences and evidence.

### **Strategy**

**1.** Continue to build expertise and provide internal briefings and updates on how the access and participation agenda applies in context, covering institutional considerations such as strategic alignment, practical examples of good practice, and how stakeholders can contribute.

**2.** Increase engagement and collaboration with students and professional partners (also see Strategic Measure 2 and the 3.2 Student Consultation).

**3.** Amend the terms of reference for the Board of Trustees, the Senate and the Executive Committee to include specific reference to responsibility for the access and participation agenda.

**4.** In 2019/20, develop the mechanisms to ensure continuous practice improvements, which includes gathering, receiving and developing understanding from others in the sector, including the OfS and Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO); and applying this understanding and evidence to the LSA's activity in context.

**5.** Roll out staff development, which in 2019-20 will include a series of workshops introducing access and participation and outreach strategy, rationale and good practice.

**6.** Undertake at least two pieces of market insight in the first three years of this plan specifically to address our target groups. Given our access performance gaps and our planned undergraduate offer, this will include key school stakeholders. Analysis of the results inform more effective practice.

### **Evaluation measures**

**1.** Evidence of a building understanding and awareness among staff.

**2.** Effective staff contributions, strategy and planning including access and participation considerations.

**3.** Informed and more effective decisions and practice improvements on the basis of deeper understanding and knowledge are being realised.

**4.** Staff participation in training and development and feedback on such.

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### 4.3 Student consultation

Due to the very small context of the LSA, its small, community premises and the collaborative, project-based nature of teaching and learning practice, engaging and consulting with students occurs as a matter of normal practice on daily bases. Student collaboration as a 'normal' operating environment for the LSA derives from our establishment, where students were key influencers and codevelopers our first years of operation.

Objectives under this plan are deepening student engagement and enabling meaningful student engagement<sup>13</sup> in the design of outreach practices and furthering collaboration and input into the developing student experience (academic, social and professional). Collaboration spans planning and development, delivery, evaluation and monitoring.

As part of the consultation process for this plan a range of students provided input and feedback, including students who are from Adult HE Quintile 1 and 2 areas and from BAME backgrounds. Student representatives, including alumni, note that further work can be done in partnership, particularly in the outreach area and in increasing the LSA's understanding of student concerns, challenges and expectations in study. In response to our student consultation, the LSA have:

- Committed to creating an action plan, in collaboration with student body representatives to explore how to strengthen student collaboration
- Included strengthened measures around access and our developing outreach programme, specifically including ensuring that target applicants get authentic experiences and good information about the Architecture sector and the careers available
- Included provision to strengthen data and evaluation that specifically helps LSA to better understand students and the student experience, including challenges and opportunities to improve practice. As part of this, an ongoing commitment to work in collaboration with students to analyse and contextualise data (qualitative analysis and feedback).
- Raiseawareness of access and participation, and the broader student experience, across the institution and in our practice network

More formally, student representatives on both the Course Forum and the Senate were involved in the development of this plan and will be involved in the iteration of future plans, and in delivery, evaluation and monitoring of plans.

The LSA and its students also work collaboratively in planning, delivery and evaluation of outreach work. For example, the LSA work in schools has been co-designed and delivered by student ambassadors. More broadly, the LSA's annual student survey and focus groups provide opportunities for students to provide additional feedback on courses, programmes and services.

Analyses and reports from the data in this survey is provided to teaching and professional staff, who are required to respond. The annual survey and feedback sessions are designed to specifically understand what students think about and experience in their study and practice at the LSA. Feedback from consultations is communicated via by email and through the formal committee structure. Student input is analysed and informs future practice.

As part of the collaboration and input to this plan, student representatives provided a number of general considerations for what successful collaboration and engagement would look like going forward. A more formal model will be further considered and agreed with students over 2019-20.

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#### 4.4 Evaluation strategy

In 2019-20 we will develop a full Evaluation Framework, which will include the evaluation approach we will develop over this plan and will be informed by OfS guidance in this area. The LSA will continue to design and develop an evaluation approach and capacity that:

- Is embedded in the organisation and part of a culture of evaluation.
- Is based on the collection and analysis of robust student data that aligns with regulator datasets.
- Generates a robust institution-specific evidence base of impacts, outcomes and value for money.
- Is designed to generate outcomes that feed into development and enhancement of its activities.
- Has a feedback and review process at its core, to ensure that our evaluation activity informs and is informed by our access activity.
- Draws on externally available research and evaluation outcomes to build broader evidence base.
- Draws on and is informed by the practice and outcomes of others across the HE sector.
- Generates outcomes that will be disseminated to sector colleagues, particularly those in similar small and specialist or new provider contexts.

We will continue to develop and enhance student data collection and monitoring to support analysis across the student lifecycle. In the immediate phases, because of small cohorts, we will not have access to statistically significant data, but we will begin to identify some correlations and suggested trends and will draw on OfS's and nationally available datasets and the analysis of other providers.

In 2019-20, we will also use the OfS evaluation assessment and standards of evidence to understand where current practice is positioned and to inform development of the evaluation framework.

##### **Evaluation design and implementation**

We will invest in infrastructure to support enhanced data capability over the long-term. Data capture systems will be developed to ensure continuous practice improvement and increasingly data-driven, evidence-based activity and monitoring, and support capacity for more effective evaluation.

As we build evaluation capacity over the life of this plan, most of the evaluations will be a combination of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical enquiry) approaches, as described in the Access and Participation Standards of Evidence. The initial approach to evaluating access activities will consist of pre-/post- questionnaire designs, qualitative data collection via participant interviews and focus groups, and stakeholder interviews (e.g. teachers, parents) and practitioner / student ambassador reflections.

Our initial approach to evaluating student success and progression activities will consist of monitoring assessment

outcomes at levels from individual level, to whole year and programme level, reflecting on student evaluation data with a focus on flagging areas that have implications for disparities in outcome, experience or attainment. The protocol for viewing this data will be shared with all relevant staff. The LSA will collect qualitative data about the impact of activity through student interviews and focus groups, as well as collecting structured reflections from teaching staff.

The LSA will make available the evaluation instruments used for each activity to relevant colleagues across the institution to ensure that thinking and best practice is available and consistent and feeds into a cycle of learning and development. Such documentation will include:

- Standardised and semi-standardised questionnaires annotated to indicate the purpose and use.
- A library of standardised questions, annotated to indicate their domain of reference and the purpose
- Interview and focus group guides and templates for self-reflection – annotated to outline context and outputs they were designed to deliver.
- Descriptions of other evaluation tools used – for example, descriptions of visual data collection methods used with younger pupils and evaluation tools for learning and teaching activities.

### **Evaluation measures summary**

The following summary provides the range of evaluation measures that the LSA will implement:

#### **All areas (institutional capability)**

- Clear progression of the access and participation agenda
- Annual milestones and five-year targets met
- Whole institution approach assessed through staff feedback and consultation
- New data provision rolled out to key stakeholders across the institution
- Stakeholders can make decisions on the basis of consistent, detailed and up-to-date data
- Staff focus group and survey feedback
- Collaboration arrangements with students are in place
- Formal feedback from student representatives reviewing how effective collaboration has been

#### **Access**

- Increased number of partner schools / colleges
- Increased number of pupil engagements
- Pre-/post- questionnaire for participants. Assessing initial rates of aspiration/expectation about HE progression, test awareness of HE and application process, test knowledge of financial aspects of HE progression
- Record of applications, offers and enrolments from partner schools
- Surveys and focus groups/ interviews with teachers and school/ college SLT
- Record of successful relationship building
- Increase in applications from target students

### **Transition-in**

- Introduction of contextual data processes
- Proportion of offers to target students
- Survey students to assess sense of belonging / transition process feedback
- Student engagement levels along the applicant pipeline

### **Success**

- NSS and/or other student survey on student experience and teaching, learning and assessment, by target groups and programmes
- Student satisfaction measures to assess academic engagement, learning and teaching
- Focus group with sample of target students to assess sense of belonging, relationship to pedagogic aspects of course and the LSA community
- Monitor support and development take-up and engagement by student demographic
- Focus group with participating students (support and development activities)
- Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment
- Regular review of student satisfaction survey – increased response rate

### **Progression**

- Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment or entering graduate studies
- Student survey results and feedback on careers and employability support provision (satisfaction)
- Students progressing into employment with employers in the Practice Network, and with employers with whom they have had contact or experience through their studies

### **Learning to shape improvement**

The LSA is establishing a recurrent feedback cycle to ensure that evaluation measures are applied back into practice and theories of change. By reflecting on the impact of evaluation outcomes the LSA will ensure that they are meaningful, useful and informative to practitioners and support development and improvement of interventions.

The LSA will continue to work with and draw on the expertise of external agencies and third sector organisations to expedite activity-specific evaluation frameworks, establishing Theory of Change and undertaking literature reviews to draw on existing expertise and good practice across the sector.

The LSA also endeavours to share its learning and outcomes, contributing to network and sector discussion. It anticipates its learning and evaluation outcomes will be particularly useful for other small and/or specialist providers.

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## **4.5 Monitoring progress**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the monitoring progress and delivery of this plan.

They will work closely with the Executive Committee, which reports directly to the Board of Trustees at least three times a year. The Committee will meet as a minimum three times per year to

develop, track and monitor practice and outcomes. The Director will monitor expenditure in relation to the plan and will also monitor risk as well as performance outcomes.

The Executive Committee will track, evaluate and enable sharing of best practice and strengthening of future activities. From 2019-20, the LSA is increasing monitoring and reporting on access and participation activity, and the Executive Committee will receive reports from staff and other key stakeholders and will oversee progress.

This reporting is supplemented by overall monitoring of institutional data as part of the annual programme monitoring cycle. As data and monitoring capability improves over the longer term, the LSA will increasingly develop a better understanding of how target student outcomes compare to their peers.

A formal reporting and planning model will be developed in 2019-20, for full implementation from 2020-21 onwards. This will be led by the Executive Committee to ensure consistency and quality in building a comprehensive annual programme monitoring regime.

If it is discovered that progress is worsening in any area, the LSA, via the Executive Committee will deploy its resources (including any necessary additional expertise or resource) to targeting improvement in specific areas, accelerating action and, where required, drawing from additional sector best practice and further analyses ('deep dives') on internal data to understand and address performance.

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#### **4.6 Provision of information to students**

The LSA is committed to publishing clear, accurate, timely and accessible information for existing and prospective students on fees and financial support. This commitment extends to the provision of information on fees and financial support to UCAS and the Student Loans Company. This information, including the fees students will be charged for the duration of their course, is contained on our website.

If a student is offered a place to study at the LSA, information on fees for the duration of the course, and any awarded financial support is included in the offer letter, as well as details on the bursary scheme and how to apply. Further information on payment plans is contained in the offer letter.

This plan will be put onto the LSA's website and distributed electronically to all staff.

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#### **Endnotes**

1. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/student-survey-only-the-rich-need-apply-to-study-architecture/10033472.article?blocktitle=NEW-HOMEPAGE-BIG-PIC&contentID=19632>
2. <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/RIBA-Student-Destinations-Survey/Additional-Documents/REPORTRIBASStudentDestinationsSurvey2015pdf.pdf>
3. <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/RIBA-Student-Destinations-Survey/Additional-Documents/REPORTRIBASStudentDestinationsSurvey2016pdf.pdf>
4. <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/RIBA-Student-Destinations-Survey/Additional-Documents/REPORTRIBASStudentDestinationsSurvey2017pdf.pdf>
5. E.g. Atherton and Mazhari 2019a; Atherton and Mazhari 2019b; Harrison and McCaig 2015)
6. Department for Education, 2017-18 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/757922/Children\\_looked\\_after\\_in\\_England\\_2018\\_Text\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757922/Children_looked_after_in_England_2018_Text_revised.pdf)
7. Learning and Work Institute (2017) Building Successful Careers: Employer guide to supporting care leavers in the workplace.
8. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-school-partnerships/guide-to-setting-up-partnerships>

9. See for example, the Centre for Social Mobility, Exeter University (2018) Research into use of contextual data in admissions.
10. Redmond, P. (2006). Outcasts on the inside: Graduates, employability and widening participation. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 12(2), 119-135; Budd, R. (2017). Disadvantaged by degrees? How widening participation students are not only hindered in accessing HE, but also during, and after, university. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 21(2-3), 111-116; Andrewartha, L., & Harvey, A. (2017). Employability & student equity in higher education: Role of university careers services. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 26(2), 71-80.
11. Turner, N. (2014). Development of self-belief for employability in higher education: Ability, efficacy and control in context. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(6), 1-11.
12. 'Use of data, evaluation and feedback' is one of the four areas the approach used by 'What Works?2' Model of Working <https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf>
13. OfS Regulatory Advice 6: Co-designing approaches with students enables them to meaningfully engage in their own higher education experience.