Royal Veterinary College
Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is one of the foremost providers of veterinary education and training in the world. Based across two campuses in central London and in Hertfordshire, we provide degrees in veterinary medicine, veterinary nursing and biosciences at undergraduate level and a range of postgraduate qualifications across similar disciplines, with a total student population of approximately 2500 (75% UG, 25% PG). Recognised as a world-leading specialist provider, the RVC has been ranked the top veterinary school in the world in the QS World University Rankings by subject for the past four consecutive years (2021-2024).

With a world-wide and world class reputation, the RVC believes diversity to be a fundamental pillar of its institutional structure and its educational commitment. The RVC Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026, clearly states that our educational mission makes the RVC unique in its standalone and specialist nature, and that our sustainability is to be found in the young people who come to us for education, training and, ultimately, careers. Our Strategic Plan endorses a portfolio approach to the recruitment of students from a diverse range of backgrounds and it places student success at the forefront of our ambitions. Our programmes prepare students to progress into their chosen professions to address local, national and international challenges in a rapidly changing world, joining a diverse community of lifelong learners.

At the heart of our Strategic Plan is our aim to advance equality, diversity, and inclusivity throughout the RVC and we strongly believe that students from every background should be able to benefit from the transformative experience of higher education. Our 2020-2024 Access & Participation Plan (APP) committed to closing a series of access gaps, particularly in IMD and POLAR4 quintiles 1, and in underrepresented ethnicities. We have succeeding in doing this through a range of initiatives, which we will maintain and develop. This APP 2025-2028 focuses on new and developing interventions.

As a major provider to candidates seeking to enter specific veterinary professions, as well as biosciences disciplines that have a shortage of skilled workers in the UK, the RVC recognises it has both educational and societal duties. Our offering presents unique challenges in increasing participation for underrepresented groups with the veterinary profession itself lacking diversity; only 3.5% of UK registered veterinary surgeons and 1.9% UK of registered veterinary nurses are from minority ethnic backgrounds (RCVS, 2020[1]), compared to 19% of the national population. It is, therefore, imperative for the RVC to strive harder and further in its strategic mission to be a university that opens career pathways to elite veterinary medical and scientific professions to underrepresented groups, thereby contributing to increasing diversity in those professions.

Deep rooted perceptions and stereotypes surrounding veterinary careers, combined with highly specialised subject areas attracting small numbers of interested and qualified applicants, means that the pool of underrepresented groups is further diminished. Preconceptions and a lack of role models makes increasing this pool exceptionally challenging. As well as educating young people to a high and demanding standard, we must, therefore, also convince prospective students and their advisors that the veterinary and scientific professions are open to them and not based on class or social background. In this APP, we are continuing to address issues of access in relation to risks identified in the EORR and

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[1] The 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Profession & The 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession. RCVS 2020.

highlighted in our own analysis. In addition, we extend our activities and interventions to include student success and progression risks.

As a small institution with large clinical overheads, we need to be astute regarding our financial priorities. Given, however, the emphasis which we place on the need to be open and supportive to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, we clearly understand the importance of financial support for such cohorts. This, along with our planned interventions and activities, demonstrates that our APP 2025-2028 reflects the highest level of commitment embedded within a whole institutional approach, acknowledging its importance and integration within the RVC Strategic Plan .

Risks to equality of opportunity

To identify the risks to equality of opportunity for RVC students and to develop the objectives and interventions to mitigate these risks, we have used both internal and external evidence. As our student population is small, most of our metrics are suppressed in external datasets due to low denominator numbers, requiring us to undertake a more significant investment in effort to reconstruct and analyse data that is available to other providers through the OfS Access and Participation dashboard. Small student numbers require us to aggregate data over multiple years and also prevents us from undertaking meaningful intersectional analysis.

Evidence used:

1. Review of the risks at the sector level within the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).
2. Access and Participation dashboard (full RVC data is only available for the Access phase).
3. Internal rebuild of data and creation of dashboards (Continuation, Attainment, Completion and Progression).
4. Other internal data regarding the student lifecycle.

The full analysis of our data can be found in Assessment of Performance (Annex A) of this plan.

Risk 1 - despite improving overall ethnic diversity over the lifetime of the RVC APP 2020-24, there remains a lower proportion of black and minority ethnic (BAME) students admitted to the RVC compared to the Higher Education (HE) sector. One reason is that our core Veterinary Medicine course attracts lower interest and has lower professional representation from these groups. Application numbers from these groups are low which, in addition to social traditions and influences, may be due to lower prior attainment within some minorities and a lower awareness of the veterinary profession and/or the RVC.

Risk 2 - there is a lower proportion of students admitted to the RVC who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) compared to the sector. As FSM form part of the ABCS metric, we anticipate this also contributes to gaps in this metric. The reasons for this are lower prior attainment, low awareness of HE and limited information and guidance resulting in low application and conversion rates.

Risk 3 - there are lower attainment rates for FSM students compared to the sector. This may be due to a combination of lower prior attainment, financial pressures requiring students to undertake more paid work, and difficulties in approaching support services.

Risk 4 - there are lower completion rates for students from TUNDRA Q1 compared to students from higher socio-economic groups (Q5) at the RVC. This is bigger than the sector TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1 gap. Students from these backgrounds may find it harder to approach support services and typically have financial pressures. This could be exacerbated by the RVC's London location, the need to travel for placement activities as part of their studies and limited time for employment whilst studying due to programme demands.

Risk 5 - RVC students with mental health disabilities experience better completion and progression compared to students with mental health disability in the sector. There are, however, notable gaps in attainment with the sector. There are also notable completion and progression gaps compared to non-

disabled students at the RVC. The reasons for this are complex and include timely access to formal mental health treatment. They may be exacerbated by the stress of long courses, financial pressures and other issues identified in Risk 4 above.

Risk 6 - RVC students from ABSCS Q1 have lower progression rates compared to students from higher socio-economic groups (Q5) at the RVC. While this is not higher than the sector gap, it is a notable gap within the RVC. Evidence from the sector indicates that lack of social capital and limited access to professional networks and connections may make it more difficult to secure graduate jobs.

Objectives

We will mitigate against the six identified risks through the following objectives.

Objective 1: To increase the percentage of those eligible for free school meals (FSM) and from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups enrolling at the RVC by 2028/29, by providing high quality advice, guidance, and support and to change perceptions of HE and the veterinary professions.

Objective 2: To increases completion and attainment rates for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds so that they are similar to the equivalent groups in the sector by 2028/29, through targeted academic, personal and financial support.

Objective 3: To increase completion and attainment rates for students with a mental health disability so that they are more similar to students without a disability at the RVC by 2028/29, through enhanced wellbeing, mental health and disability support services and flexible learning provision.

Objective 4: To improve progression for ABCSQ1 students compared to Q5 at the RVC and also students with mental health disabilities compared to those without a disability at the RVC, through supporting the development of a wide range of transferable employability skills.

Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes

Access Initiatives

Intervention strategy 1: Objectives and targets
Student lifecycle stage(s): Access

Objective 1: To increase the percentage of those eligible for free school meals (FSM) and from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups enrolling at the RVC by 2028/29, by providing high quality advice, guidance, and support and to change perceptions of HE and the veterinary professions.

Students from underrepresented groups regularly experience a lack of information, guidance, and support when applying to veterinary medicine. They often have no direct networks to develop an informed understanding of the profession or to gain experiences that will be both beneficial and are required as a part of the application process. They are often under-supported through the application process, particularly around interviews, but also in terms of awareness of the support, both financial and pastoral, available to them.

Targets

- PTA-1: Raise enrolments from FSM applicants to the RVC from 12.9% to 17.9%. We aim to increase by approximately 1.25% per year on average over the four-year period of this APP.

- PTA_2: Raise enrolments of BAME applicants to the RVC from 18.4% to 21.4%. We aim to increase by approximately 0.75% per year on average over the four-year period of this APP.

Risks to equality of opportunity.

Intervention Strategy One aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for students from low socio-economic groups and underrepresented ethnicities to access the RVC.
This addresses RVC specific risks 1 and 2 and the following EORR risks:

Risk 1 - Knowledge and Skills: the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto a higher education course that matches students' expectations and ambitions, including low prior attainment.

Risk 2 - Information and Guidance: lack of opportunity to receive information and guidance that enables students to develop ambitions and expectations and make informed choices about HE options.

Risk 3 - Perception of HE: students may not feel able to apply due to financial or family circumstances or due to perceptions.

Risk 4 - Application Success Rates: students may not be accepted onto a HE courses despite equal qualifications due to high applicant numbers or admissions requirements

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Scholars Programme – new. We will deliver a programme providing underrepresented students with the knowledge, skills, confidence, experience, and insight required to make successful applications to vet school, and particularly the RVC's BVetMed programme. • Target x10 year 12 students who are eligible for FSM and/or from a BAME background. • 18-month programme with a face to face and online programme of interventions (x9 sessions in year 1 and x8 session in year 2). • Associated expenses for attendees reimbursed. • Receive applications from 50% of attendees and enrol 20%. We will collaborate with; RVC Teachers Network, schools, Science Partners (Camden's Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) programme, Knowledge Quarter & ZSL) to endorse and promote to their audiences.	Staff*:* • Widening Participation professionals: 0.6FTE • Support from other professional, clinical, and farming professionals (voluntary) • Student Ambassadors £4,200 (2 cohorts) • Financial other per annual cohort: • Running costs (18-month programme) £15,200 • £3,000 annual scholarship on course (max 10 x 4yr =£120,000) **Total costs (excl. staff time): £139,400 per annual cohort.**	Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants applying to the RVC. An increased likelihood of successful application to vet school/the RVC. Increased sense of fit and belonging at the RVC/within HE.	**Myth busting** **GCSE Science Attainment** **Work Experience**
GCSE Science Attainment Project – extend current pilot. A dual programme aiming to improve grades for pupils working at Grade 3. We will evaluate our pilot that started in	Staff: • Widening Participation professionals: 0.9FTE	Greater understanding of the subject areas covered. Increased metacognitive skills including greater understanding of revision and study techniques and how to apply them.	**Myth busting**

2023/24 and evolve/improve to continue to deliver: - **Face to face delivery** of a revision programme in two schools with metrics demonstrating a high proportion of underrepresented pupils, through a weekly tutoring programme for approx. 30 pupils per school. - **Live, online, revision programme** to reach underrepresented pupils across the country. Open to all. Target a minimum of 5% eligible for FSM and 15% with BAME backgrounds. - **Training** for tutors who are lecturers and clinical staff (volunteers) and paid students (PG and UG) to deliver these activities. We are collaborating with: *Awarding bodies* - Pearson (Edexcel science specialists) - AQA via Marking Team Leaders - Knowledge Resource providers - Royal Society of Biology - Institute of Physics - Royal Society of Chemistry *WP networks, science outreach centres and organisations* - The Elephant Group - Causeway Education - Science Creates - Science Oxford - The Francis Crick Institute - London Biosciences Innovation Centre	- Digital communications professional: 0.1FTE - Ambassadors and tutors £8,000 per annum - Financial other per annum: £4,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time) £12,000pa**	Increased motivation. Improved study and exam skills. Increased awareness of higher education and the benefits/opportunities of progressing to HE. Improved attainment at individual pupil level (evidenced through predicted grade vs achieved) and at school level. Teacher feedback indicates initial positive improvement in performance level of pupils.	

Work Experience Provision – new. Set up a pilot scheme that will provide students from key underrepresented groups with the work experience necessary to enrol with the RVC (which has specialist veterinary requirements). The pilot will run for an initial period of two years utilising our own professional environments. We will evaluate at this point and based on these findings, extend to ask our alumni to support this endeavour. **Target:** up to 20 students enrolled in the scheme per admissions cycle (year). We will collaborate with: • RVC teaching hospitals and farm • RVC alumni	Staff: • Widening Participation professionals: 0.4FTE • Admissions Professionals: Grade 5 x 0.25 FTE • Support from clinical and farming professionals (voluntary) • Student Ambassadors £2,650 per annum • Financial other per annum: £4,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time): £6,650pa**	Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants applying to the RVC. Improved confidence in course choice and sense of belonging within HE/the RVC. Improved progression from application to offer and enrolment for underrepresented applicants. Reduced numbers of underrepresented applicants rejected for insufficient work experience.	**Myth busting** **Scholars Programm**
Myth busting awareness campaign – new Create and deliver a far-reaching promotional campaign which aims to dispel the myths of who vets and vet nurses are, what careers they can have and who can be a vet or a vet nurse. Target and measure multi-media engagement including: • Social media • Printed and display materials • Print and digital media outlets/public relations • Personal endorsements and events. Total engagement to 5,000 individuals over the APP period.	Staff: • Marketing professionals: 0.2 FTE • Financial other per annum, £10,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time): £10,000pa**	Improved awareness of the varying routes to studying/practicing veterinary medicine. Teachers, careers advisers and other influencers have a greater understanding of the routes to veterinary medicine and are better placed to advise. Greater promotion of our Veterinary Gateway course. Improved awareness of the varying careers a qualified veterinarian can follow. Increased engagement from underrepresented groups at RVC events such as Open Days and Open Houses.	

Key audiences: • Prospective students • Parents/supporters • Peers • Teachers and careers advisors We will collaborate with: • The media • RVC alumni • RVC students • The veterinary sector – including accreditor and membership groups • RVC Teachers Network		Increased engagement from underrepresented groups in *RVC for Me (communications for prospective students)* Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants applying to the RVC.	
Pre-interview support programme – expand. This initiative is designed to give interviewees from underrepresented backgrounds a range of supportive opportunities to engage with the student-selection process including: • Online webinars/Q&A sessions for applicants • Online webinars/Q&A sessions for parents/guardians • In-person activities that provide interview insight to develop confidence and skills that will help applicants fulfil their potential. • In-person information sessions for parents/guardians We will collaborate with: • RVC staff • RVC students • RVC alumni and other veterinary professionals	*Staff:* • Admissions Professionals: 0.35 FTE • *Financial other per annum:* £5,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time): £5,000pa**	Increased confidence in own ability to succeed. Increased awareness of the interview process and how it works. Parents/supporters have an increased awareness of the process and can support the participant through the process. Participants approach interview stations logically and calmly and are therefore able to perform at their best. Participants perform better at interview and score highly. Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants receiving offers to study at the RVC.	

Free School Meals travel support programme – new. Launch a programme to increase the accessibility and access to RVC events for students eligible for free school meals by offering financial support to cover travel costs. Target: Aim to support up to 75 students and their parent/guardian (x1) attend at least one event.	Staff: - Widening Participation Professionals: 0.15 FTE - Financial other per annum: £10,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time): £10,000pa**	Improved attendance from underrepresented groups at speculative events (Open Day / Open Houses) Better understanding of application processes and requirements Increased understanding of university life Better understanding of career options Improved data capture Greater awareness of characteristics of enquirer/applicant cohort	
Animal Aspirations (AA) - develop. Provide professional advice, administrative and financial support for student-led EDI initiative which started at the RVC and now has a nationwide network aimed to encourage BAME pupils into animal related studies and careers including veterinary science. **Target:** To increase and encourage ethnic diversity within veterinary medicine and other animal related careers by delivering up to 40 workshops to annually engage with 2,000 students.	Financial other per annum: £10,000 **Total costs (excl. staff time): £10,000pa**	AA can continue to operate the RVC chapter The AA RVC chapter contributes to national initiatives.	

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy 1: £1,638,000 over the 4-year plan, including staff and non-staff costs.

Summary of evidence base and rationale: Each of these interventions were developed using institutional and sector data, evaluation of existing activities and in consultation with our networks. See Appendix B for more detail.

Evaluation

We will review each activity annually however, due to the nature of some of the interventions, we are unlikely to be able to report or evidence conclusive outcomes until they have become established over several years. For some activities we are aspiring to deliver causal, Type 3, evidence. However, in most cases this will be subject to establishing sufficiently sized datasets for comparison and we recognise that, given the small size of the RVC, this could be challenging.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Scholars Programme	• Participants apply to the RVC and/or other vet schools • Increased offer rates and conversion from offer to enrolment	• Monitoring of application and conversion rates between participant and non-participant groups (Type 2). • Pre & post comparison surveys to monitor activity progress/success (Type 2). • Heat Tracking of progression to HE (Type 2).	Published on our *RVC for All* webpages. Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) Student Development Committee (SDC) Equality and Diversity Committee (EDI) Scholarship Committee (SC) Academic Board (AB)
GCSE Science Attainment Project	• Greater understanding of the subject areas covered. • Increased motivation and improves study/exam skills. • Increased awareness of higher education and the benefits/opportunities of progressing to HE.	• Pre and post comparison surveys to monitor activity progress/success (Type 2).	Published on our *RVC for All* webpages. Shared with schools involved and RVC Teachers Network Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) Student Development Committee (SDC)
	• Improved attainment at individual pupil level (evidenced through predicted grade v achieved) and at school level.	• Tracking of participants' KS4 achievements v predicted performance (Type 2).	

	• Teacher feedback indicates initial positive improvement in performance level of pupils.	• Pre and post comparison surveys with teachers (Type 1 & 2).	Equality and Diversity Committee (EDI) Academic Board (AB)
Work Experience Provision	• Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants applying to the RVC and progressing from application to offer and enrolment. • Increased applications to the Gateway course from underrepresented applicants. • Reduced numbers of underrepresented applicants rejected for insufficient work experience.	• Pre & post comparison surveys to monitor participants perceptions (Type2). • Monitoring of application and conversion rates between participant and non-participant groups (Type 2). • Comparison of application and conversion rates, using HEAT, for those who are accepted onto the programme v those who are not (Type 2 & 3). • Monitoring of application, offer and conversion rates from scheme applications (Type 2). • Improved applicant confidence in their choice of subject and ability to succeed on course.	Published on our *RVC for All* webpages. Results shared with the veterinary sector as appropriate. Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) Student Development Committee (SDC) Equality and Diversity Committee (EDI) Academic Board (AB)
Mythbusting Awareness Campaign.	• Improved awareness of the various routes and requirements to studying/practicing veterinary medicine and the careers a qualified veterinarian can follow. • Teachers, careers advisers and other influencers have a greater understanding of the routes and requirements to veterinary medicine and are better placed to advise.	• Review and quantitative/qualitative analysis of engagement statistics provided by systems (Type 1). • Pre and post comparison surveys from event attendees, including vs those who did not attend (Type 2 & 3, depending on data availability).	Published on our *RVC for All* webpages. Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) Student Development Committee (SDC) Equality and Diversity Committee (EDI)

	• Increased engagement from underrepresented groups at RVC events such as Open Days and Open Houses. • Increased engagement from underrepresented groups in RVC for Me. • Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants applying to the RVC.	• Heat Tracking of progression to HE for those who sign up to newsletters and attend events (Type 2). • Monitoring attendance rates at events (Type 1).	Academic Board (AB) Shared with RVC Teachers Network.
Pre-interview Support Programme	• Increased confidence in own ability to succeed. • Increased awareness of the interview process and how it works. • Participants approach interview stations logically and calmly. • Participants perform well at interview and score highly. • Increased numbers of underrepresented applicants receiving offers to study at the RVC. • Parents/supporters can support the participant through the process.	• Monitoring and analysis of interview performance between participant and non-participant groups (Type 2, potentially type 3 long-term, depending on availability of sizeable applicant pools). • Pre & post comparison surveys to monitor activity progress/success (Type 2). • Monitoring of offer and conversion rates between participant and non-participant groups (Type 2).	Published on our *RVC for All* webpages. Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) Student Development Committee (SDC) Equality and Diversity Committee (ED) Academic Board (AB)
Free School Meals Travel Support Programme.	• Benefits from attendance at events. • Improved attendance from underrepresented groups at speculative events (Open Day/Open Houses). • Improved data capture and ability to provide ongoing information and support.	• Monitoring levels of engagement with the scheme and attendance at events from those eligible for FSM (Type 1 & 2). • Surveys to determine perceived value of the scheme (Type 1). • Heat Tracking of progression to HE by participants in the scheme (Type 2). • Monitoring of enquiry, application, offer and conversion rates from those who	

	• Greater awareness of characteristics of enquirer/applicant cohort	received funding v those who did not. (Type 2).	
Animal Aspirations	• AA can continue to operate the RVC chapter. • The AA RVC chapter contributes to national initiatives	• Monitoring of rates of engagement/attendance in activities. (Type 1).	Published on Animal Aspirations webpages.

Intervention 1 - Summary of publication plan (for all activities):

We will publish evaluation reports at various internal RVC committees as listed in the evaluation table above. In addition, they will be made publicly available through a number of external channels including:

- *RVC for All is a section on our website designed to provide information around access and widening participation. There is a clearly signposted specific section for the Access and Participation Plan and our evaluation reports will be added there: https://www.rvc.ac.uk/study/rvc-is-open-for-all/access-and-participation*

These pages are actively promoted in communications with prospective students and their advisors through a variety of means including face to face and online events, print, newsletters and updates.

- *The RVC Teachers Network is a group of teachers with whom we regularly engage both on and offline to provide information relevant to their students who might be interested in studying at the RVC. We actively promote interventions relating to recruiting underrepresented students within our communications with this group and this will include our evaluation as it becomes available.*
- *We will share the results of our evaluation with the veterinary sector through a variety of means including through our engagement with the Vets School Council.*
- *Animal Aspirations will be able to share news of their interventions and associated evaluation on their website https://www.animalaspirations.com/*

Success initiatives

Intervention strategy 2: Objectives and Targets

Student lifecycle stage(s): Success

Objective 2: To increases completion and attainment rates for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds so that they are similar to the equivalent groups in the sector by 2028/29, through targeted academic, personal and financial support.

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may need specific kinds of support (academic, personal, financial) to support completion and attainment on our highly demanding professionally accredited programmes. Students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds may also have financial pressures. These may be exacerbated due to RVC's London location, the need to travel for placement activities as part of their studies and limited time for employment due to programme demands.

A key aspect of all of our intervention strategies to address equality of opportunity risk, is developing an understanding of the specific obstacles faced by different groups of students, using internal data dashboard so we can continue to assess what kind of targeted support (academic, personal, financial, mental health and careers) that would be most beneficial for specific groups of students.

Targets:

- PTS_1 Reduce the attainment gap between RVC students who were in receipt of FSM and those who were not, from 16.1pp to 12.1pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 1pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.
- PTS_2 Reduce the completion gap between TUNDRA Q5 and Q1 RVC students at the RVC from 8.2pp to 5.0pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 0.8pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention Strategy two, aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for students from low socio-economic groups to succeed in their studies at the RVC addressing RVC specific risks 3 and 4 and the following EORRs:

EORR Risk 6: Insufficient academic support. This may contribute to low continuation, completion, and attainment rates; lower agreement rates to survey questions around feeling part of community and reflections on graduate outcomes; and lower progression rates to employment or further study.

EORR Risk 7: Insufficient personal support. This may contribute to low continuation, completion, and attainment rates; lower agreement rates to survey questions around feeling part of community; and lower progression rates to employment or further study.

EORR Risk 10: Cost pressures. Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Intervention 2 - Activities	Inputs	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention Strategy
Increase ability to understand RVC students through the use of data dashboards for all activities - expanding The RVC will continue to review student uptake, feedback and outcomes associated with all success initiatives to continue to refine and target them as part of an overall strength-based approach. This will increase understanding and use of demographic data in identifying at-risk students for targeted and timely support interventions.	• Data analytics developer time: 0.01 FTE	• Comprehensive data dashboard system in place • Ability to monitor impact of interventions and target specific groups of students iteratively • Development of further targeted interventions	Yes, applicable to all interventions in terms of understanding our students and providing targeted support. (Int 3 &4)
Gateway Support programme- expanding The Gateway programme is a widening participation initiative to improve access to veterinary medicine for students from low socio-economic groups (including TUNDRA Q1 and FSM) and other underrepresented backgrounds. The Gateway support programme, a recently introduced year-long module, provides a comprehensive programme of activities to enhance social, personal and academic skills to ensure students are well-equipped to complete their programme and attain good grades We will continue to develop activities and tutoring support for this programme to ensure that Gateway students develop personal	• Study skills team: 1.0 FTE for Gateway support • Data analytics developer time: 0.01 FTE	• Greater sense of belonging and community engagement among students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds • Enhanced attainment and completion rates for, TUNDRA Q1 and FSM students. • Students report increased academic confidence and higher skill level. • Staff report greater evidence of academic skill in assessments and greater confidence in teaching academic skills.	Yes, relates to transferable employability skills (Int 4) and mental health (Int 3) Mental Health Charter (MHC) 2, MHC12

resilience and the necessary academic and professional skills. We will analyse the relationship between achievement on the Gateway support programme and student outcomes to establish how it contributes to student success in later years of the programme.			
Develop tutoring support using data to understand student engagement and needed support - new Develop new ways to monitor student engagement and to provide this information to tutors in the form of dashboards. Tutor dashboards will allow tutors to make referrals to the support services and for the support services to track and follow-up. We will also undertake a wider analysis of the engagement data to identify at-risk students and if there are patterns within our specific target groups.	• Data analytics developer time: • 0.01 FTE • Digital Learning team time: • 0.1 FTE • Educational Development team time : 0.1 FTE • Tutoring time	• Enhanced completion and attainment rates for target groups. • Greater sense of belonging. • Students report feeling more confident to seek support when needed. • Staff report being able to identify at-risk students and signpost to appropriate support.	Yes, relates to wellbeing (Int 3) MHC2, MHC4, MHC11
Peer Support initiatives to focus on personal and academic skills development **Student Success Coaches (SSC) - new** Current PhD students will be trained as Student Success Coaches to help students to develop personal/academic skills in 2 pathways: 1/ Time Management and 2/ Responding to Feedback. Students will be coached through tasks to develop skills in each pathway. Success is measured by how much improvement in and awareness of skills at the conclusion of the pathway.	• Data analytics developer time: • 0.01 FTE • Study skills team time: 0.4 FTE • Digital Learning team time: 0.4 FTE • Student Success coaches time:	• Active participation and establishment of student success coaches as peer support. • Active participation and establishment of Digital Skills Journeys as part of overall digital skills development supported by peers • Students report increased belonging and feel supported to develop routines to create a	Yes, relates to transferable employability skills (Int 4) MHC2, MHC4, MHC11 MHC15, MHC17

SSCs will work with students from target groups.

Digital Learning Champions - expanding
Student from each cohort offer support to develop digital skills needed as part of each programme of study. Students assess their digital skills during induction and complete activities as part of a Digital Skills journey of transferable digital employability skills.

Data will be analysed from both peer support initiatives to understand how they contribute to student success in target groups. | Annual cost of £10,000

• Digital Skills Champions time: Annual cost of £10,000 | sustainable experience at university.

• Students report increased self-esteem and feeling comfortable and confident in developing good personal connections with peers.

• Students develop an awareness of personal and digital skills and become independent in skills development including transferable employability skills.

• Enhanced attainment and completion rates for target groups. | |
| **Review and development of skills-based approach to transition into RVC including asynchronous and on-campus events - existing**

The RVC's induction includes asynchronous elements (KickStart) and on-campus elements (Welcome Week and 5 Ways to BE Well) RVC will continue to develop these elements to focus on the digital, personal, study and wellbeing skills needed to support a successful transition into HE environment. We will focus on the reflective development of co-curricular skills to run in parallel to the professional skills developed in our UG programmes of study. | • Digital learning team time & Educational Development team time: 1.0 FTE

• Data analytics developer time: 0.01 FTE | • Greater sense of belonging and community engagement among students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

• Increased sense of student agency regarding co-curricular skills development needed to thrive in HE.

• Students report feeling more confident to seek support when needed. | Yes, relates to wellbeing and belonging. Also relates to transferable employability skills development. (Int 3 and 4)

All MHC themes. |

Although applicable to all students, we will specifically support our target groups to engage and ensure they do not suffer from inequity due to lack of access to resources (digital poverty) and associated skills.			
Review bursaries, hardship funds and financial education especially related to demanding professional courses that require travel to placements - existing The aim of this review is to understand whether the existing financial support packages and financial education provision meet students' needs and/or how they can be targeted more effectively for specific groups of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The review will make use of the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit: Financial support evaluation toolkit - Office for Students and will be completed by end of January 2025.	• Moneymatters Adviser time: 1.0 FTE • Data Analytics Developer time: 0.01 FTE Potential additional funding to be determined.	• Increased number of bursaries, scholarships, and hardship funds available to students from lower-income backgrounds. • Reduced stress due to the need to work while studying in a demanding professional course. • Increased financial literacy and improved financial management skills	Yes, relates to wellbeing (Int 3) MHC10, MHC14, MHC16, MHC17
Studiosity – 24/7 writing support -existing Studiosity offers feedback on the structure and organisation of written work to support the development of academic writing. Students from a variety of educational backgrounds find this flexible service useful to develop their writing skills for a variety of types of written assignments. The study skills team will work with target groups to develop awareness of and engagement with Studiosity. Use of this tool will be analysed in the context of attainment and completion outcomes.	• Funding of service in line with demand: Approx. £35K/annum • Data Analytics Developer time:0.01 FTE	Increased attainment on assessments. Increased sense of confidence to negotiate different genres of writing for assessments. Increased use of Studiosity and understanding of which groups of students benefit most from this intervention. Enhanced completion and attainment rates for target groups.	Yes, relates to wellbeing and development of transferable employability skills (Int 3 and 4) MHC2, MHC4, MHC16

Evaluation for Intervention Strategy 2 activities

Evaluation for activities in Intervention 2 will be Types 1 and 2. We will use quantitative measures to monitor the uptake/attendance and feedback from each of the activities (online and in-person) on an ongoing basis, using our increased data capacity to monitor activities in real-time through student engagement dashboards. We note that the reporting of impact may be challenging for some groups of students given the RVC's small size and the low number of students within these groups.

We will review impact evaluation of the support measures annually in relation to students' completion of pathways/modules or other, in relation to attainment, completion and progression. We will use demographic data disaggregation to better understand which students take part in activities and which benefit from the interventions including the students targeted from Q1 and FSM backgrounds.

We will continue to look at utilisation of resources in relation to academic achievement and attainment to understand the impact of the interventions. Where uptake is low, and we have evidenced a positive impact for that activity, we will provide targeted referral pathways for tutors to enable at-risk students to benefit from this form of support.

For the review of the bursaries, hardship funds and financial education we will also analyse changes in levels of need due to the pressures of the cost of living, in addition to uptake and feedback of all bursaries and hardship funds and the use of the OFS financial support evaluation toolkit.

The impact of this intervention will also be evaluated by meeting the annual success milestones in this APP.

Intervention 2 -   Summary of publication plan (for all activities):

1. Annual reports on uptake of intervention activities to RVC Blended Learning Project Group and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

2. Annual reports on uptake of intervention activities to Student Development Committee at the Royal Veterinary College.

3. Annual reports on impact evaluation of targeted interventions shared with the Blended Learning project Group, Student Development Committee,

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

4. Student Engagement dashboards published to RVC staff and students.

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy 2: £1,555,000 over the 4-year plan, including staff and non-staff costs.

Summary of evidence base and rationale: These interventions reflect the evidence in the literature showing that non-traditional learners require specific support to thrive in new learning environments. They also recognise that tutoring, mentoring and coaching are key to help students develop a sense of belonging and improve attainment and completion. They are underpinned by the knowledge that financial support is critical, particularly in a London based institution where students study long and intense courses which require off-campus placements. Each of these interventions were developed using institutional data, sector data and evaluation of existing activities. See Appendix B for more detail.

Intervention strategy 3: Objectives and targets

Student lifecycle stage(s): Success

Objective 3: To increase completion and attainment rates for students with a mental health disability so that they are more similar to students without a disability at the RVC by 2028/29, through enhanced wellbeing, mental health and disability support services and flexible learning provision.

We recognise the complexity of need where students declare a disability or where a disability emerges while students are on a programme of study. We also recognise the stigma attached to declaring a disability; this may mean that students do not access or delay accessing support that will aid completion of studies and maintain overall positive wellbeing. We aim to take a strength-based approach to support students who declare a disability, equipping them with skills to manage their disability throughout their programme of study. We view developing heightened awareness of how students can successfully manage their disabilities as a positive and inclusive approach to diversity amongst our student community. We continue to review and develop specific kinds of support (wellbeing and disability) to reduce attainment and completion gaps through the activities in this intervention strategy.

Targets:

- PTS_3 To reduce the attainment gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability from 13.8pp to 9pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 1.2pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.

- PTS_4 Reduce the completion gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability from 12.2pp to 8.2pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 1pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention Strategy three, aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for students with mental health disabilities to succeed in their studies at the RVC, addressing RVC specific risk 5 and:

- EORR Risk 8: Mental health. This may contribute to: low continuation, completion, and attainment rates; lower agreement rates to survey questions around feeling part of community; and lower progression rates to employment or further study.

Intervention 3 - Activities	Inputs / outputs	Outcome indicators	Cross intervention
Increase ability to understand RVC students through the use of data dashboards for all activities (expanding) The RVC will continue to review student uptake, feedback outcome measures and impact evaluation associated with all success activities to refine and target them as part of an overall strength-based approach.	• Data analytics developer time: 0.01 FTE	• Comprehensive data dashboard system in place. • Ability to monitor impact of interventions and target specific groups of students iteratively. • Development of further targeted interventions	Yes, applicable to all interventions in terms of understanding our students and providing targeted support. (Int 2 &4).
University Mental Health Charter (UMHC) programme (new) Review all student support services and the learning, living and working environments at the RVC using the University Mental Health Charter Framework for a whole university approach to mental health and wellbeing.	• Staff time for steering group and domain working groups to establish gap analysis and new initiatives. • Potential need for investment to address gaps following use of improvement tool. • £2500 p.a. for UMHCP membership	• Improved mental health and wellbeing among students and staff. • Higher levels of awareness and reduced stigma. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target groups . • Increased utilisation and satisfaction of support services, learning and living environments.	Yes, relates to academic and personal skills and transition into higher education (Int 2) All MHC themes.
Increase capacity for Mentoring for Wellbeing (expanding) Specialist Mental Health Mentoring focuses on how managing a mental health disability to minimise any impact on their studies, and to support overall wellbeing and their study-life balance. We will increase this service to enable this successful method of support to benefit more students.	• Additional University Mentoring Organisation resource: • £10,000 /year	• Improved mental health and wellbeing among students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target groups. • Greater satisfaction with university support systems.	Yes, relates to academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC 2, MHC3, MHC4, MHC5, MHC6, MHC10, MHC11

Improvements to the user experience of the VLE/LEARN to support flexible learning options (expanding) Improve the navigation and organisation of the virtual learning environment to enable students to find resources more easily and to support flexible learning and overall wellbeing.	• Phased project to redesign and rebuild the VLE/LEARN: £60,000	• Improved student experience and greater satisfaction with university organisation and management. • Improved mental health and wellbeing among students. • Improved completion and attainment rates for target groups	Yes, relates to cost pressures, academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC2, MHC16, MHC17
Accessibility project– (expanding) We will review and enhance all processes related to early disclosure of any challenges faced by students with a disability; learning difference or neurodiversity. Early disclosure will lead to enhanced processes for individual learning plans and appropriate reasonable adjustments (RA's).	• Additional Resource in disability team: 1.6 FTE to meet sector benchmarks for disability support and to increase staff training. • Staff cost increase:£43,000 pa	• Increased rates of disclosure of disabilities. • Increased confidence in student support services. • Increased satisfaction with the student experience. • Increased rates of attainment and completion.	Yes, relates to academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC 2, MHC3, MHC4, MHC5, MHC6, MHC10, MHC11
Do-it Profiler (new) The 'Do-It Profiler' is an online, self-guided, screening tool that aims to support neurodivergent students to identify gaps in their study skills upon entry, target the application of funds for DSA, and support academic staff to better understand their individual learning needs.	• Additional staffing resource in disability and study skills team: 0.6 FTE • Non-staff costs: £50,000 pa	• Increased confidence in student support services for neurodivergent students. • Increased satisfaction with the student experience. • Increased rates of attainment and completion. • Increased staff confidence to support neurodivergent students.	

Evaluation for Intervention Strategy 3 activities

The evaluation for the activities in intervention 3 will be primarily Types 1 and 2. We will use quantitative measures to monitor the uptake/attendance and feedback from each of the activities (online and in-person) on an ongoing basis, using our increased data capacity to monitor activities in real-time through student engagement dashboards.

On an annual basis we will review impact evaluation using established outcome measures for the support measures in relation to attainment, completion and progression. We will use demographic data disaggregation to better understand which students benefit from the interventions and how we can sign-post to interventions to support potentially at-risk students.

We will also evaluate other measures such as staff confidence to support students with disabilities, utilisation and satisfaction of the support services rates of disclosure and the overall student experience of student with disabilities.

For the evaluation of progress towards the UMHC award we will undertake: a gap analysis of the current provision using the UMHC improvement tool; an impact analysis of current interventions; impact analysis using theory of change for all new interventions in preparation to apply for the MH Charter Award. We note that the reporting of impact may be challenging for some groups of students given the small size of the RVC.

We will also seek research partnerships through collaborations with other organisations (such as London Higher or University Mentoring Organisation) to see if we can establish Type 3 evidence for the activities in Intervention 3.

The impact of this intervention will also be evaluated by meeting the annual success milestones in this Access and Participation Plan.

Intervention 3 - Summary of publication plan (all activities)

1. Annual reports on uptake of intervention activities to Student Development Committee.
2. Annual reports on impact evaluation of targeted interventions shared with the Student Development Committee and Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
3. Student Engagement dashboards published to RVC staff and students

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £900,000 over the 4-year plan, including staff and non-staff costs.

Summary of evidence base and rationale: These interventions recognise that mental health disability impacts individual students in different ways. There are specific support needs around transition to HE and early disclosure that underpin success on course and flexible learning opportunities are crucial to help students with this disability manage, particularly on intense and longer courses. Each of these interventions were developed using institutional data, sector data and evaluation of existing activities. See Appendix B for more detail.

Intervention strategy 4: Objectives and targets

Student lifecycle stages: Progression

Objective 4: To improve progression for ABCSQ1 students compared to Q5 at the RVC and also RVC students with mental health disabilities compared to those without a disability through supporting the development of a wide range of transferable employability skills.

RVC Students are signposted throughout their programmes of study to the professionally accredited skills they develop in the curricula. Our co-curricular activities from transition onwards make students aware of the personal, academic and financial skills they need to develop to thrive in the HE environment and in their future careers. As students begin to explore career options and pathways, we sign-post these skills (curricular and co-curricular) as transferable skills that are an essential part of career planning. Our progression activities take a data-driven approach to supporting students with the planning of their career pathways. We recognise that students from low socioeconomic groups and those with mental health disabilities, may need specific kinds of targeted career support to ensure they progress to their chosen careers following graduation.

Targets:
- PTP_1 To reduce the progression gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability from 9pp to 5pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 1 pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.

- PTP_2 To reduce the gap between ABCSQ5 and Q1 students from 7.2pp to 5pp between 2025/26 and 2028/29. We aim to reduce the gap by approximately 0.6 pp per year over the four-year period of this APP.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Intervention Strategy four aims to mitigate risks to equality of opportunity for students from ABCS Q1 or those with mental health disabilities to succeed and progress from their studies at the RVC addressing RVC specific risks 5 and 6.

- EORR Risk 12: Progression from HE. This may contribute to lower agreement rates to survey questions around reflections on graduate outcomes and lower progression rates to employment or further study.

Intervention 4 - Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Cross intervention
Careers Insights Report to provide targeted careers support throughout programmes of study (new) Careers Insights Reports (CIR) are new way to support the development of careers education, transferable skills and student careers outcomes by facilitating dialogue between the careers service and course teams. Engagement and completion of activities by students from target groups will be assessed to determine the impact of this intervention on progression.	• Data Analytics Developer 0.01 FTE • Careers team time (outsourced): £18,000pa	• Comprehensive data dashboard system in place • Ability to monitor impact of interventions • Development of further targeted interventions. • Joined up thinking between careers team and course teams.	Yes, relates to mental health (Int 3) and personal skills (Int 2) Yes, relates to academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC 2, MHC3, MHC4, MHC5, MHC6, MHC10, MHC11
Support for students with disabilities to progress into graduate level employment (new) A range of support including: Workshops on topics such as disclosure, reasonable adjustments, access to work, navigating the recruitment process, mental health in the workplace, managing career goals and finding work experience and graduate opportunities.	Additional day of Careers Team time (outsourced): £18,000pa	• Increased confidence in student support services. • Increased satisfaction with the student experience. • Increased progression rates for students with mental health disabilities.	Yes, relates to mental health and disability support (Int 3) Yes, relates to academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC 2, MHC3, MHC4, MHC5, MHC6, MHC10, MHC11
Employability Health Check (EHC) (existing) Redevelopment of this tool aimed at Biosciences students to help them reflect on their own career planning and skills development post-graduation.	Careers team time (outsourced): £10,000pa Digital learning team time to administer EHC in the VLE:0.01 FTE Data Analytics Developer time 0.01 FTE	• Increased confidence in student support services. • Increased satisfaction with the student experience. • Increased progression rates for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and with mental health disabilities. •	Yes, relates to mental health and disability support (Int 3) and personal skills (Int 2) Yes, relates to academic and personal skills (Int 2) MHC 2, MHC3, MHC4, MHC5, MHC6, MHC10, MHC11

Evaluation for Intervention Strategy 4 activities

The evaluation for the activities in intervention 4 will be Types 1 and 2. We will use quantitative measures to monitor the uptake/attendance and feedback from each of the activities (online and in-person) on an ongoing basis, using our increased data capacity to monitor activities in real-time through student engagement dashboards.

We will annually review impact evaluation using established outcome measures for the support measures in relation to progression. We will use demographic data disaggregation to better understand which students benefit from the interventions and how we can sign-post to interventions to support potentially at-risk students. We will include measures such as: increased number of links with professional organisations supporting students with disabilities; improved student awareness of transferable skills and associated learning gain on the Employability Health Check.

We will also evaluate through analysis of Graduate Outcome results including Graduate Reflection questions.

The impact of this intervention will also be evaluated by meeting the annual progression milestones in this Access and Participation Plan.

Intervention 4 - Summary of publication plan (all activities)

1. Careers Insights Reports for each cohort provided to the course teams annually
2. Summary of Careers Insights Reports shared with the Careers Steering group and Student Development Committee.
3. Annual reports on impact evaluation of targeted interventions shared with the Careers Steering group, Student Development Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
4. Careers Student Engagement dashboard published to RVC staff and students.

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £273,000 over the 4-year plan, including staff and non-staff costs.

Summary of evidence base and rationale: Career planning is strongly associated with good graduate outcomes. Students with disabilities and those from low socioeconomic groups may need specific support in transitioning to a graduate career. Early support is critical for a good outcome, particularly for these target groups and our ability to identify at-risk students is critical for improving progression. Both our own data and sector analysis have guided this intervention strategy. See Appendix B for more detail.

Whole provider approach

The RVC is the only "free-standing" veterinary university in the UK. As such, it plays a significant role in the wider endeavours to uphold, expand and extend the standard of veterinary higher education at both a domestic and international level. The need to encourage people from all backgrounds into the veterinary professions is central to the institutional agenda and is endorsed and articulated at the highest levels. We are building on the successes of our 2020-2024 APP targets to achieve our goals in terms of equality of opportunity. This will go some way to achieving the diversity and inclusivity sought not just by the RVC, but by the veterinary profession as a whole.

The strategic measures, interventions, activities, and actions that we will adopt to achieve the aims and objectives of this APP are guided by the RVC's Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The APP 2025-2028 proposals have been shared, and influenced by, all key stakeholders including both students and those at the most senior levels in the RVC. It has also been reviewed and approved by the College Executive Committee. On publication it will be disseminated to all major committees, with sessions for associated staff development. The RVC sees the APP as a plan that all staff must take cognisance. Its authorship was undertaken by a wide range of specialist staff including those in the Directorates of External Relations (ER) and Learning and Wellbeing (LWB), Academic Registry and the Students' Union (SU) and was led by the Vice-Principal for Students. The APP in particular, and widening participation work in general, are standing items for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI) and the Student Development Committee (SDC) - both strategic level committees. Matters and issues relating to both areas of work are also discussed at the Academic Board, the Access and Recruitment Committee, the Scholarships Committee and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

The proposed plan aims to enhance the opportunities for all the cohorts of potential students we categorise as our specific priority groups to apply to and succeed in HE. The interventions and policies the APP generates will be reported, evaluated, and discussed in all spheres and levels of RVC life. The management and governance structure of the RVC will continue to play a significant role in the annual assessment of progress throughout the lifetime of the APP.

Our major degree is one of a highly specialist nature, and our undergraduate student numbers are relatively small. This enables us to focus across the whole institution in terms of student related policies and procedures and make use of overlapping responsibility in terms of senior staff and holistic approaches. As well as the specific interventions itemised in this plan, our Learning Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Strategy 2022-2026 ensures that, through curriculum and learning support developments, widening participation is not treated as a marginal process but one which is essential to the RVC's educational blueprint.

Plans for academic enhancement and continuous improvement for programmes are informed by student feedback and aim to provide flexible learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students. Study Skills and Careers Support provide an offering to all students as they progress through their programme developing the necessary skills to be successful; both during their studies and when moving to employment. Our tutorial policies and practices are being developed to allow for enhanced monitoring of students' performance, needs and concerns. We are continuing to develop student support services to provide appropriate interventions and diversified types of proactive support. The SU, LWB and the SDC have key roles to play in these activities.

Progress on the APP is reported at each meeting of the SDC and also the EDI committee; both have significant representation from across the student community, including those target groups identified in

this APP. There is also the opportunity for opinions and concerns to be voiced at other times if issues come to the fore. There is often a feeling amongst the general student body that enhanced tutorial and Study Skills support should be available to all and not to "minority" groups and similarly, some "minorities" are reluctant to seek special or individual attention. By embedding a proactive approach to these services within our teaching and student support provisions, we encourage students to take an active role in ensuring their own success and to access appropriate support and guidance as needed throughout their programme of study.

In our APPs, both current and historic, we have emphasised our aim to ensure that no potential or existing student should be deterred from undertaking an RVC degree programme because of lack of funds. Financial support is integral to Access, Success and Progression. The focus groups and guided discussion sessions we have held with students clearly identify financial support as being significant, if not essential to, students' academic and non-academic decisions. It remains the case that the RVC's priority groups are more likely to require financial assistance through bursaries, scholarships and hardship funds than other cohorts. This is particularly so given the "extra" costs, for example, of lengthy placements and some essential accessories associated with our courses. The relatively low salary ranges of parents, coupled with the increasingly high levels of expenditure on rent and accommodation, make possible degree study problematic. This is particularly so where the degree in question is five or, as in the case of the Gateway Programme, six years in duration. Within the very limited resources that the RVC has as a small specialist institution, we will continue to ensure that our priority groups are aware of the available support packages, scholarships and bursaries.

We have detailed in the Resource Plan and described in the text of this APP the elements and amounts of our financial support for students and our proposed expenditure in terms of Access, Success and Progression delivery and development. Our investment is significant for a small institution trying to keep pace with increasing external requirements, national costs, research and clinical investment and ambitious development plans, all of which are to the benefit of prospective students. Nevertheless, we have increased funding for activities, including in the Student Ambassador Programme, increased our scholarship portfolio and increased our bursary provision. Over and above this, many staff volunteer contribute time both within and out with their contractual obligations to participate in, develop and deliver, educational and support activities for our priority prospective groups.

The level and extent of our financial investment therefore, exceeds our physical size and endorses our educational ambitions, complementing our strategic developments. We are an inner-city and a rurally located institution, engaged in world class research and clinical care. Our reputation goes before us, but we want that reputation to reach all walks of society. So, our investment in Access, Success and Progression go hand in hand with the expenditure and investment at all other levels as this enables us to maintain fee income and support our institution in providing world class education and training to students with talent from all parts of society.

Student consultation

We conducted a series of student panels composed of students from across the RVC. These included high levels of representation by students from underrepresented groups within the student community. The RVC SU was also represented within these panels. The panels were introduced to the EORR and panels explored these to identify the RVC specific risks and the groups most at-risk. Students were presented with and fed back on proposals for targets. They also discussed the initiatives which they thought would be most impactful at each of the stages of the student lifecycle, engaging in discussion

about their own experiences and the barriers that they faced at each stage of the student lifecycle. The feedback from these panels was used to refine the APP.

In addition, the APP and its targets were discussed at the SDC, and with the EDI committee, both of which have broad representation across the student body. Again, feedback was used to refine the Plan. The SU has separately evaluated this APP and written a student submission.

Students will be engaged in the delivery of a number of interventions and will also take an active part in their evaluation. There is student representation on all committees that will review the activities and the success against targets. The SU will also be supported to engage in co-creation of activities that align with this APP. In this respect the role played by students, through the work of Animal Aspiration ambassadors, will be of great importance and their opinions and proposals which come to fruition through the course of their activities will be a valuable component of our BAME focus.

Evaluation of the plan

In our proposed interventions ranging from pre-Access to Success and Progression we have clearly aligned the parallel evaluations and theories of change. This means that evaluation will be embedded from the outset of each intervention. In most, if not all, of this work we shall be utilising Type 1 and Type 2 evaluation methods as described by OfS. Based on this level of work and its projected development we will move, over the lifetime of the APP, from monitoring which provides the statistical evidence for the success of our efforts, to full evaluation which will reveal the educational and social benefits of our activities and our strategy. As a small specialist institution, we are limited in our abilities to undertake type 3 (causal) evaluations but over the period of the plan we will develop collaborations that will help us advance to this higher level of assessment.

In developing the evaluation process, we have been strongly influenced by resources made available through TASO. This is especially relevant for the RVC as a specialist institution, often working with small cohorts of potential students which can have an impact on the data we are able to collect and eventually disseminate or publish. It is an indication of our commitment to evaluation that we are enhancing our support teams to cover data and evaluation activity. As we progress this work, we will share our developments with colleagues and groups within the veterinary academic and professional workforce. In our own institution we will disseminate data and findings across the schools to enrich our Theory of Change. We will also share with other Widening Participation bodies including AccessHE, NEON, the Knowledge Quarter and other HEIs.

The oversight of evaluation and monitoring is driven by senior managers at Vice Principal and Director level within the institution and monitored regularly with a view to improvement of service. The expertise of the RVC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee is an important strand in this. They have been consulted in the preparation of this plan and it remains a standing item on the agenda of the committee. Similarly, the Students' Union have made input, and all aspects of APP/WP work are reported to the Student Development Committee at its termly meetings. Both these committees can interrogate the data and outcomes of interventions and seek detail of the wider strategy and context.

Provision of information to students

The RVC is committed to providing prospective and current students with accurate and timely information to support their study choices, their learning journey and their progression into employment or further study.

The full APP and and Executive Summary will be published through our website and actively promoted to future students and their influencers. It will be discussed with current students through the committee structure and annual updates on progress.

In terms of Fees, Funding and Financial Support for prospective students we:

- Publish information in our prospectus and on our website.
- Promote this through a variety of communications including live and online events, open days, recruitment fairs targeted emails and social media.
- Publish information through UCAS and the Student Loans Company.

For current students, we publish fees and funding information through our website, our intranet, our Moodle VLE and through individual communications via email.

Financial Support

Information for both prospective and current students includes details on the range of financial support that is available, the application processes, eligibility criteria and deadlines if applicable, including any external funding streams for which our students may be eligible (all available on the Scholarships and Bursaries webpage here). Bursaries are automatically provided to home students with household incomes at or below a specified threshold for each year of their course. For students enrolling in 2025/26 it will be as follows;

Household Income	Award per Year of the Course
Below £39,000	£1,000

UK students assessed as Care Leavers or as estranged from their parents also receive a bursary of £1,000 in their first year of study and £500 per each year after that.

Our 'Money Matters' team in the Advice Centre engages with students through promotional campaigns, workshops and individual appointments. They support students to plan their finances effectively and help those students in financial need to access the Student Support and Digital Support schemes and other relevant funding streams both internal and external to the RVC.

The Student Support Funding is currently prioritised for specific groups of students, including:

- Students from low-income families (under £25,000 Household Income)
- Students with a disability
- Care leavers and students estranged from their parents
- Students who have lived in foyers or who are homeless.
- Students with caring responsibilities or students with children (especially lone parents)
- Mature students with existing financial commitments and priority debts

All applications to these funds are assessed on a case by case basis and currently, awards range between £300-£2,000. Students in need are able to apply in each academic year of their course.

The Digital Support fund supports students struggling to meet the costs of essential equipment to access their studies or those in financial hardship due to purchasing equipment. Awards are up to £350. Students with a household income under £35,000 are prioritised.

The levels of funding and the priority groups for this financial provision (bursaries, students and digital support funds) will be revised after the completion of the review using the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit as detailed in Intervention 2. This review will be completed in January 2025 and will commence the implementation of actions and recommendations in the academic year 2025/26 onwards. This funding currently targets the most socioeconomically disadvantaged students as well as those with disabilities, which are the target groups for Access, Success and Progression interventions in this APP. We will ensure that our funding review continues to prioritise and support these target groups so that they can thrive and achieve their potential at the RVC.

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

The RVC is a small specialist provider, with fewer than 2000 undergraduate students, of which ~65% are home students and thus eligible for analysis in the APP data set. Due to low numbers in each characteristic group, the OfS RVC APP dashboard does not contain yearly data for success and progression measures, to prevent identification of individual students. For some characteristics, there is also a lack of aggregate data. Thus, we have had to rebuild our datasets in order to fully understand our student population. As with all data that has low denominator numbers, there can be significant variation between years and confidence intervals are typically very wide making it difficult to identify real trends across the student lifecycle. In the majority of cases, we present aggregate data (2- and/or 4-year) to try to mitigate against these challenges.

Due to the very small numbers involved, we have not been able to analyse data relating to care leavers at any stage of the student lifecycle. The RVC is committed to supporting care leavers and many of our existing interventions and initiatives include care leaver status as a marker for eligibility for admissions and support interventions. We will be continuing this provision and support throughout the period of this APP.

1) <u>Lifecycle stage: Access</u>

In analysing the data in this document, we have made use of Office for Students Access and Participation data, UCAS End of Cycle data and internal student record data. In doing so, it is noted that, due to the small specialist nature of the RVC, the population sizes in this data are very small and, as a result, fluctuations over years are often caused by very small numbers of applicants/students.

All internal application data considers applicants who indicated their country of domicile was England and therefore it is recognised that this may offer small discrepancies to final enrolment classification by the OfS.

i) Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Reducing the access percentage point (pp) gap between IMDQ5 and Q1 was a key target in the RVC Access and Participation Plan 2020-24. We have made significant progress in terms of reducing this gap (Table 1).The percentage of students enrolling at the RVC from IMD Q1 has grown from 6.8% in 2016/17 to 20.7% in 2021/22.

Year	2016/7	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap RVC	27.1	16.8	24.6	16.4	16.9	2.3
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap Sector	2.1	1.3	0.5	-1.3	-2.0	-3.2

Table 1: Access percentage point (pp) gap between IMD Q5 vs Q1 RVC and Sector.

This success has come through introducing interventions to support Q1applicants through the application process, including interview interventions for those courses that require it.

Whilst we recognise that improvement has only been in recent years, this is the result of embedded support mechanisms that we intend to continue and extend to other underrepresented groups(see Intervention 1). We, therefore, do not view this as a risk to equality and will not be committing to further targets in this area.

ii)   TUNDRA

In 2016/17, the RVC TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1 gap was higher than the sector. We halved this gap between 2016/17 and 2021/22. Over the same period, the sector gap has been static (Table 2) and we now sit well below the sector gap. The percentage of students from TUNDRA Q1 enrolling at the RVC has grown from 12.9 to 16.3% between 2017//18 and 2021/22. As the RVC is performing consistently higher than the sector average both in terms of representation of TUNDRA Q1's and in closing the Q5 vs Q1 gap, we do not view this as risk of equality of opportunity and will not be setting targets in this area. We will, however, continue to monitor this through the lifetime of the plan and we will be adding TUNDRA to our contextual admissions criteria from 2025/26.

Year	2016/7	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap RVC	**21.4**	**13.7**	**14.7**	**13.8**	**23.2**	**10.5**
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap Sector	18.8	18.7	18.9	18.5	18.2	18.0

Table 2: Access percentage point (pp) gap between TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1 RVC and Sector

iii)   Free School Meals

Nationally, 23.8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (2022/23) and this number has increased over recent years. In the sector, the APP dashboard 4-year aggregate data indicates 19.2% of students admitted to HE were in receipt of FSM at Key Stage 4, and this has dropped slightly for the 2 year aggregate data (18.9%). However, Widening Participation in Higher Education data shows that the gap in admissions is widening due to the increase percentage of students being eligible for FSM (increase from 14.7% to 23.8% in the period 2016/7 to 2022/23). The same data set shows this increasing gap is particularly evident for high tariff institutions.

While admissions of students in receipt of FSM to the RVC have increased, this is very variable. In 2021/2 the gap with the sector average was 5.5pp but was 10.8pp in 2017/8. We are, therefore, below the sector 4-year aggregate (15.4% RVC vs 19.2% sector) (Figure 1).

Access indicator values for: Eligibility for free school meals (at key stage 4)

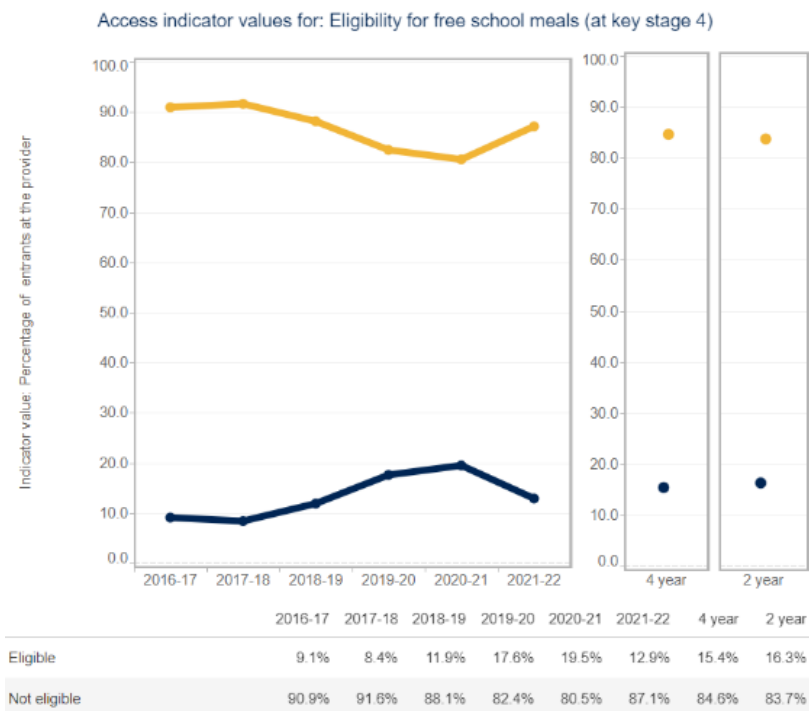|	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	4 year	2 year
Eligible	9.1%	8.4%	11.9%	17.6%	19.5%	12.9%	15.4%	16.3%
Not eligible	90.9%	91.6%	88.1%	82.4%	80.5%	87.1%	84.6%	83.7%

Figure 1: Access. Percentage of students in receipt of FSM admitted to the RVC

Historically, obtaining data pertaining to an applicant's FSM has been challenging. UCAS have made significant efforts in recent years to improve the quality of data we receive. Internally, we have also improved our data capture through the introduction of a CRM. Internal data shows there is work to be done to improve conversion rates from application to offer to enrolment for FSM applicants. We therefore believe that this area is a significant equality of opportunity risk and one that we can now target successfully, due to improvements in data availability and the ability for students to self-declare at an earlier point in their applicant journey. We have therefore set targets to both improve the percentage of FSM students we enrol and to ensure the consistency of this figure.

iv)   ABCS

ABCS uses the relationship of multiple characteristics to identify those in most disadvantaged quintiles. The RVC has reduced the admissions gap between Q5 and Q1 by 13.8pp between 2016/17 to 2021/22 (Table 3). In the same period, the sector gap increased by 3.8pp. The percentage of ABCS Q1 students enrolling at the RVC has increased from 2.0% to 5.8% between 2016/17 and 2021/22, but has been as high as 1.3% in 2019/20.

Year	2016/7	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap RVC	34.3	20.7	25.5	12.8	28.7	20.5
Q5 vs Q1 pp gap Sector	24.0	24.3	25.2	26.1	26.6	27.8

Table 3: Access percentage point (pp) gap between ABCS Q5 vs Q1 RVC and Sector.

The composition of ABCS makes it difficult to determine an applicant's quintile prior to enrolment, due to lack of available data. This makes it exceptionally difficult to target as a specific access objective, due to challenges in identifying relevant applicants/prospective applicants. We recognise that the RVC's proportion of Q1s in this area, compared to the sector, and the percentage point difference between Q1 and Q5 is very variable, and is often below the sector average and that this is a risk of opportunity. However, we have not chosen to target this specifically but instead have chosen to target composite parts. Both free school meal status and ethnicity contribute to the overall ABCs output and therefore, we believe by targeting these individual elements this will contribute to an improvement in ABCs metrics.

V) Ethnicity

There are a small number of HEI's in the UK offering Veterinary Medicine degrees and therefore the RVC is a national rather than local recruiter. In the RVC Access and Participation Plan 2020-24, we set targets to reflect the national population in terms of our ethnic diversity (based on 2011 census data, 16% from minority ethnic groups), which we have achieved. We are, however, below the sector average for admissions of minority ethnic students (Table 4). Given that our numbers of students enrolling from these individual ethnic groups are very low, we have chosen to consider them in combination rather than separately.

Year	2016/7	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% B, A, M, O RVC	13.1	11.3	12.2	19.6	23.1	18.4
% B, A, M, O Sector	26	27.4	28.8	31.2	32.4	34.2

Table 4: Access percentage of black and minority ethnic students admitted RVC and Sector

Application numbers from black and ethnic minority students to the RVC have increased (Table 5) and there is a similar or higher percentage in conversion in admissions numbers (Table 4). However, current application numbers hamper our ambition to increase overall minority ethnic student representation in our community.

Year	2016/7	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% B, M, A, O applicants RVC	13.3	14.0	14.9	17.1	18.9	18.8

Table 5: Percentage of minority ethnic students applying to the RVC

There are very specific challenges in recruiting minority ethnic students to study Veterinary Sciences and Biological Sciences (see Annex B for detailed narrative). The OfS Students characteristics data dashboard shows that both subject areas are far below the sector averages for admission of minority ethnic students with only marginal increases over the 12 years of data (a 5.8% increase for both). Only 24.8% of Biological Sciences and 8.9% of veterinary science students in the UK (Figure 2) were from ethnic minority groups in 2021/22, compared to the sector as a whole, which was 34.2% (Table 4).
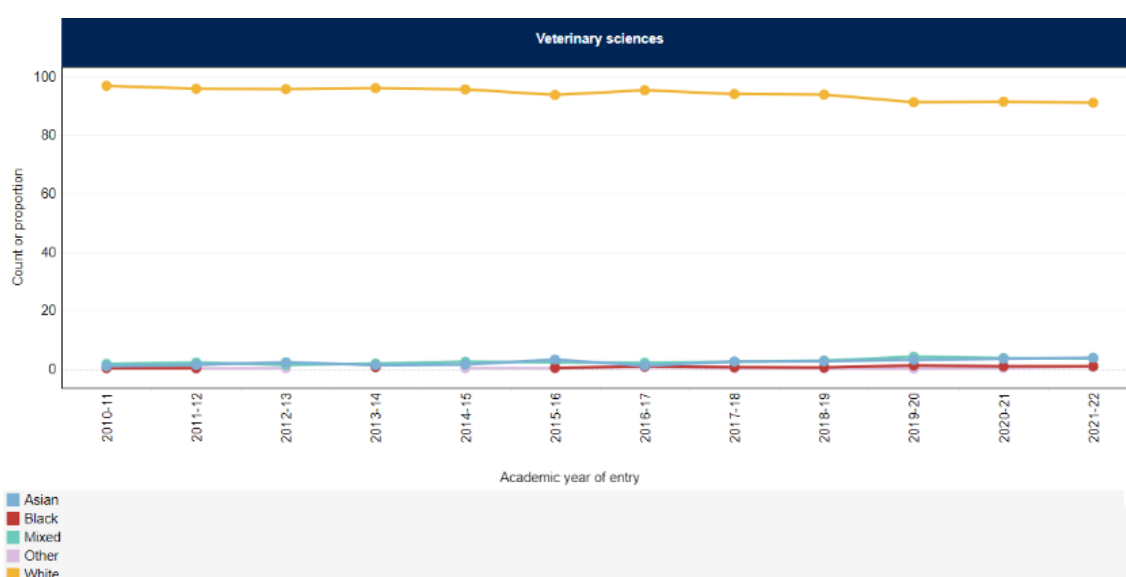
Figure 2 Ethnic diversity in veterinary science students in the UK (OfS Students characteristics data dashboard)

Veterinary professions have some of the lowest ethnic diversity in the UK, with only 1.9% of veterinary nurses and 3.5% of veterinary surgeons from minority ethnic groups (RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Professions, 2020). The RVC, as the largest veterinary school in the UK, has a significant role to play in the ongoing efforts to diversify these professions,

Whilst we recognise that there are unique contributing factors, given our small specialist status, we view this as a risk of equality and therefore we are prioritising this as a key target in this Access and Participation plan. We will be implementing specific interventions and targets to increase the number of black and ethnic minority students in the RVC student population. We have focused on setting Access targets in this domain in terms of percentage of black and minority ethnic students in combination rather than a single group, given:

- The pressing need to increase overall minority ethnic representation in the veterinary professions.
- A desire to reflect, at the very least, the national population based on the most recent census data (2021), where 19% of people were from minority ethnic groups.
- The acknowledged challenges in attracting students from all minority ethnic backgrounds to study veterinary and biological sciences subjects at university.

(vi) Age

The RVC has a very limited part-time undergraduate course offering (only in veterinary nursing) and most of our students are studying long courses. Mature students are more likely to opt for part time study and find it difficult to commit both financially and personally to five years of study, particularly in an expensive part of the country. For this reason, we attract limited numbers of mature students (Table 6), and we acknowledge we are below the sector average. While we have seen an increase in applications from mature students (Table 7) they are more likely to withdraw their application pre-offer or not have the required academic qualifications.

	4-year aggregate admission	2-year aggregate admission
% mature RVC	18.9	19.4
% mature Sector	27.7	29.2

Table 6: Access percentage of mature students

	4-year aggregate application	2-year aggregate application
% mature RVC	24.9	26.9

Table 7: Applications mature students RVC

There are currently no options to study Veterinary Medicine part-time in the UK, due to requirements from the professional body, the RCVS, to complete the course in a maximum 8 years. The very practical nature of the course means there are no distance learning options. There are, however, other institutions in London and the southeast of England that offer part time options to study Biosciences and Veterinary Nursing and therefore in these subjects, there is not a risk to equality of opportunity. Given our limited resources, we have chosen not to set targets for mature students but will continue to monitor numbers.

(vii) Disability
The RVC performs well and in some cases better compared to the sector in terms of access for disabled students, both in terms of combined (Table 8) and split characteristics (Table 9).

	4-year aggregate	2-year aggregate
% Disability RVC	18.8	16.6
% Disability Sector	16.7	17.2

Table 8 : Access percentage disabled students admitted RVC and Sector.

We are aware that many students are diagnosed with disabilities while at university or chose not to disclose disabilities at the admissions stage, so these numbers likely reflect an underestimate of the student population with disability.

	4 year aggregate % RVC	4 year aggregate % Sector	2 year aggregate % RVC	2 year aggregate % Sector
COGN	7.5	5.7	6.3	5.7
MH	5.3	4.8	4.4	5.0
MULTI	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.0
NODIS	81.2	83.3	83.4	82.8
PHY/SENS	2.6	2.3	2.0	2.4
SOC	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.1

Table 9: Access percentage of disabled students admitted per group RVC and Sector

As we will continue the support mechanisms we offer students with disabilities during the application process, we do not view this as an equality of opportunity risk and therefore are not choosing to target disabled students access in this Plan.

2) Lifecycle Stage: Continuation

i) Socioeconomic Characteristics

Our analysis suggest that we have comparable or better continuation rates than the sector for all low socioeconomic characteristic groups (summarised in Table 10). These data are aggregated and expressed as percentage point gaps between lowest and highest socioeconomic groups. Note that ABCS data is suppressed (DPH).

	4 year aggregate pp gap RVC	4 year aggregate pp gap Sector	2 year aggregate pp gap RVC	2 year aggregate pp gap Sector
IMD Q5 vs Q1	**1.2**	8.0	**3.2**	8.1
TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1	**3.1**	3.4	**1.2**	3.2
No FSM vs FSM	**0.2**	5.0	**0.9**	4.6
ABCS Q5 vs Q1	DPH	13.7	DPH	13.8

Table 10: Continuation data for socioeconomic characteristics RVC and Sector

All quintile groups within IMD and FSM/No FSM groups have a continuation rate of between 92% and 100% in the period, which is better than the sector (84.3%-94.0%). ABCS and TUNDRA quintiles ranged from 87.5% to 100% and are also better than the sector (80.2%-96.1%). This demonstrates a consistently higher continuation rate for RVC students from low socioeconomic groups compared to the sector. Therefore, we will not be setting targets for socioeconomic group continuation.

ii) Ethnicity

The majority of our continuation data for minority ethnic students is suppressed, therefore we have combined the data for all 4 minority ethnic groups that are used in the APP dataset (Table 11).

	4 year % Continuation RVC	4 year % Continuation Sector	2 year % Continuation RVC	2 year % Continuation Sector
Combined B, A, M, O RVC	**96.4**	N/A	**96.3**	N/A
White RVC	**96.4**	90.9	**97.0**	91.0
Asian Ethnicity RVC	**97.1**	90.2	**98.2**	90.3

Table 11: Continuation data for socioeconomic characteristics RVC and Sector

Our analysis of suppressed data shows us that our continuation rates for individual minority ethnic groups are very similar to white students at the RVC. For Asian students (the only category where data is not suppressed), the RVC continuation rate is better than Asian students in the sector and slightly better than white students at the RVC (Table 11). Therefore, we will not be setting continuation targets in this domain.

iii) Age

Both young (under 21) and mature students (21 and over) have similarly high progression rates at the RVC. They are both consistently higher than their comparator sector groups (Table 12).

	4-year % Continuation RVC	4-year % Continuation Sector	2-year % Continuation RVC	2-year % Continuation Sector
Mature	96.7	83.7	97.6	83.5
U21	96.3	92.4	96.8	92.6

Table 12 Continuation Age young vs mature RVC and Sector

iv)   Disability

Overall, students at the RVC have a higher rate of continuation compared to both disabled and non-disabled students in the sector (Table 13) and a comparable continuation rate to RVC students with no disability (Table 14).

	4-year % Continuation RVC	4-year % Continuation Sector	2-year % Continuation RVC	2-year % Continuation Sector
Disability	95.3	89.4	95.2	89.5
No Disability	96.7	90.1	97.4	90.2

Table 13 Continuation Disability RVC and Sector

For single disability characteristics, much of the data is suppressed. Characteristics which can be analysed are shown in Table 14. Students who have either cognitive (COGN) or mental health (MH) disabilities continue at similar rates to non-disabled students at the RVC. They also progress at higher rates than the sector. For suppressed and low data groups (MULTI, PHYS/SENS and SOC), we are confident that continuation rates are higher than the sector. Therefore, we will not be setting continuation targets for disability.

	4 year aggregate % RVC	4 year aggregate % Sector	2 year aggregate % RVC	2 year aggregate % Sector
COGN	96.0	91.6	93.8	91.6
MH	93.5	87.3	DPH	87.7
NODIS	96.7	90.1	97.4	90.2

Table 14 Continuation Disability single characteristics RVC and Sector

3)   Lifecycle Stage: Attainment

The RVC delivers 4 undergraduate courses, and only two of these are level 6 qualifications: BSc Biosciences and BSc Veterinary nursing. Only approximately 20% of our undergraduate students are on these level 6 courses. Veterinary medicine is a level 6 with level 7 elements and has three grades: pass, merit and distinction. Foundation Veterinary Nursing is a level 5 qualification and graded pass, merit, distinction.

This presents specific and unique challenges in understanding attainment data and how this relates to the sector averages. Much of our data in this domain is suppressed and attainment data for 80% of our students is not represented in the Access and Participation dashboard.

Our analysis has investigated attainment at the 3 different levels. All of the data presented here are at level 6 and are aggregated. We express caution in the interpretation of these data, due to low denominator numbers. For our veterinary medicine degree and foundation veterinary nursing degree, we have examined the difference between pass/merit and distinction rates.

i)   Socioeconomic

Level 6 data suggest we have reduced the gap in attainment for TUNDRA Q1 students over the past 4 years and, although the data is suppressed, we see that IMD Q1 attainment has a similar trajectory, suggesting that our gaps are now lower than the sector. There is a gap in attainment for students who were in receipt of FSM at level 6, and this is higher than the sector gap in 4-year aggregate data (Table 15).

Our analysis of students at level 6+7 and level 5 show much lower and more consistent gaps in attainment for IMD and TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1 (suppressed data). There are no equivalent sector data, but the RVC gaps are lower than the sector gaps at level 6. There is however a FSM attainment gap that is evident in both groups (7-10pp).

	4 year aggregate pp gap RVC	4 year aggregate pp gap Sector	2 year aggregate pp gap RVC	2 year aggregate pp gap Sector
IMD Q5 vs Q1	**22.5**	16.9	**DPH**	16.7
TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1	**10.9**	5.8	**-1.7**	6.2
No FSM vs FSM	**16.1**	11.6	**DPH**	11.3

Table 15 Attainment for socioeconomic groups at the RVC and Sector

Given that our attainment gap is larger than the sector and consistent across all levels of study at the RVC, we have set a target for FSM.

ii)   Ethnicity

Combined data from minority ethnic students shows a reduction in the attainment gap with white students over the past 4 years (Table 16). The 2-year aggregate data suggests there is now a similar attainment rate to white students at the RVC (Table 16). Sector data are not available for combined minority ethnic groups.

We are unable to analyse split characteristics for all ethnicities, but our data suggest that we are similar to the sector for Asian (RVC 72.5% : Sector 75.7%) and Mixed (RVC 83.3%: Sector 80.5%) ethnicity students' attainment (4 year aggregates).

	4 year % attainment RVC	4 year % attainment Sector	2 year % attainment RVC	2 year attainment Sector
Combined B, A, M, O	**72.1**	N/A	**77.1**	N/A
White	**80.5**	84.3	**75.8**	84.8

Table 16: Attainment for minority ethnic groups at the RVC and Sector

Data from level 6+7 and level 5 suggest low gaps (approximately 6pp, 4-year aggregate) between minority ethnic students and white students.

We do not feel that there is sufficient data for us to identify significant gaps in this area but as the proportion of minority ethnic students increases in our student community (see Table 4), we will have more statistical confidence in our data. We will continue to monitor this but will not be setting targets at this time.

iii)   Age

At level 6, the data are very variable, and, in some years, there have not been any registered mature students on these courses. The 4-year aggregate suggests there is an attainment gap between mature and young students at the RVC (13.1pp) that is slightly higher than the equivalent

sector gap (10.2pp). There is no 2-year aggregate data available for the RVC. At level 6+7, the gap is much lower (less than 4.5pp). We will continue to monitor the level 6 gap but, given limited resources, we will not be setting targets in this domain.

iv) Disability

At level 6, attainment for RVC students with disabilities has improved over the past 4 years and is now similar to attainment for RVC students without disabilities (Table 17). Compared to the sector there is a small gap of 5pp (2 year aggregate). The gap is lower still at level 6+7 (data suppressed).

	4-year % Attainment RVC	4-year % Attainment Sector	2-year % Attainment RVC	2-year % Attainment Sector
Disability	**71.6**	79.7	**75.9**	80.9
No Disability	79.3	80.7	**74.0**	81.2

Table 17 Attainment for students with disabilities at the RVC compared to those without a disability and compared to equivalent sector groups.

Data for specific categories of disability are largely suppressed, however at level 6 there is a gap in attainment between the RVC and the sector for mental health disabilities (15.8pp) (Table 18). There is also a gap in attainment between students with mental health disabilities and no disability at the RVC (13.8pp). We have also identified a gap in mental health disability attainment for level 6+7 (~7pp, data not shown). Given that this attainment gap is identifiable in the majority of courses at the RVC, we have set a target in this domain.

	4-year % Attainment RVC	4-year % Attainment Sector
COGN	**71.7**	78.6
MH	**65.5**	81.3
NODIS	**79.3**	80.7

Table 18 Attainment for students with single characteristic disabilities at the RVC compared to the sector

4) Lifecycle Stage: Completion

Completion rates are high at the RVC (92.8-98.3%; 4 year period 2014/15- 2017/18) and are better than the sector over the same period (87.2-87.9%).

i) Socioeconomic

There is a completion gap for RVC TUNDRA Q1 students that is higher than the sector equivalent (Table 19). There is also a completion gap for RVC ABCS Q1 students however this is considerably lower than the sector (Table 19). Therefore, given our limited resources, we will be setting completion targets for TUNDRA Q1

	4 year aggregate pp gap RVC	4 year aggregate pp gap Sector	2 year aggregate pp gap RVC	2 year aggregate pp gap Sector
IMD Q5 vs Q1	**8.4**	10.5	**8.1**	10.6
TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1	**7.8**	4.9	**8.2**	4.9
No FSM vs FSM	**4.6**	7.7	**DPH**	8.0
ABCS Q5 vs Q1	10.9	23.2	DPH	23.5

Table 19: Completion gaps for socioeconomic groups at the RVC and Sector

ii) Ethnicity

Completion rates for minority ethnic students are very similar to white students at the RVC (Table 20). Combined ethnic minority completion sector data is not available.

	4 year % completion RVC	4 year % completion Sector	2 year % completion RVC	2 year completion Sector
Combined B, M, A, O	94.8	N/A	95.3	N/A
White	95.0		95.7	

Table 20: Completion rates for minority ethnic groups at the RVC

Data for specific ethnic groups is mostly supressed apart from Asian students, who have 94.4% (4-year) and 92.1 % (2-year) progression, which again is comparable to white RVC students (Table 21) and higher than the sector (87.3%, 4-year: 87.0%, 2-year). Mixed ethnicity RVC students have 95.2% completion rates (4-year) which again is comparable to RVC white students and higher than the sector.

iii) Age

There are no differences in completion rates for mature students (94.8%, 4-year; 94.1%, 2- year) and young students (94.9% 4-year; 96.0% 2-year) at the RVC. RVC mature students have a much higher completion rate than those in the sector (80.2% 4 year; 79.8% 2 year).

iv) Disability

Completion rates for disabled students at the RVC are higher than both disabled and non-disabled students in the sector (Table 21). There is a small gap compared to non-disabled students at the RVC (4.1pp 4-year and 2.5pp 2-year).

	4-year % Completion RVC	4-year % Completion Sector	2-year % Completion RVC	2-year % Completion Sector
Disability	91.4	85.7	93.5	85.7
No Disability	95.5	87.9	96.0	87.7

Table 21: Completion rates for disabled and non-disabled students at the RVC and compared to the sector

Single category disability data shows a 12.2pp completion gap for RVC students with mental health disabilities compared to those with no disability (Table 22). While our completion rate for students with mental health disabilities is comparable to the sector, it is a notable gap for the RVC, and we will be targeting mental health disability completion in this plan.

	4-year % Completion RVC	4-year % Completion Sector
COGN	92.9	88.2
MH	83.3	82.1
NODIS	95.5	87.9

Table 22: Completion rates for single characteristic disabled groups at the RVC and compared to the sector

5) Lifecycle Stage: Progression

The RVC has a very high progression rate compared to the sector (RVC 89.2%, Sector 72.6%; 4-year aggregate).

i) Socioeconomic

Most of the low socioeconomic groups have similar or better progression than the highest groups (Table 23). The notable exception is for ABCS Q1 students, where there is a 7.2pp gap (4-year aggregate). Therefore, we are setting a target for ABCS Q1 progression.

Although data from students in receipt of FSM are suppressed, we are confident that this is similar to our IMD and TUNDRA Q1 data.

	4 year aggregate pp gap RVC	4 year aggregate pp gap Sector	2 year aggregate pp gap RVC	2 year aggregate pp gap Sector
IMD Q5 vs Q1	**-2.3**	10.3	**-0.8**	10.7
TUNDRA Q5 vs Q1	**1.6**	6.5	**-2.1**	6.9
No FSM vs FSM	**DPH**	6.8	**DPH**	6.7
ABCS Q5 vs Q1	**7.2**	21.3	**DPH**	19.6

Table 23: progression gaps for socioeconomic groups at the RVC and Sector.

ii) Ethnicity

Students from minority ethnic groups at the RVC progress have similar progression rates to white students at the RVC (Table 24). Combined data indicates small gaps: 1.7pp (4-year) and 4pp (2-year). There is a 4pp gap between mixed ethnicity students and white RVC students. All RVC students progress at a higher rate than their counterparts in the sector – for example RVC Asian students have 19.8pp higher progression than Asian students in the sector (4-year). Data for Black students is suppressed due to very low denominator numbers.

	4 year % progression RVC	4 year % progression Sector	2 year % progression RVC	2 year progression Sector
Combined B, M, A, O	**87.8**	N/A	**87.2**	N/A
White	**89.5**	73.5	**91.2**	74
Asian	**89.8**	70.0	**DPH**	70.7
Mixed	**85.5**	72.9	**DPH**	74.0

Table 24 progression for minority ethnic groups at the RVC and Sector

iii) Age

Both mature students and young students have similar progression at the RVC. 4-year aggregate data indicates 90.2% of mature students and 88.9% of young students progress. This compares favourably to the sector where 72.8% of mature students and 72.5% of young students progress.

iv) Disability

There is a similar rate of progression for RVC students with a disability and with no disability (Table 25) and there is significantly higher progression for both RVC groups compared to the sector.

	4-year % Progression RVC	4-year % Progression Sector	2-year % Progression RVC	2-year % Progression Sector
Disability	**89.0**	70.9	**89.5**	71.7
No Disability	**89.2**	73.0	**91.2**	73.6

Table 25: Progression for disabled and non-disabled students at the RVC and Sector

There is a 9pp gap between students with mental health disability and no disability at the RVC (Table 26). While the progression rate for RVC students with mental health disability is better than the sector, it is notably low for the RVC therefore we will be setting targets in this domain.

	4-year % Progression RVC	4-year % Progression Sector
COGN	**91.7**	73.8
MH	**80.2**	68.3
NODIS	**89.2**	73.0

Table 26: Progression for single characteristic disabled students at the RVC and Sector

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

The RVC offers a limited number of degree courses, all of which are science orientated and the majority are animal-orientated degrees. This presents unique challenges in increasing participation and representation of underrepresented groups. The veterinary profession lacks diversity with only 3.5% of UK registered veterinary surgeons and 1.9% UK of registered veterinary nurses from BAME backgrounds (RCVS, 2020), compared to 18% of the national population.

Underrepresented students have less exposure to science and veterinary environments, fewer same-race role models and encounter some cultural and religious barriers when it comes to science and veterinary careers (O'Brien et al, 2020, Wong, 2015, Asare, 2007, Robinson et al, 2007, Elmore, 2003). Kellert (1985) showed that children from BAME backgrounds and children who lived in urban areas had less knowledge and interest in animals than their counterparts. Elmore (2003) and Amass et al (2011) highlight pet ownership as being a significant factor in stimulating interest in a veterinary career, yet pet owners in the UK are more likely to be white, live in more rural areas and ownership of dogs and horses is associated with a higher household income (Purewal et al, 2019, Saunders et al 2017, Marsa-Sambola et al, 2016, Westgarth et al, 2013).

This thus creates an almost self-perpetuating cycle. To increase the number of underrepresented candidates interested in studying animal -orientated degrees, more role models and greater exposure to both animals and science is needed. Yet, there is a lack of role models to stimulate this, and pet ownership is not as likely in underrepresented groups. Whilst not impossible to achieve, progression on this front is not something that the RVC can achieve alone and is also not something that will change in the immediate or short-term future.

We have therefore chosen our objectives carefully to work to both contribute to the sector-wide issues, through our myth busting campaign and through our GCSE attainment project whist, at the same time, supporting those underrepresented students who are interested in the veterinary and science fields achieve their aspirations.

Intervention 1: Scholars programme
Evidence suggests that multi-activity (black-box) outreach programmes can be effective interventions for improving access to HE for underrepresented groups, including those from lower-socio-economic groups and BAME backgrounds (Younger et al 2019, Burgess et al, 2021). Engagement types that have been identified as effective include campus visits, information and guidance, master classes, mentoring and financial incentives (Burgess et al, 2021, See et al, 2012).

The RVC Scholars programme is a new initiative aimed at specifically preparing students for transition and study into the veterinary medicine course at the RVC. It will be a multi-intervention programme and will include components such as mentoring, subject specific master classes and revision, application and interview support, which evidence shows have a positive association with improved HE progression rates. Given the need for work experience for this course and the challenges described above, we will also be applying a strong focus on gaining experience that can be counted as meeting these requirements. We will deliver a range of engagement, over a sustained period, designed and delivered to a small cohort of students from FSM and BAME backgrounds.

Socio-economically disadvantaged groups are more likely to be debt-averse (Kaye, 2021) and at the same time are also more likely to consider themselves unaware of bursaries and financial support available. (Callender and Wilkinson, 2013). The TASO toolkit indicates that providing financial support is most likely to be effective when it is part of a broader programme of engagement with students and the literature suggests that financial support is most successful when it is easy to understand and apply for and efforts are made to raise awareness amongst potential beneficiaries. (Robinson and Salvestrini, 2020). Knowledge of the existence of bursaries is fundamental to their effectiveness for promoting student choice, provider competition, and

protecting access (Callender and Wilkinson, 2013). In recognising these challenges, we will be developing the Scholars Programme to include guaranteed financial offerings if the Scholar enrols with the RVC and will provide information and guidance to support students in this area.

GCSE Science Attainment
Socio-economic difference in HE participation comes about largely because pupils from underrepresented backgrounds do not achieve as highly in secondary school as their more advantaged counterparts (Chowdry et al 2013). Students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) have a lower average attainment at GCSE level than students who do not (Sammons et al, 2015). Whilst the differences in attainment between social groups are no larger in science than in all subjects, many other subjects do not require, or appear to require such a high level of KS4 attainment to continue study (Gorard and See, 2009). Low attainment in GCSE Science, therefore, is a significant barrier to students progressing to study science-based subjects at university. There is further evidence that those students who fail to achieve "good" passes in their GCSEs do not perceive themselves as academic and therefore dismiss their ability to study certain subjects at university (Whitehead, 2021).

Studies have shown that marginal increases in resources can improve GCSE attainment, and this is particularly strong in GCSE Science (Jenkins et al, 2005). Bloom (1984) demonstrated that most students had the potential to reach a high level of learning through a tutoring process and the TASO toolkit suggests there is a high body of evidence to support that tutoring improves attainment. The National Tutoring Programme has offered some funding to schools to spend on targeting academic support, however this subsidy rate is reducing each year, and schools are expected to make up the remainder of the cost and there are no specific aims to target students from underrepresented groups. Furthermore, evidence shows that the impact of tutoring increases with the average number of tutoring hours pupils receive (Lucas et al, 2023), and thus more hours of tuition can lead to greater benefits.

Being a small and specialist institution, the RVC's academic expertise lies within the field of science and so we have chosen to focus on improving attainment in this area. We will be working with pupils who are predicted to achieve on the grade 3/4 borderline, based on their Year 10 mock exams, as this is an area where we feel we can make a significant difference. Improving the attainment of these students to ensure they obtain a 4 will give them a good pass in the subject(s) and provide opportunities for them to progress to level 3 study.

In acknowledging that 69% of all students and 80% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds take "combined science" (Stem Learning, 2022) we will be targeting the combined science curriculum. Building on the success of our previous online A-level revision courses in both Biology and Chemistry, in addition to targeting two local schools with in-person interventions, we will offer an online version of the programme to allow wider dissemination and reach.

Work experience provision
The more preparatory activities an applicant undertakes for the various stages of the selection process the more likely they are to be offered an interview or place in the medical school (Lawrence et al 2013). Studies have shown that offering targeted advice, assistance and coaching during the selection process has the potential to improve equity in the process for underrepresented groups and to ultimately increase their chances of receiving an offer of a place (Kamali et al, 2015, Fikrat-Wevers et al, 2023, Stemig et al, 2015).

Research specific to work experience and veterinary medicine is limited however, there is some evidence that students in some geographical areas, or from financially challenged backgrounds, may find it difficult to fulfil the course providers requirements for relevant work experience (Robinson et al, 2007). In medicine, there is evidence that students applying from underrepresented backgrounds fail to fully understand the role work experience plays in university applications (Martin et al, 2018) and students without informed school or family contacts can find accessibility to work experience very difficult (Kirkham et al, 2023). Kirkham et al (2023) also highlight the importance of ensuring equitable and easy to access work experience for underrepresented groups, as opposed to ensuring equality.

The RVC believes that there are valid reasons and benefits to requiring work experience and so aims to make the process of obtaining it equitable to all applicants, irrespective of background. This approach is supported by Kamali et al (2005) who saw a larger increase in offer rates for underrepresented applicants when supporting them with organised experiences than when simply offering advice and guidance on activities. We are therefore developing a pilot programme which will support underrepresented applicants from our target groups in gaining the necessary work experience hours to join our veterinary degree. We will also support them in understanding how to reflect and learn from their experiences so that they have the necessary skills to be able to draw upon this at other key points during their journey, such as their interview. The programme will also provide an opportunity for candidates to become more familiar with the HE setting, building confidence in the prospect of 'belonging' in this environment.

Myth busting awareness campaign
There is a popular myth in the UK that many thousands of students apply to competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine each year and that competition for places on these courses is so fierce that it is not worth applying unless you are exceptionally academically able. (Andrews, 2009, Kirkham et al, 2023, Martin et al, 2018, Tomlin et al, 2010). Furthermore, there is evidence that there are many other stereotypes and myths surrounding veterinary school including employment options, social standing, finances, and animal ownership/experience requirements. (Andrews, 2009, Robinson et al, 2007, Asare, 2007)

These myths are often perpetuated by a lack of information. In a study with RVC students, Tomlin et al (2010) found some careers advisers appeared to lack accurate information about current entry requirements and had an inaccurate view of the application ratio and socio-economic diversity of the profession. Andrews (2009) found perceptions of a career in veterinary medicine changed across both BAME parents and students once they were provided with more detailed information.

Evidence from the medical realm indicates success in using first-hand accounts to address uncertainties about course content and careers (Martin et al, 2018) and that promoting a diverse representation of "what doctors look like" remains critical for eradicating stereotypes (Kirkham et al, 2023). There is also evidence that suggests that role models are vital in creating a sense of belonging for underrepresented groups (Baines et al, 2022). Our "not every vet/vet nurse" campaign will apply these theories to veterinary medicine. It will have a broad target audience with different segments being aimed at different target groups such as parents, teachers, and students of primary and secondary school age. It will seek to eradicate some of the key misconceptions.

Pre-Interview support programme
In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of paid-for application preparation, coaching and interview support programmes available for veterinary medicine courses. Applicants from independent schools are more likely to receive school-based support and are also more likely to pay for courses to support their application (Jackson et al, 2022). In contrast, applicants from disadvantaged groups may not have access to such resources (Lawrence et al, 2013), and may not participate in freely available opportunities (Jackson et al, 2022) and thus may not have the opportunity to perform as well at interview.

Again, drawing on resources from the medical environment, there is evidence to support that offering preparatory interview activities can reduce the consequences of unequal access to "coaching activities" for disadvantaged groups. Students with better academic records and with greater parental education are more likely to take advantage of information sessions (Stemig et al, 2015), therefore there is a need to provide a very targeted offering, rather than generic support. Studies (Kamali et al, 2015, Stemig et al, 2015) indicate that supporting underrepresented applicants with interview preparation can yield an increase in offer rates and our experience so far in offering support to a small number of underrepresented applicants supports these findings.

Having piloted a range of different interview support and mentoring sessions for applicants from IMD and POLAR4 Q1 areas, we now plan to widen the number of applicants we support. We will achieve this through expanding the criteria to include those in receipt of Free School Meals, among others. This will enable us to offer these applicants with an equitable experience to the paid for and school-based opportunities their peers have access to.

Free School Meals travel support programme
Research from UCAS has evidenced that prospective applicants are reducing the number of open days they attend because of increased travel costs. Prospective applicants from the most disadvantaged areas are more likely than their peers to cut back on open days due to increasing costs (UCAS, 2023). Attendance at open days has been evidenced as an important and valuable source for applicants in both deciding which institutions to apply to and in deciding which institution to accept (Moogan et al, 2003, Brown et al, 2009).

We are keen to ensure that prospective applicants have an opportunity to visit the RVC as, in agreement with the evidence, we believe it is an important decision-making factor. We find it concerning that this opportunity may no longer be perceived as viable to applicants from underrepresented groups due to cost. We are also conscious that, as an institution that has a requirement for in-person interview attendance for some of its courses, the cost of attendance at these could prove a barrier to some. We will therefore be launching a travel bursary for prospective applicants and applicants who are in receipt of FSM to access important in-person events.

Animal Aspirations
Animal Aspirations is a student-led initiative that was established at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) with the support of the RVC Widening Participation Team. The main aim of Animal Aspirations is to increase and encourage ethnic diversity within Veterinary Medicine and other animal-related careers. Only 3 per cent of the UK veterinary profession is non-white (BVA (British Veterinary Association), 2019), despite nearly 20 percent of the "working age" UK population identifying as Black, Asian, and other ethnic groups (GOV.UK, 2023).

Since their founding, Animal Aspirations have engaged with children from various backgrounds, exposing them to the versatility, ingenuity, and value of veterinary and animal-related professions. They have also increased their visibility within the profession and gained credibility as a respected organisation that will lead change in the veterinary industry.

Support and funding from the RVC will allows Animal Aspirations to continue to utilise their strengths and maximise their effects whilst also creating the opportunity to work collaboratively with the RVC and other institutions to tackle challenges regarding ethnicity and diversity.

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Intervention Strategies 2-4 – Success and Progression

Building upon our commitments, and our achievements, in reducing gaps in *access* from our target groups detailed in our 2020-24 Access & Participation Plan, we are committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, have equal opportunities to succeed academically and progress successfully in their studies and careers. Central to this endeavour is our holistic, 'whole-system' approach to student support, driven by our established Learning and Wellbeing Directorate. Through a comprehensive range of services encompassing academic skill development, wellbeing and mental health support, disability assistance, financial aid, and career guidance, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student can feel supported to realise their full potential.

As a part of this effort, we recognise the importance of robust systems and data infrastructure in supporting our efforts to enhance student success. To this end, we are actively improving our data management systems and developing student engagement and impact dashboards to increase our understanding of the needs of RVC students. These dashboards will provide real-time insights into student engagement with support services and the impact of interventions, allowing us to identify areas for improvement and tailor our support mechanisms accordingly using Types 1 and 2 evaluation. By leveraging data driven decision making, we aim to enhance the effectiveness and reach of our support initiatives, ensuring that they are responsive to the evolving needs of our diverse student body (Learning Analytics, TASO, 2023; Foster and Siddle, 2019). Through these strategic investments in data infrastructure, we are reinforcing our commitment to promoting equity, transparency, and accountability in our pursuit of student success in relation to intervention strategies 2-4.

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Intervention Strategy 2 – **To ensure that students from low socio-economic backgrounds (TUNDRA Q1/FSM) are able to receive targeted support that enables them to successfully complete their course of study.**

Gateway Support programme - Annual review and development (expanding)

The Gateway Support Programme provides a specialised module (Vet Careers and Communication, VCC) which develops personal and academic skills to tackle challenges students may encounter, enabling them to thrive in new learning environments. The Gateway cohort is made up of 43% IMD/TUNDRA quintiles 1&2 compared to 21% RVC wide & 23% FSM eligible compared to 11% RVC wide. The support programme provides additional support for transition and revision activities to ensure widening participation students feel confident with science vocabulary, assessment styles and core programme content (Burnell, 2015). Internal data from our engagement dashboards this year shows that 63% of Gateway students have engaged with the study skills team through 1:1 appointment.

Status	Enrolled		
Academic Year	Total Students	Engaged Students	% Cohort
⊟ 2023/4	43	27	62.79
Veterinary Gateway	43	27	62.79
Total	**43**	**27**	**62.79**
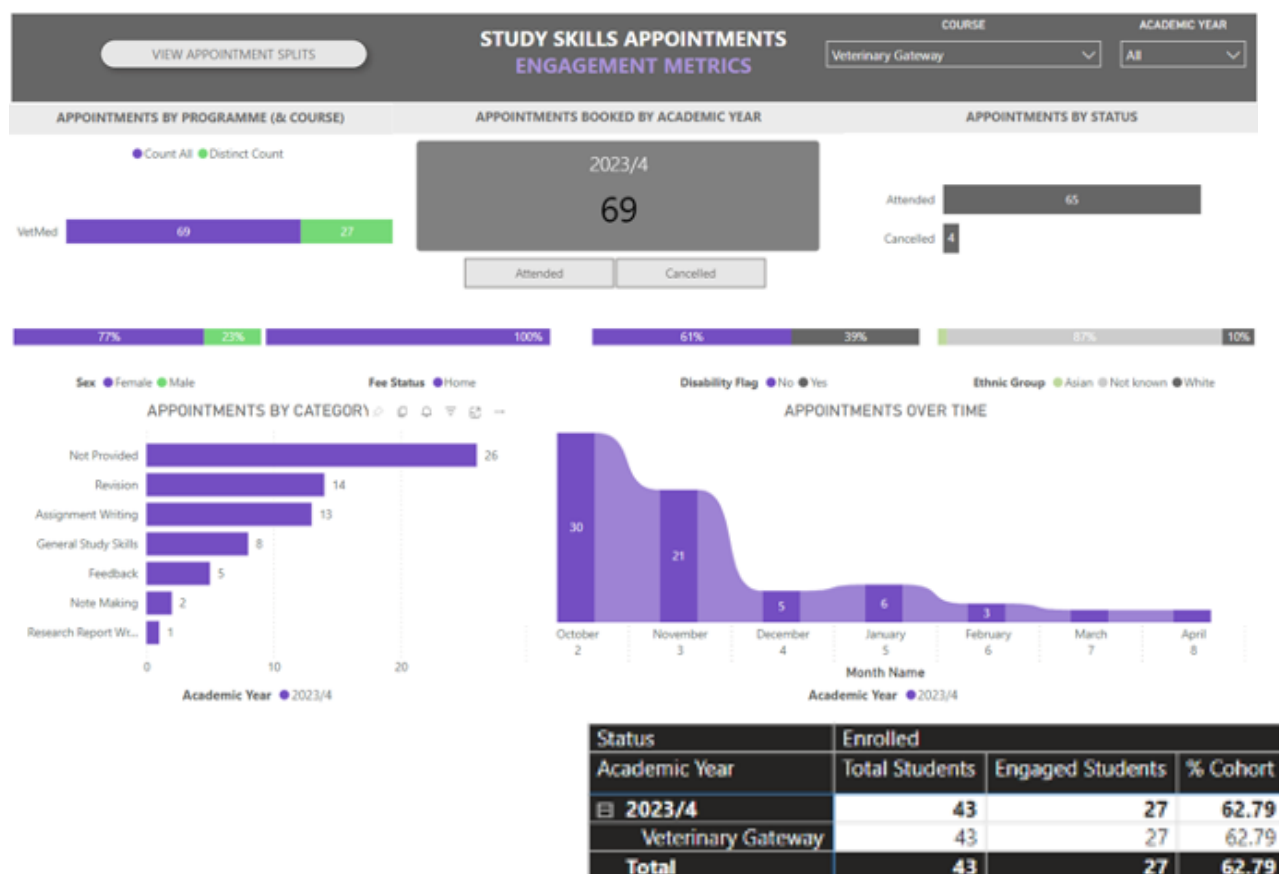
We will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the VCC module in relation to student outcomes, to establish how it contributes to student success. We are also reviewing and piloting a new system of tutoring support for Gateway students to ensure they are signposted to appropriate support when needed.

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Develop tutoring support using data to understand student engagement and needed support. (new)

Tutoring has been shown to be important as both academic and pastoral support for HE students (Grey and Osborne, 2020) specifically around developing a sense of belonging for students. One determinant of effective tutoring relates to the quality of information that tutors have about their tutees (Wakelin, 2023). Appropriate information sharing between the tutors and the student support services to follow-up on areas needing specialised support are a vital part of the tutorial process. The RVC is committed to reviewing the support provided to tutors used as part of the tutorial process and to developing new ways for tutors to understand student engagement and the use of dashboards as part of supportive interventions. In the first instance this will be focused on the Gateway (WP) students and the Biosciences to address gaps in continuation and progression.

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Peer Support initiatives to focus on personal, digital and academic skills development: Student Success Coaches and Digital Learning Champions

Student Success Coaches (SSC) (new)

Current PhD students are trained as Student Success Coaches to help students to develop personal/academic skills in two structured pathways of activities: 1/ Time Management and 2/ Responding to Feedback. A coaching approach is used to develop skills and outcome measures consider improvement and awareness of skills at the conclusion of each pathway.

Following a successful pilot of this activity we will be offering this support to all students as part of our strength-based approach to the development of transferable skills that are important for all students to be able to successfully navigate HE study. However, we will use demographic data disaggregation to understand if particular groups of students benefit from this peer support mechanism, and if so, run targeted campaigns to increase uptake from those groups.

2/ Digital Learning Champions (expanding)

Our successful Digital Learning Champion programme recruits students from each cohort who can offer peer support to develop a wide range of digital skills. The digital skills support students during the on-course part of their programme and are also transferable skills for future employment. The recent OFS review of Blended Learning (2022) recommended that universities invest in supporting digital skills development for students and staff. We will track engagement with digital skills development through the Digital Skills journey which is introduced to students as part of their pre-arrival asynchronous induction and is further developed during Welcome Week and our 5 Ways to BE Well extended induction activities. Ensuring that all students have opportunities to become aware of their proficiency level with digital skills and have opportunities to develop them throughout their programme of study.

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Review and development of skills-based approach to transition into RVC including asynchronous and on-campus events (existing)

We have taken a longitudinal skills-focused approach (Morgan, 2020) to our induction programme. It includes asynchronous pre-arrival elements (KickStart) and on-campus elements (Welcome Week and 5 Ways to BE Well). RVC will continue to develop these elements to focus on the digital, personal, study and wellbeing skills needed to thrive in the HE environment and to foster a sense of belonging in the first 6 weeks. The development of co-curricular skills is done in a reflective manner and runs parallel to the professional skills being developed in their accredited programmes of study. We ask students to develop an awareness of the skills they need to be successful in a new educational environment (Gheilan et al, 2018) during the pre-arrival phase providing them with an opportunity to assess their current level of understanding of a variety of skills and self-assess their proficiency. In the on-campus elements we build on the results of the awareness raising activities and situate the need for these skills (Ex. adaptability, teamwork, resilience, digital skills, cultural intelligence) within their new educational context and their specific programmes of study. We foster an understanding of how they can use these skills to adapt study routines to meet the demands of our time intensive programmes, to be able to use the digital tools required and to continue to maintain a life-study balance (Kift, 2015; Thomas 2012). Our on-campus elements introduce students to peer support elements (Student success coaches and Digital learning champions) and take place within our social learning spaces so that we are meeting the students within their learning spaces to facilitate engagement and participation. Through all elements of our transition programme we work to build a sense of what it means to be part of the RVC community and ensure students are familiar with key aspects of support (tutors; student support, course team).

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Review bursaries hardship funds and financial education especially related to demanding professional courses that require travel to placement (existing)

Over the previous APP period, our concerted efforts to widen access and diversify our student body have yielded encouraging results, with an increase in enrolment from students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This achievement underscores our commitment to promoting inclusivity and breaking down barriers within veterinary education. However, as we celebrate these advancements, we recognise that our work is far from complete. Looking at feedback from our own student body, we acknowledge that students from lower-income backgrounds (Q1, Q2) continue to face challenges in navigating the complexities of university life – balancing work & opportunities to earn money whilst studying - and achieving their full potential.

A combination of the national cost of living crisis, RVC location and the specific barriers related to veterinary courses - listed below - causes financial poverty for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, leading to reduced completion & attainment rates (evidenced by lower completion rates from FSM eligible & ABCS/IMD quintile 1&2 students) In particular, students from lower income backgrounds studying in veterinary schools have several unique challenges compared to other disciplines in higher education. Some of these challenges include:

Financial costs: Veterinary education can be costly, with tuition fees, living expenses, and additional expenses for clinical placements and equipment. The long course (5 years) compounds these challenges. The financial burden of veterinary education may deter students from lower-income backgrounds, especially if they lack access to adequate financial support.

Time intensive curriculum: a demanding curriculum that often includes a significant amount of hands-on clinical training and practical experience. This time-intensive nature may make it difficult for students to balance their studies with part-time work or other commitments, particularly for those who need to supplement their income.

Our initial activity seeks to understand to what extent the current elements of financial support meet students' needs with the cost-of-living crisis and/or how they can be targeted more effectively for specific groups of students (Kaye, 2021). Following the review of our existing support funds and bursaries using the OFS Financial Support toolkit, we will develop targeted interventions and enhanced support mechanisms, to create an equitable learning environment where all students, regardless of their financial circumstances, can succeed.

References

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Studiosity – 24/7 writing support (existing)

Studiosity offers feedback on written work to help to ensure the structure and organisation of written work meets the assignment brief. Previously RVC had another 24/7 writing support service (Smarthinking) which was replaced this year by Studiosity. Students from varied educational backgrounds (Vet Nursing and Gateway) have found this service helpful to develop their writing skills for a variety of assignments. Internal reporting shows that students from this year have seen a 47% increase in its uptake by students. Specifically in 2023/4, 65% of Gateway students and 68% of Vet Nursing students have benefited from this on-demand support model to develop confidence in their academic writing skills. The Study skills team will continue to monitor its use to understand which groups of students benefit most from using it.

Our student engagement dashboards also indicate the need for writing support amongst our Vet nursing cohort. The table below shows that 51% of the study skills appointments booked by Vet Nursing were for writing support. Our Studiosity dashboard shows that they have made good use of this support and also provided positive feedback with a 95% satisfaction rating.

Programme	Assignment Writing
VetNurse	**51.01%**
PG Cert Advanced Veterinary Nursing	42.11%
Grad Cert Advanced Veterinary Nursing	50.85%
FdSc Veterinary Nursing	51.63%
BSc Veterinary Nursing	51.40%
VetMed	**12.60%**
Veterinary Gateway	22.03%
Residents (Master of Veterinary Medicine)	
BVetMed	8.63%

References
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Intervention Strategy 3 – To continue to increase access to and effectiveness of mental health and disability support to improve student completion and attainment rates and to enhance their overall student experience.

University Mental Health Charter (UMHC) programme (new)

An individual's mental health and wellbeing is influenced by a variety of factors, such as their genetics, learned behaviours, social context, and environmental context. The University Mental Health Charter calls for universities to consciously consider their influence over these factors and proactively create environments that promote wellbeing. The University Mental Health Charter Framework provides a set of evidence-informed principles to support universities to adopt a whole-university approach to mental health and wellbeing. The RVC is currently evaluating all areas of its work and study environment using the StepChange Framework and UMHC improvement tool. This will result in an action plan to address gaps including impact evaluation for all proposed actions. Preparation for the UMHC award in 2026 may mean that new success and progression interventions will need to be included in future plans.

The University Mental Health Charter Framework is a set of evidence-informed principles to support universities to adopt a whole-university approach to mental health and wellbeing. RVC's work towards the Charter award is being taken forward across the 5 domain areas listed below which have been cross-referenced with our intervention strategies using MHC#. Each working group is completing an assessment of the RVC's progress towards the Charter's Principles of Good Practice and will make recommendations for improvement using the University Mental Health Charter Student Led Improvement Tool. Once the recommendations have been made, the working groups will move to deliver these recommendations and we will include them where appropriate as part of our APP reporting.

Table 28. Mental Health Charter themes

Learn	Support	Work	Live	Enabling Themes
1. Transition into University	4. Support services	8. Staff wellbeing	10. Proactive interventions and a mentally healthy environment	14. Leadership, strategy, and policy
2. Learning, teaching and assessment	5. Risk	9. Staff development	11. Social integration and belonging	15. Student voice and participation
3. Progression	6. External partnerships and pathways		12. Residential accommodation	16. Cohesiveness of support across the provider
	7. Information sharing			17. Inclusivity and intersectional mental health
				18. Research, innovation and dissemination

As part of this initial gap analysis, we will review all student support services in line with the whole university approach of the UMHC programme. We will continue to leverage data dashboards to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of current and new activities and services so the RVC can make informed decisions, adapt strategies as needed, and demonstrate measurable progress in this area. Tracking appointment usage data, specifically the main themes coming up in our initial/triage wellbeing appointments (See figure below), means that we can make sure to invest in services & tools that work to alleviate some of the core stressors of the student experience.
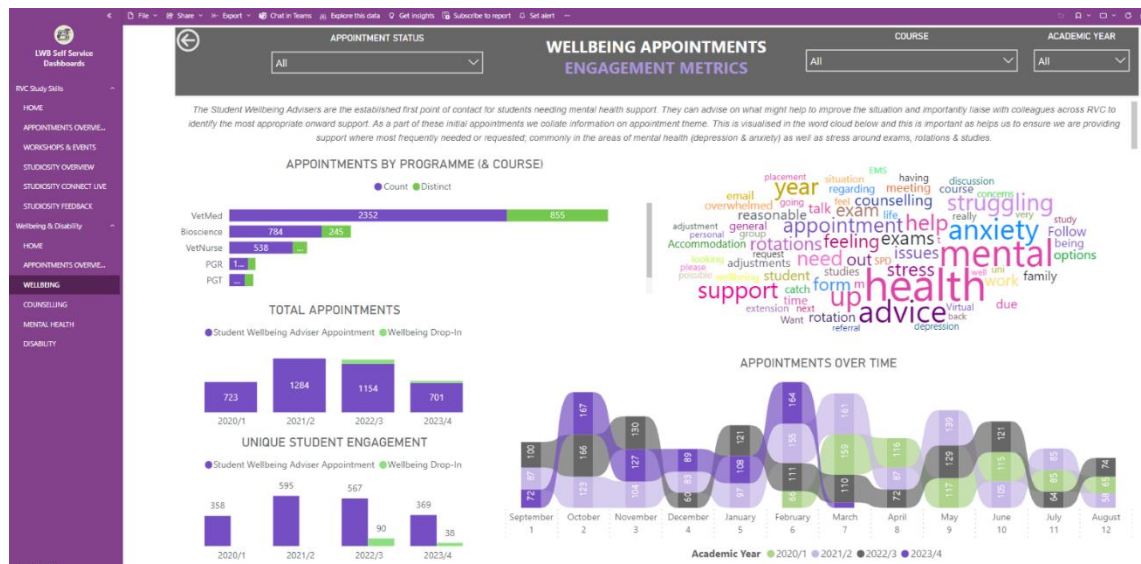
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Universities UK, [UKK] Step Change Framework #stepchange
https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange (accessed 19/24)

Increase capacity for Mentoring for Wellbeing to support development of personal skills (expanding)

Specialist Mental Health Mentoring supports students with a mental health condition and focuses on how it impacts their studies, wellbeing and study-life balance. As outlined in the UMO white paper (2020) specialist Mental Health Mentoring is part of a whole university approach to student mental health. It can have a positive influence on key performance indicators for higher education institutions, such as attainment and retention. It is also an important aspect of personal skill building applicable to navigating and thriving in HE study and also supporting readiness for life after university. RVC will Increase this service to enable this successful support activity to reach more students and will continue to evaluate its impact on attainment for all students and specifically for those with a mental health disability.

References

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Improvements to the user experience of the VLE/LEARN to support flexible learning options (expanding)

Supporting student success for students with mental health issue is multidimensional and includes not only accessible mental health support but also a flexible learning environment so students can access their learning materials in flexible ways so they can balance a variety of personal and work commitments with their study. Internal survey results have shown that students find the virtual learning environment (VLE) difficult to navigate and this often results in anxiety about not being able to access learning materials in flexible ways. This intervention seeks to improve the navigation and organisation of content on our VLE to enable students to find resources more easily, support flexible learning and their overall wellbeing.

We are increasing our ability to monitor engagement with learning materials (LectureCapture videos and eLearning) to understand better patterns of student engagement and flexible study options via Blended Learning to accommodate students who need to balance work commitments with their studies.

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Accessibility project– (new)

The RVC is committed to providing a supportive environment for students and identifying additional needs promptly. To manage students with complex needs it is essential to review current processes and increase the capacity of the disability support team, ensuring quick access to DSA support and providing resources to undertake in-depth reasonable adjustment plans where needed. We aim to support successful transitions into HE studies and remove barriers to accessing learning and teaching (Higher Education Commission, 2020; TASO, 2023 and 2024) while reducing bureaucratic burdens placed on students as they move between the pre-clinical and clinical aspects of their programme of study.

We will review and enhance all processes related to early disclosure of any challenges faced by students with a disability; learning difference or neurodiversity.. Early disclosure will lead to enhanced processes for individual learning plans and appropriate reasonable adjustments (RA's). A significant element of the

review will focus on improving the communication plan around information sharing between all parties and supporting staff training for supporting students in the classroom and clinical environments. Our aim as a result of this review is to be able to sign-up to *The Disabled Student Commitment*.

The report recommends that higher education providers agree to a number of commitments across the following areas: requests to share information; transition into the higher education community; on-course experience and moving forward out of study and into employment therefore this activity is intersectional and also pertains to interventions 2 and 4.

References

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Do it Profiler (new)

The 'Do-It Profiler' is an online, self-guided, screening tool that aims to support students to identify gaps in their study skills, target the application of funds for DSA, and to support academic staff to understand the learning needs of students who are neurodiverse.

We plan to include this in the pre-arrival asynchronous induction prior to enrolment as an awareness raising activity and then run follow-up sessions as part of Welcome Week and and 5 Ways. Students will be signposted to the appropriate support team (Advice Centre and Study Skills) to ensure they receive the information, advice and guidance they require. The Advice Centre will continue to develop effective communication with tutors and academic teams about how to provide support for their students.

References

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Intervention Strategy 4 – To continue to support the awareness and development of a wide range of transferable employability skills to improve student progression.

With the majority of our courses tailored to specific career paths we take pride in our consistently high progression rates. However, we recognise that our commitment to student success extends beyond academic achievement to encompass holistic career development and employability support. By providing tailored guidance, resources, and opportunities, we strive to empower all our students to realise their career aspirations and thrive in their chosen professions.

Careers Insights Report to provide targeted careers support throughout programmes of study (new)

Over the past two years the RVC has increased its strategic capacity to use data to understand the cycle of learning gain for careers planning through the introduction of Careers Registration at enrolment. The Careers Group, University of London presented a 3-year HEFCE funded learning gain project to investigate the value of Careers Registration: Where are you right now? Using careers registration to support employability in higher education - HEA Surveys Conference 2017 | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk) Career planning is strongly associated with positive graduate outcomes (including employment and further study); research shows that having a good career plan was a key factor for determining graduate employability (Shury, Vivian, Turner, & Downing, 2017). RVC's professionally accredited undergraduate programmes are vocational by nature and the mastery of a wide range of personal and professional skills is embedded within each curriculum. However, we recognise that students career thinking may change throughout their time at the RVC which creates a need for a careers service who can work with students to identify transferable skills and to explore a wide range of employment opportunities.

At the same time, the RVC has increased its capacity to monitor the take-up and feedback from careers events (conferences and fairs); uptake of careers service appointments and engagement with asynchronous resources found in the Careers area on our Student Hub. Through improvements in data collection, we can know and understand the demographic profile of students who engage and target further interventions accordingly. Engagement with careers services has been found to increase graduates' earnings, including when controlling for academic achievement and socioeconomic backgrounds (Percy & Emms, 2020).

The Careers Insights Reports (CIR) are a new way to support the development of careers education, transferable skills and student careers outcomes by facilitating dialogue between the careers service and the course teams. The CIR take a data-driven approach to supporting employability enhancement by providing analysis of three types of data: 1/ Careers Registration (stage of career planning gathered at enrolment annually); 2/ Engagement with the Careers service events and activities and 3/Graduate Outcomes (GOS). . The CIR's intention is to facilitate co-creation of employability interventions between the course teams and the Careers service. The use of data to target interventions is being widely used across the sector to address career readiness and employability gaps with students. .

We intend to utilise a real-time careers data dashboard for personalised Support by tracking careers service usage and identifying trends or patterns among different student demographics. Using the data to personalise outreach efforts and interventions for students who may be underutilising the careers service or facing specific challenges in career planning. See example data story below.
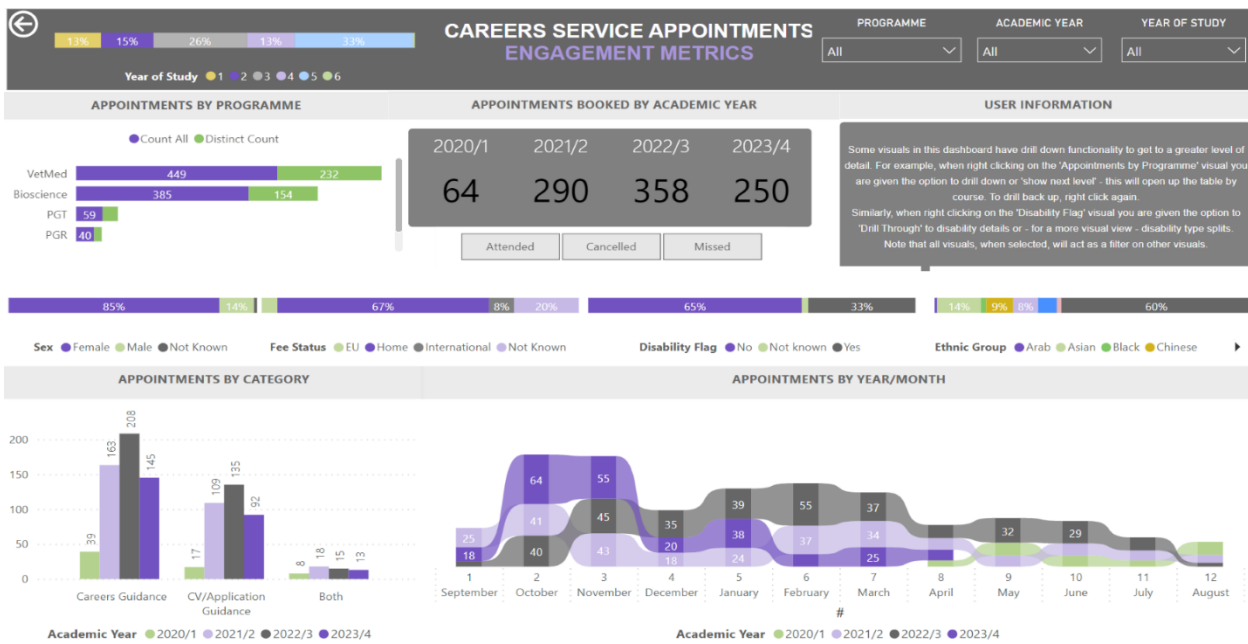
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of interventions through surveys, focus groups, and outcome assessments. Use feedback from students to refine and improve career support services, ensuring they remain responsive to the evolving needs of the student population.

References

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Where are you right now? Using careers registration to support employability in higher education - HEA Surveys Conference 2017 | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)

Support for students with disabilities to progress into graduate level employment (new)

As outlined in intervention 3, approximately 20% of the student population have a declared disability and we recognise the need for additional support. (Vincent and Ralston, 2023) as they progress into graduate employment. We note a a difference in progression rates for students with a reported mental health disability (81%) in relation to an overall progression rate of 89%. We have increased capacity in our Careers team to offer specialised support including: workshops on topics such as disclosure, reasonable adjustments, access to work, navigating the recruitment process, mental health in the workplace, managing career goals and finding work experience and graduate opportunities.

We plan to increase campaigns and promotion of careers support available to students experiencing mental health issues. We will also increase links with professionals and organisations to spotlight internship, mentoring, and graduate opportunities for students with disabilities.

References

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Employability Health Check (expanding)

The Employability Health Check (EHC) was developed previously, specifically to target career planning for students in our Biosciences programmes in order to address gaps in graduate employability or progression to post-graduate study. The EHC survey tool in the RVC context has been redeveloped this year to focus on practical skills and identifying actions students can take can move them along in their employability development. For example in second year to help them make the most of their year i.e., to gain employability experiences and reflecting/recognising the skills they will gain or have gained during that year. As discussed in Intervention 2, the RVC takes a skills-based approach both to its professionally accredited skills-based curricula and to its co-curricular support.

References

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Office for Students ofs

Fees, investments and targets
2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Royal Veterinary College

Provider UKPRN: 10007779

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Students who started in 2017-18 and onwards all courses except FdSc Vet Nursing and Gateway programme	N/A	9250
Foundation degree	FdSc Veterinary Nursing	N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	Gateway programme	N/A	9250
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	Sandwich year out and fee for applied / with Placement Year years of applicable BSc / MSci programmes	N/A	1850
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	Outbound study abroad	N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	King's College London - Biological Science courses (BSc and Msci) have the option of taking modules at KCL under a sub-contractual arrangement	10003645	9250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	Contemporary Study Skills (Level 5, no specific qualification aim)	N/A	1060
Other	Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing	N/A	4235

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

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

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Royal Veterinary College

Provider UKPRN: 10007779

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£529,000	£529,000	£529,000	£529,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£504,000	£505,000	£523,000	£534,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£138,000	£138,000	£138,000	£138,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£391,000	£391,000	£391,000	£391,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment (as % of HFI)*	**15.5%**	**16.4%**	**16.4%**	**16.6%**
Access activity investment	**Total access investment funded from HFI (£)**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**	**£529,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)*	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£479,000	£480,000	£498,000	£509,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£504,000**	**£505,000**	**£523,000**	**£534,000**
Financial support investment	*Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)*	**14.8%**	**15.6%**	**16.3%**	**16.8%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The Royal Veterinary College

Provider UKPRN: 10007779

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To raise enrolments from Free School Meals applicants to the RVC	PTA_1	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		Raise enrolments from 12.9% to 17.9% by 2028/29. Increasing this enrolment rate may also have a positive impact on enrolment rates for other socioeconomic characteristics (ABCS Q1)	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	12.9	14.2	15.4	16.7	17.9
Raise enrolments of BAME applicants to the RVC	PTA_2	Access	Ethnicity	Not specified (please give detail in description)		Raise enrolments from 18.4% to 21.4%. This target is for the combined ethnicities black, Asian, mixed and other ethnicities. There are specific challenges in attracting students to the veterinary professional courses that we offer and very low representation of these ethnicities in all veterinary courses in the UK and in the veterinary professions (see Annex A and B). Overall ethnic minority representation needs to be increased and a focus on one ethnicity will not achieve this.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	18.4	19.2	19.9	20.7	21.4
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Reduce the attainment gap between RVC students who were in receipt of FSM and those who were not.	PTS_1	Attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	Reduce the attainment gap between RVC students who were in receipt of FSM and those who were not. The aim is to reduce this gap to equal the equivalent sector gap by 2028/29. Our baseline is the 4-year aggregate gap, given that our numbers of students are low and data from individual years and 2-year aggregates are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	16.1	15.1	14.1	13.1	12.1
Reduce the completion gap between TUNDRA Q5 and Q1 students at the RVC	PTS_2	Completion	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1	TUNDRA quintile 5	The completion gap for TUNDRAQ5 vs Q1 students at the RVC is higher than the equivalent sector gap. The aim is to reduce this to equal the sector gap by 2028/29. Our baseline is the 2-year aggregate gap, given that our numbers of students are low and data from individual years are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	8.2	7.4	6.6	5.8	5.0

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To reduce the attainment gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability.	PTS_3	Attainment	Reported disability	Mental health condition	No disability reported	Reduce the attainment gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability from 13.8 to 9 pp by 2028/29. Our baseline data is 4-year aggregate data given that our numbers of students are low and data from individual years and 2-year aggregates are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	13.8	12.6	11.4	10.2	9.0
Reduce the completion gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability.	PTS_4	Completion	Reported disability	Mental health condition	No disability reported	Reduce the completion gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability from 12.2 to 8.2pp by 2028/29. Our baseline data is 4 year aggregate data given that our numbers of students are low and data from individual years and 2-year aggregates are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	12.2	11.2	10.2	9.2	8.2
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Reduce the progression gap between RVC students with a mental health disability and those with no disability.	PTP_1	Progression	Reported disability	Mental health condition	No disability reported	Reduce the progression gap between RVC student with a mental health disability and no disability from 9 to 5pp by 2028/29. Our baseline data is 4-year aggregate data given that our numbers of students are low and data from individual years and 2-year aggregates are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	9	8	7	6	5
Reduce the progression gap between ABCSQ5 and Q1 students at the RVC	PTP_2	Progression	Association Between Characteristics of Students (ABCS)	ABCS quintile 1	ABCS quintile 5	Reduce the progression gaps between ABCS Q5 and Q1 students at the RVC from 7.2 to 5pp. Our baseline data is 4 year aggregate data given that our numbers of students are low and individual years and 2-year aggregates are suppressed.	No	The access and participation dashboard	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	7.2	6.7	6.1	5.6	5.0
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
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	PTP_12														