

Student Financial Support Reflective report

Support in 2023/24

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Contents

Background.....	2
Sources of financial support.....	2
Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS).....	2
Care Experienced, Foyer students and Estranged students bursary.....	2
Pre-entry travel bursary provision.....	2
Pre-application bursary provision.....	2
Work and Study Placement bursary.....	3
Digital Support Funds.....	3
Student Support Funds.....	3
Other Financial Support.....	4
2023/24 data and spend.....	4
Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS).....	4
Care Experienced, Foyer students and Estranged students bursary.....	5
Pre-entry travel bursary provision.....	5
Pre-application bursary provision.....	5
Work and Study Placement bursary.....	5
Digital Support Funds.....	5
Student Support Funds.....	5
Commuter Travel bursary.....	6
Reading Bursary Survey Results.....	6
Key findings 2022/23.....	6
Appendix - Financial Support Evaluation.....	8

Background

Financial support includes grants, bursaries, scholarships and fee-waivers. When offered to prospective students, financial support is designed to help overcome the perceived or actual cost of applying and/or going to higher education. When offered after entry to higher education, it is designed to help students succeed on-course by alleviating the financial costs of studying.

Sources of financial support

Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS)

- For students joining the University in 2018/19 onwards, and who have a household income assessed by the relevant Student Finance Authority of below **£27,000**, the Reading Bursary consists of **£1,100** for every year that the student remains eligible and is non-repayable support.
- If a student began their studies before 2018/19 and have an assessed household income by relevant Student Finance Authority of below **£25,000**, the Reading Bursary amount will remain as **£1,000** per year and is non-repayable support.

Care Experienced, Foyer students and Estranged students bursary

As part of our ongoing commitment to care-experienced and estranged students and in recognition of the specific needs of these groups of students, we supplement the standard RBS provision by offering additional financial support. In addition to the other awards listed, these students will be eligible for cash bursaries of £1,000 in each year of study.

Pre-entry travel bursary provision

To promote fair access to our on-campus outreach programme and ensure that students from under-represented backgrounds are well represented at all outreach events, we have introduced a Widening Participation and Access Travel bursary scheme. The scheme allows us to cover the costs of travelling to on-campus events for those from under-represented groups. Currently the bursary provides a contribution towards travel costs at a rate of 45p per mile (up to a max of £300).

Pre-application bursary provision

This covers the costs of travelling to on-campus events of up to £500 for disabled applicants. Currently the bursary provides a contribution towards travel costs at a rate of 45p per mile.

Work and Study Placement bursary

This covers expenses such as travel, accommodation and/or childcare. Students from households with assessed annual incomes of less than £45k may apply to receive a bursary of between £200 and £1,000 dependant on the cost of undertaking the placement.

Following a light touch review in 2022/23, the above bursary eligibility was added to, to target automated support to Part 2 and Part 3 MPharm students who are undertaking mandatory placements throughout the academic year so that they receive an award based on the following criteria:

- Assessed household income of less than £25,000: £300
- Assessed household income of between £25,001 - £45,000: £200

Digital Support Funds

The Digital Support Fund is a support fund to help students with the associated costs of hybrid learning and study. There are limited grants of £400 per student, designed to provide financial support towards internet connectivity, specialist software as well as IT related study equipment costs. The £400 can be used as a contribution to buying a laptop and peripherals (mouse, keyboard, extra monitor, router, dongle etc.) or for paying broadband bills.

The eligibility for this fund is targeted and students must:

- Be a first year or a returning student on any undergraduate course; and
- Be a permanent resident of the UK; and
- Live in an area with low participation in Higher Education (defined as Polar4 Quintile 1, 2 or 3); and
- Be assessed by your Student Finance Authority as eligible for financial support and have an assessed household taxable income of below £27,000.

The Funds are made up from various sources such as Alumni and Supporter Engagement, Gifts and Donations to the University and **£16,000** is provided from Access and Participation.

Student Support Funds

The Student Support Funds are provided to the Student Financial Support Team in order to provide financial assistance to students experiencing unexpected financial hardship. The Funds are made up from various sources such as Alumni and Supporter Engagement, Gifts and Donations to the University and **£34,000** is provided from Access and Participation.

The maximum awards that can be made to support students with living costs are:

- Single student - £1,500
- Couple - £2,000

- Families (students with dependants) - £3,000
- Final year students who apply after the end of term 2 - £1,000

Other Financial Support

Diagnostic Testing

The University provides financial support towards the costs of diagnostic tests for students from households with assessed household incomes of less than £27k who have been recommended by the Disability Advisory Service for Dyslexia or Asperger's diagnostic testing to confirm disability.

Foundation Degree Fee Waivers

Students entering the University Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning or progressing onto our BA Children's Development and Learning programme will receive a 50% fee waiver; this waiver applies to both years of the Foundation Degree.

Undergraduate University of Reading Sanctuary Scholarships

Funds 4 bursary payments of £5,000 for each year of study for new applicants to undergraduate courses with refugee or humanitarian protection status.

2023/24 data and spend

Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS)

For the academic year 2023/24 the University paid £2,734,600 in awards to 2544 students from 1st August 2023 to 15th May 2024.

- 48 students undertaking a Postgraduate ITT course received £550 as a Reading bursary, total spend to date is £24,750.

Table 1 – Total number of students awarded the RBS with total spend in a financial year (1st August to 31st July)

Financial year	Number of students	Total spend
2019/20	2392	£2,462,525
2020/21	2494	£2,652,400
2021/22	2570	£2,740,450
2022/23	2576	£2,773,650
2023/24*	2568	£2,776,950

*Information taken from HEBSS on 14th May 2024.

Care Experienced, Foyer students and Estranged students bursary

Spend for 2023/24 Care Experienced and Estrangement Student bursary is £54,500. Currently 50 students are in receipt of this bursary.

Pre-entry travel bursary provision

This bursary is administered and assessed by the Student Financial Support Team.

Out of 196 applications received up to 15th May 2024, 146 applicants received the bursary, the total spend for 23/24 is currently £12,889.65. The mean average award amount is £88.29, and 4 applicants received the highest award available of £300.

Pre-application bursary provision

For the academic year 2023/24, 0 applications were received.

Work and Study Placement bursary

For the academic year 2023/24, the Student Financial Support Team received 13 bursary applications and approved 6 applications with a total spend of £2,000, a further 92 targeted automated awards were made with a total spend of £26,000. The final application deadline for the 2023/24 academic year was 30 June.

Automated awards information:

- 42 x Part 2 MPharm students - £11,700
- 50 x Part 3 MPharm students - £14,300

Digital Support Funds

The £16,000 provided from Access and Participation has been used to fund the following:

- 85 applications received
- 35 Digital Support Fund awards totalling £14,000.

Student Support Funds

The £34,000 provided from Access and Participation has been used to fund the following:

- 32 Student Support Fund awards totalling £33,430
- Total spend on the Student Support Fund to [15th May 2024] is £346,769.18
- Out of the 358 awards made up to May 2024, 102 awards (£98,400) were made to students in receipt of the Reading bursary, this is less than 4% of Reading bursary recipients. A small number of applications are awaiting assessment at the point of writing this report.
- We record instances where students are disclosing in their applications for support funds that their mental health is suffering as a result of financial difficulties with over 42% of students awarded from the fund stating this is the case.

Commuter Travel bursary

The student financial support team received 235 applications and made 182 awards with a total spend of £42,270.

Reading Bursary Survey Results

We received 338 responses which is an increase of 65 responses from last year.

This year the survey was completed using MS Forms, students had to use their University IT credentials to complete the survey and could only complete the survey once.

Key findings 2022/23

- Slight decrease in eligible students which is the first time we've seen this trend since pre-Covid times.
- Significant increase in responses up by 65, this may be due to the way in which we set up the survey this year.
- The highest proportion of students who replied to the survey were in part 1 – the same as in the previous year.
- The main source of personal funding for university was earnings accrued whilst working during vacation periods at 190 responses (56.2%) - a decrease in 8.7% from the previous report. Other main personal sources of funding were from earnings accrued during term-time and personal savings, at 178 and 165 responses respectively – this is the same as the previous report.
- The main other sources of funding were a maintenance loan provided by the Student Finance Authorities (262), followed by Bursaries or Scholarships from the University (259).
- For those students employed during their studies, 155 worked during term-time and throughout vacation periods. For those that worked during term-time, 58 worked more than 15-20 hours per week.
- The main reason for undertaking paid work was to pay for essential living costs such as rent and bills with 223 respondents citing this. The second highest results were to have a more comfortable life with 133; this differs from last year where the second highest reason was to help pay for the cost of books.
- There is still a high percentage of students who weren't aware that they would be eligible for a bursary before they commenced their studies with 151 respondents citing this.
- 201 of students stated that receiving the bursary was very important in supporting their continued studies.
- 165 of the students received £500 - £1000 and 134 students received £1001 - £1500 of support.
- Students who were in receipt of the Reading Bursary also received additional financial support in the form of:
 - Student Support Fund – 173
 - Student Support Fund plus vouchers - 38

- Of the original 173, 19 were applications to the Summer Fund
- Short-term loan – 12
- Digital Support fund – 50
- Of the original 173, 51 made multiple applications to the support fund

Comments:

- “Being a single full time parent with sole custody, and participating in university full time means money can be tight and I have to make things stretch. Receiving financial aid from university such as a bursary or student hardship helps to lessen the stress of figuring out what I have to cut from my budget to make things work”.
- “While I do still experience financial anxiety, the bursary definitely helped alleviate some of it”.
- “Rent is very expensive in Reading which usually maintenance loans do not cover. My financial support bursary allows me to pay rent for a month which frees my mind when it comes to paying other bills”.
- “Money was always an issue coming from a home where I knew I would not be able to receive much parental support and the bursary really helped relieve a bit of stress. Especially when student finance loan is not enough to cover both rent and living costs”.
- “Of course financial anxiety is a more or less constant thing, but support from Reading has made it clear that help is always available if and when it becomes unmanageable”.

Notes

This report has been adapted from a larger financial report, to provide some reflective evaluation on the student financial support that has been provided.

Appendix - Financial Support Evaluation

The appendix report here is the statistical analysis of the financial support packages on student retention and outcomes.

Background

In January 2024, the University received the latest data release from the Designed Data Body (DDB), Jisc, for use with the OfS financial support evaluation toolkit. The purpose of these data is to support providers in the evaluation of their financial support offerings to students, as well as understanding the impact of these investments on the retention and success of their students.

The DDB data release contains:

- Full-time, first degree entrants for each cohort.
- Sandwich students.
- English-domiciled students.
- OfS-funded students (including Initial Teacher Training).

The DDB data release excludes:

- Students on degree courses over five years in length.
- Students who qualified with a first degree in their year of entry.
- Students who left their course prior to 1 December in the relevant year.
- Students whose reason for leaving the course was serious illness or death.

The data provided are derived from the University's annual Student record submission, split into two separate files:

- Retention 1 year and 14 days after commencement for the 2020/21 cohort
- Degree and graduate outcomes for the 2017/18 cohort

This latest data release has been combined with previous data releases to create a three-year dataset for both retention and degree outcomes.

Methodology

The Planning and Strategy Office (PSO) conducted binary logistic regression analyses on the following variables:

- **Retention of students into their second year of study** – This relates to the 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21 cohorts. Students who continue at a level of study below first degree are classified as not being retained.
- **Degree completion within five years** – This relates to the 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18 cohorts. Students who obtained a lesser award or were still studying are classified as non-completions.
- **Achieved a good degree** (First or Upper Second class) – This relates to the 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18 cohorts.

Whilst graduate outcomes information is included as part of the data release, it has not been considered as part of this evaluation. This is due to availability of data, and the subsequent inability to conduct an analysis across three complete years of data. The additional lead time involved in the collection of the Graduate Outcomes data meant that no progression data was included for the 2015/16 cohort, and any students who completed their studies in 2021/22 or later will not have been surveyed prior to the release of these data.

The declared household income data for the students were obtained from the University's Student Financial Support team and mapped into the DDB data release using the Student Support Numbers. The retention data use only the household income data for the student's year of entry, whereas the degree outcomes data use up to three years of household income data to provide the highest percentage of known values.

The household income data were coded into four groups to provide a basis for the analysis:

1. **Students with a household income between £25,001 (£27,001 for the 2019/20 cohort onwards) and £42,737** (the maximum household income to be eligible for a maintenance loan) – This is the reference group for the analysis.
2. **Students with a household income of £25,000 (£27,000 for the 2019/20 cohort onwards) and below** – This is the group eligible to receive the Reading student bursary.
3. **Students with a household income over £42,737** – This is the group with a household income over the threshold for University or maintenance loan support.
4. **Students with an unknown or missing (assumed high) household income** – This is the group for whom the University does not hold household income information, and it is assumed to be high.

The number of students within each household income group (applying the [HESA Standard Rounding Methodology](#)) for each cohort were:

Continuation:

Household Income Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737	305	315	295
2: HHI £25,000 and below	700	715	775
3: HHI over £42,737	485	515	685
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	1440	1210	1130

Degree Completion/Good Degree:

Household Income Group	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737	395	400	445
2: HHI £25,000 and below	655	670	840
3: HHI over £42,737	520	545	600
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	1020	1220	1325

The regression analysis compares the outcomes of students in household income groups 2, 3, and 4 against group 1 to predict if students in these groups are more or less likely to achieve the outcome of interest, and the odds of this happening.

Alongside the household income data, a range of independent control variables were included in the analysis. The majority of these were included in the DDB data release, with additional variables mapped in by PSO. These control variables were:

- DDB-provided
 - Gender/Sex
 - Nationality
 - Age on entry
 - Ethnicity
 - Declared disability and Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)
 - Main subject of degree
 - Tariff score
 - POLAR4 Quintile
 - IMD2019 Quintile
 - Term-time accommodation type (retention only)

- Distance travelled from home address to university in kilometres (retention only)
- Degree size (retention only)
- University-sourced
 - NSS overall satisfaction score
 - Entered through Clearing

The NSS overall satisfaction scores for the students were mapped in from the results data made available to the University following each survey edition. Results were mapped in as follows:

- For the retention cohorts, results from the survey edition in their year of entry were used (e.g. 2018/19 uses the 2019 NSS).
- For the degree outcomes cohorts, results from the third year of study (i.e. the expected end date for a three-year course) were used (e.g. 2017/18 uses the 2020 NSS).

As no individual student results are made available, aggregated course data was mapped in for each student. Where no course-level result was available Department/School-level results were used.

Whilst the primary focus of the analysis was on the impact of the University's financial support offering on the above variables, significant differences within the control variable categories were also noted.

Analysis

The binary logistic regression analyses were undertaken using SPSS, with all independent control variables included. The outputs of these analyses were then reviewed to distinguish any variables (or categories within variables) that displayed a statistical significance. This significance was identified where the *Sig* value (or p-value) was <0.05, indicating that there was a less than 5% chance that the variable occurred randomly. Additionally, results with a *Sig* value between 0.05 and 0.1 were interpreted as indicating a likelihood of correlation, but not necessarily of statistical significance. Results with a *Sig* value >0.1 were interpreted as indicating no statistically significant difference.

Where a result was identified as being of statistical significance or likely correlation, the *B* value (or co-efficient) was used to determine if the result was positive (greater than 0) or negative (less than 0) in comparison to the reference group. The *exp(B)* value (or odds ratio) was then used to calculate the relative likelihood of this result occurring. This likelihood is presented as a percentage difference to the percentage of the comparison group achieving this result. The methodology used to calculate the relative likelihood is a

formula proposed by Zhang and Yu (1998)¹: “Relative likelihood = $OR/((1-P)+(P*OR))$ ”, where OR is the odds ratio ($exp(B)$) and P is the proportion of students in the reference group achieving the outcome being analysed (e.g. retained into their second year of study). The relative likelihood values are presented within a 75% confidence interval, calculated by moving 1.15 standard deviations from the mean. The 75% confidence interval is used due to the wide ranges observed for 95% confidence.

The guidance supplied by the OfS alongside the analysis toolkit provides an insight into how the results can be interpreted:

Result	What this means
Financial support recipients have significantly better outcomes than the comparison group.	Indicates that financial support is effective at improving outcomes (and possibly unfairly so with respect to the comparison group).
Financial support recipients have the same outcomes as the comparison group (i.e. no significant differences).	Indicates that financial support is effective (or there is actually no impact of financial disadvantage on educational outcomes).
Financial support recipients have significantly worse outcomes than the comparison group.	Indicates that financial support is either ineffective or insufficient to overcome the underlying effects of financial disadvantage.

Household Income Analysis 1

Retention

With all else being equal, there was no evidence of a statistically significant difference in retention into the second year of the course between students with a household income of £25,000/£27,000 and below and those in the reference group (household income between £25,001/£27,001 and £42,737) for any cohort within the analysis. It can be inferred that the bursary-eligible group within the 2020/21 had a greater likelihood of retention into their second year of study with an odds ratio over one and three quarters (1.839) times greater than the reference group (translating to them being 1.6% to 4.6% more likely to be retained), but this outcome is not of statistical significance with a Sig value of 0.056.

The only statistically significant results seen were:

- Students with a household income greater than £42,737 can be inferred as having a greater likelihood of being retained into their second year of study than students

¹ Zhang, J. and Yu. K. (1998) 'What's the relative risk? A method of correcting the odds ratio in cohort studies of common outcomes', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(19), pp. 1690-1.

with a household income between £25,001/£27,001 and £42,737 for the 2020/21 (3.2% to 5.6% more likely) cohort.

- Students with an unknown or missing household income can be inferred as having a greater likelihood of being retained into their second year of study than students with a household income between £25,001/£27,001 and £42,737 for the 2018/19 (2.2% to 5.9% more likely) cohort.

These outcomes indicate that the financial support provided by the University is currently effective in retaining students into their second year, or that financial disadvantage does not have an impact on retention. It remains to be seen if the correlation between the bursary-eligible group and a greater likelihood of retention seen in the 2020/21 cohort continues into future cohorts.

The below tables show the output of the analysis for the household income groups:

2018/19:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	0.264	0.294	1.302	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	0.434	0.129	1.543	N/A
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	0.513	0.034	1.670	2.2% to 5.9% more likely to be retained

2019/20:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £27,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £27,000 and below	-0.649	0.140	0.522	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	-0.319	0.505	0.727	N/A
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.438	0.306	0.645	N/A

2020/21:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £27,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £27,000 and below	0.609	0.056	1.839	1.6% to 4.6% more likely to be retained
3: HHI over £42,737	0.979	0.006	2.661	3.2% to 5.6% more likely to be retained
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	0.567	0.062	1.763	1.4% to 4.4% more likely to be retained

Degree completion within five years

With all else being equal, there were no statistically significant differences observed between students with a household income of £25,000 and below and those in the reference group (household income between £25,001 and £42,737) for any cohort within the analysis. This indicates that the financial support provided by the University is effective in supporting students to complete their studies within five years, or that financial disadvantage does not have an impact on degree completion.

No statistically significant results were observed in the other household income groups. It can be inferred that students with a household income greater than £42,737 in the 2017/18 cohort have a greater likelihood of completing their degree within five years with an odds ratio just under one and a half (1.400) times greater than the reference group (translating to them being 1.8% to 7.4% more likely to complete within the timeframe), but this outcome is not of statistical significance with a *Sig* value of 0.079.

The below tables show the output of the analysis for the household income groups:

2015/16:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.219	0.315	0.804	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	-0.163	0.478	0.850	N/A

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.061	0.774	0.941	N/A

2016/17:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.169	0.402	0.844	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	0.153	0.497	1.165	N/A
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.052	0.789	0.950	N/A

2017/18:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.086	0.604	0.917	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	0.336	0.079	1.400	1.8% to 7.4% more likely to complete within 5 years
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	0.024	0.881	1.025	N/A

Good degree

With all else being equal, there was a statistically significant difference in the chances of achieving a good degree (First or Upper Second class) between students with a household income of £25,000 and below and those in the reference group for the 2015/16 cohort. It can be inferred that those with a lower household income had a lesser likelihood of achieving a good degree with an odds ratio just over half (0.574) that of the

reference group, translating to them being 7.5% to 17.3% less likely to achieve a good degree.

A similar result was observed for the 2016/17 cohort, where those with a lower household income with an odds ratio approximately three quarters (0.744) that of the reference group (translating to 2.8% to 12.9% less likely) to achieve a good degree. This result, however, was above the *Sig* value to be classed as statistically significant (0.064), so can only be seen as indicative of a correlation.

There were no statistically significant observations for the 2017/18 cohort.

These results could be indication that the financial support provided by the University is becoming more effective over time in overcoming the impacts of financial disadvantage with regards to achieving a good degree, as the statistically significant results observed in the first year of the analysis are not observed in the later years. Further years of data would be required to draw any definitive conclusions, however.

It should be noted that there were factors relating to these cohorts which were not included in this analysis but may have impacted the results. These include:

- Industrial action
- Renovation of the library
- COVID-19 pandemic

Whilst these factors would also have affected those in the other household income categories, the impact may have been disproportionate on those with existing financial disadvantage.

Statistically significant results were also observed for the 2015/16 cohort for those students with a household income greater than £42,737 and those with an unknown or missing household income. Both groups can be inferred to have had a lesser likelihood of achieving a good degree, with odds ratios of 0.599 (translating to 6.4% to 16.4% less likely) and 0.620 (translating to 6% to 15.1% less likely) respectively.

No statistically significant results were observed for these groups within the 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts.

The below tables show the output of the analysis for the household income groups:

2015/16:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.554	0.001	0.574	7.5% to 17.3% less likely for good degree

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
3: HHI over £42,737	-0.512	0.004	0.599	6.4% to 16.4% less likely for good degree
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.477	0.003	0.620	6% to 15.1% less likely for good degree

2016/17:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.296	0.064	0.744	2.8% to 12.9% less likely for good degree
3: HHI over £42,737	0.041	0.809	1.042	N/A
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.170	0.260	0.844	N/A

2017/18:

Household Income Group	B	Sig	exp(B)	Relative likelihood
1: HHI between £25,001 and £42,737				
2: HHI £25,000 and below	-0.195	0.180	0.823	N/A
3: HHI over £42,737	0.197	0.222	1.218	N/A
4: HHI unknown/missing (assumed high)	-0.085	0.546	0.918	N/A

House Income Analysis 2

A second set of regression analyses were conducted with an amended reference group, comprising students with a household income up to £5,000 above the threshold to be

eligible for the Reading Bursary (£25,001 to £30,000 for the 2015/16 to 2018/19 cohorts, and £27,001 to £32,000 for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts).

This second set of analyses yielded no statistically significant results between those with a household income of £25,000/£27,000 and below and those in the reference group for any of the metrics. Only one result of potential correlation between the two groups was observed, for the 2015/16 cohort for Good Degree. It can be inferred that those with a household income of £25,000 and below were 3.4% to 19.4% less likely to achieve a good degree. As with the previous analysis, these results could indicate that the University's financial support offerings are effective in reducing the impact of financial detriment compared to those with a slightly higher household income, or that financial detriment is not a primary factor within these metrics.

Statistically significant results were observed for two household income groups for the 2017/18 cohort for Good Degree:

- Students with a household income between £30,001 and £42,737 can be inferred as being 9.5% to 23.9% more likely than those with a household income between £25,001 and £30,000 to achieve a First or Upper Second class degree.
- Students with a household income over £42,737 can be inferred as being 10.8% to 24.0% more likely than those with a household income between £25,001 and £30,000 to achieve a First or Upper Second class degree.

Other variables

Statistically significant results were observed within several of the control variables. A summary of these is provided below.

Retention

Gender

Female students can be inferred to have been more likely than males to be retained into the second year of their course for both the 2018/19 (2.3% to 4.6% more likely) and 2020/21 (1.7% to 3.6% more likely) cohorts.

No statistically significant results were observed for the 2019/20 cohort.

Ethnicity

Students from two ethnic groups can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to be retained into the second year of the course for the 2020/21 cohort. These are Black African (2.5% to 10.2% less likely) and Indian (2.6% to 4.0% less likely).

No statistically significant results were observed for any ethnic groups for the 2018/19 or 2019/20 cohorts.

Declared disability

Students with a declared disability but not claiming DSA can be inferred to have been 1.3% to 5.7% less likely to be retained into the second year of the course than students with no declared disability in the 2020/21 cohort. This significance was not seen for the 2018/19 or 2019/20 cohorts.

No statistically significant results were observed for students with a declared disability and claiming DSA.

POLAR4 and IMD2019

No statistically significant results were seen within POLAR4.

Conversely, statistically significant results were observed within IMD2019:

- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 3 can be inferred to have been more likely to be retained into the second year of the course than students from Quintile 1 for the 2018/19 (5.6% to 12.1% more likely) and 2019/20 (1.8% to 4.9% more likely) cohorts.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 4 can be inferred to have been more likely to be retained into the second year of the course than students from Quintile 1 for the 2018/19 (9% to 14.2% more likely) and 2019/20 (1.9% to 5.0% more likely) cohorts.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 5 can be inferred to have been more likely to be retained into the second year of the course than students from Quintile 1 for the 2018/19 (8% to 13.7% more likely) and 2019/20 (2.6% to 5.3% more likely) cohorts.

No statistically significant results were observed within IMD2019 for the 2020/21 cohort.

Clearing

No statistically significant results were observed for any of the cohorts.

Term-time accommodation

Statistically significant results were observed for two categories within term-time accommodation:

- Students who were living in their parental home can be inferred to have been less likely than those living in University accommodation to be retained into the second year of their course for the 2018/19 (1.6% to 5.9% less likely), 2019/20 (0.8% to 4.1% less likely), and 2020/21 (1.4% to 5.1% less likely) cohorts.
- Students who were living in their own home can be inferred to have been less likely than those living in University accommodation to be retained into the second year of their course for the 2018/19 (10.4% to 26.8% less likely) and 2019/20

(1.1% to 5.7% less likely) cohorts, although the number of students in this category was less than 50 in each cohort so there may be insufficient evidence to conclude that they have significantly lower retention rates. There were no statistically significant observations for the 2020/21 cohort.

Degree completion within five years

Gender

Female students can be inferred to have been more likely than males to complete their degree within five years across all cohorts: 2015/16 (1.3% to 5.3% more likely), 2016/17 (2% to 5.8% more likely), and 2017/18 (6.5% to 10.0% more likely).

Ethnicity

Statistically significant results were observed for six ethnic groups:

- Students of Black Caribbean descent can be inferred to have been 8.2% to 28.9% less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2017/18 cohort.
- Students of Black African descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2016/17 (4.3% to 16.6% less likely) and 2017/18 (8.6% to 19.2% less likely) cohorts.
- Students of Indian descent can be inferred to have been 5.6% to 15.1% less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2017/18 cohort.
- Students of Pakistani descent can be inferred to have been 6.2% to 17.5% less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2017/18 cohort.
- Students of Mixed descent can be inferred to have been 7.2% to 16.9% less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2016/17 cohort.
- Students of another (not elsewhere specified) descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to complete their degree within five years for the 2015/16 (3.2% to 16.1% less likely), 2016/17 (4.3% to 14.8% less likely), and 2017/18 (5.4% to 15.3% less likely) cohorts.

Declared disability

Students with a declared disability but not claiming DSA can be inferred to have been less likely to complete their degree within five years than students with no declared disability for both the 2015/16 (5.1% to 13.2% less likely) and 2017/18 (5.2% to 12.5% less likely) cohorts. This significance was not observed for the 2016/17 cohort.

No statistically significant results were observed for students with a declared disability and claiming DSA.

POLAR4 and IMD2019

No statistically significant results were observed for the POLAR4 quintiles.

Statistically significant results were observed for three IMD2019 quintiles:

- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 2 can be inferred to have been 7.7% to 19.1% more likely to complete their degree within five years than students from Quintile 1 for the 2016/17 cohort.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 3 can be inferred to have been more likely to complete their degree within five years than students from Quintile 1 for the 2016/17 (7.2% to 18.7% more likely) and 2017/18 (5.6% to 17.9% more likely) cohorts.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 4 can be inferred to have been 8.7% to 20.5% more likely to complete their degree within five years than students from Quintile 1 for the 2017/18 cohort.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 5 can be inferred to have been more likely to complete their degree within five years than students from Quintile 1 for the 2014/15 (7% to 18.9% more likely), and 2016/17 (9.8% to 20.6% more likely) cohorts.

Clearing

Students who entered through Clearing can be inferred to have been less likely to complete their degree within five years than students who entered through main cycle for the 2016/17 (1.9% to 8.1% less likely) and 2017/18 (2.0% to 7.2% less likely) cohorts. This significance was not observed for the 2015/16 cohort.

Good degree

Gender

Female students can be inferred to have been more likely than males to achieve a good degree across all cohorts: 2015/16 (10.6% to 16.7% more likely), 2016/17 (16.6% to 22.1% more likely), and 2017/18 (19.3% to 24.2% more likely).

Ethnicity

Statistically significant results were observed for eight ethnic groups:

- Students of Black Caribbean descent can be inferred to have been 22.2% to 48.3% less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2017/18 cohort. The number of students in this category was less than 50, however, so there may be insufficient evidence to conclude that they have significantly lower retention rates.
- Students of Black African descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2015/16 (7.8% to 27.3% less

likely), 2016/17 (20.9% to 39.9% less likely), and 2017/18/ (17.7% to 31.5% less likely) cohorts.

- Students of Indian descent can be inferred to have been 15.0% to 27.4% less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2017/18 cohort.
- Students of Pakistani descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2015/16 (14.8% to 38.5% less likely) and 2017/18 (17.8% to 32.9% less likely) cohorts.
- Students of Bangladeshi descent can be inferred to have been 12.8% to 13.6% less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2016/17 cohort. The number of students in this category was less than 50, however, so there may be insufficient evidence to conclude that they have significantly lower retention rates.
- Students of Chinese descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2016/17 (13.9% to 51.2% less likely) and 2017/18 (12.3% to 37.7% less likely) cohorts. The number of students in this category was less than 50 for both cohorts, however, so there may be insufficient evidence to conclude that they have significantly lower retention rates.
- Students of Mixed descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2015/16 (4.5% to 18.9% less likely), 2016/17 (12.2% to 25.4% less likely), and 2017/18 (8.4% to 20.7% less likely) cohorts.
- Students of another (not elsewhere specified) descent can be inferred to have been less likely than White students to achieve a good degree for the 2015/16 (11.7% to 30% less likely), 2016/17 (14.8% to 30.2% less likely), and 2017/18 (8.8% to 21.5% less likely) cohorts.

Declared disability

Students with a declared disability but not claiming DSA can be inferred to have been less likely than students with no declared disability to achieve a good degree for the 2015/16 (6.6% to 17.6% less likely) and 2017/18 (2.3% to 11.3% less likely) cohorts.

Students with a declared disability and claiming DSA can be inferred to have been 4.9% to 18.1% less likely than students with no declared disability to achieve a good degree for the 2016/17 cohort.

POLAR4 and IMD2019

No statistically significant results were observed for the POLAR4 quintiles.

Statistically significant results were observed for three IMD2019 quintiles:

- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 3 can be inferred to have been more likely to achieve a good degree than students from Quintile 1 for the 2016/17 (9.6% to 29.0% more likely) and 2017/18 (11.4% to 28.5% more likely) cohorts.

- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 4 can be inferred to have more likely to complete their degree within five years than students from Quintile 1 for the 2015/16 (9.0% to 29.0% more likely) and 2017/18 (12.3% to 29.5% more likely) cohorts.
- Students from IMD2019 Quintile 5 can be inferred to have been more likely to achieve a good degree than students from Quintile 1 for the 2016/17 (12.1% to 31.2% more likely) and 2017/18 (15.3% to 32.1% more likely) cohorts.

Clearing

Students who entered through Clearing can be inferred to have been less likely to achieve a good degree than students who entered through main cycle for the 2016/17 (1.9% to 10.8% less likely) and 2017/18 (2.1% to 9.0% less likely) cohorts. This significance was not observed for the 2015/16 cohort.

Next steps

The next data release (containing retention for the 2021/22 cohort and degree/graduate outcomes for the 2018/19 cohort) is expected to be received from the Designated Data Body between Summer 2024 and early 2025. Once this has been received, an updated evaluation will be conducted. It is anticipated that the next analysis will be expanded to include graduate outcomes data.

Appendix by Chris Tye, External Returns Manager (Planning and Strategy Office)