Kingston University

Access and Participation Plan 2024-5 to 2026-7

Evaluation Report for Intervention Strategy 3 (IS3) - Executive Summary, July 2026

Intervention Strategy 3 (IS3) forms part of Kingston University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2024-2027 available here: Equality, diversity and inclusion, access and participation | Kingston University London.

IS3 is primarily focused on the University's targets to decrease degree awarding gaps between White and Black students, White and Asian students, and students who were and were not previously in receipt of Free School Meals. It seeks to mitigate several risks to equality of opportunity in the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, including insufficient academic and personal support, mental health challenges, financial pressures, and the continuing impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic. It also addresses the risk that aspects of the curriculum and student experience may not be fully inclusive of all learners.

IS3 brings together a range of institution-wide activities that aim to create more equitable student experiences and outcomes. These include staff development to strengthen inclusive and culturally responsive teaching, ongoing implementation of the University's Inclusive Curriculum Framework, student-staff partnership to support curriculum enhancement, data-informed quality assurance processes to identify and address differential outcomes, targeted support within Schools and Departments with significant awarding gaps, development of inclusive personal tutoring, and initiatives designed to amplify student voice and belonging.

The evaluation of IS3 is informed by a theory-based approach that examines whether the programme's activities are contributing to the changes needed to reduce awarding gaps over time. The evaluation considers both implementation and early outcomes, drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence to assess progress against the underpinning Theory of Change. Rather than focusing solely on student attainment outcomes, the evaluation also examines institutional change, including the development of staff capability, the creation and use of evidence-informed resources, and the extent to which inclusive practices are becoming embedded within University policies, systems and decision-making processes

The first year of implementation provides encouraging evidence that the programme is successfully laying the foundations for reducing differential student outcomes and addressing degree awarding gaps. IS3 was developed based on the principle that inequalities in student outcomes are not primarily the result of individual student characteristics or prior attainment, but are influenced by institutional factors such as curriculum design, learning and teaching practices, cultural responsiveness, and students' sense of belonging.

Evaluation findings demonstrate positive progress across the three core elements of the strategy: developing an evidence-informed framework and resources for inclusive practice, strengthening staff capability and confidence, and embedding inclusive approaches within University systems and processes. The strongest evidence of progress is currently within the first two areas. Significant advances have been made in providing staff with enhanced access to data on student outcomes, developing evidence-based resources and toolkits, and

expanding professional learning opportunities focused on inclusive and culturally responsive teaching.

Staff engagement has exceeded several Access and Participation Plan targets. Participation in inclusive learning and teaching programmes was high, with 97% of eligible staff engaging in the Introduction to Learning and Teaching programme and 35 staff completing Supporting and Assisting Learning and Teaching training, exceeding annual delivery targets. Evaluation evidence indicates increased staff understanding of awarding gaps, greater confidence in inclusive teaching practices, and reported changes to teaching approaches designed to better support students from underrepresented backgrounds.

The University has also strengthened its institutional evidence base through enhanced data dashboards, learning and teaching toolkits, and embedding student partnership within curriculum review and enhancement activities. Inclusive practice is increasingly being integrated into curriculum design, quality assurance and staff development processes, supporting the long-term sustainability of Access and Participation Plan priorities.

Targeted support has been introduced in disciplines with some of the largest awarding gaps, and early findings show reductions in awarding and progression gaps across several participating departments. While it is not yet possible to attribute these improvements directly to IS3 activities, the results suggest that focused, data-informed interventions have the potential to contribute to positive change.

Overall, findings to date support the assumptions underpinning the IS3 Theory of Change and indicate that meaningful progress is being made towards creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. However, it remains too early to determine the full impact on student outcomes and the University's Access and Participation Plan targets. Challenges also remain in fully recognising and responding to the racialised nature of student experiences, highlighting the need for continued focus on race-conscious approaches across all three elements of the strategy. Continued effort will be required to strengthen evaluation, scale effective practice, and ensure that inclusive approaches become fully embedded across all areas of University activity.

This first year demonstrates strong institutional commitment and momentum, providing a solid foundation for longer-term cultural and systemic change aimed at improving success for all students.