

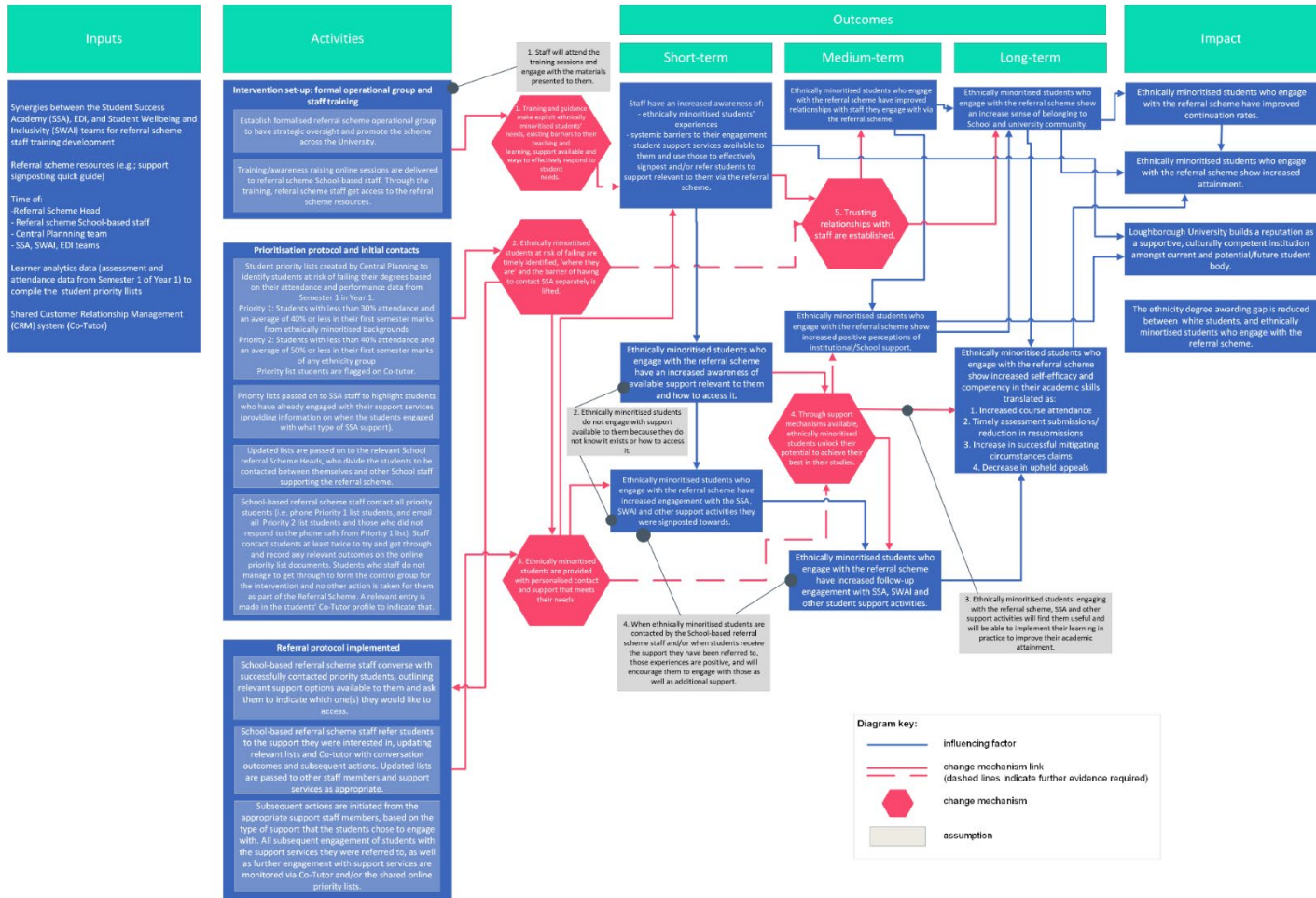
Enhanced Theory of Change (EToC) Loughborough University– Referral Scheme

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Referral Scheme
Enhanced Theory of Change



1- Click to view large version of diagram

ENHANCED THEORY OF CHANGE UNDERPINNING NARRATIVE

VERSION

Version 3 – March 2024

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NAME

Loughborough University's Referral Scheme

WHY IS THE INTERVENTION BEING RUN?

The Referral Scheme is a pilot, school-based intervention (currently implemented only in two Loughborough University Schools, Wolfson School of Mechanical, Electrical and Manufacturing Engineering and the Schools of Science). The intervention centres around the early identification of students at risk of failing their degrees (ie uses data from the end of semester 1 of year 1 to identify target students) and the provision of personal and personalised support (with school staff directly reaching out to students via phone and/or email) as a means to help them get the support they need and perform the best they can. The primary target of the Scheme is ethnically minoritised students with low attendance and academic performance. The Referral Scheme provides the opportunity to students to meaningfully engage with staff and benefit from clarifications provided regarding support relevant to them and how to access it. This support might be as small as talking students through how to submit a Mitigating Circumstances claim or arranging a meeting with their personal tutor, or might involve referral to central student support services, like:

- a. the [Student Success Academy](#) (SSA) - an institutional student support service who seeks to identify and link students to tailored support and development opportunities at key transition points to help them unlock their full potential during their time at university.
- b. the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity (SWAI) - an institutional student support services, comprising three specialist teams (the [Mental Wellbeing team](#), the [Student Advice and Support Service](#) and the [Disability Access and Learning team](#)) focusing to support students through their time at university.

The Referral Scheme is designed to proactively reach out to ethnically minoritised students to make student support more inclusive, accessible and personalised, for example, through 'finding students where they are' rather than requesting them to come and visit the school premises and staff to have a chat about their performance, and through lifting the barrier of having to identify how to access support services to get the support they need.

The Referral Scheme was initiated as institutional data evidence showing that ethnically minoritised students with low average marks and low attendance were not engaging with and benefitting from university support systems. By providing targeted support and fostering a sense of belonging, the referral scheme strives to improve ethnically minoritised students' experience, increase their course engagement and attainment, with an ultimate goal to reduce the ethnicity degree awarding gap (EDAG) at Loughborough University.

WHO IS THE INTERVENTION FOR?

The main beneficiary groups are students at risk of failing their degrees, who are identified into two priority lists, using the following institutional data:

- Priority 1: Students from minoritised ethnic backgrounds with less than 30% attendance and an average of 40% or less in their first semester marks.
- Priority 2: Students from minoritised ethnic backgrounds with less than 40% attendance and an average of 50% or less in their first semester marks.

Academic staff will be indirect beneficiaries of the intervention through awareness-raising training that will empower them to better:

- Understand the challenges that ethnically minoritised students face in their teaching and learning as well as university experience. They can then use this knowledge to change the way they approach and interact with ethnically minoritised students so that they are more personalised and multi-culturally relevant.
- Understand how to approach and support ethnically minoritised students' needs in a personalised way.
- Understand the support services available across the institution and be able to effectively signpost ethnically minoritised students to those.

WHAT IS THE INTERVENTION?

- Learner analytics are monitored by the Central Planning team to create student priority lists of students at risk of failing their degrees based on their attendance and performance data from Semester 1 in Year 1. Two priority lists are created in the form of online documents as follows:
 - Priority 1: Students with less than 30% attendance and an average of 40% or less in their first semester marks from minoritised ethnic backgrounds.
 - Priority 2: Students with less than 40% attendance and an average of 50% or less in their first semester marks of any ethnicity group.

Priority list students are also flagged in the institutional Customer Relationship Management System Co-tutor.

- The lists prepared by the Central Planning team is reviewed by SSA staff, who cross-reference the details of the identified students with their records to highlight students who have already engaged with the SSA (providing information on when the students engaged with what type of SSA support offered), to provide context for school staff and further ensure that any support offered will be relevant and tailored. Once the lists have been updated, these are passed on to the relevant School Referral Scheme Heads by week 2 of Semester 2.
- The lists are received by the School Referral Scheme Heads. For the first pilot stage, staff acting as EDI champions or with a particular interest in race/ethnicity issues have volunteered for this role. The School Referral Scheme Heads, based on their capacity and number of students identified in the lists, divide the students to be contacted between themselves and other school staff who have self-selected for contributing to the referral scheme. For the first pilot, this staff included personal academic tutors, academic staff championing EDI and school administrators. This staff have undergone relevant training (e.g. empathetic listening) at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year.
- School staff phone all Priority 1 list students, and email all those on Priority 2 and everyone who did not respond to the phone calls from the Priority 1 list, to check in with them by week 5-6 of Semester 2. Staff contact students at least twice to try and get through to and record any relevant outcomes on the online priority list documents. Students who staff do not manage to get through to form the control group for the intervention and no other action is taken for them as part of the Referral Scheme. A relevant entry is made in the students' Co-Tutor profile to indicate that.
- Students who are successfully contacted by school staff, have a conversation with school staff based on standardised online guidance (either phone or email script), which has been developed based on guidance from the SSA and SWAI teams. Through this conversation, staff provide a safe space to students to share their experiences and needs. Based on the experiences and needs expressed by the students through this initial contact, staff will outline to each student the support options available and relevant to them. Based on students' choice out of those, staff will refer student to the support option(s) that students request to access. Although the list is not exhaustive, this might involve:

- Access to the SSA's support services. Most of the times, relevant services for referred students are a) the 'Get Ahead Together' – peer mentoring to support students from ethnic minority backgrounds and groups underrepresented in higher education as they transition to university, or b) 'Academic Success Coaching' – tailored one-to-one support, including sessions on time management, critical thinking and research skills.
- Access to SWAI services
- Access to school-relevant support, like demystifying the Mitigating Circumstances – MC – process, or a meeting to devise a support action plan with the students' personal academic tutor.
- Updated lists including all outcomes of the initial contacts with the priority students are shared with all relevant staff, based on the support that each student selected. Also, relevant entries are made on Co-Tutor, flagging the actions and support type to which each student was referred, to enable cross-team oversight and monitoring of subsequent actions taken.
- Subsequent actions are initiated from the appropriate support staff members identified, based on the type of support that the students chose to engage with (e.g. sending meeting invitations – can be either online or in-person - for the support initiative relevant to each one of the referred students)
- All subsequent engagement of students with the support services they were referred to, as well as further engagement with support services are monitored via Co-Tutor and/or the shared online priority lists.
- If students have agreed during their initial contact by school staff, follow-up calls are made by school Staff or relevant support services staff to gauge students' progress after they engaged with the support type they were referred to, towards the end of Semester 2. Relevant feedback is recorded as an entry on the student profiles on Co-tutor and/or the shared priority lists.

WHO IS DELIVERING THE INTERVENTION?

- Student Success Academy (SSA) - providing training and resources to school-based staff contacting priority students, booking appointments for directly referred students, triaging students and signposting them to other activities they provide that might be relevant to them
- EDI/Student Wellbeing and Inclusion (SWAI) - collaborate with SSA to develop the training and resources for school-based staff contacting priority students
- Referral Scheme School Head – school staff member leading and managing the initiative at a school level (e.g. approaching the rest of school staff to partake in the referral scheme, dividing priority students to be contacted across the various school staff etc.) This might be staff with expertise in education and student experience, in EDI leadership roles, Learning and development Advisors etc.
- Academic Staff and school Administrators – contacting priority students, signpost and refer directly to range of support and wellbeing services (including MC information)
- Central data teams – Planning office provides a list of eligible students to schools and SSA
- Enhanced Academic Practice Team – providing personal tutor training to school-based staff in order build trust and meet student needs
- Referral Scheme project manager – appointment to be confirmed (TBC) by the Access and Participation Sub-Committee (APSC).
- Referral Scheme Operations Working Group - Membership TBC by the APSC. This could include:
 - Central planning staff data officer
 - Student records office data officer
 - SSA coordinators (one from each support service offered)
 - SSA administrator
 - School Referral Scheme Head
 - Staff members supporting the Referral Scheme in each school
 - Staff from the central evaluation team.

HOW IS THE INTERVENTION DELIVERED?

The Referral Scheme School Heads and the rest of the staff supporting the Scheme at a school level receive mandatory online training to prepare them for meaningfully engaging with the Referral Scheme's priority students (particularly those from ethnically minoritised backgrounds). This training is developed and facilitated by EDI, SSA and SWAI staff members to ensure that colleagues are engaging in conversations with students effectively – embodying a supportive, appreciative and empathetic approach. Staff need to have completed their online training at least one Semester before their engagement with the Referral Scheme commences. This training involves modules on empathetic listening, how to manage difficult conversations, how to meaningfully engage with students from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, how to ensure confidentiality and safeguarding etc. As part of this training, staff are provided with online documents that will be used as resources to contact students as part of the Referral Scheme, like an email/phone script to use for their contact with students, and a guide for signposting to all student support services available at Loughborough University.

Using learner analytics data, the Central Planning team identifies target students for the Scheme, dividing those into two priority groups. This list is compiled at least one weeks before Semester 2 starts.

The lists prepared by the Central Planning team are reviewed by SSA staff, who cross-reference the details of the identified students with their records to highlight students who have already engaged with the SSA (providing information on when the students engaged with what type of SSA support offered), to provide context for school staff and further ensure that any support offered will be relevant and tailored. Once the lists have been updated, these are passed on to the relevant School Referral Scheme Heads by week 2 of Semester 2.

The School Referral Scheme Heads divide the students to be contacted between themselves and the rest of the school staff supporting the Referral Scheme in each school.

School staff phone all Priority 1 list students, and email all those on Priority 2 and everyone who did not respond to the phone calls from the Priority 1 list, to check in with them by week 5-6 of Semester 2. Staff contact students at least twice to try and get through to priority students and records any relevant outcomes on the online priority list documents. Students who staff do not manage to get through to form the control group for the intervention and no other action is taken for them as part of the Referral Scheme. A relevant entry is made in the students' Co-Tutor profile to indicate that.

Students who are successfully contacted by school staff, have a conversation with school staff based on standardised online guidance (either phone or email script), which has been developed based on guidance from the SSA and SWAI teams. Through this conversation, staff provide a safe space to students to share their experiences and needs. Based on the experiences and needs expressed by the students through this initial contact, staff will outline to each student the support options available and relevant to them. Based on students' choice out of those, staff will refer student to the support option(s) that students request to access. Although the list is not exhaustive, this might involve:

- Access to the SSA's support services. Most of the times, relevant services for referred students are a) the 'Get Ahead Together' – peer mentoring to support students from ethnic minority backgrounds and groups underrepresented in higher education as they transition to university, or b) 'Academic Success Coaching' – tailored one-to-one support, including sessions on time management, critical thinking and research skills.
- Access to SWAI services.
- Access to school-relevant support, like demystifying the Mitigating Circumstances – MC – process, or a meeting to devise a support action plan with the students' personal academic tutor.

Updated lists including all outcomes of the initial contacts with the priority students are shared with all relevant staff, based on the support that each student selected. Also, relevant entries are made on Co-Tutor, flagging the actions and support type to which each student was referred, to enable cross-team oversight and monitoring of subsequent actions taken.

Subsequent actions are initiated from the appropriate support staff members identified, based on the type of support that the students chose to engage with (e.g. sending meeting invitations – can be either online or in-person - for the support initiative relevant to each one of the referred students).

All subsequent engagement of students with the support services they were referred to, as well as further engagement with support services are monitored via Co-Tutor and/or the shared online priority lists.

WHERE IS THE INTERVENTION DELIVERED?

This intervention is currently delivered in a pilot format at two of Loughborough University's schools. However, the intervention is in essence cross-departmental, as it requires collaboration between central services (e.g. Central planning, EDI, SSA, other student support services) and school-based staff (academic staff, admin staff, professional and support services staff etc.) to work closely with each other, to ensure the smooth delivery of the initiative (e.g. target student data and engagement information are accessible by all relevant teams, student engagement can be tracked across all different contact points etc.).

Most of the resources required for the intervention are available online (e.g. training for Referral Scheme staff, priority student lists etc.). However, when it comes to how students engage with the support services they are referred to, this engagement can take either an online or face-to-face contact.

HOW MANY TIMES WILL THE INTERVENTION BE DELIVERED? OVER HOW LONG?

The intervention is currently being piloted in the Wolfson School of Mechanical, Electrical and Manufacturing Engineering and School of Science with the aim for the scheme to be rolled out across the University. The Scheme will run on an additional pilot including more schools in the academic year 2024-2025, with the anticipation of a full roll-out with all nine schools involved in the academic year 2025-2026.

This intervention works by tailoring support to its participants. This means that the number of “sessions”, the intensity of support and the period of time over which these are delivered depends on the student. Students are checked for eligibility and assigned to priority groups for contact by Week 2 of Semester 2 with attendance checks for all students happening weekly. Students on priority lists are then contacted by Week 5-6 of Semester 2.

Details of students who have been contacted and referred are passed to support services in real-time according to the student’s needs. This is usually completed on a weekly basis. School of Science currently complete referral forms on the participant’s behalf. For direct referrals to the SSA, students are referred/booked in on a weekly basis.

Delivery of staff training to be involved in the Referral Scheme will happen once a year at the beginning of the year unless the needs for further refresher sessions or 2nd intakes are identified through evaluation of the Scheme.

WILL THE INTERVENTION BE TAILORED?

The intervention will be tailored in the sense that it seeks to provide personalised support relevant to students’ needs. In addition, timings of each activity might be shifted to fit with timings/schedule of each school.

HOW WILL IMPLEMENTATION BE OPTIMISED?

Communications strategy:

- A communications strategy for both students and staff should be developed and implemented. This communication (particularly for students) should be staggered, targeted and timely (signposting to relevant services based on key points of the student lifecycle and journey). For example, it would be good to signpost to all academic support relevant to students on the lead-up to their first exam and assessment periods, instead of just providing all types of support available to students as a 'one-off' as part of the students' induction. Student and staff need to be aware that a Referral scheme is in operation, with the aim to provide timely academic support to students to unlock their potential and thrive in their studies.
- Although currently phone calls and emails are identified as contact strategies with the priority students, the possibility to use additional means (e.g. SMS texting or a designated Referral Scheme WhatsApp group) is currently explored for future iterations of the pilot, working in collaboration with central data teams, trying to solve GDPR issues.

Schools participating in the Referral Scheme:

- Schools should ensure that staff's workload allows them to meaningfully engage with all aspects of the Referral Scheme. For this reason, engagement with the Referral Scheme should be recognised, protected and rewarded, so that there is a strong message that the institution shows a real commitment to work related with improving ethnic minoritised students' academic success and overall experience. Consequently, although the Referral Scheme Head and the school-based referral scheme staff are currently identified mostly on a voluntary basis, taking up these roles should become more formalised in future iterations of the intervention.
- Training using school- and university-specific data should be offered to all academic staff, to empower them in understanding the challenges and barriers different student groups face, working to break down stereotypes and how to embed this in their teaching practices and interactions with students.

- All academic staff, and particularly those with pastoral responsibilities (e.g. personal tutors) should be in place to offer personalised support to students, including signposting them to services available to them. They should also work in collaboration with the student support services and the Referral Scheme staff to monitor if students have engaged with support and how have they benefited from this. Relevant items included in guidelines documents used to facilitate meetings with personal tutees as well as the PDR processes could be utilised to embed staff accountability, for example.
- Proactive Personal Tutors and other staff who exemplify best practice can be used as champions (e.g., throughout training, as a link to schools, in comms, etc.)

SSA:

- Academic coaches and peer mentors set clear boundaries of what they can and cannot do/offer (early “contracting” with students).
- SSA staff should be encouraged to engage with both internal and external professional development opportunities related to how they can best support students from ethnically minoritised backgrounds.
- SSA staff should be signposted to relevant support services available to them and have manageable workloads, to mitigate for the heavy emotional labour the nature of their roles involves.

WHO ARE THE KEY ACTORS / STAKEHOLDERS?

Key stakeholders/actors:

- Student participants
- SSA team
- Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity (SWAI)
- School-based staff engaged with the Referral Scheme
- Planning Office team
- EDI team – synergies with referral scheme school-specific staff, may be part of the staff training design and delivery along with SSA & SWAI
- Enhanced Academic Practice team - synergies with referral scheme school-specific staff, may be part of the staff training design and delivery along with SSA & SWAI
- Maths Learning Support Centre (MLSC)
- Personal tutors - support referral scheme through raising awareness of support services offered by the institution in their meetings with their tutees
- Access and Participation Plan Team
- Evaluation teams to support with referral scheme's reporting and evaluation
- University Leadership – to gain buy-in, ultimately reporting upwards to them

Key committees:

- Access and Participation Sub-Committee (APSC) - meets every two months, this intervention must be reported on with semesterly updates to this committee usually around January.

- Learning and teaching committee - communications with academic colleagues and schools
- EDI committee – EDI supporting staff training
- Race Equality Charter (REC) committee – overlap in likely have synergies re: goals of the referral initiatives
- Anti-racist Working Group - likely have synergies re: goals of the referral initiatives

CHANGE MECHANISMS

Change mechanism 1

- Through the referral scheme set-up phase and the staff training element in specific, staff supporting in the delivery of the referral scheme have an increased awareness of the ethnically minoritised students' experiences, the systemic barriers to their engagement and the student support services available to them and use those to effectively signpost students to support relevant to them.
- Professional development opportunities can help academic staff recognise systemic barriers hindering ethnically minoritised students' learning, as well as their own biases towards ethnically minoritised students and how to avoid stereotypical behaviours, thus making them more effective in supporting them in a meaningful way (Guiffrida et al., 2018)
- Diversity training that is awareness-raising can be useful to introduce trainees to racism and discrimination faced by minorities, and skill-based diversity training provides attendees with new behaviours to practice and tools for changing their everyday practice (Berzukova at al., 2016).

Change mechanism 2

- Through the referral scheme, ethnically minoritised students at risk of failing are identified timely, "where they are", and the barrier of having to contact SSA and other support available separately (e.g. self-referral) is lifted.
 - Student support services should provide proactive, student-led support rather than waiting for students to contact them to offer help. (Wistow, 2023).

Change mechanism 3

- Through the referral scheme, ethnically minoritised students are provided with personalised contact and support that meets their needs and for this reason, they engage more with the support services/mechanisms available to them (e.g. SSA, SWAI, MC circumstances claims etc).
 - "Effective signposting will motivate students to access support by increasing their belief that the support on offer is likely to help them" (Wilson et al., 2022: 213).

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic university students need encouragement from staff they have rapport with to access support available to them (Cosmos, 2021).
- Academic programmes with higher rates of retention than might have been anticipated (based on entry grades), or who overcame retention issues, tend to have strategies for identifying those students more at risk of withdrawing early and implementing support for them (Thomas, 2012).

Change mechanism 4

- Engaging with relevant support, ethically minoritised students unlock their potential to achieve their best in their studies.
 - Loughborough University institutional data from the evaluation of the SSA's Future Talent Programme showed that Black students who engaged with the programme had higher success rates in securing placements than those who did not
 - Mentoring/coaching and peer support raise BAME students' achievement, positively affect their academic performance, and significantly contribute to their academic success (Elliott, 2022).
 - Universities' effective student support services predict persistence and academic performance (Johnson et al., 2022).

Change mechanism 5

- With students being contacted by school staff through the referral scheme and being provided with personalised support that is relevant to them, students show increased trust in staff and institutional support, expressed in increased staff-student interactions (e.g. students more confident and comfortable to approach academic staff), increased institutional belonging and increased student outcomes (ie continuation and attainment).
 - Increased staff student interactions nurture student engagement and belonging and are central to improving student retention and success (Thomas, 2012).
 - Students are likely to stay in an educational institution with various support services available (Julal, 2013).
 - Anecdotal institutional data from Loughborough University show that once students access one SSA activity, they are also likely to engage with additional ones.

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ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption 1

- We assume that staff will attend the Referral Scheme training sessions and engage with the materials being presented to them.
 - This assumption is based on previous experience of delivering similar sessions in other schools.
 - The initiative has the full backing and engagement of the PVC for Education and Student Experience who will be asking relevant attendance data to ensure all referral scheme staff have attended the mandatory training.

Assumption 2

- There is an assumption that ethnically minoritised students do not engage with support available to them because they don't know it exists or how to access it.
 - Anecdotal institutional evidence (e.g. through staff and student consultation for the new Access and Participation Plan) showed that both staff and students are unaware of available support services.
 - Ethnically minoritised students do not engage with support services available to them because they do not know they exist, they are not sure they are relevant to them or are hesitant to access them (Cosmos, 2021; City University Students' Union, 2021).

Assumption 3

- There is an assumption that ethnically minoritised students engaging with the referral scheme, SSA and other support activities will find them useful and will be able to implement their learning in practice to improve their academic attainment.
 - Engagement with academic support activities raises BAME students' achievement, positively affect their academic performance, and significantly contributes to their academic success (Elliott, 2022).
 - Having a learning environment that assists students in identifying their problems and seeking help from on-campus support services enhances their motivation to study and promotes their academic performance (Chao et al., 2018)

Assumption 4

- There is an assumption that, when ethnically minoritised students are contacted by the school-based referral scheme staff and/or when students receive the support they have been referred to, those experiences are positive, and will encourage them to engage with those as well as additional support.
 - o Anecdotal institutional evidence show that ethnically minoritised students who have engaged with one SSA support service independent of the referral scheme tend to engage with additional ones.
 - o Student support services that are designed to meet students where they are, have staff who are trained to be responsive to student needs and encourage authentic interactions are more likely to attract and retain diverse students (Barnes et al. 2024).

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WHAT IS THE EVALUATION AIM?

The aim of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the Referral Scheme, a school-based intervention focused on ethnically minoritised students at risk of failing academically. The evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of the Referral Scheme on student attainment, continuation, engagement, and sense of belonging. By analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, the evaluation aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects, mechanisms, and areas for improvement. This involves examining both the delivery of the intervention and the experiences of its recipients and providers.

WHAT ARE THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS?

Primary: The main questions addressed by this evaluation is whether the Referral Scheme addresses the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap (EDAG) in their context. This is explored through a series of sub-questions, outlined below:

- Does the Referral Scheme improve the **attainment** of ethnically minoritised students?
- Does the Referral Scheme improve the **continuation** of ethnically minoritised students?
- Does the Referral Scheme improve ethnically minoritised students' **engagement** in their courses?
- Does the Referral Scheme increase participants' **sense of belonging** to school and university community?

Secondary: The secondary questions seek to understand whether the intervention generated changes in staff and students' knowledge, awareness and behaviours.

- Do staff have **increased awareness** of ethnically minoritised students' experiences, systemic barriers to their engagement, student support services available to them, how to effectively signpost and/or refer students to those via the Referral Scheme? (e.g.; how effective was training?)
- Does the identifying and contacting, and reaching out to support on behalf of ethnically minoritised students lead to **building trusting relationships** with staff?
- Does providing ethnically minoritised students with personalised contact and (signposting) support that meets their individual needs lead to **increased engagement with support available** to them e.g. SSA, Student Wellbeing and Inclusion (SWAI), etc?

Exploratory:

- Does the increased engagement with SSA, SWAI etc lead to an **increase in follow-up engagement** with support mechanisms available to them?

WHAT METHODOLOGY ARE YOU USING?

A mixed methods approach will be used to address the evaluation aims, including:

- Student focus groups;
- Staff focus groups using an open forum/town hall approach;
- Pre-test post-test student surveys; and
- Administrative data tracking (e.g.; attendance, outcomes, etc.).

RISKS AND LIMITATIONS	
RISK AND LIMITATION	MITIGATION
<p>Lack of ethnically diverse representation among student-facing support staff: There is a lack of ethnic diversity in some areas of the student-facing support (e.g. currently 2 white female coaches in SSA).</p>	<p>Development of updated recruitment strategies for student-facing support roles (e.g. advertising vacancies through online mass mailing lists dedicated to student support staff, employing relevant social media groups, including those targeted to ethnically diverse student support staff members) to try and reach out to a wider pool of participants</p> <p>Highlight EDI expertise and anti-racism training that existing student-facing support staff have in their institutional profiles</p> <p>Have a clear statement promoting the institutional commitment of helping ethnically minoritised student to achieve their best and have an enjoyable student experience in all communication materials offering student support</p> <p>Employ existing ethnically diverse peer mentors, coaches and School-based referral scheme staff as ambassadors, engaging them in awareness raising sessions/roadshows</p>
<p>Lack of cultural competency amongst staff yet to be trained: There is a risk of over-looking diverse needs of the student population or applying a deficit model in early stages, creating further blockages to support.</p>	<p>Implement ongoing cultural competency training for staff.</p>

<p>Risk of non-participation: Some students might not engage with the scheme.</p>	<p>Develop outreach strategies and personalise communications (e.g.; specific names in emails, etc.) to increase participation in priority groups. Initial evidence show that students engage with the contact mechanisms identified by the scheme (phones and emails). However, the possibility to use other contact means (e.g. SMS texting or a designated Referral Scheme WhatsApp group) is currently explored for future iterations of the pilot, working in collaboration with central data teams, trying to solve GDPR issues.</p>
<p>GDPR/data privacy concerns: Handling sensitive student data requires strict compliance with GDPR.</p>	<p>Ensure robust data protection measures, particularly outlining a data protection protocol, an outlined system for shared CRM/logging of meetings and clear communication about data usage.</p>
<p>Limited staff resources: The scheme may strain existing staff resources, particularly as it scales up beyond the pilot.</p>	<p>It will be critical to ensure clear responsibilities and accountability structures for the Referral Scheme. Ensure to provide adequate training and support. Consider hiring additional staff if necessary.</p>