

# WHILE WE WAIT

*Which statement(s) best describes your role?*

Recruitment	Marketing	Widening Participation	
Pre-entry (primary)	Pre-entry (secondary/FE)	Post-entry (UG)	Post-entry (PG)
Student-facing	Non-student-facing	Anything else?	



University of  
**Southampton**

# TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

## THE VALUE OF PRE-ENTRY SUPPORT

*19 December 2024*

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Learn with US Transition Programme (Pre-Entry)

University of Southampton

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# DISCLAIMER

*This session is about learning from each other!  
We are all experts in our field*

# DISCUSSION

*What does pre-entry engagement look like in your context?*

**“Pre-entry engagement”**: Activities targeted at students who have not yet transitioned to HE. Could include: UCAS / careers fairs, primary and secondary outreach, specific skills support, IAG sessions, campus visits, etc.

# OBJECTIVES

for today's session

## Part 1:

- Outline the work of the Learn with US Transition programme
- Discuss the benefits of pre-entry support for academic skills development

## Part 2:

- Consider what is meant by a lifecycle approach to student support
- Consider how to embed or develop a lifecycle approach in your own context
- Explore opportunities for greater collaboration between lifecycle stages in your own context

# THE LEARN WITH US TRANSITION TEAM

## Who we are



**Becky  
Naylor-Teece**  
Academic Skills  
Officer

A Psychology graduate, I qualified as a teacher in 2017 through Teach First and spent seven years teaching secondary Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Simultaneously completing an MEd, I developed a strong understanding of pedagogy and how this can be translated into effective lesson design and delivery.

I now use this expertise when delivering academic skills workshops and outreach activities to students from underrepresented groups, aged between 11 and 18, supporting their transition to HE, raising their academic attainment, developing their skills of research and fostering a sense of belonging at HE.

A Psychology and Criminology graduate, Katrina also qualified as a teacher and worked as a college lecturer in Further Education (FE) for over a decade. Alongside teaching, Katrina completed her MSc in Education in 2021. Her MSc research explored the impact of positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement on academic achievement and student retention in FE.

Katrina has a passion for research, which she brings to her current role. She is committed to developing students' academic research skills, particularly supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds as they complete their research-based qualifications.

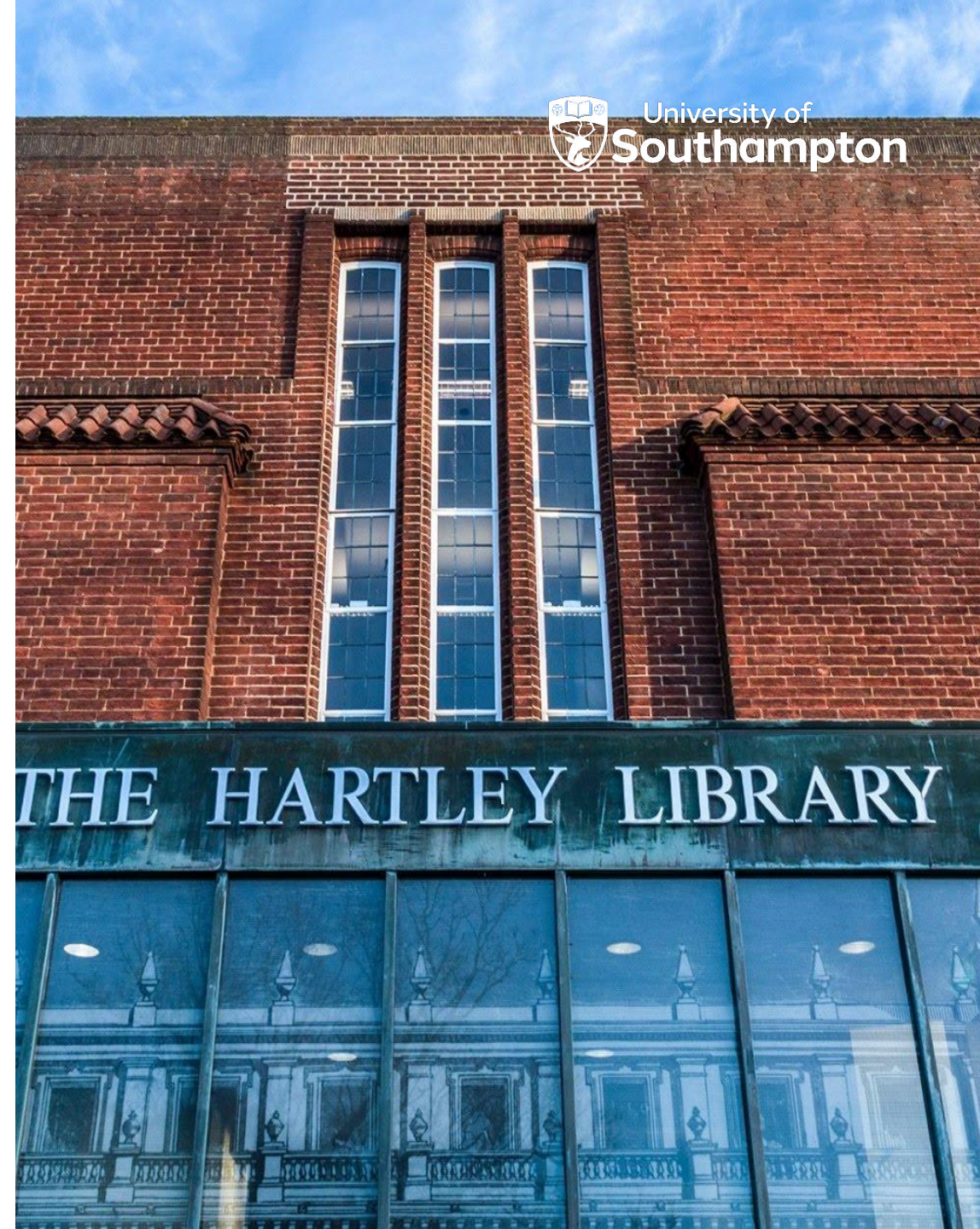


**Katrina Lueddeke**  
Academic Skills  
Manager

# THE LEARN WITH US TRANSITION PROGRAMME

## What we do

- Based within **WPSM** at the University of Southampton
- First phase of a **lifecycle-oriented** Academic Skills Service
- Delivering an embedded programme of **research skills** for pre-entry students undertaking **project qualifications**
- Activities include:
  - **Workshops** in schools
  - Research **visits** on campus
  - **CPD** for teachers
- Aim to improve academic self-efficacy, raise attainment, sense of belonging, and participation rates amongst **FSM and IMDQ1** students





# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

What are they?

Independent,  
student-led **research  
projects**



Qualifications exist at  
levels 1, 2 **and** 3  
E.g. a level 3 **EPQ** is  
worth half  
an A-level

**50**

**%**

Topic chosen by the  
student – they can  
study **anything**  
**at all**



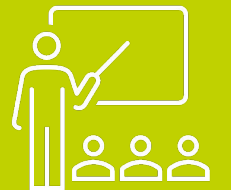
Students develop  
**skills** including  
project management,  
critical analysis,  
record-  
keeping and  
referencing



Students receive 1-1  
support from a  
**supervisor** – like an  
undergraduate  
dissertation



Projects culminate in a  
product (e.g. essay),  
and an opportunity to  
**disseminate**  
their research  
findings



# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Example titles

When I say anything, I mean **anything!**

**Essay:** How far has LSD use in the USA made cults activities since the 1960s more extremist and violent?

**Essay:** Exploring the legalisation of anabolic steroids within bodybuilding

**Artefact:** Baking a wedding cake on a budget

**Essay:** Why is education for women and children important in disadvantaged countries?

**Artefact:** Design and produce a 1920s dress, using traditional techniques

**Essay:** In what ways does racial abuse affect male English footballers' mental health, confidence and careers?

**Artefact:** How crucial were tanks in the allies' WWII victory?

# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Why do they matter?

EPQ students demonstrate **improved outcomes at HE** compared with their peers

**29%** more likely  
to achieve an A\*-B  
grade at A-level

*Jones (2016)*

**22%** more likely  
to progress to  
higher education

**50%** less likely to  
drop out of  
University in 1<sup>st</sup> or  
2<sup>nd</sup> year

*Gill (2022)*

**6%** more likely to  
achieve a 1<sup>st</sup>

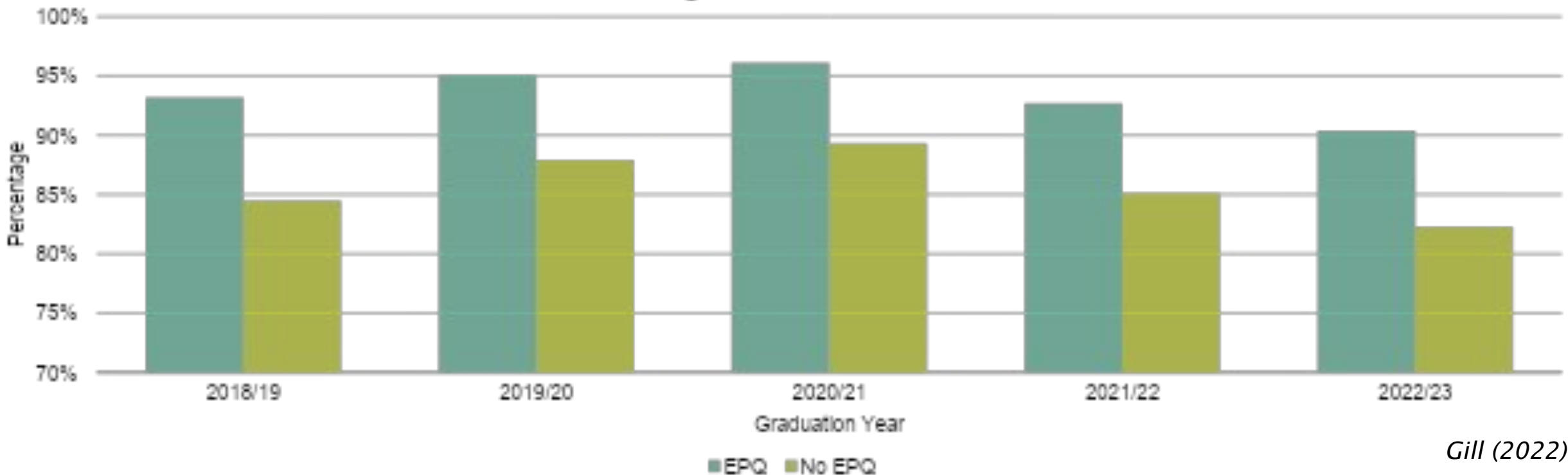
**8%** more likely to  
achieve a 2:1

# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Why do they matter?

EPQ students demonstrate **improved outcomes at HE** compared with their peers

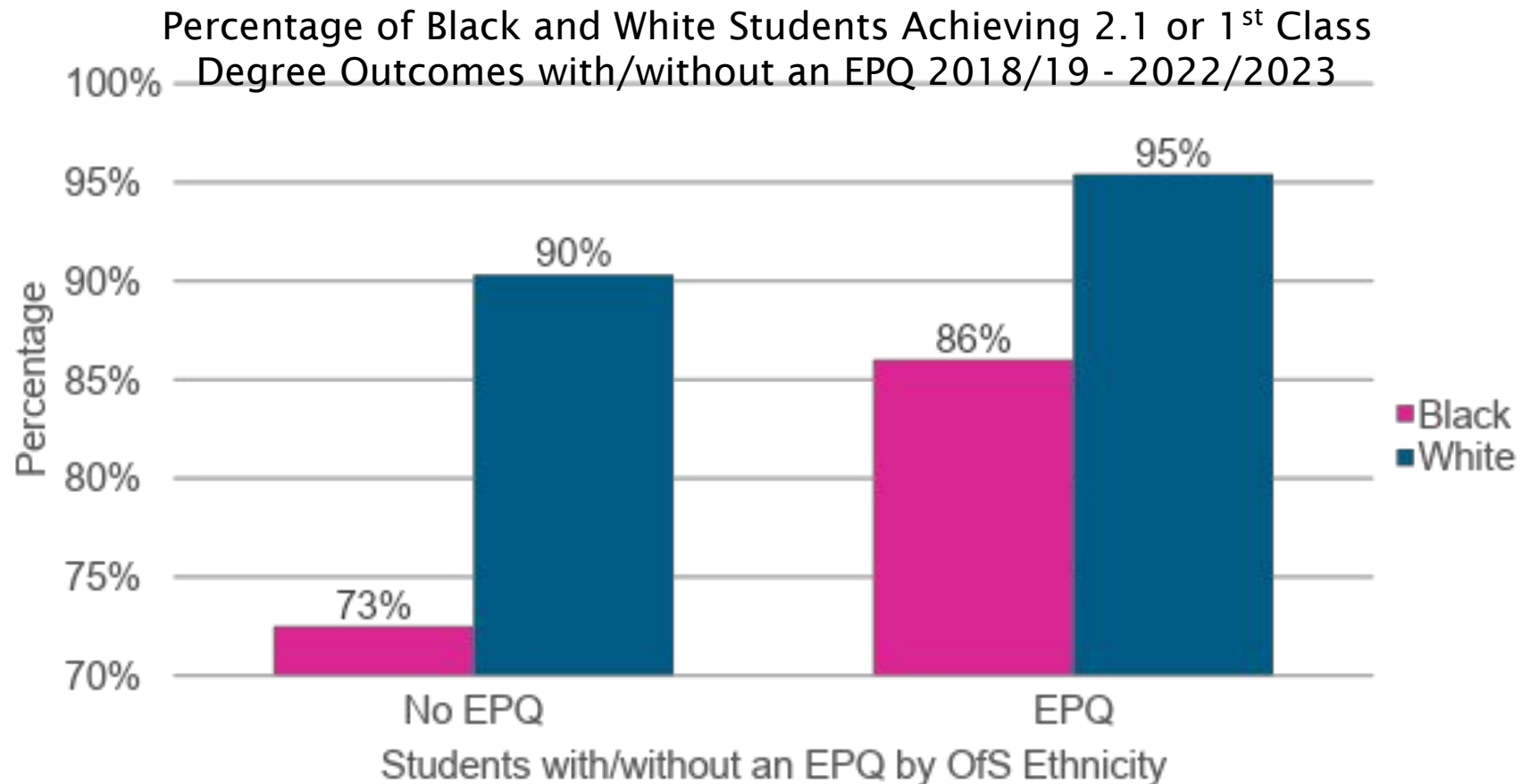
Percentage of EPQ Students vs Non-EPQ Students Achieving 2.1 or 1st Class Degree Outcomes



# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Why do they matter?

EPQ completion contributes to the **closing of ethnicity-based degree awarding gaps**



# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Why do they matter?

This is why the University of Southampton were proud to be the first to introduce an **alternative offer scheme** for students who excel in the EPQ

Under this scheme, eligible applicants to subjects across our humanities, business, law, social sciences and related programmes may receive two offers – our usual offer plus **an offer of an A in the EPQ and one grade lower in their A level subjects** (e.g. AAA at A level; or AAB at A level AND an A grade in EPQ).

This reflects **our confidence in the EPQ as an excellent preparation** for the kinds of independent study necessary for students to succeed at a research-intensive university such as Southampton.

# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Why do they matter?

EPQ completion also has **benefits at level three** (A level), including...

Students undertaking the EPQ see an average increase of 5-6 UCAS tariff points (Gill, 2017) – although work still needs to be done to control for the role of motivation effects

*For students*

Increasing EPQ participation from under 5% to over 30% of sixth formers is associated with an increase in overall centre performance (Gill, 2017)

*For centres*

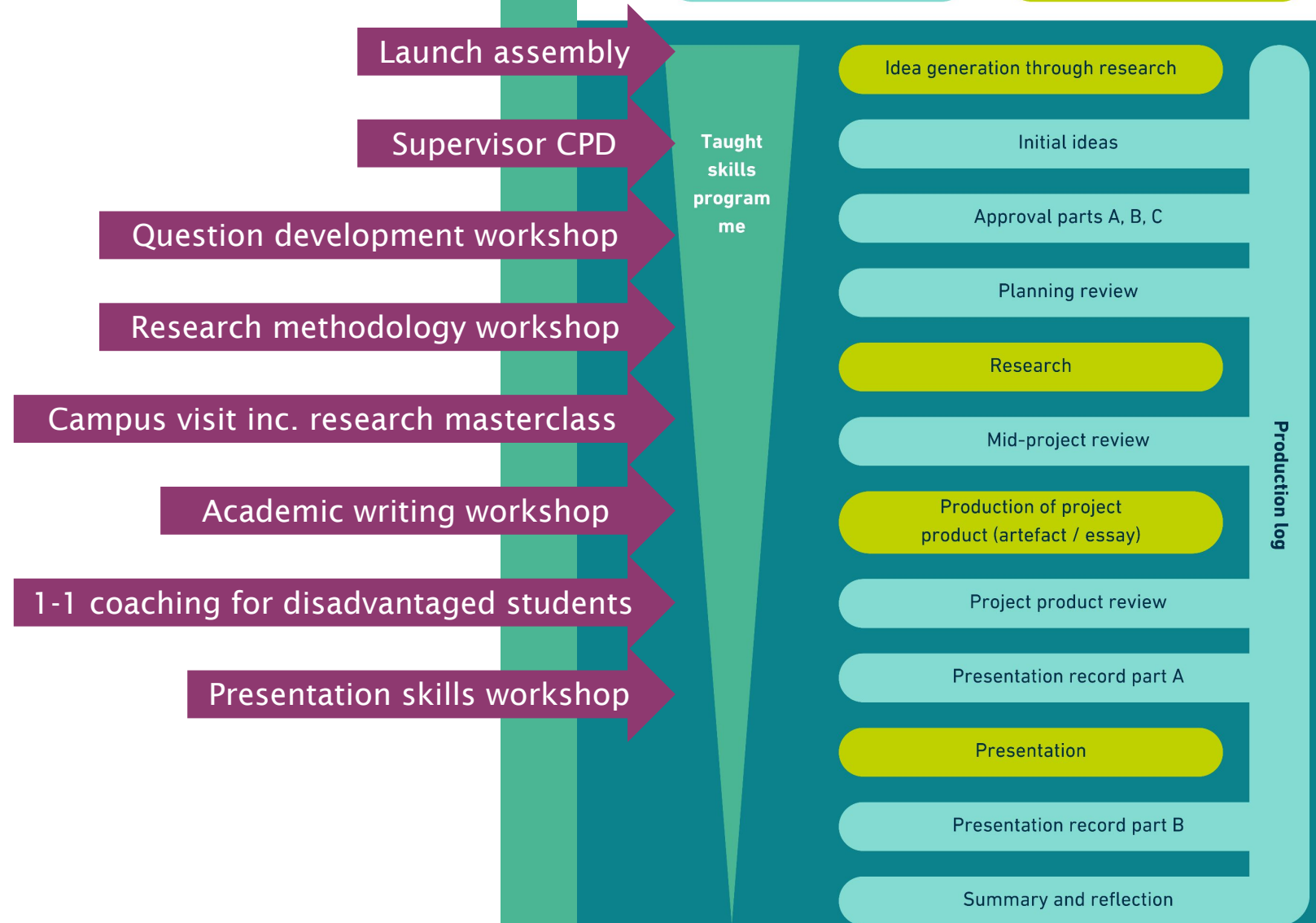
An EPQ curriculum, if well-implemented, can help a centre demonstrate that it meets standards set out by Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework, (Ofsted, 2023) specifically “quality of education, personal development, and behaviour & attitudes”

Collaborating with HE providers when delivering an EPQ curriculum helps centres meet Gatsby Benchmark #7 (Gatsby, 2024)

# PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

How do we fit in?

- The Learn with US Transition programme is designed to be **integrated** into a school / college's curriculum, rather than being offered as a standalone component
- We **work alongside students** to develop their academic and research skills as **part of their school / college's research programme**
- An example of how this might look, is shown here:



The EPQ Student Journey at a Glance



# THE LEARN WITH US TRANSITION PROGRAMME

## Expected APP outcomes and rationale

### Mechanism

### APP Outcome ([UoS, 2023, p.6](#))

Working with target schools to increase EPQ participation amongst students from IMDQ1 postcodes and those in receipt of FSM

Increase HE enrolments amongst underrepresented students

Increase degree-level attainment for those students continuing to HE

Academic skills teaching will foster confidence & academic self-efficacy

Raise attainment for participating students, at Level 3 and at HE

Emphasising similarities between EPQ and university-level study

Will improve perceptions of HE as accessible, thereby increasing participation

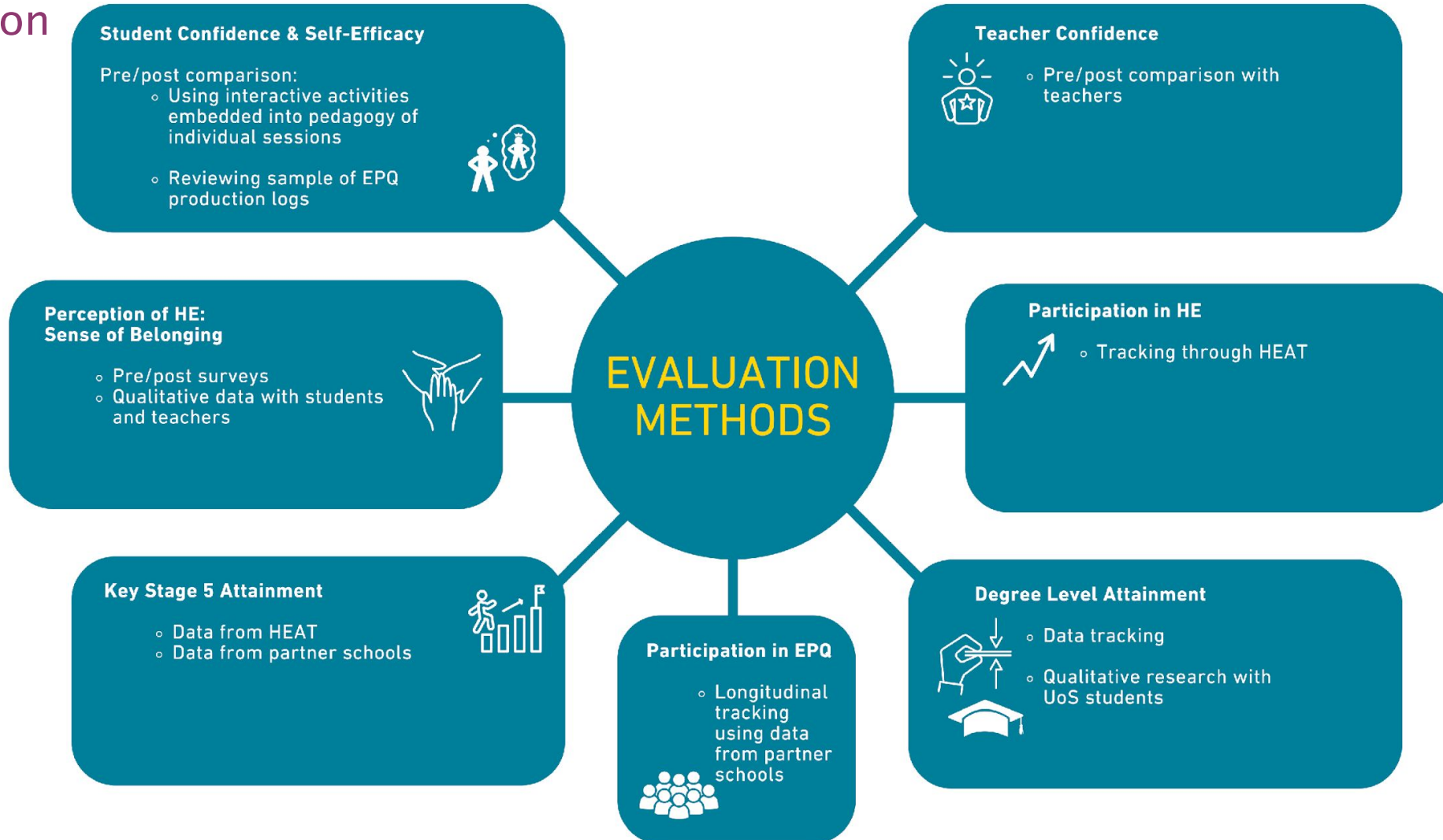
PD for teachers to increase confidence in delivering the EPQ

Raise attainment for participating students, at Level 3 and at HE

Address EoRR Risk 1 (Office for Students, 2023)

# THE LEARN WITH US TRANSITION PROGRAMME

## Evaluation



# ACADEMIC SKILLS SUPPORT

...and its value at pre-entry level

The Learn with US Transition Programme is just one example of how academic skills support can be embedded into pre-entry outreach activities.

**The EPQ serves as a powerful vehicle for promoting social mobility** by providing students from disadvantaged backgrounds with equal opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful Higher Education – addressing EoRR Risk #1 (Office for Students, 2023)

...but it's not the only way of embedding academic skills support into pre-entry outreach!



# DISCUSSION

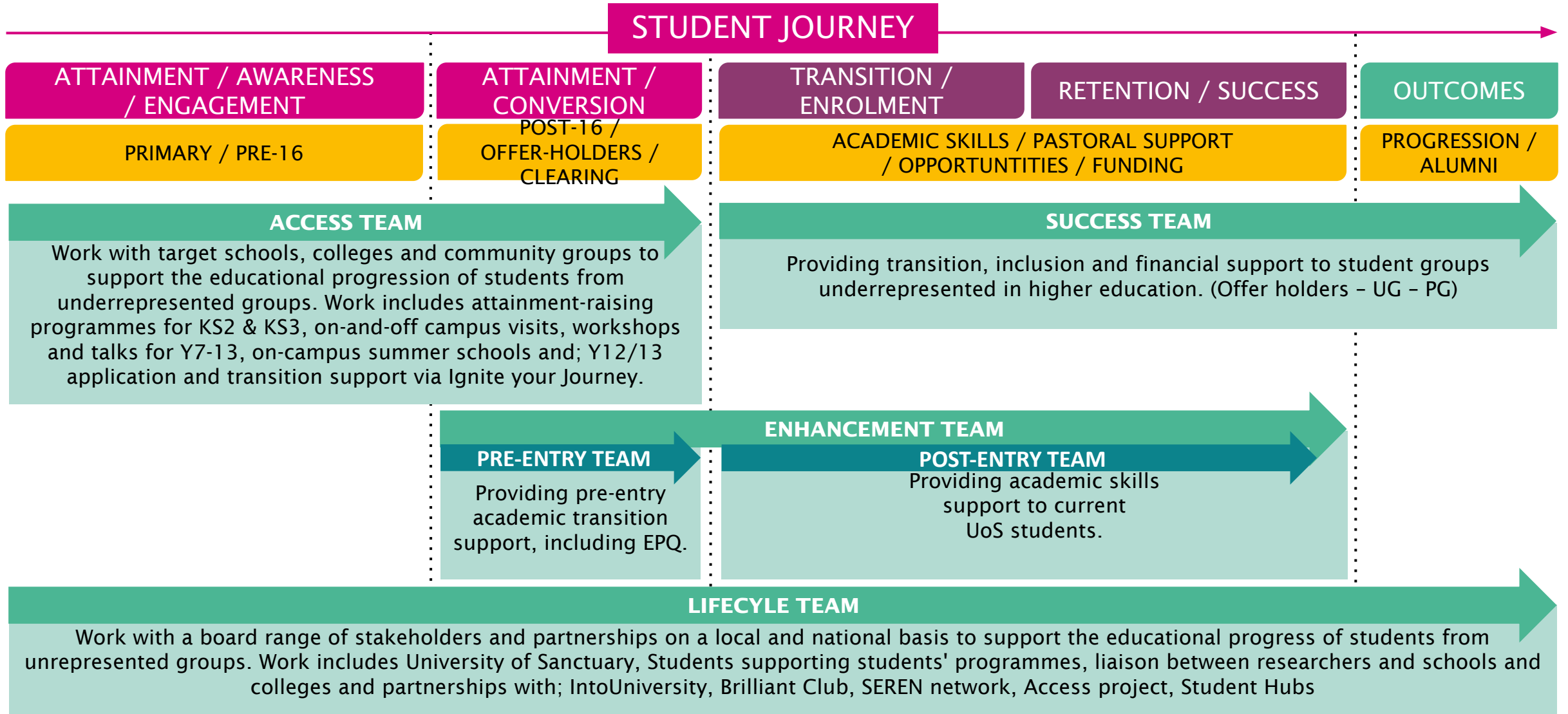
*Do your pre-entry activities  
specifically develop academic skills?*

*Is this something you could build  
into your current ways of working?*

*What could this look like?*

# THE LIFECYCLE APPROACH

At the University of Southampton

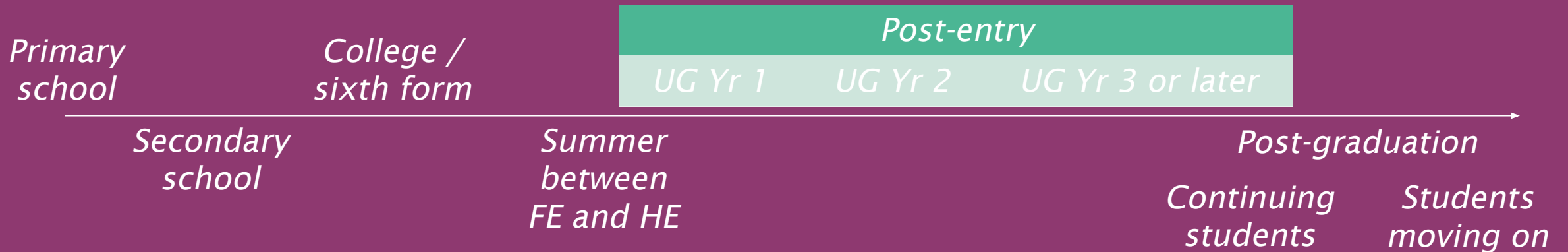


# ACTIVITY

*Applying a lifecycle approach in your own context: Exploring ways to support underrepresented students at all stages of the student lifecycle*

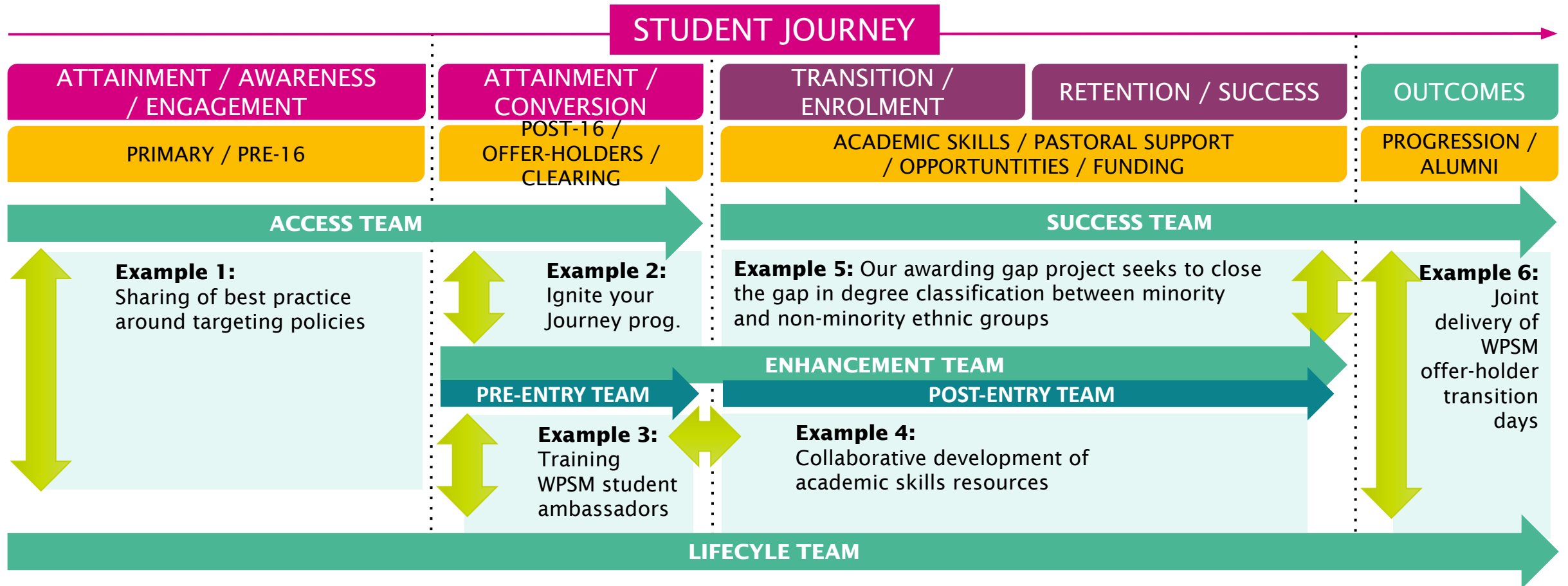
Produce your own timeline of support which your institution currently offers to underrepresented students. Consider all stages of the student lifecycle, from pre- to post-entry, to undergraduate, and post-graduation.

For each activity, consider how it specifically **supports underrepresented groups / addresses EORR risks / both**.



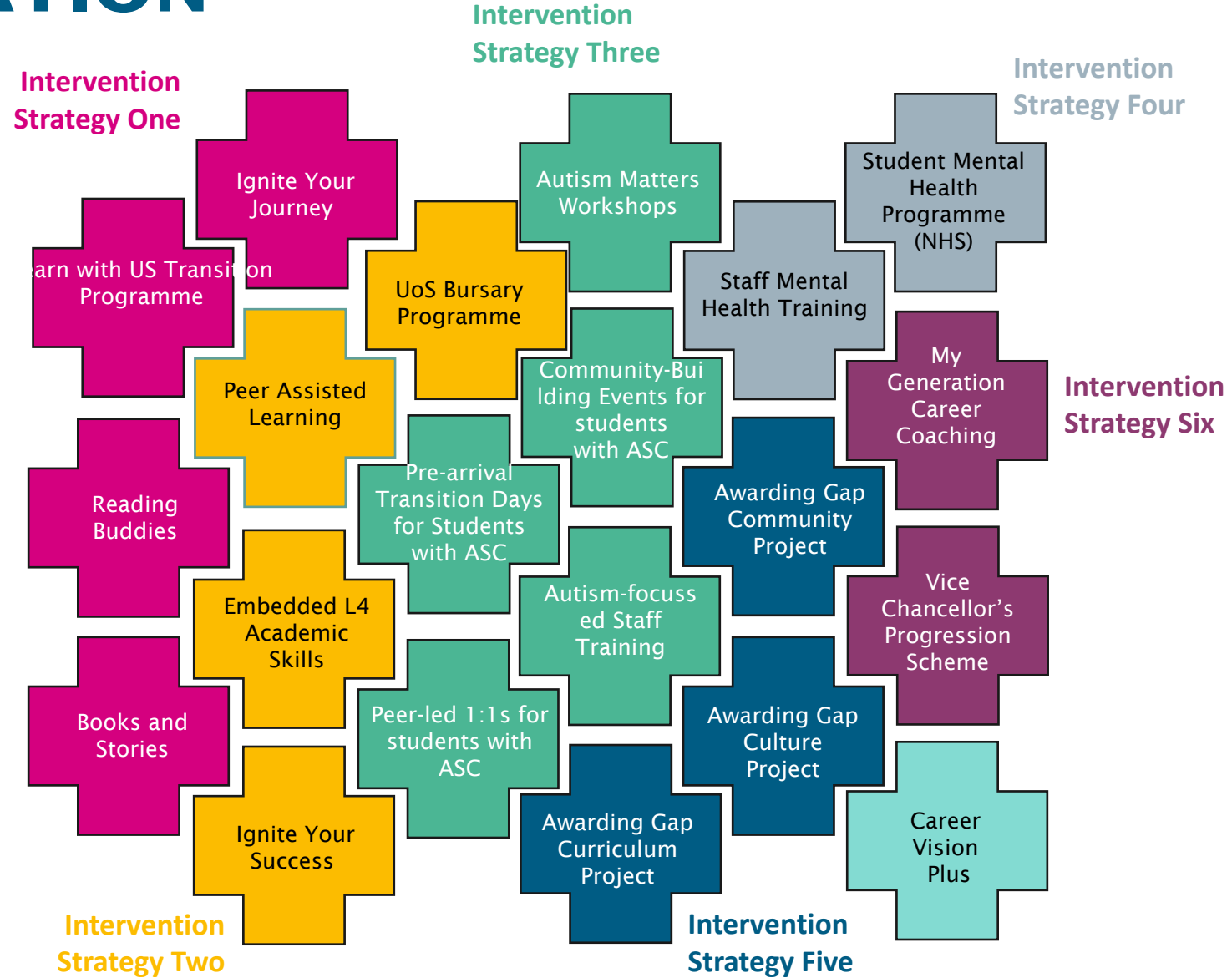
# COLLABORATION

Within WPSM



# COLLABORATION

With other services





# ACTIVITY

*Collaboration mapping*

*Add to your timeline to show where collaboration is already happening. Where are the gaps?*

# WHAT NOW?

## Takeaways and next steps

### Key takeaways

- There are significant benefits to pre-entry support for academic skills development, as adopted by the Learn with US Transition Programme
- A lifecycle approach to student support can ensure holistic support for underrepresented groups but also offers opportunities for collaborative ways of working
- Perhaps you have had some thoughts about best practice in your own context

### Next steps

- Consider whether academic skills support (including EPQ support) could be built into your institution's pre-entry offer
- If you have identified gaps within your offer, consider how these could be filled in order to achieve a whole lifecycle approach to supporting underrepresented groups
- If you have identified opportunities for collaboration between existing teams, consider which stakeholders you could approach about these

**THANK YOU**  
*Any questions?*

# REFERENCES

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