

# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and its role in fostering social mobility

Presented by University of Leeds and University of Southampton

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# Session Outline

Part One: Why the EPQ is valuable in a Russell Group context

- What the EPQ is
- How it is valuable
- How Russell Group universities perceive the EPQ

Part Two: Utilising the EPQ to address our regulators

- A response to the Office for Students
- A response to the OFTSED framework
- The role of FE/HE partnerships



# Part One

Why the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is valuable in a Russell Group context



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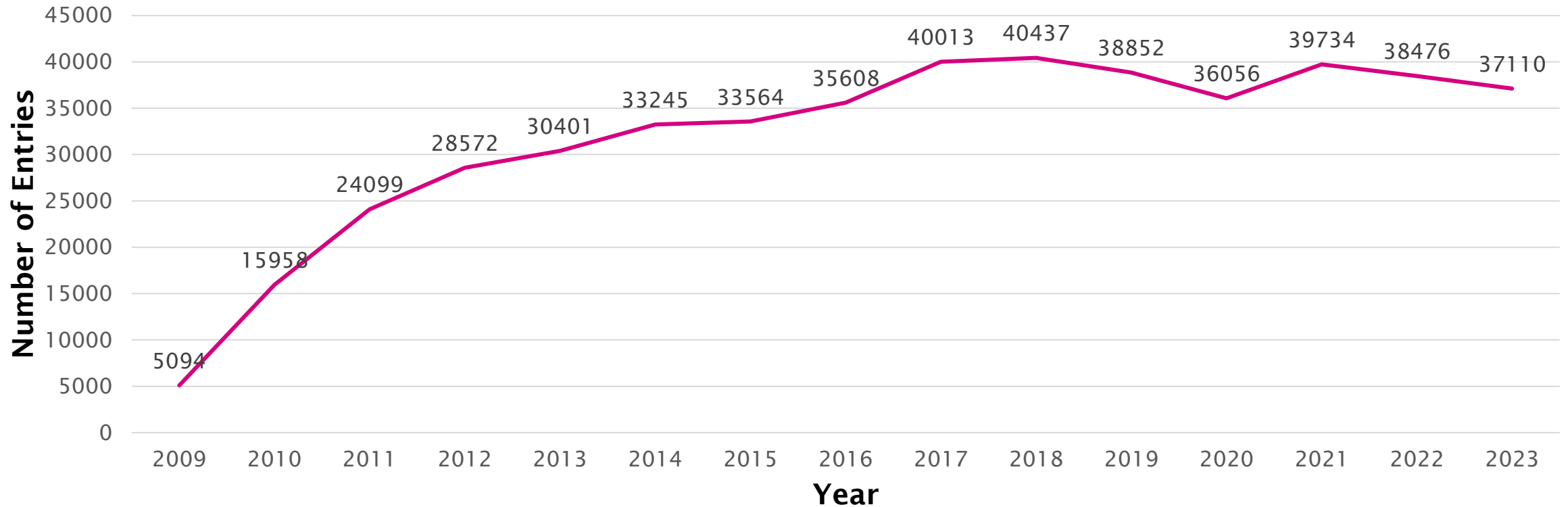
# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

- “The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a single piece of work of a student’s choosing that demonstrates evidence of **planning, preparation, research and autonomous working.**”
- “Students can undertake a project on a **topic of their own choosing, which may or may not be linked to their A-level subjects.**
- Worth **50%** of an A Level, compared to old AS Levels which are only 40% of an A Level.



# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

## Number of EPQ Entries 2009 - 2023

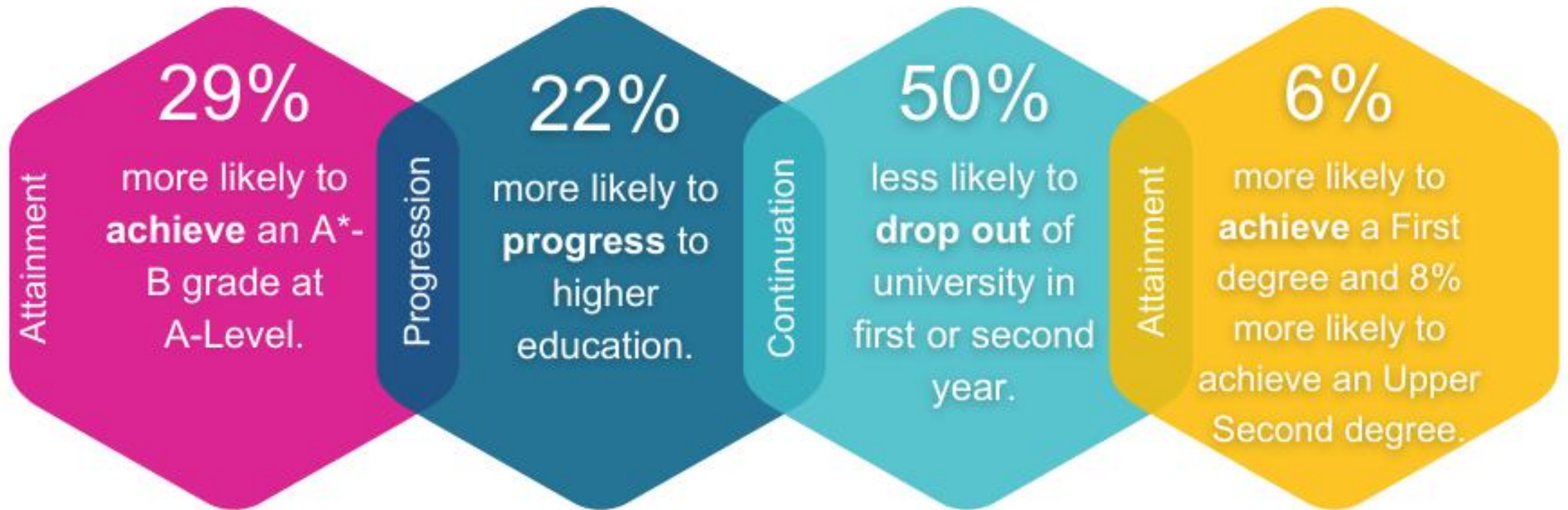


# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

|            | Assessment Objectives  | Weighting |
|------------|--|-----------|
| <b>AO1</b> | Manage: Identify, design, plan and carry out a project, applying a range of skills, strategies and methods to achieve objectives   | 20%       |
| <b>AO2</b> | Use Resources: Research, critically select, organise and use information, and select and use a range of resources. Analyse data apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any links, connections and complexities of the topic.  | 20%       |
| <b>AO3</b> | Develop and Realise: Select and use a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies and problem-solving, to take decisions critically and achieve planned outcomes.  | 40%       |
| <b>AO4</b> | Review: Evaluate all aspects of the extended project, including outcomes in relation to stated objectives and own learning and performance. Select and use a range of communication skills and media to present evidenced project outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format. | 20%       |

# The Value of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

When compared to students without an EPQ, students with an EPQ are...



Jones (2015)

Gill (2022)

# The Value of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

- Students in 2017-18 Degree Awards at University of Leeds
- In total - of those who had the EPQ: 52% got a first (versus 44% of those who did not have an EPQ)
- Students who identified as coming from a minority ethnic group - of those who had the EPQ: 48% got a first (versus 39% of those who did not have an EPQ)
- Students who came from an LPN - of those who had the EPQ: 48% got a first (versus 41% of those who did not have an EPQ)
- **Students who came from IMD (indices of multiple deprivation) Q1 - of those who had the EPQ: 46% got a first (versus 34% of those who did not have an EPQ)**
- Students registered as disabled - of those who had the EPQ: 46% got a first (versus 40% of those who did not have an EPQ)
- Students who identified as male - of those who had the EPQ: 49% got a first (versus 43% of those who did not have an EPQ)



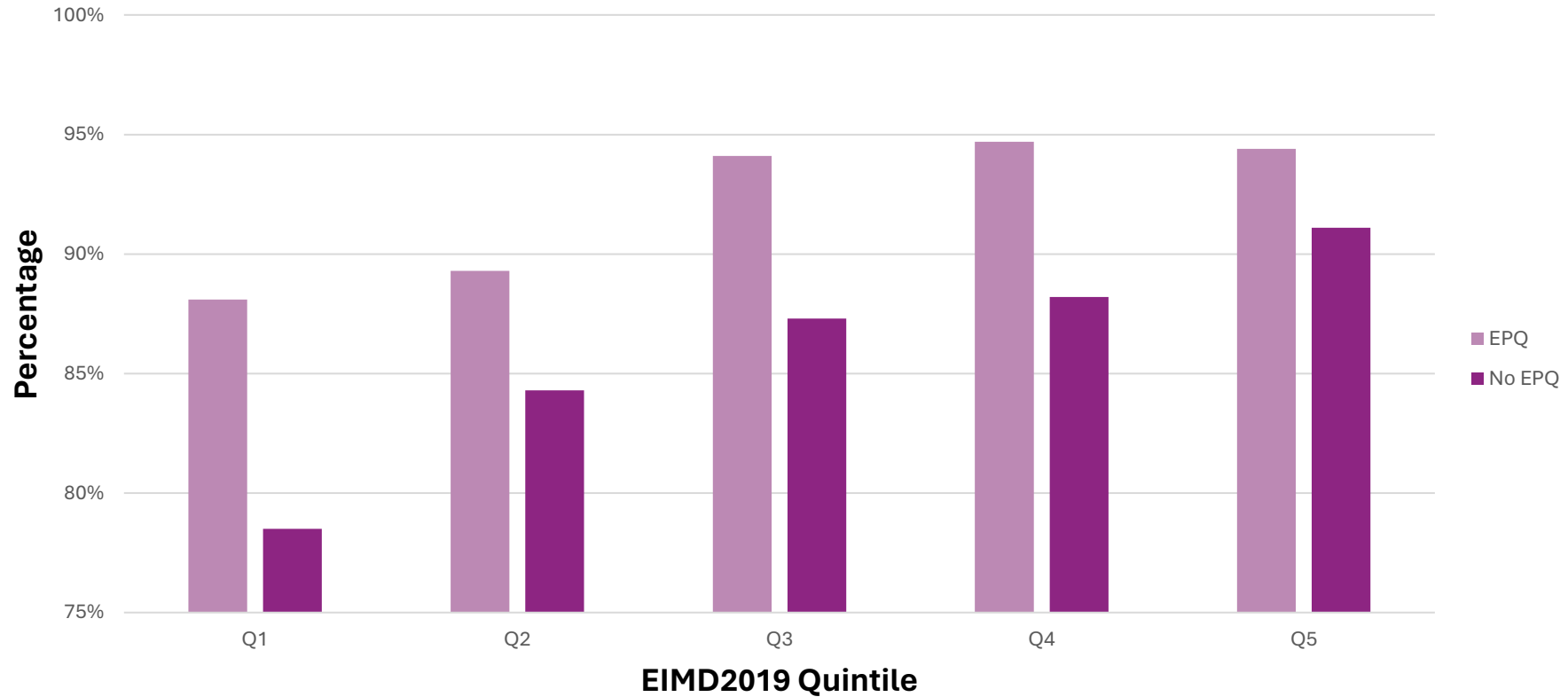
# The Value of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

## Percentage of EPQ Students vs Non-EPQ Students Achieving 2.1 or 1<sup>st</sup> Class Degree Outcomes



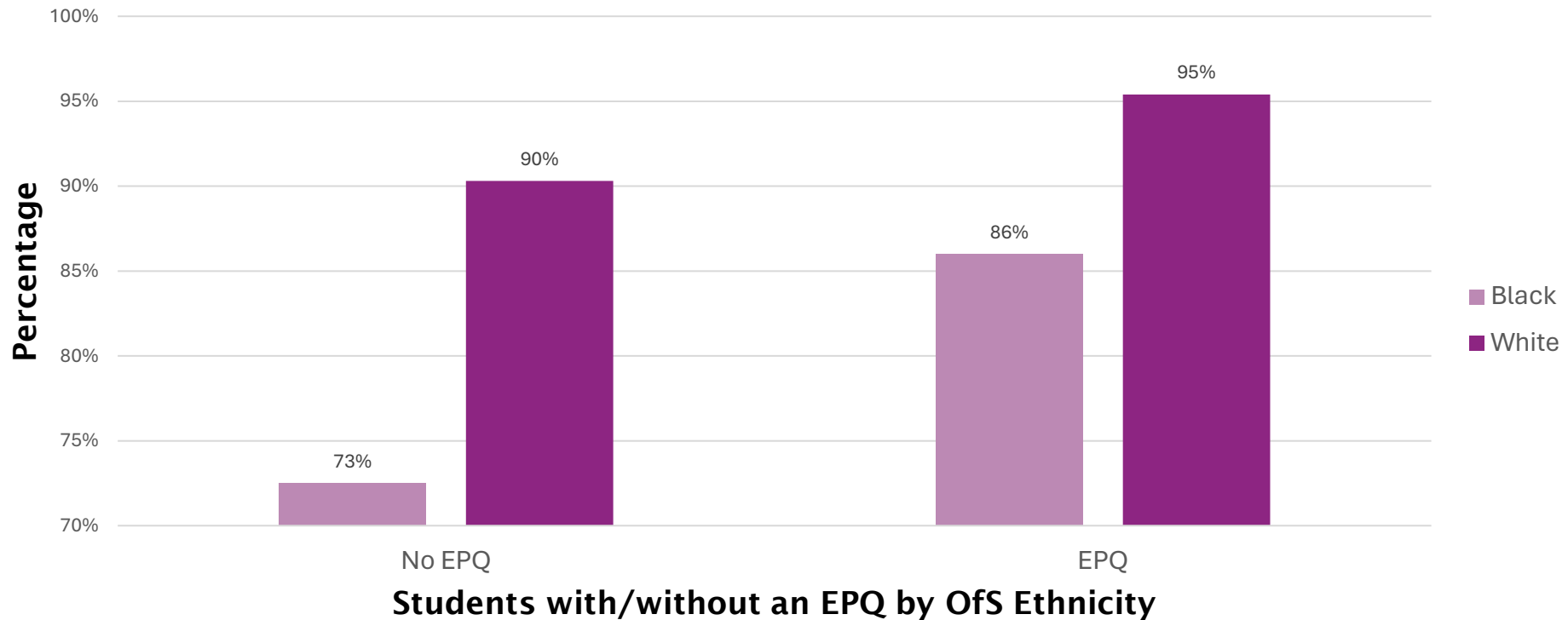
# The Value of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Percentage of EPQ Students vs Non-EPQ Students Achieving 2.1 or 1<sup>st</sup> Class Degree Outcomes by IMD Quintile Between 2018/19 – 2022/23



# The Value of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Percentage of Black and White Students Achieving 2.1 or 1<sup>st</sup> Class Degree Outcomes with/without an EPQ 2018/19 - 2022/2023



# Russell Group Universities and the EPQ

## University of Leeds:

Although UK students are not required to take the Extended Project Qualification, we appreciate that it provides the opportunity for you to develop important research and academic skills. We encourage you to provide further information on your project in your personal statement and, if invited, at interview as it is often taken into account if you narrowly miss the grades outlined in our offer to you.

In some cases, admissions tutors may make an alternative offer to applicants that involves successful completion of the EPQ (for example, AAB plus A in the EPQ as an alternative to AAA at A-Level). Please check [Course Search](#) to see if this is available for your course.

## University of Southampton

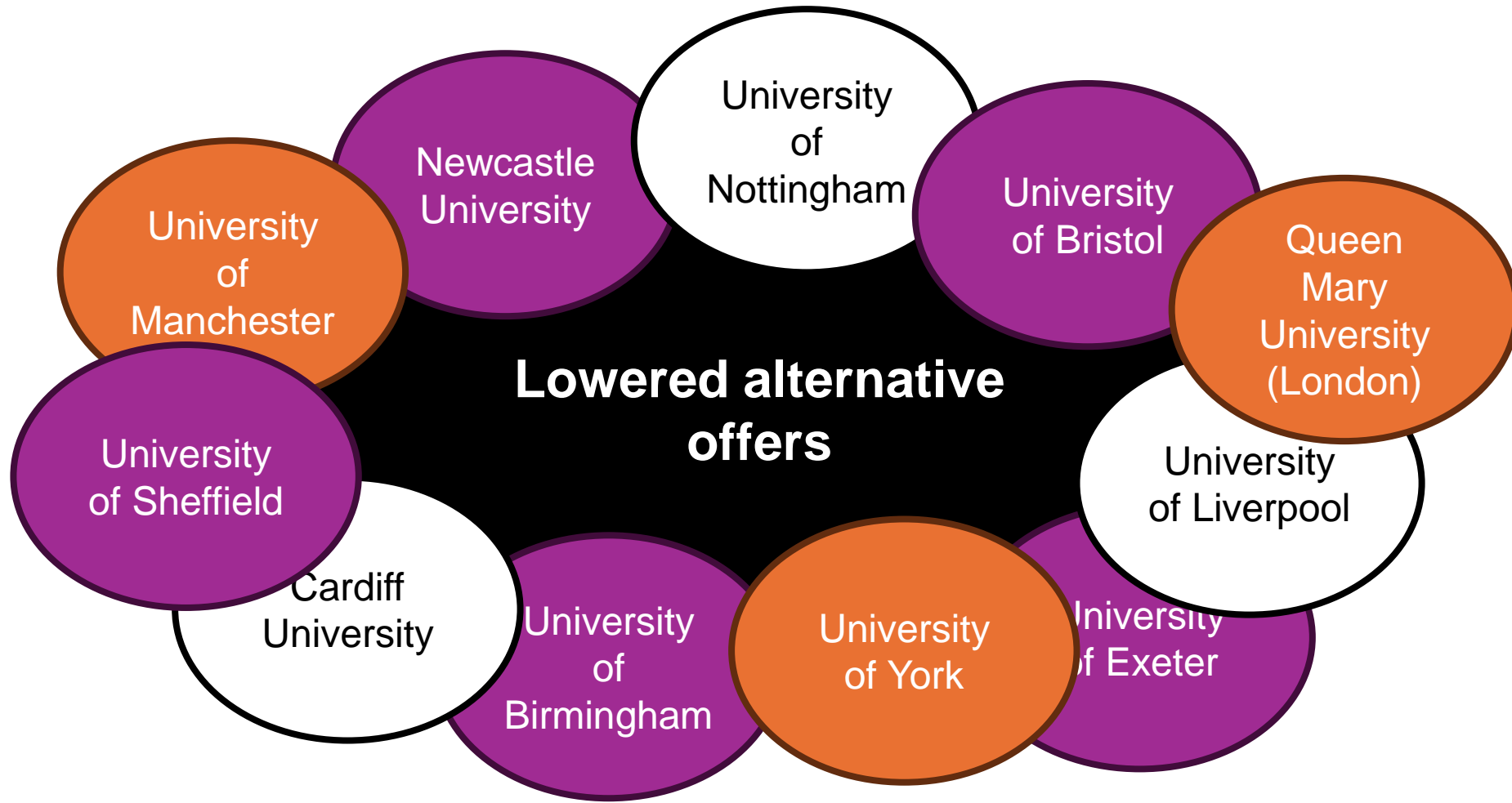
The University of Southampton was the first to introduce an alternative offer scheme for applicants who excel in the EPQ.

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 additional offer 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.



# Other Russell Group Universities and the EPQ



# Part Two

Utilising the EPQ to address the OfS and OFSTED



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# A response to the Office for Students (OfS)

## Access and Participation Plans (APP) & the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR)

What is included in an access and participation plan?

A provider's access and participation plan sets out:

- the risks to equality of opportunity that the provider has identified as relevant to their context, informed by the [access and participation data dashboard](#) and the [Equality of Opportunity Risk Register](#)
- intervention strategies, which detail the actions providers will take to challenge risks to equality of opportunity and the outcomes they expect to achieve
- how the provider plans to evaluate the impact of their work
- the investment providers plan to make on access and participation work.

Providers also publish a summary of their plan, which sets out key points in an accessible way.

# A response to the OfS

University of Southampton



**Intervention Strategy 1:**  
Increase applications, offers and enrolments of students from low socio-economic groups to the University of Southampton

**Target 1:**  
To raise enrolments of entrants from IMD Q1 postcodes from 7% to 10.4% by 2027/28

**Target 2:**  
To increase enrolments of entrants **eligible for FSM** from 9% to 14.6% of the UG student population by 2027/28



# A response to the OfS

University of Leeds

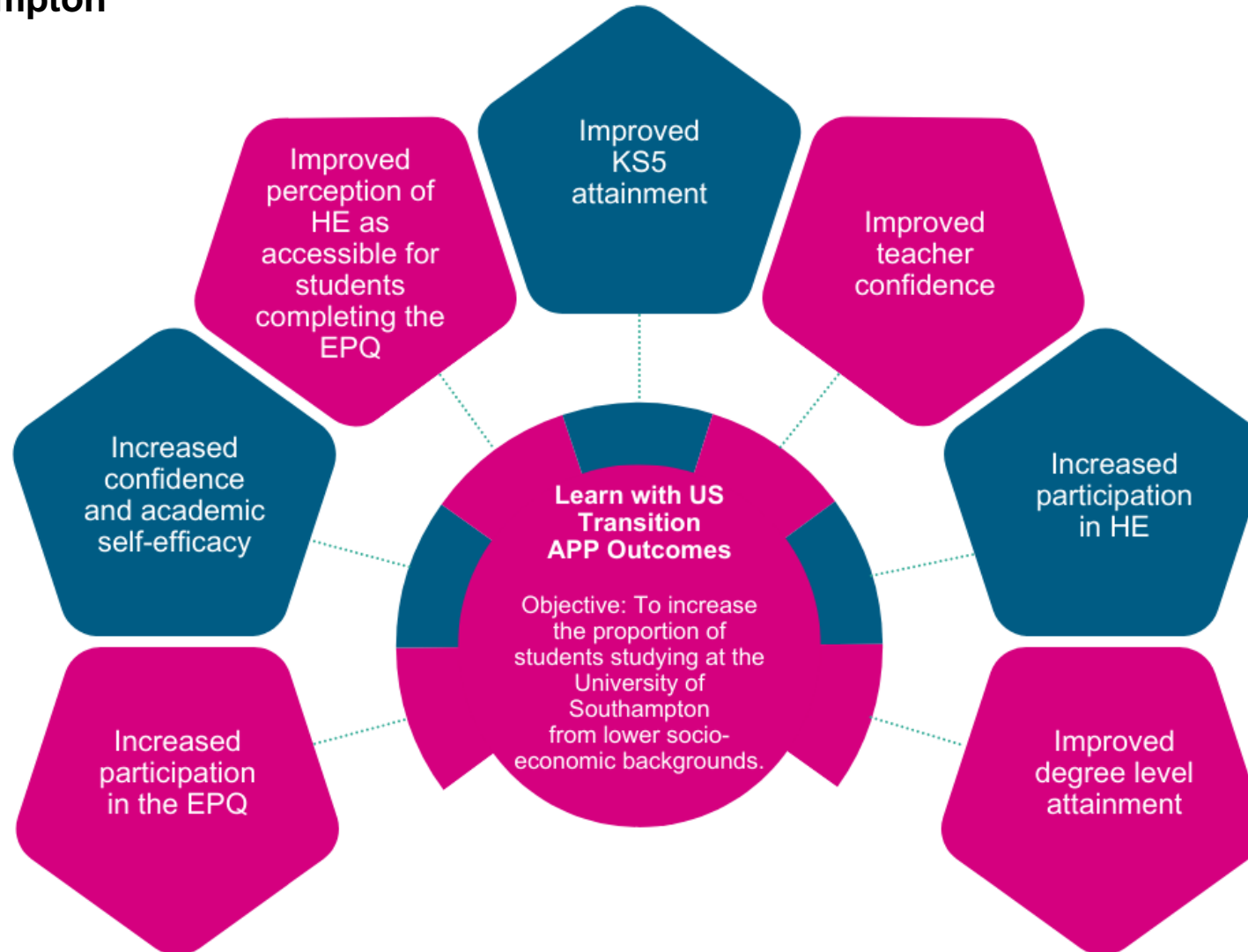


**Intervention Strategy 2:**  
Leeds will increase the percentage of students from IMD Q1 attending the University.

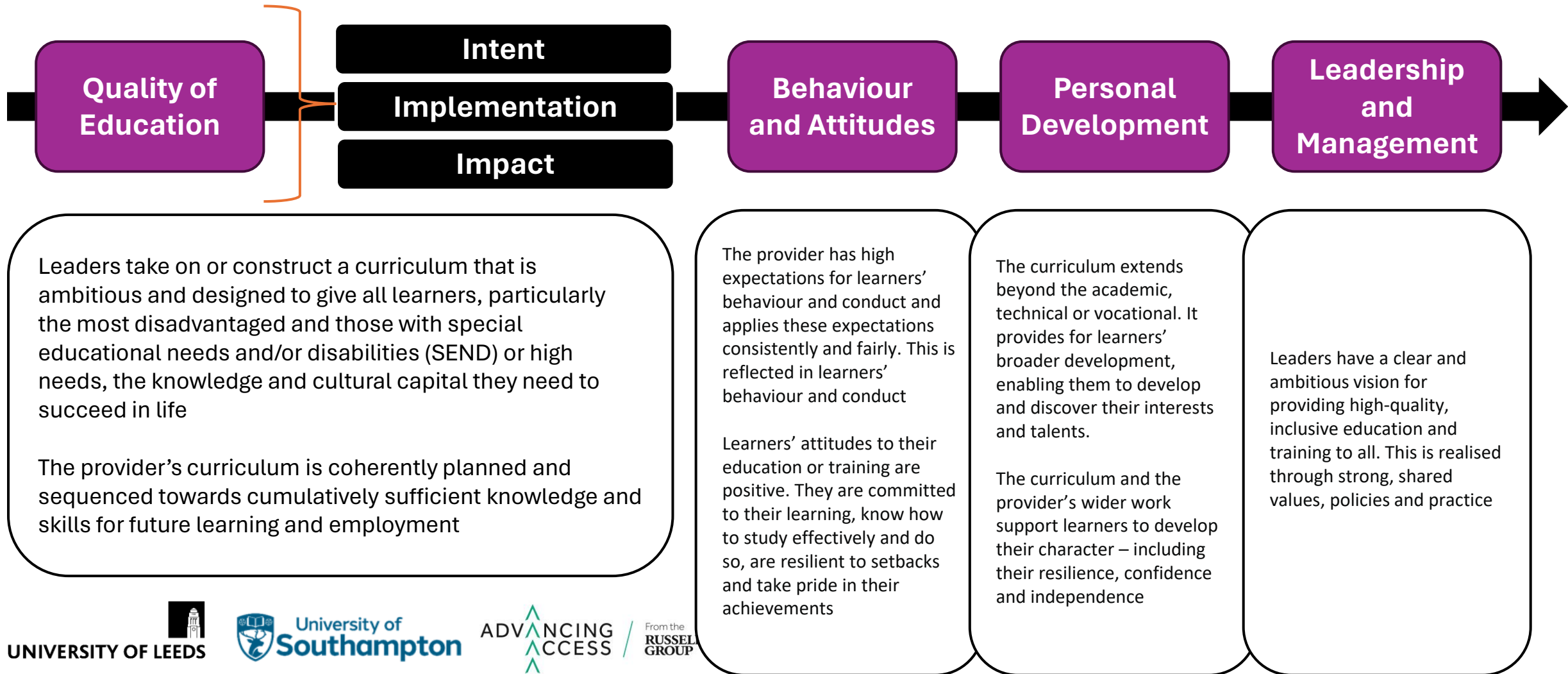
**Target 1:**  
Leeds will increase the percentage of students from IMD Q1 attending the University to 16.1% by 2027/28 through attainment raising in schools, targeted outreach activity, and associated admissions strategy.

# A response to the OfS

University of Southampton



# A response to the OFSTED: Key Judgements



Leaders take on or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life

The provider's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment

Behaviour and Attitudes

The provider has high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviour and conduct

Learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements

Personal Development

The curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational. It provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.

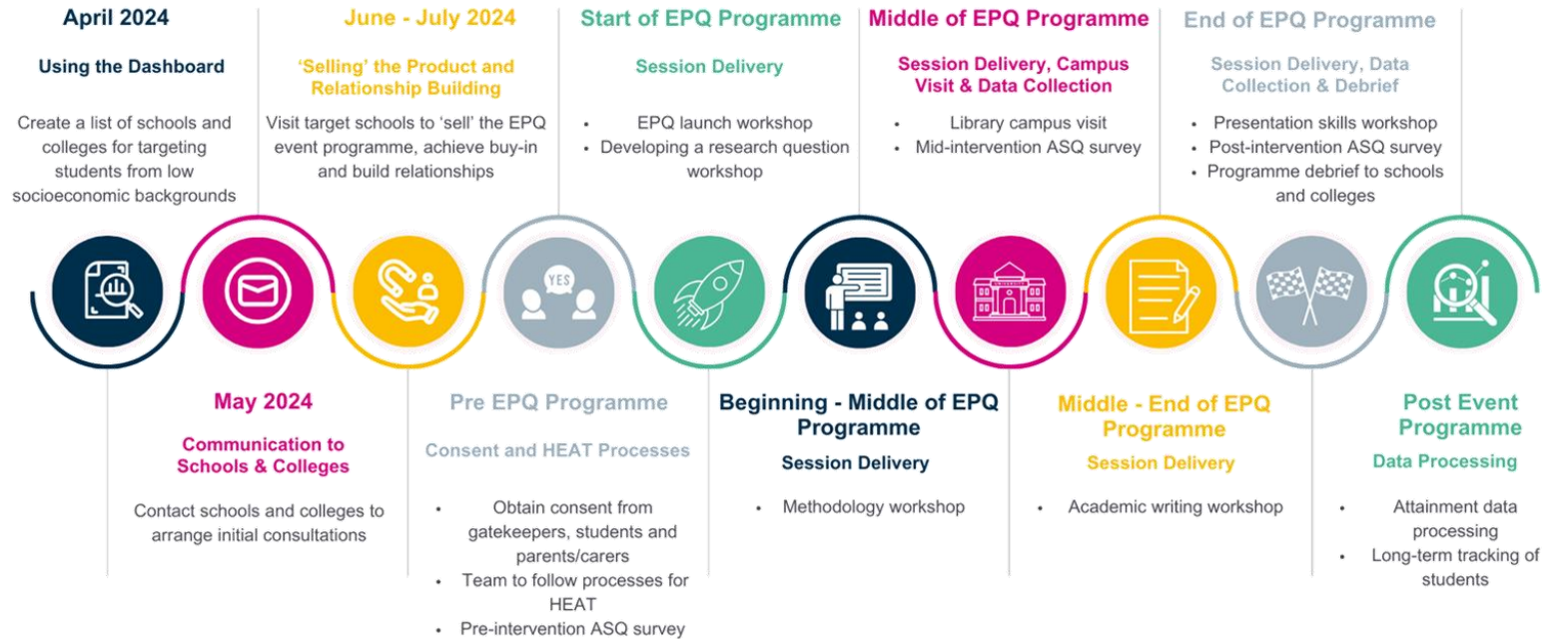
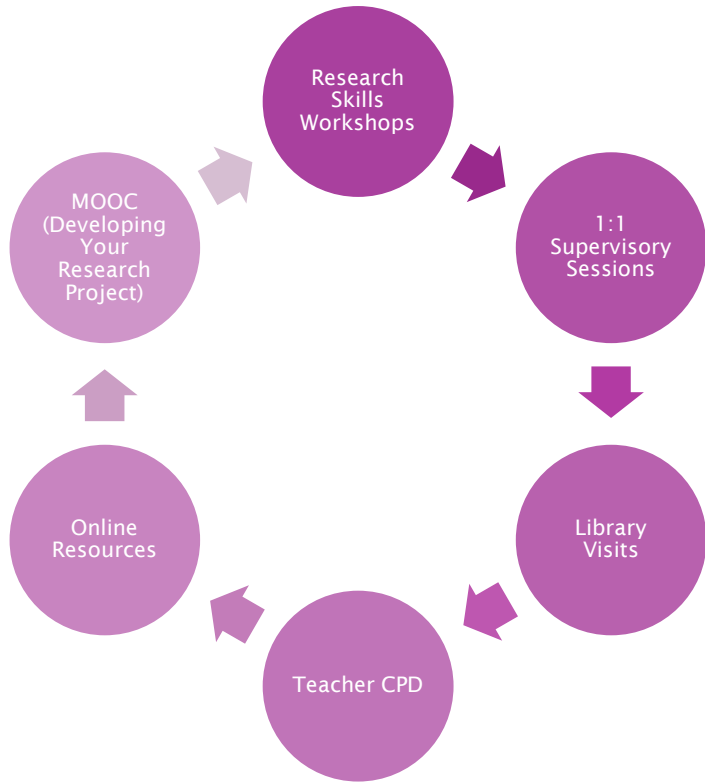
The curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence

Leadership and Management

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice

# A response to the OfS: Schools and colleges partnerships

University of Southampton



# A response to the OfS: Schools and colleges partnerships

University of Leeds

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Why do the EPQ                                   | + |
| Production logs                                  | + |
| Choosing a topic and writing a research question | + |
| Time and project management                      | + |
| Starting to research                             | + |
| Research ethics and methodologies                | + |
| Critical thinking                                | + |
| How to read an online journal                    | + |
| Artificial Intelligence (AI)                     | + |
| Note making                                      | + |
| Referencing and plagiarism                       | + |
| Academic writing                                 | + |
| Presentation skills                              | + |



## EPQ online resources

Whether you've already started, or are about to start your EPQ, explore our range of online resources for helpful tips and advice on how to improve your research and study skills.



## EPQ activity pack

From Gantt charts to Cornell note taking, download our activity worksheets to help you plan and manage your project.

## Why Do The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)?

### Why do the extended project qualification?

Are you thinking about doing the extended project qualification, but you aren't sure what it is? or what the benefits are? This short video contains all the information you need to know about the EPQ before getting started with your project.



### Online courses and TED-Ed talks

Explore our mini online courses and watch our recommended TED-Ed talks.



## EPQ student blogs

Written by students for students, our undergraduate bloggers share their accounts of how they approached, and completed their independent research project.



## Accessing the University of Leeds library

You can access our on campus libraries if you are, 16 or over and in full time education at a college or Sixth Form in West Yorkshire. Click on the image to find out more!

# Your Questions

Thanks for listening and engaging!



From the  
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GROUP**