Widening Participation in the South East Network of Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SeNSS DTP)

Dr. Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, Reader/Associate Professor (University of Essex)

June 2019

University of Essex

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Description

Widening Participation (WP) aims to address discrepancies in the take-up of higher education opportunities between different under-represented groups of students. The widening participation agenda in UK higher education has existed for decades, and is a current strategic aim of both the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the universities within the South East Network of Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SeNSS-DTP) consortium.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lower income households and other under-represented groups may continue to face barriers to entry to higher education. Embedding best practice mechanisms for widening participation within the SeNSS-DTP network will begin to remove barriers and improve access to and progress within studentships, thus improving graduate outcomes and employability.

1.2 Objectives

The overall aims of this investigation by ARISE are to:

- Establish student demographics at each of the 10 SeNSS-DTP partner locations, using existing data acquired from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
- Identify areas of existing best practice within the SeNSS-DTP network to inform a SeNSS-wide WP strategy.
- Map SeNSS-DTP WP strategy onto existing OFFA / HEFCE's National Collaborative Outreach Programme's best practice guidelines.
- Identify areas of best practice within business to promote workplace diversity.
- Use findings to generate recommendations to increase the level of applications to postgraduate programs from under-represented groups (e.g. disadvantaged background, care-leavers, mature students, disabled students and BAME students).
- Use findings to generate recommendations to enable SeNSS to position themselves as the ESRC's Doctorial Training Partnership Widening Participation champions.

In pursuit of these aims, ARISE will:
- Compare current to past postgraduate research (PgR) student demographics at the 10 SeNSS-DTP partner locations;
- Compare each SeNSS-DTP network location to national HESA data in terms of Widening Participation at their respective sites;
- Explore characteristics of widening participation and diversity to establish whether there is evidence of increased diversity with industry-funded scholarships;
- Compare approaches to increasing diversity in HE and business sectors;
- Recommend steps intended to ensure greater diversity within SeNSS applicant pool, shortlisting and awards.

1.3 Key findings

- With the exception of work by Paul Wakeling at the University of York, there is very little research published regarding widening participation in postgraduate education;
- Though no uniform consensus on WP definition exists, all organisations within the SeNSS DTP include socio-economic background and disability in some form as defining characteristics;
- The UK government lists race/ethnicity metrics as a target for undergraduate WP in 2020;
- Diversity is seen as producing benefits in the business sector, including increased profitability, creativity, better governance, and better problem-solving abilities;
- Initiatives to enhance diversity in the business sector rarely focus on diversity in terms of class or socio-economic background;
- Some suggested dimensions on which participation in PgR could be widened are:
  o Undergraduate institution;
  o Gender;
  o Race/ethnicity;
  o Socio-economic background;
- There are several unresolved issues in the discussion over WP in postgraduate studies:
  o What should the objectives/targets be;
  o What should the indicators be;
  o What should the demographic groups of interest be;
- SeNSS member institutions do not currently have a common position on:
  o Deinfitions of WP;
  o Which race and ethnicity groups to target;
  o How to measure socio-economic background;
  o How to define disability;
  o The age threshold to use for defining mature students;
  o A strategy to widen participation;
- SeNSS data does not currently measure the socio-economic status of applicants and/or those who receive funding;
- SeNSS data reveal that:
  o The proportion of white students rises from the application phase to the admission phase;
  o There is gender balance among white applicant admissions, but not among BAME applicant admissions;
  o The proportion of applicants from outside the UK diminishes by the admission/award phase;
- HESA data reveal that:
  o SeNSS students have lower proportions of BAME students than the national average in SeNSS-related studies, higher than average proportions of females, higher than average BAME females, and lower than average white females;
  o SeNSS students have higher proportions of students whose parents do not have higher education degrees than the national average for SeNSS-related studies, as well as higher proportions of students with disabilities;

      o   Comparing SeNSS member institutions to each other reveals a variety of patterns according to WP characteristics, intersections of characteristics, and sources of funding.

1.4 Key recommendations

1.4.1 Agree a DTP-wide Definition of *Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies*

As SeNSS is seeking to learn about widening participation for the DTP in general, it would be sensible for all member institutions to agree on a definition of widening participation in postgraduate studies. This would be a definition for tracking progress within the SeNSS partnership and the students it supports.

We recommend beginning with the ESRC guidelines for widening participation that explicitly mention postgraduate studies. These guidelines specify that opportunity of participation should be equal regardless of research background, previous/undergraduate institution, or any demographic characteristics.

The most common, and indeed universally recognised, indicators of widening participation are socio-economic background and disability. At a minimum, we recommend that these two criteria be included in the SeNSS definition.

Further, members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for socio-economic background:

- POLAR qualifications of applicant's current home, as well as parents' home. *We do not know the influence of either on a postgraduate research student's path.*
- Parents' HE experience and/or completion.
- Whether students received free school meals at any time in their lives prior to applying for a postgraduate research degree.

We recommend the following for disability:

- Whether the student has a declared disability.
- Whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance.
- Whether the student has or would ever invoke the "two tick" policy when applying for a job.

1.4.2 Push for a Definition of *Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies* to be Accepted at the Institutional Level of each Member Institution

To help embed the tracking of widening participation in postgraduate studies, we recommend that the SeNSS members encourage their institutions to specify definitions, key performance indicators, targets, and strategies for the same. Adoption of these policies would serve to institutionalise the idea of widening participation in postgraduate studies as an issue distinct from WP in undergraduate studies. It would also set up the SeNSS group as the path-breaker in formalising and tracking postgraduate WP.

1.4.3 Push for a Definition of *Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies* to be Accepted at the DTP level outside of SeNSS

SeNSS has an opportunity to be the innovator among Doctoral Training Partnerships and ESRC-funded initiatives. We recommend that the SeNSS leadership encourage other DTPs to adopt SeNSS-recommended definitions, key performance indicators, targets, and strategies. SeNSS could then become the DTP pioneer for widening participation strategies, and help define the landscape for the ESRC.

1.4.4 Decide detailed measures for key performance indicators (KPIs)

A review of member Access and Participation Plans indicates that SeNSS member institutions collect data on undergraduate WP target groups using a variety of performance indicators. We suggest that the SeNSS leadership agree measures for the following groups.

Socio-economic background: We recommend POLAR classifications, FSM recipient status, and parental HE experience.

Disability status: We recommend whether the student has a declared disability, whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance, and whether the student has or would ever invoke the "two tick" policy when applying for a job.

Race and Ethnicity: Whether an institution counts BAME or BME as a target group, the definition of *minority ethnic* is still unclear. We recommend that the SeNSS leadership develop a list of the ethnicities that constitute *minority ethnic*, and that this list contain as wide a characterisation of race and ethnicity as possible. Students should be allowed to choose from among a long list of potential race/ethnicity categories, including several that might not be considered *minority ethnic*. This way, no matter what the groups needed for analysis, the data will be detailed enough to be useful. We also recommend that SeNSS member institutions push for the same level of detail in their home institution data collection, and that SeNSS push for acceptance of this level of detail among other ESRC-funded DTPs.

Mature Students: The definition of *mature student* may change from one institution to another, or over time. We recommend that the SeNSS membership agree an age to define mature students in PG education, and continue to collect data on age. This way, no matter what the cut-off needed for analysis, the data will be detailed enough to be useful. We also recommend that SeNSS member institutions push for the same threshold in their home institution data collection, and that SeNSS push for acceptance of this threshold among other ESRC-funded DTPs.

1.4.5 Agree target groups

Though we recommend above that race/ethnicity, socio-economic background, and disability be considered at minimum, there are other groupings that could include valuable information. We therefore also recommend that mature students (with a threshold no higher than age 30 for PG) and care leaver groups be considered as target groups for widening participation initiatives.

1.4.6 Use Principles of Co-Design and Co-Creation to Develop Successful Strategies for Widening Participation in SeNSS Member Institutions

Research shows that participatory planning is a valuable way to succeed in achieving outcomes in areas as diverse as slum upgrading (UN Habitat 2015), resilience planning (Hardoy, Gencer, and Winograd 2019), and energy sustainability (Foran et al. 2016). Participatory planning allows planners to collaborate with and gather ideas from the very populations for whom they seek to plan. The target population becomes more active in the design of policies that affect them, which gives them more commitment to their success when adopted and implemented. UCL is implementing a participatory planning approach to doctoral skills development designed to help them widen participation and retention of low participation groups.

We recommend that SeNSS use focus groups and participatory planning approaches to develop strategies for widening participation. This should involve both PG students from low-participation groups, and people from low-participation groups who are not students, but could be, as well as PG students from high-participation groups. SeNSS should aim to identify the barriers they have confronted when making career choices, including the choice to pursue PG, family concerns, social and cultural stigma, financial difficulties, self-image, information, and access. SeNSS should also solicit suggestions as to how reducing these barriers might best be accomplished, and how SeNSS might make surmounting these barriers easier.

It is likely that suggestions will range from recruitment to admissions, programming, mentoring, retention, and employability. We recommend that this input be used to develop potential strategies for widening participation, and that these strategies be shared among all SeNSS member institutions, with interested institutions taking up strategies to trial. Over time, an evidence base can be accumulated that documents which strategies have been trialed by which institutions, as well as the outcomes of those trials. Then SeNSS can use these to demonstrate to other DTPs and ESRC that they are taking steps to widen participation and determine the best ways to do so.

1.4.7 Increase Applicant Pool from Low Participation Groups

Fundamentally, there are two issues to confront when planning to widen participation. The first is an issue of *information*. Many people in low-participation groups are not participating in PG education because they do not know about the possibility, or have not considered the possibility for themselves. The second issue is one of *access*. These potential students know about the possibility of entering postgraduate research, but they are not participating because they cannot achieve admittance.

To address the issue of information, SeNSS member institutions must recruit students who have not otherwise thought of pursuing graduate studies. We recommend SeNSS institutions jointly compile a bank of strategies they have been using to recruit students from low-participation groups, including speaking with and actively recruiting among UG students beginning with the first year of UG enrollment, and with 6th form students in local areas.

We also recommend recruiting among University alumni by directly reaching out via alumni associations and contact lists. These lists contain people who are eligible for graduate study because they have already completed UG study, and are already familiar with life at the University. Students in this group will also vary in age. We also suggest seeking referrals from existing students and alumni, both in and outside the SeNSS program, in SeNSS member institutions. These students offer the bonus of being able to give personal testimonials about the education they have received and what it has helped them accomplish. Finally, we suggest utilizing social media to recruit applicants and encouraging current students/alumni to do the same.

1.4.8 Increase Admission of Applicants from Low Participation Groups

The second issue to confront when planning to widen participation is one of *access*. These potential students know about the possibility of entering postgraduate research, but they are not participating because they cannot achieve admittance.

There are likely to be multiple issues confounding access, ranging from the application process to institutional sifting to leadership decision making about which students to admit. To address the issue of access, we therefore recommend a thoughtful and thorough consideration of SeNSS admission processes, accompanied by a review of literature on implicit bias and methods for reducing discrimination. Though outside the scope of this report, ARISE is aware of literature that shows adjustments to hiring procedures can increase workplace diversity (Wakeling 2007; Burke and Mattis 2007). Some of these changes suggest that it might be helpful to:

- *Involve students in the admissions process.*
  Although students may not be allowed to make final decisions about future admissions, student input may illuminate aspects of candidate selection that contain implicit bias against under-represented groups. Students can also attest to the sorts of characteristics that can help PhD candidates succeed in particular programs.
- *Foster SeNSS culture.*
  A positive and healthy group culture can boost retention among current students, which then becomes a selling point with prospective students. Top candidates from under-represented groups are always highly coveted by graduate programs, and having a positive culture is a perk for the candidate trying to make a difficult decision.
- *Be cautious of 'fit'.*
  It is often the case that final decisions are made on the basis of 'fit', which can be a rather amorphous feeling of one or more committee members. The problem with 'fit' as a criterion is that it focuses more on the candidate's ability to conform to existing programs, rather than a program's ability to adapt in ways that can help bring out a candidate's greatest strengths.

1.4.9 Share WP strategies to create a common bank of opportunities

We recommend that SeNSS member institutions evaluate the effectiveness of WP strategies, share findings with each other, and create a central information resource where these strategies can be shared.

1.4.10 Collect and Maintain Socio-Economic Indicators

Socio-economic background is a key feature of Widening Participation. For the three existing cohorts, we recommend gathering and cataloguing information on POLAR classifications of students' home neighbourhoods, prior receipt of free school meals, and household income. For new cohorts, we recommend collecting this data as soon as possible in the application/admissions process.

This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 2.5.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for socio-economic background:

- POLAR qualifications of:
  - o Applicant's current home.
  - o Home where applicant lived prior to beginning HE.[1]
- Parents' HE experience and/or degrees at point when student is applying for PG studies.
- Whether students' received free school meals at any time in their lives prior to applying for a postgraduate research degree.

1.4.11 Collect and Maintain Disability Indicators

Disability is a key feature of Widening Participation. For the three existing cohorts, we recommend gathering and cataloguing information on disability. For new cohorts, we recommend collecting this data as soon as possible in the application/admissions process.

This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 1.4.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for disability:

- Whether the student has a declared disability.
- Whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance.
- Whether the student has ever invoked the "two tick" policy in job application.

1.4.12 Collect and Maintain Race/Ethnicity Indicators

Race is a key feature of Widening Participation. We recommend continuing data collection on race and ethnicity for all cohorts moving forward. This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 1.4.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. For race/ethnicity, we recommend

---

[1] We recommend that both household backgrounds be included as we do not know the influence of either on a mature student's PG path.

that SeNSS member institutions unify on either BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) or BME (Black, Minority Ethnic). We also recommend that *minority ethnic* be clarified (see recommendation 3.4.1).

1.4.13 Collect and Maintain Data More Rigorously

To facilitate continued analysis and help set new WP targets, we recommend that SeNSS collect and maintain its data more rigorously. By this, we mean the data should be maintained in a secure database with coding documentation available to new administrators. Data should be input directly by administrators according to the coding system, so as to make analysis easier moving forward.

Future recommendation: Create online system whereby applicants may submit their own information securely when applying.

2   Background

2.1   About Us

2.1.1   SeNSS-DTP

The South East Network of Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SeNSS-DTP) has received additional funding from the ESRC to work collaboratively with the Universities of Essex, Sussex, and East Anglia to enhance business engagement in the social sciences. As key partners in the SeNSS-DTP, these three universities have substantial experience in co-developing social science ambitions, drawing upon the existing work undertaken through Impact Accelerator Accounts. This new partnership will draw on the robust governance structures of the SeNSS-DTP to ensure the benefits of the activities extend across all three partners, and beyond, into the wider DTP locations (SeNSS, 2018).

SeNSS consortium members are:
- City, University of London
- University of East Anglia
- University of Essex
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- University of Kent
- University of Reading
- University of Roehampton, London
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex

2.1.2   ARISE

Founded by Dr. Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, the ARISE Initiative (Advancing Resilience and Innovation for a Sustainable Environment) is dedicated to conducting rigorous, evidence-based evaluations of social programs and resilience-building projects around the world. ARISE studies policy documents, program impact, and project delivery to advise how organisations can best allocate scarce resources to achieve their priorities. ARISE has developed the *Spotlight Toolkit* and the Resilience Database to help researchers and public agencies design evaluations and measure resilience. ARISE comprises an interdisciplinary team of experts in public policy, political economy, public administration evaluation, quantitative research methods, criminology, geography, environmental studies, computerised text mining and data compliance. Ultimately, we hope to facilitate the informed prioritisation of resources, policies and initiatives, and to foster transparency and accountability in public service provision.

2.2   Scope and Methodology

The research conducted for this project is based on 2 types of information. First, ARISE collected literature and documentation on widening participation in higher education and the private sector. Second, we collected data on student demographics across higher education institutions in the UK.

2.2.1   Literature and Documentation

The documents collected include guidance of funding and regulatory bodies (ESRC, OFFA), Access and Participation Plans (APPs) from SeNSS consortium members, government reports and white papers, and academic literature on widening participation and diversity. We included diversity as a topic because most HEIs delineate between widening participation and diversity, whilst most private sector organisations do not mention 'widening participation' as a term at all. We use this information to compare priorities, definitions, and strategies for widening participation across SeNSS member institutions and with respect to ESRC guidelines. We augment this with literature on widening participation in undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as diversity in the workplace.

2.2.2   Data on Student Characteristics

ARISE acquired data on student demographics from 3 sources (detailed further in Data Analysis section, below). First, the SeNSS leadership supplied data on students in the SeNSS program. This data exists for three cohorts (2017, 2018, 2019), all of whom are, by definition, PG students.

ARISE compared the SeNSS data to UK HEI demographics based on data purchased by the SeNSS leadership from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This data covered multiple student characteristics for students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The data does not include information about all characteristics identified as WP indicators, nor does it have the same information for UG and PG students. Like all HESA data, it is rounded to multiples of 5 students, or to "full person equivalent" students[2,3], to ensure individuals are not identifiable.

Additionally, the team requested data on UG and PG student demographics from each SeNSS member institution. Though this data was eventually purchased from HESA directly, the purchase was only initiated after the team realized the member institutions were unlikely to be able to provide the data within the project's timeframe. We therefore use the information provided by the SeNSS member institutions to evaluate the quality and accessibility of SeNSS member data, rather than using it as a definitive source of information.

2.3   About the Project

The information presented in this section was gathered from the SeNSS website.[4] The South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS), funded by the ESRC, is a consortium made up of 10 leading UK universities. SeNSS offers fully funded doctoral studentships and post-

---

[2] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics. Last accessed 23 May 2019.

[3] If a request includes subject data, HESA provides a count of Full Person Equivalent (FPE). A course can cover a number of subjects so to represent this, HESA apportions the instance to indicate the proportion of a course that relates to each subject. Each instance is still given a value of 1 so in essence it is still a count, but when a course is split across multiple subjects, the counts within each subject indicate the FPE as the proportion of each subject to the instance. See: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students#count-fpe-fte.

[4] https://senss-dtp.ac.uk/. Last accessed 31 May 2019.

doctoral fellowships for study in 13 different pathways:

- Business and Management Studies
- Development Studies
- Economics
- Education
- Human Geography
- Linguistics
- Politics and International Relations

- Psychology
- Science, Technology and Sustainability Studies
- Social Anthropology
- Social Work and Social Policy
- Socio-Legal Studies
- Sociology

A SeNSS studentship/fellowship includes full funding, outstanding supervision, high quality advanced training in research methods and substantive topics, and access to interdisciplinary, international and collaborative networks. To be eligible for Masters/PhD funding, a candidate must have qualification or experience equal to a "first" or "upper second" class honors degree from an undergraduate degree granting institution, or an equivalent combination of qualifications and/or experience. Eligibility for PhD funding requires qualifications or experience equal to a master's degree with distinction or merit, or an equivalent combination of qualifications and/or experience.

SeNSS studentships are only available to Home or EU students meeting eligibility criteria. To be eligible for a full award, the candidate must have been settled in the UK with no restrictions of length of stay, must have been a UK ordinary resident for three years prior to 30 September of the application year, and must not have been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education (the latter is not applicable to UK/EU nationals). If accepted, the SeNSS funding includes fully paid tuition fees, a maintenance stipend at rates dictated by UK Research and Innovation, research training support grants, and access to further research funding.[5]

2.4 Toward a Definition of *Widening Participation* (WP)

We define *Widening Participation* (WP) to be a goal in Higher Education (HE) to address differences in access and progress between students from different social groups. Although the concept of WP has arguably existed for many years (Kettley 2007, 334), the "different social groups" included in the WP agenda have shifted over time.

The agency formerly known as the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) is now known as the Office for Students (OfS). In 2010, HEFCE declared widening participation in higher education to be "a crucial part" of its mission, part of the goal "to promote and provide the opportunity of successful participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it", which "is vital for social justice and economic competitiveness".[6] HEFCE's policy on widening participation goes on to state:

> *Widening participation addresses the large discrepancies in the take-up of higher education opportunities between different social groups. Under-representation is*

---

[5] https://www1.essex.ac.uk/dtc/senss/how_to_apply.aspx. Last accessed 31 May 2019.
[6] The National Archives https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100303151110/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/. Last accessed 17 June 2019.

closely connected with broader issues of equity and social inclusion, so we are concerned with ensuring equality of opportunity for disabled students, mature students, women and men, and all ethnic groups. (HEFCE, 2010).

According to Kettley, there is a threefold distinction in the study of university access. He elucidates this distinction as follows: the desire to extend citizenship rights (to women and racial minorities), the promotion of social justice by monitoring participation rates (by social class), and the analysis of students lifestyles and experiences (Kettley 2007, 335). Kettley argues that widening participation research should challenge these distinctions and strive for holistic and mixed-methods approaches.

In 2015, the UK government set the following targets to be reached for undergraduate WP by 2020:
- To double the proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds going into HE;
- To increase by 20% the numbers of students from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds entering HE (Connell-Smith and Hubble 2018).

Though these targets specify the increases necessary, they do not offer the baselines on which they are built; that is, it is impossible to know what the Government believes would actually be double the current proportion, or what an increase of 20% would look like. The targets also do not specify whether they should be attained across the entirety of UK higher education, or at each UK HEI.

2.4.1   Groups to Consider

A uniform definition of WP should indicate which groups are included in the categorisations of both "disadvantaged backgrounds" and "BAME", yet a consensus on these categories does not exist. The groups included in WP policies have changed over time, and vary by institution. We offer the following list of WP qualifying criteria as the most common attributes considered when setting WP policies and targets:

Demographics:
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability status

Socio-economic status:
- Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) neighbourhood classification
- Whether or not Free School Meal (FSM) recipient
- Household income
- Whether or not recipient of undergraduate maintenance grant
- Whether or not participant in undergraduate access programmes

Academic background:
- SEN (Special Education Need) status
- School type
- Higher Education Institution (Tuition Fee Band/Group)
- Mature student status

Other characteristics:
- Whether or not care leaver
- Whether or not carer
- Family estrangement status
- Refugee status
- Whether or not from military family
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Parental level of education

2.4.2 Income and Outreach

Just as there are differences across definitions, there are also differences among strategies to widen participation. While earlier strategies tended to largely focus on financial support, newer strategies are aiming to include other outreach and support activities to improve access to HE. Although there has been a significant increase in disadvantaged young people going into HE in the past years (with young people from black ethnic groups showing the largest increase), there are specific groups that have not followed in the same pattern, such as older students and young white males from low socio-economic backgrounds (Connell-Smith and Hubble 2018).

According to research by Anna Vignoles (Vignoles 2008), students from low-income backgrounds (LB) are much less likely to participate in HE at the age of 18 or 19. Only 12.7% of boys from low income neighbourhoods participate in HE while 41.7% of those from high-income backgrounds (HB) do. LB students also do not do as well as HB students in secondary school, which seems to beget the difference in whether studies are continued at the HE level (ibid.).

Economic factors such as debt can be a deterrent for students looking to participate in PG studies, and a lack of examples of achievement specific to low participation groups is a likely contributor to restricted participation in HE. People with no history of parental higher education are proportionally underrepresented in higher education, indicating that promoting the achievements of low participation groups may encourage greater participation (Yiabo Osho, 2018). Critics of the WP agenda argue that it is not at a University level that cultural change should happen, but at a school level (Armstrong 2008).

Though acknowledging the potential truth in this argument, some argue that universities can proactively launch information campaigns and generate case studies that promote achievements by the groups WP agendas are targeting (Yiabo Osho 2018). Such campaigns exemplify how outreach and school partnerships can be important, and highlight that some aspects of WP are difficult to tackle at the University level. Findings show that low-income background students who do catch up and perform well at GCSE stages have a similar probability of attending HE (Vignoles, 2008).

2.4.3 WP versus Diversity

In the context of UK Higher Education, the difference between Widening Participation and Diversity is far from clear. A fundamental component of the debate is whether non-socio-economic attributes, such as race and religion, should be included as categories of interest in terms of widening participation. As Jones (2008) states:

> *Diversity can be used interchangeably with widening participation, but can also signify specific areas of policy separable from those associated with generic practice of widening participation. For example, because this latter idea began its usage with a focus on class and socio-economic status, diversity may be used to indicate activity to address other aspects of under-representation, particularly ethnicity. (Jones, 2008: 2)*

Similarly, one can attempt to distinguish other terms by the ways in which they are commonly used. For example, *inclusion* may more often be linked to issues of disability, *equality* when talking about race, disability and gender, and *equity* (mostly used in Australia) when talking about approaching under-representation in HE (Jones, 2008). In summary, although the terms are used interchangeably by some, they may be best used when giving weight to specific aspects of wider participation.

Another distinction of the agenda of widening participation is that it is used almost exclusively in the realm of Higher Education. This tendency is largely due to the fact that Widening Participation refers to multiple forms of diversity in the UK Government's education policy, but not in policies related to the workplace or public spaces.[7] In fact, studies of private sector participation almost exclusively refer to diversity, specifically in terms of the costs and benefits of diverse work environments (Human 2005). Existing research has shown that correctly managing a diverse set of employees can have a positive effect in the workplace (Patrick & Kumar, 2012), but we found no references to the term 'widening participation' in the business literature.

2.4.4   Diversity in the Business Sector

In the UK, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is engaged in promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Their recent campaign 'Building diverse and inclusive workplaces' calls "on business to make diversity and inclusion a priority across all areas of the organisation, creating an environment where everyone has the chance to succeed, prosper and feel welcome"[8]. Substantial research shows that diversity brings advantages to an organisation in terms of profitability, creativity, stronger governance and better problem-solving abilities. Findings of note include:

- Companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenues due to innovation (Boston Consulting Group 2018).
- Improved company culture, leadership and greater innovation were the top three benefits of diversity identified by respondents (HAYS 2018).
- Companies with more women in upper management are more profitable (Noland and Moran 2016).
- Corporations that embrace gender diversity on their executive teams are more competitive, are 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability, and have a 27% likelihood of outperforming their peers on longer-term value creation (Hunt et al. 2018).

In addition to producing reports[9], the CBI also organises conferences that bring "together business leaders to explore the latest thinking on how we can build more inclusive workplaces, exchange ideas with … peers and reflect on progress and opportunity"[10] within

---

[7] In the Equality Act of 2010, which replaced the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, socio-economic categories are not protected.

[8] https://www.cbi.org.uk/our-campaigns/building-diverse-and-inclusive-workplaces/

[9] https://www.cbi.org.uk/policy-focus/people-and-skills/articles/mind-the-gap-new-member-guide-helps-firms-tackle-their-gender-pay-gaps/

[10] https://www.cbi.org.uk/events/cbi-conference-series-diversity-and-inclusion/

organisations. It should be noted that the main focus of these campaigns is on closing the gender gap, with some references to ethnic diversity, and to a lesser extent considerations of LGBT and disability dimensions.

The big missing characteristic here from a WP perspective is class and socio-economic background. The business sector does not mention promoting diversity and inclusion of people from a working-class background, people who grew up in low-participation neighbourhoods, or those whose parents have no HE. This tendency is reflected in academic research about the effects of diversity on business performance. In a large research review (De Abreu Dos Reis, Sastre Castillo, and Roig Dobón 2007), the authors found 7 dimensions of diversity in the literature: sex, race-ethnicity, age, group tenure, organizational tenure, educational background, and functional background. None of these meaningfully encompass socio-economic background.

2.4.5 WP in Undergraduate v. Postgraduate

According to Paul Wakeling (UK Council of Graduate Education 2019), there are 3 main reasons we should care about widening participation in postgraduate education:

1. Barriers to accessing postgraduate education are barriers to talent. Barriers to talent are bad for society and the economy.
2. Barriers to diversity are barriers to knowledge, which should be informed by a variety of perspectives and experiences.
3. Barriers to education are unfair. A postgraduate degree expands possibilities, and everyone deserves the opportunity to expand their possibilities.

Policies on widening participation have been increasing in prevalence in recent years. The ESRC published a literature review on widening access to research degrees in 2010, and academics such as Paul Wakeling have researched widening participation at a postgraduate level. As it currently stands, there is no general agreement about what constitutes WP in postgraduate study. Rather than list the groups that need to be targeted, the ESRC defines widening participation according to the HEI admissions practice. To ensure wide participation in postgraduate studies, ESRC advocates equal treatment of applicants regardless of research experience, undergraduate institution, or demographic characteristics (ESRC 2015).

Undergraduate Institution

Undergraduate institution seems to be a strong determinant of progression to postgraduate research. Wakeling and Hampden-Thompson (2013) find that attending a selective undergraduate HEI has a positive influence on the pursuit of postgraduate research, and that graduating from one of the 30 most selective institutions make an individual 50% more likely than graduates from other institutions to go on to masters programs, and 500% more likely to go into doctoral research. Wakeling concludes from this work that universities are not smoothing out discrepancies in opportunity that were embedded earlier, stating:

> Our findings suggest that progression to a PhD is being strongly determined by decisions many students make at 18 or 19. Just as widening participation at undergraduate level reaches out to pupils in low participation neighbourhoods,

there is a case for targeting high-achieving graduates from the less selective institutions. (UK Council for Graduate Education 2013)

Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) find that although "socio-economic class has no direct effect on immediate progression to postgraduate research once academic factors are considered", class disparities "may re-appear in later entry to postgraduate research". Access to financial resources and access to postgraduate research degrees are linked. Yet there is not a clear link between student debt and research degree pursuit.

Still, the authors find that the distribution of postgraduate research students across subject areas and institutions is substantively different from undergraduates. They note that research students are concentrated in pre-1992 universities. This trend suggests that further development of research programs in post-1992 universities might encourage under-served populations to pursue postgraduate degrees.

Demographic Characteristics

Wakeling and Hampden-Thompson (2013) find several disparities between demographic groups' progression to postgraduate study. Of particular note are the following findings:

- Despite outperforming men at the undergraduate level, women are significantly less likely to progress to PGT and especially PgR degrees;
- Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi students have lower than average rates of progression, particularly to research degrees, with fewer than 10 individuals from each group progressing in each year;
- Graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds were under-represented in PGT/R;
- Institutions varied considerably in the extent to which they retain PGT/R students;
- The four UK nations are roughly similar in patterns of progression to postgraduate study.

Perhaps most strikingly, Wakeling and Hampden-Thompson (2013) find that UK university graduates who live in the EU are significantly more likely to progress to postgraduate programs than those living in the UK.

2.4.6   Unresolved Issues

Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) call for research into the application process, including "factors affecting potential students' decision-making processes and any inequalities on the basis of social class, ethnicity, and gender", as well as the effects of financial circumstances, family commitments, disability and sexuality. Yet many issues remain unresolved.

PG Education Objectives

One undecided issue is whether there should be more postgraduate students overall or whether the postgraduate population should remain the same size but accurately reflect local demographics. The discourse on widening participation assumes that entering HE is good for everyone. However, this may not be the case, and there are no guidelines that say who would benefit from progressing to PG studies (McVitty 2012).

Additionally, the objectives of WP in UG and PG studies might not align. Originally WP was part of an effort toward mass UG education, meaning more diversity was achieved through more recruitment and more enrolment. It is unclear whether WP in PG could work without an expansion in the total numbers of students, or whether it should be an effort to change the make-up of the existing number of students.

Socio-economic Indicators
There are also difficulties in transferring most WP definitions from UG to PG studies. For one, given that the majority of PG students in the UK come from overseas, the benchmarks of comparison for elements of socio-economic background and parental education are unclear. We encounter this hurdle in the data analysis section below.

Perhaps an item more critically needing consensus is how to measure socio-economic background for students who no longer live with their families. Most mature students have set up their own home and career, and even young PGT/R students may have been in the work force for multiple years. Which neighbourhood, original versus current, should be used to determine participation rates and POLAR[11] classifications? The answer depends on whether widening participation initiatives are aimed at changing access for students with low socio-economic origins, or students with low socio-economic current circumstances.

Demographic Characteristics
Finally, it is not clear for which populations WP goals in PG studies are, or should be, set. WP goals include: the maximisation of talent and potential; improvements in quality, knowledge and the research process that derive from diverse viewpoints and experiences; and the moral case for ensuring fair access to doctoral education (Wakeling 2016, 4). The PG student body in the UK is far more diverse than the UG population, because almost half of PG students come from overseas. That being so, we are left to wonder whether the commitment to diversity and widening participation in PG education is focused on UK/EU students, or on all PG students. Since SeNSS funding is only available (in the main) to UK/EU students, resolving this issue is not necessary for the investigation of WP in this report, but it is a matter of consideration for the SeNSS leadership.

With such a range of WP definitions and no clear consensus on meaning, ARISE undertook to assess and evaluate WP in SeNSS member institutions vis-à-vis guidance that could be gleaned from ESRC documentation. After giving recommendations based on this literature review, we present a review of WP plans, targets, and strategies in each SeNSS member institution.

2.5 Recommendations
Based on the foregoing information, we recommend the following:

---

[11] POLAR classifies local areas into 5 groups (quintiles) based on the proportion of 18-year-olds who enter higher education at the ages of 18 or 19 years. Quintiles range from 1 (lowest level of participation in higher education) to 5 (highest level of participation in higher education). Source: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/polar-participation-of-local-areas/. Last accessed 23 May 2019.

2.5.1 Agree a DTP-wide Definition of *Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies*
As SeNSS is seeking to learn about widening participation for the DTP in general, it would be sensible for all member institutions to agree on a definition of widening participation in postgraduate studies. This would be a definition for tracking progress within the SeNSS partnership and the students it supports.

We recommend beginning with the ESRC guidelines for widening participation that explicitly mention postgraduate studies. These guidelines specify that opportunity of participation should be equal regardless of research background, previous/undergrad- uate institution, or any demographic characteristics.

The most common, and indeed universally recognised, indicators of widening participation are socio-economic background and disability. At a minimum, we recommend that these two criteria be included in the SeNSS definition.

Further, members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for socio-economic background:
- POLAR qualifications of applicant's current home, as well as parents' home. *We do not know the influence of either on a postgraduate research student's path.*
- Parents' HE experience and/or completion.
- Whether students received free school meals at any time in their lives prior to applying for a postgraduate research degree.

We recommend the following for disability:
- Whether the student has a declared disability.
- Whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance.
- Whether the student has or would ever invoke the "two tick" policy when applying for a job.

2.5.2 Push for a Definition of Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies to be Accepted at the Institutional Level of each Member Institution
To help proliferate the idea of tracking widening participation in postgraduate studies, we recommend that the SeNSS members encourage their institutions to specify definitions, key performance indicators, targets, and strategies for the same. Adoption of these policies would serve to institutionalise the idea of widening participation in postgraduate studies as an issue distinct from WP in undergraduate studies. It would also set up the SeNSS group as the path-breaker in formalising and tracking postgraduate WP.

2.5.3 Push for a Definition of Widening Participation in Postgraduate Studies to be Accepted at the DTP level outside of SeNSS
SeNSS has an opportunity to be the innovator among Doctoral Training Partnerships and ESRC-funded initiatives. We recommend that the SeNSS leadership encourage other DTPs to adopt SeNSS-recommended definitions, key performance indicators, targets, and strategies. SeNSS could then become the DTP pioneer for widening participation strategies, and help define the landscape for the ESRC.

3   Access and Participation Plan Comparisons

According to the Office for Students (OfS), a university's Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out how that university will improve equality of opportunity for prospective students to study there. An APP should include a university's ambition for change, its plan to achieve that change, the targets it has set, and the investment it will make to deliver its plan.[12]

Each university's APP must be approved by the OfS for that university to be able to assess higher tuition fees. The OfS maintains that they "monitor to make sure the providers honour the commitments they make to students in these plans, and take action if they do not",[13] though they do not detail anything about this monitoring, how it takes place, how often it occurs, the action taken if necessary, or which universities have needed action in the past.

ARISE collected APPs from each SeNSS member institution to compare WP definitions and strategies with respect to postgraduate education. In this section we compare the plans to each other on their WP definitions, performance, targets, and strategies. Table 3 presents this information, which is presented in greater detail in the Appendix.

3.1   Definitions

We find that while no university explicitly presents their own unique definition of widening participation, Royal Holloway University, City University of London, University of Roehampton, and the University of Essex derive their definitions from the OfS and HESA and focus on particular characteristics. The remaining 6 SeNSS partners do not provide definitions, but do list key characteristics and/or groups of focus. None of the member institutions mention widening participation specifically in terms of postgraduate research.

3.1.1   Race and Ethnicity

All member institutions list some sort of race or ethnicity as under-represented and therefore a focus of access and participation planning. The Universities of East Anglia, Kent and Surrey include Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations, while the other institutions include Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

But what, exactly, is *minority ethnic*? There is not one APP that actually defines *minority ethnic*, other than to list Black or Black and Asian prior to it. This lack of explicit definition leaves room for discrepancies among member institutions. We therefore turn to the data shared with us by member institutions to see how race and ethnicity might be categorised. Though not all SeNSS members shared their data (Table 12 details this information), we list members' ethnic categories from the data we did receive (Table 1).

---

[12] Office for Students. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/. Last accessed 17 June 2019.

[13] Office for Students. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/search-for-access-and-participation-plans/#/AccessPlans/. Last accessed 17 June 2019.

Table 1 Defining "Minority Ethnic" according to SeNSS Member Institution

SeNSS Member Institution	Ethnic categories
City University	Not received
East Anglia	White, Asian, Black, Mixed, Other
Essex	Not received
Goldsmiths	Not received
Kent	Not received
Reading	White, Asian-Chinese, Asian (excl. Chinese), Black, Mixed, Other
Roehampton	Arab, Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, Asian or Asian British – Indian, Asian or Asian British – Pakistani, Black or Black British – African, Black or Black British – Caribbean, Chinese, Gypsy or Traveller, Mixed - White and Asian, Mixed - White and Black African, Mixed - White and Black Caribbean, Other Asian background, Other Black background, Other Ethnic background, Other Mixed background, Other White background, White, White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, White – Irish, White - Scottish
Royal Holloway	Not received
Surrey	White, BME
Sussex	Asian Other, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Traveller, Other, Other mixed background, Other White, Pakistani, White, White – British, White and Asian, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean

3.1.2   Socio-economic Background

All member institutions mention some type of low participation area. The Universities of East Anglia and Kent both refer to POLAR classifications, while Essex refers to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The remaining universities refer to low participation neighbourhoods or areas.

3.1.3   Disability

The University of Kent is the only member institution that does not specifically refer to disability as a target group of widening participation. Royal Holloway and Surrey include disability as a target, but do not define it. Sussex and Goldsmiths list students receiving Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) as the target group, while the remaining institutions target students with declared disabilities.

3.1.4   Age and Maturity

Mature students are a WP target group for all institutions except City University of London, though the definition of *mature* is not clear for all. For all except Roehampton, it is unclear whether the age of *mature students* applies to UG or PG or both (Table 2).

Table 2 Defining "Mature Student" according to SeNSS Member Institution

SeNSS Member Institution	Definition of *Mature Student*
City University of London	Not a target
East Anglia	Not specified
Essex	Not specified
Goldsmiths	Over 40
Kent	Over 21
Reading	Not specified
Roehampton	UG: Over 21; PG: Over 25
Royal Holloway	Not specified
Surrey	Over 25
Sussex	Over 21

Table 3 SeNSS Member Institutions' Protected Characteristics

	Race/Ethnicity	Participation	Disability	Age	Other
City University of London	BAME	LPA/N	Declared	…	No family history of HE; low income; low socio-economic background
Goldsmiths College, London	BAME	LPN	DSA	Mature	State school
Royal Holloway	BAME	LPA	Included	Mature	Care leavers; studied at low-performing school; intersection of characteristics such as ethnicity and gender
University of East Anglia	BME; ethnicity	POLAR3	Included	Age	Care leavers; gender; Indicators of household income; Intersection of characteristics such as ethnicity and gender
University of Essex	BAME	…	Declared	Mature	Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles 1-2)
University of Kent	BME	POLAR4	…	Mature	Non-A-level entrants
University of Reading	BAME	LPN	Declared	Mature	State school
University of Roehampton	BAME	LPA/N	Declared	Mature	Care leavers; Measures of economic disadvantage
University of Surrey	BME	LPA/N	Included	Mature	State school; Care leavers; white British students with low socio-economic status; mental health issues
University of Sussex	BAME	LPN	DSA	Mature	Care leavers
ESRC – postgraduate (2015)[14]					Must offer: - Full and part-time availability - 1+3 and 4-year awards - Clear distinctions between the requirements necessary for +3 and 1+3 studentships - With or without prior research training - Publicity within and beyond the host HEIs
HEFCE - undergraduate (2016)[15]		Included	Included	Included	Weights new undergraduate entrants according to advantage of background: - Fulltime undergraduates under 21-yrs-old on entry: young HE participation, by ward - Part-time and mature undergraduates: the proportion of 16-74-yr-olds with HE qualification, by ward
HEPI (2019)[16]					Care leavers; lower income; state schools; offering AAA+ offers at CCC for disadvantaged students

---

[14] ESRC. 2015. Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines. https://esrc.ukri.org/files/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/postgraduate-training-and-development-guidelines-2015/. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

[15] HEFCE. https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/25778/1/HEFCE2016_07.pdf. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

[16] HEPI. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/FINAL-WEB_HEPI-Widening-Participation-Report-98.pdf. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

Finally, many of the SeNSS member institutions include target groups beyond race and ethnicity, age, disability, and low participation neighbourhoods. Students from state schools, care leavers, and students from households with low income or low socio-economic status are all targeted by 3 or more SeNSS member institutions. Students with mental health concerns and white British students with low socio-economic status are specifically targeted by Surrey. East Anglia and Royal Holloway are the only 2 SeNSS member institutions that mention targeting intersectional groups, such as race-gender subgroups.

3.2 Performance

Each HEI in the UK is required to report its performance in widening participation. City, Goldsmiths, Essex, Kent, Reading, Roehampton, and Surrey report percentages of target populations that are enrolled in their institutions. Royal Holloway, Reading, and Roehampton report targets to improve those percentages.

Meanwhile, performance for East Anglia and Kent are more vague, as are their targets. These HEIs report performance in terms such as "Good performance", and targets in terms such as "make this group the focus of efforts to do with intake and graduate prospects", rather than numerical proportions. The same is true for targets of City University. Goldsmiths, Essex, Surrey, and Sussex do not give targets.

3.3 Strategy

In 2016, the UK government introduced loans of up to £10,000 to help master's students defray costs. From that year to the next, the Office for Students reports that the number of entrants studying eligible master's courses increased by more than 30% (Students 2018a), while non-eligible course enrolment remained at roughly the same level. The groups with largest increases (by proportion) were students from low participation areas, black students, students who declared a disability, and students aged 25 and under.

The OfS also noted an increase in the numbers of students planning to progress to postgraduate study at the time of their undergraduate graduation. OfS reports that the groups demonstrating "a particularly large increase in realising their intentions to study at postgraduate level are students from low participation areas and black students", both groups that had previously identified funding as a barrier to progressing (ibid.).

The Postgraduate Doctoral Loan Scheme began less than two years later. This scheme allows UK and EU citizens and residents to apply for up to £25,000 (adjusted for inflation in each subsequent year) to help with tuition, fees, and living expenses. With greater sources of funding available from the government, the financial distinction between under-represented and over-represented groups in PG education should be greatly diminished. Without the need to secure funding for these students from grants or University budgets, the onus then falls on HEIs such as SeNSS-DTP member institutions to seek, find, admit, and educate students for whom PG education is now financially possible.

There are a variety of strategies being tested to widen participation across the partnership and beyond. We begin with an example from University College London.

Case: University College London
In an upcoming conference on Enhancing Postgraduate Research Cultures (12 July 2019), a symposium on Widening Participation will include a presentation about a project underway at University College London (UCL). Though not a SeNSS member, the example could be instructive. According to the abstract (Rowe-Wiseman and Standen 2019), UCL has launched Researcher-led Initiatives (RLIs) for postgraduate research students, allowing them to create their own development opportunities as part of the Doctoral Skills Development Programme. UCL provides the opportunity for these students to identify and develop skills and experience, with the intention of challenging institutional structures that marginalise and exclude subsets of the population (Arday and Mirza, 2018).

An interesting element of this program is that 'promoting the development of underrepresented groups in academia' is an award criterion. Through institutionalising this criterion, the authors claim that UCL has already begun to attract innovative projects aimed changing research culture, including supportive networks for minorities in STEM and decolonial approaches to research.

SeNSS Member Institutions
There is variation in WP strategies among SeNSS member institutions, though none mention postgraduate research specifically. Essex, Roehampton and Goldsmiths all mention the lifecycle approach. This strategy entails starting as early as possible with primary school outreach, then continuing to be present into employment and further study. The lifecycle approach goes hand-in-hand with a common SeNSS University practice of focusing on school relationships. Most of the SeNSS Universities have partnered with local schools to build relationships and networks, and to influence lower participation groups to consider further education.

University of Essex, for example, provides the opportunity for local sixth forms to teach A-level subjects on campus. These local schools offer A-levels in subjects such as Law, Geography, Philosophy and Ethics, History of Art, Further Maths, Economics and French at the University Campus while maintaining the provision of A-level and BTEC qualifications in their own schools. Courses are taught jointly by experienced staff from the schools and enriched by contributions from leading academics who are actively involved in world-leading research on the subjects the students are studying. The sixth form students also have the chance to meet with current university students to share their experiences and find out more about university life.[17]

Further strategies of SeNSS members include:
- Building a teacher network (UEA);
- Maintaining strong relationships with other HE institutions (UoE);
- Identifying schools and colleges that will benefit most from outreach activity based on school attainment, school meals, POLAR3 and pupil premium data (UoE);

---

[17] University of Essex. 2015. 'Schools to transform sixth form opportunities thanks to partnership with University of Essex.' https://www1.essex.ac.uk/news/event.aspx?e_id=7769. Last accessed 31 July 2019.

- Conducting focus groups to explore the needs of disadvantaged groups (Surrey);
- Building networks between University and local communities and expanding sustained engagement outreach programmes (Reading);
- Working with the Students' Union to tackle the BAME attainment gap (Goldsmiths);
- Combining school data on low participation rates, levels of deprivation, low attainment and information on application/entry rates alongside geographical focus on local schools (City).

3.4   Recommendations

We base the following recommendations on the above information.

3.4.1   Decide detailed measures for key performance indicators (KPIs)

APP review indicates that SeNSS member institutions collect data on undergraduate WP target groups using a variety of performance indicators. We suggest that the SeNSS leadership agree measures for the following groups.

Socio-economic background: We recommend POLAR classifications, FSM recipient status, and parental HE experience.

Disability status: We recommend whether the student has a declared disability, whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance, and whether the student has or would ever invoke the "two tick" policy when applying for a job.

Race and Ethnicity: Whether an institution counts BAME or BME as a target group, the definition of *minority ethnic* is still unclear. We recommend that the SeNSS leadership develop a list of which races and ethnicities constitute *minority ethnic*, and that this list contain as wide a characterisation of race and ethnicity as possible. Students should be allowed to choose from among a long list of potential race/ethnicity categories, including several that might not be considered *minority ethnic*. This way, no matter what the groups needed for analysis, the data will be detailed enough to be useful. We also recommend that SeNSS member institutions push for the same level of detail in their home institution data collection, and that SeNSS push for acceptance of this level of detail among other ESRC-funded DTPs.

Mature Students: The definition of *mature student* may change from one institution to another, or over time. We recommend that the SeNSS membership agree an age to define mature students in PG education, and continue to collect data on age. This way, no matter what the cut-off needed for analysis, the data will be detailed enough to be useful. We also recommend that SeNSS member institutions push for the same threshold in their home institution data collection, and that SeNSS push for acceptance of this threshold among other ESRC-funded DTPs.

3.4.2   Agree target groups

Though we recommend above that race/ethnicity, socio-economic background, and disability be considered at minimum, there are other groupings that could include valuable information. We therefore also recommend that mature students (with a

threshold no higher than 30 for PG) and care leaver groups be considered as target groups for widening participation initiatives.

3.4.3 Use Principles of Co-Design and Co-Creation to Develop Successful Strategies for Widening Participation in SeNSS Member Institutions

UCL is implementing a participatory planning approach to doctoral skills development designed to help them widen participation and retention of low participation groups.

We recommend that SeNSS use focus groups and participatory planning approaches to develop strategies for widening participation. This should involve both PG students from low-participation groups, and people from low-participation groups who are not students, but could be, as well as PG students from high-participation groups. Find out the barriers they have confronted when making career choices, including the choice to pursue PG, including family concerns, social and cultural stigma, financial difficulties, self-image, information, and access. Solicit suggestions as to how reducing these barriers might best be accomplished, and how SeNSS might make surmounting these barriers easier.

It is likely that suggestions will range from recruitment, to admissions, to programming, mentoring, retention, and employability. We recommend that this input be used to develop potential strategies for widening participation, and that these strategies be shared among all SeNSS member institutions, with interested institutions taking up strategies to trial. Over time, an evidence base can be accumulated that documents which strategies have been trialed by which institutions, as well as the outcomes of those trials. Then SeNSS can use these to demonstrate to other DTPs and ESRC that they are taking steps to widen participation and determine the best ways to do so.

3.4.4 Increase Applicant Pool from Low Participation Groups

Fundamentally, there are two issues to confront when planning to widen participation. The first is an issue of *information*. Some people are not participating in PG education because they do not know about the possibility, or have not considered the possibility for themselves. The second issue is one of *access*. These potential students know about the possibility of entering postgraduate research, but they are not participating because they cannot achieve admittance.

To address the issue of *information*, SeNSS member institutions must recruit students who have not otherwise thought of pursuing graduate studies. We recommend SeNSS institutions jointly compile a bank of strategies they have been using to recruit students from low-participation groups, including speaking with and actively recruiting among UG students beginning with the first year of UG enrollment, and with 6th-form students in local areas.

We also recommend recruiting among University alumni by directly reaching out via alumni associations and contact lists. These lists contain people who are eligible for

graduate study because they have already completed UG study, and are already familiar with life at the University. Students in this group will also vary in age.

We also suggest seeking referrals from existing students and alumni, both in and outside the SeNSS program, in SeNSS member institutions. These students offer the bonus of being able to give personal testimonials about the education they have received and what it has helped them accomplish. Finally, we suggest utilizing social media to recruit applicants and encouraging current students/alumni to do the same.

3.4.5 Increase Admission of Applicants from Low Participation Groups

There are likely to be multiple issues confounding access, ranging from the application process to institutional sifting to leadership decision making about which students to admit. To address the issue of *access*, we therefore recommend a thoughtful and thorough consideration of SeNSS admission processes, accompanied by a review of literature on implicit bias and methods for reducing discrimination. Though outside the scope of this report, ARISE is aware of literature that shows adjustments to hiring procedures can increase workplace diversity (Wakeling 2007; Burke and Mattis 2007). Some of these changes suggest that it might be helpful to:

- *Involve students in the admissions process.*
  Although students may not be allowed to make final decisions about future admissions, student input may illuminate aspects of candidate selection that contain implicit bias against under-represented groups. Students can also attest to the sorts of characteristics that can help PhD candidates succeed in particular programs.

- *Foster SeNSS culture.*
  A positive and healthy group culture can boost retention among current students, which then becomes a selling point with prospective students. Top candidates from under-represented groups are always highly coveted by graduate programs, and having a positive culture is a perk for the candidate trying to make a difficult decision.

- *Be cautious of 'fit'.*
  It is often the case that final decisions are made on the basis of 'fit', which can be a rather amorphous feeling of one or more committee members. The problem with 'fit' as a criterion is that it focuses more on the candidate's ability to conform to existing programs, rather than a program's ability to adapt in ways that can help bring out a candidate's greatest strengths.

3.4.6 Share WP strategies to create a common bank of opportunities

We recommend that SeNSS member institutions evaluate the effectiveness of WP strategies, share findings with each other, and create a central information resource where these strategies can be shared.

4   Data Analysis

In this section, we present analysis based on data from three sources: the SeNSS leadership team; the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA); and SeNSS member institutions.

4.1 Description

4.1.1 Original data shared by SeNSS

The SeNSS leadership team shared anonymous data about their student application process for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 cohorts.

Table 4 shows the variables available for each cohort group. It should be noted that for the 2017 cohort there is no data for the first two stages of the application process.

Table 4 Data provided by SeNSS about admission process

	Year (cohort)		
	2017	2018	2019
Pathway	yes	yes	yes
University	yes	yes	yes
Gender	yes	yes	yes
Age	yes	yes	yes
Marital status (or civil partnership)	yes	yes	yes
Disability	yes	yes	yes
Ethnicity	yes	yes	yes
Sexual orientation	yes	yes	yes
Religion	no	yes	yes
Caring responsibilities	no	yes	yes
Parental university	no	yes	yes
School type	no	yes	yes
Study mode	no	no	yes
Stage in the admission process	3 to 5 and declined	1 to 5	1 to 5 and declined

The original data provided by SeNSS covers many of the WP dimensions previously discussed, with some important caveats. For one, there is no measure of socio-economic status, admittedly the main focus of WP strategies (Table 5 and Table 6). It is possible to use Parental university or School type as an indirect measure of socio-economic status, but this is still removed from the traditional indicators of POLAR neighbourhood classification, FSM recipient, and household income.

Table 5 Summary statistics of SeNSS original data 2017-2019

Gender	Age	Marital status (or civil partnership)	Disability	Sexual Orientation
Female :1110 Male: 644 Non-Binary: 15 Prefer not to say: 23	under 30: 1095 30 and over: 650 Prefer not to say: 47	NA: 14 No :1374 Yes: 336 Prefer not to say: 68	NA: 11 No :1554 Yes: 184 Prefer not to say: 44	Heterosexual :1380 Other:110 Prefer not to say: 194

Table 6 Summary statistics of SeNSS original data 2017-2019, continued

Caring responsibilities	Parent(s) attended university?	School type	Study Mode
NA: 239 No :1424 Yes: 94 Prefer not to say: 35	NA: 234 No :677 Yes :833 I don't know: 24 Prefer not to say: 24	NA: 234 Independent :114 Non-selective :694 Outside UK :498 Selective :209 Don't know: 5 Prefer not to say: 38	NA: 994 Full-time studies:742 Part-time studies: 56

).

2017		2018		2019	
Arab	1	Arab	3	NA	2
Asian/Asian British [Bangladeshi]	2	Asian British	20	African	2
Asian/Asian British [Chinese]	1	Asian Other	31	Arab	5
Asian/Asian British [Indian]	2	Black African/British	5	Asian British	17
Asian/Asian British [Pakistani]	1	Black British	9	Asian Other	32
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British [Caribbean]	4	Black Caribbean	4	Black British	29
British-German	1	Black Other	5	Black Other	16
Central Asian	3	British - S.Korean	4	British/European	3
Cypriot	3	Gypsy	4	Creole	3
Czech	1	Hispanic	3	Latin/Spanish	2
Eastern European	1	Mixed/mult. ethnicity	24	Mexican American	3
Eastern European	2	Nepali British	3	Mixed Greek/Arab	4
English-Spanish	1	Prefer not to say	29	Mixed/multiple ethnicity	36
Estonian	2	White African & British	2	Prefer not to say	22
European	4	White British	431	White British	389
French	2	White British/Other	3	White British/French	4
German	3	White Other	180	White Other	229
Greek	7				
Italian	5				
Italian-American	3				
Korean	3				
Latin American	3				
Lithuanian	1				
Mixed/multiple ethnicity	3				
Mixed ethnicity [White & Black Caribbean]	1				
Mult./mixed ethnicity	2				
Norwegian	1				
Portuguese	3				
Prefer not to say	17				
Romanian	3				
Scandinavian	2				
Spanish	10				
Sri Lankan	3				
Turkish	3				
Vietnamese	1				
White [British]	100				
White [English]	17				
White [Irish]	2				
White [Northern Irish]	3				
White [Scottish]	2				
White [Welsh]	5				

The quality of the data is also variable from year to year, causing effort to merge and compare the datasets. For instance, in the original data for Gender, we find "Non-Binary", "Non-binary", and "non-binary" values, which should all be the same value but cannot be read that way with statistical programs because they are not identical. The 'Ethnicity' and 'Religion' variables pose a more interesting problem, because there are many unique values, which also change from year to year (Table 7 and Table 8).

Table 8 Religion total counts by year, SeNSS original data

2018		2019	
Agnostic	4	Atheist	6
Athiest	3	Atheist	5
Buddhist	3	Buddhist	6
Christian (all denominations)	184	Christian (all denominations)	199
Hindu	12	Hindu	6
Muslim	29	Humanist	3
No religion or belief	395	Jewish	6
of jewish origin	2	Muslim	43
Pagan	4	No religion or belief	425
Prefer not to say	108	Prefer not to say	90
Roman Catholic	5	Sikh	3
Spiritual	3	Spiritual	6
Spiritual/ non-religious	3		
Spriritual	2		
Viking	3		

4.1.2   Data purchased from HESA

From HESA, we purchased anonymised data for all UK PG and UG students from 2010/11 - 2017/18, including the following variables:

Table 9 Attributes for which Data was Purchased from HESA

- Academic year
- Sex (Male/ Female/ Other)
- Ethnicity (White/ Black/ Asian/ others including mixed/ Unknown)
- Fee eligibility
- Disability status (Disabled/ Non-disabled)
- HE provider
- Polar4 quintiles (1/2/3/4/5)
- Major source of tuition fees (grouped)
- Major source of funding (grouped)
- Domicile (UK/ Other EU/ non-EU/ Unknown)
- Subject of study (Principal subject 3.0) (2012/13 - 2017/18)
- Age of qualifier bands (18 and under/ 19-22/ 23-26/ 27-30/ 30+)
- Subject of study (Subject area)
- Level of qualification (Postgraduate (research))/ Postgraduate (teaching) / First degree/ Other undergraduate)
- Subject of study (4-Digit JACS 3.0) (2012/13 - 2017/18)
- Subject of study (Principal subject 2.0) (2010/11 - 2011/12)
- Subject of study (4-Digit JACS 2.0) (2010/11 - 2011/12)
- Parental education
- Sexual orientation
- Religious belief
- Mode of qualification (Full-time/ Part-time)

The unit of observation in the HESA data is the count of Full Person Equivalent[18] for all but the Sexual orientation and Religious belief variables, for which the data was rounded[19].

To match each SeNSS dataset by year, and to match it to the HESA data described below, we had to match the SeNSS *pathways* to HESA *principal subjects*. Most of the SeNSS Pathways have a clear equivalent as a principal subject of study in the HESA data. As reported in Table 7, there is no clear equivalent for the "Science, Technology, and Sustainability" SeNSS Pathway in the HESA data. "Development studies" and "Socio-legal studies" only have a

---

[18] HESA provides a count of Full Person Equivalent (FPE) instead of an actual person count. A course can cover a number of subjects so to represent this, HESA apportion the instance to indicate the proportion of a course that relates to each subject. Each instance is still given a value of 1 so in essence it is still a count, but when a course is split across multiple subjects, the counts within each subject indicate the FPE as the proportion of each subject to the instance. See: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students#count-fpe-fte.

[19] HESA rounds up the count of students in each category to the nearest multiple of 5 to anonymise data. See: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics.

clear equivalent in the 3.0 version of the principal subject, which runs from 2012/13 to 2017/18. We therefore mapped SeNSS Pathways to HESA principal subjects as is indicated in Table 10.

Table 10 Matching SeNSS Pathways with HESA Subject of study

SeNSS Pathway	HESA Subject of study (Principal subject 3.0/2.0)
Business and Management Studies	(N1) Business studies & (N2) Management studies (3.0/2.0)
Development Studies	(L8) Development Studies (3.0)
Economics	(L1) Economics (3.0/2.0)
Education	(X3) Academic studies in education (3.0/2.0)
Human Geography	(L7) Human & social geography (3.0/2.0)
Linguistics	(Q1) Linguistics (3.0/2.0)
Politics and International Relations	(L2) Politics (3.0/2.0)
Psychology	(C8) Psychology (3.0/2.0)
Science, Technology and Sustainability Studies	NA
Social Anthropology	(L610) Social & cultural anthropology (3.0/2.0)
Social Work and Social Policy	(L5) Social work (3.0/2.0)
Socio-Legal Studies	(M270) Sociology of law (3.0)
Sociology	(L3) Sociology (3.0/2.0)

The Ethnicity variable from HESA has 5 categories: Asian, Black, Other, White, and NA. It should be noted that Ethnicity is only recorded for students domiciled in the UK. It is not straightforward how to categorize the multiple ethnicities present in each SeNSS year data, and then match them to the HESA categories. For simplicity of presentation we perform analyses on a binary variable coded as 'White' or 'Non-white'.

The Religious belief and Sexual orientation variables from HESA present a special case for data comparison. Again the categories do not match the multiple values present in the SeNSS data, but that is surmountable problem. The bigger issue is that HESA only collects aggregated data for Religious belief and Sexual orientation, at the year and HE provider level. It is thus impossible to properly compare the HESA and SeNSS data on these two dimensions.

The Age variable is problematic for a different reason. In the case of SeNSS data, the Age is that of the applicants, whereas in the HESA data the Age variable cannot be broken down by newly admitted students. We could therefore only analyse a subset of the average age of all registered PgR students by university and subject, but not by stage in their studies.

4.2 Analysis

4.2.1 SeNSS admission process

There are five stages to the admission process in the SeNSS doctoral program: application; institutional review; pathway review; management board review; award. From approximately 300 applications each year, less than 50 students are awarded a scholarship. As Figure 1 shows, there is an increase in applications over the three years of the DTP. Although there is no information for the first two stages in 2017, the counts of students in the Pathway review stage suggest a steady increase since 2017.

Figure 1 Count of Students at Each Admission Stage, by Year

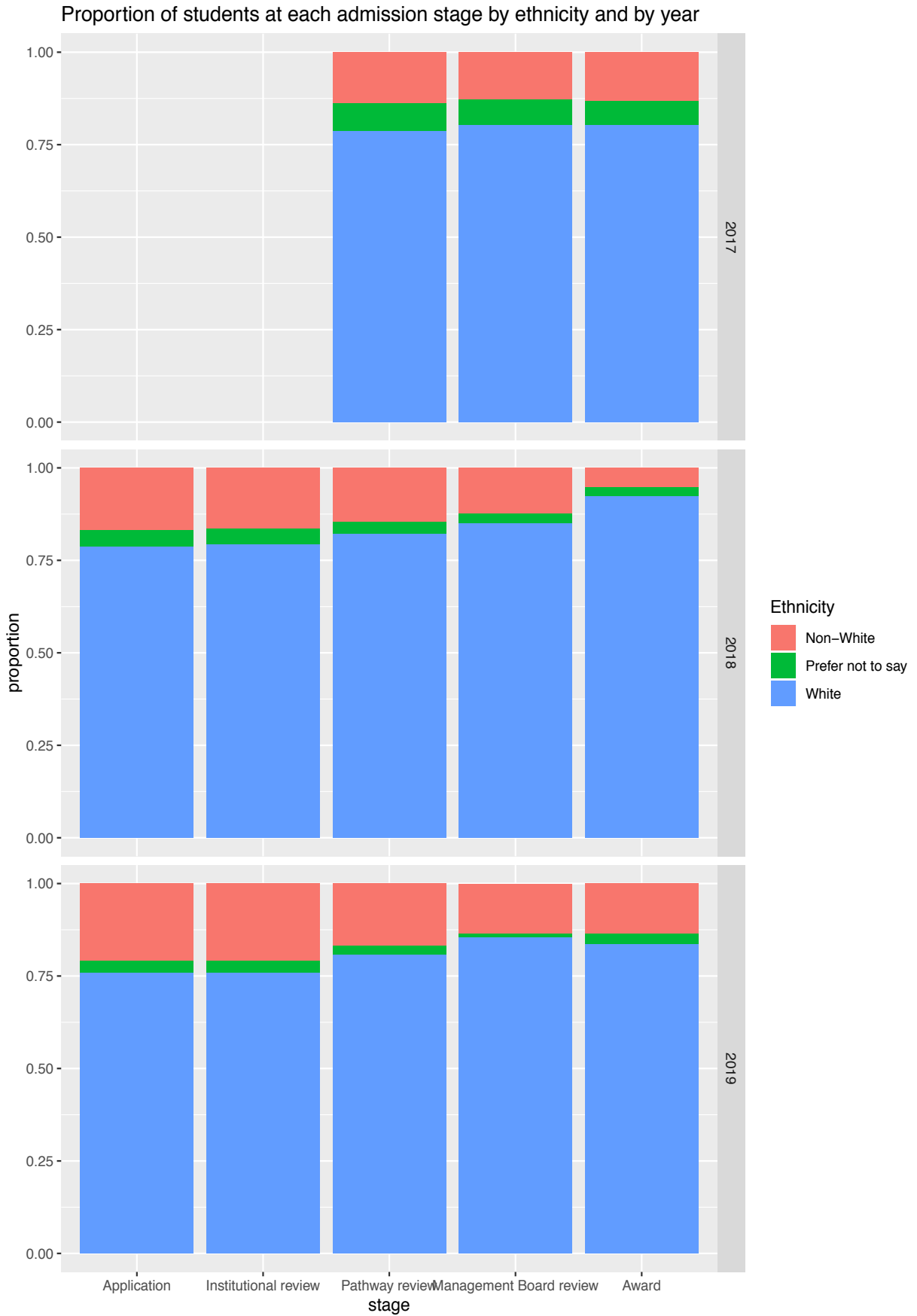## Count of students at each admission stage by year
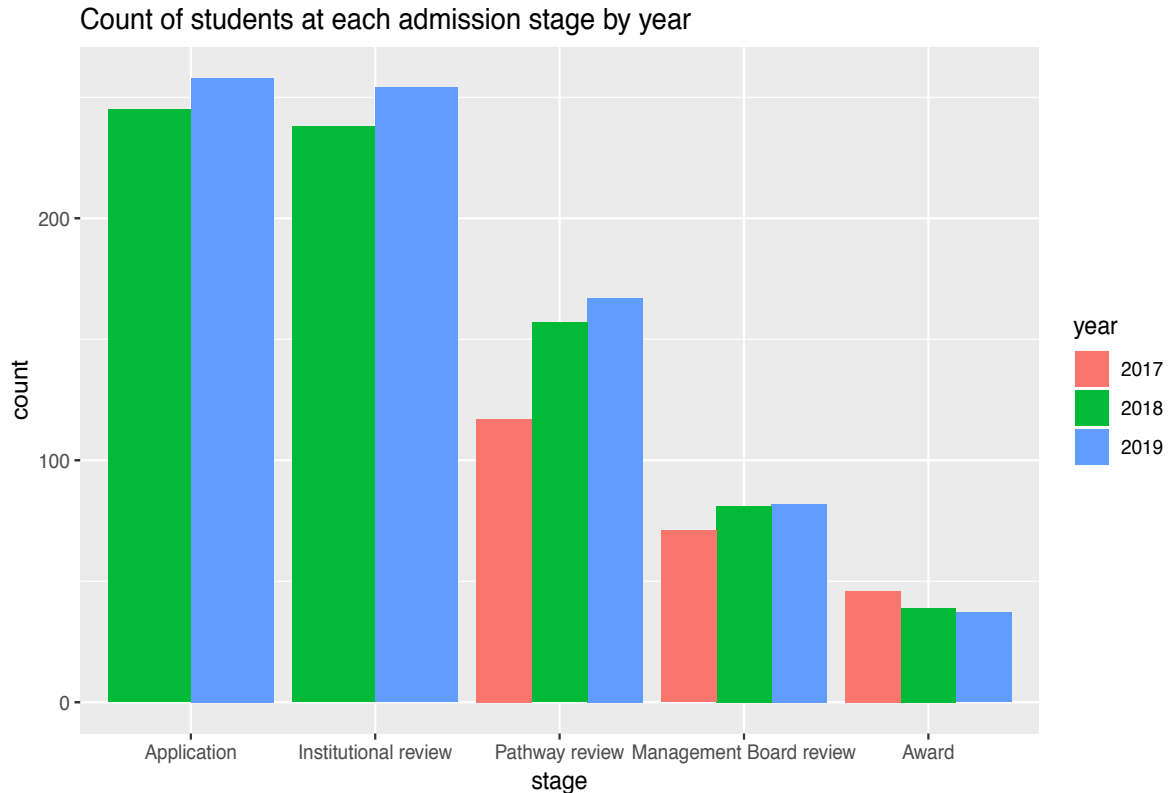
Note that there is no information for the first two stages for 2017

The stages of the admission process offer an opportunity to explore and compare the demographics of applicants as they progress across stages. Across the WP measures present in the SeNSS data, most of the proportions of students remain constant across stages in the admission process. That is, the process seems to be neutral in regard to many WP characteristics. The exceptions are *Ethnicity* and *School type*.

SeNSS records indicate that in 2018 and 2019 (Figure 2), the proportion of white students receiving awards is greater than we should expect, given the proportion of white applicants. The increase from the first stage (application) to the fifth (award) is approximately 10% in 2018 and approximately 5% in 2019. Because we are examining the entire population of SeNSS students, these differences are both statistically and substantively real.

Proportion of students at each admission stage by ethnicity and by year

Note that there is no information for the first two stages for 2017

Examining the intersection of ethnicity and gender, an interesting trend emerges. As Figure 3 shows, the proportion of male to female applicants is more or less constant inside the group of white students. The mean proportion of female applicants in the white group for the first stage is 61% against 65% in the last stage. In contrast, among non-whites there is a noticeably smaller proportion of male applicants across the admission process in 2019. That trend is similar for 2018, except that at the Admission stage the proportions revert back to the initial numbers.

Figure 3 Proportion of Students at Each Admission Stage, by Ethnicity, Gender, and Year

Proportion of students at each admission stage by ethnicity, by gender, and by year

Stage 1: Application Stage 2: Institutional Review Stage 3: Pathway Review Stage 4: Management Board Review Stage 5: Award
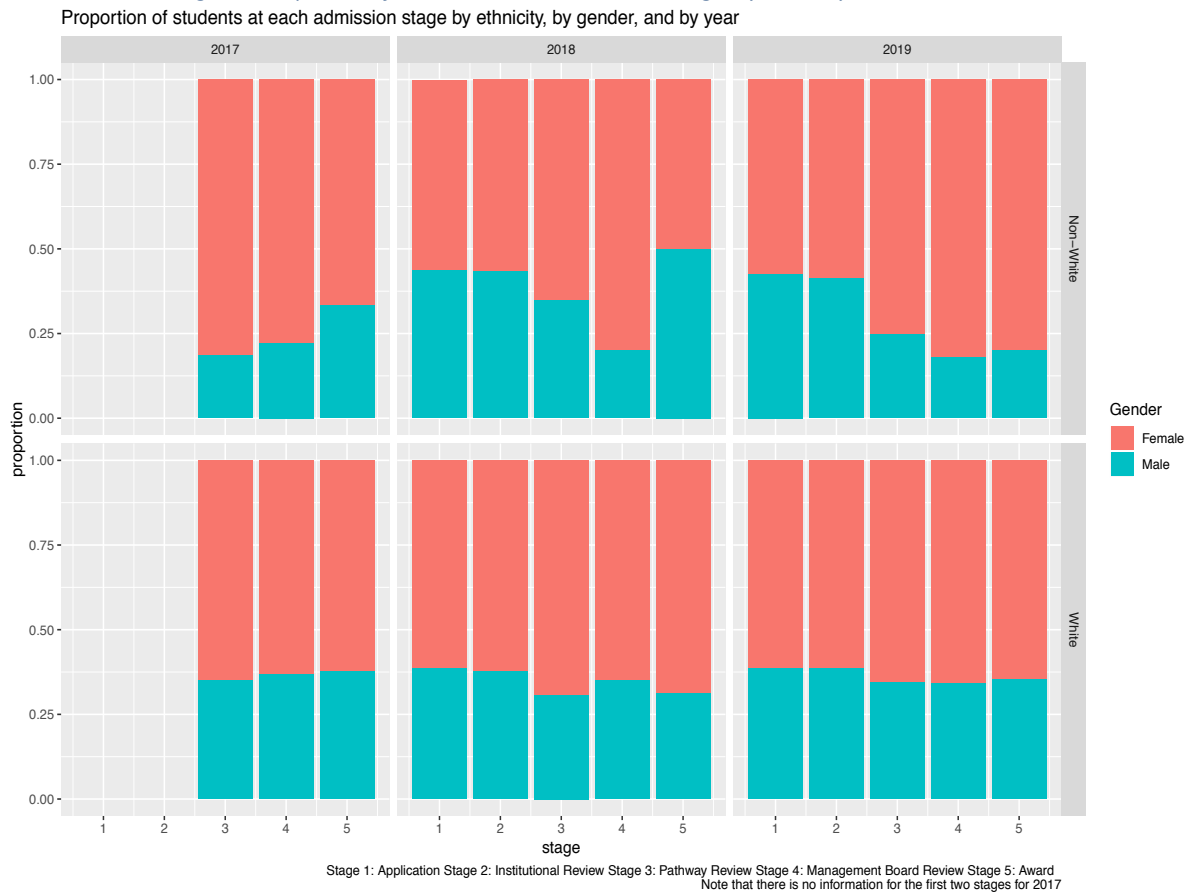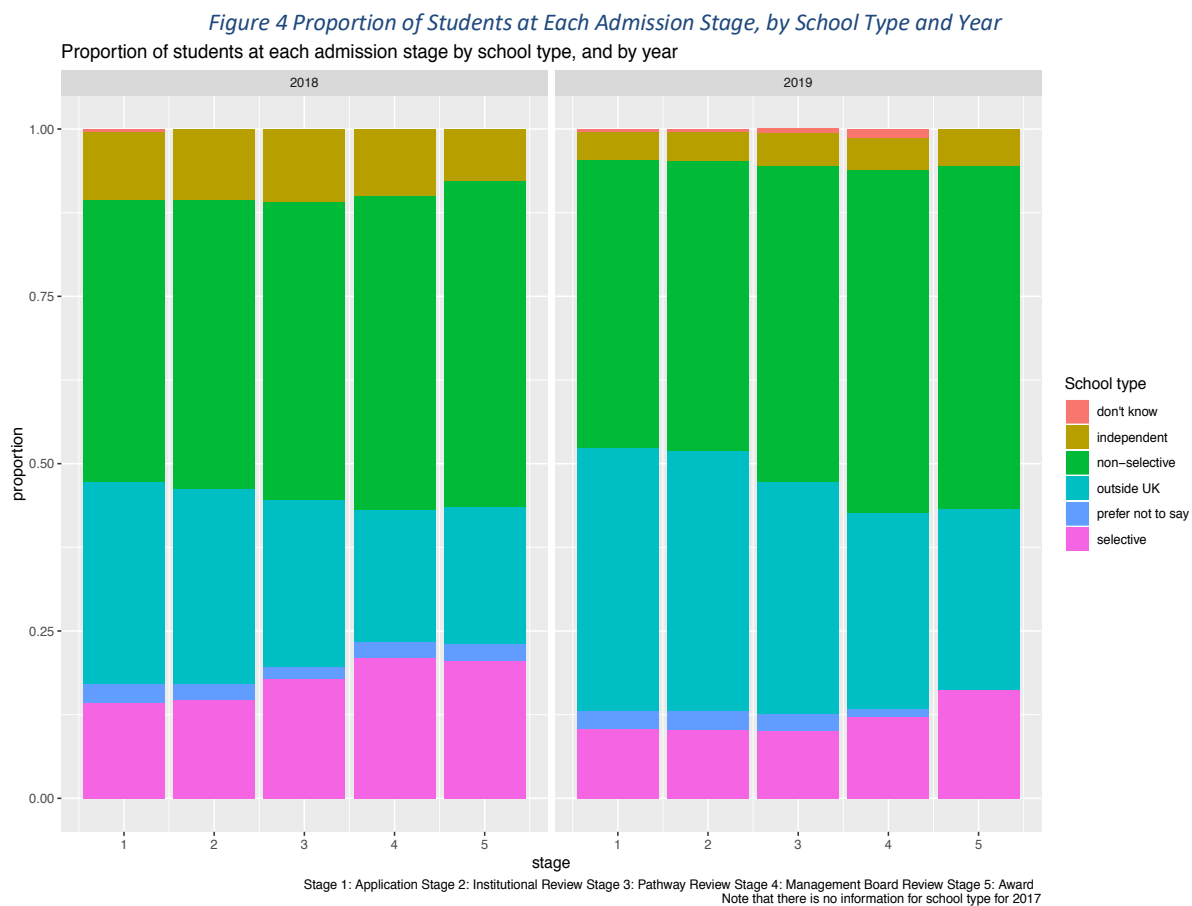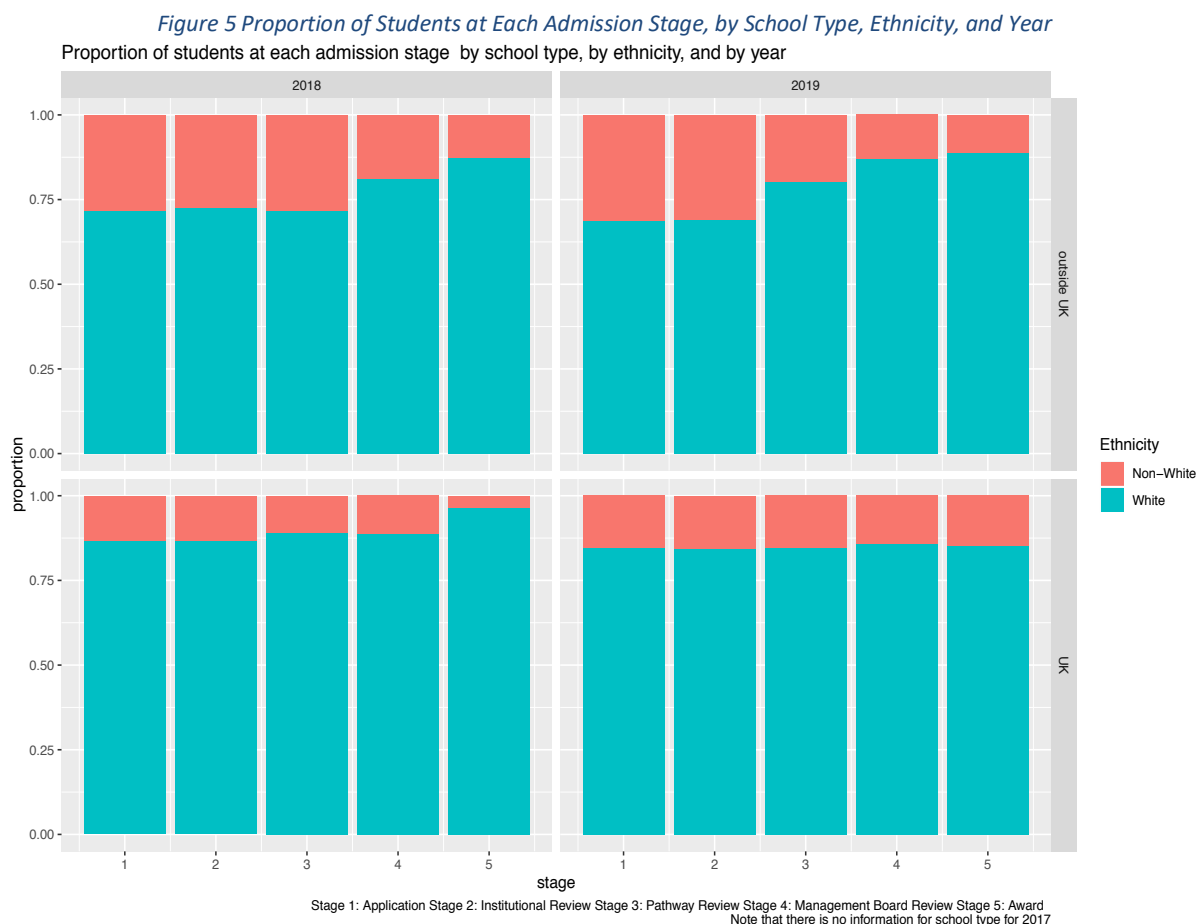Note that there is no information for the first two stages for 2017

Figure 4 shows trends across the stage according to School type. The admission process progressively diminishes the proportion of applicants who went to school outside the UK in particular.

Figure 4 Proportion of Students at Each Admission Stage, by School Type and Year

Proportion of students at each admission stage by school type, and by year

Stage 1: Application Stage 2: Institutional Review Stage 3: Pathway Review Stage 4: Management Board Review Stage 5: Award
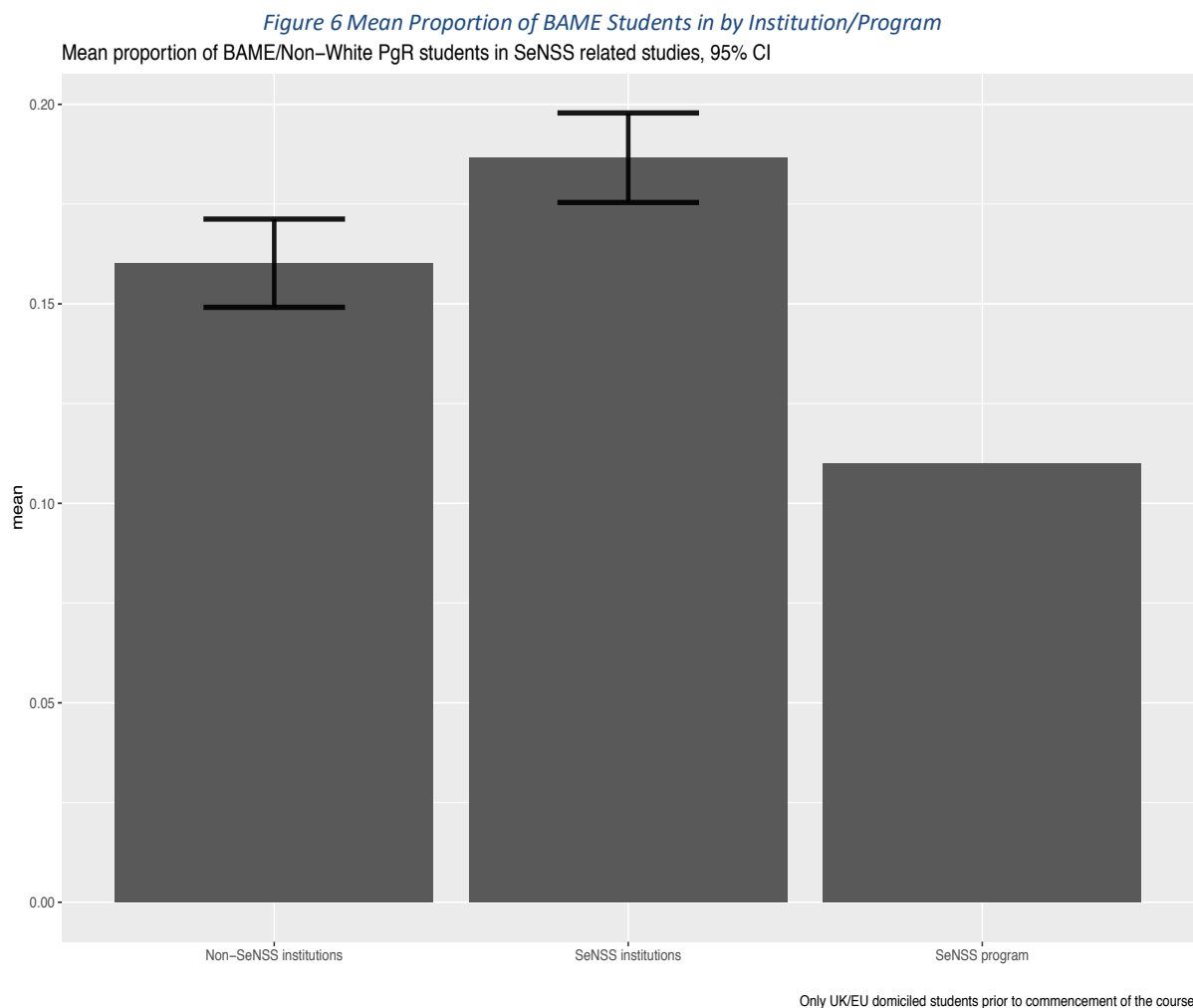Note that there is no information for school type for 2017

Perhaps even more interestingly, Figure 5 shows that the decline in the proportion of non-white applicants primarily affects the proportion of those who went to school outside the UK. The mean proportion of Non-White applicants of the group who went to school outside the UK for the first stage is 30%, against 12% in the last stage.

Figure 5 Proportion of Students at Each Admission Stage, by School Type, Ethnicity, and Year

Proportion of students at each admission stage by school type, by ethnicity, and by year

Stage 1: Application Stage 2: Institutional Review Stage 3: Pathway Review Stage 4: Management Board Review Stage 5: Award
Note that there is no information for school type for 2017

### 4.2.2 Comparison of SeNSS studentship to National Averages

We can compare the WP characteristics of the final student population that was awarded a SeNSS scholarship against the UK average of PgR students in SeNSS related studies, and those in SeNSS partner institutions. To be eligible to the SeNSS DTP the student must be UK/EU domiciled, so we restrict the sample of the other two comparison groups accordingly. Note that the graphs do not include the confidence interval for the SeNSS program because we have the entire population of SeNSS program students rather than a sample.

We can compare the proportion of Non-White students in the SeNSS program to the proportion of BAME students in PgR studies related to the SeNSS Pathways. Although the mean proportion of BAME students in SeNSS institutions is slightly larger than that in non-SeNSS institutions, the proportion of Non-White students in the SeNSS program is significantly and substantively smaller than both groups of comparison.
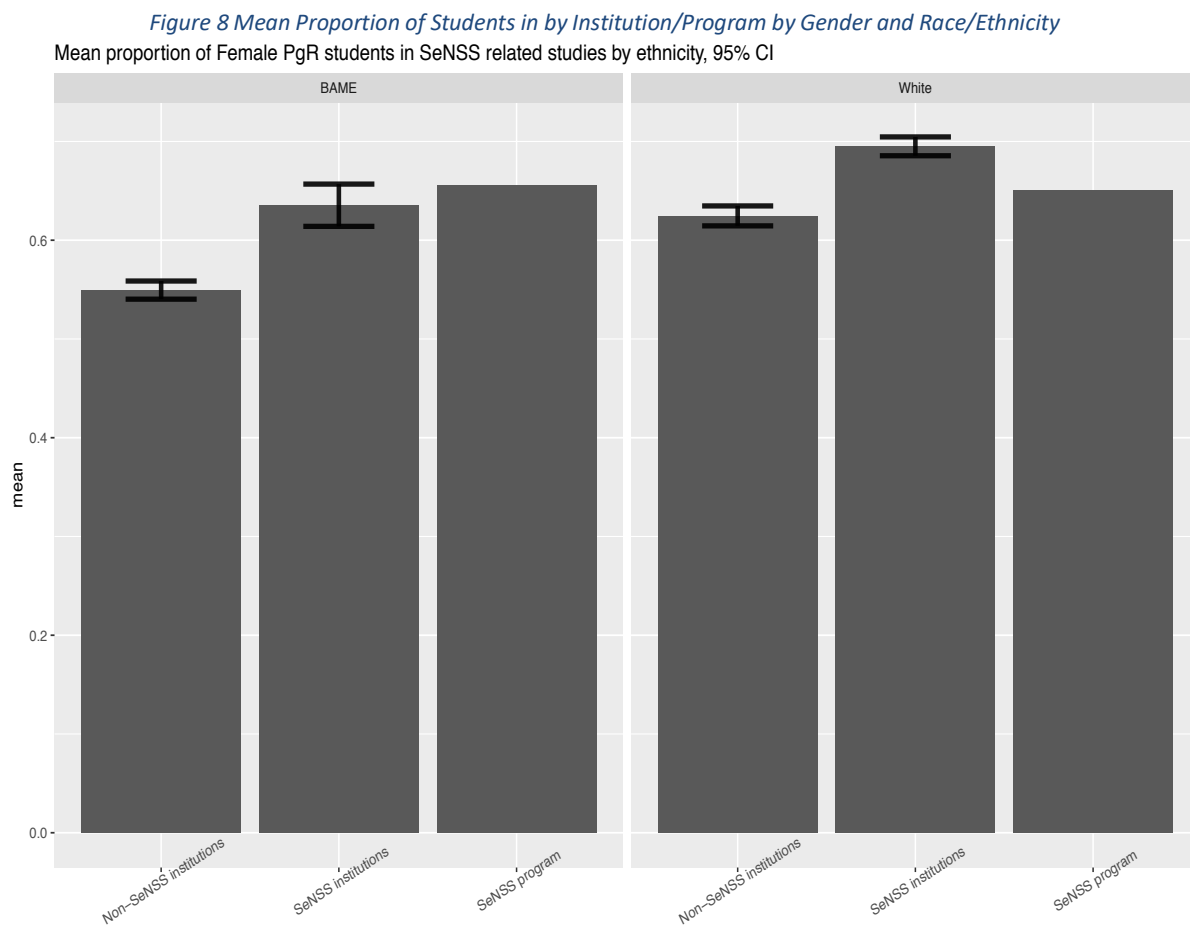
Figure 6 Mean Proportion of BAME Students in by Institution/Program

Mean proportion of BAME/Non–White PgR students in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Only UK/EU domiciled students prior to commencement of the course

The proportion of female students is in the SeNSS program is statistically identical to that in SeNSS institutions. Both are higher than in the Non-SeNSS group.

Figure 7 Mean Proportion of Female Students in by Institution/Program

Mean proportion of Female PgR students in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
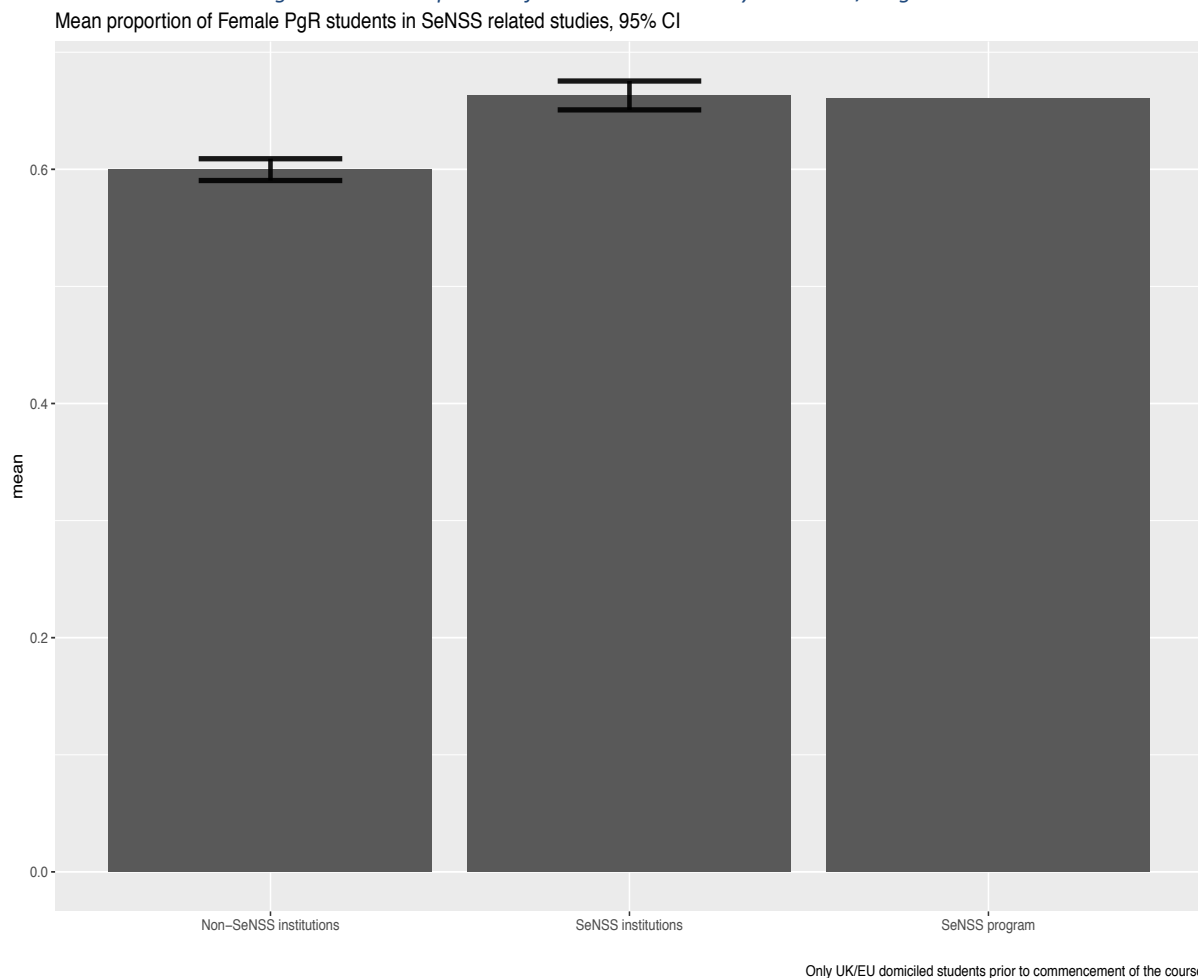
Given that on average the proportion of SeNSS Non-White students is smaller and the proportion of SeNSS female students is larger than the comparison groups, an intersectional analysis might be revealing.

As might be expected, both SeNSS and Non-SeNSS institutions exhibit higher proportions of white females than BAME females. In this case, the SeNSS-DTP does not conform. Figure 8 shows that the proportion of female students is basically the same across ethnic groups in the SeNSS program.

Figure 8 Mean Proportion of Students in by Institution/Program by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Mean proportion of Female PgR students in SeNSS related studies by ethnicity, 95% CI

Only UK/EU domiciled students prior to commencement of the course

We can also compare the groups by the proportion of students whose parents have no higher education degree. Students in the SeNSS program have a substantial higher proportion of parents with no HE degree than both comparison groups. Strikingly, SeNSS partner institutions have the lowest proportion of PgR students in SeNSS Pathway related studies whose parents have no HE degree. This proportion definitively eclipses that of all UK HEIs.

Figure 9 Mean Proportion of Students in by Institution/Program and Parental Education

Mean proportion of PgR students in SeNSS related studies whose parents have no HE, 95% CI

Only UK/EU domiciled students prior to commencement of the course
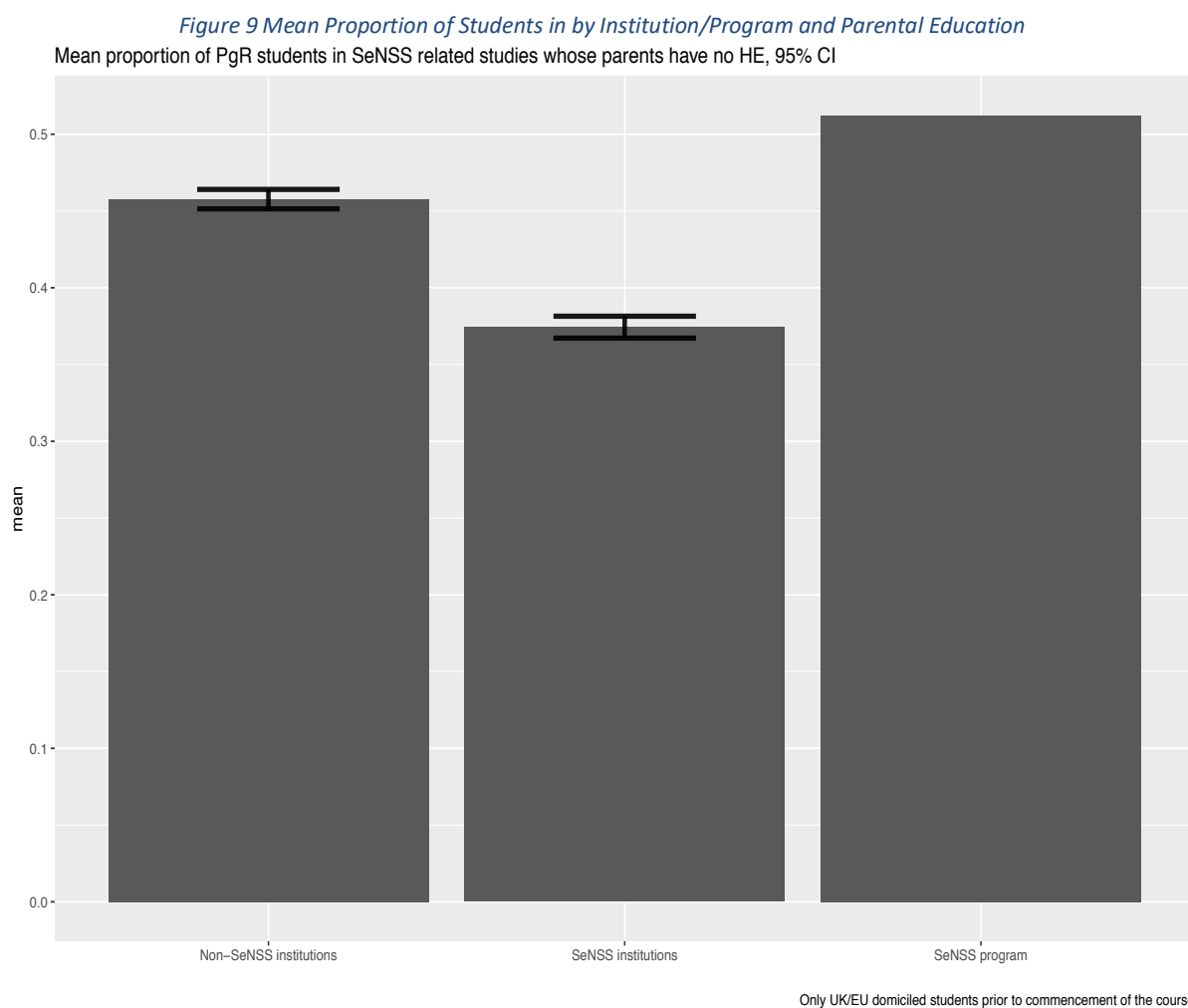
There are no more socio-economic WP characteristics on both HESA and SeNSS datasets to continue comparisons on indicators of socio-economic status. While parental education can be a proxy for socio-economic status, it would be best to compare by Polar4 quantiles.

We can look at the proportion of students with a disability. The proportion of students with a disability in the SeNSS program is significantly higher than in both comparison groups.

Figure 10 Mean Proportion of Disability Students by Institution/Program

Mean proportion of PgR students with a disability in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Only UK/EU domiciled students prior to commencement of the course
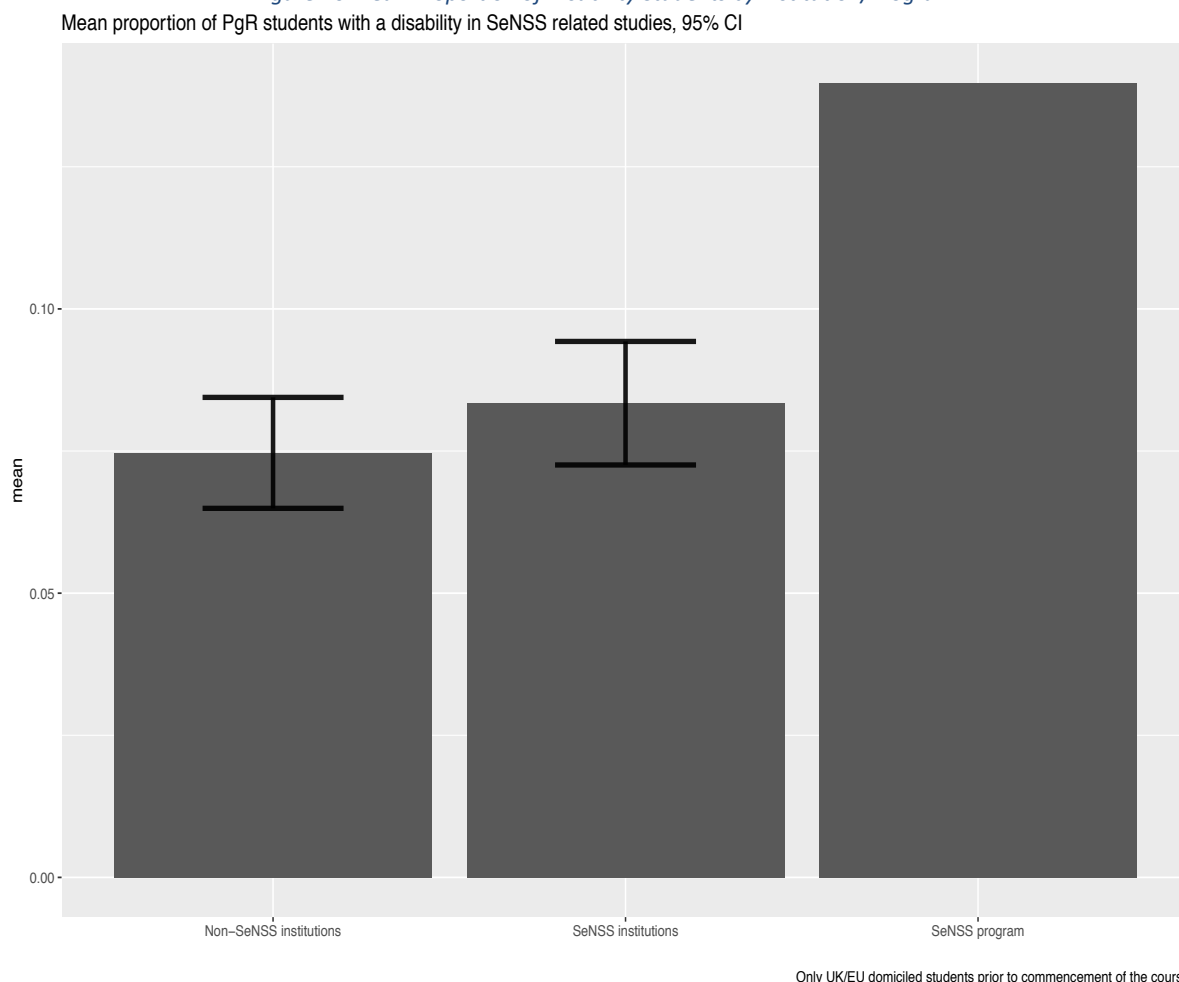
4.3   HESA Data

The HESA data allows us to compare WP characteristics by several important groups: level of study; institution of study; subject of study; whether or not the University is a SeNSS partner; and whether or not the subject of study is covered by the SeNSS Pathways. The figures below present the means and 95% confidence intervals for: various proportions within non-SeNSS institutions; the average of SeNSS partner institutions; and the individual Universities. The graphs are divided by levels of study and are a subset of subjects of study covered by the SeNSS Pathways. For t-tests estimating the statistical significance of the difference of means see the Appendix. The focus of this analysis will be on PgR students. Referring to the graphs below, we point out a series of findings.

4.3.1   Singular Characteristics

We first examine each characteristic on its own. The proportion of black, Asian, and other minority ethnic (BAME) groups in PgR is similar between non-SeNSS and SeNSS partner institutions (Figure 11). City University of London and Roehampton have the highest

proportion of BAME students in PgR, while UEA has the lowest, amongst SeNSS partner institutions.

Second, the proportion of female students in PgR is higher in SeNSS partners than in non-SeNSS institutions. Interestingly, Roehampton seems to be responsible for that difference, with close to 70% proportion of female students. All other SeNSS partner institutions female proportions are between to the 60% general mark and 50%, with the exception being Sussex's percentage which comes in just under 50% (Figure 12).

Third, in terms of low participation neighborhood students (using Polar4 Q1 and Q2), the proportion of SeNSS partner institutions is significantly lower than the non-SeNSS average (Figure 13). Some individual universities are very close to the 20% global average (Reading and Essex), while Kent and UEA have proportions closer to 30%. City University and Goldsmiths have the lowest proportion of LPN students, close to 5%.

Fourth, when it comes to students whose parents did not obtain a higher education degree, the proportion of SeNSS partner institutions is lower than the non-SeNSS average. All the individual SeNSS partner institutions have lower proportions, with Sussex the closest to the global average, and Goldsmiths the lowest average proportion (Figure 14). It should be noted that Roehampton has very wide confidence intervals, which is based on large changes across years.

Fifth, the proportion of students with a disability in SeNSS partner institutions is higher than the non-SeNSS average, but with overlapping confidence intervals, denoting variation across time (Figure 15). Goldsmiths has the highest proportion with an average mean close to 12%, while City and UoE have the lowest proportions, with average means close to 5%.

Finally, looking at the proportion of mature students (aged over 30) we should restrict the comparison to PgR students and take notice that these numbers are of total FPE registered students, not only admitted PgR students (Figure 16). There is wide variation in the proportion of mature students across universities, but it is difficult to know whether that reflects more mature students being admitted into PgR studies, or simply longer programs. SeNSS institutions have lower proportions of mature PgR students than non-SeNSS institutions, with Royal Holloway and UEA exhibiting the lowest percentages, and Goldsmiths and Roehampton the highest.

Figure 11 Mean Proportion of BAME Students in SeNSS-Related Studies

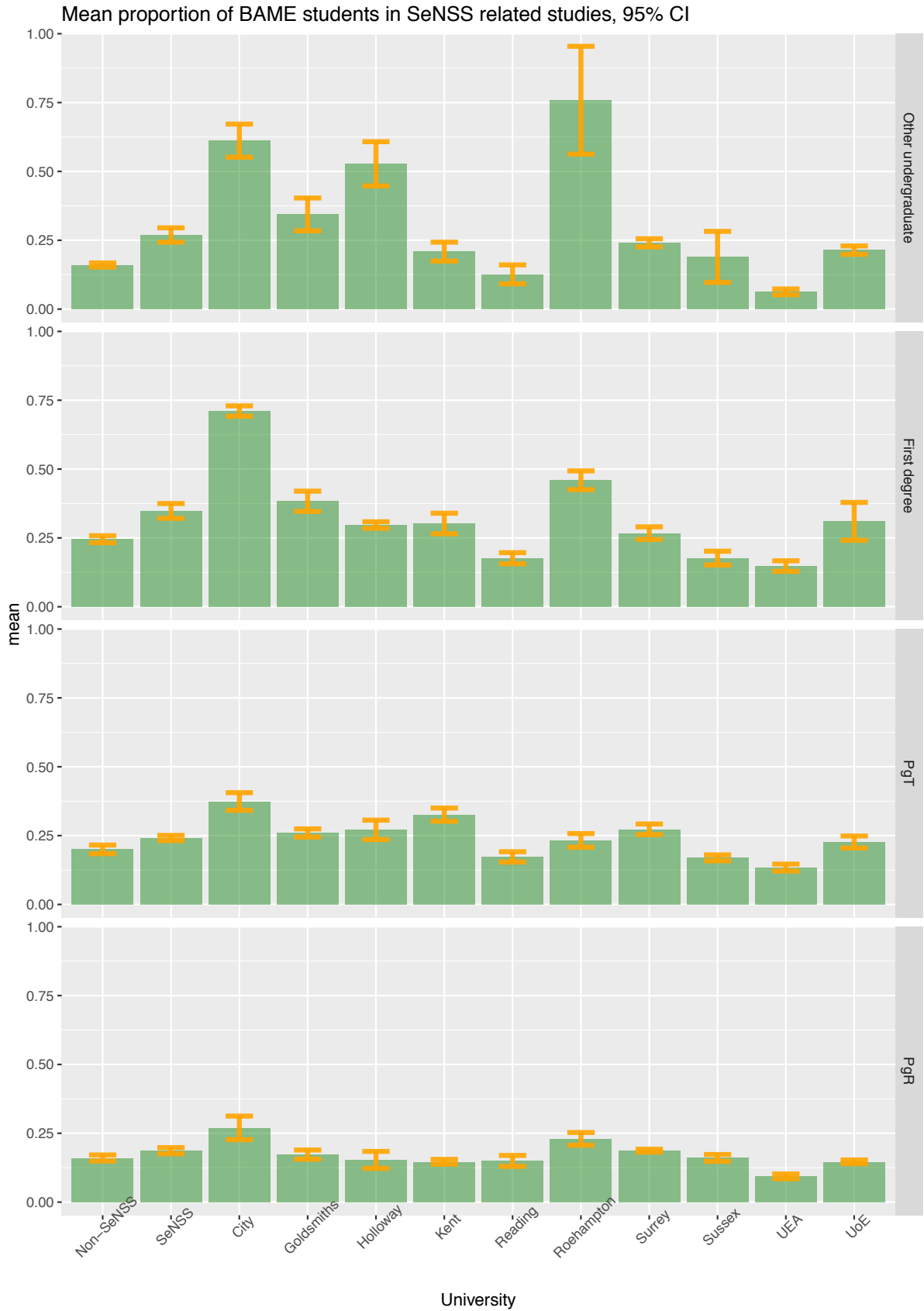Mean proportion of BAME students in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Figure 12 Mean Proportion of Female Students in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of Female students in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Figure 13 Mean Proportion of LPN Students in SeNSS-related Studies

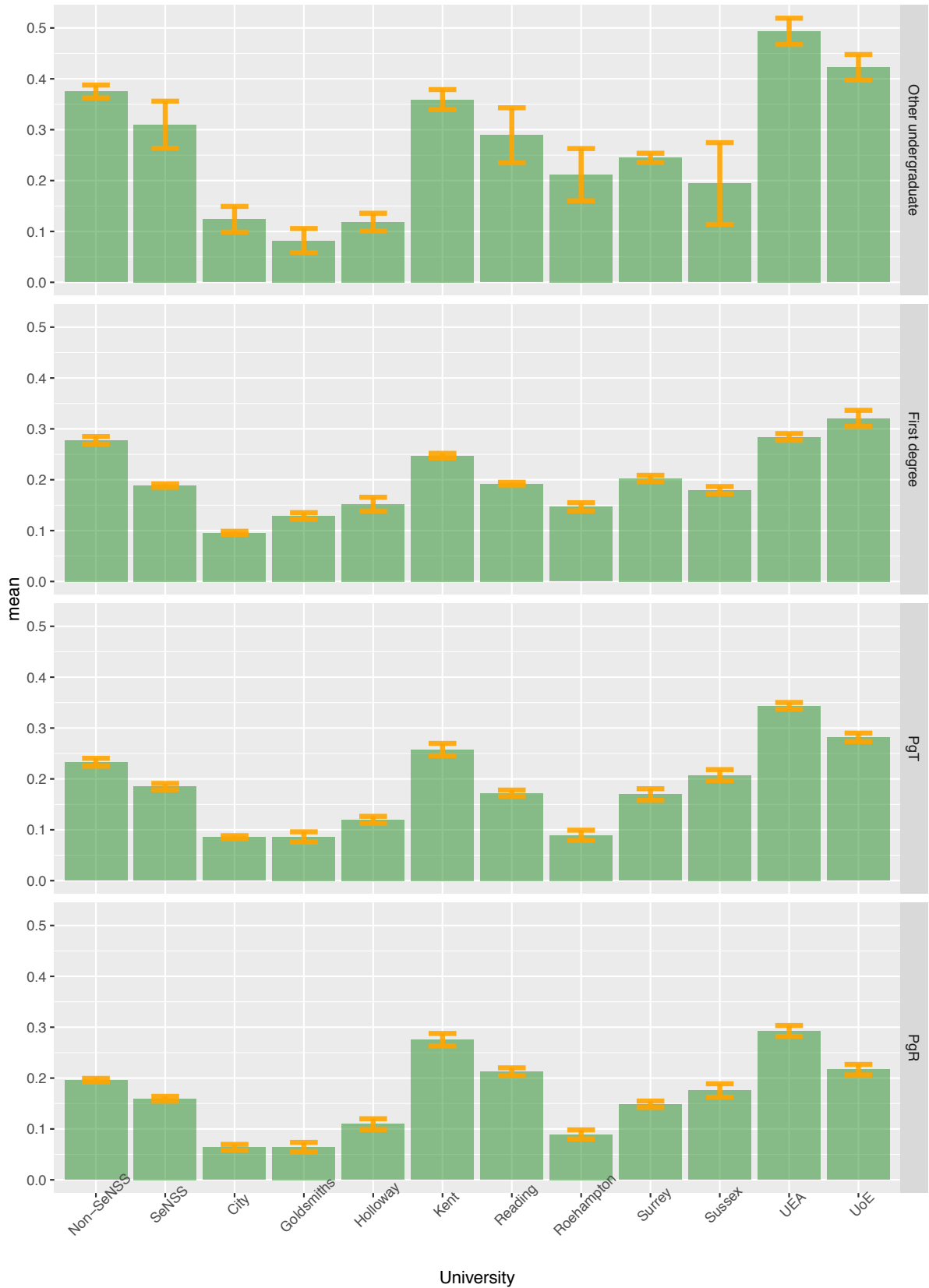Mean proportion of LPN students in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

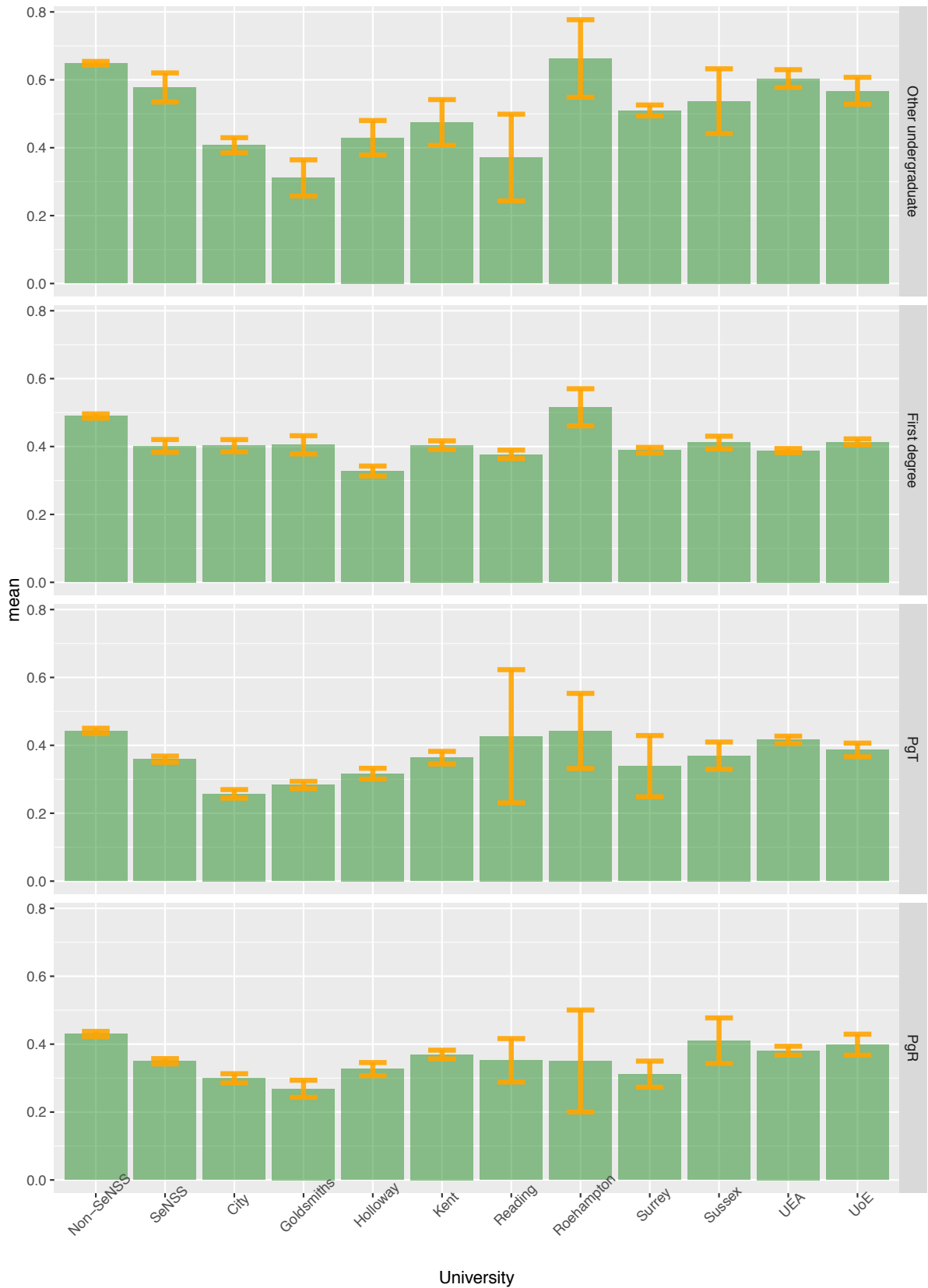Mean proportion of students whose parents have no HE in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Mean proportion of students with a disability in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
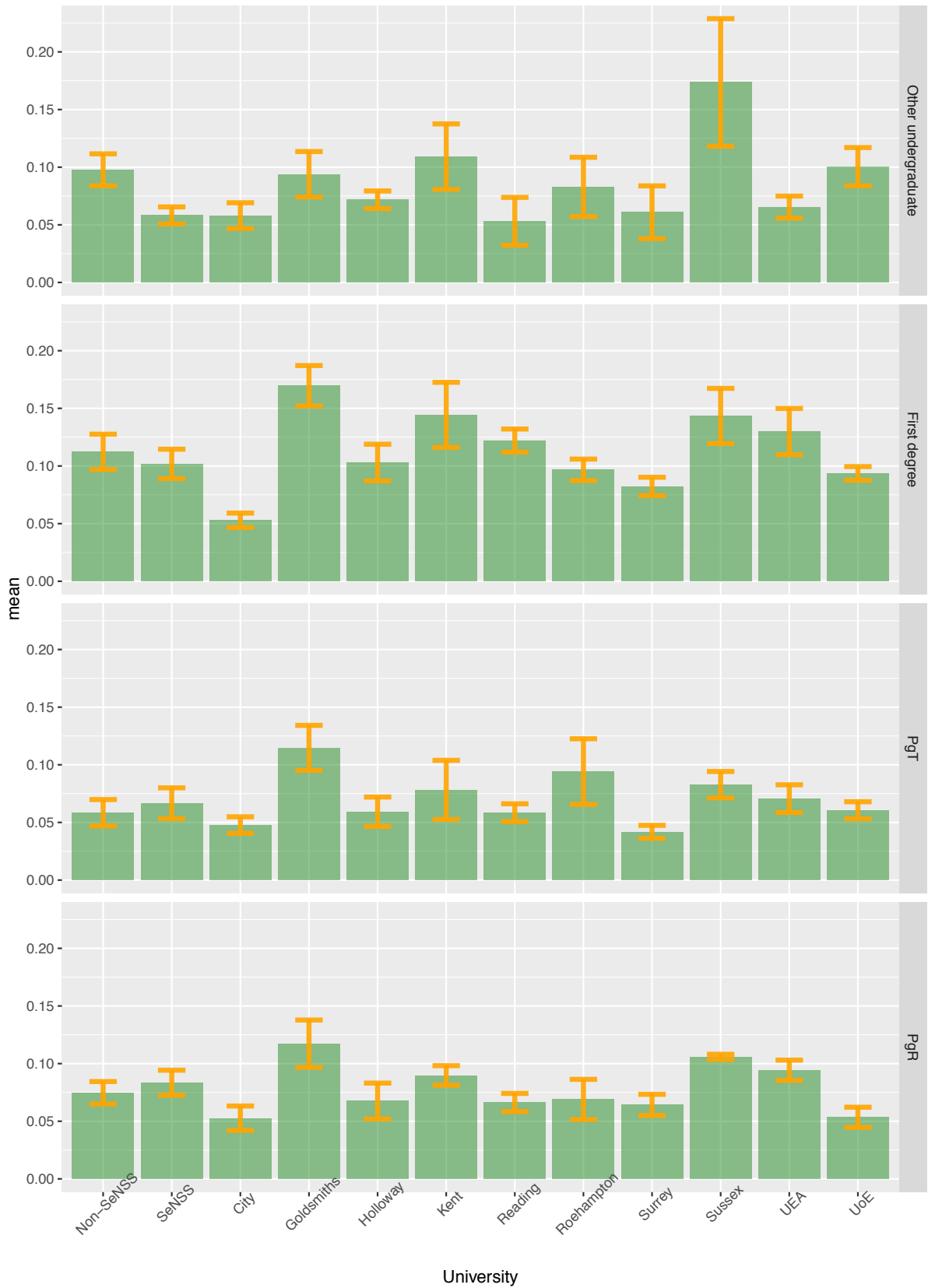
Figure 16 Mean Proportion of Mature Students in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of mature PgR students (over 30) in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
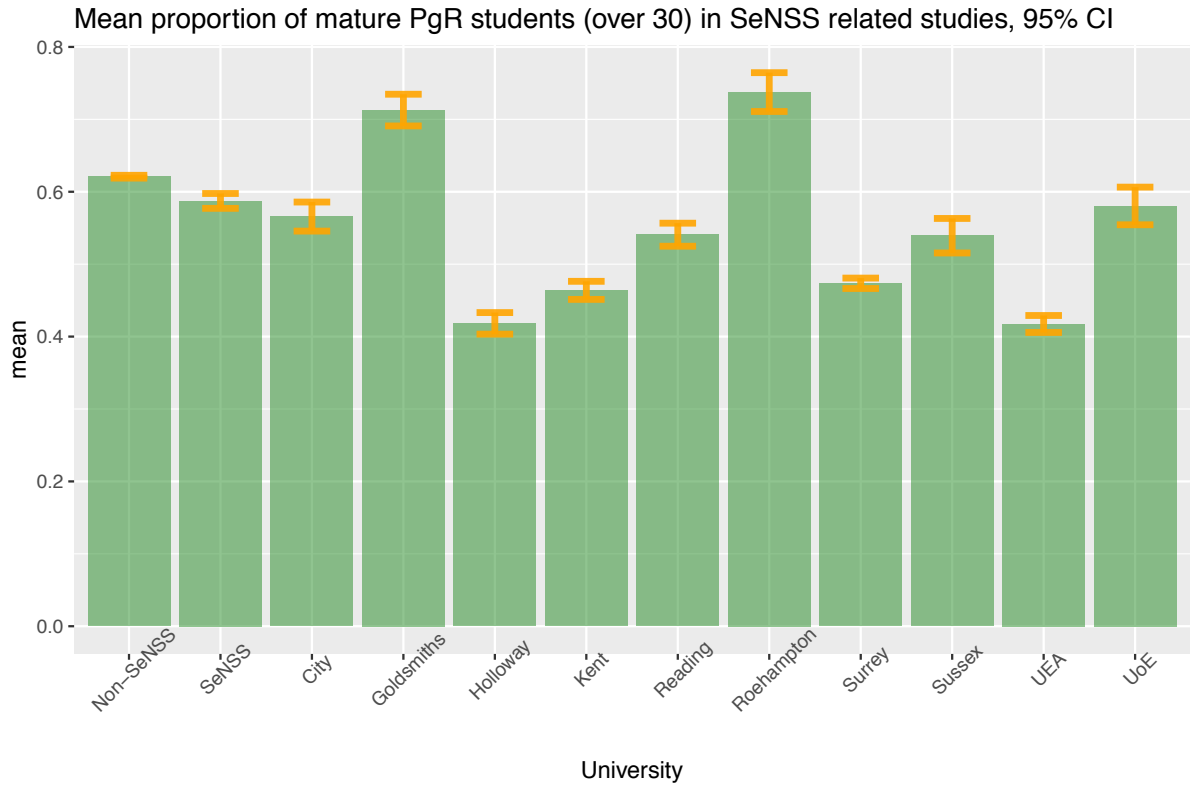
4.3.2 Intersected Characteristics

Intersectionality is the combination of two or more social identities into one social identity group (Shields 2008). Intersectionality scholarship argues that social categories are interdependent, and that race, class, and gender constitute each other and each other's effects on outcomes. We therefore examine intersections of WP and diversity characteristics.

In the graphs that follow, each bar represents the proportion of students that fit into a particular intersectional category. For example, in Figure 17, we see a graph of mature student proportions. The left-most bar shows that approximately 63% of LPN PgR students in non-SeNSS institutions are mature students. The second bar shows that just under 70% of non-LPN PgR students in non-SeNSS institutions are mature students. We can then compare the height of the bars of SeNSS institutions (aggregate or individually) to see how they compare to the average of non-SeNSS institutions.

In terms of LPN, the proportions of mature students in the non-SeNSS group differ slightly (Figure 17). In the SeNSS group, the proportion of mature students is higher for non-LPN, a trend that we find overall in most individual universities, except in particular at Roehampton, where both proportions are high. For City, Kent, Reading, and UEA, the proportions of mature students are similar between LPN groups.

POLAR4 classifications, which are used to determine LPN status, are assigned when students first enter into HE, and should reflect the neighborhood where they grew up[20]. Accordingly, graduate students keep their original POLAR4 classification, if they had one. Overseas students that enter into the UK HE system do not receive a POLAR4 classification if they applied from outside the UK. Yet students who grew up overseas but are now living in the UK can enter into graduate programs and receive a POLAR4 classification based on their current domicile. This phenomenon can potentially skew any analysis, but will be particularly significant for mature PgR students. Unfortunately, with HESA data there is no sure way to separate LPN status according to when in a student's life it was given. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

In contrast, if we examine the proportions of mature PgR students by parental HE, the differences flip. In both the Non-SeNSS and SeNSS groups, the proportion of mature PgR students is higher for the group of students whose parent do not have a higher education degree. This could mean that students whose parents without HE take longer to enter into PgR studies, or that they stay longer (

---

[20] See: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students#low-participation-neighbourhoods-polar4.

Figure 18).

Figure 17 Mean Proportion of Mature PgR Students by LPN in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of mature PgR students (over 30) by LPN in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
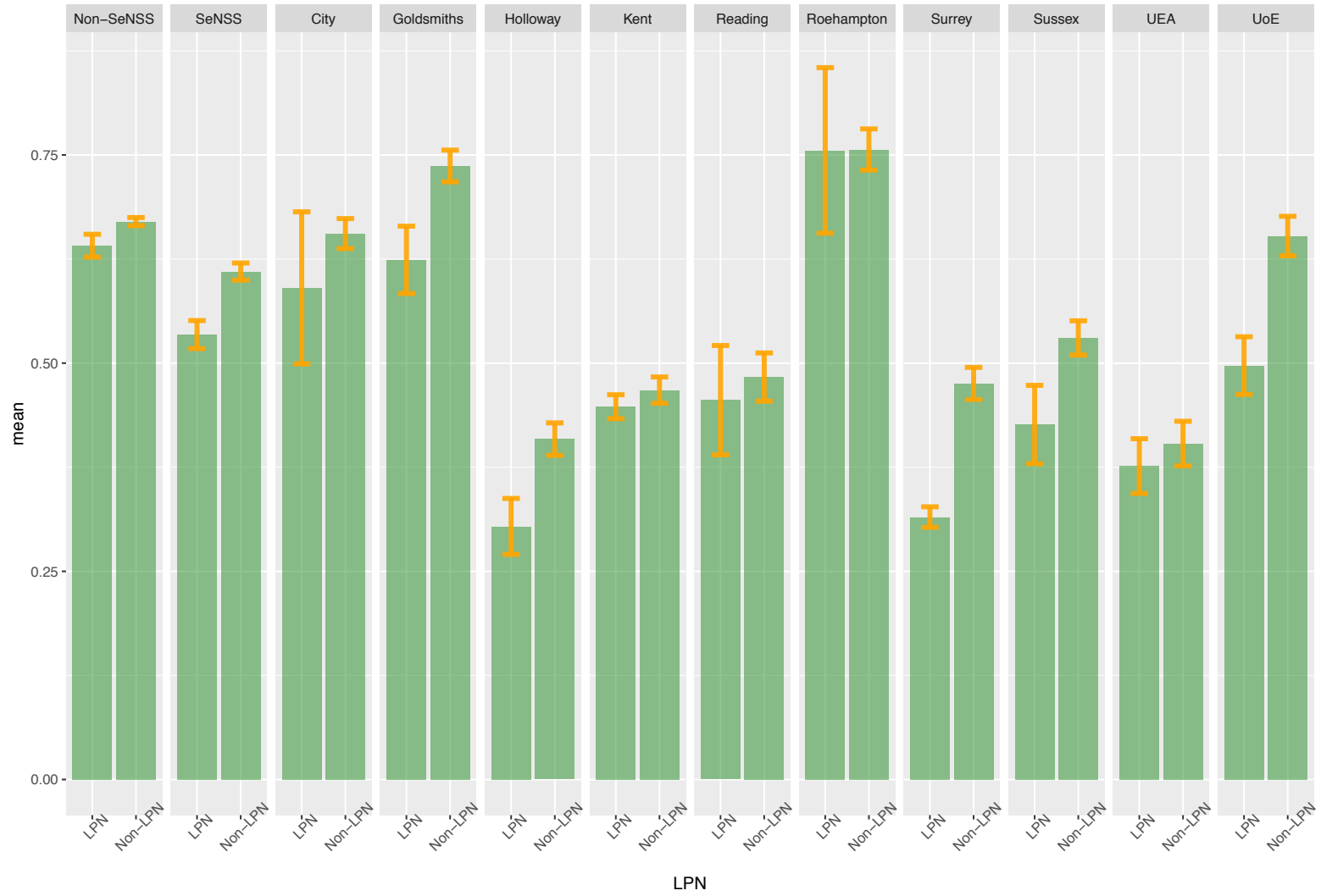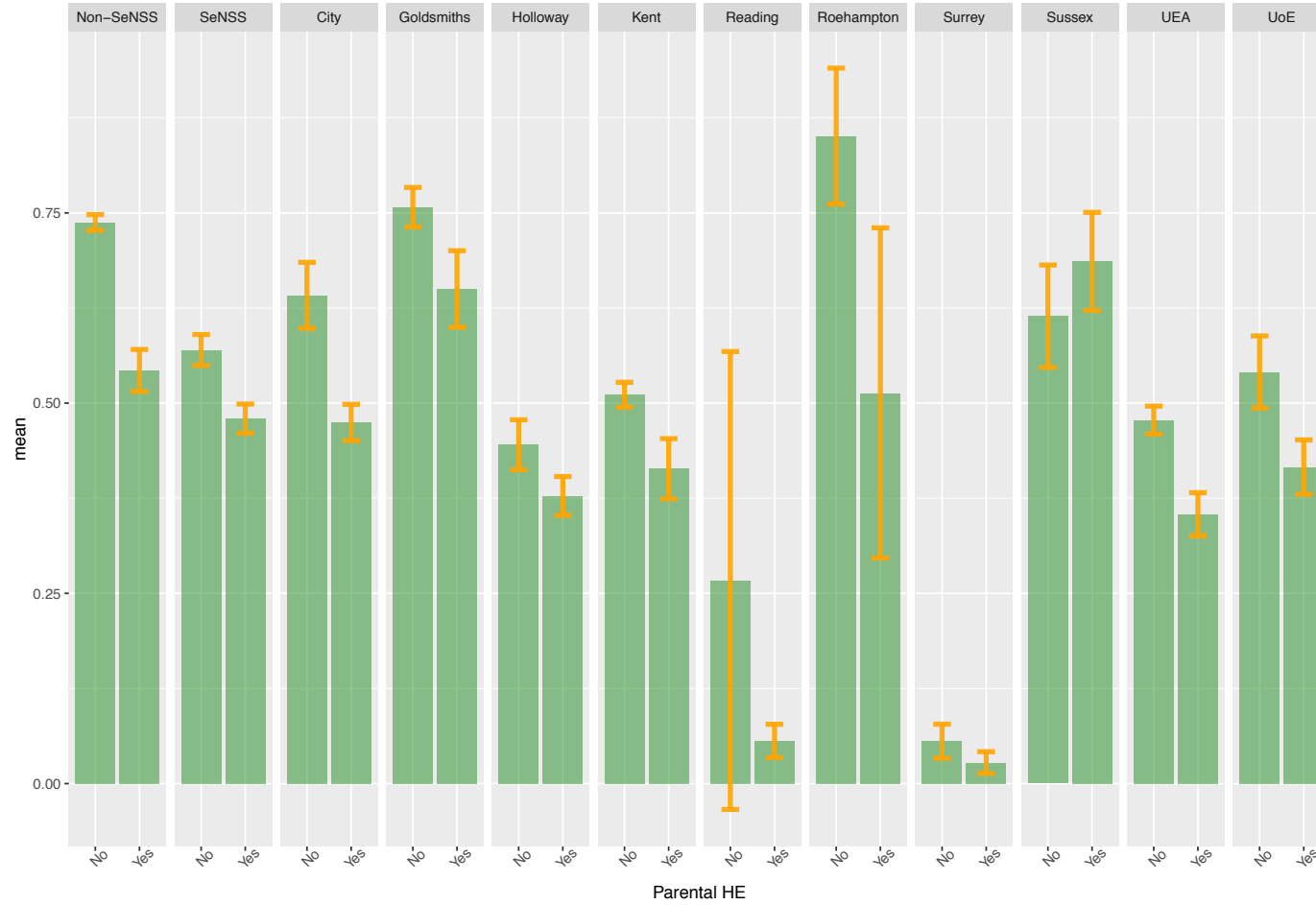
Figure 18 Mean Proportion of Mature PgR Students by Parental HE in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of mature PgR students (over 30) by parental HE in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

We can also have a closer look at race/ethnicity and participation. White males from LPNs have recently become a focus in WP circles. As Figure 19 shows, it is indeed the case that at the First degree level, the proportion of LPN students is statistically significantly lower for white males than for white females in both SeNSS and non-SeNSS institutions. Yet with BAME students, there is no significant difference across genders.

Considering PgR students, white male LPN students are under-represented in SeNSS institutions compared to non-SeNSS institutions, as are all female LPN students. Under-representation of these groups is most striking at City, Goldsmiths, Royal Holloway, Roehampton, and Surrey. These groups are over-represented at Kent and UEA.

Examining parental HE, there seems to be a flip in the proportions between the First degree level and PgR (Figure 20). While black females represent the highest proportion of students with no parental HE in First degrees, they are the smallest group in PgR. Conversely, white males are the smallest proportion of students with no parental HE in First degrees and the largest group in PgR. For Roehampton, 75% of white males in PgR have no parental HE.

We can further explore the proportion of mature PgR students by ethnicity and gender (Figure 21). The mean proportion of mature male students in the BAME group should be noted in both the Non-SeNSS and SeNSS institutions. Why this proportion is relatively higher in this particular group is not immediately clear, but the phenomenon is also distinctly present in the Roehampton, Surrey, and Essex. In contrast, the proportion of female BAME students who are mature is above average for Goldsmiths and Sussex.

Figure 19 Mean Proportion of LPN PgR Students by Ethnicity and Gender in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of LPN students by ethnic group and by gender in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
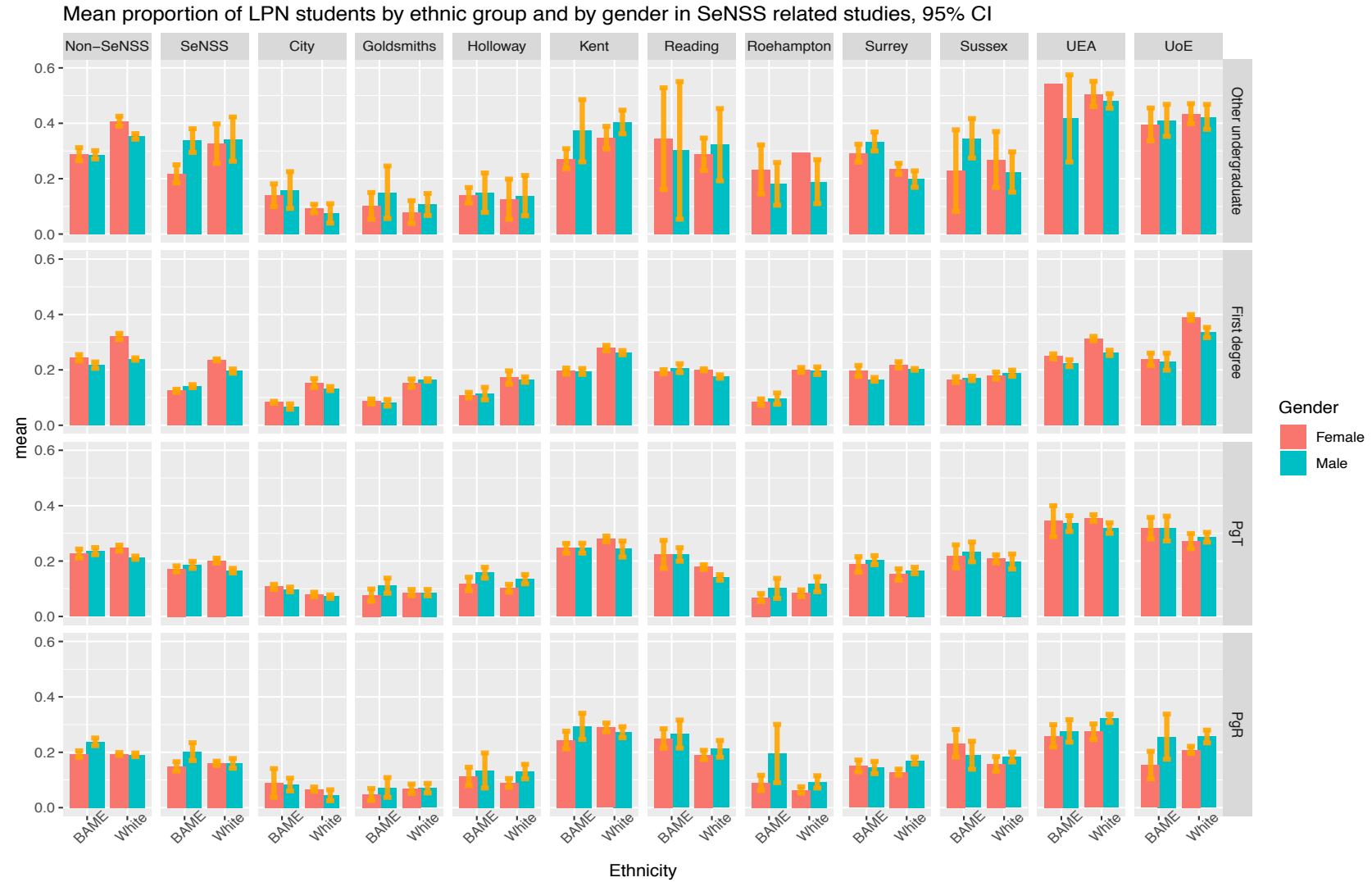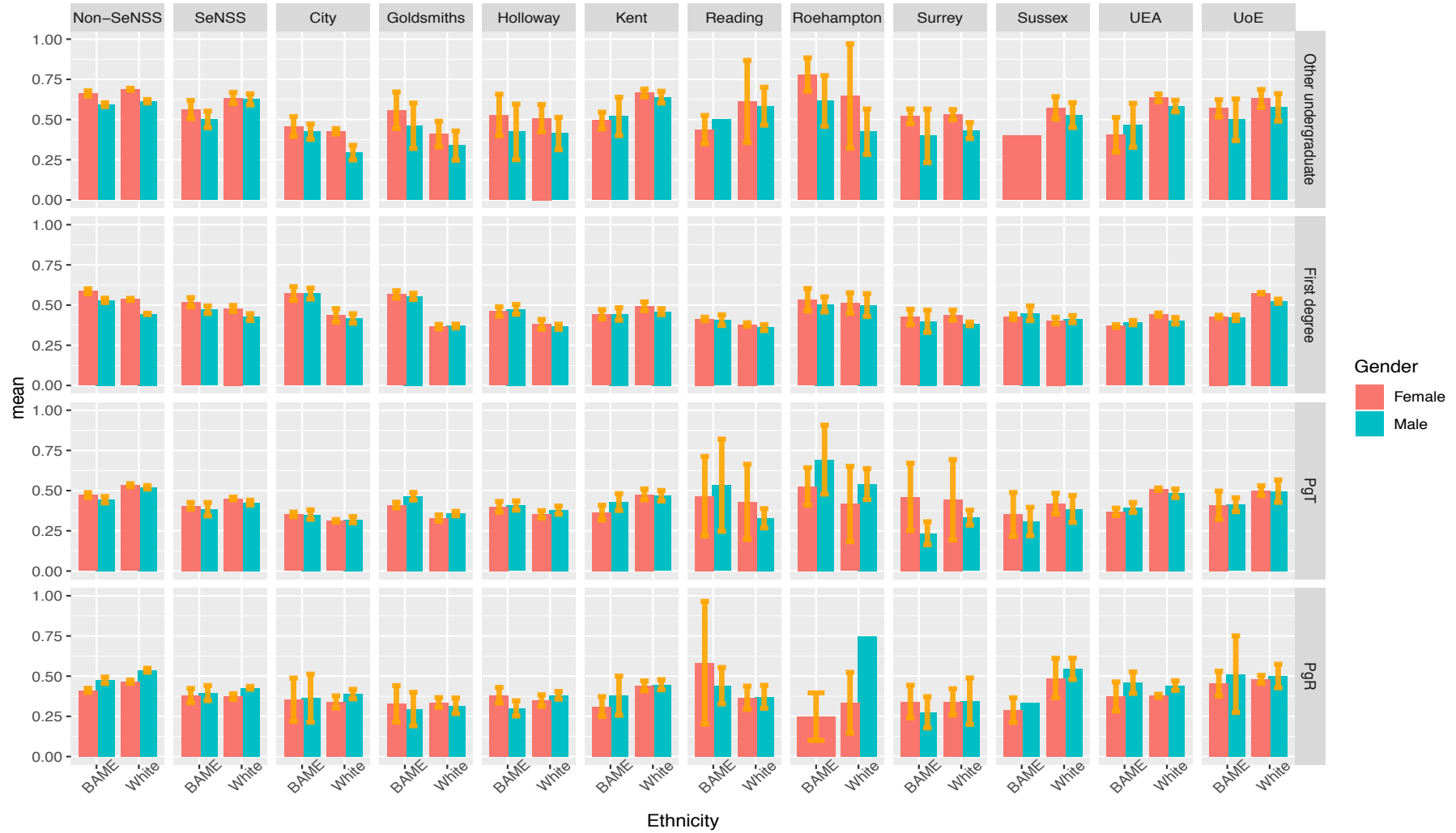
Note that CI's were excluded when they were below 0

Figure 20 Mean Proportion of PgR Students with no Parental HE by Ethnicity and Gender in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of students whose parent have no HE

by ethnic group and by gender in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI

Note that CI's were excluded when they were below 0 or above 1

Figure 21 Mean Proportion of Mature PgR Students by Ethnicity and Gender in SeNSS-related Studies

Mean proportion of mature PgR students (over 30) by ethnic group and by gender in SeNSS related studies, 95% CI
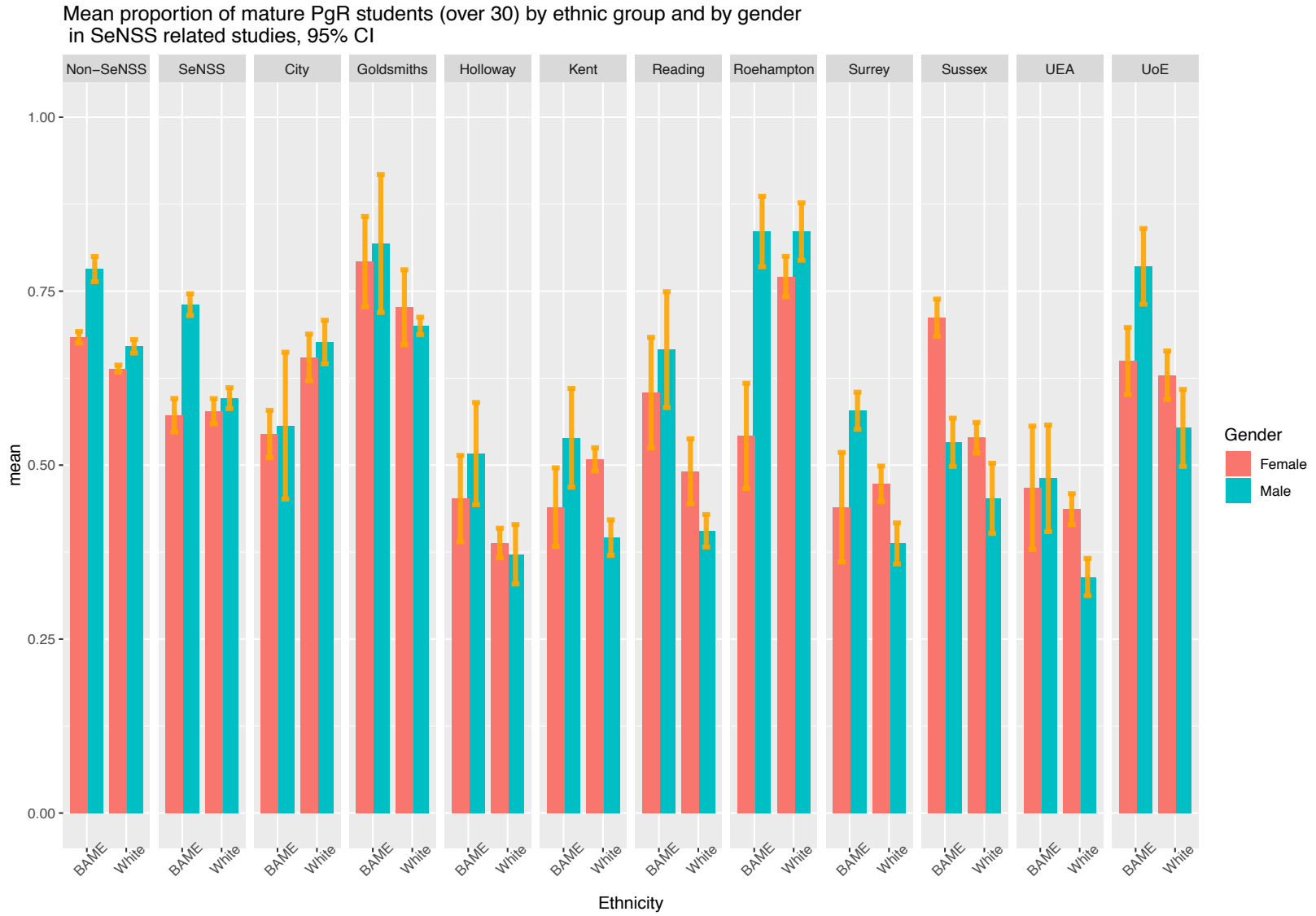
4.3.3 Source of Funding

The *source of funding* variable in the HESA data allows us to compare the WP characteristics of PgR students by their major source of funding. This information helps determine whether industry-funded studentships are more diverse, or enable wider participation, than other studentships.

Table 11 PgR Students Funded, by Source

Major source of funding	Number of students funded
EU sources	32
Joint sources	176
Other overseas sources	448
Other/not known	6851
Own institution	3699
Research councils	6021
Student funded	15379
UK central govt/local authorities	8693
UK charities/voluntary organisations	656
UK industry/commerce	296

Table 11 shows that UK industry/commerce funding supplies the third lowest number of studentships for the period of study, funding just 296 PgR students. We also note wide variation in the WP characteristics of PgR students by source of funding. In the presentation below, we focus on how the UK industry/commerce source of funding performs over the years in terms of WP and diversity. In each graph, a funding source is represented by a line of a certain colour. As time passes horizontally (from 2010 to 2018, moving left to right), a particular source's performance on a given characteristic moves up and down, indicating the proportion of its studentships that it gives to students fitting the category of that particular graph.

For example, consider Figure 22. "Other overseas sources" are most likely to give funding to BAME students, giving more than 80% in 2017-18. "Funding bodies" is the next most likely source, with "UK charities/voluntary organisations" joining it at approximately 18% of studentships going to BAME students in 2017-18. The pink line, representing "UK industry/commerce" as a funder, is the least likely to fund BAME students in 2014-15, 2016-17, and 2017-18.

For female students (Figure 23), the UK industry/commerce source of funding is again lower than most other sources, although there is steady increase over time and eventually ends up at 25% of studentships from this source going to females. By far the most likely source of funding for female PgR students is "UK central govt/local authorities", which gives more than 80% of their funding to females. Hovering around the 50% mark are "research councils", "funding bodies", and "other/not known".

Funders are more unified in their studentships for LPN students, most of which give 10%-25% to the group. "Own institution" funds the highest proportion of LPN students, whilst

"UK charities/voluntary organisations" gives the lowest. Industry/commerce hover around the lowest percentage, but end up giving approximately 17.5% to LPN students (Figure 24).

Looking at the proportion of mature students (Figure 25), there is dramatic increase between 2011 and 2013, making the UK industry/commerce source of funding one with the highest proportions since. By 2017-18, industry/commerce-funded studentships exhibit the highest percentage of mature student funding at just over 70%. This comes after a large increase between 2011-12 and 2012-13, when the proportion went from less than 40% to over 65%.

For students with no parental history of higher education (Figure 26), industry/commerce funding data does not exist; that is, there is no record of industry/commerce funding going to students whose parents have no history of higher education. In terms of proportion of students with a disability (Figure 27), UK industry/commerce had its highest percentage in 2014 at 10%, followed by a drop to less than 2.5% by 2017-18.

Figure 22 Proportion of BAME PgR Students by Funding Source

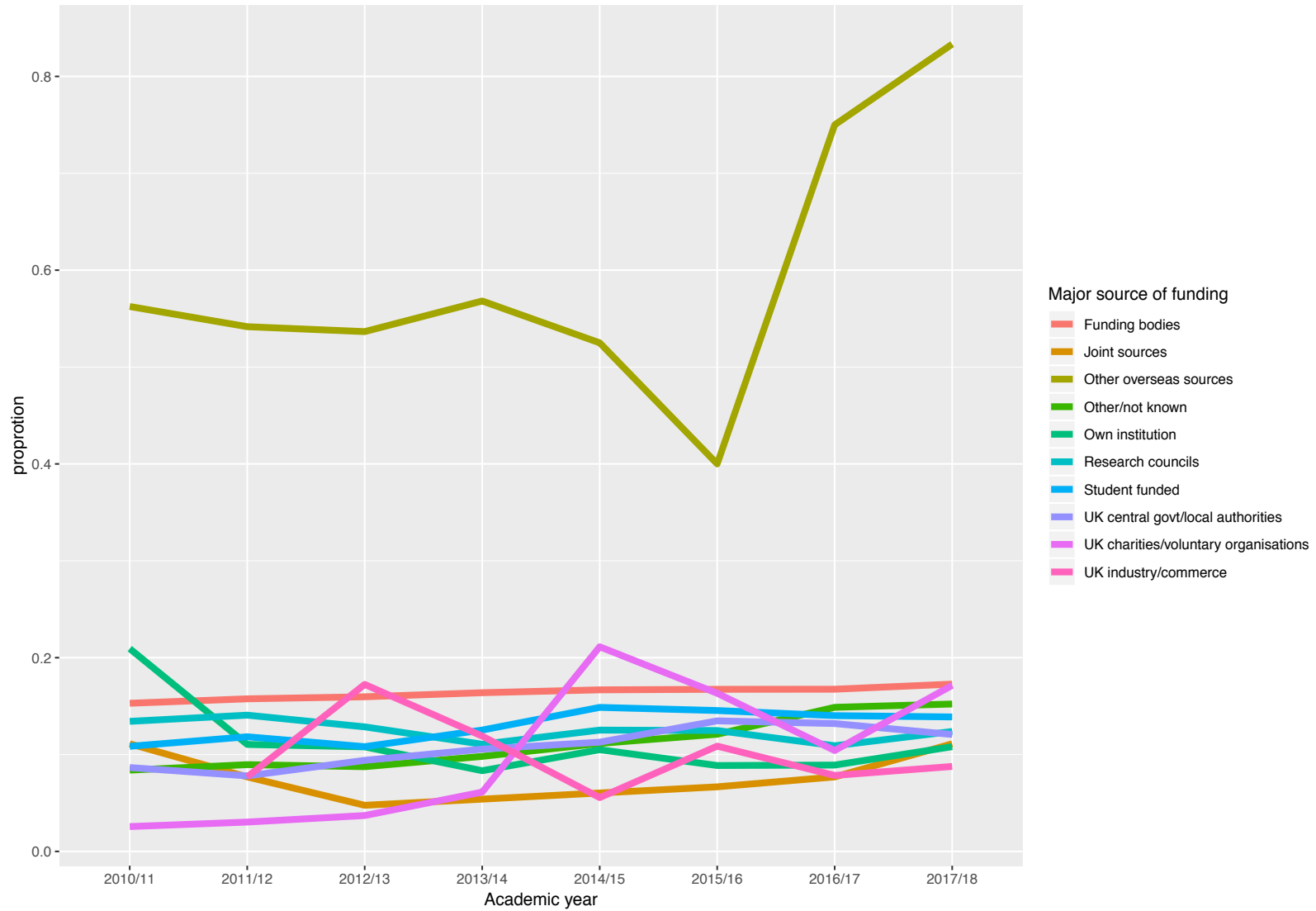Proportion of BAME PgR students by source of funding

Figure 23 Proportion of Female PgR Students by Funding Source

Proportion of Female PgR students by source of funding

Figure 24 Proportion of LPN PgR Students by Funding Source

Proportion of LPN PgR students by source of funding

Figure 25 Proportion of Mature PgR Students by Funding Source

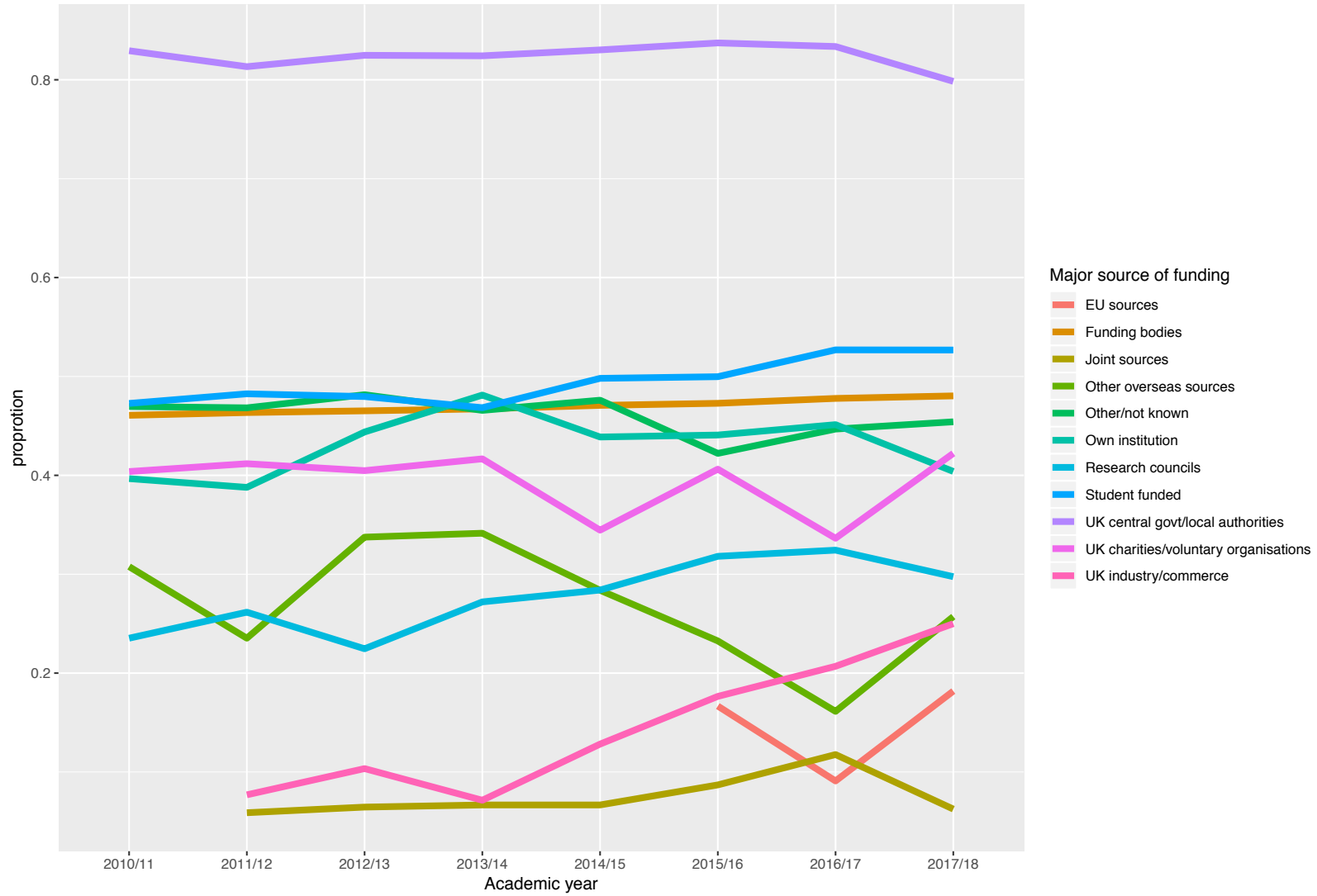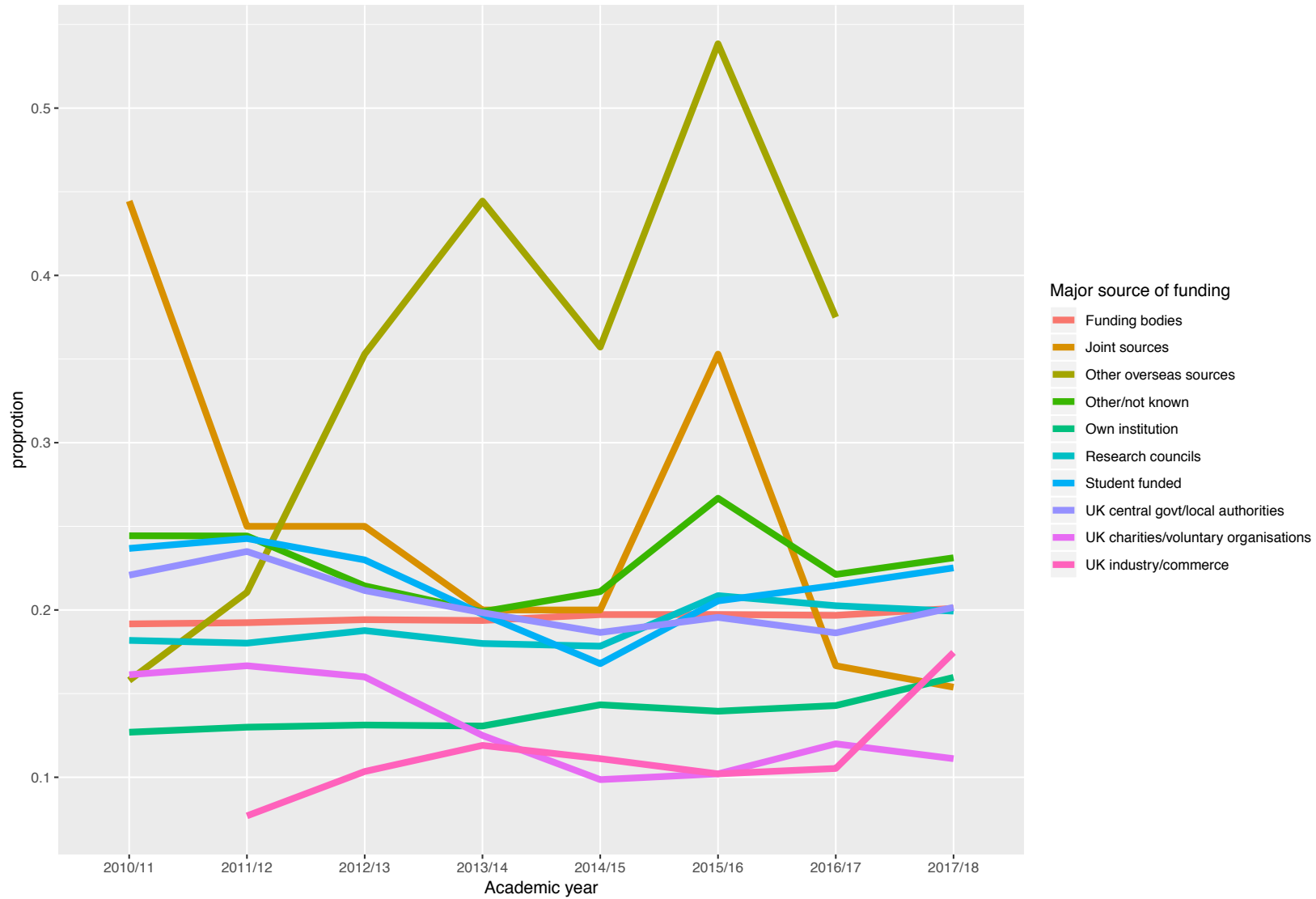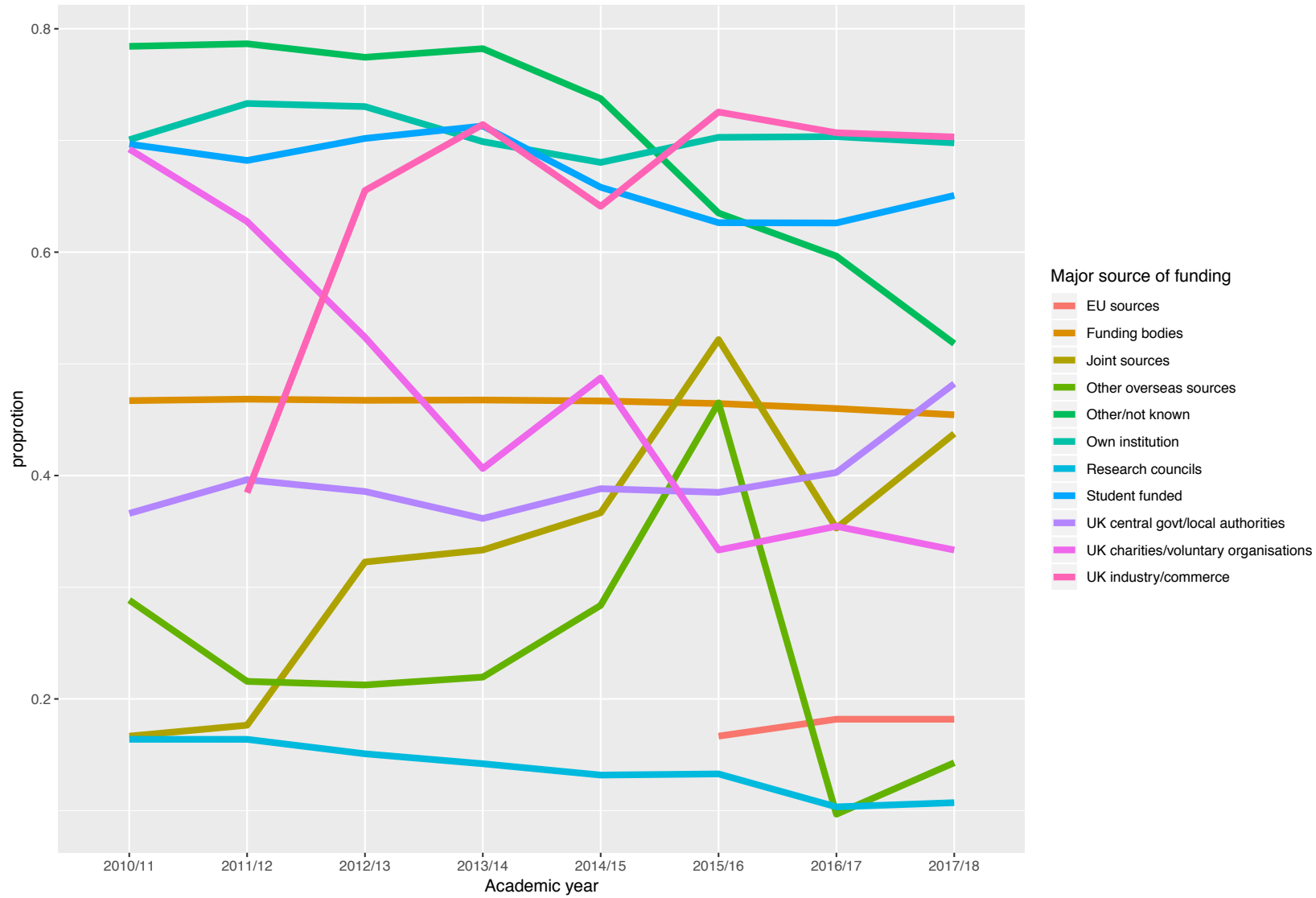Proportion of mature PgR students (over 30) by source of funding

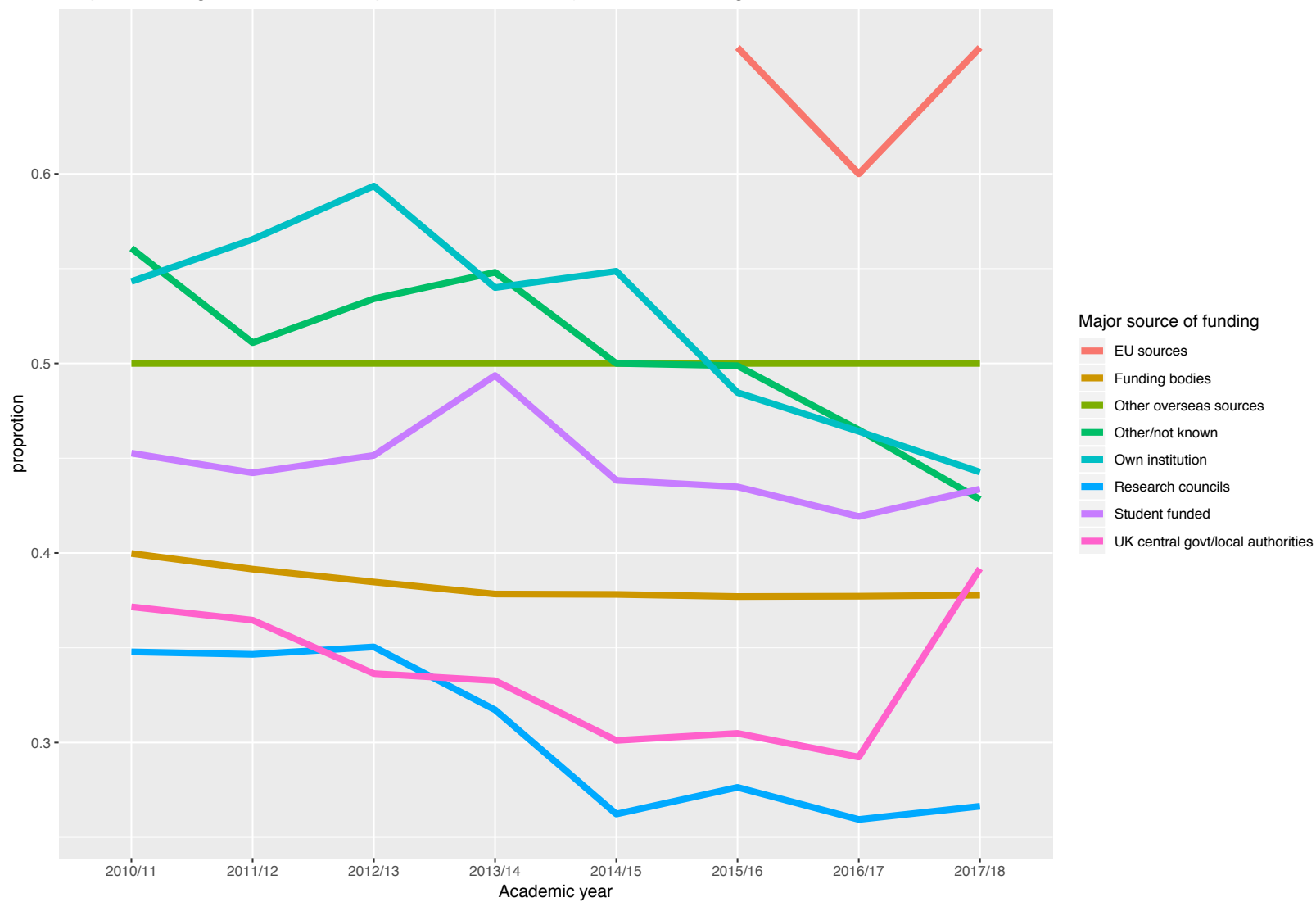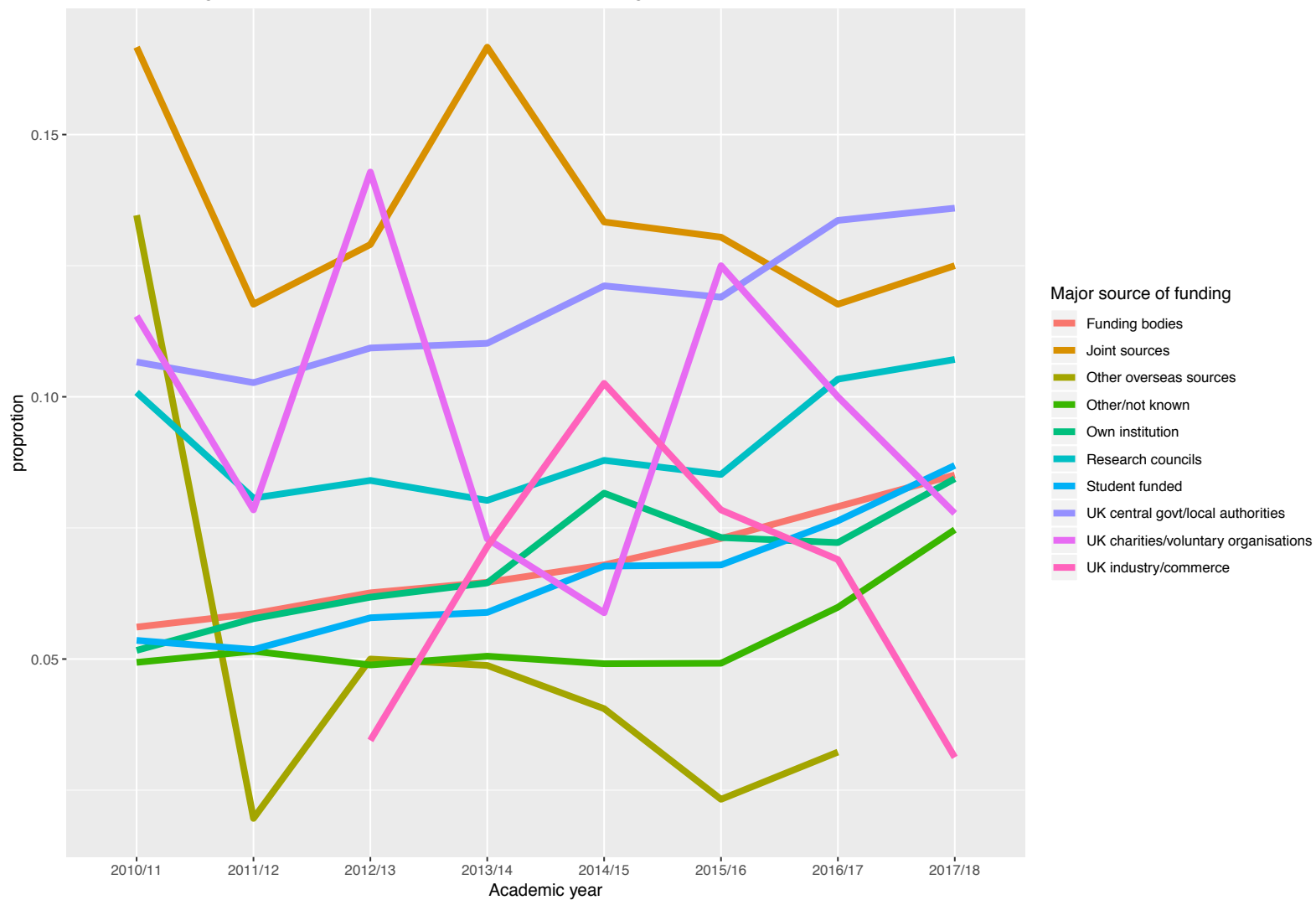Proportion of PgR students whose parents have no HE by source of funding

Figure 27 Proportion of Disability PgR Students by Funding Source

Proportion of PgR students with a disability by source of funding

4.4 Data Shared by SeNSS Member Institutions

Aggregate data about UG and PG students was requested from each of the 10 SeNSS member institutions. As stated above, this data was requested prior to the decision to purchase data from HESA. As the HESA data covers all that was requested from member institutions, we therefore do not use this member-provided data to generate the analysis above.

We do, however, use this data to describe the availability and accessibility of WP-relevant data at each member institution. We offer here the details of the variables that were provided and the time frame in which the data was provided. We suggest that those institutions with the most complete data have the most *available* information in that they allow analysis on the greatest number of variables sought. We further suggest that the members to deliver their data in the timeliest fashion have the most *accessible* information in that it did not take a long time to generate or produce. And finally, we note that members who were unable to provide any data have the least accessible and/or available information. Table 12 compares the member institutions to each other and assigns each a rudimentary value of "low, medium, high" based on these broad categorisations.

Table 12 Comparing Member Institutions According to Information/Data Provided upon Request

Institution	Groups	Subgroups[21]	Time Frame	Availability	Accessibility
City, University of London	Not received	Not received	Not received	Low	Low
University of East Anglia (UEA)	Parental Higher Education POLAR4 Quintile Religion Bursary Age Gender Disability Domicile Ethnicity Fee status Mode of study	Academic year Level Faculty Department	Delivered on 14/06/2019	High	Medium
University of Essex	Not received	Not received	Not received	Low	Low
Goldsmiths, University of London	Not received	Not received	Not received	Low	Low
University of Kent	Not received	Not received	Not received	Low	Low
University of Reading	Religion Age Gender Disability Domicile Ethnicity Fee status Mode of study	Academic year Level	Delivered on 09/05/2019	Medium	High
University of Roehampton, London	Parental Higher Education LPN Religion Sexual orientation Age (DOB) Gender	Academic year Level Faculty Department	Delivered on 03/05/2019	High	High

---

[21] Groups are the main attributes collected and reported by the University. Each group is then broken down according to sub-groups. For example, UEA reported headcounts for each element of the POLAR4 Quintile, and those headcounts were sub-divided according to academic year, level of study, faculty, and department.

	Disability Domicile Ethnicity Fee status Mode of study				
Royal Holloway, University of London	Not received	Not received	Not received	Low	Low
University of Surrey	LPN Age Gender Disability Domicile Ethnicity Fee status Mode of study	Academic year Level Faculty Department	30/05/2019	Medium	Medium
University of Sussex	Age Gender Disability Domicile Ethnicity Mode of study	Academic year Faculty Department	02/05/2019	Medium	High

4.5   Recommendations

Based on the foregoing information, we recommend the following:

4.5.1   Collect and Maintain Socio-Economic Indicators

Socio-economic background is a key feature of Widening Participation. For the three existing cohorts, we recommend gathering and cataloguing information on POLAR classifications of students' home neighbourhoods, FSM recipient, and household income. For new cohorts, we recommend collecting this data as soon as possible in the application/admissions process.

This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 2.5.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for socio-economic background:

- POLAR qualifications of:
    - Applicant's current home.
    - Home where applicant lived prior to beginning HE.[22]
- Parents' HE experience and/or degrees at point when student is applying for PG studies.
- Whether students' received free school meals at any time in their lives prior to applying for a postgraduate research degree.

4.5.2   Collect and Maintain Disability Indicators

Disability is a key feature of Widening Participation. For the three existing cohorts, we recommend gathering and cataloguing information on disability. For new cohorts, we recommend collecting this data as soon as possible in the application/admissions process.

---

[22] We recommend that both household backgrounds be included as we do not know the influence of either on a mature student's PG path.

This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 1.4.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. We recommend the following for disability:

- Whether the student has a declared disability.
- Whether the student receives, or has received, Disability Student Allowance.
- Whether the student has ever invoked the "two tick" policy in job application.

4.5.3 Collect and Maintain Race/Ethnicity Indicators

Race is a key feature of Widening Participation. We recommend continuing data collection on race and ethnicity for all cohorts moving forward. This data collection should be preceded by a discussion among the SeNSS member institutions as to how widening participation is best defined in the postgraduate context (see recommendation 1.4.1). Members will need to agree which measures of these criteria will be acceptable for the partnership. For race/ethnicity, we recommend that SeNSS member institutions unify on either BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) or BME (Black, Minority Ethnic). We also recommend that *minority ethnic* be clarified (see recommendation 3.4.1).

4.5.4 Collect and Maintain Data More Rigorously

To facilitate continued analysis and help set new WP targets, we recommend that SeNSS collect and maintain its data more rigorously. By this, we mean the data should be maintained in a secure database with coding documentation available to new administrators. Data should be input directly by administrators according to the coding system, so as to make analysis easier moving forward.

Future recommendation: Create online system whereby applicants may submit their own information securely when applying.

5   References

Armstrong, Catherine. 2008. 'What You Need to Know About Widening Participation'.
        Jobs.Ac.Uk. June 2008. http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/working-in-higher-
        education/1146/what-you-need-to-know-about-widening-participation.

Burke, R.J. and Mattis, M.C. eds., 2007. Women and minorities in science, technology,
        engineering, and mathematics: Upping the numbers. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Connell-Smith, Anna, and Sue Hubble. 2018. 'Widening Participation Strategy in Higher
        Education in England'. House of Commons Library.

Foran, T., Fleming, D., Spandonide, B., Williams, R. and Race, D., 2016. Understanding
        energy-related regimes: A participatory approach from central Australia. Energy
        policy, 91, pp.315-324. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2016.01.014.

ESRC. https://esrc.ukri.org/files/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/postgraduate-training-
        and-development-guidelines-2015/. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

Hardoy, J., Gencer, E. and Winograd, M., 2019. Participatory planning for climate resilient
        and inclusive urban development in Dosquebradas, Santa Ana and Santa Tomé.
        Environment and Urbanization. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247819825539

HEFCE. https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/25778/1/HEFCE2016_07.pdf. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

HEPI. https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/FINAL-WEB_HEPI-Widening-
        Participation-Report-98.pdf. Last accessed 20-June-2019.

Human, Linda. 2005. 'Diversity Management for Business Success'. Text. 1 September 2005.
        https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search/article?option2=author&value2=Human%
        2c+Linda&pageSize=10&index=2#Refs.

Jones, Dr Robert. 2008. 'New to Widening Participation? An Overview of Research', 23.

Kettley, Nigel. 2007. 'The Past, Present and Future of Widening Participation Research'.
        British Journal of Sociology of Education 28 (3): 333–47.

McVitty, Debbie. 2012. 'Widening Participation for Postgraduates?' *Wonkhe* (blog). 23
        February 2012. https://wonkhe.com/blogs/widening-participation-for-
        postgraduates/.

Participation, Expert. n.d. 'Equality Act 2010'. Text. Accessed 31 May 2019.
        https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

Rowe-Wiseman, R., and Standen, A. 2019. Enhancing Postgraduate Research Cultures: Co-
        Creation in Professional Development and Educational Change Programmes. To be
        presented at the UKCGE Annual Conference on Enhancing Postgraduate Research
        Cultures. http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/events/ac19-programmeandabstracts.aspx. Last
        accessed 30 June 2019.

'SeNSS Doctoral Training Partnership'. n.d. SeNSS Doctoral Training Partnership. Accessed
        31 May 2019. https://senss-dtp.ac.uk/about-senss.

Students, Office for. 2018. 'POLAR – Participation of Local Areas - Office for Students'. 14
        March 2018. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/polar-
        participation-of-local-areas/.

Students, Office for. 2018. The effect of postgraduate loans.
        https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/the-effect-of-postgraduate-
        loans/. Last accessed 29 June 2019.

Tsui, L., 2007. Effective strategies to increase diversity in STEM fields: A review of the research literature. The Journal of Negro Education, pp.555-581.

UK Council for Graduate Education. New research shows inequalities in progression to postgraduate study in the UK. http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/article/new-research-shows-inequalities-in-progression-to-postgraduate-study-in-the-uk-107.aspx. Last accessed 29 June 2019.

UK Council for Graduate Education. Q&A on Widening Participation with Professor Paul Wakeling. http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/article/widening-participation-qa-paul-wakeling-416.aspx. Last accessed 29 June 2019Yiabo Osho, Yaz. 2018. 'More than Just Widening Participation | Higher Education Academy'. 2018. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/blog/more-just-widening-participation.

UN Habitat. 2015. Particpatory Slum Upgrading. https://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/participatory-slum-upgrading/. Last accessed 30 June 2019.

Vignoles, Anna. 2008. 'Wider Participation in Higher Education: A Quantitative Analysis'.

Wakeling, Paul. 2016. 'Measuring Doctoral Student Diversity Socio-Economic Background', December, 29.

Wakeling, P. and Hampden-Thompson, G., 2013. Transition to Higher Degrees across the UK: An Analysis of National, Institutional and Individual Differences. HEA Research Series. Higher Education Academy.

Wakeling, P., & Kyriacou, C. (2010). Widening participation from undergraduate to postgraduate research degrees: A research synthesis. York, UK: Economic and Social Research Council.

6   Appendix

Table A 1 SeNSS Member Institutions' Performance, Targets, and Strategies

Institution	Group	Performance	Target	Strategy
City University of London	Mature Students	20%	*Not given.*	• Combine data on low participation rates, levels of deprivation, low attainment levels and application and entry rates to City along with geographical focus on local schools. • Mature students, those with caring responsibilities, and disabled students, those with mental health issues, and care experienced students will be high priority target groups for outreach work. • School sponsorship • Work to raise attainment • Work with specific student groups • Work collaboratively across the sector • Invest in access and alignment with Student Opportunity Allocation
	LP background	12%	*Not given.*	
	Declared disability	9%	*Not given.*	
	BAME		Maintain level of recruitment of students from BME backgrounds	
	State school & low socio-economic status	67%	Maintain participation rate above location-adjusted base mark and baseline	
Goldsmiths College (London)	Mature Students	24.2%	*Not given.*	• Continue development of a whole-lifecycle approach to the attraction and support of students from non-traditional backgrounds • Continue to ensure that we attract students from state school, BAME backgrounds, those with disabilities and from low participation neighbourhoods as a great proportion • Continue to deliver a wide variety of short and long-term outreach projects, from learners from primary age through to mature students. • Continue to target work to increase number of students with disabilities on ITT programme, recruit mature students returning to study, including those who are seeking to change careers, improve the diversity of the student population in relation to the gender balance on particular course, e.g. men into primary. • Join the HEAT membership service which assists HE institutions in England to target and monitor and evaluate their outreach activity. • Understand barriers to mature learners and deliver interventions • Continue to provide services that work and deliver cross-institutional projects in partnership with students to better understand sub-optimal performance
	LPA	5%	*Not given.*	
	DSA (Disability in ITT program)	7.9% (11%)	*Not given.*	
	BAME	40.6%	*Not given.*	
	State school, college	92%	*Not given.*	

	General under-represented groups	*Not given.*	*Not given.*	• Constantly seek new ways to engage with students using new techniques and deliver activities that work for them at the time they are needed (e.g. e-technologies) • Goldsmiths and its Students Union are delivering a project seeking to understand and tackle the BAME attainment gap. It can shape the delivery of work in supporting academic skills development, developing library collections and resources, peer support and mentoring/support to specific groups.
Royal Holloway	Mature Students	*Not given.*	Decrease the non-continuation rates amongst mature students from 18.4% to below 11%	• Support students from underrepresented backgrounds to gain access to HE by raising aspirations and attainment. • Continue development of inclusive practice interventions that aim to reduce gaps in the non-continuation and attainment between different student groups with focus on Mature students and BAME • Continue to support all students into graduate employment or further study, with particular focus on LPN and Mature students • Work with Vice-president of welfare & diversity and vice-president of education to develop APP • Equality and Diversity officers working with all relevant stakeholders • Investigate the reasons for any drop below the baseline for underrepresented groups during the admissions cycle, and take actions to improve these
	LPA	*Not given.*	Increase proportion of LPA entrants from 6% - 7.8%	
	DSA (Disability in ITT program)	*Not given.*	*Not given.*	
	BAME	*Not given.*	Increase the percentage of BAME students achieving a good honours degree from 72.1% to 82%	
	State school, college	*Not given.*	Increase the number of state school entrants from 85.4% to 88%	
	Meeting any WP criteria	9.9%	Ensure that the percentage of widening participation students progressing into graduate level employment remains above 74%	
University of East Anglia	Mature Students	Good performance	*Not given.*	• Expand our Schools Partnership Scheme with top 20 priority outreach schools offering a range of additional services and support, including a dedicated current UEA student working in each school one day per week • More strongly emphasise expanding the reach of our activity through follow up events and "wrap around" activities for core initiatives – the multiplier effect • Build a teacher network to steer our activity and initiatives with schools • Develop methods to increase longitudinal impact through follow up activity,
	LPN	Good performance	Focus for non-continuation, white males for good honours and intake	
	Declared disability	Good performance	Focus for intake, good honours, graduate prospects	

	BME	Good performance	Focus for non-continuation, good honours	action plan reviews and reunion events to review progress • Further shift our focus towards ongoing, progressive programmes of activity with multiple engagement with each pupil
	State school, college	Good performance	*Not given.*	

University of Essex	Declared disability	Increased by 31% from 2013-2018	*Not given.*	• Lifecycle approach to access and participation, starting with primary school outreach, through to progression into employment and further study.
				• Existing relationships with a number of schools and colleges, local education providers, education trusts and networks.
				• Forge and maintain strong relationships with other HE institution in the region, seeking to ensure school, college and university resources are targeted appropriately and not doubled
				• Identify schools and colleges that is believed will benefit most from outreach activity developed by us using various indicators including school attainment, free school meals data, POLAR3 data, and pupil premium data.
				• Work to ensure an appropriate representation of students from under-represented groups take part in activities, and provide the facility for students and schools to benefit from peer support.
				• Develop V16 Project enabling five local sixth forms to teach A level subjects on campus to over 300 students aged 16-19.
				• Work with local authorities to deliver collaborative outreach projects, including ECC, SBC, CBC, TDC.
				• Work with Student Union to support outreach and access, e.g. through volunteering schemes and local school engagement.
				• Lead institution for *Make Happen*, the Essex National Collaborative Outreach Programme consortia.
				• Collaborative work between the Make Happen team and the Outreach Team at the University
				• Continuous improvement through evaluation
				• Will spend 19% of HE fee income, as defined by OfS, on:
				  • Access
				  • Student Success
				  • Progression
				  • Financial Support
				(*The expenditure reflects the proportion of students from under-represented groups in a research-led university and its targeted evidence-based approach*)

	BAME	More likely to continue in HE than UK-domiciled white students; Ethnicity gap (based on proportion of good degrees received) lowered from 19.6% to 11.8%	*Not given.*	
	State school, college	*Not given.*	*Not given.*	
	Ethnicity gap (based on proportion of good degrees received)	Lowered from 19.6% to 11.8%	*Not given.*	
	Students with at least one protected characteristic	64.1% went to highly skilled work after graduation in 2013-14, 73.4% in 2014-15, and 79.6% in 2015-2016	*Not given.*	

University of Kent	Percentage of white students compared to black students attaining a first or 2.1	Improvement from 19% to 14%	• Increase intake of young full-time undergraduates from WP background post higher fees within the sector • Improve performance in the recruitment of students form under-represented groups • Increase full time entrants from University Partner and KMPF schools and colleges • Further collaborative targets agreed by the Kent and Medway progression federation	• Retain stability of intake of young full time undergraduates from widening participation backgrounds • Improve performance in the recruitment of young FT undergraduates from LPN Q1 and Q2 • Increase the volume of applicants as well as full-time entrants to HE from Partner Schools and Colleges and Kent and Medway Progression Federation schools • Increase mature participation from LPN Q1 and Q2 through the development of the access provision in Medway • Work collaboratively with local authorities', schools and colleges to improve access to HE by care leavers
University of Reading	Mature Students	66% increase in mature students since 2012-13	*Not given.*	• Significantly expand sustained engagement outreach programmes which span key stage 2 to 5 • Create a deep-rooted network of coherent relationships between the UoR and the local community in Whitley, with dual aims of increasing educational engagement attainment and confidence, understanding of HE and richer understanding of barriers to social mobility through research. • Further develop collaborative initiatives, partnerships etc. • Increase proportion of UoR entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds through e.g. ensuring UoR is an attractive choice, contextual offer making to ensure equality of opportunity. • Identify and develop pro-active means of tackling issues of differential social and culture capital amongst the student population • Enhance inclusivity of curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment • Enhance support, guidance and development for underrepresented students • Make more effective use of engagement and other data to identify under-represented students • Encourage and facilitate under-represented students to gain appropriate work experience
	LPN	39% increase since 2012-13; in 2017-18 at least 20% from LPN, almost 40% from most advantaged neighbourhoods	• 8.6% (% of whole) • 76.5% (% achieving first or upper-second class degree) • 76.5% (%progressing to employment or further study 6 months after graduation)	
	Declared disability	92% increase since 2012-13	• 76% (% achieving first or upper-second class degree) • 90.25% (%progressing to employment or further study 6 months after graduation)	
	BME	83% increase since 2012-13	• 21.2% (% of BME) • 69.5% (% achieving first/upper second glass degree qualification)	
	State school, college	46% increase since 2012-13	• 88.5%	

	Low income background	*Not given.*	• 27.6% (of whole) • 69.5% (% achieving first or upper-second class degree)	
University of Roehampton	Mature students	*Not given.*	• Community-based access provision established and one new pathway under development • Assess impact on recruitment of mature students to full and part time programmes from low participation neighbourhoods and no previous HE experience • Assess impact of new progression-provision and family learning on applications to HE	• Work across the student lifecycle to promote access and participation • Work with external partners to develop and share good practice • Work closely with students from all backgrounds to identify priorities and find solutions • Take an evidence-based approach to closing performance gaps in access, success and progression • Take a cross-institutional approach to supporting and guiding students • Align our commitments to access and participation with our wider commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion • Develop 5 University-led curriculum-based projects within new specialism areas of Science and Arts • Develop opportunities for students to access teacher training opportunities in our sponsored schools • Develop targets for the new multi academy trust • Lead community engagement of level 3 and above • Support development of 6th form • Assess impact on recruitment of young students to full time programmes using measures from state school, low income and LPN Q1&2 • Implement use of contextual data to assist a more holistic admissions process, examining applicants' educational achievement in the context of their school or college performance • Maintain and strengthen relationships with schools and colleges using evidence on school and FE participation performance, to be available through collaborative HEAT data analysis • Identify student success differentials across a range of equality groups • Identify non-completion and lower attainment in subject areas and assessing whether there are areas for intervention • Create and target internships and paid opportunities to include the further development of our ambassador scheme
	Declared disability	Reduced gap between disabled and no known disability to 0% in 2015-16	• Increase intake of young full-time undergraduates from widening participation backgrounds post higher fees within the sector • Improve our performance in the recruitment of students from under-represented groups • Increase full time entrants from University Partner and KMPF schools and colleges • Further collaborative targets agreed by the Kent and Medway Progression Federation • Work towards meeting the national benchmark where we are below those measures and meet internal targets where we exceed benchmarks • Improving student retention within HE in FE settings	
	BAME	Reduced gap between BAME and non-BAME to -1%		
	Care leavers	Increased number of care leavers from -11% to 3% in 2015-16		
	General WP	Reduced gap between underrepresented and not		

		underrepresented groups to 5%.		
University of Surrey	Mature Students	Decreased from 21% to 16% in 2017-18 following national trends; Mature students were 7% more likely to find professional employment, and earned 5% more than their non-Mature student peers.	*Not given.*	• Advisory group assesses formal bids for initiative to support under-represented groups from various departments in the University. • Review and re-establish governance groups focused on APP following internal audit. • University Education Strategy reviewed and agreed by Executive Board. To advise and oversee implementation, three groups established: Student Progression and Learning Gain, Teaching Quality and Valuing Teaching, Digital Enablement • SPLG project priorities established, including retention, assessment, and Becoming Work Ready. • Develop way of facilitating the academic performance of BME students, students with no A levels and especially BME students with no A levels. • Develop ways of supporting students with disabilities. Their results suggest a complex pattern of academic and personal issues.
	LPA	Maintained at 8%, (HESA benchmark 7.3%); White British Students with low socio-economic status at 6% (national average 5.4%)	*Not given.*	• Employ qualitative methods such as focus groups and case studies to explore the needs of disadvantaged groups that are too small for statistical analysis. • Existing and new success & progression measures delivered in 2017-18, and in development for 2018-19. Target groups in addition to those listed in second column (left): • Families where parents are in non-professional households • Low income family
	Declared disability	Increase 7% to 8%; Disabled students less likely to access professional job than overall cohort (69% vs 75%)	*Not given.*	• Families with no parental history of HE participation • Care leavers • White males from economically disadvantaged backgrounds • Young carers • Refugees • Estranged students
	BME	From 37% to 39%; Black students progressed to professional jobs	*Not given.*	• Classified as gifted and talented and also being in one of the sub-groups above

		at similar rate to overall cohort		
	State school, college	Increase from 92.1 in 2015-16 to 92.4% in 2016-17	*Not given.*	
	Gender	Women have robust disadvantage in terms of income, in line with national data	*Not given.*	
University of Sussex	LPN	Increased	*Not given.*	• Adopt evidence-based approach. Will ensure Access, Success and Progress work is of high standard and evidence-led so that resource is directed to where it has most impact
	DSA	Success	*Not given.*	• Continue to support students in most need. Ensure that APP plan focuses on e.g. care leavers, carers, LPN
	BME	More ethnically diverse	*Not given.*	• Consider feedback from students when approaching access, as well as expert practitioners and wider community feedback. Listening to academic and professional service practitioners in this field, local communities and student communities, co-delivering projects on the ground in local communities to encourage students from under-represented groups to participate in HE
	Disadvantaged students	Evidence of sustained excellent performance of disadvantaged students at Sussex going into further employment or further training	*Not given.*	• Provide the best possible student experience, and under the auspices of University Teaching and Learning Committee, our APP will support this objective. Ensure that activities and programmes that support student retention and attainment will be embedded and will be accessible for all students alongside targeted support for specific groups of students.