AdvanceHE

ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

STUDENT ACCESS, RETENTION, ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What is student access, retention, attainment and progression?

Access (across the student lifecycle), retention (completing a programme of study within a specific timeframe), attainment (cumulative achievements in HE and level of degree-class award) and progression in and beyond education are all components of student success. Success in each of these areas depends on the extent to which students are engaged, and their belonging is fostered within their programme and wider institution, across the whole student lifecycle.

Students cannot learn or progress unless they are engaged; students who feel they belong more easily succeed. Developing an inclusive institution, and embedding inclusive values and approaches within learning and teaching policy and practice, is a process that requires a wide range of stakeholders to engage and collaborate to ensure student success.

Who is the framework for?

Student access, retention, attainment and progression are the responsibility of all staff. This framework has therefore been designed to engage and support a broad range of people, especially those involved in teaching, learning and student support in strategic or practice roles. It will be most effective if adopted at an institutional level and embedded across all programmes.

Why is student access, retention, attainment and progression important?

Student access, retention, attainment and progression are important agendas within HE, with moral, legal, economic and social imperatives for addressing them. They are important to a number of different stakeholder groups within HE:

STUDENTS: students are investing more than ever in HE and their future employment prospects. Student success in HE has significant social and economic benefits for individuals, with non-completion or non-continuation having financial consequences both in the short and longer term. Enabling access, retention, progression and attainment can have a positive impact on a student's wellbeing and success.

SPONSORS: families, communities and industry contribute to HE in numerous ways, including financially, and have a vested interest in access, retention, attainment and progression.

INSTITUTIONS: excellence in access, retention, attainment and progression enhances an institution's reputation, influencing student satisfaction and recruitment and therefore future sustainability.

UK SOCIETY: social mobility, widening participation and differential attainment rates remain Government priorities; these support social and cultural development, and help to address societal inequalities.

Key enablers for access and retention

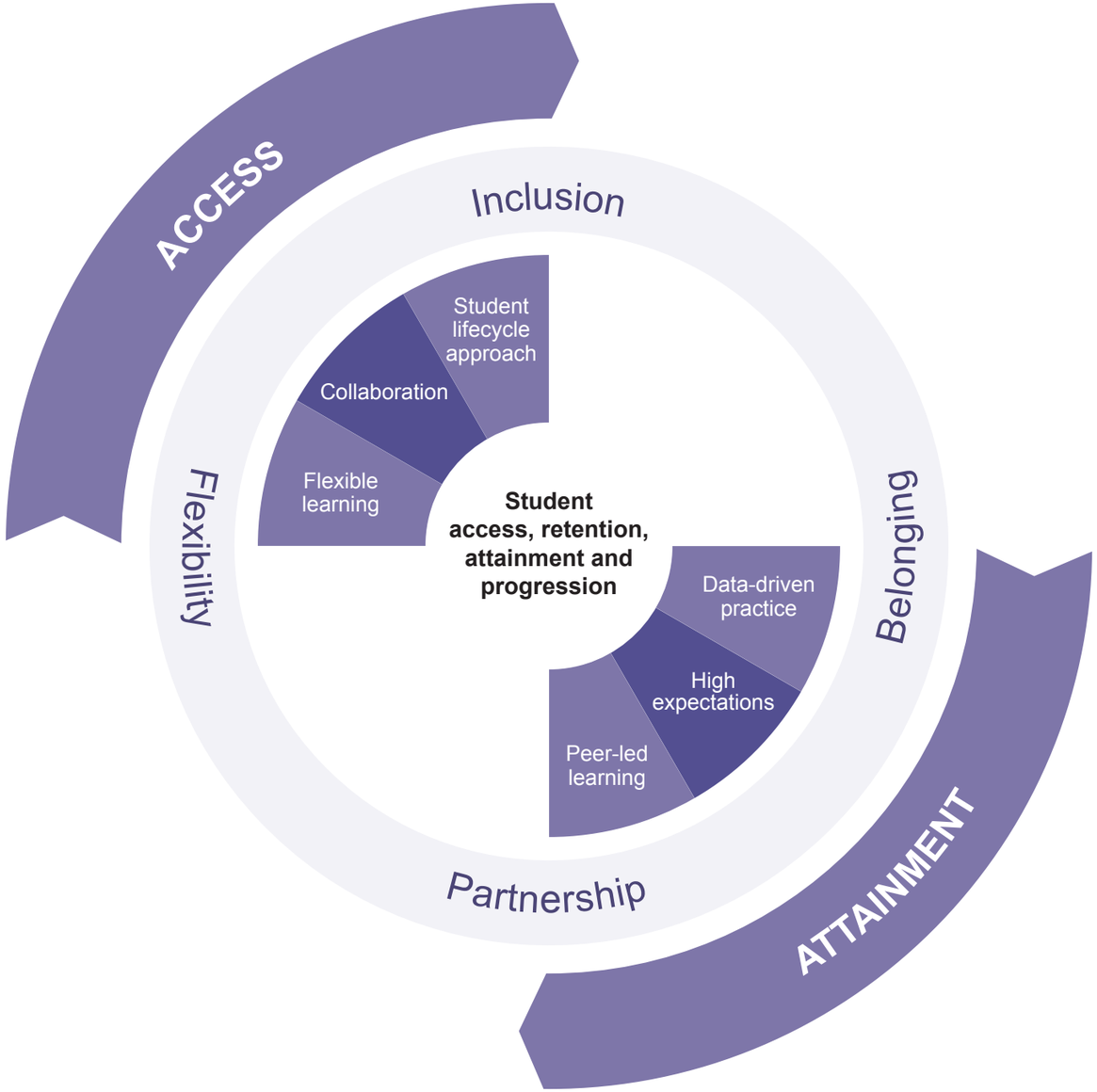
The inner circle of the framework illustrates the attributes that enable our areas of focus.

ACCESS is enabled through:

- widening opportunities to HE, throughout it and beyond, to assure fair access across the whole student lifecycle
- ensuring early and timely collaboration between providers of compulsory, further education (FE) and HE to inform student choice and preparedness for HE
- collaborating with discipline specialists in compulsory and FE (lesson observation or peer-mentoring, for example) to enhance HE curriculum design and students' transitions
- working in partnership with HE sector, families, communities and industry to extend the range of, and access to, opportunities offered by HE
- embedding flexible learning and online provision to facilitate access to and through HE for all students
- providing comprehensive personal tutoring systems for all students as part of their programme, to nurture a sense of belonging, promote engagement, and enhance attainment.

ATTAINMENT is enabled through:

- sharing retention and attainment data, in a timely and accessible manner at a programme, department, school, and faculty level, to discuss and build awareness of differential student achievement and act as a stimulus for change
- co-developing and reviewing curricula in partnership with students, ensuring that assessment literacies are integrated into curriculum design to minimise attainment differentials
- having high expectations of all students, and engendering students' high expectations of themselves, to enable attainment and success
- recognising that students learn in different ways and that teaching that responds to a range of student preferences can improve attainment
- promoting peer-led learning to help build students' expectations and confidence
- ensuring all staff, and students where possible, have ongoing developmental opportunities to address unconscious bias and to develop equality and diversity competence.to challenge the behaviours, attitudes and practices that can undermine inclusion and thus student retention.



Key enablers for access and retention

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RETENTION is enabled through:

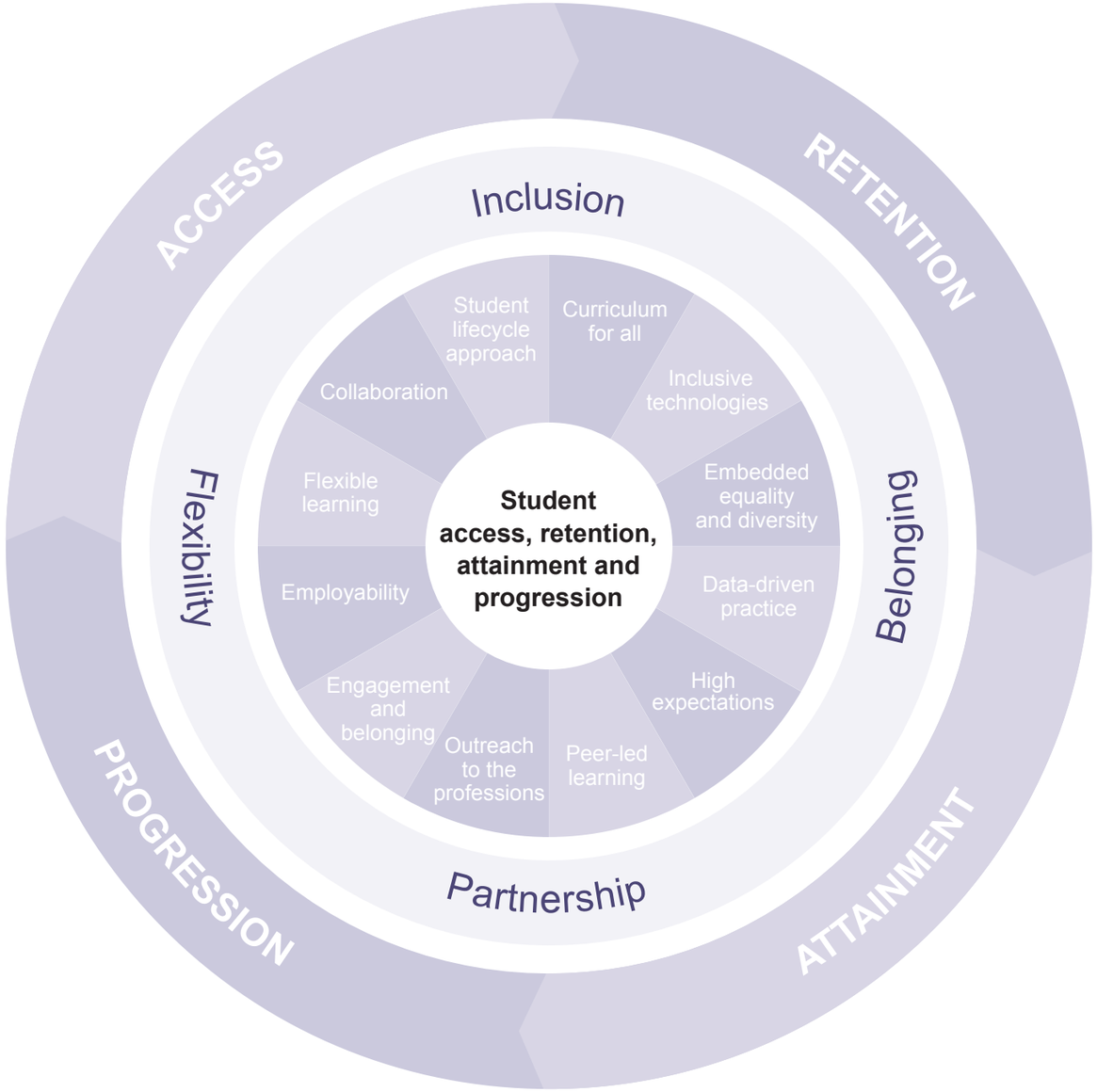
- building whole-institutional commitment to, and shared responsibility for, retention, inclusion, partnership and students' sense of belonging;
- embedding equality and diversity within policy and practice to increase retention and engagement, and enrich curricula, learning and teaching;
- developing curricula that draw on the plurality of students' life experiences, their interests and backgrounds to engage students and enhance retention;
- implementing a range of practices to support retention within all disciplines, such as active learning, ongoing induction, co-curricular activities and pre-arrival and post-arrival strategies;
- enhancing attendance systems and adopting the widespread use of inclusive and assistive technologies to aid learning and teaching;
- developing supportive learning environments where all members of the learning and teaching community feel they are safe, they belong, and are able to challenge the behaviours, attitudes and practices that can undermine inclusion and thus student retention.

PROGRESSION is enabled through:

- sharing progression data within and between departments to support dialogue about social mobility and widening participation;
- developing progression plans with students to enable career and academic progression and promote shared responsibility and commitment;
- building systematic approaches to postgraduate progression, in particular reflecting on why, how, when, and which students are encouraged to consider postgraduate study;
- creating networks with alumni to offer all students guidance, role models and professional opportunities as part of the wider curriculum and employability offer;
- developing processes for regular evaluation and impact assessment to aid reflection and input into future iterations of all learning and teaching-related policies and practices;
- developing a whole-institutional commitment to employability to enable students' progression and long-term success.to challenge the behaviours, attitudes and practices that can undermine inclusion and thus student retention.

How this framework can be used

The framework, encompassing the four areas of focus and the key statements in the cyclical design, provides a structure to shape and evaluate policy and practice at an institutional, faculty, school, department and individual level. It can be used to inform continual professional development, planning and strategic conversations throughout the institution. Addressing these four areas is a process requiring ongoing commitment, enhancement, and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders; hence this framework will be most effective if widely adopted across the institution.



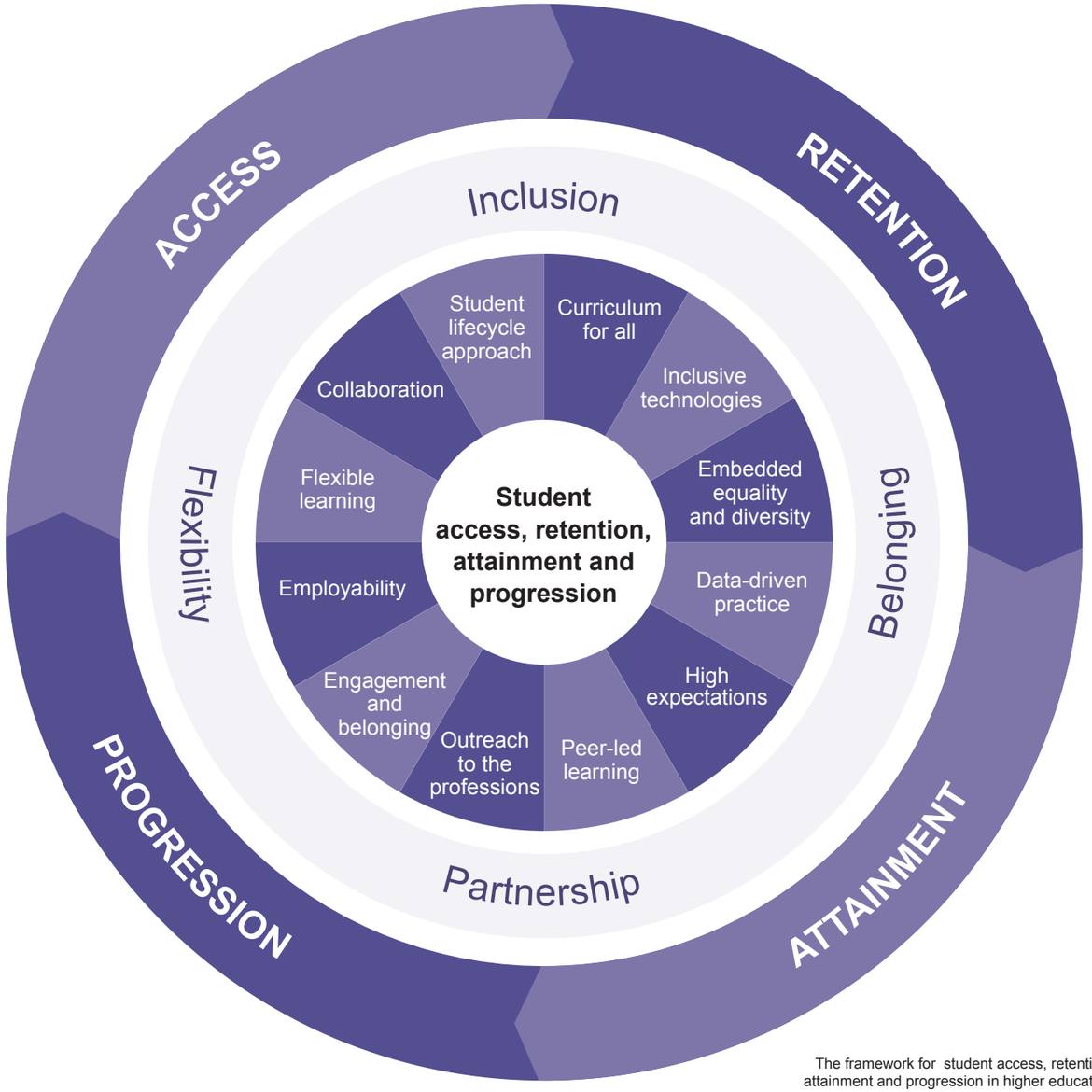
How does this framework align with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF)?

Staff may want to consider how their engagement with student access, retention, attainment and progression in HE can offer an effective approach to areas of activity, enable deeper understanding of core knowledge, and demonstrate alignment with professional values. It is particularly relevant to the following dimensions:

ACTIVITY:	**A1, A2 AND A4**
KNOWLEDGE:	**K2, K3 AND K4**
VALUES:	**V1, V2, V3 AND V4**

Advance HE invites lecturers, teachers and learning support staff to evidence their use of this or other Advance HE frameworks in applying for Fellowship in recognition of their commitment to professional practice.

To find out more about Fellowship visit: **www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship**



The framework for student access, retention, attainment and progression in higher education
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Student Success Frameworks

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