LMH

FOUNDATION YEAR

The Lady Margaret Hall Foundation Year

Esther Fisher and Jo Begbie

LMH
FOUNDATION YEAR

Started in 2016 to try to address the under-representation of certain groups of students at Oxford University.

Inspired by Trinity Access programmes at Trinity College Dublin where they have been running a Foundation Course for young adults since 1997. Their data shows that 706 (95%) students have progressed to degrees at TCD. Director: Cliona Hannon

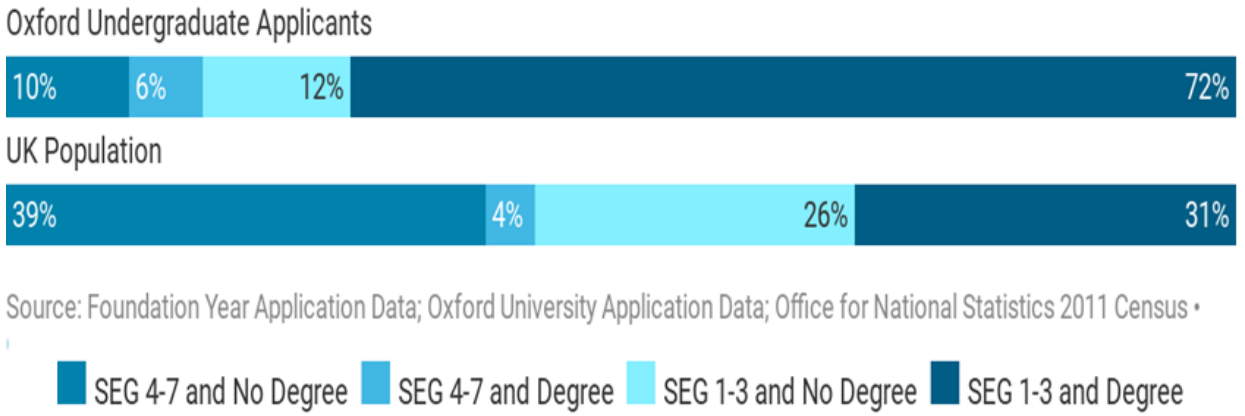
Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

LMH FOUNDATION YEAR

Started in 2016 to try to address the under-representation of certain groups of students at Oxford University.

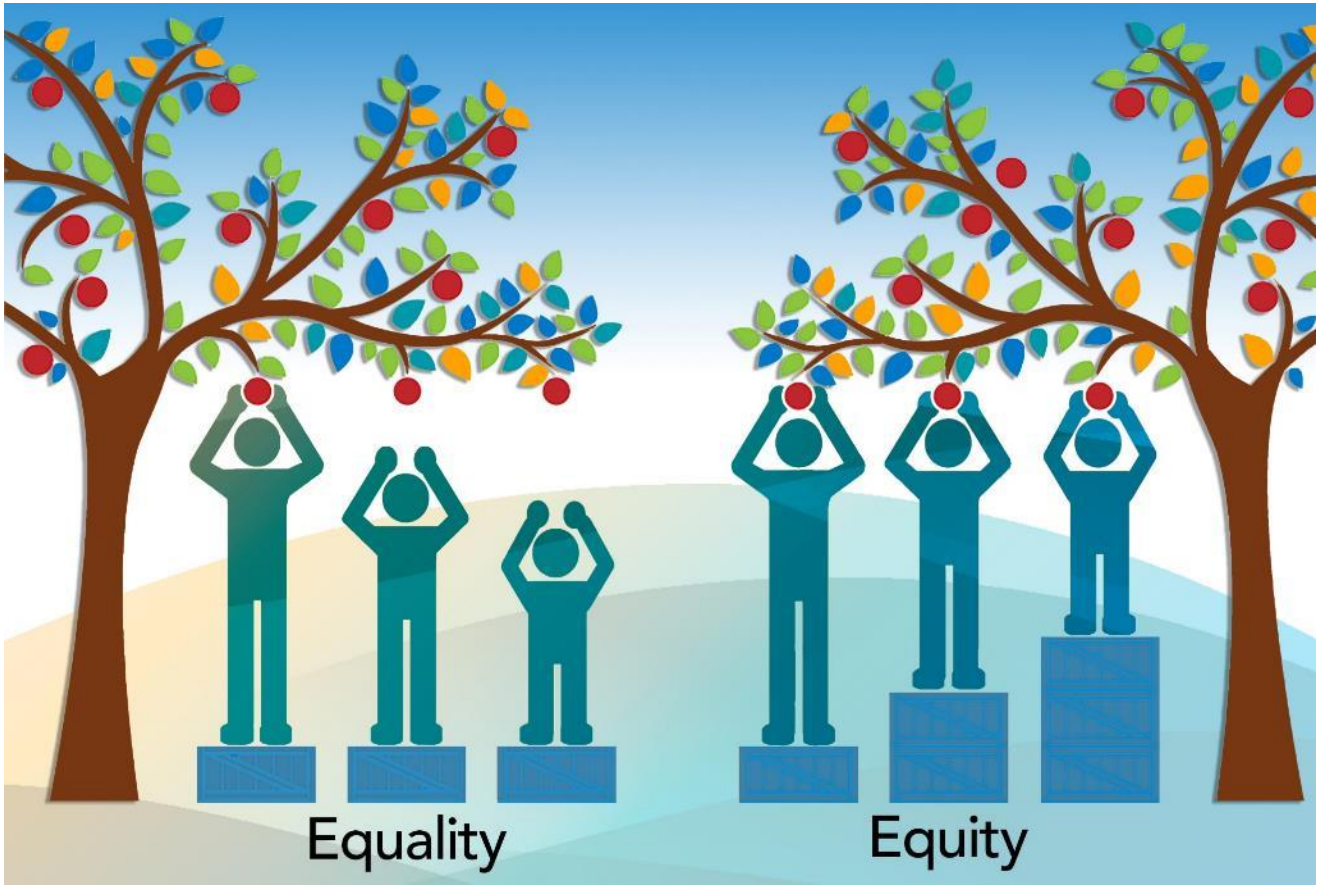
Vikki's talk has just given a fantastic illustration of the access problem that we face.

One way we can look at the scale of the problem at Oxford is by parental socio-economic group



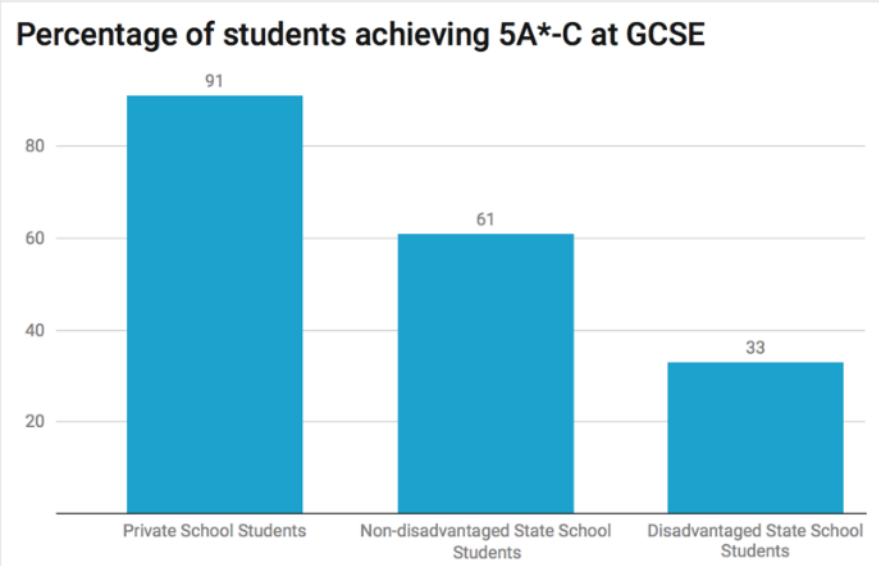
SEG = socioeconomic group. Numbers based on occupation coding by the Office for National Statistics (NS-SEC)

Oxford admissions process asks everyone to achieve the same exam grades – considered to be fair



But as Vikki pointed out – maybe we need to re-think fairness

Oxford admissions process asks everyone to achieve the same exam grades



The Sutton Trust and
Department for Education Data

This assumes that educational attainment is the result of equal opportunity.

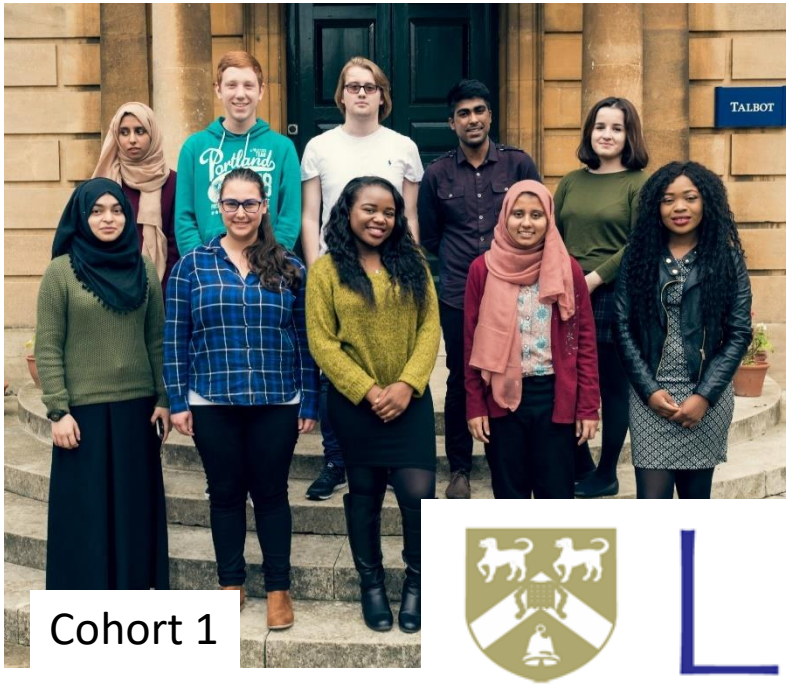
The Foundation Year is designed for academically able students who have faced educational disadvantage as a result of their socio-economic circumstances.

Contextualisation of grades means that we make a lower offer than for traditional entry.

Provide a fully funded year of teaching and personal support to realise potential.

Progression to Oxford undergraduate degree course dependent on performance on Foundation Year.

We are currently in Year 4 of our pilot and course development has been an iterative process

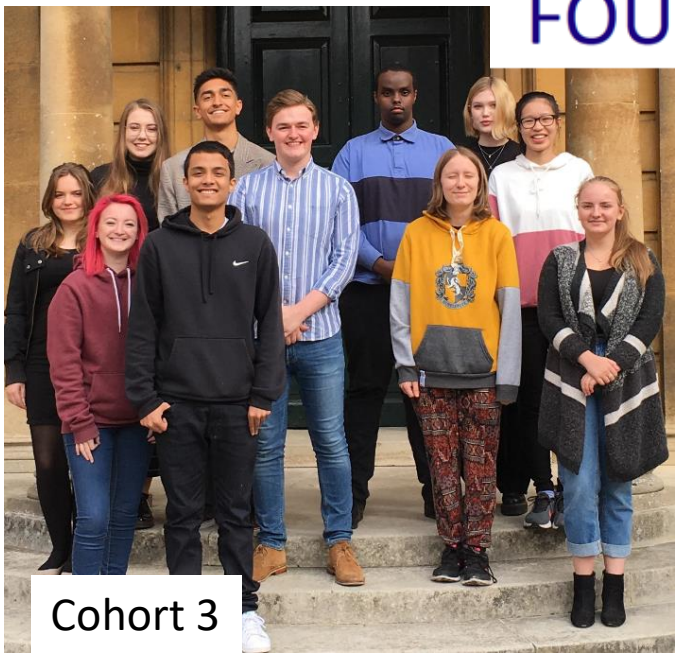


Cohort 1

Cohort 2

LMH

FOUNDATION YEAR



Cohort 3

Cohort 4

Course content

	Preparation for Undergraduate Studies	Subject Specific
Course aim	To prepare the students for the multifaceted aspects of life as an undergraduate at a highly-selective university.	To equip the student with the necessary competence and academic confidence to enter and successfully participate in an undergraduate degree in their subject.
Example syllabus	Writing for undergraduate study (different groups for science/humanities); study skills; communication skills; cultural orientation; personal development.	Varies depending on the subject. Each subject will typically have 3-4 modules.
Credits	50	100
Class size	Seminar (6-12 students) and individual sessions	1-3 students
Mode of learning	Seminar and Independent Study	Tutorial and Independent Study
Contact hours	Average of 16 hours per term	Variable: Average of 24 hours per term
Modes of assessment	Tutorial participation and assignments	Tutorial participation and assignments; exams; coursework

Aims to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to progress onto an undergraduate course at a highly-selective university.

LMH Foundation Year outcomes

Cohort 1:
10 students
100% completion
7 return to LMH
2 to other Russell Group (LSE, KCL)
1 total subject change non RG uni

Cohort 2:
11 students
100% completion
9 return to LMH
2 to other Russell Group (Bristol, KCL)

Cohort 3:
11 students
2 new subjects
100% completion
10 return to LMH
1 transfer to Jesus College

Cohort 4:
11 students
2 new subjects

Cohort 1

Cohort 2

How to identify students for the intervention?

Cohort 1

Year 1 used a combination of University of Oxford Widening Participation indicators and TCD access programme indicators.

Had to be state school educated
and likely to meet 3 of :

- Household income below £42875
- Household in receipt of certain benefits
- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Live in an area of socio-economic disadvantage (ACORN 4 or 5)
- Live in an area of low progression to HE (POLAR quintile 1 or 2)
- Socio-economic group that is under-represented in HE (NS-SEC 4-8)

Or

- Care leaver

How to identify students for the intervention?

Cohort 2

Year 2 again used a combination of University of Oxford Widening Participation indicators and TCD access programme indicators but clarified instructions

Had to be state school educated
and have a household income below £42875
and either
A:

- Socio-economic group that is under-represented in HE (NS-SEC 4-8) ***and***
- live in an area of socio-economic disadvantage (ACORN 4 or 5) *or* low progression to HE (POLAR quintile 1 or 2)

B:

- GCSE or A level school below national average attainment *and*
- live in an area of socio-economic disadvantage (ACORN 4 or 5) *or* low progression to HE (POLAR quintile 1 or 2)

Or
Care leaver

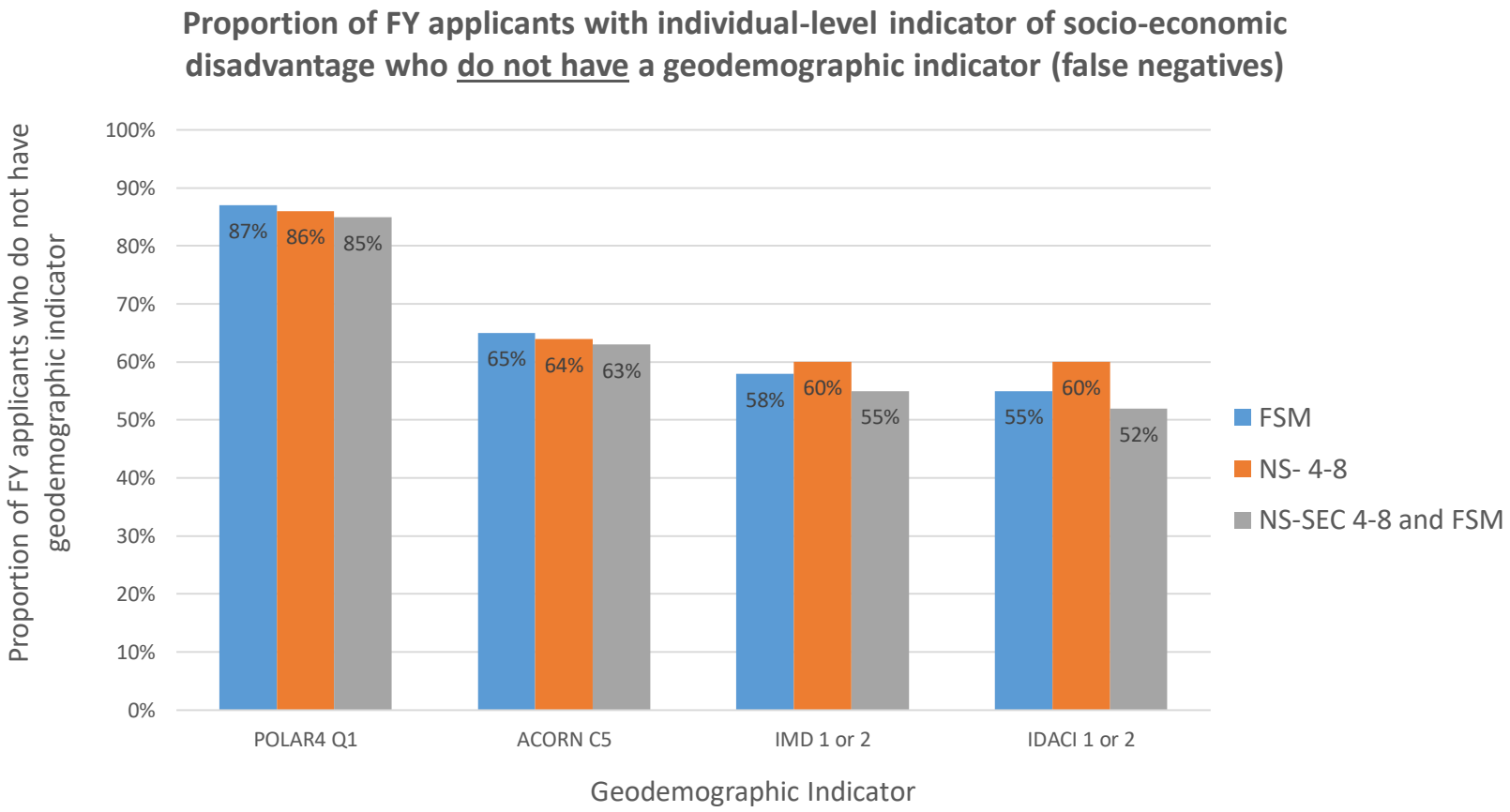
How to identify students for the intervention?

Years 1 & 2 adhered to university policy and used population level indicators as binary selection criteria (ie student had to meet one of these to be eligible)

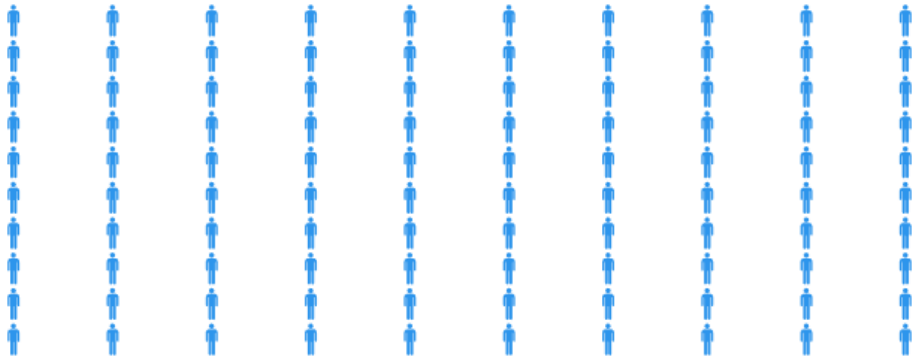
Identified that this led to high levels of false negatives i.e. students who could not be included in the intervention despite individual level indicators of socio-economic disadvantage

We did not identify high levels of false positives because the population level indicator was combined with an individual level indicator (household income), but other research shows that this is likely (Boliver et al 2019)

How to identify students for the intervention?



Out of every 100 students with Free School Meal status



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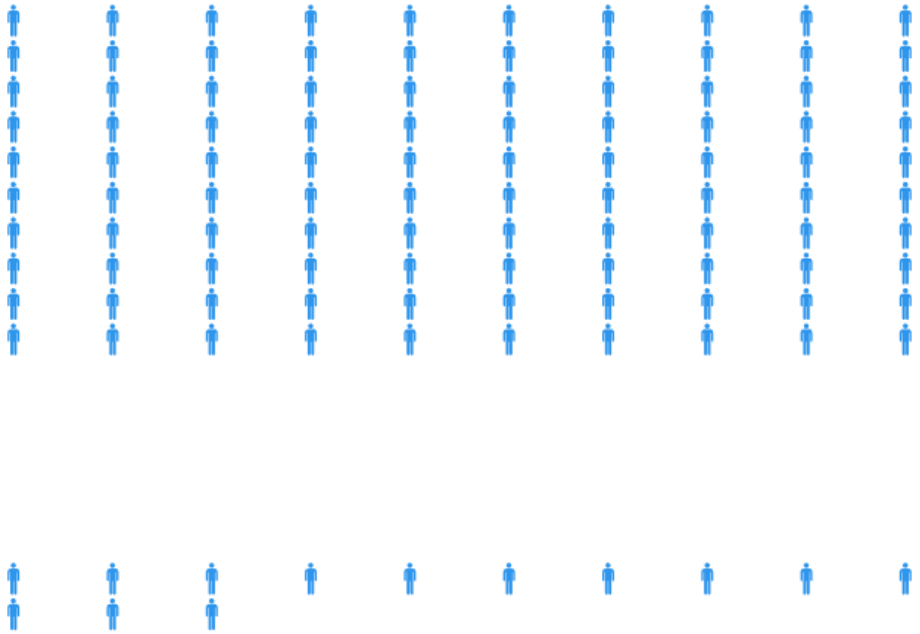


Only 13% would be eligible if POLAR Q1 were used

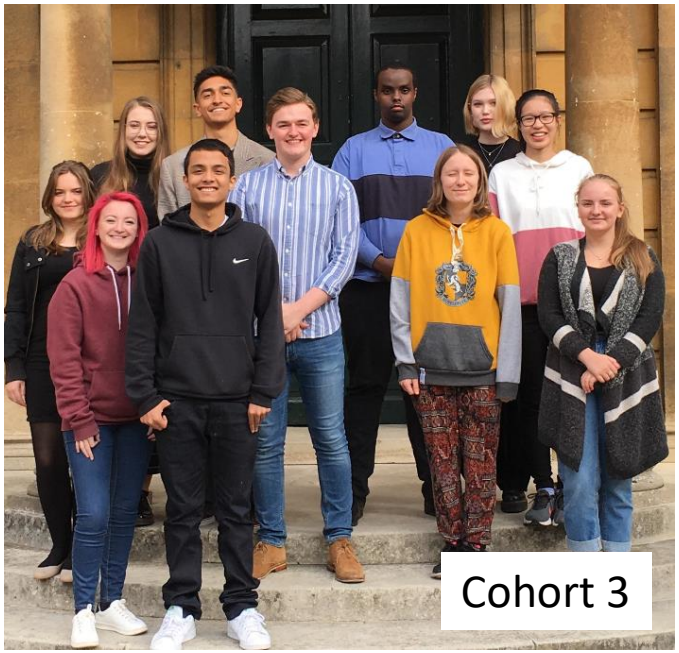
Table 1: Proportion of LMH Foundation Year applicants by individual-level indicator of low-socio-economic status who meet area-level indicators

	In receipt of FSM (n=297)	NS-SEC 4-8 (n=412)	NS-SEC 4-8 *and* in receipt of FSM (n=209)
POLAR Quintile 1	13%	14%	15%
ACORN Category 5	35%	37%	38%
IMD Deciles 1 or 2	41%	40%	45%
IDACI Deciles 1 or 2	44%	41%	48%

Re-evaluated use of socio-economic indicators

Students must be:

- State school educated
- Low household income
- From [NS-SEC group 4-8] *OR* [NS-SEC group 3 *and* Parental Education below degree level]


Cohort 3

Indicators selected by:

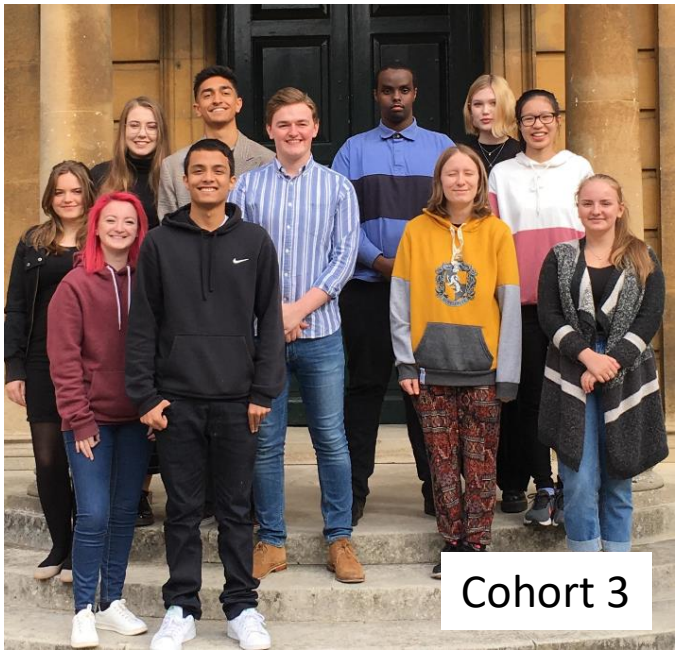
- Academic evidence liking to educational attainment ***and*** socio-economic disadvantage
- Ease of data collection and verification

Cohort 4

Put in place for Year 3, repeated for Year 4

Also use a range of indicators to further contextualise the applications of eligible candidates

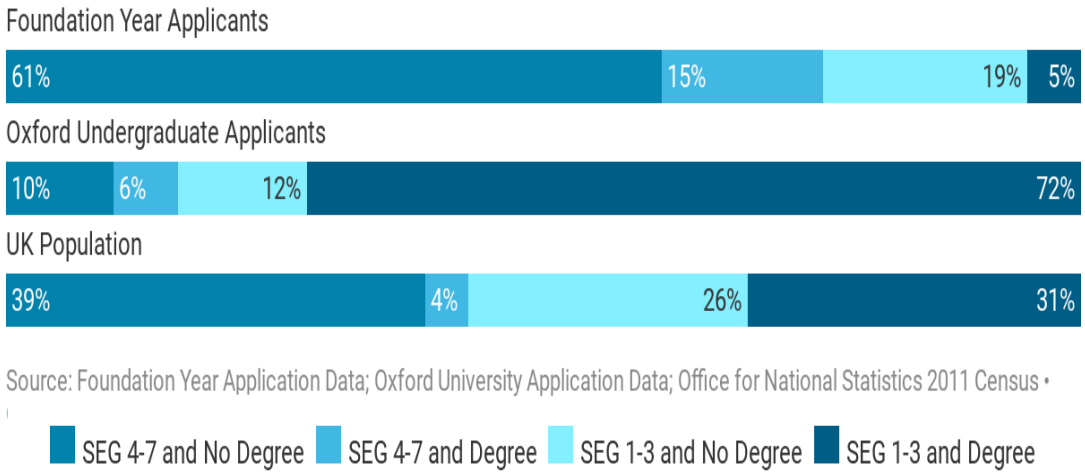
Index of Multiple Deprivation
Index of Deprivation Affecting Children
POLAR Quintile
ACORN category
School admissions policy
% 5A*-A at GCSE School
% 5A*-C at GCSE School
Average point score at A Level
% of students in school receiving Free School Meals
School progression rates to Russell Group University
School progression rates to Oxford University


Cohort 3

Cohort 4

Put in place for Year 3, repeated for Year 4

FY applicant demographic compared with traditional Oxford undergraduate applicants and UK population



Have also seen an increase in care-leavers and estranged students

Why doesn't every university use individual-level indicators to identify widening participation students?

- Data availability: not currently available through UCAS
- Data verification

Table 2: Proportion of missing values and unclassified data points in: national data (UCAS/NPD/Postcode); LMH Foundation Year applications before contacting applicant for further explanation (pre-clarification); and after further explanation (post-clarification).

	Missing or unclassified values (UCAS/NPD/Postcode)	**Missing values (LMH FY) pre-clarification**	**Missing or unmatched values (LMH FY) post-clarification**
Parental Occupation	21-59% [10]	12%	1.6%
Household-income	Not collected	0%	0%
Receipt of Free School Meals	12% [2]	4%	1%
POLAR4	17% [11]	3%	2%
ACORN	1-6% [12]	3%	2.3%
IMD/IDACI	6-12% [2,13]	3%	2.2%

Centralised Contextualisation Trial

Figure 1: Centralised Contextualisation Trial: Process

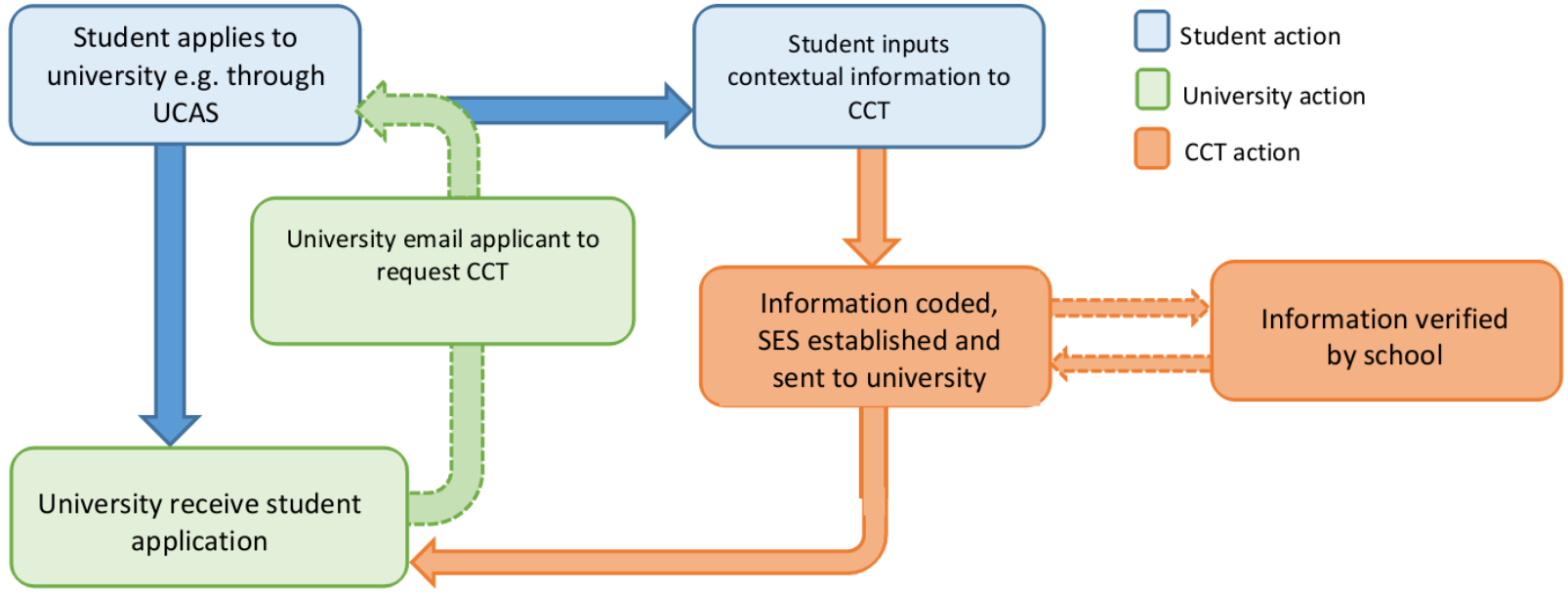
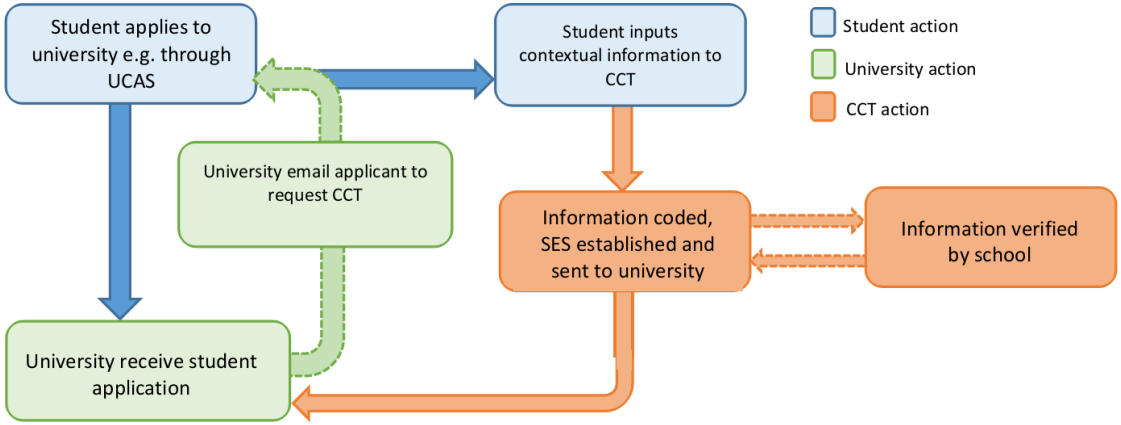
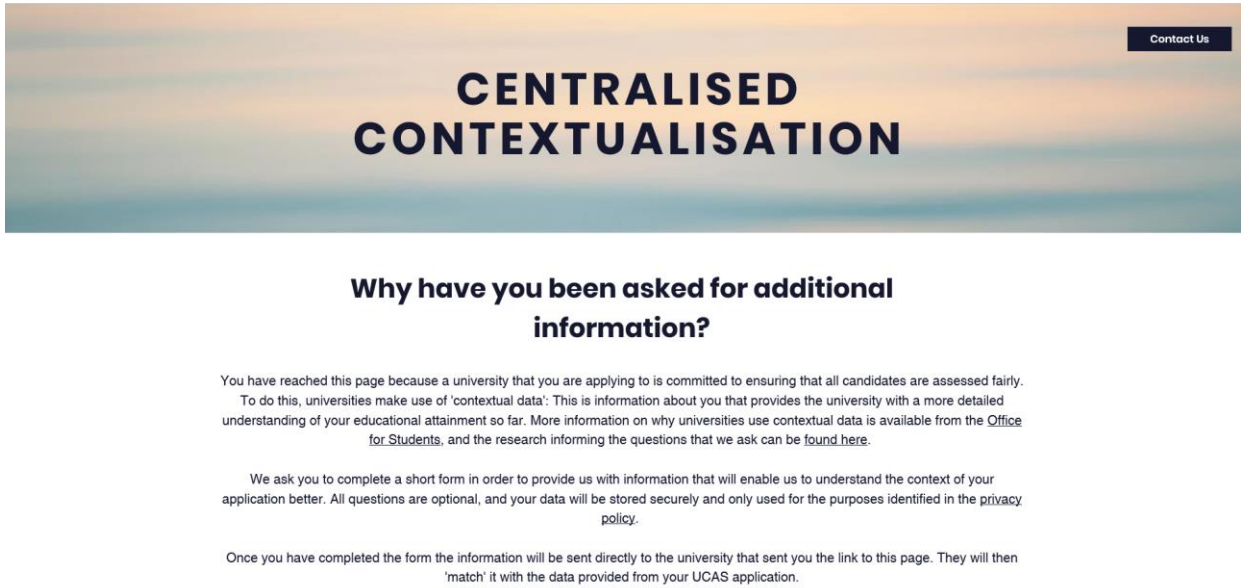


Figure 1: Centralised Contextualisation Trial: Process





Centralised Contextualisation Trial

	Missing or unclassified values (UCAS/NPD/Postcode) (refs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	Missing values or unclassified (LMH CCT)	Verified data (UCAS/NPD/Postcode)	Verified data (LMH CCT)
Parental Occupation	24-59%	15%	Not tested	Not tested
Household-income	Not collected	18%	Not tested	Not tested
Receipt of FSM	12%	3%	Not available	58%*
POLAR4	17%	1%	0%	0%
ACORN	1-6%	1.3%	0%	0%
IMD/IDACI	6-12%	6%	0%	0%

LMH CCT TRIAL: N=10,484

Centralised Contextualisation Trial

	Missing or unclassified values (UCAS/NPD/Postcode) (refs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	Missing values or unclassified (LMH CCT)	Verified data (UCAS/NPD/Postcode)	Verified data (LMH CCT)
Parental Occupation	24-59%	15%	Not tested	Not tested
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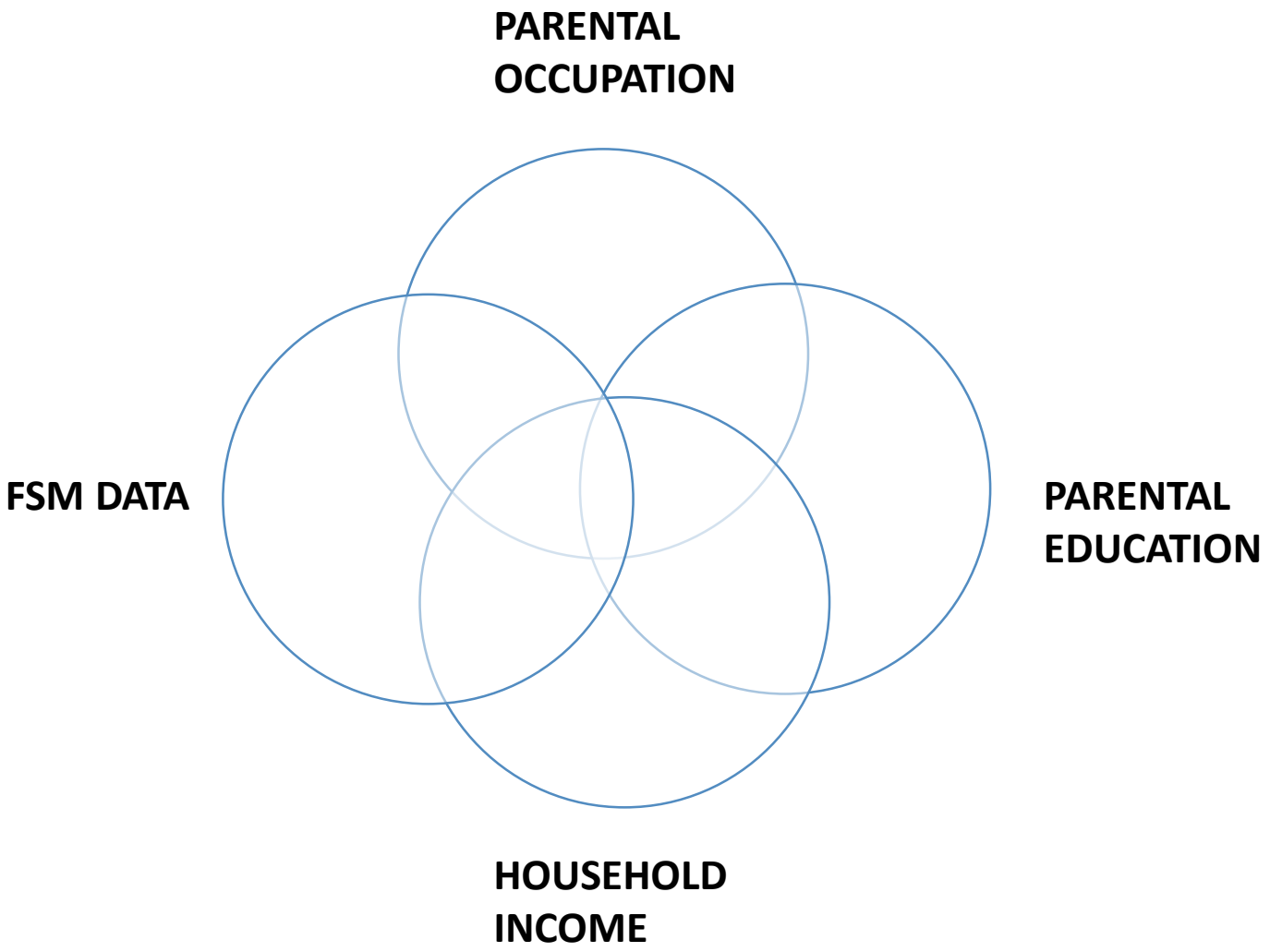
Receipt of FSM	12%	3%	Not available	58%*
POLAR4	17%	1%	0%	0%
ACORN	1-6%	1.3%	0%	0%
IMD/IDACI	6-12%	6%	0%	0%

- 97% of applicants submitted FSM status
- Of those that indicated they were eligible for FSM status, 58% were verified
- Of those that indicated eligibly for FSM *and* provided a reference, 88% were verified

Ideally would use a combination of…



Next Steps:

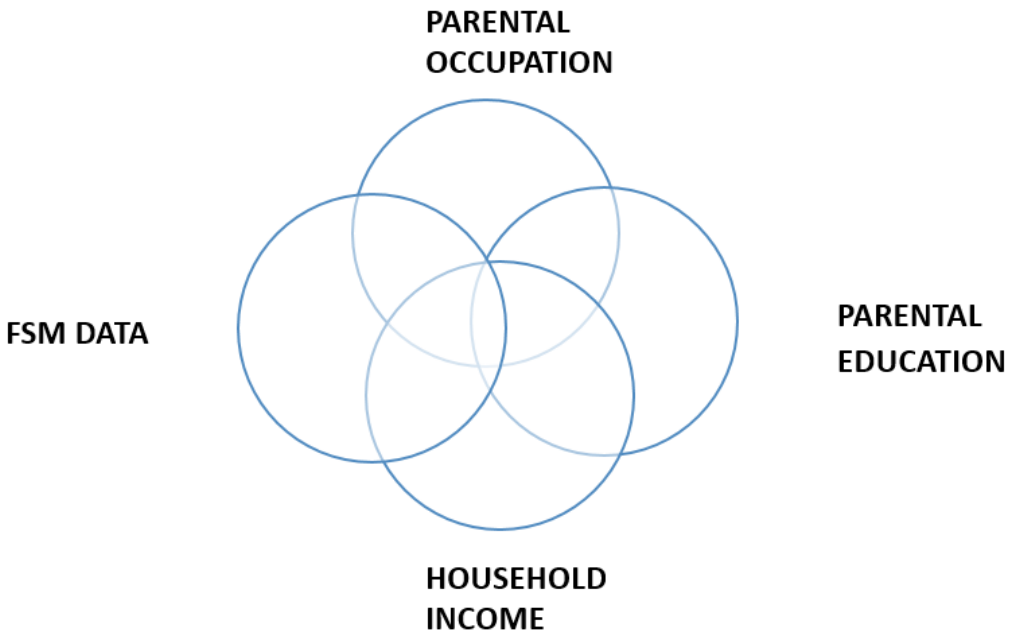
AIM: Evidence based, centralised approach to contextualising student admissions, on course support and progression support

- Refine Free School Meals identification and verification
- Testing degree of confidence of Parental Occupation and Education indicators

If you are interested in getting involved, please email esther.fisher@lmh.ox.ac.uk!

GROUP TASK:

- What are the potential barriers to using these indicators in your own institutions?
- Are there other individual-level indicators that you currently use, or that you think would work well in your context?



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To start in 2023