

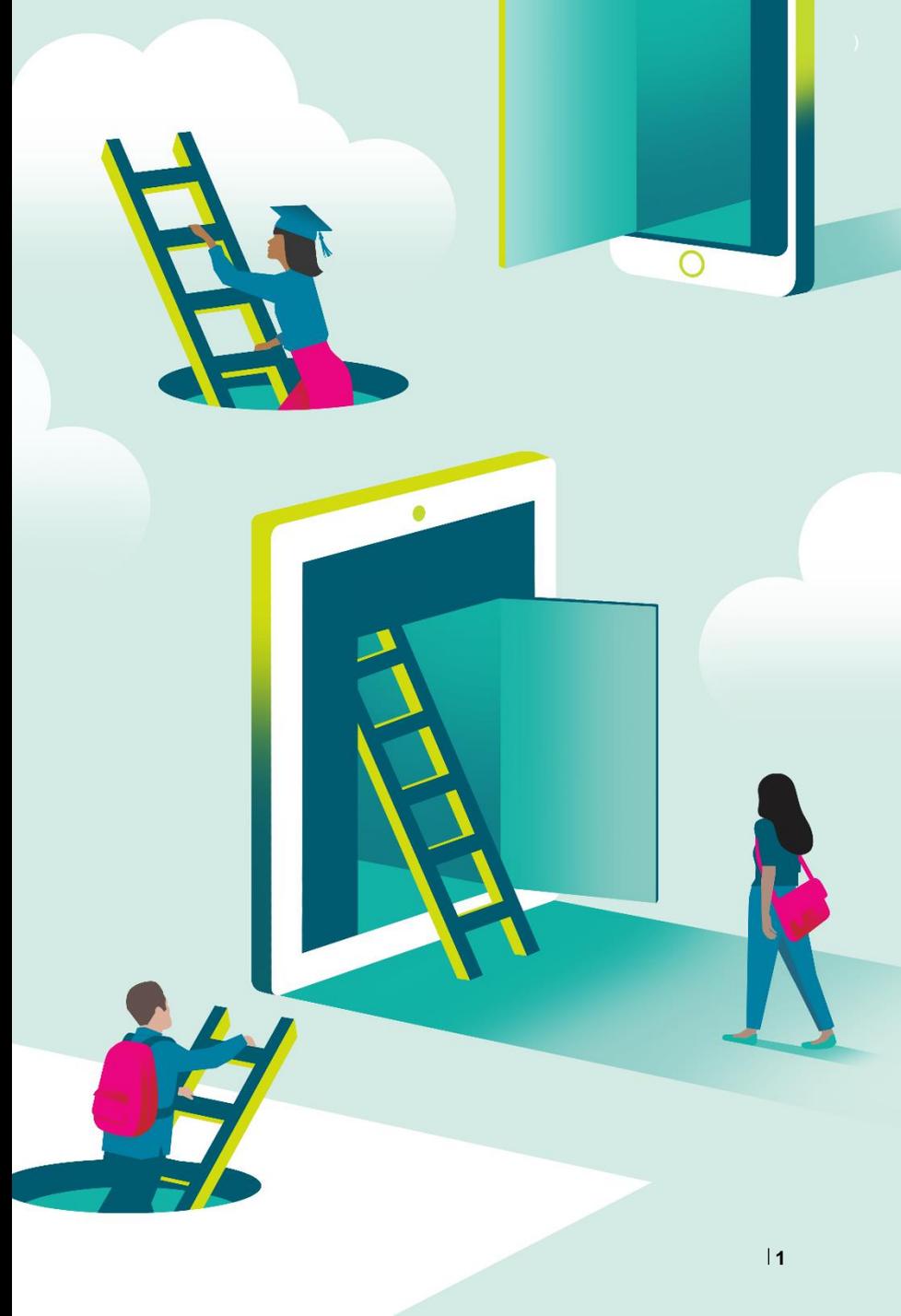


Pearson

BTEC Students into Higher Education: Listening to Learners' Voices

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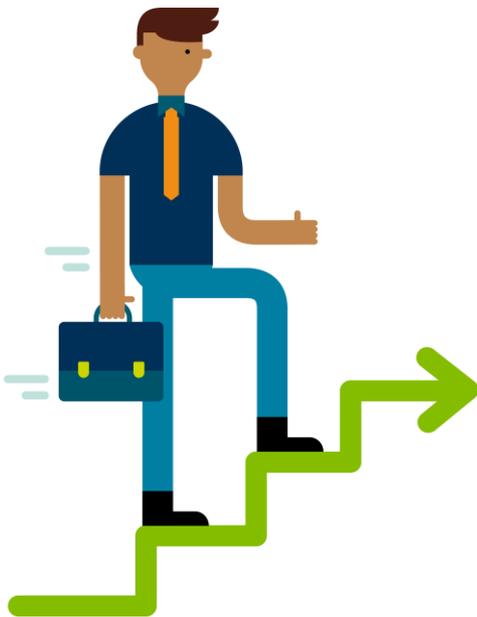




1. data

Number of BTEC students progressing to university

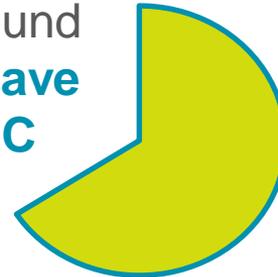
The number of students **progressing to university with a BTEC** increased from **13.3% in 2008** to **24.3% in 2015**



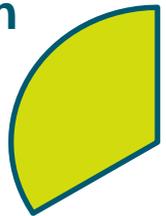
Today, around **1 in 4** students enter university having taken a BTEC National



Of those, around **two-thirds** have taken a BTEC on its own...



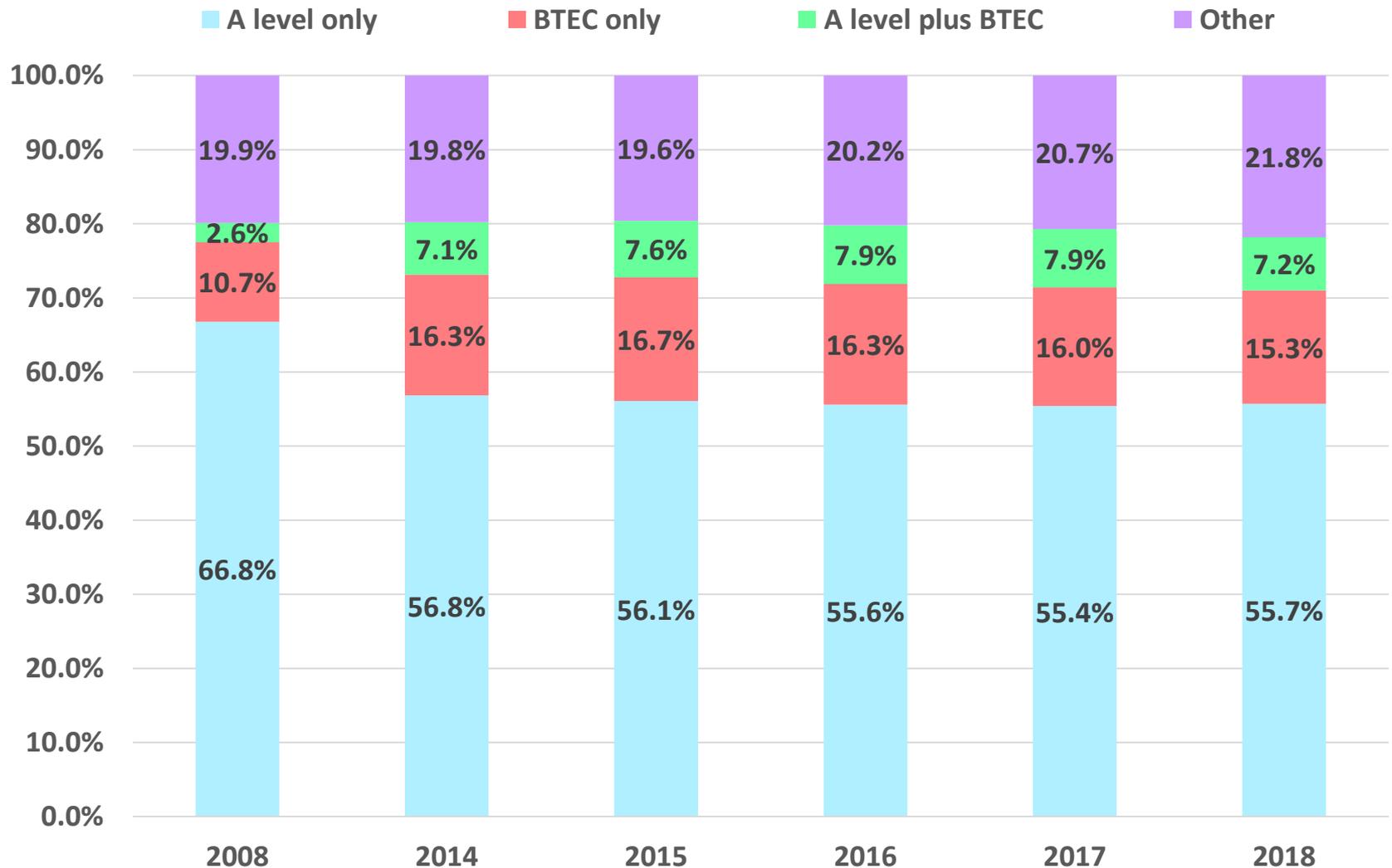
...while **one-third** have taken a BTEC alongside A levels



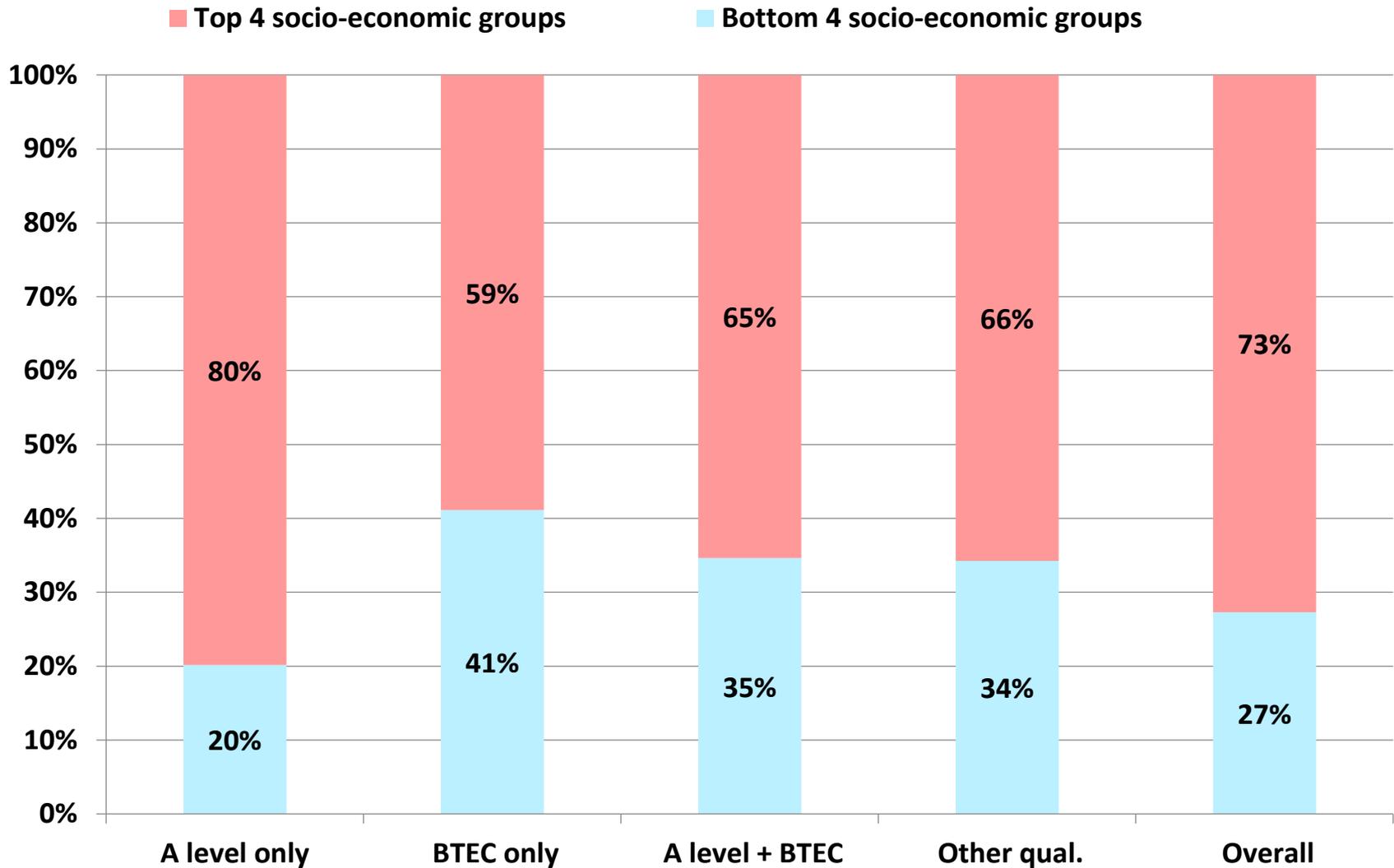
Each year, around **100,000 students** enter university with a BTEC National



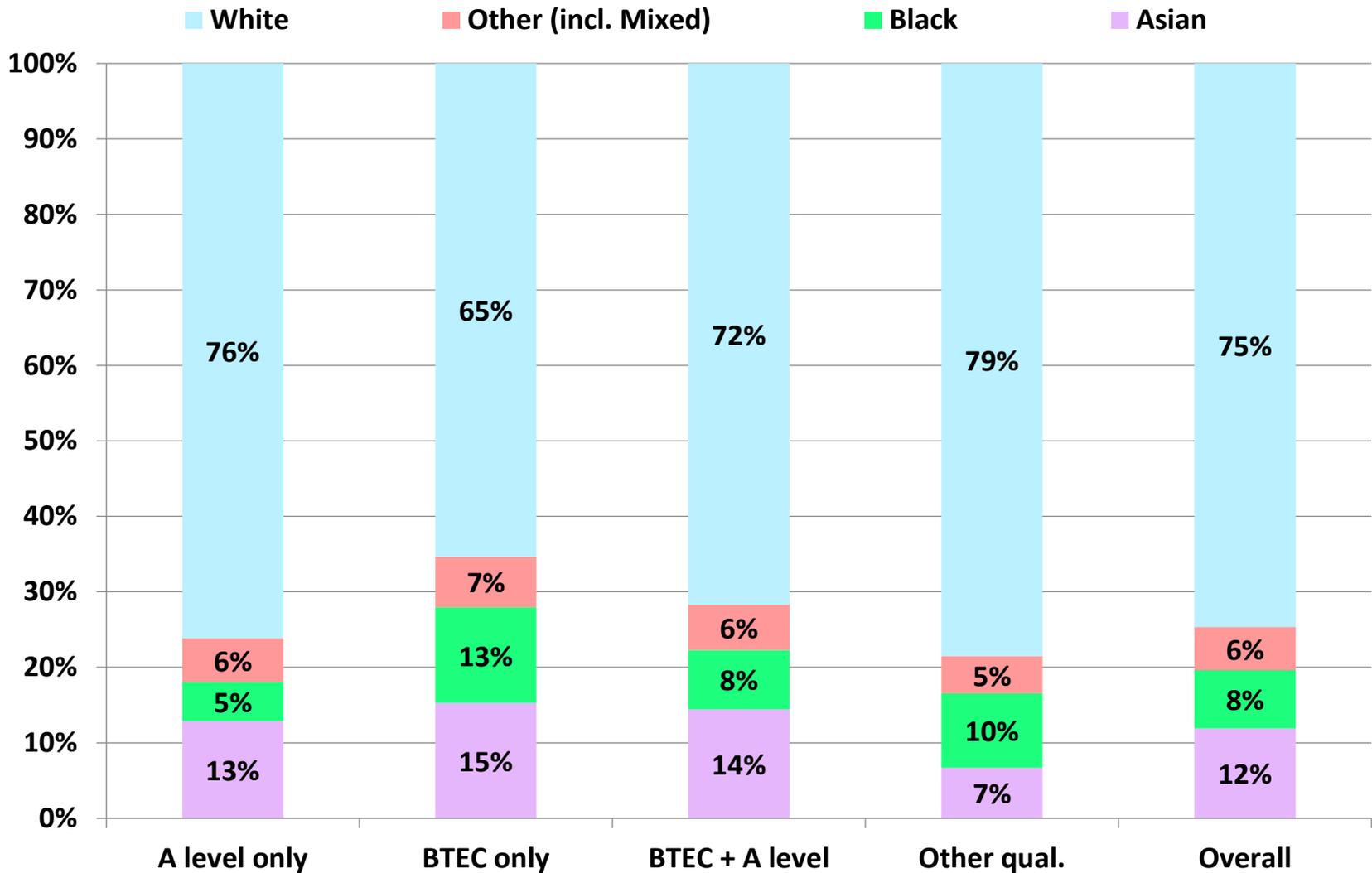
Students by qualification type (UCAS data)



Socio-economic group of 2015 entrants by qualification type (HESA data)



Ethnicity of 2015 entrants by qualification type (HESA data)



Most popular principal subjects (HESA data, 2015 entry)

A level only	BTEC only	BTEC/A level mix
Psychology	Sport and exercise science	Business studies
English studies	Computer science	Sport and exercise science
History by period	Business studies	Design studies
Economics	Nursing	Computer science
Business studies	Design studies	Psychology
Mathematics	Academic studies in education	Nursing
Politics	Cinematics and photography	Sociology
Sociology	Hospitality, leisure, tourism and transport	Academic studies in education
Design studies	Media studies	Media studies
Computer science	Management studies	Management studies

The background is a vibrant blue with a repeating pattern of dark blue, wavy, organic lines that resemble stylized waves or abstract shapes. In the center of the image is a large, solid white circle. Inside this circle, the text is centered and reads:

2. learner voice
2016-17 research

What is BTEC learners' experience at university?

- Research into BTEC students attending a Russell Group university on degree subjects with **relatively high % of BTEC intake.**
- Aim: to understand progression from post 16 education into university and access and **engagement with the university educational experience.**
- **128 interviews** in 2016/17. Across two cohorts of students with BTEC/A Level/A Level + BTEC.
- Focus on capturing the **learner voice.**

Case Study Cohort

Progression into second year degree

81% of BTEC only students progress into their second year.

This figure is **93%** for those with BTEC and A level.

It is **96.5%** for A level/IB

'If you're an A level student there's pretty much a 100% chance that you'll progress from Year 1 to Year 2. That's the pinch-point and it was only about a 60% chance as a BTEC student, although we've started to whittle that down.'

(Sport and Exercise Science lecturer)

Methodology: data collection

- Quantitative analysis
 - i. Data capture from interviews
 - ii. Institutional data

Cohort 1: *	Timeline	Number of interviews	Degree Subjects	Pre-university qualifications
Interview A: Pre-entry	September 2016	12	08 Sports Science 04 Drama	12 BTEC
Interview B: <u>Start of first Year</u>	November 2016	32	19 Sports Science 13 Drama	10 A level/IB 12 BTEC 10 A level + BTEC
Interview C: <u>End of first year</u>	May 2017	25	14 Sports Science 11 Drama	12 A level/IB 09 BTEC 04 A level + BTEC

- Qualitative analysis
 - i. Students
 - ii. Lecturers
 - iii. Employers

Cohort 2:**	Timeline	Number of interviews	Degree Subjects	Pre university qualifications
Second and third year of study	February 2017	42	21 Sports Science 09 Drama 12 Business	42 BTEC,

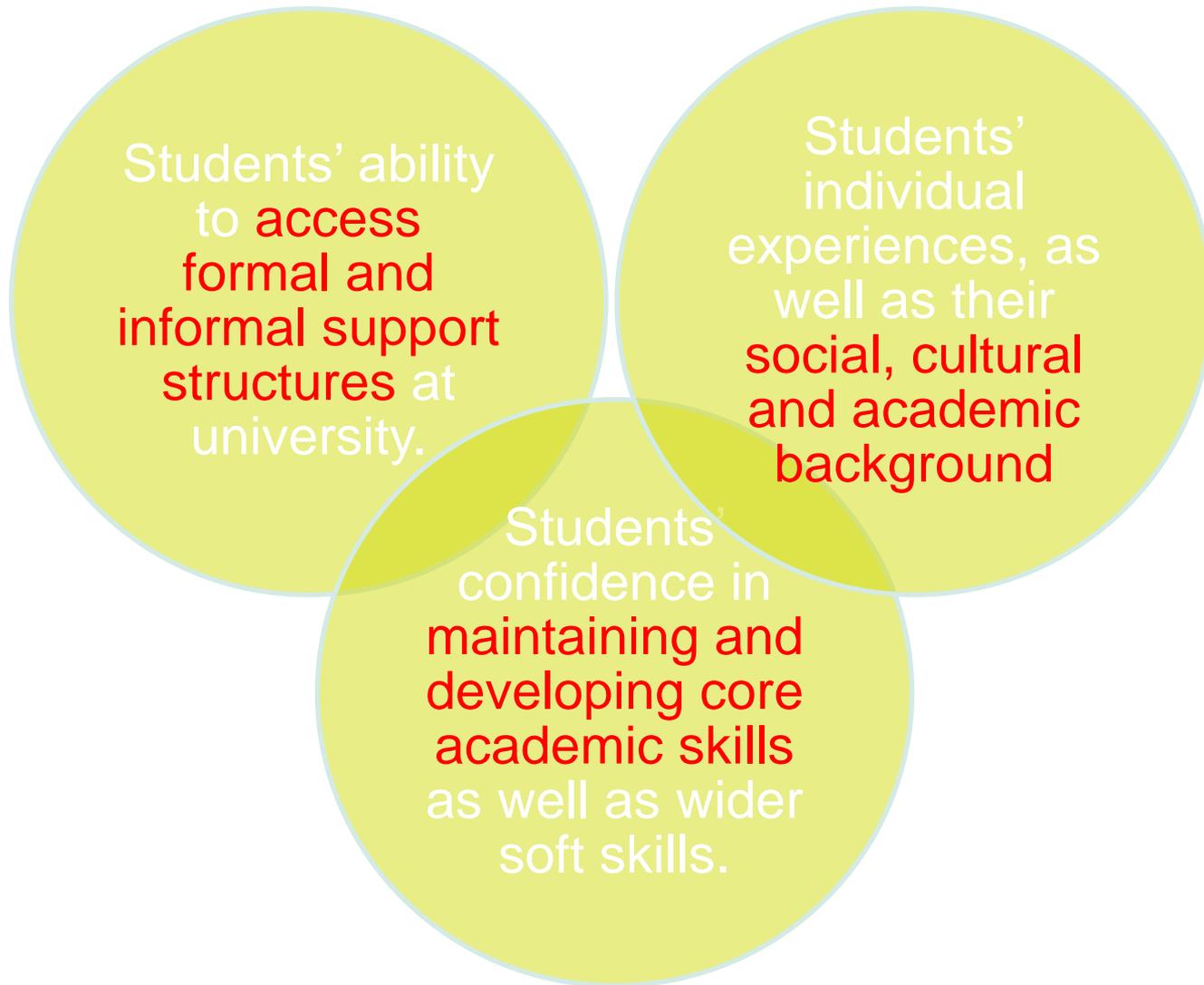
Cohort 3:	Timeline	Number of interviews	Degree Subjects
Lecturers	March 2017	9	2 Sport Science 4 Drama 3 Business

Cohort 4:	Timeline	Number of interviews
Employers	May 2017	8

* Within **cohort 1**, due to logistical constraints, new students were recruited at each stage. 7 students participated in interviews A and B while 22 students participated in B and C. 5 students were interviewed at stages A, B and C.

****Cohort 1** and **cohort 2** have no students in common.

Qualitative Data: three main themes



Students' Social, Cultural and Academic Background: student experience

*'I've never been a very class-aware person, I've never reflected on my own class, it's never, ever been an issue or a thing for me. But **since I've come to university I feel like I'm really aware that I'm working class.**'* (Drama student, BTEC, second year)

*'I didn't think the type of people who go to university are as middle class and well off as they are, **I thought everybody went to university.** But really it still is a very big thing that people are very well off, middle class, that sort of group of people still go to uni. And I'm not that at all, I'm not about that.'* (Drama student, BTEC, end of first year)

Students' Social, Cultural and Academic Background: teachers comments

'BTEC students are 'disproportionately represented by students from WP [Widening Participation]' (Drama lecturer)

We're going to be looking at students who typically come from non-traditional background in terms of coming to university'.
(Business lecturer)

Students' Social, Cultural and Academic Background: barriers to integration

'The people are very different to what I'm used to. To start with, I couldn't find anybody that was like me, or that had the same interests, or same sort of background and upbringing that I've had...I found that quite daunting.' (Business student, BTEC, third year)

'I think a lot of BTEC students, and myself included...found the degree, that you weren't really supposed to be there, it was really for A level students. And sometimes I get the impression from our students ...they're almost a bit apologetic, "Oh gosh, I should know this, everyone knows this." And I think it's, from their point of view, there's a bit of that they've stolen a place at university.' (Sport and Exercise Science lecturer)

Students' Social, Cultural and Academic Background: barriers to integration

'Nobody knows. I don't tell anyone I've done BTEC, and I think it's because it's a little bit... I don't know if it's embarrassing, or I just think that if I say, oh yes, I've done BTEC, they're going to look at me and think, oh, you must be dumb. I just... That's how I've felt like the whole time.' (Business student, BTEC, third year)

'One of the girls...said, "Oh my goodness, there's people that got on here with BTECs, we can't be friends with them." And I just think that's such a strange way of thinking.' (Sport and Exercise Science student, BTEC, second year)

BTEC Students: skills transferred from post 16 study

Areas where students are confident:

- Practical work/seminars
- Evaluation/reflection
- Group work
- Presentations
- Coursework/assignments/
managing deadlines
- General subject knowledge

Areas requiring further support:

- Writing academic essays
- Reading academic texts
- Exams
- Lectures

A Focus on Support at University: barriers to accessing support

'There are so many students, it's so big. Nobody really knows you. Like, even you have your tutors, but they've got so many students as well. And again, like, I didn't really feel confident ever, like going to seek help like that. So I never really have. So I've just really, like, tried to do it all myself.' (Business student, BTEC, third year)

'It's terror, I think that they can't really bear to face how hard they find it, and are ashamed to show feedback and to show their writing to somebody to get help. I think they're ashamed. They've had, even after they've emailed me back and said, "Yes, I'll definitely sign up, I really need some help," you can see even in their emails that they're not confident with even writing an email. And then they don't sign up.' (Drama lecturer)

Progression Through University: increasing confidence over time

'In the second and third years there seems to be some sort of [breakthrough]...when they actually realise, and I'm speaking from experience a little bit as well...“Gosh, I can do this, and if I put the work in it pays off.” (Sport and Exercise Science lecturer)

'By the time they've gone into the second year and the end of the second year they understand what this academic game is and how to play it.' (Drama lecturer)

'Very new and quite an intense start. And I feel like throughout the year...it's progressively probably got better. But also you've adjusted to it as well. It's not got easier but things have started to fall into place.' (Sport and Exercise Science student, BTEC, end of first year)

ALWAYS LEARNING