



A project that helped to close attainment gaps for black and minority ethnic students through intensive and personalised support landed the University of Kent the Outstanding Support for Students award.

Nationally, the least advantaged students achieve lower rates of attainment and progression in higher education, and this affects groups including BME students in particular.

Kent's Student Success Project adopted an innovative approach, using institutional research conducted by two dedicated researchers and student support mechanisms coordinated by project officers within academic schools.

Nine pilot academic schools were selected for the first two-year phase of the project because they had the widest attainment gaps and a significant gap between the proportions of good degrees awarded to BME and white students.

The project work within these schools is credited with reducing the institution's BME attainment gap by 3.7 per cent over the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years. The reduction was higher in the nine schools, at 6.4 per cent.

The university's gold teaching excellence framework award drew attention to what the TEF panel described as "an outstanding student success project".

The judges said that Kent "stood out from the pack with its impressive and innovative approach to improving academic outcomes for the least advantaged students. By creating a comprehensive network of tailored support and dedicated institutional research opportunities for such students in nine pilot schools, the university has made outstanding progress in narrowing the attainment gap, and has created a model that can be rolled out across the institution."