

University of Plymouth

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

Here is the [full access and participation plan](#) for the University of Plymouth.

Key points

See pages 1 to 9 of the full plan

The focus of our access and participation plan is on improving outcomes for specific groups of students. Data for the period 2013-14 to 2017-18 showed that compared to their peers at the University of Plymouth, outcomes are lower for certain groups of students.

- Students were less likely to **access** higher education at the University of Plymouth if they are:
 - From Black, Asian and other diverse ethnic backgrounds
 - From areas of high social deprivation (to measure this we use the national Index of Multiple Deprivation, which measures relative deprivation for small areas)
- Students were less likely to **continue** their studies if they:
 - Come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education (these are known as Low Progression Neighbourhoods)
 - Are mature (over 21 years old when they start their university course).
- The following groups of students were less likely to **attain** a degree award of 2:1 or above:
 - Students from Black, Asian and other diverse ethnic backgrounds
 - Disabled students
 - Students from areas of high social deprivation
- Students were less likely to **progress** to highly skilled employment or further study if they:
 - Come from a Low Progression Neighbourhood
 - Are from Black African or Black Caribbean ethnicities.

Fees we charge

See page 33 of the full plan

At the University of Plymouth, the maximum fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- £6,935 for part-time students.

You can see a full list of [fees for courses](#) at the University of Plymouth.

Financial help available

See pages 20 to 21 of the full plan

We offer financial support to students, some of which is targeted at students from underrepresented groups. This helps students to access higher education and continue studying until they complete their course. The support includes:

- A **travel bursary** for students from under-represented groups to attend our open days, our applicant days and interviews.
- A **bursary for the first year of study** of £1000 if the student's household income is below £25,000

- A **bursary for the first year of study** of £400 if the student's household income is below £35,000.
- An **annual bursary** of £1,500 for the duration of the course if the student is a Care Leaver, a young adult carer or estranged from their family.
- **Sanctuary Scholarships** are a financial support package for students who may have difficulty accessing home fees due to their immigration status.
- A **hardship fund** to support students who experience financial hardship during their time at University.

Up to date information on bursaries and other funding options can be found [here](#).

Information for students

See pages 30 to 31
of the full plan

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days and our applicant days, by letter and by email communications.

Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student portal, internal communications campaigns and emails.

For the most up-to-date information, see our [university website](#).

See pages 11 to 12
of the full plan

What we are aiming to achieve

Our aims are to support students to access higher education and create an environment where students can achieve their full potential.

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

- **Support attainment in schools and access to higher education** – We are working with schools to raise pupil attainment and expectations of continuing into higher education. During 2022-23, we will identify schools where fewer pupils access higher education. We will develop a more comprehensive programme of work with them to start in 2023-24.
- **Diversifying our provision** – Through our [partnerships with local colleges](#) we offer and deliver a range of different courses that enable students to progress onto the highest levels of study. The University's Apprenticeship Strategy (2022) ensures that we will continue to grow the number of [Degree Apprenticeship programmes](#) so that they are an important and distinctive element of the University's ambition to increase opportunities for learning outside of traditional routes.
- By 2024-25 (baseline data 2017-18) we aim to increase the percentages of students **accessing** higher education for:
 - Students from areas of high social deprivation by 5%
 - Students from Black, Asian and other diverse ethnic backgrounds by 4.4%
 - Students from Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds by 2.7%
- By 2024-25 (baseline data 2016-17) we aim to reduce the gap in the **continuation rate** between:
 - Mature and young students by 3.2%
 - Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and students from High Participation Neighbourhoods by 3.6%
- By 2024-25 (baseline data 2017-18) we will reduce the **attainment gap** between:

- Students from Black, Asian and other diverse backgrounds and white students by 7.5%.
 - Students from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds and white students by 8.4%.
 - Disabled and non-disabled students by 5%.
 - Students from areas of high social deprivation and areas of low social deprivation by 7.5%
- By 2024-25 (baseline data 2016-17) we will reduce the **progression gap** between:
 - Students that come from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and students from High Participation Neighbourhoods by 5%.
 - Students from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds and white students by 10.7%

What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 13 to 25
of the full plan

We have identified a number of activities to support achievement of our aims and targets, which we continue to evaluate and review.

1. Expand our **programme of work with schools** to support more pupils from underrepresented groups to attain good grades and progress to higher education.
2. Take a collaborative approach to **promoting practices** for reading lists, curricula, and assessment that ensure critical, inclusive, and challenging learning that promotes diversity and equity.
3. Develop ongoing activities and resources to **close attainment gaps** in our target groups
4. Learning from delivery and success during the pandemic to develop our **education environment, training, and support**.
5. Continue our inclusive **support for study** throughout the University for all students from all backgrounds, with diverse needs.
6. Support students to develop their **professional skills and employability** through our Knowledge Exchange programme and Careers Service.
7. Take a collaborative approach to improving access, success, and progression with our **external partners**.
8. Offer **financial support**, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students.

How students can get involved

See pages 25 to 26
of the full plan

We consulted with our Students' Union to ensure student input into the design of our access and participation plan and students sit on both committees that oversee the work for, and implementation of, the plan. Students can provide feedback by contacting the Students' Union.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

See pages 26 to 30
of the full plan

Our programmes of activity are informed by impact evaluation of what works for students. We collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- our programmes' designs
- the impact of the activities we are delivering to achieve our aims
- the impact on achieving our overall aim of improved access and creating an environment where students can achieve their full potential

The Evaluation Steering Group monitors and reports on these processes to the Student Success Committee. The Student Success Committee oversees implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones in our access and participation plan. We will monitor impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website by January 2024.

Contact details for further information

You can contact Julian True, Access and Participation Manager, at pao@plymouth.ac.uk for further information.