

University of Plymouth Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full plan for the University of Plymouth by clicking on the link for Access and Participation Plan 2025-2029 near the bottom of the [‘About’](#) page of our website.

Key points (see pages 1-4 and Annex A of the full plan for more information).

In reviewing our assessment of performance, we referred to various sources of data, which we then cross referenced to the Office for Students Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). From this we identified the inequalities and indicators of risk to equality of opportunity for different underrepresented groups at each stage of the student lifecycle. These stages are; getting into (accessing) university; continuing into the second year of study; completing the degree; achieving a good degree; and progressing into graduate-level employment or postgraduate study. The data shows that at the University of Plymouth we need to:

- improve access and raise attainment for students who are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, from areas of high social deprivation and who are in receipt of free school meals
- improve continuation from the first year of study into the second year for students who are mature (over 21) and from areas of low participation in higher education
- increase the number of black African and black Caribbean students who complete their degree
- improve attainment for black African and black Caribbean students, and students from areas of high social deprivation
- improve progression into graduate level jobs and post graduate study for black African and black Caribbean students, and for students from areas of low participation in higher education.

Fees we charge (see page 57 of the full plan for more information).

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

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

You can find the cost of a course at the University of Plymouth by clicking on the link for Fee Summary near the bottom of the [‘About’](#) page of our website.

Financial help available (see pages 30-32 of the full plan for more information).

We provide a range of financial support to students to enable them to progress and achieve well while at university:

- The Mayflower Award
 - £1000 for the first year of study for students from households with an annual income <£25K
 - £400 for the first year of study for students from households with an annual income <£35K
 - £1,500 per year of study for Care Leavers and students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
 - £300, £750 or £1,500 per year of study for Carers, depending on circumstances
- Sanctuary Scholarships – for asylum seekers and refugees, Full fee-waiver, £1000 per year of study and a fully funded pre-sessional English course
- Make It Count Award – for selected students from areas of high social deprivation, £3,000 for the first year of study

- Careers Insight Programme – up to £1,000 towards internships and work experience for selected students
- Financial Support Fund – to support students who experience financial hardship.

Information for students (see pages 30-31 of the full plan for more information).

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events like our Open and Applicant Days, at outreach activities held in schools and on campus, and also via letter and email. In addition, the University's website provides a range of information on the support available including a separate webpage for each course. This details the key features, the entry requirements and the fees, costs and funding.

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

What we are aiming to achieve (see pages 2-4 and Annex A of the full plan for more information).

Overall we aim to create an environment where all students have equal opportunity to thrive and succeed and where those who encounter barriers or difficulties are supported to overcome them.

Where we have identified inequalities of opportunity, we have set the following objectives:

Objective 1: To increase the proportion of ethnically diverse students entering the University from 13.5% to 15.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 2: To increase the proportion of students in receipt of free school meals entering the University from 12.6% to 16% by 2028-29.

Objective 3: To reduce the gap between students from Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 and IMD Q5 entering the University from 8.3% to 4.0% by 2028-29. IMD measures relative deprivation for small areas, Quintile 1 are the most deprived areas and Quintile 5 are the least deprived.

Objective 4: To raise attainment for secondary school students in years 7 to 11. We will do this through outreach that improves the skills and learning that support attainment.

Objective 5: To reduce the gap in Continuation (from first year into second year) between mature students and young students from 6.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 6: To reduce the gap in Continuation (from first year into second year) between students from Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA) Q1 and Q5 from 5.8% to 2.0% by 2028-29. TUNDRA measures the proportion of young people who enter higher education: from Quintile 1, with the lowest, to Quintile 5 with the highest.

Objective 7: To reduce the gap in Completion (of a degree course) between Black African and Caribbean students, and White students, from 9.9% to 4.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 8: To reduce the gap in Attainment between Black African and Caribbean students, and White students, from 19.7% to 14.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 9: To reduce the gap in Attainment between students from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 from 14.8% to 9.0% by 2028-29.

Objective 10: To reduce the gap in Progression into graduate level employment or postgraduate study between Black African and Caribbean students, and White students, from 2.1% to 0% by 2028-29.

Objective 11: To reduce the gap in Progression into graduate level employment or postgraduate study between students from TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 from 7.3% to 2.0% by 2028-29.

What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity (see pages 5-26 and Annex B of the full plan for more information).

To address our main risks to equality of opportunity we have designed 7 Intervention Strategies (IS). These are groups of activities that have been selected based on evidence from our own evaluation or sector research. We believe that they will support those students we have identified as most at risk in the different strands of the student lifecycle.

IS 1: Widening Access. Outreach activities that will Increase knowledge and awareness of the different pathways into higher education, provide information, advice and guidance to help students access higher education, and a contextual (reduced tariff) offer for selected students from IMD Q1.

IS 2: Pre-16 Attainment Raising. Programmes of outreach activities, in collaboration with Next Steps South West, which is our local consortium of Uni Connect, the national collaborative outreach partnership. These aim to raise attainment and improve GCSE results by improving the skills and learning that support attainment.

IS 3: Continuation. Firstly, activities to build a sense of identity and belonging, promote wellbeing and help students feel well supported and part of the University community. Secondly, activities to support students to think about and assess how they learn, to help build skills that support learning and to increase expectations to achieve well.

IS 4: Financial Support. Bursaries and scholarships for students from low annual income households and areas of high social deprivation so they can participate more fully in student life.

IS 5: Awarding Gap and Completion. Activities that build students confidence about their studies and university life, help them improve how they think about and assess how they learn, build skills that support learning and enable them to engage better with their academic studies.

IS 6: Progression. Students are prepared, trained and equipped with the professional skills and behaviours required for employment. They are supported to obtain relevant work experience and to increase their understanding of how to navigate and succeed in the graduate employment market. They develop their knowledge and understanding of postgraduate study.

IS 7: Mental Health. Activities to support student mental health, developed for, or targeted at, those students from underrepresented groups disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

How students can get involved (see pages 28-29 of the full plan for more information).

Our University of Plymouth Students' Union (UPSU) has representation on all major committees through its elected officers and permanent members of staff. We involved students throughout all stages of the Access and Participation Plan submission process, both through the Students' Union and also through focus groups and workshops. To gather feedback from the wider student body for the plan, we worked closely with UPSU to design a survey. This was used to gauge student opinion on the range of activities in place to support the different underrepresented groups at the University.

Moving forward, we will work with UPSU to complement their Student Networks by building on these to hold student led forums of underrepresented groups to feedback on the work and impact of the plan, including the various activities delivered through the Intervention Strategies.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (see pages 29-30 of the full plan for more information).

The University has a Data Analytics Team to provide bespoke analysis of our student data as well as a dedicated Impact Evaluation Team and together they provide a high level of expertise to oversee and support a coherent programme of evaluation across the different strands of the student lifecycle.

All of the activities in the plan were designed and based on existing research and evidence to align with the needs of our students. For each strand in the student lifecycle, we have developed a separate plan that links our activities to outcomes and clearly shows the assumptions and processes underpinning them. We use mixed methods of evaluation such as surveys, focus groups, observational analysis and statistical analysis. As we go forward, we will include some more complex techniques to try and demonstrate how the activities lead directly to the expected outcomes. We will publish the analysis and outcomes of our evaluation on our website.

Contact details for further information

Please contact the Planning and Analytics Office for more information pao@plymouth.ac.uk