

University of Essex

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.

You can see the full access and participation plan for the University of Essex at

www.essex.ac.uk/governance-and-strategy/governance/access-and-participation-plan

Key points (see pages 1-16 of the full plan)

The aim within our Strategic Plan 2019-2025 is to provide all students with an educational experience that meets their needs and aspirations and supports them, irrespective of their background, to achieve outstanding outcomes. We look for students with the merit and potential to benefit from the transformational opportunities we offer.

This commitment is demonstrated by:

- the growth in the proportion of our students from areas least likely to participate in Higher Education;
- the increasing proportion of our students who have declared a disability;
- the increasing proportion of our students who are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic groups, now 47% of our undergraduate student population.

However, our data shows that we still have more work to do because, compared to their peers, students are less likely to get a 2.1 or above if they are:

- from areas classified as highly deprived;
- from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group.

Overall progression into employment is similar for all our students.

Fees we charge

At the University of Essex, until 2024-25 the maximum fees charged for UK home students are:

- £9,250 for full time students
- £11,100 for full time students on a two-year accelerated degree programme

You can see a full list of fees for courses at the University of Essex at

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/money>

Financial help available (see pages 25-26 of the full plan)

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. Our website provides information about the financial support packages we offer, the eligibility criteria and how to apply. The support includes:

- specific bursaries of up to £1,000 a year for care leavers and for students who have refugee status, or who are dependants of refugees;
- **International Experience Bursaries** of up to £1,000 to fund an international internship, placement or voluntary activities for students from **low-income households**;
- a **hardship fund** to support students experiencing financial difficulties;
- advice and support on financial management.

We keep our financial support packages under review to ensure we continue to provide beneficial funds to students in greatest need.

Information for students (see page 29 of the full plan)

- Prospective students receive information during events such as higher education fairs, open days, careers evenings and school/college presentations.
- Finance information is available on our website as well as through presentations (online and in person).
- There are dedicated email addresses for pre- and post-registration queries
- Current students receive information about fees and financial support through the website and internal communications and events delivered working together with our Students' Union.

For the most up-to-date information, see the [fees and funding pages on our university website](#).

What we are aiming to achieve (see pages 17-19 of the full plan)

Students are welcomed to the University of Essex on the basis of their potential and we take pride in supporting them to fulfil that potential.

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

- **Students from low participation neighbourhoods** – we will reduce the gap between the proportion of students studying with us who come from **low participation neighbourhoods** and those who come from the highest participation neighbourhoods
- **Black students** – By 2024-25 we will improve the degree outcomes of Black students and reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2.1s) between White students and Black students to 9.5%
- **Students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups** – we will improve the degree outcomes (1st or 2.1s) of these students and, by 2024-25, reduce the difference between White students and students from Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups to 8.8%.
- Improve degree outcomes for **students from low-income backgrounds** and reduce the gap between them and students from high-income families to 3% by 2024-25.

What we are doing to achieve our aims (see pages 20-26 of the full plan)

We have identified several programmes of activity to support the achievement of our aims and targets, which include (but are not limited to):

- Our **Schools Membership programme** which enables collaboration with schools and colleges to support students to realise their higher education aspirations.
- Resources to support departments to tackle racism and decolonise their curricula and our aim to complete the **Race Equality Charter** to improve the representation, progression and success of students from Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups within higher education.
- Using **Learner Analytics** to support students to understand the impact of their engagement activities and identify steps for themselves to support their own achievement. Personal tutors also use this data to target support to students and the data supports evidence-based actions in departments to enhance the curriculum and teaching delivery.
- A Student Development service that supports students to both transition into university through **embedded study and skills support provision** and to progress beyond university through dedicated careers and employability support.
- **Financial support**, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students and advice and practical support for students on financial awareness and management.

How students can get involved (see page 26 of the full plan)

Students have an important role in shaping our institutional strategy and monitoring our progress in delivering it. We use student feedback to ensure our priorities for action reflect student priorities relating to support for success and progression.

We worked with the Students' Union to write our plan and set the targets within it. Students also have an integral role in the ongoing monitoring of target progression and evaluation of our plan. Student representation and consultation is a core commitment at the University of Essex and is demonstrated by student representation at departmental meetings, key committees and working groups.

To provide feedback, students can [contact their student union representative](#)

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (see pages 27-29 of the full plan)

Our dedicated Access and Participation Plan Group monitors our targets and reports on progression to our university committees. We operate an annual cycle of review and evaluation and use quantitative and qualitative data and feedback to evaluate the impact of our activities on our target groups. We ensure our impact reports are accessible by making them available via our website.

Contact details for further information

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