

University of Portsmouth

Summary of the University's Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets 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 Portsmouth at

<https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/corporate-governance/access-and-participation-plans>

Key points

The University carried out an assessment of performance and identified the following risks to equality of opportunity:

Access to Higher Education

- Learners from schools and colleges in Portsmouth and the surrounding area are less likely to go to University than many others in the region, and nationally.
- Access is a particular issue for certain groups. These include people of the global majority (PGM) students, care-experienced students/care leavers, students previously eligible for free school meals (FSM), and students from military families.

Success in Higher Education

- Students who were previously FSM-eligible, and students who declare mental health conditions, are less likely to continue from their first year of study to the second.
- Students from neighbourhoods with historically lower rates of participation in higher education are less likely to complete their study.
- PGM students are less likely to continue on and complete their studies. They are also less likely to be awarded a degree at 2.1 or above than white students. This awarding gap has a particularly negative impact on Black students.

Progression from Higher Education to Professional Employment or Further Study

- PGM students, students with disabilities, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to enter graduate-level employment or further study when they complete their studies.

The primary focus of our Access and Participation Plan is to reduce gaps in access, success and progression for these at-risk groups. See pages 2-3 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

Fees we charge

The maximum fees we charge UK undergraduate students are:

- £9,535 for full-time students (for 2025/26 entry)
- £7,145 for part-time students (for 2025/26 entry)

These are the maximum fees charged. Individual course fees are available through our website.

Please note that tuition fees will increase for new and continuing students in 2026/27 onwards in line with the maximum fee approved by the Government.

Financial help available

We offer the following financial support to students from underrepresented groups:

- **Widening Participation (WP) Bursary Scheme:** £500 per year for full-time English undergraduates with a household income of £25,000 a year or less.
- **Compact Scholarship Scheme:** £1,000 for first-year students from specific local colleges who are from low participation areas, or were previously FSM-eligible
- **PGM Advance Scholarship:** £500 per year for UK PGM students from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles 1 & 2 (allocated via an application process);
- **Care Leavers Bursary:** £1,700 per year for full-time undergraduate UK students who spent at least 13 weeks in care, some of which during their teenage years;
- **Stand Alone Bursary:** £1,000 per year for full-time undergraduate UK students aged under 25 and estranged from their parents;
- **Young Carers Bursary:** £500 per year for full-time undergraduate UK students aged under 25 with caring responsibilities for a parent or family member (but not a dependent child), and a family income of less than £25,000 a year;
- **The University Support Fund:** provides limited financial support to students who are in financial difficulty and are unable to meet basic living costs; or students who have experienced unforeseen events or a change in their financial situation.

See pages 27-28 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

Information for students

Advice and guidance are given to potential applicants and their advisers, to enable effective decision-making. Information, including financial advice, is shared through:

- Finance talks for students and parents in schools and colleges;
- Open days (face-to-face and virtual);
- Email communications to enquirers and applicants;
- One-to-one advice;
- Our website and social media sites.

See pages 30-31 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Through our Access and Participation Plan we seek to address gaps that persist across the student lifecycle. The plan sets out six key risks to students achieving equality of opportunity and objectives:

Risk 1: Limited knowledge and skills and lack of information about, and poor perceptions of higher education limits attainment and aspiration and reduces access to higher education.

Objective 1: Support local primary and secondary schools to enable learners to gain knowledge and skills needed to access higher education.

Risk 2: Issues relating to Risk 1 have a disproportionate impact on access to higher education for specific underrepresented groups.

Objective 2: Improve entry rates for previously FSM-eligible students and other underrepresented groups within our sub-region.

Risk 3: The rising cost of living, the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic and, sometimes, lower levels of support has led to a growing gap in continuation for some underrepresented groups.

Objective 3: Address these risks to reduce continuation gaps for students who were previously FSM-eligible, and students with disabilities.

Risk 4: The rising cost of living, the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic and, sometimes, lower levels of support has led to a growing gap in completion of studies for some underrepresented groups.

Objective 4: Reduce completion gaps for students from the most deprived neighbourhoods, disabled students; between Black and white students, and between Black female and Black male students.

Risk 5: The awarding gap for PGM students remains a significant issue, with a particular negative impact on Black students.

Objective 5: To significantly reduce awarding gaps for PGM, and particularly Black students.

Risk 6: There are gaps in progression to professional-level employment or further study for some groups for a number of reasons. These include financial position, access, and time to undertake activity, such as, work experience or volunteering.

Objective 6: To reduce gaps in progression to professional-level employment or further study for PGM students, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and students with multiple disabilities and social and communication impairments.

See pages 3-5 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information on the risks to equality of opportunity and our objectives.

What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

The intervention strategies included in our APP are designed to address these risks and deliver on the objectives above, through activity including:

- Expansion of existing work of the University of Portsmouth Academy Trust to support school attainment and access to HE in our sub-region;
- Expansion of contextualised offer making and a scholarship scheme for WP entrants from partner colleges in our region;
- Introduction of new activity intended to increase participation in higher education for individuals from military families, as well as continuation and expansion of existing activities;
- Enhanced curriculum development and responsive timetabling to remove barriers to students facing financial and other external pressures to support students to continue on, and complete, their studies;
- Events to support students who may find adapting to University more challenging, including care leavers, estranged students, students who declare a mental health condition and students with social and communication difficulties;
- Enhanced staff training to support students with disabilities;
- A university-wide programme of activity to address awarding gaps, including training for all staff to gain a better understanding of the student lived experience;
- Additional review of our curriculum to embed inclusivity;
- Embedding PGM ambassadors within Student Support services;
- Expansion of existing careers support for all students and new targeted support for PGM students, and students with disabilities

See pages 6-23 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information on our intervention strategies.

How students can get involved

The University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) is represented throughout the University's leadership and committee structure. The University works with UPSU on many projects, including the access and participation plan.

In developing this access and participation plan UPSU shared their insights gathered through student surveys, focus groups and discussions with student course representatives. The University also ran three online consultation workshops for all students.

Students can get involved in future access and participation work in many ways, including but not limited to:

- Becoming an elected officer of UPSU;
- Becoming a student representative of their course;
- Attending focus groups and workshops held by the University and by UPSU.

See pages 28-29 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Evaluation will be carried out for each of our intervention strategies. Results will be monitored by a central Access and Participation Plan Monitoring and Evaluation group. This group will report directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), and will operate in collaboration with University of Portsmouth Students' Union.

Findings will also be shared externally through conferences, professional networks and online. Evaluation and examples of good practice will also be shared within the University and with partners such as local schools and colleges.

See pages 29-30 of our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact the MyPort Hub at myport@port.ac.uk or 023 9284 4444 for more information.