

University of Birmingham

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

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan (APP; 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 access and participation plan](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/equality/widening-participation) for the University of Birmingham at <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/equality/widening-participation>.

Key points

The focus of our Plan is on improving access to the University of Birmingham through our Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scheme, with a particular emphasis on improving access for students eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage 4 (FSM) and care experienced students. Ensuring students from specific groups continue their studies while they are here, narrowing the degree outcome gaps which exist between specific groups of students, and narrowing the gap for the progression to employment or further study for specific groups. The student groups upon which our Plan focuses are:

- Students eligible for Free School Meals (observed inequality in access).
- Care Leavers (observed inequality in access).
- Students who live in an area of socio-economic deprivation as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintile 1 (observed inequality in continuation, degree outcomes and progression to higher level employment).
- Minority ethnic groups, with a particular focus on Black students (observed inequality in continuation and degree outcomes).
- Students with a declared disability (observed inequality in continuation and degree outcomes).

See pages [Annex A of the full access and participation plan](#) for more information.

Fees we charge

The maximum fees charged for a UK undergraduate student at the University of Birmingham is £9,250.

See <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/tuition> pages for the most up-to-date information for current and prospective students.

Financial help available

We offer financial support to help our students to access higher education and continue studying until their course is complete. Our support packages include:

- An annual bursary of £2,000, known as the Chamberlain Award. This award is available to students with a household income of less than £25k. An award of £1,000 is available for students with a household income of between £25k and £35k.
- Care leavers are eligible for an enhanced Chamberlain award of either subsidised University accommodation (up to £9,000) or a cash award of £3,000.
- Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scholarship of £1,500 for entrants who successfully participate in the P2B programme, perform well in the Access to Birmingham module, and achieve the standard offer grades for their course.

- Annual awards for students from the University of Birmingham School (known as the Mike Roden scholarships) for ten students per year. Four awards of £5,000 are available for students studying STEM programmes and six awards of £1,500 are available for students studying non-STEM programmes).

See the [Chamberlain Award](#) page for more information.

The most up to date information on our range of awards and scholarships is available on our website. All qualifying award students are automatically notified by letter of their eligibility and the payment schedule of their award.

Information for students

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, 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 the [University website](#).

Page 33 of our Plan provides further information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our Plan contains twelve objectives and eight targets which aim to address nine key risks to equality of opportunity that we have identified. We believe that addressing these risks will reduce the gaps in access and outcomes that exist between over and under-represented groups at the University of Birmingham.

- We will **continue to expand, develop, and broaden the reach of our outreach initiatives** to widen access to higher education. Specifically, we will increase the proportion of students studying at Birmingham who are eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage 4 (from 8% to 12%) and double the number of care leavers entering the University (from 14 to 30).
- We will **maintain the proportion of *Pathways to Birmingham (P2B)* students** entering the University at 10% of our intake whilst focussing efforts on ensuring equality of outcomes for these students through our intervention strategies.
- We will **reduce the awarding gap** for Black students and students from IMD Quintile 1.
- We will **eliminate the continuation gap** for Black students and students from IMD Quintile 1.
- We will **reduce the gap in progression** to graduate-level employment or further study for students from IMD Quintile 1.
- We will **continue to monitor our high-risk student cohorts** across their study lifecycle.

See pages 4-5 of our Plan for more information.

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

We have four intervention strategies which we believe will enable us to meet the targets we have set. Each of the strategies has been developed using available evidence, either from existing research, internal evaluation, or the identification of effective practice. The strategies are:

- **Access:** to continue to expand, develop and broaden the reach of our outreach initiatives to widen access to higher education through our flagship access programme, [Pathways to Birmingham](#).

- **Continuation:** to ensure that all our students are supported to thrive in their university experience and progress towards successful outcomes. We will achieve this by enhancing the scaffolding and support students require to be successful throughout their studies; this will be underpinned by the provision of [financial assistance through our Chamberlain Award](#).
- **Attainment:** to ensure that all our students have equitable opportunities to realise success in their degree and award outcomes. We will achieve this through a university curriculum that is genuinely inclusive and provides equity in opportunity for all learners, and that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable all students to achieve their full potential.
- **Progression:** to continue our work to improve progression outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Our interventions will prepare our students to prosper as citizens and become highly employable graduates, equipped to succeed in their chosen careers and life choices, or to progress their aspirations by successfully accessing further study opportunities.

In addition, we will continue to provide wider reaching high quality activities to learners in schools and colleges and to support the success and progression of our own students. We will deliver our own activities and work with partner organisations to ensure our programme of interventions effective and robustly evaluated.

See pages 6-24 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Students are important contributors to the delivery of our access and participation activity. They are key role models as ambassadors and mentors in our outreach activity, as well as in our on-programme peer-assisted study support and mentoring programmes. In many instances, our students are co-creators of the support and services we provide. This Plan was developed in partnership with our Guild of Students; they will continue to be involved through ongoing oversight of the delivery of the Plan and in helping us engage our wider student body with its interventions, activities and evaluation.

See page 26 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Evaluation is embedded in the way that we work. Each of the four Intervention Strategies in our Plan have supporting Theories of Change and our progress against our aims is evaluated using a combination of methods that encompass the full range of OfS (Office for Students) evaluation standards, from narrative to causal, depending on their type and intensity.

We will report annually on its progress against the Plan. This report will be made available through our website.

See pages 27-32 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact our team at outreach@bham.ac.uk for any APP related queries.