

University of Bristol

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 access and participation plan for the University of Bristol at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/after-you-apply/policies/access-agreements/>

Key points

See pages 1-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

The focus of our plan is increasing our proportional intake of underrepresented groups and ensuring positive on-course outcomes for all students regardless of their backgrounds. Our data shows that:

- Students from low socio-economic groups are less likely to access the University than their advantaged peers. Students from low socio-economic groups are also less likely to obtain a 2:1 or above compared to their advantaged peers.
- Black students are underrepresented in our student population. Black students, Asian students, and students belonging to 'other' ethnic groups are also less likely to obtain a 2:1 or above compared to White students.
- Mature students are underrepresented in our student population. Mature students are also less likely to obtain a 2:1 or above and less likely to complete their degree compared to students below the age of 21 upon enrolment.
- Students who declare a mental health condition are less likely to complete their degree compared to students with no disability. Students who declare a mental health condition are also less likely to be in employment or further study after graduating compared to students with no disability.

Using the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, we have identified which key risks to equality of opportunity might be contributing to these outcomes. These sector-wide risks are available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/>

At Bristol, most of these sector-wide risks are applicable to our context. An additional risk we identify as relevant to our context is insufficient sense of belonging.

In our plan, we address these priority areas through a series of objectives, targets, and intervention strategies. Our intervention strategies set out the actions we will take to challenge our key risks and improve equality of opportunity for all students.

Fees we charge

See page 30 of the access and participation plan for more information.

At the University of Bristol, the maximum fees charged to full-time UK-domiciled undergraduate students is £9,250. This is subject to change based on the maximum fee limits set by Government. Up to date fee information is available at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/>

Financial help available

See pages 30-32 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Offering financial support to students on lower incomes is a major part of our plan. Details of our financial support offer are available at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/>

University of Bristol Bursary

To be eligible for the University of Bristol Bursary you must be:

- a full-time UK undergraduate student currently domiciled in the UK
- or a part-time UK undergraduate student currently domiciled in the UK who started your studies on or after 1 August 2020.

In addition, you must:

- be eligible for Home tuition fees;
- have applied to your regional funding provider for means-tested support;
- have been assessed to have a household income of £50,000 or less.

Students who are not eligible for bursary:

- students undertaking a second undergraduate degree;
- students undertaking a paid or unpaid year in industry (in the UK or abroad) as part of their degree;
- students on any year of their course where they are entitled to NHS funding;
- students who are registered as 'exams only'.

Household Income	Award Value
£0 - £10k+	£2,500
£10k - £20k	£2,000
£20k - £30k	£1,500
£30k - £40k	£1,000
£40k - £50k	£500

Information for students

See pages 30-32 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Prospective students and current students can find information on our financial support offer at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/>

This information covers eligibility criteria for bursaries and scholarships and the level of financial support students from underrepresented groups will be offered in each year of their studies.

Prospective students can receive related information at our recruitment events (including open days), school visits, outreach events, and through our interactive online prospectus. Current students can receive information and support from our dedicated Money Advice team.

What we are aiming to achieve

See page 4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

We want to improve the diversity of students accessing our university and narrow the gaps in outcomes experienced by some groups on-course and after they graduate. Our nine objectives articulate this ambition, highlighting our target groups at different stages of the student journey:

1. To increase the proportion of students from lower socio-economic groups enrolling at the University.
2. To increase the proportion of Black and Asian students enrolling at the University.
3. To maintain the proportion of mature students enrolling at the University.
4. To narrow the gap in completion rates between students who declare a mental health condition and students with no disability.
5. To narrow the gap in completion rates between mature students and young students.
6. To narrow the attainment gap between mature students and young students.
7. To narrow the attainment gap between students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.
8. To narrow the attainment gaps between global majority students and white students.

9. To narrow the gap in progression rates between students who declare a mental health condition and students with no disability.

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

See pages 4-22 of the access and participation plan for more information.

To address our key risks, we have designed eight intervention strategies which align with our nine objectives.

In intervention strategies 1-3 we outline the actions we will take to address the diversity of students accessing our university. Our commitments include but are not limited to:

- An expanded contextual offer scheme involving a grade reduction of up to two grades below standard entry requirements
- Extensive outreach opportunities including university information, advice and guidance
- Investment in partnerships to support social mobility and KS3, 4 and 5 attainment, including IntoUniversity and The Brilliant Club
- An expanded University of Bristol Bursary scheme for students on low incomes

In intervention strategies 4-7 we outline the actions we will take to narrow the gaps in outcomes experienced by some groups while at the University. Our commitments include but are not limited to:

- Enhanced transition and clinical support for students with mental health conditions
- Disability awareness and mental health literacy training for staff
- Enhanced transition and belonging programmes
- An enhanced Race Inclusion Advocate programme
- Enhanced money advice, coaching, resources, and workshops
- Further investment in staff training and development in inclusive pedagogies

In intervention strategy eight we outline the actions we will take to narrow the gap in progression rates between students who declare a mental health condition and students with no disability. Our commitments include but are not limited to enhanced Careers support for students with mental health conditions, with referral routes from specialist interventions.

How students can get involved

See pages 27-28 of the access and participation plan for more information.

We have an established APP Student Advisory Group which brings together current students interested in the development, implementation and oversight of our plan. Our extensive student ambassador and advocacy schemes also offers opportunity for students to engage in co-creation related to activities in our plan. Bristol SU Officers, elected by our student community, formally represent the voices of our student population at the committee responsible for oversight of our plan.

Students can express their interest in work opportunities related to our plan by getting in touch with the contact details included at the bottom of this summary.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

See pages 4-22, 28-30, and 68-69 of the access and participation plan for more information.

In our plan, we have set out how we will evaluate all our activities. Methods include evaluation surveys for participants who engage with provision, tracking of outcomes for participants, and research into the effectiveness of our financial support offer. Evaluation findings will be published on our website. Our operational Evaluation Action Group will report into the committee responsible for oversight of our plan.

Contact details for further information

Please contact Abbi Bainton-James, abbi.bainton-james@bristol.ac.uk, for more information.