

University of Southampton

Summary of 2020/21 – 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. Please have a look at our full [Access and Participation plan for University of Southampton](#).

Key points

Widening participation and social mobility are strategic priorities for the University of Southampton. Fairness is a core value in our strategy, and the commitments laid out in our access and participation plan are embedded in several of our supporting strategic plans. Our approach to widening participation and sociality mobility is set out in our five-year vision – *For a Fairer Future* – which accompanies this Access and Participation Plan.

We are working to ensure fair access to University, that all students thrive during their studies, and gain an award which supports them into work. Our particular focus in the short term is to look at the degrees we award in order to remove differences between White and Black students and between those who come from the most disadvantaged areas¹.

This is because it is these groups that show the widest awarding gaps. We are working hard to put support and resources in place so that *all* our students reach their potential. We have seen improvements in several of our key performance indicators, but we still have further to go to achieve the cultural change required.

Fees we charge

At the University of Southampton, the maximum UK fees for Undergraduate students are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- 50% of the fee if you study part time
- 20% of the fee shown during any year in employment as part of your course.

You can see a full list of fees for University of Southampton at [Undergraduate tuition fees | University of Southampton](#)

Financial help available

The University of Southampton offers a number of bursary programmes to support you with your living costs during your studies. From 2021/22 onwards, we automatically award bursaries of:

- £2,000 per year if you have a household income of less than £16,000 per year
- £1,000 per year if you have a household income of less than £30,000 per year
- £2,000 per year if you are a Care Leaver or estranged from your family.

¹ We use Indices of Multiple Deprivation ([IMD](#)) to understand the comparative deprivation of postcodes

In addition, the University operates a Student Support Fund which offers non-repayable grants of up to £3,000 if you are experiencing financial hardship during your studies.

You can find more information about our bursaries on our webpages:

[Undergraduate bursary | University of Southampton](#)

[Support for estranged students and care leavers | University of Southampton](#)

[University of Southampton Student Support Fund](#)

Information for students

Prospective students: If you are thinking of studying with us, you will receive information on fees at in-person events such as Open Days, via email, or through our [summer residential projects](#) or [workshops](#).

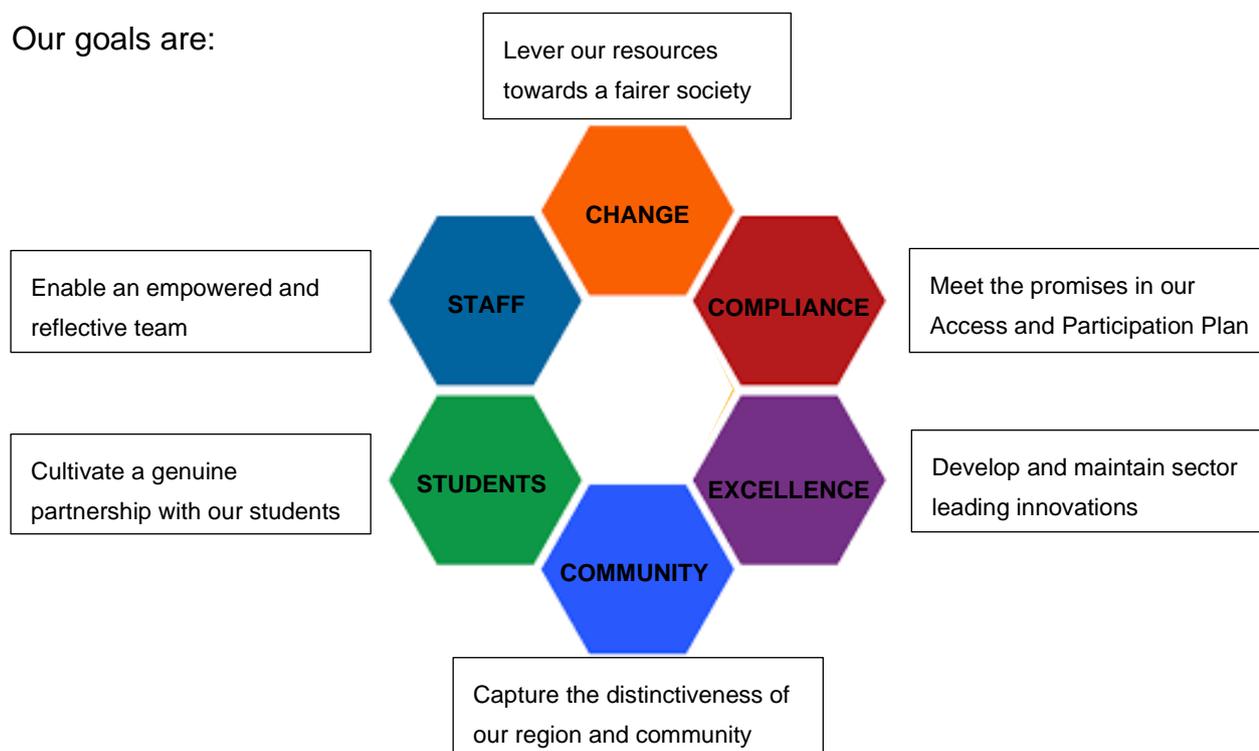
We regularly update our information for **care leavers** on the [Propel](#) website

Current students: If you are already studying with us, you will receive information about fees and about the financial support available to you through internal communications and emails.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to make the future fairer by creating an internationally recognised widening participation programme. We are proud to co-create this with our students and evaluate our impact using the best available measures. Our *Fairer Future* philosophy is built into the fabric of the University so that we can facilitate and support a socially diverse student population to enter Higher Education, thrive and succeed in their studies, and progress to graduate careers.

Our goals are:



By 2024/25, we hope to have made substantial changes. We would like to share our ambitions with you:

Students from low participation neighbourhoods and low-income backgrounds –

- Reduce the gap in participation between students from postcodes that are least and most likely to go to University² from a ratio of 5:1 to 3:1
- Reduce the gaps between 18 year old students from the most deprived postcodes³ and the wider population from **16.3%** to 10%. Reduce the gaps in awarding between students from the most and least deprived postcodes** from **11.2%** to 5.0%.

Black students -

- Reduce the gap between White and Black students achieving first or upper second degree classifications to 5% by and remove the gap completely by 2038.

Care leavers -

- Increase the number of learners with a background of care to 60

Mature students -

- Increase the proportion undergraduate entrants who are older than 20 to 12%

Disabled students -

- Reduce the non-continuation gap between students with a mental health disability and to those with no disability reported to 3.5%
- Close the gap between students who disclose disability and those who do not, in terms of achieving first or upper second degree classifications
- Close the gap in progression to employment or further study between students with a mental health disability and to those with no disability reported

We have a roadmap which supports our plan and will enable us to reach our goals over the next 5 years. Key strands of activity include:

- Our flagship widening participation programme - **Ignite Southampton** – which will support you across your journey from pre-entry to post-graduation.
- Our **academic skills** work – which offers guidance both before and after starting at the University, through our Learn with US transition programme and targeted on-course support.
- Our strategic **schools and college outreach** provision, with specific support for you and your peers in our target demographics.

Awarding gaps will remain a major priority for us, and we will continue to invest in research and action.

Co-creation is an integral part of our programme's authenticity and effectiveness, and our **Student Advisory Board and Awarding Gap Panel** will be a critical component in the development of our work.

² We use Participation by Local Area ([POLAR](#)) version 4 to understand the likelihood of people attending higher education based on postcodes

³ We use the IMD measurement as described on page 1

We will continue to seek out and maintain strategic **collaborations** with organisations which share our values and mission, and can provide assist with our ambitions.

All of our work will be underpinned by **evaluation and impact**. Our culture will be one of reflexive practice and we will contribute our findings to support national understanding of key issues.

There are many ways that you can get involved:

We work closely with **Southampton University Students' Union**. Their representatives sit at all layers of our committee structure within the University.

We also have a **Student Advisory Board** who have specific input into both the development of our access and participation plans and the reporting of our progress.

Finally, we have close links with **student networks** such as the Social Mobility Network.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved?

Our programme development will be informed by evidence from policy, theory and practice. We have been working hard to develop an evaluative, 'theory of change' based culture, in which activities are continually considered, and short- medium- and long-term impact is assessed.

We are excited about our Social Justice Library, which is a bank of evidence that staff and students can consult in their programme design.

Outputs from our evaluation will be fed into an evaluation map. Through this, we can monitor progress and identify themes across our programme of work. Progress is monitored formally by the Widening Participation Subcommittee, which reports to the Education Committee.

We will publish outcomes from our evaluation on our website by January 2024.

Contact details for further information

For more information, please contact Gino Graziano, Director of Widening Participation and Social Mobility, at g.c.graziano@soton.ac.uk.