

Newcastle University

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 are improving equity for students from groups which are underrepresented in Higher Education (HE) to get into, succeed in and progress from university. You can see our full Access and Participation Plan [here](#).

Key points

Newcastle University is a research-intensive university, providing education for over 18,000 undergraduate students at our flagship Newcastle campus in the North East of England.

Students from the North East are the least likely to progress to HE. The University makes a significant effort to engage with schools in the North East and for 2022-23, we plan to increase our work with schools and colleges to help students make the right choices for their future.

Our Access and Participation Plan is focused on improving outcomes for specific groups of students because there is evidence that some outcomes can be lower for certain groups at Newcastle University compared with their peers, for example:

- Some students coming to Newcastle University from neighbourhoods where not many people go on to HE still do less well than others;
- Students are less likely to complete their studies if they come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to HE;
- Although the gaps are narrowing, some groups of students are still less likely to achieve a high degree award (2:1 or above), for example Black and ethnically minoritised students;
- Students from some groups who are underrepresented in HE are less likely than others to progress to highly skilled employment or further study.

We are making progress towards meeting the targets we have set to reduce these inequalities, but we know more work is still needed.

Our fees

At Newcastle University, the maximum fee is £9,250 per year for full-time UK undergraduate students. Fees may increase as a result of inflation and government regulations on fee increases.

You can see a full list of fees for courses at Newcastle University on our [website](#).

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the full plan

Financial help

We offer a range of financial support, with some specific financial help for students from lower income households to make university an affordable option for more students. Our support includes:

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- Opportunity Scholarship: A non-repayable **cash bursary** of £1,000 for each year of study available to students with a household income between £25,001 and £35,000. This increases to £2,000 per year for students with a household income below £25,000.
- Discretionary **hardship funding**: available to support students from low-income households, students with dependent children and students from other underrepresented groups.
- **Work Placement Bursaries**: financial support for students who entered the University through a supported entry route or who belong to an underrepresented group, who can apply for up to £500 to support them to benefit from unpaid work experience opportunities or with costs for travel to job interviews.

Information for students

- Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support through email communications, on our website, and at in-person events, such as Open Days and Offer-holder days.
- Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our website, the Student App and via email communications.

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

What we are aiming to achieve

We aim to provide the highest quality and fairest experience we can for all our students. To do this, we will continue to take action to improve opportunities for all students from all backgrounds to access, succeed on and progress successfully from our programmes.

Based on a self-assessment of our performance, we have identified the following targets for some key groups of students:

- **Students from areas where participation in HE is low** - By 2024-25, we will improve:
 - The intake of students from the lowest participation neighbourhoods by 5.7%
 - The proportion of students continuing to the next year of their course by 3%.
- **Black students** - By 2024-25, we will reduce the gap between the number of Black and White students achieving a good degree outcome (2:1 or above) by 10%
- **All underrepresented student groups** – By 2024-25, we will reduce the % gap in the number of students from underrepresented groups progressing to highly skilled employment or further study at the end of their course compared to the majority by 2.5%.

We also aim to:

- **Support school attainment and access to higher education** – We will be evaluating the impact of our work with schools, and in addition to our current outreach programme will be exploring opportunities to work collaboratively to support raised attainment in schools and colleges.
- **Provide Diverse and Flexible Courses** – We have been developing our [higher and degree apprenticeships](#) provision, and are undertaking a review to expand this, working with cross-regional partners in colleges and employment sectors.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

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full plan

We have identified a range of activity to help meet our aims and targets. These include the following, with more outlined in our full plan:

- **Support School Attainment-raising** – expand our existing activities with schools and external partners, and explore working collaboratively with universities and school leaders, to develop a new programme to support our regional schools and colleges;
- **Deliver Supported Entry Routes to Newcastle and other research-intensive universities** - through our PARTNERS and Realising Opportunities programmes;
- **Deliver a progressive programme of outreach (in person and on-line) for students from underrepresented groups;**
- **Lead Collaborative partnerships** - including UniConnect, NE Raising Aspirations Programme, Realising Opportunities to support regional and national progression to HE;
- **Induction Programme** – Continue to work with students to evaluate and improve Induction for new students and help them make the transition to HE and develop a sense of belonging;
- **Further develop learning and teaching** - including assessment and feedback approaches;
- **Support Academic Skills Development** - provide tailored support for students who want advice to help them with the skills they need to do well in their studies;
- **Review Personal Tutoring** – continue to develop the support provided for students by their Person Tutor to help them succeed in their studies and access wider services;
- **Student Wellbeing** - further develop our provision of wellbeing and mental health support;
- **Review financial support measures for students from underrepresented groups;**
- **Improve tracking of students' engagement with careers opportunities** - to ensure they can benefit to the full from project-based learning, work placements, study abroad etc.;

How students can get involved

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of the full
plan

Our outreach work involves students working as ambassadors, mentors and tutors to deliver activities, alongside a team of graduate Outreach Ambassadors.

Students are involved in the development of our APP through representation at key meetings and strategic committees. They are encouraged to involve themselves in improving what we do and monitoring the success of our measures as Student School Reps, on Staff Student Committees, in student focus groups, and on student advisory boards. Students are also able to do paid research internships to help us evaluate what works best and learn from the improvement process.

Evaluation – how we measure what we have achieved

We use data, student feedback and research evidence to understand what works best and inform the development of our activities. We have set up an evaluation centre, The Inclusive Newcastle Knowledge Centre, which includes our APP Evaluation Team. They use a Theory of Change to help us understand the impact of our activities, improve what we do and support students from all backgrounds to have the best experience and achieve the best outcomes they can.

We are working with colleagues from many universities and external organisations, such as TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education), to improve the independence of our evaluation and share our findings about what works. We will do more to share our evaluation work publicly on the university website, through publications and at national conferences.

Contact details for further information about our Access and Participation Plan

You can contact Alison Shaw at alison.shaw@newcastle.ac.uk for further information.