

University of Staffordshire

Summary of 2025-26 to 2027-28 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan (APP) sets out the provision we expect will be meaningful and effective to promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups of undergraduate, home students.

You can see the full APP for University of Staffordshire at <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/access-and-participation-plan>.

Key points

Our APP explains what we will do to improve outcomes and promote equality of opportunity for our students. Our data and other available evidence indicate that some groups of students may face additional barriers to achieving their full potential. This is evident across different points of a learners' journey into, through and beyond Higher Education (HE).

When developing our APP, we conducted an assessment of performance to explore our institution's unique context and student outcomes (see Annex A – page 40 of the APP for more information). This assessment has informed the development of the APP and what we are aiming to achieve. Our APP includes strategic interventions during access, completion, attainment and progression points in the student journey.

Access refers to learners the opportunity learners have to access and enter HE. It is known that some disadvantaged student groups may face unique challenges that impact whether they access HE.

- Free School Meal (FSM) recipients are less likely to come to Higher Education than those who do not receive FSM.
- There are low access rates for students with racialised ethnicities, particularly students from Black and Asian backgrounds.

Completion refers to learners finishing their course in which they have enrolled. Some student groups may experience barriers which can impact their ability to complete their degree.

- Students from Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 are less likely to complete their degree.
- Racially minoritised students, particularly from Asian backgrounds, are less likely to complete their degree.

Attainment refers to students receiving a "good degree outcome" which equates to a 2:1 or a 1st degree classification. We know that some students face barriers which can impact their ability to achieve a "good degree".

- Racially minoritised students, particularly from Black and Asian backgrounds may face barriers to achieving a good degree.
- Students that have a declared a disability are less likely to be awarded a good degree outcome compared to students that have not declared a disability.

Progression refers to students being in graduate employment or postgraduate education 15 months after completing their degree. Some students may face challenges which make them less likely to progress after completing their course.

- Students from Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 are less likely to have “good progression” after completing their degree.

Fees we charge

You can see a full list of fees for courses at University of Staffordshire at <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/fees-and-funding/fees>.

Financial help available

See page 37 of the APP for more information.

We offer financial support to help students in need complete, succeed and thrive in their course (see page 37). This support includes:

- **Student Success fund** which provides bursaries for students with indications of risk in times of hardship.
- **Care leavers and estranged students fund** which provides bursaries to students who are care leavers or estranged from their families.
- **Disability assessment fund** which provides funding for assessment and equipment to enable dyslexic students to succeed.

Information for students

Prospective students can learn more about the University of Staffordshire by attending in-person events and open days. You can email us with any questions you have about fees, financial support or student life from our [website](#).

You can learn more about our peer mentoring programme on our [Careers Support page](#).

Current students receive information about fees, financial support and student life from the Beacon student platform as well as through communications and emails.

Our [website](#) will have the most up-to-date information for you.

What we are aiming to achieve

We want to support students to access higher education and enable our students do well in their studies and be successful in their careers or postgraduate study.

We use data to help us make decisions about prioritising our work to support students. We looked at our evidence and decided to focus on the following areas of work:

- We will maintain **access rates** for students **eligible for free school meals** at 19.5% of our total new entrant population by 2028.
- We will **increase access rates** for **students from racialised ethnicities** in our undergraduate student profile by 2028
 - We will increase the **access rates** for 18-year-old students from an **Asian background** to 7%.
 - We will increase the **access rates** for 18-year-old students from **Black backgrounds** to 3%.
- We will close the **full-time (FT) completion gap** between students from **IMD Q1 and IMD Q5** to 3pp or less by 2028.

- We will close the **FT completion gap** for students from **Asian backgrounds** to 2 pp or less by 2028.
- University of Staffordshire will close the **FT attainment gap** for students from **Asian backgrounds** to 10 pp or less by 2028.
- We will close the **FT attainment gap** for students from **Black backgrounds** to 15 pp or less by 2028.
- We will close the **FT attainment gap** for students with a **declared disability** to less than 3 pp or less by 2028.
 - Particular focus on closing the attainment gap for students with cognitive or learning difficulties and students with a social or communication impairment.
- We will increase the progression rates for students from IMD Q1 to 68% or higher by 2028.

A full list of our commitments is available on pages 5-7 of our plan.

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

We have developed a series of interventions and activities to address key risks to equality of opportunity and achieve our aims. Our full intervention plans can be accessed on pages 7-26.

Transforming Access (see pages 11-15) – our access interventions aim to provide support and opportunities to traditionally disadvantaged students, ensuring they have equal access to higher education and promoting their success in the academic journey.

Transforming Transitions (pages 15-18) – our transition interventions are strategically designed programmes and activities aimed at empowering learners with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to navigate critical periods of change successfully and foster a sense of belonging during transitions into higher education and employment.

Transforming Curriculum (pages 18-22) – our curriculum-focused interventions involve comprehensive changes to learning and teaching approaches to create more inclusive, relevant, and effective learning experiences for students.

Transforming Student Support (pages 22-26) – our student support interventions involve implementing evidence-based approaches and tailored strategies to address diverse needs and challenges to promote student success and well-being.

How students can get involved

We worked with the Students' Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan. Students are represented on our Access and Participation Plan Steering Board which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan.

To provide feedback, students can contact their Students' Union representative lead – contact details can be found on [SU's website](#).

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our activities are informed by what works to support student success. We use data and insights to make sure our activities make a difference for our students. Our activities are evaluated so that we are certain we are delivering the best support for our students. We use evaluation to understand:

- how we need to improve the design of our activities;
- the impact of our activities on different types of students;
- whether we are improving access and attainment for our students.

Our evaluation activities are overseen by experienced practitioners. We are also supporting staff and students to better understand and practice evaluation within their work. Our evaluation work is discussed regularly at the Access and Participation Steering Group who helps us to enhance our approach.

As part of our APP, we will provide paid training for five, year-long Student Research & Evaluation Assistants each year of the plan. These Research & Evaluation Assistants will be guaranteed fieldwork experience by co-evaluating the plan's outlined interventions with the university's dedicated APP research teams.

Contact details for further information

You can contact Inclusive Education and Impact team at erev@staffs.ac.uk for more information.