

University of Exeter

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plans

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. You can see the full access and participation plan for the University of Exeter at [Widening Participation Strategy | About us | University of Exeter](#).

Key points

Becoming a more diverse and inclusive place to learn is a priority for us and for a long time we've been delivering innovations to become more diverse and support our students, including contextualised offer making; school sponsorship to support pupil attainment; employability initiatives; degree apprenticeships; and supporting our most under-represented students such as those who have been in care, are carers or are estranged from their families.

Whilst we have seen improvements in the diversity of our student body and, generally, our students stay with us and go on to very successful outcomes, we know that this isn't the case for everyone. We have further to go to reflect our national and international context, to make sure that all students, regardless of their background or their characteristics, achieve outcomes equally well.

We target our efforts on access and student support to those students from a low socio-economic background, mature students, student carers and care experienced students and those students estranged from their families. We are also a University of Sanctuary for students who are refugees or asylum seekers. Equally, we recognise that we have further to go to become a more racially diverse institution and to support our students of colour in achieving the best possible outcomes.

Fees we charge

The full-time annual fee for UK undergraduate students is £9,250. This is the maximum fee allowed by the UK government. This figure may be subject to small increments set by the government each year and could be subject to change should government policy alter. The part-time fee is pro-rata with a maximum annual fee of £4,625.

Financial help available

We have a wide range of financial help available for all our students and most information can be found at [Scholarships and bursaries | Funding and scholarships for students | University of Exeter](#)

Scholarships are payments made to support your education, awarded on the basis of merit, personal achievement and academic ability. Bursaries are non-competitive payments intended to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or who are having difficulties funding their studies.

If you are a student who comes to study with us, and you come from a household with an income of under £25,000, then you are automatically eligible for our [Access to Exeter bursary](#). You may also apply for a bursary to help cover the costs of your computer equipment.

We also provide a package of financial and pastoral support for students who are verified as a [care leaver](#), including a full fee waiver as well as a bursary.

We also have our [Success for All](#) hardship fund available for any student who may experience unexpected financial hardship.

Information for students

We provide our prospective students and offer-holders with a range of information prior to starting their studies with us through specialist in-person advice at our open day and offer-holder open days. Our [webpages](#) contain a range of information for students with specific needs.

We would encourage any students who may require additional support because of a disability or if they have specific circumstances to contact us at an early point to discuss the support we can provide. We have a programme of transition support provided for all students as well specific support for students who are disabled or from an under-represented background. Those students progressing to us from our [Exeter Scholars](#) programme (including Realising Opportunities and Pathways to Law) and mature students are also eligible for this [enhanced induction programme](#).

Our Exeter Students Guild and the Exeter and Falmouth Students Union both provide practical support for our students studying in Devon and Cornwall. Our [Student Advice Service](#) at the Exeter Students Guild provides specific support to students who may require their help.

What we are aiming to achieve

The University of Exeter is committed to tackling social mobility through education. We do this through recruiting students from all backgrounds, from across the country and internationally; we work with schools and colleges to provide advice and guidance and to support the attainment of learners, especially in the south west of England where we play a strong role in the regional economy. Once with us there are teams across the university working hard to make sure we tackle any gaps in retention (staying in study); success (achieving a good degree); and progression (moving on into work or postgraduate study) to ensure our students enjoy the best possible outcomes.

All our work is based on the principles of taking student-centred and evidence-based approach working in collaboration and partnership where that adds extra value.

We have three strategic aims that guide our work which are set out in our Access and Participation Plan:

1. Improve access to the University of Exeter and work collaboratively within our region to better understand and address barriers to social mobility
2. Address the causes of observable gaps in success and progression for key groups
3. Enable an inclusive university culture where all can fulfil their potential

The Office for Students also requires us to set a number of targets to focus our efforts, and to see if we are making progress, based on evidence and data about our student population. Our targets are those areas where we want to make the biggest changes. Our target groups are shown in the diagram below.



What we are doing to achieve our aims

To deliver our targets and ensure this approach is leading to visible change we have organised our work under seven areas of activity.

1. Regional skills and working with partners to support attainment

We work in our region to support the prosperity of the South West through research and addressing skills gaps and we work extensively with schools and other organisations and networks to help support school and pupil attainment. Our own Graduate School of Education not only trains teachers but produces research and knowledge focused on developing the school system further.

2. Portfolio and non-traditional courses

Three-year traditional courses aren't the only courses we offer and our package of degree apprenticeships are helping lots of people to access Higher Education through the University of Exeter. We introduced our first Foundation course and are excited to further develop this kind of provision.

3. Fair Access, Widening Participation and recruitment

We run a wide range of programmes to support students from different backgrounds to study with us including our own Exeter Scholars programme as well as programmes with other organisations such as the Sutton Trust Pathways to Law and Realising Opportunities. Our Discover University online platform provides a variety of interactive tools, resources, sessions and information for learners, families and carers and teachers with regular information and advice sessions. We also support students to make applications to us with our contextual [admissions](#) offering.

4. Securing good quality and equitable outcomes for students

We organise a range of support to all our students who study with us, including transition and induction provision. Practical and pastoral support is provided throughout their studies to our disabled students as well as our students who are care-experienced, carers or estranged from their families. We also have mental health and welfare provision for all students to access. Specific support is also offered through peer mentoring, our study zone, and our library. We are taking really important steps to ensure our courses, and how they are taught and assessed, are inclusive.

5. Progression to graduate outcomes and further study

We support all of our students into their chosen careers through support delivered through our Careerzone and employability support. Students from specific backgrounds can access support for paid internships, global opportunities and 1:1 career advice.

6. Financial support

As described above, we have financial support for our students from the lowest household incomes and our hardship fund is there for anyone who finds themselves in financial difficulties.

7. Enabling an inclusive culture

Inclusion is the unifying theme of all our work to improve access and participation, so that all our students feel welcomed, supported and feel they are part of our University community. This is equally important for all our staff too. We are committed to a number of programmes of change including the Race Equality Charter and developing a submission to the mental health charter. We continually engage with our students and review data and information to help inform decision-making and policies at the highest level.

How students can get involved

We work closely with our Student Unions and through them we liaise with elected representatives, including at course, level to provide updates, receive feedback and test ideas. We are happy to receive feedback and answer questions from any student society or individuals who raise issues. We review findings of student surveys and focus groups relating to aspects of university life and use informal feedback from specific student groups when developing specific support or initiatives.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Making sure that we are checking our progress and measuring the impact of our access and participation work is important, so that we know it is working and we are using our resources in the best way. We have evaluation plans in place for a lot of the projects mentioned and we are taking an increasingly more sophisticated approach to evaluation and our understanding of which measures make the most difference. We track students' involvement in our outreach through their journey into higher education to understand what happens to them and how this correlates with the support they have received. We also use a mixture of quantitative data, student feedback and other qualitative techniques to help us understand what has and hasn't worked as part of a process of continual improvement.

Contact details for further information

Please contact successforall@exeter.ac.uk if you have any questions or to find out more