

Newcastle University's PARTNERS Programme Supported Entry Route

What are the aims of the Programme?

PARTNERS aims to support students in their journey to higher education, who have faced barriers to their education. It also aims to address gaps within the student body, as identified within the University's Access and Participation Plan.

To achieve these aims, the Programme hosts a range of events, activities and support mechanisms, that are designed to support students throughout their application and make Newcastle University a realistic option of achieving a high class degree and rewarding career.

What is PARTNERS?

The PARTNERS Programme has been running since 1999, beginning with a selection of local schools and a cohort of 41 students. It has developed into a national programme, with over 2,000 students taking part per year and over 9,000 students in total registered for study at Newcastle University via the Programme.

The PARTNERS Programme supported entry route is the cornerstone of Newcastle University's work with students from under-represented groups and is an integral part of the University's vision as a Civic University. The Programme offers a range of support and opportunities to help young people make a successful application to Newcastle University.

Through the programme, eligible students could:

- Receive a lower conditional offer to Newcastle University (up to three grades lower than the typical entry requirements).
- Attend transitional events run specifically for PARTNERS students, including a compulsory, academic-focused Academic Summer School.
- Develop skills necessary to be a successful student.
- Meet other students and increase their confidence.
- Be supported through the application process, on results day and after entering the University.

All undergraduate courses at Newcastle University are available via PARTNERS (over 200 degree programmes).

Who is PARTNERS for?

The PARTNERS programme is for students who are less likely to go to University because of their family background, low income or lack of access to information and support about universities and application.

Students must fulfil certain widening participation eligibility criteria in order to take part and can check their [eligibility online](#). Students apply to take part in the PARTNERS Programme alongside their UCAS application, usually during Year 13/second year of college.

Lower offer and the Academic Summer School

Eligible students will complete the [PARTNERS Academic Summer School \(PASS\)](#) which counts towards their grades when they apply to Newcastle University. Students are made a conditional offer which is lower than the typical requirements for the degree programme(s) they have applied to, for example:

- Medicine & Surgery (A100) without PARTNERS – AAA.
- Medicine & Surgery (A100) with PARTNERS – BBB + successful completion of the summer school.

PARTNERS students attend PASS in the summer after their A level (or equivalent) exams. During the event, they take part in lectures, seminars and practical sessions in the ‘subject-strand’ related to their chosen course at the University. These sessions are developed and delivered by University academic staff within each specialism.

PARTNERS aims to run a subject strand for every specialism that has 3 or more applicants.

Therefore, all academic schools at the University take part in the Programme, with 36 subject strands on offer at PASS.

Students are required to complete a formative assessment based upon the work that they’ve undertaken at the Summer School. The work is assessed by academic tutors who provide written feedback in preparation for undergraduate study. An external advisor makes sure that the work is marked fairly and equally across all subject strands.

Careers & Employability at PASS

Students complete an additional module of activities which is designed to increase their graduate outcomes via:

- Engagement with employers & graduates

- Careers guidance & support

These sessions are designed and delivered by the University's Careers Service.

Higher Education Skills at PASS

Students complete an additional module of activities which is designed to introduce skills – such as referencing and independent study - that will support their introduction to university-level study.

These activities are designed & delivered by the PARTNERS Team, with support from the University's Library Service.

On Course to PASS

Students who apply to the University via PARTNERS are invited to take part in an optional series of activities which run throughout the year (from September to June), in preparation for PASS and university-level study. These sessions aim to boost applicants' confidence and raise awareness of support available via:

- An introduction to aspects of university life.
- Guidance through key application processes.
- The opportunity to engage with University staff and students.
- The opportunity to meet other PARTNERS students.

Topics covered in sessions hosted during the 2022/23 academic year include:

- UCAS Application Support
- An Intro to Newcastle University
- Student Wellbeing & Support
- Finance & Budgeting
- Accommodation
- Meet Your Subject Strand

Sessions take place online, giving students the opportunity to engage regardless of their home location.

Find out more...

- PARTNERS Programme website: ncl.ac.uk/partners
- PARTNERS Student Experience video: <https://t.ly/O78q5>
- PARTNERS Team Enquiries: partners@newcastle.ac.uk

The PARTNERS Programme – The Journey so Far

Since 1999, the programme has undergone continual development to improve the experience for students and expand the PARTNERS offering. Key milestones include:

