

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan



What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the [Office for Students](#).

You can see the full access and participation plan for Newcastle University on the [website](#).

Key Points:

Newcastle University is a globally recognised, research-intensive university in the North East. We have a diverse educational community of ~29,000 students with 21% of our students from the North East, 85% from the UK, and 15% non-UK.

The aim for this access and participation plan is to address and tackle the multiple barriers and risks to equality of opportunity that students may face at Newcastle University. This includes social, cultural, societal or institutional barriers which could impact students at any stage of their journey.

Despite the improvements we are making, we have further work to do to address inconsistencies in approach to these underlying risks. This plan aims to tackle these taking an institution-wide, joined up approach, where student voice is centred throughout all our work.

See pages 1-5 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge:

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](#).

See Annex C of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

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:

- 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.
- Undergraduate Support Scholarships: A non-repayable **cash bursary** of £500 for each year of study available to students with a household income between £35,001 and £40,000.
- Discretionary **hardship funding**: available to support students from low-income households, students with dependent children and students from other underrepresented groups.

See page 28 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Information on our financial support is available on our website to ensure that students at any point during the application cycle receive up-to-date, accurate information that is easy to find. Current students can also access information through the Student Portal 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](#).

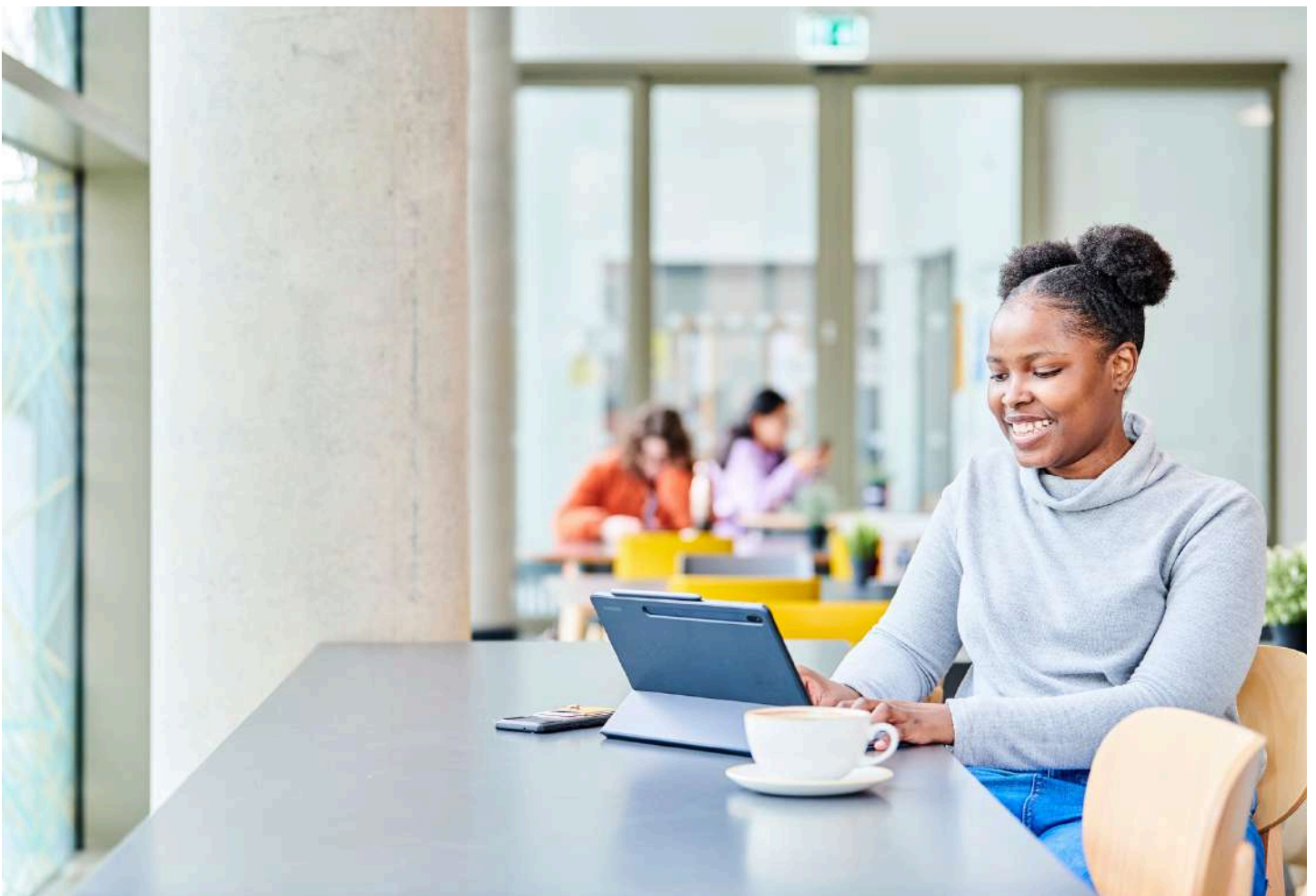
See page 28 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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. We have identified nine key underlying risks to equality of opportunity which have informed our interventions planning (see pages 3-4 of the plan for more detail on these).

1. Knowledge and skills
2. Information and guidance
3. Perceptions and expectations of higher education
4. Lack of awareness and engagement in academic or personal support
5. Inequitable access to opportunities beyond the curriculum
6. Sense of belonging
7. Mental health need, awareness, disclosure and expectations
8. Financial strain
9. Progression from higher education

We recognise that some groups of students are more likely to experience risks to equality of opportunity, and that these risks may be more significant at different stages of the student journey. Based on a self-assessment of our performance, we have identified the following targets for some of our key target student groups with the greatest risks to equality of opportunity.



Access

- To increase the proportion (%) of students from lower socioeconomic groups (e.g. students who receive Free School Meals, used as a measure of deprivation) progressing to Newcastle University.
- To increase the number of students from minoritised ethnic groups (particularly Black) progressing to Newcastle University.
- To contribute to the improvement in national entry rates to highly selective providers for those most likely to experience risks to equality of opportunity.

Success

- To reduce the gaps in student success (continuation and attainment at 1st & 2:1) between students from lower socioeconomic groups (Free School Meals) and other students.
- Reduce the gaps in student success (continuation and attainment at 1st & 2:1) between students age 21 and over on entry, and younger students.
- Reduce the gap in student success (attainment at 1st & 2:1) between Black and White students.
- Reduce the gaps in student success (attainment at 1st & 2:1) between East Asian and White students.
- Ensure that the gap in student success (completion) between students with mental health conditions and students without a disability does not widen in the light of an increasing proportion of students declaring a mental health condition.

Progression

- Ensure that the gap in progression to positive graduate outcomes for students from lower-socioeconomic groups (Free School Meals) does not widen.
- Reduce the gap in progression to positive graduate outcomes between students with mental health conditions and students without a disability.

Combined

- To improve educational outcomes for students with social or communication impairments.
- To improve access to education and educational outcomes for care experienced and estranged students.



What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity:

We have identified a range of activities to help meet our aims to address risks to equality of opportunity. These include the following, with more activities and details outlined in our full plan:

Access to higher education:

- Supported entry routes, including continuing our PARTNERS programme.
- Targeted outreach activities with target schools and student groups.
- Attainment raising activities, including academic support for the IntoUniversity Newcastle East centre.
- Online mentoring for Black heritage students.

Success in higher education – belonging and thriving:

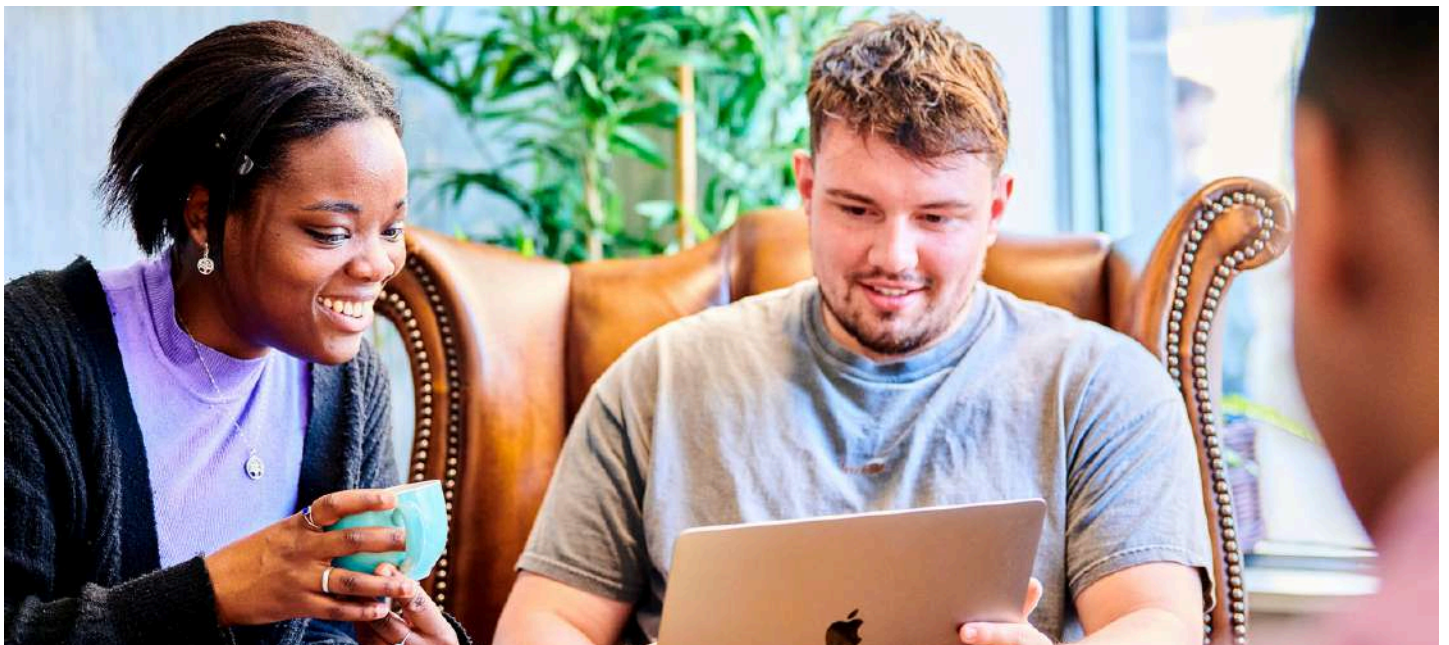
- Curriculum-based skills support enhancement.
- Enhanced peer mentoring model to develop sense of belonging.
- Updated and targeted pre-arrival and induction information for target groups.
- Financial support for student extracurricular activities, including Participation Bursaries.

Cost of living:

- Targeted financial support for some student groups, including scholarships.
- Improved online resources around cost of living.

Progression from higher education:

- Diverse work experience opportunities for target student groups, including financial support.
- Embedding employability into the curriculum.



How students can get involved:

Students have been involved in the development of our plan through representation at key meetings. We have created an APP Student Collaborative Group, a group of diverse students who have contributed significantly to the plan. This group will expand to involve more students in paid roles supporting the delivery of activities and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of our activities.

There are further opportunities for students 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.

See pages 25-26 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will 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 to make an impact in the lives of students by breaking down barriers to equality of opportunity. Our aim is to focus on in-depth evaluation for novel and potentially high-impact interventions, with light touch evaluation and monitoring across all APP activity.

We are developing collaborations between academic experts, core evaluation teams, and practitioners to make sure we are data-informed, ethical, and transparent in our evaluations. We use established tools and methods to help us access data and develop our evaluation plans. Students are also involved in our approaches to evaluation and as co-evaluators where possible.

We will share our findings from our research projects and evaluations publicly on our website. We also aim to share our evaluation outcomes through partnerships with colleagues at other universities and external organisations, publications, and at national conferences.

See pages 26-27 of the access and participation plan for more information.