

University of Wolverhampton

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 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 Wolverhampton at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/access-and-participation-plans/>

Key points

[See pages 1 to 6 of the full plan]

We have a strong tradition of attracting students from across the West Midlands, particularly the Black Country, and over two-thirds of our students are the first in their families to go to university. We have nearly equal numbers of students from white and minority ethnic backgrounds and almost half of our students are over 21 years of age.

Data shows that, compared to their peers, particular groups of our students achieve less good outcomes. The following groups are less likely to achieve a degree award of 2:1 or above and are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further study:

- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Students from the least advantaged backgrounds.

The following groups are less likely to continue beyond their first year of study:

- Students from less advantaged neighbourhoods.
- Black students when compared with White students.

Even though some of these gaps are not as wide as in the rest of the sector, we are committed to closing all gaps to ensure that all our students thrive and realise their full potential at the University.

Fees we charge

The maximum fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full-time students.
- £6,935 for part-time students.
- £11,100 for full-time students on accelerated degrees.

You can see a full list of our fees at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/apply/funding-costs-fees-and-support/fees-and-costs/>

Financial help available

[See pages 30 to 31 of the full plan]

We offer financial support to students from groups that are under-represented in HE.

- A **Student Commitment Package** for all full-time, campus-based students worth £200 in the first year of study and another £100 the following year.
- A **Hardship Fund** of up to £1,000 a year for students experiencing financial hardship.
- An **Access Bursary** of £1,000 in the first year of study and another £1,000 in the second year of study for students who:
 - Are deaf or have hearing loss; or
 - Are care leavers.

- **Care leavers** who have received the Access Bursary are also eligible for:
 - £650 in all but their final year of study.
 - £1,000 in their final year plus £250 graduation costs.
- **Estranged students** are eligible for:
 - £650 in all but their final year of study.
 - £1,000 in their final year plus £250 graduation costs.

Information for students

[See page 33 of the full plan]

Prospective students can find [information about fees on our website](#), in our prospectus and during outreach events and at Open Days.

Prospective students are told about the [financial support](#) they may be entitled to through emails and letters as well as through our website and at Open Days.

Care leavers and estranged students applying to us are contacted directly by the University to inform them of the types of financial support that may be available to them.

For the most up-to-date information see our [website](#).

What we are aiming to achieve

[See pages 13 to 14 of the full plan and Appendix A]

We want to be a university where all students achieve their full potential.

By examining our student data and performance information, we have decided to specifically focus on measures to:

- Increase the proportion of people with a recognised disability enrolling to study at the University.
- Support attainment at school. We are working with schools to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification. During 2022-23, we will work with schools in our area to determine what works best and determine schools' needs are for attainment raising. We will develop a programme of work to start in 2023-24.
- Diversify our provision. We will review our current degree apprenticeships during 2022-23. We are also piloting short courses at levels 4 and 5.
- Support students from more deprived neighbourhoods. By 2024-25, we will improve their:
 - Continuation rate - the proportion of students continuing to the subsequent year of their course.
 - Attainment of a degree outcome of 2:1 or above.
 - Progression to highly skilled employment or further study.
- Support students from minority ethnic backgrounds. By 2024-25, we will improve rates of:
 - Continuation for full-time black students and part-time students from all minority ethnic backgrounds.
 - Attainment of a degree outcome of 2:1 or above for black students and for students from all minority ethnic backgrounds.
 - Progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students from all minority ethnic backgrounds.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

[See pages 16 to 26 of the full plan and Appendix A]

We will be doing the following to fulfil our aims:

Providing employer-supported entry routes to HE by focusing on the development of apprenticeships and part-time course provision. We will continue to work closely with large

employers such as NHS trusts and will review our course design to ensure that we maximise the relevance of our curriculum to employers.

Changing our approach to assessment by undertaking evaluation of assessment at subject level to identify unintended bias and to ensure tasks are fully inclusive. Assessment literacy will support students in developing a better understanding of the expectations and requirements of their assessments.

Increasing our students' sense of belonging. There is substantial sector research indicating that feeling a sense of belonging increases students' likelihood of engaging with and succeeding in their studies. We will work with our Students' Union to update research on students' sense of belonging and then implement measures to address the practical needs of students.

Supporting students' continuation. We have Academic Coaches who provide academic and pastoral support for students. We are developing approaches to monitoring student engagement and identifying students who are not engaging and providing appropriate interventions to support them.

Increasing students' confidence and understanding of possible career pathways. We will ensure that students are consistently coached to engage in career planning during their studies.

Supporting all courses to embed work experience in the curriculum. As well as providing traditional placement years, we will develop other routes for students to engage in similar activities which are embedded within their course. This will include a mixture of summer work, embedded work-based assessments, live projects, and shorter work placements.

We have developed a number of cross-University ways of supporting students while they are at the University and beyond:

- [Inclusive Curriculum Framework](#)
- [Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Graduate Attributes Framework](#)

How students can get involved

A representative of the Students' Union was an integral part of the group that wrote our access and participation plan. We worked with the Students' Union to gather student input into all stages of the development of the plan. Students are represented on the group which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan.

Evaluation: how we will measure what we have achieved

[See pages 28 to 30 of the full plan and Appendix A]

We use evaluation - evidence about what is or is not effective - to help us decide the best way to achieve our aims. We are working on a number of evaluation projects across the University as we seek to make improvements to our programme design and identify the activities that work best to improve student outcomes.

We have an Evaluation Group, with student representation, which monitors evaluation activity. It reports to the Access and Participation sub-committee which considers evaluation reports when deciding whether to continue with activities. We will begin to publish evidence from our evaluations on our website in January 2024. This evidence will also be published externally in journal and online blogs. Additionally, evidence of what works will be shared through networks and conferences.

Contact details for further information

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