

University of Sheffield

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 Sheffield [here](#).

Key points

The University of Sheffield is a large Russell Group University based in the North of England with approximately 30,000 students, 8,000 staff and a turnover of c.£740m. Approximately 16,000 of our students are UK (home) students studying on undergraduate programmes, 95% of these students study full-time. 88% of our full time undergraduate students come from state schools and colleges.

Our access and participation plan recognises that some groups of students are less likely to come to study with us, to complete their studies, or to get a degree award of 2:1 or above than their peers. We want to understand why this is, to address the barriers these students face, and to ensure that we support all students to succeed whatever their background.

Fees we charge

At the University of Sheffield, the maximum fees charged for home undergraduate students are:

£9,250 for full time students

£6,935 for part time students

You can find out more about the fees we charge [here](#)

Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps those students to access higher education and to engage fully in their studies until they graduate. Examples include:

- **Bursaries** for home students to help with the cost of living. These are based on household income, with additional funding available for students from the most deprived areas, students who are care leavers, students who are estranged or have caring responsibilities; and those who simply need more financial help to access the same opportunities as the students around them.
- **Scholarships** and participation grants to help students make the most of activities and opportunities provided by the University, and/or to help with accommodation costs.
- **Emergency financial assistance** for students experiencing financial hardship.
- **Additional or targeted financial support** to help students from underrepresented backgrounds engage with programmes and opportunities we offer university wide, such as studying abroad, undertaking internships, and participating in the Sheffield Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) scheme.
- A **University JobShop** to help students find part-time and vacation work, internships and placements.

Information for students

Prospective students can find information on fees and financial support from the University-wide prospectus, the University website, electronic newsletters, specific printed brochures as well as face-to-face activity; targeting prospective students, their families and teachers/advisers in schools and colleges.

Support for care leavers is regularly updated via the [Propel](#) website

Current students receive information about fees and financial support through our student portal and internal communications. Advice from the University and Students' Union is available to help students manage their finances all year round.

The most up to date information on fees and funding can be found [here](#).

What we are aiming to achieve

Our access and participation plan focuses on where we have identified a need to increase the proportion of students we recruit from underrepresented groups, to ensure that these students complete their studies and succeed academically, and to help them move on to successful careers or further study after graduation. Our priorities in the plan are to:

- Increase the proportion of students we recruit to our programmes from neighbourhoods where not many students go into higher education (such that by 2024/25 we recruit one student from a low participation neighbourhood for every three we recruit from a high participation neighbourhood).
- Reduce the likelihood of the above students dropping out of their studies (reducing the current gap between those from the highest and lowest participation neighbourhood to 2.5% by 2024/25).
- Close the gap in the number of black students achieving a 2:1 or above relative to other students to 10% by 2024/25.
- Close the gap in the number of asian students achieving a 2:1 or above relative to other students to 12% by 2024/25.
- Review our engagement with schools during 2022/23 to assess the impact of our work on raising attainment, and thereby the ambition and opportunities for those students to access higher education.
- Develop, in partnership with a small number of targeted schools and colleges, sustainable opportunities to deepen the support we provide to them in a way that is measurable in terms of student attainment, for delivery from 2023/24.
- Review the ways in which we offer apprenticeship and vocational opportunities, particularly via our [Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre Training Centre](#) to ensure that we are providing flexible opportunities with genuine impact and good employment opportunities.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

To achieve our aims we are:

- Strengthening the work we are doing with **schools and colleges** to improve attainment for their students and to maximise the likelihood of these students accessing higher education.
- Working with the Students' Union to deliver our Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan, to increase the number of students and staff we recruit from black and asian backgrounds, to close the gap in terms of the number of **black and asian students** achieving a good degree, and the number securing graduate careers or going on to further study.

- Implementing a **Programme Level Approach** to make sure that all our programmes are inclusive, take account of the diverse needs of our students, and allow students to have a say in what and how they are taught.
- Improving the **academic, financial and wellbeing support** we provide to our students so that they are able to continue with, and succeed in, their studies.
- Embedding our [Sheffield Graduate Attributes](#) across all our programmes to ensure that students develop the skills they need to succeed during their time with us and as they move into their future careers.
- Working with partners across the Sheffield City Region and nationally to improve the opportunities, attainment and ambition of students from underrepresented groups and to make sure that we are learning from, and sharing, best practice in the way that we support prospective and current students.

How students can get involved

The Students' Union was engaged with the preparation of our access and participation plan and continues to be represented on the Access and Participation Strategy Group that oversees its delivery. The University works closely with the Students' Union, the course representatives they support across all our programmes, and the groups and societies that advocate for specific student groups.

The Students' Union supports over 1000 student volunteer academic representatives and students can contact the rep for their course [here](#) if they don't already know them.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We continually monitor the academic programmes and supporting services we offer, drawing on internal and external measures and, most importantly, listening and responding to the view of our students.

Our Access and Participation Strategy Group is there to ensure that we are making progress against our access and participation plan. Members help to design, direct and evaluate activities across the University that seek to improve attainment in schools, increase the number of students we recruit from underrepresented groups, and to make sure that current students are able to complete their studies and to move into graduate jobs or further study.

Contact details for further information

You can contact Michelle Nolan, Deputy Chief Operating Officer (Student), m.nolan@sheffield.ac.uk for further information.