

## **Summary of 2024-25 to 2027-28 access and participation plan (Variation Dec 2025)**

### **What is an access and participation plan?**

An access and participation 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 University of Winchester at [Access and Participation Statement - University of Winchester](#)*

### **Key points**

We are proud to consider ourselves a widening participation university. It is part of our DNA, stemming from our origins training teachers to educate poor children in the local region. In more recent years, we have been recognised for our sector leading work to support the access and participation of emerging under-represented student groups, in particular Care Leavers, Young Adult Carers, Service Children, and Asylum Seekers.

Expanding on our existing expertise and partnerships, this plan seeks to continue our commitment to advancing innovative research, policy and practice in widening access and participation, locally, nationally and globally.

We will continue to enhance our activities, develop our understanding through research, share best practice and encourage collaboration through networks, and promote transformational education, not just at Winchester but across the many communities we serve.

We have identified a series of commitments under our Access and Participation Strategic Aims that seek to address areas of risk to equality of opportunity for any student that could be impacted.

*See pages 2-3 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

### **Fees we charge**

At the University of Winchester, as published under our approved annual fee summary, the maximum fees charged for home (UK-domicile) students are:

- £9,535 (for September 2025 entry)
- £7,145 for part-time students (for September 2025 entry)

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X, subject to this remaining the inflationary method used by the Government

You can see a full-list of fees for courses at the University of Winchester at <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/accommodation-and-winchester-life/students-and-money/undergraduate-financial-information>

## Financial help available

We recognise that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting our students in many different ways and have spent the last two years working closely with our Students' Union to enhance our provision of financial support through a variety of bursaries, scholarships and 'in kind' provision.

The support includes:

- A **household-income based-bursary** for students from low-income households, the amount provided is dependent on the year of entry. For 2024/25 and 2025/26 entrants, students from households with an assessed income under £25,000 will receive £200 cash award each year. This bursary will no longer be offered to new entrants from 2026/27 onwards.
- A **travel bursary** for students from low-income households to attend our open days and interviews.
- A **student support fund** to support students who experience financial hardship during their time at university.
- The **BECOME Scholarship** for students from ethnic minority backgrounds studying on courses with pathways into health, education and social care.
- Additional **disability funding** to meet the shortfall left as a result of the changes made to the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).
- **Cash bursaries** for students from widening participation backgrounds, dependent on evidence of meeting eligibility criteria (including Care- experienced or care leavers, students estranged from their families, unpaid carers and those from gypsy, Roma, traveller, showman or boater (GTRSB) communities, students who have been granted with refugee or humanitarian status by the Home Office).
- Financial support for eligible students to access study-abroad and employability opportunities through the **Winchester Employability Fund (WEF), Turing Scheme and Study Abroad Funding**.
- As a University of Sanctuary, annually we also offer up to two **Sanctuary Scholarships** to support asylum seekers access higher education.
- **Budgeting information, advice and guidance** provided via our Student and Money team.

We have also introduced a **growing number of initiatives to help students with the rising food costs** including introducing warm spaces with free hot drinks, providing subsidised meals and Fee4All fridges where we leave surplus food still fit for human consumption

You can see a full list of current financial support packages at <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/student-life/Scholarships-bursaries-and-awards/Undergraduate-scholarships-bursaries-and-awards/>

*See page 28-29 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

## Information for students

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our Open Days, and by email communications, including as part of an offer letter. In addition, current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student intranet, internal communications campaigns and emails.

*See page 35 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

## What we are aiming to achieve

We have identified a series of strategic aims to ensure equity in access and participation, as outlined below.

### **Access**

- OUTREACH: To work with local communities to increase the low rates of pre-16 attainment and access into universities.
- RECRUITMENT: To improve our recruitment and admissions activity to ensure equity of access onto our courses.
- DIVERSITY OF PATHWAYS: To provide flexible and alternative pathways for progression to university that support the local skills gaps.

### **Success (on-course)**

- INCLUSION AND BELONGING: To create an inclusive learning and teaching environment that enhances transition, provides a 'sense of belonging' and enables students to reach their potential.
- MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING: To ensure the university environment and experience supports the maintenance of good mental health and wellbeing for students to actively engage in their studies.
- FINANCIAL SUPPORT: To provide support to students impacted by increased cost pressures that affect their ability to complete their course or obtain a good degree.
- CLOSE AWARDING GAPS: To address gaps in degree outcomes via targeted academic and pastoral support interventions.

### **Progression (further study and graduate employment)**

- EMPLOYABILITY: To embed employability within the curriculum and provide targeted initiatives to support students less likely to progress to further study or graduate employment.

*See pages 24-31 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

## What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

We conducted an extensive assessment of performance to understand our priority risks to equality of opportunity and have identified six evidence-based strategic interventions to address them.

**Strategic Intervention 1 - We will improve the rates of KS2 and KS4 attainment for learners less likely to access higher education engaging in our targeted activities across the length of the plan.**

We will achieve this through:

- Enhanced practitioner engagement, establishing a new online stakeholder partnership of schools and colleges in the region, and developing CPD opportunities, resources and events for practitioners.
- Attainment raising programmes of activity including Key Stage 2 academic coaching in primary schools, a 4-year intensive attainment raising and access programme for care-experienced young people in partnership with [First Star Scholars UK](#) and supporting Key Stage 4 attainment raising activities led by the [Southern Universities Network](#) in local secondary schools.

- Leadership of the nation [Service Children's Progression \(SCiP\) Alliance](#), enhancing the research, policy and practice to support the educational progression of children from military service families.

**Strategic Intervention 2 - *We will increase the entry rates of students from the most disadvantaged student groups across the length of the plan.***

We will achieve this through:

- [Enhancing the use of contextualised admissions](#), where universities can take into consideration any barriers an applicant may have faced in their previous education to either reducing grade requirements or give extra consideration when deciding to give an offer (for more information visit [UCAS](#))
- [Increasing our use of data](#) to inform marketing and recruitment campaigns for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- [Improving accessibility to applicant activities and events](#) through travel support funds and online resources.
- [Continuing to develop flexible study routes](#) and improve our foundation year programmes.

**Strategic Intervention 3 - *We will close the gap between offer rates and average offer rate for black applicants by 2030.***

We will achieve this through:

- [Enhancing the application and interview process to be more equitable](#), we have established a project task and finish group supported by a student consultation group to ensure continued progress.
- [Developing outreach and applicant events for our Health and Wellbeing programmes](#), supporting students who may not have the support of their school or college to make informed decisions and produce a successful application.

**Strategic Intervention 4 - *We will address the impacts of the pandemic and rising cost of living on students, closing emerging gaps in Continuation (continuing study), particularly for students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and those with declared mental health conditions.***

We will achieve this through:

- [Enhancing the 'Welcome to Winchester' \(and beyond\) transition programme](#), supporting students to feel prepared for each stage of study and develop a 'sense of belonging' at the University of Winchester.
- [Further developing our Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives under the Mental Health Charter](#), including ensuring we effectively communicate the internal and external support available to students.
- [Continued provision of financial support](#), including providing bursaries for students from low-income households and other backgrounds, improving access to our 'Student Support Fund', help with food needs, and actively promoting budgeting advice and guidance.

**Strategic Intervention 5 - *We will make significant progress in closing the awarding gaps (proportion of students achieving a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 compared to their peers) for disadvantaged males and black students.***

We will achieve this through:

- Enhancing targeted academic coaching and peer-support schemes, supporting students to confidently engage in their studies.
- Developing bespoke communications and activities for students who are repeating modules or returning after a period of interruption.
- Further embedding inclusivity in the curriculum, advancing the work of our Learning and Teaching Development Unit to embed inclusivity in the curriculum via toolkits, validation processes and seminars.

**Strategic Intervention 6 - *We will improve the rates of progression to further study or graduate employment of non-white students, disadvantaged males and disabled students by the end of the plan.***

We will achieve this through:

- Developing contact support campaigns for students with low career aspirations to encourage engagement with the Careers and Opportunities Hub.
- Targeting final year students from backgrounds with lower rates of graduate employment to participate on a bespoke professional mentoring programme, where students are matched to professionals to help improve students' employability and career readiness.
- Enhancing financial support for students for employability-based activities to enhance their career prospects.
- Providing careers activities to support networking skills, confidence building and to increase number and take-up of positive action opportunities advertised in partnership with employers and alumni (Winchester graduates).

*See pages 5-23 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

## **How students can get involved**

In Spring 2023 we employed a small group of students with a range of lived experiences to act at Student Access and Participation Consultants. The students were actively engaged in producing the plan and will continue to input to wider student consultations and working groups to ensure we make progress against the plan.

We also worked closely with the Students' Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan. Students are represented on our Access and Participation Plan Action Groups which are responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan. We also regularly consult with students via the Student Advisory Council, tailored surveys and focus groups, and via our large network of Student Ambassadors.

To provide feedback, students can contact their student union representative via [SU\\_Admin@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:SU_Admin@winchester.ac.uk)

To become involved in this work, contact our Access and Participation Lead via email to [wp@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:wp@winchester.ac.uk)

*See page 31-32 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

## **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved**

Our programmes of activity are informed by the best available evidence about what works for students. This includes publications and resources produced by [TASO \(Transforming Access](#)

[and Student Outcomes in Higher Education\)](#) 'What Works' Centre for improving equality in higher education.

We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- our **programme design**
- the **impact of the programme of activity** we are doing to achieve our aims
- the **impact on achieving our overall aims** of improved access and an inclusive environment.

We will continue to monitor and report on progress made against delivery of the plan. Reports will be reviewed annually by the *Board of Governors*, *Student Experience Committee* and *Student Advisory Council*.

We will also **commit to working collaboratively** with other universities and third-sector organisations, seeking opportunities to disseminate our evaluations and **contribute to the knowledgebase of the risks to equality of opportunity in HE** and 'what works' to address these risks.

We also recognise that the evaluation of activities may also provide evidence that new or well-established initiatives are not showing impact. We will always seek to ensure we have fully investigated these instances and where necessary we would either change the intervention or remove it completely.

*See pages 32-35 of the access and participation plan for more information.*

### **Contact details for further information**

Please contact the **Deputy Director of Student Support and Success (Operational Lead for the Access and Participation Plan)** for more information (email - [wp@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:wp@winchester.ac.uk)).