

University of Northumbria at Newcastle

Summary of 2024-25 to 2027-28 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 Northumbria University at [Access and Participation Plan \(northumbria.ac.uk\)](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan)

Key points

Our strategic aim is to work in partnership with our students and graduates to provide greater equity of access to and success in Higher Education (HE) and empower them to identify and create more options and opportunities for success in their further study, career, and life ambitions. We have a strong regional presence and our mission extends to the equity of opportunity and choice for pre-HE students in the North East of England, and to enriching the social, economic and cultural fabric of our region.

Equity of opportunity and choice is core to our educational mission and we have a strong commitment to raising educational aspirations in the NE, which has one of the lowest rates of HE participation nationally and hosts some of the most income deprived local authority areas in the UK.

The plan has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders, in particular our students, and is data-led and evidence informed. Annex A and B provide detailed context.

See pages 1, and 37 onwards of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At Northumbria University the maximum fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- £6,935 for part-time students

You can see a full list of fees for course at Northumbria University at [Tuition Fees, Funding and Scholarships | Northumbria University](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/tuition-fees-funding-and-scholarships)

Financial help available

We have a range of financial support to help students access Higher Education and continue studying until their course is completed. This support includes:

- A NU Belong bursary of £2,000 per year for Care Leavers, Carers and Estranged students
- Student money and support funds to support students who experience financial hardship during their studies

See pages 12-13 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Northumbria is committed to the provision of accurate, timely and relevant information for all potential and existing students. Information is delivered via:

- Published materials, such as our prospectus.

- Our website.
- Personal email, phone and SMS communications to enquirers, applicants and students.
- Events on-and off-campus, in schools, colleges, community venues and at employer locations.
- Our Student Support & Wellbeing Service, which provides support and advice for current and potential students.

See page 36 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

1. Increase the proportion of applications from students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) by 2030 through working in partnerships with schools to address prior knowledge and attainment gaps, providing high quality information, advice and guidance, and changing perceptions of HE.
2. Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion, and attainment) between students of low and high socioeconomic status ([TUNDRA](#) Q1 & 2, IMDⁱ Q1 & 2 and eligible for FSM) by 2030 through improving access to academic, pastoral, mental health and financial support and creating a sense of belonging and inclusion.
3. Improve outcomes for care experienced students, estranged students and student carers across the lifecycle (access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression) by 2028 through improving personal, academic support, reducing cost pressures and improving access to work experience and careers guidance.
4. Eliminate the gaps in student success (completion and attainment) and improve the on-course and progression outcomes between Black and White students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support, reducing cost pressures, creating a sense of belonging and improving access to work experience and careers guidance.
5. Eliminate the progression gap between Asian and White students by 2028 through improving access to work experience and tailored and targeted careers guidance and support.
6. Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion and attainment) between male and female students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support and reducing cost pressures.

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

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

We have identified a number of programmes of work to help us address key risks to equality of opportunity. These include:

- Extending our pre and post 16 programmes of work with schools to increase student knowledge and awareness of Higher Education, as well as their capacity to navigate it.
- Supported Entry Schemes to help students transition to HE.
- Collaborative initiatives working with other NE universities, colleges and organisations to support aspiration and attainment raising.
- Subject specific activity to support engagement.
- Tutoring programmes to help raise pre-16 attainment.
- Enhanced support for study throughout the university so all students can access tailored support.
- Peer support and paid opportunities to support students to succeed, enhance inclusive practice and create an improved sense of belonging.
- Enhanced wellbeing and mental health support for target groups.

- Transition support for students including practical opportunities for progression.

We believe that creating a central, sustainable offer for supporting local activities which can be targeted effectively to meet relevant objectives will provide a holistic, responsive model which can be effectively monitored, evaluated and adapted as required. Sustainability is a key principle for the plan and its evaluation as Austen et. al highlight: “work should be supported beyond quick wins to enable sustained (‘sticky’) practices and evidence of impact over time.” (p. 4, 2021)ⁱⁱ.

The model is centred around ‘Foundational Activities’ (FAs) which can be tailored to address specific targets and objectives, as outlined in the intervention strategies. These are all evidence-based and explored in more detail in Annex B of the access and participation plan.

See pages 4-30 and Annex B (from page 56) of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

We have worked in partnership with the Students’ Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan. Students are represented on our Student Access and Success Committee, which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan. To provide feedback students can contact their Students’ Union representative. We are also committing to a variety of paid student roles as part of our intervention strategies. To become involved in this work, please contact our Access and Participation Team (details below)

See pages 32-34 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, as outlined in Annex B. We plan to evaluate each activity in the intervention plans. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- Student satisfaction
- How well our activity works
- Progress against our aims as listed above
- The impact of our work

The Student Access and Success Committee will monitor and report on these processes to the Education Committee and the University Executive. These fora will oversee the implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones in our access and participation plan. We will monitor impact on our target groups to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students, alongside publishing outcomes via a new APP Blog to contribute to sector knowledge and practice.

See pages 4-30 and 34-36 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact accessandparticipation@northumbria.ac.uk for more information.

ⁱ Index of Multiple Deprivation, as calculated in England only. It is calculated from a set of measures which classifies areas in England by their level of deprivation. It is presented here as five quintiles, where quintile 1 contains the most deprived 20 per cent of the English population, and quintile 5 the least deprived 20 per cent. Two sets of IMD quintiles are presented as they were calculated in both 2015 and 2019.

ⁱⁱ Austen, L. et al, 2021. Advance HE. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review