

University of Birmingham

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans (APP) 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 APP for the University of Birmingham at <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/about/equality/widening-access.aspx>.**

Key points from our Plan

The University of Birmingham has embraced widening participation and fair access since its foundation. The majority of our UK-domiciled undergraduate population (2018/19 data) study full-time; three quarters are from state schools, and a third are first generation students, and a fifth are from neighbourhoods which tend to have a small number of people going into higher education (known as POLAR4 Quintile 1 neighbourhoods).

Data shows that Birmingham students from under-represented groups are as likely (if not more likely) to continue on their course, achieve good honours and gain highly-skilled employability than the average English student from over-represented groups. However, we recognise that in some areas we have more to do, and where our data tell us that there are significant gaps in performance between different groups of students, we have set clear targets to address this and are investing in activities and interventions to ensure we achieve them.

Fees we charge [see page 30 of the full plan]

The maximum fee we charge for full-time home undergraduate students is £9,250. You can see a full list of fees: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/about/equality/widening-access.aspx>

Financial help available [see page 24 to 26 of the full plan]

We offer financial support to help our students to access higher education and continue studying until their course is complete. Our support packages include:

- An **annual bursary of £2,000**, known as the Chamberlain Award. This award is available to students with a household income of less than £25k; **or** students on our 'Pathways to Birmingham' scheme with a household income of less than £60k; **or** students from POLAR Q1 neighbourhoods with a household income of less than £60k. You can check if your address is in a POLAR Q1 neighbourhood on the [Office for Students website](#).
- **Care leavers** are eligible for an enhanced Chamberlain award of either subsidised University accommodation (up to £7,540) or a cash award of £3,000.
- In the first year, POLAR Q1 students are eligible for an award of £1,000 if they decide to live in University halls of residence.
- **Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scholarship of £1,500** for entrants who successfully participate in the P2B programme, perform well in the Access to Birmingham module, and achieve the standard offer grades for their course
- **Young adult carers awards** (Sarah Hawkins awards x7 of £2,000 up until 2022)
- **Annual awards for students from the University of Birmingham School** (known as the Mike Roden scholarships) for ten students per year. Four awards of £5,000 are available for students studying STEM programmes and 6 awards of £1,500 are available for students studying non-STEM programmes)

Information for students [see page 29 of the full plan]

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications. **Current students** receive information about fees

and the financial support available through our student portal, internal communications campaigns and emails.

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

What we are aiming to achieve [see page 12 to 15 of the full plan]

Access to Higher Education: Our data tells us that students are less likely to come to Birmingham if they live in a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education (low participation neighbourhoods). Therefore, by 2024/25 we will increase the number of POLAR Quintile 1 students we admit to 20% of our population, and 10% of our entry population will be made up of Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scholars.

Success in getting your degree: Our data tells us that our Black students, Asian students, Disabled students and those from low participation neighbourhoods are less likely to achieve a degree award of either a 2:1 or first. Therefore, by 24/25 we will reduce the awarding gap of good honours attainment for our Black students (to 5 percentage points), our Asian students (to 5 percentage points), and our Disabled students (to 1 percentage point).

Progression to Graduate Employability: Our data tell us that our Black and locally-domiciled P2B students are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further study. Therefore, by 2024/25 we will reduce the gap in progression to graduate (highly-skilled) employment between White and Black students to 2 percentage points, and the gap between locally domiciled P2B graduates and other students to 3 percentage points.

What we are doing to achieve our aims [see pages 15 to 24 of the plan]

What we offer prospective students. The [Pathways to Birmingham](#) programme offers Year 12 and 13 students an insight into higher education and professional career routes, and support students throughout the university application process.

Students who successfully complete a Pathways to Birmingham programme and apply to the University of Birmingham will receive special consideration from admissions tutors. If their application is successful, they will receive two offers from the University of Birmingham - the standard offer and a [Pathways to Birmingham offer](#). The Pathways to Birmingham offer is typically two grades below the standard offer, as advertised in the prospectus. Students may also be eligible to receive the [Pathways to Birmingham financial support](#).

All Pathways to Birmingham programmes have the same [eligibility criteria](#), and students are required to meet these criteria to be considered for the programmes.

What we offer current students. The [Birmingham Scholar programme](#) is the University's dedicated initiative for improving student access, success and progression. The programme is designed to support students from under-represented backgrounds, particularly those identified in our plan, to get the most out of their studies at Birmingham.

Scholars have access to a wide range of bespoke support in addition to that which the University offers to all students. This includes specific events for Scholars such as dedicated welcome week events supporting the transition to university, tailored and enhanced [academic skills](#) support, and exclusive career development workshops.

What we do in partnership. As part of regional **Aimhigher** network we provide activities for 11–16 year olds including mentoring, residentials, and activities on aspirations, awareness, attainment, access and application. Through the **Realising Opportunities partnership** we offer a programme of on-campus activities, mentoring and an academic assignment which leads to an alternative offer that is usually two grades below the standard offer recognised by all partner universities.

The **University of Birmingham Training School (UBS)** admits secondary students from a range of attainment backgrounds, and has a strong focus on raising aspirations, increasing awareness of HE and increasing social mobility. University staff contribute to subject-related activities, and the Careers Network and Outreach teams provide advice on HE and post-sixth form options.

We will raise attainment in schools through:

- the **Forward Thinking** programme, a partnership of 40 schools supports a cohort of 600 students in Year 8 to 11.
- piloting **pre-16 tutoring** with 5 Forward Thinking schools, this tutoring will be delivered by existing undergraduate students.
- Attendees to our Year 10 summer school will be offered 10 hours of tutoring after attending.
- The “**Levelling Up: STEM**” project, A-level students from less advantaged backgrounds will be offered tutoring and mentoring in Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Materials Science.

We will increase our flexible provision through:

- the **National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure** (NCATI) delivering L4 and L5 programmes drawing on University expertise, and through offering a route for foundation degree students at NCATI to progress to the final year of a University engineering degree.
- Provision of **digital bootcamp** courses continues to grow with support from the West Midlands Combined Authority, and new programmes in development to supplement the existing web development and data analytics courses.
- The number of students on our degree apprenticeship in partnership with PwC continues to grow.
- Delivering a fully funded Foundation Year that can lead directly to one of our degree programmes in Engineering and Physical Sciences

We will continue to improve attainment of students from underrepresented groups by:

- Increasing the Birmingham Scholar cohort to include all POLAR Q1 students.
- Fully funded short-term mobility opportunities are available for BS students through the Turing scheme.
- Specific mentoring and employability support for 50 STEM, Law and Business scholars from Goldman Sachs.

How students can get involved [see page 26 to 27 of the full plan]

Students are important contributors to the delivery of our access and participation activity. Students are important role models as ambassadors and mentors in our outreach activity, as well as in our on-programme peer-assisted study support and mentoring programmes. In many cases, our students are co-creators of the support and services we provide. Indeed, this Plan was developed in partnership with our Guild of Students.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved [see page 27 and 28 of the full plan]

Access to higher education: Each of our sustained progressive outreach programmes has a bespoke evaluation framework that sets out the rationale for the intervention, aims and objectives, and expected short-term and intermediate outcomes, and longer term impact. The evaluation framework sets out key evaluation questions to assess progress against the impact and identifies indicators and data collection methods.

Success in obtaining your degree: We use a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence to evaluate the impact of the Birmingham Scholar programme. This includes surveys of Scholars, as well as continuation and award data, and whether Scholars are engaged in specific parts of the programme.

Progression to employability: Our Careers Network evaluates the impact and effectiveness of its services on the confidence, competence and knowledge of students, monitors attendance and engagement with its services mapping graduate outcomes against engagement and uses data to influence strategic decision making.