

University of Essex

Summary: Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2025-26

Based on national data, there are people from certain backgrounds who are less likely to go to university and less likely to succeed at each of the student lifecycle stages. These stages are Access (getting into University); Continuation and Completion (progressing through and completing your course); Attainment (gaining an upper second- or first-class degree) and Progression (going onto graduate level employment or further study after you finish your course).

Our plan identifies which student groups may need additional support to succeed at each of these stages and outlines a range of intervention strategies, designed to do this. [You can read the full APP here.](#)

Key Points of the Plan

We are proud that we do not have any Access gaps at the University of Essex. We recruit a significant proportion of students from backgrounds underrepresented in Higher Education and have a wide range of outreach activity in place. We have already committed to eliminating any significant gaps in student success measures by the end of our current strategic plan and this aim has also been embedded within our APP.

Whilst there is a range of support available to all students at Essex, we have focused our intervention strategies on groups of students who; based on the available data, are less likely to achieve success getting to and at university. These groups include:

- Students from lower socio-economic groups who are under-represented within Higher Education.
- Male students, who are underrepresented nationally on healthcare courses.
- BTEC students, who have lower rates of continuation and completion.
- Black students, who have lower rates of attainment than white students.
- Young students, who have lower rates of progression into graduate level careers when compared to mature students at the University.

Our Intervention strategies are summarised below and are available in full within our APP. We have committed to:

- Working in partnership with the Healthcare Science Centre to encourage more male students to consider and register on courses leading to a career in healthcare.
- A range of outreach activity, including attainment raising sessions, campus visits and mentoring for students who are from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- An Essex Futures Bursary for students who join the University with a household income of less than £30,000.
- Providing a focused pre-entry study support programme for students who hold a BTEC on entry.

- Designing a new academic calendar with the intent of increasing opportunities for success for all students and undertaking assessments to understand the impact of the new calendar on target groups of students from 2027/28.
- Understanding the impact of university policies (such as our contextual admissions policy and our extenuating circumstances policy) on under-represented groups.
- Providing named personal tutors for a more sustained period for students from Black backgrounds; based on [sector research](#) that suggests this will positively impact attainment for this group.
- Engaging students with a campaign to combat imposter syndrome.
- Piloting additional assessment choice for some courses to understand the impact of this as a mechanism to improve attainment.
- Further work to understand the reasons that fewer black students (when compared to white students) choose to progress to Postgraduate study.
- Continuing to embed extracted employability (activity to support career readiness) within the taught curriculum so that those students facing time and cost pressures receive employability support within scheduled teaching.
- Offering a range of paid placements targeted at students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those with a disability to provide work experience.

These strategies are designed to eliminate any significant gaps in the measures of student success at the University as they apply to the groups outlined in 'key points of the plan'.

Tuition Fees

Our undergraduate fees are regulated by the Office for Students for UK/'Home' students. Our annual fees for 2025/26 are:

- Full-time first-degree students (such as a BA or BSc): £9,535.
- Foundation degree full-time students: £5,760.
- Accelerated degree students: £11,440.
- Study abroad year: 15% of the standard tuition fee.
- Placement year: 20% of the standard tuition fee.

Tuition fees, including any potential increases are communicated on our [Fees and Funding pages](#) and are provided with the offer of admission.

Financial Help

The [Essex Futures Bursary](#) is available to support students who have a household income of less than £35,000. Information on other [scholarships and bursaries](#) at the University of Essex is also available.

Our [Hardship Fund](#) supports students whose financial circumstances have changed during an academic year.

Informing Students

We will communicate the provisions of the plan via

- Pre-registration information for students.
- Direct communication to registered students eligible for support from; or who may be impacted by our intervention strategies.
- A continuous dialogue with our Student Union leaders, who are represented at every level of monitoring activity (from implementation and seeking student feedback to oversight at a senior level through our committee structures).

Students involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the APP

We have several provisions in place to ensure that students are involved in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan:

- Student Representatives are members of our operational group, ensuring the implementation of our Intervention Strategies.
- Student Representatives are also members of Education Committee, responsible for overseeing the targets within our APP.
- A University of Essex student is undertaking a PhD studentship to evaluate the plan.
- Progress will be shared on an annual basis with Student Council.
- We welcome further involvement and student feedback on the intervention strategies. The best way to get in touch is via our [Student's Union](#).

Evaluation of the APP

Each of our intervention strategies follows a Theory of Change model which identifies the likely outcomes of the strategy and ensures that we know what success looks like. Annual review of our progress will mean that we can identify if we are on track, or if a strategy is not working as intended and requires further attention. The resulting data will be shared with our Education, Data, Insights and Advisory Group (EDIAG) and overseen by members of Education Committee and the University Executive.

We are supporting a PhD for one of our students to ensure sound intervention design and evaluation practice. Our findings will be shared at a national level with research and evaluation groups so that all Universities may benefit from this knowledge when considering how they can best support their students.

Further Information

[For more information, please contact our Student Services Hub.](#)