

University of Hertfordshire

Summary of 2025-2029 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan (APP) is a document developed by higher education providers in the UK which sets out how they plan to promote equality of opportunity for underrepresented student groups. These documents must be approved by the Office for Students (OfS) if universities want to charge higher tuition fees. You can see the APP for the University of Hertfordshire on our [website](#).

Key points

The University of Hertfordshire aims to 'power the potential' of our diverse student body of over 34,000 from more than 140 countries. Our APP is focused on ensuring that specific groups of students can succeed in their studies at the University and achieve their career goals.

See pages 1-6 of the full plan

Our data shows that certain groups of students are less likely to continue in their studies (continuation), achieve a 'good degree' (awards) and secure employment or further study after graduating (progression). We have identified 13 risks to equality of opportunity across the continuation, awards and progression parts of the student lifecycle and 13 objectives to address these risks. The risks have been grouped into six 'at risk' student groups: Students who are Male; Students who identify as Black or Asian; Students with BTEC/non-traditional entry qualifications; Students who declare a Mental Health Condition; Students from Indices of Multiple Deprivation Q1 (IMD Q1); and Students who have been eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

We are committed to delivering an exceptional student experience and our long-term goal is to eliminate inequalities and ensure equal outcomes for all our students.

Fees we charge

Academic year 2025-26

- **Standard first degree:** £9,535 per year.
- **Foundation degrees:** £6,165 per year.

See here for more information:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/fee-information/how-much-are-my-fees>.

Financial help available

- **Bursaries and Scholarships:** Various bursaries are available, including the University of Hertfordshire Bursary (£1,000 for first-year students with household incomes under £30,000) and specific bursaries for Care Leavers, Independent (Estranged) Students, Displaced Refugee Learners, and Young Adult Carers.
- **Hardship Funds:** Short-term assistance grants and the University Financial Assistance Fund provide support for students in financial difficulty.
- **Student Opportunity Fund:** Up to £1,000 for educationally enriching opportunities, providing autonomy and choice of opportunities beyond students' financial means to enhance employability.

See pages 30-32 of the full plan and the University website for more information: [Scholarships, grants and bursaries | Study | Uni of Herts](#).

Information for students

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support through the university's website and via our outreach events. Fee information is provided at application stage within our

Prospectus and the Programme Pages of the University's external website: herts.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/fee-information/how-much-are-my-fees. Information is also held in our [Application Guide pages, which stores our Fee and Finance Policy](#).

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aims are to **Eliminate Inequalities**, ensuring equal outcomes for all students. **Improve Social Mobility**, enhancing the University's position in social mobility rankings. **Support Under-represented and Under-recognised Groups** to achieve success. We have set targets to achieve over the four years of the plan:

The fees, investments and targets section of the full plan provides more information. This is included as an appendix towards the end of the document.

Success Targets

- To increase the continuation rate of students with a declared Mental Health Condition to be equivalent to continuation rates for students without a declared disability.
- To increase the continuation rate of FSM eligible students to be equivalent to continuation rates of non-FSM eligible students.
- To reduce the Year 1 continuation gap between Males and Females to a minimum of 2 percentage points (pp).
- To reduce the continuation gap between A-level and BTEC entry students to a minimum of 4pp.
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between White and Black students by a minimum of 50% to 8pp
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between White and Asian students by a minimum of 50% to 6pp
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between White male and Black male students by a minimum of 50% to 20pp
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible students by a minimum of 50% to 5.5pp
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between for IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students by a minimum of 50% to 7pp.
- To reduce the 'good degree' awarding gap between A-level and BTEC entry students by a minimum of 50% to 8pp.
- To eliminate the 'good degree' awarding gap between male and female students.

Progression Targets

- To reduce the Graduate Outcomes gap between students with a declared Mental Health condition and students without a disability by a minimum of 50% to 3pp.
- To reduce the Graduate Outcomes gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students by a minimum of 50% to 3pp.
- To eliminate the Graduate Outcomes gap between Male and Female students.
- To reduce the Graduate Outcomes gap between A-level and BTEC entry students to 3pp.

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

We have designed intervention strategies for the six 'at risk' groups (IS1-IS5). An intervention strategy is a group of activities or programmes that will be delivered to achieve the aims of our APP. IS1-5 are preceded by an over-arching institutional intervention, comprised of nine initiatives. Seven apply to all students and two are specific to widening participation (WP) students. Identifying an over-arching institutional intervention means that the various initiatives will collectively benefit large numbers of students in our identified risk groups

See pages 2-23 of the full plan.

given that 82% of our UK-domiciled, undergraduate students (full time and part time) have at least one of our risk characteristics. Summary of interventions (IS1-IS5):

- **Mental Health Support:** Develop staff confidence to support students with mental health conditions and create a new institutional framework for wellbeing.
- **FSM and IMD Q1 Support:** Provide academic, pastoral and financial support to FSM eligible students, and those from IMD Q1.
- **Male Student Support:** Improve understanding of factors affecting male student continuity, success and progression and provide targeted support.
- **BTEC Student Support:** Develop staff understanding of BTEC students' needs and provide tailored induction programmes.
- **Racial Equity:** Implement an anti-racism project, inclusive teaching practices, and a leadership programme for racially minoritised students.

How students can get involved

- **University Governance.** Students are represented on university committees through Herts SU's Elected Officers and Student Community Organisers. They are there to represent the views of the student population.
- **WP Student Panel.** A student panel for consultation and feedback will be set up for the 2025-26 academic year, led by the access and participation team in partnership with Herts SU. 25 paid student roles, meeting once a month to co-create and feedback on WP initiatives.
- **Student Advocates:** The University provides opportunities for students to become student advocates. The University currently employs Disability Advocates, Engagement Advocates and Race Equity Student Advocates.
- **Student Insight Assistants.** Paid roles to gain peer-led insight throughout the year, with a focus on understanding students' concerns and barriers to success.
- **Widening Access and Student Success Student Ambassadors.** Students employed to support our WP outreach activities.

We are committed to ensuring that student voice and co-creation is embedded in the development of our initiatives for students. For more information on how to access these opportunities, please contact the access and participation team: <https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/supporting-our-students/widening-access-and-student-success/team>.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

The Access and Participation Evaluation Strategy (APES) has been designed to ensure our initiatives have their intended impact and is informed by the OfS Standards of Evidence.

See pages See pages 29-30 of the full plan
--

The intended outcomes of the APES are to: Establish a consistent and effective approach to the evaluation of access and participation activity across the institution; embed a 'What Works' culture amongst staff who design and implement access and participation initiatives; increase the volume and quality of our evaluation output and disseminate learning derived from evaluation activity in a timely, accessible, and purposeful way.

The University is committed to producing robust evaluative evidence to inform its work through our APES. We are keen to embed a 'What Works' approach across the institution and to share externally.

Contact details for further information

Contact the Access and Participation team: <https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/supporting-our-students/widening-access-and-student-success/team>.