

# Brunel University London

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

### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans 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 access and participation plan for Brunel University London at <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/access-and-participation/>

### Key points

The focus of our access and participation plan is to improve outcomes for specific groups of students. Brunel has an exceptionally diverse student body but our data shows that, compared to their peers at Brunel, outcomes are lower for certain groups of students. We aim to be, and are actively working towards becoming, a university where there are no differences in outcomes for any student group.

See pages 2 to 12 of the full plan

Our current challenges are:

- Student from low-income backgrounds (those with a household income less than £25,000 a year), and students from deprived areas (as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation which looks at deprivation levels in small areas) are less likely to:
  - continue after their first year of studies,
  - achieve a degree award of 2:1 or above,
  - progress to highly skilled employment or further study.
- Students who are aged 21 or over when they start their studies are less likely to continue their studies after their first year.
- Black and Asian students, as well as students from deprived areas, are less likely to achieve a degree award of 2:1 or above and less likely to progress to highly skilled employment of further study.

### What we are aiming to achieve

**Our overall aims** are: to support students to access higher education, both at Brunel and at other universities, to ensure that there are no differences in outcomes for any student group at Brunel University London, and to support all of our graduates to have successful outcomes.

See pages 12 to 15 of the full plan

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas to focus on:

- **Students from low participation neighbourhoods** – By 2024/25 we will increase the proportion of entrants from areas of low participation in higher education to 17.7%.
- **Mature students** – By 2024/25 we will increase the proportion of our entrants who are aged 21 or over to 17%, and ensure their continuation rates are the same as for young students.
- **Care Leavers** – By 2024/25 we will improve the continuation rate of students who experience of the care system, so that 9.6% or less leave after their first year.
- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students** – We will halve the gap in achievement of a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2.1 degree and halve the gap in progression to further study or a graduate job by 2024/25. We will eliminate these gaps by 2029/30.

- **Students from deprived areas** – We will halve the gap in progression to further study or a graduate job by 2024/25 and eliminate any gap by 2029/30.

## What we are doing to achieve our aims

- **Raising attainment from a young age** – We deliver activities with school pupils from primary school through to sixth form to support them to do well. We particularly focus on helping pupils achieve good GCSE grades and during 2022-23 we expand on this to give extra support to pupils aged 5 – 11 years old and their parents and teachers.
- **Offer a range of flexible ways to access Higher Education** – As well as full-time and part-time degrees we offer degree apprenticeships, short courses for professionals, foundation years, and partnership programmes with HCUC (our local Further Education college). We want to continue to increase the number of students accessing these programmes and increase the range of subjects they cover.
- **Remove barriers to academic achievement** – Technology is playing an increasing role in education, and we want to make sure that all our students, regardless of their income levels, have access to the necessary technology they need to study and the knowledge and skills to use it. We also know that financial pressures can mean students spend time working which makes studying challenging, so we provide lots of financial support and well-paid student jobs on campus to support students.
- **Increase the number of students participating in paid work experience** – We know that completing an internship or a placement increases the chances of students entering a graduate level job when they graduate. We are working to ensure that more students can benefit from these opportunities, whether that be full time or part-time around their studies, and gain the extra experience without financial worries.
- **Providing on course support to engage and to develop the necessary skills to succeed** – The transition to higher education requires students to develop new skills, we support them to do so by running support programmes before they start their degree and also through specific skills sessions, either as part of the teaching or available as extra sessions. All of our undergraduate programmes also offer Peer-Assisted Learning where students in later years of study support first year students with their studies and challenges they are facing.

See pages 15 to 21 of the full plan

## Fees we charge

At Brunel University London, the maximum fees charged are **£9,250** for full-time and **£6,935** for part-time Home students. Full fee details are available on our [course pages](#).

## Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students to access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes:

See page 21 of the full plan

- A **Brunel University London Bursary** for students with a household income of less than £25,000 a year and who are either aged 21 or over at the start of their studies, or are from a deprived area. The bursary starts at £1,000 in the first year, increases to £2,000 in the second year and £3,000 in the final year.

- A **Care Leaver and Estranged Student Bursary** of £2,000 a year for students who have either spent at least 13 weeks in care since they were 14 years old, including during their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, or are estranged from their parent(s), and are under 25 years of age when they start their studies.
- A **Life Long Learning Bursary** which provides a full fee waiver for ten students who are aged 25 or over at the time when they start their studies.
- An **Urban Scholars Bursary** of £3,000 a year for former participants of our Urban Scholars programme.
- A **Sanctuary Scholarship** for five refugees each year, providing a full fee waiver and accommodation for the duration of their studies.
- A **PGCE Access Bursary** of £2,500 for twenty PGCE students with a household income of less than £25,000 a year and who are either aged 25 or over at the start of their studies, or are from an area where participation in higher education is low, or have a disability (including dyslexia).

### 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.

See page 24 of the full plan

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 our [university website](#).

### How students can get involved

Students are at the core of our activities. As well as members of the Students Union being on our Access and Participation Committee, which oversees all of our work and sets the strategic direction, students are employed as part of the delivery programme for many of our schemes. We offer part-time jobs, internships, placements and graduate opportunities to ensure the student voice is at the heart of delivery. Current students should contact [JobShop](#) for more information about opportunities.

See pages 21 to 22 and Annex A of the full plan

We also employ Access and Participation Student Ambassadors who work with the central team to review all our activities and consider where we could make improvements. They support our evaluation activities, including looking at good practice and helping with surveys and focus groups.

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

All our activities have a clear rationale about why we think they will help us to achieve our aims, which we express in documents called a ‘theory of change’. We use focus groups and surveys (filled out before and after activities) to test these theories of change and make sure that the results we want are being achieved. These results are combined with data about which students are accessing our activities and reviewed every year as part of our ‘evaluation and review cycle’. A summary of our evaluation and review cycle, as well as plans for improvement, are overseen by Access and Participation Committee as well as our Executive Board and Governing Body. This level of scrutiny helps us to ensure our work achieve its intended goals and keep us on track.

See pages 22 - 25 of the full plan

### Contact details for further information

You can contact the access and participation team at [acroaap@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:acroaap@brunel.ac.uk) for more information.