

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out how universities will work towards equality of opportunity for people from all backgrounds to access, succeed at, and progress from higher education. Our plan focuses on students studying for undergraduate degrees.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Brunel University London at <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/access-and-participation/access-and-participation-plan>.

Key points

Brunel is based in west London and offers a range of largely full-time courses across a variety of subjects. We are very proud of our diverse student population and want to create an inclusive, welcoming and accessible environment where everyone has the same opportunity to succeed. Our data tell us that we have some work to do, and our plan sets out what we intend to do as we work towards becoming a university where there are no differences in outcomes for any student group.

The main areas we are working on are:

- Ensuring that there are students from all backgrounds studying on our undergraduate Medicine degree programme.
- Supporting students who have taken BTEC qualifications to continue with their studies and to gain a degree award of a 2:1 or higher.
- Supporting students from different ethnic backgrounds, particularly those of Black and Asian heritages, to continue with their studies, to gain a degree award of a 2:1 or higher, and to progress to graduate employment or further study.
- Supporting students who live in an area of deprivation or received free school meals to gain a degree award of a 2:1 or above, and to progress to graduate employment / further study.

See pages 1-3 and 35-54 of the full plan

What we are aiming to achieve

The aims of our plan are to remove barriers to study and to support students from all backgrounds to succeed throughout their studies. We will continue our important widening access work in supporting students to access higher education, but a key focus of this plan is to support students once they have started their studies at Brunel.

Based on the analysis of our data and conversations with our students and staff, we have identified some significant risks to equality of opportunity at particular points of the student journey (see above). Our analysis highlighted that some of our risks may be linked to gaps in skills, and that we also need to ensure that students are able to access academic, personal and financial support.

To address these risks, we have set ourselves a number of targets which we will be working towards from the start of the plan in September 2025 until the end of the academic year in 2029. These are:

- **Medicine undergraduate programme:** our aim is that 80% of home students (students who pay 'home' fees) studying on this programme will be from under-represented backgrounds.
- **Continuation:** we will significantly reduce the gap we see in students continuing with their studies, particularly for those entering with BTECs or those of Black heritage.

- **Degree outcomes:** we intend to reduce the differences in degree outcomes (the degree awarded) for students from Black and Asian heritages, those who were eligible for free school meals, or those who studied BTEC qualifications.
- **Progression:** by 2028/29, our aim is that the gap in progression to further study or a graduate job will be eliminated. This has a focus on students who have lived in an area of deprivation, who have been eligible for free school meals, or who are of Black or Asian heritage.

See pages 3-4 of the full plan

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

To address our key risks, we have developed five intervention strategies. These strategies set out the activities, programmes and support we will undertake to deliver the aims of our plan. These strategies are:

- **Access:** this strategy focuses on raising awareness of university and supporting individuals from different backgrounds to progress to university. This involves working with young people, schools, local authorities, teachers, parents, carers and virtual schools as well as working closely with schools to provide support to raise attainment.
- **Success – Structural Barriers:** this strategy focuses on how we do things, what we say, and what we teach. We will be looking at our policies and regulations, the language we use, and reviewing our curriculum to ensure that they are accessible, inclusive and sensitive to all students.
- **Success – Financial:** we know that financial pressures can mean students spend time working which makes studying challenging. This strategy focuses on support to help students manage their money alongside providing financial support, a hardship fund, and creating opportunities for flexible paid work on campus.
- **Success – Academic:** when students arrive at Brunel, they have different experiences, skills, and needs. This strategy focuses on providing a range of support for students whilst they are studying at Brunel. This includes support for students with a disability, a mentoring programme, support to develop academic skills, and opportunities to interact with students across different year groups.
- **Progression:** this strategy focuses on supporting students to progress from university to graduate employment or further study. Activities include opportunities to develop employability skills, undertake flexible paid work on campus, take part in career mentoring, develop professional networks, and to complete internships.

See pages 4-29 of the full plan

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

All of our activities have clear aims and are supported by evidence as to why we think they will work. We use different methods to gather feedback and measure impact and this could include surveys at the start and end of programmes, gathering feedback from participants and Student Ambassadors, and analysing data about who has taken part in activities. We review our activities regularly and make changes if they are not having the impact we expect.

The work committed to in our plan is overseen by a committee which is made up of members from different parts of the University. Regular reports are also presented at a number of our key university committees on the progress we are making against our targets. We have also made commitments to share our evaluation findings both inside and outside Brunel so that we can deepen our understanding of, and share, what works.

See pages 31-34 of the full plan

How students can get involved

We ran a number of focus groups and a survey with students whilst we were developing our plan so they could share their experiences. Our findings from these activities played a key role in identifying the areas we need to improve and the actions we need to take. We shared these findings with members of the Student Union and they had the opportunity to comment on our findings. Students also had the opportunity to comment on a draft of the plan when it was shared with different internal committees. We have a student representative on the committee which oversees our access and participation work and we will continue to work with the Union to monitor the impact of this plan.

See page 31 of the full plan

Fees we charge

At Brunel, the maximum fees charged are £9,535 for full-time and £7,145 for part-time home undergraduate students. Increases in home fees will be in line with national increases and published on our website. Details about our fees are available on our [undergraduate fees and funding](#) pages.

See page 60 of the full plan

Financial help available

We offer scholarships and bursaries each year to support students from specific backgrounds. Full details can be found on our [bursaries and scholarships](#) page.

- **Care Leaver and Estranged Student Bursary** – for students who are a verified care leaver or estranged student and who are aged 25 or under when they enrol on a full-time undergraduate course or a full-time PGCE. Students are awarded £2000 per year.
- **Cowrie Scholarship** – for students from Black African and Caribbean heritage with low household income. Students are awarded a full fee waiver.
- **Sanctuary Refugee Scholarship** – for students identified as refugees and classed as paying home fees. Students are awarded a full fee waiver and accommodation on campus.

We also have a hardship fund which supports students who experience an unexpected change in their financial situation.

See page 34 of the full plan

Information for students

Future students receive information on fees and financial support at events, such as open days, and by email communications. Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student portal, virtual learning environment and internal communication campaigns. Information about financial support is also being included in our revised tutor handbooks so that academic staff are able to support students. For the most up-to-date information, see our [undergraduate fees and funding](#) and [bursaries and scholarships](#) pages.

See page 34 of the full plan

Contact details for further information

Please contact the access and participation team at acroaap@brunel.ac.uk for more information.