

## The University of Manchester

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

#### *What is an access and participation plan?*

An access and participation sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for The University of Manchester at [Widening participation | The University of Manchester](#).

#### *Key points*

We are a globally influential institution located and firmly embedded in the heart of Manchester, with a far-reaching impact extending to international centres in Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore. We are proud to be home to a thriving, vibrant, and diverse community of students and staff, with over 45,000 students hailing from 177 countries.

We are recognised for our global impact, ranking highly in international standings and focusing on integrating research into teaching. We are committed to excellence, social responsibility and inclusivity, and aim to empower students and alumni to contribute positively to society locally and globally.

Our analysis reveals numerous signs of risk to equal opportunity, with our plan setting out a series of objectives, targets and intervention strategies to address the underlying and contributing factors. The plan focuses on the six most prevalent of these related to the student life cycle stages of access, completion and attainment with a focus on the following student groups:

- Lower socio-economic groups (individuals eligible for free school meals or from areas with the highest indicators of deprivation) in access and attainment.
- Ethnic minority groups, particularly young Black undergraduate students (aged over 18), in access, and both Black and Asian students in attainment.
- Care-experienced students in access.
- Students with certain declared disability (mental health or social/communication) who have lower completion rates than other students.

See pages 1 – 6 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *Fees we charge*

For 2025/27 entry the University of Manchester will charge £9,250 for UK Undergraduate fees. This will be subject to change in subsequent years and the University may increase its fees in line with fee limits set out in regulation.

See page 107 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *Financial help available*

We aim to mitigate the financial burden associated with pursuing and succeeding in higher education. Our support is offered through bursaries, scholarships, and funds, targeting specific

groups such as low-income households, underrepresented student groups, and subject-specific areas.

The Manchester Bursary provides £1,000 annually for students with household incomes below £35,000 and £2,000 annually for those below £25,000. Additional scholarships and bursaries are available, with detailed information on the University's website.

See page 43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *Information for students*

We are committed to providing clear and accessible information to current and prospective students through a range of online and face-to-face methods. Our university website provides information on our fees and financial support, courses, opportunities for widening participation applicants, and the Manchester Experience.

Prospective students can access information through Open Days, online sessions, and outreach activities, particularly in Greater Manchester. The “Get Ready for Manchester” website offers key resources on accommodation, student finance, and wellbeing.

See page 49 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *What we are aiming to achieve*

We aim to address the risks that may affect a student’s opportunity to access and succeed in higher education, enabling them to fully engage in both academic and campus life. We aim to be recognised as a leader in the northwest region and the Russell group for addressing equality of opportunity risks. Our six objectives set out to address eight targets, with the aim to:

- Improve access rates for prospective students from ethnic minority groups (black undergraduate students), lower socio-economic groups (individuals eligible for free school meals or from areas with the highest indicators of deprivation) and care-experienced backgrounds.
- Improve completion rates for students with particular declared disabilities (mental health or social/communication).
- Improve attainment rates for students from Ethnic minority groups (Black and Asian) and lower socio-economic groups (from areas with the highest indicators of deprivation).

See pages 5-6 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

Our plan sets out six intervention strategies, which we believe provide a comprehensive suite of activities and support mechanisms that, where possible, eliminate barriers affecting those who experience socioeconomic and other causes of disadvantage, where it is possible to do so and mitigate the impact of barriers where we are unable to eradicate them.

We will look to enhance the transition and success of underrepresented student groups by addressing access barriers, providing clear and inclusive guidance, and increasing confidence. Our approach will include raising aspirations and academic performance for underrepresented

groups, alleviating financial burdens with targeted support, and leveraging data and technology to improve decision-making and support.

We are committed to offering comprehensive academic support and revising learning and teaching approaches to close attainment gaps while fostering an inclusive campus environment. We will also focus on improving employability and retention through mentoring, coaching, and peer support, ensuring all students have the necessary resources to succeed. Our plan sets out our ambition across nine broad themes, each with specific aims.

See pages 6 – 40 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *How students can get involved*

We greatly value our ongoing partnership with our diverse student body and the University of Manchester's Students' Union (UMSU), which plays a crucial role in representing student interests. We actively encourage student participation in shaping access, success, and progression initiatives through academic representation, surveys (end-of-unit, NSS, UMSU Build Your MCR survey), staff-student liaison committees, Faculty Forums, and other university committees. We also collaborate in open meetings on issues of concern to students, such as belonging, success, support, and cost of living. As well as working together on initiatives like the employment of Student Ambassadors for activities to engage with prospective students.

We will continue to work in partnership with students to evaluate and enhance our activities as set out in the plan.

See pages 43, 46 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

Our evaluation plan ensures a thorough, transparent, and credible assessment of our interventions addressing equality of opportunity. Our targets are embedded in the University's governance and annual academic assurance cycle, monitored by the Board of Governors and Senate. Key components of our evaluation approach include:

- Annual Review and Self-Assessment
- Collaboration and Dissemination
- Evaluation Design
- Student Engagement

Overall, our plan promotes continuous improvement, informed by robust evidence, collaborative efforts, and ongoing evaluation. See pages 47-49 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### *Contact details for further information*

Please contact Craig Best, Director of Student and Academic Services (craig.best@manchester.ac.uk) for more information.