

ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

IMPACT REPORT

2024

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INTRODUCTION

At the centre of our work is a commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has equal access to educational opportunities and the support necessary to thrive in higher education.

In the past year, we have made significant progress in enhancing student experiences through various initiatives, including increased award values for the Manchester Access Bursary and UG Access Scholarship, new bursaries for care leavers, and campus improvements such as the Commuter Hub. Additionally, groups such as the Belonging Network, Mental Health Charter Group, and Cost-of-Living Group have actively addressed challenges faced by our students. Initiatives led by our Students' Union, including Recreational Grants, the Gender Expression Fund, and Money Advice services have also played a crucial role.

The landscape of access and participation in higher education has transformed significantly, especially in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The APP for 2020-21 to 2024-25 set ambitious targets for improving access for underrepresented groups, notably through the POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) classification system. While we did not meet our target ratio of POLAR Q5 to Q1 students of 3:1, we are encouraged by the increased proportion of entrants from POLAR Q1 backgrounds. This reflects a nuanced picture, as the ratio of POLAR Q5 to Q1 entries showed an upward trend during the pandemic. We anticipate that the academic year 2024-25 will mark a notable reduction in this ratio, projected to be around 3.7, with an associated access gap of 28%, down from 32% last year.

Our new plan expands access targets to include students from families receiving free school meals (FSM). This strategic shift demonstrates our commitment to personalised access initiatives, moving beyond geographic measures. In recognition of this need, we are also reviewing our contextual admissions policy to ensure that our approach remains effective in addressing the diverse needs of our future applicants.

Integrating a Theory of Change framework has been crucial for assessing the effectiveness of our initiatives. The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health Success Hub (SSH) are an example of a group who have already adopted this approach. The SSH have now launched an EDI training session for all first-year students in FBMH and are undertaking a systematic literature review of interventions aimed at addressing awarding gaps. The evidence gathered from the SSH will provide vital insight into how this challenge can be addressed elsewhere in the institution.

The Success4Life initiative, celebrating its tenth anniversary, exemplifies our collaborative spirit in reaching marginalized young people across Greater Manchester. By partnering with Greater Manchester Higher (GMH) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), we have successfully supported young people with experience of living in care who are often excluded from entering higher education. These partnerships remain crucial, especially as UniConnect undergoes changes over the next two years. Our commitment to the principles of GM Higher ensures that we remain strategically aligned with the rest of the Greater Manchester Higher Education ecosystem.

Our partnership work across the region is extensive, collaborating with schools and colleges, and supporting initiatives like IntoUniversity, UpReach, Brilliant Club, and Tutor Trust. We also recognise the growing demand for flexible learning that accommodates personal commitments and are committed to providing accessible, high-quality education for lifelong learning. Our Flexible Learning

Programme and partnership with Manchester City Council on the UNESCO Learning Cities Initiative demonstrate our dedication to enhancing digital skills and developing our Lifelong Learning portfolio.

Whilst recognising the importance of collaboration in delivering high quality and sustainable initiatives, we can never overstate the importance of passionate individuals driving lasting change. The "We Belong Here" initiative, led by the University Access and Success team and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team, showcases the impact of targeted support for care experienced students. Through this programme, a local student received mentorship from the Academic Lead for EDI Disability, transforming their aspirations and leading them to study at the University, an opportunity that seemed unattainable a year prior.

Our Access and Success initiatives align with our university vision to be recognised as an inclusive organisation, reflecting our diverse community and complementing initiatives like the Athena Swan Charter, Stonewall, Race Equality Charter, and Disability Confident.

Our commitment to equitable opportunities drives our initiatives and partnerships across the University and Region. As we introduce our new Access and Participation Plan, we must remain mindful of the unique challenges faced by underrepresented groups and continually adapt our strategies to meet their needs. The stories of our students should inspire us to focus on meaningful change and celebrate how much richer our institution is because of them. Together, as we look toward Manchester 2035, we have the power to create a transformative environment where every individual feels they belong and can thrive.

Craig Best
Director of Student
and Academic Services



**In 2024
we worked with**



**50,556
students from**



**1,195
schools and colleges**



ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

Over the past year, colleagues from across the University have come together in a series of workshops to support the creation of our new Access Participation Plan (APP), which will run from September 2025-August 2028.

In this new APP cycle, the Office for Students (OfS) tasks universities to consider, not only access rates for underrepresented students, but also whether the HE environment provides equal opportunity for all students to succeed and thrive.

The OfS's new Equality of Risk Register (EoRR) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that could impact a student's opportunity to succeed in HE. The EoRR

also highlights which underrepresented groups may face more significant risks at various stages of the student lifecycle.

There is a renewed emphasis on evidencing impact. Providers are now expected to not only meet their own targets but also contribute to a shared understanding of effective strategies for improving student Access, Continuation, Success, and Progression.

At Manchester, the APP planning group brought together dedicated colleagues from academic and professional services in all three faculties, a range of central services, our cultural institutions and the Students' Union. Going beyond the task of setting and meeting targets, this group focused on how we could make a genuine change in experience and outcomes for our UoM student community.

The University's approach to creating the new APP for 2025 to 2028

Phase 1 Digging into the data

The APP planning group carried out a detailed interrogation of our institutional data. From this we gained a thorough understanding of where we are failing to address the risks which impact access and success that could be compared against national risks identified in the EoRR. Through collaboration and discussion, the APP planning group used this data to generate six priority risks and objectives for the plan.

Phase 2 Assessing our progress to date

Reflecting on where gaps appear for our APP target groups and where in the student lifecycle we can bolster support for greatest impact, we took stock of our fantastic Access and Student Success work.

Alongside wider sector research, we reviewed the evidence base generated through evaluation of our existing work and investigated which new activities could complement our existing provision. This process produced a variety of interventions, both targeted and universal, designed to make the institution a more intentionally inclusive space.

Phase 3 Planning change

The APP planning group organised activities into nine cross-cutting themes, designing a Theory of Change for each.

This task provided an opportunity for staff to share expertise in their area of work and map out how our interventions will produce change for our students and institution. After taking time to critique our ideas as a group, we led a Prioritisation workshop to help decide how each theme should inform each objective and its corresponding intervention strategy.

Phase 4 Student consultation

The University of Manchester Students' Union (UMSU) conducted focus groups with a diverse range of students from all APP target groups. The data collected was analysed to understand how to best support these students. The analysis was presented by the UMSU to the APP planning group to inform the design of our intervention strategies.

Phase 5 Writing and submission

The strategies and objectives laid out by the planning group were then written into a full plan and accompanying annexes detailing supplementary literature. The full plan provided details of the activity we intend to deliver, how we plan to evaluate these initiatives and share our findings. This draft was submitted to the OfS in May and approved in August.

Phase 6 What happens next?

Our focus now turns to operationalising the APP. Through Spring 2025, we will run a series of workshops to develop an implementation plan that ensures we maintain our whole provider approach throughout delivery of the new APP.

We will review our themes and objectives, establishing a benchmark for each intervention, creating resourcing and delivery plans, and identifying supportive ways of working.

From there, we will move to a round of open workshops, raising awareness of the APP targets across the University and providing an opportunity for staff to contribute towards the implementation plan for the first 2-years before this its finalisation in Summer 2025.



ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

The following six objectives set out our road map for addressing the most significant Equality of Opportunity risks that were identified through the performance assessment review.

[Click here to read our full APP and accessible summary](#) 

ACCESS

Objective 1

To increase the proportion of students studying at the University of Manchester from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. We will increase the percentage of students from Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA) Quintile 1 & 2 postcodes and those eligible for free school meals from 19% to 25% and 11.9% to 15%, respectively, by 2028/29.

Objective 2

To address the underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups among university entrants, with a specific focus on young Black undergraduate students (Black UG 18–20-year-olds). We aim to increase the proportion of young Black entrants to better align with the local population profile within Greater Manchester, elevating it from the current 5% to 10% by 2028/29.

Objective 3

To increase each year the number of care experienced young people from the Northwest who progress into higher education at the University of Manchester by 5% on the baseline of 2023/4.

SUCCESS

Objective 4

To bridge the completion gap between students with no declared disability and disabled students, particularly those with mental health, social/communication, or multiple conditions at the University of Manchester. We aim to address barriers to completion and reduce the existing completion rate gap from 3.8 percentage points to 2 percentage points by 2028/29.

Objective 5

To reduce the awarding gap of socio-economically disadvantaged students studying at the University of Manchester between Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q5 vs IMDQ1. We aim to reduce the gap in degree attainment from the current 13.6 percentage points to 5.2 percentage points.

Objective 6

To reduce the awarding gap between Black and White students, narrowing it from the current 12.5 percentage points to 5.8 percentage points by 2029, and reduce the awarding gap between Asian and White students, narrowing it from the current 9.3 percentage points to 5.3 percentage points by 2029.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Each objective has an intervention strategy matched with relevant themes, detailing actions and activities aligned with overarching objectives to address the targets. The nine cross cutting themes used across our APP are:

- Access and Inclusion
- Accessible Information, Advice and Guidance
- Supporting Attainment Raising
- Bursaries, Scholarships and Financial Support
- Data, Analytics and Technology
- Academic Support and Learning Resources
- Curriculum and Programme Innovation
- Inclusive and Accessible Student Experience and Support
- Mentoring, Coaching and Peer Support



PRIMARY OUTREACH

11,661
primary school
pupils engaged

168
outreach
activities

Educational inequality can begin to impact pupils early in their school career.

At The University of Manchester, we recognise how significant an impact we can have by giving young children an insight into higher education as they explore their future aspirations.

Over the last academic year, 11,661 primary school pupils were engaged through 168 outreach activities. Over 10,000 pupils also attended events hosted by our Cultural Institutions designed to introduce pupils to our art and museum collections, and the Access and Success Team hosted a set of primary visit days to campus. IntoUniversity Salford Central and Manchester North centres hosted 256 pupils for their study skills and curriculum support programmes.

Additionally, the Science and Engineering Education Research and Innovation Hub (SEERIH) continued to have a huge impact nationally on science education via the annual great Science Share, which saw 669,190 pupils participate in challenges and activities.



Supporting
856
pupils across
Greater
Manchester

Access All Areas

Coordinated by the University of Manchester Students' Union, AAA is a collection of outreach projects led by students currently studying at the University of Manchester. Last year, students volunteered over 1500 hours, supporting 856 pupils across Greater Manchester. Through one AAA initiative, Audio, pupils from Birchfields Primary School enjoyed performances from music students and were supported to learn an instrument and perform themselves. 87% of participants enjoyed getting the opportunity to write their own song and teachers felt doing so improved pupil's confidence and self-esteem.

Access All Areas



Targeted learner work

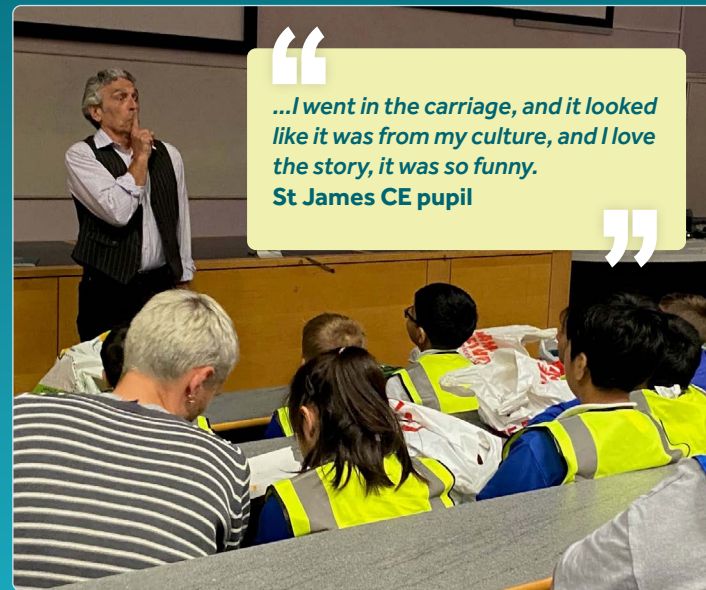
In 2024, we continued to develop outreach activities for and about communities who have been historically marginalised in higher education.

In June, we held our first Gypsy, Roma and Traveller celebration event, with a campus visit for pupils from St Alphonsus and St James CE Primary Schools. It was an engaging day of activities

including exploring a vardo, developed as part of the Traveller Wagon Project with Salford Council. Internationally acclaimed Romani Gypsy author Richard O'Neill attended the visit, leading a session around Traveller storytelling.

Pupils learned about the history of vardos, their significance in Gypsy, Romani, Traveller culture, and the importance of storytelling, all whilst learning about potential futures studying in HE.

Young people with care experience face several risks to equality of education, as recognised by our latest APP. We run bespoke ad hoc campus visits for children in care throughout the academic year. As part of this effort, twelve Year 6 pupils from Bolton were invited onto campus to explore what a future in HE might look like for them. Talks given during this visit busted myths around the affordability of university for young people with care experience, explaining the financial support available at Manchester.



“
...I went in the carriage, and it looked like it was from my culture, and I love the story, it was so funny.
”
St James CE pupil

Campus visits for local primary schools

In Spring 2024, we welcomed 157 pupils from local primary schools onto campus as part of our Visit Days. Pupils were encouraged to explore what studying in higher education would be like and how this could help them achieve their career aspirations. After attending a visit day there was a 45% increase in the number of pupils who agreed that they knew what studying at university would be like, and an 18% increase in the number of pupils who agreed that university is for people like them.

157
pupils from
local primary
schools



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PRIMARY OUTREACH

Great Science Share for Schools

Run by the Science and Engineering Education Research and Innovation Hub (SEERIH), the GSSfS celebrated a decade of difference as the initiative turned 10 this year. GSSfS also prestigiously obtained UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Patronage this year, solidifying its status as a beacon of excellence in science education.

The programme culminated in an event held cross-institutionally at the University of Salford, where pupils were welcomed onto campus to share their investigations and what they had learned.

Great
Science
Share
for SCHOOLS

YouTube
Click here to
see highlights
from the GSSfS
2024 event



delivered
to nearly
200
primary school
pupils

Faculty Outreach

By engaging pupils in subject specific outreach from a young age, we can help to contextualise the link between their school subjects and future careers. Each year, we see passionate teaching staff across the University volunteer their time to inspire young people across Greater Manchester. In the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, Peek-a-Boo Microscopy was delivered to nearly 200 primary school pupils. These interactive sessions introduced pupils to the Foldscope, an affordable paper microscope, giving them hands-on experience in scientific investigation. The workshops were designed to ignite curiosity about science in pupils from Reception to Year 6.

The children thoroughly enjoyed learning about microscopes. The adults leading the session were very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, it was so lovely to see our pupils excited about science.
**Primary School Teacher,
Mersey Vale Primary School**



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SECONDARY OUTREACH

In 2024, we worked with 16,332 young people across 228 new and established secondary initiatives.

Whilst some of our activities – such as our campus visits – are focused on nurturing academic aspirations through information, advice and guidance sessions, other programmes such as Gateways and our new programme Manchester Young Academics (MYA) place a greater emphasis on academic skills development and self-efficacy.



Gateways

The Gateways programme has run at the University for over 15 years, with a focus on providing a cohort of pupils with annual information, advice and guidance sessions throughout their secondary education. Significant updates were made to the programme with a refocus on delivery to Year 7 - Year 9 students and the inclusion of new activities with the aim of improving students' meta-cognitive skills.

75%
of attendees are considering attending university in the future

Gateways 

The decision to shorten the programme was made to compliment the new offer of Manchester Young Academics, which has a greater focus on supporting attainment raising and academic skills development.

During the 2023/24 academic year, 761 pupils from across 25 schools attended Gateways visit days. Feedback data showed that 75% of attendees are considering attending university in the future, and 71% know what studying at university would be like.

Manchester Young Academics

NEW
Programme

Manchester Young Academics (MYA) was launched as a pilot attainment raising programme in January 2024. Designed to support Year 10 and 11 pupils from socio-economic areas in Greater Manchester less represented in higher education, MYA equips participants with skills to become independent learners and successful university applicants. The programme comprises of campus visits, enrichment sessions, cultural experiences, and revision. MYA focuses on developing metacognitive skills, self-efficacy, cultural capital, and oracy while fostering a sense of belonging beyond participants immediate community. The first cohort of Year 10 pupils was comprised of 32 pupils from 3 schools. MYA was received positively by both participants and their teachers, with 70% of participants achieving either a 2.1 or a 1st on their final assignment.

Calum Berry, Careers Lead at Oasis Academy Media City, one of our MYA partner schools, found the content of the programme to be innovative; *'I thought the programme was really interesting in its approach and in its content because it was something that the pupils just won't have come across before. (...) in terms of the virtues and all the content, it was based around and I think that really captured their imagination'*. Calum saw particular strength in the reflective nature of the programme *'it was structured to involve self-reflection on themselves and occasions where they perhaps demonstrated the virtues (being taught) or ways that they could (demonstrate them) in future. I think that was really good for the students'*. Calum believes that since completing the first year of the programme, he has already seen a positive change for those who took part *'I saw the students' growing confidence through the programme. (...) they clearly took great pride in what they do, and I know that those students are now being aspirational in the applications that they're making for college.'*



SECONDARY OUTREACH

Manchester Museum Careers Takeover Day

The Manchester Museum Careers Takeover was a collaboration between the University and our regional UniConnect provider, Greater Manchester Higher. Over 340 Year 10 pupils from 12 Greater Manchester schools attended and got a chance to learn more about museum careers and employability skills such as CV and application writing. Pupils participated in career-fair style zones, interacting with museum staff and engaging in career-related activities. Feedback showed that 79% of learners found the event useful, with the session designed to boost pupils' career awareness, motivation, and ability to make informed decisions.

Over
340
Year 10 pupils from
12 GM schools



Success4Life

Success4Life (S4L) – a scheme to support care experienced young people with HE, life skills and confidence – celebrated its 10th anniversary during the 2023/24 academic year. The project is a collaborative initiative between the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, and, more recently, Greater Manchester Higher. The scheme supports Year 8 and 9 care experienced pupils from Manchester, Trafford, and Salford. The feedback from those involved in the programme is overwhelmingly positive, with noticeable improvements in their understanding of the university, confidence, and teamwork skills.

Success4Life 

S4L culminates in a graduation ceremony where each participant delivers a speech about their time on the programme and what they feel they have gained. Thematic analysis of the graduation speeches further highlighted how pupils stepped out of their comfort zones. Common themes expressed included the practical skills they gained by taking part, how their confidence has increased and their knowledge of higher education.

“In the past 8 weeks I have gotten more confident week by week. I have made more friends. (...) I have met so many lovely people and I'm very glad I got the opportunity to come here.”
Success4Life Participant 2024

Tutor Trust

The University of Manchester has collaborated with Tutor Trust for nearly a decade in a partnership aimed at improving educational outcomes for pupils through tutoring, while offering training and experience to our university pupils. This partnership plays a crucial role in supporting young people across Manchester, providing tutoring that complements classroom learning and boosts pupils' academic performance. This year, the Tutor Trust has also expanded its services, including earlier interventions through phonics tutoring for younger pupils and post-16 tuition in English and maths for those yet to achieve a grade 4 at GCSE.

6,000

young people across the North of England were supported by the Trust this academic year

109

Students and alumni were recruited as tutors in 2024

If you are interested in getting involved please visit the Tutor Trust website for details.



Year 10 Wise Up Summer School

The Year 10 Wise Up residential summer school welcomed 38 Uni Connect pupils from 13 schools across Greater Manchester. The programme gave pupils a taste of university life whilst helping them make informed decisions about their future. After attending, 90% of pupils expressed an intention to pursue HE, with 97% understanding its benefits and feeling motivated to excel in school. Notably, there was a 35% increase in pupils who felt HE

Faculty Outreach

Subject specific outreach delivered by our faculties remains a powerful way to engage pupils to think about potential careers and degrees they may not have considered before. For example, whilst GCSE entries for languages have increased slightly for French and Spanish over the last few years after a dramatic drop in the early 2000s, languages are still viewed as too difficult by many pupils. The School of Arts, Languages and Cultures supported teachers to make the case for language study by running a comprehensive languages outreach programme with on-campus activity and in-school talks to 1030 students across Years 8-12. 60% of these pupils were more interested in continuing to study a language after attending one of these events.

520 pupils also took part in a coordinated package of campus visit days run by the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE), which included two Girls in Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) days specifically aimed at improving female representation in the sector. Participants had the chance to meet current FSE students while building their team-working skills by helping build a foamboard Delta-wing aircraft. After attending, 90% of pupils were more aware of pathways for their future, and 87% had a greater understanding of how to access those pathways.

Wise UP Summer School 



POST-16

The goal of our post-16 access work is to provide young people in further education with the necessary skills and knowledge to get ready for university life.

Our schemes support both academic attainment and HE preparedness. Through these activities, we aim to give pupils who are less well represented in higher education, the confidence to enter and thrive in higher education and a set of skills they can use for life beyond graduation.

Manchester Museum Work Experience Programme

Manchester Museum offers week-long work experience placements supporting up to six Year 10 and eight Year 12 pupils. During the placement, pupils worked closely with members of the Visitor Team, curatorial staff and the Learning Team to better understand how we bring the collections to life and help our visitors. The programme aims to develop participants communication and research skills as they work towards the development and delivery of a public highlights tour on the final day of their placement. Pupils received mentoring support from the visitor team.



The week in the museum was amazing. I got the chance to speak to so many new people, which allowed me to learn continuously every day. I didn't just learn about one subject; I was involved in every gallery.

Manchester Museum
Year 12 Work Experience Pupil



mA*ths Online

mA*ths Online is our brand-new post-16 access programme, run in collaboration with Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI) and Imperial College, London. The programme supports academically high achieving Year 12 pupils from WP priority communities who are studying A-level Mathematics and are considering studying a maths-related degree at a high tariff HE provider. Participants are supported to improve their Maths skills and confidence through tailored online study modules, Maths tutoring and face-to-face masterclasses, all delivered by our own Maths students and academics.

On the programme's first year at The University of Manchester, 22 Year 12 pupils from the North West successfully completed the programme. For the 2024/25 academic year, we will further support these pupils as they go through Year 13, as well as recruiting a new cohort of Year 12 pupils. Feedback from participants and their tutors from the pilot year has been used to amend the programme delivered in the 2024/25 cycle for both the Year 12 and Year 13 participants.

Daniel, who had already benefited from our Gateways programme from Year 7 to Year 11 and had recently been accepted into the Manchester Access Programme in 2024, saw mA*ths Online as another chance to engage with The University of Manchester. He recognised it as a valuable resource that could help him fill the knowledge gap between his current understanding of Mathematics and the more advanced topics typically covered in Further Maths. Daniel believes that mA*ths Online has particularly helped him improve his problem-solving skills, while also boosting his confidence in Maths.

Daniel highlights the masterclasses as his favourite part of the programme, where he has been able to develop his flexibility when tackling Maths problems: "The whole point of the masterclasses to me was: your teachers have taught you this way of thinking, but there's other ways of tackling the question that you've not even seen." He also praises his programme tutors, Leon and Luke, stating that they showed

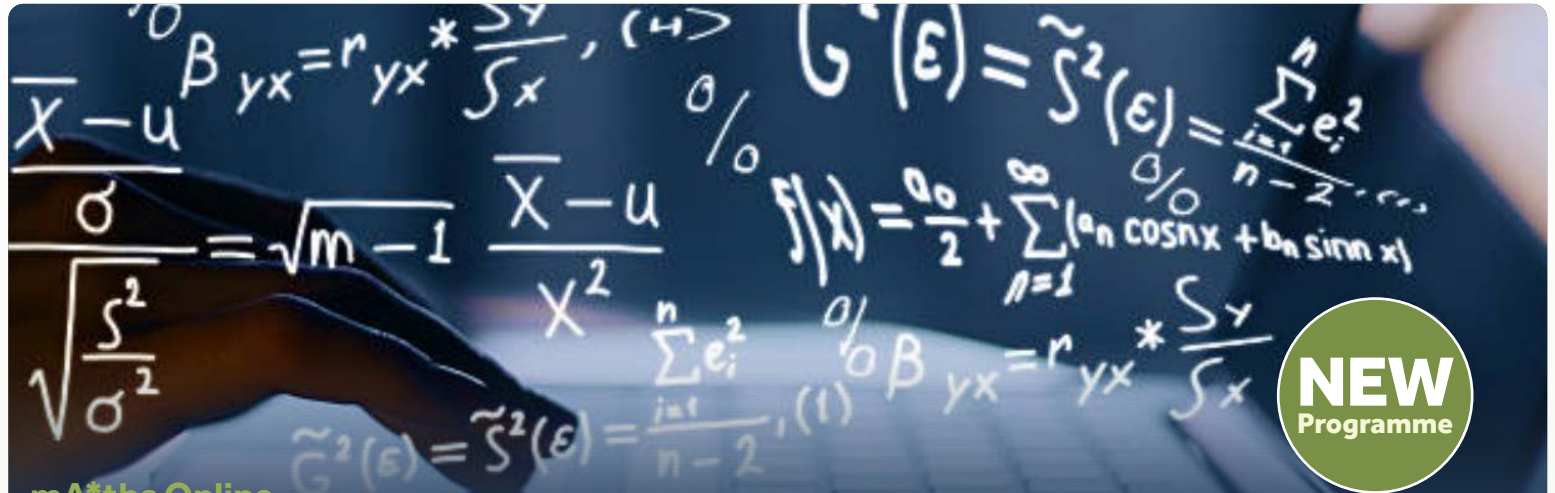


patience and support to him throughout the programme: "They both very much took the time to explain things and constantly checked if you were understanding things (...) I felt comfortable messaging in the chat: Hey, this is something I'm stuck on. Can we work through it?"

The programme has already had a positive impact on Daniel's academic performance.

At the start of Year 12, his Maths grades would fluctuate between A and C; upon completion of his first year with mA*ths Online, his AS grade became a very stable A. With his predicted grade being an A*, his hope is to get accepted at the University of Manchester, where he plans to study Computer Science with Industrial Experience. We look forward to seeing what he can achieve!

[mA*ths Online](#)



Manchester Access Programme

MAP 

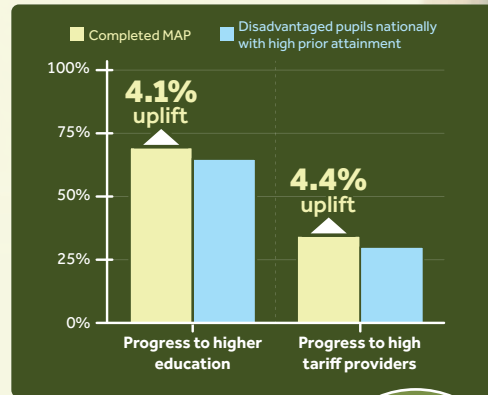
The Manchester Access Programme (MAP) is the University's access scheme for Year 12 pupils in Greater Manchester, primarily aimed to support students from underrepresented backgrounds to access The University of Manchester or another research intensive university. Upon completion, pupils gain a 2-grade entry requirement reduction and develop academic skills through research and referencing lectures, 1-1 feedback sessions with academic tutors and the completion of an academic assignment.

New contextualised data has revealed that students who complete MAP enter higher education at high tariff universities at a rate 4% higher than their peers, when accounting for prior attainment and socio-economic disadvantage.

523 Year 12's completed the programme in 2024, an 8% increase from last year's numbers. We also had over 170 MAP tutors involved in supporting participants with their academic assignment, a key part of the MAP programme that pupils find invaluable.

523
Year 12's
completed
MAP in 2024

This year, the MAP team has liaised with our partner IntoUniversity to deliver the Make Yourself a Success module and worked alongside the UoM library for the research and referencing workshops, where pupils learned how the library service works and the support they can get on course. Both updates to the programme have been well received by MAP participants, who have consistently found that these workshops positively impact their academic skills and confidence with university life.



Manchester Distance Access Scheme

The Manchester Distance Access Scheme is The University of Manchester's national offer holder access programme. Delivered exclusively online, the programme offers Year 13 students from underrepresented backgrounds a taste of university-level teaching and assessment, giving them a head start with their university journey. Students who complete the course also receive a one grade reduction in entry requirements, increasing their chances of starting on a course at Manchester.

In 2024, 225 participants across 55 different subjects completed the MDAS programme.

Our data still shows a positive impact on participants who go onto studying their undergraduate degree at Manchester. In 2024, the percentage of good degrees gained by MDAS former participants was 76% – 3% higher than for non-participants from a widening participation background.

MDAS 

225
participants
completed
MDAS in 2024

“

I really enjoyed having the chance of writing an academic assignment as it [gave me] a chance of seeing what university work will be like and I enjoyed improving my researching and referencing skills.

MAP pupil

”



Faculty Outreach

44 Year 12 pupils from underrepresented backgrounds attended A Day in the Life of a Pharmacy Student in 2024. Pupils spent time with pharmacy students learning about clinical and consultation skills, where they heard from a final year student about their research for their dissertation, before receiving careers support, pharmacy school interview practice and completing observations of clinical examinations. This day saw a 30% increase in participants confidence that they could make a successful application to study pharmacy.

The University of Manchester, on behalf of the Dental Schools Council, hosted an online Dental Summer School for 54 Year 12 pupils from underrepresented backgrounds. The Summer School aimed to enhance students' understanding of studying dentistry, and dentistry as a profession, so they could make an informed decision about their future. Through a series of lectures and workshops, pupils learnt what it was like to be a dental student and pursue a career in dentistry. As well as increasing the pupil's confidence in applying for dentistry by 16%, this project also increased pupils' presenting skills and confidence in interacting with others by 12%.

STUDENT SUCCESS / Transition support

[Transition support](#) | [Financial support](#) | [On-course success](#) | [Student Development](#) | [Employability](#)

We are committed to ensuring a successful transition into the University for all of our students.

Transitioning to higher education study is a pivotal moment for all students, and an essential part of the journey towards personal and academic success during their degree programme.

We recognise that prospective students all enter HE with varying levels of confidence and knowledge about university life, and to best ensure all students can succeed, we have a range of schemes to support our offer holders.

Transition mentoring

Our faculties have continued to deliver mentoring for offer holders from under-represented socio-economic backgrounds and other target groups such as women in STEM. This mentoring – delivered online by current UoM students – provides those offer holders with invaluable support in understanding how to prepare for life in higher education and how to engage with study and pastoral services during their UG career. Students highly value this insight and encouragement from students close in age and with current experience of higher education.

During 2023/2024, 18 mentors from The Faculty of Science and Engineering provided support to 2,511 offer holders, with 296 being mentored using the Brightside platform. Students who engaged in the scheme were 20% more likely to become UoM students than those who didn't receive mentoring. Students who participate in these schemes have told us "This mentoring experience has really helped me, in terms of feeling secure with my decision to study at UoM. The fact that I have been able to ask questions to somebody who has already experienced what I will be experiencing, has also made me feel more prepared for the journey ahead. I think that if it wasn't for this mentoring experience, I would definitely be feeling more nervous."



Adapting to HE academic study skills and assessment

The University of Manchester Library is a vital service that provides support to young people both pre- and post-entry. 2,359 School and College Memberships have been distributed to regional post-16 pupils for the

2,359
School and College
Memberships
distributed

23/24 academic year to support their studies and ensure they can fulfil their potential and meet the terms of any university offer they hold. The Library also provides interactive face-to-face training sessions on a broad range of topics to support students in their studies.

The Library continued to play a pivotal role in supporting the transition for new entrants for the 2023/24 academic year through their My Learning Essentials (MLE) platform. Through podcasts, workshops, drop-in sessions, and

online modules, students were able to quickly upskill in areas such as referencing, how to use the library, academic writing and a myriad of other study and academic confidence topics. Last year, almost 400 1st year students were supported through the MLE open programme, with a further 24 receiving MLE support directly through their course and 2,453 being supported in total across all year groups through 420 events. Access to these support services and tools remain in place through a student's academic career at UoM.



Welcome and Induction

Our welcome week activities provide students with an introduction into the curricular and co-curricular support available to aid their study and campus capital. We also recognise that some of our students will benefit from additional opportunities to find targeted support for their support needs, which is why our Welcome Week features spotlight sessions and locations for care experienced, Black heritage and asylum seeker students. As with last year, our care experienced, estranged and asylum seeker students were gifted with welcome essentials including shopping vouchers, a rucksack, food essentials and toiletries. Our Manchester 10/10 Team organised several events to welcome new Black Heritage Home students to both the campus and the community that the 10/10 programme provides. The programme moved to an open format, allowing for students to manage their own engagement with 10/10 for 2023/24, to encourage increased participation from new students who are yet to establish their co-curricular needs.



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The University has a range of scholarships and bursaries on offer to support students who are from underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds and target communities. This includes care experienced students, students with Black heritage and students with refugee status.

Through our Manchester Bursary (eligibility based on Household Income) and our Undergraduate Access Scholarship (which supports our MAP UG students and some other high priority student communities), we've continued to provide extensive financial support for underrepresented student communities.

With thanks to the support from the Division of Development and Alumni Relations (DDAR), this year has seen an increase in the number of financial packages that we are able to offer these students. We have continued to develop our relationship with our already established partners, build new partnerships with other generous donors, and ultimately support the access to, and progression on, our university courses.

Here is just a selection of the schemes available for our students.

In 2023/24, our Manchester Bursary and Undergraduate Access Bursary were distributed to over

5,900 students

This represented an investment of over **£11m annually**



The Raheem Sterling Foundation Scholarship

2024 saw the start of our relationship with the Raheem Sterling Foundation, with two students from Greater Manchester successfully enrolling onto the Raheem Sterling Foundation Scholarship. This scholarship supports Black African or Caribbean heritage students from socio-economically under-represented backgrounds living in Greater Manchester. Alongside a full tuition fee waiver, students also receive an £8000 bursary as part of the scheme.

Speaking about the impact of the scholarship, one of our scholars said, *"It's given me the advantage of time. I don't need to get a part-time job as a student, so I can really focus on my education, and I think the benefits of that you can see in my exams and my [work experience] applications where I have been successful."*

Article 26 Scholarship

Our Article 26 scholarship has continued to support students seeking asylum in the UK who are unable to access student finance because of their immigration status. The Article 26 Scholarship provides successful applicants with a free place in our halls of residences, a living cost bursary of £5000, and a full tuition fee waiver. This

year we welcomed 4 new scholars, meaning that we now have a cohort of 15 Article 26 scholars at the University.

One of our A26 scholars said, *"It has allowed me to pursue a degree in a field I am extremely passionate about – I could not have done so without this scholarship. The free accommodation and £5000 bursary have also made my studies more manageable and stress free."*

Manchester Masters Bursary

The Manchester Masters Bursary provides £4,000 of financial support to students from under-represented socioeconomic backgrounds who are looking to progress into postgraduate taught courses. This year, we issued 100 bursaries; 50 of which were provided by the University, and 50 that were provided thanks to the legacy gift from the estate of Aline Egan. Thanks to this generous donation we were able to support an additional 25 students compared to the previous academic year.

The Sadler Bursary

Following a generous donation from alumnus, Simon Sadler, we are delighted to launch two new bursaries in September 2024. The Core Sadler bursary will support over 35 care experienced students over the next 7 years, by providing a £10,000 living costs bursary to support them during their degree.

The Sadler Access bursary will support 30 additional students who have completed the Manchester Distance Access Scheme, and who come from low-income backgrounds, with a £5,000 per year living cost bursary.

The Cowrie Scholarship

As of September 2023, we have nine Cowrie scholars on course, who are each provided with a living cost bursary of £8000 and a full fee waiver. Students on this programme are all Black African or Caribbean heritage students and from socio-economically under-represented backgrounds. Cowrie scholars also take part in a mentoring programme as part of the scheme and are provided with a peer mentor to help them navigate university life, and a professional mentor to introduce them to the world of work.

The Elizabeth Moley Bursary

Following the generous gift from the Moley Family Foundation, we are delighted to launch the Elizabeth Moley bursary. This bursary will provide £8,000 per year for two students who have previously been in receipt of free school meals and are studying a social sciences course. This bursary was created in memory of Elizabeth Moley, alumnus from the University of Manchester.



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In 2022, our Widening Participation Team's transition into the Access and Student Success team demonstrated a wider commitment to address disparities in the success of our Undergraduates across the University.

Now with these commitments reaffirmed in our latest APP, we are aiming to further develop the HE sector's understanding of differential attainment and deliver substantive change for our student body.



Student Success Hub

The Student Success Hub (SSH) within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health (FBMH) began in September 2023. The SSH comprises five workstreams, all seeking to address institutional drivers of differential attainment. Each led by teaching staff, the five workstreams of Accessing and Analysing Data, Embedding Inclusive Education, Developing Anti-Discriminatory Practice, Ensuring Equity of Placements and Research and Evidence demonstrates a multifaceted approach in addressing differential attainment. The SSH aims to offer a holistic range of interventions informed by student experience which can measurably improve student outcomes.

Through the Embedding Inclusive Education workstream, an Equality Diversity and Inclusion training session has been delivered to first-year undergraduate students in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS). The session was developed and delivered in collaboration with the Students' Union and led by the SBS Inclusive Education Student Partner. Looking forward to the next year, the SSH is part way through completing a systematic literature review of differential attainment interventions and planning to develop a virtual hospital to model best practice in inclusive education.

Grow Beyond Limits

2024 saw the launch of a new pilot coaching programme for Black heritage students in the FBMH. Grow Beyond Limits was created to establish and evaluate a model to reduce the unexplained awarding gap between our students of White and Black heritage. The programme provided individual coaching by trained university staff to help students find their own solutions to problems, overcome barriers, and effectively navigate the institution.

Staff who volunteered to be coaches for Grow Beyond Limits received training from GRIT Coaching to equip them with the skills to support students with non-academic issues.

“ The Grit (training) programme has been transformative... it's created a space where you know you can get together, with colleagues and talk about issues that are on your mind. ”
Kevin, Coach

Grow Beyond Limits had a notable impact on students' ability to motivate themselves to study when needed. Before the programme, only 40% of students agreed that they could motivate themselves. After the programme, however, the percentage of students who agreed increased significantly to 75%.

Incorporating feedback from participants, Grow Beyond Limits is going to continue to pilot in the next academic year and expand to support Undergraduates of South Asian Heritage across the University, another target group from our latest APP.



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Manchester 10/10

Beginning as a pilot in 2021/22, Manchester 10/10 has grown significantly into a diverse suite of activities and opportunities both designed by and made for Black heritage undergraduates at Manchester. Increased visibility of the initiative around campus and expansion across all faculties has enabled M10/10 to reach more students in 2024, with 90% of participants agreeing that M10/10 has provided them with opportunities to connect with other students and form a community at Manchester.

72%
of participants felt M10/10 gave them the opportunity to shape the conversation about the Black student experience

86%
agreed that M10/10 has provided opportunities to help progress them to a graduate career

“
(M10/10) has allowed me to connect with a variety of Black students in the University and has given me space to be myself and thrive.
”
Manchester 10/10 student, 2024

Black Leadership Programme

2024 also saw the launch of a new M10/10 strand, the Black Leadership Programme (BLP). The 25 students who took part received training from Grit Coaching, a charity who specialises in delivering personal development workshops to students of colour, supporting them to grow by challenging their assumptions, attitudes and expectations. The students who successfully completed the training

Part of the
M10/10
Programme

from this programme are now being encouraged to take up leadership and ambassador roles at the University.

Through this initiative, Manchester 10/10 aims to create student leaders who can build community on campus and co-create improvements to student experience, equipping the University with more knowledge and experience to support students of Black heritage.

Summer research internships for black students

The Brain Inflammation Group hosted a summer internship for four undergraduate students who were transitioning from first to second year. Students worked on two different projects, focused on mechanisms of stroke and dementia pathophysiology. Funded by a Faculty Access & Success award and supplemented by funds from the Alzheimer's Research UK (ARUK) Northwest Network, the programme aimed to improve access to neuroscience research for groups in medical research. Alongside practical laboratory techniques, students learned general research skills through group sessions and attended usual lab meetings.

The internship is designed to act as a springboard that can improve grades and open doors to post-graduate study, and access more extensive research opportunities that are often required for PhD programme entry. Feedback from the interns at the end of the programme demonstrated its positive impact; all four interns agreed that their lab skills and understanding of research careers had improved, they felt more confident in the lab, and they enjoyed and found the internship useful.

One intern shared...

“
The lab work was definitely hugely beneficial to my growth as a scientist, but I also very much enjoyed just being in an environment full of PhD students, Post-Docs and PIs; I really enjoyed the camaraderie of the lab, and there is a lot to learn just by observing how everyone treats each other. I feel that I have grown personally, and I definitely don't feel as intimidated by the prospect of working in research anymore.
”



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Students as Partners

The University of Manchester's commitment to Student Partnership includes providing meaningful opportunities for students to take part in decision-making and service development at all levels of the institution.

The Students as Partners initiative facilitates opportunities for students to work collaboratively with staff to co-deliver projects to improve aspects of Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience. Student Partners are empowered to proactively shape change for other student beneficiaries, whilst gaining meaningful paid employment and valuable work experience.

Since its inception in 2020, 'Students as Partners' has delivered paid, flexible partnership working opportunities for students, matching over 100 students with a staff member offering a project.

Student Partners are paid for up to 28 hours per month, with work taking place mostly during term time. The roles are flexible and typically require a mix of in-person and remote work.

Student-staff partnerships are crucial to the work taking place across the institution to improve student success, and there are several Student Partners who are collaborating with staff teams to improve belonging, success and progression for underrepresented students.

In the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE), data identified that there was an awarding gap for students of Black Heritage, which is compounded by the fact that there are very low numbers in the faculty of both staff and students from Black Heritage backgrounds. Initially the faculty worked with an external organisation to better understand the issues. It was recognised that this was a complex and nuanced area of development, and it was critical that students with lived experience were involved in shaping the response. Therefore, in 2023/24, an FSE Black Heritage Student Partner was recruited, with the remit to work in partnership with staff to design and set up a Black Heritage Student Network in the Faculty.

Other faculties have since followed suit, recruiting Student Partners to work on projects related to access and success. This includes a Black Heritage Champion role in Humanities, as well as two Student Partners for Black Heritage projects and two for projects supporting Neurodivergent students for 2024/25 in FSE. An additional Student Partner is also being recruited to explore what decolonising the Psychology curriculum might look like in the 2024/25 academic year.

The Students as Partners initiative has recently been awarded funding from the University's Access and Success Fund, which means that 25 new partner projects over the next 3 years can be delivered. This expansion prioritises projects which align with institutional aims around promotion of equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In this way, these students are not just the beneficiaries of changes to the student experience, but because we aim to recruit Student Partners who have lived experience of the issues being explored, they are also the protagonists of this change.

Our Student Partners say it best...

“ *This has been an incredible journey of growth, learning and collaboration that has shaped not only my academic experience but also personal development. I am proud and happy to have taken part in this project, collaborate with fellow peers and make a change...*

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a Student Partner was the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded staff and students. Working alongside students who shared the same drive for 'better making' allowed me to exchange valuable opinions and experiences. **”**

Students As Partners 



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At Manchester we are proud to offer a range of initiatives aimed at reducing risks to inequality of opportunity in employment and making the University a more intentionally inclusive space for students to succeed.

Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme

The Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme was established to support Black men from low-income backgrounds pursuing careers in law or other city professions, such as investment banking and management consulting. It recognises students who demonstrate exceptional potential, leadership qualities, and a commitment to making a difference in their communities.

Each year, eligible students receive support from the Access and Success team and the Careers Service through the application process, including mock assessment interviews and one-on-one guidance to address any challenges or barriers ahead of a two-day assessment centre in London.

In 2024, another successful candidate from the University was awarded the Scholarship after a highly competitive selection process. Arthur, a second-year Economics student, will be benefiting from mentorship schemes with both Freshfields and the Bank of England as well as work experience insights in the next academic year. Arthur's accomplishment is not only a testament to his dedication and hard work but also reflects the strength of our community in nurturing future leaders.

“ Being selected for the Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship is an honour. I'm excited to learn and grow alongside such a talented group of scholars, and I hope this experience will not only advance my own ambitions but also inspire others to pursue their goals. ”

Arthur, 2024 Freshfields Scholar



Work Experience Bursary

The Work Experience Bursary awards up to £1000 per academic year to economically disadvantaged undergraduate students to support them with undertaking work experience opportunities. The pattern of the bursary is reviewed annually to ensure people that need it the most know about the scheme and can apply for it.

In the academic year 2023/24, 73 students received this award, which helped them gain invaluable work experience at a wide range of institutions such as the civil service, national banks, international art galleries and research-intensive universities abroad.

“ I've had a fantastic summer, directly enabled by the bursary. I was lucky enough to be offered a placement in the Civil Service as a private secretary for one of the top civil servants in the Home Office, meaning I was able to meet some of the most prominent figures in British politics and gain a fascinating insight into the workings of central government. The work experience has cemented my desire to join the civil service and I'm sure will massively boost my chances of getting onto the Fast Stream graduate scheme. ”

Bursary recipient, 2024



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Manchester Global Graduates

A collaboration between the Careers Service and the Division of Development and Alumni Relations (DDAR), Global Graduates gives 37 students from a widening participation background the opportunity to spend a fully-funded week in one of seven cities across the globe, gaining key employability skills while

meeting with The University of Manchester alumni from a range of businesses and industry sectors who currently live and work there.

Data from an evaluation of the programme in 2023 confirmed the positive impact the students' participation in this programme had on their future career success.

“ I genuinely feel like a different person coming back from the Global Graduates Programme. Both my personal and professional mindset have been changed for the better and I am so excited for what is next to come.
Manchester Global Graduate Student, 2024 **”**

Reverse Mentoring

The Reverse Mentoring Scheme was designed to leverage the insights and fresh perspectives of Manchester Graduate Talent (MGT) interns so that organisations could gain an external perspective on their recruitment processes and online presence. Interns conducted comprehensive reviews of the websites of 20 participating organisations, specifically focusing on their early careers pages, assessing usability, clarity, accessibility of information, job descriptions, and the organisations' commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The work not only provided valuable feedback to organisations but also offered interns hands-on experience in consultancy and report writing. Employers noted that they valued the perspective recent graduates were uniquely positioned to offer, and that they would be implementing changes based on the received feedback.

Turing Scheme and Widening Participation in Going Abroad

The Placements and International Partnerships (PIP) team is responsible for distributing Turing funding to students from disadvantaged backgrounds participating in international placements.

The PIP team has conducted an analysis to identify the specific barriers preventing underrepresented students from studying abroad. The data gathered from this analysis will be used to adjust their guidance and promotion and improve their distribution of funds so that they can better reach widening participation students.

In 2023/24, the Turing scheme funded a total of 436 placements, with 79% of these placements going to students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This was an increase of 7% from the previous year.

436
placements
funded



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Whether evidencing our impact to the Office for Students, discovering new ways in which we can deliver change or improving the delivery of longstanding interventions, evaluation at Manchester remains a key priority.

Over the past year, the Access and Student Success' Monitoring and Evaluation Team have begun working in partnership with the Institute of Teaching and Learning to offer a streamlined holistic package of support applicable to all areas of the University. Moving beyond ad-hoc training and support sessions, Theory of Change consultations and evaluation support clinics are now available to book through the University training catalogue at regular points throughout the year, and in response to feedback, our training module has been used to develop an interactive Decision Tree tool with smaller and more accessible training modules.

Over the last year:

- An Evaluation Decision Tree tool, featuring training modules, case studies and guidance has been developed due for launch in early 2025.
- The number of tracked participants recorded in Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) has increased to 16,874 – greatly improving our ability to measure the impact of our access work.
- The Faculty of Science and Engineering have created an Evaluation Task and Finish Group to ensure evaluation is embedded across the faculty.
- 10 evaluation drop-in sessions are now held each term and bookable through the UoM Training Catalogue.



Further links:

Contact Jack.Walker@manchester.ac.uk for more information about our Evaluation Framework

Contact HEATSupport@manchester.ac.uk for more information on our institutional use of HEAT

Contact Frances.Hooley@manchester.ac.uk for more information on ITL evaluation projects

[Institute of Teaching and Learning – Evaluation Guidance](#) | [ITL Projects and Communities Teams Space](#)

[Book onto an Evaluation Training Session](#)

