

Impact Report

Access and Student Success

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2025



Introduction

At the heart of The University of Manchester's mission is an unwavering dedication to equity. We have strengthened this commitment by working with over 60,000 young people in the past year, to ensure that Manchester is a place everyone can thrive.

As we launch our new [Access and Participation Plan \(APP\) for 2025-29](#), aligned with our [Manchester 2035 strategy](#). We will build upon the impact we have made at UoM to bring transformative opportunities to more young people than ever before.

Reflecting upon our 2020-2025 APP, we have made substantial progress towards closing longstanding degree awarding gaps. Our White vs. South Asian gap has narrowed by 6.4% to 4.1%, outperforming our target of 5.3%. The White vs Black gap has also fallen from a peak of 18.6% in 2022/23 to 10.8%. Our intake figures remained strong as well, with the POLAR4 Q5-Q1 intake ratio (Participation of Local Areas, which measures higher education participation by postcode) improving from 4.6 to 3.8, against a target of 3.0. Although there is much more work to be done, these are promising signs for the future.

We have expanded our efforts to support pupils in achieving top grades with two new secondary schools participating in Manchester Young Academics and 150 college pupils participating in mA*ths Online, in partnership with the HG Foundation. Elsewhere, our new contextual admissions policy, proposed for 2027 entry, leverages existing data to better capture the potential of our talented applicants.

Our broader access offer includes our incredible cultural institutions, such as The Whitworth, who are engaging over 13,000 pupils annually through their stimulating outreach programmes. The Science & Engineering Education Research and Innovation Hub (SEERIH) celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Great Science Share for Schools, which has reached over 845,000 pupils and collaborates with UNESCO to promote scientific inquiry and curriculum innovation. Colleagues in academic faculties continue to offer subject-based outreach that connects the school curriculum to higher education and careers, such as the Humanities' Career Detectives programme, where 89% of participants reported that they view the University as a realistic pathway. Students continue to deliver vital outreach as well, with the Students' Union initiative Access All Areas reaching over 800 pupils in 2025.

More broadly, our role within the Greater Manchester community remains of strategic importance. Through partnerships with organisations such as IntoUniversity, UpReach, Brilliant Club, TutorTrust, and GM Higher, we are collaboratively responding to the evolving needs of our region.

Once students arrive at UoM, a sense of belonging is crucial to facilitating success. September 2024's Welcome Week offered new students an inclusive experience through collaboration between academic schools and central services, with tailored support for students with disabilities, commuters, and those with care experience. This approach was mirrored by the 2025 Institute of Teaching and Learning Conference, which championed inclusive education, belonging, and student voice, showcasing innovative practices to enhance curriculum and create a campus where student mattering is prioritised.

The library has continued to champion equity by listening to student needs, upgrading study spaces, introducing wellbeing zones such as Cosy Campus spaces, and implementing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme.

Positively, we have taken steps to address the growing digital divide impacting students from low-income households. The Digital Equity Fund, supported by the donor-funded Manchester Access and Success Fund, was piloted in 2025, providing 330 laptop vouchers to students identified as needing equipment to support their engagement with their studies.

Other targeted interventions, such as the Summer Accommodation Grant, support independent students with the cost of their summer accommodation and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to supportive pathways for student success. Financial support remains essential, given the cost-of-living crisis, with over £11.5 million in Undergraduate Access bursaries allocated this year. Moving forward, we will establish a unified Financial Support Hub, enabling every student to access the help they need.

We have further embedded our Monitoring and Evaluation Team's evaluation framework across the institution in 2025. Through training sessions and collaboration with the Institute of Teaching and Learning to establish an evaluation toolkit, more staff than ever have adopted Theory of Change and taken a structured approach to evidencing their impact. An example of this was a comparative analysis of foundation year students in the School of Biological Sciences carried out by the Programme Director for the course. In this instance, use of these resources resulted in adjustments to course design to best support those entering the University with alternative qualifications.

The whole provider approach will continue to be crucial, as will the support from donors and alumni as we recommit to leading change in research, teaching, and social responsibility. We are proud to play our part in creating a fairer, more inclusive university and city.

From Manchester, for the world.

Melissa Jacobi
Head of Access Student Success and Development



**In 2025
we worked with**



**more than
62,000
young people
from
1,550
schools and colleges**



Access and Participation Plan

Our new Access and Participation Plan (APP) took effect in September 2025 and will remain in place until August 2028.

The plan outlines the University's priorities for addressing access barriers and reducing unexplained degree awarding gaps for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

In this APP cycle, the Office for Students (OfS) tasks universities with considering not only access rates for

underrepresented students, but also whether the HE environment provides equal opportunities for all students to succeed and thrive. The OfS' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that could impact a student's opportunity to succeed in HE; knowledge and skills, information and guidance, perception of higher education, application success rates, limited choice of course type and delivery mode, insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, mental health, ongoing impacts of coronavirus,

cost pressures, capacity issues, and progression from higher education.

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 not only to meet their own targets, but also to contribute to a shared understanding of effective strategies for improving student Access, Continuation, Success, and Progression.

Universities are expected to adopt a Whole Provider Approach, which embeds actions to address inequalities in access and student outcomes in all activities, levels, and stages of the student lifecycle.

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



Implementation Workstreams

Workstream 1

Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation

This workstream will enhance access to relevant and accurate data, enabling staff to pinpoint areas where action is needed to improve inclusivity, fairness, and accessibility for students and applicants.

New data models will be supported by staff training and guidance on how to effectively interpret data and make informed decisions about addressing differences in outcomes across various student communities.

Workstream 2

Communication and Engagement

This workstream will ensure that staff across the University are aware of the Access and Participation Plan, its purpose and priorities.

Through staff communications and social media channels, we will raise awareness of how the APP aligns with the Manchester 2035 strategy and the Civic Universities agenda. Through Communities of Practice and a dedicated seminar series, we will increase understanding of how the day-to-day work of staff intersects with APP priorities. Using these channels, we also aim to build knowledge on what staff can do to improve outcomes for students and young people from APP target groups.

Workstream 3

Research and Publishing

This workstream will deepen our institutional understanding of the causes of, and effective solutions to, access and awarding gaps, while fulfilling the OfS requirement to contribute to the wider HE sector's understanding of differential outcomes. We will harness the extensive research and evaluation expertise within the University, shedding light on existing research, identifying opportunities for new exploration, and bringing research and practice together to accelerate progress towards equality in Access and Student Success.

Workstream 4

Intervention Delivery

The APP includes six intervention strategies, which outline a collection of actions to be taken to make progress toward each objective. This workstream is concerned with the practical delivery and monitoring of these commitments, ensuring that all activities are effectively evaluated and reporting processes are in place to make sure that all contributions to these targets can be recognised and reported on in our APP monitoring returns to the OfS.

Workstream 5

Project Management and Governance

A central APP Implementation Group, including Faculty and Professional Services staff in both operational and leadership roles, has been established to coordinate the implementation of the APP and support the Whole Provider Approach, which in turn informs the design of a practical implementation plan and effective monitoring as the APP is delivered.



Access and Participation Plan

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

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 see a yearly increase of care-experienced young people from the North West who progress into higher education at The University of Manchester by 5% on the baseline of 2023/24.

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 by 2028/29.

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

Introducing pupils to higher education whilst in primary school encourages early consideration of how their school subjects can relate to future careers.

Through engaging outreach activities, workshops, and interactive sessions, young learners are inspired to explore their interests and understand the pathways available to them. This approach helps pupils to imagine their own futures and equips them with the knowledge and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their education.



Primary School Campus Visits

In 2024/25, we hosted six visit days for 190 pupils from local primary schools to explore higher education through campus tours and interactive workshops. Current students worked with the pupils to help them understand what being a student is like and how the university can support them to achieve a career they dream of. After attending the event, there was a 19% increase in the number of students agreeing that university is 'for people like me'.

In 2024/25, we engaged 16,203 primary school pupils across 282 outreach activities. This included over 1,500 pupils participating in events at our cultural institutions, the Whitworth, Manchester Museum, and Jodrell Bank, utilising world-class facilities to bring their learning to life. In Salford and North Manchester, our partner IntoUniversity centres continued to provide community learning spaces where pupils are supported to learn and grow. Moreover, the Science and Engineering Education Research Innovation Hub (SEERIH) has continued to impact science education nationally through their annual Great Science Share and new campaigns that inspire pupils to think like scientists and design creative solutions to real-world problems.

Bespoke visits for care-experienced and estranged pupils

Pupils with care experience can face unique risks to their education, and nationally they experience lower rates of progression to higher education. We arranged seven bespoke visits for care-experienced and estranged pupils over the last year, including our first for primary school pupils. As well as a campus tour, these visits included information about the support specifically offered to students with care experience and details of how we are making the university more accessible.

I really appreciated the bespoke visit you gave us and the timing before his SATS and getting ready to move on to High School was significant as I believe the visit will give him something to aim for.
Carer of a visit day attendee

16,203
primary school pupils engaged

Faculty Outreach

60 local primary school pupils took part in the Psychology Education & Wellbeing in Schools (PEWS) project organised by staff from the Faculty of Biology Medicine and Health. PEWS promotes psychological wellbeing and encourages pupils to view university as accessible. Staff delivering PEWS led interactive wellbeing and psychology activities in schools, and invited pupils to a campus tour and a celebration event to recognise their achievements.

Faculty staff worked to improve access to pharmacy education by delivering outreach activities that informed pupils about the pathway to studying pharmacy and the nature of university-level teaching.

180
pupils engaged
from three Manchester primary schools in hands-on workshops



They engaged 180 pupils from three Manchester primary schools in hands-on workshops, including the use of medical equipment and role-playing as pharmacists, to better understand the profession's responsibilities. Pupils also used AI technology to interact with patient avatars in a community pharmacy through Virtual Reality headsets, gaining firsthand experience of how digital innovations are transforming healthcare education.



Primary Outreach



Access All Areas

The UoM Students' Union's Access and Widening Participation volunteering programme, running in partnership with the University's Access and Success Team, aims to deliver impactful, student-led outreach that supports underrepresented young people from KS1-5.

In 2024/25, 127 students dedicated 1334 hours to leading outreach events in schools and colleges.

One activity delivered by Access All Areas, Dentists in Primary Schools (DiPS), provided 370 primary school pupils across five schools in Greater Manchester with educational and interactive workshops on oral health, covering topics such as oral hygiene, healthy eating, dental anatomy, and visiting the dentist. Pupils not only gained insight into studying Dentistry at university but also learned how to take care of their teeth and maintain good dental hygiene. 100% of teachers found the sessions to be engaging for their pupils.

Supporting
808
pupils across
Greater
Manchester

Access All Areas



The Science and Engineering Education Research and Innovation Hub celebrated 10 years of impact.



**ENGINEERING
EDUCATES
ROBOTICS
CHALLENGE**

engaged
51,910
pupils across
398 schools

**NEW
CAMPAIGN**

Engineering Educates Robotics Challenge

The Science & Engineering Education Research and Innovation Hub (SEERIH) is a nationally recognised centre for the improvement of science and engineering education in the UK and globally. SEERIH develop and engage in-service teachers in innovative, research-informed continuous professional learning programmes to improve confidence in curating, and delivering excellent teaching, learning and assessment experiences.



SEERIH uses a range of methods to engage teachers, aligned with the Trajectory of Professional Development, such as STEM Masterclasses, Regional Science Subject Leader Networks, Specialist Science School Reviews, research and development projects, as well as international campaigns, including the Great Science Share for Schools (GSSfS). Now, with UNESCO National Patronage, this initiative enters its 11th year, featuring the theme of 'Connected Science,' which inspires educators and learners to explore connections across questions, disciplines, and global communities.

Great
Science
Share
for SCHOOLS

YouTube
Click here to
see highlights
from the GSSfS
2025 event

Complementing this, SEERIH's research into engineering in primary schools has been a decade-long programme that has resulted in policy and sector reports supported by the Royal Academy of Engineering. Working at scale, the Engineering Educates campaign cascades teaching and learning approaches into schools through biennial thematic challenges, currently the Engineering Educates: Robotics Challenge. Targeted at learners aged 7-14, this campaign empowers teachers to integrate the engineering design cycle into the mainstream curriculum, fostering problem-solving and creativity through real-world contexts, with a reach of 13 countries. This is supported by the UK Robotic Autonomous Systems Network, spanning over 30 UK universities. Inspiring pupils to think like engineers, this campaign has engaged 51,910 pupils across 398 schools in 2025, with 53.7% of these schools located in areas of high social deprivation.



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Secondary Outreach

Our outreach activities for secondary pupils are designed to inform and inspire pupils about a potential future in higher education.

In 2024/25, we worked with 21,013 secondary pupils across 268 activities, helping them identify the skills they need to meet their aspirations and providing support to help them achieve the highest grades possible.

Last year, we continued to evolve the support we provide, with programmes like Manchester Young Academics expanding to work with more schools. We also began new initiatives, such as The Road, in partnership with Greater Manchester Higher, which offers bespoke programmes for boys at risk of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

21,013
secondary school pupils engaged

Gateways

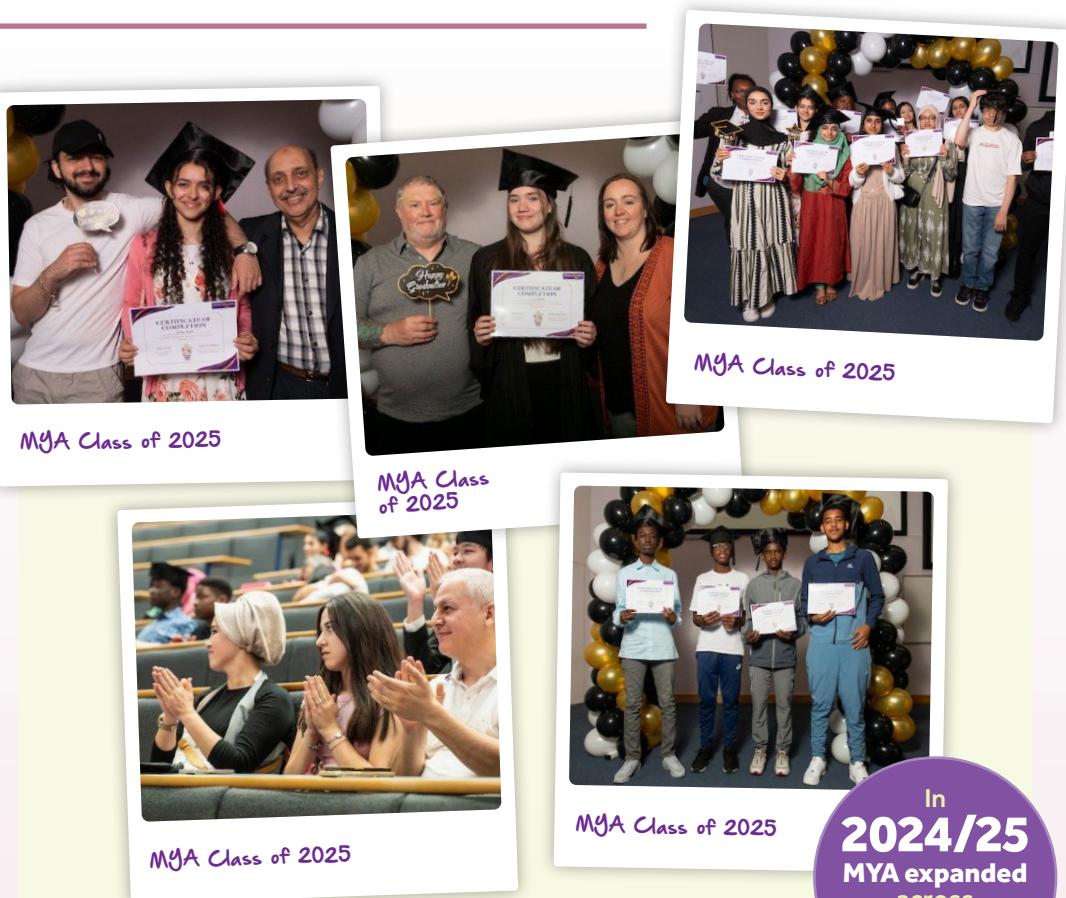
Gateways is the University's access programme for pupils in Year 7-9, providing students with valuable information, advice, and guidance about university, through annual full-day workshops on campus. In 2024/25, the Library Student Team collaborated to deliver academic skills sessions as part of Gateways, not only promoting access to higher education but also improving pupil attainment in school.

In 2024-25, 708 students attended a Gateways event from 22 schools across Greater Manchester. After attending, 72% of students agreed that they were thinking about going to university, with 60% believing that if they applied to university, they would get a place.

Gateways 



708
students attended a Gateways event from 22 schools



In
2024/25
MYA expanded across five secondary schools

Manchester Young Academics

Manchester Young Academics (MYA) supports the attainment of key stage 4 pupils by equipping them with the skills, resources, and experiences they need to become independent learners. By receiving 9 in-school sessions delivered by our trained student instructors, pupils develop self-efficacy, cultural capital and oracy before completing a university-style assignment. Following a successful pilot year

with Oasis Academy MediaCityUK, The East Manchester Academy and Cedar Mount Academy, MYA has expanded to work with the Co-op Academy North Manchester and Moorside Academy as well. After completing MYA, 96% of pupils agreed they felt confident in getting the exam results required to progress to higher education, a 15% increase from the start of the programme.



Secondary Outreach

Boys Impact – The Road



This year, a pilot programme, The Road, was launched in collaboration with Greater Manchester Higher (GM Higher) in response to growing research that boys from lower socio-economic backgrounds are performing worse than their female peers across each stage of education. 15 Year 10 boys from The Deanery High School, at risk of being PA (Persistent Absence) or NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), explored key themes such as motivation, identity, and aspiration through a series of interactive and academically challenging sessions, with the opportunity to explore post-16 pathways and future career pathways.

Focusing on English attainment to improve their ability to answer essay-style questions, pupils visited the University and attended mock lectures and seminars. During seminars, pupils discussed what they had learned and applied those discussions to practical outputs, such as posters and presentations.

Jen Morgan, a graduate advisor and Outreach Officer for GM Higher, acted as liaison between the school and the University. Jen felt the guest speaking workshops were some of the most impactful sessions, and afterwards, the students were more confident sharing their ideas. *"It was interesting to see them be able to pull on that external confidence that they have outside of the classroom and bring it into the classroom and*

75%
of pupils agreed
they could motivate
themselves
to study

be able to present to each other with the level of confidence that wasn't there at the start of the programme".

Jen observed that the pupils became more engaged throughout the programme, *"That shift in behaviour was a big highlight for me... and a huge highlight for them was meeting and working with Miles, a Student Ambassador. Throughout the programme, they grew to love Miles and really looked forward to seeing and engaging with him. That was really nice to see that they were building a relationship and rapport with someone who is potentially doing what they may want to be doing in the future".*

Following the success of the pilot, the programme will continue in 2026, and new content changes will be implemented to ensure it is appropriate for the level at which the pupils are working. Jen shared that *"allowing for these activities to continue provides exposure to higher education environments and massively impacts their sense of belonging, leading them to raise their aspirations and discuss HE options for themselves. As we have seen this year, the GCSE gender gap decreased, so these projects behind the scenes can impact these outcomes".*

By the end of the programme, 75% of pupils agreed they could motivate themselves to study, a 41% increase. Pupils also reported increased understanding of the benefits of higher education and having the academic ability to manage a higher level of study.



Faculty Outreach

The Faculty of Humanities led a programme to introduce 43 pupils in Year 9 and 10 from Black Heritage backgrounds to the wide-ranging opportunities within Humanities subjects. By taking on the role of 'Career Detectives', pupils explored the wide range of university courses available and the career pathways associated with them. They also collaborated with Student Ambassadors to explore how a humanities degree can enhance their transferable skills. By the end of this programme, 100% of pupils agreed that they now better understand what is on offer at The University of Manchester.



I wanted to advance my education up to the university stage, and coming to this programme has enlightened me further and also on the choices I could make as I have met with the Student Ambassadors and I was able to experience it fully.

Career Detectives Year 10 Participant



By the end of this programme
100% of students
agreed that they now better understand what is on offer at The University of Manchester.

Tutor Trust

The University of Manchester has continued to maintain a successful partnership with Tutor Trust, helping to raise aspirations and attainment of local pupils. UoM students and alumni delivered 4,636 hours of tutoring, supporting 1,312 pupils across Greater Manchester in 2024/25. The Tutor Trust adjusted tutor recruitment last year, focusing on subject expertise rather than year group, allowing tutors to work with a broader range of age groups. Additionally, greater consideration has been given to recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds who better represent the lived experience of pupils receiving support.

**Supported
5,500
pupils**

110
tutors were
recruited
from UoM

By expanding their programme through Tutoring Plus, they were able to offer more individualised and tailored tuition support. As a result, 25% more students benefited from this programme.

Tutor Trust



Post-16

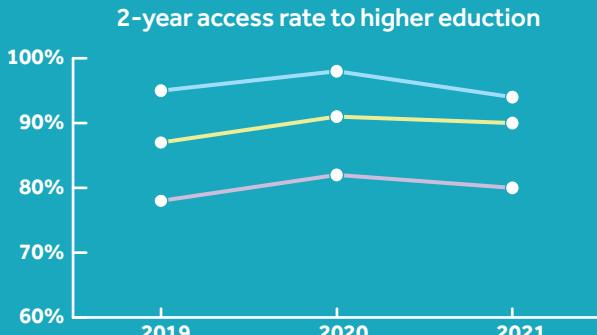
In 2024/25, we delivered 314 activities to sixth form and college pupils, preparing them to make an informed choice about their university applications and supplementing their teaching to boost their academic achievement.

Our access programmes offer tailored guidance sessions that clarify the application process and develop essential academic skills, facilitating a smooth transition to higher education. This comprehensive approach helps students gain the confidence and knowledge needed to excel and make informed decisions about their future.

The UoM Library School and College Membership Scheme provided 1,690 memberships to pre-university learners, giving them access to study spaces and resources. This complemented our outreach activities and supported pupils in their transition to university-level study.

Both MAP and MDAS continue to show strong outcomes, with participants entering higher education at a rate between 10% and 17% higher than local pupils studying A Levels or equivalent qualifications.

— MDAS
— MAP
— Local level 3 pupils



Manchester Access Programme

The Manchester Access Programme (MAP) is the University of Manchester's central widening participation scheme for local Year 12 pupils in Greater Manchester. After receiving a record number of applications in 2024/25, we were able recruit more students than ever before.

MAP supports local pupils to gain a place at The University of Manchester or another research-intensive university through events, workshops, and an academic assignment taking place over Year 12 and 13. Upon completion of the programme, MAP students are eligible for a 2 grade reduction on entry requirements for their chosen course and are equipped with a broad range of skills to support students' academic readiness and their transition into university.

MAP



578 pupils completed MAP in 2025

MDAS



310 pupils completed MDAS in 2025

I really enjoyed the group work we completed during Module 1, as it gave me the reassurance that I will fit in at university, surrounded by like-minded people.
MAP 2025 participant

578 pupils completed MAP 2025, a 9.5% increase from the previous year. We also saw 200 MAP students progressed onto a course at The University of Manchester in September 2025, 13 more than in 2024.

In response to student feedback, we incorporated more social activities into the design of MAP. These activities were shown to enhance sense of belonging to both the programme and the institution.

MAP helped me find my passion in education again and reminded me how much I loved what I do, even if I struggle with my subjects sometimes. The academic assignment gave me solid experience in what writing a professional essay looks like and has made me much more confident about the thought of university.
MAP 2025 participant

The Manchester Distance Access Scheme (MDAS) is The University of Manchester's national offer holder access scheme. MDAS prepares pupils for university by building their academic skills through the completion of a university-standard mini-degree module relevant to their chosen course.

(MDAS) Expanded my knowledge on the specific area of my course which solidified my decision. I also feel like it's helping me become prepared and ready for how universities test knowledge and understanding.
MDAS participant

310 pupils passed the programme, with 166 progressing to a course at the University of Manchester. Pupils who have completed MDAS are able to use their experience of our online learning systems to support their transition into the first year of their degree. After participating in MDAS, 93% of pupils felt that they had the academic ability to do well at university.



Post-16

GMH Healthcare Careers Pathways Day

58 Year 12 students from priority colleges across Greater Manchester attended a Healthcare Careers Pathway Day to gain insight into healthcare courses and careers. At the carousel event, students networked with professionals and ambassadors, receiving tailored advice on interviews and applications. They also joined a campus tour and taster lectures to experience university life. After the event, 78% of students strongly agreed they were considering higher education, an 11% increase from the start.

Faculty Outreach FSE Mentoring Scheme

Partnering with Brightside, FSE mentoring scheme offered female and widening participation home offer-holders for undergraduate programmes in Science and Engineering a mentor of their choice to learn more about student life, thereby easing their transition into university. Mentors were able to provide in-depth information and advice regarding accommodation and maximising university support services. This fostered meaningful connections between prospective and current students. Last year, 50% of the mentors supporting the scheme had previously participated as offer holders.

115
offer-holders
engaged with
the scheme

 [Click here to see the Mentoring Scheme Overview](#)



$$= \sqrt{m-1} \frac{\bar{X} - u}{X^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{c_n^2}{n^2} \beta_{yx} = r_{yx} \times \tilde{S}^2(\varepsilon) = \tilde{S}^2(\varepsilon) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \varepsilon_i^2}{n-2}, (1)$$

mA*ths Online Programmes

The mA*ths Online Programmes, supported by The Hg Foundation, helps pupils from underrepresented backgrounds across the North West to attain high grades in A-level Maths, working with partners at Imperial College London and MEI. Learners receive tailored support from University of Manchester STEM undergraduates and postgraduates through online mentoring and on-campus masterclasses. mA*ths gives pupils a chance to fill knowledge gaps from their studies and work through challenging problems, covering content in a different way to their sixth forms and colleges. Pupils found the mentoring sessions engaging and useful, helping them better understand A-level maths and offering insight into studying maths at university.

After a successful first year, the programme expanded to include support for pupils as they enter Year 13. Last year, 94 Year 12 pupils and 49 Year 13 pupils from the North West successfully completed the programme. 76% of those who completed the programme are confident they will get a place at The University of Manchester.

 Mentor had a deep understanding of maths far beyond our knowledge. Revealed more complex solutions of questions which helped us understand a problem from another viewpoint.
mA*ths online 2025 participant 

mA*ths Online 



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Welcome is an exciting time for many students, but for some, it can feel overwhelming.

As every University department tries to communicate their specific messaging, essential student information can get lost.

In 2022, we adapted our approach to Welcome, aiming to better understand what messaging is most important for Welcome and what can be delayed to later in the term. Student feedback demonstrated they wanted clear, accessible and timely information delivered in a way that was not overwhelming, with clarity on processes. "Tell us what we need to do, how do we do it and when do we need to do it by".

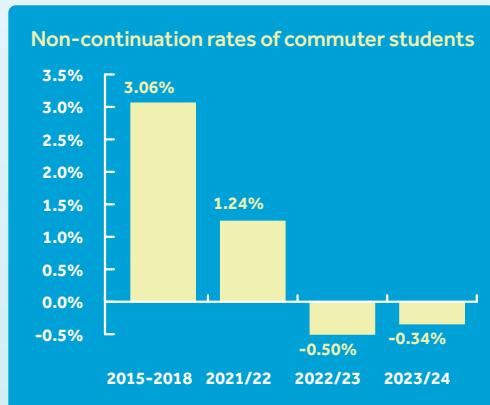
The Success and Development Team refocused Welcome to those elements that were essential in a students' first week. As well as introducing students to key student services at a two-day Start of Year Fair, themed days were developed to address student concerns regarding Wellbeing and Cost of Living.

Striving to create a 'one University' approach, we brought Academic Schools together to agree on a core offer delivered during Welcome. This approach produced greater consistency in student experience and created an environment for Schools to collaborate and share best practices. Centralised activities, including Sport, the Library, Careers, Volunteering and the Students' Union, also worked together to coordinate activities cohesively and holistically.

We delivered targeted interventions to address the needs of specific students. For example, commuter students were given the opportunity to come onto campus the week before Welcome, to orient themselves and meet their peers. This encouraged commuters to find students travelling from similar areas and build social capital, to engage in Welcome events. This is something that students living in halls of residence have easier access to. In 2024, the newly formed Commuter Society also became involved in



this event, supporting new students in accessing an existing network of commuters. Evidence suggests that commuter welcome events and our commuter peer support scheme are having a positive impact. Since 2018, the gap in non-continuation between commuters and non-commuters has decreased from 3.06% to -0.34% in 2023.



Working with Disability Support Services, students with declared autism were also invited onto campus before Welcome to arrive at Manchester in a calmer atmosphere. The ResLife team shared information with students about quieter and busier arrival times in halls so everyone could make more informed choices on when to check into their accommodation. A quiet room was also made available over lunchtime throughout the week for students to be able to take time out.

Students with care experience or those who are estranged often have a different Welcome experience, not having parents or care-givers actively involved in their journey to University. These group of students have been prioritised to ensure they felt recognised and supported. Welcome packs were put together with key essentials, including a voucher for a local supermarket to allow students to do their first food shop – so often something that parents will facilitate and fund. Students had the chance to come together in Welcome at an informal event and meet staff who will provide support throughout their time at University.



Thank you so much to all of you for what you are doing for us students. I really didn't expect all this kindness, and I am so grateful for everything. I got some useful information from Sophie, she was really helpful in answering all my questions. Thank you again, this all made me feel valued, and I'm sure the other students felt the same way
2024 Transition support student

A new event in 2024 was led by the Vice-Chancellor and President. Senior leaders for the University and Students Union were brought together as a panel at an informal afternoon tea, where students attending could ask anything they wanted of senior leaders. Giving students direct access to University decision-makers signals a new inclusive, open approach, valuing the voice of students from their very first week as a member of the University community.

The work continues, with a shift to thinking about how we can build on Welcome into an extended period spread across several weeks. We aim to provide an environment that enables students to form connections with their peers, staff, and the institution, facilitating a smooth transition to their new lives and routines, and ultimately supporting their success.



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Student success / Financial support

Transition support | **Financial support** | On-course success | Employability

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During the academic year 2024/25, we have seen an increase in the number of bespoke financial awards that we provide to students from communities underrepresented in higher education, and we have developed a good understanding of the additional student success activities that we can provide, alongside the financial support, to ensure the highest chances of success.



During this year, we have continued to deliver the following scholarships:

• **The Cowrie Foundation Scholarship** for 15 Black Heritage students from low-income backgrounds who received a tuition fee waiver and a £6000 maintenance bursary.



• **The Raheem Sterling Foundation Scholarship** for four Black heritage students from Greater Manchester who received a tuition fee waiver and an £8000 maintenance bursary.



• **The Article 26 Scholarship** for 12 students seeking asylum in the UK, who are unable to access student finance, who received a tuition fee waiver, free university accommodation, and a £5000 maintenance bursary.



We have also seen the launch of the following bursaries

• **The Sadler Core Bursary** for 12 students who are care-experienced and received a £10,000 maintenance bursary.



• **The Sadler Access Bursary** for ten students who come from a low-income background and receive a £5,000 maintenance bursary.



• **The Elizabeth Moley Bursary** for two students who come from a low-income background and are studying a social sciences degree, and receive a £8,000 maintenance bursary.

With a growing cohort of students receiving a bespoke bursary or scholarship, and sector research suggesting that financial support should be provided in conjunction with additional student success activities to best support their retention and continuation rates at Manchester, we piloted several interventions to better support our cohort. Our primary focus was to foster a sense of belonging and cultivate a sense of community among this cohort of students. Our alumni and university supporters generously made our financial support offer possible.

Activities included:

- Free social events that focused on enhancing peer-to-peer connections. We organised mini golf, escape rooms, and meals out for the students.
- Weekly coffee and cake drop-ins to support the development of trusting student-to-staff relationships. We booked a table at the same location, at the same time every week, providing a safe, informal space for students to come to relax, meet their peers and ask questions or discuss challenges.
- Compulsory 1:1 meetings between students and their named contact in Access and Student Success, 3 times per year. This provided an opportunity to understand each student's progress in their course and check in on their transition outside of their academics. This supported the development of trusting staff-to-student relationships and facilitated the delivery of vital support throughout their student journey.

Students fed back that *'it was amazing to meet each other again, and having to use our brains to escape [the breakout room] was challenging, but at the same time, really fun'*.

Staff members said that *'this programme has allowed us to build relationships with the students and provide individualised support. This has already had a huge impact, as we've supported students in getting emergency accommodation, through Student Finance England delayed applications, guarantor challenges and additional academic support'*.

Based on the activities we piloted in 2024/25, the conversations we have had with students, and the sector-wide research we have conducted, we will launch a new programme in 2025/26 for undergraduate students on one of our selective bursaries or scholarships. The programme will be called 'Made for It' and will have 3 strands:

- 'Lead the Way' – which will provide enhanced transition support for students in Year 0 / Year 1 only.
- 'Make the Links' – which will provide community-building activities for students in any year group.
- 'Strengthen your Skills' – which will provide skills workshops for students in any year group, centred around the key challenges that students have discussed with us.

This is a pilot programme that will be extensively evaluated to establish the impact of providing additional student success related activities to students in receipt of a bespoke financial award.



Student success / Financial support

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In 2025, key changes were made to the Undergraduate Access Scholarship (UAS) and the Manchester Bursary, resulting in award values increasing from £1,000 to £1,300 and from £2,000 to £2,600, respectively.

These awards were distributed to 5900 students and represent an investment of over £11.5 million annually.

2025/26 will see an additional boost in financial aid for students from low-income households, with the residual household income thresholds for the Manchester Bursary eligibility changing.

5900
students awarded
an Undergraduate
Access Scholarship
or The Manchester
Bursary

[Undergraduate scholarships and bursaries](#)

- The threshold for low-income households will increase from less than £25,000 to less than £31,000
- The threshold for partial support will expand from £25,001–£35,000 to £31,001–£43,000.

We anticipate this change resulting in over 1,000 additional students receiving the Manchester Bursary, an increase of nearly 20%.

125
bursaries
provided

The Manchester Masters Bursary

The Manchester Masters Bursary provides £4,000 to students from under-represented socioeconomic backgrounds who are looking to progress into postgraduate taught courses.

This year, we were able to provide 125 bursaries. 50 bursaries were funded centrally by the University, 50 were provided thanks to the continued legacy gift from the estate of Aline Egan, and the additional 25 were provided by the University's Faculty of Humanities to celebrate the University's bicentenary year. This allowed us to support an additional 25 students compared to the previous academic year.

Digital Equity Pilot Scheme

The Digital Equity Scheme was launched this year to provide laptop vouchers worth £300 each for students from priority communities who do not have their own computer to buy one to use for the remainder of their studies.

This year, we were able to provide vouchers to over 300 students, which equated to a £100,000 investment from the University's Access and Success fund.



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Student success / On-course success

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On-course success | Employability

Success looks different for every student at Manchester, and in 2024/25 we continued to evolve our student success offerings to create an environment where all are enabled to thrive.



86%
of 10/10 students
felt the Careers
Service sessions
improved their sense
of belonging to the
wider University



Manchester 10/10



By offering a series of tailored events and opportunities, Manchester 10/10 provides a space for students of Black Heritage to build community and comfortably engage with the full student experience. The programme has continued to grow, experiencing a 45% increase in social media engagement over the past year.

Focus group feedback revealed that Manchester 10/10 students had concerns about entering the job market and the possibility of facing positive discrimination and imposter syndrome. In response, the Careers Service adapted sessions to meet their needs, delivering our first Manchester 10/10 mock

assessment centres, which students found useful for networking with employers from multiple industries. After attending, participants reported a 24% increase in their confidence accessing our University Careers Service, and 86% felt the event improved their sense of belonging to the wider University.

“
M10/10 has fostered an inclusive space for Black heritage students and has shown me new and exciting opportunities, which have allowed me to maximise my university experience so far.
M10/10 2025 participant
”

By facilitating spaces where marginalised groups can build community, offering transformative professional opportunities, and empowering students to support one another, we aim to enable students to make the most of their time at Manchester.

Black Leadership Programme

In 2025, the Black Leadership Programme (BLP) entered its second year with 37 students of Black heritage participating. Grace, a final-year pharmacy student, discovered Manchester 10/10 during her first year at Manchester and decided to participate in the BLP after hearing about the benefits from a friend...



Grace

“ *They said it was really useful and helpful in building confidence in knowing your worth and just having the support of other Black people in a more intimate way.*

Grace, BLP participant 2025



All BLP participants take part in workshops delivered by GRIT, a charity specialising in personal development workshops for students of colour. For Grace, these workshops were *“a safe and confidential space in which you could open up*

about your experiences as a Black student” and “explore why our voices matter”. Through these workshops, Grace developed a stronger relationship with her academic advisor, “it’s about understanding what you can kind of get from each other... the barrier fell a lot more and I got a lot more comfortable”.

Grace’s experience aligns with the feedback of our broader BLP cohort, who reported increased confidence and a 20% increase in their sense of belonging to the University.

With the skills developed through the programme, as well as the financial bursary of £500, Grace was supported in securing work opportunities. She completed a summer internship at AstraZeneca, taking her first step toward her desired career. Grace also delivered a speech at our Manchester TEDx event and took on leadership roles at the University, including serving as the General Secretary and Inclusion Officer for the Arts and Crafts Society.



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Manchester Momentum

Previously known as Grow Beyond Limits, Manchester Momentum expanded in 2025 to support undergraduates of Black and South Asian Heritage from all faculties. This coaching programme aims to reduce the degree awarding gap between Black and South Asian Heritage students compared to their White peers by empowering students to thrive through one-on-one coaching.

14 students were matched with staff from various academic disciplines and professional services directorates. All students and staff completed training with coaches, learning how to conduct sessions effectively and guide students in overcoming limiting mindsets. The training sessions also allowed students to share experiences in a group setting, build connections, and learn new ways to tackle obstacles.

By the end of the programme, students' sense of belonging at university increased by 36%, with a 28% increase for staff. Participation improved students' relationships with the university by raising their awareness of support services and how to make the most of available opportunities before graduation.

“As a student of South Asian heritage and being from a working-class background, I have often felt out of place in certain environments. I was quite drawn to the idea of developing a strong network and having a coach to support throughout it. I thought this programme would be quite beneficial to help me understand myself better and develop good habits that will help me to succeed in both academics and beyond university.

”
Manchester Momentum 2025 participant

Faculty Outreach

Widening participation: Speech and Language Therapy Clinical Lecturer Internship

The Speech and Language Therapy team offered five 2nd year students a 3-month paid internship to experience working in academia as a clinical lecturer and receive mentorship to encourage diversity in the future workforce. Funded by the Faculty of Biology Medicine and Health Access and Success widening participation budget, interns had a range of responsibilities, including collaborating with staff

on admissions and outreach events, providing student input to inform curriculum development, and delivering lectures to 1st year students. Upon completion of the internship, students submitted an end-of-placement report, emphasising the importance of encouraging students from widening participation backgrounds to pursue higher education. This opportunity encouraged these students to apply for further opportunities, such as the Advanced Higher Education Associate Fellowship, to gain more experience within this field.



Library Student Team

The Library Student Team is an award-winning group of over 20 part-time student staff who contribute to the design and delivery of inclusive, student-facing services across The University of Manchester Library. Their work spans the full student lifecycle, supporting Access and Success initiatives from pre-arrival outreach and Welcome activities to ongoing academic skills support. Drawing on their lived experience, the team helps ensure Library services remain relevant, inclusive, and responsive to student needs.

“I really enjoyed being able to speak to the team from the library about imposter syndrome and feelings surrounding the idea of being in such a prestigious university... It made me feel like, as a student, I do have support from various places within uni. Undergraduate workshop participant



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The UoM Turing Scheme

Project 2024/25

The Turing Scheme is a fund which promotes equal access to global work experience opportunities, improving international mobility. In 2024/25, Turing Scheme funding was distributed to 402 Manchester students, 75% of whom came from households with an annual income of less than £35,000. Of those funded, 39% reported they would not have been able to go abroad without this financial support.

Through experiences enabled by this fund, students develop global competencies, which strengthen their employability and equip them for the modern job market. Last year, funds from the Turing Scheme supported study exchanges at leading universities, work placements with global partners, research internships, language and culture summer schools, and volunteering in the Global South.

Participants reported significant benefits from international placements, including greater confidence in their studies, improved employability skills, and enhanced global awareness.

Reverse Mentoring

Our Reverse Mentoring Scheme leverages the insights and fresh perspectives of Manchester Graduate Talent (MGT) interns to provide external organisations with a new graduate perspective on their processes and online presence. Interns conducted comprehensive reviews of the websites of 50 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) and Sustainability. 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 feedback they received.



In 2024/25, Turing Scheme funded
402
Manchester students

Work Experience Bursary

The Work Experience Bursary at Manchester provides financial support for undergraduates undertaking career-enhancing work experience. Widening participation (WP) students are eligible for £1,000, while non-widening participation students are eligible for £250. This bursary has consistently demonstrated a positive impact over the years in supporting cohorts who are marginalised in higher education. In 2024/25, 110 students received this bursary, totalling £54,535.47, with 88% awarded to WP students.

“Since the internship was unpaid and based in London, the costs of travel and daily expenses were a concern, especially during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The bursary made a huge difference—it helped cover my travel, allowing me to attend without taking stressful, long commutes or worrying about affordability. It made the experience far more accessible and comfortable.”

Work Experience Bursary recipient
2025

Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scheme

The Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme is offered to Black men in their first year of undergraduate study who come from widening participation backgrounds, aiming to address the underrepresentation of these students in large commercial law firms and other city professions. Applicant support transitioned to the Careers Service, enabling students to benefit from specialist careers expertise, providing bespoke advice and guidance for eligible students, supporting their personal statement, and conducting an assessment centre preparation session for applicants.

After a two-day assessment centre in London, two students from the University were offered the Scholarship, and one was accepted as a Highly Commended Candidate.

The two students accepted as scholars: Daniel Williams, a 2nd year History student, and Jesse Quaw, a 2nd year Electrical and Electronic Engineering student. One student, Ejike Okpara, a 2nd year Mechanical Engineering student, was identified as a Highly Commended Candidate.



Pictured: Daniel Williams (top), Jesse Quaw (middle) and Ejike Okpara (bottom).



Student success / Employability

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New Internship Programme

Our new Micro-Internship programme, in collaboration with Practera, has provided 200 students with the opportunity to participate in virtual, 2-week live consultancy projects for real external clients. Working in small teams with other University of Manchester students to focus on a specific business challenge (Growth Strategy,

**2025/26 Ringfencing
600 spaces specifically for bursary scholars and BLP participants**

AI, International Markets, Digital Marketing), they have developed skills in collaborative working, team communication, report writing, and responding constructively to feedback. Following the success of this pilot, we are expanding our reach for 25/26 and offering over c.600 places, with ringfencing of spaces specifically for bursary scholars and BLP participants.

Global Graduates

Our Global Graduates Programme 2025 provided 46 students (39 of whom were WP) with a fully funded trip to one of 7 global cities to meet with alumni. In small groups, they had the opportunity to learn more about their businesses, roles, career journeys and what life is like living and working in the city. The programme is made possible by the generosity of alumni donors and the alumni who give their time to host our students in their cities (New York, San Francisco, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, London and Zurich).



Images: Miriam Wong

Each year, our students highlight how transformative this experience is for them, and 2025 was no different.

An amazing programme especially for individuals who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Just seeing a different perspective of a role made me realise there is a whole world out there to explore and work in!
Global Graduates 2025 participant

From having never left the UK, to travelling to the other side of the world in less than one year at university all fully expensed, I'd seriously think this was a fever dream; but it's not!
Global Graduates 2025 participant



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Institute of Teaching and Learning Conference

The third University of Manchester Teaching and Learning Conference took place on 2nd and 3rd July 2025, continuing to disseminate, embed, and celebrate inclusive and effective teaching and learning practices, scholarship, and research.



A key theme of the conference focused on belonging, mattering and community. Alongside the call for papers, the conference committee and others involved ensured that the underlying processes and structures surrounding the event were themselves inclusive and specifically designed to highlight marginalised and minoritised voices of both staff and students.

Community and belonging at Manchester

The focus on community and approaches to belonging that co-create, rather than impose, grew naturally out of wider work at the University. The longstanding Belonging Network and Community of Practice, initiatives such as the 10/10 Network and sector-wide recognition all provided consensus of the impact a sense of belonging can have on student success. It is not enough for an institution to say students and staff are welcome; it must create systems and support practices that ensure our diverse communities have agency and opportunity to impact their time at Manchester, whatever path they may take.

The inclusion of belonging as a theme was cemented by students and staff having equal say on the conference planning committee and with abstract submission requirements that prioritised projects, research and practice with concrete student participation. This practice is one of many that ensure that the experience of engaging with the conference reinforced the discussions on inclusion, belonging and community.

Amplifying student voices

Throughout the event, but particularly in its plenaries, the conference also deliberately asked participants to reflect on the experiences of students who are underrepresented and absent in the "default" image of a student used in planning and developing the learning experiences and wider contexts of the institution. Many of our most marginalised communities are also othered, considered separate from and somehow lacking in their own understanding



Institute of Teaching and Learning



of higher education, of their learning and of their own potential and skills. All three plenaries featured student and staff voices that spoke to counter the narrative that their lived expertise was something to fix, address or hide. They spoke with dignity, passion and power about the realities of working while studying, coping with caring responsibilities, negotiating the world as an estranged student or one with refugee status. This myriad of barriers, large and small make their experience of learning at Manchester very different from the one that many of our systems are built to support.

Their voices reminded participants that there is more to community, more to belonging, than access, and of the assumptions we make about the communities we work alongside. Embedding inclusivity into our systems, practices, and ways of thinking requires constant reflection, questioning, and refinement in collaboration with the student communities at Manchester.

These plenaries, fringe events, and presentations individualised the experience of students who often find themselves lumped into cohorts and labelled with the institutional opinions of their "gaps", "deficits" and "struggles" and put them in the context of the structural and practical ways those gaps are created not by the students but by the institution they attend. It also highlighted the effective and caring practices found all over the University, from targeted interventions to large community partnerships, that can work towards addressing the issues that are not a "problem" created by these students, but a barrier inherent in their experience of higher education. Finally, it brought together the presenters, diverse participants, and the wider university community to collectively consider how teaching, learning, belonging, and the student experience might be addressed in both small activities and institution-wide interventions.



Evaluation at UoM

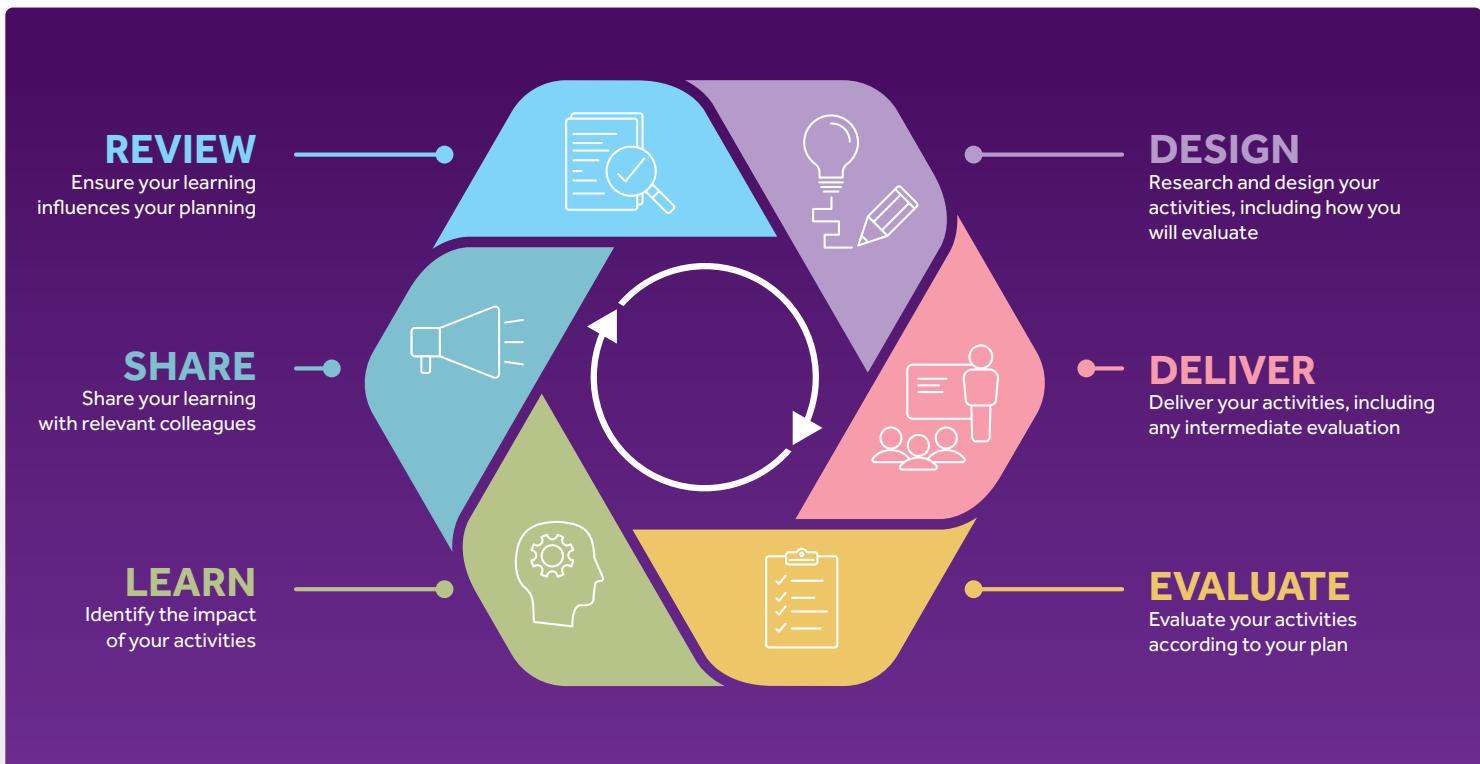
Whether evidencing our impact to the Office for Students, discovering new ways in which we can deliver change, or improving the delivery of longstanding interventions, evaluation at Manchester remains a key priority.

In recent years, we have made improvements to the standard of evaluation at Manchester, with all initiatives delivered by the Access and Student Success team adopting a Theory of Change model and the creation of our in-house Evaluation Framework.

As more staff have engaged with our Evaluation Framework, we have continued to adapt our content to the changing needs of our audience. In the Faculty of Science and Engineering, an Evaluation Task and Finish Group was established in 2025 to develop faculty-specific resources and a network of evaluation advocates. Elsewhere, the Access and Student Success Monitoring and Evaluation Team continued to support the development of the Institute of Teaching and Learning's Evaluation Toolkit and delivered an online 'Evaluating Your Practice' event, which highlighted key tools, methods and approaches to evaluation.

Over the last year:

- The number of tracked participants recorded in The Higher Education Access Tracker has increased to over 20,000 – greatly improving our ability to measure the impact of our access work.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Team have played an active role across the sector, helping to establish an evaluation community of practice with other members of the Forum for Access and Continuing Education's Access and Participation Special Interest Group.
- Evaluations, drop-ins, and workshops have been held each term and are bookable through the UoM Training Catalogue.



If you would like to receive support with your evaluation, guidance on how to get started or hear more about the resources listed on this page, please use the links below.

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
[Institute of Teaching and Learning – Evaluation Toolkit](#) | [ITL Projects and Communities Teams Space](#)
[UoM Training Catalogue](#) | [Forum for Access and Continuing Education \(FACE\)](#)

Access our
UoM Theory of Change template
[here](#)

Access our
UoM Evaluation Plan template
[here](#)

