

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 Access and Participation Plan

What is an Access and Participation Plan?

An Access and Participation Plan sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the [Office for Students](#). You can see the University of York's full access and participation plan at: https://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/University%20of%20York_APP_2025-26.pdf

Key points

Our plan aims to support equality of opportunity by improving the experiences and outcomes of specific student groups, enabling them to access and succeed in higher education, and progress into further study or graduate employment. Data shows that certain groups have lower outcomes compared to their peers at the University of York:

- **Access:** Students from low socio-economic backgrounds and minoritised ethnic groups are less likely to study with us.
- **Continuation:** [Underrepresented student groups](#) may have lower continuation rates from year one into year two of their studies, particularly Mature students (aged 21 and over when they start their course), Black students and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Completion:** Mature students are less likely to complete their studies. Some [underrepresented student groups](#) may also be less likely to complete their studies, particularly Black students, students from a low socio-economic background, students with a reported mental health condition or a reported sensory, medical or physical condition.
- **Degree awarding:** Mature students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Black students, and Asian students are awarded firsts and 2:1s at lower rates than their peers.
- **Progression from higher education:** [Underrepresented student groups](#) may be less likely to pursue further study or secure graduate employment, particularly disabled students (and specifically those reporting a mental health condition).
- **Whole student journey:** Students with care experience and students who are estranged are less likely to access Higher Education, less likely to continue and complete their studies, less likely to be awarded a degree of 2:1 or above, and are more likely to experience unique challenges when they progress from Higher Education.

► See pages 1-4 and Annex A (Self Assessment of Performance) of the full plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

By addressing the disparities outlined in our key points, we aim to support students from all backgrounds to access higher education, and foster an inclusive environment where every student can achieve their full potential. Our plan focuses on:

- **Access:** Increasing the number of students from low socio-economic backgrounds and minoritised ethnic groups enrolled at York. By 2028/29, we have set targets to:
 - Increase the percentage of students who live in an area of socio-economic deprivation (measured by the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (IMD) Quintile 1) from 9.6% to 13%.
 - Increase the percentage of Asian students enrolled at York from 6.1% to 9.7%.
 - Increase the percentage of Black students enrolled at York from 2.2% to 4.4%.
- **Continuation and completion:** Ensuring that overall continuation rate differences and completion rate differences between underrepresented student groups and represented student groups do not increase, with an aim that they decrease. By 2028/29, we have set a target to:
 - Decrease the gap in completion rates between Mature and Young students from 11.9 percentage points (pp) to 9.3pp.
- **Degree awarding:** Increasing the rates of awarding degrees of 2:1 and above for Mature students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Black students and Asian students. By 2028/29, we have set targets to:
 - Decrease the awarding gap between Mature and Young students from 13.3pp to 9.3pp.

► See pages 7-9 of the full plan for more information.

► See fees, investments and targets of the full plan for more information (appended to the document)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decrease the awarding gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 students from 17.8pp to 13.4pp. ○ Decrease the awarding gap between Black and White students from 17pp to 8.6pp. ○ Decrease the two-year aggregate awarding gap between Asian and White students from 8.7pp to 1.7pp. ● Progression from higher education: Ensuring that overall progression rate differences between underrepresented student groups and represented student groups do not increase, with an aim that they decrease. ● Whole student journey: Ensuring that consistent and effective support for students with care experience and students who are estranged is provided throughout their entire student journey, the impact of which will be demonstrated through evaluation of our provision. 	
<p>What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity</p> <p>Extensive student and staff consultation helped us understand why we see lower outcomes for particular student groups. We identified five key risks related to the student experience at York and their potential impact across the whole student journey: access and transparency of information; practical and process barriers; sense of belonging; university culture/institutional ethos; and discrimination and experiences of harm. We will undertake the following activities to help us address these underlying risks and achieve our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extend and enhance our existing programmes with schools, colleges, and other organisations, while developing new initiatives to support more students in achieving their full potential and accessing higher education. ● Continue fostering student communities among underrepresented groups. This includes providing comprehensive induction and transition support, along with targeted advice and practical assistance, to ensure students feel supported throughout their studies. ● Develop our teaching, learning, assessment, and academic support practices in collaboration with departments to create a more inclusive curriculum that ensures equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically. ● Provide opportunities for students to develop employability skills, gain relevant and valuable work experience, and access support networks, while actively removing barriers to ensure that all students feel confident and well-prepared to achieve their future goals. ● Offer a student financial support package that includes bursaries and funding to develop new initiatives or expand successful existing activities. This package will be designed collaboratively and in direct response to student feedback to meet current needs and opportunities. ● Embed a whole provider approach to align university efforts and ensure coordinated action towards achieving our aims. This approach will deliver inclusive, responsive support that recognises the diversity of our student body. ● Continue to engage and co-construct initiatives with diverse student groups, to ensure our plan remains relevant and effective. 	<p>▶ See pages 5-6 of the full plan for more information on our York risks to equality of opportunity.</p> <p>▶ See pages 10-21 and Annex B (Rationale, Assumptions and Evidence for Intervention Strategies) of the full plan for more information.</p>
<p>How students can get involved</p> <p>We closely collaborated with students, the University of York Students' Union and our Student Expert Panel (SEP) to co-create our plan. We will maintain strong partnerships with our student union and our SEP, which consists of students from a diverse range of backgrounds. Both will continue to be essential in providing valuable advice and challenge. We aim to further engage students in evaluation activities, to inform the delivery of our plan. By continuing to offer paid student partnership opportunities, ensuring student representation in governance, and engaging students in working groups, we commit to placing the student voice at the forefront of meaningful and impactful change.</p>	<p>▶ See pages 24-25 of the full plan for more information.</p>
<p>Evaluation - how we will measure what we have achieved</p> <p>Evaluation is embedded in the way we work. We will continue to engage with our students and stay up to date with the latest evidence to ensure our initiatives are best informed. The most appropriate methods will be chosen to evaluate our activities and the impact of these will be transparently published on our website. The University has developed internal datasets and an Evaluation Framework of supportive resources, aimed at providing consistency across evaluation activity, increasing staff confidence, and enhancing our collective evaluation capacity. We will continue to develop these to ensure they are as effective as possible. The evaluation of the plan will be overseen by working groups which include student representation and meet regularly to monitor progress.</p>	<p>▶ See pages 25-27 of the full plan for more information.</p>

<p>Fees we charge</p> <p>The maximum fees charged for full-time, UK (home) undergraduate students at the University of York are £9,250 per year. We will increase fees each year, subject to the maximum fee limits set by government regulation.</p>	<p>► See our webpage on undergraduate fees and funding.</p>
<p>Financial help available</p> <p>We offer financial assistance to students from underrepresented groups to support them in accessing higher education and succeeding in their studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The York Bursary is offered to students with a household income of up to £35,000. Eligible students will receive £1,000 per year of study. • The Refugee Bursary assists students who have a Refugee immigration status and a household income of up to £25,000. Eligible students will receive the York Bursary, plus an additional £1,000 per year of study. • The Care Leaver and Estranged Students' Bursary is available to students aged under 25 at the start of their course and who come to York as a Care Leaver¹ (as per the legal definition), through the national Foyer Federation, are irreconcilably estranged from both parents or both parents have passed away. Eligible students will receive £3,000 in their first year of study, £2,500 in subsequent years, and an additional £1,000 to be paid in their final term to assist with graduation and interview costs. During a year in industry, placement year or year abroad, the package of support is reduced by 50%. • The Care Leavers' Accommodation Subsidy is offered to students aged under 25 at the start of their course and who come to York as a Care Leaver (as per the legal definition) or through the national Foyer Federation, and whose Local Authority is not making accommodation provisions. Eligible students can choose to apply the accommodation subsidy to either on-campus or off-campus accommodation, up to the value of £130 per week. During a year in industry, placement year or year abroad, the package of support is reduced by 50%. 	<p>► See pages 28-29 of the full plan for more information.</p> <p>► See our webpage on undergraduate funding for UK (home) students for full eligibility criteria and further information.</p>
<p>Information for students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective students are informed about fees and financial support through various channels, including in-person events at schools and colleges, on-campus events like Open Days and Taster Days, residential visits, dedicated resources for teachers and advisers, and our webpage on undergraduate study at York. • Upon receiving an offer, prospective students are provided with their course's tuition fee in the offer letter, along with information on funding options, bursaries, scholarships, general advice on living costs and budgeting, and links to the relevant university webpages. • A central webpage consolidates the latest details on course fees, government loans and York financial support, including bursaries and scholarships. Our bursaries webpage outlines application processes, eligibility criteria and the level of financial support offered each year. • Current students receive additional financial assistance, support, and information through our student support and finance teams, assistance funding webpage, internal communications campaigns, and emails. 	<p>► See pages 28-29 of the full plan for more information.</p>

Contact details for further information

You can email the Access and Participation Monitoring and Evaluation Team for further information: access-and-participation@york.ac.uk.

¹ The legal definition comes from The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 which states that a Care Leaver is someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday. The 13 weeks do not have to have been all in one go.