

# University of Worcester

## Summary of 2024-25 to 2027-28 access and participation plan

### What is an access and participation plan?

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

You can see the full access and participation plan for the University of Worcester on our [webpages](#).

### Key points (see pages 1-3 of the access and participation plan for more information)

The University of Worcester is in the West Midlands. Our main campuses are in the cathedral city of Worcester. The University is home to over 10,000 students – including students who study with our partners.

The University has a higher proportion of mature students (44%) compared to many other universities – many of these students are studying on Health or Education courses. A high proportion of our students (44%) join us with non-A-Level qualifications, including BTEC, and many are first in their family to study at university (52%).

Our plan is focussed on improving outcomes for specific groups of students across the various stages of their university journey.

### Fees we charge (see pages 25-26 of the access and participation plan for more information)

The University will charge the maximum fee of £9,250 (plus inflation) in 2024-25 for all our undergraduate courses. The fee for students studying part time will not exceed the maximum fee level of £6,935 (plus inflation).

If the Government determine a change in the maximum fee we can charge, we will apply this change.

Where our fees are below the fee cap, we will apply annual increases in fee levels for continuing students. This will be in line with the appropriate inflationary measure set by the government. Any fee increases will be calculated using the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast RPI-X.

We publish clear and accessible information on the [fees that we charge](#) on our webpages.

**All students** can access the most up to date information on fees and financial support via the [University website](#).

### Financial help available (see pages 26-28 of the access and participation plan for more information)

We offer financial support to students via our [Access to Learning Fund](#). This fund helps eligible students experiencing financial difficulties to continue to study until their course is completed through the award of non-repayable grants.

We offer [scholarships](#) for academic achievement and for [sports](#). Full details of these and eligibility criteria are published on our webpages. Scholarships are available at each year of study for eligible students.

### **Information for students (see page 26 of the access and participation plan for more information)**

We share information on fees and financial support with prospective students at in-person events (including our open days), email communication and publish the fees that we charge on our [webpages](#).

Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student portal, [webpages](#), internal communication and emails.

All students can access the most up to date information on fees and financial support on our [webpages](#).

### **What we are aiming to achieve (see pages 6-7 of the access and participation plan for more information)**

Our plan is focussed on improving outcomes for specific groups of students across the various stages of their university journey.

We will **improve access** for:

- Students that are from a neighbourhood where not many people participate in higher education.
- Students from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic community.
- Students that have been in receipt of free school meals.

We will **improve continuation** for:

- Mature students (students over the age of 21 on entry to the University).
- Students with entry qualifications other than A-Levels.
- Students from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

We will Improve **degree completion** and **degree award levels** for:

- Students with entry qualifications other than A-Levels.
- Students from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

Prior to the pandemic we were making good progress in improving continuation (students continuing with their studies), and degree award levels (students achieving a degree award of 2:1 or above).

Our plan is focussed on regaining the positive impacts that we were achieving.

### **What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity (see pages 8-19 of the access and participation plan for more information)**

Our **overall aim** is to support students to access and be successful in higher education regardless of background or entry qualification.

**We are focussing our work on:**

- **Supporting attainment at school and access to higher education** – we will continue and expand our work with schools to raise pupil attainment and aspirations to study for a higher education qualification. We will increase applications to study at university from the most geographically underrepresented groups and support access to higher education for pupils from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

- **Increasing continuation and improving completion and attainment for all students regardless of entry qualifications, family experience of higher education, household income or [protected characteristics](#).**- We are continually working to improve the experiences of students that study with us, our plan will do this through the ongoing development of our student support systems, our approaches to teaching and assessment and improvements to resources, curriculum and professional development for our staff.

We have identified a comprehensive programme of activity to support our aims and targets:

1. Extend our **programme of work with schools** – this supports more pupils from underrepresented groups to attain good grades and progress to study for a higher education qualification.
2. Support all learners as they start university study with a **comprehensive onboarding and academic induction programme** – this supports students with their confidence to study at higher education and equips them with the skills to be successful with their studies.
3. **Review how our students are assessed** and develop a whole university assessment – this supports students to build confidence and success with assessment.
4. Offer **financial support**, including hardship funding through our access to learning fund, for eligible students, and practical support for students applying to Student Finance England.
5. Continuing our work on **decolonising the curriculum** and promote culturally and ethnically diverse practices at the University.

### **How students can get involved (see page 23 of the access and participation plan for more information)**

We work closely with Worcester Students' Union to support and embed student representation in all that we do. Students are represented on all our internal groups overseeing the implementation of the plan. We worked closely with Worcester Students' Union and student groups to gather input into the design of our access and participation plan.

### **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (see pages 24-25 of the access and participation plan for more information)**

Our programmes of activity are informed by the best available evidence about what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- The impact of the programme of activity we are delivering to achieve our aims
- The actions outlined above
- The impact on achieving our overall aim of improved access and success in higher education.

Progress against the aims and actions will be monitored by our Access and Participation Plan Steering Group – which is a group of senior staff and students from across the University that have the experience to achieve the aims of the plan. This will be reported to our Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, which is a formal committee of the University. The Steering Group will oversee implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against the milestones in our access and participation plan. We will monitor the impact of our work on the student groups we have identified to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our programmes of activity to ensure they remain in the best interests of our students.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our [webpages](#).

### **Contact details for further information**

Please contact Val Yates (Director of Access and Inclusion), [accessandinclusion@worc.ac.uk](mailto:accessandinclusion@worc.ac.uk) for more information.