

University of Exeter

Summary of 2025/26-28/29 access and participation plan

What is an Access and Participation Plan?

An Access and Participation Plan sets out the meaningful and impactful steps an institution will take to promote equality of opportunity to enable everyone, irrespective of background, to enter and succeed in higher education if they have the potential and desire to do so. It is a regulatory requirement and is focused on priorities identified through research, analysis and consultation. You can see the full Access and Participation plan for University of Exeter at [Widening Participation Strategy](#) | [About us](#) | [University of Exeter](#).

Key points

Helping to make the world a fairer place through the power of education is one of the most important goals within our University strategy. We want everyone to feel welcome, valued and supported to realise their potential at the University of Exeter. This plan is part of a broader mission to build a diverse and inclusive educational community. We are hugely grateful for the insights of our students and their engagement with this plan and look forward to progressing this important work together.

The University of Exeter has around 30,000 students studying at campuses in Devon and Cornwall, as Degree Apprentices within industry and studying online. We are becoming a more diverse educational community but want to do better in attracting students from all backgrounds and particularly those from lower income households. Typically, 65% of our home undergraduate students meet at least one criteria of under-representation in higher education, rising to 80% of students from the South West¹. We achieved the highest rating for the quality of our education - Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 - with support and outcomes for under-represented students highlighted as marks of quality. Our rates of retention, academic attainment and progression to graduate outcomes are high but we want to eliminate gaps in success where they occur between students with different backgrounds.

See page 2 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

We currently charge the maximum allowable fee for our undergraduate courses of £9,250. If the fee cap were to be lifted during the period covered by the plan we would review this fee, taking into consideration Government policy, inflation and other economic factors.

Financial help available

We review our bursary and scholarship provision annually based on student feedback, evaluation, and the economic situation. The table below shows bursaries only [excluding scholarships] for home undergraduate students starting their studies with us in 2025/26. This is a minimum commitment, and we would strongly advise students to check our website for details of our provision which may exceed the values shown below. Scholarship opportunities are also available for students completing nominated fair access programmes, for refugees and asylum seekers and mature students.

Table 1 Bursaries available to students starting in 2025/2026

Name of award	Eligibility	Description	Minimum award value from 2025-26
Access to Exeter Bursary	Household income less than £16,000 pa	Automatically awarded for all years of study subject to eligibility	£2,300
Access to Exeter Bursary	Household income between £16,001 and £25,000 pa	Automatically awarded for all years of study subject to eligibility	£1,340

¹ Students meeting one or more of: TUNDRA quintile 1 or 2, IMD quintile 1 or 2, Bursary recipient, Mature, Disability, Ethnic minority, or 1st Generation to HE. Internal analysis 2024

We will increase the number of students we support through the types of scaffolded and longitudinal programmes which our evaluation shows have the greatest impact on progression to HE and continue to improve them in collaboration with participants and stakeholders.

We will build and strengthen relationships with schools and partners with high proportions of students from under-represented backgrounds to provide advice and guidance, and address perceptions which may prevent students from progressing to certain courses or institutions despite being qualified to do so.

We will grow substantially our portfolio of non-traditional and flexible study options to make degree level study more affordable and accessible while addressing regional and sector skills gaps.

We will continue to work to identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity within our recruitment and admissions process. This will include increasing our engagement with under-represented students through the recruitment process, providing relevant personalised information and support to inform decision making, and the proactive use of contextual offers.

3. Alleviating non-academic barriers to learning, improving continuation and delivering positive student experience.

Working with students we will redesign the way in which we communicate and provide support for under-represented students to improve accessibility, engagement and service quality.

We will increase the funding support available for students on low incomes and introduce new measures to provide specialist funding advice, improve affordability and access to accommodation.

We will extend and improve the support we provide to under-represented student communities to support mental health and wellbeing, belonging, continuation and academic success.

4. Supporting students to fulfil their academic potential ensuring our portfolio is relevant and adopting sector leading inclusive practice.

We will introduce major changes to our academic support model and curriculum to embed support and skills development.

We will embed inclusive education practice through policy and training and progressively employ universal design principles to ensure the most common adaptations for disability are built in to our modules.

We will work with students from ethnic minorities to provide personalised support and interventions to remove barriers to realising their potential in addition to building on whole institutional approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion.

5. Supporting students to fulfil their post-study ambitions to achieve social mobility.

We will establish a programme to support students from under-represented backgrounds to experience and progress to postgraduate study.

Working with employers we will provide focused support for students with disabilities and mental health conditions to improve employability and graduate outcomes.

See pages 6 to 27 of the access and participation plan for more information on each of the activities within our intervention strategies.

