

University of Kent

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. You can see the full access and participation plan for University of Kent at:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/applicants/policies/access-and-participation-plan>

Key points (See pages 1-13 of the full plan)

The focus of our access and participation plan is to support specific groups of students to access university, improve their success on our degree courses and ensure that good graduate outcomes are achieved. Analysis of our data shows that students are less likely to access the University if:

- they come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education
- they are care-experienced
- they are a mature student (over the age of 21)

Students are less likely to complete their degree with us if:

- they come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education, have a lower household income and / or entered with qualifications other than A-Levels
- are a mature student (over the age of 21 when they started their undergraduate degree course)

The following groups are less likely to achieve a good degree outcome:

- Students from specific ethnic groups
- mature students
- Students who enter university with qualifications other than A Level, such as BTECs.
- Students who come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education

Progression data shows that white students are more likely to progress to Higher Postgraduate Degrees (e.g. PhD, Dphil, Mphil) than their black peers.

Whilst we are meeting the milestones set out in our plan, we still have further to go.

Fees we charge (see our Fee summary)

At the University of Kent, the maximum fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- £6,935 for part-time students.

A full list of our fees can be found at www.kent.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/fees-and-funding

Financial help available (See page 26 of the plan)

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying with us. The support available includes:

- **The Kent Financial Support Package – a bursary** of £3,500 over a 3 year degree (or £4,500 over the duration of a 4 year degree) for full-time students with a household income of £30,000 or below, and who meet other eligibility criteria.
- In addition to this, we also **offer funding and wider support** to Care Leavers, young independent students, estranged students, homeless students, student carers.

For more information on the above please visit : www.kent.ac.uk/guides/vulnerable-student-funding

Information for students (See page 25 of the full plan)

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person and online events, such as our open days, applicant days and by email.

- We regularly update our information for care leavers on the Propel website: <https://propel.org.uk/Details/the-university-of-kent>
- Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our internal communications campaigns and emails. For the most up-to-date information, see our university website: www.kent.ac.uk

What we are aiming to achieve (See pages 15 to 21 of the full plan, and our Targets)

Our overall aim is to support students to access higher education, for our students to thrive and fulfil their academic potential, and achieve successful graduate outcomes. Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

- **Support attainment at school and access to higher education** – We are working with schools in the Kent and Medway region to support pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification. We will build on existing work by piloting new projects designed in collaboration with schools, other local universities and local / national organisations to start in 2023-24.
- **Diversifying our provision** – We are committed to developing new pathways to university and more flexible provision. (See page 8 of the full plan).

We will work with the following groups of students to improve their outcomes, ensuring that the gaps between these students and their peers are reduced by 2024-25.

- **Students from neighbourhoods where they are less likely to go to university, or from low income backgrounds:**
 - Reduce the university entry gap from 19 percentage points to 8 percentage points
 - Reduce the non-continuation gap (the proportion of students not continuing to the next year of their course) from 2.3 percentage points to 0.5 percentage points
 - Reduce the gap in attainment of a good degree (2:1 or above) from 21 percentage points to 8 percentage points.
- **Care experienced students** –we will increase the rate at which students with experience of the care system in the region access higher education to 11%.
- **Mature students** –we will:
 - increase the proportion of mature students (aged over 21) to 24%.
 - reduce the non-continuation gap between young and mature students (aged over 21 years) from 7 percentage points to 3 percentage points.
- **Ethnicity – we will reduce the gap in good degree (2:1 or above) attainment:**
 - Between White and Black students from 28 percentage points to 8 percentage points.

- Between White and Asian students from 13 percentage points to 3 percentage points.

What we are doing to achieve our aims (See pages 15 to 21 of the full plan)

We have identified the following programmes of activity to support achievement of our aims and targets.

1. **Develop our existing programme of work with schools** – Taking a targeted and evidence based approach to support more young people from underrepresented groups to attain good grades and progress to study at university.
2. Continue to **develop our role as lead sponsor for a multi academy trust**.
3. Engage with external partners to work together **on improving attainment and access to higher education for care leavers**.
4. Continue to deliver and **expand the reach of our University Entrance Diploma** (an alternative route to higher education for 16-19 year) **and our Access to HE Diploma qualifications** (for mature students wanting to attend higher education).
5. Offer **financial support**, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students.
6. Continue to deliver and **further develop transition to higher education support for students joining University of Kent**, including the award winning [One Hour Degree](#).
7. **Deliver our Student Success programme and create early intervention opportunities** to ensure all students have an equal chance to succeed at the University of Kent
8. **Expand our inclusive curriculum research and activities** at the University of Kent.
9. Provide **professional guidance and coaching to students** who are most at risk of unemployment / underemployment when they graduate, to better support their outcomes.
10. Work with local education and industry partners to support the development of a **joined up education and employment focused skills offer for local communities and employers**.

How students can get involved (See page 22 of the full plan)

We worked with the Students' Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan, and we continue to work closely with them to ensure we deliver our aims. Students are represented on our Access and Participation Plan Operational and Steering Groups, which are responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan. To provide feedback or get involved in this work, students can contact their student representative at kentunion@kent.ac.uk.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (See page 22 to 25 of the full plan)

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

- our programme design
- the impact of the programme of activity, and the impact on achieving our overall aim of improved prior attainment, access and an inclusive environment.

The Access and Participation Plan Operational Group will monitor and report on these processes to the Steering Group. The Steering Group will oversee implementation to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones in our plan. We will monitor impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing our aims. We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website by January 2024.

Contact details for further information

You can contact Clare Allison at outreach@kent.ac.uk for further information.