

University of Central Lancashire

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 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 Central Lancashire at <https://www.uclan.ac.uk/values-and-initiatives/widening-participation>

Key points

The [University of Central Lancashire](#) is a large higher education provider with UK campuses in Preston, Burnley and Westlakes. We have a large network of partner colleges in the surrounding regions and offers flexible provision including degree courses and apprenticeships.

The focus of our access and participation plan is on improving access to higher education for specific groups of students and improving their outcomes. Data shows that outcomes are lower for some groups of students compared to their peers at the University.

We want to partner with schools to improve pupils academic outcomes and attitudes towards higher education, with the aim of increasing the number of pupils from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education, accessing university.

When at the University, we recognise that students from areas of disadvantage, Black students, and mature students do not perform as well as other students. We will improve the outcomes for these student groups by delivering a range of support activities.

See pages 1-3 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At the University of Central Lancashire, the maximum fees charged per year are:

- £9,250 for full-time UK students
- £6,930 for part-time UK students

You can see a full list of fees for courses at the University of Central Lancashire on the [Fees and Funding](#) webpage.

See page 70 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

We offer financial advice and support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes:

- Targeted financial support for students from low income households: from September 2025, students whose main household has an annual income of less than £25,000 a year will be entitled to a financial bursary. The bursary is £500 for each year of study, except the final undergraduate year, which is £750.
- A hardship fund that supports students facing financial hardship, including emergency payments for unexpected financial crisis.
- A range of targeted bursaries to support specific student groups.

You can read about our full list of bursaries at the University of Central Lancashire at www.uclan.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/bursaries-and-scholarships.

See page 46 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

We publish clear information for existing and prospective students about our courses, particularly around money and fees.

- Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support and advice at in person events such as our Open Days, the [Fees and Funding](#) and [Cost of Living Support Hub](#) webpages on our website, and by email.
- Current students receive information about fees and financial support and advice through our Student Hub [webpages](#).

See page 51 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to enable people, no matter their background, to fulfil their potential and meet their life and career goals.

We have identified several key risks to equality of opportunity:

- School pupils from low income households are less likely to achieve a Grade 5 at Maths and English at GCSE. This is a larger issue in Lancashire where the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is greater than the rest of the England.
- Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress are more prevalent among students from low income households. This makes it more difficult for these students to succeed academically and progress through their studies.
- Mature students, many of whom have been out of the education system for several years, face challenges transitioning into HE. Negative trends in continuation and completion rates underscore the need for comprehensive academic and personal support systems.
- The awarding gap between Black and White students at the University indicates a lack of adequate academic and personal support for Black students, which hinders their academic success.

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the below targets:

- **Target 1:** increase the number of pre-16 pupils eligible for free school meals reporting improved academic self-efficacy.
- **Target 2:** increase the number of pre-16 pupils eligible for free school meals reporting improved attitudes towards HE.
- **Target 3:** improve the completion rate for students from areas of disadvantage by 2028/29.
- **Target 4:** reduce the completion gap between disabled and non-disabled students from 4.8% in 2021/22 to 1.5% by 2028/29.
- **Target 5:** reduce the continuation gap between young and mature students from 8.2% in 2021/22 to 4% by 2028/29.
- **Target 6:** reduce the awarding gap between Black and White students from 24% in 2021/22 to 12% by 2028/29.
- **Target 7:** improve the progression rate into graduate employment for students from areas of disadvantage by 2028/29.

See pages 6 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity

In partnership with our Students' Union, we have designed activities for each target which are summarised below:

- **Target 1 activities:** increase pupils' motivation to engage with school and college study and to increase academic confidence by improving study skills.
- **Target 2 activities:** bring pupils onto campus to make university a more familiar setting and guidance workshops about university and how school subjects link to courses at university and different careers.
- **Target 3 activities:** help transition into university and provide effective personal, academic and mental health support to students to ensure they are supported to succeed.
- **Target 4 activities:** provide tailored advice and financial support to disabled students and ensure staff have access to disability specific-training to provide effective support.
- **Target 5 activities:** help mature students return to learning if they are studying after a break and provide support on how to balance mature students' common additional commitments such as childcare and part-time working.
- **Target 6 activities:** build belonging and inclusion for Black students and wider university improvements such as ensuring our curriculum and assessment is diverse.
- **Target 7 activities:** improve part-time work and placement opportunities for students and provide financial assistance for students to engage in career development opportunities.

See pages 7-42 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

We work in close partnership with the University of Central Lancashire Students' Union to gather student input into the design and continual review of our access and participation plan. To support student involvement in our projects, we will create a new paid Student Partner position to help design and deliver our student activities to ensure they remain relevant and impactful.

See page 47 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

The work we do in our access and participation plan is informed by evidence about what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- Our overall approach to access and participation.
- The impact of the different activities we are delivering to achieve our targets.
- How we are performing against our targets.

We will monitor impact on our target groups to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where needed, we will adapt our activities in the best interests of our students.

See pages 48-50 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact wparticipation@uclan.ac.uk for more information.