

# Birmingham City University

## 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 university courses, succeed in their studies and progress from higher education into graduate employability.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Birmingham City University (BCU) on the BCU website [Access and participation plan | Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.bcu.ac.uk/access-and-participation).

### Key points

Our mission is *'To be the University for Birmingham and to enable personal transformation of individuals, employers and society through excellence in practice-based education, research and knowledge exchange'*.

Birmingham City University is the *University for Birmingham*, a core objective and theme from our strategy BCU2025. Over 70% of our students are commuters who live in or around Birmingham. BCU believes we do not thrive unless our city and its people thrive. The focus of our access and participation plan is on improving outcomes for specific groups of students. Data shows that, compared to their peers at BCU, outcomes differ for certain groups of students.

See pages  
1-18 in the  
full plan

- Students from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to university
- The following groups of students are less likely to stay on their course of study:
  - Students from neighbourhoods which are designated as deprived
  - Students of Black/White mixed ethnicities
  - Mature students
- The following groups of students are less likely to achieve a good honours degree
  - Students from neighbourhoods which are designated as deprived
  - Students who are Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic and Black ethnic background
  - Mature students
  - Students who have a declared cognitive disability
  - Those students who have been in care
- The following students are less likely to progress to a graduate job or further education after graduation
  - Asian students
  - Students from neighbourhoods which are designated as deprived
  - Those students who have been in care

### Fees we charge

At BCU, the maximum fees for undergraduate students eligible for Home fees are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- £11,100 for accelerated degrees
- £6,935 for part-time students

You can see a full list of fees (2022-23) for courses at BCU in our Fee Summary on the BCU website [2022/23 Fee Summary | Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.bcu.ac.uk/fees).

## Financial help available

We offer financial support to students identified as part of our access and participation plan. Our support package is responsive and informed through our Student Union. Current financial help can be found on our website [Money Management - Financial Difficulties | Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.bcu.ac.uk/money-management).

- Funded **dyslexia diagnostic assessments** with a university-approved supplier.
- A digital support scheme for low-income students.
- A **hardship fund** to support students experiencing unplanned financial difficulties.
- Emergency support to help students in immediate need, e.g. food vouchers.
- **Care leaver package** including a dedicated contact, guaranteed accommodation, and a bursary

## Information for students

- Information for **current students** is provided on the institution's intranet, via email communications, social media, digital signage, leaflets, and activities on campus.
- Information for **prospective students** is available at [Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.birminghamcity.ac.uk) and through Open Days and Applicant Taster Days, and communications to applicants and offer holders.
- Information for **students** who have been in care is provided [Care leavers | Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.birminghamcity.ac.uk/care-leavers), on the institution's intranet, and via email communication to current and prospective students.

See page  
29 in the  
full plan

## What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to ensure that all students with the academic ability can access and succeed in Higher Education, irrespective of their background. We want to create a learning environment where students at BCU achieve their fullest potential.

For **students from neighbourhoods where fewer people go to university**, we will reduce the gap in access by 3% compared to neighbourhoods where more people go to University, and **of those who are White** we will reduce the gap by 5%.

**We will reduce the gap in good honours degree outcomes** between White students and students from a Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background by 8%. We will also close the gap between White and Black students by 8%.

We will reduce the gap in between White and Black students **not continuing into the second year of study** by 5%.

We will reduce the gap in **Progression to graduate jobs** between White and Asian students by 5%.

We will increase the number of **students reporting a disability** by 5%, thus ensuring specific support is available.

For **Mature Students** we will reduce the gap in non-continuation by 2% and the gap in degree outcomes by 5%.

For **Care Leavers**, we will increase both the attainment rate and progression to employment rate by 10%.

In addition, **we aim to eliminate all our gaps by 2030-31.**

## What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages  
20-25 in the  
full plan


To achieve our targets, BCU is undertaking the following activity:

- Evidenced based research and evaluation aiming to match investment and activity to known issues to affect meaningful change in access and attainment
- Extend our **programme of work with schools** to support young people from Birmingham and the West Midlands to improve their attainment and access to higher education.
- Support for **flexible pathways** into higher education with the Degree Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Taking a **targeted approach to academic support** through Graduate+, Life Coaches and Peer Assisted Learning.
- **Engage students** in their own development of personal, social and professional skills through embedded Graduate+ programme.
- Focused support for **graduate employment** through Careers+, industry engagement and placements
- **Support for disabled students** including diagnosis and financial support
- **Financial support** through our Hardship Funds.

## Student Engagement

See page  
25-26 in the  
full plan

BCU Student Union has proactive representation on the Strategy Board and Implementation group related to the Access and Participation Plan. Thus, their views directly inform the monitoring of target achievements and initiatives evaluated for impact. The Student Voice is captured through School and course representatives, together with student societies, which assists the Student Union in representing views of the wider student body.

 To provide feedback or get involved in this work contact **[Student Voice | BCUSU | Birmingham City Students' Union](#)**

## Evaluation: how we will measure what we achieved

See pages  
26-28 in the  
full plan

Monitoring, together with the in-year course monitoring process and data dashboard, provides a range of metrics which assist BCU in evaluating the impact of interventions. To ensure timely awareness and evaluation, BCU has an Access and Participation Strategy Board which provides strategic guidance, and an Access and Participation Operations Group which takes an active lead on monitoring and evaluation.

The work includes ensuring evaluation is built in at the start of intervention design, to ensure relevant data is collected in terms of **inputs, outputs and outcomes**. By outcomes, we mean the achievements against our Access and Participation Plan targets (such as an annual measurement of the reduction of the gap in degree outcomes between White and Black students).

When, as we have seen through our work on disability support, a closure of the gap in degree outcomes is achieved, we can extend the activity; but where other interventions do not achieve required outputs, and thence little likelihood of any outcome change, we can review and redesign. Embedded continuous evaluation enables early refocus of our interventions.

## Contact for further information

 For further information contact Alaa Elaydi at **[Alaa.Elaydi@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Alaa.Elaydi@bcu.ac.uk)**