

University of Cambridge

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Our access and participation plan sets out how we will address barriers to equality of opportunity that impact our students and potential applicants, encompassing admissions, on-course experiences and progression to further study or employment. It focuses on UK undergraduate students and follows detailed analysis of data to identify potential risks to equality of outcomes. It sets out the interventions we will undertake to mitigate these risks and how we will evaluate and learn from what we do.

You can see the full access and participation plan for the University of Cambridge at www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plans/

Key points

We have made significant progress in recent years. Nevertheless, we recognise there is still further work to do. Our analysis has identified six risks to equality of opportunity in the context of Cambridge:

Risk 1: Students from IMD quintiles 1 & 2 and those who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are underrepresented at Cambridge.

Risk 2: Students from Black-British, British-Bangladeshi and British-Pakistani ethnicities are underrepresented at Cambridge.

Risk 3: There is a degree classification awarding gap for Black-British and British-Bangladeshi students.

Risk 4: There is a risk to educational outcomes for students with mental health conditions.

Risk 5: There is a lower rate of progression to postgraduate study at Cambridge amongst applicants from certain groups who have undertaken undergraduate study at other UK universities, including underrepresented ethnicities, lower socio-economic backgrounds and mature students.

Risk 6: There is a lower rate of progression to further study, managerial or professional employment or other positive outcomes for students with a declared disability.

See pages 1-5 of the access and participation plan and Annex A for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve and what are we doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

In order to address the risks to equality of opportunity, we have set ourselves ambitious objectives, and developed robust plans to ensure that we can deliver on our commitments.

Objective 1: We will seek to increase the proportion of students from IMD quintiles 1 & 2 and those in receipt of Free School Meals. We will do this by enhancing our collaborative outreach and attainment-raising activities that target these groups, including a new focus on regions of the UK

which are currently underrepresented at Cambridge. We will update our outreach targeting and priority selection criteria for 2025-26, to reflect a stronger focus on these potential applicants.

Objective 2: We will seek to increase the proportion of students from Black-British, British-Bangladeshi and British-Pakistani ethnicities. We will do this by enhancing our collaborative outreach and attainment-raising activities that target these groups, with a particular focus on driving outcomes pertaining to sense of belonging. We will update our outreach targeting and priority selection criteria for 2025-26, to reflect a stronger focus on these potential applicants.

Objective 3: We will improve the experiences and outcomes of Black-British and British-Bangladeshi students by encouraging evidence-based and research-led awareness of the awarding gap. We will do this by supporting students and staff in participatory approaches to understanding and addressing inequities (for example through the APP Participatory Advisory Research Project). We will consistently monitor quantitative and qualitative evidence. We will encourage systematic, effective evaluative approaches and we will contribute to sharing and developing good practice within the institution, between institutions and via publication of our findings.

Objective 4: We will support students with mental health conditions to achieve positive educational outcomes. Our work will draw on the significant additional investment in provision of support for student mental health and wellbeing in recent years and the forthcoming recommendations from the Disability Review. We will monitor and evaluate the impact of enhanced service delivery on educational outcomes.

Objective 5: We will address progression to postgraduate study at Cambridge amongst undergraduates from other universities, particularly from certain groups, including underrepresented ethnicities, those who have faced socio-economic disadvantage and mature students. We will do this via a programme of funded research experience placements targeted at participants from groups that are underrepresented in postgraduate research study at Cambridge. We will also offer a postgraduate application support programme and appropriate signposting of funding opportunities, and implement the findings from our collaborative research with the University of Oxford on use of contextual information in postgraduate admissions decisions..

Objective 6: We will address the gap in progression to further study, managerial or professional employment or other positive outcomes for students with a declared disability. We will do this via a skills assessment and development project, and specialist advice and support from dedicated careers consultants. We will also conduct a survey six months post-graduation to provide more immediate progression destination information in order that targeted additional support can be provided to those with a disability.

See pages 5-37 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We recognise the importance of evaluation and we are committed to continual enhancement of our practice. The objective of our evaluation activities is to understand what works in the Cambridge context in order that the findings can be fed back into our practice. We are also committed to sharing our findings with the sector and drawing on their experiences.

To capture the wide range of interventions that departments, colleges, museums, libraries, collections, and organisations such as Cambridge Students' Union and the Institute of Continuing Education carry out across the student lifecycle, it is intended that the collegiate University creates a 'What Works' document for publication at the start of the 2025-26 academic year.

See pages 40-42 of the access and participation plan and Annex B for more information.

Fees we charge

The tuition fee for Home fee status students starting their first undergraduate degree in 2024-25 is £9,250. The government regulated tuition fee for 2025-26 and beyond has not yet been set and will be provided on our [tuition fees website](#) once available.

See pages 42-43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

The Cambridge Bursary Scheme (CBS) is a means tested Bursary providing financial support for students from lower-income households and is applied consistently across all of our Colleges. Currently (as of 2024) students with an annual household income of up to £62,215 are eligible, with the students from the lowest annual income households (up to £25,000) receiving the highest payment of £3,500 per year. There is a sliding scale for household incomes up to £62,215, with students in this top band receiving £100 per year. This funding does not have to be repaid.

Students who were eligible for FSM receive an additional £1,000 per year, on top of the amounts referred to above. Furthermore, independent students and care leavers are eligible for additional funding via an enhanced bursary, resulting in a total of up to £8,350 per year.

See pages 42-43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Providing clear and accessible information on fees, financial support and additional course costs is of primary importance to students in making decisions about their HE choices and while undertaking their course. Undergraduate tuition fees are provided on our website, with historical information retained. Likewise, details of financial support available via the government in the form maintenance loans and funds available from the University via the Cambridge Bursary Scheme are provided on our website and during our in-person and online events.

See pages 42-43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

We continue to develop student engagement through key oversight and governance groups, with student members being active participants in the Access and Participation Plan Scrutiny Group, the General Board Education Committee, Undergraduate Admissions Committee and the College Admissions Forum. Students are co-conveners of the University's Black Advisory Hub and are active participants in our outreach initiatives.

See page 39 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact app@admin.cam.ac.uk for more information.