



Southampton Solent University

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

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan 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 Southampton Solent University at <https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/our-policies-and-legal-information/university-access-agreements>.

Key points

Solent University is a practice-oriented, industry- and employment-focused, open, lively and inclusive academic learning community. Our curricula, created in collaboration with industry employers, include strengths in maritime, engineering, law, architecture and interior design, allied health, and sports. We are proud to have been awarded triple gold – the highest accolade possible – in the latest Teaching Excellence Framework (2023) in recognition of our ‘outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting students’ learning, progression, and attainment.’

In 2021/22, our UK-domiciled student population numbered 6,933. Within this, our undergraduate (UG) community consists of c. 6,427 students, most of whom study full time (FT) on non-apprenticeship first degree courses (86%) across a rich range of subject areas. We also have a small population of Other UG (OUG) students in 2021/22 and nearly 500 UG Apprenticeships. Our part time (PT) students make up just 5% of our total UG population and are predominantly studying on OUG or apprenticeship courses.

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

Fees we charge

We charge £9,250 for a full-time undergraduate degree and £6,167 for a part-time undergraduate degree for home students. More information on fees and finance is available at: <https://www.solent.ac.uk/finance>.

See page 87 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

We are committed to providing £481,000 in financial support to students prioritising students from the identified target groups.

Students can find information on bursaries and grants on our [internal student portal page](#).

See pages 44-47 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Prospective students can access information on fees and financial support on our website, and at events such as Open Days, and through school visits and other outreach activities.

Current students can also access information on fees and financial support on our website and receive tailored advice from our Student Funding team on available bursaries and grants. This information includes eligibility criteria, support levels and the method of assessment. Students in specific target

groups receive tailored communications on financial support available and the Student Funding Team undertake course visits and are present during Welcome and other university-wide events to provide relevant information, advice and guidance.

See page 44 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

This plan is taking a holistic student life cycle approach and is therefore tracking two target groups from access through to success (continuation, completion, attainment) and progression. The two target groups are ABMO (Asian, Black, Mixed and Other) and IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) Q1/2 students and interventions are aimed at supporting both student groups in succeeding throughout their student journey with the university.

Objective 1: To ensure ABMO and IMDQ12 students have equal opportunities to access Higher Education by 2028/29.

Objective 2: To ensure ABMO and IMDQ12 students have equal opportunities to continue and complete their degree by 2028/29.

Objective 3: To ensure ABMO and IMDQ12 students have equal opportunities to attain a degree award that reflects their academic capabilities by 2028/29.

Objective 4: To ensure ABMO and IMDQ12 students have equal opportunities to progress from their studies to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience by 2028/29.

See pages 3-8 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

Intervention strategy 1: Access

- **Contextual admission:** An established programme. Based on applicant information received via UCAS and a self-declaration form, Solent reduces entry requirements (by up to 32 UCAS tariff points) for applicants meeting set criteria, with additional support provided in the form of specific contextual applicant transition events, parent/carer information events, teacher CPD events and £500 scholarship to support the cost of living.
- **GRIT workshop Young leaders:** A new programme (Future Leaders) in collaboration with charity Grit, working with learners in years 10 to 13. This programme supports participants' educational journey and helps them in achieving their full potential, with a focus on transforming self-beliefs and highlighting opportunities within higher education.
- **Step into Success Programme (Year 5-13):** An established programme, working with learners in years 5 to 13. This is a progressive multi-activity programme comprising of workshops, assemblies, campus visits, events and 1-1 careers guidance (CEIAG), all focussed around widening participation themes, careers/education progression and attainment raising. Also supports professionals and parents/carers via CPD and information events.
- **More Maths Programme (Year 5-12):** An established programme, working with learners in years 5 to 11. This programme is a series of longitudinal small group maths tuition activities and revision events (on and off campus) aiming to raise GCSE attainment in Southampton. Content focusses on key GCSE topics and widening participation themes.
- **Ready Readers Programme (Year 5-6):** An established programme, working with learners in years 5 to 6. This programme takes place over a 6-week period, where trained staff volunteers

and education studies students (Book Buddies) read with learners in Southampton Primary Schools aiming to increase literacy levels.

- **Step into Solent Post-16 Programme (Year 12-13):** A developing programme, working with learners in years 12 to 13. Activities include large scale campus visits, a contextual offers programme (including contextual offer holder specific events and a scholarship), parent/carer events, transition events for applicants (focussed around widening participation themes), 1-1 careers guidance (CEIAG), Interview/Audition/Portfolio support and awarding of scholarships (contextual offer holders and ABMO students).

Intervention strategy 2: Continuation and Completion

- **Peer mentoring:** This new programme pairs first-year students (level 4 - mentee) with senior peers (level 5 - mentor) from similar backgrounds for mentorship. Following training and receiving session recommendations for both mentors and mentees, mentees are encouraged to discuss academic and personal challenges with their mentors.
- **GRIT workshop - Resilience:** This is a new programme for first-degree course entrants studying in foundation year or year 1 (Year 0/ level 4). It supports participants in their educational journey and helps them develop appropriate coping strategies, with a focus on handling personal and academic challenges.
- **GRIT workshop - Leadership:** This is a developing programme for first-degree course students studying in second year (level 5). It supports participants in their educational journey and helps them develop leadership skills, with a focus on self-leadership for personal academic success and the ability to lead others.

Intervention strategy 3: Attainment

- **Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales:** The project includes annual data collection through the Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales (CSCS) to gather student perspectives on relevant aspects. Additionally, a masterclass series for teaching staff will be conducted to raise awareness of cultural issues and support them in developing skills and strategies to implement curriculum changes.

Intervention strategy 4: Progression

- **Professional mentoring:** This developing programme pairs final-year students (level 6 - mentee) with professionals working in their desired industry. Following introduction for both mentors and mentees, mentees are encouraged to contact their mentors actively, prepare questions relevant to their career targets, and lead the discussion with their mentors.
- **GRIT - Employability:** This is a new programme for final-year first degree students (level 6) to support their career planning and preparation for graduation. The programme focuses on enhancing participants' career aspirations and conducting a needs assessment to better align their development of skills and goals with the job market.
- **Living CV:** This is an ongoing initiative launched to support students' work readiness and encourage students to translate their learning outcomes into CV outputs so that their implicit learning becomes explicit to themselves and potential employers. It is rooted in the idea that there is often a divergence between the students' perception of their learning and skills required to succeed in the workplace.

See pages 8-35 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Co-creation with students and the Students' Union sits at the heart of all our activities to ensure we not only consult students on projects and policies but work with them as active partners to develop and



review these. The Students' Union Sabbatical Officers are represented on all relevant committees within the university governance structure that have oversight of the implementation and monitoring of the plan.

Our Student Partners are current students who support several projects across the institution, for example reviewing curriculum content ensuring it is inclusive, developing content for key activities such as Welcome or facilitating focus groups for strategic initiatives such as the APP and University Mental Health Charter.

The Student Partners played a key role in the development of this plan and will continue to support its delivery. We believe that it is essential that students continue to be involved in the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of agreed interventions and are remunerated for this. Responsibility for ensuring this requirement is met will sit with each intervention project lead who will be supported by a Student Partner.

See page 40 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Solent is deeply committed to understanding and demonstrating the impact of its interventions through multiple evidence levels. Our approach includes:

- **Type 1 evidence (Narrative):** Solent will consistently review relevant publications to ensure robust evidence supports the rationale and design of interventions. We will also utilize TASO's Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE) tool to verify that interventions are implemented as intended.
- **Type 2 evidence (Empirical Enquiry):** To assess outcomes, Solent will apply an A-B-A design, which helps ensure interventions contribute to both immediate and sustained improvements in students' psychosocial characteristics throughout their academic journey. Solent will also invite participants and staff to share their experiences and comments through qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
- **Type 3 evidence (Causality):** Solent plans to conduct annual institutional surveys to track key outcomes and create potential control groups, which helps to identify the influence of environmental factors and minimizes the risk of false positive effects in the evaluation. This method not only supports evaluation but also facilitates early intervention for students identified as at risk.

Solent intends to publish these evaluation reports on the university's website, with plans to share findings across relevant sector networks and present them at suitable sector forums.

See pages 41-43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact Tania Struetzel, Director of Student Success on tania.struetzel@solent.ac.uk for more information.