

# Solent 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, succeed in and progress from higher education. This plan represents Solent's commitment to equality of opportunity for people from all backgrounds to access, succeed in and progress from higher education to further study, highly skilled employment or to make other choices for their future. You can see Solent University's full access and participation plan on our [website](#).

## Key points

Solent University is a small, modern university located in Southampton city centre. Our courses include Foundation, Undergraduate, Postgraduate, short courses, Apprenticeships and PhD. We have 8,500 students in three Faculties and three Schools.

In 2021/22 our students come from a variety of backgrounds: 25% of are students are local with their home situated under 20 km from the university. 31% of our students come from postcode areas where few young people enter higher education. 17% have declared a disability or specific learning difficulty. 60% are aged 20 or below when they start their course. 73% are White, 11% Asian/Asian British, 7% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British and 5% are Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group.

The focus of our plan is on improving outcomes for specific groups of students. We want to:

- Recruit and support more students from the most deprived neighbourhoods and from postcode areas where low numbers of young people decide to go to university.
- Recruit and support more Asian students.
- Increase the proportion of Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority, disabled and male students who are awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1.
- Increase the proportion of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority students and students from postcode areas where few young people go to university to progress to highly skilled employment or further study.

## Fees we charge

Our [website](#) includes a 'Fees and Finance' section specific to each course. At Solent University, the maximum UK, EU (settled status) and Channel Island full-time undergraduate fees charged are:

£9,250 for full-time students	£6,935 for part-time students
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## Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students to access the University and continue studying until their course is completed. The support we offer our students includes:

- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic scholarships** of £1000 for first year undergraduate students, from specific ethnic backgrounds, to use towards their university tuition fees or accommodation.
- **Care leavers' bursary** of £1500 per year for the duration of a student's course.
- **Foyer/supported accommodation grant** of £1500 to students who have previously lived in this accommodation.
- **Diagnostic assessments grants** to contribute towards the cost of diagnostic assessments.
- **Carers bursaries** of £1,200 awarded to students who have caring responsibilities for their parents or immediate family member (excluding children) while they are studying at Solent.

- **Estranged student bursaries** of £1,500 awarded for each year of study to students who continue to be estranged from their parents while they are studying at university.
- **Support grants** to help with living costs, childcare, travel, accommodation, household expenses, course equipment and graduation. Amounts vary depending on need. Students can apply more than once a year.
- **Summer support grants** to help with care responsibilities/dependents, a disability/medical circumstances, course resits which temporarily restrict working and unforeseen circumstances such as illness.
- **Course cost grants** to support students who have compulsory additional course costs including equipment; specialist software; compulsory course trips such as field trips and professional memberships.

### **Information for students**

Prospective students access information on fees and financial support on our [website](#) and at in-person events, such as an open day. Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student portal, internal communications campaigns and emails.

### **What we are aiming to achieve**

We aim for equality of access to Solent University. We also want to create a learning environment where all students can achieve their full potential and become work-ready, world-ready and future-ready. Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

**We aim for our 18 year old student population to reflect the 18 year old population of England. To achieve this, by 2024/25 we need to:**

- Close the access gap for 18 year old entrants from the 20% of postcodes that are the most deprived to 7.5%
- Close the access gap for 18 year old entrants from the 20% of postcodes that are the second most deprived to 1%.
- Close the access gap to zero for 18 year old entrants from the 20% of postcodes where the fewest young people participate in higher education.
- Close the gap between the Asian entrants and Asian 18 year olds in the population to 1.2%.

**We aim for all Solent students to achieve good outcomes and for different groups of students to be just as likely to achieve 2.1 and 1<sup>st</sup> degrees. To achieve this, by 2024/25 we need to:**

- Close the awarding gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students to 6.8%.
- Close the awarding gap to zero for disabled students.
- Close the awarding gap for male students from deprived postcode areas to 4%.
- Close the awarding gap to zero for male students from postcode areas where the fewest young people participate in higher education.

**We aim for all Solent graduates to progress to graduate level employment or further study. To achieve this by 2024/25 we need to:**

- Close the gap to zero for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic graduates progressing to graduate level jobs or further study.
- Close the gap to zero for females from low participation neighbourhoods progressing to graduate level jobs or further study.

### **What we are doing to achieve our aims**

**Improving access to university:** We are extending our programme of work with schools to support more pupils from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups to attain good grades and progress to university. We are continuing contextual offers for applicants from low-participation and deprived neighbourhoods and enhancing transition events for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds to prepare for university.

**Improving student success:** We are strengthening the disability advice service to support the success of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. We have gained the Race Equality Charter and our plan will help the success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. We are delivering targeted interventions and student development programmes to support courses not meeting ethnicity awarding gap milestones.

**Improving student progression into graduate level employment or further study:** We are continuing the professional mentoring programme for female Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and students from low participation neighbourhoods. We are also developing an Asian group mentoring programme. We are delivering Enterprise plans to support students who want to start a business or become a freelancer.

**Working in partnership with schools to raise attainment:** Developing a Key Stage 2 Southampton Literacy Programme to support disadvantaged pupil attainment at Key Stage 2. Developing a Knowledge Exchange programme to support help disadvantaged learner attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4 and progression to Higher Education. Enhancing the Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 Maths Attainment Raising Programme. Developing teacher training provision. Enhancing strategic partnerships and governance support for Hampshire schools and colleges.

**Successful participation:** Strengthening our student achievement team retention and achievement initiatives. Modernising the Student Hub service. Working towards the Mental Health Charter.

**Flexible and diverse provision:** Continuing and expanding our Apprenticeship offer. Delivering our Institute of Technology focusing on Maritime, Engineering, and Digital (MED) industries. Delivering Higher Technical Qualifications from 2024 in construction, digital, health and cyber security.

## **How students can get involved**

We worked with Solent's Students' Union and students for input into the design and delivery of our plan. They are also consulted when we evaluate the activities we put in place to help achieve our targets. The Students' Union are part of our working group who are responsible for the design of the plan and the Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. To provide feedback, students can contact their Students' Union representative. To become involved in this work please contact [EDI@solent.ac.uk](mailto:EDI@solent.ac.uk).

## **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved**

We want to use the best available evidence on what works for students to inform our activities. This means:

- We design and plan our activities using findings from research and other evidence.
- When we carry out activities, we gather data and feedback to evaluate the impact of each activity on our targets and overall aim to become more inclusive.
- Where appropriate, we will adjust and improve our activities to make sure they benefit our applicants and students as much as possible.

The working group reports evaluation findings to the Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee which is responsible for ensuring we are making progress against our yearly milestones and taking action if we are not. We have joined university networks where we will share our evaluation findings and learn from other universities. We will make our evaluation outcomes publicly available by January 2024.

## **Contact details for further information**

Please contact [EDI@solent.ac.uk](mailto:EDI@solent.ac.uk) for further information.

