

# Birkbeck, University of London

## Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

### What is an access and participation plan?

Birkbeck's access and participation plan outlines how we will support people to study at our university and to help students achieve their potential while studying with us. There are people from certain groups and backgrounds who are [less likely to go to university](#) or might do less well when they are at university. Our plan identifies where we think there are gaps and what we are doing to achieve equity for our students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Birkbeck, University of London on our [Corporate Policies webpage](#).

### Key points

- Birkbeck already recruits higher numbers of students from under-represented backgrounds.
- We have some gaps in achievement for students from certain backgrounds (we outline these below) and while we have made progress there is still more to do. Our plan outlines our priorities.
- We are devising work to help young people improve their attainment before they leave school or further education college.

### Fees we charge

Our undergraduate fees are regulated by the Office for Students for UK/'Home' students. Our annual fees for 2023-24 are:

Full-time first degree students (like a BA or BSc):	£9,250
Part-time undergraduate first degree students:	£6,935
Foundation degree full-time students:	£7,375
Foundation degree part-time students	£5,530
Study abroad year:	£1,385

You can [find out more information about our fees including for courses which are at a lower level than an undergraduate degree](#).

Each of our course pages has information about fees for that course. This includes our fees for international students.

### Financial help available

Our **Birkbeck Needs-Based Assessment** scheme provides support for students principally with an income below £25,000 and our assessment judges the gap between people's income and their needs subject to circumstances. The maximum award we will give is £4,000 per year. Our average award is around £2,000.

Our **Hardship Fund** supports students whose financial circumstances have changed during an academic year. Awards of up to £800 are available.

**Other help:** students studying for degrees with a foundation year, part-time certificate of education, or part-time foundation degrees can apply for a cash bursary. Students must have household incomes of less than £25,000 (increased to £39,999 for part-time students), with awards of up to £800 (£600 for part-time students). We also support childcare and digital learning needs.

The full eligibility criteria are listed on our [financial support pages](#) and communicated to students through the Student Bulletin.

## Information for students

Students can find information about fees on the website, both the general fees page and on each course page. We produce a 'confirmation of study agreement' for each student which is a summary of the web information produced before they start their course including fee information.

Information about our financial support is on our website including the schemes available, eligibility and how to apply. We use our weekly Student Bulletin to remind students about financial support.

## What we are aiming to achieve

Birkbeck succeeds in recruiting people who might not usually go into higher education. The focus of our plan is to ensure that all of our students can reach their full potential. There are four particular areas that our plan is designed to address:

- a. **Work with parents and teachers to improve the attainment of children and young people** (see pages iii to iv of our Preface).
- b. **Make sure that students from different backgrounds and with different personal characteristics have equal chances to achieve their full potential on our courses;** and
- c. **reduce and remove the gaps in achievement for our students from different backgrounds.**

We identified a number of gaps in experience and outcome for students when we first prepared our plan in 2020 (our detailed analysis is on pages 1 to 12 and you can see our targets on the final page). We have committed to achieving the following:

- remove any gaps in continuing study that cannot be explained (for example by prior qualifications) for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, between Black and White students, Asian and White students and mixed heritage and White students;
  - remove or significantly reduce the awarding gap (students getting a 'good' degree – we usually mean a 2:1 degree or higher) between White students and students from Black, Asian and mixed heritage backgrounds;
  - halve the awarding gap for students from lower-socio economic backgrounds compared to their more advantaged peers;
  - improve the opportunities for disabled students and for Black students to obtain graduate employment (using the Office for Students' definitions).
- d. **Ensure that part-time and flexible forms of study are available and properly supported for our students** (see page viii of our Preface for information).

## What we are doing to achieve our aims

Pages iii to viii and pages 20 to 25 outline our activities. We are focused on the following areas for the next two years (2022-23 and 2023-24).

- a. **Helping to improve young people's attainment** by creating work with further education colleges and local authorities and working with parents/carers to support their young people (see iii).
- b. **Improving how we monitor student engagement and support our students** by putting in place a new programme of activity to understand the student attainment gap, provide

information for staff and students about their own engagement and progress and offer activities to help students achieve their academic, personal and professional goals (see page vii for more information and the outcomes of the Student Experience Review on pages 19-20 outline why we devised this programme).

- c. **Improving our teaching model** through a simple and standardised approach where all students are taught over three terms, in manageable module sizes which include early feedback to help them know how they are doing and course structures which support building a supportive learning community. (See pages vi to vii for further information and pages 19 to 25 for background information.)
- d. **Addressing the awarding gap, especially for our Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students** by diversifying our curriculum, examining where there might be structural challenges affecting these students and by implementing our engagement programme outlined above (see page vii).
- e. **Preparing for flexible and bite-sized learning** to be ready for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (page viii). [You can read here about our newest developments.](#)
- f. **Simplifying our financial support package, including more hardship funding.** (See page viii.)

### **How students can get involved**

Birkbeck Students' Union contributed to the design of our plan and its update in summer 2022. You can see their views when we wrote our plan in 2018 on page 30.

You can get involved in our access and participation work by:

- contributing to surveys, focus groups and networks to find out students' views;
- working with the Students' Union on projects to improve outcomes for students.
- engaging with our videos, training materials and support to improve everyone's understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion.

See page 25 for further information about student consultation and involvement.

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

- We will use our targets as a measure of success by judging whether we have closed some of the gaps we have identified for students from different groups.
- Measuring the change to student outcomes following any specific project or intervention.
- As a small institution, we will not always be able to use evaluation that will 'prove' a particular measure has had a specific result, but we can contribute to wider programmes of evaluation, including with partner universities and colleges in the University of London.

See pages 26-28 for information about our approach to evaluation.

### **Contact details for further information**

You can contact members of our team responsible for access and participation by [emailing the Academic Registrar mailbox](#).

[Link to our access and engagement work on our website](#) and [sign up for our quarterly newsletter](#).