

## Arts University Plymouth

### 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. This supports students from underrepresented groups in higher education to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Arts University Plymouth from our website under [reports and legal](#)

#### Key points (see pages 6 to 9 of our full Plan)

We are committed to supporting all students from underrepresented groups. We focus on where most work is needed given our context as a small, specialist arts university located in Plymouth, specifically:

- improving access into higher education for students from neighbourhoods where there are low numbers progressing into higher education (identified nationally as “Low Participation Neighbourhoods”)
- supporting these students, mature students and students with disabilities to progress successfully through their studies to completion
- supporting students with disabilities so they can achieve the same high quality degrees as students with no disabilities
- supporting students from “Low Participation Neighbourhoods” to progress to professional careers or further study

#### Fees we charge

At Arts University Plymouth our current undergraduate tuition fees for UK full time students are £9,250, and £4,625 for UK part time students. Full details are on our website under [fees, finance and funding](#)

#### Financial help available (see page 18 of our full Plan)

We provide a bursary of £300 for students in their final year of undergraduate study subject to household income. We also have a hardship fund available to students to support cases of severe financial hardship. We will continue to keep our support under review each year.

#### Information for students (see page 21 of our full Plan)

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications. This is also kept up-to-date on our website under [fees, finance and funding](#). Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student portal, internal communications and emails.

#### What we are aiming to achieve (see pages 6 to 9 of our full Plan)

We are aiming to achieve the following by 2024/25:

- Increase progression from our own further education courses (for learners aged 16-19 years) to higher education, to at least 76%.
- Develop our relationships further with schools and colleges to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification.
- Explore diversification including degree apprenticeships and technical routes at Levels 4 and 5 that could be offered flexibly to students.
- Improve the proportions of students continuing to the second year of their course:
  - to 88% or higher for students with disabilities
  - to 88% or higher for mature students
  - to 88% or higher for students from deprived neighbourhoods (as defined by the national Index of Multiple Deprivation),
  - to 89% or higher for students from “Low Participation Neighbourhoods”.
- Reduce the gap between proportions of students achieving a 1<sup>st</sup>/2:1 degree classification for students with disabilities and students with no disabilities to 3% or lower
- Improve overall progression to employment for our graduating cohorts of students from “Low Participation Neighbourhoods”:
  - to 90% or higher for progression to employment and/or further study
  - to 60% or higher to highly skilled employment and/or further study

### **What we are doing to achieve our aims (see pages 11 to 18 of our full Plan)**

We are supporting access into higher education for students from “Low Participation Neighbourhoods, mainly in Plymouth and further afield in Devon and Cornwall. We are also developing activities with schools in support of pupil attainment.

This involves work with our own further education students, our Young Arts Clubs, and our provision of the National Art & Design Saturday Club. It also includes a large amount of work with schools and colleges across Devon and Cornwall.

We undertake our own activities and also work in collaboration with the [Next Steps South West](#) consortium through the [Uni Connect](#) programme. We will continue to develop these activities with schools in support of pupil attainment. We are planning to develop pilot projects in this respect through 2022/23 prior to implementation in 2023/24.

We are continuing to provide and further develop support for all our students from underrepresented groups in higher education. Our support aims to be tailored to individual needs to help students progress successfully through each year of study and achieve their best outcomes. We also support students to prepare for and transition to rewarding, professional careers.

We place emphasis on strong and close collaboration between central student support services and individual course teams, starting prior to arrival and from initial enrolment. Support encompasses wellbeing, counselling, support for students with disabilities that includes ‘in-programme’ support through inclusive learning assistants. It also includes technical workshops, use of the library, academic skills sessions, support with learning and information technology, and financial support.

We continue to place significant emphasis on achieving a fully inclusive approach to teaching and learning. We have developed a common framework for the curriculum across all undergraduate subjects that supports this approach. The curriculum is also designed to support development of students’ creative skills and knowledge as well as general graduate attributes, employability skills and digital literacy.

Embedding this in the curriculum supports their studies and practical skills, and provides comprehensive preparation for our students to transition to their professional careers. For creative practitioners, this encompasses potential careers as employees, entrepreneurs, small business

owners and freelance work. Additional careers support is designed to help students connect to the creative industries and prepare fully for the transition into their professional working life.

### **How students can get involved** (see pages 18 to 19 of our full Plan)

Consultation with students on the proposals set out in our Access and Participation Plan included meetings with the Students' Union and representative groups of students. It also included consultation with student members of our Equality and Diversity Committee. More recently, we consulted with the Students' Union on the accompanying, additional proposals for 2023/24 that form an Appendix to this Plan.

With high proportions of students in our University from under-represented groups, supporting these students is a significant part of the way we operate.

Students can get involved in this work in a number of ways. As a student representative for their course they will contribute to discussions in their course Staff Student Liaison Group over changes and improvements. As a member of the Equality and Diversity Committee they will consider our access and participation plans and progress towards our objectives.

A significant contribution would also be as an elected member of the Students' Union Executive. This executive group has regular meetings with senior leaders for discussions on key issues and plans, including our Access and Participation Plan. They will be kept abreast of progress against objectives, and consulted as part of further developments in our Access and Participation Plans.

For students wanting to provide feedback or to get involved in this work, please contact the Registry ([registry@aup.ac.uk](mailto:registry@aup.ac.uk)) or the Students' Union ([studentsunion@aup.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@aup.ac.uk))

### **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved** (see pages 19 to 20 of our full Plan)

Currently, our activities in outreach and in supporting pupil attainment are evaluated through feedback from participants and we will be working to develop this further. We will be working to adopt best practice in both the design of theories of change and our evaluation of activities for raising pupil attainment. We aim to ensure we are evidence-led and that we focus on data where possible, alongside feedback from participants.

In our interventions to support our students, impact from activities will continue to be evaluated through feedback from students as well as the relevant data. This includes continuation, attainment and progression data for the separate underrepresented groups to measure progress towards our targets.

The activities undertaken and evaluation of their impact will be shared with the Students' Union Executive, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and reported to Academic Board. Academic Board is the senior body responsible for academic affairs in the university. Reports will also include a summary of student feedback and actions taken in response by the university.

This reporting aims to provide clear oversight of progress from working level through to Academic Board and ultimately the Board of Governors. Annual review provides a mechanism to reflect on progress, and review and amend our interventions in the best interests of our students. Action plans for change as a result are scrutinised and approved as part of that process.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website in accordance with sector guidance and otherwise by January 2024.

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

For any further information, please contact the University Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Robin Kirby, either directly by email: [rkirby@aup.ac.uk](mailto:rkirby@aup.ac.uk), via the Registry ([registry@aup.ac.uk](mailto:registry@aup.ac.uk)), or telephone 01752 203434.