FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN SUMMARY (2024-25 TO 2027-28)

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. You can see the full Access and Participation Plan for Falmouth University at **Falmouth University APP 2024-25 to 2027-28-accessible.pdf**

The focus of our Access and Participation Plan is on improving outcomes for specific groups of students and providing equality of opportunity. Data shows that, compared to their peers at Falmouth University, outcomes are lower for certain groups of students.

- Students are less likely to apply to HE if they come from a deprived neighbourhood (IMD students).
- Students from these areas are also less likely to continue their studies or to achieve a degree of 2:1 or above.
- The same groups of students are less likely to progress to a successful graduate outcome.
- Mature students (over 21) are less likely to enrol at Falmouth, or once enrolled, less likely to continue their studies than their younger peers.
- Students with a disability are less likely to achieve a degree of 2:1 or above compared to non-disabled students.
- Ethnic minority students are less likely to apply to Falmouth, and are less likely to continue their studies or achieve a degree of 2:1 or above, compared to white ethnicity students.
- Students from areas of low participation in HE (TUNDRA) are less likely to achieve a successful graduate outcome.

These are our 'target' students, and our main aim is to decrease the difference (i.e., "gap") between the most and least disadvantaged students who fall within these underrepresented groups.

> **For more information on our numerical targets see Annex A & B-pages 48 to 56 in our main plan.**

Fees we charge

Full Time First Degree - £9,535	Accelerated Degree- £9,950 to £11,440
Part Time First Degree - £6,935	Foundation Degree - £8,250/ £9,835

Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes: -

- The Falmouth Bursary- an annual bursary of up to £500 if the student's household income is below £25,000.
- The Pendennis Bursary- an annual bursary of £1000 for care leavers/estranged students. Plus a £100 voucher on arrival and a 'Welcome Pack' of vouchers worth £150.
- The Hardship Fund- to support students who experience financial hardship.
- Dependants Bursary- bursary support of £250 for eligible students assessed as having children and/or adult dependants.
- A DSA Diagnostic Assessment- when a diagnostic assessment is needed to apply for disability allowance, this is paid for by the university (to a maximum amount of £375).
- Travel Bursary- for students from low-income households to attend our open days and interviews.
- Emergency support available in the form of emergency supermarket vouchers and food bank boxes available through student support.

Information for students

- Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, by email communications and letters.
- We regularly update our information for care leavers, care experienced and estranged students with the Care Leavers Covenant and on the Propel website.
- 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

Our overall aim is to support students to access higher education, to feel supported whilst studying, to help them to achieve their degree and their ultimate career goal. We also want to create an environment where all target students at Falmouth University can achieve their full potential. In our Access and Participation Plan, we have identified 6 risks to students achieving equal opportunities, set ourselves 6 objectives to mitigate these risks, and added numerical targets to each. We have developed 'interventions' which are the initiatives/projects/events/processes that will help us to meet our objectives and targets.

Our equality of opportunity risks and objectives are:-

Risk 1- Lack of ethnic diversity on campus is causing social marginalisation. The small number of Global Majority ethnicity students studying at the University can't form a sense of belonging, or feel part of the local community, leading to withdrawal from their studies, and a widening attainment gap.
Objective 1- Provide a more ethnically diverse campus community for students, by increasing applications from Global Majority ethnicity students each milestone, and by developing new social networks and support.

Risk 2- Below average attainment levels for disadvantaged learners in schools across Cornwall and Devon, causing a widening attainment gap for disadvantaged learners. This leads to less students from IMD areas being able to follow a HE pathway.
Objective 2- Support disadvantaged and underrepresented learners in schools within Cornwall and Devon to raise GCSE attainment levels across the Counties.

Risk 3- Post-pandemic, the University have experienced an increase in students requiring intensive learning, mental health, financial and wellbeing support to aid their 'transition-in' from FE to HE study, in addition to the support provided throughout their studies. This results in new applicants feeling unsure and anxious regarding their next steps and once enrolled, disengaged/ struggling target students withdrawing early from their studies.
Objective 3- To review, develop and monitor all student support mechanisms from pre-enrolment and throughout the student lifecycle, implementing new initiatives where required on an annual basis.

Risk 4- The combination of the current national cost-of-living crisis and the consistent higher than average cost-of-living in Cornwall, causes financial poverty for disadvantaged students wanting to study at Falmouth. This is resulting in increased withdrawal rates from target students, widening of the attainment and progression gaps, and discouraging new applicants.
Objective 4- To implement a range of cost saving initiatives for students and to review, develop and monitor the University's student financial support offer, researching additional scholarship and paid work placement opportunities.

Risk 5- There is a widening continuation gap for Mature students and students from IMD areas at Falmouth University that needs to be addressed.
Objective 5- To implement a range of activities specifically targeted at Mature students and students from IMD areas, offering additional specific support.

Risk 6- The geographical location of Falmouth University is within both a coastal and rural area, causing combined infrastructure challenges and lack of graduate level employment, affecting all progression measures.
Objective 6- To embed employability and entrepreneurship across the University, including student work experience and networking opportunities, leading to improved graduate outcomes.

> **For more information on our equality of opportunity risks and objectives- see the intervention strategy tables on pages 7 to 12, 15 to 23 and 25 to 27 in our main plan.**

How we plan to address our equality of opportunity risks

The interventions stated in our new Access and Participation Plan are a range of initiatives that we are planning to deliver over the next four years. These interventions include: -

- **Supporting attainment at school and access to HE**- we are planning to work with schools and colleges across the country on different projects, to raise pupil attainment and aspirations to study for a higher education qualification.
- **Diversifying our provision**- we have added different pathways during 2022-23 including integrated Foundation Year programmes; most undergraduate degree programmes being offered with a professional placement; and an increase in the number of online undergraduate courses.
- **A more inclusive application process and focusing on transition from further education to higher education**- we offer 'contextual admissions', considering applicants' wider skills and experience. We also offer regional interviews, a mock interview programme, and financial support for open days and interviews. We are focusing on offering excellent support pre-entry to help the student develop a sense of belonging straightaway, and to deal with all accessibility issues at the start of their studies.
- **To increase ethnic diversity on campus**- we are developing a range of projects and initiatives to improve ethnic diversity and racial equality at Falmouth University, and across Cornwall.
- **To further develop quality teaching and learning**, the curriculum and assessment processes now include new modules to support students and staff wellbeing.
- **The University Mental Health Charter**- different workstreams focusing on improving mental health and wellbeing for all students and staff members, but in particular those who are disadvantaged or under-represented in any way.
- **Two evaluation databases** are now being utilised to store all student/staff/teacher feedback surveys, helping us to gather and monitor/report upon evaluation data and improve our future practices.
- **To continue working with external partners** such as Uni Connect hubs and the local County Council, on improving access to higher education. To work closely with our franchise partners, sharing best practice.
- **To continue providing work experience opportunities for students** from underrepresented groups through the Micro-Internships programme and Turing scheme. To help students network with employers through co-creating projects and working on employer briefs.

How students can get involved

The Students' Union (SU) have been consulted in the design and development of this Plan, participating in a range of discussions to develop activities. Students are members of a range of committees and provide feedback through their representatives. The SU and the University collaborate to form networks for target students to meet regularly both online and in person, for example the ADHD Pizza Club and the Mature Students Café events. Students also form a 'Wellbeing Panel' who meet once a term to discuss different key topics, helping the University to support the students throughout their studies.

Evaluation- how we will measure what we have achieved

Our intervention strategies are based on evidence of what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

- our project/initiative/activity design.
- the impact of the intervention we are delivering to achieve our objective.
- the impact on achieving our overall aim of improving equality of opportunity and providing an inclusive environment.

An evaluation strategy, framework and survey tools have been developed to be used throughout the student journey, from pre-entry to progression.

> **The detailed 'monitoring and evaluation strategy' and table can be found in our main Plan, pages 31 to 46.**

Contact details for further information

Helen Norman-(Head of Student Access & Success)- helen.norman@falmouth.ac.uk