

Royal Holloway, University of London:

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.

➡ You can see the [full access and participation plan for Royal Holloway here](#) on our website.

Key points

See pages 1 to 7 of the full plan

Ensuring equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education has been at the heart of Royal Holloway since it first began. It was one of the very first institutions in the UK to give women access to higher education.

We are proud to have a diverse population of students with 40% from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; 84% from state schools; and 12% with a disability.

Our access and participation plan focuses on improving outcomes for specific groups of students, focusing on addressing the following points:

- Young people from low participation and high deprivation neighbourhoods are less likely than their peers to come to Royal Holloway.
- The majority of our students have successful outcomes but data shows that, compared to their peers, outcomes are lower for certain groups. Students from low participation and high deprivation neighbourhoods, and students from Black ethnic groups, are less likely to achieve a degree award of 2:1 or above.
- Although most students progress to highly skilled employment or further study, the proportion is lower for students from Black ethnic groups and students with a mental health condition.

We believe that all students should gain the best possible outcomes from education, irrespective of their ethnic, socio-economic or other background, and we are determined to address these differences as a matter of social justice. We have developed a range of initiatives which are successfully impacting outcomes for these groups, as summarised below.

Fees we charge

At Royal Holloway, the maximum fees charged are £9,250 for full-time students.

➡ You can see a [full list of fees for courses at Royal Holloway](#) here on our website.

Financial help available

See pages 17 to 18 of the full plan

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. All bursaries are for students ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom - full eligibility details can be found [at this link](#).

- An **annual bursary** of £1,500 for the duration of the course if the student's household income is below £25,000
- An **annual bursary** of £500 for the duration of the course if the student's household income is between £25,000 and £30,000

- An **annual bursary** of £1,000 for the duration of the course for students who completed a QAA recognised Access to Higher Education diploma
- A **care leavers and estranged students annual bursary** of £3,000 for the duration of the course
- A **study support grant** is also available to support students facing financial difficulties.

Information for students

- **Prospective students** receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our [open days](#), and by email communications.
- **Care leavers** have a [dedicated website](#) for information and a named contact for support.
- **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

See pages 8 to 9 of the full plan

Our overall aim is to support students to access higher education and to create an environment where students at Royal Holloway can achieve their full potential. Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

Target area	Details of change to be made by 2024/25	Gap to be reduced by	Long term ambition
Access	Narrow the gap in access between students from highest and lowest deprivation areas	8 percentage points (pp)	Reduce by a further 11 pp by 2038/39
Access	Support state school pupils to improve their written communication, subject knowledge and critical thinking skills	590 pupils to be supported	N/A
Success	Eliminate the gap in attainment between students from the lowest and highest participation neighbourhoods	9 pp	N/A
Success	Reduce the gap in attainment between students from the highest and lowest deprivation neighbourhoods	9 pp	Eliminate by 2029/30
Success	Reduce the gap in attainment between Black and White students	10 pp	Eliminate by 2029/30
Progression	Reduce the gap in progression between students with a mental health condition and those with no known disability	10 pp	Eliminate by 2025/26
Progression	Reduce the gap in progression between Black and White students	10 pp	Eliminate by 2025/26

What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 10 to 20 of the full plan

- **In Access**
 - Our **inclusive outreach programme** includes a range of interventions, including residential summer schools, attainment raising activities, and a long-term outreach scheme for students from underrepresented groups.
 - We have a **new widening access team**, who work with local schools, particularly those in low participation and high deprivation neighbourhoods to improve access to university. The team focus on activities that target students from these areas, for example a new student ambassador mentoring scheme, an expanded residential programme, and the expansion of the long-term outreach scheme.
 - We are **working in partnership with The Brilliant Club** on their Scholars Programme to target students aged 10 to 17 from low participation neighbourhoods and to improve their university readiness.

- **Contextual admissions** – we offer a reduction of up to 2 grades lower than our standard entry requirements for students meeting certain eligibility criteria, who are from groups that are generally less likely to go to university.
- **In Success**
 - We deliver activities to help students **develop the skills needed** to maximise their potential. These activities focus on transition to university and on-course attainment.
 - We also run targeted activities to **improve the pre-arrival experience** for students from low participation and high deprivation neighbourhoods.
 - The **Student Success scheme** has focused on attainment for students from ethnic minority groups, including Black students. We have implemented a number of initiatives in each academic School that are having a positive impact on attainment.
- **In Progression**
 - We ensure that progression activities are **effectively targeted and promoted** to black students to maximise engagement with these activities.
 - We also ensure that progression activities are designed with **maximum accessibility** for students with a mental health condition, having considered the needs of these students with our Student Advisory & Wellbeing Service.
 - The **micro-placement scheme** offers summer work placements and has also been reconfigured to maximise support for students with a disability.

How students can get involved

See pages 20 to 21 of the full plan

We worked with the Students' Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan. Students are part of the governance that oversees implementation of the plan, and we have also put in place a diverse student panel called 'RH100' to provide student voice feedback on a range of topics.

- ➡ To provide feedback, students can [contact their student union representative](#)
To become involved in this work, [contact our Access and Participation Lead](#)

See pages 21 to 23 of the full plan

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our programmes of activity are informed by the best available evidence about what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate if our activities are successful in achieving our overall aim of improved access and an inclusive environment.

The Inclusive Education work-streams will monitor and report on these processes to the Inclusive Education Board. The Board will oversee implementation of actions and will monitor impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website by January 2024.

Variation

We are addressing OfS' new priorities for access and participation in a number of ways as outlined in our revised plan. These include: producing this summary of our plan; enhancing our partnerships with schools to help raise attainment; and ensuring that students from underrepresented groups are supported to successfully participate on their courses and achieve good quality outcomes.

Contact details for further information

- ➡ You can contact James Knowles at james.knowles@rhul.ac.uk for further information.