

## Plumpton College

### Access and Participation Plan Summary 2025-25 to 2028-29

#### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans (APPs) set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity and ensure home undergraduate students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups have better chances to access and succeed in higher education, and progress to good graduate jobs afterwards.

→The full access and participation plan is on our [website](#).

#### Key points

Plumpton College is committed to widening participation. Our students face a range of challenges including financial hardship that requires them to work to support their studies. Many of our students enter via non-traditional routes, having studied more vocational qualifications on arrival, and many have a learning difficulty, disability or ongoing health condition. We recognise that some groups of students are currently less likely to achieve the outcomes they wish to, and there are gaps in access, continuation and degree awards between different groups of students.

The focus of our plan is on improving access and outcomes for specific groups of students. Data shows that there are areas we need to improve on. We need to do more to recruit students from low-income households and those eligible for free school meals. We need to improve retention of students with a declared disability, specifically those with mental health needs. We also need to support these students when they are on their course to reduce the awarding gap. *See pages 1 to 2 of the full plan.*

#### Fees we charge

The maximum tuition fees charged in 2025-26 are:

- £9,275 for standard home full-time undergraduate study
- £4,635 for home part-time undergraduate study (based on maximum of 60 credits).

The full list of fees is available on the college website [here](#).

#### Financial help available

We are committed to support students most in need through our **HE Hardship Fund** which is an 'apply to' scheme. It is a cash bursary of up to £1,000 for each year of study, paid typically in three instalments each year. The fund is available to:

- Students with a residual household income of up to £25,000
- Students previously eligible for Free School Meals
- Students who are Care Leavers including those estranged from their families
- Students with a reported disability.

Our **voucher scheme** offers short term financial relief for students outside of term time, such as over the Summer recess or Christmas break. The voucher scheme is an 'apply to' scheme which offers a flexible approach to assisting those in short term financial crisis, and will retain a maximum limit linked to our bursary offer.

We also offer additional support to help students to secure paid work at the college as **student ambassadors**, which allow them to work around their studies, and more flexibly than other paid work.

Financial support information is available on our website [here](#).

*See pages 24 to 25 of the full plan.*

### **Information for students**

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person and online events (such as open days, offer holder events, transition days, social media, and specialist outreach activities held in schools), and by email communications. Potential applicants are encouraged to use our website for information, and our Enquiries, Advice and Guidance team are available to answer questions.

Current students receive information about fees and the financial support through the Higher Education Student SharePoint Hub available to students 24/7, 365 days a year, providing signposting to available support. Students can also book appointments with a Professional Services or Bursary Officer or drop in to the HE Office for advice and guidance.

*See pages 26 to 27 of the full plan.*

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

Our aim is to continue our work to widening access to higher education, and to support our students through their journey with us, ensuring all our students achieve their full potential. Our commitment to creating an inclusive and inspiring environment in which our students have a strong sense of belonging and achieve their academic potential is set out in the College's Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Based on our assessment of performance, we have identified the following areas to focus on:

**Improve access for students from low-income households** (IMD 2019 Q1) areas. We aim to attract more students from low-income households and intend to reduce the gap between low and high-income households from 23.2pp to 15pp by 2029.

**Increase the number of students eligible for free school meals accessing higher education** across the Uni Connect region by 2029-30. This is a collaborative objective in partnership with the Sussex Learning Network whereby the aim is to increase access in East Sussex from 16.9% to 21.9%, West Sussex from 18.1% to 23.1%, and Brighton & Hove from 21.2% to 26.2%.

**Supporting disabled students to continue with their programme of study.** We aim to eliminate the current gap between students who report a disability, specifically mental health, and those with no reported disability by 2030.

**Improve attainment for students with a reported disability** (students gaining a good degree outcome of 2:1 or above). We are focussing on reducing the awarding gap between students with no disability and those reporting a disability from 13.7pp to 5pp by 2030.

*See pages 2 to 4 of the full plan.*

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

Our whole provider approach supports students across the student lifecycle, with work starting with our outreach activities. Here is a summary of key activities:

**Wellbeing first:** Our range of wellbeing and mental health support services are designed to support all students by nurturing a growth mindset and fostering a strong sense of belonging.

**The Plumpton Graduate:** Equipping our graduates with key employability skills throughout their student journey including increasing work experience and vocational learning as well as authentic assessments in the curriculum which support students to hone business acumen, and embedding transferrable skills at modular level.

**Curriculum reviews:** The College's continuous review of curriculum practices and assessments aims to ensure we use inclusive practices and resources in our approach to teaching and learning. This supports our strategic aims to improve the student experience as well as progression to sustainable graduate destinations.

**Academic success:** We provide a consistent offer of academic support including academic skills development and ongoing individualised feedback to support the progression of students through each stage of their programme and beyond.

**Students as partners:** Students are at the heart of what we do. We work collaboratively with our students to inform the student experience and ensure every voice is heard to enable a high-quality student experience.

**Financial support:** Our financial support offer is tailored to ensure it is accessible and we reach those students most in need. We also closely monitor the impact of financial pressures on our students and are able to respond swiftly to those in most need.

*See pages 2 to 4 and pages 23 to 25 of the full plan.*

## **How students can get involved**

We worked with our Student Representatives and Students' Union to feed into the design of our plan. Students are represented on our governing committees including our Academic Standards and Student Voice subcommittees. To provide feedback or to get involved, students can contact their representative or the HE Office – [heoffice@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:heoffice@plumpton.ac.uk)

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

Our plan outlines how we will evaluate the activities we undertake to demonstrate impact. We will evaluate continuously, looking for evidence early on to see if our activities are having the impact we hoped for, and adjusting them where necessary. Our Progression, Recruitment and Outreach Working Group oversees the implementation of the plan and will also monitor and report to Senior Management progress against yearly milestones.

*See pages 25 to 26 of the full plan.*

## **Contact details for further information**

You can contact our Higher Education team at [HEOffice@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:HEOffice@plumpton.ac.uk) for further information.