

Middlesex University Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2025-2029 Summary

Introduction and Purpose

This summary provides a comprehensive overview of Middlesex University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2025-2029. It describes the strategic approach we plan to take to address performance disparities across different student demographic groups, covering continuation (progressing from year one to year two of a degree course), completion (successful achievement of a degree course), academic attainment (1st or 2:1 degree classification), and progression (to further study or highly skilled employment).

The University is proud of its diverse student population and long-established reputation for widening participation – for facilitating fair access, improving equality of opportunity and creating an inclusive and collaborative environment for student groups who are under-represented in higher education or disadvantaged. We are committed to enabling all students to be able to thrive academically and personally and at all stages of their journey. This summary is for our current students, prospective applicants, their families and other stakeholders interested in our approach to equity and inclusion. Our Access and Participation Plan in full can be accessed on our [University website](#).

Key Points and Context

Middlesex University is a global institution with campuses in London, Dubai, and Mauritius. Our London campus, which is the focus of this APP, serves approximately 11,000 students. Many of our students come from the city of London; representing a rich diversity of cultures and communities who enter with a wide-ranging set of experiences, responsibilities and aspirations. Our key demographics include:

- 69.6% from Asian, Black, Mixed or Other (ABMO) global majority ethnicities
- 60.9% from areas of high deprivation ([Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) quintiles 1&2)
- 43.5% previously eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- 37.4% entering with one or more BTEC qualification
- 63.5% who are first in their family to attend university.

Whilst we are proud of our track record in widening access, our plan has a greater focus on enabling our students to succeed throughout their degree course and beyond. Our disparities of outcome are in the areas of continuation, completion, attainment, and progression.

Fees and Financial Support

We understand the cost-of-living challenges for students, and how these financial pressures can influence students' choices to study, work, engage or withdraw from their studies. Not all students have equitable access to information about finance and funding. Our advice and guidance about tuition fees starts early, guiding potential, new, and continuing students to be able to prepare financially in advance of each academic year. We have dedicated teams to help with student finance applications, eligibility, entitlement and tuition fee instalment plans. The latest information on tuition fees, is detailed in our annual fees summary, located under our [access agreement page](#) on our University website.

We are committed to minimising on-course costs and providing clear and transparent information about tuition fees, course and living costs. We make university study more affordable for everyone with additional costs removed for day-to-day student needs and the provision of laptop loans, free personal e-textbooks, journals and reading list books, specialist software, printing, LinkedIn learning, microwaves and hot water dispensers for home brought food, period products, and resources to help save on energy bills, shopping, and cheaper travel.

We offer a discretionary hardship fund for enrolled, home UK students, providing access to non-repayable money and food vouchers to help with immediate living cost needs and emergencies. We

also offer a range of part-time paid work opportunities and internships, renewed annually, open to all students to apply.

Financial support options are displayed on digital screens around the campus and communicated through Virtual Learning Environment, student callers, social media, word of mouth, testimonials and in teaching sessions. For further information, please visit our University website, for advice on [budgeting and living costs and financial support](#) options or [part-time work and internships](#) available.

Objectives and Key Risks

Through our assessment of performance, we identified inequalities of outcomes that we grouped into six overarching risk categories. Different outcomes associated with stages of the student lifecycle are addressed in each category, summarised as follows:

1. *Awarding gap*: students from global majority ethnic groups, increasing their rates of attainment
2. *Financial circumstances*: students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or eligible for free school meals, improving their completion, attainment and progression
3. *Family background*: students who are first in family and/or have caring responsibilities, improving their rates of progression to further study/employment.
4. *Prior attainment*: students with BTEC qualifications, improving their outcomes at all stages
5. *Mental health and wellbeing*: students with disclosed mental health disabilities, improving their continuation and completion
6. Other: male and young (aged 18-21) students, as intersectional factors impacting risk.

Our primary objectives focus on eliminating or significantly reducing gaps in relation to the following:

- *Continuation* for students entering with BTEC qualifications, disclosed mental health disabilities, particularly amongst male students
- *Completion* for students eligible for FSM; with BTEC qualifications; and/or disclosed mental health disabilities, particularly amongst male students
- *Attainment* for students with ABMO ethnicities, eligible for FSM, and/or from lower socio-economic backgrounds, particularly amongst male students
- *Progression* for students who are first in family, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and/or with BTEC qualifications, particularly amongst young students.

Actions to Address Risks

Approximately 98% of our UK students and studying in Hendon fall into one or more of our six risk categories, which has led to us taking a comprehensive, inclusive approach focused on the curriculum. Our interventions are grouped into key strands designed to systematically support success of all our students.

1. *Collaborating for access and success*: We will build on our robust partnerships with schools, colleges, employers, and local boroughs to continue to widen access and create comprehensive support networks for our students. By developing curriculum in close collaboration with businesses and industry partners, we aim to provide students with practical, relevant learning experiences that directly connect academic study to work and employment. These partnerships will help address knowledge gaps, information guidance, and perceptions about higher education.
2. *Preparing student transitions for success*: We will continue to support a seamless and supportive transition for new students to fully integrate into the University community and make friends. Our support will cover key transition points across the student journey, including transitions between levels of study, to initial work placements, and the first assessment. Our consistent, comprehensive approach will create a smooth transition for each new phase of learning, so students can prepare and understand what is expected of them academically and professionally, as well as know where to go for help and support.

3. *Making the first-year count:* Recognising the critical importance of the first year of study, we will implement a range of curriculum reforms focused on creating a supportive and engaging initial experience, aimed at building confidence, a sense of belonging and achieving early academic success. Our approach includes creating a broad-based, interactive and engaging first-year curriculum that will enrich our students' experience, to help them make informed decisions about different pathways and future career options. By focusing on the first year, we aim to build a strong foundation for academic and personal success.
4. *Supporting students' wellbeing for success:* We believe good wellbeing is essential for learning and the success of all our students. Our standardised delivery structures will facilitate a manageable workload that prioritises students' mental health and study/life balance. We will continue to provide a holistic package of support for everyone – integrated into courses, with dedicated support teams available - to provide students with the resources and guidance needed to maximise their engagement and success.
5. *Assessing for success:* We are committed to creating equitable assessment practices and building assessment literacy, particularly for first-year students, recognising that our students come to us with diverse educational backgrounds and assessment experience. Our reforms will ensure that the assessments on all courses are varied, authentic, and manageable. This will help our students build confidence and engagement with assessment and effectively demonstrate what they have learnt, contributing to improved submission rates, continuation, and overall academic performance.
6. *Preparing students for future success:* Employability is at the heart of our approach. We will integrate career preparation across all courses, leveraging our strong employer networks, so all our students gain [practical and professional competencies](#) and understand diverse career pathways. We aim to equip all students with the confidence, skills, and clarity needed to transition successfully into graduate employment or further study.

Evaluation and Student Involvement

We regularly evaluate our progress across all courses. We will continue to be in contact with our applicants before they arrive, to better understand and respond to their needs from the outset. We will continue to routinely monitor our students' feedback and levels of engagement, confidence and achievement, by demographic groups, and make consequential adjustments to our approach and/or intervene to provide additional support to those who need it. University Committees will consider reports on progress incorporating a range of student data. Our evaluation for APP will also involve tracking the effect of changes over time, especially on our risk categories, and conducting research to ensure we are addressing our objectives.

Students are integral to the development and implementation of this plan. We will involve students through:

- Representation on key decision-making bodies, including the Board of Governors and Academic Board
- Training and supporting Student Voice Leaders within every course
- Employing Student Learning Assistants and Student Ambassadors, to offer relatable and relevant support in the first year of studies
- Student-led inquiries into barriers and enablers, based on lived experiences
- Ongoing, regular surveys and feedback mechanisms.

Students are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to working together to improving equality of opportunity and creating an inclusive and collaborative environment where every student can thrive academically and personally and at all stages of their journey.